

WRITINGS OF JOHN BRINE

by John Brine

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by John Brine, compiled for study and devotional reading.

86 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 01.00. Treatise on Various Subjects
2. 01.01. Of the Original Purity of Human Nature
3. 01.02. Of the Present Entire Depravity of Human Nature
4. 01.03. On the Spirit's Work in Regeneration
5. 01.04. On the Great Differenece Between Real Conversion and the Mere Semblanc...
6. 01.05. On the Life of Faith
7. 01.06. Of the Assurance of Faith
8. 01.07. Of A Believer's Growth in Grrace
9. 01.08. On Declensions in the Power of Godliness
10. 01.09. Of the Symptoms of Declension in the Power of Godliness
11. 01.10. Of the Ways and Means of Revival, Under Decays of Grace
12. 01.11. Of the Temptations of the Present Age
13. 01.12. Of Holy and Spiritual Communion With God
14. 01.13. Appendix 1
15. 02.00. The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ Asserted
16. 02.000. The Preface
17. 02.0000. The Introduction
18. 02.01. Part 1
19. 02.01.01. Chapter 1
20. 02.01.02. Chapter 2
21. 02.01.03. Chapter 3
22. 02.01.04. Chapter 4
23. 02.01.05. Chapter 5
24. 02.01.06. Chapter 6
25. 02.01.07. Chapter 7
26. 02.01.08. Chapter 8
27. 02.02. Part 2
28. 02.02.01. Chapter 1
29. 02.02.02. Chapter 2
30. 02.02.03. Chapter 3
31. 02.02.04. Chapter 4
32. 02.02.05. Chapter 5
33. 02.02.06. Chapter 6
34. 02.02.07. Chapter 7
35. 02.03. Part 3
36. 02.03.01. Chapter 1
37. 02.03.02. Chapter 2
38. 02.03.03. Chapter 3
39. 02.03.04. Chapter 4

40. 02.03.05. Chapter 5
41. 02.03.06. Chapter 6
42. 02.03.07. Chapter 7
43. 02.04. Part 4
44. 02.04.01. Chapter 1
45. 02.04.02. Chapter 2
46. 02.04.03. Chapter 3
47. 02.04.04. Chapter 4
48. 02.04.05. Chapter 5
49. 02.04.06. Chapter 6
50. 02.05. Postscript
51. 02.06. Footnotes
52. S. A Charge of Publishing a Palpable Falsity
53. S. A Discourse on the Prayer of Jabez
54. S. A Refutation of Arminian Principles
55. S. A Sermon Preached at an Ordination of Deacons
56. S. Animadversions Upon The Letters
57. S. Ancient Prophecy Proved to be Divine
58. S. Antidote Against Spreading Antinomian Principle
59. S. A vindication of Divine Justice
60. S. Cause of Salvation and Vocation Considered
61. S. Christ The Object of God's Eternal Delight
62. S. Diligence in Study
63. S. Doctrine In The Supralapsarian Scheme
64. S. Duty and Divine Efficiency Represented
65. S. Eternal Justification
66. S. God : The Defense and Glory of His Church
67. S. Grace at the Sovereign Disposal of God
68. S. Job's Epitaph Explained
69. S. Motives to Love and Unity Among Calvinists
70. S. Solemn Charge of Christian Minister Considered
71. S. Some Account of The Choice Experiences
72. S. The Baptist Against The Baptist
73. S. The Believer Triumph over Death
74. S. The Chief of Sinners Saved Through Jesus Christ
75. S. The Christian Religion
76. S. The Covenant of Grace Opened
77. S. The Doctrine of Imputation
78. S. The Faith of God's Elect Noted and Rectified
79. S. The Glory of the Gospel considered
80. S. The Gospel Not Absurd
81. S. The Imputation of Christ Active Obedience

- 82.** S. The Knowledge of Future Glory
- 83.** S. The Nature of True Holiness
- 84.** S. The Opposition of Flesh and Spirit In Believers
- 85.** S. The Proper Eternity of The Divine Decrees
- 86.** S. The True Sense of The Atonement

01.00. Treatise on Various Subjects

Treatise on Various Subjects by John Brine

1703 - 1765 TABLE OF CONTENTS This Treatise is divided into twelve Chapters, and the subjects therein are Discussed in the following order:

Chapter 1 - Of the original purity of human nature.

Chapter 2 - Of the present entire depravity of human nature.

Chapter 3 - On the Spirit's work in Regeneration; and also in Conversion, and Sanctification.

Chapter 4 - Of the great difference between real conversion, and the mere semblance of it.

Chapter 5 - On the life of faith.

Chapter 6 - Of the assurance of faith.

Chapter 7 - Of a believer's growth in grace.

Chapter 8 - On declension in the power of godliness, and its causes.

Chapter 9 - Of the symptoms of declension in the power of godliness.

Chapter 10 - Of the means of revival, under decays of grace.

Chapter 11 - Of the temptations of the present age; and cautions against them.

Chapter 12 - Of holy and spiritual Communion with God.

Appendix I - Analytical Index to the whole book.

01.01. Of the Original Purity of Human Nature

CHAPTER 1. OF THE ORIGINAL PURITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

O my soul, what is that subject which thou art about to contemplate? Consider it well, it is important, copious, and what thou hast never had experience of. How then canst thou hope to form conceptions of it agreeable to its nature? Canst thou expect to delineate the original beauties of the human mind, who hast been. unlovely, ever since thou wast, in the least degree, conscious of thy own acts? Is it likely that thou shouldst be able to represent the perfection of the intelligent creature, particularly Man, seeing thou hast never had a sight of the lovely image, either in thyself, or in another? The undertaking must be difficult to any depraved mind, and it certainly must be so much the more difficult to thee, by how much thou art less holy, and more degenerated than others are. But, my soul, be not discouraged, nor decline the work before thee, on that account; the labour possibly, may be of some advantage to others, and to thyself, it doubtless will be profitable; for, the better thou shalt be acquainted with the original purity and perfection of thy nature, a juster sense thou wilt have of that vitiosity, which thou hast always been attended with, and therefore, it may reasonably be expected, that thou wilt learn humility, the evil nature of sin, and be stirred up to adore that divine favour, which hath provided for thee a new beauty that never can be lost. If these useful ends should be, on thy part, in any measure answered, thou wilt be well recompensed for all thy pains, were they far greater than thou are able to take in this momentous enquiry. And, therefore, proceed to consider what the excellency of thy nature was, in its primitive state; and be sure that thou fail not to give an impartial and fair representation of the original glory of the human mind, so far as thou shalt be enabled to obtain the knowledge of it, because thou naturally art the very reverse of it, in thy thoughts, desires, and affections. This, this is my firm resolution, and it is what I hope constantly to keep in view.

Man, as soon as he was created, became subject to a law. The relation between God and the creature necessarily supposes, the subjection of the creature to the will and rule of God. And the divine will hath the power and force of a law; acting contrary to that, is disobedience and rebellion.

Again, that law whereunto man was subjected certainly was perfect or it comprised the whole of his duty. For it is irrational and impious to imagine that God can be the author of an imperfect law. Infinite rectitude cannot fail of requiring what is holy in all its branches, and in its full extent.

Hence it follows that man was pure and holy in his creation-state, or possessed of power to do the complete will of God. For equity requires that the powers of the creature, as he is created by God, be sufficient to enable him to keep a law, which is to be the rule of his actions. No acts of obedience, in justice, can be demanded of the creature, which exceed his powers, as he is formed of his Maker. For, it is equitable that there be a proportion between the ability of the creature and the command under which he is placed; and, consequently, man, in his original state was perfect, and attended with no moral disorder or defect. If he was not so, he could not keep a perfect law; and to subject him to a law which he could not obey, through a weakness natural to him, as created of his Almighty Ruler, would have been unjust. And, therefore, as the law was perfect, so

was man, the subject of it. God cannot omit requiring of the creature what is holy, nor can He command acts of obedience of the creature., which are beyond that ability which He furnishes the creature with, in his creation.

Moreover, the Holy Scriptures assert the perfection of human nature in its original state. Uprightness is attributed to man, and it is declared that, God made him in His own image. Lo, this only have I found, that God made man, upright: (Ecclesiastes 7:29) that is to say, pure, and holy, and that perfectly so. Man had a perfection of knowledge, a holy disposition of mind, and perfect purity in his affections.

I. He had a perfection of knowledge; no ignorance attended him in his primitive state.

1. Man had a perfect knowledge of God, according to the nature of that law or covenant, whereby he was then directed to fear and serve Him. Without a perception of the Being, and infinite powers of Deity, no acts of adoration, reverence, trust, and love, can be exerted towards and on God our Maker. If, therefore, man was obliged in his primitive state, to worship his Creator, of which, surely, none can doubt, it must be supposed, that he was acquainted with his divine excellencies and glory. A blind devotion was not performed by man in innocence, nor did he worship he knew not what. Ignorance of God is the consequence of sin, and, therefore, man was not the unhappy subject of that ignorance and blindness, before his transgression.

Some have thought, that he had a knowledge of the Trinity, and it is not improbable. For, though that is not attainable by reasoning on the operations of God's hand, we may fairly suppose that man received by ,immediate and supernatural revelation, the knowledge of some truths, and why may we not conclude, that, the knowledge of this mystery was conveyed to him in that way? To the end he might, in his acts of devotion, pay those honors to the Divine Three, which are the due of each.

Since ignorance of God is every-where represented as an unhappiness to men, it is unreasonable to think that man originally was unacquainted with Him.

2. We cannot rationally suppose that he was a stranger to his duty, either in the matter, manner, or extent of it. If he had not known what acts his Maker required of him, it would have been impossible for him to behave himself agreeably to His will. Obedience to any authority necessarily supposes the knowledge of what is enjoined. For, if a subject happens to act as the law requires, who has no knowledge of what is enacted, properly speaking, his acts would not be obedience to the legislator, because he could have no respect to his will in those acts, or intention of shewing his submission to his authority in what he acted, which always enters into the nature of real obedience to a superior, in what he commands. And, consequently, man must know what he ought to practice, and in what manner, and with what views, the duties required of him were to be performed; for otherwise, he could not be obedient to the will of his Maker in what he did. And, unless he had had this knowledge of what it was, the will of God he should practice, if he had failed of his duty or acted contrary to it, no uneasy consciousness could possibly have taken place in his mind, upon such failure, and unlawful acting. Conscience cannot accuse of offence, farther than a perception of what ought to be done, and what ought to be avoided, extends. It must, therefore, be concluded, that man was acquainted with his duty, in the whole compass of it. As his understanding was not blinded by any contracted prejudices, so no natural defect attended it. His

mind was then capable of discerning the objects which claimed his love, and of seeing those objects which it became him to turn from and avoid. His rejection of the highest good, and his choice of evil, were not the effects of ignorance. If he could have pleaded that in his excuse, we may be certain he had not failed of it, for he discovered an inclination to lessen his crime, if that had been possible ; but he offers nothing of this kind to extenuate his guilt. This leads me to observe,

3. He knew wherein his happiness consisted. If man in his first estate had been insensible of the excellency of that good, unto which he was entitled so long as he preserved his integrity, his folly had not been so great in forfeiting of his title to it ; neither could he have taken pleasure in that good, while he had it in possession; for delight from good enjoyed, arises from a perception of the nature of that good; and, consequently, pleasure in it, cannot exceed that measure of acquaintance the mind hath with it, in its excellency. We cannot therefore suppose, that Adam was ignorant of his happy circumstances, in his creation-state. If he was then happy, he must have been sensible wherein his felicity consisted.

4. He was not ignorant of that misery which a breach of the law would bring him into. He perfectly knew that sin against his Maker would certainly be followed with consequences fatal to himself His perfect reason could not but discern that rebellion against his Sovereign would expose him to his righteous displeasure. Ignorance ,is to this, cannot be pleaded in his excuse. He dared to rebel, with a full knowledge of the dreadful effects of an act of rebellion, according to the appointment of God in the law.

II. His disposition was such as God approved of. It is irrational to imagine that the mind of man was not the subject of any habits, good or evil, as he was created of God; for that supposes, that he was neither holy nor unholy. The disposition of his mind, as he came out of God's hand, could not be sinful, for that would make God the author of sin; and, consequently, he had no aversion to holiness, nor inclination to evil, or his will was not under the influence of any evil bias. He then must have a good and holy disposition. Adam was created good in a moral sense, or else God gave being to a creature, which the purity of his own nature would necessarily incline him to disapprove of, and prevent him holding fellowship with, than which nothing more absurd can be supposed. For my part, I can as soon believe that man rose into existence of himself, as that God formed him with such dispositions as men universally give evidence have place in their minds. The absurdity of such an imagination, I cannot but think must be evident to every one who is not void of all consideration, and is not absolutely a stranger to himself. Is it rational to suppose that God made man with such instability, such inclinations, such irregularity and disorder in his passions, as are now found with all men? It may be questioned, whether that man thinks at all, (if he speaks truth,) who says that he hath no experience, nor ever had, of any such depravity in him, as it is pretended every man is now the subject of. For it is hardly possible that reason can be exercised without a discernment, in some measure, that our reasonable nature is not, at present, such as it would be well if it was.-With respect to some, who confidently assert that they have no disposition to evil, it may partly be owing to ignorance of themselves, of the nature of holiness and of sin; but perhaps, much more to perverseness and obstinacy: they may hardly deny what they know to be true, rather than give any advantage to a principle which they are obstinately determined to oppose and run down at any rate. That human nature is now corrupt, is so plain a truth, that I cannot be persuaded that any man retains consciousness, who hath no perception of the dismal

fact in himself. And is it not most absurd to imagine that God created man such as he now is ? It is not so great a dishonor to God, to deny that he is the author of the being of man, as it is to assert that He created him such as he now is, in the temper and disposition of his mind. And to suppose that He formed him without either good or evil inclinations, or without a direction in his will, either to what is good, or to what is evil, is senseless and irrational.

III. His affections were untainted, and no disorder attended him in his passions. No temptation arose from vanity seated in the inferior powers of his soul, which is the case with man in his fallen state. Neither were his passions tumultuous and rebellious against his reason; so that his sin could not be occasioned by the impurity of his affections, nor the impetuosity of his passions. No unlawful love, delight, or aversion were implanted in the nature of man by the great Author of his being. And, therefore, the dictates of his reason did not meet with control from corruption in his affections, while he continued innocent. And, consequently, obedience to the law of his Maker was not rendered difficult by any unruliness in the passions of his soul. Disorder there, was the effect, and not the cause of his apostacy. The arguments are various by which this doctrine of the original purity of man is proved.

1. God created him in his own image and likeness. And this image must intend moral rectitude. Intelligence or reason, though it is necessarily included, it is not the principal thing designed by that divine likeness; for if rationality was this image, it could never be lost. Sin, which defaces this beautiful image, does not deprive men or devils of intelligence. The nature of both will eternally continue rational. It is impossible that either can sink into brutality. Thought and consciousness are inseparable from the nature of both. And, therefore, the image of God must be something distinct from reason. Indeed, reason only can be the subject of it ; but reason is not the thing itself To suppose that mere reason is God's likeness is an imagination unworthy of a reasonable nature, with how much confidence so ever, some pretending unto a superior degree of reason, assert that it is. This is a glaring evidence of their deep corruption, depravity, and of their being unacquainted with the true glory of an intelligent nature, even in theory. No censure too great can be passed on an opinion so senseless, and reproachful to our Maker.

2. Whatever the law requires of men now, that was in human nature originally. Doth not the law demand love to God with our whole hearts? It does. Can we be supposed to love Him, without a true knowledge of Him, in His being, nature, and perfections ? No; for such love is not a blind passion ; but a holy affection, raised in the mind b a perception of His infinite excellencies. Ignorant devotion is every whit as good in itself, as undiscerning affection towards the Deity. Again, the law requires us to fear and reverence our Maker. And can there be a reverence of God, without the knowledge of Him? No. We may have a dread of something unknown, and revere a nature that we axe taught is excellent; but unless we have some ideas of the power and excellency of that nature, we are afraid of we know not what, and pay veneration to a being or nature possessed of some supposed excellencies, but such as we are strangers unto. So the idolatrous Athenians worshipped God. They had this inscription on one of their altars, To the unknown God. And some men, if I understand them, would lead us into a belief of the possibility of the human mind exerting acts of love, fear, and reverence of God, without the knowledge of Him. Since the law requires these things of men, of all men, certain it is that human nature in its primitive state, was the happy subject of a true knowledge of God, in His nature, and infinitely glorious perfections; of a holy affection to God, and of a disposition to reverence and fear Him. Nor

is any intelligent nature like unto God, which approves not of goodness, truth, and righteousness. The moment an intelligent creature ceases to love and delight in these things, he is strip of his glory, and becomes depraved in his understanding, will, and affections.

3. Man in his original state was the object of the approbation of his Maker. This cannot be denied, without the absurdity of supposing that God gave existence to a creature, which He could not look upon with satisfaction and pleasure. Now, if God approved of man when He had made him, he must be the subject of such qualities in his reasonable nature, as were Pleasing to Him. For bare intelligence is not the object either of God's approbation or disapprobation. A reasonable nature, which is the subject of perfect holiness, is the object of God's delight; and a reasonable nature depraved and vicious, is the object of his displeasure; and, consequently, man originally was the the happy subject of good habits, or of integrity, righteousness, and a perfection of nature ; for then nothing could be wanting in him, to render him the fit object of the approbation of his Creator.

4. Regeneration, or our new creation, is the implantation of, or giving being unto, holy principles in our minds; that is, making the heart good, in order unto the performance of good works. And this is called the image of God, and it is said to consist in righteousness and true holiness. And, consequently, the divine image is not intelligence; but purity and holiness in an intelligent nature. Wherein a true knowledge of God, according to the nature of the covenant under which man is, and love to Him, fear of Him, and a disposition to obey Him, axe included.

5. Man was happy in his original state. He not only was free from pain and misery, but he enjoyed delight. And the pleasure he had before his apostacy, was of a pure and holy nature, such as God approved of. If his mind was not the subject of perfect knowledge, according to the nature of that covenant under which he then was; if his will had not been disposed to obedience . if his affections had not been holy and pure, what pleasure could he possibly take in those truths which were contained in the law, whereunto his obedience was required? Happiness necessarily supposes delight, and delight as necessarily supposes an agreeableness between the disposition of the soul, and the objects from which its pleasure springs. Man was happy in innocence, he, therefore, enjoyed pleasure, and that pleasure was pure and holy. He, then, must know truth, and approve of it.

6. Man, in innocence, enjoyed a sense of divine favour, according unto the nature of the covenant which was then made with him. This seems to me so evident a truth, and so consonant to reason, that I think it cannot well be called in question. And if it is true that Adam in that state enjoyed communion with his Maker, surely he must then be the subject of heavenly knowledge and true holiness. For if not, his mind would not have been disposed unto fellowship with God, and he must have been incapable of taking any pleasure therein. A depraved intelligent nature is averse to communion with God; and a mind which is not the subject of a holy disposition, can have no inclination unto intimacy with him. If any suppose that a reasonable nature, destitute of such a disposition, may be inclined to communion with the Father of spirits, they must be strangers to that happiness because it includes a perception of what God is, of the creature's relation to Him, and that all its felicity springs from Him, and an adoration of His infinite perfections. Hence, it necessarily follows, that the mind of man, originally, was not only free from corruption; but, also, that it was the happy subject of pure and holy principles, which were concreated with it : for where real holiness is not, it is impossible that communion with God can be enjoyed.

7. If man by acts of obedience had acquired good habits, he would have been the author of his chief excellency, and not God, which it is blasphemous to imagine. God indeed gave him a reasonable nature; but its ornament and beauty would not have been a divine gift ; the supposition of which is intolerable arrogance and insolence against the Author of our beings; and, therefore, man was certainly created pure and holy. A mind which is the subject of good dispositions, is better than a mind that is not. The acquirement, therefore, of such dispositions, by a mind destitute of them, must be esteemed an acquisition of greater glory than it before possessed; and, consequently, man's highest excellency must have been the effect of his own labor, and not of the bounty of his Creator. This reasoning is what I think cannot be answered by those who deny original righteousness. But holy acts can never arise in a mind destitute of holy habits. If Adam, therefore, was not created with a holy disposition, he could not have acquired it, because, without it, he could not perform holy acts.

8. Indifference to good and evil I think cannot have place in a reasonable nature. Indifference in the mind can only respect things indifferent, which are neither good nor evil, if the mind is supposed to be conversant about objects whose nature is not indifferent. That intelligent nature certainly is not what it ought to be, in whose account, it matters not whether truth or falsehood is embraced, whether right or wrong is chosen and pursued. When the mind gives the preference to what is right and fit, and is disposed to that, before its contrary, it is good ; but when it is the subject of a disposition to what is unfit, and makes choice of it, then it is depraved. The supposed indifference of the human mind towards its duty, or the contrary of it, agrees not with the experience either of good or bad men. It is not found in the soul of any man in this world, nor can attend any human mind in the next world; and to conceit that Adam was created of God, that which neither a good man nor an evil man is, is a fond and ridiculous imagination. That he could not create him with vicious dispositions all must grant, and, consequently, he made him with good dispositions, because it is impossible that indifference to holiness or sin, should ever be found in a reasonable nature. a creature disposed neither to good nor to evil, never had real existence ; but is only a supposed being in the foolish imaginations of some perverse men. The just and natural conclusions arising from these things are, viz., That man in his original state was the happy subject of moral perfection; not only free from all vitiosity and disorder in his reasonable nature, but possessed of positive holiness, the object of the approbation of God who made him, and made him good, in a moral sense ; for otherwise, he had not been a fit object of divine approbation. That his knowledge was complete, or that he was perfectly acquainted with all the momentous truths contained in that law or covenant, under which he then was. That he had a disposition to good, or a liking to truth, righteousness, and holiness. That he was capable of holding fellowship with his Maker, and actually enjoyed a sense of His favor. That, therefore, pleasures pure and holy sprung up in his mind, from an apprehension of an interest in the good will, care, and bountiful kindness of his Creator. For he not only was entertained with a sight of the pleasing wonders that surrounded him above, and on the earth beneath, especially in that fertile spot of it whereon he was placed; but also with an apprehension of the glory of the Author of the universe, in that way, wherein he had then displayed it. Adam, therefore, was not only free from pain, uneasy consciousness and misery ; but possessed happiness in a positive sense, full satisfaction, joy and delight pure and holy, and such as God designs to a pure and perfect mind. Hence it is apparent that no vain thoughts naturally sprung up in the mind of man, no unlawful desires arose in his soul from an evil bias in his will, nor were any natural tendencies then found in his affections towards objects trifling,

vain, and hurtful, through impurity seated in them. His unclouded and perfect reason, which clearly discerned what was the matter of his duty, and dictated him to the practice of it, met with no opposition from disorder in his affections for they were as pure as his mind was discerning. Reason in a state of innocence, as it was at no loss relating to the fitness or unfitness of the part it was to act, in any instance; so it had no rebellious inclination to subdue and conquer, in order to acting that part it knew to be becoming and fit. God did not place man in such a difficult and disadvantageous situation. He certainly had all the advantages which were necessary to facilitate the practice of what his Maker required him to do. This cannot be scrupled without a reflection both on the wisdom and goodness of his Creator. For infinite wisdom and goodness must needs direct to the formation of the creature free from all such corrupt inclinations, as would render his duty a task difficult for him to perform. If man had found himself to be the subject of any such dispositions from the first moment of his existence, as were repugnant to his reason, he would never upon his apostacy have been silent on that head ; but would certainly have pleaded it, as some extenuation of his crime. For, it is evident, that he had an inclination to have done this on some pretence or other, if it had been possible. And this would have been a much more plausible plea, than the shameful one he used with his Maker, Lawgiver, and Judge: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." He discovered an inclination to impute his crime to the Author of his being, or to prove that He was the occasion of it. And such is the impious and daring conduct of his wretched descendants in too many instances. Because men find themselves to be the subjects of such desires, or tendencies of mind, as they know to be unfit, and repugnant to reason, they easily excuse themselves for errors in practice, and with frontless assurance insist upon it, that it will be cruelty in their Maker to call them to an account for those defects and blemishes in their behavior, which are unavoidable in their present circumstances. We, therefore, may conclude, with the greatest certainty, that infinite wisdom would take care to prevent all occasion of such like cavilling in the formation of man, that he might not have it to say that his duty was difficult to be performed, by reason of an unsuitable turn in his will, and tendency in his affections, as he was created of God.

And, surely, it is reasonable to conclude, that Adam performed devotional acts with holy reverence and sacred delight. He could not but give tributes of' praise to God his Maker, for his superabundant beneficence and favour towards him, whereby he was furnished with everything not only needful to his sustentation, in those happy circumstances wherein he was placed; but with whatever he could desire for the entertainment and delight of his innocent and heavenly mind, and constituted ruler and lord over the numerous ranks of creatures the world contains. Above all, his grateful soul was doubtless possessed of adoring thoughts of the wisdom, goodness, and power of his great Creator, and of the interest he had in his approbation, protection, and kindness. And his principles, natural to him, directed him to implore the continuance of the care, aid, and guidance of his Almighty Former, wherein his guiltless soul could not be attended with any dread of his terrors nor with the least suspicion of a want of a favorable regard to him, in the mind of that infinitely good Being who made him. And, therefore, what serenity, what satisfaction, what pleasures must fill the breast of man in his primitive state, who had a free access to his Maker, a sense of his favor, and was absolutely free from all fear of his displeasure ! O what a happy state must this have been!

Besides, his pure and holy mind. was not reluctant and indisposed to religious services, nor wandering and sluggish in the performance of them ; for man was then not the subject of any aversion to holiness and communion with God. And, therefore, divine worship must be a branch of duty, wherein man took a peculiar pleasure in his original state. Perfect love to the infinitely glorious Object of his worship, sweetly engaged all the powers of his soul unto acts of adoration, thanksgiving, and praise. As his understanding discerned the infinite excellencies of his Creator, and his will was free from all evil bias, it adhered to Him, and his affections being untainted, embraced and delighted in God his Maker. As has been observed, whatever the law requires of all men now, that was in man originally; the law commands us to worship our Maker, in a pure, holy, and reverential manner, without reluctance, wandering, and mixture of vanity in our thoughts, desires, and affections; and, consequently, innocent man performed service of that noble and heavenly kind. If he had not, he never could have claimed a title to God's approbation and favor; but, on the contrary, must have fallen under His displeasure and censure ; for if God receives not that glory from the creature, which is due unto His holy and great name, He cannot but resent it. And since the creature's happiness consists in the knowledge of God, in acts of love to Him, and in acts of obedience to His righteous will, certain it is, that Adam in a manner perfectly devout and holy, worshipped his great Creator.

Hereby we may be induced to enter upon a pleasing contemplation of the happiness of the lovely pair, in the delightful garden of Eden. Two pure minds were perfectly united in love, between which no strife or contention could arise, to the disturbance and vexation of either. Adam, on his part, to whom we may allow a superiority over the innocent and beautiful fair., he certainly was all affection and kindness to her, nothing of a stern and angry disposition appeared in his air, language, or in any of his actions towards her. His commands, when he gave her any, were no other than such as proceeded from perfect reason, sweetness of temper, and the truest affection. And the woman, on her part, was all submission to her gentle ruler and loving companion, for whom she was formed, and to whom she was given by her Maker, to attend him, and unite with him, in all acts of adoration and praise, to the Former of them both. Perfect harmony, unmixed delight, and untainted piety reigned in the breast of each. And the man, we may suppose, pronounced orations on the wisdom, power, and beneficence of the great Creator, in her hearing ; and that she, not less capable of discerning the bright display of these divine perfections in the wonderful works of creation, discovered an approbation of all he expressed, as what perfectly, corresponded with her own ideas on those important subjects, and unto both transporting!

Socinian and Arminian writers deny this original perfection and happiness of man, because, they think, his apostacy cannot be explained, if he was the subject of purity and holiness. They imagine that his mind, though it was not tainted with moral evil, yet that it was not the subject of those dispositions before mentioned, and, consequently, that he could not be so happy a creature as we conclude he was. But,

1. It is not a sufficient reason for the denial of the truth of anything which reason leads us to conclude is true, that difficulty attends the explication of some other thing, which fact proves is true also. It doubtless is more rational to conclude upon the truth of what reason dictates to us must be true, than to deny it, because somewhat afterwards occurs which we cannot explain, and show how the latter can consist with the former. Reason plainly proves the truth of mans original purity and rectitude, and fact proves the possibility of his sinning against his Maker, though He formed

him holy and happy. It is open folly in men, whose understanding is much limited in the explication of things which they have a power of discerning the truth of, to deny the truth of anything, merely because they find themselves unable to explain how another thing is true, which fact undeniably proves to be so.

2. The greatest perfection which a creature can be the subject of, raises him not above a possibility of acting an unwise and sinful part ; for his nature cannot be rendered immutable. It is inseparable from the nature of a creature, as a creature, to be liable to change. As it is of the nature of God to be unchangeable, who necessarily is what he is, and to whom it is impossible ever to be in his nature other than he is. Deity alone is above the possibility of a change. And, therefore, unto what height so ever you raise the perfection of the creature man, in his original state, you place him not above the possibility of a mutation. That cannot be without blasphemy, or making him equal unto God, in what He always challenges, as a peculiar property of His nature. "I am the Lord, I change not." He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

3. I apprehend that it is not merely on account of this difficulty, that these men deny the doctrine of man's original holiness; but for another reason also, viz., man's apostacy, though he was perfectly holy, proves the necessity of the super-addition of divine grace immutably to preserve the pure creature in a state of perfection. This is what they are unwilling to grant, because they will have it, that the continued happiness of the creature depends on his acts, without a determining influence from the grace of God. If they were to allow of such an influence on the mind of a perfect creature, they could not consistently insist upon it, that such an influence on the mind of an imperfect creature destroys its free agency, which is what they constantly and vehemently urge against it.

4. Since mutability, or a possibility of change, is true of the most holy creature, that creature may sin and involve himself in ruin, if God withholds confirming grace from him. And this was the case with man in innocence: his nature was holy, but not immutably so; and as God withheld his determining influence from Adam, and left him to the mutability of his own will, he made an unhappy choice. Obedience to the law was not beyond the powers of his nature, for God did not require impossibilities of him; but the holy habits of his mind were insufficient infallibly to influence it unto acts of obedience. Power to obey the divine command is one thing, that he had; and power to preserve the will infallibly, in a continued choice of duty, is another and farther thing; this latter he had not; and God withholding from him confirming grace, which is necessary unto the creature's invariably choosing to practice its duty, or continuing rightly to use that power it bath, he violated the law of his Maker. Ability to perform acts of duty, a perfect creature bath; but ability infallibly to persevere therein, he bath not, because his mind is mutable in its nature, and, consequently, how holy so ever the creature is, he is not raised by his inherent principles above a possibility of sinning against God. And there is reason to conclude that he certainly will, without supernatural grace, from the fall of angels, and the apostacy of man, who were created pure and holy.

5. Those who deny the irresistible, or the effectual operation of God on the human mind, because they fear that such an influence destroys its free agency, must be obliged, according to their opinion, to maintain, that the saints in heaven continue happy, by virtue of inherent principles, and not in consequence of a determining act of the divine will upon their wills, to prevent their making

at any time an evil choice; which is highly derogatory to the glory of divine grace. They allow indeed, that God makes the saints perfectly holy but they must assert that they preserve themselves in a state of holiness and happiness for ever. And they will not grant, that man, originally, was the subject of that perfection, purity, and holiness, which it is reasonable to conclude he was, lest an argument should be formed from thence, in confirmation of the necessity of such an influence from God on the perfect creature, in order, infallibly to preserve his holiness and happiness, so cautious are they of yielding any thing to the prejudice of their dunghill idol, free-will. That must stand, whatever falls. That is their governing principle, and their whole scheme of divinity is so framed, as not to injure in the least degree this Diana of theirs. By this govern themselves in forming their sentiments of man before his fall, of human nature as fallen, of men unconverted, of men converted, and of the saints in heaven. Of so extensive an influence is this unworthy, filthy brat of their own begetting ; and so enamored are they with it, that they care not what is lost, so that that is but safe. They are determined to do homage to this favorite principle, at the expense of every thing else. Perhaps some would propound a question relating to this subject, and enquire thus;. Why should evil habits have greater influence on the mind than good habits? or, why should evil habits prevent holy acts arising in the mind, since good habits, whereof the mind of man it is supposed was the subject, did not prevent a sinful act in him? I answer,

1. Sin is the consequence of mutability in the nature of a creature. If good habits infallibly determined the will to the choice of good, the creature's continuance in a state of happiness would be independent of an act of the divine will, and its influence upon the will of the creature, which it is impious to imagine the possibility of. And, therefore, good habits can have no such influence on the will of the creature, as infallibly to determine it to make a wise and fit choice. But though the most perfect creature may, possibly, change for the worse, because of its natural mutability, it by no means follows that a sinful creature may effect a change in itself for the better, or perform holy acts.

2. If a creature which is the subject of evil habits only, could will holiness, it would then be in the power of the sinful creature to raise itself out of its miserable state, and regain that happiness which it lost by sin but that is impossible. The creature is the cause of its misery; but God alone is the author of its salvation and recovery. I suppose that all such will acknowledge the truth of this reasoning, who are persuaded of the inseparable connection between holiness and happiness. If the sinful creature may become holy of itself, I think it is certain, that it may by an innate power, become happy also.

3. Evil may be chosen under a false notion, or under the appearance of good. But holiness cannot be chosen except as holiness, and because of its excellency. Such a choice the depraved creature cannot make, for two reasons; One is, his understanding discerns not the excellent nature of holiness. The other is, his mind is enmity against it, as holiness, and, consequence it cannot be the matter of his choice.

4. The law denounces wrath and misery against the sinner, and, therefore, it is impossible that an apostate creature should ever recover its holiness, and regain its happiness. When it doth the former, it also will the latter ; for no holy creature will ever be rendered miserable, by infinite Holiness and infinite Goodness.

Hence we may observe,

1. If man was overcome by temptation, when he had no corrupt habits in his mind, but had holy dispositions in his soul, how foolish is it to think that, now he is depraved, he stands not in need of powerful, special, and effectual grace from God to make him holy, and preserve him in the midst of the numerous temptations, which continually, and in every condition attend him ! If the natural mutability of his will, in a state of perfection, rendered it so easy for Satan to conquer and slay him, is it not absurd to imagine that he can defend himself, now his heart is possessed of enemies more dangerous by far, which are always disposed to join with him in whatever temptations he presents? It certainly is. The fall of our first parents ought to teach us humility, and a constant dependence on divine grace for our safety, unto which it is wholly owing.

2. Sovereign goodness alone provides for, and secures the lasting felicity of angels and men. Angels owe their standing unto favor beyond what is due unto a creature. God is not obliged to preserve the will of any creature from making an improper choice, by his determining influence upon it. Holiness is the intelligent creature's due, in his creation, on the footing of equity ; but none have a farther claim upon God. If, therefore, he affords, additional aid in order to prevent his creatures from sinning, through the mutability of their wills, it is the mere effect of his sovereign goodness. Unto this the saints owe their security in heaven. Invariable happiness rests on a certain and infallible cause, which the will of the holiest creature is not. Immutability can no more take place in the will of a creature, than any other perfection can, which is peculiar to the nature of God.

3. What a low notion the Socinians and Arminians have of rectitude, righteousness, and the image of God! I must needs say, that though they pretend to be zealous for holiness above others, their false notions about it, is one of the principal objections I have against their sentiments. This I know, that as there was more in man, in innocence, than they will allow of, so more is required to be in men, in order to the enjoyment of happiness hereafter, than they judge necessary hereunto. A man may carry to hell along with him, that which they call a preparation for heaven. And I am sure, if their experience, as to holiness, is not beyond their notions of it, they will never come there.

4. How greatly was the sin of man aggravated? It was committed against knowledge, and under great advantages, through the beneficence of the object against whom it was directed, after warning given, and an explicit declaration of the consequence of his transgression. In his crime there was presumption, unbelief, horrid ingratitude, and rebellion against the most just, the most kind, and the most beneficent Ruler. How dreadful, therefore was his offence ! No circumstance was wanting in it, which could aggravate it.

5. Since God shewed him mercy, as we have reason to conclude he did, what encouragement may we collect from hence, to hope for favor, under the deepest sense of our unworthiness.

6. How should we adore the rich mercy and grace of God, which hath provided for the recovery of lapsed men ! He was under no more obligation to rebellious man, than to apostate spirits. And, therefore, he might as justly have left men, who are the sinful descendants of Adam, eternally to perish, as he has those angels that sinned. Can we seriously think of this without wonder, admiration, and praise ! If we have any spiritual sense, and gratefulness in our minds, we cannot.

01.02. Of the Present Entire Depravity of Human Nature

CHAPTER II. OF THE PRESENT ENTIRE DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

MANY seem to. take a peculiar pleasure in extolling of human nature, and give such a representation of the state of mankind, as is plainly a contradiction both to Scripture and universal experience. Because man still continues intelligent, and hath a power of willing and nilling, of loving and hating, which is essential to his constitution and make, and, therefore, can never be lost, without his ceasing to be man, they persuade themselves, and would fain make others believe also, that human nature is not much, if any thing, a sufferer by the fall. Hence, they are exceedingly lavish in their encomiums, and groundless flattering applauses of the human excellency. The depravation of our nature is not the loss of intelligence ; but of that ability to exert itself in a wise and fit manner, which it originally possessed. And therefore, When we assert the necessity of the communication of divine grace, in order to our acting in a holy and fit manner, we do not suggest that we are passive in doing good, nor that we are acted upon as machines and puppets, which have not intelligence, and consequently, neither perception, volition, nor pleasure, in or about any objects, towards which they are impelled to move. Those who object either the one or the other to us, plainly discover the want of due attention to what we say, or a defect in their boasted intellectuals, or else a want of fairness and honesty in their reasoning. Our depravity is a subject very largely treated of in the Holy Scriptures. And it is only the light of revelation which can guide us into the knowledge of the true nature and extent of that depravation which attends us. The following particulars are clearly taught and strongly inculcated, in those writings.

1. We are dead in sin. Death is not a decay of vigor and strength, through sickness, disorder, or wounds but a privation of life, taken in a natural Sense, as the body is the subject of it. And in a religious view, as the mind is the subject of death, it is not a diminution of power for acting in a holy manner, but a total loss and privation of that power. The life we lost by sin, is not that spiritual principle which flows from new covenant-love ; but that principle of holiness, which was con-created with man, and was connatural to him. Men indeed are without the former; but it is in a way of negation only, not by privation, as they are of the latter. Human nature in its original state, was not the subject of the former, and, consequently, it could not be lost by man's apostacy. Since we are deprived of this principle of holiness, in consequence of sin, we must be incapable of performing that obedience the law requires of us. And much more must we be unable to act in a spiritual manner, about and towards spiritual objects and things, to whose nature the new creature is congruous, and upon which it acts itself.

II. We are under the dominion of sin. Whatever is intended by this phrase, it is true of all those who are under the law. Romans 6:14. Hence we must conclude that the tyranny of sin is of universal extent, for all men are in subjection to the law, considered as the descendants of Adam. The phrase necessarily supposes that sin hath possession of the soul; for the mind certainly is the subject of that, under whose direction and influences it acts, whether it be a good or evil principle. Besides, it evidently suggests that the mind is in subjection to evil, as a governing principle, which

determines it in all its volitions and acts. This rule of sin is not a force upon the mind, to which it makes opposition, for the soul is a subject, and not a captive to evil. It cannot but will evil, through the reign of sin; yet, all its evil volitions are spontaneous and free. The dominion of sin consists in its determining influence upon the will. And this sway over the mind it keeps, until victorious grace makes a conquest upon the soul, by the implantation of a contrary principle, (which opposes the influence of sin, and disposes the will to contrary acts) let conscience remonstrate ever so sharply against the fatal choice sin inclines the will to make. This is not a propensity to some particular evil; but an inclination to deviate from the rule of our duty, taken in its full compass. Yet, as the mind is incapable of exerting itself all manner of ways, and about all sorts of objects at once, and in one instant, it is sometimes acting in one manner, and sometimes in another, as it is variously affected by the different objects about which it is conversant ; but all its actions are evil. And those who study their own hearts most, will best understand the surprising variety of ways wherein evil concupiscence acts its part in the soul. In the several stages of human life, this reigning power of sin discovers itself In childhood, by follies proper to that age. In youth it exerts itself in various ways, by a low ambition, pride, and a strange fondness for sinful pleasures. In the state of manhood, by a pursuit of the transitory things of this world, and this is often under specious pretences of more extensive usefulness ; but in fact, men are acted by a spirit of covetousness ; and in an advanced age, by impatience, &c.

III. Ignorance and darkness have overspread our minds. As a person who hath not a power of seeing is incapable of being impressed by the strongest rays of light, which any bodies reflect upon him, and must be unable to form ideas of their appearance ; so men, naturally, by reason of the blindness of their minds, cannot discern the nature of heavenly things. Hence the notions which they form about, them are contrary to their nature, and they think them to be the very reverse of what in fact they are. The highest wisdom they account folly; and objects the most glorious and attractive, when viewed as they are in themselves, they despise and reject, as having in their account nothing of the amiable and charming in them. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In which words, are these things observable, 1. The person spoken of, a man who is not the subject of something supernatural, which might entitle him to a more raised character than that of natural, which is inclusive of all those accomplishments that are to be acquired by instruction, reading, and the most assiduous meditation. 2. The things of the Spirit of God, i. e. Christian doctrines, which are foolishness to him, he discerns not anything of wisdom in them, they seem to him the reverse, and, therefore, he despises them, as a rational man ought to contemn what is absurd and foolish. 3. He cannot know them, i. e. the things themselves, though he may the truth of them. 4. The reason is, they are spiritually discerned. This incapacity of understanding divine mysteries, is common to all unregenerate persons. But in some, it is greatly heightened by the influence of Satan, who hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, and by various strong prejudices of their own contracting, through pride, and a vain elation of mind, supposing themselves equal to the discovery of every branch of truth that is necessary to be known, in order to their happiness. And sometimes this darkness is increased, by a judicial act of God, giving them wholly over to follow the dictates of their own corrupt and distempered minds.

IV. Men, are obstinate. The unyielding disposition of the human mind to heavenly things, is beyond expression. On this account, the heart is compared to a stone, to a rock, and the neck to an iron

sinew. We not only want ability to perform what is good; but a will and inclination to it also. The most pathetic in treaties and moving expostulations, cannot entice the mind to close with what is absolutely necessary to its solid peace and final happiness ; nor the most awakening threats and thundering menaces, force the will to retract the evil choice it has once made. An unsanctified mind will for ever risk the loss of the chiefest good, and suffer the greatest misery, to gratify its sinful desires. And numerous are the evasive and deceitful reasoning's it will use to prevent a sense of this its stupidity being fixed on it, to the disturbance Of so ruinous a security. As men are without ability to come to Christ, and submit to His authority, which is their misery ; so they will not come to Him, that they might have life; but they reject Him by a positive act of opposition against H* in the character of a Saviour, and this is their guilt, and will add to the weight of their punishment. There is such a settled aversion in the mind to holiness in them, that it will never be drawn by the alluring promises of happiness, nor be driven by the awful denunciations of death and everlasting misery, to subject itself to the law of God. Enmity, which the carnal mind is against God and his law, will never be soothed, or terrified into the love of either. " The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 8:7. The seeds of all vice are in all men, though all vices are not predominant in the conduct of any man. Some things may be proposed for consideration to confirm it. 1. The unregenerate mind approves not of any branch of holiness the law enjoins ; but is contrary to it. 2. Nor does it disapprove of any sin, as sin, or as it is a breach of the divine law. Under some other considerations it may have a dislike of particular vices. 3. That which dispose-, to the breach of one divine precept, is not inclined to keep any upon the authority of the legislator. 4. Some vices are predominant in one man, and others in another; one is immersed in sensual pleasures; another, who despises them as low and sordid, is carried by a torrent of intellectual vices, which, though they are more secret, are not less criminal. One man is proud, another is covetous. One is envious, another is malicious and wrathful. 5. Different vices act their part in the very same person, at different times, and under different temptations and circumstances ; so you shall see the same person sometimes covetous, and sometimes profuse ; sometimes fearful and diffident sometimes presuming and rash.

These things fully prove that men are the subjects of a disposition to violate the law in every part of it, and that they have not an inclination to obey any part of it. For 6. That in man which inclines him to neglect any duty, is disposed to none 3 and that which prompts him to one unlawful action, will lead him on under a different temptation to another of a different kind, how much so ever he may fancy himself averse to it. The reason is evident; a disposition to any vice, sensual or intellectual, is wholly evil in its nature, and, therefore, it will betray a person into the commission of any unlawful action, when, and as it is influenced by various temptations. For though it is not possible that the flesh should gratify itself at once, in all the ways it can act, it will not refuse the gratification of its various lusts at different times, and by different acts.

V. No unregenerate person acts agreeably to the law in any instance. It is allowed that he may perform what is materially good, and decline what is materially evil, in many particulars, and thereby obtain the character of a virtuous man; but, yet not having in his heart a principle of holiness, which alone is the spring of actions, that are properly good, and pleasing to God, nothing he acts corresponds with the rule of his duty, with respect to its motives, its source, nor its end. To conceit that holy acts may arise from natural principles, and be performed by natural powers, is an imagination, which entirely destroys the grace of the gospel, and totally nullifies the distinction

between persons regenerate and unregenerate. If this may be admitted, it is most certain that regeneration is unnecessary; the consequence is clearly discerned, and those acting's of the mind, which are the genuine fruits of that gracious work of God upon men, are boldly pronounced enthusiastic and irrational by many, who put in their claim for the name of Christians. To such a height is men's contempt of divine grace advanced, in our sad times.

Holiness, in general, is a submission to God's authority in the law; or, it is an approbation of the commanding will of God: and this necessarily supposes a subjection unto his authority in every branch of duty. A holy mind declines whatever God forbids, and chooses to practice all he requires, without any exception. Nothing short of this is TRUE holiness. If, therefore, we approve not of our duty in its full extent, we are greatly mistaken, if we imagine that we have a real liking unto any part of it. A person who hath no principle of holiness in him may be disinclined to many vices, and be disposed to practice various virtues, as he discerns the former are unfit actions, and the latter are comely and fit actions in themselves; but his disapprobation of vice, and approbation of virtue, arise not from a disposition to submit to the will of God in the law, and, therefore, his dislike of vice is not universal, nor is his liking of virtue of that extent. Whereas a man imprincipled with real holiness, his aversion to evil and choice of good, are of the same compass with the law in its prohibitions and precepts. Where there is not an universal approbation of duty, there is not a real liking of any part of it, as duty. If our minds submit not unto the will of God in all He commands, we submit not to His authority in anything which He enjoins. And if a man hates sin, as sin, or as it is contrary to the will of God, his abhorrence of evil must be of the same compass as the law is, in its prohibitions. But if his aversion to evil springs from other considerations, how great so ever that aversion may be to some particular sins, it extends not unto all sin, nor is it a dislike of any sin, as sin; but as an action followed with some inconveniences, which he chooses to avoid; or at best, as an action unbecoming a creature of his make and rank : wherein, there is no true hatred of sin, as such. Abhorrence of evil as evil, supposes an acquaintance with the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which produces in the mind a dislike of it, because of the malignity and vileness of its nature; and, where that is, the opposition unto it certainly is universal. Indulgence cannot be given unto any lust, either of the flesh, or of the mind.

But, on the contrary, if the heart is not wrought up, unto an abhorrence of sin, as sin, it will be for sparing some cursed lust, or another, under some pretence or other, either that it is but a small offence, and no great harm is in it; or, that he will hereafter part with it, and give it up to be slain in a future time; or, that God is not so rigorous, as not to connive at some little gratifications of our strong desires. Ten thousand ways the flesh hath of pleading for itself against the dictates of the conscience; and it will surely prevail in the issue in some degree, or other, unless a person hates sin, as sin.

Besides, grace only qualifies a person for performing holy and acceptable obedience. Until heavenly light is infused into our minds, we discern not the nature of that obedience which God requires of us, as Christians. That is not a legal, but evangelical obedience. The matter of it is indeed contained in the law, if not formally, yet radically; but the motives to it, and the ends of it, are such as the law is unacquainted with, and gives us no direction about. Those ends of obedience which are proper to the law, respecting us, are our justification and life by it, which are incompatible with the gospel ; for that is a revelation of the acceptance of our persons, and of our right to life, upon another foundation. Now, before a man is furnished with a spiritual understanding

of the gospel way of justification, he acts in direct contradiction to the righteousness of God in the law, and unto his grace in the gospel. For though he cannot yield such obedience as the law requires, he proposes to obtain justification by what he acts, which proposal is contrary unto the righteousness of God in the law, for that requires sinless obedience unto that end ; and in this proposal, he openly renounces the gospel of Christ, or submits not unto that righteousness of God, which is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith. And, therefore, his obedience cannot be accepted with God, or entitle him unto life. That obedience which flows from faith in Christ, in a poor sinner, only is acceptable to God. "For without faith it is impossible to please God." The reasons of which are evident. In this obedience, the equity and justice of God are heartily acknowledged, in requiring a perfect observance of his holy commands, in order to justification and life. And, therein, a person approves of God's gracious method of justifying and saving miserable sinners, alone by and through the mediation of Jesus Christ. Wherein, his grace, wisdom, and justice most conspicuously shine, which his soul humbly adores. Besides, this obedience is an effect of gratitude, for the many great and inestimable blessings God in a way of mere sovereign goodness and mercy, bestows upon unworthy creatures, and it is cheerfully and voluntarily performed. A man is sweetly drawn by a sense of love, and not driven by the terrors of the law in what he acts. Whereas, an unbeliever, in his acts of obedience, proposes to make God a debtor to himself thereby; although his obedience is far, very far from being such as the law demands to that end, which is one of the highest acts of rebellion against the righteousness and justice of God, in the character of a lawgiver, that a sinner can be guilty of. Farther, this is not a choice of duty, as such; but only in a certain respect, and so far as regard to self-interest o it, which frame of mind God abhors.

VI. If it is a truth, that persons who are born again, act in a holy spiritual manner, only according to that spiritual principle, which is wrought in them at the time of their regeneration; then, no actions of an unregenerate man are good and holy. But Scripture and experience concur in giving evidence that this is true. The flesh serves the law of sin; and that which is engaged in the service of sin, Will never be brought to enter into the service of God. It is in its nature to oppose the spiritual part, in all its motions and acts. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." And, therefore, the heart of a believer is never entirely holy in any of his acting's; but imperfections, and a tincture of evil, attend his best performances, by reason of the continual presence of the law of sin, whereof he is the subject. And, consequently, such who are unregenerate, have no spring of holy actions in them ; hence, it must be concluded, that nothing they do can be holy and acceptable to God. That an unregenerate person is the subject of evil habits only, is a clear case. For if an unregenerate man hath good principles in him, there can be no difference between a man who is in a regenerate state, and one who is not. Persons born again are the subjects of evil habits, as well as of good habits; and, therefore, if an unregenerate person hath good principles in him, which dispose him unto good and holy acts, all difference between a man that is born of God, and one who is not, must necessarily be sunk and lost; because a regenerate man is no more, nor other than he is, viz., the subject of holiness and sin; to suppose which, is absurd and contradictory unto the whole current of sacred writ. Again, upon this principle, regeneration is not necessary, nay, it is impossible that it can pass upon a man, who is holy in the temper and disposition of his mind ; for that work is the production of somewhat in a person, which before he was not the subject of; and that must be holiness, because God is the author of it; except there maybe a birth, when nothing is produced, which is contradictory to reason. Regeneration is absolutely necessary to every man's

final happiness, and, consequently, no man is holy before he is regenerated. All men, therefore, are void of holiness, as a principle, or spring of action, that is naturally; and of course no man until he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, can yield an holy obedience unto God. An unregenerate man is in the flesh, and cannot please God. He is wholly flesh, or hath nothing of spirit in him, from which spiritual acts can arise, such as faith, hope, love, and reverence of God.

VII The carnal mind is enmity against God. By the carnal mind is intended a soul destitute of the spirit and grace of God, or which is in the flesh, and, therefore, cannot please God. Men may dispute, as long as they think fit; but they will never be able to prove that any unregenerate mind is other than flesh, whether it is drenched in sensual lusts, or no. All men in a state of un-regeneracy are enmity against God. He is the object of their aversion. I sometimes, indeed, hear good, wise, and learned men, in popular addresses to sinners, tell them that they cannot believe, that they will care to say that they do not desire to have anything to do with God; but, that they are willing to gratify some lust, or another, which is the reason why they are for postponing acquaintance with God; and pathetically expostulating with them on this head, inform them that this is the accepted time, and that this is the day of salvation ; and with great earnestness labor to convince them of their folly, in putting off, until another season a choice of God and real happiness, for the sake of any unlawful gratifications. This arises from the want of a due consideration of the dreadful truth, that the language of the hearts of sinners unto the Almighty, is " Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." The fact is really this ; men choose lust, because they are not disposed unto a choice of God and holiness and not that they neglect to make choice of God, because they choose sin. A mind which chooses not God, certainly chooses sin, of that there can be no doubt. But the reason why a man chooses not God, is not because he chooses sin; but he chooses sin, because he chooses not God, through an alienation of mind from him. And I observe, that the very same persons who thus expostulate with sinners, when they are treating on different subjects, plainly tell them that they cannot understand, and make choice of spiritual things, through the blindness of their minds, and a fixed aversion in their hearts unto those things; and so they allow of the truth of what, when discoursing on some other subjects, they vehemently declare that they cannot be persuaded is true. The consistency of these things, I have no discernment of ; nor is it in my power to reconcile contradictions. Alas ! the dismal fact is this, our hearts are estranged from God, are enmity against Him, and are by no means willing to have anything to do with Him, nor with what is acceptable and pleasing to Him and, therefore, there is nothing so vain, so trifling, nay, so pernicious, that we choose not, rather than God and holiness. Nor is it possible to persuade a depraved mind, to believe that its happiness consists in a sense of the favor of God, and in a conformity to His holy will, and, consequently, to prevail with it to choose God and holiness, by the highest strains of rhetoric such can use, who are best qualified for striking the passions of mankind, in the manner of their address.

Men's enmity against God appears in a variety of ways. They like not to think of him, as he is an infinitely holy and pure Being, and necessarily hates sin, and disapproves of the persons of sinners; nor, as he is a sovereign Being, and, consequently, may dispense of his favors according to his absolute pleasure, with respect to the guilty creature-that he may either save or destroy transgressors, just as it seems good in his sight. And, as men like not to think of God, so they take no pleasure in discoursing on him. No subject of conversation is so unacceptable to men in general, as God is; especially in the purity of his nature, the strictness of his justice, and his infinite

displeasure with sin ; these are things, which they hope, are not true, which is the very same as hoping that there is no God. The denial of these divine perfections amounts unto a denial of Deity. And he who takes a secret pleasure in thinking that God is not so holy, so inflexibly just, and so displeased with sin, as his Word represents him, wishes there was no God. For it is the same thing if we desire that we may not find him to be what he really is, viz. in purity, holiness, justice, and righteousness, as to wish that he were not.

Enmity against God appears in an opposition to his law, in the extent and spirituality of its precepts, and in the terror of its threatening for a breach of its commands. Its requirements are thought too strict, and its menaces too severe, by the carnal mind. God's authority in commanding is despised, and his justice in denouncing punishment, is censured as cruel. The carnal mind will not acknowledge the equity of divine precepts in their full compass, nor the justice of divine threatening for a failure of obedience, in that extent which the law requires. Men who oppose the sovereignty of the grace of God in the gospel, are enemies to his authority in the law, and will always be so. Such who think that saving grace must be of universal extent, always judge that it is fit and proper that the law should be dispensed with, in the rigour of its commands. And they often break out into ungodly and hard speeches, against both the justice of God in the law, and his sovereignty in the gospel. Because, according to the former, they are obnoxious to eternal misery ; and according to the latter, salvation cannot possibly be of themselves, either in whole or in part; but is entirely resolved into the free will of God, without any moving consideration in them. Men can neither be reconciled to the holiness of God, in the constitution of the law, nor to his grace in the constitution of the gospel. He who is an enemy to the latter, he also is so to the former.

I think that this natural opposition of the human mind to God and goodness, may be strongly argued from the motions and acting's of the unregenerate part in believers. What their minds are according to that part, that the hearts of the unregenerate wholly are, as to spiritual things. Now, the flesh in the saints, opposes the acting's of the spiritual part in them; and it raises other thoughts, other desires, and other delights in the mind, and is conversant with other objects than grace is; hence are all their wanderings in duty, their backwardness unto it, and weariness of it. The flesh is not for holding fellowship with God; He is the object of its aversion, and it too often diverts the mind from the object it bath no delight in, but averse from. This it is which renders it so difficult to contemplate heavenly things without distraction, and tergiversations of soul. And, if it is thus with sanctified persons, through the influence of the carnal part (unto the truth of which sad experience universally testifies,) it necessarily follows, that the heart of an unsanctified person, is all opposition to God and holiness. And by how much the more any duty is spiritual, or how much the more nearly God is to be treated with therein, by so much the more our hearts are disinclined unto it. He is the most happy man living, who meets with the least interruption from the flesh in his contemplations on God, in his approaches unto him, and in communion with him, let his circumstances, as a man, be what they may. And hence we may learn that the carnal mind hath no desire of possessing heaven. Many delude their souls as to this matter, and think that they desire the happiness of that state, who have no love to God, nor the least pleasure in heavenly objects. None are willing to suffer the torments of hell, but they are few who have any relish for the joys of heaven. Let us not deceive ourselves in an affair of such importance. If we now have no pleasure in thoughts of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the mysteries relating to his person, and offices, and work, and precious benefits, we certainly have no disposition to enjoy heavenly glory;

nor is it possible that we should take any delight in the fellowship subsisting in that state, or the pure spiritual service which is performed by the happy inhabitants of that blissful world. Our hearts are certainly averse from heavenly objects, heavenly communion, and heavenly service. If we form a conclusion that we desire heaven, merely because we are afraid of hell, we are under a dreadful deception. We may tremble at an apprehension of suffering the vengeance of God, when we have no desire of enjoying a sense of his favor.

If men are not swearers, or unclean persons, nor drunkards, or thieves, they are very apt to flatter themselves that all is well, that they are in a safe and happy state. " They are pure in their own eyes; but they are not washed from their filthiness." This is a sad delusion. Many who act not a brutal part, frequent act a diabolical one. They wallow not in the mire of sensual lusts; but they are under the sway of intellectual lusts, pride, covetousness, wrath, anger, malice, contempt of others, who, perhaps, in no sense, are their inferiors; these vices appear in them to the observation of almost every spectator. Can we think that such sort of persons are holy and good? We must be as much unacquainted with both sin and holiness as they themselves are, if we do. I must needs say, that no persons are more strangers unto real holiness than some who despise others, because they imagine, that they excel them therein. They often say to such, who are truly sanctified, " stand by thyself, come not near to me, I am holier than thou," whereas in fact, they are as distant from true holiness, as any persons in the world can be. The proud Pharisee, while he swells with an opinion of his superior merit, is no other than a slave, though not to sensual, yet to intellectual lusts. No persons are more remote from holiness than some who scorn to indulge sensual lust. The Pharisees, who were as unholy as any men upon earth, were not whoremongers, adulterers, nor drunkards ; they abstained from those sordid vices, and practiced many virtues, which much recommended them to the people, and caused them to esteem them as persons of great sanctity. If they had not maintained regularity in conduct, our Saviour would never have compared them to " whited sepulchres," which axe fair and beautiful; and he would not have likened them to tombs, if they had not been inwardly full of putrid lusts. They declined fleshly lusts; but lusts of the mind were predominant in them. And this is the sad condition of many, who think themselves, and axe accounted by others, righteous persons. Concupiscence is very extensive in its acting's, and while it is restrained from exerting itself in one way, it acts with great violence in another. It is surprising how ready lusts of the mind are to break forth in some, who are not so much inclined to gratify the lusts of the flesh. Malice and revenge often possess the breasts of men for a long season, and with great impetuosity break forth into injurious acts against their objects, whenever a fit opportunity offers, how long so ever it may be, since they conceived displeasure in their minds against them.

Farther. That a man is either regenerate or unregenerate, is evident from many considerations. 1. He is either dead in sin, or alive unto God. There is no medium between death and life. What is life, but a principle of action, taken either in a natural or spiritual sense? If, therefore, a person hath such a principle in him, he is a living man; but if there is a total want of such a principle, or power in him, he is dead, and is absolutely incapable of action. And consequently, men must be either the subjects of spiritual life, or not. If they are the subjects of such a principle, they are of " the living in Jerusalem," as the prophet's phrase is. On the contrary, if they have no spiritual principle in them, they are dead in trespasses and sins. To conceit that a man may be neither living nor dead, is a ridiculous imagination. Again, 2. A person is either light or darkness, in a spiritual sense. He is

darkness, if he hath not ability of discerning spiritual things. On the other hand, he is made light in the Lord, if he hath any capacity of seeing the glory of God in the person of Christ. This respects not the degree of light ; but the presence of it, or the absolute and total want thereof. If a man is wholly destitute of such light, he is in darkness, and is darkness ; but if in any measure, he hath this heavenly light, he is not in a state of darkness. In some, this light is strong, in others, it is feeble. Some discern spiritual things in a clear and distinct manner, others more confusedly, they " see men as trees walking." But in all who have it, it will "Shine more and more, unto the perfect day." I add, 3. Men are either under the law, or under grace. The unregenerate are under the law, and there they must abide, whether they will or no, until they derive grace, light, and life from Christ. They like not their situation indeed, when conscience is awakened. And how should they, for it is a dreadful one? Such who are the subjects of the law, and retained under its power, fain would come under the rule of what they through ignorance, imagine is the grace of the gospel. The yoke of the law galls them grievously, and, therefore, they are desirous to shake it off, or plead for an abatement in the strictness of its precepts, for a release from its curse; but it holds them fast, whether they will or not; it is God's just appointment, that so it shall be. And, consequently, their attempts to lay hold on evangelical privileges and benefits, are no other than endeavors to rob God of the choicest jewels He designs to bestow on His creatures. They have no present title to receive gospel promises and gospel consolations. Let them hear what the law saith, in its commands, prohibitions, and terrible threatening, for they are according to justice its subjects. Men's concern for the encouragement of sinners in a state of unregeneracy, proceeds from ignorance of the true nature both of the law and gospel, or from a dreadful corruption of each. Such who are under grace, are indeed dead to the law by the body of Christ; and that wherein they were held, while in unregeneracy, i. e. the law is become dead to them, that is to say, as in the form of a covenant, and, therefore, they are not subject to its threatening ; but have a visible claim, according to the ordination of God, unto gospel promises, gospel privileges, and gospel consolations, and no other than these persons have any such claim. Again, 4. A man is either holy or unholy. Holiness here intends not perfection, but a holy gracious principle implanted in the heart by the Spirit of God, which disposes the mind unto acts of holy obedience to the law, for such uses and ends as are appointed of God. The man who is destitute of such a principle is unregenerate, whatever his convictions are, his sorrows, his joys, his resolutions, or his acts thereupon. There is no medium between sanctification and a total want of it. It is true that there are degrees in it ; but impossible it is that any man can neither be sanctified in part, nor unsanctified. Such an apprehension is a mere dream. And, therefore, there can be no intermediate state between regeneracy and unregeneracy. 5. A man is either in a state of meetness for heaven, or he is not. If a person may be in a condition neither fit nor wholly unfit for heaven, then the notion of Purgatory is not so ridiculous as Protestant writers have represented it. Why may it not be thought probable, that men dying in such a condition, may be detained in some middle state, between heaven and hell, until such time as they shall be prepared for an entrance into the blissful mansions ? This is the only doctrine by which the purifying flames of purgatory can be supported. Moreover, 6. The Scripture gives us no other distinction of men, than believers and unbelievers; of men who have faith, and those who have not faith. Unto the former, ministers are charged with a comfortable message; and unto the latter with a dreadful one. "He that believeth, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." The law condemns all as transgressors, and the gospel is a revelation of pardon, peace, and salvation, as claimable only by believers. Until a man believes in

Jesus Christ, he can have no ground of comfort and peace. We must first die to the law, and despair of obtaining life in that way, before we can rightly receive comfort from the gospel. That secret right the elect have to pardon, justification, and blessedness in Christ, is not the foundation on which faith acts, but the divine declaration of God in the gospel.

These things, I suppose, are sufficient to prove, that there is no into-mediate state between regeneracy and unregeneracy. If not, more arguments offer themselves immediately to consideration, which would abundantly confirm it. Now, if there is no such intermediate state, then it will follow that no unregenerate man can be subject to the law of God, can discern the things of the Spirit, or can come to Christ, and believe in him. The carnal mind and the natural, must mean an unregenerate person, or one who is not born of God; and what is denied of the power of any in such a state, is denied of all who are in that state, whether they be profligate and abandoned sinners or no.

Some observations on this subject.

Observ. 1. Pride in men, as it is a sin, so it is extreme folly. For we have all lost that which was the true glory of our nature, and are become the subjects of such base and sordid lusts, as render us most abominable and hateful.

2. Salvation must be unconditional and free ; because as the human mind is thus debased, it is incapable of performing duty, in order to the reception of divine benefits.

3. It is astonishing goodness in God favorably to regard men.

4. He is at full liberty to bestow the special blessings of his grace on whom he pleases, since none can prevent divine goodness by holy acts of obedience.

5. It betrays self-ignorance in those who extol human wisdom and power.

6. If we imagine that we have a natural capacity of doing good, it is an evidence that we are in a state of unregeneracy. I would now answer some objections.

Object. 1. If it is once believed by men that they are thus impaired in their ability to do good, it will prevent them acting the best they can.

Ans. Wholly to neglect duty, because we cannot perform it as we ought, is a most dreadful way of sinning, and doubtless will add much to the weight of our punishment.

Object. 2. Ungodly men have desired and sought after spiritual good, and therefore, the human mind is capable of being raised up towards heavenly things. So did Balaam, for instance.

Ans. In spiritual blessings, three things are to be considered. 1. A freedom from misery, and the enjoyment of ease and pleasure, which are eligible to nature, though corrupt. 2. The true nature of those blessings, as spiritual, so they are neither discerned nor desired by a depraved mind. 3. God's way of bestowing these blessings is despised and rejected, as foolish and unfit, by the carnal mind.

Object. 3. The proofs which are brought to confirm this doctrine of the universal depravation of human nature are impertinently alleged, because they are no other than descriptive characters of

the baser part of mankind, who are abandoned to vice, and, consequently, those proofs in no way affect, nor can they relate to men of sobriety, virtue, and religion.

Ans. This objection, I confess, requires a particular consideration j for if it is founded upon fact and truth, then the whole scheme of what we account the gospel of the grace of God, will necessarily vanish into nothing.

1. There is no intermediate state between unregeneracy and regeneracy ; or, every man is either unregenerate or regenerate. These two classes divide and comprise all mankind. 2. Regeneration is a work of God upon men, which capacitates them for, and disposes them unto a holy and acceptable obedience. And, therefore, 3. Until this work is wrought upon a man, he is not able to " serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." For, 4. Every unregenerate person is the subject of impure habits only. He hath no good and holy principles in him. Yet, 5. There is a difference among unregenerate men, as to the eruption, or breaking forth of evil in their conduct. Though all of this character are unable to do good, yet many of them are just, sober, and benevolent in their behavior, and do no run into any excess of riot. Hence it follows, 6. That we must not conclude that every unregenerate person is that in his conduct, which the Scripture charges upon some who are in this state, viz. a swearer, a deceitful man, a murderer, and other the like detestable characters. 7. Some things expressed in Holy Scripture of an evil nature, are true of all unregenerate persons, viz. ignorance of spiritual things, aversion to them, enmity against God, and the like. These must be granted to be true of all who are in a state of unregeneracy, except it can be proved that there is an intermediate state between unregeneracy and regeneracy, or that a man may be neither unregenerate nor regenerate, but something between both. And, consequently, 8. The seeds of all vice are in all men, though all vice does not appear in the conduct of every man. 9. God, who searches the heart, knows our internal, invisible acts, and in his account, we are what we act internally; and vice, yea, a great many vices may be acted in the mind of a person, who never proceeds so far as to perpetrate vicious acts outwardly; and therefore such who are virtuous in men's esteem, they may, in God's account be exceedingly criminal and vicious. 10. Vice is sensual and intellectual, and either the one or the other is predominant in every unregenerate person. These things, I think, amount unto a full answer to this objection.

What is said of the depravity of mankind, is true of every man - some particular acting's of lust relate unto some persons only, which is no contradiction to the doctrine of the depravation of men universally. The truth is this, all men are corrupt but the corruption of our nature discovers itself in some persons more in one way, in others, more in another manner. Some things spoken in the Scripture of unregenerate men, respect concupiscence in their hearts; those things are true of all to whom that character belongs, whatever their deportment may be. There are other things expressed of the eruption of lust, in this or the other manner. Some of those particulars are true of one unregenerate man, and others of them are chargeable on some other unregenerate persons. When we say that sin in the heart is a disposition to all and every sin, we do not mean that it actually breaks forth into external acts of all kinds of evil in any man. Perhaps that is not possible, because some lusts are so different from others in some respects, that they are a check upon each other, which prevents the gratification of all sorts of sins, at the same time, and in the same acts. For instance, prodigality and covetousness : a man cannot well be lavish and niggardly in the same acts; though he may be both, in different acts and at different times. What we affirm, and

shall always abide by, as a certain truth on this subject, is this, That every man naturally hath no disposition to holiness, and is inclined to evil. But we do not intend that this disposition to evil discovers itself in all the same way, and in the same degree. No, no, we allow that there is a very great difference among unregenerate men, as to the breaking forth of those sins whereof all men are the subjects, both in the manner and degree of them. Some are serious, and others are profane. Some are tender and compassionate, others are cruel and unaffected with the miseries of the most deplorable objects. Some are covetous, others are bountiful and generous in acts of liberality, for the relief of the indigent. Some are swearers, others tremble at an irreverent mention of the great name of their Maker. Some are tricking and fraudulent, others are men of honor and probity. And, therefore, we are far from thinking that all unregenerate persons are of dissolute manners, or that they are all guilty of all those crimes which the sacred writers impute to men in a state of unregeneracy. Some of them are guilty of one, and others of them are guilty of others of those crimes; and so, take unregenerate men together, or in a collected view, and they afford matter for the whole charge exhibited by the divine writers: and this is what we ought to do, when we treat of the depravity of human nature.

01.03. On the Spirit's Work in Regeneration

CHAPTER III. ON THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN REGENERATION; AND ALSO IN CONVERSION AND SANCTIFICATION.

Regeneration precedes, and may be considered as the foundation and spring of Conversion and Sanctification. For that is the principle from which both arise. Grace as a principle of spiritual acts, is first communicated, and from that proceeds all acts of a holy spiritual nature, both internal and external. Neither of the latter can be, until the former is wrought ; and when that is effected, both the latter certainly follow. In the first We are merely passive, in conversion and sanctification we are active. For,

Conversion is the primary acting's of the grace of Regeneration, in turning from sin, self, and Satan, unto God through Christ. And, Sanctification is the progress of that work, and includes in it all the secondary acting's of grace, in opposition to sin, and in a course of holy obedience unto God. Having observed the difference between these, I would proceed to shew,

First, The necessity of this work in order to our final happiness. And this will appear by the consideration of two things in general. I. Without it no man is "meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. II. Election is the choice of persons to holiness in this state, in order to the enjoyment of happiness in the next.

1. No unregenerate person is meet for, nor capable of enjoying the heavenly state. I. He is not the subject of a disposition suited to view the infinitely glorious objects with the least degree of delight, which the blessed always behold and adore, viz. God, Christ in his glory as Mediator, and the Holy Spirit. Enmity, which the carnal mind is against God, will eternally turn from Him, and choose other, yea, any other objects, rather than Him to view. His infinite excellencies will. never affect with pleasure the depraved mind, nor engage it for a single moment to reverence, praise, and adore him.

2. Nor is an unregenerate person capable of that holy fellowship which subsists in the heavenly world, between God and the saints. This communion, on the part of God, is His discovering to them His infinite perfections, as they have been exercised in the contrivance of the stupendous design of their eternal salvation, and in its accomplishment through the mediation of the blessed Jesus. On their part it is a clear, steady, and uninterrupted prospect thereof, with ineffable pleasure and the most profound reverence. The glory of heaven consists much in a contemplation of the eternal grace, mercy wisdom, holiness, &c. of God, as displayed in our recovery. And, consequently, minds prejudiced against these sublime mysteries, as all our minds naturally are, will never have any relish for them, nor satisfaction in them. Such who are indisposed to gracious communion with God now, will never desire fellowship with him hereafter. Such a cursed aversion is there in our hearts to God, that we could be always content without a sense of His favor, provided we might but, for the same endless duration, be free from a painful sensation of His terrible displeasure. It is not heaven those men love and desire, but hell which they dread, that

influences them to reform their conduct, who are, enemies to the gospel of Christ. The spiritual, the pure joys of the blessed world, they would never envy the saints the fruition of, were not they to stiffer infernal torments, The annihilation of heaven would give them no pain, the ceasing of hell would afford them the highest degree of pleasure they at any time wish for. It is no better than infatuation to think that men whose minds are wholly taken up with trifles and carnal pleasures, who have no inclination to present communion with God, can have any desire to the nearer fellowship with Him in heaven. And, therefore, this new birth is absolutely necessary. Grace must be given, or else glory will never be desired and enjoyed. And this is true of every man.

3. Unregenerate persons are disinclined to that spiritual, pure, and holy service, which is the constant employ of the inhabitants of heaven. The departed saints are not entered into a state of slumber and inactivity; but of the noblest action and service, viz., of praising God, and punctually performing his will, without any interruption or defects. As they have always a ravishing sense of his goodness to them, so they exercise their perfectly pure minds in ascriptions of praise and glory to Him, for delivering them from deserved ruin, and placing them in the blissful mansions, where they find themselves possessed of ease, delight, complacency and glory, wholly unmerited. Now, minds who are unacquainted with the excellency, vast moment, and transcendent glory of the way of salvation, by the blood, righteousness, and grace of Christ, can never unite with the blessed in acts of adoration and praise on that account. For without a perception of the propriety and fitness of this method of saving sinners, the mind can never be suitably affected with, nor give to God the glory due unto his name, for this infinitely wise and gracious contrivance. And without light subjective, the glory of heaven objectively considered will not be discerned; and, therefore, those only who are now made light in the Lord, will hereafter be capable of beholding the celestial light of glory in the world above. If we do not now admire and bless God for the provisions His rich grace and mercy have made for our pardon, peace, the acceptance of our persons, and the sanctification of our souls, by the sacrifice, obedience, and grace of His only Son, as our alone and complete Saviour; let us never think of an entrance into that world, all whose happy inhabitants are constantly employed in songs of praise to God and the blessed Redeemer, for all saving benefits which flow from His atoning death, and to God a well-pleasing sacrifice; for if we do, we shall find ourselves dreadfully deceived.

II. Election to everlasting life is the choice of persons to holiness here, as the means leading on to the fruition of it hereafter. As future blessedness is the result of the eternal gracious decree of predestination, the enjoyment of that, it must be concluded, was impossible to any, without this purpose of divine grace; and since this decree appoints the participation of holiness here, in order to the possession of felicity hereafter, it is a vain thing to admit the least hope of happiness in eternity, unless we partake of holiness in time. If God receives one unsanctified sinner to glory, He must act contrary to His own purpose, and change a resolution He has formed, which is agreeable to His own infinitely pure nature, and that would be a denial of Himself, which to Him is impossible. Add to this, all those whom God intends to render perfectly happy in the next world, He designs to make, in part, happy in this world; and as holiness is essential to the happiness of an intelligent creature, it is most certain that the participation of a happiness now begun, must consist in partaking of holiness in some degree, at least, as complete happiness supposes a perfection in holiness.

Hence observe, that it is mere calumny to asperse the doctrine of predestination as licentious and unfriendly in its aspect to holiness ; nothing is more false in fact, nor any thing more contrary to the truth and nature of things can be devised, than that is, with what confidence so ever some are pleased to affirm it. That doctrine which supposes the necessity of holiness, and such a necessity as is indispensable in order to happiness, it is irrational to conceit that it is calculated to encourage sin in any. Farther, none can have an evidence of their election, who are destitute of holiness. This secret decree of God about men, opens itself to their view, only by a communication of grace and true holiness. Again, such as are the subjects of holiness, certainly are objects of predestination unto everlasting life, and shall assuredly enjoy it.

Secondly. I would now shew what Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification are, or wherein they consist.

I. Regeneration is the infusion of a new principle of spiritual life. Naturally men are dead in trespasses and sins, and, therefore, in order to their acting in a holy and spiritual manner, a living holy principle must be communicated to them. Hence the saints are said to be quickened, that is to say, they are inspired with life. And this is a new life, and is a spring of new actions. It is called a new heart, and a new spirit, and a heart of flesh. Grace is not our old nature made better, and excited unto spiritual acts ; but it is a new nature produced in our minds by the infinite power and grace of God for which reason we are said to be new creatures. Something now exists in us, which had no being in our minds before. Nothing short of this comes up to the scriptural account of this matter. No excitations, no impulses, no aids, however forcible and great they are supposed to be, reach the intention of the Holy Spirit in those phrases which he uses on this subject. Besides, our corrupt nature is not a fit subject for heavenly excitations, nor is it possible to bring it in subjection to the obedience of Christ. The carnal mind can never become subject to the law of God. A bitter fountain will as soon send forth sweet streams, which all know is impossible. Regeneration doth not consist in acts, but in the production of a principle disposed unto actions holy and well-pleasing unto God, by Jesus Christ; and therefore this work is instantaneous, and wrought on the mind at once.

II. By Conversion I understand what may be called the primary acting's of the regenerate principle : before I proceed in discoursing on which, I would premise two things; one is, the human mind, as it seems to me, is one rational principle of operation. The schools have taught us that there are three distinct powers of the human soul, viz., the understanding, the will, and the affections. They have done this for the sake of accuracy, in speaking of the distinct acting's of our minds. I much question whether this is according to truth in philosophy, and I cannot but apprehend that it hath not been serviceable to the cause of truth in divinity; particularly, in treating on the subject now under consideration.

It seems to me, that our intelligent nature is one power, and not the subject of different and distinct powers, but capable of exerting itself in various modes. in perception, willing, nilling, loving, hating, &c. The other thing I would premise is this; that grace is one spiritual principle of operation in the soul; and not, properly speaking, various and distinct habits seated in our mind, but able to exert itself after divers ways, as in spiritual perception, holy choosing and refusing, loving and delighting in spiritual things, in a Spiritual manner, which are commonly spoken of as acts of so many different and distinct habits of grace in our minds ; but I think that they all proceed from one

principle as their common root and spring. If this is true, those contests which have arisen and been litigated between learned men, concerning grace as having one power of the mind only for its subject, and concerning the impropriety of supposing that the grace of faith is seated in two powers of the soul, viz., the understanding and the will : I say, if this is true, those contests may soon be terminated ; and that it is not, I am humbly of opinion, neither philosophy nor religion will prove. In conversion, or the primary acting's of the regenerate principle, may be observed the following particulars.

1. The mind perceives, or hath a conviction of its guiltiness and impurity. The soul is impressed with a piercing sense of guilt, and it is directed to look into that fountain from which have sprung all its sad criminal actions. And it discerns therein a disposition to violate the law of God in as great a variety of ways as our reasonable nature is capable of exerting itself. This is what the apostle designs by the revival of sin upon the entrance of the law into the soul: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Romans 7:9. Moreover, that spiritual light which is communicated in regeneration enables a man to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin he becomes now really acquainted with the malignity of sin in its nature, as it is contrary to the holy law of God, which law is a transcript of His infinitely pure and holy nature. And from that arises an abhorrence of it, as a most vile and loathsome thing.

2. The demerit of sin is also discerned ; that the wages of it is eternal death, or the loss of divine favor, and suffering a dreadful and terrible sense of the anger of God, and that for ever - from which arise many bitter self-reproaches, and most keen reflections on account of sin committed. And the equity of the constitution in the law, that sin shall expose to such terrible punishment, is heartily acknowledged. Thus, a persons mouth is stopped, and he confesses himself to be guilty before God, or justly liable to His, awful vengeance, for his numerous transgressions and the plague of his heart. Hence he cries out, What shall I do to be saved? In what way may I escape my dreadful doom, and obtain life and happiness? Rest and peace are at the greatest distance, and it is vain to hope for them in this state, says a person under this conviction.

3. The poor sinner is convince o the absolute impossibility of contributing, in the least degree, to his recovery out of this miserable condition. Many ways are usually suggested to the mind ; but as none of them are safe for a person to trust, unto, by the light of divine grace the poor sinner sees the vanity of them all, and that it would be acting a most egregiously foolish part in him, to propose placing any confidence in the flesh; that it would be building on the sand, and that therefore the fall of the superstructure must be certain, in a time of temptation and trial.

4. God, in infinite goodness and compassion, by his Holy Spirit, discovers Christ in his suitableness, ability, and tenderness, as a Saviour, unto the poor trembling sinner. The merit of his obedience, the merit of his sacrifice, and the treasures of his grace, are presented to the view of the soul for its encouragement, support, and relief, in this distressed condition. And the prospect of a Redeemer, under a sense of guilt, its nakedness, pollution, and want of holiness, as a meetness for heaven, prevents the mind, overwhelmed with grief, from sinking into despondency. Hence,

5. Desires after an interest in Christ spring up in the mind, and it resolves to look for salvation in no other way. For it is fully convinced that security can only be had in this; and it also discerns in some measure, the glory of this method of salvation, And though the poor sinner heartily acknowledges that Christ might very justly reject him, and refuse to shew him favor, yet he will not

hearken unto what carnal reason may tender for his peace under this trouble. And therefore,

6. He humbly applies to Christ, as the only way of salvation, and escaping divine vengeance. A man reasons thus with himself : If I continue to go on in the practice of sin, certain destruction will be the consequence of it; and if I yield the best obedience I am able, that cannot justify me before God, and give me a right to eternal life, because it will not be such as the law requires to those ends; and therefore ruin, and that for ever, is unavoidable in that way. He argues much after the same manner as the lepers did, who sat at the gate of Samaria, and said, "If we sit here we shall die; if we enter into the city, the famine is in the city, we shall die there ; if we fall into the hands of the Assyrians, and they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we can but die." So says the broken-hearted sinner; if I gratify my lusts, I am sure destruction will follow; and if I perform duty, and depend on that, nothing but endless misery is before me; Christ is the alone way of peace and safety; unto Him therefore will I apply myself, if he shews me compassion I shall live, if he refuses so to do, I can but die and, therefore, I will throw myself at his feet, and "if I perish, I perish," as Esther said, when she went into the presence of Ahasuerus without an order for it. And this application unto Christ is made with a deep sense of our own unworthiness, and with speed, as a man-slayer hastened to the city of refuge for security from the avenger of blood. Hence faith is expressed by fleeing for refuge; Hebrews 6:18, Hereby we are preserved from entirely sinking into despondency, and in this trust, we remain fully satisfied, and some hope arises in our souls, that we shall meet with a kind and gracious reception, from Him, whose encouraging language always expressed His heart, and who hath Said, " Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. A precious and gracious declaration indeed ! sufficient it is to answer all objections which are formed in the mind from the consideration of our guilt and impurity. Many thousands of poor convinced and sorrowful souls have had reason to adore the compassion of a tender Saviour, which is so strongly expressed in those blessed words of His. And that invitation wherewith the sacred canon is almost closed, hath afforded great encouragement to multitudes: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; let him that heareth say, Come; let him that is athirst come; and who, so ever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. Under the benign influences of the good Spirit of God, the soul is by these sweet declarations and invitations, encouraged to apply to Christ for pardon, peace, righteousness, grace, wisdom, and strength ; yea, V for every thing necessary to its welfare and happiness. And herein, sometimes, great importunity is used, with a most frank and full acknowledgment of our vileness and unworthiness. It is with us, as with the Canaanitish woman, who upon a repulse from Christ, not out of unkindness to her, but to try her faith, said, " Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." So we, in this application to a Redeemer, confess that we are so vile, and so unworthy, that no name of reproach is too severe to be applied to us; but notwithstanding that, we are determined to lie at the feet of Jesus, and implore His help, who came into the world to save the chief of sinners. " Oh ! (says the soul,) I am justly described by that character, and therefore it is fit I should abase myself in the very dust, and eternally own that shame and confusion belong to me. But O, precious truth! Christ came to save even such, and, therefore, it may be, that I may obtain mercy, and find favor with Him. However, in Him alone will I place my hope."

7. This act is a receiving of Christ as a Saviour. Sometimes, by a reception of Christ and his benefits, we intend a man's appropriating Him and His salvation to himself, or his concluding upon it that Christ is his, and all saving blessings which flow from Him. This is faith grown up into

assurance. But that is not what I here design, but a person's choice of Christ to be his Saviour, his approbation of I-Tim in that character, not only from the consideration of the necessity of an interest in Him in order to his safety; but also from an apprehension, in some measure, of His fitness to deliver us from ruin, through His blood, righteousness, and grace. Upon this view, although we may be attended with many doubts and fears relating to our interest in Christ and in his salvation, here we fix all the hope we have, and are fully resolved never to embrace any other object for our trust and confidence, let what will be the issue. Now this is a real and true reception of Christ as He is proposed to us in the gospel; or it is believing in Him, and taking Him for our Saviour, if saved we shall be. And those who are assisted thus to apply to Him for salvation from sin, and all its dismal effects, have no reason to doubt of the truth of their faith, nor of the love, compassion, and care of a tender Redeemer, who will not cast out any that come to Him.

8. This act grants to God the authority of His law, the rights of His justice; and it greatly honors Christ, though the soul, for want of skill in spiritual things, may not discern it.

(1) There is in this act an hearty acknowledgement of the just authority of God in the law, as He commands perfect holiness, and condemns the creature for the want of it.

(2.) That it would be equal and righteous in God, to recompense the evil of sin, with the evil of punishment. The poor sinner hath nothing to object to the justice of his eternal damnation, and this he freely confesses, and it is supposed in his application to Christ for Salvation., for it is only on the ground of free and sovereign grace and mercy.

(3.) Christ receives from us in this act, that glory which is His due, in the character of a Saviour from sin, both in its guilt and power. For herein we look to Him alone for remission, peace, acceptation with God, and sanctification, or for strength against every sin, and for grace to dispose and quicken us unto the practice of every duty. If we duly considered how much we glorify God in this act, and honor the blessed Jesus, we should not be so disconsolate, and mourn, as sometimes we do, through temptations, jealousies, fears, and questionings about our safety; but we should rather rejoice, in that, in some degree, we glorify God, and do honor to a dear Redeemer; and with some measure of cheerfulness, we should proceed in a renewal of such solemn and humble acts of application to Christ, our precious and only Saviour, It is a certain truth, that Christ is precious to those who believe, and it is equally true, that those to whom He is precious, really do believe in Him.

According to what principle a man sees Christ in His excellency, according to that principle he chooses Him. The understanding never receives spiritual light, without a communication of grace to direct and determine the will to make choice of the glorious objects, which the understanding, as enlightened, discerns. No man sees the glory of the Lord, without being changed into the heavenly image from glory to glory. It is not only light, but it is life and heat also. It is not ineffectual and idle, but operative, and influences unto holy acts. It is impossible, without spiritual light, spiritually to discern our misery; or the way of recovery by grace; or the suitableness of Christ to our souls; or the riches of His grace ; or the freeness of His love ; or the readiness of His heart to save us ; or the desirableness of happiness; or the beauties of holiness. It is only spiritual light which enables us in a spiritual manner to discern spiritual things and if the mind is possessed of spiritual light, it is not destitute of holiness, for they are inseparable.

Other acts also flow from this principle, viz., Repentance, which is sorrow for sin, and abhorrence of it, as sin; and an earnest desire to forsake it, and to be completely delivered from it. An approbation of the law, as holy, just, and good. Fear and reverence of God. These I call the primary acting's of grace, which immediately follow upon regeneration, and are true conversion; or a turning from sin, self, and Satan unto God; which we have seen is necessary to future blessedness. They are included in that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

III. Sanctification consists in what, I think, may be called the secondary acting's of grace, and is inclusive of the primary acts of the spiritual principle, which are mentioned above,

1. Sanctification consists in a denial of our corrupt inclinations; or, in an abstinence from sin, out of a regard to the authority of God in the law. Which evidently supposes an approbation of both the precepts and prohibitions of that law; or a liking of what it commands, as good and holy, and an aversion unto what it forbids, as evil and vile. This latter is usually called mortification, and is one considerable branch of our sanctification; wherein we ought especially, in a very strict manner, to regard the principles and views, upon which we act, in our opposition to sin. For there may be an abstinence from acts of evil, without a grain of holiness in the heart. If we forsake sin, only from some prudential considerations; or, through the influence of legal motives, concupiscence maintains its rule in our minds, and will continue so to do. But it is to be feared that many are insensible of this, and content themselves with a bare denial to gratify the flesh in external acts, and take it to be true mortification; whereas, in fact, real mortification of sin, they are utterly strangers to. And those, who are truly gracious, do not always abstain from sinful actions, upon considerations of a pure, holy, and spiritual nature. For there be many motives unto this abstinence from evil, which have great influence on the mind, that arise not from the principle of grace in the souls of the saints; and, therefore, there is great need narrowly to observe our hearts, and closely to examine upon what views we act; without this, there will be little of real holiness, though our conduct may be such as raises it above the censure of those who know us best. If we are engaged in a spiritual manner, in this most necessary branch of our duty, our minds will take into consideration the evil nature of sin; the many obligations we are under, as Christians, to leave every vice, that we should be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness ; and from the great and numerous acts of goodness he hath put forth, in our favor, from a sense of the manifold benefits which we receive from him, merely on the foundation of kindness unmerited. Never let us think that we are any farther holy than we act under the influence of such like considerations and motives; for if we do, we shall form a mistaken opinion of ourselves. If we are not deceived, as to the being of grace in our souls, we certainly shall be, as to the degrees of it. It is a very dangerous mistake to think that all opposition to sin is real mortification. And, therefore, let us look well to our ends and our frames, in all our actions. If we fail in this thing, very little real holiness will be found in our walk before God, how free from blame so ever it may be in the sight of men.

2. The other branch of sanctification consists in an attendance to holy duties, and the exercise of grace therein. The performance of duty, without the exercise of grace, brings no glory to God, nor any spiritual advantage to our souls. We may maintain the practice of religious services, in a regular manner, and yet be very far from that spirituality and heavenly mindedness, which our profession calls for. Regeneration is sanctification radically. The advancement of purity and spirituality in our souls, is our sanctification progressively considered. The Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of it. As grace in the principle is His production; so the vigor and increase thereof, is

effected by His benign influences. And many precious considerations He suggests to the mind, to strengthen and invigorate the gracious principle in us, viz., the love of God to us; the tender and intense affection of the blessed Jesus; the greatness of that salvation, which we enjoy through His obedience and sacrifice the dignity that is conferred upon us, as we are constituted sons of God, by a sovereign act of His immense goodness; the title we have to all spiritual and eternal blessings, in consequence of our being brought into that relation. Our union to Christ is another consideration, whereby our hearts are excited earnestly to desire a conformity to Him, in meekness, lowliness, patience, submission to the will of God, and in every other grace. Moreover, the divine Spirit gives us views of the glory of the Lord, in the glass of the gospel, whereby we are changed into the heavenly image from glory to glory. He that expects an increase of grace and holiness in any other way, will certainly find himself sadly mistaken in his expectations, let his endeavors be what they may. The new creature cannot be nourished and improved, but by feeding upon, and digesting spiritual food, which is Christ the Bread of Life : unless we receive the nourishing milk, and generous wine of the gospel, we shall languish and decline in our spiritual part. The want of this, through one cause or another, is the occasion of that leanness o soul, which most complain of at this time, and it is to be feared, not without great reason.

01.04. On the Great Difference Between Real Conversion and the Mere Semblance of it

CHAPTER IV. ON THE GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REAL CONVERSION, AND THE MERE SEMBLANCE OF IT.

Sum a change may take place upon the mind, and appear in the conduct of a person, which he may account real conversion, and it may be so esteemed by others, which is far short of it, and hath nothing at all of the nature of that in it.

First. I propose to consider this change. Secondly. To shew wherein the real difference lies between conversion and that change. This is a subject of very great moment and considerable difficulty. Herein, therefore, it is necessary to proceed with caution, lest on one hand, the unconverted should imagine themselves to be in a safe and happy state, and on the other, lest some who really are the subjects of this good work, should fall under discouragement, and be tempted to fear that they are destitute of true grace, and have only the semblance of it. I begin with the former.

First. There is a change which is not conversion, and in this change the following particulars are included:

I. Men may have an apprehension of the truth of spiritual things. This is light, but not the light of grace.

1. A perception of the work of the law, and of the truth in it. This is what is usually called the fitness and unfitness of things in relation to human actions. The monstrous nature of vice, in numerous branches of it, may be discerned, and the propriety and amiableness of virtuous actions be understood in a variety of instances. This light is indeed natural to men, and inseparable from human nature, though it may be much obscured by irregular passions, contracted prejudice, and the fatal influence of temptation, wherewith men are surrounded in every circumstance. The increase of this light by revelation, which exposes every kind of vice, and represents virtue in all her lovely charms, is what I here intend. Some by conversion seem to mean no more than a change of the manners of dissolute persons, under the influence of such light. But this is a great remove from it.

2. The knowledge of the truth of the doctrines of the gospel. They are principles above reason, and therefore could not be discovered by it; but the revelation of them, as to their truth, reason is capable of understanding; and, consequently, men may know that they are true; and as there is a dependence of one truth upon another, and an inseparable connection between all the branches of revealed truth, the mind may discern that dependence and connection, and the harmony of its diverse parts. This is the work of reason, not of grace. Hence men destitute of the light of divine grace may have a clear discerning of the truth of heavenly mysteries, who are wholly unacquainted with the nature of those mysterious truths. This cannot be conversion. Orthodoxy is

not to be taken for faith, nor soundness of judgment for holiness. A man may understand all mysteries, and preach the gospel, who is unconverted, and so remain. An awful truth indeed. Matthew 7:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:1-2.

II. There may be a legal conviction of sin in its guilt. A man's sins may be set in order before him ; his conscience may exhibit many charges against him, as having acted in a criminal manner, and sharply remonstrate for his misbehavior. The demerit of sin may awaken dreadful fears in his soul, and occasion severe self-reproaches of folly, madness, and a wild fury, which has impetuously pushed him on to gratify extravagant and unlawful lusts, to his endless ruin. From hence springs 1. Sorrow and distress. A guilty mind cannot look upon past offences without some degree of concern, lest that vengeance should overtake it, which is its due for those criminal actions. 2. An enquiry how to escape deserved punishment. And a man concludes that an alteration in his conduct is necessary to this end, about which he is earnestly solicitous, and, therefore he resolves upon forsaking a vicious course of life, avoiding the occasions of sin, and determines with himself to practice all known duties for the future. And by the influence of this conviction, he may become a virtuous person in his deportment, and much recommend himself to the esteem of the sober and regular; calm his disturbed conscience, and buoy himself up with hopes of regaining the divine favor, upon an apprehension that God will be favorable and propitious to him, if he acts the best part he is able.

III. He may not only yield assent unto, but also take some pleasure in the gospel.

1. On account of its rationality. As it is a system of doctrines that are perfectly consistent and harmonious.

2. Its general design. (1) Salvation from misery. Self-love disposes men to be pleased with whatever they apprehend is for their advantage. And as the mind is impressed with a sense of danger, and is seeking after security, it is affected with pleasure by the report of the gospel, concerning a deliverance from eternal ruin (2.) The same principle is excited by the revelation of a state of endless felicity. The thought of the enjoyment of good eternally, gives the mind a very sensible pleasure, though the nature of that good is not apprehended, but as the contrary of torment and anguish. Under these considerations the word may agreeably impress the mind, and possess it with joy, without any perception of its true nature and relish of that. This is the case of stony ground hearers.

(3.) Sometimes the reasoning or the pathos of the preacher entertains the mind, according to the different taste of the hearer. Some, though the smaller part of mankind, as I take it, are much pleased with just and nervous reasoning. With those, the logic of a preacher is acceptable ; others, who are far the greater part, love to have their passions moved, if their judgments are not informed; and they are generally much delighted when a religious address has such an effect upon them, because they flatter themselves that this is true edification by the word, though it is no such thing. They are entertained with the preacher's rhetoric, even when they have no relish for his doctrine.

IV. Divine institutions may be religiously regarded. A man who hath a serious turn of thought, cannot but apprehend, that it is his duty to worship his Maker, and he sees that it is certainly requisite to worship God, in that manner He requires. And as He hath clearly pointed out to us in

His word, that mode of worship which is acceptable to Him, he finds himself inclined to submit to His will in this matter. Accordingly, he takes upon him the profession of Christianity, and celebrates its sacred rites. And thus, in his own opinion, he commences a true Christian, and often in the esteem of others also, when he is as far from real Christianity, as he was before this change. He is not turned from self to God ; but cursed sin is still the reigning principle in him, though the manner of its rule is altered. Real grace takes away the dominion of sin ; conviction only alters the form of its government. Sometimes it determines a man to gratify itself in one way, and sometimes in another, as the mind is variously affected by different circumstances.

V. Men may be conscientious and sincere in all these things. It would be injurious to many, and contrary to truth and fact, to pronounce them hypocritical and insincere, in their professions of sorrow for their crimes, resolutions to reform, desires of escaping divine vengeance, and in their endeavors to obtain that which they understand by happiness, and in the way wherein they think it is to be attained. The want of a principle of grace in the heart, by which alone a man can act spiritually, does not necessarily suppose that whatever such a person acts of a religious nature, is performed in an insincere and hypocritical manner. The convictions of these persons are real, not pretended, though not spiritual ; their sorrow on account of their sins is unfeigned, though it is not of a godly sort ; and their resolutions to amend their ways are hearty, though not of a holy nature; their desires of the enjoyment of what they esteem happiness, are true, though not arising from grace; and their intentions to acquire it may be deliberately formed, and followed with earnest endeavors. For hypocrisy, in the gross sense of it, stands not opposed to grace ; but to the truth and reality of a man's declared intentions in his actions. Though these persons are not really converted, and it may be, never will be so, they are, in truth and fact, what they profess to be, viz., greatly in earnest relating to an escape from hell, and the obtaining of eternal rest and peace, according to those apprehensions which they have thereof. I proceed to shew, Secondly, Wherein lies the difference between this change, and real conversion.

1. A spiritual conviction of sin, much differs from a mere legal conviction, in several respects.

1. As to sin's demerit. Legal conviction is a perception of the fact that sin exposes a man to dreadful punishment. A person clearly discerns that it is a certain truth that hell, or eternal torment and misery, is the consequence of a violation of the law of God; and a consciousness of guilt awakens in his soul the most dreadful fears, and prevents his taking any rest or ease, while he is under the weight of this conviction. His language is, What shall I do I? Whither shall I flee ? By what means shall I screen myself from that terrible vengeance which is impending, and possibly may very soon fall upon me? Oh! The weight of it is insupportable, and it is endless ! Oh, sad condition indeed! what will not a man do in this case? what will he not offer to avert the threatening storm? He will not withhold anything in the power of his hand to give, even though it were " thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil;" nay, he would even "give his firstborn for his transgression, and sacrifice the fruit of his body, for the sin of his soul;" he thinks nothing too dear to part with, for safety and peace, in this distressed condition. And all this may be, where there is no grace. Spiritual conviction proceeds much farther than the fact, that eternal death is the wages of sin; it is carried on to discern the justice of this constitution. Devils, and the spirits of wicked men know the dreadful truth to their inconceivable horror; but the righteousness of this appointment of God, they never will acknowledge. And a man may have a taste of hell, who hath, no meetness at all for heaven.

Again, legal conviction, though it brings a man to dread suffering divine anger, it does not cause him to lament the loss of divine favor. A man could patiently bear, in eternal separation from God, for communion with Him he desires not; but His terrors give him the greatest uneasiness. We are mistaken, if we think that heaven is desirable to us, merely because we tremble at the thoughts of hell. In spiritual conviction, the mind of a poor sinner is influenced to Mourn deeply under an apprehension of sin's exposing him to suffering the loss of God's gracious and glorious presence. The thought of being in a state of exile and distance from God, affects him sensibly, and his earnest petition unto God is, "Cast me not away from thy presence," wherein there is a discovery of true love to God; but trembling under a sense of divine vengeance, may be, without the least degree of love to God, or delight in divine favor. The devils tremble, but they will never love the object they dread.

2. In spiritual conviction, the mind of a poor sinner is furnished with the knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. By virtue of the light of grace, he discerns the malignity of sin, as it is contrary to the pure law of God, and unto the holiness and rectitude of His nature. And from that arises an abhorrence of sin, as sin, which is a real discovery that the mind approves of the purity of God. Nothing of this nature is ever found in a legal conviction. That indeed will prevail with a man to make opposition to sin, in its acts, upon hopes of escaping punishment for past offences; but as those hopes decline or lessen, his opposition to evil abates; and if they are entirely sunk, his language immediately is, "There is no hope, I have followed after my lovers, and after them I will go." To what purpose is it for me to deny myself of pleasures which I choose, since my ruin is inevitable? I can but perish, let me indulge my inclinations as far as I am able; why should I refuse it, seeing there is no room left for me to cherish hopes of escaping the damnation of hell? Now, under the influence of a spiritual conviction of sin, the mind reasons and acts otherwise; for as it, discerns the evil that is in sin itself, it loathes it on that account, and makes opposition to it from a sense of its vile nature and even though punishment should be inflicted for past misconduct, yet the soul desires to sin no more. Grace influences a man to say, whether my sins are forgiven, or not forgiven; whether my soul is saved, or not saved; as I may be assisted, I will watch, pray, and strive against sin, which is so abominable and vile in its nature; yea, though my eternal damnation was to me as certain as I clearly discern it would be just, I should nevertheless be glad to sin no more. Where there is not something of this nature, I say of this nature, not to speak of its degree, I know not that a man hath any reason to think that he is the happy subject of a spiritual conviction of sin. Acquaintance with sin's nature, and abhorrence of it, are evidences of such a conviction, and not the fear of punishment.

3. There is a very great difference in the sorrow of a real Christian, from what is found in the heart of a person who is not truly converted. A man who is convinced, but not converted, may be overwhelmed with grief under a sense of guilt; bitter sighs and deep groans may proceed from him, on account of his evil conduct, because of its consequences; and his sins may force him to cry, yea roar. He may really and truly lament that he has acted such a sinful part, as he is conscious to himself, he has done. So Judas repented of betraying his Master; he was sorry, but not after a godly sort. It is not the degree, but the nature of sorrow for sin, which is an evidence of that repentance, which the grace of God produces, and whereof he approves, If a man's concern only springs from the consideration of that penalty which is due to sin, he is not the subject of repentance unto life; for concern on that account, and in a, very great degree too, may be in a

mind which loves sin and hates holiness. That sorrow which arises from a gracious principle is of quite a different nature ; it is a concern for having acted contrary to the will of God, for having abused His goodness, and for having despised His authority. In the former, a person is only under the influence of self-love ; a man is not sorry that he has dishonored God; but his grief is, that he has ruined himself. In the latter, a person is truly sorry for the evil he has committed, in distinct consideration from the consequences of such behavior. He is a stranger to repentance unto life, who is wholly destitute of this sorrow, let him howl ever so much under a sense of divine wrath.

4. Legal conviction and spiritual conviction differ in this, the former brings not a man to a thorough acquaintance with the vitiosity of his nature, the latter does. Under a consciousness of guilt a person cannot be an absolute stranger to his corrupt inclinations and disorderly passions, but he does not discern himself so far as to loathe and abhor himself. As he sees not the exceeding sinfulness of sin, so he hath not a view of the dreadful plague of sin in his heart. In spiritual conviction a man's heart is dissected, and exposed to his view. He discerns that there is a total want of all good, and that his soul is the subject of all evil radically. That concupiscence or lust, which dwells in him, exerts itself in a most surprising variety of ways, that his understanding is darkened, that his will is obstinate and perverse, disinclined to holiness, and bent to sin, that his affections are light, vain, corrupt, and disposed to unlawful objects. In a word, that he is in himself as an unclean thing " and that his heart is a fountain of impurity, and always hath been so; that he is flesh, and only flesh, the very contrary of that holiness and spirituality which the law of God requires. And that, therefore, it is impossible for him ever to recommend himself to the divine favor, or regain an interest in the divine approbation which he lost by sin. Hence,

5. He dies to the law, and gives up entirely all hope of ever being justified by his own works in the sight of God. Until a man is slain by the Law, and becomes dead unto it as a Covenant, he is not prepared for, nor will he be disposed unto a reception of the grace of the Gospel. No person will renounce his own righteousness, in the business of his acceptance with God, without such an acquaintance with himself, such a perception of the extent of the holy law of God, and of the equity and justice of all its requirements, as a legal conviction never gives. This is the reason why the mind under that conviction, to what height so ever it is carried, never embraces and acquiesces in God's way of justifying a sinner. A person may have a clear discerning of the truth of the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, who is under a legal conviction ; but as that conviction does not cause him to die to the Law, it will never dispose him to seek for life, and a happy immortality by the Gospel. Such a one practically contradicts those notions he hath of evangelical truths. The grace of the Spirit only disposes men to the embracement of, and an acquiescence in the grace of the gospel. A man must die to the Law, or else he will never live to God.

II. There is a vast difference between the knowledge of the gospel which a temporary hath and that of a real Christian, as such. I say as such, because he hath that knowledge, or may have, which the other hath; but that is not all, he hath also another kind of knowledge. The former is supposed to have the knowledge of the truth of the gospel in its diverse branches. That he may have in a degree, perhaps, beyond what some Christians have, through hearing, reading, and conversation; but he hath not that knowledge of the gospel, in any of its branches, which a saint of the lowest forum. hath. For,

He doth not understand the nature of evangelical truths. All he knows about them is, that they are true principles, and must necessarily be so because they are revealed of God, who is truth, and cannot express a falsehood. The spiritually enlightened person understands the things themselves, he knows the things of the Spirit, and those things which " are freely given to us of God."

1. He discerns the wisdom of God discovered in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. That it is a method most fit and proper to bring poor sinners to the enjoyment of happiness. Reason in some measure discerns the fitness of what is commanded, but without divine illumination, the most rational cannot discover the propriety and fitness of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. The highest cultivation of our genius prepares us not one jot for a cordial reception of the gospel. Grace alone enables us to view the wisdom which is discovered in this admirable contrivance. Unless we receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, to teach us the nature of heavenly mysteries, we shall never understand them to our spiritual advantage and His glory.

2. A Christian views the wonderful display of the divine perfections, which there is in the gospel. That Sovereignty gave rise to the design of our salvation, and is that foundation whereon it rests. That infinite wisdom contrived the way wherein sin is punished to the full, and yet freely pardoned. That God appears as displeased with sin, as gracious and merciful to the persons of sinners, in the method he has taken to acquit them of guilt and free them from punishment. That His justice shines with as bright a luster as His mercy. And that His holiness is not less conspicuous than His love, in our redemption by the suffering and death of His Son. That His law suffers nothing by our deliverance from its curse, through the atonement of our blessed Redeemer. That in the way of our justification the law is magnified, and exalted infinitely beyond what it could have been by our most perfect obedience to it, unto eternity. On account of these things, the saints value the gospel of Christ. The world is not more mistaken in any thing, than in this matter; they imagine that the gospel is embraced by the saints, merely because it is a scheme of principles calculated for their security, but the truth is, though Christians are thankful for that provision for their salvation, which they ought ever to be, that is far from being the only reason why they approve of the evangelical scheme; it recommends itself to their greatest esteem, because of that glory which arises from it to the Divine Persons, and unto all the divine Perfections. Real Christians are under the influence of a more generous principle, than unregenerate persons are acquainted with; and have far nobler views than their minds are raised up unto at any time, whatever their convictions, sorrows, Joys, and endeavors may be. The glory of God, the honors of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, yield them the highest satisfaction and pleasure. And, therefore, as they clearly discern that God hath saved them in a way worthy of Himself, and becoming the purity, rectitude, and holiness of His nature, they rejoice and are exceeding glad. There is at also this vast difference between legal conviction and spiritual; the former excites a person to consult his own safety, and no more ; the latter directs the subject of it unto a concern for the glory of God also. Such whose minds have never, by all their convictions, been elevated above a regard to their own interest, it is no wonder that they think that there is no such openness in the souls of others. From hence spring all the calumnies that are cast upon us, for our attachment to the doctrines of the grace of God, by persons who are indeed in earnest about religion, but are destitute of spiritual light, and are under the influence of legal convictions only.

3. Christ is discerned in his suitableness to our condition, as we are lost and miserable in ourselves. The merit of His blood, death, and sacrifice, is presented to the view of the spiritually convinced sinner, as the alone procuring cause of the remission of sin, which prevents the mind sinking into despondency, under a pressing sense of guilt. The merit of His obedience is discovered to the mind fully convinced of the impossibility of ever being justified by its own, for two reasons, first, because of sin already committed, which will prove an eternal bar to justification by works; secondly, because no duty can be performed in that perfect manner the law requires. And this view of the merit of Christ's righteousness, produces some degree of hope in the mind of the spiritually convinced sinner, of his acceptation with God, his righteous Judge. Again, the fullness of grace which is in Christ's hand, is shewn to the mind so convinced, and this encourages the soul to hope for all necessary and seasonable supplies of holiness, wisdom, strength, and support, in all times of affliction, temptation, and danger, and in order to the discharge of every duty, and the exercise of every grace, as the difference of his circumstances, in this changing state, may render needful. And the compassion, care, and power of Christ, are also discovered to the soul. This view of a Saviour much endears Him to the poor sinner, and he is filled with wonder, that such a Redeemer, so suited to his condition, should be provided for one in misery, and wholly so through sin, and be provided too by the Object against whom all his sins have been committed; this is grace which is above all degree of comparison astonishing, and the soul cannot but be amazed at it. Hence,

4. The poor sinner resolves that he will look to Christ, and to Him only, for salvation. Persons under legal convictions, place some degree of trust in the merit of a Saviour, but they do not confide therein alone, nor will ever be brought unto that. They seek for righteousness and life, partly by works, and partly by Christ ; and what they account the grace of God, viz., a will to accept and reward men, for acting according to their present abilities, and those advantages which they enjoy. But the real Christian, in divine light, sees that there is no such grace in God, that this agrees neither with the first nor second covenant. That the first covenant, or the law, holds forth to the guilty creature nothing but curse, wrath, and eternal vengeance. And that the second covenant, or the gospel, is a revelation of salvation, by the blood, righteousness, and grace of Christ, without anything of the creature to be connected therewith, as the ground of its dependence and hope of life and happiness. And the soul approves of, and acquiesces herein, as what is truly wise, holy, gracious, and upon all accounts most fit. A person who is the subject of that conviction of which I speak, heartily acknowledges that it is proper for him eternally to own, that shame and confusion only are his due, for his manifold and great transgressions. And that it would be acting a presumptuous part in him ever to expect salvation in a way not honorable to God, and His infinitely glorious perfections. And as he sees that this is the only way wherein the glory of God can be exalted, this he chooses, delights in, and rejects all others. Legal conviction of sin, and the bare knowledge of the truths of the gospel, will never bring a person to this.

5. These views of Christ in His glory, and of the grace of God, in its freeness, riches, sovereignty, and eternal duration, produce in the soul, not only adoration and praise, but also spiritual and holy desires. Earnest desires of a conformity to Christ, and of obedience to the whole will of God. Grace influences a man not only to seek for a deliverance from the punishment of sin, but for salvation from sin itself. Self-love may put a person upon the former, but it will never carry him on to the latter. Some speak very contemptibly of good desires ; but desires of grace are grace ; that

is to say, that they spring from a gracious principle, implanted in the heart by the Spirit of God; and this is an eternal truth. A desire of holiness is a holy act, and cannot spring up in the carnal mind, as it is corrupt; no holy acts arise from the flesh. If a desire to sin is a sinful act, then a desire to be holy is an act of holiness. Again, desire supposes an approbation of what is desired; for a person desires not that which he does not approve of. In a desire of holiness, therefore, is contained an approbation of the law of God, unto which a carnal mind will never become subject; and, consequently, that person in whom holy desires arise, is spiritual, holy, and born again. Moreover, what God produces in men by His gracious influences upon them must be holy; He is the author of holy desires, for He works in us to will, as well as to do, and both of His good pleasure. Besides, that which God approves of is certainly holy; He approves of a holy desire and will hear it. Herein consists the very essence of prayer. Our desires are the language of our souls, and desires of holiness God will graciously attend unto and fulfill. Blessed be his name for that abundant evidence which He hath given us of this matter, in many sweet and precious promises. Thought is a lower act than desire; and even that, when it is spiritual and holy, is graciously regarded by God. He hath " a book of remembrance written before Him, for them who think on His name." And He hears the desire of the humble; their sighs and groans, arising from a sense of their sinfulness and imperfections in duty, are acceptable to Him.

It is false to suppose that a man may be convinced of his misery, and desire salvation, (by fits and starts for many years) and yet be lost for ever. Nothing more contrary to the tender love and care of Christ towards poor sensible sinners can be asserted than this is. What! may a man see his misery, and desire salvation by Jesus Christ, and yet be lost for ever? What is a desire of salvation by Christ, but a poor sinner's application to Him to be saved by Him? Will He then refuse to save him? Or are not His merit, and power, and fullness, equal to His compassion? Would He save him, but cannot?

Grace is an habitual disposition to holy acts; but in none is it always in actual exercise. The less it is interrupted in its acting's, the better; and Christians ought to be careful about the exercise of it. Our Saviour has taught us this doctrine, that happiness will attend the man who hath holy desires: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after, righteousness, for they shall be filled." In whomsoever a will is wrought to receive grace, life, and eternal blessedness, to him those favors shall certainly be granted; for with that gracious view was that desire and will produced in him.

Mr. Wesley advises a person not to account himself a Christian; no, not in the lowest degree, unless the Spirit of God bears witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God. That is to say, until he enjoys an assurance of an interest in the love of God, is an heir of Him, and a joint-heir with Christ. What if a man hath such an assurance? May he certainly conclude upon his everlasting enjoyment of God, of whom he is assured he is an heir? No, by no means, according to Mr. Wesley's opinion that there may be a final falling away: for grace in his heart may become extinct, as he thinks; and, therefore, this assurance cannot be a persuasion of a certainty of being happy hereafter; because that is not a thing certain in itself, at least, with respect to some, who really have true grace. For if a person may lose his meetness for heaven, how well so ever he may be satisfied that he is at present the subject of that meetness, it is impossible that he should enjoy an undoubted hope of coming there. I beg leave to observe that it is not acting the part of a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, in giving advice to Christians not to rest satisfied with that measure of grace they have already received, to require them to conclude they have none at all,

because it is not carried to that height, which O ought to desire it may be brought in to their souls, for the glory of God, and their greater consolation. Is it proper to persuade a man that he is not a babe in Christ, because he is not a father ? Is it any wisdom to labor to persuade a person that he is dead in trespasses and sins, merely because he has not yet arrived to that degree of spiritual strength which it is desirable he may? Is it proper to deny such acts as certainly spring from a gracious principle in a person, to be of a holy, spiritual nature, because some farther acts of the same principle are yet wanting in him ? Is this the way to strengthen and improve grace in the mind? On the contrary, is it not the way to promote unbelief ? It certainly is, and hath no other tendency than to bring a person of a lower measure of grace to conclude he has none; which is not a likely means of increasing it. The best have need of exhortation to seek after the increase of grace in their souls; but that is not a sufficient reason for calling upon any, in whom true grace is, though in a low degree, to conclude upon his being wholly destitute of it. That person who knows no better method of stirring up Christians to their duty than this, ought to stay till he is better qualified for a service of this kind, before he presumes to engage in it. But I return to the work before me.

III. There is a great difference in the obedience of a person who is the subject of a legal conviction, and that of a spiritual person. This difference is not in the external matter of it ; for that, I grant, may be the same in both, as to abstinence from sin, and the practice of duty. The one may be as outwardly regular and religious as the other. But still there is a vast difference in the obedience of these persons. The person under a legal conviction, acts out of fear in what he does. He would not be what he is, was it not through terror of conscience which drives him to it. He obeys God, as a man obeys a tyrant, under whose power he is. Such obedience God abhors. The gracious soul attends to duty from a principle of love to it, and delight in it. Again, the man who acts under the influence of a legal conviction, proposes to make God a debtor to him by his obedience and all the satisfaction he takes in what he does, arises from the consideration of the reward he expects for his care, diligence, and denial of his sins. His aim is his wages, and serving of himself, not God. This is also highly displeasing unto God. Whereas a spiritual person aims at God's glory, and humbly owns that his service is so far from deserving a reward from God, that it justly exposes his person to condemnation, because of those blemishes and imperfections that are found even in the purest part of it. Again, a person acting under the influence of legal conviction, is content with the performance of duty, but a gracious soul aims at spirituality and communion with God therein.

I shall conclude this subject with some observations.

1. Sometimes persons who give the best evidence of their being subjects of true grace, are in great concern, through fears and jealousies, that they are not. Because they are not that in degree, which the gracious principle in them causes them to long, to be, they are fearful that they are not that which in fact they are, viz., lovers of God, of Christ, and of holiness, and haters of sin, as sin. On the other hand, 2. It is often seen, that some, who have no reason to conclude that they are in a happy state, have no scruple at all of the goodness of their state, and the safety of their condition. They are indeed other sort of men than they once were, they have passed under a change, and they think all is well. But they know not themselves, nor sin, nor God, nor Jesus Christ; nor wherein the real happiness of a poor sinner consists, and are quite easy and content without it. They cry to themselves peace, though they know not the way to eternal rest and peace. They think that they are in the way to heaven, but in fact, they are on the road to hell and

everlasting misery. There is another way which leads to death, besides that of indulging our sensual lusts, and neglecting the duties of religion, viz., a proposal to obtain life by our own works, in opposition to God's way of saving poor sinners, alone by the blood, righteousness, and grace of His Son. He, who thinks to acquire a right to heaven by his own works, and attends to duty upon that principle, will in the issue meet with a sad disappointment.

3. Not all that knowledge which a Christian hath of Christ, and heavenly things, is of a spiritual nature. His discernment of the truth of evangelical mysteries, may be clear and very extensive, and yet his spiritual acquaintance with them may be but small. He may be very conversant about them, as to their truth, connection and the harmony of the several branches of the gospel, and yet be but very little, in the exercise of grace upon them. Let us, therefore, never form an opinion either of the truth, or of the degree of our grace, from our perception of the evidence of the truth of gospel doctrines. For, as a man may perceive that evidence, who has no grace at all so a Christian may much increase in his acquaintance with the truth of evangelical principles, and be able to speak of them with great readiness, pertinence, and accuracy, and notwithstanding that, woefully decline in a gracious, savory, and spiritual knowledge of the things themselves, It is not always that our growth in grace is equal to our improvement in light of this kind. And I must needs say, that it would be better for most of us more carefully to attend unto this consideration, than perhaps we do. A revival in the vital and experimental part of religion will be expected in vain, tunder our sorrowful decays, without it.

4. Hence we see what care and caution, as well as faithfulness, are required in a Christian minister. Great prudence, and a clear discerning of the difference between real grace in its nature, and the genuine acting's of it, and a legal conviction, and of its effects are necessary, ill speaking to their hearers on the important subject of the conversion of a sinner. Un-skillfulness' in treating on this point, may be attended with sad consequences, both to saints and sinners. The former may be discouraged, or weakened in their faith j and the latter may be tempted to think that they are in safety. If, on one hand, we are not careful that our account of conversion exceeds not the nature of true grace in those effects which it produces ; and if, on the other, we see not to it, that our account of that work comes up to its real nature and genuine fruits. And therefore, how awful and how difficult a labor is that of the ministry ! What compass of spiritual knowledge! What acquaintance with the workings of the minds of men under convictions and temptations What a discernment of true grace in its nature, acting's, and fruits, are necessary unto the discharge of this service, as well as an understanding of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ ! What assiduity in study, not only in the holy word of God, but also what careful observations of our own hearts, in times of trouble, temptation, as well as in seasons of consolation and joy, is requisite ! A well-taught of God Christian preacher, is the noblest and highest character a poor sinful mortal can bear. But unto this, what labor, what skill, what tenderness, what faithfulness, are absolutely necessary ! And therefore, once more I observe,

5. It certainly behooves Christians to give all possible assistance and encouragement to ministers in their work, which in itself is so very difficult, and which in a proper discharge of it is of such importance to their advantage, in their best interest. This is one duty, among many others, too much neglected in these declining times. How many professors are unconcerned what difficulties and discouragements their ministers labor under? They live in plenty, and are rising in their circumstances, that is enough for them. They cannot but know, if they will allow themselves to

think, that their ministers find great difficulty to provide things honest in the sight of men ; and yet they are so far from affording them a little degree of sympathy under this circumstance, that they frequently insult them, however modestly they demean themselves. I think that man is blind, who discerns not some visible tokens of Christ's displeasure, with this sort of behavior towards his ministers. But I forbear to add on so unpleasing a subject.

01.05. On the Life of Faith

CHAPTER V. ON THE LIFE OF FAITH

INQUISITIVE and contemplative men, who enjoyed not divine revelation, have written much concerning the happy Life. They were greatly divided in their sentiments about it, and really were ignorant of that life. The Holy Scripture plainly informs us what it is, and sets before us shining examples of it for our encouragement and imitation. That is a life of faith on Christ. The Apostle Paul acquaints us that such was his life, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." He not only was a subject of divine grace, but he lived in the exercise of it, without which no solid satisfaction and pleasure can be enjoyed, let our circumstances, as men, be ever so easy and affluent. In that life, we shall derive from the glorious object of faith, full contentment, settled tranquility, and permanent joy, how much so ever we are tried and afflicted. And, therefore, an enquiry into it may be instructive and beneficial to us.

1. The objects of faith are things invisible. Such as could not have been discovered without revelation, they are things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, which have not entered into the heart of man." Hence the grace of faith is thus defined: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." The life of faith is taking a frequent prospect of them, and conversing with them. And this is to have our conversation in heaven,

11. This is a life above the delectable things of this world. There is not anything upon earth congruous in its nature to this noble and heaven-born grace, it is of a far more exalted and sublime nature than the most splendid of sublunary enjoyments. They are mere trifles in its esteem. And as this new creature wants them not for its support and nourishment, it covets them not for its diversion and pleasure. A person, who is the subject of this principle, may indeed covet and be delighted with those gaudy toys, but not according to that principle. It is not grace in any man which thirsts after, and is fond of the glittering objects of time and sense, but the opposite of grace; for grace raises the soul far higher than this earthly globe, even to heaven itself, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. And, therefore, if we are strangers to an elevation of mind above the choicest terrene things, we are unacquainted with the only happy life, viz., that of faith. For in the exercise of that grace, we "enter into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered." And the prospects we take of those infinitely excelling objects, which there we view, cause us to disregard the brightest things the world can boast of.

III. Faith carries the mind above the afflictive and distressing things of this world. As it swims not upon a torrent of terrestrial pleasures, so it is not depressed by a heavy weight of worldly sorrows. It smiles not on the gayest things of this mortal state, nor hath it any sadness of countenance when it is deprived of all earthly enjoyments. Its language is: Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the Cod of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:17-18. In prosperity, it is humble and modest; in affliction, it is submissive and patient; because it is persuaded, "that all

things work together for good, to them who love God, and are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. "It glories in tribulation, which worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; the love of God being shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost." Romans 5:3-5.

IV. It is a life contrary to the evil part of the believer, and above his better part. Faith is a combatant with the flesh in all its lusts, and is a holy resolution to gratify neither those of the sensual, nor intellectual kind; and it vehemently longs for the extirpation of both out of the mind. And as it is a life of opposition to sin, it is a life above itself. Faith feeds upon Christ, the heavenly and hidden manna, and it drinks of the pure delightful streams which flow from the river of God's eternal love, whereby it is refreshed and much invigorated. If grace at any time looks upon its own beauty,¹ it is not in order to self contentment and admiration, but with an intention to raise the mind cheerfully to engage in the delightful service of adoration and praise to the lovely Redeemer, whose beautiful image it is. And it expects all supplies of wisdom and strength from the Father of Glory, in every needful season. Again, in the matter of consolation, it regards itself only as an evidence to itself of its divine original, as an encouragement to hope for succour in temptations, assistance in all difficulties, and renewed comfort in every trouble, from the gracious and Almighty hand which formed it in the soul. The source of its being is the origin of its joy, viz., the grace of God in Christ. This is, therefore, a life contrary to our fleshly part, and above our spiritual part. Faith places its trust in another, and derives all its peace, comfort, and pleasures from Christ, who is all in all unto every real Christian.

V. The life of faith supposes a frequent exercise of that excellent grace. A man's life is the general course of his actions. A person is said to live a good life if his conduct in the general is good; an ill life, if his actions in the general course of them are evil. And so the Christian may be said to live a life of faith, if that grace is often acted, and his duties are discharged in faith. That alone denominates them the obedience of faith, if we multiply duties and keep up a regular practice of them, without the exercise of this grace therein, we bring no glory to God, nor do our souls receive any spiritual advantage by them. By this exercise of the grace of faith, I mean direct acts of it on the person, blood, righteousness, and fulness of Christ; and upon the grace, kindness, and mercy of God through Him. This frequent renewal of direct acts of faith is necessary to our spiritual peace, joy, and fruitfulness in good works, to the praise and glory of God. And, therefore, if we do not seek after this renewing of the acts of this grace, we may go on from month to month, and from year to year, in a low, withering, and starving condition of soul; which, it is to be feared, is the sorrowful condition of many professors at this time. It is not the bare discharge of duties, though ever so many, that will preserve our minds in a heavenly spiritual frame. Without the exercise of faith in them, they are only lifeless, dull, and formal performances, wherein God is not honored, nor our souls profited. It is well if the best axe not guilty of too much overlooking this, to their great detriment in the highest interest we can possibly have, to seek after the advancement of, so long as we shall continue in this world.

VI. A life of faith may be maintained in a believer even under darkness, and the hiding of God's face. A ravishing sense of divine love does not always attend the exercise of this grace. It is sometimes acted when the cheering rays of the Sun of righteousness shine not into the mind, and the refreshing light of extraordinary comfort and joy is wanting. And hereby, the mind of a Christian is preserved tranquil and composed, though it hath not that degree of pleasure, which springs up

in it, from the affecting manifestations of divine love. Nor ought this serenity, which is maintained in the soul to be censured as stupidity, or a carnal security, for it greatly differs there from, whatever some may think who seem to have no other notion of faith, than what consists in ravishment and ecstasy.

VII. This faith is a dependence on the faithfulness of God, to all his promises and engagements. As God exhorts the saints to stay upon Him, and trust in His name, "when they walk in darkness, and have no light." It is reasonable to suppose, that such is the condition of believers sometimes, because the exhortation would be needless, nor could it be put into practice, if no such case ever attended them. In that circumstance to act faith, evidences the strength of it, and brings great glory to God. And when a Christian is enabled to trust in the Lord, and rely on His fidelity to His gracious promises, he walks with Him, and is concerned for His honor, and yields to him a becoming obedience, though he enjoys not that sweet delight which he does when he is favored with the light of His countenance, and His love is shed abroad in his heart. And the foundation of this trust is firm and stable, and consequently, there is no danger of shame and confusion succeeding it. Divine love is immutable divine faithfulness is eternal; and therefore, this holy confidence can never be attended with consequences prejudicial to its subject. This dependence is not without some renewed direct act of faith on God and Jesus Christ. Herein it differs from a carnal confidence, and dangerous presumption, which is never attended with real acts of faith.

VIII. This life is a desire and expectation of better things than can be enjoyed in this state. By those things, I do not intend what the world calls valuable, and which money may procure; but jewels and treasures far beyond all comparison with the choicest of them, viz., those gracious visits and heavenly pleasures which the saints are sometimes favored with in the present state, as an earnest of the full enjoyment of God in the world above. To be with Christ is far better. What is that which is excelled? Not the good of this world, but the good of grace, between which and the good things of this world, no comparison can be made. Communion with God, and a view of Christ in His glory by faith, far transcend the enjoyment of all the honors, the riches, and the delights which this world hath to bestow on any mortal, notwithstanding the vain sons of men court these things and when they attain a considerable share of them are elated with them, in the surprising manner they be. A poor despised believer, who walks with God, is far happier than he who possesses most of earth, and is a stranger to heaven. But the future state of glory greatly excels the good of present grace, and present communion with God. And a life of faith is an expectation of that blessed Hope.

01.06. Of the Assurance of Faith

CHAPTER VI. OF THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

I. ASSURANCE may be considered objectively and subjectively. The former relates to the objects on which faith is supposed to act. This is a firm persuasion of the truth and existence of those objects. For instance, that the Son of God came into our world, and that by his obedience and sacrifice he secured the salvation of some men, or obtained eternal redemption for them. And this is necessarily supposed in all acts of recumbence and dependence on him for deliverance from sin, and the penal consequences of it. By the latter is intended a persuasion in the mind of a poor sinner of his particular interest in Christ, and in His salvation.

II. This latter is not essential to that faith which is of the operation of God, as I apprehend. Several reasons induce me to think that true faith may be, and is sometimes acted where this assurance is wanting. 1. Faith is sometimes expressed by such phrases as do not necessarily include it, viz., seeing of Christ, coming unto him, hoping in the Lord, and, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. An assurance of the object is plainly supposed in all these, but not the assurance of an interest in Him to whom application is made for help and relief. 2. There is little or small faith, which is attended with fears, jealousies, and doubting. "O ! thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt 3. There is a strong and a weak faith; the latter cannot well be thought to include this assurance in it; for if it does, it will be difficult to Show wherein the difference lies, between the strong and feeble acting's of this grace. 4. In Christ's family there are different classes of Christians. All are subjects of the Same grace in kind, but not in degree. Some are babes, not grown up to any considerable pitch of knowledge, experience, and spiritual strength. And in His fold there are some lambs, who are to be dealt very tenderly with ; it does not seem very likely that these, at present, enjoy that strong consolation, which carries the mind above all discouragements and fears. Yet, III. This favor may be enjoyed.

1. This may be argued with very strong evidence, from the nature of divine promises relating to salvation. A conditional promise of benefits neither ascertains the enjoyment of them, in fact, nor is a proper foundation for an assured persuasion of receiving them but absolute promises ascertain the possession of that good they express, if the promiser is faithful to his word, and in promising exceeds not his power; and are a firm bottom for an assurance of the reception of it. All divine promises relating to salvation are absolute. I Will and they shall, is the form wherein they run; and therefore, they ascertain salvation, in fact, and are a solid basis of a steady assurance of it. Since their nature is suited to produce and support such a persuasion, God doubtless had this gracious end in expressing them. And if he had such an intention, that must respect either the world or the church. Not the world certainly, and, therefore, the church. Again, the church is triumphant and militant. These promises are intended, then, either to confirm and establish the faith of the church triumphant or militant. Not the church triumphant, and, consequently, this must respect the church militant. And as all generals consist of particulars, every particular is included in the general; hence it follows that all the saints have right to that strong consolation, which the promises of God are

fitted in their nature to produce ; and it is possible, in the nature of the thing, that they all may, and not to be doubted but some do, at least at some seasons, enjoy it.

2. God, in confirming His promises with His oath, had this gracious end in view, that those who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them, might have that strong consolation which attends or arises from an assurance of his favor to them, and their security in consequence thereof. Two things axe clearly expressed in those words. (1.) An act of faith on Christ, fleeing for refuge to Him ; and this is supposed to be done antecedent to the enjoyment of that strong consolation. True faith, therefore, may be without it. (2.) That they should enjoy strong consolation, who thus flee to Christ for Safety and salvation from sin.

3. The witnessing and sealing of the Holy Spirit evidently prove that an assurance of an interest in the love of God may be enjoyed by the saints: Romans 8:17 ; Ephesians 1:13. The latter text evinces the precedence of faith to sealing, as well as expresses this holy persuasion, through the influence of the Spirit upon the mind, as a witness, after believing. And the very same point of doctrine is deducible from His operations, as the Spirit of adoption. He enables believers to address God as their Father, with boldness, liberty, and confidence, through Jesus Christ; and this He doth at some seasons, wherein they have the greatest sense of their guilt, pollution, and unworthiness.

4. Many of the people of God have expressed their persuasion of an interest in his love, and the glorious benefits springing from that fountain. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? " " The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." I might multiply testimonies of this kind, for they are very numerous in the Scripture. Nor is it to be apprehended that this was peculiar to persons inspired; for the apostle John expresses this matter in the name of Christians in general. "We have known and believed the love that God hath unto us." If it is not one main design of that epistle to prove this point, it must be allowed that many things are therein delivered, which abundantly confirm it. And this cannot be peculiar to prophets, apostles, or inspired persons, nor arise from inspiration; because some have been inspired, who had no faith at all, as Balaam for instance, and holy persons have not always enjoyed it, when under inspiration. Inspiration and this holy persuasion, therefore, are distinct things, and the latter does not necessarily attend or arise from the former.

5. I am of opinion that this great and glorious privilege might be more commonly enjoyed than it is if professors were wisely cautious in behaving themselves. It is by no means to be thought that this jewel is to be attained, without the diligent use of those means which God hath appointed for our increase and growth in grace; greater self-denial, watchfulness against sin and carnal pleasures, mortification to our worldly interests with the assiduous practice of religious duties viz., prayer, and reading the Word of God instead of the fashionable books of our times; meditation, and a frequent review of our spiritual experience, and a conscientious attendance on the worship of God, are the appointed means of our advancement in heavenly knowledge. These are things to which many professors discover but little inclination. Let not such, who doubtless must be destitute of this assurance whereof we speak, dream of attaining it in their present frame of mind and course of behavior; for if they do, their imaginations of this sort will certainly prove deceiving dreams indeed.

6. All believers have a proper and certain evidence within them, of their interest in divine favor. Grace in the hearts of the saints is an effect of God's love to them, and His gracious purposes

concerning them. And, therefore, from the being of grace in their souls, they may safely infer that they are objects of divine love, and interested in all those blessings, which take rise there from.

7. Some, through causeless fears and jealousies, are prevented enjoying this assurance. They are afraid, because sin is in them as an active and restless principle, that they have no contrary principle of holiness; and because in part they are Still carnal, that they are not spiritual persons; because grace is but feebly acted in their minds, that they are void of it. And because for a season they enjoy not strong consolation, that they have no title to it, or any spiritual blessings. These jealousies and fears at least evidence a desire of grace, which certainly springs from a gracious principle, for the desire of grace is proper to grace. The want of skill in these persons to distinguish between the motions of the flesh and those of the Spirit; or of attention to both, within themselves, and of a consideration of the new covenant, according to whose nature God will always proceed towards them, are the occasions of their distressing fears.

IV. When this holy assurance is maintained in the souls of believers, it influences them unto a humble and close walk with God. Pride, carnality, and neglect of duty, are not attendants of the assurance of faith. If lusts ' either of the flesh or of the mind, are indulged, and a man is careless and negligent in his conversation, let him not imagine that this favor is vouchsafed to him by the blessed Spirit; for when the Spirit of God operates as a Comforter He also does as a Sanctifier. This strong consolation is never enjoyed, without a heavenly constraint upon the mind to love God, and cheerfully obey Him. It is probable that some may mistake in this matter, and take a merely rational conclusion for this assurance, wherein the Holy Spirit has no concern, viz., Thus, a man reflects upon his past experience of divine goodness, as he thinks, in former seasons, and Says within himself, this must have been the work of God upon me ; I, therefore, am the subject of his grace, and interested in his love. But if he thus reflects, and thus reasons, when his condition and the general frame of his mind call loudly upon him to the duties of humiliation, and sorrow for sin, spiritual sloth, and criminal indulgences, he may assure himself, that in this the divine Sanctifier has no concern, and that the conclusion lie has drawn contains nothing of that holy assurance in it whereof we now speak. There is, I think, such a difference between the merely rational acting's of our own minds in this business, and the blessed guidance of the Holy Spirit in our reflecting upon his work on our souls, as is easily discernible to the saints and they are greatly wanting to themselves, with regard to their spiritual peace and solid comfort, if they neglect to attend to that difference in this review of their past acts. In the former, only ease and quiet are sought after, in which consists carnal security; in the latter, strength against sin, and a renewal of the vigor of grace which has fallen under a decay, and present direct acts of faith are put forth in this latter, which are not in the former.

V. It is our duty to endeavor to obtain it. We ought to be thankful for the lowest measure of faith, but not content ourselves with a low degree of grace; because the being of grace in our hearts, though small, is an evidence of our safety. As far as anything of this nature is found in us, so far we have just cause well to examine ourselves, lest at last we prove mistaken in cherishing hopes of a real conversion. This can be no sign of it ; for it is in the nature of the new creature to desire both its preservation and improvement ; the neglect hereof can only arise from the flesh, its opposite and combatant. Nothing is more inculcated -upon us, than this endeavor after an advancement in holiness and spirituality: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure;" "and, add to your faith, virtue," &c., and let us go on to perfection;" with various other exhortations

of the same kind, which plainly prove that this is a duty indispensably incumbent on us. But, alas! We are very defective herein, which is the cause of that slow progress we make in the knowledge of heavenly things, and to this is owing very much that want, of the savour and relish of them, which too visibly appears in most professors at this day.

VI. Great advantages attend it. Spiritual peace, which greatly differs from that carnal security that usually, is the concomitant of a backsliding frame. Joy in God, which causes us to despise those low and weak pleasures wherewith our corrupt minds are too apt to be delighted. Freedom and boldness in our addresses at the throne of grace. Thankfulness and gratitude to our heavenly Father, for all the good and inestimable blessings he is pleased to confer upon us. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us," &c. This strength of faith will enable us to give glory to God, even under such dispensations as are most trying to it. What difficulties will it not surmount; what afflictions will it not bear with calmness, submission, patience, yea, with triumph? Since such advantages arise to ourselves, and such glory to God from this faith, shall we think any thing too hard a labor to attain it, or any thing too dear and valuable to part with for its enjoyment? It is our folly if we do.

There is no inconsistency at all, between a persuasion of the necessity of a strict and regular attendance to duty, on our part, in order to the enjoyment of a sense of divine favor, and a belief that our growth in grace entirely depends on the efficiency of the Holy Spirit. As to the acknowledgment of the latter, and a steady regard to it as a precious and indubitable truth, I will not give place to any man in the world. But then, on the other hand, I am equally satisfied, that it is only in the ways of holiness that any have reason to hope for the benign influences of the Spirit of God, in order to the strengthening and increase of grace in their hearts. A careless, negligent, and loose walk will always be followed with dread effects. The bitter weeds, the briars and thorns of corruption of one kind or other will grow, and grace will decline. Sad instances of the truth of this our times abound with. All pretensions unto the present enjoyment of the assurance of faith in those whose conversation is unbecoming the gospel, are groundless, if they ever enjoyed that favor. In some, it is to be feared, that at last it will appear, that they never were by the Holy Spirit sealed unto the day of redemption, notwithstanding all that confidence with which they have expressed themselves. This is an observation not intended for any who are mourning under a sense of their sins and sinfulness, whatever their revolts may have been through the violence of temptation and the strength of lust stirred up by it. Far be it from me to offer anything, which hath the least tendency to break the bruised reed, and quench the smoking flax. But the condition of some, who are at ease in Zion, calls for awakening reproof, that at least, they may not have it to say that they were suffered to go down into the chambers of death, without any warning given to them of their danger.

Objection. Some perhaps will say, "This doctrine of assurance of safety and security, or a firm persuasion of an interest in Christ, and in His salvation, is not a likely method to promote holiness; for if a man enjoys a certain hope of being happy hereafter, what need he concern himself about the manner of his behavior? His sins are pardoned, his person is justified, he is an heir of heaven, and his title to eternal life is unalienable; can it, therefore, be expected of him that he should watch, pray and fight, since his future welfare is a thing certain in itself, and he knows it to be so?"

Answer 1. Such who thus object, are of a different opinion from our Saviour, who plainly told some that their sins were pardoned. " Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." And "her sins, which are many, are forgiven." Besides, as He predicted to Peter his denial of Him, He acquainted him with that interest he had in His prevalent intercession. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and expressly mentions his recovery: When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." This Objection, therefore, is leveled against the wisdom of our blessed Saviour; and if its force is admitted, it must be at the expense of His want of care about the suitable behavior of His followers. This is a consideration sufficient entirely to sink the objection, and to cause its authors to blush, if they had the least degree of modesty left. But,

2. Who are the persons, that from an assurance of an interest in Christ, and in His saving benefits, can be supposed, upon that assurance, will grow remiss and careless about the practice of their duty? They must be either unregenerate or regenerate persons. The unregenerate cannot have this assurance, and, therefore, they cannot abuse it in the manner the objection supposes. And, consequently, if it is thus abused, it must be by regenerate sanctified men. From what principle in them can this abuse of so precious a favor spring? It must be either from the flesh or from the spirit. That it cannot arise from the latter, is, I suppose, a truth evident to all. And what if the flesh is inclined to abuse this or any other divine truth, is that a sufficient reason for the rejection of it? Surely it is not. He who is insensible that there is that in him which is inclined to take occasion to sin from the commandment in the law, as well as from the promises of the gospel, is a stranger to the plague of his heart. But is it proper, for that reason, to part with either the law or the gospel? Certainly it is not. This is an undoubted truth, that, that in men which abuses the gospel, it will also pervert and abuse the law; and, if we admit this shameful objection, we can therefore retain neither the law nor the gospel.

3. Since it is only the flesh, which can be guilty of thus abusing the doctrine treated of, how absurd is it to imagine that a man can enjoy this assurance while he is pampering and gratifying the flesh! That man deceives himself who is confident of enjoying future happiness, which consists very much in a perfect freedom from all sin, who allows himself in the present practice of it. I utterly deny that that man desires to be free from sin hereafter, who does not desire to forsake it now. This assurance therefore, cannot in fact give the least encouragement to sin. It is an act of the spiritual part in a believer, which never gives any advantage to the fleshly part in him.

4. It is a sacred truth, and as such it is firmly believed by us, that faith, without works is dead. This faith "purifies the heart," and it produces good works in the life of him who is the subject of it. How then can this excellent grace be, where the genuine fruits of it are not found? This objection is no better than mere calumny, designed to traduce and reproach a precious evangelical truth. But this is nothing now nor strange. If some sort of men did not despise, reject, and slander divine truths, it would be a strong temptation for me to think myself mistaken, in esteeming them such. For the things of the Spirit of God will always be foolishness to some men.

5. Those who thus object, either express the part, which they themselves would act, upon such a persuasion, or they do not. If they do not, why is it that they object after this manner? If they do, and are in earnest, I am not afraid nor ashamed to tell them that they are strangers to grace and holiness; and if they have no other principle than what at present influences and determines them, nothing is more certain than that they will descend into the bottomless pit, from whence there is no

redemption. That man to whom it would be a satisfaction to continue in sin, upon having an assurance of impunity, most certainly is in the broad road to destruction. He who desires not to be holy now, is dreadfully mistaken, if he imagines that he desires holiness hereafter. The eternal ruin of such sort of persons, whose real principle this objection expresses, is inevitable, without sovereign grace and mercy works a change in their hearts; and their everlasting damnation will be just. If any pretend unto an assurance of the pardon of their sin, and of the salvation of their souls by the blood and righteousness of Christ, who have no experience of hearty sorrow for sin, indignation against it, and against themselves because of their transgressions, they know nothing at all what that holy assurance is. They undoubtedly are "in the gall of bitterness, and, bonds of iniquity." Some such bold pretenders and impious boasters it may be there are; but their condition is most dreadful, for death, eternal death, in fact can only be expected by them. I am sure that heaven is not their choice, and that they have nothing to look for, but the fiery vengeance of a holy God. This I know is true, that assurance of pardon through the blood of the Son of God, never fails to produce in the mind the greatest abhorrence of sin, and the most earnest desires of its utter destruction.

01.07. Of A Believer's Growth in Grrace

CHAPTER VII. OF A BELIEVER'S GROWTH IN GRACE. By grace I do not intend a speculative knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity. That an acquaintance with the truth, connection, and harmony of Christian principles is not grace, sufficiently appears I think, from what has been before observed. Nor gifts grace; neither an ability to explain, defend, and inculcate those doctrines, though it be in ever so serviceable a manner. A man may be furnished with eminent gifts, and greatly improve them by reading, meditation, and a diligent exercise of those talents, and at the same time dwindle in his graces. And he certainly will so do, if he aims not at the exercise of his graces in the exercise of his gifts. When it is thus with any who are employed in public work, however accurate their performances may be, a spiritual savour will always be found wanting in them. It is as necessary for a minister to look well to his graces as to his gifts, if he desires and designs an improvement in both. I fear that with many there is great neglect in this matter, if the best are not culpable of too much negligence herein. As the Apostle Paul was very eminent in grace and holiness, so it was his earnest desire, that churches and particular persons to whom he directed his Epistles, might increase and greatly flourish therein. And in my opinion, we may easily learn wherein that growth of grace consists, by attending unto his solemn prayers to God in behalf those to whom he writes; and by consulting the accounts, which he gives us of his own gracious experience, relating unto this momentous subject.

1. Let us attend unto the consideration of what was the subject matter of his request unto God for others.

Hereby our views will be much enlarged on this noble subject; and if there is any thing of spirituality in our minds, we shall, under the blessing of God, be stirred up to make his petitions for others, our requests unto God for ourselves. He prays for the enlargement of the saints' knowledge of heavenly mysteries. This favor he earnestly desires might be vouchsafed unto the Ephesians, Philippians, and to the Colossians. It is evident that he intends the most sublime and deep mysteries of the gospel. Doctrines which many through ignorance, pride, or it may be as to some, a contempt of them, would have them buried in eternal silence and oblivion; or if not so, will scarcely allow of an explicit mention of them in public; because, as they say, " they are of so abstruse, difficult, and perplexed a nature, that they are above the reach of vulgar and ordinary capacities; and therefore not likely to be of any very great use to the interest of holiness and practical religion, which it must be the real and principal design of the Christian revelation to promote. And the dreadful effects of this blasphemous pretence against God and His sacred truths, under which the church at this time groans, and in many places withers and declines, in savour, spirituality, and experimental religion, are far more than I am capable of enumerating. The meanest Christian is able to conceive of the sublimest principles that are peculiar to the gospel, in that manner the apostle desired the dear saints to whom his epistles were inscribed, might understand them: that is to say, in a spiritual manner. Strong reason is not necessary to this, though strong grace is needful to a fixed and steady persuasion of them after a spiritual sort. The knowledge of technical terms, the use of which has become necessary in treating on those

subjects, through learned men's subtle and quaint distinctions upon them, not out of love to the truth, but with a desire to curtail, corrupt, or entirely sink it, is not required to a spiritual understanding of them. Philosophy and logic are useless things in this matter. Neither are they of that advantage, even when soberly used, in the handling of evangelical doctrines, as some suggest they are. They cannot contribute anything towards the discovery of those truths. The reason is plain, they are no other than an artificial ordering of our conceptions concerning some natural truths, and inferring others from them, which naturally follow from thence. And what can that do towards the discovery of supernatural truths, or of the nature of those truths? Nothing, at all. Persons who (in comparison with others) may be accounted babes in the knowledge of earthly things, may have a clear and distinct understanding of the nature of the mysteries of Christianity, though they cannot discourse of them in that artificial way, which some with great readiness may do, who are as ignorant of the things themselves, whereof they speak, as a stock or a stone. God knows that human science is a poor foundation for human pride. Philosophy, even in her own sphere, is not so knowing in many instances, as her votaries represent her. She often puts us off, with ingenious conjectures only, though she vaunts, as if she gave us the most undeniable demonstration, and we are so foolish as to grow up into confidence without proof. It is enough for her to act this part, in natural things, let us never permit her to impose upon us in spirituals also. This observation dropt from me before I was well' aware, but since it has fallen from my pen, I shall not retract it, for I know it is truth, however mortifying it is to our boasted intellectual powers, which I could give proof of in various instances.

I. They are common Christians, for whose improvement in the knowledge of the mysteries of divine grace, the apostle prays; not such whose talents were above the ordinary degree. The evidence afforded in favor of their truth, is obvious in itself, and not beyond the reach of a common understanding, though it is much obscured by the studied distinctions, philosophical objections, and critical wrestlings of many learned men. And as to the nature of those mysterious doctrines, reason merely, can never understand it. This I think may be received, as a certain rule in divinity, viz., that those principles, which as to their truth are above the discovery of reason, the natural understanding of men, how much so ever it is improved, can never attain unto an acquaintance with their true nature. That is a supernatural gift. And the meanest capacity is as susceptible of this heavenly grace as the most capacious mind. And, therefore, the profoundest doctrines of Christianity may be profitably understood by persons of very small discernment and abilities in other things, as they are proposed to the faith of the saints in the Holy Scriptures, for their encouragement and consolation. This holds true even with respect to the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, predestination, satisfaction, and efficacious grace. Though they cannot dispute about essence and person, priority or posteriority, nor concerning subsistence in itself, or in another nor of the divine decrees, in consistence with human liberty; nor of the foundation on which God proceeded in the business of satisfaction; nor of the certain efficacy of divine grace in the conversion of a poor sinner, in an agreement with the free agency of the subject of that effectual influence. I say, though they cannot debate those points with subtle objectors, they are capable of understanding these precious truths, in such sort as they are revealed of God, with a gracious view to excite in their minds a holy adoration of Himself, and of His designs in their favor; and to engage them to exert acts of faith, hope, and joy in a glorious Redeemer, wherein alone consists that knowledge which will stand our souls in stead, in a time of trial, temptation, and more especially at the awful hour of death. The apostle entreats that the

knowledge of the Ephesians might be increased in the great things of God, viz., His relation unto Christ, as mediator, and unto His people in and through Him. This is implied in that character under which he speaks of God, in his solemn address to Him, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ." And, that they might clearly view Him, as the Fountain and Author of blessedness and glory, signified by the other branch of His character, "the Father of glory." He communicates grace, which is a meet ness for future glory; it is the first-fruits of it, and is of a glorious nature, and is called glory. An advance in grace is a transformation of the mind into the heavenly image, from glory to glory. The titles he gives to the blessed Spirit are very instructive, and suited unto the matter of his following petitions: "The Spirit of wisdom and revelation." He perfectly knows all the deep things of God, wherein His wisdom is in the fullest manner discovered, and is able to make us know them to our peace, consolation, and spiritual joy. Now follow his requests unto God for them, that their minds might be furnished with larger degrees of heavenly light: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened," whereby they would clearly discern what was "the hope of their calling." Vocation intends that holy calling, which is the fruit of God's purpose and grace, given us in Christ before the world began. The hope of it may respect either the object and foundation of the saints spiritual expectations, or the good which grace in the soul is a hope of enjoying hereafter, which is expressed by "riches of glory," attributed to the heavenly inheritance. Somewhat of that glory we receive in this state - but the riches, plenitude, and perfection of it, are reserved for our enjoyment in the future state. Again, he desires that they might know what grace and power were displayed and exerted in that good work wrought in them, as the only preparative for a participation of that glorious state. His desire was that they might have a more enlarged apprehension of the cause of their vivification, when they were in a state of death in sin. Which cause is the infinite power of God. "The greatness of His power, yea, the exceeding greatness of His power, and the working of His mighty power, the same as He exerted in raisin Christ from the dead." Some learned men, in order to evade the force of an argument taken from hence, in confirmation of the doctrine of the efficacious grace of God, in t1te conversion of a poor sinner, observe, that it was the manner of the eastern writers to use strong language and bold figures and that, therefore, some abatement of the force of their expressions may be made, consistently enough with the true intention of those authors. When criticism fails, this shift is to serve their turn. And no question but they compliment themselves very highly, on account of this invented evasion, by the help of which, they may divine writer to as low sink the pompous language of a sense as they would have had him expressed, if they had dictated to him on those subjects. We see that other people, besides the Papists, know how to make the Scriptures a nose of wax. What if some others should act the same part? And why may they not, on what is said relating to the subject of future blessedness in this place and elsewhere; and maintain, that though lofty and grand expressions are used on that subject, yet no such grand and noble ideas are intended to be conveyed by those exalted modes of speech, as we imagine; and insist upon it that the future state of the saints is not such in grandeur, majesty, bliss, and glory, as those rising expressions in loftiness naturally lead up, to conclude upon. What must we say to them? Surely this, except we will content ourselves with low apprehensions of that blessed state and lay aside our hopes of being hereafter so happy as we desire to be, that they are bold corrupters of the Word of God, though they boast of superior learning and ingenuity. in interpreting it. Without the leave of these men, we shall still believe that when we read of God's inheritance in the saints, and of glory, and of Gods glory, and of the riches of that divine glory, in relation to that inheritance, such blessedness

is designed, as far transcends our present most exalted ideas of it. And when we read of God's power, of the greatness of His power, of the exceeding greatness of His power, and of the working of His mighty power, in effecting a saving change in our souls, we shall still retain a persuasion, (whether these men will allow us or no,) of two things.

(1.) That this change requires the exertion of the infinite power of God to produce it. (2.) That almighty power is certainly effectual in its influence on the hearts of sinners, and really converts them from sin to God. And since the knowledge of this, and the increase of it, among other things, were the matter of the apostle's request to God for the Ephesians, we are firmly persuaded that the belief of it is a necessary article of faith, and that it is what may be apprehended in a very useful manner by common Christians, and that a growth in grace necessarily supposes an increasing acquaintance with this, and the other things above mentioned. Let some call them speculative points of doctrine, which have little or no influence upon practice. It is true, indeed, they have no influence at all upon the minds and the behavior of many; but that is because they are strangers to Christianity, both in its principles and that holy conversation which it recommends. Farther, the apostle prays that God, "according to the riches of His glory," or of His grace, which is His glory, and lie designs and desires that they might so account it, would strengthen them, "with might by His Spirit in their inner man." The inner man only is the subject of a divine influence, and capable of receiving spiritual strength; the flesh, or old man, is not so; and it betrays eat ignorance, both of grace and of the flesh too, to imagine that it can. Increase in grace consists much in the communication of, in additional vigor to our spiritual part, whereby it exerts itself in a lively manner. Farther, he beseeches God that "Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith," i.e., that they might be much conversant with Him in a way of believing, or in acting faith on Him, in his person, offices, work, and benefits in the merit of His obedience, and of His sacrifice, and in the fullness of His grace, and the prevalence of His intercession, that "being rooted and grounded in love," in a sense of a dear Saviour's love to them, in their love to Him, and to one another, they might be equal to any of the saints, in a perception of the love of Christ or in an acquaintance with that love in its dimensions, the "breadth, length, depth, and height" of it, know and be persuaded of it, as an affection which surpasses our most extensive ideas, and that they might "be filled with all the fullness of God." Upon the whole, I think two things may fairly be inferred, from what is expressed by the apostle in a way of petition. First. That grace is a spiritual understanding of spiritual things, or heavenly mysteries. Secondly. That the increase of grace necessarily supposes the advancement of that knowledge. And the apostle prayed that the Philippians might abound in love, more and more, "in knowledge, and in all judgment." Christian love is not a blind affection or passion; it is, a spiritually discerning grace. And those things that are the objects on which the grace of love is acted, are discerned in some measure in their nature, in order to a spiritual delight in them. Hence it follows, that where there is not a spiritual understanding of spiritual things, there is no spiritual pleasure in them; and also that we are deceived if we think that we increase in love to heavenly objects, without a growing acquaintance with their excellency and glory. An advancement in divine love, cannot be without an improvement in heavenly knowledge. The more a Christian knows of the importance and glory of evangelical truths, the more will his heart be attracted after them, and the infinitely glorious objects to which they relate, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And therefore it is a folly greatly to be lamented, that men propose to raise and maintain in the minds of those to whom they minister, a holy affection, without endeavoring to furnish them with an understanding of the holy mysteries of the Christian religion. For no object is loved, farther

than it is apprehended and known. Love to God springs from the knowledge of Him, in the designs and acting's of His grace, and the benefits accruing to our souls from thence. In the doctrines of Christianity, two things are to be observed. 1. Their truth. 2. Their nature. A man may discern the former, who hath no perception of the latter. In the latter, an apprehension of the former is necessarily included; for the nature of evangelical truths cannot be known without the mind hath received a conviction of their verity; and consequently, the flourishing of the grace of love, supposes a growing acquaintance both with the truth and nature of these doctrines. But it may be needful to observe, by way of caution, that love only arises from a spiritual perception of the nature of those sublime truths; a bare conviction of their truth, however full it is, by an attentive consideration of the clear evidences given in favor thereof, will never beget any delight in the things them selves, for they are still unknown. Let none, therefore, content themselves with a discernment and persuasion of their truth, nor imagine that they are Christians because they have acknowledge of the truth of those principles; for men may eternally perish under the just condemnation of the law, who yield the firmest assent unto the truth of the gospel. Real grace is a spiritual understanding of spiritual things, and the soul's adherence unto them, and holy delight in them, as they are glorious, and exalt the glory of God in His persons and infinite perfections. The Colossians were also interested in the prayers of the apostle; and for them he entreated of God an enlargement of their heavenly knowledge, or an increasing acquaintance with the will of God, i.e., His counsels and purposes of grace, concerning their salvation in its several parts, and in the infinitely wise methods wherein it is accomplished; which contrivance is the fullest, brightest, and most astonishing display of the wisdom of God. His wisdom shines in all His works; but in the affair of our redemption by Christ, there is such an exercise of mercy and grace towards sinners; and such a manifestation of divine wrath and indignation against sin; as will for ever fill the minds of saints and angels with astonishment and delight. In this business the greatest evil is overruled by sovereign love, for bringing into view and everlasting enjoyment the highest good, viz., the treasures of God's kindness, grace and mercy; which otherwise had lain eternally hid and concealed. And it is especially to be observed, that it is a spiritual understanding of that so deep and sublime a mystery that the apostle intends, and that is the matter of his request to God on their behalf. That it is an acquaintance with the real and true nature of the doctrines of Christianity, not merely a perception of their truth, which never produces those effects that he ardently wished might plentifully be found with them. Farther, that he designs an increase in the knowledge of the profound truths of the Christian revelation, will not, I think, admit of the least scruple, if we take into consideration that his desire was, that they might be replenished with the knowledge of "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," where is clearly proposed to their serious consideration, and consequently to their faith, what many nominal Christians pretend can be no article of the belief of common and ordinary saints, viz., the doctrine of the Trinity, or of the real distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit, their equality and their union. And that glorious mystery which these Three, alike eternal, wise, powerful, and good, were concerned in the contrivance of, even the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ. And it is worthy of notice that if there is anything in that scheme which deserves the name of mystery above other parts of it, the apostle desired that they might receive the largest and richest assurance of its truth, and that they might profess and own it as an article of their creed Nor did the inspired writer, under the dictates of the Holy Spirit, pray for what is in its nature impossible. True it is, let learned men take it as they please, common Christians are full as capable of understanding the great things of God, as any of those who have

the best title to that character. And as Christ is the sum and substance of evangelical truth, or as all those truths meet in Him, their proper Center, a growth in heavenly knowledge is an increase of our acquaintance with Him, in the constitution of His person, offices, work, fullness, and benefits. Hence the apostle exhorts us to "walk in Him, as we have received Him, which intends the renewal of acts of faith upon Him, as He "of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Nor is there any increase in grace and holiness, without renewed acts of faith on Him, for it is only by believing views of His glory, that we are changed into the heavenly image, from glory to glory.

II. If we attend unto the consideration of the apostle's gracious experience as he relates it, in respect to this point, we shall see the truth of what is observed above, fully exemplified in him. He declares, that he lived a life of faith on Christ, in His love, the acts of His love, its nature, and the precious effects of it. And by a discernment of his Excellency, beauty, and glory, ardent love to Him, delight in Him, and earnest desires of a clearer knowledge of Him, and of greater conformity unto Him, were produced in his soul.

1. He set no value on all his accomplishments and Excellencies, which he had esteemed gain. The discovery he received of the glory of Christ, the Sun of righteousness, obscured and hid all the shine of his own glittering righteousness, which before was exceedingly pleasing to him, and in the light whereof he had walked with great delight. He now saw that he had been involved in darkness, that caused him to be content in sparks, and walking in encompassing himself about with the light of his own re; and that it was rich grace undeceived him, and prevented his lying down in eternal sorrow; which is the case of all those who are left to this dependence on their own services, however exact and shining they may be in their apprehension, for they are no other than an ignis fatuus, which will lead men into everlasting perdition.

2. He accounted all things, i.e., his extraordinary gifts, and their exercise for the benefit of the church, his grace, and the acting's of it in all duties he discharged both as a Christian and a minister, but "loss for the sake of the knowledge of Christ." The phrase is excellency or very observable, he doth not say for Christ, but for the knowledge of Christ. Such a value he put upon an acquaintance with Him, in His glory, in the glory of His person, righteousness and grace, as caused him to look upon all other things as comparatively nothing. And he freely, cheerfully suffered the loss of them all, and esteemed them but dung, dog's meat, (as the Greek word signifies) for Christ.

3. In this low estimate of all these excellencies, he had respect to the righteousness of Christ for justification before God; and therefore, he casts no slight or contempt on grace and the fruits of it in itself, but rejects it in the business of his acceptation with God, for the righteousness of Christ, which is infinitely glorious and valuable, and hath infinite merit in it arising from the infinite dignity of His person, who is as truly God, as He is really man.

4. He expresses an intense desire to know Him, that is to say, to grow in the knowledge of His person, who is incomparably excellent and beautiful, and admits of no compare with the loveliest among angels or saints. His glory is like that of the sun, theirs but like that of the planets, which is borrowed, and inexpressibly inferior to that of those lucid bodies from which they derive it all. Every excellency centers in Him, and therefore, He deservedly is the object of the love, joy, adoration and delight of the happy spirits and angels who encircle His throne in heaven. He is all

beauty without blemish, all radiant glory, without so much as the least shade, or a feeble ray. As God, He is possessed of all infinite perfections. As man, He is the subject of purity untainted, and adorned with all the shining graces of the Holy Spirit in their plenitude and perfection. As God and man united, He is the most glorious effect of the immense wisdom of God; which constitution of His person was designed to answer ends respecting God and the church, which could not in any other way be effected.

Ends most interesting to the glory of all the divine perfections, and unto our peace, joy, and everlasting felicity. And, consequently, a spiritual view of His person, will kindle in our hearts fervent love to Him, beget a holy delight in him, encourage us to exercise a holy trust in Him, and influence us to make the adoring song of the blessed angels who were the joyful messengers of His nativity, our own, and with pleasing accents cause us to pronounce their language on that most happy occasion: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men." If we attentively consider the grace, mercy, kindness, and wisdom discovered in the constitution of His person, we shall be at a loss to determine which most calls for our wonder, praise, and holy admiration. Again, the knowledge of the different states of our gracious Redeemer, must certainly strike us with amazement, and possess our souls with ravishing pleasure. Can we view this glorious person in the depth of poverty, laden with calumny and reproach, delivered up to suffering and death, yea, to an ignominious, painful, and accursed death, and that for our sins, and in order to our eternal redemption from misery, which we so justly deserved, without astonishment at the grace of God, and without shame, sorrow for, and indignation against sin and ourselves? Our hearts must be stone, if this prospect affects them not. On the other hand, can we see Him crowned with glory, and not feel the pleasing passions of love, delight, and joy arise in our breasts? It can never be.

5. The apostle earnestly desired a farther acquaintance with the power of His resurrection. That hath an influence into our justification, as it is an evident demonstration of the reality and completeness of His satisfaction; is God's act of acquitting Him of our sins, and is His discharge of us from guilt, in Him, as members whom he represented. He was "raised again for our justification." A surety's discharge from his obligation upon payment made, necessarily infers the right to a discharge of the principal, whose surety he is. Again, the resurrection of Christ hath a powerful influence into our spiritual life, both in the principle and growth of it. One happy consequence of the Head's rising again, is, the members partaking of a divine life from Him. We are begotten again by virtue of His resurrection. Once more, our resurrection to a state of blessedness, is a fruit of His vivification who died for our sins. This is a point largely insisted on by our apostle, in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians : - "Because Christ lives, we shall live also." These are very momentous truths, and if faith is in a lively manner exercised upon them, our souls will be filled with solid peace, and holy triumph over all our enemies, and we shall set very light by all the things of this world, our minds and affections will be raised to things that are above, where our risen Lord is.

6. Grace is conversant about the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. His sufferings were great and of a penal nature, in our stead, and for our redemption. We therefore, have fellowship with Him therein. He suffered as our Surety and Head, and we as debtors and members, were therein concerned. Hence, whatever benefits and advantages arise from His sufferings, they relate to us, and were intended for us: this, the very nature of the thing, and the grounds of that amazing

transaction, abundantly testify. And how great and glorious are those blessings which spring from his agony and death! Pardon of sin, of all sin to those whose guilt He bore; peace and reconciliation with God security from divine vengeance; victory over sin, death and hell. Since such eminent fruits arise from the sufferings of Christ, and since there is so much of the wisdom, grace, mercy, sovereignty, righteousness, and justice of God, discovered in that affair ; and since faith discerns these things therein, what joy ! What consolation! What adoration! Must the prospect of them produce, and maintain in the souls of believers! And an intense desire to increase in the knowledge of those things is a good evidence of a growth in grace. On the contrary, if we are content with a low degree of understanding in these important truths, and we are but little conversant with them, grace is under a decline: for these things are our food, our life, our all, as we are Christians or spiritual persons.

7. The apostle longed vehemently for a conformity to the death of Christ. By virtue of His death, His members are dead to the law, sin, and to the world. His death is the condemnation and death of sin, which is the procuring cause of death, curse, and wrath: and as faith views this, the saints die unto sin and live unto God, and serve Him on other grounds and considerations than What the law proposes, in a cheerful, spiritual, and heavenly manner, without legal terrors, which never produce an obedience that is acceptable to God. And they die to the world. That is to them as a dead carcass, wholly unfit for their entertainment and delight, even in the very best things it has to boast of. Its riches are not valued, its pleasures are despised, all its honors are trampled on as low and mean trifles, when faith is much exercised on a crucified Saviour. Hence, says the apostle "by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The men of the world have no pleasure in grace, and grace hath no delight in the world; it considers all its delectable things not only as trifles, but as dead and lifeless objects, which have nothing amiable and attractive in them. A man would as soon embrace and hug in his bosom a stinking carcass, as grace choose and delight in the perishing vanities of this polluted world. If it hath not better and infinitely more glorious objects to converse with and exert itself upon, it will retire and remain inactive. And we may be certain of the truth of this, that grace is not exercised even if it is as a principle, in the minds of those who are immersed in worldly cares, carnal pleasures, and the empty titles this world can bestow on men. Oh! How many professors give sad evidence of a carnal mind, by a pursuit after, fondness for, and delight in things which the name they bear obliges them to consider as dead, putrid, and rotten How far are they from desiring a conformity to the death of Christ, who are for living in pleasure, and are never easy but when they are amusing themselves with one vanity or another, none of which afford them satisfaction; and therefore, they endeavor to supply their emptiness by their great variety, and run round in an amazing circle of unsatisfying newly invented delights, to the loss of all their spiritual peace, joy, and it may be, unto the eternal ruin of their precious souls hereafter. And hence we may see, that it is a vain thing to hope for an increase in holiness and spirituality, without a growing acquaintance with Christ, in His person, the power of His resurrection, and in the fellowship of His sufferings; for conformity to His death is unattainable in any other way.

8. The apostle expresses the extent of his desire, which was of a vast compass, for it reached unto the summit of that glory God intends to bestow upon His people, at the resurrection of their bodies from the dead. This lie longed after, kept in view, and joyfully expected waiting for the adoption," or that blessedness and which belong unto the children of God, who are heirs of Him and joint-heirs

with Christ ; and this he explains by the redemption of the body, in that place. And elsewhere, he declares the same earnest longing for this happy state, wherein "mortality shall be swallowed up of Life. This was his aim, and the bent of his desire "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." His proficiency in heavenly knowledge, grace and holiness was very great; but far short of What he aimed at: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; that is to say, I am so far from having arrived to that glory, that I am not yet perfect, or furnished with that knowledge, purity, and love, which the souls of departed saints are the subjects of. And therefore, he desired to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than the present state, but inferior in glory to that which will commence immediately upon the resurrection, when the saints will be rendered immortal, spiritual, and glorious in their mortal part; their glorified bodies be re-united to their perfect minds; and made capable of steadily looking upon Christ their Head in all His glory at the right hand of God, whose face shines as the sun in its full strength; when all the elect will be presented to the Father, in those heights of glory His everlasting love appointed them to the enjoyment of, as sons and heirs of Himself ; when a complete victory over all their enemies, sin, Satan, death and hell, shall be enjoyed by them all. And when the divine Father will most clearly appear to be all in all. ALL to Christ as the Mediator and Head of the elect body, " the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven;" and ALL in every member of that body. And therefore, Head and Members will eternally unite in songs of praise, joy, and adoration for his gracious, sovereign, and infinitely wise purposes concerning them. Christ the Head will lead in ascriptions of glory to the Father, for the designs lie formed about Him and His members in his eternal mind, and they will joyfully catch His adoring language, and express their gratitude for His redeeming love in the lofty strains of praise they will learn of Him in the world above. And the holy angels who encircle the church, placed near the throne of their exalted Head, with holy affection, delight, and wonder, will gaze upon the superior glory of the bride, the Lamb's wife; as the result of sovereign goodness and immense wisdom, which will engage them all to ascribe salvation, glory, and power to God, and unto Him that sits on the throne for ever and ever. This glorious state was ardently desired by the apostle, and he had it in prospect; and he followed after, or endeavored to obtain the knowledge of this state. " If that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Calling is unto God's eternal glory, and it is a disposition to converse in a way of believing, with those objects, which will always be viewed in that blissful state. He did not reckon himself to have apprehended; his knowledge, though very extensive, was not complete: but one thing above all others he did, "forgetting the things that were behind," i.e., the world, on which he had turned his back, with an intention never more to afford it a smiling look in its most pleasing dress and forms; and as to the things he had already learned of a spiritual nature, he would not dwell on them, but as a person in a race, (to which he alludes,) looks not back on the ground he has run over, but continues his course without stay or abatement of his pace, that he may win the prize for which he runs ; so would he pursue his end in view reaching forth towards the things that are before." Glorious and precious things he had enjoyed views of by faith ; but not content with those prospects, his desires were intensely carried forth after new glories, which he knew would open to his clear, uninterrupted, and endless view in the better world, where he vehemently longed to be. "I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Effectual vocation is a high calling indeed: it is glorious in all its causes, viz., the impulsive, the rich grace and mercy of God; the procuring, the blood of Christ; the efficient, is the good Spirit of God. Its final cause, that God may be honored and glorified by us. He forms us for Himself, that we may show

forth His praise. And it is with a view to our enjoyment of God; for we are begotten again to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for us. And the nature of it is spiritual and glorious; its effects are all excellent and holy. It is the calling of God, and that as in Christ Jesus, as a new-covenant God and Father in and through Him, to all those who are the happy subjects of this vocation. The prize is eternal glory and blessedness. The mark we must reach if we receive the prize, is Christ in His person, offices, work, and benefits. For those who have not the Son have not the life of grace, nor shall possess the life of glory. The holy apostle pressed towards Christ, as his all in all. As the foundation of his hope of pardon, peace, and acceptance with God; and as his title to future glory. And as He, who alone could keep and preserve him to that state, and put him into the possession of it. The Father has given Him power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to as many as He hath given Him. Oh! The holy ardor of this excellent saint and great apostle, to improve in spiritual knowledge, fervent love, and true holiness he was so intent on these things, that he regarded nothing else. And herein he proposes himself as an example to others. Could we imitate him, O how happy should we be!

I think it may not be improper to make some observations on the gracious experience of this eminently holy person. And,

1. Surely we must be convinced, that as the essence of grace consists in a spiritual knowledge of Christ, growth in it necessarily supposes an increasing acquaintance with His excellency and glory, as the Head and Saviour of the church. For if real grace is a perception of His beauty in His person, and of His suitableness to our condition in the character of a Redeemer, certainly an advancement therein must consist in more clear views of His glory, which never fail of changing our minds in a higher degree into the heavenly image, even from glory to glory. Hence is this exhortation given us: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ." A mind wholly destitute of the spiritual knowledge of Christ, is devoid of grace. For without this knowledge, the heart cannot be good. And where there is but low degree of it, there is but a small measure of grace. Only let it be observed, that it is an understanding of spiritual things themselves that is designed, and not merely a perception of their truth. Persons capable of the latter, may eternally remain incapable of the former. For this kind of knowledge is proper only to holy spiritual persons.

2. All endeavors after improvement in holiness, without mixing faith with the great doctrines of the gospel, whereof Christ is the sum and substance, will prove ineffectual. One important end of the Christian ministry is to promote spirituality and heavenly mindedness in believers; and this end cannot be answered but by proposing to their consideration evangelical truths, and their acting faith upon them. That ministry, therefore, which is most spiritual, is best suited to answer this great design. Such who act in that sphere in the church, under the influence of various motives, may determine to say little, if anything, in the course of their ministry, on some points of doctrine; but as this is not to their honor, so it is not to the advantage of those who hear them. And to such a height is this prudential caution carried by many, as that very little is declared concerning the origin of our salvation, viz., the divine sovereignty on which it entirely rests, and into which it must wholly be resolved. Also concerning the certain efficacy of the death of Christ, because that is inconsistent with the corrupt notion of a general ransom; nor concerning unconditional justification, nor of the determining influence of the grace of God, on whomsoever it is exerted, in order to their conversion. The effects hereof are ignorance, and a lifeless formality in religion.

3. When we enquire into' the state and frame of our souls, let us especially consider how Christ and evangelical doctrines stand in our esteem. If Christ is not precious, dear, and infinitely valuable in our account, we know Him not, nor have a just claim to the character of believers. Unto them that believe, He is precious. If He is in our estimation, fairer than the children of men ; the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; if His person is the object of our choice above all others, because of that transcendent glory we see in Him -- if His benefits are the matter of our delight, joy, and the ground of all our future hopes, in times of trial, temptations, and spiritual distress, occasioned by a sense of sin, deserved curse, wrath, and vengeance ; and we place our confidence therein, let what will be the issue. If our souls act thus, upon a conviction of the wisdom, fitness, and glory of this method of salvation; if the thoughts we have of Him, of His benefits, and His grace, afford us our chiefest pleasure; and if we lament that we know Him and love Him no more, and serve Him no better; if we value the gospel, as it is a revelation of Him, in what He is in Himself, in what He is of God made to us, we have reason to conclude that we are passed from death unto life, and shall not come into condemnation; and that grace is growing in us.

4. Hence we may learn what is to be our aim under a declension, in order to a revival of our graces, and wherein that revival consists. What saint so ever is declined in grace, whether he is gone off from the practice of his duty or not, Christ and the truths of the gospel are less valued by him, than formerly they were. His thoughts are less employed on the person of Christ, and he hath not the same relish and savour of evangelical truths. He is not so much conversant with them, nor hath the same pleasure in them as formerly. His mind is entertained with other objects, and his affections are grown cool to heavenly things. If this is our case, as it certainly is the sorrowful condition of many professors in our days; and considering how general this is, it is very much, if it is not thus with us in some degree; let us be persuaded of this, as a certain truth, that a revival under this melancholy decay, must begin where we were directed by the Holy Spirit at our first conversion, to begin in our acting's God-ward, viz., in an application unto Christ, who is our life, our all, and in a renewed acceptation of the report of the gospel concerning Him, in His person, offices, work, and precious benefits. Without this, an alteration for the better is not to be expected; for if it is, we shall certainly meet with a sad disappointment. Grace when decayed will never recover its vigor, unless it is acted on those glorious objects, which it is a disposition to view and embrace with delight. Mortification of sin is the other general branch of duty, whereunto true grace disposes Christians.

Sin dwells in them. When they would do good, evil is present with them. And of the flesh, or unregenerate part, these things may be observed, viz., that no good thing dwells in it. The nature of it is wholly evil, and it is entirely contrary to grace and, therefore, no good can be educed out of it. Fire may as soon be struck out of ice, as good dispositions and motions be produced in the corrupt part of the regenerate. And it will never be prevailed upon to concur with the new principle in any of those acts which it puts forth; hence the mind of a believer is at no time wholly spiritual and holy in its acts ; there is more or less of a renitence, or an impulsive resistance in his soul to what is holy, at all seasons. He is never so heavenly, as to have nothing of carnality arising in his mind ; so that his purest actions are tinged with a sinful defilement and he is not without cause of shame and self-abasement in his best moments. All his righteousness are as filthy rags. No persons are more remote from real holiness, than those who conceit that they have nothing of sin.

It may be taken for granted that there is no true love to God in that man, who is confident that he hath no aversation of mind from God.

Again, as the flesh constantly opposes what is good, so it disposes the will to what is evil; and all its motions, as under its direction, are towards objects that are vain and carnal. Besides, the violence of it is sometimes very great, and it captivates the will and the affections, notwithstanding the opposition which grace makes against it. Farther, it is seated in the heart, and hath possession in all its powers. The understanding, the will, and the affections, are all subject to its cursed influence. Hence darkness, obstinacy, and vanity, are found in the minds of the best. Moreover, grace or the new creature is not more heartily engaged in the service of God, than the flesh is disposed to the service of sin and it is as possible to bring the spiritual part into an actual rebellion against God, as to prevail with the unregenerate part to subject itself to His authority. And, therefore, though there are not two distinct rational principles of operation in a believer, there are two distinct springs of action, in the one intelligent principle of operation in him, viz., in his mind ; and one gives the will one direction, and the other gives it another, as contrary as can be ; so that he acts according to one spring of action in one way, and according to the other spring of action in another way, and in both spontaneously; for those contrary actions are both voluntary, because the will is the subject of both these principles, sin and grace. It, therefore, chooses evil freely, and it voluntarily inclines to good. And unto neither is it wholly or only disposed. For the choice of evil is not made, without opposition from grace; nor is the choice of good, without opposition from sin. Hence it follows that though all the powers in a Christian are concerned, both in acts of sin, and in acts of holiness, yet none of his powers are wholly and only exerted in acts of either kind. The presence of sin, prevents the mind from being entirely spiritual and heavenly, in any of its acts; and the presence of grace, prevents its being wholly evil in any of its actions. And, therefore, there is a great difference in the manner of a regenerate man's sinning, and of the unregenerate man's, though the external acts may be the very same. The unregenerate are wholly evil in acts of sin, the regenerate are not so. For as the good actions of the saints have not the concurrence of the flesh with the spirit in them; so the regenerate part concurs not with the unregenerate part, in their sinful actions. Grace opposes sin, and sin opposes grace; and neither principle hath, nor can have the heart wholly at its direction, because it is the subject of both, as determining principles of operation of a contrary nature. And, consequently, there is such a war in the breast of a believer, as all unregenerate persons are wholly unacquainted with. They are strangers to that - grief and pain, joy and sorrow, which are the effects of this combat between the flesh and spirit in the saints. They have not that will to good, nor that reluctance to evil, which regenerate persons experience within themselves. Mortification of sin is the great duty, and it ought to be the constant business of a Christian. With respect to it, we may observe, that it supposes not the extirpation of sin out of the heart; it will retain its being in the soul. This law is so deeply engraved on our minds, that we cannot efface it. The highest measure of grace we receive in this state, expels not this troublesome inmate, it keeps its residence in the heart. And its nature is not at all altered. It is still what it was, and all its motions and acts are the very same which they always were. Regeneration is not an amendment of our corrupt nature, but the implantation of a contrary principle in our souls. Nor hath the old man lost any of his members; he is complete in all his parts, though his dominion is taken away. The flesh in its disposition continues to be the very same it ever was, and therefore, the same thoughts, the same desires, and the same corrupt motions in the affections, may arise and be stirred up, as were before grace was wrought in the soul.

Mortification of sin implies these things. 1. Abstinence from the practice of evil. Lust is very fertile in conception, and its aim is to bring forth every monstrous fetus with which it is pregnant. Grace is a check, upon it, and stifles numerous of its productions, as soon as they are formed; they never see the light nor become visible to any eye, but that of the soul itself, and unto the all-penetrating eye of God, who knows us far better than we know ourselves. And this watchfulness upon lust, lest it break forth, is extended to all its various branches, its sensitive, and also its intellectual part. Some, who seem much mortified to sensual lusts, are greatly captivated by intellectual lusts. They are not swine indeed, or they do not wallow in the filth of uncleanness, drunkenness, and other fleshly gratifications but they are full of pride, covetousness, envy, malice, and contempt of others; which are lusts as hateful as any an intelligent creature can indulge in. True grace opposes sins of every kind, not only those of the flesh, but of the mind also. That which is an opposition to sin, as sin, must be as extensive as sin itself is. It is the property of real grace not to connive at, or nourish any evil.

2. The regenerate part is all opposition to internal as well as watchfulness against the breaking acts of sin, forth thereof in external acts. Without which there is no purity of heart, or nothing of that holiness which is indispensably required to future happiness. Many seem to think otherwise; and, therefore, so long as lust breaks not forth into outward acts of sin, they are content, and think all is well. As for thoughts of folly, and the first motions of the will and affections towards what is evil, these give them no uneasiness at all. For they have worked themselves up into a persuasion that they shall not be accountable for their thoughts to Him) who requires our hearts, and if we give Him them not, He receives nothing from us He values in the least measure. This was the case of the Pharisees, whom our Lord compares unto whited sepulchres, which are beautiful without; but within full of dead men's bones. Men may appear fair, whose hearts are full of filth and putrefaction. Evangelical mortification of sin not only respects the behavior, but the heart; there it begins the thoughts, desires, and affections, are principally the seat of it. Real grace is not content with regularity of conduct, its aim is to introduce into the mind spirituality; abhorrence of evil, in the root and spring of it, love to God, and delight in a conformity of soul to His will. Where these things are not in some measure, there is nothing of that mortification which God requires of men. Lust is not killed, maimed, or rendered incapable of acting. Its life is continued, it remains entire in all its parts, and it exerts itself, even in the most sanctified, in a surprising variety of ways, to their disturbance, vexation, and inexpressible grief, many times, and especially when temptations are* permitted to assault their souls. Then it is kindled in the mind; and unless seasonable supplies of grace are immediately afforded, to assist against it, and check its violence, it will assuredly prevail in such a season, even in the most spiritual of the saints. Hence the apostle advises them to consider themselves, (I lest they also be tempted." If grace in a believer is left to itself to struggle with sin under a temptation, lust will certainly get the better of it, and prevail to such a degree, as may be matter of sorrow to him all the remaining part of life. Sin is far from being dead, mutilated, or deprived of power for action. Still it is true that grace, desires its destruction, and rejoices greatly because of that foundation it hath to conclude upon its expulsion out of the soul at death. Oh! says the Christian, that is worth dying for. Let this earthly tabernacle shake, decay, and be dissolved, that I may no longer, nor any more for ever be distressed by this innate enemy, which continually annoys and assaults me, and sometimes with so much fury and violence, as strikes me with terror, and causes me to fear that I shall not be able to hold out in the combat. Sin is impatient of the restraints laid upon it by grace; and grace is uneasy with the motions of sin. Hence there is action

and re-action continually in the mind of a saint. Sin inclines him one way, grace disposes him to another, even a quite contrary way. And, therefore, he cannot do what he would, and as he would, neither with respect to duty nor evil. The spiritual part is often prevented from performing duty in such a manner as it desires, through the opposition of the flesh. And lust is hindered of gratifying itself in that manner it seeks and endeavors to do, because grace opposes it, and sharply remonstrates against its motions and tendency. But of this opposition between sin and grace, holiness and un-holiness, unregenerate persons have no perception at all. Nor do good men always express themselves on this subject of mortification, consistent with their own and the experience of other holy persons; whereby the faith and hope of gracious souls are -sometimes weakened, and occasion is given to unbelief to prevail against faith. This is the effect of inadvertency, and of a want of due attention to the contrary workings of sin and grace in their own souls. Much skill and spiritual wisdom are required to speak on such subjects as immediately affect the experience of Christians; and these are not acquired but by the gracious instruction of the Holy Spirit, and a careful observance of ourselves. It is full as necessary for ministers to be diligent in reading their own hearts, as it is to be assiduous in reading of books. Without the former, they will not have the tongue of the learned, nor know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

3. The influence of the Spirit of God upon the principle of grace is absolutely necessary hereunto. The difference is very great between grace and sin, or between the old man and the new man, relating to ability for action. The flesh needs no external influence to quicken it to action. It is at all times capable of exerting itself, without assistance from without. It is a self mover; so is not grace; that depends upon an external cause to quicken and excite it. The saints can sin, without being acted by another; but they cannot act in a holy spiritual manner, without assistance from Christ, who is their Head of life and influence. Without Him they can do nothing. They are not sufficient of themselves, as of themselves, to think anything that is good and holy. And, therefore, good men often pray for heavenly aid and assistance. Self endeavors to mortify sin will always prove ineffectual. The Holy Spirit is the sole Author of this work. And,

1. He gives us a sense of sin's evil nature, and maintains it in our hearts, without which we shall never be in earnest in an opposition to sin and its interest. And it is only in the light of divine grace that we discern its malignity and abominable nature, which discernment engages the soul to seek after its ruin. 2. The blessed Spirit of God suggests to our minds such considerations and motives to watchfulness against sin's encroachments, as are of the most persuasive nature, whereby we are awakened to use diligence in the business of opposition to sin. 3. He makes us sensible of, and warns us against temptations, which are great incentives to lust; and influences us to oppose them, and gives us strength against them, and by His all-powerful assistance, we repel their force. 4. The divine Spirit communicates vigor to our graces, and maintains their exercise. Sin is no farther truly mortified, than grace is exercised in an opposition to it. A bare abstinence from acts of sin may be without a principle of grace, and consequently, without the exercise of that principle in the minds of those in whom it is ; but that is not that mortification the Scripture speaks of, and which is the incumbent duty of the saints. That is an abstinence from evil arising from a dislike and hatred of it, as it is displeasing to God, grieving to His Spirit, and prejudicial to our noblest part. And these things necessarily suppose the acting's of the new creature in us, in a way of faith, hope, love, godly repentance, and self-denial. No unregenerate person really is engaged in the

mortification of his lusts, nor is the regenerate man any farther exercised in this necessary work than as divine grace is in activity. That subdues and keeps sin under in the soul, which reigns in opposition to it, through righteousness unto eternal life; which is grace, and nothing else. And yet how many poor souls delude themselves with hopes of real mortification of sin, because it is, by various considerations, which are taken from the consequences of sin, prevented breaking forth into external acts! Within, it rages and rules the mind, though it is, as to outward acts, laid under restraint by terror, occasioned and kept up in the breast through a sense of its direful effects. Conviction will not suffer a man to sin quietly, it will raise a dreadful storm in his mind, and compel him to think closely of what, according to the just constitution in the law, is the wages of sin, viz., eternal death. Hence he resolves not to indulge his criminal inclinations; but his will is not thereby turned off from evil, and towards holiness. The former is not his aversion, nor the latter the object of his choice and delight. His conscience is against sin, as it is an unfit thing, and attended with dreadful will is in the interest of sin, and he would make no difficulty of complying with its solicitations, provided it did not expose his person to danger and misery. Many, it is to be feared, owe all the denial of their vicious desires to this remonstrance the natural conscience makes against sin. The only reason why they refuse to gratify lust is, such gratification will destroy their peace, and involve them in trouble, which is not easy to be borne with. The gospel furnishes believers with many very cogent motives to watchfulness against sin.

(1) I begin with the almost exploded doctrine of election. That is an eternal, sovereign, and gracious appointment of men to a participation of real holiness in this state, and unto perfect holiness in the future. It is a purpose of everlasting date; an act which passed in the divine mind before the foundation of the world, whereby holiness in its beginning is secured to the objects of that decree in time, and complete holiness in eternity. This is a sovereign act. It is a free act of God's will ; and not an act which proceeds on the foundation of right in the creature unto those blessings, it is a designation of its objects to the enjoyment of The creature cannot reasonably be supposed to have a right to any favors from God, but such as are included in the first covenant, on the ground of its obedience. And the want of such obedience as that covenant required, is a forfeiture of all right to those privileges, which that covenant contains, and subjects it to all the inconveniences and miseries therein threatened. And, therefore, it is a senseless thought that the creature can acquire a right to such blessings as far transcend in excellency and glory, those which the first covenant promises. And where a right to favors can take place in none, sovereignty must be the foundation of a decree to bestow them on some. Again, it is a gratuitous act, and the effect of mere goodness, grace, and mercy. A design to confer honor on such whose conduct justly exposes them to everlasting shame and disgrace; a resolution to make those for ever happy, who, according to equity, are obnoxious to endless misery, can arise from no other cause than kindness and mercy. Such is the decree of election. And that it is a purpose of conveying holiness, the Scriptures plainly teach; under which notion, it is a precious doctrine to the saints, who know that holiness necessarily enters into happiness, and desire no other felicity than what is at least inseparably connected with a perfection of purity With them it is a very engaging motive to endeavor after holiness, and a great encouragement ultimately to hope for a complete victory over all sin. As for others who object to this doctrine, as of a discouraging nature to serious minds, who are in doubt whether they are elected or no; it may be observed, that they form the objection, without a clue consideration of the nature of it, for it is a precious foundation of faith and hope to every man who hath the grace of it in the lowest measure. And if by serious minds they do not

mean regenerate persons, then I affirm that they have no right at present to that consolation which the gospel provides. And with respect to such who may be easy under a prevalence of sin, from an imagination of their being elected, they are guilty of great impiety and senselessness too; for they discover no approbation of the design of election; or a desire that that design might take place in them; and, consequently, what pleasure they have therein, is not in the true nature of it; but in a false and impious notion of a doctrine that is according to godliness. On the other hand, those who content themselves in sinful neglects and criminal gratifications, because they cannot presently be assured of their election, and reproach the doctrine on the on that account, I would in treat the favor of them to spare their reproaches, at least till such time as they are truly desirous of being holy, for as yet they have nothing of holiness in them; and when in some degree they shall become truly holy, it is great odds if they do not change their opinion concerning this doctrine. Holiness is the fruit of it. And a good hope through grace of an interest in the blessings springing from that divine purpose, hath a most sweet and determining influence upon the minds of the saints to love, adore, praise, and yield obedience unto God in all things. Persons, who rejoice in a humble hope of being chosen to holiness, can never, according to the same principle, take pleasure in sin. That, which approves of the design of election, is the result of it. And where there is a true approbation of that design, there that design is in part already executed, and will be fully accomplished hereafter. If any think they should like to be holy in the next world, but are very well satisfied to remain unholy till the moment they depart out of this, they only delude themselves in those thoughts. True grace is a desire of present purity. I confess that I am not solicitous about the encouragement of many sorts of persons, which some are. I think that no man hath a title to evangelical comforts, who is not the subject of evangelical dispositions. It is greatly to be wished that this was strictly observed, in endeavors to administer consolation to the souls of men.

If it were, it would quickly appear that there is no need to mince or conceal any doctrine of the gospel, lest such should be discouraged who give the least evidence of a right to divine consolation; nor any necessity of advancing anti-evangelical notions, in order to relieve and comfort spiritually humble souls under their sorrows. Nay, which is far more, it is true that no such notions, however plausible they may seem to some, are calculated to afford them encouragement and hope of obtaining salvation. It is a very easy work to prove that universal grace, which from its own nature is not effectual, is wholly unsuited to comfort humble and spiritually convinced sinners; and that it is only fitted to nourish the natural pride of men, which must be subdued, if their souls are ever saved. I am no more concerned for the consolation of a man who is not convinced that he is irrecoverably lost and ruined for ever, in himself, than a physician would think himself obliged to administer medicine to a person in perfect health. Until men know that only hell or eternal damnation, according to righteousness and equity, can be expected by them, on the foundation of their own works, I shall never be solicitous at all about their encouragement and consolation. All such as are disposed to encourage a hope in sinners of enjoying heaven, without a sense of their misery and helplessness in themselves, have no warrant from God for what they act in this business. A man must first be convinced of his being obnoxious to divine wrath, and irrecoverably so, as to himself, either in whole or in part, before he will submit to God's appointed way of salvation. And to such the doctrine of predestination contains nothing of a discouraging nature in it, let some men cavil as they please. On the contrary, it is a precious foundation of solid hope and comfort to all such. Persons, who are the only men upon earth that have a, right to evangelical peace, joy, and consolation, And in proportion to their spiritual acquaintance with this doctrine, will

their spiritual and holy obedience be in the degrees of it. The notion of election to everlasting life may be abused; but the grace of it never can be; let all its adversaries reproach it as they will now, for which they must shortly be accountable to Him, whose this doctrine is and which they are capable of knowing is His, by that clear revelation He hath given of it in His sacred Word.

(2.) Another engaging motive to abstain from sin is the saint's relation to God. They are His sons and daughters; the consideration of which influences them not to touch the unclean thing, sin. Grace disposes them to reason thus with themselves: it is certainly most reasonable and fit that I who am so beloved, so dignified, and entitled to privileges so numerous and so great by God, and that in a way of mere grace and rich mercy, should abstain from all appearance of evil.

(3.) Redemption, or the pardon of sin by the blood of Christ, hath the same powerful influence on the mind. A sense of remission produces joy; an apprehension of the expensive price of pardon, excites in the mind a holy indignation against sin. He who pretends to the enjoyment of a sense of the forgiveness of his offences by the agony and death of Jesus Christ, without experience of a hatred of sin, is a stranger to that unspeakable privilege. And what a man hates, he will certainly endeavor to avoid. This is the true reason why sin is not more subdued in us than it is; we are not, as we ought to be, employed in holy meditations on the sufferings of a dear Saviour in order to procure our pardon, and save our souls from wrath and hell. It is not possible that that man's thoughts can be much exercised on the sorrows, pains, reproaches, and the accursed death of Christ, with a view to his redemption from sin, who makes light of it, and is easy under its prevalence. Let but professors act faith much on a crucified Saviour, and I dare affirm that the work of the mortification of sill will be happily advanced in their souls.

(4.) The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers is a very persuasive motive to watch against sin. His presence with, and in the saints, is their honor and their security; and the consideration of His residence in their hearts, cannot fail of begetting and cherishing desires of purity and holiness. How piercing is the thought of acting a part that is grieving to Him! This is a subject worthy of greater enlargement; but the limits which I have proscribed to myself will not allow of it. And, therefore, I shall close it with answering two queries.

Query 1. May sin prevail in some particular acts, where true grace is, since that is opposite unto sin, and seeing it hath such important and so many weighty considerations to quicken it to watchfulness, against all the motions of evil in the heart?

Answer. No scruple can reasonably be admitted concerning the possibility of the prevalence of sin in some particular acts, even where true grace is. For we have infallible evidence of the real conversion of some in whom the old man has gained the predominance, as to particular acts. And, therefore, let none presume peremptorily to say that a man hath no grace who is overtaken in a fault, concerning whom he hath had reason to hope well of. Some who have been so censorious in peremptorily judging another, have had sad occasion to change their opinion, by the advantage sin has obtained over themselves. Let all such beware that this prove not their own case. They have just cause to fear it may be, in such a frame of mind.

Query 2. How comes sin to prevail, since grace is always resident in the soul?

Answer. 1. A long interruption in the exercise of grace exposes the soul to numerous temptations and unto manifold snares, with the sad influence of each.

2. Sin in such a season gets great strength in the heart; and hence follows the breakings forth of it in the life, in some actions or other sometimes in more, sometimes in fewer instances.

01.08. On Declensions in the Power of Godliness

ON DECLENSIONS IN THE POWER OF GODLINESS; ITS CAUSES, &C.

CHAPTER VIII, A real believer will never sink into a state of unregeneracy; or, grace in his heart will never become extinct: yet he may greatly decline, with respect to the liveliness, vigour, and exercise of grace, through various causes. The Christian may suffer a suspension of the divine influences. There is always such an influx of divine power and grace as maintain the being of the spiritual principle of grace in the hearts of the saints; but they do not at all times enjoy the enlivening operations of blessed Spirit on that principle, whereby its acting's are interrupted for a season, their joy and consolation abate, and they become less conversant about spiritual objects. The flesh takes this advantage, and often acts its part with great violence; and the consequence is of a very sorrowful nature to the Christian, for he declines in the new man, and the old man gains wonderful degrees of strength.

Query 1. Why does God thus withdraw from His people, or suspend His comforting influences, which are necessary to their close walk with Him ?

Answer.1, He may do this in a sovereign way, or without any cause in the manner of their behavior towards himself.

2. It may be with a view to teach them more fully the knowledge of themselves, relating to the strength of corruption, and the weakness of grace in itself; and blessed fruits follow upon it, under His direction and guidance, though for the present it is distressing to the saints.

3. Sometimes it is in a way of awful rebuke for their miscarriages; and when this is the case, they cannot well be insensible of it, for the cause is near to view. He will make them know that though He loves their persons, He hates their sins; that though He will not frown them into hell as an angry Judge, He will correct them as an offended Father and it may be long before He admits them to former freedom and familiarity. This is an awful, but a holy and righteous dispensation of God towards His disobedient children. Let us, if we are in this sorrowful condition, freely and heartily own the justice of the rebuke we lie under, and adore the favor that God draws not His sword against us, but in kindness and mercy uses His rod upon us, for our great good in the end.

Query 2. Can this withdrawal consist with divine faithfulness, and God's care of the new creature?

Answer. Yes ; for it is neither total nor final. He preserves the being of grace and He will revive it again, which two things comprise the whole of what is intended in those promises that relate to our perseverance in faith and holiness to the end.

II. Another cause of declension is the opposition that sin makes to grace in the souls of believers. That is ever present with them, and at no time is it inactive, whether we perceive it or no. The advantages it hath, through its power and force, treachery and deceit, cursed cunning, continual presence, the variety of objects upon which it acts, and the numerous temptations by which it is

excited, are indeed inexpressible; as every one who carefully observes the various ways wherein it assaults us will soon and fully be convinced. But, alas! we are too apt to be inattentive to its serpentine windings and turnings, whereby we become great sufferers in our noblest part, before we are at all aware of it. This, this is a stupid folly in us, and it costs us dear. By this means we get a blot, our souls receive a deep wound, (and astonishing grace it is that it proves not mortal,) our spiritual part languishes, and it would certainly expire, but that our gracious Father and compassionate Head preserves its being in our souls. No thanks to us that its existence is maintained, for sin has prevailed with us to act a part, through our inadvertency and extreme folly, that tends to our ruin and destruction. Grace never thrives where sin is nourished, for the interest of the flesh and of the Spirit cannot be promoted at the same time. If corruption is predominant in its acting's in our hearts, we cannot reasonably be in doubt a single moment, whether we are flourishing or declining in grace it may at once, and without any debate upon our condition, be determined that the opposition to sin declines in its vigor, and that concupiscence increases in strength.

Query 1. When may sin be said to be predominant in its acting's, in a believer, which is so very detrimental to grace?

Answer. It hath a predominance in the mind when it fills the thoughts, entangles the affections, and prevails upon the will to choose such objects as are agreeable to it. To instance, in covetousness, which is a thirst after the empty and perishing things of this world. If the mind is possessed with anxious thoughts about the increasing of our temporal estate ; if our affections are ensnared, and pleasing images are formed in our corrupt fancies from that increase, sin is certainly predominant in a way of covetousness, pride, and a low ambition. And I think that professors in general have reason, remarkably at this time, to examine themselves closely as to this matter, for an eager pursuit after corruptible perishing things is manifestly in many as that which preys upon the vitals of religion ; for while they are forming numerous projects to add to their earthly store, they starve their souls, and in religion appear mere skeletons.

Query 2. Can this prevalency of sin in the mind consist, with true grace ?

Answer. 1. Some would roundly assert that it cannot, and boldly pronounce every one in whom it is, to be an unregenerate person. But,

2. I dare not pass such a censure, nor affirm that there is no principle of holiness in a mind wherein sin gains such a predominancy in acting ; there may be life where there is not growth and vigor. Yet,

3. This I am free to assert, that such a prevalency of corruption is inconsistent with spiritual peace, joy in God, and divine consolation. "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." If love to the world fills the mind, there can be but a very small sense of divine love to us, and but a very low degree of love to God in our hearts. I am confident of the truth of this, let who will be affected by it. And I am persuaded that the number of such is, at this time, very great.

III. A languor in grace, may be occasioned by a neglect of duty. Various duties are enjoined upon us, with a gracious view on the part of our heavenly Father to our spiritual profit; and, if we do not practice those duties, we are unmindful of our own advantage, as well as of the glory of God, which negligence must be followed with loss to ourselves. Those duties are, reading the Scripture,

meditation on it, prayer, especially private addresses at the throne of grace, hearing the gospel preached, and the celebration of the holy institutions of Christ, all which are intended for our spiritual benefit ; and a proper attendance to them is usually blessed of God, to the increase of heavenly knowledge, the establishment of faith, and indeed unto the improvement of every grace of the Spirit. This is that precious reward which God has given us grace to hope for, in keeping His commandments. On the contrary, we must expect Him to hide His face from us, if we seek Him not in those ways wherein He has promised to meet and bless us; for such neglect is both a violation of His command, and a regardless of our own good.

Some, perhaps, may say that they experience no reluctance to these exercises, but as the appointed seasons of such duties return they are ready to the performance of them, and cheerfully discharge them. I would ask these persons if they aim at spirituality of mind, and a solemn treating with God himself therein If that is not their aim, they may perform them without trouble and difficulty to themselves; but let them know this also, that it is without any honor to God. Such, whose attention it is not, in prayer, and other religious duties, to deal with God in them, will not perceive any disinclination in their minds unto them ; they may therefore wonder at others, whose design this is, and who think that those duties are not performed to any good purpose without it, speak of such an aversion in themselves to duties which reason itself cannot but allow to be necessary. The only way of discovering this cursed aversion in our hearts to such exercises, is by an aim to perform them in a spiritual manner. If giving to God the lip contents us, we shall not find any difficulty to attend to that; but if we really desire to give Him our hearts, we shall quickly perceive that this, though a reasonable, is a most difficult service. The insensibility which many discover of the distance of the mind from God, in a great measure arises from a contentment in duty itself, without their hearts being raised up unto, and fixed on God in duty; without which, we do Him no honor, nor does any advantage accrue to ourselves by the discharge of it,-conscience may be quieted, but grace is not acted.

Readiness to the performance of social duties is not always an evidence of liveliness in a Christian, no, nor yet in a minister. A private Christian may not experience such a backwardness to prayer with others, as he finds in himself to that exercise in his closet. The reason is, when he speaks in the name of others, gifts have their exercise, his invention and memory are set to work in some measure, but in a private address to God gifts have less employ. The discharge of that alone, therefore, if it is performed in any tolerable manner to his sanctification, it must be by the exercise of his graces rather than the exercise of his gifts. A person may seem to be well-fitted for that duty, when he performs it in the presence of others, who, in reality, is but very meanly qualified in the frame of his mind for the practice of it by himself; and, therefore, let us rather judge of our condition by what we are in the closet, than by that which we are in the family, or in the church for that judgment is most likely to be formed according to truth, because there is not the same danger of mistaking the exercise of gifts for the exercise of grace. And, thus, a minister may readily be disposed to the practice of those public duties that are proper to his station in the church, and to others he may appear to be zealous and lively in their discharge, when in fact, though he exercises his ministerial gifts, his graces may be very little, if at all, acted therein. Both may be free to exercise their gifts, when they are not disposed to the exercise of grace. With respect to the duty of meditation, it may be observed, that that is either the exercise of reason merely about spiritual things, or it is the exercise of grace upon them. The former is a close

thinking of the evidences of divine truths in their connection and agreement between themselves, and in what language they may be most aptly expressed for the instruction and benefit of others, and this is the proper business of a minister. Or meditation on heavenly subjects, is the exercise of the mind, as it is spiritually illuminated, in contemplating the nature of evangelical doctrines, the glory that is in them, as they are glorifying to God. This latter is indeed the exercise of our reason; yet not that merely, but as it is sanctified by the grace of God. All meditation on spiritual things is not spiritual meditation, we are greatly mistaken if we think it is. I humbly apprehend it is very necessary for ministers well to consider this, lest they be tempted to content themselves with merely rational acts of the mind, about and upon the doctrines of Christianity, which their honorable calling makes it their especial duty diligently to study. Unto the former we may be very well disposed, and, accordingly practice it with good advantage to others, but with no profit at all to ourselves, in a spiritual sense; because to our own benefits the exercise of grace is necessary in our meditations. Let not ministers, therefore, when they examine into the state of their own souls, proceed in their enquiry on, or with regard to their acts as ministers, but with respect to such acting's of grace as are common to them with other Christians; if they do not it is very probable they may think more favorable of themselves than they ought.

IV. Criminal indulgencies are very prejudicial to grace. It may be taken as a certain rule, that by whatever means sin is increased, grace is impaired, and the flesh grows in strength, when and so far as it is gratified in its desires, it increases in its demands as fast as they are answered, for it is of an insatiable nature. In vain shall we expect sin to abate of urgency in its pleas and arguing for gratification, if in any degree, or in any acts, we are prevailed with to give it countenance, modesty and limits it has none. We shall always find it grow in impetuosity and violence by every act of indulgence, it is able through its artifice and cunning, to obtain. The only way of keeping it under, is refusing to hearken to its solicitations. If once it gains a small advance, it will not fail of making a great advantage to itself by our inadvertency and folly; and, in proportion to the increase of the vigor of sin, grace declines in its strength, darkness spreads itself over the mind, and an indisposed-ness to spiritual acts and duties is the certain consequence of all sinful self-pleasing. There are lusts of the sensitive, and lusts of our intellectual part-indulgence to the latter is as dangerous and hurtful as indulgence to the former, though but few seem to be persuaded of its truth. Pride is as pernicious as intemperance, and covetousness is not less hurtful than incontinence.

If we follow after lying vanities of any sort, we forsake our own mercies. Backsliding is always attended with very ill consequences to ourselves, as it dishonors our heavenly Father. If our conversation is vain, frothy, and unguarded, we have no reason to wonder that we are lean in our souls, that our graces are languid, and that we are destitute of those spiritual comforts we formerly enjoyed. It is a dreadful delusion to imagine that we may pamper the flesh, and at the same time preserve the vigor of the Spirit. Grey hairs will certainly be found upon us, whether we are sensible of it or not, if the corrupt lusts in our hearts are suffered to break forth into act. Indeed, it is not in our own power to give spirit to the new man, but we can sorely wound the new creature in us, and bring it under a sad waste of spirits, by acting a part agreeable to the old man, The eruptions of lust will assuredly be followed with a melancholy decay in grace; for if we live after the flesh we shall die, i.e., we shall decay in the exercise of grace, lose our comforts, and bring our souls into such a condition as may render it very difficult to determine, upon inquiry, whether we are in the

flesh or in the Spirit, dead in sin, or dead unto it. Oh ! the egregious folly that many are guilty of, who feed the carnal part, to the great detriment of their spiritual part. If, indeed, they are true Christians, it must be confessed that their behavior affords very little evidence of real Christianity.

V. The declension of Christians is sometimes owing to an un-edifying ministry. The ministerial work is intended for the edification of the church ; and it is very necessary that those, whose employ this is, should always keep that great end in view. As it is their proper business to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ, they ought to see to it that they set before them the wholesome savoury food of the gospel. And it is requisite that they should consider the various cases of the saints, what is the condition of their souls; what kind of temptations attend them; what are their distresses; and what weaknesses they are encompassed with; whether they are growing or declining in grace. Without a due consideration of these, and other things, it is not likely that they should much assist the people of God, or help them in their spiritual joy. Moreover, it is very needful for them ever to remember this, that they may please when they do not profit. Real edification is often wanting in hearers, when the preacher gives them full satisfaction in his discourses, because it is neither his aim nor their desire, that they may receive spiritual advantage. His intention is to approve himself rather to their reason than their grace. Hence he more studies accuracy than savor in his composures, and is satisfied with the character of being ingenious without the more amiable one of being spiritual. And many hearers applaud such kind of discourses, and especially if the preacher has the additional art of moving their passions, by the manner of his address in delivering them, both he and they are content, though the great ends of preaching are very little, if at all answered, by his labored and pathetic performances; and, therefore, neither he nor his hearers make any advances in holiness and spirituality by those services, which are pleasing to himself, and gain their approbation. It is the matter delivered that edifies, and not the preacher's method, language, and air; these things have no influence at all into real edification. And, therefore, though a person may be much delighted with a minister's accuracy, charming language, and agreeable address, he may receive no more spiritual advantage in hearing than the fourm on which he sits. That preaching which is calculated to feed the church of God, is not an address to the unsanctified reason, flighty wit, and blind passions of mankind, but to the gracious principle in the hearts of believers, which is only nourished by the doctrine of the grace of God and truths relating to Christ as a crucified Saviour. Without a minister determines, as the apostle did, to make Christ the subject of his discourses, he cannot justly expect that his hearers should improve in the knowledge of Him, and in that holy obedience to Him, which is the blessed fruit of a divine faith in His person, offices, benefits, and grace. Acceptable obedience springs from that holy principle of grace which is wrought in the souls of believers b the Spirit of God, and the vigor of that principle is maintained by evangelical truths and, consequently, discourses that have little of the gospel in them are not calculated to render the Christian fruitful in faith, and in those good works which spring from it. I am afraid that the barrenness of many professors, is in a great measure owing to a defect of this nature in the ministry on which they attend. Persons may remain unfruitful, indeed, under means that are in the best manner fitted for the cultivation and improvement of their graces ; and this is too often seen through their own criminal neglects and sinful indulgences ; but, if a minister is careful to discharge his duty in presenting his hearers with the generous wine and nourishing milk of the Word, their leanness and decay in the vigor of grace is not the fruit of a culpable defect in his ministrations, that must be owing to some other cause.

VI. Formality in religious exercises will have this sad effect upon us. The difference is not much as to this matter whether we neglect or practice those duties, if it be only in a formal manner ; the bare performance may prevent stings of conscience, but it will never contribute anything towards an improvement in grace; and that ease of mind which it gives, is nothing better than carnal security, which in many will be followed with endless destruction, to their great amazement. And very ill effects will attend a course of formal obedience, even in the real Christian, for such obedience is not the exercise of grace, and the heavenly principle in our souls declines by an interruption in its acts. And, therefore, if it is not our desire and aim in the discharge of duty, to exercise grace therein, we shall not be in any degree the better for the practice of it. As to spiritual advantage, such service will never promote that in our minds; and, yet, for want of a due consideration of this, and through the wretched aversion of our hearts to a close and solemn intercourse with God, in the ways of His appointment, how apt are we to content ourselves with doing acts of duty without a serious and diligent attendance unto the manners of their discharge ! When this is our case, we honor God but little, and very small is that profit our souls receive from such performances. There is nothing of holiness in the obedience of the formalist; and God knows that sometimes there is but very little of it in that of the real Christian.

VII. Unprofitable and vain conversation brings on the same consequence. Society becomes either useful or the contrary, according to the nature of the subjects about which conversation is held. If the subject of discourse is weighty and solid, it is suited to entertain a grave and serious mind; but if it is trifling, though it is embellished with some agreeable turns of wit, the pleasure it gives is very little, and it affords no satisfactory reflection. Spiritual converse is calculated to warm the heart, and improve the graces of Christians. In this the weakest believer may bear his part, and that not without singular advantage, even to such who are far his superiors in discernment and abilities. Sometimes persons of inferior talents give happy evidence that they are best qualified for heavenly conversation. Though they have less of the rational capacity, they excel in spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, which fits them for that kind of discourse that is most beneficial to the saints.

If we indulge ourselves in conversing about things that are carnal and pleasing to the flesh, we certainly prejudice ourselves, and it may be, we also spread injury among all who hear us. If our converse discovers that our minds are worldly, carnal, an vain, it is not improbable but it may render the minds of others so too, for that is its natural tendency.

01.09. Of the Symptoms of Declension in the Power of Godliness

OF THE SYMPTOMS OF DECLENSION IN THE POWER OF GODLINESS.

CHAPTER IX.

1. A drowsy and slumbering frame of mind is a sure sign of declension. Sluggishness and inactivity are certain evidences of a declining state in a Christian. Though there may be life, still liveliness and vigor are wanting. Some ill habit of mind is contracted, if we are disposed to carnal ease, and are not prepared for spiritual exercise and communion with God therein. This is a very Sad frame, and bitterness will be the issue of it. So it was with the church: I sleep, says she, but my heart waketh. It is the voice of my beloved, &c. If Christ finds us indisposed to give Him entertainment, when He graciously condescends to make us a kind visit, we may reasonably expect Him to withdraw from us, and teach us the evil of our ingratitude, by the want of His delightful presence as He did the church, when in such a frame. It is very much to be lamented that ever such a wretched stupor Should seize us, as unfits us for holding fellowship with a dear Redeemer; but this is sometimes our case, through the prevalence of the flesh. It is with us as it is with a person asleep, our senses are locked up, we neither see nor hear as we ought, nor are agreeably impressed by any spiritual objects; but are almost wholly taken up with things of a very different nature, to the great detriment of the gracious principle in us. Besides, then we suffer the enemies of Christ quietly to introduce noxious errors into His church. And this is remarkably true in our times. As there never was a season, at least since the Reformation, wherein corruption of doctrine was more artfully, violently, and generally introduced; so never with less opposition from those who profess to be the friends of Sacred truth. As this is the shame of some, it is an occasion of glorying in others.

II. Loss of spiritual appetite is a sign of declension in grace. If we nauseate our heavenly food, we may be assured that it is the effect of some very bad disorder in our souls. For if the new creature is in a sound and healthful state, it will desire, feed upon, and digest with pleasure that elegant food which our heavenly Father hath provided for its support and entertainment. Our taste is grievously vitiated by sin, if we do not savor the things that be of God. If we prefer ashes to the hidden manna, grace must be under a melancholy decline, and corruption grown strong. If we do not hunger and thirst after the bread and water of life, there is reason to conclude that we feed upon husks, which are not food for the new creature ; but its opposite in our hearts. When grace is lively and flourishing, the mind is disposed to seek after and embrace spiritual objects; but if the flesh hath the ascendant, we slight heavenly things, and our affections are fixed on earthly things. The want of a relish of spiritual food, and a hankering after what is agreeable to the flesh, arise from some dangerous distemper which hath seized the soul; and Satisfying our disorderly desires, tends to fix that distemper, and to bring the new creature into a languishing condition.

III. Declension attends us, if our love to God, Christ, and to spiritual things is abated. When grace flourishes, love is ardent, our affections strongly tend towards heavenly objects, and we take much pleasure in them. This is often the case at first conversion. The love of our espousals is fervent,

and causes us to surmount those difficulties, which, when an abatement in the warmth of our affections takes place, we think insuperable. It is truly melancholy that we should lessen in our love to those objects which are infinitely amiable, and most deserving of our intense desire and highest delight; but so it is, through a variety of causes in ourselves, and numerous temptations which we meet with in the world; insomuch that it may be difficult to determine to our full satisfaction whether we are the subjects of this heavenly grace or no. And this decay of our love is generally the effect of negligence and want of caution to avoid sinful pleasures ; or it may be occasioned by an anxious concern about the things of the world: either of these will damp our spiritual affections, and render our minds vain and carnal. This luke-warmness is very displeasing to Christ, who is recommended to our esteem by all that is charming and attractive. I suppose that none who think themselves concerned in matters of this important nature, can be wholly insensible of that coldness which almost universally is found amongst professors in our times, And though it is the subject of common complaint, but few seem inclined to lay it to heart, as we all ought to do, nor to betake themselves to proper methods for a revival of a holy affection in their souls. The aim of some is not, or at least it doth not seem to be, that Christ and His grace may become more precious to their souls; but they are striving after holiness, with little, if any regard, to the person, love, glory, and grace of Christ; hence they labor in the fire, and all their pains are to no purpose at all; their work is consumed, and they are totally disappointed of attaining real spirituality. The issue of all their labor is only a legal frame of mind, and such an opposition to sin as the flesh itself will join in, under the lash of the law, to whose conduct and rule they subject themselves. As these persons are much pleased with their imaginary success against sin, because the axe hath lopped off some of the branches of lust; so none are more inclined to censoriousness in judging others, who in fact are what they would be thought to be, but in reality are not so, viz., spiritual and holy. Every man will certainly be deceived who shall think to introduce spirituality into his mind and affections, without acts of faith on the glory of Christ, for thereby alone is the mind changed into the heavenly image, from glory to glory. If, therefore, Christ is less precious to our souls than He has formerly been, in His person, offices, grace, and benefits, whatever we think of ourselves, we are assuredly declined in grace, let our opposition to lust be what it may, under the influence of other considerations.

Grace must certainly be declined, if our affections are chilled towards Christ and heavenly things; if they are less in our thoughts, and are not so pleasant and delightful to us as they have been. Where there is intense love to any object, it will often make it present to the mind, and that will view it with pleasure, which increases the passion of love to the object. So it is in natural things ; and in spiritual things it is the same. If our thoughts are but little employed about Christ, nothing is more certain than this, that we love Him but little. What! love Him much, and think of Him but little! It is impossible. Warm affections to a dear Saviour will frequently make Him present to the soul, and cause it to view Him with wonder and delight; and that pleasing prospect of Him will maintain a fervency of love to Him. For spiritual affections are a great help to spiritual thoughts, and spiritual thoughts promote spirituality in the affections.

Some persons seem to me to be almost utterly unacquainted with the true workings of grace in the heart, who yet profess it is their desire to improve in grace ; for while they are laboring after holiness or what is so in their apprehensions, they plainly manifest that they have forgotten, if they ever knew, how it is to be attained.

IV. Another symptom of a decay in grace, is an abatement of our zeal for the honor of God, and of a dear Redeemer. As the gracious principle in believers is an humble hope in divine mercy through a Mediator; so it is a concern for the divine honor. And if that principle is lively and vigorous, it will cause us to decline whatever reflects dishonor on God and His ways, and engage us cheerfully to practice those duties with a peculiar pleasure, that are most conducive to the glory of God, and which give the clearest evidence of our subjection to Christ, as King in Zion. If the new creature is preserved in a healthful state, it will influence us to bring forth much fruit to the glory of our heavenly Father ; but if it falls under a decay in vigor and liveliness, our concern to glorify God will be very small. And this is evidently the condition of numerous professors at this time. Of this also general acknowledgment is made; but without the use of proper means for rekindling a holy zeal in our hearts for the honor of God and of a precious Saviour. Until other measures are taken than many pursue, it is not likely that this evil will be remedied; but it may be expected to increase, except where it is advanced so far already, as not to admit of any increase. This may be the dreadful condition of some who once made a fair show.

V. A thirst after, and fondness of the world, is a symptom. of declension in grace. Lawful it is to desire as much as is really wanted, and we have ground to hope for the bestowment, of such a share of the things of this life, in some way or other; enjoying that, contentment with it is our duty, if we never have more in possession. And it is of very little consideration whether we have or not. It is even a reproachful thing to human nature, to be all pursuit after the transitory things, of this fluctuating state. Various considerations may well make us ashamed, even as men, of our insatiable thirst after riches, and those advantages which they can procure us, viz., the brevity of human life those advantages, therefore, we cannot long possess. The uncertainty of our continuing in this state, the short time our feeble frame seems to be erected for, especially in the enjoyment of health and ease, without which nothing in the world can render us comfortable, as men. Again, we cannot enjoy much of this world, let us be entitled to ever so large a share of it. Great men have no more enjoyment of what their brawny servants luxuriously devour in their kitchens, than of what their horses eat at the manger, and drink at the pond. The gay liveries of their lackeys, and fine trappings which adorn the creatures of their ease, ambition, and pride, come not into the number of those things they enjoy, nor is it possible that they should, Besides, abundance makes us neither wiser nor better; and, therefore, that man is a fool, who thinks that an addition to his fortune increases his happiness. More over, riches are uncertain things, and possibly they may not be long kept. Once more, that respect which is paid us, in a affluent circumstances, is seldom to ourselves, but to what we have about us ; but men's good opinion of themselves will not suffer them to discern the flattery of cringing dependents, and of such who intend, sometimes at least, to have the command of their purse.

There are other considerations which may make us ashamed, as Christians, of our thirst after, and fondness of earthly treasure, viz., God puts no value upon it. He throws it away as a thing of nought, on the very worst enemies He hath in the world. Again, it cannot do us the least degree of good, as we are Christians. Earthly treasure cannot increase our grace. Besides, we have infinitely better things to entertain our minds with than magnificent dwellings, rich furniture, costly apparel, and sparkling decorations. He who hath not, is a stranger to happiness, how much so ever his vain fancy is pleased with the splendid figure lie makes wherein he cannot justly compare With a butterfly or a tulip.

These things are so obvious, that no difficulty at all obstructs the sight of them ; and yet even professors at this time are much intoxicated with this strong opiate, and seem to discover that they think they shall never have enough of this world, while they are permitted to live in it. A full evidence this is that they are but very little conversant, in a way of faith, with a better. No wonder, therefore, if they are much in doubt whether they are likely to enjoy that world, when they shall be obliged to leave this, at such seasons as they are compelled, by one means or other, to exercise their thoughts about so gloomy and terrifying a subject. Again,

VI. The want of watchfulness against sin, excited by a quick and tender sense of its evil nature, is a sure sign of a decay in grace. When the new creature is in a good plight, and is vigorously acted, sin is exceedingly hateful to the saints, because then they have a clear and striking apprehension of the malignity of its nature, which maintains in them a holy indignation against it. If the mind is much exercised in the consideration of that price which was paid for the remission of our guilt, viz., the blood of Christ, as a lively hope of pardon is thereby ingenerated, so a detestation of evil, whose pardon cost Him thus dear, certainly springs up in the mind from that consideration. And this is always attended with strict watchfulness against it. For the soul cannot bear the thought of countenancing that which was the procuring cause of such shame, sorrow, and pain, as a precious Jesus was put to, felt and endured, in order to our redemption from that misery to which sin subjected us. If any pretend unto an assurance of forgiveness on this foundation, without any experience of shame, sorrow, and hatred of sin, on account of its vile nature, I dare boldly pronounce such a pretension to be no other than a vain presumption, that is likely to be followed by an eternal loss of their immortal souls. Everlasting ruin will certainly ensue, if sovereign mercy interposes not to make them ashamed of this irreligious confidence. A sense of pardon, through the death of Christ, always produces a hearty sorrow for sin, and this influences unto watchfulness against all appearance of evil. And, therefore, the want of such caution must be an evidence of an interruption in the exercise of grace, if not of a total want of holiness in the soul.

VII. When we are more governed in our conduct by prudential, than spiritual considerations. By such considerations, I intend a view to our reputation and advantage, as men, and unto our own credit, in the character of professors. Indulgence in criminal lusts is attended with disgrace, at least among the sober part of mankind, we can never gain and preserve an interest in their esteem but by a good behavior. And, irregularity is followed with many pernicious effects in the circumstances of men; thereby a person not only tarnishes his character, but draws upon himself and his family very great inconveniences,-it prevents him making provision for their future prosperity; it wastes his present substance, and entails reproach on his name, and poverty on his descendants. If men even make a profession of religion, then a loose and unguarded conduct justly renders them the objects of slight and disregard in the religious character. Now, if our circumspection, sobriety, and attendance to the duties of religion arise from these considerations, and we are what we be as to these things, by the influence of such motives, we have not our conversation in the world, by the grace of God, but by fleshly wisdom. Grace hath higher views and far nobler ends in all its acts; and it is a glaring proof of a sad declension in grace if we are acted by these considerations, rather than by views to the glory of God and the honor of Christ. A behavior of this kind is not only most distant from true holiness, but it contains not anything of real virtue in it, for even that is the practice of morality, upon other and better considerations than these. The Lord, who searches the hearts of men and is intimately acquainted with all our governing views, only knows what low

degrees of holiness sometimes are found in us, even when our deportment is such as raises it above the censure of those who have opportunity of knowing us best. Let us thoroughly consider this awful truth, that there is no more of true holiness in us than there is of a single eye to His glory in the denial of our lusts, and the discharge of our duty in the civil and religious life. Oh! what need have we of the exercise of forgiving love since our defects are so very many ! and what necessity are we under to implore the divine aid to assist us in our obedience, without which not the least degree of real spirituality will ever be found in it ! So far as we are influenced by a regard to our advantage as men, and our own credit as professors in our deportment, rather than to the honor of Jesus Christ, and His gospel, we fail of yielding that holy obedience to Him He requires of us. We are not under the direction and determining influence of grace in what we do, but merely prudential considerations and motives if we have not an eye to the glory of God in all we do.

VIII. When we are influenced not so much by evangelical as legal motives; for then, though there may be more show of holiness there is less of it in reality; and this will always attend an indifference towards the pure and unmixed gospel of Christ. It is a great mistake to imagine that spiritual obedience will ever be promoted by legal principles. A declension in grace will always follow an abatement in a regard to the doctrines of grace, whether the Christian is sensible of it or no. He may regularly keep up the practice of religious duties, and on that account conceit that he is not declining ; but a narrow and strict view of his heart and frame will soon convince him of a melancholy languor in his graces, in proportion to the abatement of his regard to the pure gospel of Christ. The reason is evident, the vigor of grace in the heart is only to be maintained by mixing faith with the doctrines of grace. Hence is owing that dry, formal, and sapless obedience which many professors satisfy themselves with keeping up. There may be as much as ever of the form of godliness, but the power of it is greatly wanting.

Query 1. Why is grace suffered to decline, and sin permitted to break forth into such acts as it sometimes has in good men?

Answer. Great modesty becomes us in a question of so much difficulty, lest we " darken counsel by words without knowledge. But some reasons for it may be assigned, viz. God may permit this with a view to exalt the glory of His grace in their pardon and Salvation. This permission on His part is consistent with His righteousness and holiness ; but if any commit evil that His grace may abound, it is a wicked and most impious way of sinning yea, beyond what the devil is capable of, for he has no opportunity of sinning against God at this dreadful rate. Again, To convince haughty sinners of madness in pretending to perfection. If the best saints have been guilty of committing the foulest sins, a pretence to perfection can have nothing to support it. That it is certainly true that none are justified by virtue of their own obedience. Moreover, For our caution, not imitation, that we may learn what the power of sin is, where there is most grace.

Lastly., For the relief of humble souls -under a brolien sense of their guilt; or to encourage them to hope in divine mercy for pardon. And this is a wise, gracious and holy end of God in such permission.

Query 2. How may a Christian under declension arrive at satisfaction that he is the subject of true grace?

Answer. 1. If he is very much declined it may be difficult for him to attain a satisfying evidence of this matter, which is enough, one would think, to deter us from that carelessness and negligence which occasions it. That is a condition greatly to be dreaded, wherein a person can scarcely collect any ground of hope that he is in the way to heaven, but for ought he knows, at present, he may be in that path which leads down to the chambers of death. Is not this sufficient to make us tremble and start back from an act of sin, when we are solicited by the flesh and Satan to commit it ? But alas! through the deceit and violence of lust under temptation, we are guilty of acting a most cruel part against ourselves; and if a dear Redeemer, against whom we offend, had no more compassion for us than we have for ourselves, perish we must, without remedy. Well it is for us, that God and a precious Saviour bear us greater love than we have for ourselves without this our eternal ruin would be inevitable.

2. It may not be best for us always to attain to Satisfaction in this point. In some frames it might prove a temptation, viz., when we aim not at present acting's of faith and repentance.

3. The wisest part we can act in such a sad condition is, rather to desire and seek after acting grace now, than to enquire whether we have acted it before. And if it shall please God to enable us thereunto, we shall in some measure be able to discern an evidence of the truth of what we are desirous of obtaining satisfaction about. For where such acts be as are proper to grace, there grace most certainly is. Besides, this is the only way of coming out of this sad condition, for a revival cannot be without renewed acting's of grace in the soul.

4. Uneasiness with this condition, and a desire of being brought out of it, as it is what dishonors God, may be considered as the breathing of the new creature, though laboring under much weakness, which sin has brought upon it; for this is a farther view than our own peace, and is the soul's tendency towards God, as the object of its choice and delight according to the regenerate part ; and, therefore, where this is, there is ground of hope that the mind is not destitute of a principle of spiritual life, though it is fallen into a very melancholy decay. But,

5. Suppose the worst thou canst, believer, even this, which I know will be very cutting to thy soul, that as yet thou hast never truly acted faith on Jesus Christ. Thou now seest thy need of Him, and of a communication of grace from Him, to make thee what thou fearest thou art not, viz., holy. Thy proper business at this time is to flee to Him for refuge, or to commit thy soul to Him to be sanctified and saved by Him ; and doing this will be acting the best and wisest part thou canst in thy present condition. Fears of being mistaken in relation to past acts of faith should not prevent thee making a present application to Christ for help and relief in thy sorrowful state.

Query 3. What is included in a revival of grace ? or wherein consists a recovery from backsliding ?

Answer. A renewed conversion after backsliding is excellently expressed by David, after his grievous revolt, in Psalms 51:1-19., whereupon I shall make some observations.

1. He is solicitously concerned about the remission of his sins; and divine mercy is the ground of his hope and the matter of his plea, not his surprisal into evil, nor his sorrow and contrition for it, though it appears it was very great, but mercy, goodness, and grace alone, without the consideration of any extenuating circumstances.

2. He speaks of his conduct, not in soft and qualifying terms, but in such language as was suited to its nature, and expressive of the just sense he had of it, and of indignation against himself on account thereof. He calls it transgression, or rebellion, sin, and iniquity, and expressly mentions the worst part of his miscarriage, blood-guiltiness. When repentance is truly acted, the soul abhors tender names for its sin, nor does it seek to cover and hide its iniquities. That which under temptation is thought no great offence, when truly repented of is accounted heinous. Sin, before its commission, often appears to the mind as a very small evil, but true grace acting in a way of repentance for it, throws off all its false colorings, and views it in its dreadful malignity ; and cannot bear to use tender and soft language about so vile and detestable a thing as sin is.

3. David considers God as the object against whom he sinned, and that he had done that great evil in His sight; wherein a variety of considerations are included which influenced his mind to an ingenuous sorrow, viz., what the Lord is in Himself, and what He was to him, and had done for him.

4. He confesses the sinfulness of his nature, he traces up the stream to the fountain from which it proceeded, viz., the impurity of his heart. As, acts of sin are discovered as flowing from that origin, when repentance is exercised, a person views that evil source with great humiliation and self-abasement. He discerns that, he is, in his disposition, the reverse of that inward truth which God requires. The nature of sin is directly contrary to eternal truth, and in all its pleas and arguing it is a deception of the mind. Most properly, therefore, does David consider it as the very reverse of amiable truth.

5. He prays earnestly for holiness. Whenever sin is discerned in its malignant nature, holiness, its contrary, is seen in its excellency and beauty and as sin is then the object of the mind's great aversion, holiness is the object of its choice and delight. There cannot be an abhorrence of sin, without pleasure at the same time, and in the same degree, in holiness. True repentance is not only a loathing of acts of sin, but it also is the soul's desire of being unprincipled with a disposition and temper of a contrary nature.

6. He deprecates the loss of God's gracious, spiritual, and immediate presence.

7. Prays for the enjoyment of divine consolation, and to be upheld in his walk by the good Spirit of God.

(1.) Grace influences the penitent heartily to acknowledge that lie deserves to be cast away from the gracious presence of God, and for ever to lie under His awful displeasure. The justice of so terrible a procedure is freely owned, but it is contrary to the nature of grace to be content without a sense of divine favor, and therefore a submission to the loss of God's gracious and glorious presence, is not required of grace ; for that principle, whose nature it is to desire a sense of the favor of God, cannot be content with the eternal loss of it, that would be acting contrary to itself ; the supposition of the possibility of which is absurd. In nothing does the difference between legal and evangelical repentance more appear than in this, the former dreads suffering under God's anger, the latter trembles at the thought of sustaining the loss of divine favor; and, consequently, it is not in the nature of grace to dispose a poor sinner to be willing to bear that loss. It confesses indeed that it would be just with God to banish the criminal from Himself, but it can never consent to an eternal separation from Him. Nor does God require this of any, neither does he produce in

the minds of His children a willingness for ever to be banished from Himself.

(2.) David had enjoyed precious discoveries of divine love and goodness, and of an interest in God's salvation, which filled his soul with peace, consolation and joy.

(3.) Such manifestations had been withheld upon his evil behavior. No man shall enjoy heavenly comforts while he continues in a backsliding frame and course.

(4.) He longs and prays for the restoration of those joys to his soul. Through sovereign and infinite grace there is proper foundation to hope for this signal favor; grace in the heart in some measure discerns this, and that encourages it to use freedom in its address to God for it. The seasons of the return of these heavenly visits, is wholly in the sovereign pleasure of God; and sometimes they are sooner, and sometimes later, just as it pleases Him to act by His disobedient children. Some He is pleased to surprise with melting discoveries of His goodness, mercy, and grace, immediately upon their sin, and thereby He breaks their hearts in love, and at once recovers them from their evil frame and way. This was Peter's case. And, sometimes He withdraws for a considerable space of time, and then the mind becomes either stupid through the continued prevalence of sin, or sorrowful under a sense of its shameful departure from God, and the bitter effects of that ungrateful carriage. The former seems to have been David's condition; but he is now awaked out of his lethargy, and the heavenly principle again vigorously exerts itself.

Query 4. May a Christian think he is declined in grace, and be mistaken in that matter?

Answer. I think he may, and that some gracious souls are mourning under such an apprehension without cause. For,

1. They have a fuller knowledge of themselves. One branch of the Spirit's work, is to furnish us with the knowledge of ourselves ; and we never have right apprehensions of our nature, state, and condition until our dark minds are irradiated with the light of divine grace. According to the degrees of that light, is that acquaintance we have with our own sinfulness, weakness, darkness, and alienation of mind from the life of God. Grace, when increased, enlarges our views of our hearts, and enables us to look deeper into that gulp of iniquity which is therein. Hence, some, from a growing acquaintance with the various ways wherein sin exerts itself, are induced to think that they are waxing worse and worse; whereas this apprehension springs up in the mind, not from the growing power of sin, but the increasing light of divine grace in the soul. Persons most sanctified, are always most sensible of their natural impurity. When grace is quickest in acts of opposition to sin, it is soonest discovered in its corrupt motions. Hence, saints who have been very eminent for holiness have most complained of their vileness, and the power of sin in their hearts. Where there is the largest measure of grace, there is the fullest knowledge of sin in its nature, being, power, and treachery ; and we are never less spiritual than when we are least sensible of our natural carnality.

2. The self-displeasure of these persons is greater. Nothing is more natural to us than to be pleased with ourselves on account of some imaginary excellency or other. This vanity is often fed, even by such supposed qualifications, wherein real merit has not the least concern. This is one sad evidence, though overlooked by many, of the dreadful corruption of our nature, and is such abominable pride as calls for deep humiliation and self-abasement. Grace, when it thrives, brings us to a hearty and ingenuous acknowledgment, that we are so far from being possessed of

advantages, which are a proper foundation of self-admiration and applause, that we are the unhappy subjects of every detestable quality, which is a just reason why a creature should shrink into nothing in its own esteem, and be content for ever to lie in the dust. Without true grace no man is humbled to make such submissions in kind, as the state of every man calls for and unless that holy principle is preserved by the good Spirit of God, in lively exercise, our natural pride will soon rise up to a considerable degree, and we shall fancy ourselves to be at least somewhat fair and beautiful. On the contrary, if grace flourishes, we shall clearly discern that we have no more just pretension to beauty, than a man who is covered from head to foot with filthy running ulcerous sores, the stench of which makes him even weary of his life, as it is offensive to all about him.

3. Sin is more hateful to them. Mere uneasiness under a sense of guilt, is no evidence of the being of grace in the soul. That which exposes to penalty, in a reflection upon it, will give pain to the mind, and produce heavy censures of a man's self. Love to sin is not inconsistent with great regret, when the mind hath a painful sensation of sin's demerit. The consequence of vice may be dreaded, even when a man is under the sway of vicious inclinations, Conviction disturbs him, and will not suffer him to enjoy peace, but it produces no dislike to sin, as sin. As sin is impatient of any restraint, there may be a strong contest between that and conviction, and this jarring of conviction and sin some take for real conversion, whereas it is quite of another nature. Grace brings the mind to detest sin in itself, upon a clear perception of its vile nature. This is what a legal conviction will never do, let it be carried to ever so great a height ; and it is a good evidence of an increase in grace, when the mind is much influenced to hate sin, because of its evil nature, and to resolve to forsake and oppose it under that consideration, whatever becomes of the poor soul, whether it is saved or lost. Nothing short of true grace will effect such a disposition of mind : and yet some humble persons go mourning who are the happy subjects of that disposition, but they shall be comforted.

4. They have a clearer knowledge of Christ, and He is more precious to them. Grace is a discernment of the glory, beauty, and excellency of the Saviour, in His person; and a perception of the value and preciousness of His righteousness, sacrifice, and fullness, which raises the highest esteem of Him in the mind,-it engages the soul to choose Him and delight in Him ; and as this principle is more or less exercised upon Christ, the believer increases or declines in love to Him. If our spiritual views of Him are unfrequent, our affections will grow carnal, and our hearts will be much inclined to look after and embrace other objects. And this decay of spirituality in the affections, is attended with no small degree of insensibility ; love is cooled, and the man takes little or no notice of it, that is not the matter of his grief; he is playing the harlot with a variety of other lovers. I have nothing to offer for the peace and consolation of those who are in such a frame their case requires not a cordial but a corrosive, to bring them out of their lethargy, for if they are possessed of a living principle, they are seized with a sad slumber. But the persons whose encouragement I aim at, are such whose love is not in fact abated; but through causeless fears and jealousies they are apprehensive it is, which apprehension fills them with sorrow and bitterness, and that is a comfortable evidence of the reality and fervency too of their affection to this infinitely amiable object.

3. They are more spiritual in their obedience. A Christian may be sunk very low in grace, even when he is regular in the course of his obedience. Two things are necessary to evidence the truth of grace in the heart. (1.) The practice of duty. (2.) A spiritual principle in the soul as the spring of

it. Where the first is not, it will readily be granted that a person is graceless ; but as to the second, neither the nature of it is understood, nor the necessity of it acknowledged by many, whose aim and endeavor, as they say of themselves, is to be as obedient and holy as they can.

(1.) A person must become dead to the law in order to live unto God. The law is dead to a Christian, and he is dead to that. "I through the law am dead to the law ; that, being, dead wherein we were held." It is the law that the apostle speaks of, under the authority and condemning power of which we all naturally are ; but grace brings us from under its yoke and disposes us to practice duty upon other considerations and motives than what the law is acquainted with, And there are duties, which though radically are contained in the law, they are not formally; wherein much of that obedience consists that is required of believers. Acts of faith in Christ, evangelical repentance, love to Him, and gratitude for His saving benefits. None of these branches of our obedience are formally contained in the law, though they are so radically, as it is a perfect and eternal rule of righteousness. The measure of the precepts of the law, as in the form of a covenant, is the truth it reveals, legal obedience is founded on doctrines which are proper to the law; and, consequently, acts of faith in Christ, love to Him, and subjection to His authority in His complex character of a Mediator, are none of the ditties of the covenant of works. Hence, it follows that they cannot be the immediate duties of such as are under that covenant. But this, by the bye.

(2.) Perfect holiness is required by the law. It allows of no defects or imperfections. Infinite perfection can never give an imperfect law. This seems to me so clear a point, that I think a man must offer violence to reason if he doubts of its truth: and yet some express themselves in such a manner concerning Moses law, (as they term the law of God,) which cannot easily be reconciled with it. But,

(3.) It is called the letter, in distinction from the gospel, which is styled the Spirit. " The letter killeth, the Spirit giveth life;" because the truths of the gospel excel in spirituality those truths that are proper to the law. The latter are glorious, but the former exceed in glory. And they are the foundation of a more spiritual obedience than What the law as a covenant is acquainted withal.

(4.) This is the reason why human understanding discerns, in some degree, the propriety of the doctrine of the law, and the reasonableness of that obedience which is built upon it. But it cannot discover any excellency in evangelical principles, nor the fitness of that obedience which is built on those principles as its foundation ; and hence, unregenerate persons, what conviction so ever they receive of the truth of the gospel in discharge of duty, they always act under the influence of the doctrine of the law, so far as they understand it, and not in the least measure agreeably to the nature and genius of the gospel. And, even in believers there is a propensity to this legal obedience. Their minds are not wholly evangelized. Sometimes, and in some instances, they are not actuated by the influence of evangelical, but legal motives. It is a good evidence of a growth in grace, when the soul attends much to the practice of those duties that are founded on the doctrine of the gospel, and unto the discharge of all under the influence of that doctrine.

First, This spiritual obedience is without fear, that is to say, it arises not from a dread of punishment. He that obeys merely from the consideration of the dreadful consequences of disobedience, no more approves of the matter of duty, than a vassal approves of the command of a tyrant, that is contrary to his own inclination, though he executes it, because he would not expose himself to his merciless fury. Such obedience cannot be pleasing to a man of an

ingenuous open disposition it can only be agreeable to him who makes his will a law to others, whether it be right or wrong. And, can we think that it will be accepted with God? No, surely! He abhors it, and must do so ; for it supposes that a man either thinks himself called unto unreasonable service, or that his inclination is to violate the just and equitable command, if he durst ; the former is a blasphemous reproach cast on God, the latter is the will's refusal of duty, and its choice of sin, provided it might be with safety to the man himself. It is just that sin should expose to penalty, but to avoid the commission of it merely to escape punishment, is far, very far, from that holy obedience which God requires of his creatures.

Secondly, Spiritual obedience is freely and cheerfully performed not with reluctance, as men do, whenever they act under the influence of terror and dread. The law may drive a person to duty, but the gospel sweetly draws him. A sense of wrath may restrain sin, and prevent it breaking forth, but it will never produce a contrary disposition in the soul. Grace doth the latter, and when it is lively, obedience is the more voluntarily performed.

Thirdly, It is an evidence of spirituality when duties are the matter of our delight. The flesh may be compelled to practice them by various considerations, but never with the least degree of pleasure. Grace is a disposition to acts of duty, and therefore it is no unpleasing task, which it is unto the flesh. And if the new creature is lively and vigorous, the more spiritual any duty is, by so much the more is the mind of a Christian delighted with it. A readiness to engage in exercises wherein the proper business of the soul is to hold communion with God; and if that is the attractive unto those exercises, it is a sure sign of heavenly mindedness. The persons whose consolation I here aim at, are happily disposed to those branches of Christian obedience, in an especial manner, wherein nearness unto God is to be enjoyed ; and on that account they take pleasure in them : and yet, because they find within themselves a reluctance to those duties, arising from the flesh, they are sometimes greatly discouraged, and think that surely they are in a declining state ; but, on the contrary, they are really flourishing in grace. We should not form our judgment of the being of grace in our souls, by a freedom from the being or acting's of sin in us, that is not to be expected so long as we are here ; neither should we measure our grace by the opposition the flesh makes against it, but by the genuine acting's, of the gracious principle in its acts of holy obedience, and its opposition to the motions of the corrupt part in our hearts. The difference between a regenerate and unregenerate person is this, the regenerate man is partly spiritual and partly carnal, in the disposition and acts of his mind; the unregenerate is wholly carnal in his dispositions and in all his acts, whether he is employed about what is materially good, or what is materially evil. For such as his nature is, such are all his actions, either in the matter of them or in their circumstances. No good thing is in the flesh, and therefore nothing that is good can possibly be brought out of it, either by the terrors of the law or the sweet and melting truths of the gospel. The difference between a growing and a declining Christian is this, grace is much and vigorously acted in the former, but little and very weakly in the latter. Grace, when it is highest in its acts, never prevails with the flesh to unite with it in what is spiritual; that always, and in all instances, opposes the spiritual part ; hence, every act of duty a regenerate person performs, is imperfect, and tinged with evil and, where there is the most grace there is the clearest sense of the opposition it meets with from the law of sin, in that course of holy spiritual obedience, whereunto it disposes the Christian. And therefore the growing saint, for want of a due consideration of this, may conceive that he is under a decline, and walk mournfully on that account, when he hath the best evidence of

true grace in his heart, and of its increase also.

One thing I would mention here, in a way of caution, and that is, what I have offered is not intended for the jocund and merry professor, such as our times abound with ; let them not imagine that this is a cordial which God hath prepared for them. I would as soon present them with a cup of poison, while they continue in their present frame and course of behavior, as with the consolatory truths of the gospel. Let them take care, though they please themselves with the doctrines of grace, as some of them do, that the law does not, by and bye, seize them as its rightful subjects, in all its dreadful terrors; if it should, all their jollity will be suddenly turned into distress, and their catastrophe will be terrible beyond expression, and even thought too. Some may say, "What, would you have religion wear a melancholy gloom?" No such thing is intended. But this I know, that carnal mirth is not the fruit of real experimental religion. That produces pleasure of a far better nature, a joy that is solid and lasting.

01.10. Of the Ways and Means of Revival, Under Decays of Grace

OF THE WAYS AND MEANS OF REVIVAL, UNDER DECAYS OF GRACE.

CHAPTER X. The Holy Spirit, in a way of efficiency, is the sole cause of a happy revival, under decays of grace. It is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of God, that the work of grace is maintained and carried on in the souls of believers. And, therefore, the church in a declining state, and under a deep sense of it, makes application unto God for a revival. "Wilt thou not revive us again ? that thy people may rejoice in thee."

There is but little joy in God, when grace comes under decline. Though the Holy Spirit alone can effect this desirable change in the frame and behavior of withering, barren professors, still various means are appointed of God, which are subservient to this end; and if we neglect to use those means, no wonder that we still have reason to complain, and cry out, O our leanness, our leanness ; for the treacherous dealers, even under all our complaints, are dealing treacherously; and, therefore, an alteration for the better cannot reasonably be expected. If we are thoroughly persuaded of this, we shall really desire a time of refreshing from God, to excite us to use diligence, in order that our graces may be revived, and to strengthen what remains that is ready to die.

Much labor and diligence are required unto this. It is not complaining of the sickly condition of our souls, which will effect their cure. Confessions of those follies that have brought diseases on us, though repeated ever so often, will avail nothing towards the removal of them. If we intend the recovery of our former health and vigor, we must act, as well as complain and groan. We must keep at a distance from those persons and those snares which have drawn us into the instances of folly, which have occasioned that disorder which is the matter of our complaint. Without this, we may multiply acknowledgments and expressions of concern for our past miscarriages, to no purpose at all. It is very great folly to think of regaining our former strength, so long as we embrace and dally with those objects, through whose evil influence we are fallen into a sorrowful decline. It is not our bewailing the pernicious effects of sin, that will prevent its baneful influence upon us; except we are determined to forsake that, to which our melancholy disorder is owing, never let us think of recovering our former healthful and vigorous state; for if we do, we shall certainly be deceived to our further prejudice : for such a frame of mind tends to ruin, nor can it be prevented, but by sovereign grace effecting a contrary disposition in us.

I. We must remember from whence we are fallen, and lay to heart the sad occasions of our declension.

Let us recollect what convictions of sin we have had, and what tenderness of conscience they produced. How fearful we were of acting anything that bordered upon evil, out of a regard to the glory of God, as well as the peace of our own minds. What watchfulness against all baits and temptations which were laid in our way to ensnare us, we then exercised. Let us remember how precious Christ was then to our souls. The views we had of the value of those benefits which

spring from His obedience, death, and sacrifice. In what manner our souls desired to be "found in Him," and applied to Him for pardon, peace, righteousness, wisdom, strength, and indeed for all that is necessary to our present consolation, holiness, and future welfare. Let us remember how our souls admired and adored the grace of God, which formed the astonishing design of our eternal salvation from ruin which we so Justly deserved; though to effect it, He must part with His own Son from His bosom, and deliver Him up to shame, sorrow, curse, and a penal death; His law and justice requiring it, that we wretched transgressors might be saved. And shall we not call to mind what pleasing wonder possessed our souls, from the consideration of the honor conferred upon us, viz., that God made us His sons, clothed us with the best robe, with fine linen, clean and white, a garment pure, spotless, and of infinite value; adorned our souls with precious jewels, the graces of His Holy Spirit, as tokens of His infinite love to our persons, and the earnest and first-fruits of eternal glory whereunto He called us? Shall we be so ungrateful to our heavenly Father, as to bury in forgetfulness the gracious discoveries of his kindness, grace, and mercy to our souls, when we were overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, curse, and vengeance, which we saw we had contracted, and whereunto we were exposed, without any ground of hope of relief and deliverance, but only from that infinitely glorious object against whom we had been sinning all our days ? Let us remember how sweet the gospel was to us, what a rich treasure, and delightful food it was to our poor famishing souls ; how we delighted in the ordinances of Christ, that we " sat under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to our taste." The remembrance of these things, on the one hand, may produce joy; and on the other, shame, sorrow, indignation, and revenge against sin and ourselves, when we consider what a melancholy change we have passed under. Oh! surely with shame, blushing, and confusion of face, we must think of our present declension. What want of watchfulness against sin is now found in us, and what near approaches do we dare to make unto it! What a languor is there in our graces! How little is faith, in exercise! And how is our love abated to God, to Christ, to His gospel, His ordinances, and His people.

We cannot wholly be insensible that we are without those gracious visits of divine love from our covenant Father, our only Saviour, our best Friend, and elder Brother, who was born for our help and relief in the worst of adversity, which in time past, our souls enjoyed. And this distance between God and our souls, is the consequence of our sin, sloth, negligence, and base ingratitude. Are our hearts affected with this as they ought to be ? They are not, God knows. We are in a sad slumber, perhaps some are in a dead sleep, as we use to say, and nothing Will wake and rouse them out of their Wretched carnal security, but some shocking and terrible dispensation, which, whenever it comes, will put them into the utmost consternation and terror and they may not be able to determine whether they are of the living in Jerusalem, or sinners and hypocrites in Zion; whose portion will be fearfulness here, and everlasting burnings hereafter, notwithstanding that flourishing profession they once made. Awful thought indeed! Should we not each of us say, What have I done to cause God to hide His face from me? Wherein have I grieved the Holy Spirit, which hath occasioned Him to withhold His benign comforting influences from my Poor soul, through the want of which I am attended with darkness, deadness, loss of spiritual consolation, joy in God; and am at a great uncertainty, in my own apprehension, whether I am in the way to heaven, or in the broad road to hell and destruction ! Oh ! the bitter effects of sin!

II. Consider what Christ required of the church at Sardis, Which many interpreters think is a representation of the church under the Reformation fallen into sad declension; and they apply it to

our times. He requires them to "remember how they received," i. e., with what joy they embraced His gospel, and received Himself as held forth therein, in His person, offices, work, and benefits. How they had received His sacred institutions and excellent laws, that they had celebrated the former with spiritual pleasure and great advantage; and submitted to the latter with holy reverence and zeal for His glory as King in Zion. Again, He calls upon them to recollect how "they had heard," what attention they gave to His delightful voice in the promises He expressed, the warnings He gave against sin, temptations, and snares they would meet withal, in the course of their pilgrimage in this world; which suggests that they had been defective in this matter, which was the cause of their deadness and formality; so that they seemed not to have life; at least, no vigor or liveliness were discovered; but they were sunk very much into a dead formality, in the course of their behavior. Moreover, Christ commands them to "hold fast," i. e., His doctrine; this implies that they were in danger of having it either violently or artfully taken from them, by open or secret enemies. Very needful advice for us in our dreadful times. Some, with much cunning insinuation, and all the arts of address, endeavor gradually to lessen our regard to those important doctrines; the rescuing of which from Popish corruption, was the chief glory of the Reformation; and with daring insults, proud confidence, and matchless injustice, do many reproach and vilify those doctrines. What need therefore, have we of this advice, and how well is it suited to our circumstances! Many are sunk into a neutral spirit, and discover no concern at principles are introduced, nor what doctrines are given up. They are but speculative points, (they say) and if they can but promote practical and experimental religion, for their parts, they are quiet and easy, Do not, then, evangelical truths enter into that religion they would advance? Are not those truths the foundation, life, and soul of it? If not, let us boldly renounce it, as no religion of the blessed Jesus; this is what our profession of being His followers obliges us unto, let these cowardly men take that renunciation how they please. If, indeed, they are the ground of that practical and experimental religion these persons pretend it is their design and endeavor to promote, why, then, are they unconcerned about what treatment those doctrines meet with? The introduction of other doctrines than those the Reformers boldly defended against the hellish fury and rage of Rome, brought into the Reformed Church that pride and contempt of spirituality, which have been, and still are nourished by those doctrines, which in the end, unless God prevents it, will prove our ruin, and render the Reformed Church, for corruption in principles, full as infamous, if not more so, than that of Rome, which Christ will "consume with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming." Never let us part with those things wherein is continuance, and by which we are to be saved, if saved we shall be, through the fawning and flatteries of these professed friends, but secret enemies of the gospel of Christ. Nor let us ever be frightened out of our faith by the rage, contempt, and scorn that open adversaries pour upon us, because of our regard to the doctrines of God's sovereign and distinguishing grace ; though, through the defection of many, but few may join us in an opposition to that tide of fury against those precious truths, which flows in upon us with great rapidity. Let us stand our ground, keep firm hold, and quit ourselves like men," in the defense of principles, which ought to be far dearer to us than the most valuable privileges we can enjoy of a temporal nature, yea, than life itself. For if those truths are rent from us, from what source, then, can we derive peace in trouble, strength in weakness, joy In sorrow, light in darkness, comfort in life, or hope in death? And on what may we build an expectation of happiness hereafter, if the doctrines of the Reformation are wrested from us ? On nothing. Though multitudes now desert them, through one cause or another.

These doctrines are, Efficacious grace in the conversion of a poor sinner, communicated on the foundation of eternal predestination to everlasting life. Complete atonement for sin, by the death and sacrifice of Christ. Justification by His righteousness, without any works of our own; and received by faith, in order to our peace, joy, and hope of heaven. Final perseverance in faith and holiness, what shocks so ever we may meet with from sin, Satan, or the world. These blessed truths are the only supports of a divine faith, and heavenly hope; and I am not afraid or ashamed to say, that he is no Christian who is ignorant of their sweetness, power, spirituality, and effectual influence to promote holiness in all its branches; let some clamor as long as they think proper, and charge these glorious truths with licentiousness. But I must acquaint them that there is a time hastening, wherein they will be obliged to give their account to Him, whose these doctrines are, and whose glory is much concerned in them, for all their ungodly and hard speeches against them. They will do well to consider what defense for themselves they shall be able to make. Reproach, slander, falsehood, and contumely, will not be suffered at His tribunal, though now they are permitted to practice these abominable vices, to run down truth, and propagate destructive errors.

III. We must do "the first works," if we design a revival of our graces. This calls for humility and diligence, to both which our proud and slothful hearts are too much disinclined. We must be content to begin afresh, both to learn and practice, since through carelessness and sloth we are gone backwards in knowledge and practice too. It sometimes is with the saints as with schoolboys, who by their negligence are so far from improvement, that they have almost forgot the rudiments of a language or an art they have begun to learn; in which case it is necessary that they. make a new beginning; this suits not with. their pride, but unto it they must submit. So the Christian has sometimes need of being taught again, "what are the first principles of the oracles of God," when for the time he has been in the school of Christ, his improvement ought to be such as would fit him for giving instruction to others in these plain and easy principles. But through negligence he has let them slip. And we must be content to pass through the very same lessons of conviction, sorrow, humiliation, and repentance, we long since learned of the Holy Spirit. Whatever we think of the matter, a revival cannot be without it. This is humbling to our pride, but our past negligence has rendered it absolutely necessary ; besides, we must attend to those duties we formerly did, viz., prayer, reading, meditation, self-examination, hearing, and ordinances; if we do not, we may multiply complaints of our leanness, without adding anything to our vigor, strength, and fruitfulness. As we are, So we shall continue to be, or grow worse, if that can be, unless we use those means which Christ has appointed for our growth in grace. And we must re-assume our former watchfulness against sin, and all occasions of it. Decline all those ways, and that sort of conversation which have proved snares to our souls. This wise part we acted at first conversion, and a new conversion requires our acting the very same part. Perhaps some jolly, loose-walking, merry professors, Who abound in our times, we may have contracted acquaintance with ; and their discourse, with the manner of their behavior, has insensibly tainted our minds at first, and caused us to remit somewhat of our strict watchfulness; this has been followed with those acts of backsliding, whereunto we owe that barrenness of soul we so justly complain of. If this is our case, we cannot by serious advice and a grave example reform them, then let us forsake their company, and get rid of a conversation, by the ill influence of which we may long suffer, if not to the day of our death. Grace will not long thrive under the droppings of a pernicious conversation, nor will it revive where it is Sunk and decayed under that disadvantage. If we throw water upon a low fire, we must surely be sensible that it will not maintain and revive it. Vain conversation is to grace,

what water is to fire.

Query. How can this declension consist with promises of growth?

Answer. Our increase in grace is often represented by the growth of plants, which in some seasons is interrupted. As in winter, through the sun's distance, nipping winds, and pinching frost, they lose all their beauty; but their sap abides in the root, and upon the return of the enlivening sun, through the influence of its quickening rays, the sap ascends, the plant which not long since afforded no pleasing prospect, salutes our eye with a delightful green; it presently buds, its blossoms open, and it yields precious fruits. So the Christian, when the Sun of Righteousness withdraws, and the north wind of temptations blows upon him, at the present he grows not, grace subsides, corruption rises, and the beauty of his profession is gone, and no fruit is brought forth to the glory of God. But, when the Sun of Righteousness returns, with the cheering rays of his graces that have lain hid discover themselves again, he recovers his former beauty, "blossoms as the rose, grows as the Lilly," spreads his roots and bears much fruit to the glory of his Heavenly Father. Let us not then on a sudden, pronounce a person dead who is, it may be, now barren ;he may have brought forth fruit; and though it is winter with him now, he may see a returning spring, and again afford us a lovely prospect; and for this let us wait and hope.

Lastly, let the saint recovered from backsliding and declension, adore the divine goodness, grace, and mercy discovered in his new conversion. If he takes into serious consideration, his provoking carriage, and God's patience, long-suffering, faithfulness to His promises, and the immutability of His love to his person, under all his unworthiness : if he well considers from what a Sad frame he is delivered, and what advantages, divine pleasures, and signal favors he is again brought unto the enjoyment of: if he thoroughly considers what new honors is done him, by making him again fruitful in good works, to the glory of his Heavenly Father, and to the joy and usefulness of his fellow Christians, pleasure inexpressible must flow in his breast. Let him also remember that he is still in a state of imperfection, and snares, and dangers ; and that, therefore, another declension may succeed: for as grace communicated to him at his first conversion, prevented not his former decay, which has been so much to the dishonor of God, and the grief of his soul; so neither may that grace bestowed on him, in this new conversion, preserve him from a future declension. In order to this, renewed supplies of grace are necessary, to keep him in a humble, watchful, and depending frame of soul on his Head of life and influence. Sin, upon this revival, is indeed much subdued ; but he may possibly live to find it act again, with as much violence as ever it did; and grace, may again subside, though it now advances and expands itself in the soul.

However spiritual he now is in his frame, he is not got beyond the reach of temptation, and he is still the subject of that, which under fresh temptations, will not only incline him, but prevail with him also, to act a part (unless divine grace interposes to his succor) that will involve him in the same sorrowful condition he is now emerged out of. It is enough to make one tremble to think what prevalence the flesh has gained, even after the most affecting discoveries of divine love and goodness, that have ever been vouchsafed to saints most eminent for holiness. Some have got their foulest blemishes, after they have received the most signal tokens of divine favor they were ever indulged withal.

Let this teach us humility and caution; they are, I am sure, the useful lessons we ought to learn by those awful dispensations under Which some eminent saints have passed, with whom none of us

are comparable in holiness and the power of religion.

01.11. Of the Temptations of the Present Age

OF THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE PRESENT AGE.

CHAPTER XI.

Temptation is exceedingly dangerous to us, because we have that in us which is fit matter or it to act upon. It is not with us as it was with our great master, who had no disposition in Him upon which a temptation could fix itself, and therefore he repelled the force of all sorts of temptations, without their making the least impression on His mind. " The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." We are like unto a city besieged by powerful enemies, wherein there is a strong party within, who are on the side of the besiegers, and who seek for an opportunity to give them entrance, and betray it into their hands; therefore we can never be safe, without a strict watch kept on these intestine enemies, as well as a resolute defense against the enemies without. Consider believer, what swarms of evil lusts there are in thine heart, which are always ready to join with any temptation, and thou wilt soon be convinced of the necessity of constant watchfulness against temptations, that without it thou canst never walk Safely a moment. In an unguarded minute, the enemies of thy soul will find an avenue, got entrance and presently fire thy lusts, and cause thee to act, a part which will fill thee with shame, sorrow, and fear, perhaps, all thy days. Consider likewise that not every guard in such time of danger will secure thee. It may be, thou thinkest that a regard to thy honor, or interest in the world, &c., will be sufficient security in temptation ; but alas! when once temptation hath got access to thy soul, and lust is kindled by it, thou wilt find that it will break through all such restraints with as much ease as Sampson burst the strong cords wherewith the Philistines bound him when asleep.

All such reasoning's will prove like a bowing wall and tottering fence, before temptation when united with our lusts.

We enjoy our liberties as men and Christians. Separation from the Establishment is not deemed by our laws criminal, nor are we on that account subject now to any penalties. We live in the quiet possession of our property in safety and peace, and are protected in the free exercise of our religion by the laws of our country. So that we suffer no such hardships as our forefathers underwent, to preserve a good conscience. They suffered confiscation of goods, imprisonment, corporal punishment, and death, because they had the pious courage not to join with others in those acts of religious communion which they were persuaded were not agreeable to the institution of Christ. But as for us, though at some periods clouds have gathered, and dreadful storms have threatened us, still God, in his providence, has wonderfully appeared in our behalf, dissipated those clouds, and prevented the impending storms with which we were threatened: so that we have no experience of the sharpness and severity of persecution for conscience' sake, nor of the temptations which attend a suffering state on account of our profession. But our long ease, increase of wealth, and the great change which these pleasing circumstances, through the corruptions of men's hearts, have introduced in the temper and behavior of numerous professors, have exposed its to temptations no less dangerous and threatening than the sharpest persecution.

And multitudes have been hereby much ensnared. We are waxed fat, we are grown thick, we have forsaken the Lord that made us, and have lightly esteemed the rock of our salvation. What loss of substance, of liberty, of ease, yea of life could not effect, that liberty, affluence, and worldly honor have done, in many among us, viz., rendered them carnal, careless, and loose, both in their principles and conduct; so that now we are but little like them whose descendants we are, in zeal for truth, in love, humility, and mortification to the world. And, these melancholy circumstances are growing upon us more and more. If men are not stark blind, or are not wholly disposed to take no notice of the state of things amongst us, they must be obliged to confess the dreadful truth. And what will be the issue, God only knows. It is very probable such, as very few, if any, have expectation of, or will at present be persuaded will be the result. Our present security in that deplorable condition into which we are sunk in a religious sense, is no symptom in our favor. God hath often brought the severest judgments upon it people, when according to political maxims, they have imagined themselves in the greatest safety. And if his treatment of us should not be such, I am sure it will be entirely owing to sovereign mercy, for our circumstances are of that nature as leave us without any other ground of hope. And how long it may be His pleasure in the dispensations of His Providence to act towards us on that foundation, is a secret in His own breast, and absolutely out of our view. Our times may very justly be esteemed (Xalepoi) difficult, troublesome, and dangerous. For many, who are of the religious character, are manifestly under the influence of such vices as the apostle in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, enumerates. Some are captivated by one, and others by other vices. Some are proud, and others are envious or lovers of themselves, or of pleasures, are heady, high-minded, &c. It is not to be thought that all these vices are found predominant in any man pretending to religion - but take a number of those persons together, who have "a form of godliness," and they fill up this dismal account, or afford matter for this charge in all its branches, sad and heavy as it is. One person is likely to prove an ensnaring temptation to us in one way, and another in some other way ; and such a multiplicity of evil practices among professors, renders a strict watchfulness exceedingly necessary; without it, we shall soon find ourselves in such entanglements as will prove of very bad consequence to our souls. To maintain strictness of walk and conversation, when carelessness, indifference, sloth, and love to the world, with indulgence in those evils, which always accompany such a frame of mind, prevail among professors, is the privilege and happiness of but a few, because it requires more guard upon ourselves, more self-denial, and less conversation with such dangerous companions, than through the treachery of our hearts we are disposed to exercise. Sometimes we , are sooner laughed out of our religion by men of this character, than we are driven out of it, by the fierceness and cruelty of others who persecute us for our profession, but who make none themselves. In my opinion, those who make pretences to religion in words; but in their behaviors are any way irregular, are the most dangerous companions a good man can intimately converse with. Because he may be tempted to think that there is not much evil in this or that irregular practice, through a charitable judgment he forms of the persons addicted to those practices. Familiarity cannot, without great difficulty, be held with loose professors, but to the prejudice of grace in our souls. For, alas! where watchfulness against temptations is wanting, the mind is certainly in a fit frame for falling in with them, as soon and as fast as they offer of what nature so ever they be. And he that is insensible that evil conduct in others, may prove a temptation to the best of us, is unacquainted with the depravity of human nature.

1. Temptations leveled against our faith, by open and avowed enemies, are many. The gospel, since the reformation in England, never met with more violent opposition, in most of its branches, than at this time it does. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity; of the Incarnation of Christ of His obedience to the law for us, in order to our justification before God the great truth of His atonement and satisfaction for sin; the doctrine of the nature, necessity, efficacy, and effect of the Holy Spirit's operations on the minds of men., these all-important truths are the matter of the rude scorn of multitudes. Men seem determined to bear down those principles with supercilious and haughty airs, blustering language, and bold charges of absurdity and nonsense. And, therefore, our adherence to those sacred truths, forfeits in the esteem of these men, our claim to the character of rational, and much more to that of being wise and ingenious : to such a height are their insolence and pride swelled at this day. Formerly those who disbelieved those doctrines, were at no small pains and labor to advance objections against them, many of which were plausible; but now contempt, blasphemous reproach, noise and triumph, are the weapons used to batter down our faith and hope in the blood, righteousness, and grace of our precious Redeemer. The reasoning of the present most celebrated adversaries of evangelical truths, requires no great labor to answer. Impertinence, set off with the advantage of confidence and effrontery, is to do the execution intended. And it is not a little surprising how far this end is answered by that bluster which these men make. It is also very observable that they are exceedingly lavish in their complaints one to another, and liberally bestow encomiums one on another for their endeavors this way. And infidels seem to have learned this art of demolishing revelation, by sneer and banter upon it, rather than by advancing objections against it, in a sober manner, like real inquirers after truth. And yet they put on the grimace of being passionately in love with truth, whenever and wherever they can discover it. While they pretend to be absolutely divested of all prepossession and prejudice, and to follow wherever reason leads, without the least reluctance, they give glaring evidence of their having thrown off all awe of God and regard to impartial reason too, in the manner of their treating inspired persons, their writings, and the doctrines which they have delivered. And by these unfair and unreasonable methods, they have been able to turn off many from a religious regard to the sacred pages; and have taught them to admire themselves for being profanely witty on what is sacred.

II. The secret enemies of divine truth are numerous'. front whom many temptations arise.

1. Men of this character, especially if they are ministers, very rarely are open and frank in declaring their sentiments. They choose to lie concealed as to their notions, until such time as they have been able to ingratiate themselves into the good opinion of those whom they intend to bring over to their sentiments. And very watchful they are, for every opportunity and advantage which may offer that are favorable to their design, nor will they fail of improving them to the utmost. Doctrines which they have no relish for, it may be some in their congregations firmly believe; and therefore they dare not, at once, and in a plain manner, deny them ; but by Long silence about them, and now and then advancing principles not consistent with them, they insensibly instill them into the minds of their hearers, and draw them off from that regard they once paid to those other principles. It is very sad what Influence such conduct hath had, and still hath in many places I had almost said to the total subversion of Christianity. And in others this sort of demeanor is very likely to be productive of the same dreadful effects. May the good Lord have mercy upon His churches, and preserve them from being seduced by these men who lie in wait to deceive. If Christians are not

excited to watchfulness against them, by their insinuations and address, whereof they are perfect masters, they will be in great danger of being drawn aside. For these men are qualified for that kind of disservice to the, church of God, whereunto they have devoted themselves, and unto which they direct all their studies.

2. This sort of persons frequently declaim much against controversy in religion and against insisting on controverted points; because as they are pleased to say, that tends to fill men's heads with niceties and speculative notions, which have no great influence on their morals to make them better. And that it is certainly best to treat on plain and practical subjects, which are calculated to promote holiness. By this means they bring, their hearers to be content without discourses on the important truths of the gospel, until at length they become indifferent about them, and greatly prejudiced against them. Then,

3. The fit time being come for them to be open and unreserved, they then throw off the mask, and can dare to enter upon the stage of controversy, and with downright blows oppose those doctrines they never believed.; but till now were shy of letting it be known. Now they become zealous defenders of the principles, which before they but whispered softly in the ears of some trusty friends. In this their success they glory, as if it was a very honorable achievement. Let them expect their reward from Him, whose Servants they pretend to be.

III. Many persons carefully avoid the use of some terms and phrases, by which the most important doctrines of Christianity are expressed. For instance, You shall never hear them use the terms eternal, nor infinite, concerning our blessed Saviour, when they speak of Him ; this silence about His eternity and infinity hath the effect intended, that is to say, it brings men to be unconcerned whether he is eternal or infinite, or no! Whether He always was, or once was not ? Whether He is in His powers and perfections, unlimited or limited'? In a word, whether He is God or a creature only.

Others, they decline the use of the terms sovereign and discriminating, when they speak of the grace of God. Grace, free grace, exuberant, boundless grace, are epithets they choose, and they are very serviceable, for some take them in a different sense from what they intend, which they like very well while others understand them in their true sense; and so persons of different apprehensions on the subject of divine grace, are content with the artful preacher. But for never so much would he be prevailed with to use a mode of speech expressive of the absolute freedom and discriminating nature of the love of God to men.

*Farther, the terms elect, election, predestinate, predestination, are with many grown obsolete; although they are Scriptural terms. The use of these terms is laid aside, it may be, lest some persons should be offended who disrelish the doctrine of predestination and where that is the case, you may be assured the doctrine is not opened and inculcated ; though it is the basis and origin of our salvation from misery. And by this means people become almost strangers to that doctrine, and many contract great prejudices against it.

Moreover, the use of the tern-is absolute and unconditional justification is discontinued. The righteousness and sacrifice of Christ are, it may be allowed, an influence into our pardon and justification ; but something must be performed by its in order to an interest in, or title to the benefits arising from His obedience and death; and this performance is not wholly owing to the

operation of divine grace on our souls. Which is nothing better than the Popish doctrine of justification. But how sadly are some well-meaning people imposed on by this cunning of the preacher. They think his meaning is, that the blood and righteousness of Christ are the sole and entire causes of our remission and acceptation with God : whereas the artful preacher is at a great distance from any such meaning.

Again. the terms irresistible and effectual grace, are never heard. Aids, assistances, operations of grace, and divine impulses, are spoken of with great freedom. By this means, some who ascribe the whole of their Regeneration to the grace and spirit of God, are persuaded to think that so the preacher means; but it is wholly a mistake; and he has others about him who are well aware of it, and applaud his imposing art. They are fully sensible that he intends no more than this, that God assists us in turning from sin to Him; and that our choice of holiness is from ourselves. without the determining influence of divine grace upon our wills in that choice. And so the preacher gives satisfaction to the unwary Calvinist, and the Arminian also.

I add, these persons cautiously decline the use of the term merit ; but the doctrine of merit they are advocates for, in that sense wherein it was understood by Popish writers. They disclaim merit of condignity; but maintain the doctrine of merit of congruity. That is to say, though they deny that, in strict justice, men merit favors at the hand of God; still they plead that it is fit that persons so and so qualified should become entitled to those blessings which are conditionally procured by the death and sacrifice of Christ. And thus, without the use of the term, they effectually propagate the doctrine of merit; and in that. sense which the greatest adversaries of the grace of God towards men have desired it might be maintained. For no man, who acknowledges that human nature is ruined by sin, can ever contend for merit in a higher sense. Thus we have lost the chief glory of the Reformation, and the very life and soul of Popery greatly flourishes amongst us, to our great scandal and the satisfaction of the Romanists. This is the dreadful condition of a multitude of those who pass under the denomination Protestant Dissenters. And what will be the issue of these things, the Lord only knows. May we be prepared for the worst. Some terrible dispensations we may justly fear will befall us in our present situation, it is so exceedingly bad; nor is there any room, as yet, to hope for an amendment in our circumstances.

Another instance of the art of these persons is, they speak with great contempt concerning schemes and schematics, This is done with a design of broaching some erroneous opinions, without being called to an account; and for advancing principles inconsistent with the analogy of faith. Through the weakness and inadvertency of some, and the supine ness of others, this artifice, absurd as it is in itself, hath answered the intention of those who have used it in many instances. For they have been suffered to vent opinions contrary to the common faith of Christians, without any rebuke or check- from some, because they would not seem to be bigoted to any particular scheme or party. These artful men must know that religious principles are linked together and compose a scheme, notwithstanding they speak against schemes in religion and against religious schematics.

Thus the desired and intended effect hath been followed in many places by a total neglect of those Solid and glorious truths wherewith the hearts of Christians formerly were warmed, and by whose kindly influence upon them, they meekly, patiently, and courageously suffered reproach, and almost all manner of evils, lived comfortably, holily, and died triumphantly even in the midst of

flames. Add to these things, much art is used to persuade us that this and tile other doctrine is not necessary to be believed, in order to salvation. With some, not the doctrine of Christ's Deity. With others, not His satisfaction, at least as proper, full, and ascertaining peace, pardon, and eternal salvation. With others, not the doctrine of justification by his righteousness. With others, not the doctrine of effectual and efficacious grace. Nay, with some, it is not thought absolutely necessary to believe that Jesus was the Messiah promised. They seem to think salvation is possible to an unbelieving Jew, provided that he is but honest and sincere. Indeed it is well if he hath not as much of Christianity in him as they have.

Once more, there is all opinion prevailing which is of a dangerous nature to the souls of men, dishonorable to God, and naturally tends to lessen our regard to the merit of a Saviour's blood, viz., that God is a benevolent merciful Being, and will make all reasonable allowances for the imperfections and follies of life. Are these moral imperfections? Are these sinful follies? If they be, what allowance is it reasonable for infinite rectitude and purity to make for our being guilty of such imperfections and such follies? The supposition of the reasonableness of any such allowances, is a horrid reproach to the holiness and justice of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. May my soul eternally detest the thought. Is not this likely to beget light thoughts of sin in the minds of men? Doth it not tend to cause them to imagine that the remission of such offences is no great matter? Who will think themselves much concerned to look to the blood of Christ for the pardon of such small and unavoidable offences? But this is a foundation, it seems, whereon some lay a considerable stress: although it agrees neither with the religion of nature, nor yet with the religion of Jesus; nothing like it is contained either in the law or in the gospel of Christ. A deceased minister of the Independent denomination, says, "My greatest concern is to have rational and solid expectations of future happiness. I would not be mistaken nor build on the sand; but would impress my mind with a firm belief of the certainty of the future world, and live in a practical preparation for it. I rely very much on the rational notions we have of the moral perfections of God, not only as a just, but a benevolent and merciful Being; who knows our frame, and will make all reasonable allowances for our imperfections and follies in life; and not only so, but upon our repentance and faith in Christ, will pardon our past sins, though never so many and great." Part of a Letter from Mr. Neal to Dr. Miles, of Tooting; as quoted by Dr. Jennings, in his Funeral Sermon for Mr. Neal. The law makes no allowances for our defects and foibles; and the gospel gives us no ground to hope for the pardon of any sin, but through the atoning blood of the Son of God. Every imperfection and every act of folly, exposes us to the just condemnation of the law; and the blood of Christ alone procures our deliverance from that condemnation. To this cause we owe the remission of our smaller and greater transgressions. No sin at all, is pardoned, but upon the foundation of Christ's atonement. Nothing more contrary to the strictness and purity of the law, and to the grace and justice of God in the gospel, can be advanced than this, that the remission of our lesser offences is an effect of divine benevolence and clemency, without respect to the blood of Christ as the meritorious cause thereof. Besides, salvation is not an effect of what is called benevolence and mercy in God; which we are supposed to have rational notions of, distinct from the Christian revelation, and whereon that is thought to be built. It is the result of mere sovereignty. God saves not sinners, because it was fit and proper he should save them, but because it was His pleasure. And consequently evangelical discoveries are not built upon, and super-added to our rational notions of God. Those discoveries are absolutely now, and in their nature wholly distinct from those truths which the Scripture contains, relating to sin and sinners.

Natural religion is no other than the doctrine of the covenant Of works. That covenant promises the enjoyment of good to the innocent creature; but it threatens the transgressor with death and eternal misery, and it leaves him in that condition into which his guilt hath plunged him, without any foundation of hope of a deliverance from sin and its dreadful consequences. According to that covenant, nothing is to be expected from our righteous Judge; but curse, wrath, vengeance, and fiery indignation to devour us. And therefore it is most false that the new covenant is built upon and super-added to any natural or rational notions we can have of God in His moral perfections. The measure and rule of our natural notions of God, is the law that is the religion of nature in its purity and perfection. And what is there in the law which only promises life and happiness to the innocent creature, and denounces vengeance and everlasting death to the sinner, that can furnish us with the least hope of the pardon of sin, and of the welfare of criminals? Nothing at all. Believer let me entreat thee to beware of this pernicious doctrine, which is nothing but a corruption of the religion of nature; and is falsely said to be the religion of Jesus. In fact, it is most remote from it. The Christian religion is not a diminution of the glory, authority, and extent of the law, in order to our recovery; but a full and effectual provision for its honor, in all its branches in our pardon and salvation. Better it were ten thousand times that we should perish for ever, according to our desert, than that any slur should be cast on the holiness and justice of God in that way whereby our recovery is brought about. If once we imagine that our imperfections and unavoidable weaknesses in the present state, are pardoned, or that allowances are made for them by divine benevolence and mercy, otherwise than on the foundation of the blood-shedding and sacrifice of Christ, we shall soon conceit that there is less, far less of evil in those imperfections and foibles than in fact there is, and that the remission of them is a thing to be expected as of course. And, therefore, that sorrow, humiliation, and self-abhorrence for them will not be found in us, which certainly ought to be. This is the common doctrine of our corrupt times.

IV. Some act a neutral part, -appear on no side you cannot tell whether they are of this, or of the contrary opinion. This sort of persons have ends to answer, which are pleasing to themselves; and sometimes their views are accomplished, and when they are they congratulate themselves on the happy success of their caution and prudence, and look upon some others with contempt, for their folly in entering on the defense of unpopular opinions, whereby they have fixed an odium on their characters, and rendered themselves unacceptable to many who hold the others in admiration. But how do those persons endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, who decline coming into the field, and not dare to meet an enemy of His in the gate, lest they become sufferers by it in their reputation or secular advantage ? I am sure these are not times wherein we can please men in general, and preserve the character of faithful servants to Christ. Opposition to His gospel is now become too common to allow of that. Through this neutrality of some, the interest of sacred truth declines, and erroneous doctrines are propagated without any check in many places. Those who think them selves concerned in matters of this nature, must in some measure be apprized of the truth of what is declared.

Many temptations attend us which are very likely to have all ill influence oil our minds, relating to real holiness and the power of religion. The effect of a neglect of the doctrines of the Reformation, and embracing of contrary principles, hath not been such as it was pretended would follow that change of opinion. Holiness has declined in proportion to the degree of that alteration of sentiments. Let men pretend what they please, a departure from those principles will never be

followed with good effects in the minds and morals of mankind. We are as far departed from that purity of conversation, which was the honor of the Reformers, as we are gone off from their faith.

1. A mistaken notion of holiness is now become general. Men imagine that to be holiness which is not so ; and, consequently, they are content without it, and conceit they have it ; but in fact they are ignorant of it and enemies unto it. Morality is thought to be holiness; and evangelical obedience is not accounted necessary. Hence, self-applause is maintained in such whose minds are void of true grace.

Regularity of conduct is esteemed all that is necessary to future welfare. Regeneration is so stated as will necessarily lead us to conclude that it is a change whereof some have no need; and that they cannot be the subjects of it for, if it is no more than a reformation from vice and a dissolute course of life, which many affirm. it is not, the sober virtuous part of mankind have always been what a regenerate person is supposed to be, and therefore they cannot pass under that change. As, for faith in Christ, or a dependence on His blood and righteousness for pardon of sin, and acceptance with God, love to His person, delight in His presence, and a cheerful obedience to Him, arising from a sense of His saving benefits, they are things which have no other existence than in the imagination of mistaken minds, in the opinion of many. This is an open renunciation of all Christianity, and leaves us no other religion than that of corrupt nature somewhat improved, and reinforced at the best by those moral precepts and positive rites, strip of all their importance and significance in the writings of the New Testament. These men are blind leaders of the blind, and unless God mercifully prevents it, those who lead, and those who are led by them, will both fall into the ditch; for they are entirely unacquainted with the nature of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. It is a vain imagination that morality is that purity which the Christian religion requires as necessary to happiness; without we have more than that, nothing is more certain than our eternal ruin. But when evangelical doctrines are given up, gospel holiness and obedience must be rejected as imaginary things; and, therefore, those who deny the precious truths of atonement of sin by the death of Christ, justification by His righteousness, and the necessity of the effectual operations of His Spirit on the souls of men, to make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, they act consistently in rejecting the Scriptural account of holiness; for that cannot be supported without granting the truth of the principles on which it is built, which are those mentioned with others of the like nature. Take away the object of that faith which purifies the heart, and you necessarily destroy the very notion of its being ; for that is a mere nullity, if its object is removed ; and if the grace of faith exists not, holiness, which is supposed to spring from it, can have no real existence ; and, consequently, we must sink into bare morality, and the Christian religion can be no more, no other, than a refinement of natural religion from corruption, and a reinforcement of it, which some of these men say it is: others of them are more upon their guard, they mean the same, but will not own it.

2. A selfish and worldly disposition hath taken deep root in the mind, and discovers itself in the conduct of many professors. The interest of this world engrosses so much of the thoughts, desires, affections, and time, of numerous persons under a profession, that religion can come in but for a very small portion of either. And, some whose business of life is so very urgent upon them, that they cannot spare a few hours from it to attend on the worship of God; are able to devote whole days, now and then, to recreation and diversion from that fatigue and hurry. And how many rack their invention to form schemes for increasing their earthly store, who scarcely are at the expense

of a serious thought in what way they may promote the interest of truth, religion, or holiness, either in themselves or others! If this is not the case, why are meetings appointed for transacting the affairs of Christ in His house, so slenderly attended as they be; and occasional assemblies so seldom favored with the presence of some, who no doubt could give their attendance, at least oftener than they do, if lukewarmness, and love to the world and the things of it, were not the cause of their absence many times? Unto such a height is this pursuit after the world grown in many, that it proves matter of discouragement to some, who are inclined not to pursue this world in such a manner as to leave no room for attending to things of infinitely greater moment. In a word, such are our circumstances, as to many, that, if a part of one day in seven, was not appointed to the service of God, I cannot tell whether any portion of time would be spent by them in divine service or not in a public way. When will the Sabbath and new, moon be over, that we may buy and sell, and get gain? " seems to be the inward thought of too many. Not only so, but other practices also discover this frame to have possession in the minds of many professors, which are sad blots upon their characters, and furnish the enemies of religion with abundant matter of reproach.

3. With many there is very little of self-denial as to carnal pleasures. This is found among those who are of advanced circumstances. Their affluence is dreadfully abused in the gratification of vain desires, and it seems as if it was without remorse. They can act as the world, and run in the same circle of vanity as they do. And such who do not choose to conform to the world, are the objects of their contempt on that account. Strictness of conversation, and separation from carnal men in the course of their conduct, is laughed at as needless scrupulosity and a foolish squeamishness. Men have long proposed to indulge themselves in sinful delights, and in the issue to lie down in safety but it will never be ; God forbid it ever should be. He must lay aside His righteousness and justice, if the end of these ways is peace.

4. But few are careful to keep up family worship. There is reason to fear that it is very rarely practiced, by many who would be thought to be Christians. They have not time to give. God thanks for the mercies of the day, to confess their sins to Him, and in treat His protection in the night, in the presence of their children and servants. This was not always the case. Professors formerly did not behave themselves in this manner. We are much degenerated in our conduct, and shall we wonder if we have lost our comforts? That is nothing strange, it cannot be with us otherwise than it is, so long as we continue to behave in the manner we do. And thus it is with many of every denomination among us.

5. Another thing which is greatly to be lamented, is a trifling and vain conversation almost universally prevails among professors. The subjects of our converse are the affairs of this world, or what is far worse, evanid pleasures, which taint our minds and. affections. Scarcely ever have we anything to say of God, of Jesus Christ, of the precious truths relating to Him, which are the life, comfort, and joy, of Christians now, and will be the matter of their contemplation for ever, when they shall have done with this world and all things in it. The motives to caution and watchfulness, lest we enter into, or be surprised by temptations of any kind, are many. I shall mention some :

1. Our dear Saviour gives us this advice Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." We cannot doubt of His kind intention therein, since we have such incontestable evidences of the reality and strength of his affection to us. Love always consults the good and welfare of its objects ; and,

therefore, it must be concluded, that our Lord designed our advantage in this advice. He will never abridge us, either of liberty or pleasures, which we may enjoy without injury to ourselves and dishonor to His Father and ours also, through rich grace. Shall we then fail heedfully to attend to His counsel? If we do, we shall have sad occasion to bewail our folly in that matter. It is well for those who have not had cause to confess the truth of this, from sorrowful experience.

2. If we consider the tendency of temptations, we shall see reason to shun them. They are many of them leveled against our faith, as has been observed. If we do not watch against temptations of that sort, we shall insensibly abate in our religious regard to those important truths, from whence we derive all our spiritual peace, joy, and consolation ; the consequence of which will be leanness of soul. Some, who seemed once to have a delightful savour of the precious truths of the gospel, through a want of this necessary caution, are moved from their steadfastness, and are seeking for comfort in such a way as they will never find it in this world and on a foundation which will not support their hopes in a dying hour, of the enjoyment of happiness in the next. Let us watch and pray, that we may not thus be shaken in our regards to those momentous principles, which have been sweeter to our souls than the honey, and the honeycomb. Again, let us consider what is the tendency of the temptations which attend us, relating unto an abatement of strictness in our conversation and walk. The sorrowful effects of them we may see in many ; and if we have no experience of their baneful influence on ourselves, it is owing unto sovereign grace and mercy, which hath preserved us in the midst of so many dangerous snares that have been laid to entrap our feet in our Christian pilgrimage. Let us be so wise as to learn caution where there is danger, by the damage others have sustained through a want thereof; and be persuaded of the truth of this, without making the experiment, that we are as liable as others to suffer in our best interest, by being imprudently free with occasions of sin.

3. Let us consider well the treachery of our own hearts. They are full of lusts which are always ready to fall in with evil temptations of any kind. and, therefore, ought by no means to be trusted in dalliances with those objects, which in temptation are presented to the mind. If we are so foolish as to place any confidence in them, and flatter ourselves, that the temptation we may be under shall not carry us any great length, in that we shall contract great guilt ; and it will be much if the flesh exceeds not those limits which in the beginning of the temptation it prescribed to itself For whatever it pretends unto of that nature, its evil desires are, in fact, boundless. And, therefore, we may with as much safety trust gunpowder within the reach of fire, as our deceitful hearts with temptations. This is a cogent motive to watchfulness and prayer, to be kept by the power of God in these perilous times. If we are insensible of our danger through the want of necessary consideration, we shall not walk circumspectly, and it may be, that may be followed with such effects as we shall have just reason to bewail and mourn on account of, so long as we have breath. That which is the case of some others may possibly become ours, if we, like them, should be so mad as to sport with folly. For, what are we more than others in ourselves? Nothing, as to holiness and strength against temptations.

4. We shall do well to consider what influence temptation hath had over the minds of some eminent saints; and what bitter effects it produced when they were left under its power. It evidently appears that persons most spiritual will fall an easy conquest to temptation, if they are not upheld by powerful grace when under it. If some have been overcome by the force of it, who have given evidence of being subjects of such a measure of holiness and grace, as not any, I think, will

presume to compare with them therein, but such who have great reason to conclude that they have none at all; how cautious ought we to be, that we enter not into temptation ! and what necessity of strict watchfulness is there, since we are surrounded with so great a variety of temptations, and such as arise from the conversation of some of all sorts of persons, and to whom it would even be a pleasure, to prevail with us to act as they themselves do, to the dishonor of Christ and the reproach of His gospel; for our corrupt times are not without professors of such an abominable and diabolical disposition as that is. They are loose in their behavior, and they like to see others so too.

01.12. Of Holy and Spiritual Communion With God

CHAPTER XII. OF HOLY AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNION WITH GOD.

It is evident that communion and fellowship hath always subsisted between God and His saints. In every age He hath graciously condescended to give them intimations of His favor. Old-Testament believers enjoyed this inestimable privilege. We often meet with such modes of speech in the writings of the prophets as put this matter out of all doubt, and raise it far above modest objection, though the terms communion and fellowship are not used: what we intend by them for substance, is clearly and plentifully expressed. God lifted up the light of His countenance upon his people. Made His face to shine upon them. He granted to them the Joys of His salvation. The Sun, of Righteousness arose upon them with healing in His wings. God by His favor made their mountain to stand strong, and many other expressions equivalent to these, which convey no other idea than what is intended by communion with Him. And, By this communion is designed, a spiritual perception of the glory of God in the Mediator Jesus Christ; and a comfortable sense of divine love to the soul, which begets holy joy, adoration, and an humble trust in the Lord. And it is the gracious sovereign pleasure of each divine Person thus to manifest Himself to the saints, and to encourage them to put forth acts of faith and hope on Him, agreeably to that part He bears in their eternal salvation : which communion is founded on the new covenant, or covenant of grace. For God cannot have any fellowship with the violators of the covenant of works, on the foundation of that covenant. The reasons are these :-according to that covenant He holds them guilty. They have transgressed the terms of it, and, therefore, they must in relation to that covenant, be considered as guilty persons. And the nature of it allows of no familiarity and friendship between God and the guilty creature. It denounces a curse against sinners. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." They are obnoxious to divine wrath and vengeance. All title to divine favor is forfeited irrecoverably, and that for ever, according to the first covenant ; and man is liable to eternal misery in a separation from God. Divine righteousness inflexibly requires a satisfaction to be made, if the sinner re-enjoys communion with God. The old way of enjoying nearness to God is entirely cut of by sin. It is impossible that the person of a sinner can be accepted with God, by virtue of or according to a covenant by which he stands condemned in His sight. The acceptance of the person of man with God, was the foundation whereon he drew near to Him in the old covenant; and, therefore, as his crime rendered his person unacceptable to his Maker, it will be an eternal bar to his enjoyment of divine fellowship on the ground of the covenant of works. The new covenant is a gracious provision for the remission of our guilt, and the acceptance of our persons, in such a way as was wholly unknown to the old covenant. Now, as spiritual converse with God is founded upon the acceptance of our persons with Him, it necessarily follows, that our justification in His sight is prior, in order of nature at least, unto our enjoyment of a sense of His favor. I have thought, that it is in order of time, as well as in order of nature, prior thereunto; and I have not yet met with anything which convinces me of a mistake in that matter, and, as I suppose, I never shall. But however that be, I am persuaded that all such must allow that the acceptance of the person through the obedience and sacrifice of Christ, is prior in order of

nature to gracious communion with God, who embrace the doctrine of the new covenant, because that follows upon and can never precede justification in His sight, either according to the old or the new covenant.

Acceptation with God is the ground of communion with Him. In the new covenant an immovable and everlasting foundation is laid for our enjoying fellowship with God.

1. He unalterably wills and engages to be our God, our Father, and our Friend. " I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." This resolution, engagement, and promise, wholly springs from sovereign goodness, grace, and mercy, which is a never-failing source of good to our poor souls. Oh ! believer, thou mayest view this origin of thy blessedness with holy triumph, in the midst of all dangers and distresses, which at any time surround and invade thee. For, as it is not the effect of any external cause, nothing can move God to recede from this infinitely merciful purpose, nor bring Him to violate this gracious and free engagement to thee in Christ thy Head, in this covenant, which is ordered in all things, and sure, It is astonishing goodness, that, such a solid and firm foundation should be laid for our lasting, yea, everlasting communion with God, who so justly deserve to be eternally driven by avenging justice, from His presence.

2. God promises to pardon all our sins. Guilt is an effectual bar to our enjoyment of a sense of God's favor in the first covenant ; but it is not so in the new, because remission is promised therein; and a gracious method is provided for the removal and expiation of our sins, though they be many, great, and dreadfully aggravated. The language of God in this covenant is, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." It is on this foundation that grace is communicated in our regeneration; and on this ground it is, that all supplies of grace are conveyed to our souls afterwards to maintain that good work in us. The blood of this covenant cleanses from guilt contracted after conversion, otherwise the saints would be deprived of the benefit of communion with God; and instead of a comfortable sense of His favor, they would inevitably come under His terrible displeasure.

3. He graciously justifies their persons. They are "justified freely by His grace." And that is by the sovereign appointment of Christ's righteousness to be theirs, and the gracious imputation of that righteousness unto them. That He saves sinners is the greatest wonder we shall ever be acquainted with; but it is in such a way as magnifies the law, and makes it honorable. And, therefore, in this appointment He takes infinite delight. He is well pleased for Christ's righteousness' sake; and that everlasting righteousness is the everlasting foundation of the saints' communion with God. Their justification is the ground of their present communion with their heavenly Father, and of their most near fellowship with Him in the future state. Whom He justifies, them He also glorifies." All our approaches unto God ought to be on this foundation, as our admission into heaven will be solely on this ground. Let us make mention only of the righteousness of our dear Saviour, when we draw near to our covenant God and Father; for in that alone He accepts of our persons; and because of that only it is that He delights in and holds communion with us while we are in this state of distance from His heavenly court, the seat of His immediate presence.

These precious truths are necessary to be well settled in our minds, as to our persuasion and spiritual understanding of them. If we are not convinced of them, if we discern not their importance and glory, if we acquiesce not in them, we shall find it impossible to think of an approach unto God,

under a sense of guilt, pollution, and unworthiness, with the least measure of satisfaction, or boldness and liberty of mind ; nor can we form any expectation and hope of God's meeting with and blessing us, except on these principles. Sinful men miserably cheat their own souls, who hope to enjoy an interview with God here, or hereafter, to their joy, who reject this new way of fellowship with Him. Death, misery, and eternal woe will be the consequence of such rejection, if it is final. Life, peace, consolation, and blessedness, are only to be received and enjoyed in the new and living way, which is peculiar to the new covenant. And, since a foundation is laid for lasting, yea, eternal friendship between God and our souls, how ought we to admire and adore His free grace, whose basis this is, and all the blessings that thereon rest!

First, The saints enjoy communion with God the Father. He is their Father in Christ. The affection He hath unto them, and the familiarity he permits them to use with Him, are suitable to a character so tender and expressive of kindness, compassion, and care.

1. They have communion with Him in His love, which is,

1. Eternal, and not of late date. All the transient acts of that love are in time, but itself is from eternity. Christ the Head was the object of the Father's love before the foundation of the world ; and His people also as early were objects of His love. For the "Father hath loved them as he hath loved Christ: because He loved them with an everlasting love, therefore he draws them, with loving-kindness. Their present existence is not necessary to an existence in divine love, nor to any of the immanent acts of that love towards them, such as the choice of them to eternal salvation is, &c. Those whom God from the beginning chose to salvation, He loved. As for that logical axiom, that a nonentity, or what is not, cannot be the subject of any affection, in divinity, and as applied to God's eternal acts of favor towards His people, it is no better than learned nonsense, which, if admitted, would overthrow the whole ground of our salvation. The certain future existence of the persons beloved and chosen to eternal salvation is plainly supposed, but not their present being in either of those acts. Divine love was fixed on the human nature of Christ before its actual subsistence, and divine favour was placed on the persons of all the elect before all of them really existed, yea, before time commenced. And, as to the common objection, that then God must love His people in their sins, it is of no weight at all. What the objection expresses is true; if not, no design of saving them from their sins had ever been formed in the mind, nor would any divine acts have ever been put forth in order to that end. The distinction of God's loving their persons, and hating their sins, is easy and just. Besides, God's approbation of the work of grace in believers, is not his love to their persons, but it is quite of a distinct consideration from that love he bears to their persons. In general, professors are grown weary of the doctrine of God's everlasting love, and will scarcely allow of the mention of it, through I know not how many groundless fears, of ill consequences following upon it, which carnal and corrupt reason suggests. That our depraved nature may abuse this doctrine, I am sensible; and I also know, that it will take occasion to sin even from the commandment; but I do not think it is proper, on these accounts, to part with, either the law, or the gospel. Let not the children of God neglect His favor, because the children of the devil may dare to abuse the evangelical revelation of it, unto the just damnation of their souls.

II. Divine love is sovereign. God's approbation of the innocent creature, is according to right ; justice requires it ; but love to a guilty creature, must be an act of sovereignty. Right hath no place in that matter ; it certainly is an act of God's free will, without all direction from justice. He loves not

sinful men, because it is fit and proper for him to love them ; but because He WILL, and for no other reason. He hath mercy, because He will have mercy; and he hath compassion, because he will have compassion. As there is nothing in Deity, whereunto our cursed nature is more opposite than divine sovereignty; so there is nothing in God, which true grace more cheerfully submits unto, and more humbly adores: Its language is, "Even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight."

3. The love of God is immense. His grace is, as He Himself is, absolutely without limits. The riches of divine mercy and goodness, in number far exceed the sand on the sea shore. Hence we read of the "Multitude of His tender mercies, of the riches of His grace, and of the exceeding riches of His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." These epithets are expressive of the boundless nature of divine love to the elect. And as such attributions are given unto it, so such acts and benefits arise from it, as will own no other than infinite mercy for their cause, viz., an eternal decree in God, to bring unworthy creatures to the enjoyment of the highest good and glory, their nature is capable of possessing, which was an act of the richest mercy and grace. Again, God has given us His Son, and His Spirit ; grace and glory ; nothing that is good divine love withholds from us, Since the grace of God bestows upon us what is in its nature most valuable, and even that to the utmost capacity of our enjoying it; certainly it is in itself infinitely beyond our comprehension. We can as soon span the heavens, and grasp the earth, as form adequate ideas of that love, which is the fountain of our salvation and blessedness. And, yet how backward are we to receive what God freely gives, and kindly invites us to take at His hand, because we are conscious to ourselves of great unworthiness ? Whereas, the bestowment of those favors, would not be grace, but only liberality, if we were the subjects of fitness moving, to the communication of them. We sometimes say within ourselves, when we are conversant about spiritual blessings, and our souls desire a participation of them : " Alas ! these are favors my unworthiness forbids me to hope for the enjoyment of. Surely it will be deemed presumption, in such a one as I am, to hope for benefits of so glorious and exalted a nature." When we thus reason, we dishonor the grace of God, whose glory consists in conferring the most eminent blessings on the most unworthy. Never do we honor God so much as when lying in the dust, at His foot-stool, under a sense of our own vileness, we appropriate to ourselves the richest blessings his grace bestows, being encouraged thereunto by an apprehension of the absolute freedom with which they are given. Rich grace has not thought them too great to give, and we ought not to think them too great for us to expect, and hope for the enjoyment of.

4. The love of God is immutable. If its nature admitted of change, it might cease : and the cessation of divine love would be the drying up of the fountain, from whence spring all our life, peace, comfort, and joy. But this can never be. Love, which hath a beginning, may possibly have an end. But favor, which never began, will never, never end. God's love to his people, no more commenced, than His existence ; nor will it cease, alter, or abate, any more than His being will discontinue. When he ceases to love His saints, He will cease to be. He intends to assure us of this most interesting truth, when He declares of Himself, that He is love. " God is love." Greater ground of security we need not, nor can have, than this is.

5. Divine love is inseparable. Immutability supposes the endless duration, and the equality of its intenseness at all times, without any variation. Its inseparableness seems to point out the absolute impossibility of any change, which may take place in the state, circumstances, or frames of those who are the objects of it, dividing them from that love. "Nothing shall separate us from the love of

God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." As it will never decline, nor cease of itself, because its own nature is unchanging; so no temptation, (shall I say it ? I will, and pronounce it boldly too) nor sin shall ever divide the saints from the love of God in Christ ; "nor things present, nor things to come," whatever those things may be, and are. In one word, nothing which can come within the reach of language, or even imagination, shall divide believers from the heart of their heavenly Father.

Now, to have communion with God in His love, is to discern the nature of it, and act faith upon it, as it is revealed in the holy Scripture. Hence the apostle John says, " we have known and believed the love that God hath unto us." Sometimes the saints are chiefly conversant about it in its properties, and rejoice and triumph in its eternity, sovereignty, immensity,, immutability, and in the inseparableness of its nature. The Holy Spirit places them at the shore of this boundless infathomable ocean, and enables them to take a very far extended prospect of it, whereby their souls are possessed with delight, wonder, and adoration. He causes them to approach to that throne with pleasure, mixed with awe and reverence, from which this " river of the water of life proceeds; and its rise, numerous streams, and constant flow, fill them with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Sometimes they are delightfully engaged in viewing the great and manifold effects of divine love effects which could only spring from such a cause, as they know it to be by the prospects they have been favored with of its properties and nature, and both excite their praise, their joy, and their astonishment; and their hearts feel a holy flame of love kindled towards God. " We love Him because He first loved us." Divine love manifested to our souls, never fails to produce a holy, sincere, and cordial affection unto God. His love to us is the powerful and irresistible attractive of our love to Him. The reason why we love Him no more than we do, is, because we are no more conversant with His infinite love to us. The grace of love in us increases, or, declines as we exercise faith on divine love in a higher or lower degree.

II. The saints enjoy communion with God in His counsels and purposes concerning their salvation. That design was an impenetrable secret in the divine mind. No created understanding could ever have discovered it. What grace purposes, and acts in favor of sinners, natural reason could never have so much as conjectured. This secret is with, them who fear the Lord, and He shews unto them His covenant. His "deep things" He reveals to believers by his Spirit; and He gives them the knowledge of those things which are freely given unto them of God.

Secondly, Intimacy, and fellowship is maintained between Christ and the church.. His relation to the Saints is the ground of His communion with them: they are His brethren, His children, His bride, His members, bone of his bone flesh of his flesh. If, therefore, friendship should not subsist between Him and them, the great end of their union would not be answered; and the characters He wears would sink into empty and insignificant titles. In the book of Solomon's Song, that intimacy and intercourse which Christ and the church hold with mutual delight and pleasure, is represented in a most lively and affecting manner.

Some of the church's expressions of Christ's beauty rise so high, and some parts of her language relating to her affection unto Him are so strong, as might induce us to conclude that it is designed as a representation of fellowship between Christ and her in heaven, rather than of their mutual friendship in the present state ; but that there are some other things said and acted by the church, which will by no means allow us to understand it in that light, viz., her acknowledgment of her

blackness: " Look not upon me because I am black: I am black but comely, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." Which she will have no ground to say of herself when arrayed with shining robes of glory, and actually become the subject of holiness unblameable in the presence of her heavenly Father. And we find her conduct in some instances was such towards her Beloved as it can never be when she is taken by Him into His immediate presence. She was backward of receiving Him when He condescended to wait upon her, and in melting moving language called her to give Him entrance, Song of Solomon 5:1-16. Besides, sometimes, we find her sadly bewailing the loss of His presence, which she will have no cause for in heaven; there she will always have Him in her view, she will ever be near Him, and without any interruption hold the most sweet and delightful communion with Him. Add to these considerations, she was not in her present condition above the grieving censures and unfriendly rebukes of such, whose character and work required in them a very different behavior towards her. "The watchmen that went about the city found me; they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me." These things forbid our understanding this book as a representation of that communion which subsists in the heavenly world between Christ and the church ; and, consequently, even here, believers may enjoy very clear views of Christ's glory, they may be filled with a ravishing sense of His love to them and delight in them; and their hearts may glow with ardent affection to Him. The church describes the beauties of the person of Christ ; asserts her interest in Him, and His in her. She expresses a vehement desire of His presence, and the delight she took in His company. Again, she declares her enjoyment of it. And Christ, on His part, represents her beauty. Declares to her that she was the object of His love, delight, and complacency. He kindly invites her to come into His company, acquaints her that He desires to see her face and hear her voice, that her beauties ravished His heart. And that He valued none but her : or that none but she was the object of His affection and love.

Thirdly, The saints enjoy communion with the blessed Spirit. The part He bears in the economy of our salvation is, in general, the sanctification of our souls. For, we are" chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit." His office, and work, is to reveal and apply to us what the Father hath given to us in the everlasting covenant. which is " all our salvation and all out, desire," and is what Christ hath obtained for us by His obedience and the oblation of Himself to God as a sacrifice, according to his engagement in that covenant. This includes the Holy Spirit's residence in our souls, and His gracious influence upon us, whereby He gives being unto a spiritual principle in our hearts, and graciously excites that principle, as well as maintains and preserves it. He convinces, comforts, and gives testimony to the saints of their adoption, or of their standing in the near and honorable relation of sons to God. He subdues sin, and cherishes and promotes holiness in our souls; and He abides with us in the blessed character of a Comforter, notwithstanding we often grieve Him by our folly, sin, and base ingratitude. These benign influences of the Holy Spirit upon us, and those effects, which they produce, are boldly pronounced enthusiasm, by many, who wear a religious character and put in their claim for the name of Christians. But true it is, that in these things consists the very life of real Christianity; and he who is an absolute stranger unto an experience of their truth in himself, let him be what he may in other respects, a Christian he is not. The reason why men despise these things, as the effects of a warm and deluded imagination, is, they End them not in themselves. And, as they are not in them, they conclude, that they have no real existence in others. Nor is this to be wondered at, for the spiritual man, how well soever he is known, merely as a man, he is wholly unknown as he is spiritual, unto the carnal man; he discerns

him not: The spiritual man is judged, or discerned of no man. (1 Corinthians 2:16). Hence it is, that love to a saint, as such, is a sure evidence of the spirituality of him, who is the subject of that, love. Grace only discerns, and values grace in another ; Or it is only the image of Christ in one man, that discerns and esteems it in another.

Communion with the Holy Spirit consists in spiritual views of that office, which he graciously condescended to take upon himself in the economy of our salvation; and of his operations on us, as effects of that infinite love He bears to our persons. And it is under his blessed guidance and instruction, that enjoy fellowship with Christ: for " He takes of His things, and shews them unto vs." In prospects whereof, lie all the power, sweetness, and glory of real religion : let some graceless and unholy persons deride those things as they please. And, therefore, I would, a little more particularly consider the, important and delightful subject of communion with Christ, as it is represented, in that divine and, heavenly book of Solomon's Song. And.

1. It is a very elegant description Which the church gives of His person. Says she, "He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." That is to say, there is none like Him, in beauty and glory. She may well be thought to have in view the constitution of his person ; or, His two natures, divine and human as they are personally united : the purity of His human nature, and its bloody agony, unparalleled sufferings, and accursed death, whereby, her redemption from sin, curse and hell was effected. " His head is as the most fine gold; His locks are bushy, and black as a raven." Wherein she hath respect to the importance, purity, and glory of all His designs, Which are formed with the highest wisdom, and, therefore, are unalterable, and cannot fail of their accomplishments. Besides, she intends His beauty and strength. He never declines in His vigour. Grey hairs are not, nor ever will be found upon Him. His beauty fades not, His strength decays not. She adds, "His eyes are as the eyes of doves, by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set." His eyes are piercing. He hath in exact knowledge of all things. He is acquainted with all the troubles, temptations, sorrows, and wants of His saints. For He is " a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and tries the reins," Besides, He is chaste, tender, loving, and constant, in His care of the church. For His eye of love is immovable fixed on her. Farther, "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers." In him His dear saints find rest tinder weariness and fatigue, occasioned by sin, temptation, and a variety of afflictions, which attend them in this vale of fears ; and revival, when they faint in their minds through the sharpness of their spiritual conflicts with the enemies of their souls. Besides, his fragrance fills them with inexpressible delight. "His name is as ointment poured forth," which spreads an odour all around, and therefore, " the virgins love him : His lips, like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." They are lovely beyond comparison; and all His words are sweet, precious, and expressed in a most ,graceful manner. He speaks, as never man spoke. For grace is poured into his lips. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl." All His works are glorious, for He is wonderful in working both in providence and grace. "His belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires." Christ's affection to the church is pure, disinterested and permanent. " His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold." His strength is firm and durable : All His steps are graceful, and answer ends most valuable. "His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars." His appearance is grand, majestic and mild ; it commands awe, and begets love. "His mouth is most sweet, He is altogether lovely." His speech is soft and winning ; and He is all beauty and perfection.

2. Christ describes the beauty and glory of the Church. He commends her garments, which are "garments of salvation." A robe of righteousness, of infinite value, and of everlasting duration, influence and efficacy as to her acceptation with God, and title to blessedness. The fragrance of this robe is great, "like the smell of Lebanon." And its splendor is like that, of the sun. The church in her justification is "clear as the sun," though in her sanctification, she is but "fair as the moon," not without spots and waning. The divine Father delights in the saints, as He views them in this white raiment, and pronounces them perfect herein. "Thou art perfect through My comeliness, which I have put upon thee. The Lord is well pleased for Christ's righteousness' sake, who hath magnified the law, and made it honorable." Again the church's Beloved delineates her beautiful features, and expresses how much her various graces delighted Him. That she had "ravished His heart with one of her eyes," i. e., the eye of faith, which is very penetrating, and is capable of discerning objects at a great distance. It looks into the deep things of God; things which the eye of mere reason can never discover, nor discern the nature of: and it penetrates into the heavenly world, and views the glorious objects which are "within the veil, Whither the Forerunner is for us entered." And the eye of faith is chaste and pure. It bestows no amorous glances on earthly objects; nor looks to any but unto Christ, and His blood and righteousness, for pardon, peace, reconciliation, and acceptance with God: and unto his fullness for all supplies of grace, wisdom, and strength, in times of temptation, trial and affliction, yea, through the whole of the Christian's pilgrimage in this world. These acts of the grace of faith on Christ, are exceedingly pleasing to Him, and greatly to the advantage of the saints; for hereby they become more and more like him, increase in love to Him, and by so much the less do they esteem the delectable things of this world. Acts of faith on the person, offices, and benefits of Christ, and on the glory of God through Him, never fail of elevating the mind above this earthly globe, and raising the affections to heavenly objects which infinitely transcend, in glory and grandeur, the noblest and most refined of terrestrial enjoyments. And, yet, alas! how much are the minds of many professors disposed to cast smiling looks on their own filthy rays, rather than look steadily on the infinitely glorious righteousness of Christ, in the great affair of their justification before God; and rather choose to view their own imaginary beauties, than the glories of the person of Christ. Besides, Christ commends the love of the church: "How fair is thy love!" The saints are subjects of a spiritual affection to Him. Others see no beauty or comeliness in Him, why they should desire Him; in their esteem, He is a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; but, in the account of believers, He is fairer, infinitely fairer than the children of men. For they discern the Divine perfection's which He possesses, and the purity of his human nature, which is richly adorned with all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, in their perfection. They view Him in the form of God, and as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; which prospect ingenerates in their souls a holy reverence of Him, steady trust in Him, and a warm affection to Him. And, as they discern the purity of his human nature, and all the gifts and graces of the blessed Spirit therein residing, in their plenitude; and its union, or personal oneness with the Son of God, in order to bring, about their eternal redemption, in a way honorable to all the attributes of God, His sovereignty, His grace, His mercy, His justice, His holiness, His truth and faithfulness, they cannot but adore the wisdom of this constitution, and take up their rest in this infinitely glorious object, who is the delight of the Father; admired and adored by the holy angels; and eternally will be the object of the highest delight, joy, and complacency of the church in the world above, where she will behold Him in His glory at the right hand of the Father, without interruption for evermore. The

reason why we love this amiable person no more than we do, is, we are so little exercised in viewing His divine excellencies. If the eye of our faith was more frequently directed to Him ; and we took spiritual views of His person, His love, His blood, His righteousness, and of His grace, we should not have that sad occasion, which most of us have, to bewail our want of love to Him. For no man can behold Him in His glory without his affections being strongly attracted towards Him, nor without delight and joy in Him. He who loves not Christ, never beheld His glory. And, he, whose views of Him by faith are infrequent, and long interrupted, through carnality, a pursuit after the world, and indulgence in sin in any way, declines in his affection to a dear Redeemer. If the grace of faith is but little acted, the grace of love will not be fervent. Since Christ take's so much pleasure in our love to His person, how ought we to aim at the increase of our affection to Him ! All the return we can make Him for His astonishing love to our persons, and the stupendous acts of it, is a cordial affection to Him, and obedience to His commands, springing from that affection, which he may justly expect of us.

3. The church's Beloved acquainted her with that interest she had in His tender, intense, and constant, affection, than which nothing is more entertaining and delightful to the saints. She expresses ardent desires after the gracious tokens of His favor : " Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; His love is better than wine." And He, in infinite goodness, condescended to grant her what she so earnestly requested of Him : " He brought her into His banqueting house, and His banner over her was love." Believers sometimes, are very jealous of Christ's love to them, which jealousy is attended with great anxiety and pain of mind. Others are afraid of His anger and wrath but are content without a sense of His love. Nature trembles at an apprehension of His vengeance, because it is not to be borne : grace is a holy spiritual desire of a sense of His favor. Those jealousies which attend the saints concerning an interest in the love of a dear Saviour, often arise from a misapprehension about the nature of His love; or, at least, from a want of a due consideration of it. They are suspicious of Christ's kind regard to them, because of their unworthiness. They discern so much impurity in their hearts, so many imperfections in all their services, and are conscious of so many instances of backsliding from Him, that they fear it cannot be, that such unlovely, and unworthy creatures as they know themselves to be, should have an interest in His kindness. These thoughts spring up in their minds from unbelief, and the want of a proper attention to the nature of the love of Christ, which is absolutely free and unattracted. If none were to be the objects of His favor, who are destitute of amiable qualities, or engaging, excellencies, not one of the human race ever would be interested in His affection. It is in consequence of an interest in His love, that we become the subjects of such dispositions of soul as, are pleasing to Him. His love to our persons is the cause, and not the effect of holiness in us.

It may be of use to the saints, well to consider what Christ's love to them is, and how it differs from His approbation of their graces, and the acting's thereof for they are distinct things, and ought not to be confounded. His love to their persons, is a will to do them good, with delight and joy therein : this is eternal, free, and immutable, or always the same, whatever their state or circumstances may be. His delight in their graces is not His love to their persons; but it is His approbation of what He works in them, as a fruit of that affection He bears to them. From hence Christians may collect that their unworthiness is no objection to their interest, in the kindness of a dear Redeemer. And this, if properly attended unto, will enable us to answer the cavils which are raised against the love of Christ to men, while they are under the dominion of sin. For if His love to the persons of men is

distinct from His approbation or disapprobation of their temper and actions, certainly, it will follow that His kind regard may be extended to their persons, even while they are the subjects of no other than evil qualities, because an approbation neither of what they are, nor of what they act, is supposed in His love to their persons. Blessed be God, that creatures most unworthy of His love, may be beloved by Him, without the least reflection on His holiness and purity ; if that was a thing impossible, the salvation of the sons of men would be so too. All holiness in us springs from the love of God and Christ to our souls, and therefore, our interest in the love of both must be prior to the being of grace in our hearts. And, therefore, it is dishonorable to the love of Christ, to call into question our interest in it, because we are unlovely. He loves not His church because she is amiable, but he loves her while unlovely; and as an effect of His love to her, He makes her amiable, and adorns her with all the graces of His Holy Spirit. But let none from hence imagine that they are objects of the love of Christ, who have not within themselves the fruits of His love. For though His people are beloved by Him, when they are not the subjects of His grace, they have not, nor can they have any evidence or perception thereof, while they are in a state of alienation from Him. The nature of His love is well fitted to encourage and comfort those that are mourning in Zion, under a deep sense of their guilt, impurity, and great unworthiness; but it gives not support to the presumption and confidence of such, who are at ease in Zion. Disconsolate saints sometimes are strongly tempted to entertain thoughts concerning an interest in the love of Christ, which agree not with its nature, as to its freeness and sovereignty, wherein they are to be corrected ; but daring sinners subject themselves to heavy condemnation, who abuse this doctrine, and give full evidence that they have no ground at all to conclude upon an interest therein.

4. The church expresses the great pleasure she took in the enjoyment of the presence of Christ : grace in believers is a disposition to hold fellowship with the blessed Jesus. It desires a sense of His favor above all things. Nothing is so delightful to the saints as communion with Him : that fills them with joy and gladness, far beyond the increase of corn and wine. For that grace is a principle of love to the person of Christ, upon a perception of His incomparable excellencies and glory, and it seeks after and delights in His presence. It is not, nor can be, entertained with the tarnished glories, and trifling togs of a perishing world. It is not in the nature of the gracious principle to desire after, and delight in the painted. beauties of fading time. For it is a disposition to view, converse with, and take pleasure in objects, infinitely more glorious, than the most eligible things that are under the sun. And a precious variety of important and ravishing subjects it is furnished with, whereon to exercise itself in holy contemplation, viz.

Christ in the admirable constitution of His person, who is truly God, and really man; and both united, in order to bring about the eternal salvation of poor sinners, in such a way as exalts the glory of all the perfection's of God, in a far higher manner than it is displayed in the works of creation and providence.

Again, the several relations wherein Christ stands to His people, are fit matter for the delightful meditations of spiritually-minded persons. Herein they at once discern their interest in His most tender affections, constant care, and their everlasting security; as well as that great honor, whereunto they are by sovereign grace and mercy advanced. He is the First-born among many brethren." He and they are both of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Christ is the husband of the church; and that love which He bears to her is most intense, constant and invariable. He is a head unto her, and will always sympathize with His poor, suffering and

afflicted members ; nor will ever suffer any to rend them from himself ; but will take care of, provide for, supply, and securely defend them in every time of difficulty and danger. Besides, He is a Father to the saints, and he will never be wanting in acts of kindness to them, which might be expected of Him to put forth in their favor, in a character so tender.

All these relations are expressive of Christ's love to, and delight in the saints, and of their safety and immortal dignity. Communion with Christ in His relations, consists in holy contemplation's thereon, in adoring thoughts of the astonishing goodness which is therein discovered, unto such wretched and vile creatures as we are ; and in acts of love to Him, trust in Him, in forming such expectations from Him in all our times of need, as the nature of those relations is a proper foundation of : and ineffable joy arises from fellowship with Christ, as standing in those relations to our poor souls.

Farther, a view by faith of His several offices greatly comforts the saints. For as He is in the office of a Prophet, we may hope for instruction from Him, in all things relating to the glory of God and our good. His priestly office is a precious ground of consolation : in that character He hath transacted, and doth transact all affairs between God and our souls, wherein our eternal redemption and complete salvation are concerned. And He is an High Priest who becomes us, i. e., every way fitted to officiate for us in that capacity, and "is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him." As He is our King, protection, honor and victory over all our enemies may be expected from Him. And, therefore, communion with Him, in His offices must be productive of peace, joy and triumph in the saints. Their spiritual consolation arises from a sense of His glory, compassion, union with them, and the offices He bears and executes, with a view to the glory of His Father, in an inseparable connection with their welfare and happiness. Wherefore' as the grace of faith is more or less exercised upon Him, their holy spiritual joy increases or declines.

If our communion with Christ in His person, love, relations and offices is rare, and but little; we have but small experience of that joy, which is unspeakable and full of glory. Grace is not entertained, nourished, strengthened, or increased in us. For all our vigor, liveliness, and improvement in purity, depend on the acting's of the grace of faith upon Christ, as our all in all. The graces of the Holy Spirit in us languish, and we become barren in our frames, in our walk and conversation, if we live not in the exercise of faith on Him; unless we " abide in Him, or walk in Him, as we have received Him," we shall bring forth no fruit to the glory of our heavenly Father. Through one cause or another, too, too often we are prevented so doing to the great detriment of our souls, and the prejudice of the new creature in us. So far as we are strangers unto a renewal of acts of faith upon Christ, we must be without that pure, spiritual and holy delight, which arises from believing views of Him, or gracious and intimate communion with Him. And, therefore, it ought to be our desire and aim, in all duties, and in all ordinances, to behold the King of Zion in His beauty. If He graciously condescends to sit at His " table" with us, our " spikenard will send forth a sweet smell," i. e., our graces will emit a sweet odor, and our souls will rejoice in God our Saviour.

Moreover, communion with Christ in what He hath done for us, will greatly revive our graces, and cheer our minds. If we view that he hath finished our transgression, made an end of our sins, made reconciliation for our iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for us, in order to our justification before God ; pleasure inexpressible will possess our breasts. If we act faith on the victory He hath obtained over all our enemies, sin, Satan, death and hell; and we behold Him as

crowned with glory and honor, upon that conquest, our spiritual affections will be warmed, our minds will be raised above this vain world: God Himself will be the object of our joy, delight and adoration, who in the character of the God of all grace, designed, constituted, and gave to us such a gracious, glorious, and every way suitable and complete Saviour. And our souls will be much animated, and encouraged to fight the good fight of faith ; nor shall we doubt of enjoying, in the issue, a full conquest over all our spiritual adversaries through Him that hath loved us. It is the want of this communion with our Redeemer, in what He hath done for us, that occasions us to go mourning in the manner we do, now we are conflicting with sin, Satan and the world. Acts of faith on Him, would enable us to triumph in the midst of our conflicts with the enemies of our souls.

Besides, fellowship with our blessed Lord in those precious benefits, which He hath procured for, and effectually secured to us, by His mediatorial acts and sufferings, is a spring of heavenly joy to our hearts, viz., The most glorious robe of righteousness, which adorns our persons, renders us righteous eternally in the divine account, and gives us an unalienable right and title to future blessedness. The pardon of our sins, which is inclusive of our deliverance from condemnation, wrath and vengeance. His Holy Spirit, with all necessary supplies of grace, to revive the good work in us, to maintain it in our souls, in spite of all the opposition it meets with from sin and Satan, and to perfect it in glory. The enjoyment of communion with Him in these His benefits, must yield us the highest pleasure. No earthly possessions are comparable in importance, excellency and glory to these blessings, and therefore nothing in the whole world can give that pleasure to the mind, as prospects of them by faith always produce in the souls of believers. They say, as the church did with holy exultation, when favored with this divine fellowship; " I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ,for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

I add, the apprehension of that goodness, grace, mercy, -wisdom, righteousness and justice, which shine gloriously in this admirable constitution, and appointment of Christ to be our all and in all, delights and ravishes the heavenly-minded person. An advancement in a spiritual understanding of these thing renders the soul more humble, more joyful, more holy, more mortified to the world - and, therefore, we cannot act a better part, by ourselves, and we cannot do anything more glorifying to God, than seeking after this spiritual communion with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Sad it is, that the flesh, that the empty, fading, and putrid things of time and sense, should ever prevent us of, interrupt and make breaks upon a fellowship so spiritual, so sublime, so heavenly, and whereby our best interest is so much promoted. This it is that embitters life to spiritually-minded persons, and causes them earnestly to desire to depart and be with Christ, when no interruptions through any cause whatever, will attend their communion with Him. They sometimes say with Job, I loathe it, I would not live away. Their souls long for the enjoyment of that blissful state, wherein they will for ever be near unto, and view with unmixed and increasing pleasure, the glory of God in the person of Christ, as it is displayed in all His mediatorial acts and sufferings, in order to bring them unto that glorious state. The sweetness of the first-fruits, which they have in present possession, makes them long for the delightful and plenteous harvest. The importance, glory, and great variety of spiritual things cannot fail of affording to a spiritual mind, satisfaction and delight. As God designed no other matters for the entertainment of the new-born principle, in the souls of His children, than those, and such like glorious truths, whereof Christ is the center and sum ; so no other than these things it desires, nor can it take up with ; because they

are not of a nature suitable and agreeable to grace, for that is wholly spiritual and heavenly. That noble principle raises the mind above earthly enjoyments and treasures, it leads the soul into heaven, and converses with those glorious objects that are within the veil, whither its Forerunner is for it entered. It takes a view of Christ in His glory, at the right hand of His Father, with pleasing wonder, and a holy rapture. The church invites the Daughters of Jerusalem to take this prospect : "Go forth, and behold King Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of gladness of his heart." Grace exults with joy at the sight of Christ as crowned with glory, who was crowned with thorns for our sakes. It is fit that He who was reduced to the lowest state of humiliation, to promote the glory of God, in the salvation of the objects of His love, should be raised to that state of dignity He now enjoys at His right hand. No prospect can be more pleasing than this, to those who love our dear Lord Jesus. And if views by faith of the glory of Christ, afford us so much delight, oh ! what pleasure must possess our grateful souls, when we shall enjoy the heavenly vision of the glory of our best friend ?

5. The church sometimes was without the company of her Beloved: He withdrew from her, and though she sought Him diligently, she could not find Him. This not unfrequently is the sorrowful case with the saints. Such as are the children of light, sometimes walk in darkness, and are without the light of comfort and joy for a season. When clear and bright days are enjoyed, and the rays of the Sun of righteousness shine upon the Christian, especially at first conversion, he expects not, it may be, dark and cloudy seasons ; much less nights of melancholy desertion and darkness -but unto his great sorrow, he meets with them, and he may be tempted to fear, that all his comfort was illusion, and that that light wherein he formerly rejoiced, was fancied only. Which apprehension, so far as it is suffered to prevail, must be attended with distress and grief. " Weeping endureth for a night, but joy shall come in the morning;" for which let the Christian wait and hope. His business is to wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and to continue in waiting for Him, yea, to wait patiently for His gracious return unto his sorrowing soul. " Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." And though that precious seed may lie under the clods a considerable season, let not the saints faint, and grow weary of waiting for its springing forth, it will certainly shoot forth, and they shall again, in the appointed season, enjoy what their souls are mourning for the want of. "The vision may be for an appointed time;" but it will speak, it will not lie; and though it tarry, (and, as they may think, though it tarry long,) let them wait for it. Present want of the light of God's countenance, is no evidence, that the soul hath not formerly enjoyed that heavenly favor. Past experience of divine goodness, is a precious ground of hope of the re-enjoyment of that glorious privilege.

(1.) Christ may stand at a distance for the trial of faith; and to teach His people to live a life of dependence on His care of them, and love to them, and of His faithfulness to all His promises and engagements, when they enjoy not His sensible comforting presence with them. It is the duty of those who "fear the Lord, and obey the voice of His servant, when they walk in darkness, and have no light, then to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God." Such who dare affirm, that this is carnal security, are very unskillful in the word of righteousness: And are no better than bold intruders into the sacred office of the ministry. One considerable branch of the minister's work is to "comfort the mourners in Zion;" and if there are any such, they must be the persons whose consolation is now proposed.

(2.) Sometimes Christians are guilty of acting a part, which is offensive to their dear Saviour, and therefore, He withdraws from them. Darkness spreads itself over them, thick clouds interpose between Him and their souls, and they see not His smiling face. This was the case with the church, when she was inclined into carnal ease, rather than to rise and give her Beloved entrance. He quickened her desires after the enjoyment of His company, by an effectual touch upon her heart; but He withdrew, departed and, left her to bewail her folly, in her sinful neglect. Upon this her bowels were troubled, she arose and sought Him; but she found Him not. It is just with Him to hide Himself from us, if we are indifferent about the enjoyments of His delightful presence ; and give us occasion to confess our ingratitude to Him, by the loss we sustain in consequence of it. His love in itself passes under no vicissitude, it is always the same; that is our security ; but the manifestation of it to our souls, from which our peace, comfort, and joy spring, may be interrupted, through our negligence., sloth, and sin. A sense of it, when it is so, may well break our hearts ; for there is no ingratitude in the world like it.

(3.) If this is the case with us, let us not content ourselves, without His presence; but, as the church did, continue in seeking after Him, although we find Him not for a season. Our ungrateful carriage towards Him, we may justly expect him to resent, and it is our duty to acknowledge our iniquity, wherein we have transgressed against the Lord: Nor should we think it any unkindness, that He shows Himself displeased with our evil conduct, by absenting Himself for a while. Let us hope for the returning visits of His love to our souls, for He will not always chide, nor keep His anger for ever.

(4.) If we have had a gracious experience of renewed discoveries of His love, after we caused Him by our evil behavior to depart, surely we must be convinced that it will be our wisdom to conduct ourselves, with more caution for time to come, lest we should be again deprived of what we ought to value more, far more, than life itself, viz. Communion with Him, wherein our peace, our joy, and all our delight, as Christians, consist.

I would now consider our communion with God, in the course of that holy obedience which He requires us to yield unto Him, while we are in this mortal state. And I begin,- First, with duties 'of a religious nature which are various.

1. Meditation. This is a duty that may be practiced with singular advantage to our souls. If our minds are much exercised, in contemplation on divine subjects, we shall thereby become spiritual and heavenly in our desires and affections. Nothing is more conducive to our improvement in knowledge, and growth in grace, than a diligent attention to this duty. But, alas ! through one cause or another, how few of the fleeting hours of our lives are filled up with this exercise ! Our minds are sluggish, our avocations are many, and carnal pleasures, or a vain and trifling conversation with the men of the world, or it may be with luke-warm professors, waste so many of our precious moments, that we have but little time to spare from business and pleasure, for this heavenly work. Retirement is not the choice of many, Which certainly is the best for this exercise. As to the subjects of a holy meditation, they are noble, grand, sublime, deep, and manifold. They are things where into, the angels desire to look ; and whereon we shall contemplate for ever, if we arrive to heaven at death. Is not that enough to invite our thoughts, and fix our attention on those important things.

If it is not an engaging motive with us, in some measure, to employ our thoughts in this way now, what reason have we to think, that those glorious subject will entertain our minds hereafter ? Without it, we cannot have any evidence that the employment of heaven will be the matter of our choice and delight. If we take no pleasure in thoughts of the grace, wisdom, holiness, and justice of God, as displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption by Jesus Christ, we are deceived in imagining, that we are the fit subjects of that bliss, and that glory, which is possessed by " the spirits of just men made perfect." For that, very much consists in an uninterrupted prospect of, and delightful contemplation on those momentous truths. If now we have no desire to exercise ourselves in holy meditation on the glories of the person of Christ, and concerning His grace, compassion, and benefits, why should we fancy ourselves at all qualified for, or disposed unto, that service in another state ? Real grace is conversant about the same objects, as glory is; (a delightful thought this) though it is not able now to discern them, in their full brightness, which it will be when sublimated into glory; and, therefore if we are wholly indisposed to this heavenly exercise now, let us not once think that it will be our choice, when with us time shall be no more.

2. Prayer is another branch of our duty, wherein we ought to aim at, and desire communion with God. O amazing goodness ! A throne of grace is erected, and a mercy-seat for us to approach unto, and present our supplications before. Nor are we without solid ground to hope for an audience, and a gracious answer to our humble and spiritual requests, let us ask what we will that is conducive to our good, and the glory of our heavenly Father for us to enjoy. And, therefore, the Christian under the influence of the spirit of grace and supplications, uses freedom, liberty, and confidence, in presenting unto God, through Christ, his petitions, for mercy and grace to help in every time of need. And sometimes, the saints are favoured with great nearness unto God, even under the deepest sense of their guilt, vileness, and misery, in themselves; and are enabled to plead the blood and righteousness of Christ before the divine throne, as the ground of their hope of pardon, peace, and acceptation with God; and He causes His face to shine upon them, in this exercise of prayer,

3. It is our duty to read the Word of God, and we ought to have in view communion with Him therein. The Holy Scripture is a standing revelation from heaven ; and it is to be considered, as the voice of Christ speaking to us, no less than if He was actually present, and we heard His precious mouth express the heavenly truths therein contained. In that sacred book, what lofty sentiments are delivered! Doctrines are handed down to us thereby, that far surpass, in sublimity, depth, sweetness and glory, any discoveries, our shallow reason could ever have made. And how many sweet, gracious, and soul-reviving promises are therein expressed, which are adapted to all our circumstances, of what nature soever they be! Those promises are confirmed with Gods oath, that we might have strong consolation, arising from a view of our eternal security, which rests on the immutability of God's counsel concerning our salvation. Will not the importance of the principles revelation contains, invite to the study of it ? Will not the gracious promises of it, which are expressions of the love of God to us, and of His, unalterable designs about us, engage our attention ? Will not the representation of the glory of Christ, in this glass of the Word, attract our eye, and entertain our minds? If not, our hearts are carnal, and we walk ,as men.

4. Attendance on the preaching of the gospel, is a branch of our duty, wherein, we ought to propose the enjoyment ,of communion with God. It is to be feared that many hearers have too little regard unto this, although no usefulness, or spiritual advantage arises from hearing the gospel

preached, without our souls attend unto it not as the word of man; but as it is indeed, the word of God. Curiosity and taste are the main things to be gratified with multitudes, in their hearing, and such cannot reasonably hope for the enjoyment of communion with God,-it is not their aim and desire; they are content without it, when they are charmed with the preachers' accuracy, reasoning, pathos, or address. The Lord only knows how many trifling hearers are found at this day, among the number of those who have so much of the form of religion, as rather to attend divine service, than spend the Lord's-day wholly in sloth or pleasure. The gospel is a joyful sound-glad tidings of great joy. For it informs us of Gods love to sinful men, of the mission and coming of Christ into the world to save them. And it gives us assurance that guilt is expiated, that divine anger is appeased, that a glorious robe is provided to, clothe our naked souls, that riches immense are laid up for us, who were sunk into the greatest depths of poverty, that a kingdom is appointed to us, who were beggars sitting on a dunghill. To favour, relish and embrace these things by faith, is to enjoy communion with God in them.

5. The celebration of the institutions of Christ, is a duty wherein we may hope to enjoy fellowship with God. They were graciously appointed in order to the edification of believers. There is this great difference between the positive rites of the Old Testament, and those of the New Testament: carnal, unregenerate persons were admitted unto the former, but they have no right to the latter. Faith was not required of any, in order unto circumcision, offering of sacrifices, or to any other acts of external worship, under that dispensation. Believers, and unbelievers, among the Jews, were admitted to all those ordinances. But it is not so with respect to the rites of the New Testament, baptism-and the Lord's-supper. Faith, and a discernment of the Lord's body, are required of such as are admitted unto them. In those sacred institutions, Christ is represented to our faith, as suffering, dead, buried, and risen again for our justification. And, therefore, they are wisely and graciously appointed for the confirmation of our faith, the increase of our hope, love, and of every other grace. This is the great end we ought to have in view, in the celebration of them; and Christ hath given us ground to expect His presence and blessing in both. When He instituted baptism, He promised His presence, so long as that ordinance shall be administered: " Lo, I ant with you always, even to the end of the world. And as in His supper, He requires that we should do it in remembrance of Him ; we have comfortable reason to hope that He will come into our souls, and sup with us, and that we shall sup with Him.

Some persons strip these institutions of all their importance, though they administer and celebrate them. They cannot, therefore, propose to enjoy communion with God, and a dear Redeemer in them. Those who deny that Christ was a proper sacrifice for sin, that real atonement is made by His death, and that His descending into the lower parts of the earth, or making His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, was required of Him by divine justice, as a necessary part of his humiliation for our crimes; and that his resurrection hath a causal and effectual influence into our justification; for what reasons they continue the use of the institutions of baptism and the supper, themselves best know. This is certain, if these principles are false, those institutions can have no relation unto any of them; and if they have not, it will be very difficult to show wherein their weight and significance consist, or what important ends respecting the advantage of our souls, can possibly accrue to us from the administration and celebration of them. Such who give up Christian doctrines, may without prejudice, also give up Christian institutions.

We are under obligation to design and aim at our spiritual improvement in these appointments. And we have great encouragement to hope for the presence of our heavenly Father, and of our blessed Saviour, in these ordinances, which are significative of such glorious and important things, wherein our peace, consolation, joy, and eternal welfare are so deeply interested.

Communion with God and the Lord Jesus Christ, in those institutions, consists in holy adoring thoughts of the love of each. In views by faith of Christ, as suffering, dying, and descending into the grave, and rising again from the dead, in order to our remission, reconciliation with God, our justification in His sight, and a complete and everlasting conquest over all our formidable enemies. When grace is acted on these noble and transporting subjects, love to God and Christ is happily promoted, and an indignation against sin is cherished in the soul. Says the Christian, " O thou base, vile, most hateful thing, sin, which was the procuring cause of such dolorous sufferings, as my dear Lord Jesus endured in the garden, on the, cross, &c. What stabs did my pride, my covetousness, my envy, my sensuality, and others of my sins, give my blessed Lord! And unto what grief was He put, in order to appease the justice of God for them! May I eternally hate them all, and let their ruin hasten." This is the language of grace in the hearts of the saints.

Secondly. Communion with God and Jesus Christ, may be enjoyed in the practice of the duties of the second table. Mark xii. 31. If our minds were spiritual, holy and heavenly, we should know how to discharge our duty towards all mankind, in such a manner as would much glorify our heavenly Father, and greatly honour our dear Redeemer.

1. In declining all words, and all actions, which tend to prejudice our neighbor. We are required to love our neighbor as ourselves. And love is the fulfilling of the law : it works no ill. Love is always friendly, kind and benevolent. It never acts a part injurious to its objects. Motives to an universal love of men are many, viz., the command of God; His bounty and liberality towards all, in the dispensations of His providence, the unjust as well as the just, the evil as well as the good; wherein we ought to imitate Him, and approve ourselves to be His children; the behavior of our great Master, whose steps we ought to follow, will teach us meekness, gentleness and benevolence towards all, even towards our very enemies. If we take Him for our pattern, we shall not render evil for evil, but reward evil with good.

We shall be inoffensive, harmless, and the sons of God without rebuke; if we imitate Jesus Christ, who was holy, harmless, and without guile. And if our minds are influenced by these considerations, and others of the like nature, to decline everything that is prejudicial to our neighbor, and to act the kind, the sympathetic, the benevolent part towards all; our obedience is spiritual, holy, acceptable and pleasing unto God, through Christ, and therein we enjoy communion both with the Father and the Son. Nothing short of which is real holiness ; a very necessary truth, and to be more considered than by most it is.

2. A spiritually-minded person is not without communion with God, in the duties of his calling. The despised mechanic and artificer, who labors with his hands, working the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth, is often far more happy than those who treat him with contempt. His mind is exercised upon noble and most excellent subjects, and he derives from them pure, holy and lasting joy; while the great and rich are squandering away their time in visits, in a vain pernicious conversation, and hurtful pleasures. As the world now is, a lower station of life is more eligible than advanced circumstances the temptations attending greatness, unto pride,

vanity, luxury, and a regardlessness of the power of religion, where the form of it is, are so numerous, from the growing corruption of our dreadful times. How many have fell down, wounded sorely, if not mortally, by the force of those temptations! Happy are the few who escape without injury, by possessing an abundance, A person who attends to the duties of his calling, as a part of the service of Christ, which all who profess to be His followers ought to do, not only honors his God, but reaps great profit to himself.

3. If we are careful to fill up our several relations and stations in life in a spiritual manner, we shall not be without communion with God, in those duties, thereunto belonging in the conjugal relation, the paternal, &c. Grace will teach us to practice the duties of every relation in such a way as will redound to the glory of God, and our good. Were we more holy, how pleasant and profitable would the discharge of the duties of our respective stations in life be ! Nothing unjust, severe and cruel would be required by masters ; servants would not be unfaithful, unruly, and disobedient to the reasonable commands of their employers. If we were under the powerful influence of Christian principles, love, meekness, humility, sympathy, benevolence, kindness, and every thing that is commendable and praiseworthy, would adorn our profession; and our minds would be raised up unto God in our duties; peace, joy and delight would possess our breasts, and we should esteem the divine precepts concerning all things to be right. But alas! how defective are we in every duty ! How little of that spirituality is found in our obedience, which our profession calls for! And therefore we bring but little glory to our heavenly Father, do small honor to our blessed Redeemer, who lived a life of sorrows for us, suffered an accursed death for our sakes, and now He lives to make intercession for us. What need have we of His atoning blood to cleanse us from sinful mixtures, which are found in all the acts of our obedience ! And how necessary are the quickening and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, to enable us to live and act in a holy, spiritual, and heavenly manner! And since pleasure attends all duties so far as we are spiritual in the discharge of them ; then what delight will possess our souls, when we shall serve our God day and night, without fainting, weariness, or the least tincture of evil in any of our acts! And when our communion with the Father, Son and Spirit shall be most near, uninterrupted, and without end ! To whom be everlasting honors ascribed. Amen.

01.13. Appendix 1

ANALYTICAL INDEX. This Treatise is divided into twelve Chapters, and the subjects therein are discussed in the following order.

CHAPTER I. Of the original purity of human nature. "Man was pure and holy in his Creation state; his affections were untainted; and no disorder attended him in his passions: no unlawful love, delight, or aversion, were implanted in the nature of man, by the great Author of his being." 1. He had a perfection of knowledge. 2. His disposition was such as God approved of 3. His affections were untainted. 4. The objections of Socinian and Arminian writers, replied to.

CHAPTER II. Of the present entire depravity of human nature. "Our depravity is a subject very largely treated of in the Holy Scriptures." 1. We are dead in sin. 2. We are under the dominion of sin. 3. Ignorance and darkness have overspread our minds. 4. Men are obstinate. 5. No unregenerate person acts agreeably to God's holy law. 6. None of his actions, while in that state, are good and holy. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God. "A man is either regenerate or unregenerate." Observations oil this subject.

CHAPTER III. On the Spirit's work in Regeneration; and also in Conversion, and Sanctification. "Regeneration precedes, and may be considered as the foundation and spring of conversion and sanctification." 1. Of the necessity of regeneration. 2. What is regeneration, conversion, and sanctification; or, wherein they consist. Regeneration, the infusion of a new principle of spiritual Life. Conversion, the primary acting's of the regenerate principle. Sanctification, the secondary acting's of grace.

CHAPTER IV. Of the great difference between real conversion, and the mere semblance of it. "This is a subject of very great moment, and one of considerable difficulty." 1. There is a change, which is not conversion. 2. Wherein lies the difference between this change, and real conversion; shown in various particulars. Concluding observation.

CHAPTER V. On the life of faith. "The holy Scripture plainly informs us what it is ; and sets before us shining examples of it." 1. The objects of faith are things invisible. 2. The life of faith is above the delectable things of this world. 3. Faith carries the mind above the afflictive and distressing things of this world. 4. It is a life contrary to the evil part of the believer, and above his better part. 5. The life of faith supposes a frequent exercise of that grace. 6. It may be maintained in a believer even under darkness, and the hidings of God's face. 7. That it is a life of dependence on the faithfulness of God. 8. It is an ardent desire, and a sure expectation of better things than can be enjoyed in this state.

CHAPTER VI. Of the assurance of faith. This important subject is handled, 1. Objectively and subjectively. 2. Assurance not esscntial to that faith which is of God's operation. 3. That this favour may be enjoyed; argued in several particulars., 4. Of the influence attending this holy assurance. 5. Of our duty to endeavour to maintain it. 6. That great advantages attend it. Objections answered.

CHAPTER VII. Of a believer's growth in grace. A negative definition, "By grace I do not intend a speculative knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity." 1. The prayer of the apostle for the saints enlargement in spiritual knowledge. 2. A consideration of the apostle's own gracious experience on this point ; and observations on that experience. 3. What is implied in mortification of sin? Two queries answered.

CHAPTER VIII. On declension in the power of godliness, its causes, &c. The axiom. "A real believer will never sink into a state of unregeneracy ; yet, he may greatly decline with respect to the liveliness, vigour, and exercise of grace, through various causes." 1. The Christian may suffer a suspension of divine influences. 2. The opposition that sin makes to grace in the souls of believers, often a cause of declension. 3. A languor in grace may be occasioned by a neglect of holy duties. 4. Criminal indulgencies very prejudicial to grace. 5. The declensions of Christians are sometimes owing to an un-edifying ministry. 6. Formality in religious exercises will cause a decline in the power of godliness.

CHAPTER IX. Of the Symptoms of declension in the power of godliness. 1. A drowsy and slumbering frame of mind is a sure sign of declension. 2. Loss of spiritual appetite is a sign of declension in grace. 3. Declension attends us, if our love to God, Christ, and to spiritual things, is abated. 4. Another symptom is an abatement of zeal for the honour of God, and of a dear Redeemer. 5. A thirst after, and fondness of the world, is a symptom of declension in grace. 6. The want of watchfulness against sin is a sure sign of decay in grace. 7. Being more governed in our conduct, by prudential than spiritual considerations, 8. When influenced not so much by evangelical, as legal motives. 9. Queries answered. (1.) Why is grace suffered to decline, and sin permitted to break forth 7 (2.) How may a Christian, under declension, arrive at satisfaction that he is the subject of true grace? (3.) What is included in a revival of grace, &c.? (4.) May a Christian think he is declined in grace, and be mistaken in that matter? 10. The difference between a regenerate, and an unregenerate person.

CHAPTER X. Of the means of revival, under decays of grace. "The Holy Spirit, in a way of efficiency, the sole cause of a happy revival." 1. We must remember from whence we are fallen, and lay to heart the sad occasions of our declension. 2. A consideration of what Christ required of the church at Sardis. 3. We must do the "First works," if we design a revival of our graces, 4. Query. How can this declension consist with promises of growth? Answered. 5. Cautions to the saint on his recovery.

CHAPTER XI. Of the temptations of the present age; and cautions against them. "Temptation is exceedingly dangerous, because we have that in us which is fit matter for it to act upon." 1. Temptations leveled against our faith, by open and avowed enemies. 2. The secret enemies of divine truth, from whom temptations arise. 3. Of persons carefully avoiding the use of some terms and phrases, by which the most important doctrines of Christianity are expressed. 4. Some act a neutral part; they appear on no side; you cannot tell what their opinion is. 5. The motives to caution and watchfulness, lost we be surprised by temptation.

CHAPTER XII. Of holy and spiritual Communion with God. "Fellowship with God hath always subsisted between God and His saints." 1. The saints enjoy communion with God the Father in his love, which is (1.) Eternal. (2.) Sovereign. (3.) Immense. (4.) Immutable. (5.) Inseparable. (6.) The saints enjoy communion with God in all his counsels and purposes concerning their salvation. 2.

Intimacy and fellowship is maintained between Christ and the church; they being his brethren, his children, his bride, his members, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. 3. The saints enjoy communion with the blessed Spirit. Some experimental portions of Solomon's song illustrated. 4. The several relations wherein Christ stands to His people, a fit matter for delightful meditation to spiritually minded persons. 5. The church is sometimes without the company of her beloved. The reasons why, are shewed. 6. and lastly. A consideration of our communion with God, in the course of that holy obedience which He requires us to yield unto Him, while we are in this mortal state. 1. Duties of a religious nature. (1.) Meditation. (2.) Prayer. (3.) Reading the sacred Word. (4.) Attending on the preaching of the gospel. (5.) Celebrating of the institutions of Christ. 2. Communion with God and Christ, enjoyed, in the practice of the duties of the second table. The volume closes with a glance at the sacred delight which will possess our souls, when we shall serve our God day and night, without fainting, weariness, or the least tincture of evil in any of our acts; and when our communion with the Father, Son and Spirit shall be most near, uninterrupted, and without end.

02.00. The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ Asserted

The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ Asserted by John Brine (London: Aaron Ward, 1743)
THE CERTAIN EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, ASSERTED: OR, The NECESSITY, REALITY, and PERFECTION, of his Satisfaction are pleaded for: The Objections of the SOCINIANS and ARMINIANS are answered: The Moral Law proved to be in full Force: And the unconditional Nature of the new Covenant is demonstrated; in Answer to a Book, called, THE RUIN AND RECOVERY OF MANKIND; The Mistakes of the Author, on various Subjects are Discovered and Corrected, viz. The Annihilation of Infants. The Imputation of Original Sin to Men. The Charge of Sin on Christ. The Imputation of his Righteousness to his People.

ALSO, The Necessity, and Nature of the Work of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration, are treated of: The Scriptural Account of these important Doctrines is clearly stated, and vindicated, from his, and the Exceptions of some others. WITH A POSTSCRIPT, Proving that a Charge of Guilt is inseparable from Punishment. BY JOHN BRINE LONDON ¾ Printed for, and Sold by AARON WARD, at the King's Arms in Little- Britain. London 1743.

02.000. The Preface

THE PREFACE

I apprehend, that every intelligent Reader will allow, that the various Subjects treated of in the following Sheets, are of the greatest Importance: Because the Glory of God in all his Perfections, the Honour of Christ, and the eternal Happiness of his People, are intimately concerned in them. Doctrines of such Moment require the most impartial Examination, in order to form a Judgment about them: If an Enquiry, deliberate and serious, calm and unbiass'd, is necessary in any Doctrinal Points, it is evidently so in each of these Particulars, wherein, I hope I have not been negligent. But I am not insensible of the Meanness, and on many Accounts, the Unfitness of him who has ventured in this public Manner to deliver his Thoughts of these evangelical Mysteries, to undertake the Defence of the Doctrines of the true Grace of God, of the real Satisfaction of Christ, and of the Efficacy of the gracious Influences of the divine Spirit, in Opposition to the Misrepresentations which the Author of the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, gives of those heavenly Truths. It would have been very pleasing to me, if any Person furnished with Abilities suitable to a more copious Defence of these momentous Doctrines, had undertaken it, and thereby prevented a feebler one. The Author of which being fully persuaded of their real Excellency and singular Weight, he cannot but wish to see them in the best Manner defended. As I greatly desired this, I waited a considerable Time, with Expectation of seeing so necessary a Piece of Service perform'd; but have been disappointed, herein, Thinking it highly needful, that something should be offered in Vindication of that Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, in Answer to the Book above mentioned, and no Person, that I knew of, of superior Abilities undertaking this task, I could not but interpret it, as a Call upon me in Providence, to set about a Labour, which I know, as it requires, it also deserves a much abler Hand. If any thing I have advanced in Favour of what appears to me to be the Doctrine of Scripture, may in the least Measure, convince Opposers, settle wavering Minds, and establish those Truths of Christ, which have formerly been own'd and contended for, as such, by the Church of God, it will give me a peculiar Pleasure. To which I think, I may subjoin, that such is my religious Regard to the Principles, I undertake to defend, that it would be a Satisfaction to me, to see this Work, which I present to the pious and impartial Reader sink in his Esteem, by the Publication of a learned and judicious Defence of those Principles.

Till then, it may be this Performance, such as it is, will not be wholly useless; but it may afford some Assistance to the common Reader, at least, in his Enquiries about the sublime and glorious Doctrines of the Grace of God, of the Merit and Satisfaction of Christ, and concerning the Work of the holy Spirit on the Souls of Men in Regeneration. Perhaps some may think, that since Deism and Infidelity greatly spread, in this unhappy Age, it is very unseasonable to oppose a Writer, who appears an Advocate for the Christian Religion, and endeavours to set any Scriptural Doctrines in an easy and unexceptionable Light, tho' he may be mistaken in some particular Things, especially, when it is his professed Design to compose the Differences which subsist among the Friends of Revelation, to the great Disadvantage of that Revelation, may not this Cause its Enemies to sneer and triumph? In answer to which I observe, I. We are under an indispensable Obligation, not only

to vindicate the holy Scripture from those Objections, which bold and daring Men are pleased to frame against it; but also to contend for the glorious Truths therein express'd, by whom soever they are misrepresented, or corrupted, or oppos'd. It seems to me a Conduct not the most consistent, to maintain the Credibility of the Bible, and decline or censure an Attempt to defend and support its Doctrines. 2. If one Christian Writer takes the Liberty to oppose the Sentiments of other Christians, why may not they be allowed to offer to public View, the Reasons which induce them to embrace and adhere to those Principles? Surely this can't be thought in the least unreasonable. 3. As for the Improvement, that Deists and Infidels may make of the different Sentiments of Christians, to the Prejudice of the Christian Revelation or Religion, unless I am very much mistaken, far greater Advantage is given them, by a Connivance at the Errors and Mistakes of such who profess to maintain a Veneration for the sacred Pages: For many of the Deists have Penetration sufficient to discover, that the most peculiar and mysterious Doctrines, which one Set of Christians contend for, are really contained in the holy Scriptures, tho' other Christians may think differently, and therefore they take the impious Freedom to disbelieve Revelation, and deny its Authority. 4. An Attempt to reconcile Christians, whose Sentiments are opposite, concerning the momentous Doctrines of a Sinner's Justification before God, and of the Operations of the holy Spirit in Regeneration, will ever prove fruitless, and greatly prejudicial to Truth: For no Concessions can be made to those who think, that Christ's Righteousness alone, is not the Matter of our Acceptance with God, without great Detriment to the good old Protestant Doctrine of Justification by Faith in Opposition to Works. Nor may any Concessions be made to those, who apprehend, that the Will of Man is actively concern'd in Regeneration, consistent with this most important Truth, that the Saints are the Workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Of this Opinion was the great Dr. Owen, (who was a very competent Judge in the, Case) as appears by the Advice he gives to Ministers, with which I shall close my Preface.

Hold fast the Form of wholesome Words and sound Doctrine, know that there are other Ways of Peace, and Accommodation with Dissenters, than by letting go the least Particle of Truth. When Men should accommodate their own Hearts to Love and Peace they must not double with their Souls, and accommodate the Truth of the Gospel to other Men's Imaginations. Perhaps some will suggest great Things of going a middle Way in Divinity between Dissenters: But what is the Issue for the most Part of such Proposals? After they have by their middle Ways raised no less Contention, than was before, between the Extremes, (yea when Things before were in some good Measure allayed,) the Accommodators themselves, through an ambitious Desire, to make good, and defend their own Expedients, are insensibly carried over to the Party and Extreme, to whom they thought to make, a Condescension unto; and by endeavouring to blanck their Opinions to make them seem probable, they are engaged to the Defence of their Consequences, before they are aware. Amyraldus, whom I look upon, as one of the greatest Wits of these Days, will at present go a middle Way between the Churches of France, and the Arminians: What hath been the Issue? Among the Churches, Divisions, Tumult, Disorder; among the Professors and Ministers, Revilings, Evilsurmising; to the whole Body of the People, Scandals and Offences; and in respect of himself, Evidence of his daily approaching nearer to the Arminian Party, until as one of them faith of him he is not far from (their) Kingdom of Heaven.^{f1} But is this all? Nay but Grotius, Episcopius, Curcaellaus, etc. (quanta Nomina) with others, must go a middle Way to accommodate with the Socinians, and all that will not follow are rigid Men, that by any Means will defend the Opinions they are fallen upon. The same Plea is made by others for Accommodation with the Papists; and

still Moderation, the middle Way, Condescension are cry'd up. I can freely say, that I know not that Man in England, who is willing to go farther in Forbearance, Love, and Communion with all that fear God, and hold the Foundation than I am, but that this is to be done, upon other Grounds, Principles and Ways, by other Means and Expedients, than by a Condescension from the Exactness of the least Apex of Gospel Truth, or by an Accommodation of Doctrines by loose and general Terms, I have elsewhere sufficiently declared. Let no Man deceive you with vain

Pretences; hold fast the Truth as it is in Jesus, part not with one IOTA, and contend for it, when called thereunto. The Preface to his Book against Biddle, p. 55, 56.

02.0000. The Introduction

THE INTRODUCTION THE Author of a Book which bears the Title of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, is of Opinion, That GOD hath chosen a certain Number of Men to everlasting Life; and that they shall infallibly be saved thro' the Merits and Righteousness of CHRIST. It is not to be doubted, but that the unalterable Love of GOD to the Elect, and their final Happiness, as a certain Effect thereof, are Truths which appear to this Writer with the brightest Evidence. Since he is also of Opinion, that Men universally are interested in CHRIST'S Death; that all are brought into a salvable State; or, that thro' the superabundant Merit of our Saviour, a conditional Provision of Salvation is made for every Man without Exception. The Gentleman discovers a very great Satisfaction in this Scheme, (if it will bear that Name, and he likes it should be so called) because, as he apprehends, peculiar Advantages attend it far beyond the Calvinistical and Arminian Schemes, neither of which, as he conceives, are clearly and fully consistent with the Scriptures. As this Scheme secures the eternal Salvation of the whole Number of the Elect, it also provides for the Happiness of All; and therefore the Author thinks, that the Calvinist may be fully satisfied with it, and the Arminian likewise. The Calvinist may, because it expresses the Whole of his Sentiments concerning the everlasting Security of GOD'S Chosen and the Arminian has no just Reason to be dissatisfied with it; because, according to this Opinion, GOD in his immense Goodness really wills, and has provided conditionally for the Felicity of ALL. Those for whom Happiness is in a conditional Manner designed, suffer nothing by the effectual Provision which is made for the Elect: And on the other Hand, such as are chosen to eternal Life, are not brought into a State of the least Uncertainty by GOD'S Intention to save Some who never may be, nay, it is certain, who never will be saved. The ingenious Author suspects, that those who disapprove of this Scheme, are ill-natured, and love not their Neighbour as themselves. The Reasoning in his Book would have lost Nothing of its Beauty and Force, if he had spared this Reflection. I humbly hope we want not Compassion to our Fellow-Creatures, but we would not be led by Pity to Men into any Principles that are dishonourable to the divine Perfections, eversive of CHRIST'S Satisfaction, and which in Reality leave them under an Impossibility of Salvation, notwithstanding GOD intended their Happiness; all which necessarily follow upon his Sentiments, as may hereafter appear. This Work will consist of four Parts: In the First I shall endeavour to prove the limited Extent of the Death of CHRIST, and the certain Salvation of all those for whom he died. In the Second, the Objections which are usually urged by the Arminians, and others, will be answered. In the Third shall attempt to prove the Impossibility of the Salvation of the Non-Elect, upon the Supposition of no other than a conditional Provision of Salvation being made for them. In the Fourth Part shall attend to what he delivers on the Subjects of the Imputation of original Sin to Men, the Charge of Sin on CHRIST, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People.

02.01. Part 1

Part 1

02.01.01. Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1. Contains the First Argument to Prove the Limited Extent of CHRIST's Death IN this first Part I propose to enter upon the Consideration of the Extent of the Death of CHRIST; whether he died for all Mankind, or a Part of the human Nature only. This is a Question of very great Moment, and is a Point which has been much contested. Some affirm, That he died for all Men; as well for those who are damned, as for such who are eternally saved. Others deny it; and (for very weighty Reasons as they think) conceive he expired on the Cross for none but those who enjoy eternal Felicity. In my Apprehension the Truth lies on this Side of the Question: For the Support of my Opinion, I shall in this Chapter present the Reader with an Account of the Nature and Effects of divine Love, of which CHRIST's Death is such an amazing Instance, that ever hath, and eternally will, fill Angels and Saints with the greatest Admiration and Astonishment. Divine Goodness was the impulsive Cause of the Sufferings of the Redeemer, in order to the Salvation of Sinners.

I. The Love of GOD the Father, is abundantly display'd in this wonderful Transaction (John 3:16.). From the many strong Expressions concerning the Love of GOD, which induced him to put his Son to Death for Men, it may reasonably be concluded, that all those for whom he died, were the Objects of his Favour, taken in its most comprehensive Sense. If no greater Instance of divine Goodness ever was, is, or wilt be, given to Men, than that of CHRIST, as a Sacrifice for them, then more intense, immutable, and inseparable Love GOD bears to None, than to such, for whom CHRIST became an atoning Sacrifice. Now I cannot conceive, that a Decree to eternally punish, and the Execution of that Decree, can consist with an Interest in the rich, inconceivable, and inseparable Love of GOD; if it may, then a certain Conclusion of being happy, cannot be drawn from an undoubted Evidence of an Interest in the good Will and Favour of GOD. For according to this Supposition, a Person who is beloved of GOD, may eternally perish, or suffer his awful Vengeance, than which, nothing seems more absurd to me. With respect to the Nature and Properties of the Love of GOD, we may observe as follows:

1. It is infinite: No Tongue can fully express it, or any Mind comprehend it, it passes Knowledge (Ephesians 3:19.). The most extensive Ideas that a finite Understanding can frame about Divine Love, are infinitely below its true Nature. The Heaven is not so far above the Earth, as the Goodness of GOD is beyond the most raised Conceptions we are able to form of it; it is an Ocean which swells higher than all the Mountains of Opposition, in such as are the Objects of it; and it is a Fountain from which flows all necessary Good to those who are interested in it. Since therefore all Men have not an Interest in this rich and super-abounding Grace of GOD, all Men are not the Subjects of Redemption by CHRIST.

2. The Love of GOD is immutable; divine Favour is subject to no Vicissitude; GOD is without any Shadow of turning (James 1:7.). The Mercy of the Lord will be to everlasting upon such, towards whom it acted in Favour of, from everlasting (Psalms 103:17.). Those to whom GOD was gracious in his eternal Counsels, and for whom he provided a Ransom (Job 33:24.), he cannot execute his Vengeance upon, without a Change in his Affection, and an Alteration in his Purposes. If therefore

all Men are not saved, but some fall under the Infliction of divine Penalty, all Men were not the Objects of that Love which gave CHRIST as a Sacrifice for Sin; and of Consequence, not interested in his Death. The Redemption he has wrought, or obtained, by his Blood, is not of larger Compass, than is that Love, as an Effect of which, he was constituted a Redeemer and Saviour.

3. The Favour and Love of GOD is inseparable. This most delightful and important Doctrine the Apostle clearly asserts, and largely treats of (Romans 8:32, Romans 8:35-39): What Love of GOD that is, from which there can be no Separation, is easily to be collected from the Scope and Design of the Place; it is that good Will and Favour of GOD which determined him to give his Son for Sinners. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, How shall he not with him also freely give us all Things? From hence it evidently appears, That the Love which it was the Intention of the inspired Writer to prove a Separation from, is impossible, is that which was the impulsive Cause of CHRIST'S Death. This affords us an irrefragable Argument that he died for Some only, and not for Men universally. In order to invalidate its Force, it must be demonstrated, that the Love of GOD which is inseparable, was not the Cause of CHRIST'S Death; or that those for whom he suffered, are not the Objects of it; or else, that tho' Men are interested in the inseparable Love of GOD, they may eternally perish.

II. The certain Effects of divine Love which gave CHRIST to die for miserable Sinners, I cannot but apprehend are so many weighty Objections against the unlimited Extent of his Death.

1. Election to Salvation results from it: Those who are the Objects of divine Favour, are not included in the Decree of Reprobation; they are not appointed to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ. There is a certain Connection between the Love of GOD, and an Ordination to Life, as between Cause and Effect; hence, says the Apostle, We are bound to give Thanks always to God for you Brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13.). And therefore, Redemption which springs from the same Cause as Election doth, is of no larger Compass than is that gracious Decree: For this Reason; it is only in the Name of the Elect, that this remarkable Challenge, with a View to the Death of CHRIST, as the Foundation of it is expressed, Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died (Romans 8:33-34).

2. Adoption is an Effect of the same Love: Such who are the Objects of divine Goodness, Grace, and Favour, enjoy the Dignity and Privileges of Sons: Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God (1 John 3:1.). If Filiation is not connected with the rich Grace of GOD, or doth not spring from it, as a certain Effect thereof, to what Purpose are those Words expressed? Adoption is to the Praise of the Glory of that Grace, according to the Riches of which we have Redemption through Christ's Blood (Ephesians 2:6-7). And therefore, that Blood was shed for those, and those only, who are dignified with the Relation of Sons to GOD; which, we know is not true of all Men.

3. Vocation is a Fruit of that Love which delivered CHRIST to Death for Sinners: Such to whom GOD appointed him to be a SAVIOUR, to them he was gracious in his eternal Counsels, or loved with an everlasting Love; and those whom he loves with an everlasting Love, he draws with Loving Kindness (Jeremiah 31:3). In his appointed Time he quickens all such to whom he bears an infinite Affection. It is evident from what has been before observed, that all for whom CHRIST died, are the Objects of the infinite, immutable, and inseparable Love of GOD; and therefore, they who are

quicken by divine Grace, and only they, are interested in a dying SAVIOUR.

4. Eternal Life springs from that Love which was the impulsive Cause of CHRIST'S Death: The Happiness of Heaven is an eminent Gift of divine Grace; but great as it is, the Goodness of GOD shines with as bright a Lustre in the Gift of CHRIST for us, as in the Communication of all that Blessedness to us. That was such an Act of Favour, as is not to be exceeded by any Instance of Kindness whatever; since Heaven is the Fruit of GOD'S good Pleasure (Luke 12:32), i.e. of his rich Grace and Goodness as the Gift of CHRIST was, it is, and will be, bestowed on all those for whom he was given. The Reason is evident: Two Effects arising from the same Cause, are equally and certainly produced by it; the one, as well as the other. Each of the Things we have mentioned, the Apostle includes when he thus reasons, He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things (Romans 8:32.)? All Men receive not all Things; and therefore, CHRIST died for some Men only.

II. The happy Subjects of Redemption are Objects of the most intense Love, of the Author of that Redemption: A greater Instance of Compassion to Sinners is nor, or can be, given by a SAVIOUR, than dying for them. This is constantly represented as the highest Act of Friendship, good Will, and Favour. If therefore, we will form our Judgment of the

Affection of CHRIST to sinful Men, from the most amazing Proof he has given of it, we shall find ourselves obliged to allow, that greater Love he bears to None, than to Such on whole Account he endured the Ignominy, Reproach, and Cruelty of the Cross. When the Church expresses her warmest Sense of CHRIST'S Love to her, she instances in his Sufferings for her; Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own Blood; which the Apostle also doth, Who loved me, and gave himself for me (Revelation 1:5.). Can it be thought, that such as were in Hell, were interested in this most intense Love of the Redeemer; or, that Judas had the same Share in the tender Affection of a SAVIOUR, as Peter? May it be imagined, that the unparalleled Compassion of CHRIST which determined him to die for Sinners, will not induce him to communicate to them whatever is necessary to their Salvation, especially as that was the End he intended in dying for them? Surely not! An Opinion more derogatory to the Glory of the Love of CHRIST, than is this, that he withholds from many for whom he suffered; that which is absolutely requisite to the Knowledge of himself as a SAVIOUR, which he certainly doth; if he died for all Men (for many enjoy not an external Revelation) will not soon be invented. Strange! It is beyond all Imagination that CHRIST should so love Multitudes, as to die for them, to whom a Discovery of his having so done, is not in Providence afforded. With Regard to the Nature of the Love of CHRIST, the same might be observed of it, as has been of the Father's: That it is immense, invariable, and inseparable. He is the same Yesterday, and To-day, and for ever (Hebrews 13:8.). His Affection to Sinners is infinitely above any Change. That which might be thought to extinguish the Flame of Love in his Breast towards them, if any thing could, he full knew when first he loved them; i.e. their own Unworthiness. Since therefore, notwithstanding that, he resolved to love them, and died to render them happy, that will not diminish his Affection to them, or separate them from his Favour. If therefore he shall sentence any of those to the Regions of Darkness, and Horror, for ever, for whom he suffered, they are such whom he ever loved, and eternally will love; even as intensely as those whom he fills with pure Delights, by shedding the Rays of his Glory around, upon, and in them, in Heaven. When it shall be proved that CHRIST did not love those for whom he died, or that his Love is mutable, may cool, be extinguished, that Fury and Hatred may take Place thereof in his

Heart; then, and not till then, (which never will be) may the Doctrine of the universal Extent of his Death be established.

III. Those Persons for whom CHRIST died, are the Objects of the Love of the holy Spirit. Such as are interested in the good Will of the Father, and Son, have an Interest in the special Grace and Love of the Spirit; for as the Trinity of Persons are undivided in their Essence, their Affection and Love is equal, and extended to the very same Objects. Now, as it hath been proved, (and as I hope beyond all just Exception) that those who are the Purchase of CHRIST's Blood, have a peculiar Interest in the Love of the Father, and Son, it is reasonable to conclude, that they are infinitely beloved of the holy Spirit; and if so, as the Father appointed the Son a SAVIOUR to them, and the Son graciously condescended to take that Capacity upon him, and acting in that Character, hath redeemed them from all Iniquity: The holy Spirit who bears the same Affection to them, as the other divine Persons do, and unites with them in the kind Design of their Salvation, will not fail to regenerate, sanctify, and preserve them, to a future State of Bliss. Hence therefore we may conclude, that those in whom the Spirit of GOD implants not Grace, and a divine Life as a Meetness for Heaven, are not the Objects of redeeming Love, or interested in the Death of CHRIST. The Doctrine of universal Redemption, is inconsistent with a peculiar and special Work of Grace on the Hearts of some Men, in order to their final Happiness. Such to whom CHRIST is a Redeemer, the Spirit is a Sanctifier. He is not a Sanctifier to all Men; neither is CHRIST a Redeemer to all. I close this Chapter with observing, That the Opinion of universal Redemption infinitely derogates from the Love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, represents it as mutable, like that of a Creature, and therefore that Opinion cannot be true.

02.01.02. Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2. Contains a Second Argument in Favour of the Limited Extent of CHRIST'S Death
THE End of CHRIST'S Death hath always been acknowledged a principal Point in the present Controversy. According to the Apprehensions Men have of the Design of his Sufferings, are their Sentiments of the Extent of his Death: That he died for All, without Exception, as the Arminians conceive, or that his Death is limited to Some, as the Calvinists think; and therefore, our most serious, diligent, and impartial Enquiry, is here absolutely necessary, if we would discover, embrace, and adhere to Truth in this important Article of Faith. The End of CHRIST'S Death may be considered, as it bears Respect to GOD the Father, to himself, and to Men.

I. GOD had in View his own Glory, as the ultimate End in delivering up his Son to Death. 1st., The Praise of his glorious Grace: he took this most surprising Step, that his free, Sovereign, and immutable Love, might be display'd in the fullest Manner. 2dly, In this extraordinary Transaction, he had a Regard to the Honour of his Law, which we have dreadfully violated, and are subject to the Condemnation of, on that Account. 3dly, The Glory and Vindication of his Justice was one End proposed in this Affair, or that he might appear to be just and righteous in saving Sinners.

II. The End with Respect to CHRIST himself, was twofold, 1. That he might have the Satisfaction and Pleasure of seeing those for whom he died, completely happy for ever. 2. That he might receive Glory and Praise from them, on Account of that Salvation he effected by his Sufferings and Death for them,

III. The End respecting those for whom he suffered, is now to be attended to. This was either to put Men into a salvable State, that is to say, to procure a Possibility of their Salvation on certain Conditions; thus the Remonstrants think. Or the Intention of his Death was to actually save and bring Men to Heaven, which seems to me to be the Truth of the Case. In Order to clear up, and confirm this weighty Point, I shall give the Reader a general View of the Design of GOD, and CHRIST, in this singular Transaction; and also a more particular one.

1st, Let it be observed, That the Father, and Son, unite in the End and Design of his Sufferings. The Intention was the same in both: In the Father who delivered up our SAVIOUR to Suffering, and in CHRIST who voluntarily suffered for us, his Pleasure consisted in a Compliance with, and Performance of, the Father's Will.

2dly, This in general was the Salvation of Sinners. The End proposed in the Incarnation and Sufferings of the Redeemer, was the Welfare and Happiness of offending Creatures; and the Gospel which brings us this welcome Report, is highly deferring of the most grateful Reception: It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners (1 Timothy 1:15.). The Design of our LORD'S Appearance was this, That his People might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10.), i.e. That they might be the happy Subjects of a divine Life now, and possess eternal Life hereafter. It therefore was not a bare Possibility of Salvation, or a conditional Grant and Promise of Life, that CHRIST came to obtain;

but the End of his Coming, was to effect Eternal Redemption; and this he actually and really obtained before his Ascension to Glory (Hebrews 9:12.). I apprehend that it will contribute much Light and Evidence in this Matter, to consider well the Covenant of Grace.

(1.) CHRIST the Mediator of this Covenant was a Head, either to all Men, or to some only, that is, an influential Head, from whom Grace, Holiness, and Life, are derived; for here I do not speak of him as a Head of mere Dominion and Rule, such he is to Angels, to the apostate Spirits, and to Men universally, but as a Head of Life, and Influence, which he only is to his Body, the Church, who are the Elect of GOD alone.

(2.) These Persons only can be interested in the Covenant of Grace; the Reason of which is, CHRIST in that Covenant is constituted a Head to all those who are included in it, in order to communicate to them, the Blessings therein promised; and therefore, none but such to whom he is a Head of Life, and Influence, are within the Compass of that Covenant.

(3.) It is clearly deducible from the Promises of the new Covenant, that GOD and CHRIST, really and fully intended the Salvation of all the Persons to whom those Promises are made. For this Covenant comprises all spiritual and eternal Blessings; or they are all granted and promised therein. Hence David speaks of this Covenant as including the Whole of his Salvation, This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire (2 Samuel 23:5.). Herein the Affair of the Sufferings and Death of CHRIST, was settled as a Condition required of him, and agreed to by him, in order to viewing his Seed, enjoy the great and glorious Benefits therein given to them. But of these Things more will be spoken hereafter. I proceed to give the Reader a more particular View of the End of our SAVIOUR'S Death.

I. Both the Father and CHRIST intended the Expiation of the Guilt of those for whom he suffered.

1. This was the Intention of the Father. It was his Will not to impute Sin to Those whom he reconciled to himself by the Death of his Son. He charged their Guilt on CHRIST their Surety, and they stand clear of all Sin in his Sight; and if he is not disappointed of his End, they are constituted, or made righteous. For he hath made him to be Sin for us who know no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

2. This also was the Design of CHRIST: The Lamb of God had not bore the Iniquities of many, but that he intended to remove them into an everlasting Oblivion, as the Antitype of the Scape Goat; Once in the end of the World, hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26.). The Father's Will to impute Sin to CHRIST, and his Compliance therewith, evidently prove, that both designed the Discharge of Sinners from Guilt, which is a considerable Branch of Salvation.

II. A farther End in View was, to secure Life to miserable and dead Sinners.

1. The Father proposed this gracious End in the Mission of his Son: In this, was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God lent his only begotten son into the World, that we might live through him (John 4:9.). The evident Import and plain Sense of these Words is, that GOD intended the Life of sinful Men in sending of CHRIST.

2. Our Saviour had the same thing in View, in coming into the World; of this he clearly informed his Disciples; I am come, that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John

10:10.). The Life of Sinners who are naturally dead in Sin, was one eminent Part of the Joy that was let before CHRIST, which caused him to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame (Hebrews 12:2.) attending it.

III. Our Holiness or Sanctification was one End of his Death. In ourselves we are morally impure and unmeet, for the Fruition of GOD, CHRIST sanctified himself, or set himself apart to Death, that those for whom he died, might be made holy; for their Sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified, through the Truth; sanctify them, through thy Truth; thy Word is Truth (John 17:1-26; John 19:17.) His Design in the Gift of himself for the Church was, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of Water by the Word (Ephesians 5:26.).

IV. The Redeemer desired that all those might be eternally happy for whom he laid down his Life. Such was that love he bore to Sinners, that he was not less intent on their Welfare and Happiness, than on his own Glory; he could not be content to dwell in Heaven alone, or without them, to see his Glory, and participate of Bliss, in the presence of his Father with him; except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground and die, it abideth; alone (John 12:24.). In which Words it is the Design of our Lord to acquaint his Disciples with the Necessity of his Death, in order to the Felicity of his People, and of his proposing their Happiness, as the End of his dying for them. From there Things it appears very evidently, that it was not a mere Possibility of Salvation which God and Christ proposed in his Death, but the actual, real, and certain Salvation of all such for whom he suffered.

V. The Means used to this Purpose are most: proper and effectual, to question which, is highly blasphemous. It would be an impious Impeachment of divine Wisdom to imagine, that God in any of his Works, uses Means not suited to attain his End. The Death of Christ, as it was a most gracious Method of saving Sinners, so it is an effectual one: This cannot be denied without imputing Folly to him, who is the Fountain of Wisdom.

1. By the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and the Infliction of Punishment on him, the infinite Displeasure of God against it, is fully discovered, and from hence arises the real and certain Remission of it, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood the Forgiveness of Sins (Ephesians 2:7.). From this Definition of Redemption it is clear, that it consists in the Pardon of Sin; those therefore, whose Sins are not remitted, are not the Subjects of Redemption.

2. Christ's Subjection to, and sustaining of the Law's Curse, is a full Vindication of its Honour, and is the gracious and effectual Method which was appointed by infinite Wisdom to secure our Deliverance from the dreadful Menaces thereof, Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us (Galatians 3:10.).

3. The Death of the blessed Jesus was designed to bring about our Reconciliation with God: His Substitution in our Room, bearing our Guilt, and undergoing the Penalty due to us, are undeniable Proofs thereof. And since his Death was penal, it must be satisfactory to the Law and Justice of God. Hence we read, That the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and that with his Stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5.). As the End designed in cutting off the Messiah, was to make Reconciliation for Iniquity (Daniel 9:24-26.), that gracious End is accomplished; for Peace is made by the Blood of his Cross (Colossians 1:20.); so that when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son (Romans 5:10.). Upon the Whole, it is very evident, that it was the kind Intention of God and Christ by his Death, to effectually secure the certain Salvation of all

those for whom he died; unless therefore they are disappointed of the End they intended, unless their Design is rendered abortive, and unless the Redeemer died in vain: All such for whom he suffered, will certainly be saved; and therefore, since all Men are not saved, all Men are not interested in the atoning Sacrifice of Christ; nor was his Death intended as a Means of the Salvation of every Man without Exception, which was the important Point to be proved.

02.01.03. Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3. Contains a Third Argument in Favour of the Limited Extent of CHRIST's Death

I. THE very different Appellations, which, in the Scripture, are given to Such for whom Christ died, from those which others bear, deserve our particular Consideration. They suggest to us that special and peculiar Interest, which the former have in the Compassion and Love of Christ, and in his saving Benefits; and that the latter are not the Objects of his Favour; that he had not the same Design concerning them; and that they share not in the happy Effects of his Sufferings and Death.

1. They are called, the Sheep of Christ, by, which may be signified their Disposition to wander, their Distance from God in their natural State: This is also expressive of the Redeemer's Concern about them, and of his peculiar Interest in them, as distinguished from others. Our Lord speaks several Things of these Persons, which he no where expresses, concerning the rest Of Mankind, that may justly lead us to conclude, he had formed such Resolutions about them, as he had not taken up about the Goats, viz. That he must bring them (John 10:16.), that they hear his Voice, that he knows them, that they follow him, that he gives to them eternal Life, that they shall never perish, that none shall pluck them out of his Hand, nor out of his Father's Hand (John 10:27-29); nothing like these Things is ever declared of others; and therefore, we have no Reason to think it was the Intention of Christ to save Such to whom this Character is never applied. We are plainly told, That for these Persons Jesus Christ died: I lay down my Life for the Sheep (John 10:15.). If it be said, This is certainly true, because he died for all Mankind, of whom they are a Part; but that from hence it is not to be proved that he suffered not for others also. I answer,

(1.) Its no where said, he died for such as are represented under the opposite Character of Goats; if this had been any where expressed, that would have been a demonstrative Proof of the universal Extent of Christ's Death; but it falls out to the great Disadvantage of this Opinion, that no Hint of such a Nature is to be found in all the Scripture.

(2.) It is the Design of our Saviour to set forth his particular and special Regard to these Persons in Distinction from all others, when he calls them his Sheep; which upon a due Consideration of the Things before observed, cannot well be denied. And therefore, when he says, I lay down my Life for the Sheep, his Intention is to represent this Act as a singular Instance of his good Will and Favour to them, as they stand distinguished from others; of consequence others are not interested in his Death.

(3.) I suppose it will be granted, that eternal Life is only given to the Sheep, not to the Goats, who in Judgment will be placed at the Left Hand of Christ, upon whom an awful Sentence of Condemnation will be pronounced, and dreadful Punishment will be inflicted: as therefore the Omission of the exceptive Particle only, when our Saviour says, To them I give eternal Life, leaves no room to think he also gives eternal Life to others; so the Omission of that Particle when he says, I lay down my Life for the Sheep, is no just Objection to the Limitation of his Death to them; for it is here as plainly understood as there, and the whole Scope of our Saviour's Discourse leads

to that Sense, as I can't but think must be evident to every impartial Enquirer.

2. Sons and Children are Characters given to such for whom the Redeemer suffered. From the several Places in which these Persons are honoured with these Titles, and Christ is said to die for them, it evidently appears, that it was the Intention of God to save them through his Sufferings and Death; for they were to be gathered together in one (John 11:52.), and to be brought to Glory (Hebrews 2:10.). In order to which, Christ was made perfect thro' Sufferings, on their Account; viz. a perfect Saviour. This was by his undergoing all that the Law and Justice of God required to their Discharge. He was made a perfect Saviour to None in his Death, but to those who are Sons; and therefore None but such who are Sons, have an Interest: in his Death.

3. Church is an Appellation by which those Persons for whom Christ suffered, are distinguished from others. It will (as I suppose) be readily acknowledged, that the Whole of Mankind are not designed by this Character, but only the Church of the First-born who are written in Heaven. Now if it was the Intention of the Apostle to represent the special Love of Christ to those who are saved, (which cannot reasonably be called in Question) where he mentions Christ's giving himself to that End (Ephesians 5:25-26), there is the clearest Reason to think that his Death is a full Proof of that peculiar Affection which he bears to the Saved-Ones; for that alone is here produced as such an Evidence; and therefore, his Death is limited to the Church of the First-born, nor are any others interested therein.

4. Another Title given to these Persons, is the Body of Christ: This is expressive of that foederal Union which subsists between him and them. He is the Head, and they are the Members. By Way of Distinction from others, he is declared to be the Saviour of the Body (Ephesians 5:23.): Such Christ is to them, and to them only for whom he died. He cannot with any Propriety be called a Saviour of them who are not saved; he freed not them from the Curse of the Law on whom it is inflicted he redeem'd not them from Hell who suffer eternal Vengeance there, since Christ is not a Saviour to those who perish, but only to his Body, the Church of the Firstborn, who are written in Heaven, and Salvation arises from his Death as the meritorious and procuring Cause thereof; they are the only Persons for whom he died, to whom that Title properly belongs, who are not all Men is most certain.

5. The Elect is another Name by which they are known. That the Chosen of God, are the only Persons, against whom a Charge of Guilt cannot be exhibited, appears very plainly, from this Challenge of the Apostle in their Behalf: Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died (Romans 8:33-34). Others are under the Imputation of Sin, a Sentence of Condemnation; and that Sentence will certainly be executed upon them. In the Opinion of the Apostle, the Death of Christ is a sufficient Security, from a Charge of Offence, and a Sentence of Condemnation; and therefore, such for whom he died, to them, Sin is not imputed; nor, is any Curse pronounced against them, considered as interested in his Death, which Things are true of the Elect of God only, in whole Name alone, this Challenge is expressed. The same Thing is evident from two Places of Scripture compared together, the First is, Hebrews 12:23. To the Church of the First-born. The Second is, Ephesians 5:25. He loved the Church, and gave himself for it. The Church consists of such Persons only, who are written in Heaven; viz. Who are elected to Everlasting Life, for these Christ is said to die, or give himself: And to say that he died for others also, is to speak beside the Scripture.

II. Others of the human Race are as plainly distinguished from them, by very different Characters.

1. They are called The Rest: The Election hath obtained it, and the Rest were blinded (Romans 11:7.): It is expressly asserted, that Christ died for the Former, but of the Latter, no such Thing is any where intimated; and therefore to affirm that he died for Men universally, is to extend his Death far beyond what the Scriptures do. As for those general Expressions, the World, the whole World, it can never be proved, that they include Persons of these different Characters, the Election, and the Rest; and therefore, from those Expressions it cannot fairly be inferred, that Christ died for the Elect, and Reprobates also, which is the Point to be demonstrated.

2. The World is another Title under which they pass, by way of Distinction from the People of Christ: I pray for them, I pray not for the World, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine (John 17:9.). If ye were of the World, the World would love his own; but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World; therefore the World hateth you (John 15:19.). To establish the Doctrine of the unlimited Extent of Christ's Death, it ought to be proved, That that World is redeemed, out of which, the Church of God is said to be redeemed (Revelation 5:9.); and therefore was not redeemed together with it.

3. They have the Character of Goats: The Sheep he will set at his Right Hand, but the Goats on his Left (Matthew 25:33.). Our Lord expressly declares, He laid down his Life for the Sheep; but he never says any thing like it of the GOATS. His Sheep he knows, bears a great Respect to them, is never unmindful of them, securely defends them, and gives to them eternal Life: The others denominated GOATS, he NEVER KNEW (Matthew 7:23.). They are not the Objects of his good Will and Favour; he gives not to them eternal Life, but consigns them over to endless Misery. How confidently soever it shall be affirmed, I do not expect to see it proved, that Christ died to save those WHOM he NEVER KNEW.

4. They are represented as Persons appointed to Condemnation, and WRATH (Jude 1:4.), which is a Character just the REVERSE of those, for whom Christ is said to die. They are (as we have seen) called, the Elect, and said to be chosen to Salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:9.). Let it be clearly proved, if it can be, that Christ suffered with an Intention to save those, who are APPOINTED to WRATH; and when that is done, I shall ask some Questions, which will not admit of Answers very easy. Whether an Intention, to save, and to punish, are the same, or may consist together? If God and Christ once designed to save those, whom they eternally punish, when they changed their Purpose concerning these Persons? Whether such an Alteration of Purpose is consistent with Immutability? And to what Motives, or Reasons, we may attribute, this Change of Resolution and Design? I have always thought, that the Council of the Lord shall stand; that he will do all his Pleasure (2 Thessalonians 2:12; 15:13.); that the Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations (Isaiah 46:10.); that none have resisted his Will (Psalms 33:11.), or prevented the Accomplishment of his infinitely wise Determinations: But when I shall see it once proved, that God intended to save all Men, by the Death of his Son, I will readily acknowledge myself mistaken, In the Sentiments, (so agreeable to the Scripture) just now expressed, and that the Bible is not the most consistent Book, which was ever wrote: But at present I am under no Apprehension that I shall be obliged, to make Concessions so dishonourable to God, and destructive of his Veracity in his Word.

02.01.04. Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4. Contains a Fourth Argument in Favour of the Limited Extent of CHRIST's Death THE learned and ingenious Author of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, in Words greatly extols the Merits of our Saviour, he frequently speaks of his redundant, superabundant, and overflowing Merit; but his Opinion is a real Extenuation, and Nullity of his true Merit, as will hereafter appear.

1. The Foundation of Christ's Merit, in his Obedience and Sufferings, is the infinite Dignity of his Person; his Obedience to the Law, his Sufferings and Death had not been available to the Justification of Men, or to the Remission of their Sins, if he had been a mere Creature, or Man only. His human Nature was the Subject of Obedience and Suffering; but his Obedience and Sufferings have their infinite Value, from his Divine Nature: His Righteousness being the Righteousness of God, and his Blood being the Blood of God, is the Reason, Cause, and Foundation of that Merit, which attends both.

2. It was an eminent Act of free and foreign Favour to Christ, as Man, to ordain his human Nature to a personal Union, with the Word the Son of God: This, which is his highest Honour, as Man and Mediator, is a free Gift, or it is a Fruit of the Father's everlasting and eternal Love to him (John 17:24.). This he did not, he could not merit; for our Saviour can't be supposed to have merited that, which rendered him a Subject capable of meriting. Which Augustin well improves as an Argument against Merit in us. And Calvin from him insists upon the same Argument in his Institutions (Lib. II. Cap 17.). Limborch very much misrepresents Calvin's Sense in this Point². His Opinion was not, that intrinsic Merit, did not attend what Christ did and suffered; this he pleads for; but inasmuch as this Union of the human Nature with the Divine, is the Result of God's Decree, he resolves Christ's Merit into that Decree, as the Origin of it; and represents the Grace of God as the supreme Cause, and the Merit of Christ, as the subordinate Cause of Salvation.

3. As a supreme, and subordinate Cause, are not inconsistent, so Salvation though it is merited by Christ, it is still freely given; the Grace of God is to be considered, as the supreme Cause, and Fountain of it: For since, the Merit of Christ, (as we shall find it is, if we trace it up to its Source) is to be resolved into, the free, and sovereign good Will of God, we affirm nothing incompatible, with the Freeness, Riches, and Sovereignty of Divine Grace, when we say, that our Salvation is merited, by the Obedience, and Sufferings of our Saviour. The Reason is, a Cause supreme, and subordinate, are by no Means repugnant.

4. Infinite Merit attended, what Christ did and suffered for his People, and by Virtue of the Union which subsists between him, and them, that Merit becomes theirs.

1st. His Obedience to the Law, had an infinite Merit attending of it. In order to give the Reader, a clear, and distinct, and just Idea of this most important Point, I observe.

(1.) It was by a special Divine Constitution, that Christ became Subject to the Law, Men are born under the Law, or Covenant of Works, as the natural Descendants of Adam, with whom, that Covenant was made, but so was not Christ: The first Adam was not a Head to the last Adam; and

therefore, if the last Adam, comes under the Obligation of that Law, which was given to the first Adam, it must be, by an Appointment, and Decree peculiar to himself; hence as Christ was made of a Woman, i.e. as his human Nature was produced in a supernatural Manner, or not according to the settled Law of Nature, so he was made under the Law, by a special Appointment (Galatians 4:4.), otherwise he would have had no Concern, with the Law, or Covenant of Works, as a Subject of it. For as the first Man, was not a Head to the second Man, who is the Lord from Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:47.), nor he a natural Descendant from him, he was not, nor could be obliged to the Observation of that Law, or Covenant, (but by special Appointment) which was given to, and made with the first Man.

(2.) Christ as Man, by Vertue of his personal Union, with the Word, the Son of God, was raised above the Condition, and State of a mere Creature; or, had a Right to Glory, and Blessedness, even to Glory, as great as we may suppose, his human Nature thus advanced was capable of enjoying, for he was appointed Heir of all Things (Hebrews 1:3.); he was rich (2 Corinthians 8:9.), and his stooping to a low State was a voluntary Act of Condescension, being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself (Php 2:8.); and therefore Obedience to the Law, became not due from him, in order to the Fruition of God: As he was exalted above the State, and Condition, of all Creatures, by Vertue of this Union, he is not to be considered under the same Obligation with them. And this is the great Mystery, and Glory of the Gospel; Oh that my Soul may for ever, admire, and adore it!

3.) Though he was not a mere Creature, but God as well as Man, and was thus exempted from the common State, and Condition of Creatures, yet, by a special Designation of the Father, and his own voluntary Agreement, he became subject to the Law., or Covenant of Works, not on his own Account, for that was impossible, but for the sake, of others; or with a gracious View, to their Redemption, from that Law, considered as a Covenant of Works.

(4.) Those, on whose Account he became subject to the Law, or Covenant of Works, are such, for whom he was a Surety to the Father, or to whom he was constituted a representative Head, and no others: For as his Obligation to the Law, or Covenant of Works, wholly arises from the Father's sovereign Will, and his own voluntary Consent, it can't be thought, that he stood obliged to fulfil that Law, or Covenant, for those, whole Surety he was not, and to whom he was not appointed, representative Head, until therefore, we shall see it clearly proved, that Christ is a Head, to such, who are not of his Body the Church, we shall continue to firmly believe, that he only fulfilled the Law for them, and that he is not, or was designed to be the End of the Law for Righteousness to any others.

(5.) Our blessed Saviour was perfectly conformable to the Law, his Nature was pure, and his Conduct unblemished, he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth (1 Peter 2:22.). His Obedience was commensurable to, or every Way, such as the Law required, he always did those Things which pleased the Father.

(6.) As in his Obedience, he is to be considered a Surety and Head, his Righteousness, or Obedience, is imputed those, and only to those, for whom he became a Surety, and to whom. he was appointed a Head. He is not a Head to all Men, he only is to his Body the Church, i.e. the Church of First-born, who are written in Heaven, or the Elect of God, who we know are not all Men: All Men therefore are not interested in his Obedience, and the Merit of it, which was the Point to be

proved.

(7) The Deity of Christ infinitely exalted his Obedience: Immense Honour arose to the Law by Christ's Subjection to it, and Observation of it, he magnified the Law, and made it honourable (Isaiah 42:21.). The Obedience of our Lord is attended with Merit suitable to the Dignity of his Person, which Merit becomes theirs, on whole Account, he was made under the Law, and for whom as a Surety, and Head, he fulfilled it; they therefore are entitled to all those Benefits and Blessings which are the Result, of his Obedience; hence says the Apostle, That being justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life (Titus 3:17.).

(8) Infinite Merit attended the Sufferings of Christ: The Blood of our Redeemer, is equal in Value, and Worth, to the Greatness and Dignity his Person. Now he is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person (Hebrews 1:3.). It therefore is no Diminution, or lessening of the Father's Honour, to esteem him, his EQUAL (Php 2:6.); of Consequence, he is a Person infinitely great and glorious. And if his Sufferings are allowed to have any thing of superior Worth in them, to those of a mere Creature, on Account of his Deity, if we will be consistent, and carry up our Reasoning, to its proper Pitch, in an Affair, wherein it is absolutely necessary to be done, we must grant, that as they have any thing more of Merit, in them, than those of a mere Creature, they have infinitely more and greater Worth: Hence it follows, that his Suffering are an adequate, and every Way sufficient Price, for our Redemption: An infinite Justice was offended, and an infinite Person suffered: Here was an Equality between the Judge, who punished, and the Subject, on whom Punishment was inflicted. And if the Death of Christ was a full, and adequate Price, of Redemption, then all those, for whom he died, in Justice, have a Right and Claim to a Discharge from Guilt, Freedom from Condemnation, and Security from the penal Effects of Sin. Whether these Things can consist with the universal Extent of his Death, a small Degree of Discernment, in spiritual Truths, will enable any Person to discover. It is impossible to maintain the true Merit of Christ, without granting, that all those partake of the Benefits which he merited, for whom they were procured; for it is unjust, to withhold that, to which a Person hath a Right; Merit gives Right to those Favours, which are supposed to be merited, whether that Merit, is personal, or it is the Merit of another, but becomes ours, by Vertue of the meritorious Action being done by one between whom and us, there is such a Union, as lays a proper Foundation, for the Imputation of that Action to us, which is the Case here, as plainly appears by what has been before observed. This cannot be denied, without an entire Subversion of the Gospel, in the most weighty Points, it recommends to our Faith and full Assent.

02.01.05. Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5. Contains a Fifth Argument in Favour of the Limited Extent of CHRIST's Death

REDEMPTION which is effected by the Death of Christ, Is a clear and cogent Argument in Favour of the limited Extent of his Death.

1. Redemption may be considered as metaphorical; that is a mere Deliverance out of Misery and Servitude, without the Payment of any Price. Thus the Israelites are said to be redeemed (1 Chronicles 17:21.) out of the Hands of the Egyptians, when no Price, or valuable Consideration, was given for their Release from Bondage. The Socinians maintain, that such is our Redemption by Christ, that he paid no Price, or valuable Consideration, for our Deliverance from the penal Effects of Sin³.

2. It is proper, and that is when a Price is given, or a valuable Consideration, is yielded by him who acts the Part of a Redeemer, for those who enjoy Liberty in Consequence of his so doing, (1). This may have Place in the Deliverance of Captives, who are held under Confinement by a Conqueror. (2.) In the Deliverance of Criminals from deferred Punishment, in this View, our Redemption is to be considered, for we are Criminals, and obnoxious to very severe Penalty, for our Offences, against God, our Sovereign, and our Judge.

3. Christ as our Redeemer paid a valuable Price, or Consideration, for our Redemption. In order fairly to make out this, it will be necessary to prove — That he suffered in our Stead — That his Sufferings were that Penalty, to which we were obnoxious — That those Sufferings of Christ were a proper Price, or valuable Consideration, for our Deliverances and Exemption from Punishment.

I. Christ suffered in our Place and Stead not merely for our Good, as the Socinians and Arminians urge: For though it is certain, that in suffering in our Room he suffered for our Good, yet this he might be supposed to do, without suffering in our Stead. The observation of two Things will fully clear up this.

1. Christ was a Surety to God for those Persons, on whose Account he died; hence he is said to be the Surety of a better Testament, or Covenant, *diaqhkhv* (Hebrews 7:22.). For this Reason, his Blood is called the Blood of the everlasting Covenant (Hebrews 13:11.). He was not a Surety for God to Sinners, as the Socinians, and Arminians contend⁴; he stood in no Need of a Surety. to make good his Engagements; it is blasphemous to imagine it, the Thought thereof is a horrid Reflection, on the Power, or Veracity of God. And therefore if Christ was a Surety at all, he was our Surety, and took our Debt upon him, as such, he died, in order to clear that Debt, which necessarily supposes his Substitution in our Place, or Relation to the Law of God.

2. He is expressly said to have suffered for us; i.e. in our Stead; for the Preposition *uper* evidently designs the Substitution of one Person in the Room and Place of another *ina uper sou diakonou*, That in thy Stead be might have ministered (Philemon 1:13.), *uper Crisou deomega*. We pray you in Christ's Stead (2 Corinthians 5:20.), *uper gar tou agaou* for a good Man (Romans 5:7.), i.e. in

the Stead of a good Man, and no Reason can be assigned, why it should not be taken in this Sense, when it is said, Crisov uper hman apeqane, Christ died for us; the Just suffered for the Unjust (1 Peter 3:18), uper adikwn in Stead of the Unjust, agreeable to the Sense of the Preposition in other Places, until therefore some substantial and clear Reason is assigned for a different Sense, we shall not grant what is merely begg'd, the Cause is too important to allow of such a Complement. The Reason which is urged against this Sense, taken from its being said that Christ suffered pdei amartiwn, i.e. for Sins (1 Peter 3:18.), is so far, from militating with it, that it abundantly confirms it, for he of whom it is declared, that he suffers for the Crimes of another, must be understood to suffer in the Stead of that other Person, when it is affirmed that he suffers for him.

II. Christ suffered the Penalty, that they were liable to, on whole Account he died. Which thus appears:

1. Their Guilt was imputed to him: He was made Sin for them (2 Corinthians 5:21.), the Lord laid on him the Iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6.), he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree (1 Peter 2:24.). Christ was in himself innocent, but by Imputation, he was made Sin or Guilty, without that, his Sufferings could not be of a penal Nature, for proper Punishment is the Infliction of the Evil of Suffering, for the Evil of Sin; Penalty therefore always bears Respect to a Charge of Offence, committed either by the Person himself who suffers, or by others, for and in whose Stead he suffers, which is the Care here. Nor is there any thing unjust in this, if the Party offended, hath a Power of excusing the guilty Party and of accepting the Engagement of another to suffer for him, and he who engages, hath a Power over his Life, if that is at his Disposal, and he is free to resign it, which Things though they are not found among Men, they are all true, and actually found here, or else we are undone for EVER.

2. He was made a Curse: That very Thing from which we are freed, by the Death of Christ, he was made in dying for us, which is the Curse and Condemnation of the Law, he redeemed us from the Curse of the Law being made a Curse for us (Galatians 3:12.). No, say the Socinians and Arminians, he was not properly made a Curse, if not properly, then not at all; for there is no improper Sense, in which he could be made a Curse, the Apostle affirms, he was made a Curse for us, every one knows whom we ought to believe, the inspired Writer rather than those Men.

3. Our gracious Redeemer sustained the Shock of the Father's vindictive Displeasure: What less, than this, can be the Import of such Modes of Expression as these: It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to Grief (Isaiah 43:10.), and awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, against the Man that is my Fellow, finite the Shepherd (Zechariah 13:7.). This awful Language is expressive of a real and positive Act, of God himself against his Son, as the Surety of Sinners, and standing charged with their Guilt, which must be an Act of Vengeance. The whole Punishment due to Sin, when punished in such a Subject as Christ is, was inflicted on him, who had infinite Dignity, whole Sufferings therefore were of infinite Value, and of Consequence, it was not necessary that they should be endless in Duration, because they were in Value immense: Hence it is evident that the Shortness of the Time of his Sufferings, is no just Objection, to his undergoing that very Punishment, which was due to, or from us; though Socinians and Arminians are pleated to argue it is.

III. Christ's Sufferings were a proper Price, or valuable Consideration for our Redemption. The Socinians deny that his Death was a Price, though it is expressly so called, Lutron, (Matthew 20:28.), i.e. a Price of Redemption, which is the proper Signification of the Word. The Arminians will nor allow, that it was a full, and adequate Price; but that it was so according to the Estimation of God, or his gracious Acceptation. And some others, who perhaps would take it amiss, to be reckoned of that Party, agree with them therein; thus Dr. Doddridge speaking of what Christ paid for us, faith, it was GRACIOUSLY ALLOWED of God, as a valuable Consideration . This is infinitely to sink the Merit of the Redeemer, below its true Nature; for his Death must needs be an adequate and full Price of Redemption, or a complete Payment of our Debt; because he suffered that very Punishment, which was due to the Criminals he intended to redeem, and was equal, in Dignity, to their offended Judge, who inflicted that Penalty. The Sufferings of an innocent Person, in the Room of the Guilty, ought to be allowed and accepted, as a valuable Consideration, for their Deliverance, if he suffers all that penal Evil which the Law threatens, Justice requires it, it is not an Act of Favour, but of Righteousness: And therefore, if Christ really suffered for Sinners, the WHOLE of that Punishment, which was due to, or from them, in Right and Justice, they are intitled to Impunity: If indeed he has not, but a Part of it only, then we are left in a miserable Condition; for we are unable to bear the least Part of the Penalty our Sins deserve. But the Father expects no more for our Deliverance and Redemption, than Christ has paid: And therefore all those for whom he died, have Remission of Sins, Freedom from Condemnation, and Security from WRATH. In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins (Ephesians 2:7.). Where is therefore now no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1.). Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him. The universal Extent of the Death of Christ, supposes the Reverse of these Things, so plainly expressed, in the Holy Scriptures: That the Surety bore Sin, and that the Sinner remains under a Charge of it. — That our Saviour was made a Curse, and that the Offender continues under it. That our Lord sustained the infinite Displeasure and Wrath of God, and that those (at least many, yea the greater Part of them) for whom he so did, will eternally lie under his awful Vengeance. Thus Men take the Liberty to depreciate the Merit of the Redeemer under a Pretence of extending it, and to contradict the plainest Evidence of the Word of God, in Favour of their own Opinions, which have no Foundation in the sacred Writings, as I hope fully to evince and prove hereafter. The Author of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, makes a Concession which (if I mistake not) is entirely inconsistent with the universal Extent of Christ's Death, though he appears a zealous Advocate for it, (in a marginal Note.) It is this, I cannot find that Scripture once asserts, that Christ redeemed all Men, or died to redeem them all. I beg Leave to ask this Gentleman, Whether Christ died with an Intention to redeem such for whom he paid a Price of Redemption? Surely he must: The Scripture represents his Death as a Price of Redemption; and I should think his Death was that in his Intention, which it was in Fact; if therefore he died for all Men, in his Death he intended to pay a Price of Redemption for all Men, or died to redeem them all. The Arminians in order to reconcile the Doctrine of universal Redemption, with particular Salvation; or the Happiness of a Part of human Nature only, with the universal Extent of Christ's Death, distinguish upon Redemption, as impetrated, and as applied. They suppose that Redemption was impetrated for all Men; but that it is applied to some only, the Reason of which is, all do not perform those Conditions, upon which the Application of Redemption depends⁵. To this I answer: Though the Impetration of Redemption, and the Application of it, may be distinguished, they cannot be separated: For it is unjust to render the

Enjoyment of that uncertain which is impetrated, or obtained, by the Payment of a proper, and full Price, to those for whom it is so obtained, by the Injunction of any Conditions on them. It would be acting an injurious Part to him, who paid that Price. And therefore, since Redemption is not applied to all Men, but to some only, it was not impetrated, or obtained for all Men, but for a Part of the human Nature only. Upon the Whole, we may safely conclude, That the Extent of Christ's Death is not universal, but particular, and limited to some.

02.01.06. Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6. Contains a Sixth Argument in Favour of the Limited Extent of CHRIST's Death THAT Reconciliation which Christ effected by his Death, seems to me, a nervous Argument in Favour of the limited Extent of it. The Doctrine of divine Reconciliation supposes not any Change, in the Disposition of Gods or from a Purpose of inflicting Punishment, to friendly Design of conferring Benefits, neither of which are compatible with the Perfections of God: And therefore Apprehensions of this Sort, are by no Means to be entertained, when we speak of that Peace which Christ has made for Sinners. But it supposes an infinite Displeasure with Sin, in God. A Disapprobation of our Persons, considered as Offenders; and the Engagement of divine Justice against us, as Transgressors: All which are perfectly consistent, with the everlasting Love of God to us, and with his gracious Choice of us in Christ to eternal Salvation; and with the invariable Approbation of our Persons, as view'd in the Beloved. Hence it appears, That Reconciliation with God, by the Death of Christ, is not a Procurement of divine Favour, as the Socinians object to us: But it really is an Effect thereof, There is no Repugnancy, between the free, sovereign, and eternal Love of God to his Elect, and the Doctrine of real Peace, being made for them by the Blood of Christ's Cross. The pretended Inconsistency of God's good Will and Favour, Love to and Delight in his People, with actual, and proper Reconciliation, which is effected by the Sufferings of the Redeemer, is no other than a foolish Objection of the Socinians, who are professed Adversaries, to the Merits and Satisfaction of Christ. And it is Pity, that any through a Desire to maintain the precious Truth of God's Free, immutable, and eternal Love to his People should in the least countenance an Objection formed by the worst Enemies, which the Gospel has, against the proper and real Atonement of Christ: Since there is no Inconsistency in these Things; but both are alike true, and of equal Moment, in our Salvation, viz. The free Love of God to his People, and Atonement made for their Sins, by the Sufferings of our blessed Lord. The Ground of this Mistake, is, considering God as attended with human Passions, than which, nothing more dishonourable to the divine Being, can by a Creature be deviled. Reconciliation is not a Change in the Heart of God, from an angry Disposition, to a friendly Affection, as it is in Men; but it is a full, and proper Satisfaction to his violated Law, and offended Justice, Nor is another Objection which the Socinians make, of the least Weight; i.e. That God is never said to be reconciled to Men; but that we are said to be reconciled to him, by the Death of his Son. For the Party to whom Christ offered himself, as a Sacrifice, is reconciled, which was not Men, but God. Besides, it is the usual Mode of speaking, to express Reconciliation, by the Party who offends, becoming reconciled, to the Party offended: Go thy Way, and first be reconciled to thy Brother (Matthew 5:24.). God in this Affair is to be considered, as a Judge, insisting on a plenary Satisfaction to his Law, and Justice, which being given, he hath no farther Demand to make; and therefore is most properly said to be appeased, or reconciled to Sinners.

I. Christ was to make Peace or Reconciliation: Let him take hold of my Strength; i.e. on Christ who is the Son of Man, whom God has made strong for himself: And is called the Power of God, that he may make Peace with me, and he shall make Peace with me (1 Corinthians 1:24; Isaiah 27:5.).

One gracious End of the Messiah's being cut off; but not for himself, was to make Reconciliation for Iniquity (Daniel 9:24-26.). The Church under the legal Dispensation, was taught to expect the great Benefit, of real Atonement, or Peace and Reconciliation, by and through the Sufferings of the Messiah: And the Saints then acted Faith on that Atonement: The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5.).

II. The Nature of the Sufferings of our blessed Redeemer, is an evident Proof, that he suffered in order to make Peace and Reconciliation. His Sufferings were penal, and therefore, so far as he sustained that Punishment, which was due to, or from Sinners, they must be satisfactory to the Law, and Justice of God. Sin was imputed to him; The Curse of the Law was inflicted on him: And the Sword of divine Justice smote him. Which Things are a full Evidence, that in suffering he was punished: And if the Whole of that Penalty which Sin demerits, was endured by our Saviour, the certain Effect thereof, must be real, and perfect, Peace, or Reconciliation with God. If indeed he suffered only a Part of that Punishment, then complete Atonement is not made, he is but a partial Saviour, and was not made perfect through Sufferings. But this we can, by no Means, allow of, not only because it dreadfully affects our eternal Interest, but also because it impeaches divine Wisdom, and Justice, and reflects the greatest Dishonour on Christ himself.

III. The Gospel is a Report of Peace and Reconciliation. It is called The Gospel of Peace: And the Word of Reconciliation (Ephesians 6:15. 2 Corinthians 5:19.). Because it assures us, That Peace is made, by the Blood of the Cross of Christ. And that when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son. And that we are healed by the Stripes, i.e. the Sufferings of our Lord. It is not a Report of a Disposition, or Inclination in God, to be reconciled to sinful Men, on Account of the Suffering, and Death of Christ; but it is a clear, and glorious, and gracious Discovery, or Proclamation of real, and actual, and perfect Peace, or Reconciliation effected by his Passion and Death, The Divine Will to Reconciliation is not an Effect, but it is the Cause of Christ's suffering for Sinners, in order to his making Peace for them; Hence we read, that the Apostles preached Peace by Jesus Christ (Acts 10:31.); not a Will or Disposition in God to a Reconciliation with offending Creatures, but real Peace, or actual Atonement, and Reconciliation. And therefore some Gentlemen must excuse me, if I say that they are very different Preacher, from the Apostles, and bring us another Gospel (which is not another, no Gospel of Christ at all) who represent God as only willing to be reconciled to Sinners, thro' the Death of his Son) and not actually reconciled.

IV. The Distinction of a first, and second, or of a former, and a latter Reconciliation, the former as common to all Men, and the latter as peculiar to Believers upon Believing, which the Arminians urge, is an Invention of their own⁷. They suppose that which cannot in Justice be granted; viz. That Christ: by his Death obtained a conditional Grant, of Pardon and Life for all Men: This they call the first, or former Reconciliation; and thus much are they pleased to allow to the Merits of our Saviour; but not that he merited that Grace, which is necessary to enable Men to perform those Conditions, on which the latter Reconciliation is to be enjoyed, (and herein the Author of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, agrees with them, as to the larger Number of Men, for whom Christ died.) This I say is supposing what Justice forbids us to allow, in this Care, or in any Affair of this Nature. For it is manifestly unjust, to require an innocent Person to suffer for a Criminal, that Punishment which he deserves, and enjoy any Conditions on the Criminal, which may render his Impunity precarious, and for Want of the Performance of such Conditions, actually punish him; of this the Arminians are fully sensible; and therefore they deny that in a strict Sense Christ was

punished. And so to must our Author also, if he will be consistent with himself. I should think this Gentleman can't esteem it an unreasonable Request, if I ask the Favour of him, to tell us plainly, whether he apprehends Christ was really punished for Sinners in his Sufferings? Whether he endur'd the Whole, or a Part only, of that Penalty which was due to, or from them, for whom he died? And whether he thinks it agreeable to Justice to inflict the whole Punishment, due to Offenders, on a Surety for them, and punish them also.

It seems clear to me, even to a Demonstration; that if our precious Saviour was punished in his Sufferings: That if he underwent the Whole of that Punishment, to which they were liable for whom he died: And if it cannot consist with Justice, and Righteousness, to inflict Penalty on a Surety, and on Offenders also: That all those for Right to Impunity, whom Christ suffered, have a Pardon, and Life; or that the Law and Justice of God are satisfied, that no Fury is, or can be in God, against those Persons; but that he is actually reconciled to them, or pacified towards them for all that they have done. Which is evidently inconsistent with the universal Extent of Christ's Death; and therefore, I cannot but apprehend that it is particular; and limited to time.

02.01.07. Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7. Contains the Seventh Argument to Prove the Limited Extent of CHRIST's Death THE Satisfaction of Christ is justly accounted a most momentous, and important Article of Faith, because his Glory, and the Efficacy of his Merits, the Honour, and Justice of God: And the Salvation of his People, are inseparably connected with it, are built upon it, and arise from it. We therefore are under infinite Obligations, to accurately inquire into it, clearly Rate it, and zealously defend it. And since the Adversaries of evangelical Truths, exercise their greatest Skill, and use their utmost Efforts, in militating against the Necessity of it, its Reality, and the Perfection thereof, we certainly ought not to be less diligent in asserting, and vindicating its Necessity, Reality, and Perfection.

I. I shall endeavour to prove, that in order to the Remission of Sin, Satisfaction is necessary and such a Satisfaction, as is fun, and adequate to what the Law and Justice of God require, which can be no other than what is given to both by Christ. Some Divines who defend the Satisfaction of Christ as real, and complete, have yet thought, that God might, if such was his Pleasure, have pardoned Sin, without any Atonement or Satisfaction for it: They apprehend that the Necessity of Christ's Satisfaction is hypothetical only, or what results from a divine Decree and Purpose, that is to say, That God having decreed the Death of his Son, as a Satisfaction to his Law, and Justice, his Death became necessary by Vertue of that Decree; but that God might have pardoned Sin, and saved Sinners, without his dying, had he not decreed his Death. At first View, this may seem too curious an Enquiry, and that it may better become us, to acquiesce in what God has done, as what upon the Whole is certainly wise, and just; since infinite Wisdom and Justice cannot do any thing, but what is so, rather than enquire whether God might have acted otherwise in this Affair, than it hath been his Pleasure to act. I confess that under the Influence of this Consideration, for a great while, I declined the Examination of this Point: But upon observing that the Socinians argue strongly against the Satisfaction of Christ, from no Satisfaction being absolutely necessary, and that they think this Point being gained, they are able with Ease, to answer all other Arguments, tho' they are much mistaken. I began to think, that I might very safely enquire into it for the Defence of Truth; accordingly I did: And as I hope upon a humble, serious, and impartial Enquiry on this Head, have, arrived to a clear, and full Conviction, that the Justice of God necessarily requires a proper, and plenary Satisfaction for Sin, if Sinners are pardoned; and that since this is just and righteous, am persuaded that the Judge of all the Earth who cannot but do what is so, could not save Sinners, without such a Provision for the Honour of his law and Justice, any more than he can deny himself. The Reasons which induce me to be of this Opinion, are these:

1. It is reasonable to think, that God would not have punished his Son, in the Manner he did, if it had not been necessary, to secure his Glory, and maintain the Honour of his Law in saving of Sinners. It is hard to conceive that a good and merciful God, who doth not willingly afflict or grieve the Children of Men, should so sorely bruise, wound, and punish, his only Son, who is dearer to him, than Angels or Men, without any Necessity for it, or the Honour of his Perfections so requiring, if Sinners are saved by him. His Sufferings were penal, or he was punished in suffering:

For he bore Sin, or Guilt was imputed to him — He suffered for Sinners, or in their Stead — He suffered for their Sins, that is to say, their Sins were the meritorious and procuring Cause of his Sufferings — He was made a Curse, i.e. the Curse due to us Christ endured — Justice incensed by our Sins, smote him, wounded him, and put him to Grief. And therefore in Suffering Christ was punished for Sin. Besides, it was Punishment of an amazing and dreadful Weight that he sustained: Unless this is granted, we shall not be able to vindicate the Resolution and Fortitude of our Saviour, in and under his Sufferings such were the Complaints which he uttered.

Many Martyrs, not to say equall'd, but far exceeded him, in Courage, if he underwent bodily Pains, and Reproaches from Men only, if he was not smitten, stricken of God and afflicted: And what adds much Weight to this, is, our Saviour had not that to trouble him, which the best of Martyrs have: A Consciousness personal Guilt, that they are Sinners, and deserve Wrath: Unbelief or Diffidence, a Sense of God's Displeasure, he was not, or could be in Doubt, about and Interest in the Favour of his Father, or concerning the good Issue of his Sufferings. Besides he had that to comfort him, in suffering, which the best of Men cannot be supposed to have. A Sense of his personal Union with the Son of God, a full and certain Evidence that he had never offended the Father, that the highest Honour and Glory, would redound to the Law and Justice of God, by his Sufferings: That Sinners would certainly be thereby saved, and himself after his Sufferings be crowned with Glory, in which he could not have either any Equal or Partner: That he should have a Name which is above every Name that is named in this World, or in that which is to come. Now if Christ had not that to grieve him, which the best Saints on the Earth have, and if he enjoyed that which no good Man can be supposed to enjoy, tho' it be in suffering for the best Cause in the World: Unless we allow that in his Sufferings he was made a Curse, and had a piercing Sense of that Wrath which is due to Sin, How shall we be able to account for the sore Complaints he expressed? Let Christians view their suffering Lord in the Garden, in his Agony, and there sweating, great Drops of Blood falling down in Plenty to the Ground, and think whether it will become them to imagine, this preternatural Sweat, was only occasioned by a Dread of the bodily Pains, he was to undergo. Let them hear him expressing himself thus, Now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say? And my Soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto Death. Attending to this, his Language; let them ask themselves whether it is likely, that Christ should be so much inferior in Courage and Fortitude, to many of his Servants, who have gone to the Rack, and to the Stake, in Triumph, and with Exultation? Upon the Whole, we may safely conclude, That our Saviour was punished, and that the Weight of his Punishment was exceeding great. Why should it be thought, That God would punish his Son, whom he infinitely loves, in such a Manner, if it was not necessary to secure the Honour of his Perfections? Nor can I think that less than Christ actually suffered, would have been sufficient to the Redemption of his People, much less that one Drop of his Blood, as some have said, would have been sufficient to that End.

2. It was proper that God should equally provide for the Honour of all his Attributes. It seems not to comport with his infinite Wisdom, to regard the Exaltation of the Glory of his free Mercy, in Remission, and wholly neglect the Honour of his Justice, which on]y could be manifested in the Infliction of Punishment. Why may it not be thought becoming God, and suitable to his Nature, which is holy as well as gracious, to shew himself offended with Sin, by punishing it, while he shews himself gracious in remitting it to the Sinner? The inspired Writer to the Hebrews, plainly suggests to us this Idea: It became him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in

bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation, perfect through Sufferings. If bringing Men to Heaven this Way became God, or was proper for his own Glory; he could not bring them to Happiness without it; unless we suppose that God may, or can omit, what it becomes him to do; which we have no more Reason to think, than that he can be unmindful of his Honour.

3. God cannot but hate Sin: As he is a Being infinitely holy in his Nature, he necessarily, tho' freely, loves and delights in Holiness; so he necessarily detests and hates the contrary of it, Sin: He is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; he cannot look upon Evil with Approbation or Connivance. Sin is the abominable Thing his righteous Soul hates: Hatred in God is not an Affection, or Passion, the infinite Blessedness of his Nature admits not of that, but it is a Will to shew Resentment against Sin, which, what is it but the Infliction of Penalty? If it be thought that the Holiness of God's Nature, moves him to shew his Approbation of a Conformity to his Will, in his Creatures, Why may we not conceive, that his infinite Rectitude, and Purity, will certainly and necessarily determine him, to act an opposite Part, when his Creatures are chargeable with a Behaviour towards him quite the Reverse.

4. It is just and righteous to punish Sin: Is it a righteous Thing with God to recompense Tribulation to Sinners: he is not unrighteous who taketh Vengeance. Socinus observes to very little Purpose, that God's punishing of Men, is called Wrath, Anger, Fury, Indignation, and Severity. His Acts of Punishment being so spoken of, import nothing contrary to Justice and Equity in those Acts, or that God proceeds in such Acts, from an angry and revengeful Disposition; and therefore this is no Objection to the Righteousness, Equity, and Justice, which are inseparable from those Acts. As God is essentially just and righteous, he necessarily, tho' freely, wills to act what is just and righteous; but should he will not to punish Sin, he then would will to omit an Act that is just and righteous, and is agreeable to the Holiness and Righteousness of his Nature, which is what he cannot do.

5. This essential Righteousness of God is own'd and acknowledg'd by the Heathen: They have a Conviction in their Minds, that Sin deserves Punishment, or that those who are guilty of it, are worthy of Death, Romans 1:32. This is as forcible an Argument that God is essentially just, as their Acknowledgment of a Deity and supreme Being, is, that there is a God. From the Sense they had of Punishment being due to Sin; proceeded their Terrors of Conscience, Dread of Wrath, and the many Methods they fixed upon, to avert that Vengeance they fear'd on Account of their Vices. Whatever Men in Controversy may now say upon the Head, when once Guilt lies on the Conscience, and the Demerit of it is apprehended, there is not any thing in the World so difficult to be believed, as is that of the Remission of our Sins, even under the unspeakable Advantage, of a gracious Revelation of a full Satisfaction being made by the Blood of Christ: Such a deep Impression is made on the natural Conscience, of the Justice, Holiness, and Righteousness of God; and so far is the Light of Nature from dictating to us, there is Ground to hope for Pardon.

6. Out of Christ God is a consuming Fire. The Words indeed are metaphorical; but the Sense of them is plain and obvious, viz. That as Fire necessarily consumes all combustible Matter within its Reach, so God necessarily, but freely (for he is an Intelligent and free Agent, which Fire is not) punisheth and consumes by his flaming Vengeance all such, whose Sins are not atoned for by the Sacrifice of his Son.

7. If this Point is proved and granted, then it necessarily follows, that Christ in suffering, satisfied for Sin, or else it cannot be remitted: Of this, the Socinians are fully convinced; and therefore they use their utmost Skill in objecting to it: And some others who entirely dissent from their Opinion concerning the Ends and Effects of his Death, will not allow of the Necessity of Satisfaction, particularly Dr. Twiss, Vossius, and Dr. Goodwin. I shall first attend to the Objections of the Socinians, and then consider their Exceptions to it. I shall begin with Crellius his Objections; which are as follow:

Object. 1. God hath a Power of inflicting, or not inflicting Punishment: but it is not repugnant to divine Justice, to pardon a Sinner whom he hath a Right to punish⁸.

Answ. 1. God is indeed the supreme Lord and Governor of the World, as he necessarily must be, since he created and upholds it 2. But he doth not inflict Punishment, as a universal Lord, for then he might be supposed to punish innocent Creatures, but as Judge of all, and he cannot omit doing what is right in Judgment; such is the Infliction of Penalty on Offenders.

3. God acts not as supreme Lord in the Affair of punishing Sin; except in the Constitution of Christ a Surety, to the End he might bear Sin, and sustain the Penalty demerited by it, in order to Satisfaction for it, herein indeed, God acted not as a Judge, but as the universal Sovereign, and Lord of all, that is to say, in his Constitution; but in his Suffering for Sins, God acted as Judge.

Object. 2. He does Injury to None, whether he punishes, or not punishes⁹ Answ. 1. None ever thought that a Neglect to punish, would be an Injury to the Offender.

2. The Prejudice arising from such a Neglect would affect God's Perfections, not the Sinner, Punishment in Care of Sin, is a Debt, not properly due to us, but to the Justice of God.

Object. 3. Punishment is not due to the Offender, he owes it; and he owes it to him, against whom all the Injury ultimately tends¹⁰.

Answ. 1. Because Punishment is not due to the Offender, but he owes it to the Law giver, it follows not that the Legislator, may in Justice forbear to inflict it.

2. The Infliction of Punishment for Sin, is not as God is affected with Injury by it; for as he is not profited by good Actions; he is not injured by evil Actions; but God inflicts Punishment as Law-giver and Judge.

Object. 4. Any one may part with his Right¹¹.

Answ. 1. There is a Right of Debt, which being of an indifferent Nature, may be given up.

2. There is a Right of Rule and Government; this cannot be resigned, without a Disregard to the Law, under which the governed Party is; this is, or at least ought to be granted with Respect to the divine Law in its Precepts.: And it ought to be allowed in its Sanction and Threatening, unless it may be proved, that though the Righteousness and Justice of God necessarily, yet freely determines him to delight in, and command Holiness, it doth not determine him to hate, and will to punish its contrary Sin. Thus far the Objections of Cressius, and the Answers to them. I shall now consider Socinus his Objections, to the Necessity of Satisfaction for Sin, as they are delivered by him in his Book, de Jesu Christo Servatore.

Object. 1. To pardon is to abate of what is right and due, this a Man may do, much more God, our Sins are Debts, and may be forgiven without Payment^{f12}.

Answ. 1. Obedience is God's Right or Due from Men, with this his Right he cannot part, for if so, God may allow of Disobedience, or Sin: But a Man who is a rightful Matter and Lord of a Servant, may let his Servant at Liberty, and require no farther Obedience or Service from him; hence we see though Men may part with their Right, it follows not that God may also part with his.

2. Our Sins are not properly, but metaphorically called Debts; a proper Debt is something that we owe to a Creditor, which we received from him, such are not our Sins; but as a Debtor owes something to a Creditor, that he hath received from him, we owe a debt of suffering to the Law and Justice of God, for that we have acted against both.

Object. 2. The Justice of God by which he punishes Sin, it not an essential Property of his Nature, but is an Effect of his Will^{f13}.

Answ. 1. All Righteousness and Justice is essential to God, or else his Nature, is not absolutely and infinitely perfect, which it certainly is.

2. It is granted, that God cannot but punish impenitent Sinners, the Reason of which is, the Holiness and Righteousness of his Nature: If God cannot but punish such, the Infliction of Punishment on them, is not an Effect of his Will.

3. We should all eternally remain obstinate and impenitent, were it not for the Satisfaction of Christ, which secures the Communication of that Grace, that is necessary to work Repentance in us; and therefore, were it not for this Satisfaction, we should necessarily suffer Punishment.

Object. 3. Punitive Justice is contrary to Mercy: Mercy is essential to God, and if punitive Justice is essential to him, the are there contrary Properties in God, which cannot be^{f14}.

Answ. 1. Justice is not contrary to Mercy, Cruelty indeed is; but that hath no Place in God's inflicting Punishment on Sinners.

2. Different Acts flow from Justice and Mercy, yet they are not contrary: To argue from Acts to Properties, is very weak and inconclusive.

3. If God acts contrary to Mercy in punishing, then impenitent Sinners cannot be punished for Sin; the Reason is, God cannot do an Act, that is contrary to any of his Attributes.

Object. 4. There is a twofold Righteousness, and a two-fold Mercy: One Righteousness, God perpetually exercises, when he punishes and destroys the Wicked and Obstinate, and Men lost to all Hope. The other is that by which God sometimes punishes sinners, not obstinate, nor wholly desperate, whose Repentance is not deferred: Yea, God might, if he would, punish the Penitent, exclusive of the Promise of his Mercy, by which he hath freely after some Sort bound himself to us. From whence the two-fold Mercy of God, as we have said, appears. One by which he pardons all sin, to those who repent, as his Promises shew, and confers Salvation, and Life. The other is that by which he truly prevents, calls, and allures Men hitherto immersed in sins, to himself, and graciously offers the Pardon of their sins, and Salvation to them, they not thinking of those Things^{f15}.

Answ. 1. We should all remain wicked and obstinate, were it not for the Satisfaction of Christ, in Vertue of which, Grace is communicated to us in Order to Faith and Repentance, as was before observed.

2. Its confess'd that God corrects in Faithfulness and Goodness, those whom he loves, and for whole Offences Satisfaction is made by the Death of Christ; but he cannot in Justice inflict Punishment oh them; the Reason is, Christ sustained Punishment in their Stead. It is also acknowledged, that not supposing the Satisfaction of Christ, God might eternally punish them; but that being supposed, he cannot. Allow but Socinus the Thing he begs, and he will certainly prove his Point.

3. God's pardoning Sin is an Act of Justice, as well as Mercy. To us it is an Act of Mercy, to Christ who has made Atonement, it Is an Act of Righteousness and Justice.

4. God exercises long Suffering towards the Wicked, or defers Execution of Punishment, as long as seems meet to his infinite Wisdom. Thus it appears that these Distinctions of Justice and Mercy, as opposite, are only invented by Socinus to answer an End, which they by no Means do. His whole Arguing here is sophistical; he begs the Thing he ought to prove, viz. that Satisfaction is not made by Christ, which being allowed him, the Proof of the Nonnecessity of his Satisfaction is most easy.

Object. 5. If Justice is essential to God, not pardon sin, no not the least sin to any one, i.e. without Satisfaction¹⁶.

Answ. It is the manifest Design of Socinus, to urge this upon us as a great Absurdity, we acknowledge it to be our firm Opinion, out of the Regard we have to the Honour of God, in whom all Justice and Righteousness, we are fully persuaded is essential: Nor is it in the Power of any Man, as I believe to prove it absurd that God cannot pardon Sin without a Satisfaction, no not the least Sin.

Object. 6. This is not called Righteousness in the Scripture, but Severity, Vengeance, etc¹⁷.

Answ. 1. Never was any Thing more falsely spoken by Man, than is this, that the Infliction of Punishment, is not called Righteousness, Romans 1:32.

2. It is called Severity and Vengeance suitable to our Apprehensions of it: But this suggests not in the least, that it Is an Act, not flowing from Righteousness and Justice.

Object 7. To punish sin, and pardon it, are contrary¹⁸.

Answ. This is true, if Respect is had to one and the same Subject, in punishing and pardoning: But if Respect is had to different Subjects, as it is in this Affair, they are not.

God willed not to punish Sin, in his People, but in his Son. On his Son he actually inflicted Punishment, on them he doth not: To pardon Sin in the Sinner, and punish it in the Sinner's Surety, are not contradictory, or the one is not eversive of the other.

Object. 8. Its unjust to punish Sin in Christ¹⁹. The Justice of God in the Imputation, of Sin to Christ, and the Infliction of Penalty on him, shall hereafter under divine Assistance, be vindicated from the Objections of Socinus, where this Objection will be particularly considered.

Object. 9. Mercy as opposite to Justice is not essential to God, but is an Effect of his Will^{f20}.

Answ. 1. Mercy and Justice are not contrary, as was before observed, tho' Mercy and Cruelty are.

2. God's Nature is infinitely merciful, but the Exercise of his Mercy, is under the Direction of his most holy Will, as to its Objects, the Time, Manner, and the Degree of its Discovery; otherwise it can't be true that he hath Mercy, on whom he will have Mercy.

3. The Exercise of Justice and Mercy are not to be considered in the same Light: Justice is not exercised, but in Case of Demerit: This the essential Righteousness of God requires; but Mercy is exercised freely, or without Merit; there is nothing in the objects of Mercy, that render its Exercise and Discovery towards them necessary, as there is in those, towards whom Justice is exercised.

Object. 10. God very commonly, and most readily pardons Sin^{f21}.

Answ. Whatever Men may now think of the Pardon of Sin, they will certainly find at God's awful Tribunal, that it is not to be had at such an easy Rate, as in Tenderness to themselves, and without a due Sense of his Righteousness and Justice, they may at present imagine.

Object. 11. God's Justice and Mercy are not infinite, for he is slow to Anger, and abundant in Mercy, the latter exceeds the former^{f22}.

Answ. 1. From the Delay of Punishment, it can't be proved that God's Displeasure with Sin is not infinite.

2. Though God according to his sovereign Pleasure in the Dispensations of his Providence, discovers more of long Suffering, Patience, Goodness, and Mercy than of punitive Justice, it follows not from hence, that they are unequal in himself, and may not consist together.

Object. 12. Socinus asserts, that we being deceived by a Shew of the Word Justice, think that God's Sovereignty and Anger is infinite^{f23}.

Answ. 1. Its no Deception to think that the Indiction of Punishment, is a righteous and just Act; and therefore this Man was guilty of impious Boldness, in saying, that we are willing to call it by some worthy Name; viz. Justice, as though this was an Honour not strictly due to it.

2. Righteous and just Acts proceed from Righteousness and Justice; and therefore the Act of punishing, flows from God's Righteousness and Justice, which doubtless is essential to him.

3. Of consequence it must needs be infinite, for there is nothing in God, but what is so. I proceed to consider the Objections of the very learned Dr. Twiss against the Necessity of Satisfaction.

I. His first Argument stands thus. If God cannot pardon Sin without a Satisfaction, then this is either because he cannot by his Power, or because he cannot by his Justice^{f24}.

Answ. 1. What God cannot do by one Attribute, he cannot do by any; for he cannot act contrary or unsuitable in any of his Perfections.

2. We plead that Justice requires Satisfaction for Sin, it therefore was not very pertinent in the learned Man, to argue from Power to Justice; the Point to be proved was, that Justice doth not require Satisfaction; till that is proved it can't be demonstrated, that God may by his Power forgive

Sin without Satisfaction. That God may by his Power forgive Sin without Satisfaction, is concluded, because it implies no Contradiction; to be able to remit Sin, and to be able not to remit, are not made up of contradictory Terms, that is, to be able to forgive Sin, is no Contradiction, and to be able not, is no Contradiction, and therefore God may do either, just as he pleases. Again, these things are not contradictory; to be able to remit Sins without Satisfaction, and to be able not, because this a Man may do, yea he ought to forgive his Enemies. The Answer is, I. A Man may do what God cannot, a Man may give up his Rule and Authority over his Servants, but God cannot, for he is necessarily, the Lord of his Creatures, and cannot dispense with their Obedience to him. 2. It is a Contradiction not to will to punish Sin, for the Infliction of Punishment is an Act of Justice, and God cannot but will to act justly. 3. Its a Contradiction that God is able not to hate Sin, which is a Will to punish it, as was observed above, for if God is able not to hate Sin, he is able to approve of it, which his infinitely pure Nature cannot do. 4. Men in some Instances may forgive Injuries, when they are personal, and a publick Good is not affected; but in Instance where the common Good is affected, they have not a Power of forgiving Injuries. Now Sin cannot be pardoned without a Satisfaction, because thereby the Government, Justice, and Righteousness of God, would be much affected.

II. His Second Argument is; If God cannot suffer sin to go unpunished; then it must unavoidably be, that he punishes by absolute Necessity²⁵.

Answ. 1. There is a Necessity in God, which tho' it is natural, is not absolute; but results from his Will, necessarily, and yet freely; thus if God wills to create a rational Creature, an Angel, or a Man, he cannot but will to create that Creature holy. So if God wills to speak or reveal his Mind to Men, he cannot but will to speak Truth, and yet he freely wills to speak Truth; this is a Necessity tho' natural yet not absolute. He urges, none doubts, but that the Punishment of evil Men may be encreased in this World, which he supposes cannot be, if God punishes necessarily, and that God must punish as far he as is able.

Answ. 1. Tho' God necessarily punishes Sin, he punishes freely, and according to his infinite Wisdom, as to Time, Manner, and Degree. 2. Not as far as he is able, but so far as in Righteousness he judges it just, and fit to punish. 3. And therefore the Time, Manner, and Degree of Punishment are according to divine Constitution; but tho' these Circumstances of inflicting Penalty, are under the Direction of the Will of God, it doth not follow that he may will not to punish.

Arg. 3. God may inflict a milder Punishment, than Sin deserves, and therefore he may according to his absolute Power, suspend the whole Penalty, to support which he reasons thus: God may reward beyond Desert, and therefore he may punish without Desert²⁶.

Answ. 1. As before tho' God necessarily punishes Sin, yet the Execution of Punishment, as to the Circumstances of it, such as Time, Manner, and Degree, is under the Direction of his most holy Will and Wisdom!

2. Tho' God may confer Favours, where there is no Merit, it doth not follows that he may punish without Demerit: The Supposition is false, his Justice doth not require the Bestowment of Favours more than are due; but it requires the Infliction of Punishment where there is Demerit. To consider the Communication of divine Benefits, in the same Light with the Infliction of Punishment, is highly improper: The Reason is plain, God may confer Blessings without Desert but his Justice allows not

of the Infliction of Penalty, without Demerit; for proper Punishment, always hath Relation to Guilt, and Suffering without that is not Penalty.

3. Since the Supposition is false, that God may punish where there is no Demerit, it is not true, that he may omit to punish where it is.

Arg. 4. God may inflict Suffering exceeding great, yea eternal, without any Demerit: therefore he also may, notwithstanding Demerit however great, suspend Punishment as great The Antecedent, saith he, is proved more than once elsewhere: The Consequence is evident from hence, God is more inclined to do good, than to punish. He goes on and asks whether it is impossible for God to bring a sinner to Repentance? If you shall say it is impossible, I ask why it is impossible to bring a Sinner to Repentance? Since this includes no Contradiction. If it should be granted that it is possible, see what follows, that God is brought by a certain, natural, and absolute Necessity to punish some sinner, and that for ever, (unless Christ should be his Surety) though he repents, and departs this Life in a State of Repentance. He also objects, that God cannot annihilate a Sinner if so, f27.

Answ. 1. Why doth the learned Man in this Argument, speak of Suffering merely; this is not fair, it is Punishment, not mere Suffering that is under Consideration; all Penalty is Suffering, but all Suffering is not Penalty.

2. If God may inflict Suffering without Demerit, he cannot suspend Punishment, where Demerit is, the former is an Act of absolute Sovereignty, the latter is an Act flowing from the Righteousness of God's Nature.

3. To will to bring a Sinner to Repentance, and to will to punish him are contrary: Since therefore God cannot but will to punish, the Repentance of a Sinner is impossible without Christ's Satisfaction.

4. God is said to be more inclined to do good, than to punish, because the Motive to the latter is in the Subject, not so in the former.

5. Annihilation may be without Demerit: No Creature hath a Claim upon God, to preserve it in a State of Existence; its Production into Being, was a sovereign Act of God's Will, and so is its Preservation in a State of Being: Annihilation therefore is no Punishment, which we shall have Occasion to treat of hereafter: But Sin being supposed, I deny that God may annihilate the Creature, and am persuaded that any Absurdity attending this, will never be proved.

6. The Elect may be said to be punished in Christ, by Reason of that Foederal Union, which subsists between him and them: Christ and they are one in Law, yet it can't be said that they made Satisfaction, he made Satisfaction on whom the Punishment was personally inflicted, this was Christ not the Elect; notwithstanding it may truly be said, that they suffered in him, as he was their Head and represented them Vossius thus objects I. The Question is not whether it is just to take Satisfaction, but whether it is unjust not to take itf28.

Answ. 1. As hath been proved, the Justice of God's Nature, requires that Sin be punished.

2. Its confessed that Christ's making Satisfaction was refusable, God might have insisted on our Suffering, and not have. Resolved on his: But he offers this Argument: If God is merciful in doing

this or that Thing, it follows not that in not doing it he is unmerciful: Very true; but there is that in a Sinner, which requires the Exercise of Justice, tho' there is nothing in him that requires the Exercise of Mercy.

Object. II. He goes on to observe, that every Agent that acteth naturally, acts on the Object naturally receptive of his Action; wherefore, if to punish be natural (namely in such a Sense as infers Necessity) such an Action cannot pass from the Person of the Sinner to another^{f29}.

Answ. 1. An intelligent Agent acting naturally, acteth with Will, and Choice, thus God in punishing Sin, acteth necessarily, yet freely, and with Choice; and therefore tho' his punishing of Sin is necessary, punishing of it in the Person of the Sinner, or in the Person of a Surety, was free to the divine Will.

2. The Act of Punishment flows from Justice; but that Christ should be the Subject of it, is an Effect of divine Sovereignty: God's Will to punish is necessary; but his Will to punish Sin in Christ, is most sovereign, and free; it is Punishment for Sin, Justice indispensably requires, but not the Punishment of it in a Surety.

Object. III. The Wisdom of God greatly shines in this Affair, as it chose the Means, but it seems not to have Place herein, if God could not by Nature act otherwise^{f30}.

Answ. The Righteousness of God requires Satisfaction for Sin: Infinite Wisdom contrived the Satisfaction Christ hath made. Dr. Goodwin objects thus, Christ put the Necessity of his Suffering on the will of God, and therefore, that Necessity arose not from the divine Nature, but the divine Will^{f31}.

Answ. The Necessity of Satisfaction arises from God's Justice; but Christ's making Satisfaction is the Result of God's sovereign Pleasure: So that Christ's Sufferings were the Effect of God's Choice, in order to Satisfaction for Sin, tho' a proper Satisfaction became necessary from his Justice. The very learned Dr. Twiss objects, that the necessary Consequence, of the Truth we contend for as Atheism: That God is a necessary Agent and acts not freely^{f32}, this is a dreadful Consequence indeed, and if any Degree of Proof, could be given of it, all pious Minds would doubtless reject an Opinion, that is necessarily attended with such a Consequence; but well it is, Proof fails.

Answ. 1. Some Necessity in God consists with the Freedom of his Choice, as God having decreed to punish his Son for Sin, he cannot but continue to will the Infliction of Punishment on him, by Reason of the Immutability of his Nature, and yet he continues to will this most freely.

2. If God speaks to Men, he cannot but speak Truth, and yet when he speaks, he speaks Truth most freely.

3. If God will create Man, he cannot but create him pure, and yet he creates Man pure and holy, with his free Will and Choice.

4. If God wills to permit Man to Sin, he cannot but will to punish his Sin, the Justice of his Nature so requiring, and yet he wills to punish Sin freely. Under this Objection, it may not be improper to take Notice of the immutable Relation, Reason and moral Fitnesses of Things, independent on the Will of God, which is much talked of, in this very enlightened and refined Age: If this is the belt

Instance, that is to be fixed on, as an Evidence of its admirable Improvement, Men of the present Time, have little Reason to boast of their superior Knowledge and Discoveries. For, 1. The several Relations of things between themselves, and God, is wholly dependent on the divine Will.

2. To suppose that any thing, out of God, is the Rule of his Will, is to imagine him to have some superior, and to be under the Direction of something out of himself; than which, nothing more dishonourable to God, can be invented by the depraved Mind of Man.

3. The Opinion of the absolute Necessity of Satisfaction, is at an infinite Remove from this moral Fitness of Things, supposed to be a Rule to the Will of God, from which he cannot vary. That supposes something out of God, to be a Rule and Law to his Will: This maintains, that the Righteousness of God's Nature, is the Rule of his Will, and not any Thing extrinsical, or out of himself, which hath no other than a Chimerical Existence, in the vain, and loose Imaginations of Men of corrupt Minds.

II. The Reality of Christ's Satisfaction is now to be proved: The Remonstrants, and some others deny the Reality of the Satisfaction of Christ; they allow not of the proper Ends and certain Effects of his Death; but imagine that by his Sacrifice God was at Liberty to save Men on what Condition soever he pleased: not that his Sufferings, great as they were, procured Salvation certainly, and infallibly for all such, on whose Account he suffered. To detect the Falshood of this Opinion, and establish the Reality of Christ's Satisfaction, is my Design at present; and I apprehend the following Particulars abundantly confirm this most important Truth.

1. Christ by his Death expiated Sin: He bore the Sins of all such for whom he died, or their Guilt was imputed to him, and by bearing it, he bore it away, hence we read of his purging our Sins, and putting away Sin by the Sacrifice of him. self: The Transgressions of God's People are removed from them as far as the East is from the West: And those contrary Points will sooner meet, than the Sins and the Persons of those whose Iniquities Christ sustained. Crimes cannot be charged on the Offender, and also on another for him, that is not compatible with Justice, and therefore God in designing Reconciliation to Men, by the Death of his Son, imputed not their sins to them, but charged them on him; hence if he is acquitted of their Guilt, it can't be considered as chargeable on them. The Pardon of Sin, or Justification from it, must necessarily be a certain Effect of his Death, and therefore the Satisfaction of Christ is real and proper.

2. He redeemed those from the Curse of the Law, on whose Account he was made a Curse: To obtain only, a conditional Grant of Freedom from the Law's Curse, is not real Redemption: If nothing more than this is to be attributed to the Death of Christ; then he obtained not eternal Redemption; his Death was only an Attempt to redeem Men, and it may prove successful, by their Non-performance of the Conditions enjoined, and we are to consider God, as acting a Part in this Affair, which no righteous Man would do, viz. punish the Surety and also the Offender. Either Christ in Suffering was punished, or he was not, he was not say the Socinians and the Remonstrants, which if true, then indeed he made not Satisfaction for Sin, if it is at all punished, it must be in the Sinner. If Christ was punished in his Sufferings, he bore either a Part of that Punishment to which we were obnoxious, or the whole of it; if a Part only, we are inevitably undone, and are left notwithstanding his Death, without Hope of Salvation, nor is he a perfect Saviour; if he bore the whole, let such who conceive that God punishes those for whom he died, vindicate and clear his Justice in so doing, if they are able.

3. Such for whom Christ died Reconciliation is made: God is really reconciled, not willing to be reconciled, on Performance of certain Conditions, that to say the most of it is only a Disposition to Reconciliation: But Peace is made by the Blood of Christ's Cross, says the Apostle: No, say the Arminians, only Articles of Peace are obtained by the Death of Christ, and Sinners are to compose the Difference between God and them, by performing certain Conditions, contrary to which we are persuaded, that being justified by Christ's Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him, and that when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son: that the Messiah made Reconciliation for Iniquity: and that the Gospel is the Word or a Report of Peace and Reconciliation, as effected by a dying Saviour. But it seems in all these Particulars, we please ourselves with any Dreams and buoy ourselves up with false Hopes, though as we apprehended, there things are expressly asserted by the Prophets, and Apostles: But it seems, That the Chastisement of our Peace, was not upon Christ, neither by his Stripes are we healed: It is only a conditional Grant of Peace, and Healing, that is the Effect of the Sufferings of our Lord, and he may have the Satisfaction of seeing the Travail of his Soul suffer eternal Vengeance: We really thought, it could be no Pleasure to a Saviour, to view such in Hell, lying for ever under the Wrath of God, for whom he made his Soul an Offering for Sin: And it will doubtless be fully proved that we are mistaken in these Sentiments, when it shall be made evident, that the inspired Writers intended to convey Ideas, contrary to what their Words fully express, which we think never can be done.

4. He suffered in the Room and Stead of those, for whom he died: The Just suffered for the Un-just, that he might bring them to God: The Surety sustained the Persons, and stood in the Place of all those, for whom he shed his most precious Blood. God our righteous Judge accepting his Engagement for us, and in Consequence of such his Engagement, and his own Acceptation of it, punishing of Christ for us, it cannot consist with his Justice, to punish us also; Righteousness requires not the Death of a Surety and of the Offender too for the same Offences: Either therefore Christ did not die, and was not punished in our Stead, or he has made Satisfaction for us. The Socinians therefore, who deny the Satisfaction of Christ, are right in denying that he suffered in our Room and Place.

5. Christ was punished for our Crimes: He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities. An innocent Person cannot suffer for the Offences of Criminals; but in his own Intention, and in that of the Judge who inflicts Penalty, it must be in order to make Satisfaction for them, no other just End can be proposed in such a Transaction.

6. It is highly unjust to punish a Surety for a Criminal, and enjoin any Conditions on that Criminal, which may render his Impunity uncertain; and upon Non-performance of those Conditions punish him for his Offence. Its a real Injury to the Surety, and for which he can't be recompensed. It is allowed this may be in pecuniary Punishments, because the Surety may sustain no Injury by it, the Money which he paid being returned to him, as in Justice it ought to be; but it cannot have Place in corporal Punishment, as in suffering Tortures, Pains, and Death. It is unjust to require an innocent Person to suffer corporal Punishment for an Offender, and leave his Impunity uncertain, under any Conditions to be performed by him; and upon Non-performance to inflict Punishment on him: The Reason of which is evident, the innocent Person is deprived of what he has a just Claim to, viz. the Impunity of him for whom he suffered: This not being granted and enjoyed, no Recompence can be made to him for suffering on Account of the Criminal's Guilt. If therefore any of those are

punished for whom Christ suffered Death, an irreparable Injury is done to him; but this we know can never be: For that Justice of God which indispensably requires the Punishment of Sin, requires the Impunity of such, for whom Christ sustained Penalty. God cannot but punish Sin, either in the Sinner, or in a Surety for him; and since he has punished Sin in Christ the Surety, he cannot but forgive, and omit to inflict Punishment on the Offender. These Things sufficiently prove the Reality of Christ's Satisfaction, and the limited Extent of his Death.

III. That the Satisfaction of Christ, is plenary, and full, is now to be established, which these following Particulars clearly demonstrate.

1. Men cannot make Satisfaction for the least Offence: The Punishment demerited by every Sin against God, is of such Weight, as would for ever sink us into Horror, and Despair: We are not able to sustain the Curse and Wrath, to which we become obnoxious by the smallest Crime. And therefore if Christ's Satisfaction is incomplete, we are eternally undone, and must: unavoidably suffer endless Punishment in Hell, on Account of that remaining Guilt for which he has not atoned.

2. Men are in no Part the Cause of their Salvation: If any thing which they suffer or do, appeases the divine Displeasure, they are Authors at least in Part, of their Salvation, which they are not, Christ is the sole Author of their Recovery, and Happiness, and he ought to have the whole Glory arising from it.

3. He is a perfect Saviour: Such he was made by Suffering, and therefore he suffered not a Part only, of the Punishment Sin demerits; but the whole of that Punishment, or else he is no more than a partial Saviour. It is greatly prejudicial to the Honour of Christ, to consider him an incomplete Saviour, but such he is if his Satisfaction is incomplete, and not full.

4. His Blood cleanses from all Sin: He suffered either for all the Sins of those for whom he died, or he suffered for some of them only: If he suffered for all their Sins, then he sustained the Punishment, that all their Sins taken together demerited, if so, then in Right and Justice, no part of that Penalty may be inflicted on them. To this it is objected, that he suffered not for final Impenitency, and therefore such as are finally impenitent God may justly punish. To which I answer: (1.) Sin being atoned for, in Consequence of that Atonement, Faith, Grace and Holiness, are given to all such, for whom the Atonement is made. (2.) If Punishment is inflicted on such for whom Christ died, it is either for some, or for all their Sins: If for all their Sins, as good Christ had never died for them, for they reap no Advantage from his Death; but if for some of their Sins only then it follows, that the damned will experience no Remourse, and Terror, for some of their Sins, it may be not for Murder, as Cain, not for the betraying of Christ, as Judas; but Stings of Conscience, will attend them only for final Impenitence, for which Christ died not. (3.) It is not as Unbelief is final, that it subjects Men to Punishment; but as it is a Sin, as such Christ hath made Satisfaction for it, on the Account of those for whom he suffered, and therefore in them it shall not be final³³. (4.) Perhaps it is not easy to be proved, that it is the Want of Faith in Christ:, which subjects us to Condemnation, such indeed who have not Faith are condemned; but it does not follow that the want of Faith is the Cause of that Condemnation. If Christ suffered for some of the Sins of Men only, his Satisfaction is doubtless incomplete, and we are certain of this uncomfortable and dreadful Truth, that we must necessarily perish. Let the Assertors of the universal Extent of Christ's Death, take which part of this Argument they please, we are persuaded they will never be able to answer it. (5.) Where no Curse is due, nothing is necessary to be

suffered; but no Condemnation is due to them that are in Christ; the Reason is plainly this, he hath redeemed them from the Law's Curse, by being made a Curse for them. So that his Satisfaction is full, plenary, and complete, which can never consist with the Universality of the Extent of his Death. This Chapter I shall conclude, with an Observation of Dr. Owen's; it is this remarkable one, to affirm Christ to die for all Men, is the readiest way to prove he died for no Man, in the Sense Christians have hitherto believed, and to hurry poor Souls, into the Bottom, of all Socinian Blasphemies³⁴. When he wrote this, he little thought, that any Successor of his, would stenuously assert and defend a Doctrine of such a pernicious Tendency, an Apprehension of it would have given his pious Soul great Distress.

02.01.08. Chapter 8

CHAPTER 8 Contains an Eighth Argument in Favour of the Limited Extent of CHRIST's Death THE Intercession of our Saviour, is one Branch of his sacerdotal Office, and therefore he intercedes for those Persons on whole Account, as a Priest, he offered an atoning Sacrifice. His Sacrifice and Intercession are of the same Latitude; the former cannot with any Propriety be conceived of larger Compass than the latter, as we shall quickly discover, and if not, then, if there are any for whom Christ prays not, there certainly are some for whom he died not.

1. Our Lord expressly affirms that he prayed not for the World: I pray for them, I pray not for the World, but for them which thou hast given me (John 17:9.). Those Persons who are interested in the Intercession of the Redeemer, are distinguished from others, included under the Term World, by various Things — They are the Fathers — They are given to Christ — Power is given to him, over all Flesh, that he may give eternal Life to the whole Number of them — For their sakes Christ Sanctified himself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth — They are not of the World — They are loved of the Father, as Christ is. None of these Particulars are any where expressed concerning those, who are designed by the Term World. It can't be said of them, that they are the Fathers, by a gracious Choice, or Ordination to everlasting Life; on the contrary they were of old appointed to Condemnation and Wrath (Jude 1:4.), as a just Punishment of their Sins — They are not given to Christ to be saved by him. For them he did not sanctify himself, and therefore for them he prayed not.

2. Such for whom Christ prays, he intercedes with the Father to communicate Grace and Glory to: He requests of the Father, to send his Spirit into their Hearts, to convince them of Sin, to apply his saving Benefits to them, and to meeten them for a State of future Blessedness, and for their actual Possession of eternal Felicity in his Presence.

3. His Intercession is certainly prevalent: The Father hears him, and grants the Blessings, he asks, in Favour of all such, for whom he makes Intercession, for which Reason the Apostle concludes upon his Ability, to save to the uttermost, from his ever living to make Intercession. Two Things fully prove this Point. (1) The Promises and Engagement of the Father to him; he required Christ to make his Soul an Offering for Sin, and promised that as a Reward for so doing, he should see his Seed, i.e. not in Hell, but in Heavens as I think, and that the Pleasure of the Lord, i.e. not the Destruction, but the Salvation of Sinners should prosper in his Hand (1 Thessalonians 5:9.), or under his Influence. Supposing therefore it was allowed that the Satisfaction of Christ, was not proper and complete, which it certainly is: Since the Father called him to suffer, and promised him the Welfare of Sinners on that Condition, and as he has suffered at that Call of the Father, it would be a manifest Violation of Right, not to grant the Favours promised upon that Condition. But what adds much weight to this is, (2). Christ's Intercession is founded upon the Perfection of his Satisfaction. That Sin is expiated — That an everlasting Righteousness is brought in, for the Justification of those to whom Christ is constituted a Head, or for whom he was a Surety — That actual Reconciliation is made, are Things not now to be proved. Clear and sufficient Proof is, I

hope, already given of each of these Particulars: And therefore the Discharge of these Persons from Guilt, the Justification of their Persons, their Impunity, and Participation of all heavenly Blessing, must necessarily be agreeable to the Justice, and Righteousness of God. Hence it follows that Christ is certainly heard of the Father in his Petitions, in Favour of all those for whom he prays: If therefore all partake not of Grace and Glory, Christ prays not for all Men, nor is his Death of unlimited and universal Extent.

4. Those for whom Christ died, he most intensely loves: His dying for them is an incontestable Proof of the great Affection he bears to them; those whom he so loves, he certainly desires the Welfare, and Happiness of. His Intercession is the Expression of that Desire; if therefore there are some, for whom he prays not, there are some whom he loves not, whose Salvation he desires not, and of Consequence, for whom he died not with an Intention to save them.

5. Typical Atonement made by the Priests under the Law, had Relation to all those, and only to those, for whom Sacrifices were offered. And thus the Intercession of the Antitype, in the holy Place not made with Hands, bears Respect to all those, and only to those, for whom he offered himself a Sacrifice infinitely pleasing to God. His Intercession is of Compass as large, as his Death, and his Death is not of wider Extent, than is his Intercession; his Intercession is limited, and his Death also is.

6. It is the Blood of Christ which speaks, and it speaks better Things than that of Abel. Now his Blood doubtless pleads in Favour of all those, for whom it was shed; if therefore there are any for whom it speaks not, it evidently follows there are some for whom he died not. The Arminians object to this Argument taken from the limited Extent of Christ's Intercession. Thus,

Object. 1. Though Christ did not at that Time pray for the World, it is not to be concluded, that he at no other Time did or would.

Answ. 1. Christ always prays for the Salvation of all such, whose Salvation he desires; and therefore, since he then prayed not for the World, he desires not the Salvation of that World of Men; nor is it to be thought he can, for if so, he must desire, and pray the Father to save such, as he hath appointed to Condemnation and Wrath, and not agreeable to the Will, and Counsel of the Father, which is absurd to imagine.

2. It is nowhere else said that Christ prays for the World, that they may be saved; and therefore, there is no Reason to believe he ever did, doth, or will intercede for them.

3. That Place contains a glorious Plan of Christ's Intercession in Heaven, we have there expressed what Favours he asks for his People, and it seems to be designed to inform us for whom he intercedes, as well as for what Blessings he asks, and if so, then, now he is in Heaven he prays not for the World; but only for those who are given him of the Father.

Object. 2. Christ afterwards prays that the World might believe.

Answ. It is not saving Faith that is intended; but a Conviction of his divine Mission and Authority: The World reproached him, as an Impostor and Deceiver of the People, he prays for the Vindication of his own Honour in those Words, and not their Happiness John 17:21. These are some of those Arguments, which I apprehend clearly prove the limited Extent of Christ's Death, and the certain Salvation of all such for whom he died. — The Objections unto this Point, shall in

the second Part be attended to, and I doubt not, but under divine Assistance, this Doctrine may be defended, from all just: Exceptions, how much soever the Force of some particular Objections may be boasted of, by those who be the Authors of them.

02.02. Part 2

Part 2

02.02.01. Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1 Contains Answers to the Author's General Arguments in Favour of the Universal Extent of the Death of CHRIST THE universal Extent of Christ's Death, is spoken of with as much Freedom and Assurance, as if the Scripture had expressly said, he died for ALL MEN: Which is not once affirmed, in any Part of the sacred Writings. Nor is it said, he tasted Death for every MAN (Hebrews 2:9.). Anqrwpov Man is not in the Text, in the Greek, we have only pantov, which is either an Enallage of Number, for pantwn, all, or uiou, or adelov, may be understood, agreeable to the Scope of the Writer, for every Son, or for every, Brother; that is to say, for every Individual of those Sons, and Brethren, whom God intended to bring to Glory (Hebrews 2:10.). And therefore, those Words are not a proper Foundation for the Author of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, to proceed upon in shewing, in what Sense Christ died for every Man. But I shall attend to his Arguments, and he argues thus:

Arg. 1. We may suppose it is owing to the exuberant Merits of Christ, that this Earth continues to be the Habitation for Mankind; and that the Life of Adam and Eve, were preferred some hundreds of Years after the Day in which they first sinned, since the express Word or Threatening consign'd them over to Death immediately. (Page 215.)

Answ. 1. It is very probable that pardoning Mercy was extended to our first Parents, and that they were eternally saved.

2. If that Threatening had been immediately executed, there would have been none of the human Race to be either saved or lost. As God had a Design of saving some of their Descendants, they must of Necessity be continued in Life, not only so long as to have Seed: But a Time sufficient to provide for, succour, and protect that Seed during the State of Infancy. And if the whole Number of the Elect are born into the World, Men must be placed in such Circumstances as will admit of it. Surely it can't be reasonably thought, that to bring Men into Being, and suffer them to dwell on the Earth, for a Course of Years, are a Proof, that God intends to bring them to Heaven, or that he has made Provision for that Purpose.

3. Deferring the Execution of Punishment, for a Season, Is no solid Argument, that God designs the Salvation of Men, for he permits some to live for many Years, who treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and with an Intention that they may so do.

Arg. 2. 'Tis owing to the superabundant Merit of the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ, that the Earth is appointed still, and order'd to produce such a Variety of Supports and Comforts for Mankind in their successive Generations. (Page 216.)

Answ. 1. If it is the Will of God, that there should be successive Generations of Men, he must be supposed to will that they enjoy what is necessary to the Nourishment and Support of animal Life, without that, there could not be such a Succession of the human Race.

2. The Comforts of Life are new Covenant Blessings to all those for whom Christ died, such they are not to all Men, for Riches are sometimes kept for the Owners thereof to their Hurt. And therefore merely from Men's enjoying those Comforts, we are not to conclude as this Author does, That God is upon Terms of Grace and Reconciliation, with all the Rebel Race of his Creature Man. (217.)

3. Many such who are excluded a Share in spiritual Blessings, are favoured with a large Profusion of temporal good Things: As Ishmael, Esau, Pharoah, and many Millions of others, to argue from the Bounty of God's Providence, to the Purposes of his Grace, is very inconclusive: Indians may be thought to have as good a Ground of Hope, of being the Favourites of Heaven upon this Principle, as Christians themselves, for their abound in the Riches and Delights of Nature.

Arg. 3. That Mankind have the common Faculties of Nature continued to them, is to be ascribed to the Undertaking of Christ: That they have the Use of their Senses and Limbs in any Measures of Health, Ease, Vigour, and Activity; for there were all forfeited by sin, and included in the Word, Death. All this is probably owing to Christ. (Ibid.)

Answ. If I understand the Author's Meaning in this Argument, it is this, that our continuing to be Men or rational Creatures, is owing to the Merit of Christ, such Sinners will eternally remain in Hell, so that this merely is no great Advantage to Mankind. Farther he seems to me to apprehend, that our natural Senses are enjoyed by us on the same Account, and the Vigour and Activity of our Limbs, without which Mankind would soon become extinct: Whence it follows, that if God wills a Succession of Men in the World, he must be thought to will that Mankind should enjoy each of these, at least so far, as is necessary to the Propagation of their Race. When I come to treat of the Annihilation of Infants, which is the Opinion of this learned Writer, I shall shew that it was not our Being, which we forfeited by Sin; but our Well-Being or Happiness only: So that the Continuance of our Existence, is not to be ascribed to the Death of Christ, as the meritorious Cause of it.

Arg. 4. That Men have any Sparks of natural Virtue, Benevolence, Goodness and Compassion is probably the Fruit of the Mediation of Christ. (218.)

Answ. 1. It is a Favour that God in his Providence checks and restrains the unbounded Lusts of Men, thereby they are prevented contracting a great Deal of Guilt, which their vicious Nature prompts them to. 2. This also is necessary to the Accomplishment of God's gracious Designs concerning his Elect, for without such a Restraint upon Men, it is more than probable the human Race would soon cease to be, so extravagant is the Madness, Rage, and Enmity of Men. 3. As God may of his absolute Will, defer Punishment for a Time, he may confer Favours on Men, and let such Bounds to their Lusts, as his own Designs render necessary, without Regard to the Merit of Christ, as a procuring Cause, of such a Communication of Benefits to them, and of laying such a Restraint upon their unruly, and impetuous Passions; from hence therefore it cannot fairly be concluded, that Christ died for every Man.

Arg. 5. That all Mankind have had a Gospel revealed to them, or a Covenant of Grace proposed to their Acceptance, first by Adam, and afterwards by Noah, proceeds from the generous Undertaking of Christ. (218.)

Answ. 1. God in the first Promise made to fallen Man, clearly signified his peculiar, and distinguishing Favour to some of the human Race, and his Rejection of others of them, by the

express Mention which he therein makes, of the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent. 2. Neither Adam nor Noah, proposed the Covenant of Grace to all Mankind, i.e. the whole World, for they lived to see but a very inconsiderable Part of Mankind comparatively. 3. Their Descendants soon lost all Memory of this Revelation, and became as ignorant of it, as if such a Revelation had never been afforded to their pious Progenitors.

Arg. 6. 'Tis probably owing to the same Undertaking of Christ, and the overflowing Value of his Righteousness and Death, that there are so many Means of Grace and divine assistances, both outward and inward, afforded to whole Nations where the Gospel comes. (220.)

Answ. 1. Since hearing is the appointed Means of Faith, it can't be, but that those concerning whom God hath no Intention of working Faith in them, must hear the Gospel with those about whom he hath such a Design, since they reside among them. 2. But God affords not the Gospel as a Means of ingenerating Faith in such, on whom he never purposed to confer that Grace. 3. Divine Assistances are not afforded to such, in order to Salvation, who are appointed to Wrath. 4. These supposed Assistances, are sufficient, or they are not, 'tis certain they are not, because it is not allow'd that any gracious Habits are infused. Sin retains its Dominion in the Heart: Men continue dead in Sin, and their Minds remain carnal, and Enmity against God: They are still unregenerate, in the Flesh, and cannot please their Maker. It is very trifling to talk of Divine Assistances, being afforded to Men, in order to their Salvation, who are left of God in a State of Unregeneracy.

Arg. 7. In the last Place, 'tis owing to the most redundant Merit of Christ our Lord, that such a conditional Pardon and Salvation, or such conditional Propositions of Peace as the Gospel expresses, were ever provided for them who were not elected. (221.)

Answ. 1. It is not to be proved, that such a conditional Provision of Salvation, is made for all the Non-Elect, at most, it can be made for some of them only; unless it is supposed and allow'd, that they (i.e. many of them) remain wholly ignorant of those Conditions, which are required to Salvation, because no Revelation is in Providence afforded to vast Numbers of the human Species.

2. Not one Soul will ever be saved by such a conditional Provision, which I intend to prove, the Lord assisting, hereafter. This therefore represents God as designing to save Millions of Men, but for Want of suitably providing for the Accomplishment of that Design, he is disappointed of his End, and those Steps which he takes to it are all ineffectual. When Men shall be able to prove, that God is not infinitely wise, they may prove him to be the Author of a Design, that certainly will not be executed; when it shall be made evident, that he is not infinitely powerful, then indeed it may be granted, that the Means he uses to a certain End, may fail of compassing that End, that is to say, when it is proved, that he is not God, then there Things may follow, but not till then.

3. The Invitations and Declarations delivered in the Gospel, are not expressive of such a conditional Provision of Salvation for all Men; but of the Characters of such Persons as shall be saved, in whom God by his Spirit, works Desires of Salvation by Christ, and they are designed as Encouragements to such Persons only. And therefore no Argument can justly be formed from thence, in Favour of a Design in God to save Men universally.

02.02.02. Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2 Contains Answers to Particular Arguments in Favour of the Universal Extent of the Death of CHRIST THIS ingenious Gentleman delivers it as his Opinion, that there is such a Thing as a Sufficiency of Pardon, Grace and Happiness, provided for all Mankind by Jesus Christ: And that 'tis left to their NATURAL Powers under COMMON Helps to accept or refuse it. To support which he proposes the Considerations, or Arguments following.

Consid. 1. It is very hard to vindicate the Sincerity of the Blessed God, or his Son, in their universal Offers of Grace and Salvation to Men, and their fending Ministers with such Messages and Invitations to accept of Mercy, if there be not such a conditional Pardon and Salvation provided for them. (224.)

Answ. 1, Either this Tender of Grace and Salvation is universal, or it is not, it is supposed and asserted to be universal, if so, then this Offer is made to every individual of Mankind without Exception. This we know is not true in Fact, for a great Part of the World were never informed of this Saviour and this Salvation, the Argument is therefore most: evidently defective; what because some Men have an Offer of Christ: and Salvation, doth it thence follow, that he is provided as a Saviour for the whole World? What because some Men are invited to accept of a Redeemer, is this a necessary Consequence of such an Invitation, that a conditional Provision of Happiness is made for every Man, for such as receive no Intimation that there is such a Person as Christ, or such a Salvation? This Argument is so manifestly weak and inconclusive, that I should but impose on the Understanding and Patience of the Reader, to enlarge on the Impropriety of it,

2. Since a full Satisfaction is made to the Law and Justice of God, for the Sins of all those for whom Christ suffered, (which I hope has been clearly proved in the first Part,) it would be unsure to enjoyn any Conditions on those Persons, which would render their Pardon and Salvation precarious; and for Non-performance of those Conditions, inflict the Punishment demerited by their Sins on them: This would be doing, an irreparable Injury to a Saviour, who underwent that Punishment in their Stead, to which they were exposed by their Guilt.

3. It is in the Power of Men to embrace this Tender of Christ and Salvation, or it is not: If it is not in the Power of Men to accept this Offer, then either God will give them Ability to embrace it, or he will not: To say that Men have Power of themselves to accept this gracious Tender, would entirely let aside the Necessity of a supernatural Influence on their Minds, in Order to Regeneration. If it is not allowed that God will give Ability to Men, to embrace this Offer, perhaps it may be very difficult to vindicate, the Wisdom, and Sincerity of God, in making such an Offer to them: And if it should be granted that God gives to Men sufficient Power, to accept this gracious Tender; as this Author seems to think, and which he expresses by COMMON Helps; then either these Common Helps, take away the Heart of Stone, and give an Heart of Flesh: Either they implant Divine Principles, in the Souls of Men, such as Faith, Love to God, etc. or they do not: If they do, then it must be allowed, that all to whom this Tender of Grace and Salvation is made are really regenerated, and truly believe in Christ, which we are certain all Men. who hear the Gospel do not: If these

COMMON Helps are sufficient to enable Sinners, to accept the Offer, though no such heavenly Principles are infused into them, then it necessarily follows, that such as are in the Flesh, i.e. an unregenerate State, may please God, which we really thought they could not, because, the Apostle expressly affirms, they cannot: If these COMMON Helps are insufficient, to enable Men, to embrace this Offer, then the Rhetorick of our Author, may be turned upon himself, and he may find it no easy Matter, to vindicate the Sincerity of God, in offering Christ, and Salvation, to Men, and at the same Time, deny them sufficient Ability to accept the Offers he makes.

4. If by this Tender of Christ, and Grace, and Salvation, be intended a proposing of him for Acceptance, to all such, as are willing to receive him, so far as I am able to discern it may be granted, without any Prejudice to the distinguishing Grace of God, or Danger of extolling the Power of the Creature, and without affording the least Support to the Opinion of a conditional Provision of Salvation design'd for all Men.

For,

1. This suggests not that God has provided Salvation for all Men, and that it is his Desire, and Intention that everyone who hears the Gospel should enjoy Happiness.

2. But it supposes that those Persons to whom such a Proposal of Christ: for Acceptance is made, have Desires after him, and Salvation by him, upon a Conviction of their miserable Condition by Nature, and a Sense of his Suitableness and Ability as a Saviour:

Now it is certain, that all such may lay hold on a Redeemer, for he is held forth to them in the Gospel to that End. Whosoever will, may take the Water of Life freely (Revelation 12:17.).

3. It imports not, that those may have Christ and Salvation who are Enemies to him, or who have no Conviction of the Necessity of an Interest in him. Well then, if to offer Christ, and Grace, and Salvation, be only a Declaration, that all who have Desires of being saved by him, may freely take him, and all his Benefits, and no more; there is nothing in this, which countenances the Opinion of a conditional Scheme of Salvation designed of God for all Men for it is a Call and Invitation to Men, not merely as Sinners; but as sinful Creatures convinced of their Misery, to lay hold on Christ for Salvation.

4. Men are not called or invited to this, as righteous, i.e. in their own Apprehensions; but as Sinners, i.e. as sensible of their Sins and Sinfulness. So that the Offer of Christ, or Proposal of him for Acceptance, is not made to Men, as Men, or to Sinners, merely as Sinners; but it is made to them as convinced, thirsting, hungry Sinners after Christ, and his Righteousness, and his Salvation, which is not incontinent with the discriminating Favour of God; but is a clear Proof of it. It supposes not a Power for spiritual Acts in unregenerate Men, nor affords any Support to the Doctrine of a conditional Provision of Salvation for all Mankind.

5. Though Christ is not offered, or proposed for Acceptance to the Elect, as such, yet they are the, only Persons to whom he is held forth in the Gospel for Acceptance: Because they only have Desires after him. He is proposed to them as Persons seeing their Need of him, which, though it is not a Proposal of him as a Saviour to them, considered in the Character of the Elect; but as Sinners sensible of their Guilt, Danger, and Misery, this Proposal can be made to such only who are Objects of Election: Unless it may be proved, that the Non-elect see their Need of Christ and

his Salvation. The Proof of which would exceed all my Expectation.

6. If an Offer, or Proposal of Christ for Acceptance is made to Sinners, merely as Sinners, whether sensible, or insensible of their lost Condition, I would ask, if it is the Will and Design of God, that they should accept of him as a Saviour? If it he said, that such is the Will and Design of God; then it must be allowed, that he is disappointed of his Purpose in making this Proposal; with respect to the far greater Number of those to whom the Offer is made: Which seems to me evidently inconsistent with the Perfections of God. And if it is not his Desire and Intention, that Men should accept this Tender of Christ, to what End is such an Offer of the blessed Jesus made? Again, if it is the Purpose of God, that Men should embrace the Proposal, then (as was argued above) either they have a Power to accept the Offer, or they have not. If they have, then they may believe of themselves, and Faith is not the Gift of God, as we have always thought it to be, because the Apostle expressly affirms it is. If they have not such a Power, either God will communicate to them an Ability for it, or he will not. If he will, then they shall certainly believe, for that Ability is the Grace of Faith, wrought by divine Power in the Hearts of Men. If he will not, then he must be supposed to make an Offer and design the Acceptance of it, which he knows is a Thing impossible, because he grants not to Men a Sufficiency of Strength to embrace that Offer.

Hence we may plainly see, that a general Tender of Christ, and Grace, and Salvation cannot be made to all who hear the Gospel, much less is such a Tender afforded to those who am Strangers to the Gospel, and are without Hope and without God in the World. This Argument therefore in Favour of universal Grace, and a conditional Salvation provided for all Mankind, how much soever it is boasted of, fails of proving the Universality of divine Grace, and of a conditional Provision of Salvation, for every Man without Exception.

5. I will add one Thing more here, (though to some, perhaps, it may seem unnecessary) which is, That when I say, that an Offer or Proposal of Christ: for Acceptance is made in the Gospel to Sinners sensible of their Misery, and who are seeking after Salvation, I do not intend a BARE Offer, though I apprehend an Offer is included; but a gracious Declaration, that God has provided Christ as a Saviour for such Persons, as they are, that he is given to them, and that it is a Duty incumbent on them to thankfully receive him as God's free Gift.

6. With respect to divine Calls, Invitations, and Exhortations, we may observe: They either relate to Men concerned about their eternal Interests, and who are under a Work of Grace: Or they refer to Men, who are not the Subjects of such a good Work, only the latter come under Consideration here. And, I. Men are called upon to repent, (1.) Of all Sin, i.e. of their sinful Behaviour in general, thus in Acts 17:31. (2.) Of some particular Evil, so in Acts 4:19. The Murderers of Christ are required to repent of that Wickedness, in Order to escaping those dreadful Judgments; to which that horrid Act, and their inveterate Opposition to the Gospel and Interest of Christ expos'd them. Repentance or Sorrow for Sin, as it seems to me, would have been the Duty of sinful Creatures, in Case no Provision had been made for their Recovery, and will eternally remain to be the Duty of those, on whom deferred Punishment will be inflicted, tho' not Repentance of such a Nature, as attends or flows from an Act of Faith in Christ; and therefore unregenerate Persons are exhorted to the Exercise of Sorrow for Sin in the Word of God. (3.) Unrenewed Men are called upon, to submit to the evangelical Revelation, and to use those Talents which they are furnished with in the Advancement of Christ's Interest, Matthew 20:16. But none of these Things prove that there is a

conditional Provision of Salvation made for all Men.

Consider. 2. It is very hard to defend the Sincerity of the Spirit of God in awakening the Consciences of these Persons, sometimes, who are not elected, and stirring them up, to think of receiving the Salvation of Christ, if there be no such Salvation conditionally provided for them to receive. (P. 227.)

Answ. 1. That Men at some Seasons may have terrifying Apprehensions of Sin, and its Consequences; that they may take some Pleasure in a general Idea of Salvation which the Gospel reveals; and that they may break off their sinful Courses, are all granted; but, that there are Effects of a real and positive Work of the Spirit upon their Hearts, wants Proof; these Effects are no other, than, what may be produced by the natural Conscience, accusing of Sin, and assisted by the external Revelation of the Will of God.

2. It is not to be thought that the holy Spirit, who is an infinitely wise Agent, ever operates in such a Manner, as will certainly be ineffectual to attain his End, in his Operations, which this Consideration necessarily supposes him to do; for it allows not, that he infuses Principles of divine Life in the Heart; in order to spiritual Acts; but it takes it for granted, that the holy Spirit excites Men to act, without giving Life, a Principle of Action; that he stirs Men up to bring forth good Fruit, without making them good Trees, which if our Lord is right, they cannot do; and therefore we conclude that there are no such Excitations, Impulses, or Influences of the Spirit, in or upon dead Sinners. Excitations to act, without giving Ability for Action, as it seems to us, will be eternally vain, and fruitless.

Consid. 3. It is equally difficult to vindicate the Equity of God, as the Judge of all Men, in condemning Unbelievers, and punishing them eternally for not accepting the Offers of Pardon, if there was not so much as a conditional Pardon provided for them. (P. 228.)

Answ. 1. It will be very difficult indeed, to vindicate the Equity of God, in damning Men for not believing in Christ, who never heard that such a Saviour appeared in the World; which if not admitted will enervate the Force of this Argument. Sure this Gentleman can't think it a forcible Way of Reasoning, to say some Men will be punished for not accepting the Offers of Pardon, to whom the Gospel has been preached, and therefore a conditional Provision of Salvation is made for every Man without Exception: For such as receive no Intimation of this conditional Provision, and of Consequence Faith in Christ, cannot be expected of them. Whatever Weight there may be in this Argument, it can only extend to such a Part of Mankind, as are furnished with a Revelation of Christ, which a great, if not the greater Number of Men are not.

2. The Law is an accidental Cause or Occasion of Sin in Men, the Blame of which is not to be imputed to the Law; but it is wholly chargeable on the depraved Lusts of Men, which are irritated by the Prohibition of Sin in the Law, and therefore break out with the greater Violence. This as it heightens their Guilt, it will increase their Punishment, and the Equity of the Divine Lawgiver, is very easy of Vindication, in the Infliction of that heavier Penalty.

3. Thus the Gospel may be an accidental Occasion of Sin to Men, hence says Christ, I came not to fend Peace on the Earth, but a Sword, and elsewhere, to send a Fire, and what will I if it be already kindled. The Gospel is not chargeable with the Fault, but the Obstinacy and Prejudice of Men: Their Opposition to the Gospel must one Day be accounted for, and a Disbelief of its

greatest Mysteries, will, I doubt not, expose them to very severe Penalty; because though those Mysteries are above human Comprehension, and their Nature is inexplicable; the Revelation of them, is so very clear, explicite, and full, that if Men would but admit of the obvious and natural Interpretation of the Language of Scripture, they could not refuse an Assent to those mysterious Doctrines, as divine Principles. And therefore the Punishment of those who never heard the Gospel, will be more tolerable, than such shall suffer who are Adversaries to evangelical Truths.

4. All unregenerate Men will be eternally damned; but that the Want of Regeneration, will be the Cause of their Condemnation, seems to me a most harsh and severe Idea. I cannot tell how to think, that God will punish Men eternally, because they have not heavenly Principles infused into them, the Infusion of which is a Work proper to God. If Men are not damned, because they are not regenerate, they are not condemned and punished for the Want of that Faith which is peculiar to Persons regenerated. If Men are eternally damned for the Want of that Faith, it must: be either for Want of the Habit, or of the Act if for Want of the Habit, then God damns Men, because they are destitute of that, which he ALONE can give to and create in them. Again, if Men are damned for Want of the Act of Faith, they are eternally condemned and punished, because they have not put forth a supernatural Act, for such is that Faith in Christ:, which is proper to the Regenerate, as Dr. Goodwin very fully and judiciously proves³⁵. This seems to me an Idea, not consistent with, either the Goodness, or Justice of God, and therefore I humbly apprehend it is not to be admitted, It is one Thing, to say that Punishment will certainly be inflicted on such as believe not, and another, that it is the Want of Faith, which demerits that Punishment. The Sense of those Words in John 3:18, brought to support this severe Opinion, is now to be enquired into. He that believeth on him, is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God.

1. It is not the Execution, but the Threatening of Punishment, which is intended in the Text.
2. Believers are not under the Law, as a Covenant of Works, to them therefore there is no Condemnation, or Threatening of Wrath and Punishment.
3. Unbelievers are under the Law, whether Elect, Non-elect, and are subject to the Threatnings of it.
4. Hence it follows, that the Want of Faith, is the Cause of Men's lying under the sentential Curse and Condemnation of the Law; this is expressed by the Particle ALREADY, in which lies the Emphasis of the Words: But from this, it is not to be apprehended, that the Want of Faith demerits the Punishment threatened.

Consid. 3. It is very hard to suppose, that when the Word of God by the general Commands, Promises, Threatnings given to all Men what soever, and often repeated therein, represents Mankind as in a State of Probation, and in the Way to eternal Rewards, or eternal Punishments, according to their Behaviour in this Life: I say 'tis hard to suppose all this to be no real and just Representation, but a mere Amusement. (Page 230, 231.)

Answ. 1. These Things are either true of Men universally, or of some only, if they are not true of all Men, it is not to be inferred from those Things, that all Men are in a State of Probation: But we are sure that such to whom no Revelation is afforded, are not commanded to believe in Christ, and that no divine Promises are given to them: And therefore should it be granted that these Things

are the fullest Proof of such being in a State of Trial, to whom the Gospel is preached, they afford no Proof at all, that those to whom it is not revealed, are also in a State of Probation. That which is universal, may be said of Particulars, because Particulars are included in what is universal; but that which is particular and limited to some, cannot truly be expressed of all.

2. If it is Fact that those who hear the Gospel are in a State of Probation, then they are under a Law or Covenant of Works, and will be rewarded or punished hereafter, according as they obey, or disobey that Law. If this is affirmed, as it is plainly supposed and suggested in this Argument, then I would beg leave to put the following Queries. Is this Law perfect, or is all Sin forbid by it? Then none can keep it and obtain Life by it: For there is not a just Man who lives and sinneth not. Is the Law imperfect and doth it allow of Evil in any Instance? To assert this is rank Antinomianism. Will the divine Legislator justify Men, for an imperfect Observation of a perfect Law? Then God must be supposed to account them righteous, who are not so, and his Judgment will not be found according to Truth. Is an imperfect Obedience accepted of God, as if perfect, and doth God reward his Creatures for such an Obedience? Then it follows, That that Obedience, which subjects to Punishment, because it is defective, entitles to a Reward: These Things may be allowed to be true when flagrant Contradictions are so. Are those Works or Conditions, which this Law requires, in the Power of Men? If so then Salvation may be of Works, which the Apostles deny more than once. If there Conditions are not in the Power of Men, either God will afford to them Grace sufficient, to enable them to perform them, or he will not; If he will, then he regenerates all Men, of whom the fulfilling those Conditions is expected; for no Man can believe, and repent truly, without the Graces of Faith and Repentance. If he will not, then Men are put into such a State of Trial, as renders their Salvation impossible. Is it just to punish Christ for the Sins of Men, and enjoy in Conditions on them, which render their Impunity, not to say precarious, but their Punishment inevitable? Thus it must be, since God wilt not regenerate them, for without the Infusion of divine Life or gracious Habits, Men are no more able to believe and obey God, in a spiritual Manner, than to keep his perfect Law. For without Faith it is impossible to please God: and they who are in the Flesh, i.e. who are in an unregenerate State cannot please God. The eternal Damnation therefore of all such, whom God is not pleased to create in Christ Jesus unto good Works is unavoidable. Let the Gentleman solve this Difficulty, when he is at leisure, if he pleases, and if he is able to do it, it is what may be justly expected of him. The ingenious Author apprehends, that if a conditional Provision (at least) of Salvation, is not made for the Non-elect, they are in the same State with Devils, for whom no Saviour was provided, and whom God has not treated in a Way of Precept, Promise and Threatening. But he is greatly mistaken: Christ was not provided as a Saviour, for such as eternally perish; he is not a Saviour to those, who are not saved. Besides there are many Millions of Men, whom God has not treated in a Way of Precept, Promise and Threatening, are they also in a State of Tryal, and is it expected of them, who never heard a Syllable of Christ, that they should believe in him, in Order to Salvation? Again, God commands Men (such to whom a Revelation is afforded) to be holy, and threatens to punish them for Sin: But that he promises to pardon, and save all who hear the Gospel, if they will with such Helps, as he is pleased to afford to them, repent and believe in Christ, as yet wants Proof: Notwithstanding they are not in such a State as the Devils are: For Judgment is not at present executed upon them, eternal Punishment is threatened, but it is not inflicted: This is a great Favour, and is so esteemed by those, who know the pungent Grief, which arises from a Sense of Guilt, and of the Wrath of God. Moreover Men enjoy many Mercies, for the Support, Convenience, and innocent Amusement of Life; whereas the

Apostate Spirits have nothing to alleviate their Grief, or abate the Weight of their Sufferings. Farther no Man has any just Occasion to be discouraged, though Salvation is limited to the Elect of God. Men may be considered, either as concerned, or unconcerned about their future Welfare. Those who are unconcerned about their eternal Interest, as it seems to me, have no Right, to the least

Degree of that Consolation, which the Gospel provides. As for such who are serious, and disposed to enquire into Things, which relate to their eternal Peace; this Doctrine contains nothing in it of a discouraging Nature to them; except it be that God promises to bear the Desires of the humble, and that such, who upon a Conviction of their lost Condition by Nature, and a View of Christ's Ability as a Saviour, seek for Salvation by and through him, shall receive what they apply to him for: I say they have no Reason to be dejected, except it is, that God hath promised to save such Persons as they are, and will infallibly make good his Promises to them. And one would Imagine, that there is not any thing of a discouraging Nature in this. But this is a Point I shall have Occasion to consider hereafter; and therefore say the less of it now.

Consid. 5. This seems to be a fair and easy Way to answer several of those Texts of Scripture, which represent God as the Saviour of all Men. Some of those Scriptures the learned Gentleman quotes, one of them is by Mistake wrongly cited; it is 1 Timothy 2:6. Who gave himself a Ransom for all: Not for all Men as this Author reads it; nor is the Term Man in the Greek, in Hebrews 2:9. as is above observed. After the Quotation of those Texts, he proceeds thus: I grant indeed that many of these Scriptures, may have a pretty sufficient Answer given to them, by the Art of Criticism, but there are some Few of those Scriptures, and of their parallel Places, which can never be so well explained; but by supposing that the Death of Christ, has such an all-sufficient and overflowing Merit in it, as to provide a sufficient conditional Pardon, and conditional Salvation for the Non-elect, while it also provides absolute, effectual, and certain Pardon, and Salvation for those whom God has elected. (P. 231, 232.)

Answ. 1. This Gentleman seems not to disapprove of what he calls the Art of Criticism, used in explaining those Texts, and if not, I should think he must: allow, that those critical Explanations are just and proper.

2. We should have been obliged to this learned Author, if he had pointed out to us, which of those Scriptures in his Opinion, will admit of sufficient Answers, and which he thinks will not. This would have been of some Moment in the Affair under Debate.

3. As he hath not thought proper to do this, which if he had, it may be I might have apprehended otherwise, I am firmly of Opinion, that every Text brought to support the Doctrine of the universal Extent of Christ's Death, will admit of Answers just and altogether sufficient. And I shall consider them, in the Order they are presented by Limborch on this Subject. But before I do this, it may not be improper, to attend to the sixth Consideration or Argument advanced by this ingenious Person, in Favour of the universal Extent of the Death of Christ, and of a conditional Provision of Salvation made for every Man without Exception. It is this,

Consid. 6. That all Mankind have some conditional Salvation provided for them, and some real Grace and Pardon offered to them by a new Covenant, appears from this, that all Men, both wicked and righteous, or just and unjust, shall be railed from the Dead, to give an Account of

Things done in the Body, whether good or evil, and to receive Rewards or Punishments in their Body, as well as in their Souls, according to the Improvement or Misimprovement of the Dispensations under, which they have lived. — Now a Resurrection is by no Means provided by the Law of Innocency or Covenant of Works: That only threatens Death for sin, without the least Hint or Thought of the Body's rising again. This Doctrine of the Resurrection therefore seems to be the Effect of the overflowing Merit of Christ. (P. 238, 239.)

Answ. 1. The Purport of the Threatening in the Law, is to be interpreted by the Punishment, which is inflicted on Sinners: Since therefore God raises the Bodies of ungodly Men, and punishes them in their Body, as well in their Souls; it may justly be concluded, that the Infliction of such Punishment, was intended in the divine Threatening: For it can't reasonably be thought, that God exceeds in the Penalty he inflicts on Sinners, the true Meaning of his Threatening in the Law.

2. Either that Threatening extends to the whole Persons of Men, in each constituent Part of their Nature, or to one Part of Men only. That the Threatening affects the Body as well as the Soul is evident; because the Body dies and returns to Dust. Now the Death threatened not only included in it the first, but also the second Death; and therefore as that Threatning respected the entire Person of Man, the Body, as well as the Soul, it seems to follow, that his Body, in Union with his Soul, was to suffer the second Death, or endless Punishment, which necessarily supposes its Resurrection from the Dead. The Law of Innocency therefore provides for the Resurrection of the Body, and the Resurrection of Men; even the Resurrection of the Saints is not founded in the Mediation and Merit of Christ. The Death of Christ is not the Cause of Believers merely rising again, or their Resurrection is not to be attributed to his dying for them; tho' their Resurrection to a State of Happiness is an Effect thereof.

3. If the Resurrection of Men is owing to the Mediation of Christ, as this ingenious Author apprehends, and if they will be rewarded or condemned, according as they embrace or reject Pardon and Grace offered to them in the Gospel: Then either the Offer is made to all Men, or to some only, if there are any to whom no Tender of Pardon and Salvation is afforded, that cannot be a Reason of their Resurrection; nor can this Covenant or new Law, be a Rule of Procedure in Judgment with them: Unless it may be thought, that Men will be judged and condemned by a Law, of which they received no Notice. This is so manifestly absurd, that but very few, I am persuaded, will ever assent to it.

4. That there are a very considerable Part of Mankind, who know nothing, or have Means of knowing any thing of the Gospel, is too evident to admit of the least Dispute. Shall they be condemned because they receive not that Pardon and Grace, a Tender of which is not afforded to them? This is with me, a most difficult Thing to be believed.

5. I am therefore of the same Opinion with the Apostle Paul, who was a much better Judge in these Things, than is this Gentleman, though a learned and ingenious Person, that some there are without Law, (Romans 2:13.) i.e. a divine Revelation, and that they will perish without Law, i.e. the Law as it is revealed in the Word of God, wilt not be the Rule of proceeding towards them in Judgment: And that as many as have sinned in the Law, or under the Advantage of a clearer Discovery of the Law in the divine Word, shall be judged by the Law, as so revealed to them.

6. The Gospel was not revealed to all Mankind, in Adam their first Father, to him it was revealed indeed; but he did not personally convey the Knowledge of it to any of his Descendants, who were born after his Decease: And it is pretty evident, that his Posterity very soon lost all Notices they had received of it. Nor did Noah preach the Gospel to all the World, it cannot be supposed he did, to all the Inhabitants of the Earth who lived before the Flood, nor could he after it, his Posterity quickly lost all Knowledge of it, and sunk into abominable Idolatry.

7. May not therefore a great Part of Mankind, at the last Day, upon this Principle, object to their Judge; that they are try'd and condemn'd by a Law, of which they never had the least Knowledge, and in their Circumstances could not possibly have any Acquaintance with it: That this Law indeed provides a severer Punishment, but no Advantage, for never was any Tender of Pardon and Grace afforded to them. If such an Opinion as this is calculated to vindicate the Equity of God the Judge of all Men, I confess I have no Notion what Equity is. A feeblor and more improper Argument in Favour of a conditional Provision of Salvation for all Mankind, than is this, cannot readily be formed, as I apprehend.

02.02.03. Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3 Contains Answers to an Argument taken from the Use of the Term ALL, about the Death of CHRIST

LIMBORCH in treating about the Extent of the Death of Christ, endeavours to prove it is universal, by various Arguments drawn from Scripture, and from some Absurdities, which in his Opinion necessarily attend the particular and limited Extent of his Death, all which I shall attempt to answer. The Arguments formed from Scripture, he ranges into four Classes or Heads. The first principal Argument, he takes from its being said, that Christ died for all. The second, that he died for the World. The third, that Christ is said to come into the World to save Sinners, etc. indefinitely; and therefore, as he thinks, all Sinners are included. His fourth Argument he draws from those Scriptures, wherein it is said, Christ died for those who perish. Then follow his Arguments taken from the Absurdities, which in his Apprehension, attend the Doctrine of the limited Extent of Christ's Death. In this Chapter I shall consider his first principal Argument formed from its being said, that Christ died for all³⁶. Among the various Scriptures, which he produces, where the Term all is used with Relation to the Death of Christ: Those Words of the Prophet are introduced: Hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6); which Words can only be understood of the Church; for the Prophet is not speaking of Men in general, but of some in particular, who were healed with the Stripes of Christ, which all Men are not. He also produces there Words of the Apostle, delivered him up for us all (Romans 8:32.). Men universally cannot be intended in that Text is evident, for the Apostle is there speaking of God's Elect, of Believers, and not of Men in general, the Term all therefore includes not the whole of human Race; but such of Mankind only, who are elected, and believe in Christ, in consequence of their Election in him to Holiness and eternal Life.

I. It is said indeed in several Places, that Christ died for all; but not in any one Place that he died for all MEN, or for every MAN, as was observed above: And since those for whom he is said to die or give himself, are distinguished from others, by the Characters of Sheep, Children, Sons, and the Church, and the Church of the Firstborn, who are written in Heaven: And others are as plainly distinguished from them, by very different Titles, as The Rest, The World, and Goats, for whom it is nowhere said Christ died, there is great Reason to interpret those Texts, wherein he is declared to have died for all, of all the Sheep, all the Children, all the Sons, and of the whole Church of the First-born, who are written in Heaven. And no solid Reason can be offered, why we should extend those Places to other Persons described and distinguished from them, by very different Characters, and for whom it is not once affirmed Christ suffered Death.

II. If it had been said, which it is not, that Christ died for all MEN, that alone would have been insufficient to prove his Death, is of unlimited and universal Extent. For, that the Terms all Men are used in a restrictive Sense very frequently, cannot be denied, as for Instance, when it is said All Men held John for a Prophet. Multitudes of Men never heard of John, and a great many who did, entertained a contrary Opinion of him. Thus also when it is said, All Men came to Christ: A

Limitation must be understood, for he was rejected by far the greater Number of the Jews. Many more Instances of this Sort might be produced to prove, that the Terms all Men, are to be interpreted with Restriction; but these are sufficient to that Purpose. And therefore if even the Terms all MEN had been used with Relation to the Death of Christ, (which they nowhere are) that would not have afforded an unexceptionable Proof, of the unlimited Extent of his Death.

III. Where the Term all is used in this Subject, a Limitation seems to be required; as in these Words: Who gave himself a Ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6.) The Apostle before speaks of different Ranks of Men, of Governors supreme and subordinate, and directs us to pray for all Men, i.e. for Men of differing Conditions in Life, and then observes to enforce the Exhortation, that God will have all Men to be saved, and that Christ: gave himself a Ransom for all, in both which Men of every Condition and State in Life are intended: As for those Words: If one died for all, then were all dead: (2 Corinthians 5:14.) they afford no Countenance to the Opinion of the universal Extent of Christ's Death, because all those for whom he died, are said to be dead, and his dying for them is offered as a Proof of their being dead; or these Persons are represented as dead in Consequence of Christ's dying for them; and therefore a Death to Sin must be designed; when Christ died, he died unto Sin, and they died unto Sin in him as their Head and Representative.: All Men are naturally dead in Sin, but that is not a Fruit of Christ's Death. The Apostle evidently designs a Death, that is the Effect of Christ's dying, which can intend no other than a Death to Sin; and therefore all MEN are not designed in these Words, but some only. Thus this Text which is urged as a Proof of the unlimited Extent of Christ's Death, contrary to the Intention of our Opponents, furnishes us with an Argument for it, and such an Argument it is, as will not admit of a very easy Answer. The latter Part of the Words leads not to a different Sense, inaoizwntev, i.e. that they, or all these living, or being made alive by divine Grace, should not live unto themselves, but unto him, that died for them. Christ's dying for them and their spiritual Life, as a Fruit and Consequence of his Death, are represented as forcible and persuasive Motives, to live to Christ, and therefore he died not for all MEN, for all MEN are not dead to Sin, and do not live spiritually in Consequence of his dying, which the Apostle plainly supposes of all those for whom he died; and what farther establishes this Sense of the Words, is, Christ rose again for their Justification, which is not true of all MEN and therefore he died not for all Men.

Those Words, he tasted Death for every Man, require a Limitation, as has been above observed, its every Son, every Brother, every Child, that is designed, and not every individual of Mankind; Man is not in the Text, and the Scope of the Place directs us to understand it of every Son or Brother. So weak and inconclusive is the Argument taken from the Use of the Term all, in Favour of the Opinion of the universal Extent of Christ's Death, that it might justly be expected to hear no more of it. Several Things are objected to the Interpretation of this Term all, to Men of all Sorts, and of every Condition, which it will be proper to consider, and give Answers to.

1. If this Exposition of these Places should be admitted, it must be said that there are no Sort of Men, of whom there are not any, but for them Christ died; but from whence may this be evident, if Christ died not for all and every one.f38 I answer, sure it may be evident, that he died for some Men of all Ranks and Conditions in Life, for Rulers and Subjects, for high and low, for learned and unlearned, for wise and unwise, for rich and poor, for bond and free, for old and young, without a Supposition of his dying for Men universally. It is clear that God saves some of every Sort, for though not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; some

such are called, as well as others of different States; and therefore no doubt may he made of Christ's dying for some of every Condition and State, tho' he did not die for the whole Race of Mankind. The learned Man farther observes thus: Besides among all Sorts of Men, there are both ungodly, and impenitent even unto Death; for some of such Christ likewise died, and consequently according to their Opinion, some of them will be saved, which is absurd. (Ibid.) The Answer to this is: Either Christ in dying for Men had Respect to Faith and Repentance in them, or he had not; if he had, then he suffered for penitent and believing Persons only, which effectually destroys the Opinion of the universal Extent of his Death. If he had not Respect to Faith and Repentance in Men, when he died for them; then he suffered for them, considered as ungodly and without Strength, which he certainly did, and it is this that renders his Grace, Love and Compassion, so admirable, and conspicuous in dying for them. When therefore it is said, he died for Men of all Sorts, the Meaning is, he died for sinful Men of all Sorts; and not for such as believe, and for such as are finally impenitent. This Distribution of Men into penitent, and finally impenitent, in treating on the Death of Christ, is very impertinent: For it is all Sorts of Men as Sinners, that Respect is had to, and not to Men as Sinners and Saints, tho' of Sinners, Men become Saints, in Consequence of Christ's Death; and for such as are not sanctified by divine Truth, Christ did not sanctify himself, or let himself apart to Suffering and Death on their Account. Again, says he,

2. It may according to this Exposition be much more justly said of all, that Christ died not for them, or rather, that he died for none, because according to them (the Calvinists) there are in all States, a much greater Number, for whom Christ did not die: And thus all, that is Men of every Condition, are said to be excluded the Benefits of Christ's Death. (Ibid.)

Answ. It is strange! That to assert Christ to die for many, for some Men of every State and Condition, and that they shall certainly enjoy the Benefits of his Death, should be thought to imply he died for no Man, and that all Men are excluded the Benefits of his Death. Besides, to say Christ died for some Men of all Sorts; but that he did not die for all Men of any Sort, are not contradictory, and therefore it is ridiculous to infer from his dying for some of every Sort; but not for all of any Sort, that he died for NONE.

3. The Term all, when it is taken of a most special and peculiar Species, cannot denote the Sorts of each; but only when it is expressed concerning a Thing of diverse Species: But Man is a most special and peculiar Species, having no inferior Species under himself. You will say, philosophical Kinds are not understood, but political, into which Mankind is distributed.

Answ. It is queried, whether it is the Usage of Scripture, that the Term all expressed of that Species, which by Logicians is called most special, should signify not every individual of it; but the political Sorts. (Ibid.) I reply, thus it plainly is: That ye may eat the Flesh of Kings, and the Flesh of Captains, and the Flesh of mighty Men, and the Flesh of Horses, and of them that fit on them, and the Flesh of ALL MEN, both bond and free, both small and great (Revelation 19:18.). All in this Text doth not design every one of the human Species; but the human Species of every Circumstance and Condition. So also is this Term all to be understood in there Words: For tho' I am free from all Men, yet have I made myself a Servant to ALL (1 Corinthians 9:19.), i.e. to Men of every Nation, State, and Condition: Not every one of the human Species; but to the human Species of every Circumstance, as the Apostle himself explains it; Jew and Gentile and the weak, that he might gain some of every State; and therefore it is usual with the Scripture, to distribute the

most special or peculiar Species into political Kinds, and the Term ALL is expressive of every one of those Kinds. Nor can I think the learned Man was unapprized of it, tho' he was pleased to frame this Objection: However the Removal of it hath occasioned very little Difficulty.

4. The Circumstances of some Places, sometimes require the Restriction and Limitation of the Term all: But in Places where it is said Christ died for all, no Circumstances occur, which require a Restriction of this Kind: But in same, Circumstances are found which manifestly exclude all Restriction. (Ibid.)

Answ. 1. Tho' no Circumstances occurred in the several Places, where the Term all is used with Relation to the Death of Christ; yet if understanding it in an unlimited Sense, cannot consist with what is delivered concerning his Death in other Places of Scripture, as is evident it cannot, from what has been observed in the first Part of this Undertaking: It ought to be interpreted with Limitation, and especially since it is very frequently used in a restrictive Sense, 2. It happens to prove a Mistake, that Circumstances do not occur which require a Limitation, when it is used about the Affair of Christ's Death. That all Men like Sheep have gone astray (Isaiah 53:6.), is readily acknowledged; but it is not true that ALL Men confess it with Shame and evangelical Sorrow, as the Church does; and the Terms US ALL in the latter Part of the Text, intend not any others, or more than such, who have a spiritual Sense of their Sins, and humbly confess them unto God, which ALL MEN do not. Says this Author no Restriction can be admitted in 2 Corinthians 5:14, That the contrary of this is true is before proved: But, saith he, all denotes not all, who are dead to Sin and themselves, is plain, because the End of Christ's Death is the same for all, that they should not live unto themselves; but to Christ who died for them: Therefore he died for them in that State, in which, as yet, they were not dead to sin. (Ibid.)

Answ. As when they were Enemies they were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son (Romans 5:10.): So by the Death of Christ, their Head and Representative they really, tho' not personally, became dead to Sin, when in themselves they were Enemies to God, and dead in Trespasses and sins, which is the Cause of their quickening, and dying unto Sin. It therefore is very evident, that Circumstances occur, even in these Words which require a Restriction in the Interpretation of the Term ALL, and so far are they from countenancing the Opinion of the unlimited Extent of Christ's Death, that they are a clear Proof he died not for ALL MEN.

02.02.04. Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4 Contains an Answer to the Argument taken from its being said that CHRIST died for the World

Arg. 2. A second principal Argument we take from those Places, where it is said Christ died for the World: The first of which occurs is John 3:16. and the Word World denotes all Men in Kind. (Isaiah 53:6.)

Answ. 1. It cannot be denied but that the Term World is ambiguous, and of very different Significations in Scripture: And therefore from the bare Use of that Term with Relation to the Death of Christ, we are not to form our Opinion of its Extent. But we ought to consider and compare other Places, where this important Subject is treated of; and if they hold forth such a Sense, as will not admit of the universal Extent of his Death, we cannot fairly conclude that so it is, from the Use of this Word, which we know to be of doubtful Import: And especially as it is used in a limited. Sense, and is even sometimes put for, and designs no more than Believers, and the Elect of God, who shall infallibly be saved.

2. Tho' it is denied that the Term World is put for the Church and Elect of God, the Proof that so it is, will not be attended with the least Difficulty by any thing our Opponents are able to object to that Sense. It is indeed put for the Non-elect, or at least for Men in a State of Unregeneracy, in these Words: Whom the World cannot receive John 14:17.). It is very vident that it designs the Non-elect in these Words: I pray not for the World (John 17:9.). And thus it may mean, at least it must mean Men in a State of Unregeneracy, where it is said: The whole World lieth in Wickedness (1 John 5:19.). Its of the same Import when Satan is called the Prince of this World (John 14:30.): And the God of this World (2 Corinthians 4:4.), But because it is put for the Non-elect, that therefore it is not used for the Elect, by no means follows. It's manifestly put for the Elect and Church of God in several Places of Scripture, thus in these Words: For the Promise that he should be the Heir of the World (Romans 4:13.). That is of the same Import with, the Father of the Faithful: Both Phrase are of the same Latitude, and express the same Idea; and therefore by the Term World the Elect of God and they only are to be understood in that Text. This also is its Signification in these Words: Now if the Fall of them be the Riches of the World (Romans 11:13.). This like-wise must be its Sense where it is said: God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them (2 Corinthians 5:19.). Until clear and evident Proof is given, that God imputes not Sin to the Non-elect, it must necessarily be concluded, that the Elect alone are intended in this Text. God imputes Sin to those, and only to those, whom he eternally condemns and punishes, and therefore the Nonelect to whom he imputes Sin, and on whom he inflicts endless Punishment cannot be intended. It is also put for the Church under the New Testament-Dispensation in there Words: For unto the Angels hath he not put in Subjection the World to come, whereof we speak (Hebrews 2:5.). This Term World denotes the Elect and Church of God in these Words: And giveth Life to the World (John 6:33.). Christ gives Life only to his Sheep or to such who are given to him of the Father: To this it is indeed answered, That it designs

Christ's doing what is required in order to it, tho' it follows not through the Vice of Men, refuting, or opposing his Operation. Limborch.f39

I reply,

1. An Attempt to give Life to Men, who are dead, which is unsuccessful, thro' what Cause soever, cannot properly be called giving Life, seeing they still remain dead.

2. Doth Christ so much as attempt to give Life to such, to whom he reveals not himself, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life: I should think not, which we are sure he doth not to VAST Multitudes. But to support this it is farther observed, that God is said to have pursed Israel, and they were not purged. I answer thereby are intended, those Warning, Reproofs, Threatenings of Punishment: And Promises of Protection, Peace, and Plenty, In case they would reform in their Worship, and Conduct, which they received by the Ministry of the Prophets: But what are all these Things to Christ's giving Life to the World? Which Is effected by a real, powerful, and positive Work of his Spirit upon their Hearts, and is always effectual, or else his People are not made willing in the Day of his Power; which we cannot but apprehend they are, because it is expressly declared, that so they shall be (Psalms 110:3.). It is also objected thus: But be it so that the Term World, sometimes denotes the Elect, yet the Circumstances of this Place, viz. John 3:16. will by no means bear that Exposition, because it is added, that every one that believeth, should not perish; but have everlasting Life: For hence it is plain, that some of those for whom Christ died, may not believe, and may perish: Otherwise the Language is unapt and improper; which, since they (the Calvinists) will not grant; it follows by the Word World, others also besides the Elect are comprehended, and as we say all Menf40.

Answ. 1. Respect may be had to the Elect, tho' not under that formal Consideration; but as Persons in like Circumstances with others; i.e. sinful, condemned by the Law, and liable to Wrath, and therefore may very properly be called by the Name of the World, as expressive of their Misery, and deplorable State by Nature, as so considered, they are Children of Wrath, even as others.

2. The Elect of God consist of Jews, and Gentiles, which was a Mystery but little known, till the dearer Revelation of the Gospel, by Christ, and his Apostles. The Jews generally apprehended themselves, to be the only Favourites of Heaven: To convince them of this Mistake, we meet with such general Expressions, in comprise Gentiles, as well as Jews, and particularly the Term World in this Text.

3. Therefore under, . standing the Words of the Elect only, no Impropriety attends the Mode of Expression, though it is denied, that any of them may not believe, and may perish; because Respect is had to them, as guilty miserable Sinners, and as Jews and Gentiles. God so loved the World, i.e. his Elect; that whosoever, i.e. that what Persons soever they are, believing, they shall not perish. The Words regard their State and condition: and therefore the sense is not, whoever of these Persons believes, but whatever be the Extract, Circumstance, and State of him, who believes, he shall not perish but infallibly be faced, thro' the Mediation and Sufferings of Christ.

4. So it must be, because God infinitely loves ALL those Persons, represented under the Character of the World, in this Place, Doth God so love ALL Men? Why then doth he reveal his Will to SOME Men only? Why then doth not God give his Spirit and Grace to SOME MEN, for whom he gave his Son? The Gift of whom, without the Gift of the Spirit will not save them. Is divine Love

productive of some saving Benefits, and not of ALL to SOME MEN? If so, then they must inevitably perish, for their Salvation is absolutely impossible, because the Love of God doth not determine him, to communicate to them, that Grace which is necessary to prevent their eternal Ruin. Is the Favour of God mutable? May it change, and turn into Hatred? This, however absurd it is, must certainly be allowed, if God once loved ALL Men, and now hates SOME Men, Let our Opponents take which Part of this Argument they please, I am persuaded they will never be able to solidly answer it.

5. The Distinction of a Love of Complacency, and Love of Benevolence, which latter is said to be here intended, removes not the Difficulty: By this Love of Benevolence, God is said to decree, to shew Favour, and give Life to Men, if they will believe⁴¹. To which I object thus: Such a Purpose cannot reasonably be thought to be in God concerning ALL Men, without an Intention, that the Object of Faith should be proposed to ALL Men. And if once he so designed, when, and for what Reasons, did he recede from that Purpose, and wink at the Ignorance, and heathenish Darkness of WHOLE NATIONS for CENTURIES of YEARS?

Again, if God decreed to give Christ to Death, to save Men upon Condition of their believing in him, he either knew, or did not know, whether they would believe or not: If it be said, he did know; then he appointed his Son's Death to an End, which he foresaw would not be attained by it, at least with Respect to the far greater Part of Mankind, for it is certain, that but a FEW will believe and be saved, which as it seems to me, cannot comport with the Wisdom and Justice of God, or with his peculiar Regard to Christ. If God did not know, whether Men would believe, or not, then he is not omniscient, nor can be supposed to have decreed their Happiness or Misery. But he waits to see Men born into the World, and finish Life., and in what Manner they so do, before he wills their Bills or Punishment, and gave his Son to Death, altogether at an Uncertainty, whether his End therein, at least With Respect to the far greater Part of Mankind, would be brought about or not; which is a Thought one would not entertain of a WISE Man, in Affairs of infinitely less Importance. And shall this ever be conceived of GOD the Source of ALL Wisdom? May he himself forbid it, and by his holy Spirit prevent Men's embracing and spreading such Principles, as necessarily suppose it; which this most evidently does. Farther, either Men can believe of themselves, or they cannot: If they may, then Faith is not the Gift of God; but such it certainly is: Then, either God will bestow this Gift on Men, or he will not: IF he will, then ALL Men will certainly believe, which the far greater Number of them do not. If he will not bestow the Gift of Faith upon them, or create this Grace in their Hearts, they can no more believe, than see without Eyes, walk without Feet, or do Business without Hands, whatever Excitations, Impulses, and Influences, it is imagined they may receive to act Faith. 4. In my humble Opinion, God can no more punish his Son, for the Sins of Men, and only grant to them Conditions of impunity, and if they fail of performing those Conditions, eternally punish them for their Sins, than he can for ever punish an innocent Creature, or act unjustly: And thus I cannot but conceive, 'till I shall see this dreadful Opinion fully proved, that the Satisfaction of Christ, is not proper and complete; which that it is, is not now to be demonstrated, it has been done already. And 'tis mere trifling to talk of Christ's Suffering Punishment, in the Room and Place of Sinners, without allowing that Law and Justice are satisfied, for their Offences; if he sustained the WHOLE of that Penalty their Sins demerit: If indeed he did not; but a PART of it only, we are inevitably undone, and it is a vain Thing to contend about a conditional Impunity: For there is nothing, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery Indignation, which will shortly

devour us: Let Men buoy us up, with what airy and false Hopes of Salvation, they please. The second Scripture produced to this Purpose is, 2 Corinthians 5:19. God was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself not imputing their Trespasses to them: That these Words relate only to the Elect of God, may be thus proved. God acted towards these Persons, as he was in Christ, or he formed the Design and Plan of their Reconciliation, as he was in the Mediator; which intends the same, as if it had been said, they were in Christ: When it is affirmed that Sinners are in Christ, or that God is in Christ, as he puts forth any Acts, or Act towards them, in them, or upon them, the Idea conveyed by both Phrases is the very same; which is, that God is graciously determined, to shew Favour to those Persons in Christ, and to deal with them as a Covenant-God. And since the Arminians contend that none but Believers are in Christ, it might justly be expected that they should readily grant us, that the Term World, in this Text, designs Believers or the Church and Elect of God only. This however we will not crave of them as a Favour, but effectually prove: And what is now advanced, is such a Proof of it, as may perhaps, occasion them no small Difficulty to set aside: For God was in Christ to those Persons, and only to those, whom he chose in him to eternal Salvation before the World began; he never was, or ever will be in Christ, to more, or any others. Besides, God imputes not Sin to that World of Men, whom he reconciles: This is true of the Elect ALONE.

1. No such Challenge can be expressed in Favour of others, as the Apostle gives out in their Behalf: Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect, it is God that justifies.

2. Those to whom God imputes not Sin, are happy Persons, so they are pronounced to be, by the inspired Writers David and Paul: And surely by the joint Evidences of these two infallible Witnesses, this glorious Truth is fully established, beyond all the Exceptions of the Arminians, or others, whatever Name they bear, or Sett of Principles they are pleased to embrace.

3. The Happiness of those, to Whom Sin is not imputed, is most certain, because to them God imputes Righteousness, which the Apostle proves from David Romans 4:6-7. Now those to whom Righteousness is imputed, are justified in the Lord, and in him shall they glory: Being made or constituted righteous, by the Imputation of Christ's Obedience, they shall receive Justification of Life, and shall reign in Life, by one Jesus Christ their Lord.

4. The Non-imputation of Sin, necessarily infers a. Freedom from Condemnation: For a Curse Is only denounced upon a Charge of Offence, such as are acquitted, of their Guilt, are redeemed from the Law's Curse, and therefore they are under no Denunciations of Wrath and Vengeance, except sentimentally, as considered under the Covenant of Works, which indeed the Elect of God are, until their Conversion, but converted they shall be, and enjoy Freedom from a Sentence of Condemnation contained in the Law (under which, they naturally are) in Consequence of their Redemption by Christ: And shall certainly receive the Adoption (i.e. the Honour and Privileges) of Sons: Those who partake of one spiritual Blessing, shall receive ALL; for there is an inseparable Connection between those Benefits. Such whom God justifies, he also glorifies, he doubtless justifies them, to whom, he imputes not Sin: The Elect: only enjoy a Nonimputation of Sin, and therefore no other Persons, than the Elect, can be intended, by that World of Men, to whom Sin is not imputed. Let any Arminian, produce Reasons as clear and cogent for Understanding the Term World in this Text, of Men universally, or others, if they are able, and they shall no longer meet with Opposition from me.

Limborch objects several Things to this Interpretation.

1. Says he, we have shewn, that it is contrary to the Stile of the Scripture, to understand by the World, the Elect. (Ibid.) This has been sufficiently refuted above, and therefore it requires no farther Answer now.

2. This Text, says he, permits not, that by the World the Elect may be understood; because all are said to be reconciled, to whom the Word of Reconciliation is sent, which is the Word of the Gospel; but that is not sent absolutely to the Elect; but it is sent to all men indifferently. (Ibid.)

Answ. Its not said, that all Men are reconciled; the Apostle only speaks of himself of his Fellow-Labourers, and of Believers, when he says: Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and not of ALL MEN. Again, the Gospel is not sent indifferently to ALL MEN: For it is not at all sent, to many Millions of Men; besides, it is sent with a special Regard to the Elect, tho' others also hear it; God sends it to those, whom he has graciously chosen, with a Design, that it shall be effectual to their Salvation: If his intention was the same, concerning others, he would exert his Power, and bring them to believe it, to the saving of their Souls, which he doth not. Farther the Gospel is not sent to any Place, or continued where it is sent, unless God hath a People there. As for the Figment of the learned Man, of a prior and posterior Reconciliation, that we have before considered, and entirely removed out of the Way, and therefore it is here useless, and needs no farther Answer.

3. It is said, that the Apostle exhorts us to be reconciled to God. Very true, he doth so, but he also informs us elsewhere, that when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son (Romans 5:10.); both which are here intended, the former was effected for us by Jesus Christ, the latter is wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ, and is a certain Effect and Consequence of the former. A third Text, on which the Opinion of the universal Extent of the Death of Christ is founded, and from which it is urged, is 1 John 11:2. And he is the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours only; but also for the Sins of the whole World.

Answ. The Terms whole World, frequently intend only a Part of Mankind, as when we read, that all the World were taxed, only that Part is designed, which was in Subjection to the Roman Power; and in this Epistle the Terms are used in a limited Sense: Thus in these Words, The whole World lieth in Wickedness: It is evident, that only a Part of Mankind are intended, i.e. such who are in an unregenerate State; and the Terms must be understood with Restriction, when it is said, all or the whole World, wondered after the Beast: For God always had a Seed to serve him, and who were accounted to him for a Generation. It is pleaded that this is a Catholick Epistle, or written to Gentile Believers, as well as believing Jews, and that therefore, when the Apostle says, not for our's only; but also for the Sins of the whole World, he comprises Believers, both of the Jewish and Gentile Extract, and in the latter Phrase, takes in all of all Nations, or such of all Nations as believe not.

Answ. several Reasons may be assign'd, why it is to be concluded, that this Epistle was wrote to, and principally intended for the Use of believing Jews.

1. The Author of it was an Apostle of the Circumcision, as Peter also was, in the Discharge of his Office, therefore, it is reasonable to suppose he chiefly regarded Believers of his own Nation, tho' not exclusively of Gentile Saints.

2. Various Things in the Epistle itself, clearly prove it to be wrote to Jews and not to Gentiles,

(1.) Those Words in 1 John 2:7. Brethren I write no new Commandment unto you; but an old Commandment, which ye had from the Beginning: The old Commandment, is the Word, which ye heard from the Beginning, i.e. from the Commencement of the Gospel Dispensation, which was not true of the Gentiles; but is true of the Jews only.

(2.) Those Words in 1 John 2:24, evidence the same: Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the Beginning: These Persons therefore, heard the Gospel when first preach'd by Christ, and his Apostles, which the Gentiles did not.

(3.) Those Words in 1 John 3:11, For this is the Message, that ye heard from the Beginning, that ye love one another. The Gentile Nations heard not this Message, from the Beginning, and therefore to them this Epistle, was not directed.

(4.) The Persons to whom it was wrote, were commanded, by Christ himself, in his personal Ministry, to love one another, which the Gentiles were not, for he was sent to the lost Sheep, of the House of Israel ONLY. He, i.e. Christ gave us, i.e. us Jews, a Commandment to love another, 1 John 3:23. The Apostle is therefore writing to such of his own Country-men, as believed, and not to the Gentiles. Hence we cannot but conclude, that when he says, For our sins, in these Words, he intends himself, and his own Countrymen, who believed in Christ. If the Apostle had proceeded no farther, but ended his Discourse, of Christ's Atonement here, it might have occasioned great Inconvenience, and Cause of Difference to Believers, both of Jewish and Gentile Extract, and therefore he adds in the last Part of the Text: But also for the sins of the whole World: The Reason of which is plain, the believing Jews were not without great Difficulty persuaded, that the Gentiles, were Fellow-Heirs with them, of the Blessings of Abraham, as might be abundantly proved, if that was here necessary: It therefore was of great Importance that the Apostle subjoyns this Phrase: But also for the sins of the whole World. In order to remove that popular Prejudice, and teach them, that the Gentiles were not excluded a Share, in the Benefits of the Messiah; but it cannot fairly be inferred from hence, that every Individual of Mankind, is interested in the Death of Christ: Some of all Nations are; but not all of any Nation.

Limborch objects thus: The Support and Foundation, of Consolation proposed to a Sinner in the first Verse, is taken away: For how should he be certain, that he hath Christ, an Advocate with the Father, if his Propitiation, is not common to all Sinners; but belongs to some only, and is absolutely peculiar to the Elect. (Ibid.)

Ans. 1. This Objection supposes, that the Intercession of Christ, and his Death, are of the same Extent, which is a great Truth: But tho' the Objection supposes it, and argues upon it, I am apprehensive, that it will not be allow'd, because it would enervate a principal Argument formed in Favour of the Opinion, of the universal Extent of Christ's Death: Which thus appears. There is a World of Men, for whom Christ prays not; it is supposed, that he is an Advocate, or Intercessor for all such, for whose Sins, he is a Propitiation, and therefore we have a World Men, for whom Christ prays not, that are not included in this whole World, for whose Sins be made Atonement.

2. The Knowledge which a Believer hath, of an Interest in Christ, as an atoning Sacrifice, and prevalent Intercessor, with the Father, is not of so low a Nature, as this Objection suggests: Which is only an Inference drawn from Premises, in a natural Manner. As thus, Christ died for all Men,

without Exception, I am of the human Species, and therefore he died for me. For such on whose Account he died, he is an Advocate, he died for every Man, and for every Man he is an Advocate, or Intercessor, and therefore he is my Advocate with the Father. It will shortly appear how far this is, from being the Faith of the Operation of God.

3. Though the Intercession, and Atonement of Christ, are limited to some, yet a Man may have a comfortable Hope, and solid Persuasion of an Interest in both. 1. By a powerful Impression, of evangelical Promises on the Mind. 2. By discerning the happy Fruits, of Christ's Propitiation, and Intercession, in himself: Such as Love to God, Abhorrence of Sin, and Dependence on Christ for Salvation, and Desires of Conformity to him. These are Effects of his Death and Intercession; and therefore the Subjects of these Things may safely conclude, upon an Interest in both. 3. Our Election of God may be known by its Fruits in us, hence says the Apostle, Knowing Brethren beloved, your Election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in Word only; but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5).

4. The Intercession of Christ, is not to be proposed to ALL MEN, as a Foundation of Consolation: If any think, that the Wicked and Ungodly, are to be comforted, by observing to them, that Christ hath atoned for their Sins, and is an Advocate for them, with the Father: I cannot but declare myself to be of a very different Opinion. That as no Man can receive evangelical Consolations, until he sees his Need of Christ, and Salvation by him: So none have a Right to those Consolations, before they are the Subjects of such Convictions. To propose the Satisfaction of Christ, and his Intercession, as Grounds, and Foundations of Hope, Comfort, and Joy to unregenerate Men: I am fully persuaded, is to cast Pearls before Swine, indeed.

5. Every proper Subject of Comfort, may enjoy it, notwithstanding the Limitation of the Death, and Intercession of Christ, to the Elect: That is every sensible Soul may, who seeks for Salvation by him. For there is not any Thing of a discouraging Nature in this Doctrine, to such whole Hearts the Lord would not have made sad.

6. The Opinion of the universal Extent, of Christ's Death, and Intercession, is no very comfortable one. It supposes indeed, that he died, to save Men; but that notwithstanding his Sufferings and Death, they may perish eternally, and that in Fact, the greater Number of Men, will for ever perish, because by his Death, he did not secure to them, that Grace which is necessary to keep them, in a World of Sin, Temptations and Snares. Pardon of Sin, Reconciliation, and Security from Punishment, are by no Means, to be thought, the certain Effects of his Death, to any, say some, not to the greater Part of Mankind, say others: And therefore ALL, as some, or the greater Number, of those for whom he died, as others think, must secure those Benefits, by their own Obedience, or else, notwithstanding his Death, they will inevitably perish for ever. Christ indeed, say some, intercedes for Men universally; but his Intercession prevails not so far, as to furnish a great Part of those, for whom he prays, with an external Revelation of himself: Nor is his Intercession, in Favour of many of those, who enjoy such a Revelation, a certain Means, of procuring for them; that Grace of the Father, which is necessary to preserve them safe: But tho' Christ prays for their Salvation, and Happiness, they may, and many of them will certainly, and infallibly suffer endless Punishment in Hell: This doth not seem to me, to be that comfortable Doctrine, which affords strong Consolation to the Heirs of Promise, according to the Will of God: And therefore I am persuaded, its no Doctrine of his; its not from Heaven; but of Men, to say no

worse of it. I shall here subjoin Limborch's third Argument, with the Answers to it.

Arg. 3. This, says he, we collect from those Places, where it is said, the Lord Jesus came into the World, to save Sinners, and to seek, and to save that which was lost, which could not be, without the Intervention of his Death. Since therefore the Language of the Scripture, is indefinite, having no Limitation, or Restriction, from whence it may appear, that Jesus came into the World, to save some Sinners only: We rightly collect, that Christ died for Sinners indefinitely: And therefore not for the Elect only; but all Sinners, yea, that he died for all Men, because all Men are Sinners (Ibid.).

Answ. 1. The People Christ came to save, were really Sinners; and therefore in coming to save them, it is rightly said, he came to save Sinners. And that in dying for them, he died for Sinners.

2. If he came to save all Sinners, why then are not all Sinners saved? Is it because he failed of performing, what was necessary to their Salvation? If so, what Advantage do they receive from his Appearance in the World, and dying for them? If he did not fail herein, what then should be the Reason that Christ hath the Dissatisfaction, of seeing the far greater Part of those, whom he died to save, suffer Vengeance in Hell for ever? Is it, because the Father on his Part, fails to communicate to them, that Grace, which is necessary to secure their final Happiness? If so, how may we vindicate his Veracity, and Faithfulness: Since he promised Christ, on Condition of his dying, that he should see of the Travail of his Soul, to his Satisfaction, and that his Pleasure, i.e. the Salvation of Sinners should prosper in his Hand. That the far larger Number of those are eternally damned, for whom Christ died, if he died for all Men, is too evident to admit of the least Dispute: And I should think, that their suffering eternal Torments, can't well be interpreted, of that Success, which the Father promised to him, upon his Undertaking to suffer and die for them. Neither of these Things are to be imagined: On Christ's Part there was not any Defect, for in Suffering he was made perfect, i.e. a perfect Saviour, nor is on the Father's.

3. Christ is not a Saviour to those, who are not saved: An Attempt to save Persons in Misery, that is unsuccessful, in no other Case but this, (if so, it must be in this) would be accounted Salvation, any more than an Attempt, to destroy a dangerous Enemy, without Success would be esteemed Victory, and denominate the Author of such an Attempt a Conqueror. All Men are not saved, Christ therefore is not a Saviour to all Men: If he is not the Author of eternal Redemption to the Whole of Mankind, which we are sure he is not; then he is only in Name, and not in Fact a Saviour to some Men, yea to far the greater Part of the human Race, to all such as suffer everlasting Punishment in the Regions of Blackness, Darkness and Horror.

4. He is the Saviour of his Body the Church: These are the Persons given to him of the Father, or whom he sanctified and prepared for Glory: It cannot be truly said, that he is the Saviour of those, who are not of his Body the Church.

5. He was to save his People from their Sins, as the Angel informed Joseph: He shall save his People from their Sins, and he actually doth free them, from an Imputation of Guilt, and delivers them from all the penal Effects of their Sins. To say that Christ came to save more than his People, from their Sins, is to speak beside the holy Scripture. Upon the whole, nothing can be justly collected from the Phrases of Christ's coming into the World to save Sinners, and to seek and to save that which was lost, in Favour of an Intention in him to save ALL Men, and that he died for all Men with such a View: Because in coming and dying to save SOME Men ONLY, he came and

died to save Sinners, for such are all Men.

02.02.05. Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5 Contains Answers to the Argument taken from those Places where it said CHRIST died for those who perish A Fourth Argument is, Christ is said to die for some that perish, and therefore he died not, for the Elect only. 1st. Thus in Romans 14:15. and 2dly, in 1 Corinthians 8:11.f42

Answ. To perish sometimes imports a sinking into nothing, thus in there Words: They go to nothing, and perish (Job 6:18.). Sometimes it intends suffering eternal Punishment, so in this Text: And perished in the Gainsaying of Core (Jude 1:11.). In other Places, it designs Loss of spiritual Joy and Comfort, and the Weakness of the Graces of the Saints, as in there Words: Unless thy Law had been my Delights, I had perished in mine Affliction (Psalms 119:92.). Now the Question is, in which of these Senses, the Phrase is to be understood, where it is supposed that such may perish, for whom Christ died. Not in the first Sense, the Arminians will allow, anti that very rightly; but this is not to be collected, and prov'd from those particular Places; but from other Texts and the Analogy of Faith, which will not admit of this Sense. And we reject the second Signification, because it is contrary to other Places of Scripture, as may be seen above, and to the whole Analogy of Faith. To establish this Sense, it must be proved, that some for whom Christ died, are not of the Number of his Sheep, for whom he laid down his Life: Or that his Sheep, may eternally perish, and that there are some of his Sheep, to whom, he doth not give eternal Life, that some of his Sheep, may be plucked out of his Hand, and out of the Father's Hand. But it will be a very difficult Matter to prove, that Christ delivered a Sense, directly contrary to that, which his Words undeniably express. We therefore justly conclude, that tho' his Sheep for whom he laid down his Life, may dwindle in their Comforts, and decay in the Exercise of Grace, they shall not be eternally miserable, any more than they will cease to be, and that the Apostle intends perishing, in the third Sense, in these Places; which gives no Countenance, to the Opinion, of the universal Extent of Christ's Death, or of the Possibility, of such suffering endless Punishment, for whom our Saviour died. The third Scripture produced to serve, this Purpose is; Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy Thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29.)?

Answ. The Words suggest no such Sense, as is suppos'd and taken for granted: The Sanctification of the Person committing the Sin, of which the Apostle speaks, is not intended; but the Sanctification of Christ. His letting himself apart to suffer, and his actually suffering, and thereby becoming to Sinners, the only Way of Life and Hope, which contribute nothing to the Support of the Opinion of the unlimited Extent of his Death, or that any of those for whom he died, may eternally perish. The fourth Scripture which is urged to this End is: Denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift Destruction (2 Peter 2:1.).

Answ. 1. It must be confessed, that there Words (at least) do not afford a clear Proof, that any of those perish eternally for whom Christ died: Because it is not to be proved that Christ is here

intended, or that the Price of his Blood, is treated of and referred to: Hence It appears, that but very little at most:, can be inferred from them, in Favour of the Opinion we militate against; indeed not any thing with Certainty. For

(1) It cannot be proved, that Christ is the Person, who is said to have bought these Men, and if that is not capable of evident Proof, it must be allowed, that this Text affords not any clear Evidence, of Christ's buying these Persons: For ought we could have known, it might be God the Father, who is intended, if nothing in the Words themselves, had directed us to understand them of him, which Despothv translated Lord imports, for that is a Name, which is never given to Christ in the New-Testament.

(2). Buying may intend, as it doth, in some other Places, providential Mercies, thus in these Words: Is he not thy Father, that has bought thee (Deuteronomy 32:6.)?

(3). God the Father may be, and is denied by wicked Men, who introduce into the Church damnable Heresies, to his Dishonour and the Disturbance of his People.

(4). They bring on themselves swift Destruction, by acting such a Part. We have many weighty Reasons for interpreting the Text in this Sense, rather than in the other, for which the Arminians contend.

[1.] These Persons were not the Objects of divine Favour, because they were not drawn with Loving Kindness: As all those are whom God has loved with an everlasting Love (Jeremiah 31:3.).

[2.] They were appointed to Condemnation and Wrath, or were made to be taken, and destroyed (James 5:12. Jude 1:4.) which cannot consist with a Design of saving them by Jesus Christ.

[3.] If God ever intended to save them; I would ask why he changed his Purpose, and what was the Occasion of that Change, and how this can consist with his Immutability? To say that the Change is not in God; but in them, is no proper Answer to the Enquiry: For then it will be farther ask'd, whether God always knew, what Manner of Men, they would be? To affirm he did not know, and so he once really designed their eternal Happiness, until they proved other Sort of Men, than he expected, Is a plain Denial of divine Prescience. If he always knew, what Kind of Persons they would be, and yet once intended their Salvation, he could not ever appoint them to Wrath, and punish them for Sin, without a Change in himself, and that for no Reason possible to be assign'd.

[4.] If Christ died for them, they are either destroy'd for those of their Sins, for which he suffered, or for other Sins, for which he atoned not: If for those Sins, for which the Redeemer suffered, then Punishment is twice inflicted for those Sins, once on Christ, and also on them, which cannot consist with Justice. If for other Sins, then, they perish, because of a Defect, in the Satisfaction of Christ^{f43}: Which is not by any Means to be allow'd.

02.02.06. Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

Contains Answers to the Absurdities charged on the Opinion of the limited Extent of CHRIST's Death, and a Vindication of Calvin from a Misrepresentation

LIMBORCH charges the Doctrine of the particular Extent of the Death of Christ, with several Absurdities, from which, I shall here attempt to vindicate that important Truth.

Absurd. 1. All to whom Christ is revealed, are bound to believe, that he died for them: If therefore he died not for all Men, they are obliged to believe a Falshood⁴³.

Answ. 1. If this was admitted, it would not prove, that Christ died for all Men; because he is not revealed to all Men by a great Number. The Obligation to believe, cannot exceed in Compass, the Extent of the Revelation of Christ, and since that is not universal, but limited, it is impertinent, to argue from a particular Obligation, to an universal Conclusion, in which, all Men are included, as well those not under the Obligation, as those that are under it.

2. It is certain not only, that all Men to whom Christ is revealed, ought to believe that he died for them, but it is equally certain, that they cannot disbelieve it, if he died for all Mankind: The Reason is most evident, in Order to a Belief of an Interest in his Death, no more is necessary, than understanding, this very plain Proposition, Christ died for every Man without Exception, and Mens allowing themselves, to be of the human Species, of which they cannot doubt, without falling into a strange Delirium, and losing the proper Exercise of their Reason: Hence it appears, that the full Assurance of Faith, is no extraordinary Attainment. Upon this Principle, it must necessarily be allowed, that a Persuasion of an Interest in a suffering Redeemer, is not proper to Believers, for it is, and must be in such, who are unregenerate. And therefore why, the Faith of primitive Christians, and of the Martyrs since, as consisting in a Persuasion, of an Interest in the Death of Christ, should be accounted a great Favour, no Reason can be assigned: For the most wicked Man upon the Earth, who hears the Gospel, has the same evident Foundation, for such a Confidence, as they had.

3. That all Men who hear the Gospel, are bound to believe in Christ, I humbly apprehend, is not very easy of Proof. They are indeed obliged to various Things, in consequence of enjoying the great Advantage, of a Revelation from God. They ought to search the Scriptures, and that diligently. It is their Duty to meditate upon the Scriptures, and use their Powers of Reasoning, in the best Manner they are able, in order to discover their true Meaning and Sense: They are not to enquire into the Modus, of the mysterious Things therein revealed, and embrace or reject the Doctrines of the Word of God, either as they can comprehend them, or as they exceed the narrow Limits of their shallow, and imperfect Understandings. The Part which Multitudes act, of this Nature, must one Day be accounted for. Again they ought to pray to God for Direction, in the reading of his holy Word. Farther they will be found inexcusable, in an awful Time approaching, in neglecting to hear the Gospel, and for a Disregard to the Worship of God. Moreover as Opposition

to the Truths, and Interest of Christ greatly heightens their Guilt, and will increase their Punishment hereafter. But that they are obliged, to believe in Christ, and take him as theirs, without, or prior to a Conviction of their Need of him, and of his Suitableness to their Condition, as Creatures lost, miserable, and helpless, is much questioned, and I think, as yet wants Proof. The common, and external Revelation of Christ, obliges not, to special; but a common, and historical Faith, agreeable to the Nature of the Revelation: A special Revelation of Christ, obliges in a special Faith in him, which as I conceive supposes these Things.

1. A Sinner by the Infusion of divine Light sees himself to be guilty, vile, and without any spiritual Strength.
2. That he is condemned by the righteous Law of God, and that his Condemnation, is strictly just.
3. That he is obnoxious to inconceivable, and endless Penalty, for his numerous Sins.
4. That he cannot, by any means, deliver himself from Wrath, and secure his future Welfare.
5. He views Christ to be the only Saviour, and his Mind is furnished with delightful Ideas, of his infinite Merit, everlasting Righteousness and Strength. He discovers incomparable Beauties, and Excellencies in his Person, and beholds that Riches unsearchable, and ever durable, are lodged in his Hand, for the Supply of the Wants, of such needy indigent Creatures, as he now sees himself to be. In a Word, he is fully convinced, that such an high Priest, and gracious Redeemer, as Christ: is, becomes him.
6. On this special Revelation of the blessed Jesus in him, he stands obliged, to put forth Acts of special Faith, Hope and Love, towards Christ, for it seems reasonable, to suppose, that this additional and superadded Light, to the external Revelation in the Word, obliges to new Duties, which are suited to the Nature of this superadded Revelation. And what those Duties, arising from such a Revelation should be, unless those just now expressed, it may prove very difficult to shew, And therefore I cannot but conclude, that Men to whom the Gospel is barely preached, or without the Supperaddition of an internal Revelation, are not obliged to a special and supernatural Faith.

Absurd. 2. If Christ died not for all Men, then no Man, when Christ is preached to him, can be certain, that he is bound to believe in him, which is most absurd (Ibid.),

Answ. Every Man is bound to believe, according to the Nature and Degree of the Revelation made to him. The external Revelation in the Word, is of itself insufficient to convince Men of their Need of Christ, and to furnish their Minds with an experimental Knowledge of Christ's Glory and Suitableness as a Saviour: And therefore, it follows not from the Nature and Degree of this external Revelation, that Men must know themselves bound to believe in Christ, or to put forth supernatural Acts: The Things revealed, are supernatural: But the Mode of the Revelation, is natural, and obliges not to acts above Nature.

Absurd. 3. Then no Man will be condemned for Incredulity (Ibid.)

Answ. Men will be condemned, for not yielding such an Assent to the Gospel Revelation, as the Nature of it requires: Thus the Jews were; and all other Opposers of it, under what Pretences soever, will find their Punishment increased, as their Guilt is aggravated and heighten'd by an Opposition to it. A special and internal Revelation of Christ, fails not to produce a Supernatural

Faith: Hence those, who are the Subjects of it, are passed from Death to Life, and shall not come into Condemnation. Such who enjoy it not, are not obliged from the Nature of that Revelation, which is afforded to them, to this special Faith.

Absurd. 4. Baptism is a sealing of the Covenant of Grace, and may be only administered to such, who are in that Covenant: If Christ died not for all Men, then those, who only make a Profession of Faith, may not be baptized: God and Christ could not require their Baptism, for they not being in the Covenant it cannot be sealed to them (Ibid.).

Answ. Baptism is not a Seal to the Covenant of Grace, that only is, or can be a Seal to this Covenant, by which it is confirmed; and that ALONE is the Blood of Christ: This Covenant therefore hath not, or can have any other Seal, than his most precious Blood. Again, if all Men are in the Covenant of Grace, why do not all Men partake of the Benefits therein promised? Its Mercies are sure, and all its Promises are yea and Amen, to the Glory of God by Jesus Christ: And therefore, never was that Man in the Covenant of Grace, whether he be the Son of Abraham, or the Son of Pharaoh, who partakes not of ALL the Blessings promised in that Covenant. Before I conclude this Chapter, I shall vindicate Calvin from a Misrepresentation, which the Author of the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, gives of his Sentiments, relating to the Extent of Christ's Death. He represents it as the Opinion of Calvin, that Christ died for all Men, and produces several of his Comments on divers Texts of Scripture, to support that Representation. In Answer to which, I observe as Spanhemius does, its no Wonder, if before the Controversy arose he wrote with less Guard, on this Subject. I add, that if his general Expressions in those Comments, are to be interpreted of all Men, and that, if at the Time of his writing those Comments, he was of Opinion, that the Extent of Christ's Death is universal; it is evident he afterwards changed his Sentiments, in this Point, on farther Enquiry: His Note on 1 John 2:2. is a full Proof of this: A Part of which Note, this Gentleman presents the Reader with, but suppresses that Part of it, which acquaints us with the real Sentiments of that great Reformer, on this Subject: The Truth is, a more partial, unfair, and disingenuous Quotation of an Author, to serve a Turn, will not soon be met with: I can hardly allow myself to think that the Gentleman, whom I have Reason to believe, is the Author of this Book, would descend to so low a Piece of Artifice to gain Countenance to his own Opinion; I should rather imagine that he took it from Mr. Baxter, as it stands in his Catholic Theology, but that I observe some small Variation from his Manner of quoting it. However, it is certain, when Calvin wrote this Note, he no more believed that Christ died for all Men to save them, than he believed, that he died for Devils; for he says expressly, under the Term all, Reprobates are not comprehended The Reader may please to take a View of his Note entire, and he then will see, that Calvin's Opinion was, Christ died for the Elect and Church of God only. The Note runs thus, not for ours only: This he adds for illustrating or enlarging his Subject, that Believers might really be persuaded, that the Expiation effected by Christ, is extended to all who receive the Gospel by Faith. But here a Question is moved, how the Sins of the whole World can be expiated? I omit the Ravings of frantic Men, who admit, with this Pretence, all REPROBATES, yea, and Satan himself to Salvation. This monstrous Figment is unworthy of any Refutation. Some to avoid this Absurdity, have said Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole World, but effectually for the Elect alone, This Solution commonly obtains in the Schools, although I confess this to be true, yet I deny it agrees to this Place. The Design of John was no other, than to shew, this is a Benefit common to the whole Church. Therefore under the Term all he includes not REPROBATES; but he designs those, who

as they believed, were also dispersed through various Parts of the World. For then is the Grace of Christ truly illustrated, as it is meet it should be, when it is published as the Salvation of the World⁴⁴. This Gentleman favours the Reader only with this imperfect Part of Calvin's Note: How can the Sins of the whole World be expiated? Some have said Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole World, but effectually for the sins of the Elect alone; this is the common Solution of the Schools, and though I confess this to be true, yet I don't think it agrees to this Place (Page 237.). Was ever any Author more unfairly quoted, to serve a Turn in a Point of Controversy? I am of Opinion, that the Reader wilt think with me, no Author can well be cited in a more partial Manner. The true Sentiments of Calvin, are entirely kept from View; if they had been brought to Light, the Reader would have seen, that by the general Terms, he makes Use of in some other of his Comments on several Texts, he did not intend that Christ died for REPROBATES, or if he did then so intend, that he had now changed his Sentiments in this Matter. Thus we see, that a Gentleman of great Ingenuity, in Heat of Controversy, may be guilty of very great Unfairness and Partially, in the Citation of an Author, whom he is desirous to represent as a Favourer of his own Opinions.

02.02.07. Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7 Contains Answers to the Author's General Objections

Object. 1. Reprobation, in the most severe absolute Sense of it, says he, stands in such a direct Contradiction to all our Notions of Kindness and Love to others, in which the blessed God is set forth as our Example, that our Reason cannot tell how to receive it (Page 244.).

Answ. 1. That some of the human Race are hated of God, and appointed to Wrath and ever-lasting Condemnation, Is as evident from Scripture, as it is, that others on the contrary are chosen to eternal Felicity. And if this was a Doctrine attended with Difficulties, to us insuperable and inexplicable, we ought, nevertheless, to readily and heartily assent to it, in a holy Submission to the sovereign and righteous Will and Counsel of God, whose Judgments tho' deep and infathomable, must we are sure, necessarily be equitable and just: In a Refusal of it we shall certainly be deem'd guilty of inexcusable Incredulity and Folly: How much more shall we expose ourselves to the divine Censure, if we refuse to believe a Doctrine, not only revealed of God, but let in such a Light, as raises it above any reasonable Objections, which this Doctrine is, as will quickly appear.

II. This Gentleman observes, that it hath a dreadful Aspect, upon far the greatest Part of our Fellow-Creatures considered as mere Creatures (Ibid.) i.e. as I suppose he means not considered as guilty of Sin.

Answ. 1. This Observation seems to me not true: I cannot but account it a most unfair, as well as a disadvantageous Method of Rating that Doctrine. For, I. Reprobation is either an Act of Preterition, wherein God decreed not to bestow eternal Bliss on some Men, which none had a Right to claim, and therefore he was at Liberty, to appoint Men to that happy State or not, just as it pleased him, and his purposing to bestow it on some, was an Act of undeserved and sovereign Favour towards them; and his Decree not to confer eternal Glory on others, was a sovereign Act of his; but it contains nothing of Injustice in it; since they, nor others, had the least Right or Claim to it.

2. It is Pre-Damnation or an Appointment to suffer Penalty, which Act passed not in the divine Mind without Respect had to Sin, as deserving that Punishment: So that Men were not considered as MERE Creatures; but as guilty and worthy of Death in this Act of God. Now if there is nothing contrary to the Kindness and Goodness of God, in the actual Infliction of Punishment for Sin committed; why it should be thought inconsistent with the Kindness and Goodness of God, to will or purpose to inflict that deferred Punishment, it will be found no easy Matter to assign the Reason of.

3. Is God obliged to provide for the Recovery of his guilty Creatures, and must he be charged with Cruelty if he does not? Then, why is not Provision made for the Salvation of the Apostate Spirits, for Devils as well as Men? His awful Dealing with them, is a full Proof, that his Kindness and Goodness lay him under no Obligation to provide afresh, for the Happiness of his offending Creatures, and to put them on a new Foot of Hope.

4. It is a Favour that sinful Men are permitted to dwell on the Earth, in the Midst of so many Mercies, for so long a Time as they do, since Justice might be much more speedily executed on them.

III. The learned Author enquires, What great Advantages can be derived to Religion and Christianity, by endeavouring to limit the Extent of the Death of Christ and to take away all manner of Hopes, and Prayers, and Endeavours, from the Non-elect (Page 245.).

Answ. 1. No Advantage arises to the Satisfaction of Christ, by asserting that many of those may and certainly will suffer the Torments of Hell for EVER, on whose Account he sustained Punishment: This is a manifest Subversion of the Reality and Perfection of his Satisfaction, and it offers great Prejudice to revealed Religion and Christianity, and therefore is by no means to be endured, let who will appear an Advocate for it.

2. No unregenerate Man, may justly entertain Hopes of Salvation, remaining in a State of Unregeneracy, even upon the Principles of this Author; for he allows that no Man will be saved, unless he believes and repents; an Unbeliever and impenitent Person therefore, while he is so, cannot hope upon solid Grounds, that he shall be happy hereafter. And as none know, while in that State, whether they are Objects of Election, or the contrary: As on the one Hand, they cannot conclude upon their Election; so on the other, they have no Evidence of their Reprobation. Hence it is easily to be discerned, that they are not by the Doctrine of Election justly discouraged from those Hopes, Prayers, and Endeavours, of which any may apprehend them capable, without the Grace of God.

3. The Sentiments of this Gentleman are full as discouraging, as the Opinion he opposes is: For since he will not allow, that God gives effectual Grace to the Non-elect, their Salvation is impossible, and their Damnation is ascertain, as if no such conditional Provision of Salvation was made for them, which will be hereafter prov'd. His Opinion really sinks the Merit of the Redeemer, infinitely below its true Value, subverts his proper Satisfaction for Sin, without the least Advantage to the Non-elect, for whom he thinks Christ died, as well as for the Elect.

IV. He enquires, Are the Elect discouraged by it? Not in the least (P. 246.).

Answ. 1. Many of the Elect, under serious Impressions, are much in doubt about their Election: This I suppose will be granted.

2. It is affirmed that God by his Spirit often works upon the Minds of the Non-elect, and excites and stirs them up to desire and seek after Salvation in Christ: But since he gives them not effectual Grace, they may thro' their own Folly and Obstinacy cause the Spirit to withdraw from them, and may never become regenerate or meet for Heaven; and therefore notwithstanding these divine Influences upon them, and their Desires after Christ and his Salvation, to Hell they must as certainly go, as if they had never felt or experienced any of those Things. Doctrine of a more discouraging Nature to a tender Mind, convinced of Sin, and of a Need of Christ, without a Persuasion of an Interest in God's electing Love, will not, I am of Opinion, very soon be invented and propagated by Men, who are profess'd Adversaries to evangelical Truths. The Case in Fact is this, if the Sentiments of this Gentleman contain any Thing of an encouraging Nature to Sinners, they are not the spiritually awakened and convinc'd; but the Careless and Unconcerned about heavenly Things, as it seems to me, who are but too apt to presume upon the Sufficiency of their

own NATURAL Powers, with COMMON Helps to obtain Salvation.

IV. Says this Gentleman, But many Persons who are awakened to a Sense of Sin, and are seeking after Christ for Salvation, by this narrow Doctrine may be terribly discouraged, from receiving his Offers of Grace, when they are taught to doubt whether there be any Grace provided for them, or whether Jesus be appointed to act as their Saviour (Ibid.).

Answ. 1. A narrow Doctrine is most likely to be true, because the Way to Life is narrow, and but Few will find it, as we think, since he who is the Truth hath said it, and those Few, are only the chosen Few: None besides them discover and walk in this Way. And this Doctrine being called narrow in a Way of Contempt, by any Man, or Set of Men whatsoever, will give us no other Concern, than what arises from the Consideration of their offending against Christ and his Gospel.

2. Who teach Men awakened to a Sense of Sin, and to seek after Christ, to doubt whether any Grace is provided for them, or whether Jesus was appointed to act as a Saviour for them? Surely not such as constantly teach, that because Grace was provided for them in eternal Election, and Christ was appointed to act as a Saviour for them, therefore his Spirit operates in this Manner on their Hearts, and raises Desires in them after Christ and his Salvation, which Desires God graciously hears, and will certainly satisfy: I say not such Teachers surely, and I pray the Lord to deliver his Churches, from all such as teach otherwise.

V. It may, says he, drive some poor Souls to Despair, when they hear that unless they are elected they may seek after Salvation by Christ in vain (Ibid.).

Answ. The Doctrine of Election affords the greatest Encouragement to such as seek after Christ and Salvation by him, because it supposes, that this Act of seeking, is a Fruit of it, and that they who seek shall find.

VI. It may, adds he, tempt them to begin at the wrong End, and seek to pry into the Counsels of God, etc. before they dare trust in Grace, or submit to the Gospel of Christ (Ibid.).

Answ. 1. God's Word, and not his secret Purpose is the Rule of our Conduct.

2. There is nothing in the Doctrine, that leads to this Practice, and if Men are prevailed with to act such a Part, by Unbelief, or Satan, that is no just Objection to the Doctrine itself.

3. In thus seeking they submit to Christ's Gospel, and therefore shall be saved.

02.03. Part 3

PART 3. IN this third Part I intend the Proof of the Impossibility of the Salvation of the Non-elect, upon the Supposition of a conditional Provision only, being made for their Happiness. The Author of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, allows, that they cannot obtain Life by the Law of Innocency, or Covenant of Works; because that requires Perfection of every Man, in order to it: If therefore, they secure their eternal Felicity, it must be by the Observation of a Law, which enjoins easier Terms and Conditions of Life, than that Law doth. I observe he cautiously avoids the Use of the Terms, a new and remedial, or milder Law, which have commonly been used about this Subject, by such Persons, with whom he agrees; particularly by Mr. Baxter, whose Track of Thoughts, he has very nearly followed, in what he delivers on this Subject, and in his Attempt to reconcile the Calvinists and Arminians. Since he means the same Thing, it is of very little Consideration, that he declines the Use of the Terms, perhaps he might have particular Reasons, which determined him, to make use of a somewhat different Mode of speaking, when he intended to convey to the Reader the very same Ideas. God forbid, that by a Change of the Mode of Language, we should be led to another Gospel, which is not another, no Gospel of Christ at all. I hope that such is our firm Regard to the free Grace of God, as the alone and entire Cause of Salvation, in Opposition to Works, perfect or imperfect, that we shall not be prevailed with, by a Representation of Works, as Causes of Salvation, in any Sense, tho' in a different Dress, to part with the pure and unmixed Gospel of Christ. No surely, we shall be able to discover, when Works are represented, as having a casual Influence into Salvation, in what Language soever, such an Opinion is express'd. I have always apprehended, that Letters, Syllables, and Words, are perfectly indifferent Things, neither good nor bad, and that it is acting a very low Part, to object to Terms, which are only Signs of our Ideas, provided we are agreed about the Thought or Idea convey'd by those Terms: But yet we ought to deliver our Conceptions, especially in divine Things, by such Words as are properly expressive of our Ideas, and of the Truth itself. So that it is of some Moment, whether Faith shall be called a Condition of Salvation or not; because that Term is capable of a Construction, inconsistent with free Justification by the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ alone: And therefore it is necessary, that the Use of that Term should be laid aside.

02.03.01. Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1 The Law of Innocency proved to be in full Force; Believers are under it as a Rule of Conduct; Its various Uses to them are shewn; The Non-elect are under it in the Form of a Covenant of Works.

SOCINIANS, Arminians, and Baxterians, all agree in an Opposition to the holy Law of God, which is the invariable and eternal Rule of Righteousness to Men: They contend, that since, that Law requires absolute Perfection in Heart and Life, and Men are depraved and cannot obey it, or obtain Life by it, Christ hath introduced new Law, which enjoins easier Terms and Conditions, and which it is in the Power of Men with common Helps to keep, and secure eternal Happiness by the Observation of. If another Law is enacted by Christ, under which Man was not, in a State of Innocence, that Law is either perfect or imperfect, or though the Law is perfect, God will justify and save Men by an imperfect Observation of it. If the Law is perfect and requires complete Holiness in Heart and Life, it is the very same, that was given to Man in his primitive Estate, i.e. it is the same materially and not another specifically different from it: If it is another specifically distinct from it; then indeed, it is an imperfect Law, and exact and universal Purity is not required by it, which to suppose, makes our Saviour the Minister of Sin, and to allow of Iniquity by a Law.

You will say this is a very heavy Charge, which deeply affects the Sentiments of some good Men; true it is so; but I am under no Scruple of fully supporting this Charge, heavy as it is. The Law of Innocence is not abrogated, and another essentially distinct from it, introduced into its Room, as at needs must be, if perfect Holiness is not commanded.

I. The Apostle Paul constantly teaches, that the Gospel doth not make void the holy Law of God; but on the contrary he asserts in the strongest Manner the Establishment of the Law by the Gospel: With respect to Believers they are not indeed under it, considered formally as a Covenant promising Reward in Case of Obedience and threatening Punishment upon a Breach of its Precepts, for they are not under the Law, as in form of a Covenant, but under Grace in Covenant Form, they are not without Law or a Rule of Conduct to God, but are under the Law to Christ. It hath been frequently and with great Confidence objected to the Assertors of the free Grace of God, that they deny, that Believers are under any Obligation to keep the Law, as a Rule of Behaviour, if any such Persons are to be found, their Number I am persuaded is very inconsiderable, would to God that none of his rational Creatures ever admitted a Thought so contrary to the Purity of his Nature, and destructive of his Government. For my own Part I declare I shall as soon believe, that not a Word of the Gospel is true, as that Believers are not obliged to observe the holy and perfect Law of God, as a Rule of Conversation and Walk: I would offer several Things to the Consideration of the Reader, in order to expose the egregious Folly and unparallel'd Immorality of such a wild and extravagant Conceit.

1. This necessarily supposes that none of the Actions of a Believer are sinful. If the apostolical Definition of Sin, is allowed to be just and true, the necessary Consequence is, that where no Law is, there is no Transgression; then a Neglect to reverence, adore, and serve God, will be no Sin,

then the Perpretation of the most abominable Vices will not be criminal: For if Sin is a Transgression of a Law, and Believers are not under the Law, this Consequence is unavoidable. Maccovius rightly observes, Should no Law intervene, there would be no good Work, nor any Sin, all Actions would then be indifferent. Therefore,

2. The Distinction of Good and Evil would then vanish into Air, and cease to be: Upon such a Principle, the eternal Difference between right and wrong, just and unjust, Holiness and Sin, can never subsist.

3. According to this licentious Opinion, no Actions of Believers would deserve Punishment; for it is a Breach of the Law only that subjects Men to Penalty, and the Displeasure of God, then there would be no Need for them to address the divine Being, in the Manner the inspired Writer did, rebuke me not in thine Anger, neither chasten me in thy hot Displeasure.

4. This therefore is an unavoidable Consequence of such an immoral Principle, that Christ suffered for no Actions of Believers. The Doctrine of the Scriptures is, that he bore their Sins, and sustain'd the Punishment by them demerited: If Believers are under no Law they sin not, nor could Christ have any Sin of theirs imputed to him, he could not be wounded for their Transgressions, and bruised for their Iniquities: What then becomes of the Gospel as well as the Law, we have neither the one nor the other.

5. This vile Opinion is subversive of the Experience of Believers: They are much disquieted in their Minds through the unregenerate Part, that is in them, and the Motions of it; but upon an Application of the Blood of Christ they enjoy Peace and Tranquillity. A Sense of Sin and Guilt distresses them, a View of Pardon fills them with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory: But if they are under no Law, and sin not, they cannot be either Subjects of Sorrow through a Sense of Sin, or of Joy through a Discovery of Remission.

6. Evangelical Repentance can have no Place, because that is a godly Sorrow for Sin: If Believers are not Subjects of Sin, (as they are not if they are under no Law,) they cannot be Subjects of Repentance. This is so contrary to Scripture and Experience, that nothing can be more so, they look on Christ whom they have pierced, or who suffered for their Sins, and mourn as a Man mourneth for his only Son.

7. Hence it follows, that Christian Communities have no Rules to walk by; nay, it is impossible that there should according to this Principle, be any Christian Churches or Societies, if a particular Believer is under no Law a Collection of them can be under none; then they are not obliged to comfort the distressed, to support the weak, to relieve the necessitous, to reprove the loose, or eject the scandalous, and the Church at Corinth was put upon a wrong Practice by the Apostle, in casting out the incestuous Person.

8. This necessarily supposes that Christ dissolved all Obligation to Duty, than which, there is not any thing more false. His Satisfaction secures the Persons of Believers from Punishment, but changes not the Nature of their Actions: Vicious Acts in them are still sinful, and will eternally remain so; Redemption from the Law's Curse, frees not from the Obligation to observe its Precepts.

9. This abominable Notion eclipses the Glory of free Grace in the Remission of Sin: If it is not allow'd that Sin is committed by Believers, how can free Grace be discovered in their Forgiveness? 'Tis a most plain Contradiction, that Sin is forgiven to the Saints, if it be denied that they contract Guilt.

10. If no divine Law is in Force to Believers, God is not their Governor or Christ their King: Rule and Dominion necessarily supposes a Law or Rule of Behaviour is given to the governed: If Believers are under no Law, God then exercises no Rule over them or concerns himself about their Conduct: It is a Thing indifferent to him, whether they honour or dishonour him, adore or deny him his Glory.

11. This monstrous Opinion sets aside the Work of the Spirit upon the Hearts of the Saints: If they are under no Law, then it can't be imagined that the Spirit of God convinces them of Sin, humbles them for it, or raises Desires in them, of a Freedom from it, or gives them Joy and Peace under a Sense of pardoning Love, or in a Word, that he sanctifies their Hearts, and makes them holy, for all their Holiness and Sin are only imaginary Things.

II. The holy and righteous Law of God, is of great Use and Advantage to the Saints: The proper Use of it is very profitable, and it serves to excellent Purposes; the Law is good if a man use it lawfully, and therefore it is not made void or abrogated by the Gospel, its Uses to the Saints are such as follow.

1. They collect from it what Thoughts, Words and Actions are good or sinful. That the Commands and Prohibitions of the Law extend to the Acts of our Minds, to internal as well as external Acts, is most evident from the Exposition given of it by our Saviour, in his Sermon on the Mount; tis a very mistaken Apprehension that Men are not accountable for their Thoughts, however difficult they may find it to preserve them pure, regular and holy. We cannot exercise that Humiliation necessary to Creatures guilty and vile, without a Sense of that Guilt we have contracted, and the Knowledge of this is only to be acquired from the Law of God, the Rule of our Conduct, and therefore an Acquaintance with, and a strict Regard to that Law, in its Precepts and Prohibitions, procure us great Benefit.

2. It is from the Law of God we learn our miserable Condition by Nature: That we are destitute of a Righteousness necessary to our Acceptance with the divine Legislator; we are taught by the Purity, Spirituality and vast Compass of his Commands; and the Menaces of the Law in Care of Disobedience give us a full Conviction of that Wrath, Vengeance, and Weight of Punishment, to which our Crimes export us, hence we cannot but conclude, that our natural State is very calamitous and sad. 3. It is by the Law of God we discover the absolute Necessity, of placing our Hopes and Confidence in the Righteousness of Christ alone, which only is commensurable to its extensive Demands: 'Till Men are under a powerful Conviction of the Defers and Blemishes, that attend their own Obedience, they will not submit to the perfect Obedience of a Saviour, which is that Righteousness, that is revealed in the Gospel from Faith to Faith. And it is only in the Glass of God's Law, that we can see how defective we are, in every Act of Duty, and get an Acquaintance with our numerous Offences.

4. By a proper Knowledge of the divine Law, we are excited to adore divine Goodness, which provided a Redeemer for us. In Proportion to our Apprehensions of the Misery, to which Sin hath

exposed us, and the Difficulty that attended our Recovery, and the dreadful Nature of that Curse Christ endured for us, will our Gratitude rise for that Salvation, the sovereign Love and Favour of God designed to us, through the Mediation and Merits of his Son.

5. The Law furnishes us with the Knowledge of our Duty; Ignorance of the Part we ought to act, in a Variety of Instances, towards God, ourselves and our Neighbour, is no small Branch of the Unhappiness attending human Nature. It is only by that Law which is wisely made the Rule of our Deportment in all Things, that we can improve in our Knowledge of Duty, and get rid of that Darkness and Ignorance about the manner of conducting ourselves, which is a Reproach to the Race of Mankind. These are some of those Advantages, which arise to us from the righteous Law of God, but it is here to be observed that the Law cannot be of that Service to us, we plead for, unless it is perfect: This leads me to shew, that a Law of milder Terms, and easier Conditions of Life is not given to Men.

III. The Enaction of an imperfect Law, is a mistaken Opinion, which thus appears, 1. It is inconsistent with the Perfections of God.

(1). It is contrary to his infinite Purity and Holiness. Such as Is the Nature of God, such is his Law; his Nature is holy, and so is his Law. Holiness he cannot but approve and command: Sin he cannot but hate and forbid: Nothing more dishonourable to God will Men soon invent, than is the Opinion of his being the Author of an imperfect Law.

(2). This cannot consist with the Immutability of God. That which God commands, he esteems good; and what he forbids, is evil in his Account. If God ceases to enjoyn the Holiness he once did, or to forbid the Evil in any Instance which he strictly prohibited, it follows, that what he once accounted good, and what in his Esteem once was Evil, are not by the divine Mind considered in the same View, which is incompatible with the Invariableness of God our supreme Lord and Judge. Thus it must be, unless God requires not what he approves, and forbids not what he disapproves, which is a Thought that will not be readily admitted, by those who have a due Concern for the Glory of God.

(3). It would be an Impeachment of the Wisdom of God to conceive him the Author of such a Law, as essentially differs from that he before gave. It is not possible for human Governments, who have only an imperfect View of things, and as they at present appear, to enact Laws, in many Cases, which if always to be continued in Force, would no Way be prejudicial to themselves or to the Subjects; but such an Apprehension of the supreme Being, divers him of his infinite Wisdom, and limits his Knowledge.

2. Such is the Nature of the divine Decrees, that their Accomplishment requires not the giving of a Law different from that of Innocence. It can't be reasonably thought, that the Purposes of God are so framed, as to render any thing necessary, that is inconsistent with the Glory of his Attributes, far be it from us, to entertain so unbecoming an Opinion of God, who is infinitely wise, holy and just.

1. God's Decree to save Men is not conditional, but most free and absolute. If he purposed the Salvation of any Part of Mankind, upon certain Conditions, either the Performance of those Conditions is in their Power or it is not, if they have not Ability to fulfil those Conditions, then unless he gives them Strength for their Performance, Salvation is impossible to be attained, and we must necessarily suppose God to will and decree, that to be, which he knew could not be, because be

would not do that for Men, which the Accomplishment of his Designs about them, necessarily required him to do. If God will enable Men to perform those Terms of Life, then their final Happiness is certain, but this is not granted, it is only allow'd, that God affords those Aids and Assistances to Men, which if duly improved would be sufficient to secure their Felicity. But,

(1.) Can this be conceiv'd of such a Part of the human Race, as are wholly ignorant, that Salvation is at all intended for any by Jesus Christ? Surely not. (2.) The Helps which are said to be given to such a Part of Mankind, as hear the Gospel, either make Men regenerate, and inspire them with Life, or they do not; if they do, then is their Salvation not a thing doubtful, but certain; if they do not, then let Men say what they please, till it is prov'd that Persons unregenerate, and under the Dominion of Sin, and dead in it, and who are in the Flesh, may perform Service acceptable to God, which may perhaps be found a very difficult Matter to be prov'd, if it should ever be attempted: Salvation, notwithstanding these supposed common Helps and Assistances, will remain a Thing impossible, and God must be thought to have decreed that to be, which he eternally knew could never be. A Purpose of this Sort, who will attribute to a wise Man, and shall we admit such an Apprehension of God who is in Wisdom infinite? Therefore God's Decree of saving Men is unconditional, of Consequence Life and Happiness are not proposed on Terms and Conditions to be performed by Men; but are freely promised, and graciously bestowed on all such, whom God intended to save: This Consideration alone, I should think is sufficient to disprove the Opinion of a conditional Salvation provided for any.

2. God willed not to impute Sin to those, whom he purposed to reconcile to himself by Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:19. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespasses to them: Where there is a Non-imputation of Sin, there can be no Infliction of Punishment; if there may, then the Happiness of those to whom Sin is not imputed, is not certainly inferable from the Non-imputation of Guilt; but thus it is in the Opinion of the Apostle, blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin, or did God once intend not to charge Sin on Men, but afterwards changed his Purpose; what should be the Reason of such an Alteration in the divine Mind? Is it because the Satisfaction of Christ is incomplete? Then is he an imperfect Saviour, we are inevitably undone, and God is disappointed of his End, in the Constitution of his Son a Redeemer to his People, which may by no Means be allow'd of, or is it because Men fail of performing what is necessary on their Part to actual Pardon? Then God only willed in a conditional Manner their Remission, but decreed absolutely the Satisfaction of Christ for their Sins, and agreeable to this absolute Decree, actually charged Sin on Christ, and punished him in the Stead of Sinners whom he proposed to save, and yet, he also charges Sin on many of those Persons, and eternally damns them for those Sins: If the Justice of God in such a Procedure may be vindicated, I should be glad to see it done, a Decree to pardon Sinners conditionally, cannot consist with an absolute Decree that Christ should satisfy for Sin: There therefore is no such conditional Grant of Pardon to all Men, which may not take Place as to the greater Part of them.

3. God decreed to justify Sinners by the Obedience of Christ, and as he viewed them in his Righteousness, they ever were the Objects of his Approbation and Delight. Such as are the Subjects of Vocation, are the Objects of Justification, for whom God calls, them he justifies if the Apostle be right: But he calls not all, even externally, and many who hear the Gospel, he calls not effectually; now, I ask if the Righteousness of Christ secures Justification to all such, for whom that Righteousness was intended of God? If it is answered no, then it should seem to follow, that God

is disappointed of his End, in designing that Righteousness to such a Purpose: This will be denied, and it will be urg'd, that it was intended for all such, as believe, and no others; then I would ask another Question, can Men believe without the Grace of Faith is given? If so, it is of themselves, and not the Gift of God, and we have hitherto been mistaken in considering it as a divine Gift, and were unhappily led into that Mistake, by an express Assertion of the Apostle, that so it is, his Assertions are therefore not to be admitted without some Caution. But if it should prove after all, that the Apostle was right, then, I ask will God give the Grace of Faith to all such, for whom the Righteousness of Christ was designed? If you answer, God will afford such Helps to Men, as are sufficient to enable them to believe: This I observe is either true of some only, or it is true of all; it can't be true of all, because Christ was never proposed as an Object of Faith to many. Again, these Helps afforded to some Part of Mankind, either produce the Grace and Habit of Faith in them, or they do not: If they do, then all who enjoy those Helps, actually become Believers, for where the Grace of Faith is wrought, God doth not fail to educe it into Act: If they do not produce the Habit of Faith in the Souls of Men, and yet they are sufficient to enable Men to believe, it must then be granted, that heavenly Acts, may be where there is no spiritual Life, that Men dead in Sin under the Dominion of it, whose Hearts are Stone, who are unregenerate, and in the Flesh, may please God, that Grapes may be gathered of Thorns, and Figs of Thistles, and that the Tree need not be made good, in order to bring forth good Fruit.

4. If God decreed the Salvation of all Men conditionally, he either decreed to give them that Grace which is necessary to assist them to perform those Terms of Life, which pursuant to that his Decree he sets before them. If he did not decree to confer those Aids, that are absolutely necessary to fulfilling the Conditions of Salvation, their Damnation is inevitable, and certain: If God decreed to afford them sufficient Helps, then those Helps regenerate Men or they do not; if they do, then all Men shall be saved, unless it may be that heavenly Life, created in their Hearts is extinguished, and they after divine Quickening become dead in Sin, which cannot be; for in whomsoever a good Work is begun, it shall be performed until the Day of Christ: If there Assistances give not Life, they are insufficient to enable a dead Man to act: If they produce no Principle of Love to God, they are insufficient to cause Enmity, to love him and his Ways, so that the Decrees of God, concerning the Salvation of Sinners cannot be conditional, nor is a Law of easier Terms and Conditions of Life, given to Men, by which they may obtain Happiness.

IV. Many Absurdities attend the Supposition of the Enaction and Introduction of such a Law, which I shall now mention: It is apprehended that the Conditions and Terms of Life proposed to Men, are Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience, that this new Law pronounces not Damnation in Case of Sin; but only in Case Repentance is wanting. If thus it is, then I observe as follows:

1. A Person really regenerate may be guilty of the most flagitious Crimes: If Murder, Incest, Adultery, Cursing, Swearing, and a Denial of Christ, may be so esteem'd the Observation therefore of this Law may consist with the worst of Vices.

2. If no other Obedience is commanded in this Law, than may be interrupted by the Commission of such detestable Crimes, it will follow, that there are not Sins, for all Sin is a Transgression of some Law: Its not supposed, that Men are under any other Law, if therefore they are not Breaches of this Law or Covenant, it is a very imperfect Law indeed, and an infinitely holy God can no more be the Author of it, than he can be the Author of Sin, which he necessarily hates.

3. Sin and Imperfection are even necessary to our Acceptance with God: Such an Obedience in Kind, as the Law requires to that End, we must yield and not another, that is specifically different from it; but such a perfect Obedience is: And therefore by, or according to this Law, perfect Obedience cannot intitle us to Life and Happiness, for such the Law requires not: Principles nothing so dishonourable to God, and contrary to his Law would be branded with the odious Name of Antinomianism in some Men, by those who embrace this detestable Opinion.

4. It is a plain Contradiction, to affirm that this Law is not violated by Believers, and yet that Repentance is a necessary Condition of it, for Repentance presupposes the Commission of Sin, since it is a godly Sorrow for it, wherefore those who sin not, they cannot act Repentance; For as has been before observed: Sin is a Breach of some Law, Men cannot violate a Law, under which they are not, 'tis denied that they are under the perfect Law of God, against that Law therefore they do not offend, and if this new Law is not violated, it will be difficult to prove that Repentance is a Condition of it.

5. If to avoid there Consequences which are most evidently absurd, it should be said that this Law forbids all Sin, and requires universal Holiness, it is the very same with that Law given to Man before his Fall, and it is not possible that Men should keep it, or obtain Life by it; to this it is answer'd by Limborch, That the Law, yea the Law of Christ forbids all Sin, but that God doth not rigourously insist on a complete Obedience to it: But uses Indulgence as a kind Father, pardons the Sins of Believers, and accepts of their sincere Obedience in the Room of perfect. To which I reply,

1. The most detestable Crimes do not expose them to God's Displeasure, that Believers may, and that they have fallen into the worst of Sins is capable of the most evident Proof. Is their sincere Obedience, notwithstanding those Miscarriages accepted of God, how can it be, That that Obedience should deserve Reward, and Punishment also? Not by the same Law sure, which this Opinion supposes; but there are Things so plainly contradictory, that both cannot rationally be allow'd to be true.

2. If this Law forbids all Sin, Men cannot perfectly obey it; and if God justifies and fares Men on Account of their imperfect Obedience, then he hath published a Law which he intended should never be fulfilled, either by Sinners themselves, or by a Surety for them, how much this makes for the Honour of the divine Law, every intelligent Reader will easily determine.

3. This Opinion naturally tends to pacify a guilty Conscience without an Application of the Blood of Christ; which is the only proper Means of the Removal of Guilt; because it is the sole meritorious Cause of Pardon. If this new Law doth not subject us to Penalty, unless for Impenitence, it is our Repentance, that is the proper Condition and Cause of Remission, and not the Sacrifice of Christ. If this does not let aside the comfortable Experience of the Saints in applying to a crucify'd Saviour, for a Sense of Pardon, I am much mistaken.

4. This Notion supposes that imperfect Works intitle us to Life, they therefore do not subject us to Condemnation and Wrath; but Heaven is bestowed on such who according to the perfect Law of God, deserve Hell and eternal Destruction, and that on Account of their own filthy Rags, for such are the best Duties of the Saints, when compared to the holy Law of God, if this is not Antinomianism, pray what shall, or may we so esteem?

5. If God in justifying Men, accounts them righteous, they are so, or they are not, if they are righteous, then they have perfectly observed that Law which was the Rule of their Conduct, or else they cannot be truly so accounted, if this may be then opposite Characters agree to them, just and unjust, righteous and unrighteous, and they merit a Reward, and deserve Punishment, by one and the same Obedience, which cannot be, if Men are not righteous, then God in justifying of them, forms not his Opinion of them according to Truth, he esteems them to be what in Reality they are not, which who will dare affirm.

Upon the Whole, there is no imperfect Law enacted or can be, which sinful Men may keep, nor doth God or can he justify Men, for an imperfect Obedience to a perfect Law, the Opinion therefore of a conditional Provision of Salvation for all Mankind, is down right Error, dishonourable to God and no Way profitable to Men, as shall be hereafter proved. The Law of Innocency is in full Force, the Elect are redeemed from its Curse by the Blood of Christ, God acts towards them, upon the Foot of a Covenant of Grace, diametrically opposite to that, and by this their eternal Salvation is secured, the Non-elect are left under the Covenant of Works, to them no Law is given which can give Life, and by which a justifying Righteousness can come, their Salvation therefore is not possible.

1. If the Non-elect are not under the Law of Innocency, they are under no Law, for there is no other Law, which the Things above urged, I apprehend prove very fully: If they are under it, they are under it as a Covenant, or as a Rule of Conduct only; if they are under it in the latter, and not in the former Sense, then their Sins are not imputed to them, they are not condemned, on them Punishment will not be executed; but they will be certainly saved, which none will affirm. They therefore are under it, as a Covenant of Works, and God will proceed towards them, agreeable to the Nature of that Law or Covenant.

2. Those, to whom Sin is imputed, are under a Covenant of Works: For the Covenant of Grace promises the Remission of Sin, and therefore it is not according to the Nature of that Covenant to charge it. The Challenge which the Apostle expresses in Favour of God's chosen, plainly supposes the Imputation of Sin to others: Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies, who shall condemn? It is Christ that died. And if Sin is charged on the Persons of the Non-elect, as we have Reason to conclude it is; because this Challenge is given in the Name of the ELECT only: They are under the Covenant of Works, and have no Right to any of the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, for they are not included in the Compass of it.

3. Condemnation is pronounced against such, as are not in Christ: None are in him, but those, who were chosen in him, and to whom he was appointed a Head in the divine Decrees. The Non-elect were not chosen in Christ, nor was he constituted a Head to them, and therefore they stand condemned or are under the Curse of the Law of Works: To suppose, that Christ may become a Head to any Persons, to whom he was not appointed such in God's Decree, or that they may ever be in him as Members, is to extend his Headship beyond the divine Purposes, and can't be true. Hence it follows, that Christ is not a Head of Life and Influence to more than the Elect of God, and therefore the whole Number of the Non-elect, are left under the Covenant of Works, and no conditional Provision of Salvation, is by any other Covenant made for, and granted to them.

4. They are no Part of his Church, for the Church of Christ only consists of such Persons, who are denominated, the first born, and who are written in Heaven: All others are trader the Covenant of

Works.

5. God will proceed in Judgment towards them, agreeable to the Nature of that Covenant, to those of them, who have sinned without Law, as without Law, and to those of them, who have sinned in the Law, as under the external Revelation of that Law: And therefore we may strongly conclude, that they are under that Law or Covenant, for it is highly reasonable to suppose, that they are now under that Law, by which they will hereafter be tried and judg'd. Now, this Law proposes no other Terms or Conditions of Life, than perfect Works: Hence it is apparent, that no Proposal of imperfect Works, as Terms of future Happiness is made to the Non-elect.

6. Men cannot be under two Covenants, that are specifically distinct, under a Law of Works, and under a Covenant of Grace also. Either Men are under the Covenant of Grace or not: If they are under the Covenant of Grace, their Sins are forgiven, their Persons are justified, their Hearts shall be sanctified, and they shall be eternally sav'd, according to the Promises of that Covenant, which is ordered in all Things and sure. Since therefore many Men are not saved, they were never interested in the Covenant of Grace; but were left of God, as a righteous Judge, under the Covenant of Works.

7. A great, if not the greater Part of the Non-elect, hear nothing of the Gospel. Can it justly be supposed, that they are under a Covenant, which is entirely concealed from them, and that they will be judg'd by a Law, of which they never had the least Notice? This seems to me a very unreasonable Supposition. And if a great Part of them, will be proceeded against, in divine Judgment, according to the Law of Works: Can it reasonably be thought, that others of them will be judged by a different Law, one Part of them, by the Covenant or Law of perfect Works, and the other Part, by a Law of imperfect Works? Surely it cannot be.

02.03.02. Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

Shews, That no Law is given, which can give Life; That Faith and Repentance are Things impossible to unregenerate Men, and that God is the sole Author of Regeneration. THE Opinion of a conditional Grant of Life to Men, supposes, that a Laws given, by which Happiness is attainable, and that a justifying Righteousness may be by that Law: Against which I object, thus,

I. If any such Law was extant and in Force, in the Apostle's Time, he had not the Pleasure of an Acquaintance with it, this is evident from his own Words: If there had been a Law given, which could have given Life, verily Righteousness would have been by the Law (Galatians 3:21.). The Reasoning in which Text, (as the Apostle's every where is) is exceeding clear and strong, 'tis this: There is no Law enacted, by which Righteousness, justification, and Acceptance with God can be; and therefore there is no Law published, that can intitle Men to Life. The Opinion of Terms and Conditions of Life and Happiness, by fulfilling of which, Men may secure their eternal Blessedness, not being as ancient in the Church as the Time of this inspired Writer, I cannot believe it to be true.

II. If this Opinion is true, then, Salvation is due to the Works of Men: For if they perform those Terms and Conditions, which the Law prescribes, they may claim Life upon the Foot of Right, and the Reward cannot be esteemed of Grace; but must be accounted a due Debt: For to him that worketh, is the Reward, not reckon'd of Grace, but of Debt (Romans 4:4.). That Happiness becomes due to Men, on account of Works, is constantly denied: Not of Works, least any Man should boast (Ephesians 2:9.) Boasting is not excluded by a Law of Works; but by the Law of Faith (Ephesians 3:27.). To this it is answer'd, that the Apostle denies perfect Works to have Place in our Justification, or such Works as the Law of Innocency requires, which the Jews contended for; but that Works commanded by Christ, i.e. Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience, are Terms and Conditions of Life: To which I reply,

1. No such Distinction of Works, is to be found, where ever the Apostle treats of this Subject, and therefore it is not to be prov'd, that perfect Works are ONLY excluded.

2. It is faith, that the Jews contended perfect Works, as Conditions of Life. For, they sought Life, as it were by the Works of the Law; and not by a perfect and sinless Observation of it.

3. They did not allow, that the Law of God required Perfection, in order to Life. This is so evident by the Vindication of the Law from their corrupt Interpretations of it, in the Sermon of Christ upon the Mount, that it will not admit of the least Doubt. And therefore to suppose the Apostle in his Debates with the Jews, only militates against the Opinion, of Justification by perfect Works, is to represent him as an impertinent Caviller, which is not greatly to his Honour.

4. It is irrational to think, that the Jews could entertain such an Apprehension: For,

(1.) They had an Account of the Blemishes, which attended the most pious of their Forefathers, and therefore they could not conceive, that they were justify'd and sav'd, by a perfect Observation

of the divine Law.

(2.) Promises of Pardon were given, as a Foundation of Hope, in their sacred Writings, which would not permit them to imagine, that Salvation and Happiness, were alone to be expected by perfect Works.

(3.) The Ceremonial Law provided them with Sacrifices for Sin, and in a Variety of Instances, obliged them, to acknowledge that they were Sinners. How a People, in such Circumstances, could think that perfect Works, were the Terms and Conditions of Life, is hard to conceive.

III. If Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience, are the Terms and Conditions of Life, these are not in the Power of Men: They cannot believe in Christ, or truly repent of Sin, nor in a spiritual Manner obey God: To prove which, I offer the following Particulars to Consideration.

1. Men cannot discern the Importance, Excellency and Worth of spiritual Things: Their Understanding is darkened; and therefore they are incapable of discovering the Beauty and Glory, of evangelical Truths: The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God: For they are Foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14.). 'Tis as reasonable to think, a Man may discern Objects, who is naturally blind, as imagine a Sinner, who hath no spiritual Sight, is able to see the Value and Excellency of divine Mysteries.

2. The Will of Man is averse to Holiness, and is strongly bent to Sin: Hence it is asserted, that, The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, that it is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7.), and since there is such an Aversion to God, and such a Propensity to Evil fixed in the human Will, Men unregenerate cannot chuse those Things, that are pleasing to God, and which will conduce to their spiritual and eternal Welfare.

3. They are without spiritual Ability, and have not Power to perform what is spiritually good. The sacred Writer expressly affirms that we are without Strength, he doth not say, we are without great or sufficient Strength; but without Strength, which is exclusive of the least Degree of Power. And our Saviour asserts that without him we can do NOTHING: From him therefore Ability is derived, for the Performance, of every Act of evangelical Obedience.

4. The Hearts of Men are Stone: The natural Hardness of their Hearts, renders them incapable of evangelical Sorrow. The Adamant Stone will sooner yield to the Stroke of the Hammer, than the obdurate Hearts of Men, will yield to the Law's Threatnings and Gospel Promises: They are harder than the nether Milstone, and are not susceptible of spiritual Impressions.

5. Men are dead or void of spiritual Life. Life is the Principle of Action: Since Sinners are not the Subjects of a divine Life, heavenly Acts are not within the Compass of their Power. Such are Faith, Repentance and holy Obedience: These then, if they are Conditions and Terms of Happiness, Men cannot perform, and of Consequence, it is impossible to obtain Life and Felicity, by a Law or Covenant, which requires those Things, in order to the Fruition of Bliss. It is allowed indeed, that divine Influences are necessary to enable Sinners to believe, to act Repentance and obey God: But not that any Principle or Habit of Grace, is infus'd and implanted by the Holy Spirit, in the Hearts of Men. Dr. Doddridge gives us his Sentiments, on this Subject in these Words: They who believed on him were possess'd of these Principles, not in Consequence, of their being born of

Blood, i.e. their being descended from the Loins of the holy Patriarchs, or sharing in Circumcision and the Blood of the Sacrifices: Nor could they ascribe it MERELY to the WILL of the FLESH, i.e. their own superior Wisdom and Goodness, as if by the Power of corrupted Nature ALONE, they had made themselves to differ⁴⁵. Elsewhere the same Gentleman has these Words: The Cause of Men's final and everlasting Ruin, may be referred in one View of it, to God's withholding those gracious Influences, which if they had been imparted, would indeed have subdued the greatest Perverseness; but the withholding these Influences, is not MERELY an ARBITRARY Act; (I suppose he means sovereign) but is a just Punishment of Men's Wickedness, and of their obstinate Folly, in trifling with the Means of his Grace, and grieving his holy Spirit, till it was provoked to withdraw, This Thought, (no very bright and just one) which I might largely prove to you to be a Compendium of the Scripture Scheme, reconciles all; and any Consequences drawn from one Part of that Scheme, to the Denial of the other, how plausible soever, must CERTAINLY be false⁴⁶. This is very strongly expressed indeed, and hardly leaves us room to think, the Gentleman apprehends himself, under a Possibility of being mistaken in this weighty Point. If I might be allowed to entertain any Scruple in a Matter, wherein this learned Person is so remarkably positive, I should think this Scheme to be antisciptural, and imagine that Objections, far more than plausible, may be advanced against it:

They are such, as follow:

1. This Scheme supposes, that God intends the Salvation of some who perish: His Counsel therefore in there Instances doth not stand, and he does not all his Pleasure.
2. It supposes, that the Efficacy of divine Grace, is dependent on, and is to be resolved into the Will of Man. I have till now apprehended, that it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth; but of God that sheweth Mercy.
3. If this Scheme is true, then God excites Men to spiritual Acts, who are destitute of spiritual Life, and therefore we must be mistaken, in thinking a Principle of Grace and Holiness, is necessary to Acts of Holiness.
4. Then Men may bear good Fruit, before they are made good: Grapes may be gathered of Thorns, and Figs of Thistles, which we have thought till this Time, could not be.
5. The Scheme suggests, that God operates on Men in such a Manner, as he knows will not be effectual, to attain what he proposes in his Operations, whereas we have imagined, that the Word of God shall not return to him void; but that, it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and proper to the Thing, i.e. the End, whereto he sends it: But if this Scheme is true, we are doubtless mistaken.
6. It insinuates, that Men may cease to trifle with the Means of Grace, and subject themselves to the divine Law, even whilst the Enmity of their Hearts against God remains: We therefore have misunderstood the Apostle, who affirms, that the carnal Mind cannot be subject to that Law, and his Words are to be interpreted in a Sense very different to that, which they plainly express.
7. If this Scheme is true, then God works on some, with an Intention to save them, on whom the Decree of Reprobation is passed: Judas the Son of Perdition, who is gone to his own Place, for Instance: So that God hath contrary Wills, i.e. he wills to save some Men, and operates upon

them, with a Design to bring them to Heaven, who were of old appointed to Condemnation. This seems to us most manifestly absurd.

8. Then, God draws some with loving Kindness, whom he never lov'd: We have apprehended, that heavenly Attraction is a Fruit of everlasting Love; but it seems in some Instances it is not so: God attracts them he hates, as well as those he loves.

9. Hence it follows, some hear and learn of the Father, who never come to Christ, the Words of our Lord therefore, which assert the contrary, are to be understood in a Sense quite foreign to their obvious and natural Import, and when he says, every Man that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me, we must: understand him to mean, some who hear and learn of the Father come not to me.

10. According to this Scheme, God operates on some in a gracious Manner, to whom he imputes Sin, condemns by his Law, and leaves them to perish for ever, under the Curie of the Covenant of Works.

11. It supposes, that God works on some to save them, WHOM Christ NEVER KNEW, and for WHOM he NEVER pray'd, and therefore whole Salvation, he NEVER DESIRED, which can't be reasonably thought. It may be these Objections, will be found somewhat more, than plausible, and occasion greater Difficulty, to solidly answer, than this Gentleman, and some others, might conceive to attend a Point, in which he is so very positive and dogmatical.

IV. All Acts of Faith, evangelical Repentance and new Obedience, flow from a Principle of Holiness created or infus'd into the Souls of Men, and therefore no unregenerate Person, can fulfil there Conditions and Terms of Life.

1. If these Things are possible to unrenewed Men, then they may be saved without Regeneration or the new Birth; but if we do not as strangely mistake the Doctrine of our Saviour, in this Point, as we do in some others, according to the Principles of some Men, this cannot be. If a Man may act Faith, without the Grace of Faith wrought in his Heart: If he may exercise Repentance, without the Gift of the Grace of Repentance: And if Men may act holily, without a Principle of Holiness, implanted in them, they may be admitted to Heaven, without such a Change passing upon them, as that of the new Birth is: For tho' they have not Principles of Grace in them, yet since they believe, repent of their Sins, and sincerely obey God, they shall be sav'd. And if Men may act Faith, or believe, before the Habit or Principle of Faith is wrought in them, then either their Act of believing without the Habit, must be taken for Regeneration, or else a Believer is not a regenerate Person: And if this is Regeneration without the Habit of Faith in the Soul, then, when a Man believes not, or his Act of Faith is interrupted, he sinks again into a State of Unregeneracy, and Men must be supposed, to become regenerate, or unregenerate, as often as they act, or act not Faith; but this cannot be. And therefore the Infusion of Grace, and a divine Life, into the Heart, must be that Regeneration, the Scripture speaks of, and is antecedently necessary to all Acts of Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience to Christ:.

2. Regeneration is the Implantation of some supernatural Principles in the Mind; unless the Expressions used about it in Scripture, are to be interpreted infinitely below a Construction, which must be confess'd to be obvious and natural, and therefore not to be denied without manifest Necessity. Such Modes of speaking, as, being born again, quickened when dead, and created in

Christ, are (at least) capable of being constru'd, without any Degree of Force, of the Production, of something in Men, which before they were not the Subjects of: And when it is said that we are new Creatures, it may mean, and seems properly to mean, that some heavenly Principle is created in us, which 'till that Time we had not. This I think must be allow'd, and what Necessity can be urged, which should oblige us to understand these Modes of Speech in a lower Sense: Unless it is this, Enmity may love: Unbelief act Faith: And Sin may be productive of holy Acts: And Ignorance discover the true Nature of heavenly Things. In a Word, I can conceive of no other Necessity for this, than only maintaining that one contrary, may produce another: Darkness, Light, Sin, Holiness, and Enmity, Love; and who will not allow of the Propriety of this, especially, when it is to answer the desirable End of maintaining the Power of FREE WILL in MEN, to chuse what is good? It is likely all will grant it; but such as are fully determined to advance the Glory, Sovereignty and Efficacy of divine Grace. These Persons are indeed so tenacious of the Honour of the Grace of God, and at the Time desirous, not to embrace any Principle evidently repugnant to Reason, that they will never allow the Necessity pleaded for.

3. If Regeneration is not the Infusion of a divine Life into the Heart, then there are not contrary Principles in the Minds of regenerate Persons, then the Flesh lusteth not against the Spirit, nor the Spirit against the Flesh: For Spirit and Flesh are not in them: They have not a Law of Sin, and a Law of Holiness in their Minds, nor do contrary Acts flow from contrary Principles, as Acts of Faith, and Acts of Unbelief: But the Case is in Fact this, when their Hearts are excited by divine Grace, and their Wills are at Leisure to attend to, and are disposed to concur, with the Influences of the holy Spirit upon them, Acts of Faith and Holiness are produced, and they spring from the Mind not as possess'd of any supernatural Principles; but only, as it is under some divine Influences and Impulses. If it is thus, the Bible seems to me a Book most obscure, and I think the Experience of the Saints is not to be accounted for.

4. That in a Believer, which serves the Law of Sin, which is Flesh, and lusteth against the Spirit, is not, or can be, the Subject of divine Excitations and Influences to spiritual Acts: Who will say that the Minds of Believers, as depraved, carnal and corrupt, are stirr'd up, to love God, hate Sin, and act Faith on Christ? Should any affirm it, I imagine they will never be able to prove it. 'Tis the spiritual Part in a Saint, that is excited to spiritual Acts: It is not his Unbelief, that is stirred up to believe in Christ; but his Faith which is wrought in him, as a Principle, in order to the Act. Unregenerate Persons therefore, being in the Flesh, and wholly carnal, they are not meet Subjects for those Excitations, which are spoken of: And such supposed Influences, will be eternally ineffectual to produce a single Act of Faith and Holiness in them. Let us then be very plainly told, what is intended by common Helps of divine Grace, and what Effects they do or may produce, if it be thought proper, do they regenerate Men, or do they not? If they do, then Men really believe, repent of their Sins, and obey the Precepts of Christ, and shall infallibly be saved: If they do not regenerate Men, then notwithstanding those Excitations, Impulses and Influences of the holy Spirit upon them, their Salvation, is absolutely impossible.

V. God alone, and entirely is the Author of Regeneration, which thus appears:

1. It is the Infusion, Creation, and begetting of a new Life and Principle in the Hearts of Men: This is evident from what has been above observ'd. The Will of Man cannot rationally be thought to contribute to the Production of an infused Habit or Principle: So far, as any Habit is owing to the

Concurrence of the Will, so far it is acquired and not infus'd.

2. If the human Will is active herein, it must be so either as it is regenerate, or unregenerate, if that Faculty is the Subject of Sin, or of Holiness. If the Will should be said to concur, as it is made holy, that implies a manifest Contradiction, for it supposes a Man to be unregenerate, when he is regenerated, and it is the regenerate Part in him, that renders the Will capable of this Concurrence. If the Will acts herein, and cooperates with divine Grace, as unregenerate, in order to Regeneration, then one contrary assists in the Production of another, and it necessarily, supposes, that the Will may act in a holy spiritual Manner before it is made holy, which we deny, and ever shall do, until we see it clearly proved, that a Principle of Grace is not necessary to heavenly Acts.

3. If we are actively concerned in our Regeneration, then it is owing to ourselves, (at least in Part) that we differ from others, and become meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, and the WHOLE of this Work is not to be ascribed to divine Grace. The Consequence (disagreeable as it would once have been to some, who I fear are in great Danger of falling from Grace, i.e. the Doctrine of Grace is heard with Patience) is allow'd: The Grace of God indeed hath the Honour of being represented as the supreme Cause of the new Birth; but the Will of Man is affirmed to be a Cause, tho' subordinately to divine Grace; and therefore as Dr. Doddridge plainly suggests, it is of ourselves, at least in Part, that we differ from others, and it is because we will to be regenerated, that we become so.

4. Then the Efficacy of divine Grace is dependent on, and is to be resolved into the Will of Man: Unless the Will of Man concurs, divine Grace, will not obtain it's End in its Operations: God will be disappointed of his Design in the Influences he affords to Men: His Will is resisted, i.e. it is overcome, and his Attempt to regenerate Men proves unsuccessful, and his kind Purposes are rendered abortive: How these Things suit with his Wisdom, and agree to the Nature of his all-powerful Operations, a small Degree of Discernment in spiritual Truths, will enable us to determine. Upon the whole we may rarely conclude, That the Salvation of Men is impossible, according to this imaginary conditional Scheme of Salvation: For the Performance of the supposed Terms of Pardon and Salvation propos'd to Men, they are absolutely unequal to, and tho' God has thus conditionally design'd their Happiness, he will not it seems, communicate to them that Grace, which is requisite to enable them to fulfil those Conditions, and therefore they must unavoidably perish, and their Damnation is as certain, as if such a conditional Grant or Proposal of Life, had never been made to them.

02.03.03. Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3 The Method which this Author takes to reconcile the Calvinists and Arminians, consider'd. His Mistakes noted, and the Impossibility of a Reconciliation proved, from the Disagreement of their Principles.

IT is greatly to be wish'd, that all who profess to believe the Christian Religion, were united in their Sentiments, and heartily embraced divine Truths. An Agreement in Error, is far from being desirable, that is joining in an Opposition, to the Cause and Interest of Christ; and therefore in attempting to compose Differences, which subsist among nominal Christians, no Person ought to make the least Abatement of Truth, or in any Degree countenance Error: To do this, is betraying Truth, and gives an Opportunity, for false Opinions to be propagated, with the greater Ease and Advantage. The Sentiments of many are so widely different, that an Attempt to reconcile them, is extremely dangerous. No Concessions can be made to one Party, without great Disadvantage to the Truth, embraced by the other, for as there is a Connection in Error, as well as Truth, one Concession to an erroneous Opinion, makes way for, and necessarily obliges to another. If we grant to the Arminians, that Christ died for all Men without Exception, we shall never be able to prove against the Socinians the Reality and Perfection of his Satisfaction: The Remonstrants are fully sensible of this, and therefore they give up, into the Hands of the Socinians, the glorious and important Doctrine, of his real and proper Atonement for Sin. And if we yield to them, that divine Grace is not effectual, in its Operations, they will easily maintain the Opinion, of the Dependence of Salvation on the Will of Man: The Uncertainty of the Salvation of any particular Man, and indeed of all Men; and that Faith is not given but acquired. How this Gentleman succeeds in his Attempt, to reconcile the very different Sentiments of Calvinists, and Arminians, relating to the Nature of the Influences, of the Grace of God, upon the Souls of Men, I shall now observe; as a Foundation to proceed upon, he lays down fix Propositions, to which, he thinks both Parties may agree: It will be very necessary, to well consider and examine those Propositions.

Prop. I. God has provided a glorious Salvation for fallen Men by Jesus Christ, which is sufficient far all Men in its own Nature, and shall be certainly effectual to all that are willing to accept of it upon his appointed Terms, or in his own appointed Way, i.e. in a Way of Repentance for sin, Renewal unto Holiness, and Faith or Dependence on the Mercy of God through Jesus Christ⁴⁷.

1. That the Sufferings of Christ would have been sufficient for the Salvation of all Men, if God had appointed him a Saviour to all: And if the Sins of all Men had been imputed to him: And if he had died in the Room and Place of all Men, is readily granted, because of the infinite Dignity of his Person. But,

2. It remains to be prov'd, that he was appointed a Saviour to Men universally: That the Sins of all Men were charged on him: And that he suffered in the Stead of the whole Race of Mankind, until each of there Particulars is fully prov'd, this Proposition will not be a proper Foundation, to argue upon, in Favour of a Provision being made, for the Salvation of all Men, as it is design'd to be.

3. It is only a Part of Mankind, who can be concern'd herein because it is not to be expected, that such as know nothing of this divine Appointment, should fulfil those Terms, on which this Salvation, is to become effectual to Men.

4. None will ever be willing to accept of Salvation, in that Way God intends it shall be enjoy'd; but such whom he makes so, in the Day of his Power. And therefore this Proposition, is a most improper Foundation, on which to build the Possibility of the Salvation of all Men. For the Salvation of no Man is possible, without the effectual Operations of the Grace of God.

5. It supposes, that the Efficacy and certain Effects of Christ's Merits depend on the human Will, which is highly dishonourable to our Saviour, impeaches the Wisdom, Goodness and Justice of God, and is eversive of the Satisfaction of Christ, and therefore we can't but take the Liberty to reject this Proposition, as an unsound and rotten Foundation of Agreement among Christians, and of their Hope of Life,

Prop. II. Since God has made so glorious a Provision for the Recovery of Mankind, he will not leave it to mere Chance and Uncertainty, whether any Person shall repent and accept of this offer'd Salvation or no; left thro' the universal Depravation and wretched Obstiancy Men, his own gracious Counsels for our Salvation should be frustrated, and the important Labours and Sufferings of his Son be sustain'd to no saving Purpose, and render'd almost useless to the World (Ibid, p. 265,266.). This Proposition fills me with Astonishment, it is so contrary to the Grace, Wisdom and Justice, and Immutability, and Faithfulness of God, as there his Perfections are gloriously displayed in the admirable Scheme of Salvation, by the Sufferings and Death of his Son. For,

1. It evidently supposes that no real and proper Satisfaction for Sin, is made for any Part of Mankind, by the Death of the blessed Jesus. All it allows is, that Christ by his Sufferings obtained a bare Possibility of Salvation for all Men, and that God so far, as the Death of Christ, considered in itself, hath an Influence into our Salvation, intended it no more for one Man, than another, for Peter no more than for Judas.

2. It seems God leaves it to mere Chance and Uncertainty, as to some, for whom he put his Son to Death, in order to their Salvation, whether they shall believe and repent, and accept of this offer'd Salvation or no. So that he punished Christ, for the Sins of some Men, with a perfect Indifference, whether they reap any Advantage from his Sufferings or not. A Thought more dishonourable to the divine Perfections, will not soon enter into the Mind, or fall from the Pen of any Writer, than this is, I am fully persuaded.

3. Unless God is pleased by his Spirit and Grace, to conquer the rebellious Hearts of Men, not one of them will ever believe and repent: It is not a Chance and a Thing uncertain, whether they will or no, for it is most certain they cannot, and that they will not come to Christ, that they may have Life. No Man can come to Christ except the Father draws him. And the carnal Mind cannot be subject to the holy Law of God.

4. It as evidently supposes, that the gracious Counsels of God are frustrated, as to some, whole Salvation he intended. The Pleasure of the Lord, altho' Christ made his Soul an Offering for sin, to the End it might, doth not prosper in his Hand; but is, as to the greater Part of Mankind render'd abortive, and not accomplished: For it seems it was the gracious Counsel of God, that all Men

should be saved by the Death of Christ, and yet the larger Number of Men, are eternally damn'd, and for Want of that, on the Part of God, without which their Salvation was impossible.

Prop. III. There is no Way, which I can conceive of, how God should secure or ascertain the Salvation of any in general, or make it lure even to his own Foreknowledge, unless it be same Way or other ascertain'd, which particular Persons shall accept of this Grace end Salvation (Page 266.). As to this Propositions I observe

1. It is certain, that not a single Person will or can believe, without the special and efficacious Grace of God this to the divine Being could not be unknown.
2. Justice requires the certain Salvation, of all those, for whom Christ died, as appears from what has been observed above.
3. The certain Salvation of Men results from God's Decree, to confer that Grace upon them which secures it, and without which their Damnation would be as certain.

Prop. IV. God will magnify his Grace in the Salvation of all those who are saved, in such a Manner, that every one shall acknowledge his own Salvation, perfectly owing to the divine Mercy, and that none shall have Cause or Occasion to glory in himself; but shall confess to the Glory of divine Grace, that it is Grace, that is the Supreme and the chief Cause, that has made him to differ from others (Ibid.).

1. If the Will of the Creature is a subordinate Cause of Salvation, it is not wholly to be ascribed to God and his infinite Mercy.
2. It is supposed to be so of the Will of Man, that the Efficacy of divine Grace, is dependent on and must be resolved into it: And therefore the Event is principally owing to the human Will, which is represented as a subordinate Cause of Salvation.

Prop. V. How much soever the blessed God may design to manifest and magnify his free and sovereign Grace towards sinful Men, yet in every Step of his Procedure, he will maintain such an invariable Regard to his Equity as Governor of the World, that he will never exercise his Grace in such a Manner, as to take away the necessary Regards and Honours due to his governing Justice. The great God has given Man an understanding Mind to distinguish between Good and Evil, and a Freedom of Will to chuse one or the ether, and ordained him to be always, and in all Circumstances a proper Subject of his moral Government. And he has determined and resolved in Righteousness to manifest himself at last, as a Judge to render to every one according to their Works: And therefore he will maintain this righteous Design of his Government, to make the eternal Rewards and Punishments of Men, to depend on what they themselves have freely chosen, whether it be good or evil: Nor will he ever do any thing inconsistent with this his glorious and universal Design, as a righteous Governor and Judge of his intelligent Creatures (Ibid. p. 267, 268.).

1. To this Proposition, Papists, Socinians, and Arminians may all agree: Men of what Character and Denomination soever, who think, that Salvation is not of free Grace; but that future Happiness, notwithstanding all what Christ hath done, and suffered, is dependent on, and to be secured by our own Obedience, will most: heartily assent to it.

2. It is suited to a Covenant of Works alone, tho' I suppose, this Favour will be allowed to guilty enfeebled Men, that imperfect Works, which deserve eternal Death, shall be rewarded with eternal Life. If this Proposition is true, either the Gospel is not true, or it has been strangely misunderstood, by the Bulk of our first Reformers, and by all those, who have opposed the Errors of the Socinians and Arminians, concerning the Grace of God.

3. The Proposition is so framed, as only to suit Man in a State of Innocence, and as under the Law of Innocency. But since Man is become depraved, he is incapable of understanding what is, or what is not evil, in a proper Manner: Nor hath he a Freedom of Will to chuse the former, and refuse the latter; if he hath, What Necessity is there of divine Grace, to enlighten his Mind, and sanctify his Will? 4. If Salvation is dependent on the Will and Obedience of Men, then it is of Works; and therefore according to the Doctrine contain'd in this Proposition, it is not of Grace: And if by Grace, then it is no more of Works: Otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then it is no more of Grace: Otherwise Work is no more Work. This clear and nervous Reasoning has never yet been answer'd, nor ever will be, by all the Shuffles, Evasions, and groundless Distinctions about Works, which the fertile Wits of Men shall be able to invent. 5. For what Reason are the Merits, and Satisfaction, and Obedience of Christ, entirely left out, when God is represented, as acting upon the Foot of Justice, towards guilty miserable Creatures? Hath divine Justice no Regard to Christ's Satisfaction for Sin, in this whole Affair? Or is it because its Honour is not vindicated, by the Sufferings of a precious Saviour? And is no Obligation laid on the Justice of God, by the Death of Christ, to grant Pardon and Life? Is it equitable to punish the Surety, and inflict eternal Punishment, Wrath and Vengeance on such, whole Surety he was, and for whole Sins he made Atonement? The good Lord of his infinite Mercy grant, that in Judgment, I may not be proceeded towards, in a Way of Justice, with Relation to my own Acts of Repentance, and Obedience: For if so I should be, I am sure, the Consequence would be dreadful; but solely with Regard to the Merits and Righteousness of Christ, whereby alone, I am certain, that I a most miserable Sinner can stand in his Sight, and be justify'd at his awful and righteous Tribunal.

Prop. VI. Therefore when divine Grace operates upon the Minds or Wills of Men, in order to their Conversion and Salvation, it is generally done in such a soft, gentle, and connatural Manner, that does not put any Violence upon the Faculties of the Soul. But for the most Part, the Grace of God and his holy Spirit, seem to operate insensibly, as though our own Faculties wrought this of themselves, and without any strong, certain and evident Notice, that it is the Operation of any Spirit superior to our own: And yet, by the blessed Effects of our Conversion, and Sanctification, compar'd with the Records of Scripture, we certainly infer that it must be, by Vertue of some divine Influence, received from above, that the Glory may be given unto God, and his Grace, as the supreme Cause of our Salvation (268.).

1. This Proposition evidently allows, that God operates on some, in a Manner very perceptible, and that it may easily be known it is a divine Influence on the Soul: And therefore I would ask, if in such Instances any Violence is offered to the Wills of Men, and if they are involuntary in the Choice of Good, under this powerful Influence? The Answer will hardly be in the Affirmative, for very evident Reasons.

2. Tho' God operates imperceptibly, yet I hope it may be granted he works effectually, and infallibly determines our Wills to chuse Good, and refuse Evil, by his gracious and most persuasive

Operations in us. The Want of a Perception, of its being a divine Work we are under, is no Objection to its Efficacy; nor affords the least Proof that our Wills, are left in a State of Indifference, about the Choice of Good or Evil.

3. I humbly apprehend, that God operates on our Minds, in such a Manner, not only at our first Conversion; but afterwards also, in many Instances of Conviction and deep Sorrow for Sin, a Sense of Wrath, and heavenly Joys, that its evident in itself, whether we duly attend to it or not, that we are under a supernatural influence, and yet tho' our Wills are thus powerfully acted upon, they act most freely in all these Instances.

4. Divine Grace hath the Honour of being allow'd the supreme Cause of Salvation, I could be glad, if it might be granted, that it is the SOLE and ENTIRE CAUSE: For these Reasons, to deny it, and represent the human Will, as a subordinate Cause, robs divine Grace of its Glory, and may occasion some who experience, that in them, that is in their Flesh, dwelleth NO GOOD THING, to despair of ever being saved. I am willing to hope, that such have no just Occasion to doubt of Salvation by Christ, who most evidently find to their great Concern, Sorrow and Shame, that they have of themselves, neither a Will to what is good, nor Ability to perform it: Adored be divine Favour for it! They have not, for God worketh in them to will and to do, of his good Pleasure. And Christ filleth all in all, he fills their Souls with the heavenly Graces of his Spirit, and he fills those Graces, with Vigour and Activity: He is the Alpha and Omega in their Salvation: He is the Author and the Finisher of their Faith. Christ laid the Foundation of the noble and surprising Structure of their eternal Salvation, he carries on the Building, and will lay the top Stone thereof, and they with loud Acclamations of Joy will eternally cry, Grace! Grace! unto it. He alone builds the Temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the Glory. The chief Point, which this learned Gentleman, in his Attempt to reconcile the Calvinists and Arminian, labours to prove, is this, that the Will is not determined, by absolute and resistless Force to chuse, what the Understanding represents as good and eligible. He seems to apprehend that the Opinion of the Calvinist, deprives the Will of its natural Freedom, and subjects it, to an unnatural Force: That allowing his Sentiments to be true, free Agency is lost, and that Men are moved, as Machines or Puppets, and act not of Choice. In order to let this Matter in as clear and easy a Light as I can, I would observe the following Things.

I. Some Necessity is consistent with Liberty, that is in say, a free Agent may necessarily will, and yet his Will act freely, in what he wills. 1. This is true of God, who, it is most certain, acts freely in all Things: For he worketh all Things, according to the Counsel of his own Will. Now he cannot but love and will Holiness, and he cannot but hate and will to punish its contrary, Sin; and yet his Will acts most freely in both.

2. Our Saviour could not but will to obey his Father, and yet his Will was not under any unnatural Force or Compulsion; but he was a free Agent, in all the eminent Instances of his Submission to the Father's Pleasure concerning him, tho' he could not but will to finish the Work, which the Father gave him to do.

3. Elect Angels cannot but will to obey God, and yet all their Acts of Obedience are free and voluntary: Some Necessity in them therefore is consistent with Liberty.

4. The Spirits of just Men made perfect, cannot but chuse what is good and agreeable to the Will of God, and yet their Choice of Good, is free and voluntary. Therefore,

II. Freedom doth not consist in an Indifferency, or Liberty to will Holiness, or will Sin, without any Biass and prevailing Disposition to one more than the other: If it does, then there is no Being, but what may make an improper Choice; the Consequence of such an Opinion is too horrid and blasphemous to be nam'd.

III. What if this is a Point absolutely inexplicable to us? What if it is attended with insuperable Difficulties, as to the Modus of it? Are there not a great Variety of Things that are so, both in the natural and moral World? Which yet we find ourselves obliged to believe and assent to, and therefore why should we refuse an Assent here? Since I should think from the Instances just now mentioned, we must be convinc'd, that some Necessity and Liberty, do not imply any Contradiction, for what is, does not, with what Obscurities and Darkness soever, the Modus of that Thing may be attended, which hide it from human View. None I believe, will ever be able to demonstrate that some Kind of Necessity, cannot consist with free Agency, how confidently soever, they may be pleased to assert it: So little do Men know, wherein is feared the Freedom of their Wills.

IV. It is not I think merely owing to the Illumination of the Mind, by which the Glory and Excellency of heavenly Things are discerned, that the Will is determin'd to the Choice of them; but by a real, positive and supernatural Work on the Will itself: And thus I can't but think, because the Soul in all its Faculties, is the Subject of the sanctifying Operations of divine Grace.

1. The bare Illumination of the Mind, how great soever, removes not the Aversion in the Will to spiritual Things.

2. Nor gives a different Biass and Inclination to it.

3. In an unregenerate Man, there is a Propensity to Evil, in a regenerate Person, there also is a contrary Bent and Inclination: According to the Flesh, he cannot but serve the Law of Sin, in which his Will acts freely, and according to the Spirit he cannot but hate Sin, and serve the Law of God, in which he likewise acts voluntarily.

V. No Influences without the Infusion of gracious Habits, are sufficient to enable a Man, to chuse Holiness and refuse Evil: To suppose that a Man destitute of supernatural Principles, may be influenced to embrace spiritual Good, as it seems to me, cannot consist with a Freedom of Choice; because the Will without such Principles cannot approve of that Good, and therefore it would be determin'd to make a Choice, without an Approbation of the Object chosen, which is ever essential to a free Choice. Hence it follows, That that Opinion which is pretended to be embrac'd, in order to preserve the Liberty of the Will in its Acts or Volitions, at once deprives it of its Freedom, and supposes Men to be furnished with a Power, which they are not. The Author of the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, apprehends, that the Distinction of natural Power and moral Impotence, reconciles all relating to this Subject. Amyraldus and Mr. Baxter before him had the same Apprehension. As to that Distraction, I observe,

1. Natural inability seems to be understood, of a Want of Faculties for reasoning and willing, and not of the Want of proper Habits or Principles in those Faculties, by which Men become capable of reasoning justly, and willing as they ought to will. This is a Supposition of what none contend for, that I know of, what is and will be still insisted on is, that tho' Men have their natural Powers of reasoning and willing, those natural Powers without supernatural Principles and Aids, cannot

reason and will as they ought, about spiritual Things.

2. Moral Impotence seems to be taken for Men's labouring under such Prejudices and Ignorance, that without some superior Aids and Influences, they cannot reason and will as they ought; but it is not allowed that an Infusion of gracious Habits is necessary to either. I answer, It cannot be said of the Body of Adam, before its Union with his Soul, that It was naturally incapable of Sensation, or of the various Motions, for which its curious Organs and several Members were fitted and prepared, if natural Inability be taken in the Sense here express'd, yet I imagine none wilt say, it was possible for it to have Sensation or to move, before the Infusion of the Soul, and kindling the vital Flame in it. But of a Log of Wood, and of a shapeless Clod of Earth, it may be said that they are naturally incapable, of such Sensation and wonderful Motions, as the curious Machine of the Body of Man, is capable of having and performing, as animated by the Soul. When we say Men are naturally unable to reason justly, and to will, as they ought to will about spiritual Things, we mean that they can no more, reason justly and will rightly, than the Body of Adam was capable of Sensation or Motion, before Life was given to it, tho' it had all the Organs of Sense, and all the Muscles and Members requisite to Motion. The same may be observed of the Body of Lazarus, while it lay breathless in the Grave, neither the one nor the other, wanted the proper Organs of Sense, or the Muscles and Members necessary to Motion: And yet it was absolutely impossible, that either should have Sensation or move a Finger, before the Infusion of the Soul, and during its Absence from the Body. And thus, tho' Men have the natural Powers of reasoning and willing, while in an unregenerate State, yet until spiritual Life and heavenly Principles are infused and created them, they can no more reason and will spiritually, than the Body of Adam could have Sensation and move without the Soul, or than the Body of Lazarus could rise out of the Grave, while his Soul was absent from it. This Distinction therefore, by no Means, proves what it is design'd, as a Proof of, viz. That an Infusion of spiritual Life is not necessary to spiritual Acts. Grant us but the Idea we plead for, which is manifestly expressed in the Scripture, and we shall be content, and leave you to call it by what Name soever you please: It is the Thought not Terms that I would at any Time contend about. It is very observable, that this Gentleman allows of the Infusion of gracious Habits, in order to spiritual Acts, in which he dissents from Mr. Baxter who denies it, as the Arminians do; I heartily thank him for this Concession to the Advantage of divine Truth; but he must allow me to tell him, that this is such a Concession, as effectually overthrows the greatest Part of his reasoning on this Subject, and is a full Evidence of the Impossibility of a Reconciliation between the Calvinists, who contend for this, as a most important Doctrine, consistent with their other Principles, and the Arminians who deny it, which their Principles necessarily require them to do.

02.03.04. Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

Shews, that the new Covenant was made with Christ, from everlasting, as the Head of the Elect, and That that Covenant is absolute or unconditional.

THE. new Covenant or Covenant of Grace, is to be considered either in its Constitution, or Manifestation. It was constituted and entered into by God the Father and Christ, as the Mediator and Head of the Elect, wherein are several Things to be observed.

1. That a certain and definite Number of Persons, were eternally beloved of God: Hence he says to the Church: Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, and therefore with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. The Love of God is so spoken of, not only because it will continue to everlasting; but also because its Commencement was from everlasting, which evidently appears by these Words: The Mercy of the Lord, is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them who fear him. And this delightful Truth receives full Proof from our Saviour, when he says, And hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. The Love of God to his People, is of the same Date, with that Love he bears to his Son, which I presume, none will deny to be eternal.

2. Those Persons, who were the Objects of God's special Favour, he unalterably determined to save: He did not appoint them to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ. His Purpose was to render them happy, in the eternal Fruition of himself. He chose them to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth. As many as are included in this gracious Decree, have believed, do or shall believe: For according to this divine Purpose, they are saved and called with an holy Calling, and not according to their own Works.

3. In order to secure this glorious and gracious Design of their Salvation, God the Father made Choice of his Son to be their Head, Redeemer and Saviour. And as we are allow'd to speak of this important Affair, by the scriptural Account of it, he proposed To him, that he should in their Nature, suffer for their Offences, and obey the Law for them, that the Honour of his Justice might be vindicated, and the Riches of his Grace might be gloriously display'd in their Happiness, to each of which Christ readily consented. The Language of the Mediator in this Compact was, Lo I come, I delight to do thy Will. Upon his consenting to perform the arduous Work assign'd him, the Father promised great and glorious Thing, to him: Some of which respect himself personally, as He shall not fail, nor be discouraged; which Promise assured him of Assistance in his Work. Other Promises relate to Christ mystically, as, Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power. These Transactions between the Father and Son, considered as the Head of the Elect, amount to the Nature of a full, formal and explicate Covenant. That this Covenant was entered into with the Elect in Christ their Head, is very evident from hence, that Grace was given to them in Christ before the World began, according to which, they are saved and called, with an holy Calling. And that Grace was given to them in this eternal Covenant of Grace. The Constitution of it was in Eternity; the Manifestation and Application of the Benefits promised in it, are in Time. That this Covenant is

absolute and unconditional, may be argued from these Things.

I. God's Purpose to save Sinners, was sovereign, free and absolute, or the Persons who are the Objects of that most gracious Decree, were not considered therein as holy, penitent and believing, and therefore were ordained to everlasting Life. But God chose them in Christ, that they might be holy, and not because he foresaw they would so be. To suppose that any became the Objects of God's Choice, on Account of the Foresight of Faith or Holiness, prior to the divine Decree, to work Faith in them, necessarily infers that Faith is not of the Operation of God, nor a heavenly Gift. Faith and Holiness if so, are not Fruits flowing from God's gracious Decree; but are the Cause of it: And hence it also follows, that Salvation is chiefly dependent on the fickle and uncertain Wills of Men, and is not secured by the most effectual and operative Will of God: Adored be divine Grace this is not the Care; but God chose us to Salvation, without any external Motive or Qualification in us, which induced him to put forth such an Act about us. He hath Mercy, because he will have Mercy, and for no other Reason. An unconditional Decree, and a conditional Covenant, by which our eternal State, is to be determined, are eternally repugnant, and therefore since God's Decree to save his People is unconditional, the new Covenant must necessarily be absolute and free, and without all proper Conditions.

II. If this Covenant is conditional, it is a Covenant of Works, for Works must be the Conditions contain'd in it: And whether those Works are perfect or imperfect, upon the Performance of them, Men may challenge the precious Benefits promised on those Conditions: They merit them, according to the Nature of the Covenant, and the Obligation under which God says himself, by his Promise. This is not denied by those, who embrace the Opinion, of a conditional Scheme of Salvation, Mr. Baxter thus delivers himself upon this Head, in his Aphorisms of Justification. Thesis 26. As Promise is an Obligation, and the Thing promised is called Debt; so the Performers of the Condition are called worthy, and their Performance Merit, tho' properly it is all of Grace, and not of Debt. This Concession is plain and honest; but what he adds to qualify it, is contrary to the express Words of the Apostle. To him that worketh, the Reward is not reckon'd of Grace, but of Debt. Merit and Grace are eternally opposite, (even when Merit is taken in this qualify'd Sense, and intrinsic Worth is not contended for) they will never consist together, by distinguishing Works, into perfect and imperfect, who ever dream'd, that depraved Men can perform perfect Works? And if Men could, those Works would not be meritorious in the Sense he falsely imagines, that is to say, That the Reward of eternal Life, in a strict and proper Sense, would upon the Foot of Justice, become their just Debt, on Account of the intrinsic Value of those Works. If by my Performance of the Conditions of the new Covenant, the Blessings of that Covenant, become my due, according to the Nature of its Promises, it is irrational to suppose, that they are free Gifts, and are freely bestowed on me. All that is allow'd to free Grace in the Business of Salvation, is, that it delivers us from the perfect Law of God, brings us under an imperfect Law, by the Observation of which, Life is to be obtain'd: But as has been observ'd, if Salvation is of Works, of any Kind, it is not of Grace, and of Consequence, a conditional Covenant, cannot be the Covenant of Grace.

III. Those Things, which are said to be the Conditions of this Covenant are absolutely promised, and freely given it: And therefore they cannot be the Conditions of it. The gracious Language of God in this Covenant is: A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments,

and do them. It is evident that Regeneration, as the Principle of evangelical Obedience and practical Holiness, is promised in there Scriptures: And therefore they are Blessings, and not Conditions of the new Covenant, for they cannot be Conditions, and promis'd Benefits also: The new Covenant then is really absolute, and unconditional: And Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience are not Terms and Conditions which it enjoyns.

I conclude this Chapter with an Observation of Dr. Owen's; it is this: Thus it is, the Covenant of God is not suspended, of our Will, or any Conditions to be performed by us; it hath all its Vertue and Effect from the Authority, Grace and Faithfulness of God himself. For it is an absolute Promise of Grace; nor is there any Condition of this Covenant which is not contain'd in the Promise itself. Therefore they act an unskilful and preposterous Part, who from the Nature of a Covenant used to be enter'd into between Men, endeavour to explain the Nature of the divine Covenant^{f48}

02.03.05. Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5 Contains Answers to such Arguments as are advanced to prove the Gospel is a Law. THE Gospel is represented and spoken of, as a Joyful Sound, and glad Tydings of great Joy. And it may well be so esteem'd: For it is a Discovery of full, free, certain and everlasting Salvation to miserable, helpless and unworthy Sinners thro Jesus Christ. 'Tis hence we learn the Resolutions of matchless and stupendous Favour! To secure Happiness to us, who by our Sins were involved in the greatest Misery. 'Tis this acquaints us with the admirable and astonishing Methods, which divine Wisdom and Love fix'd on, to effect so wonderful and gracious a Design: Methods no less surprising, than the kind Design itself, and which are wisely suited to effectually bring about the End in View. The Gospel declares, That Peace, Pardon, and Acceptance with God, and eternal Felicity in the Fruition of him, are inviolably secured to us, by the Sufferings and Obedience of Christ. And that, as to what is necessary to prepare us for, and preserve us to the heavenly State, God will not fail to work it in us, and bestow it upon us, as the Effect of his gracious and sovereign Pleasure. In a Word, the Gospel is a Revelation of pure Grace, in its glorious Contrivances about us, Actings for us, and effectual Influences upon us: And therefore it is called The Gospel of the Grace of God. This agreeable Account of the Gospel, which is so well suited to our helpless Condition, and to raise and comfort our distressed Minds, under a Sense of Guilt, the Law's Curse, and divine Displeasure is vehemently oppos'd by some, who contend it Is a Law with Sanction, and that it denounces dreadful Menaces against us, that the States of Men are not determin'd, by God's Decrees about them, or by what Christ hath done and suffer'd for them: Nor by the Influences of the holy Spirit upon them. That free Grace hath not secured Salvation, but only grants to Men Conditions of Life, and puts them upon a fresh Tryal for it: That the Gospel is a new Law, according to the Observation of which, or Disobedience to it, our eternal State will be happy or miserable. Various Arguments are made Use of to prove that the Gospel is such a Law, which I shall new consider and endeavour to answer.

Arg. I. The Gospel is called a Law in Scripture, and therefore it is to be concluded that it is such. The Gospel is intended by the Law of Faith.

Answ. The Term Law does not always intend a Law with Sanction, neither in human, nor inspired Writings; but a settled Rule or fixed Order of Things. This is a frequent Use of the Word, with Poets and Philosophers, this is the manifest Import of it with Juvenal, where he speaks of the Law of Speech⁴⁹. And Philosophers use the Term in the same Sense, when they mention the Laws of Nature, the Laws of Bodies, and the Laws of Motion. It is the Order which obtains in Nature, in Bodies and in Motion that is design'd. In this Sense the Gospel may be called a Law, for it is a Discovery of the most beautiful Order, which obtains in Man's Salvation. It is not justly to be collected from the bare Use of the Term Law in Scripture, with Relation to the Gospel, that it is a Law with Sanction, for many Times, it signifies no more than Doctrine or Instruction, according to the Import of the Hebrew Word *jrwt* a Law, which comes from *jryto* cast, because Doctrine is as it were cast out of the Lips. It was customary with the Jews to call all Doctrine a Law, agreeable to their usual Mode of speaking, the Apostle so calls the Gospel; but it by no Means, follows, that it is

a proper Law, which enjoyns Conditions and promises Blessings, in Case those Conditions are fulfilled, and threatens Death and Damnation, on Account of their being neglected.

Arg. II. Faith, Repentance and all good Works are required by the Gospel, as Conditions of Life, the Want whereof subjects Men to Threatnings of dreadful and sore Punishment: And therefore it is a Law which commands Obedience, as necessary to intitle us to Happiness, and condemns us for the Omission of it.

Answ. Faith is a free Gift of divine Favour, as was before observed, for which Reason, it cannot be a proper Condition of the new Covenant: It is absurd to think, that Faith or any other Grace, is a Gift of divine Favour, and a Condition, on which our Right to new Covenant-Blessings depends. Again, if Faith and Repentance are Conditions of Life, that is unattainable, for these are not in the Power of Men: And therefore those Scriptures which inform us, that Faith and Holiness are pre-requisite to everlasting Life, do not intend that they are Conditions of it, but are only descriptive Characters of such Persons, who will enjoy it. Thus in these Words: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: But he that believeth not shall be damned. That God formed a glorious Design of saving some of the Race of Mankind is indisputable, from the clear and express Declaration of the Gospel; but who those are, cannot be collected, except from such Scriptures, as acquaint us with their proper Characters, by which they stand distinguished from the rest of their Fellow-Creatures. And that is all that is intended in those Words, and in Texts of the like Nature.

Arg. III. The Gospel commands Men to believe and repent, and therefore it is a Law.

Answ. A Command from one who is a rightful Sovereign and Governor, and which is just in itself, is a Law and binding upon the Subject. But it doth not appear that the Gospel consists of Commands and Comminations; they really are incompatible with the Nature of it, which as has been already mentioned, is a Doctrine of pure Grace, or a Revelation of God's most gracious Purposes, concerning the Objects of his Favour. Witsius very rightly observes thus: The Covenant of Grace, or the Gospel strictly taken, which is the Deed of that Covenant, whereas it consists in MERE PROMISES, properly prescribes NOTHING, as Duty requires NOTHING, commands NOTHING; not this indeed, believe, trust, hope in the Lord, and Things of the like Nature. But shews, declares, signifies to us, what God promises in Christ, what he intends to do, and will do. All Prescription of Duty belongs to the Law, as after others venerable Voetius has well observed, Disput. Tom. 4. p. 24. and following Pages. And this truly, we must hold, if with all the Reformed, we would constantly defend the Perfection of the Law, containing in its Compass all Virtues, all Duties of Holiness. f50

Arg. IV. Subjection and Obedience are required by the Gospel, which are proper to a Law, and therefore the Gospel is a Law.

Answ. That some are represented, as disobedient to the Gospel is granted, thus in these Words, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:8.). The Word is upaousi which is expressive of a Slight and Disregard to the Gospel, as a Revelation of Salvation, and not of a Breach of Precepts contained in it, as tho' it was a Law. Again, the Gospel establishes the Law, inasmuch as it informs us, that God will write his Laws in the Hearts of his People, or implant Holiness in them, agreeable to the Nature of his Law. It also furnishes us with powerful Motives to the Practice of our Duty; such as, the free Remission of our Sins: The gracious Acceptance of our

Persons in the Righteousness of Christ; and of a firm Title to eternal Life, which are Incitements to Holiness, of a most persuasive Nature. Moreover it clearly directs us to the proper End, we ought to propose to ourselves in all our Acts of Obedience, viz. the Glory of God. That Obedience, which hath these Attendants, may justly be called evangelical: Not because the Gospel is the Rule of our Duty; but by Reason, it serves for our Instruction in the right Practice of it: Nor is it to be inferred from these Things, that the Gospel is a Law consisting of Precepts, Prohibitions and Comminations.

Arg. V. Men may be and are guilty of Transgressions against the Gospel; but where no Law is, there is no Transgression, of Consequence the Gospel must be a Law.

Answ. As was before observ'd from Witsius, the Law is perfect, or it includes the Whole of our Duty, to God and Men. There is no Act of Obedience, which we are oblig'd to; but the holy Law of God commands it, if not, the Law is defective, which it cannot be, because the divine Legislator is infinitely perfect, and cannot be the Author of any imperfect Law. Now the Law obliges Men to honour, fear, adore and obey God: And therefore they must be under an indispensable Obligation, to assent to the Truth of what he shall, at any Time, please to reveal. An humble Adoration of God, as a Being of infinite Wisdom, Power, Truth and Justice, without Doubt, includes a Belief of the Verity of all the Doctrines he discovers: And if so, it is a Duty incumbent upon all Men, to credit the Mysteries of the Gospel, as revealed by him, and the Want thereof, subjects them to the righteous Condemnation of the Law of Works. The real Truth of scriptural Doctrines, how far soever they may exceed the narrow Compass of our limited and impair'd Faculties of Reasoning, is not to be called into Question. Surely the divine Authority, by which they are recommended to us, is sufficient of itself, to gain our Assent to those Doctrines, how mysterious and inexplicable soever, they may appear to us, with Relation to the Modus of the Things, therein treated of. Since the Truths of the Gospel have ALL THE DEMONSTRATION THEIR NATURE WILL, ADMIT OF: And it is certain they are not demonstrable, by the Principles of deprav'd Reason, and their Nature is of such Sublimity and Height, that no finite Mind, can by the utmost Stretch of Thought rise up to it, any more than that which is finite can comprehend Infinity, or infinitely extend it self: It is most unreasonable, to refuse an Assent to them, because they have not Demonstration of such a Kind, as is inconsistent with their Nature, and which, if they had, they would not be what they are, viz. The deep Things of God: And therefore Mens Opposition to the Gospel of Christ, is a manifest Breach of the Covenant of Works, under which they are, and they justly expose themselves to the Menaces of that Law, by their Opposition to it, as the most daring of them, will quickly find, to their Shame and Confusion, tho' they now sneer at, and burlesque the Mysteries of the Christian Revelation; for, as for solid Thought, and just Reasoning, I am fully convinced, it is not to be expected of some Gentlemen, who vaunt, as if they were the only Men of Sense and Reason. No Transgressions strictly speaking, can be committed, against the Gospel, which is a Revelation of pure Grace: Those Duties which are sometimes called Gospel-Duties, are not properly so, or they are not enjoyn'd by it as a Law; but they are called such, because the Gospel is the Object of them, as it is of that Assent, which all Men to whom it is preach'd, are under an indispensable Obligation to yield to its Truths, tho' they do not spiritually understand them. Or they are so called, because they are proper to the Gospel- Dispensation, as Baptism and the Lord's Supper; but the Gospel doth not enjoyn, even these Institutions as a Law; for by Vertue of the Covenant of Works, tho' not as so considered, but merely as a Rule of Conduct, Believers are oblig'd to practise those

Duties because God commands them in that Manner to worship him. And without Doubt, he hath a Right to institute what Mode of Worship he pleases, and upon the immediate Notice, that it is his Will to be worship'd, in this, or in the other Manner, we become bound to worship him in that Manner, by this Command, in the Law, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Hence it appears, that a Refusal of Assent to the Gospel, and a Neglect of New-Testament Duties, are Transgressions of the holy Law of God; but are not properly Offences committed against the Gospel, and therefore it is not a Law, as it is urged to be.

Arg. VI. Christ: as Mediator hath a Law, according to which, he dispenses Blessings and inflicts Punishments: The Law of Works is not: that Law, and therefore the Gospel is.

Answ. It is evident from what has been before observ'd, that we do not receive spiritual Benefits, on Account of our Obedience to any Law, for they are freely given to us. Christ: as Mediator hath the Covenant of Works in his Hand, and his People are under it, as a Rule of Duty, and are under no other defective and imperfect Law, such as the Gospel is very absurdly imagin'd to be. Nor is our Obedience the Cause or Ground, of our receiving any Favours from God; and therefore the Gospel is not a Law, which is to be observ'd in Order to a Participation of heavenly Blessings, that is intirely foreign to its Nature.

Arg. VII. Men will be judg'd at the last Day, according to the Tenor of the Gospel, for Proof of this, these Words are urg'd: In the Day when God shall judge the Secrets of Men, by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel (Romans 2:14.). And therefore the Gospel is a Law.

Answ. This Text fails of proving the Point: Two Things are to be observ'd which comprise the full Sense of the Words.

1. That Christ is raised to this high Dignity and Honour, as Man and Mediator, to examine, try and pass Sentence on all Offenders, and openly to acquit and pronounce blessed all such, as believe in him, which the Gospel reveals to us, otherwise we had been ignorant of it.

2. That as Life and Salvation is declared by the Gospel to be design'd and prepar'd for Believers in Christ, and only such: So God will at the Day of Judgment, make it apparent, that the evangelical Account hereof is strictly true, by receiving to Happiness the Saints, and by condemning impenitent Sinners. But neither of these Things afford the least Evidence and Proof, that the Gospel is a Law, by the Observation of which, Life is to be obtain'd, or that eternal Death will be inflicted on Men for Offences committed against it, this Argument therefore has nothing of Weight and Force in it, to prove that the Gospel is a new Law. Nor have any of the Arguments advanced in Favour of this Opinion, Strength sufficient to support it. The Gospel is, we must conclude a Revelation of pure Grace, and of full, free and everlasting Salvation by Jesus Christ, and no Law at all.

02.03.06. Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

Shews, that the State of the Heathen, is a weighty Objection, to the Scheme of a conditional Provision of Salvation made for all Mankind.

I. THE ingenious Author of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, professedly treats of the State of the Heathen World; but is very sparing in what he delivers on this Subject, which I imagine might arise from a Consciousness, that their Circumstances, are a very strong Objection to the Scheme, he endeavours to defend. In Fact at least, I am strongly persuaded, it is so, whether he had any Apprehensions of it or not: For if a conditional Provision of Salvation, is made for all Men without Exception, and if God really intended to save every Individual of Mankind, on Condition of Faith in Christ, Repentance and a Renewal unto Holiness, it is reasonable to think, that God in his Providence, would take Care that the Revelation of this his Design should be as extensive, as the Design itself. For how can God expect Men to believe in his Son, if they never hear that there is such a Person as Christ?

II. The learned Author, on this Subject, sets out with a manifest Mistake, and asserts That is not to be doubted, which no considerate Person can ever believe, viz. That the Gospel has been twice preached to all Mankind, first by Adam, and afterwards by Noah⁵¹. If by all Mankind he intends all the natural Descendants of Adam, he liv'd to see, but a small Number of them, comparatively to the many Millions, who have been born since his Decease, which may also be said of Noah; and therefore it cannot with the least Appearance of Truth, be affirm'd that either of them preach'd the Gospel to all Men. If he means all Mankind, who liv'd in their respective Ages, it is using the Terms All Mankind in a very limited Sense indeed: And a very small Part of the human Race, are included in those Terms. Such an ambiguous Use of the Terms is very unfair, in treating on a Subject, wherein every Man without Exception is supposed to be concern'd: They must be very unwary and extremely credulous Readers, who are impos'd on by such an Artifice. With as much Truth it might be said, yeas with less Appearance of False-hood, that Dr. Owen preached the Gospel to the same Individuals, as Dr. Watts now does, which he did not, as I suppose, to any of them; and I fear that the Doctrine, which Dr. Owen greatly recommended, is but too, too much disregarded by a Minister, who succeeds him, tho' not immediately, in the Work of preaching to a Congregation, who in Dr. Owen's Life-time had the Honour and Advantage of his Instructions; and that as an Effect thereof, the solid and found Divinity, which he zealously defended, is become distateful to many, if not to the greater Part of that Community. It cannot be said, that either Adam or Noah preached the Gospel to all Mankind, in that Sense, in which the Term Mankind is ever used in this Controversy, it is not put for the Number of Men who exist in any particular Age; but for all Men, who did exist in former Ages, who exist in the present, and who shall exist in future Ages.

Neither of them preach'd the Gospel to Men, born hundreds and thousands of Years after their Departure out of this Life. And I should think, it can't be apprehended, that Noah preach'd the Gospel to all Men who liv'd in his own Time, before the Flood: Its probable, that not so much as his

Name was known, in many Parts of the habitable World, before the universal Deluge, which was brought upon the Earth.

III. Until the Law was given on Mount Sinai, those Revelations, which God was pleased to afford to holy Men, were not written⁵². So that Mankind had not, in preceding Ages, the Advantage of a standing Revelation: They had indeed the Benefit of their pious Instructions, so far as their Influence reach'd; but that was far from being of universal Extent: And as the Mind of Man is naturally averse to spiritual Things, it is reasonable to think, that those Lessons of Piety, which the holy Patriarchs taught, might make but little Impression, on the Souls of Men in general, and that they might soon, entirely loose all Sense of those pious Instructions they receiv'd from them, which divine Revelation, assures us was actually the Case, and that all Flesh corrupted their Way, and sunk into the Practice of the most stupid Idolatry.

IV. When a standing Revelation was given, the Jews were the only People in the World, who were favour'd therewith, for many Ages: Other Nations were permitted to live in gross Darkness, and fatal Ignorance: They sat in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death: The Lord shewed his Work to Jacob; his Statutes and his Judgments to Israel; he dealt not so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they knew them not. The other numerous Nations in the World, receiv'd no Notices of the Messiah, who should be born, and become, The Author of eternal Redemption, to those who obey him.

V. It appears from those Accounts, which are given us of the Gentile Nations, in the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles, that in general they were devoted to Destruction, without an information of a divine Design, to save any Part of the human Race. God poured out his Fury on the Heathen: They were not a People for many Ages, but were Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, were without Hope, and without God in the World. The Gospel therefore for Series of Ages, was concealed from them: How this can comport with a Decree to save every Individual of Mankind, on Condition of Faith in Christ, will be exceeding difficult to demonstrate. The Dispensations of Providence, toward the far greater Part of Mankind, for a long Tract of Years, will not easily be reconciled, with such a conditional Purpose of saving every Man by Jesus Christ. Besides. it is not to be prov'd, that every Nation in the World, even in these Gospel Times, has heard of Christ and Salvation by him. And in many Places, where the Gospel has been preach'd Ages since, Men have no more Sense and Remembrance of it, than if such a gracious Discovery had never been made, in those Parts of the World. If it should be said, That those Nations are deprived of the Light of the Gospel, for their Sins and Opposition to it, I would ask, if it is for their own Sins, or for the Sins of their Ancestors?

If for the Sins of their Fore fathers, their Salvation and Damnation, depended not on their own Wills and Conduct; but on the Wills and Behaviour of their Progenitors, which cannot be admitted. If they are deprived of the glorious Light of the Gospel, for their own Sins, this supposes, that God intended to save them by the Gospel of his Son; but foreseeing in what Manner they would conduct themselves, under that great Advantage, he determin'd to leave them, to eternally perish without it, whereas the Nature of the divine Decrees, according to this Opinion, necessarily requires, that they should hear the Gospel, whatever may have been the Carriage of their Ancestors, or in what Manner soever they would conduct themselves under it.

VI. The Calling of the Gentiles to the Participation of the Gospel Salvation, and evangelical Privileges, is represented as a Mystery. The preaching of Christ among the Gentiles is one Branch of the great Mystery of Godliness. 'Tis true in the prophetic Writings, very plain Predictions are delivered, that so it should be, and that great Success would attend its Publication among them: But because many Ages past, before those Predictions had their Accomplishment, and the Jews contracted a great Dislike of them, and were very much prepossess'd in their own Favor, to the Contempt of the Gentiles, they lost the true Sense of these Prophecies, and even when the Gentiles were converted to the Christian Faith, it was with great Difficulty they were persuaded, that God intended their Salvation, and upon a Conviction of the Reality of such a Purpose in God, concerning heathen Sinners, they were fill'd with Astonishment. God suffered them to walk in Darkness to their eternal Destruction for many Centuries, and winked at those Times of Ignorance. The Author of The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, interprets uperidwn, of a lighter Degree of Punishment; but that Sense is plainly contrary to the Scope of the Place (Acts 17:30.). The Meaning of it is, God neglected to furnish them with a Revelation of his Will, or suffered them to live in Blindness and Ignorance.

VII. That the Punishment, which will be inflicted on heathen Sinners, will be lighter, than that, which will be inflicted on such Sinners, who hear the Gospel, and refuse an Assent to it, and oppose that glorious Scheme of Salvation by Christ, is readily granted; but surely this fails of proving, that a conditional Provision of Happiness, Is made for such a Part of Mankind, as know nothing, and never had Means or Opportunity of knowing any thing of the Gospel.

VIII. Wherever God hath any considerable Number of People whom he intends to save, he sends his Gospel, as is clearly signified to the Apostle, No Man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much People in this City (Acts 18:10.). And therefore in those Places where the Gospel is not preached, we have no Reason to think, that there are any considerable Number of Persons, for whom Salvation is design'd: Where there is such a Number the Word of God is sent, they are gather'd in to Christ, a Church State is let up, evangelical Institutions are practised, and Gospel Privileges are enjoy'd.

IX. It is not to be dissembled, that the Arminians turn this Objection upon us, say they, if God designs to save some of all Nations and Families of the Earth, as you yourselves allow he does, it lies upon you to answer this Objection, as well as upon us. To which I observe we are able to do it, upon our Principles, beyond any just Exception or Reply. For,

1. We maintain indeed, that God has elect Persons of every Nation; but then its only known to him, who they are, and in what Ages they do or shall exist. There Persons he will either bring out of those dark Regions, into Places where the Light of the Gospel is, or he will send his Gospel to those Parts where they reside.

2. Tho' God may not have any Persons, whom he designs to save, in this or that particular Nation, in this Century, or had not in some foregoing Centuries, he may have such among them, in succeeding Times, those Persons he will certainly call, and they shall enjoy the glorious Light of his Gospel, and if this is not accomplished, until the latter Day, when the Gospel shall have a surprising Spread, and the Knowledge of the Lord shall cover the Earth, as the Waters do the Seas: This furnishes out no solid Objection to our Opinion, for if it hath not its Accomplishment before, it certainly shall have, when the Fulness of the Gentiles, shall be brought in.

02.03.07. Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7 The Author's Opinion of the Annihilation of the dying Infants of ungodly Parents examined and refuted; The Death threatned in the Law, intends not the Destruction of the Being of a Sinner, but his Well-being, and Annihilation is proved to be no Punishment.

I. THIS Gentlemen seems to take it for granted, that the Death threatened in the Law is the Destruction of the Being of a Sinner; but produces not one Text of Scripture, wherein the Term Death, is so to be understood: This he ought to have done, since he hath not, we may reasonably suppose, he knew of no Place, where it is capable of such a Construction, his Opinion therefore of the Infants of ungodly Parents ceasing to exist at Death, is not founded on Scripture; but is entirely foreign to it, which is a Reason sufficient for our Rejection of this novel Opinion.

II. If Christ suffer'd that Punishment, which the Law denounces against Sin, in order to make Satisfaction for it, the Death threatned cannot be the Destruction of the Being of Transgressors, this must be evident to every one: And if the same Penalty was not inflicted on Christ, to which sinful Men are obnoxious, for their Offences against God, then Satisfaction is not made, by his Sufferings, nor are we heal'd by his Stripes: Should it be said, that it was endless Punishment, the Law threaten'd in Case of Disobedience; and that since Christ's Sufferings were short in Duration, they were not the same Penalty we should have sustain'd. I would answer, the Eternity of our Punishment, is only a Circumstance, arising from our Incapacity to suffer it, in its whole Weight, in any imaginable Part of Time, and our Unworthiness, who suffer Punishment, and that herefore the Shortness of the Duration of the Sufferings of Christ, is no Objection to the Identity of the Penalty, tho' in this Circumstance different; but if it was His of Being the Law threatned, it is certain Christ could not bear it, nor hath made Satisfaction for Sin.

III. The Wages of Sin is that Death the Law threatens, and that Death is the Opposite of eternal Life, which cannot be Loss of Being, but of Wellbeing only; and therefore it was not the Destruction of our Being, the Law intended by Death, but an eternally miserable State of Being.

IV. The Punishment which is executed on Men for Sin, is that Punishment the Law threatened, and not Penalty of another Nature, and specifically different from it: Loss of Being, and a being for ever miserable, are as distinct, as, To be, and Not to be, than which, nothing can be more opposite, and therefore it was a being eternally miserable, which the holy Law of God denounced against Man, in Care of his Disobedience: For we have not the least Hint, that the Punishment is changed, or that a different Penalty is to be inflicted on Men, from that which the Law at first threatened.

V. I humbly apprehend Annihilation is no Punishment at all, for these Reasons following.

1. Man hath no Right to a Continuance of his Existence, even in Case he offends not. A Right he hath to be happy, according to the Law under which he was originally placed, if God should will him still to be. His existing was absolutely dependent on the sovereign Pleasure of his Maker, but his Well-being depended on his Observation of that Law, which was given to him.

2. Man could not by his Sin forfeit that to which he had no Claim: No Right he had to continue in Being; this cannot be supposed consistent with his absolute Dependence on the sovereign Will. of God, as to his Existence, or Nonexistence; for if this is allow'd, God was under an Obligation to preserve him in a State of Being, in Case he did not sin against him, his Sovereign Lord and righteous Governor.

3. God may, if he pleases, annihilate the most perfect of his Creatures: They all rose into Being, by Vertue of his absolute Will, and their continuing to be, must be resolv'd into the same Cause, unless we raise an innocent Creature to a State of Independence on God, which would deify the Creature, and deprive the Almighty Creator, of his unalienable sovereign Right, Power and Dominion over the Works of his Hand.

4. Disobedience God cannot but punish, and therefore in Case of Sin, he cannot annihilate and destroy the Being of an offending Creature. That God by Necessity of Nature wills, and yet freely wills to punish Sin, hath, as I hope, been fully prov'd in the first Part, to which the Reader is referr'd. Now if God cannot but will to punish Sin, he cannot will to take away the Being of a Sinner. This may at first View seem strange, and it will perhaps be ask'd, What, may God of his absolute Pleasure, destroy the Being of an innocent Creature? and can he not annihilate a guilty Creature? How is this? Does Sin raise the Subject of it, to an Independence on the Will of God? Answer. No; by no Means: But the Case is thus: The Righteousness and Justice of God's Nature, necessarily, but freely determines him to will the Punishment of Sin, and of Consequence to will the Being of a Sinner, the Subject of Sin, and of the Penalty that Sin demerits.

Object. The Destruction of the Being of a rational immortal Creature, deprives that Creature of Happiness, which is a great Punishment.

Answ. 1. Its deprived of Happiness, either before or upon its Annihilation: If you shall say before, that is an Infliction of Penalty while it exists, and is not the Annihilation of it. And if you say after or upon Annihilation, the guilty Creature is deprived of Happiness, it is a very manifest Contradiction; for this necessarily supposes the annihilated Creature to still exist, which it does not. Annihilation is a Privation of Being, but properly speaking, it is not a Privation of Happiness: For a Privation of Happiness necessarily infers the Existence of some Being, which is the Subject of that Privation.

2. All Punishment causes Grief and Pain to the Subjects of it. But, 1. No Grief and Pain follow upon Annihilation is certain, the Reason is clear, that which is not, cannot be the Subject of Joy or Grief, of Happiness or Misery. 2. It therefore is so far from being a Punishment to annihilate a Creature under the least Degree of Pain and Torture, that it puts an End to his suffering Pain, and of Consequence, Annihilation Is no Punishment, nor is threatened by the Law as a Penalty. And therefore Adam did not subject himself or any of his Descendants, to the Loss of Being by his Disobedience. And of Consequence, this novel Opinion, of the Annihilation of the Infants of ungodly Parents, who die in a State of Infancy, is not founded on the Word of God, or right Reason; but is an Invention of his own, and is very deservedly rejected. This is not a Place to examine the Author's Sentiments, concerning the State of the Children of pious Parents, during their Infancy, and therefore I decline it.

02.04. Part 4

Part 4

02.04.01. Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

Treats of Imputation. An Enquiry whether the Fault of a Criminal may be imputed to an innocent Person, among Men; This is disallowed, and the Reasons of it are assigned; An Argument to prove it may be, is answered. IN this fourth Part 1 propose to consider what the learned Author delivers, in his Essays on imputed Sin, and imputed Righteousness; And on the Guilt and Defilement of Sin. I humbly apprehend the Method he takes to explain the Doctrine of the Imputation of Adam's Sin to his Posterity, and of the Imputation of our Sins to Christ, is very unhappy and improper, or rather, that in reality he denies the Imputation of either.

I. The Hebrew Word *bcj* is frequently used to express Imputation, as in these Instances, And it was counted unto him for Righteousness (Leviticus 17:4.). Blood shall be imputed to him (Genesis 15:6.). And that was counted unto him for Righteousness (Psalms 106:31.). Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity (Psalms 106:31-32). In each of these Scriptures that Word is used, which the Septuagint render by *logibomai*, as the Apostle also does. 1. It imports to place to the Account of a Person, an Action, righteous or unrighteous. 2. Upon so doing, to reckon and esteem him righteous or unrighteous, according to the Nature of the Action imputed to him. The Greek Word *logizomai*, is used in the New Testament, in both there Senses. In the first: of there, it is used in these Words: That it may not be laid to his Charge (1 Timothy 4:16.). And in this Text: Not imputing their Trespases to them (2 Corinthians 5:19.). Also, in this Scripture:

Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin (Romans 4:6.). The contrary of this is, the Imputation of Righteousness: Even as David also describeth the Blessedness of the Man, unto whom God imputeth Righteousness without Works (Romans 5:8.). It is taken in the second Sense in several Places. Thus, in there Words: The Temple of the great Goddess Diana should be despised, or esteem'd as nothing, *eiv ouden logiv qennai* (Acts 19:27.). And in this Text: Brethren, I count not *logizomai* myself to have apprehended (Php 3:13.). And this its Import in there Words: To him that worketh, the Reward is not reckon'd of Grace, but of Debt (Romans 4:4.). It is not the Imputation of the Reward, but the Estimation, or reckoning it a due Debt, that is plainly intended. Imputation of Sin or righteousness, is the Foundation of reputed a Man, a Sinner or Just; nor can a Man, consistent with Justice, be accounted a Sinner, without a Charge or Imputation of Offence: Neither can a Person be reckon'd righteous, without the Imputation of Righteousness, but by Mistake; for he is not what he is esteem'd to be. The Imputation or Charge of a Crime, renders the Person, who is the Subject of that Charge, liable to Punishment, according to the Sanction and Threatning of the Law, by which, the Crime is imputed. Suffering without the Imputation of Offence is not Punishment: Says Grotius, Punishment in its general signification, is the Evil of Suffering which is inflicted for the Evil oration⁵³. The same Account Selden gives of Penalty⁵⁴. And therefore Punishment cannot be inflicted on an innocent Person, as so consider'd, without manifest Injustice.

Query. May the Fault of a Criminal be imputed to an innocent Person, and he be made to suffer the Punishment due to that Offence, among Men?

Answ. 1. No such Union subsists among Men, as can make them one Person in the Eye of the Law; and therefore the Righteousness of one Man, cannot be imputed to another; nor can one Man's Guilt be charged on another. All human Laws respect Men personally. Hence they are, and must: be justified and condemn'd, either as they obey, or disobey the Law in their own Persons.

2. Pecuniary Punishments may be inflicted on an innocent Person, in the Room of the Guilty, who is fined for any Offence. The Ground of which must always be his voluntary Agreement, for without that, it would be Oppression and Robbery under a Pretence of the Execution of Justice: But his Payment of the Mulct or Fine, is not properly a Punishment to him, because it is not required of him with Respect to the Perpetration or Charge of the Crime, which is the formalis Ratio of Penalty. He takes it upon him as a Debt, and as such merely it is demanded of him. This it Man may do, because he has Power over his Property, and may dispose of it at his Pleasure.

3. But capital Punishment may not be sustain'd by an innocent Person, in the Room of a Criminal.

(1.) Because the Law cannot make the Crime deserving that Punishment his, the Reason is very evident, the Law only deals with Men in their own Persons, and justifies or condemns them, as they are or are not conformable to it.

(2.) The Law or Legislature have no Power, to require an innocent Person, to suffer in Stead of the Guilty: All just Laws, and every just Legislature, protect the Lives of guiltless Subjects, and therefore may not require such to suffer capitally for Offenders.

(3.) An innocent Person may not agree to suffer capital Punishment for a Transgressor, the Reason is, he hath not Power over his own Life, as Grotius observes⁵⁵. And should the Legislature accept of such an Engagement, and proceed to Execution upon it, this would be a manifest Violation of Right; for Justice necessarily obliges the Legislature to protect, and by no means allows of taking away the Life of any innocent Subject.

(4.) Mutilation or the Loss of an Eye, or of any Member of the Body, may not be inflicted on an innocent Person, instead of the guilty; because it may not be done, without the Consent of the innocent Party: And the Law of Nature (which human Laws never ought to contradict) obliges all Men not only to preserve Life itself; but also to preserve themselves entire and free from Maiming⁵⁶. A Man has no more Power over his Eye, than over his Head, and therefore I think the Conduct of Zaleucus, is incapable of Defence, who submitted to the Loss of one of his Eyes, for a Crime of his Son's, which required the Loss of both his, that he might be deprived but of one: Nor can I conceive how this was any Way satisfactory to the Law, since he and his Son could not legally be considered as one Person.

Object. Treason is frequently imputed to the Children of a Traytor, and they suffer Poverty and Disgrace for their Father's Sin⁵⁷.

Answ. 1. 'Tis evident, that the Law does not consider the Children of a Traytor, as guilty of his Treason, if it did, the same Punishment would be inflicted on them, as is inflicted on their traitorous Parent.

2. Children inheriting Honours, from their Parents, they cannot be suppos'd to be intitled to those Honours; but by Virtue of their Father's Right. And as a Traytor forfeits all his Dignity, which was originally derived from the Crown; his Descendants can have no Claim to it, for he cannot convey that Honour to his Posterity, which by Overt Acts of Treason he has forfeited. This may be considered as suffering in his Children; but properly speaking it is not Punishment: Nor are they reputed as guilty with him, of that Rebellion he stands charged with.

3. As by Virtue of the mutual Contract, between the King and the Subjects, the King holds his Power and Prerogative: So by Virtue of that Contract, the Subject holds his Right to Life, Dignity, Liberty, and his Estate, on Condition of Loyalty and Subjection to his Prince; in Care therefore of Treason, against his lawful Sovereign, he forfeits his Life, Dignity and Liberty, and also his Estate; his Descendants having no other Title to his Estate, than what was sounded in his Right, they are justly deprived of it in Consequence of their Father's Crime, and yet they are not to be considered as criminal: Nor Is this a Punishment to them, strictly speaking, to their Father it is; but not to them. There Things are a sufficient Answer to what this Author advances on this Subject in the 387th Page of his Book. As to what he supposes of an innocent Person being permitted by the Laws of a State, to suffer Imprisonment, Banishment, or scourging in the Room of an Offender (Page 388.), such a Conduct could not be justified by the Word of God or right Reason, so far as I am able to conceive, because the Crime could not be made his, by any Act of his own, nor Act of the State: His Imprisonment, Banishment or Scourging, therefore would not be Punishment, but merely Suffering. Nor hath any Man, nor have any Sett of Men a legal Power to inflict Sufferings on any Person; but in Case of Offence: For no Man becomes subject to the Evil of Suffering from a Fellow-Creature, but upon the Supposition of the Evil of Offence; and since no such Union does, or can subsist between one Man and another, as lays a proper Foundation for the Law to consider them as one Person, the Offence or Righteousness of one, may not be imputed to another, and the other suffer for his Crime; and if a Government will reward others, for the serviceable Actions of some one particular Man, 'tis Matter of mere Bounty, they can have no Claim to the Reward, because the serviceable Actions of that Man cannot be made their's by the State, any more than criminal Actions may. But what have all there Things to do with the Subject under our present Consideration, which infinitely differs from any supposable Case among Men. The learned Author makes three Remarks in order to support his Observations of this Kind:

Rem 1. That there are several such Histories in the Bible, wherein the Instances of the like Kinds among the Transactions of Men are delivered down to us in such Sort of Expressions or Words of the same Import. Abraham's eminent Obedience to God in bringing his Son Isaac to the Altar, was rewarded not only in Blessings to Abraham himself, but to his Seed, Genesis 22:16, Here it may be said, that Abraham's Obedience, at least in the Result and Consequence of it is imputed to his Seed. The same Promise is repeated again to Isaac, and assign'd to his Seed, Genesis 26:4-5. Abraham's Righteousness was thus imputed to Isaac and his Seed. The eminent Act of Righteousness of Phineas was so far imputed to his Children, as that they received the Reward of it as well as himself, Numbers 25:11. The Crime of Achan by the Appointment of God, was so far imputed to his Children, that they were all stoned for the Sake of his Crime. The Guilt or Punishment of it, was imputed to the Children together with the Father, Joshua 7:24. The Falsehood and Covetousness of Gehazi were imputed to his Posterity, 2 Kings 5:25. When God by the Mouth of his Prophet pronounced that Leprosy should cleave unto him, and to his Seed for

ever (Pages 394, 395, 396.).

Answ. 1. The Scripture saith nothing of the Imputation of Abraham's Obedience to his Seed, or of their being made righteous thereby, or of the Imputation of it to Isaac and his Seed. Nor is any Thing said of the Imputation of the eminent Act of Righteousness of Phineas to his Seed. Neither is any Thing declared of the Charge of Achan's Sin on his Children, tho' they perished with him. Nor are we told that Gehazi's Crimes were imputed to his Descendants.

2. God may of his sovereign Goodness confer temporal Benefits on Men, without the Imputation of any Righteousness to them: That of Christ's, or the Obedience of pious Parents. Thus he did on the Seed of Abraham, the Posterity of Isaac, and on the Descendants of Phineas: His so doing may be considered as an Approbation of their Piety and holy Conversations; but affords no Argument at all, in Favour of the Imputation of their Obedience to them.

3. God may take away the Lives of Children with their ungodly Parents, without the Imputation of their Parents Sin to them, for they are born under a Sentence of Death: The Execution of that Sentence, at such a Time and in such a Manner, as it was executed on the Children of Achan, may justly be considered, as an Instance of God's great Displeasure with his Sin; but it is no Proof of the Charge of his Guilt on them.

4. No Instance that I know of, is to be produced, where a Communication of Benefits or the Infliction of Punishment, is called Imputation of Righteousness, and the Imputation of Sin; this is such a Sense of Imputation, as is most foreign to the Scripture, the former and the latter follow upon Imputation, and cannot with the least Propriety be taken for the Thing itself. It destroys all proper Imputation, which implies these two Things and nothing more.

(1.). Placing to the Account of a Man, Actions righteous or sinful.

(2). Accounting that Man just or unjust as those Actions are just or unjust, which are imputed to him. To confer Reward or inflict Punishment, is a third Thing that results from the Imputation of Righteousness or of Sin, and is not included in it.

Rem. 2. The Words sin and Iniquity *afj* or *hafj* *ˆw[* and *Amartia* both in the Hebrew and Greek Languages, signify, sometimes, Liableness to Punishment, or Punishment itself (396, 397.).

Ans. 1. It cannot be denied, that there Terms are frequently put for sinful Actions themselves, as in there Words. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, *ygz[m* i.e. from my Guilt, and cleanse me from my sin, *ytafhm* i.e. from my Sinful Actions (Psalms 51:2.); Thus also in this Text of Scripture, Thou hast not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities (Psalms 103:10.). It is manifestly our criminal Conduct, that is intended in there Words. It would be almost an endless Labour, to instance in the numerous Places, where sinful Actions or Guilt is designed by there Terms. The Greek Word, *Amartia*, i.e. Sin, is I think, used more than a hundred and sixty times in the new Testament, and it is not in any one Place put for Obligation to Punishment or Penalty itself; but always deflates, either sinful Actions, or the corrupt Habits of the Mind from which criminal Actions proceed, and it is evidently distinguish'd from Punishment in these Words, come out of her my People, that ye be not Partakers of her *taiv Amartiaiv* i.e. Sins, or evil Conduct, and that ye receive not of her Plagues (Revelation 18:4.). The plain Sense of the Text is, that ye may not involve yourselves in her Guilt, and share in her Punishment.

2. The Hebrew Word hafH is sometimes taken for Punishment, or the Evil which Sin demerits; but it includes a Charge of the Offence, and is not understood in an abstract Consideration from it: So in these Words, if thou dost well thou shalt be accepted, and if thou doest not well, Sin lieth at the Door (Genesis 4:7.), i.e. Guilt will be charged on thee, and the Penalty it deserves shall be executed, which are the contrary of Acceptance, that supposes Justification or the Non-imputation of Sin and a Reward: This Charge of Guilt, and a Subjection to Punishment on that Account. In some Places it may be put for a Sacrifice for Sin; but in those Places the Guilt is included, which the legal Sacrifices typically bore, and Christ: who made his Soul an Offering for Sin, bore it really, as the Antitype of the legal Sacrifices.

3. The Hebrew Word ^z[i.e. Iniquity, may sometimes signify the Punishment of Sin, as in the Instance this Gentleman produces, Hosea 10:13. which by Mistake is quoted Hosea 12:1-14. Ye have plowed Wickedness and reaped Iniquity, i.e. the Consequence of your Crimes or dreadful Punishment; but this was not without the Imputation of their Sin itself. The thing to be prov'd in this Point is, that Punishment may be inflicted without any Charge of Offence. If therefore a thousand Places could be produced, where the Word is put for the Penalty of Sin, as taken in a strict Connection, with the Imputation of Sin itself, as the Cause of Punishment; they must have a great degree of Discernment indeed, who shall be able to discover, that Penalty may be inflicted on any Subject, to whom Guilt or Sin is not imputed, as the Cause of suffering that Punishment. It may design Penal Evil in these Words: God layeth up his Iniquity for his Children (Job 21:19.), and in these: In the Iniquities of their Fathers shall they pine away with them (Leviticus 26:39.). Thus also in this Text, Our Fathers have sinned, and we have born their Iniquities (Lamentations 5:9.), i.e. the Consequences of their Sins and of our own; but surely not without a Charge of Guilt. These are all the Places, that I know of, where Iniquity is put for Punishment, and in neither of them, Penalty is intended in an abstract Consideration from a Charge of Guilt or Sin. To produce Instance, where it is taken for Punishment, in strict Connection with, and as following upon the Imputation of Crimes, fails entirely of proving that Punishment, may be inflicted on any Subject considered as innocent, to say the best of it, it is no other than impertinent Cavilling.

Rem. 3. The Scripture does not, as I remember, any where in express Words assert, that the Sin of Adam is imputed to his Children, or that the Sins of Mankind or of Believers were imputed to Christ, or that the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to Believers (Page 403.).

Answ. 1. If the Ideas conveyed by these Phrases are found in Scripture, it is trifling to object to the Truth of those things, because these very Words, and in such a Form, are not therein express'd.

2. The Imputation of Adam's Sin to his Descendants, is asserted with peculiar Strength and Evidence, when it is affirmed, that by the Disobedience of One, many were made Sinners.

3. And thus also when the Apostle says, by the Obedience of One many were made righteous, the Words are a full Assertion of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to his People. Men are not made Punishment by Adam's Sin, nor are Believers made Reward by Christ's Obedience. Besides, it is very improper to speak of the Imputation of Penalty, for Punishment is not imputed, but inflicted; or of the Imputation of Reward, for the legal Result of Obedience, is not, it cannot be imputed to Believers, but it is communicated to them. Imputation of Sin or of Righteousness, is an Act in the divine Mind, to inflict Punishment or confer Reward, are transient Acts of God upon Sinners and Saints, and are most improperly called Imputation. This Remark I shall have Occasion

to consider hereafter, and therefore add no more concerning it in this Chapter.

02.04.02. Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

Contains Arguments to Prove the real Imputation of Sin to Christ, and Answers to the Author's Objections to it. Also Replies to some Answers which he gives to such Arguments for it, as he is pleased to mention: And the Objections of Socinus, are answered. THE Socinians, who deny the Satisfaction of Christ, and that he was punished for Sin, consistently with their own Principles utterly disown the Imputation of Sin to him. But such, who profess to embrace and maintain the important Doctrine of the real and proper Satisfaction of Christ, are greatly inconsistent in a Denial of the Imputation of Sin to him, in order to his suffering Punishment. The Arguments in Favour of a Charge of Sin on Christ our Surety are these,

1. Sin is not Punishment: No two Ideas are more distinct and different, than those of a Crime, and the Penalty it demerits. And therefore without urgent Necessity, when the sacred Scriptures speak of Sin, we ought not to interpret those Places of Punishment, in Distinction from Sin itself. If it is denied that Sin was imputed to Christ, it will be difficult to demonstrate what of Sin he bore.

2. If Christ had not Sin imputed to him, his Sufferings were not of a penal Nature, for as we have before observed, proper Punishment is the Infliction of the Evil of suffering for the Evil of Action: An innocent Person therefore, as so considered, cannot be the Subject of Penalty. And if Christ did not sustain the Punishment, which we deserve, he made no Satisfaction for our Offences; then, if Punishment is at all inflicted for Sin, it must be on our selves, which would sink us to the lowest Hell.

3. Our Saviour had that charged on him, which he bore away for his People: He took away Sin in its Guilt; for he removed our Transgressions from us, as far as the East is from the West: And put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, he purged our Sins. Which Scriptures with many others, intend our Discharge from Guilt, in Consequence of the Imputation of it to Christ, and of his making a proper, real and plenary Satisfaction for it: And therefore Sin it self or our criminal Actions were laid on Christ, in order to the Removal of them, at the greatest Distance from us.

4. Christ might be made Sin or guilty, by the Imputation of Sin to him; but in suffering he could not be made Punishment. An innocent Person may be made or constituted guilty, by a Charge of the Crimes of others on him; but by the Infliction of Sufferings, he cannot be made Punishment, for two very evident Reasons

(1.) No Penalty may justly be inflicted on him, without the Imputation of Guilt, i.e. the Sins of others for whom he is supposed to suffer.

(2.) No Man suffering Punishment, can with the least Propriety be accounted Penalty: He is not what he endures; but a Man may be made Sin or guilty, by an Imputation of Guilt to him. Thus, he who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us: i.e. according to the Opinion of some, he was made Punishment: That we might be made the Righteousness of God in him, i.e. say they, that we might

be made or constituted divine Favours and Benefits. There are no Ideas so different and distinct, but some Persons, out of Opposition to evangelical Truths, will confound them, and dare to make the blessed God the Author of such Confusion.

5. Remission of Sin is a Fruit of Christ's Death, in the Discharge from Guilt, as well as Freedom from Punishment. His Sufferings could not be the procuring Cause of our Acquittance from a Charge of Sin, without the Imputation of our Guilt to him, and therefore Sin itself or our criminal Actions, were placed to his Account, as our Surety.

6. No innocent Person, as so consider'd, in suffering can be made a Curse, however great his Sufferings may be; for a Curse necessarily supposes a Charge of Sin, as the Cause of that Curse, which he. is made: Christ in his Death was made a Curse, and therefore he did not suffer consider'd as innocent, tho' in himself he was absolutely so; but he was accounted guilty, which he only could be, by the Imputation of our Sins to him.

7. This was typically represented, by the great Anniversary Sacrifice under the Law. A real Charge of Guilt could not indeed have Place, in any of the Mosaical Sacrifices: Nor could proper Punishment, be inflicted on any of the Beasts, which were slain and offered to God as Sacrifices, according to the ceremonial Law: But if any infer from thence, that Sin was not really imputed to Christ, as the Author of the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind does, they may also conclude, that our Saviour did not, properly speaking, suffer Punishment for us, which to conceive entirely enervates his Satisfaction, leaves us under the Imputation of our Guilt, and obnoxious to all the Penalty it demerits. These are Consequences greatly to be dreaded by every one, who has the least Concern for his eternal Welfare and Deliverance from the infernal Pit.

8. Without a proper Imputation of Sin to Christ, he cannot be said to die in our Room, as we are Sinners. It is as Persons guilty, that we become obnoxious to Death; an innocent Person could not die in our Stead, without a Charge of our Sin on him, the Reason is evident, he who dies for, or in the Place of a Criminal, suffers for him that Penalty, to which his Crimes expos'd him; but this cannot be without the Imputation of his Sin, because the Infliction of penal Evil, where there is no Charge of Offence, is a Violation of all Right and Justice. Christ was our Substitute, and died in our Room, and therefore our Sins or criminal Actions were really imputed to him. The Author of the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, objects several Things to this evangelical Truth.

Object. 1. The particular sinful Actions of David, Mary Magdalen and Rahab, could not minutely be imputed, that is to say, that every particular lustful Thought of theft Persons could not be charged on Christ⁵⁸.

Answ. 1. When this Gentleman makes a Difficulty, of allowing such a minute and particular Imputation of Sin to Christ, his Intention is to entirely overthrow the Doctrine of the Charge of Sin on Christ, in order to his making Satisfaction for it. We understand, Sir, your Drift and Scope, but shall never be shaken in our Faith relating to this great Doctrine, by any such trifling Objection, as this is, it contains nothing of Difficulty in it, as will appear by observing.

2. It is God, who charges Sin on Offenders themselves, or on his Son our Surety. Now, as God is able in his all-comprehending Mind, to impute every sinful and lustful Thought to Sinners themselves, so he is certainly able to charge every sinful and lustful Thought of theirs on Christ, who suffered for them. His Knowledge of Sin is absolutely perfect, he knows it in all its various

Springs and Motions in the Hearts of Men, and therefore, he is able to impute it either to Men in their own Persons, or to charge it on Christ, as a Surety for them, as his sovereign, Pleasure is, to act in this great Affair.

Object. 2. The Author fears it would border upon the Language of Blasphemy, to say that sin itself was imputed to Christ^{f59}.

Answ. 1. This stale and groundless Objection, the Author could not but know, has been many Times answered, it might therefore be expected, that he should have shewn, wherein the Answers given to it over and over are defective, if he think them so. The Omission of it I can't but apprehend, will be thought highly unfair and disingenuous, by more Persons than myself.

2. The Imputation of Sin to an innocent Person, does not formally make him a Sinner: It is only a Conveyance of sinful Habits does this, which is absolutely denied in this Care, and is not supposed in the Nature of the Thing, nor doth attend it, and therefore, there is not any Thing of a blasphemous Nature in the Doctrine. The blessed Jesus on the Charge of the Guilt of others to him, was accounted and reputed what he was not in himself, and could not be made viz. Sin or guilty.

3. The Imputation of the Action of one Person to another, does not make that Action, the personal Act of him, to whom it is imputed, whether the Action is righteous or unrighteous: So that our sinful Actions became not the personal Acts of Christ, by the Imputation of them to him, neither do his Acts of Obedience to the Law of God, become our personal Acts, by the Imputation of them to us. This Objection supposes that sinful Actions, upon Imputation, became the personal Acts of Christ, or else there can be no Foundation for this dreadful and horrible Charge of Blasphemy, the Consequence therefore, is inferr'd from what is not supposed or found in the Nature of the Thing, and is as certainly false, as it would be shocking, and destructive of all our spiritual Hopes if true. The ingenious Author undertakes to answer some of the Arguments, used to support the Doctrine of the real Imputation of Adam's Sin to his Posterity, and of the proper Imputation of Sin to Christ, which Answers of his I shall now consider and reply to.

Arg. 1. The first Argument, as he ought to have stated it, is, how can Punishment be inflicted on an innocent Person, without the Imputation of the Crimes of others to him for whom he suffers Penalty? Or how can the Reward that is due to Righteousness, be conferred without the Imputation of that Righteousness to him, on whom the Reward is bestow'd? To which Enquiries he answers thus, The very same just Constitution, whether human or divine, by which the Actions themselves, whether good or evil, could be supposed to be imputed, is sufficient for the Imputation of the legal Result of those Actions, and that with as much Justice (Page 399.).

I reply,

1. No human Law can impure the good or evil Actions of one Man to another, for the Reasons before assign'd in the preceding Chapter.

2. The Imputation of the legal Result of an Action, whether good or bad seems to me, a most odd and improper Idea: The legal Result of a good Action i.e. the Reward may be conferred, and the legal Result of an evil Action, i.e. Punishment may be inflicted. But of the Imputation of Reward or Penalty, I cannot frame any Idea: If I mistake not, the true Nature of Imputation is entirely lost. in

this Supposition.

3. Its unjust to inflict Punishment on an innocent Person, as so consider'd, and suffering without an Imputation of Offence is not Penalty. If Sin therefore, was not imputed to Christ, his Sufferings could not be of a penal Nature, which if they were not, no proper Satisfaction for Sin arises from his Death: At most, it was only a Condition of Pardon, and this the Socinians themselves freely grant us, who are avow'd Adversaries to the glorious and important: Doctrine of real Atonement and Satisfaction.

4. To justify a Person, who is not righteous, as so considered, is as contrary to Truth and Equity, as it is to condemn and punish the innocent. If therefore, Men are not righteous in themselves, nor made so by the Imputation of another's Obedience, their Justification mull: be an illegal Act, and plainly contrary to all the known Rules of Equity and Justice: And without Justification, a Man can have no Title to the Reward, which the Law promises only in Case of Obedience to its Precepts, to be perform'd either by Men themselves, or by a Surety for them.

Arg. 2. May not the sinful Actions of the Father be imputed to the Posterity, since the Children were in the Father naturally, when he committed those sins? Is not Levi said to pay Tithes in Abraham, in Hebrews 7:9. because he was yet in the Loins of his great Grandfather, when he paid Tythes to Melchisedec? The Author answers to this Argument thus,

1. The Apostle expresses it, not as Matter of strict reasoning, because he adds the Words, as I may so say, to intimate, 'tis rather an Allusion or Emblem, than strict reasoning.

2. If there could be supposed any Advantage by this natural In-being of all Men in Adam to support the Imputation of his sin to them, yet there can be no Necessity of it, for Christ was not naturally in us, tho' our Sins were imputed to him. This Imputation of Sin therefore, to the one or the other, signifies only the transferring of Guilt, Condemnation or Punishment, and not the Imputation of the same evil Actions, or the transferring them from Adam to, us or from us to our blessed Saviour (Pages 399, 400.).

I reply,

1. 'Tis not suppos'd, that Abraham and Levi were consider'd as one Person, by which Abraham's Act of paying Tithes might become his, or be accounted the Act of Levi, as well as the Act of Abraham, for tho' Abraham was Levi's Progenitor, he was not his Representative. But as Adam was the common Parent and Root of Mankind, he also was constituted the Head and Representative of all his natural Descendants; he and they were considered as one Person by the Law, which he violated, hence his Act of Disobedience became theirs, or chargeable on them, as well as on him, and they were reckon'd to sin in him, and fall with him in his first Transgression.

2. Therefore, the Imputation of Adam's Offence, does not merely follow upon the natural In-being of all Men in him; but it arises from his being their Representative: He indeed was the only proper Person to be constituted such a Head, to the whole of the human Race, because he alone is the common Parent and Root of all Men.

3. Christ was not naturally in us; but yet he might be, and actually was constituted the Representative Head of his Seed. He and they were considered as one in the divine Mind, hence our Sins became his, and his Righteousness becomes ours or is imputed to us.

4. From what has been before observ'd, 'tis evident, that unless Adam's Sin is imputed to us or reckoned ours, as well as his, we are unjustly subjected to Condemnation, Misery and Punishment on Account of that Sin: For, to deny the Imputation of that Offence, and yet grant that we suffer in Consequence of it, necessarily supposes, that we are condemned and punished, consider'd as innocent, than which there is nothing more unjust: And it is equally apparent, that unless our Sins were imputed to Christ, he could not suffer the Punishment due to them, for no innocent Person as so considered, can be made the Subject of Condemnation and Penalty, without a manifest Violation of Justice, in the highest Degree imaginable.

Arg. 3. There is a particular comparison, between our being made or constituted Sinners by the Disobedience of Adam, and our being made or constituted righteous by the Obedience of Christ. The Author's Answer to this Argument is a very observable one, 'tis this. The Jewish and all the Eastern Writers deal in very strong Figures and Expressions, to signify plain and obvious Things. And therefore there is some Allowance to be made in the Explication of them, or when we reduce them to plain Language (401.).

I reply,

1. That the inspired Writers many Times use elegant and strong Figures on various Subjects, is evident enough, and this must be allow'd a peculiar Grace and Beauty in their Stile, which is far above the Imitation of some, who pretend to discover Defects and Blemishes in it, as much for Loftiness and Majesty, instructive Allusions and beautiful Metaphors, as it is for Conciseness, Ease and Simplicity.

2. But we must not imagine, that the unspired Pen-men make Use of figurative Modes of Speech without any Evidence, that they so do, and take the Liberty to interpret their Words, in a Sense quite different from and far below the proper and natural Import of them, without a solid and substantial Reason for it, taken either from the Nature of the Subject concerning which they speak; or from the Scope and Design of the Writer, for if we may indulge to such an Imagination, no evangelical Truth will be capable of Defence from Scripture, nor will it be found possible to detect and refute any Error, however great, by the Help of the sacred Pages.

3. The Truth in the Case is really this: The Subjects of which the Apostle in this Place discourses, are mysterious, and of the Number of the deep Things of God; but the Language in which they are expressed, is easy, plain and natural, yea too plain and striking, for any Person whatever to interpret it in a Consistency with a Denial of the important Truths of the Imputation of Adam's first Offence to his Posterity, and of the Imputation of Christ's Obedience to his People.

4. The Scope of the divine Writer requires us to understand his Words, in their obvious and natural Import, and will not allow us to explain them, as if they were figurative, and more elevated and strong, than the Nature of the Things about which he writes required. It is his general Design in this Discourse to prove two Things. First that Adam's Sin, is the Cause of Condemnation and Death to all his Seed. Secondly, That Christ's Obedience is the Cause of Justification and Life to all his Seed. (1.) He asserts Sin and the Sin of one Man to be the Cause of Death. (2.) That Sin is not imputed where there is no Law. (3.) That Death had reigned from the Time of Adam to Moses, even over such a Part of Mankind, as had not sinned, in the Manner Adam did, i.e. personally, whereby it is not to be doubted Infants are intended. And therefore Mankind were under a Law,

before the Delivery of the Law on Mount Sinai, by the Hand of Moses, and this Law threatened Death in Case of Disobedience, and since many suffered Death, who had not actually sinn'd, they must be under an Imputation of Guilt contracted by another: For the Apostle plainly supposes an Imputation of Sin to all who are subject to Death, and concludes, that by the Offence or Disobedience of one Man, we are made or constituted Sinners. farther he supposes throughout his Discourse, that it is Sin imputed, which subjects Men to Condemnation and Death, and that it is Righteousness imputed, which intitles Men to Justification and Life. And therefore, there is a manifest Necessity to interpret his Words, in their plain and obvious Sense, his Scope and Drift will by no Means allow us to think, he here uses figurative Expressions or Language stronger than the Nature of the Subjects, about which he treats will bear, as this Author falsely imagines he does. In the remaining Part of the Author's Answer to this Argument, 'tis observed, that a Conveyance of sin from Adam, and a Communication of Grace and Holiness from Christ may be intended in this Discourse. To this I reply, (1.) In this Place there is no Mention of our natural Depravity and Corruption, in Consequence of Adam's Sin. (2.) Nor is any Mention made of our Sanctification by Christ. His whole Discourse is of the Imputation of Sin, of one Sin, and of the Sin of one Man to Condemnation and Death: And of the Imputation of the Obedience of one, i.e. Christ, in order to Justification and Life. Sanctification enters not into his Discourse in this Place. The Author argues, that there was not a real Imputation of Sin to the Scape-goat or a real Infliction of Punishment.

Both these Things are freely allow'd, because that was not a Subject capable of either: But still both are true of Christ the Antitype, if he made a real and proper Atonement for Sin, which glorious and important Point is not now to be prov'd, I hope it has been already done.

Arg. 4. It cannot properly be called imputed Righteousness, if the righteous Actions themselves are not imputed, for in proper Speech, the Result of Christ's Righteousness, i.e. the Right to Impunity and eternal Life, which he procured for us, is given to us rather than imputed. To this says he, I answer and grant, this is the very Language of Scripture, it is called, the Gift of Righteousness, Romans 5:17. Eternal Life which is the Result of Christ's Righteousness, is the Gift of God through Jesus Christ. Romans 6:23. And the Forgiveness of Sins is given to Israel. Acts 5:31. Yet let it be observed, that the very Reward itself, is sometimes said to be reckoned or imputed in Scripture Romans 4:4. The Word is *logizetai*, which our Translators have construd' imputed in the next Verse (P. 493.).

I reply,

1. Conferring of Benefits, it is certain, cannot properly be called an Imputation of them. Imputation is an Act in the divine Mind towards Men: A Communication of Favours to Men, is a gracious Act of God upon them, which are very different and distinct Ideas: The latter is not the same with the former, nor may be put for it.

2. The Word signifies to reckon, account, esteem or repute, as well as to impute or place to Account: Thus in these Words, I reckon, *logizomai*, that the Sufferings of this present Time, not I impute (Romans 8:18.). So in this Text, We are accounted *elogisqhmen*, as Sheep for the Slaughter not we are imputed as Sheep (Romans 8:36.), etc. And this must be the Sense in which the Word is used in this Scripture: are counted *logizetai eiv sperma* for the Seed, i.e. are reckoned or reputed, not imputed for the Seed (Romans 8:8). More Instances might be produced, where the Term is taken for Account, Esteem or Reckoning; but these, as I suppose, are sufficient. The

Sense of Romans 4:4. is plainly this: To him that worketh, i.e. who obeys the Law, the Reward is reckoned, or accounted a due Debt. It is the Judgment formed of his Right and Title to Life, upon the Foundation of his Obedience to the Law, which is design'd, and not the Imputation of the Reward to him, that is intended.

3. The Word signifies to impute, or place to the Account of a Person, an Action righteous or unrighteous: Thus in these Words: I pray God it may not be laid to their Charge, mh autoiv logisqeiou (2 Timothy 4:16.) and also in this Scripture: Unto whom God imputeth logizetai Righteousness without Works (Romans 4:6).

4. When a righteous Action is imputed, a Man is accounted or reckoned just, upon the Imputation of that righteous Action and when a sinful Action is imputed or plac'd to the Account of a Person, he is thereupon reputed or esteem'd Unrighteous. But without the Imputation of Righteousness or of Sin, Men cannot be esteem'd Just or Unjust. Socinus objects several Things to the Imputation of our Sins to Christ; but they are such as will be found very easy of Dispatch.

Object. 1. It obscures the Glory of the Grace of God, which is discovered in delivering Christ to Death for us, for if our Sins were imputed to Christ, then in that Act he prosecuted his own Right.

Answ. 1. God maintain'd and vindicated the Honour of his Justice, in the Imputation of our Sins to his Son, and in the Infliction of that Punishment on him, which they merit.

2. Herein also the Glory of his Grace shines with the brightest Lustre: His Blood being a proper Price or valuable Consideration for our Discharge from Guilt, is no Diminution or lessening of the Glory of divine Grace in our Forgiveness: Since the Provision of Christ as a Redeemer, is wholly and solely to be attributed to the Riches of that Grace.

Object. 2. Christ could not then be an Example to us, in his Death, for the Sins of others cannot be imputed to us.

Answ. 1. Christ was an Example to us, in what he suffered from the Hands of Men, and we ought to imitate him, in Patience, Meekness, and Gentleness, when we are rudely treated for his Sake, and the Good of his People and Church.

2. But he was not an Example to us, in what, and as he suffered from the Hand of God, who commanded the Sword of Justice to awake against him, and to smite him, in order to the Redemption of his Body the Church.

Object. 3. How can our Sins be imputed to us, if they were to Christ?

Answ. Adored be divine Favour for it, they are not imputed to us: For, God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespasses unto them.

Object. 4. Two Things are required to the Imputation of another's sins.

(1.) There must be a personal Conjunction or Union between him, to whom they are imputed, and the Person, whose sins they are. (2.) The other is, he must have sinned, and imitated his Wickedness, on whom they are charg'd.

Answ. 1. Christ was absolutely free from all sinful Pollution in himself, for he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.

2. But there is a most near Union between Christ and his People, a nearer Union than can subsist between one Man and another: He is the Head and they are his Members: They are Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh: And 'tis this close and intimate Union which is the Foundation of the Charge, of their Sins on Christ, and of the Imputation of his Righteousness and Obedience to them. And therefore Socinus had no just Cause, as his Manner was, to insult, triumph, and pronounce the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, false, absurd, and impious, which he insolently and rudely does. I am very sorry that the Author of the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, has in any Degree imitated him, in suggesting it to is a blasphemous Doctrine: Such I am well assured it will never be prov'd.

02.04.03. Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3 Shews, that Faith is not a Condition of our Justification, and that it is not imputed to us for Righteousness.

I. A Proper Condition is an Addition to a Promise, by which we will that what is to be granted, or to be, should be conferr'd, in Case some other Thing is done. And therefore two Things enter into the Nature of a proper Condition. A Delay to fulfil the Promise, and an Uncertainty of the Bestowment of the Thing promised. For if the Condition is not fulfill'd, Right to the Benefit promised on that Condition, cannot take Place⁶¹. Some have apprehended, that Faith is a proper Condition of our Justification by the Righteousness of Christ. That an everlasting Righteousness is brought in, for the Justification of Sinners that it is accepted of God to such a Purpose; and, that it is in itself sufficient to that end, am granted; but it is not allow'd to be imputed to any particular Person, except upon the Condition of believing in Christ. Against this Opinion, I object Thus,

1. This Principle supposes, that Christ was not made under the Law, nor obey'd it, for one Man, more than another: Or that he as much designed the Justification of Judas by his Obedience, as the Justification of Paul or Peter, which is entirely incontinent with that peculiar Love he bore to them, and in which Judas had no Interest.

2. There is a foederal Union between Christ and those Persons, on whose Account he fulfill'd the Law: He is their Head, and they are his Members, which can only be said of the Church of the first-born, who are written in Heaven, who are his Body, and to whom he is a Head exclusive of all others, to them therefore, he had a particular View, in his Obedience to the Law, and only intended the Justification of those Persons.

3. As we have before prov'd, this Condition is not in the Power of Men to perform. Now it would be an Impeachment of the Wisdom of Christ, and no Instance of Goodness in him, to design his Righteousness, as the Matter of our Acceptance with God, upon an impossible Condition.

4. If God gives that Grace to Men, which effectually enables them to fulfil this Condition, the Nature of a proper Condition, as to us, is lost: For Justification with Respect to Men becomes absolute, and what there is of Conditionality in it, is not on our Part, but on the Part of God.

5. If all those are not justified, for whom Christ: obey'd the Law, with a View to their Justification, he is disappointed of the End he propos'd to himself in his obeying of it, then he magnified the Law, and made it honourable in vain, as to these Persons, which may not be thought, any more than that he dy'd in vain.

6. Since Christ knew, that God would not enable such Men to believe, who are not of his Sheep, for Men continue in Unbelief, because they are not of that happy Number: Ye believe not, because ye are not of my Sheep, he must be suppos'd to intend, the Justification of such Patrons, as he certainly knew never could be justified, which can't be thought without a manifest Impeachment of his Wisdom: Nor consistent with his Submission to the Father's Will.

7. This supposes, that a Believer for a Time is not justified but condemn'd, for according to this Opinion, Faith is prior to Justification, which if it is, then a Believer may be considered as an unjustified Patron, at least until after his first Act of Faith; but thus he may not be conceived of.

II. Some are of Opinion, that Faith, i.e. the Grace of Faith is imputed for Righteousness, as the Socinians and Arminians. Dr. Doddridge declares himself to be of this Mind, tho' he also believes the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, which Arminius likewise did. I have said, (so he speaks) that I believe both, i.e. that the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and that our Faith is imputed for Righteousness⁶². And says Dr. Doddridge, all manner of Imputation seems to be a Metaphor, taken from Books of Account, between Creditor and Debtor. To impute any Act of Sin, or of Obedience, is therefore properly no other than to let it down to his Account. The great God of Heaven and Earth is represented in Scripture, with humble Condescension to our Manner of acting and conceiving of Things, as keeping a most exact Book of Records and Accounts, in which things are registered concerning every one of us, which he will bring into that final Review and Survey, by which our Characters and States shall finally be determin'd. And as a most exact and perfect Obedience is a Debt which we owe him, as our great Creator, Benefactor, and Governor; so on the Breach of his Law, we owe him some proper Satisfaction for it. In this view, we are all charged as Debtors, poor, miserable and insolvent Debtors in the Book of God: Innumerable sins are imputed, or set down to our Account: And were Things to go on in this Course, we should e'er long be arrested by the divine Justice, and being found incapable of Payment, should be cast into the Prison of Hell, to come out no more. But God in Pity, to this our calamitous State, has found out a Surety and a Ransom for us, and has provided a Satisfaction in the Obedience and Sufferings of his Son; which is what we mean by the Righteousness of Christ, or his active and passive Obedience. It is with a gracious Regard to this, to express his high Complacency in it, and if I may so speak his pleasing Remembrance of it, that all who are finally justified and saved, meet with divine Acceptance and Favour: Or to pursue the Metaphor open'd above, the Righteousness of Christ is in the Book of God, imputed offer down to their Account, as that by which the Debt is balanced, and they are intitled to such Favours as righteous Persons might expect from God. But then it is an invariable Rule in the divine Proceedings, that this Righteousness, or this Atonement and Satisfaction of Christ, (for I think it matters but little, by which of these Names it shall be called) be a Means of delivering those, and only those, that believe. Pursuant therefore to the afore said Metaphor, when any particular Person believes, this is set down to his Account, as a most important Article, or as a Memorandum (if I may so express it) in the Book of Gods Remembrance, that such a one is now actually become a Believer, and therefore is now entitled to Justification and Life by Christ. In this Sense his Faith is imputed for Righteousness. Yet it is not regarded by God, as the grand Consideration which balances the Account, or indeed as paying any Part of the former Debt, which it is impossible it should; but only as that, which according to the gracious Constitution of the Gospel gives a Man a Claim to that which Christ has paid, and which God has graciously allowed as a valuable Consideration, in regard to which he may honourably pardon and accept all who shall apply to him in his appointed Way, or in the Way of humble believing, aa Faith was described above⁶³. On this extraordinary Paragraph we may remark as follows.

1. It is supposed that the Satisfaction of Christ is not real and proper; but is graciously allowed of God as a valuable Consideration for our Discharge, altho' it is not so in itself, for if so it is, it is not a Favour to allow it to be such.

2. That this was paid for such, as may have no Claim to it for want of Faith. The Churches of Christ, in Northamptonshire, may expect to soon hear the universal Extent of Christ's Death in express Words asserted, when they are sufficiently prepared for it, by such artful and sly Insinuations of it.

3. That it is Faith which intitles Men to this Satisfaction of Christ's, such as it is allowed to be: We have thought that it was God's Acceptation of it for us, and his Imputation of it to us, that made it ours, and not any Act which we perform, but it seems this old Protestant Doctrine proves a Mistake.

4. It is here suppos'd, that we are not constituted and made righteous, by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us; but receive Favours from God, as if we were righteous, tho' in Reality we are not so made.

5. It is expressly affirm'd that Faith, i.e. the Grace of Faith is imputed for Righteousness: So say Papists, Socinians, and Arminians, the learned Man, if that will afford him any Degree of Pleasure, may observe, that all who are averse to the most important Point of the truly reform'd Religion, viz. the Doctrine of Justification by the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ ALONE, differ not from him, in this his Opinion of the imputation of the Grace of Faith for Rightousness. 'Tis not a little strange that such a Congregation as that at Rowel in Northamptonshire, should press the Publication of Doctrine, quite the Reverie of what they have been faithfully instructed in, by a Succession of able and judicious Ministers, for many Years, and which they have profess'd to cordially believe: But tho' they so did, I can't persuade myself to think, that they will give up the glorious Truths of the Reality and Perfection of Christ's Satisfaction, the Inconditionality of an Interest in it, and in the Remission of Sin, arising from it and secured by it. Nor that of Justification by Christ's Obedience without any Act of ours. I would here advance some Arguments to prove that the Grace of Faith is not imputed for Righteousness,

1. If Faith is imputed for Righteousness, it is either the Act of Faith only, or it is the Act with the good Works, Which attend it and spring from it: If it is the Act of Faith itself, then we are justified by an Act of our own, and in Justification God imputes not Righteousness to us without Works; but on the contrary, he imputes to us in order to Justification, an Act or Work of our own, for such is Faith. If Faith in Connection with its Fruits, Repentance and holy Obedience, is imputed to us for Righteousness, then we are justified by Works, and therefore this great Benefit with all the Fruits attending it become due to us, and the Reward is not reckoned of Grace; but of Debt, if the Apostle's Reasoning is right.

2. If Faith itself is the Matter of our Acceptance with God, then he justifies us, on Account of an imperfect Work, for such is our Faith, and by Reason of the Imperfection of it, we become liable to Condemnation according to the holy Law of God, which requires absolute Perfection in order to Justification: So that an Act to which Remission is necessary, is the Foundation of our Justification before the awful and holy Tribunal of God. Nothing more false or absurd than is this, that an Act which in strict Justice deserves Punishment, because of its defective Nature, is accepted of God, as our justifying Righteousness, and intitles us to divine Benefits, will soon be invented.

3. In Justification God either accounts us perfect and sinless, or imperfect and deficient in the Practice of our Duty: If he reckons us perfect, then Faith which is imperfect cannot be our justifying

Righteousness in his Sight, that is, if his Judgment is formed of us according to Truth: If God justifies us as imperfect, then he pronounces Men righteous, who are unrighteous, for one single Act of Offence against the Law, justly denominates a Man a Transgressor, and this his Act of Disobedience subjects him to legal Condemnation, and will be an eternal Bar to his Justification by his own Acts of Obedience, how sincere soever.

4. If Men are justified by Faith itself, they have whereof to Glory, and Boasting is not excluded, especially as Faith is thought to be produced, by the Concurrence of the human Will, with the Operations of divine Grace, and Men are suppos'd in Part at least, to be the Cause of their differing from others.

5. Upon this Principle a Believer cannot truly acknowledge, that his purest Acts and best Services consider'd in themselves, expose him to Condemnation according to the Law: Nor hath he Reason to pray, that God would not enter into Judgment with him; but on the contrary, this he is to expect, and is to be justified or condemn'd, as he obeys or disobeys that Law, which requires Faith, as a Condition of his Justification. 6. Neither may Believers renounce a Dependance on their Works, for if God has expressly declared, that he will justify them, on Account of any Acts, or Act of theirs, they ought not to reject those Acts, or that Act, in the great Business of their Acceptance with the Majesty of Heaven; but agreeable to his revealed Will, place their Hopes of Justification therein, and not act such a preposterous Part, as the Apostle must be supposed to do, (if this Doctrine is true) who counted all Things except the Righteousness of Christ, but Dung, Skuzala Dog's Meat (Php 3:8.), as the Word signifies, and of no Consideration in the momentous Affair of his Justification before God: Nor may he frame such an Opinion of himself, and of all his own Righteousness, as the Church does of herself and of her Righteousness: We are all as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags. Before I dismiss this Point, it will be proper to answer an Argument, advanced in Favour of the Imputation of the Grace of Faith for Righteousness. The Argument is this, it is expressly said, that Faith was imputed to Abraham for Righteousness, Romans 4:22.

Answ. Faith either intends the Grace or the Object of Faith; it is strenuously insisted on by Papists, Socinians and Arminians, and by some others, who perhaps would not be thought to be of either of those Parties, that the Grace of Faith is intended: But various Things may be objected to it, taken from the Context and the Thread of the Apostle's Discourse, which will not I apprehend, admit of easy and solid Answers; as, 1. The inspired Writer in Chapters the first and second, and in the first Part of the third Chapter of this Epistle, largely proves the universal Corruption of human Nature, and thereupon infers this Conclusion in the 20th Verse, By the Deeds of the Law, no Flesh can be justified in the Sight of God.

2. He lays down this Proposition in the 21 Verse: The Righteousness of God is manifested and witnessed to, by the Law and the Prophets, which is the Matter of our Acceptance in Opposition to Works. In the 22d Verse he distinguishes this Righteousness from Faith: Even the Righteousness, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no Difference. The Grace of Faith, which is so plainly distinguish'd from the Righteousness manifested and witnessed to, by the Law and the Prophets, cannot be that Righteousness itself. In Verses 24, 25, 26, he expressly declares this Righteousness to be the Redemption and Propitiation. of Christ, hence it is evident, that it was the Intention of the Apostle to prove, that the Matter of our

Justification before God is not in ourselves, but in Christ; on whom true Faith acts, as its proper Object, and therefore all Boasting is excluded, and the Law is fully establish'd in the Justification of Sinners, thro' the Perfection of that Righteousness the Gospel reveals. In the fourth Chapter, the Apostle enters upon the Proof of this important and glorious Doctrine, and produces Abraham, as an Instance of this free Justification, by the Righteousness of God. In Verse the 6th he calls it: A Righteousness without Works: Faith is a Work, and therefore cannot be that Righteousness. In Verse the 11th he distinguishes this Righteousness, from that Faith Abraham had, while he was uncircumcised, and therefore his Faith could not be that Righteousness, which was imputed to him, in order to his Justification. Circumcision was to Abraham a Seal, not of his Faith, but of what God had revealed and promis'd to him, as a Ground of his Hope and Trust, which the Apostle calls the Righteousness of Faith, and which is the Righteousness that the Faith of Abraham had Respect to, and trusted in, and is imputed to such who are not circumcis'd. In the 13th Verse he again calls it the Righteousness of Faith. In the 18th Verse he mentions the divine Promise given to Abraham, as the Foundation of his Hope, and the Object of his Trust. In Verses 19, 20 and 21, he observes the Strength of Abraham's Faith under the many Difficulties, which attended the Accomplishment of that Promise, to which his Faith had Respect: And then asserts, that this Righteousness of God, on which his Faith acted in so eminent a Manner was imputed to him Verse the 22d. Besides, another Thing which evidently shews, that it was not Abraham's Faith itself, which was imputed to him for Righteousness, but the Object of his Faith, is this: That which was imputed to Abraham for Righteousness, is also imputed to others, to the same End, which can't be true of his Faith; but is true of the Object of his Faith, viz. the Righteousness of God, which is to all, and upon all them, that believe without any Difference or Distinction. Thus the Apostle clearly proves the Proposition laid down, that the Matter of our Justification, is not in ourselves; but that it is the Righteousness of God manifested, and witnessed to, by the Law and the Prophets. To these Things we may subjoyn, that the Apostle in the next Chapter, professedly treats of the Imputation of Adam's Sin to his Posterity, and of the Imputation of Christ's Obedience to his Seed, in order to Justification of Life. And therefore it could not be his Design in this Chapter to establish the Doctrine of Justification, by Faith, as an Act or Work of ours.

02.04.04. Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

Contains Arguments to prove that the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to Men in order to Justification. And an Enquiry into the Foundation of the Charge of Sin on Christ, and of the Imputation of his Obedience to his People. MY Design in this Chapter, is to offer to the Consideration of the Reader, such Arguments, which I apprehend clearly demonstrate and prove, that Christ alone is the Subject of that Righteousness, by which we can be justified in the Sight of God, and be intitled to eternal Life; they are as follow:

1. We cannot be justified by an imperfect Righteousness: The Holiness and Justice of God, before whom the Heavens are not clean, and who charges his Angels with Folly, is such, that no Service tinctur'd with Sin, can ever be accepted with him, as in itself considered, and be the Foundation of the Acceptance of our Persons in his Sight. He cannot esteem an Action, which hath the least Mixture of Evil in it, pure, and impute it to the Subject of it for Righteousness: For if so, God must be thought to account his Creatures just and unjust, righteous and unrighteous, and that with a View to the same individual Actions, which imply a most manifest Contradiction, and therefore cannot be true. Our own Acts of Obedience are all defil'd, and when compared with the holy Law of God, deserve the Name of filthy Rags: Of these filthy Rags we must be diverted, and be clothed with Change of Raiment: With fine Linnen, clean and white, that is to say, with a Righteousness absolutely pure and without any Spot, or else we can never be the Objects of divine Approbation. No such perfect Righteousness we have of our own, if therefore we are not furnished with such a Righteousness by our dear Redeemer, our Justification is a Thing impossible. God of his infinite Mercy grant, that such as depend on their own imperfect Obedience, and now think of putting themselves upon Trial at the Bar of God, to be justified or condemn'd, as their Actions are agreeable or disagreeable to his Law, may see the Danger of that Dependence, before their Appearance there, if not the Consequence will be dreadful.

2. Justification is not of Works, or of the Works of a Law, that is to say, not by the personal Actions of Men performed in Obedience to any divine Law whatever, new or old: For there is no Law given which can give Life, and by which a justifying Righteousness, may by Men be wrought out. To say, that if we are justified by the Righteousness of Christ, we are justified by Works conformable to the Law, is a glorious Truth; but is no Objection to this Assertion, that Righteousness is imputed to us without Works, in the Apostle's Sense, who speaks of Works in a personal View, or of Men's personal Actions. And therefore to infer from the Imputation of Christ's Obedience, that we are justified by Works in such a Sense, as contradicts the Design of the inspired Writer, concerning the Exclusion of Works, from having any Concern in Justification, is no better than an impertinent Cavil, and is most unworthy the lovely Name of Reasoning. If Justification is of Works, or of the personal Actions of Men, it is not of Grace: It is of the one wholly, and exclusively of the other, it cannot be of both, of Grace, and of the personal Acts of Men too: There are Opposites, and it is impossible they should ever be blended, or enter into a Composition. We are justified freely by the

Grace of God, thro' the Redemption, that is in Christ. His Righteousness alone therefore, is the Cause, Matter and Foundation of our Acceptance with the divine Being.

3. Our Righteousness is in Christ, he only is the Subject of it: Surely shall one say in the Lord have I Righteousness. That it is a Righteousness for Justification, which is designed in the Text, plainly appears from what is immediately subjoin'd: In the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified. We are justified in him, in whom our Righteousness is, who is no other than Christ: Nor are we justified by any other Righteousness, than what is in him; his Obedience therefore, is our justifying Righteousness, and is imputed to us for our Justification.

4. One of Christ's glorious Titles is: Jehovah our Righteousness. This Name of his, is as Ointment poured forth, which causes the Virgins to love him. It Is our Righteousness in the divine Account, which is the Matter of our Justification, Christ in the Esteem of God, is our Righteousness, and therefore we are only justified by and thro' him, or by the Imputation of his sinness and perfect Obedience to us.

5. He is expressly declared to be the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one who believes. The Law of God required an exact Observation of all its Precepts, in order to Justification and Life: Through the Weakness of our Nature, it was impossible for us to keep it: God in infinite Goodness and Mercy to us lent his Son, in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the Flesh, that the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, i.e. by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, which is commensurable to the extensive Commands of the Law. So that the Law now, as it was fulfilled by Christ for us, proposes no such End of Obedience to us, as obtaining Justification and Life, that End is brought about by Christ's Subjection to it, and Observation of it for us, as our Surety.

6. By the Obedience of Christ, we are made or constituted righteous: This only can be by the Imputation of that Obedience to us. Say some, we are intitled to the Reward, or God deals with us, as if we were righteous, on Account of Christ's Righteousness; but we are not so made. If this Interpretation of Scripture is allow'd of, what Principles may not be defended, or what evangelical Truths can be establish'd? It is only saying the Intention of the inspired Writers, was to convey Ideas, very different to what their Terms are proper Signs of, Truth is banished and Error is introduc'd: Nor have we any Way left us, to defend the former or detect the latter. If indeed the Language of Scripture, might be understood, in its proper Sense and Meaning, we should have nothing to fear, from the most subtle and violent Opposers of the Gospel. But this is a Favour which will not be granted us, tho' as we think, in Point of Right and Justice we may demand it: But we must it seems wait to see what Sense some Persons will please to put upon the Words of Scripture, different from their plain, natural and obvious Import, before we may safely interpret them, and yet none in the World know, how they came to be invested with this extraordinary Authority, which they assume to themselves. No two Ideas are more different and distinct, than Obedience or Righteousness, and the Reward, or the Result of Righteousness and Obedience. We think, that when the Apostle says, we are made righteous by the Obedience of one, i.e. Christ, his Language was properly expressive of his Sense; no, say some, he intended a very different Thing, not that we are made or constituted righteous; but we are proceeded towards, as righteous Persons might expect to be, tho' such this Obedience makes us not. If we take the Liberty to ask there Persons, what Foundation they have to support their Opinion, truly they are able to assign no

other Reason for it, than, that to them the Thing express'd seems not reasonable, which with us is of no Weight at all; because we know, that the Mysteries of the Gospel, have always been censured, as irrational and foolish Notions by many.

7. God is well pleased, for Christ's Righteousness sake. With what is God well pleas'd for the sake of the Obedience of his Son? We think it is with the Persons of his People, who are the Objects of his infinite Delight, as he beholds them in the spotless Righteousness the Mediator, as so view'd he pronounces them all fair and without Spot. The Persons of God's Elect are the Objects of the eternal and invariable Complacency of Christ: His Delights were with the Sons of Men, before the World was framed. In no other View could they so be, than, as clothed with his own Robe of Righteousness, and 'tis as invested therewith, that God sees no Iniquity or Perverseness in them, and declares them perfect: Thou art perfect, through my Comeliness, that I have put upon thee.

8. Christ is the entire Cause of our Justification. One Branch of which, is our Discharge from Guilt, that is owing to his Sufferings, and Death: Being justified by his Blood. The other Branch of our Justification, is God's accounting us righteous; Christ solely and alone is the Cause of this, as he is of the former, or else he is only a partial Saviour, which we don't take to be true; on the contrary, we are fully persuaded, that, he is a perfect Saviour, and all in all, to the Saints: ALL in their Acceptance with the Father, as well as in their Redemption, which he is not, if our Faith or Obedience is imputed to us for Righteousness. There Arguments are so clearly deducible from Scripture. and contain so much Evidence in them, that we think no Exception can reasonably be made to them. If it would not be interpreted as expecting more than we ought, we should desire those, who differ from us, in this grand Article of Faith, to produce at least, one Argument equally clear, in Favour of their Opinion of Justification, by any Acts, or Act of our own, which if they will please to do, it shall have all the Weight and Consideration the Importance and Evidence of it may require.

Query. What is the Foundation of the divine Procedure in the Charge of Sin on Christ, and in the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People? In the Resolution of this Question, lies no small Part of the Mystery and Glory of the Gospel.

1. There is a most near and intimate Union between Christ and his People, that Union is the Ground of this Imputation in each Instance: If this Union is of such a Nature, as cannot subsist between Men, then such Acts may follow upon it, towards Christ and towards his People, as may not take Place in the Conduct of Men towards one another. And that this is really the case, may be concluded, from the various Unions the Scripture uses, to express that of Christ: and his People by. Christ is represented as the Vine, and his Saints as the Branches in him: He is the Husband and his People are his Bride: They are Bone of his Bone and Flesh of his Flesh: They are of Him as Eve was of Adam. Christ and they constitute one Mystical Person, they are his Members, and he is their Head: God considers them as one, in such a sense, as any Number of Men cannot be constituted one. Christ and they therefore may be treated, in such a Manner, as no Number of Men may be by one another, by reason of the peculiar Conjunction between them. This Union is set forth by the most near in Nature, that of the Soul and Body There is one Body, and there is one Spirit. As a reasonable Soul, and a human Body united, constitute the Person of a Man; so Christ and his People constitute one mystical Person, in the Repute of God, hence it is that their Sins were imputed to him, and that his Righteousness is imputed to them.

2. Christ is their Surety, he is expressly called the Surety, of a better Testament. The Socinians indeed speak of him, as a Surety for God to Men, wherein they are followed by the Arminians. But this is no other than a mere Figment of theirs, invented with a Design to evade the Force of several Arguments, form'd from thence in Favour of the most solid and important Truths of the Gospel. God had no need of a Surety, 'tis blasphemous to imagine it. He is Truth and cannot but fulfil all his Promises and Engagements: He is omnipotent and able to perform all the good and great Things for his People, he gives them Reason to hope for. Christ therefore was a Surety for us to God, and not the Surety of God to us, as these Men affirm he is, without the least Evidence from Scripture or Reason. 'Tis hence our criminal Actions were charged on him, and this is the Foundation of the Imputation of his Righteousness or Obedience to us. Suretyship may be and frequently is allow'd of among Men, in Affairs of mere Debt; but it ought not to be admitted in capital or corporal Punishments, for Offences against the Law: The Reasons are, no human Legislature have Power to require, or to accept of the Engagement of an innocent Person to suffer for a Transgressor: Justice obliges to protect the Life and Safety of every guiltless Subject: Nor is there such an Union subsisting among Men, or can be, as lays a proper Foundation, for the Law, or Legislature, to consider them as one Person, and therefore the criminal Actions of one Man, cannot legally be charged on another: Neither hath any Man Power over his Life, or over the Members of his Body, but to preserve it: He therefore may not engage to die, or to suffer the loss of any Member, for and in the Stead of an Offender. But God had Power over the human Nature of Christ, and might will and design him to suffer for his People. Christ also had Power over his Life, and might dispose of it, to effect the important End of the Redemption of Sinners. And since such a Union subsists between Christ and those Persons, whom he intended to save, as is a proper Foundation for the Charge of their Offences on him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to them, he and they being considered as one by the Law, and were such in the Repute of God; in neither of these singular Transactions, is there any thing absurd, or inconsistent with Justice, tho' no such Acts, may take Place in human Conduct.

3. Christ became subject to the Law by a special divine Constitution: He was not born under it, as all mere Men are; their Subjection to the Law follows upon their being the natural Descendants of Adam, to whom the Law was originally given, and his being to them a Representative; but as Christ was not a natural Descendant of Adam: Nor was the first Adam a Representative of the second Adam, who is the Lord from Heaven; his Obligation to the Law arises not from his Birth but he was made under it, by an Appointment peculiar to himself, to answer a special End, viz. the Redemption of sinful Men: And therefore what the Law required of them, either in a Way of Suffering or Obedience, he became obliged by this divine Constitution to undergo and perform: And by Vertue of this peculiar Appointment, both are reckoned or imputed to them, without which, their Redemption from the Law, as a Covenant of Works threatening Death in case of Offence, and promising Life only on Condition of perfect Obedience, was impossible.

02.04.05. Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

Contains Answers to the Author's Objections against the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to his People; And also to the Objections of Socinus. THE first Objection is contain'd in the latter Part of the third Remark, which the ingenious Author makes, the former Part of which is before considered. It is this,

Object. 1. The Scripture does not as I remember, in express Words assert — that the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to Believers (403.).

Answ. 1. If the Sense is found in Scripture it is sufficient, tho' the Terms are not expressly mentioned, and that it is, I hope is abundantly evident from what has been before observ'd.

2. But it may be, if it had been said expressly, that the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to Believers, the proper Idea conveyed by that Assertion, would not be admitted; but some figurative Meaning, would be invented, which the Terms of the Proposition do not properly import, and the Thought express'd would be deny'd. This Gentleman is pleas'd to acquaint us very plainly, that this Method would be taken, and I doubt it not. If these Words, says he, were expressly written in the Bible, they could not reasonably be interpreted to any other Sense, than that which I have explained in and by so many Examples, both in the Scripture History and in common Life (404.). I am very sorry that so offensive an Observation, as this is, fell from his Pen.

(1.) The Thing is contested, as it is said, because the Scripture does not in express Terms assert it.

(2.) But what if the Scripture had expressly in these very Terms, and in this very Form asserted it, would the Doctrine have then been believed? No, it seems not: This brings to Mind what Socinus said of the Satisfaction of Christ; that if the Scripture had expressly asserted it, he would not believe it. When once Men arrive to such a Height of Prejudice against any Doctrine, their Conviction is hardly to be hoped for, whatever Evidence is offer'd in Confirmation of divine Truth: And therefore were we not constrain'd by Love to evangelical Truth, to appear in its Defence, as good we might leave them quietly to enjoy, and please themselves with their corrupt Prejudices, and would do so; but that we know, we ought to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

(3.) To put a forc'd and unnatural Sense on the Terms of Scripture, is not to interpret it; but is a manifest Corruption of the Word of God, and for which Men, unless I am greatly mistaken, will one Day be accountable.

(4.) If this Gentleman or any other shall be able to prove, that Obedience is Justification and eternal Life, i.e. that Obedience and Reward are the same thing, and not different and distinct Things then how much soever, I am persuaded of the Truth and Importance, of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to his People, I will no longer contend about it, but give it up as an Opinion

never to be prov'd.

(5.) I promise the same, upon his or any other Person proving, that to make Men righteous by the Obedience of Christ, is intitling them to Justification and Life, without considering them righteous by the Imputation of that Obedience to them, this may be done when it is prov'd that Righteousness is Life or Reward, but not before. And therefore I am in no great Danger of being obliged by this Concession, to part with a Doctrine, which in my Apprehension, is as important and glorious, as any recommended to our Assent and Faith, in the sacred Word of God.

(6.) To assert that Men are made righteous by the Obedience of Christ, is affirming the Imputation of that Obedience to them, with the stronger Evidence imaginable: The Evidence is such, as cannot be resisted; but by denying, that the Terms are used in their proper Sense, without being able to assign one solid Reason, why they must be understood, in an improper one: Nay, which is more, when the very Scope and Design of the holy Writer, requires us to understand him, as speaking, not in a figurative, but strictly proper Manner, as is above observ'd, and I hope fully prov'd.

(7.) The Instances in the Scripture-History, which this Gentleman produces, are by no means parallel: Abraham and his Seed, Phineas and his Seed, Gehazi and his Seed, Achan and his Seed, were not considered as one Person by the Law, and therefore their Actions righteous or unrighteous, could not be imputed to their Posterity. But Christ and his People are one, in the Eye of the divine Law, and in the Repute of God: Hence their Sins were charged on him, and 'tis hence his Righteousness is imputed to them.

(8.) All Affairs in common Life are at an infinite Remove, from the Nature of those Things, now under our Consideration. Strange indeed! is there no Mystery in the Gospel, and are all divine Procedures towards Sinners, and towards Christ, to be explained by the common Affairs of human Life? Why then is the Gospel represented as a Mystery and the hidden Wisdom of God in a Mystery? For what Reason does the Apostle speak of the Doctrines of the Gospel, particularly that of Redemption; as of the deep things of God: If it is a Matter so very obvious, and may be considered in the same Light, as Things in common Life? Sure this Eastern Writer, uses very strong and exalted Expressions indeed on a Subject, which hath not in the Nature of it, any thing of Sublimity or Depth, suitable to the Pomp and Grandeur of those exalted. Epithets, which he profusely gives it. In Words there is a Shew of Something extraordinary, and far above all Affairs in human Life; but in Fact there is not. See the dangerous Tendency of departing from the known and establish'd Sense of Terms and Expressions used in the holy Scripture, without urgent Necessity for it. This is an intolerably bad Note, and I doubt not, but the good Gentleman will some Time or other, be heartily sorry, that he ever wrote it.

Object. 2 This Satisfaction cannot be imputed to us properly.

Answ. Is there any improper Imputation of Righteousness? To me it seems there is not. To impute an Action righteous or unrighteous, is to place it to the Account of a Person, on which he is reputed righteous or unrighteous, according to the Nature of that Action, which is imputed in him or placed to his Account. Either therefore an Act of Obedience is reckoned to a Man, or it is not; If it is, that is a proper Imputation of it. If it is not, there is no Imputation at all. To say that Imputation is proper or Improper, is at best speaking very improperly. But why may not the Satisfaction of Christ be

imputed to us? The Reason he assigns to support this Objection is this, Lest we should be said to have satisfied, and made God a Recompence for our sins. His Merit cannot be imputed to us in a strict Sense, for that would make us Meritors, (407, 408.).

Answ. 1. When the Action of one is imputed to another, that Action is still to be considered, as the personal Act of him who perform'd it, and not the personal Act of him, to whom it is imputed.

2. The Imputation of Christ's Obedience to his People, supposes not, that they performed it, or were personally concern'd an those righteous Actions, of which it consists: Or that it is accounted their personal Righteousness; This Imputation of it therefore, makes it not their personal Obedience, which, the Objection. evidently, supposes, and since It suggests that which is not supposed to attend, or which in Fact does not, nor can attend the Act of Imputation, it fails of proving the Point, the Objector intends it as a Proof of: The Imputation of Christ's Merit to Men, does not make them Meritors, as this Author, with the Socinian most untruly affirms. The Author of a meritorious Action alone merits, because that Action is only his personal Act: The Imputation of it to another, makes it not his personal. Act., and therefore in Consequence of the Imputation of that Action, he can't be said to merit: But yet he hath a Right to all the Favours merited, by Virtue of the Imputation of that meritorious Action to him.

2. No valuable End, I think, is answered by using Scripture Language, when Men explain away the proper Ideas that Language is expressive of: To what Purpose is it to say, the Obedience of Christ is imputed to Men, and that they are made righteous by that Obedience, when no such Thing is intended; but only that the Result i.e. the Effects of that Obedience are imputed, (which by the Way cannot be, for Favours may be communicated, but cannot be imputed) and made theirs or transferred to them? It is no better than trifling with the Word of God, and it will one Day appear, whether this is not done, with an Intention to impose on the less capable and discerning Part of Christians, who may not be able to discover, that the Doctrine of Scripture is deny'd, when a scriptural Mode of speaking is used, tho' the proper Ideas of the Language of Scripture are entirely explained away. For my Part, tho' I am desirous to hold fast the Form of found Words, and would not part with, even Terms and Expressions by which divine Truths are properly express'd, and to use other Words capable of a Construction contrary to, or short of those Truths, in Complaisance to any Man: Yet, I cannot be content with the bare use of such Terms, without the Ideas they properly convey, for what are Letters, Syllables, and Words or Sounds, without those Ideas they are proper Signs of? Let Gentlemen, therefore, if they please, together with a Rejection of scriptural Doctrines, lay aside the Use of scriptural Expressions: How ever if they will not do this, they may be assured of being oppos'd in a Corruption of the Word, of God, tho' they express themselves in the Language of the Bible. Socinus vehemently opposes the Imputation of the Satisfaction and Righteousness of Christ; he pronounces it impossible, absurd, and pernicious. This is objecting very strongly, indeed, how he succeeds in supporting there Objections we shall presently discover.

Object. 1. Says he, it is impossible; which he endeavours to prove thus; Christ was obliged to obey the Law for himself, as other Men are, and therefore his Obedience, cannot be imputed to others.

Answ. 1. Christ was born and given to the Church of God; or became Man with a View in the Salvation of his People; what therefore he did or suffered in Obedience to the Law, was for the Sake of those, on whose Account he came into the World.

2. He was God, as well as Man: and his human Nature, being personally united with the Son of God, it was exalted to a State above that of mere Men; and he was not obliged to obey the Law, in order in his own Justification and Right to Life, as all mere Men are: For by Vertue of his personal Union with the Son of God, he had a Right to Heaven and Glory; his Title to Happiness did not depend on his Obedience to the Law; but was the proper and necessary Result, of his being ineffably united with the divine Nature. Hence we read of his being made under the Law, i.e. by a special divine Constitution, with a View to the Redemption and Justification of others, as was before observ'd. He indeed denies the Divinity of Christ but this is a Truth, which at present I take for granted, it not being called into Question, by those with whom I have now a more immediate Concern, tho' they, at least some of them, have borrowed his Reasoning in this Point, without his Principle on which he founds it. 'Tis this Union that is the Foundation of the infinite Merit, which attended the Obedience of Christ; and 'tis owing to this, that it is available to the Justification of many. This effectually answers a second Thing, offered by Socinus, to prove the Imputation of it is impossible; which is, that it could not be imputed to more than one single Person. To which we may add Christ was appointed a Representative Head to many, and he and they were considered as one by the Law: His Obedience therefore, may be imputed to every Individual of those Persons, to whom he was constituted such a Head, upon the same Ground, as it is imputed to any one of them. He farther observes, that if the Obedience of Christ is imputed to us, he must have obey'd, for us, at our Will or Desire, which is just as true, as that one who pays the Debt of another, must do it at the Request of him who owes it, if the Payment of the Debt is accepted by the Creditor; every one knows this is not necessary. God's Appointment and Christ's voluntary Engagement, were a sufficient Foundation for the Imputation of his Merit, Satisfaction and Obedience to his People. It was not necessary, Christ should suffer or obey the Law at their Motion and Will, in order to the Imputation of his Sufferings and Obedience to them.

Object. 2. It is absurd, says he, because then we blotted out the Sins of Mankind, and satisfied for our Offences. This is sufficiently answered above, to an Objection of the Author's of Ruin and Recovery, which is much the same with this. We very well know of whom, some other Objections of his to the glorious Truths of the Gospel are borrowed, and whole Language it is he uses. I need only observe now: The Imputation of the Action of one to another, does not make it become the personal Act of him, to whom it is imputed. Christ's Obedience to the Law, consists of his personal Actions agreeable to it, the Imputation of that Obedience to us, does not make those Acts, our personal Acts, of which that Obedience consists. If the Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness was as absurd, as this Way of arguing is, it would be monstrously so indeed. He adds, its absurd, because it supposes Men are justified, who are ungodly. This the Apostle expressly affirms: But believeth on him, that justifieth the ungodly, in which at present, we think he was not mistaken. But tho' Men are justified who are ungodly, yet they are not considered as ungodly; but as righteous by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to them, in the divine Mind. And Holiness and Grace shall certainly be communicated to them, to dispose them to Acts of Religion and Piety.

Object. 3. Its pernicious, says he, because it dissolves Obligation to Duty^{f64}.

Answ. 1. It is certain Men will be obliged to all Acts of Holiness, when Justification and Life depend not on the Practice of Duty, viz. when they will be in Heaven. 2. To say that Men are under no Obligation to Holiness, because that is not required in order to their Justification, is the same

Objection, which was brought against the Doctrine of the Apostle; it seems therefore, very likely to be the Doctrine, which he so zealously recommended.

3. To affirm that if good Works are not necessary to Justification, they are in other Respects unnecessary, discovers great Ignorance or Perverseness: If a Man is not under the Law, in order to his Justification by the Works of it, 'tis not to be inferred from hence, that he may cease to observe it as as a Rule of Conduct; for Duty ceases not with this End of it. Thus we see this Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Obedience is not impossible, absurd or pernicious, as Socinus pronounces it.

02.04.06. Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

Contains an Examination of the Author's Distinction of the real and relative Evil of Sin; his Mistakes herein are noted. Sin not put for Obligation to Punishment, without a Charge of Offence. What he delivers on Guile and Guiltiness considered. His Thoughts of the Filth Of Sin, are also taken into Consideration: And some Animadversions are made on the Author's Answers to several perplexing Questions, relating to these Subjects. THE Author of the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, distinguishes the Evil of Sin, into real and relative,

1. With Respect to the real Evil of Sin, he observes, it consists in its hurtful Nature and evil Qualities; whether it be considered in the Habits of the Mind, or in the Actions of Life.

2. The relative Evil of sin, says he, consists more particularly in its Respect to the governing Authority and Law of God, it is a Contrariety to that Law, partly in the very Principles and Habits of the Soul, as well as in the Actions of Life. But as this relative Evil belongs chiefly to sinful Actions, it is more properly an actual Opposition to, or Violation of God's righteous Law, and so it subjects the sinner to the Punishment, which that Law threatens (Pages 411, 412.).

1. The ingenious Author is obliged to allow, that the relative Evil of Sin, extends itself to the Habits of the Mind, as well as to the Actions of Life, ho' more particularly and chiefly to external Acts; and therefore it bears Respect to the governing Authority and Law of God, of Consequence the natural Depravity of our Mind, as well as our sinful Actions in Life, renders us guilty in the Sight of God: Hence it is to be considered as a relative Evil of Sin, as well as a real Evil.

2. I cannot understand what this Gentleman designs by the Application of this Distinction, of the real and relative Evil of Sin, to the Habits of the Mind, and to sinful Actions in Life: Unless it is to prove, that vicious Principle, in Men, do not subject them to a Charge of Guilt and Condemnation by the Law. In a marginal Note he plainly acquaints us, that this is his Intention: I do not remember, says he, the Word Guilt, which is the proper relative Evil of sin, is ever in Scripture ascribed to the Principle or Habit of Sin, without the Act. His Opinion therefore, as it seems to me, is plainly this: That Sin, as it is an evil Habit in the Soul, is not any Part of our Guiltiness before God. Which I take to be an intolerable Error: Men at the Bar of God will, I am strongly persuaded, find the dreadful Corruption of their Hearts, charged on them as one Branch of their Guilt: For the divine Law requires Truth in the inward Part, as well as a strict and perpetual Conformity of Life to its righteous Precepts. Such an Observation as this from some Persons would be censured as Antinomianism, and how justly, I think any Person may easily discover.

3. The Mind of Man is an active, and ever thinking Power or Substance, as the ingenious Dr. Watts observes^{f65}. As the Mind is depraved, it cannot think, will or desire regularly, and therefore it constantly thinks, wills and desires in an irregular Manner: The Imagination of the Thoughts of the Hearts of Men, is only evil continually. Now I would ask, whether our irregular Thoughts, and disorderly Acts of our Wills and Affections are criminal? If it is allowed they are, why should the

Streams which flow from the Fountain of Sin in us, be accounted vile and abominable; and contrary to the Law, and the Origin from whence they take their Rise not be so esteem'd? I should think, that as the Source and the Streams are of the same Nature, they both must be hateful and displeasing to God.

4. When this Author says without the Act; he means either the internal Act of the Mind, or the external Act in Life: If he intends the latter, then the Apostle was mistaken, in thinking that he sinn'd, when he coveted; which will not soon be granted: If he means the internal Act of the Mind, when he is able, it may be expected of him to prove, that a reasoning Power or Substance, which ever thinks, and is corrupt, may think, will and desire, as it ought, or that the Habit of the Mind may be separated from the Act; then he may conclude, that the Depravity of the Mind, is not any Part of our Guiltiness before God; but not till this is done. The Reason of which is, tho' the Habit and the Act may be distinguished, they cannot be separated: As a Power of thinking, and Thought may be distinguished, but cannot be separated; for as a Man cannot cease to think, he cannot cease to think in a disorderly Manner: 'Tis therefore a vain Thing, to distinguish upon the Habit and Act of Sin, in such a Way, as to clear the Habit of Blame, and throw it all upon the Act.

5. If the internal impure Acts of Men are not relatively evil, then the Law of God hath no Concern with their Hearts, then Covetousness, Pride and Envy, Malice and Revenge, as aged in the Mind are not criminal: Nor indeed any Act that is proper to the Soul, which is most false.

6. The Reason why the Guilt is charged on the Act, is, the Act is inseparable from the Habit, as was just now observed, and the evil Habit of Sin, from which sinful Acts spring, is considered or included in the Act.

7. It therefore is evident, that the evil Bias and Propensity of our Hearts, subjects us to Condemnation and Penalty.

8. The Want of any Thing which enters into that Righteousness, which the Law requires to Justification, renders us liable to Condemnation and Death. The Law commands Purity of Heart in order to Justification, and therefore the Want of it, and the contrary, i.e. Impurity, being found in us, subject us to Punishment and Death.

II. He asserts, that Sin both in the old and new Testament, is put for the sinful Disorder of the Heart, and also for the Demerit of some evil Action (Pages 214, 215.).

Answ. 1. I am of Opinion, Sin is never in the old Testament, but for Punishment, in an abstract Consideration from a Charge of the Crime deferring the Penalty, I know of no Instance where it is to be so taken; nor has this Gentleman produced any such.

2. It is not Fact, that Sin is ever put for Penalty in the new Testament, at least so far as I can find, true it is, that Punishment may be and is included; but a Charge of Offence, is always supposed as the Cause of that Penalty. It is not put for Punishment in a separate Consideration from the Crime itself, in the new Testament, which is what this learned Gentleman intends, if I mistake not his Sense. When Christ is said to be made Sin, it designs the Imputation of Offence, and an Infliction of Punishment, as the Result of that Charge of sinful Disorder on him, not his own, but his People's.

III. Guilt and Guiltiness the Author enquires into;

1. Guilt and guilty, he apprehends, denote a Person's Obligation to suffer Punishment (Pages 214, 215.). But surely not without an Imputation of Sin itself: Guiltiness is the Opposite of Innocence and Righteousness, without which a Man is not intitled to a Reward; neither is or can any Man legally be obliged to suffer Punishment, without the Imputation of Offence.

2. He distinguishes Guilt into Reatus Culpaе, & Reatus Paenae, i.e. Guilt of Blame and Guilt of Punishment; what Foundation so ever it may be thought, there is for this Distinction relating to Guilt, the latter only follows upon the former, they are inseparable: No Man is or can in Justice be liable to Punishment, that is not guilty of Fault, either by Perpetration or Imputation Reatus Poenae, cannot take place, where there is not Reatus Culpoe.

IV. He observes, That we never say a Man is guilty of the Fault; but when he is the actual personal Sinner (416, 417.). Very true: The Reason of which is, an Offender and an innocent Person among Men, cannot become one Person in a legal Sense. Says this Gentleman, But he may be said to bear the Guilt of sin, or have the Guilt laid on him, when he is made liable or subject to the Punishment, by the Imputation of Sin to him (ibid.). I cannot well understand this: Sometimes Obligation to suffer Penalty, is all the Imputation of Sin that is allow'd of. Here Imputation of Sin seems to be consider'd as a Thing distinct from it, which is the very Point we plead for, and shall be glad if it may be granted.

V. He observes, that Guilt of Conscience, or a Consciousness of Sin, is proper to the personal and actual Offender, and can never be transferred to another by Imputation (ibid.).

Answ. Tho' our Saviour could not have the least Consciousness of personal Offence, yet he was capable of having a painful Sensation of the Charge of Sin on him by divine Justice, and of the evil Nature of Sin, and of the infinite Anger and Displeasure of God, demerited by those Sins he bore and he actually had a wounding Sense of these Things, or else he was not punished in his Suffering, for there are essential to divine Punishment, and enter into the very Nature of it: And if a Redeemer sustained not Penalty, Satisfaction is not made, and therefore after all, we must embrace Socinianism. There is nothing more inconsistent in the World, than to deny the Imputation of Sin to Christ:, and his having a painful Sensation of its vile Nature, and dreadful Demerit: And yet pretend to maintain the Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin, by his Sacrifice and Death. If Christ had not a Sensation of these Things, his Soul was not made an Offering for Sin, or was not any other Way the Subject of Suffering, than as it was affected with his bodily Pains, and other afflictive Circumstances, which attended him, from Devils and Men, which Socinians themselves will never deny. The ingenious Gentleman expresses himself in such a Manner, if I understand him right, as is not very consistent, it is thus: The only Thing in Sin which can be transferr'd or imputed to any other Person, is the Obligation to suffer Penalty, or to make amends for the Violation of the Law. To which he subjoins in the following Part of this Discourse, Therefore when I use the Word Guilt I desire to be understood chiefly, or only, concerning that Liableness, Obligation or Subjection to Punishment, which sin may bring any Man under, whether it be actually and personally committed by himself, or whether it be transferr'd to him only by Imputation (418.). How can these Assertions consist together?

Obligation to suffer Penalty is the only Thing in Sin, which can be imputed to an innocent Person.

2. A Man is brought under a Liableness, Obligation or Subjection to Punishment by Sin, either as it is personally committed by himself, or as transferr'd to him only by Imputation.

1. If I mistake not, that which is denied in the first Assertion, is granted in the Second; Obligation to suffer Penalty, and Sin, are considered as distinct Things in each Assertion. Sin itself is denied to be imputed in the first, to any but the actual Transgressor: And in the second, Sin (as thus distinguished from the Obligation to suffer Penalty,) is said to be imputed to one, who is not the actual Offender, in order to his Subjection to Punishment. Either these Things are not consistent, or there is some Obscurity in the Manner of the Author's expressing himself, which I acknowledge, is with him an exceeding rare Thing. Or else the Difficulty only arises from my Want of Capacity to understand his Meaning, which of these it is: I leave with the Reader to determine,

2. Obligation to suffer Punishment is not any Thing in Sin; but; is absolutely distinct from it, tho' it is the proper and legal Result of it. If therefore it was only the Obligation to Punishment that was imputed to Christ; nothing of Sin was imputed to or laid on him.

3. If the Obligation to suffer Penalty arises from, and is only founded in a Charge of Sin, then an innocent Person, as so considered, cannot be the Subject of that Obligation to suffer Punishment.

4. Christ's Obligation to suffer Penalty must be most distinct from ours, if our Sins were not imputed to him: For our Liability to suffering Punishment, results from a legal Charge of Sin. But if Sin was not imputed to him, his Obligation to suffer, infinitely differs from our Obligation to suffering: Nor did he take our Obligation upon himself, the Reason of which is evident: That Obligation to suffer, which only arises from a Charge of Sin, can never be separated from it, any more than the Effect and Cause may be: An Effect cannot exist without its Cause, a legal Charge of Guilt or Sin is the Cause, and our Obnoxiousness or Obligation to suffering is the Effect: And therefore Christ could not be any Way concerned in the Effect, separately from a Concern in its Cause. And without this, his Sufferings could not be of a penal Nature; nor could any Satisfaction be made for our Sins by his Death.

IV. I proceed to observe what the learned Author says of the Filth of Sin, and here I must ask his Pardon, for being obliged to say, I cannot perfectly understand him: Or if I do, that he is egregiously mistaken in several Particulars.

1. I attend to the Sense of the Word Guilt, which he desires us to understand him in, when he uses that Term in this Discourse, i.e. chiefly or only of Obligation to Punishment.

2. I observe he ascribes the Pollution of Sin to the Guilt or relative Evil of it, i.e. to our Obligation to Penalty. Now, why Obligation to Punishment, should be thought vile and filthy, is to me a most inexplicable Thing, that is a righteous Effect which follows upon the Commission of Sin, according to the Nature of the holy Law of God, and therefore can have nothing of Filthiness or Pollution in it. He observes two Things in order to the Proof of it, 1st, It is the Guilt of Sin, that makes us offensive to the divine Justice (Page 421.). 1. If the Gentleman understands by Guilt, Obligation to Punishment: How is it possible to conceive, that this Obligation renders us offensive to God? 2. If he intends by Guilt, the Evil of Sin itself, he uses the Word in a Sense different from what he professes to do on this Subject, and would be understood to mean by it in this Discourse. 3. 'Tis because Sin is in itself a vile, filthy and abominable Thing, and contrary to the holy and pure Nature of God, that it is condemned by his Law, and subjects us to Penalty: The Pollution of Sin therefore, cannot be our Obligation to suffer Punishment. 2dly. Says he, The Defilement of Sin is represented, as producing Shame and Fear in the Sinner in the Presence of God (422.), what he

now calls Defilement, he presently calls by the Name of Guilt, i.e. our Obligation to Punishment: Fear, he observes, is the Effect of Guilt, and Shame is the Effect of the Disorder of Sin. Again, he says, The Guilt of Sin produces Fear, and the Disorder of Sin produces Shame (423.). His using the Terms, Defilement and Guilt indifferently, and understanding by Guilt, Obligation to Punishment, is no Proof at all, that they are the same Thing, they are quite distinct Things, and cannot be the same. 3. Guilt being taken as it ought to be, for Sin itself, and as charged on us, is a most filthy Thing, and subjects us to Punishment, and therefore produces both Fear and Shame in us. 3dly. He adds, The Defilement of sin is sometimes represented, as debating the Nature of the Soul, and rendering it vile (Ibid.). True it is so, and it actually does; but this is no Proof at all, that Pollution attends Obligation to Punishment: On the contrary, it is a strong Objection against it: For Men become not vile thro' an Obligation to suffer the Evil of Punishment but they become liable to Penalty, because they are impure, and have acted a Part most polluted and vile. (2.) He proposes another Method for Proof. 1. Says he, we are said to be washed from our Sins, by the Blood of Christ, Revelation 1:5. There the Defilement imply'd, must signify Guilt (424.). It is readily granted, if Guilt be taken for our sinful Actions: But not if our Obligation to Punishment is intended by Guilt, in which Sense the Gentleman would have us understand it. 2. He hath two strange Assertions. 1. Says he, It is possible in the Nature of Things, that the Guilt of Sin and all Obligations to Punishment may be taken away from a Person by pardoning Grace, and yet the Impurity or sinful Disorder of the Soul may remain (426.).

Answ. 1. If this is rightly understood, I think it is true, not only that so it may be, but also that it actually is so: For I question not, but the Elect of God are perfectly justified in his Sight, before their Regeneration, as considered in Christ. The Mention of the Possibility of this by me, some Persons would pronounce at once to be Antinomianism, perhaps it may be more favourably treated in this Gentleman. But if it be meant that it may always remain, then it follows that a Man might be pardoned and justified, and yet remain for ever in a State of Enmity against God, which is impossible.

2. It is possible also, that the sinfulness and moral Disorder, and evil Qualities of the Soul, may be removed by sanctifying Grace, and yet the Guilt of past sins may remain (Ibid.). If this is true, then a Man might be call'd, who is not justified or whole Sin is imputed to him, i.e. a Person may be sanctified and glorified, who is under a Charge of Sin. This Assertion will hardly be received by any, who have a tolerable Degree of Discernment in spiritual Things: But besides, if Guilt be understood of an Obligation to Punishment, as this learned Person professes to understand it, in this Discourse, then a Man may be eternally happy, and yet not be free from an Obligation to suffer Penalty in Hell for his Sins. These Assertions, especially the latter (the former may be interpreted in a good Sense) if I am not mistaken, are very contrary to the true Nature of evangelical Truths, and afford no Support to the Point in View.

V. Let us consider the Author's Answers, to some perplexing Questions, relating to these Subjects.

Quest. 1. Can the Defilement of Adam's first Sin be transferred to his Offspring by Imputation? The Gentleman grants it may with Respect to the Guilt of his Sin: But denies it with Regard to the Pravity or Corruption of Nature (Page. 428.). If Guilt means an Obligation to Punishment, that is not the Defilement of Sin. Again, the Impurity of our Nature is not the Pollution that attended Adam's first Sin; but it is the Consequence of that Sin, as it was legally' charged on him and on his

Posterity. So that the Conveyance of that Depravity, cannot be considered, as the Imputation of that Sin. Besides, if his sinful Act itself in Eating of the forbidden Fruit, is not charged on his natural Descendants, they must necessarily be esteemed innocent, not having personally sinn'd, and they must become corrupt without any Charge of Offence. This seems to me such an Impeachment of the Justice of God, that I could much sooner entirely give up the Doctrine of Original Sin, than embrace this Account of it: But this I cannot do, so long as I know any Thing of myself, of human Nature, and of the Word of God. Farther, the Defilement of Adam's first Sin, as it is of every sinful Act, was its Contrariety to the holy Law, and infinitely pure Nature of God. This is inseparable from Sin, and without it, Sin would cease to be Sin, the Imputation of his Act of Disobedience therefore, to himself and to his Offspring, was an Imputation of that Pollution to him and to his Seed, which is ever inseparable from a sinful Action.

Quest. 2. How far was our Lord Jesus Christ, our great Surety, concern'd in the Filth or Defilement of our Sins? Some, says he, pronounce it boldly, that he took upon him the Filth and Pollution of our Sins, tho' at the same Time they mistake, and suppose it to mean something really distinct from the Guilt (Page 429.). This is no Mistake, that if is something distinct from Guilt, if Guilt is understood of Obligation to Punishment: For there is no Filthiness in that, Punishment is not Sin, nor can it be considered such with the least Propriety. Again, Pollution is inseparable from sinful Action, as is above observed, the Imputation of Sin therefore, to any Subject, whether innocent or guilty in himself, in an abstracted View from this Charge of Offence, must be allow'd to be an Imputation of Sin with its Filth and Pollution to him: But the Imputation of Sin with that Filthiness which is ever inseparable from it to Christ, supposes not, that he was rendered in himself impure, by that Imputation, and therefore there is no need, to reject the Doctrine of the Charge of Sin with its Pollution on Christ, which some do reject, as the learned Gentleman observes. This Author apprehends, that our Obligation to Punishment was imputed to Christ. But that is not Sin; it is absolutely distinct from it: tho' a necessary Consequence thereof. Again, Christ could not be legally obliged to suffer Punishment, without a Charge of Sin, for where that is not, the formalis Ratio of such an Obligation is wanting, and therefore, he could not come under any such Obligation. Nor can it properly be said, that Christ made Atonement for our Guilt, i.e. our Obligation to Penalty, as this ingenious Person seems to apprehend. He concludes this Essay and the Book itself with expressing his Charity for all sincere Enquirers after Truth, which he might have done, without making Concessions prejudicial to Truth. Charity to Men's Persons may be very consistently exercised, with a zealous, strict and faithful Defence of every Branch of evangelical Truth. While we are charitable to Men, we ought not to give the least Countenance to such Opinions they embrace, as are dishonourable to the divine Perfections, diminish the Glory of the Mediator, and are eversive of his Satisfaction: Which this ingenious Person does, in allowing that we suffer for Adam's Sin, without the Imputation of it, and in supposing it sufficient, as he seems to do, to believe that Christ some Way or other is the Author and Cause of our Salvation, tho' it be, for ought his Words imply, in the Socinian Way, without any Satisfaction for Sin by his Death. I fear his Charity to Men is not more extended, than his Zeal for the glorious Truths of the Gospel is dimish'd.

02.05. Postscript

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE my Writing what precedes, the learned Author has published a second Edition of his Book, with a Postscript; wherein, he farther treats of the Infliction of Punishment, without a Charge of Guilt, and endeavours to clear it of some Objections, He represents it as the Opinion of those, who are skill'd in the civil Law, that an innocent Man may suffer Punishment, If he had read their Writings with due Care, he could not, I think, have fallen into such a gross Mistake: This he doubtless ought to have done, since he appeals to their Judgment in the Affair, his Neglect thereof, I cannot but apprehend will be thought inexcusable. My Design here is to propose and give Answers to four Queries They are these.

Query 1. What is Punishment, and may it be inflicted on an innocent Person?

Query 2. May not God punish an innocent Creature as so considered: Or without any Imputation of Sin or Guilt?

Query 3. May God impute the Fault of an offending Creature to one who is innocent, in order to his Suffering Punishment: Or was it agreeable to his Righteousness and Justice, to charge Sin on Christ, and punish him for it?

Query 4. If it will render the Doctrine of Christ's Atonement, less exceptionable, to state it in such a Manner and Light, as corresponds with the Conduct of Men in some Cases of Penalty, why may it not be done, in order to compose Differences subsisting among Christians? Why should we delight in Obscurity, and contend for Principles, which will not admit of an easy Explication and Defence, either from the common Notions, or Conduct of Men, when this Doctrine may be so stated, as to agree with the common Sentiments of Mankind, and may by that Means be more generally approved?

Query 1. What is Punishment, and may it be inflicted on an innocent Person?

Answ. It is the Infliction of Suffering or Pain, with relation to or on Account of Offence, I suppose it will be allowed, that Cicero was no incompetent Judge in this Matter, and he defines it thus: Pain or Torment is the Punishment of Sin⁶⁶, i.e. when judicially inflicted, as he must be understood to mean. And Grotius it will certainly be granted, was well acquainted with the Nature of Penalty. His Definition of it is this: Punishment in the general Signification of it, is the Evil of Suffering, which is inflicted for the Evil of Action⁶⁷; and observes, That he who punishes, that he may justly punish, must have a Right to punish, which Right, says he, arises from the Fault of the Person guilty⁶⁸. Now if to punish without Right is unjust, and if a Right to punish arises from Offence, then to punish an innocent Man, is the Infliction of Penalty without Right to do it, and is a manifest Violation of Justice. Farther his Opinion is, That no Man ought to be punished beyond Desert⁶⁹. This is also observed by Cicero⁷⁰. If a Man is not to be punish'd beyond Desert, then surely not without Desert: If it is unjust to inflict greater Pain for an Offence, than that Offence deserves, it

can never be consistent with Justice to punish without Offence. Now an innocent Person, as so considered, or without the Imputation of another's Crime, cannot be attended with any Desert of Punishment, and therefore it is not lawful to punish him. He may not, as Cicero very rightly observes, be brought into any Danger of Punishment^{f71}. far the Guilty only, as Cicero farther observes, are to be punished. His Opinion was, That it is cruel to punish the Crimes of Parents in Children^{f72}. Philo condemns the Practice^{f73}. And Vinius in his Commentary on the Institutions of Justinian the Emperor says, It is not just, that the Heir should suffer Punishment for the Fault of the Deceased^{f74}. And Selden, whose Judgment in this Point is of considerable Weight, observes, That by the Reason and Essence of Punishment, properly so called, it should be impendent on a Person for sin or Guilt^{f75}. The formal Cause of Punishment, says he, certainly consists in this, that it is timwria, or vindictive, or purgative, or expiatory, or some other Way bears Respect to Wickedness or Sin committed. And adds, Punishment, properly speaking, as it hath Place in any Right whatever, is taken for this, that it is the Evil of suffering for the Evil of Action; or that it is rendered, as an Evil of Punishment, for that which is the past Evil of Guilt, viz. Punishment is Avenging a Crime, or as the Greek Lawyers speak Amartimatov Ekdikhsiv, i.e. the Avenging of Sinf^{f76}. To this Purpose, says Hierocles, The Law taketh Vengeance on a Man, not simply, or as a Man; but as evil or guilty^{f77}.

Object. The Children of a Traytor suffer for their Father's Crime, although they are not guilty of Rebellion with him, nor is his Sin imputed to them.

Answ. 1. The King, or sovereign Prince, is the Fountain of Honour: In such a Stile Kings speak of themselves in the Creation of Peers: as Selden observes in his Titles of Honour^{f78}. The King or supreme Magistrate confers Peerage or Dignity on a Subject, in a conditional Manner, He requires an Oath of Loyalty, and Subjection, which supposes a due Regard to the Laws of the Land; this is also observed by Selden, in his Titles of Honour^{f79}. Hence in case of Treason, the Person on whom Nobility or Honour is conferr'd, violates his solemn Oath, and forfeits his Dignity, nor may be supposed to have any longer, a legal Title to that Dignity or Honour.

3. It is a Rule with Lawyers, that Parents cannot convey greater Right than they have themselves: Now, as a Traytor, by his Rebellion against his lawful Sovereign, forfeits his Title to Nobility and Honour, his Son cannot be intitled to that Dignity.

4. If a Subject holds his Estate by a Right from the Crown, which is many Times the Case, by treasonable Acts, he forfeits his Title to it, his Right to that Estate ceases, and therefore no Right to it. from him, can devolve upon his Son.

5. Some have thought Confiscation of Goods cruel and unjyst, as Cicerof^{f80}, Vinnius^{f81}, and Chrysotom^{f82}.

6. But allowing it just, it is not a Punishment to Children, tho' it is to their guilty Parent: This, as Grotius observes, some call Damage or Suffering indirect, and allow it not to be Punishment, and assign this obvious Reason for it: Children have a Right to Nothing, but what their Parents possess to their latest Breath^{f83}. A Traytor forfeiting his Dignity, Estate and Goods, as well as his Life, he is degraded before his Condemnation, as Selden observes, in his Titles of Honour^{f84}, or is reduced to a base Condition, to Disgrace and Poverty, and therefore he has neither Dignity, Estate, nor Goods to leave to his Descendants. Hence it is evident that the Punishment wholly terminates on

him, tho' his Posterity in an indirect Manner, suffer, or in Consequence of that his Punishment; the Law supposes a Traytor to have no Right to Honour, Estate, or Goods, and therefore no Right to either, can descend from him to his Children: For according to the Rule before-mentioned, he cannot convey farther Right, than he himself possesses: He is inverted with no Right to either of these Things, as the Law supposes; hence it manifestly follows, no Right to them he can convey. These Things evidently prove, that the Children of a Traytor, are not punished for their Father's Crime, tho' they suffer in Consequence of it. Vinnius, as was before observed, denies that penal Actions against Heirs may be allowed, for this Reason, lest there should be Punishment, where there is no Guilt. Pecuniary Punishments may indeed pass to Heirs, yet not as Punishments; but as Debts due upon the Estate of the deceased, which they take possession of, the Reason of which is, the Deceased and the Heir, are accounted as one Person, with Respect to the Estate or Goods convey'd and enjoyed. Farther, something afflictive may be enjoyn'd on a Person, or Benefit taken from him, by Reason of another's Crime: But not so as that the Offence is the proximate Cause of the Action, as it relates to the Right itself of acting: He who becomes a Surety for another's Debt suffers Damage; but the proximate Cause of his Obligation, is his Engagement itself. And hence it is, that the Evil inflicted on him takes its Measure or Degree, not from the others Fault; but from the Power he had in promising.

1. No Man may promise to die for another, because he hath not Power over his Life.
2. Nor to lose a Member, for Power is not given to a Man over the Members of his Body, but to preserve it. He may not injure himself, nor has a Power of inverting others, with a Right of doing it.
3. Banishment, and Loss of Money, for another, is not properly Punishment.
4. Obligation to Punishment arises from Desert, Desert is personal, for this Reason, no Man free from Fault may be punished for the Fault of another^{f85}.
5. Achan's Children, Saul's, etc. God exercised a Right of Dominion over, but not of Punishment, Grotius^{f86}. Upon the Whole, it appears, that Penalty may not be inflicted, without Relation to Fault or Sin imputed. Grotius, in his Defence of the Satisfaction of Christ, urging that it might, and Arguing on that Principle, rendered the Answer, on this Part of the Subject, very easy to Crellius, who pretty well understood the Law, and made a satisfactory Reply impossible to Grotius, without an Acknowledgment of a Mistake in this Point. Let the Reader compare the fourth Chapter of his Book, with the Answer of Crellius to it, and with what he delivers here concerning Punishment, and he will be convinced of the Truth of this Observation.

It is in vain to think of establishing the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction against the Socinians, who are not unskilful in the Law, by referring to the Conduct, of Men in the Infliction of Penalty: For this Case is really singular, and has no Parallel, and it is utterly impossible that any thing of the like Nature, consistent with Justice, should ever be acted by Men. It will be always easy to prove, that Punishment properly so called, may not be inflicted on an innocent Person by Men: Since the Guilty and the Innocent cannot possibly become one in the Eye of human Laws, and Men have not Right to inflict Penalty; but upon a legal Charge of Guilt on the Person, who is the Subject of Punishment, and no Man is invested with Power over his Life, or over the Members of his Body, except to preserve the one and the others; and therefore may not engage to submit to Death, or Mutilation for the Fault and Crime of another. For tho' an innocent Person may suffer, in

Consequence of the Infliction of Punishment on a Person guilty, in some Instances, yet he is not, he may not be punished without a Concern in the Guilt, from whence alone arises Obligation to suffer Punishment. Thus much in Answer to the first Query.

Query 2. May God punish an innocent Creature, as so considered, or without the Imputation of another's Sin or Guilt to him.

Answ. I humbly apprehend he cannot, for the Reasons following:

1. God cannot but approve and justify an innocent Creature as so consider'd, or as free from all Charge and Imputation of Offence, the Reason is evident: The innocent Creature is what God wills him to be according to his Law, and therefore it is impossible he should, under this Consideration, be the Object of his Disapprobation.

2. An innocent Creature, as such, cannot be the Subject of the Condemnation and Curse of the Law of God: Because the Law pronounces a Sentence of Condemnation, only, upon a Charge or Imputation of Fault or Sin.

3. Hence it necessarily follows, that an innocent Creature, as so consider'd, cannot be impressed with a piercing Sense of divine Vengeance against Sin. A Perception the guiltless Creature may have, of the Evil of Sin, and of the Wrath of God, which Sin demerits: Such a Perception the holy Angels, and glorify'd Saints doubtless have, and ever will have; but this is not attended with any Anguish or Pain of Mind: For it is only a Sense of Sin, as charg'd or imputed, and of an Obnoxiousness to divine Displeasure that Account, which can give the Soul Uneasiness and Torture. This seems to me so evident and demonstrable, that nothing, I apprehend can be more so. The Saints I am persuaded, will retain forever a Consciousness of their sinful Actions, and will never lose the Idea of that Wrath, Curse, and Vengeance, to which their Offences render'd them obnoxious: But this Consciousness, and this Perception of the proper Demerit of their Guilt, occasion no Uneasiness, Sorrow, or Pain; the Reason is, they are discharg'd of their Guilt, and are not the Objects of God's Displeasure, to which it exposed them; this must be allow'd, if their Happiness in Heaven is granted to be complete.

4. Each of these Things enter into the very Nature of, and are essential to divine Punishment. Surely it is not to be thought, that God approves of any whom he punishes, that is to say, as they are the Subjects of his Act of punishing: And it is impossible, that a Creature under the same Consideration should be the Object of divine Condemnation and Justification; for these are certainly inconsistent Ideas, if any such there be. Nor can God impress the Mind of a Creature, with a painful Sense of his Wrath, who is not, under any Consideration, the Object of his Displeasure. Either therefore an innocent Creature cannot be the Subject of Penalty, or these Things do not enter into the Nature of divine Punishment: Or else Guilt is imputed to that innocent Creature, and in his suffering Punishment, he is consider'd, not as he is in himself; but as guilty, by a Charge of another's Guilt on him, for whom he sustains that Punishment.

5. God in punishing, acts as a Lawgiver and Judge: The Act of punishing therefore, is not an Act of Sovereignty, but of Righteousness and Justice; and is agreeable to the Nature of his Law by which penal Suffering is threatened. Now if no divine Law is extant, which threatens Penalty without Relation to a Charge of Fault or Sin, it should seem to follow, that Punishment cannot be inflicted on an innocent Creature, as such, or without the Imputation of another's Guilt to him. I am firmly of

Opinion, that no Law of God is to be produc'd, wherein penal Suffering is denounced, without Respect to Sin imputed, as the procuring Cause of that Denunciation of penal Evil, and if not, then no innocent Creature as such, can be the Subject of divine Punishment. 6. What God hates in Men he cannot do himself. Nothing is the Object of God's Displeasure; but what is contrary to the divine Nature: To punish the Innocent is disapproved of God, because it is a dreadful Violation of Right and Justice; and is therefore contrary to the essential Righteousness and Justice of God. It being so, he cannot condemn and punish, without a righteous Charge and Imputation of Offence.

Query 3. May God impute the Fault of a Criminal to one who is impotent, in order to his suffering Punishment, or was it agreeable to the Righteousness and Justice of God, to Charge Sin on Christ, in order to his sustaining the Penalty due to it?

Answ. In this Question we may observe, that those, who plead for Christ's suffering Penalty, without a Charge of Guilt, in order to Satisfaction, can have nothing to object to the Righteousness and Justice of God, in punishing his Son. The only Difficulty with them, is to reconcile the Act of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, with divine Justice, to which End, I would propose several Things to Consideration.

1. Christ and his People are to be reckoned as one: He as Head and they as Members constitute one mystical Person. Such a Relation subsists between him and them, as cannot subsist among Men, and therefore, as the Conjunction and Union of Christ and his People is singular and without a Parallel, such Acts may follow upon it, both towards Christ himself as Head, and towards them, as Members, which cannot take place with Respect to any others, viz. The Charge of their Sins on Christ, and the manipulation of his Righteousness or Obedience to them.

2. According to a special divine Constitution, he took their Place, Standing and Relation to the Law: Christ's being made of a Woman, was peculiar to himself; so also was his being made under the Law (Galatians 4:4). In Consequence of which, what the Law charg'd on them and demanded of them, is in Right and Justice chargeable on him, and he becomes responsible for them, in order to their Redemption from it, as a Law or Covenant of Works. This supposes the Imputation of their Sins to him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to them.

3. He voluntarily agreed to take their Debts upon himself, or to come under that Charge, which the Law exhibited against them: And therefore no injurious Part was acted towards our Saviour, in the Imputation of Guilt to him, any more than Injustice is done to a Surety for a Debtor, in charging a Debt to him, which he undertook to pay.

4. Christ bore our Sin, or was under a Charge of Guilt, but for a Time, and in order to make Satisfaction for it, and upon his making Satisfaction for Sin, he was acquitted and discharg'd of Guilt, which I apprehend is design'd, when it is said: He was justified in the Spirit (1 Timothy 3:16.). if the Imputation of Sin to him had been perpetual, as it is as to the Persons of Sinners, the highest Injury had attended that Act, because his Sufferings had then been endless in Duration, and he must have been rendered incapable of receiving any Reward, for his singular Submission to the Will of God in bearing Sin; but this was not the Case: For,

5. Signal Honour is conferred upon Christ on Account of his submitting to the Will of God, in this wonderful Affair: And therefore no Prejudice arose to our Saviour, from the Imputation of Sin to him (Php 2:9-11).

6. No false or mistaken Idea, attends the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ: For he was not esteemed the actual Transgressor, in that Act; but the Transgressions of others, with his full and free Consent, were placed to his Account: The Debt charged on him, as he did not contract: it, he was not reputed to have so done; but in Vertue of his own Engagement, it became his, and no otherwise. So that in this singular Case, there is nothing contrary to Truth, Justice and Righteousness.

7. It is Fact, that the Minds of Men may be troubled about a sinful Act, which was the personal Act of another, as that criminal Action is imputed to them, and subjects them to Punishment. Adam's first Offence, was his personal Act: His Posterity cannot have a Consciousness. of committing it; but a painful Sensation may attend the Apprehension of a righteous Charge, and Imputation of that sinful Action to them, by which they are made or constituted Sinners. And thus tho' it was impossible, that Christ should have a Consciousness of our criminal Actions, as his personal Acts: Yet he might have, and actually had, a painful Sensation of the Charge of those Actions to him, and of his Obnoxiousness to Penalty on that Account. To deny this entirely destroys the Reality of his suffering Penalty, and of Consequence the Truth of his Satisfaction. In Words Men may deny Socinianism; but unless this is granted, all that the Socinians contend for, may and must be allow'd because without it, the Death of Christ cannot justly be considered as a Punishment inflicted on him, and therefore can't be satisfactory; at most, it was only a Condition of Pardon and Salvation, which the Socinians themselves readily assent to.

Query 4. If it will render the Doctrine of Christ's Atonement, less exceptionable, to state it. in such a Manner and Light, as corresponds with the Conduct of Men in some Cases of Penalty, why may it not be done, in order to compose Differences subsisting among Christians? Why should we delight in Obscurity, and contend for Principles, which will not admit of an easy Explication and Defence, either from the common Notions, or Actions of Men: When it may be so stated, as to agree with the common Sentiments of Mankind, and may by that Means be more generally approved?

Answ. 1. The Imputation of a Fault, and the Infliction of Punishment, are as distinct Ideas as can be; the Ideas of Colour and Sound are not more so. They be as different, as the Idea of a Cause and its Effect are.

2. Among Men Punishment cannot be inflicted, without a Charge of Offence. This I think is very clearly proved above: And also that Men have no Power to impute the criminal Action of an Offender, to an innocent erson; or to punish him for another's Offence.

3. This Doctrine ought to be esteemed among the deep things of God: It is his Wisdom, yea his hidden Wisdom In a Mystery. With as much Reason therefore, It may be affirmed, that more Depth of Wisdom, Is not discovered in Nature than in Art, as that the Affair of punishing the innocent Jesus to save Sinners, is to be explained by the common Notion and Actions of Men, in civil Life. A higher Affront, in my Opinion, can't soon be offered to God: Or a greater Reproach be cast on the Gospel, than such a Way of stating this Doctrine carries in it. I am fully persuaded it is acting a very bad Part, by what Motives or Views soever, a Person may be influenced to do it, and that it will appear so to be, when the Time of Disputing shall have an End with Men.

FINIS.

02.06. Footnotes

FOOTNOTES ft1 Amyraldus was of the same Sentiments with the Author of the *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*, says he, *Duo sunt igitur Genera Hominum a Christo redemptorum, Electi scilicet & non Electi. De non Electis certum est Fidem illis a Christo nullo modo suiffe impetratam, quam ipfi certe praestare tenentur, & ni id faciunt, Justissime puniuntur a*

Deo. Ad Electos quod spectat, Fides illis ira impetrata suit ut Impetratio omnem Conditionem excludat. Speciminis Animad. General.

Exerc. de Grat. Univerf. Pars III. p. 190. His Opinion was, that the Salvation of the Elect is certain and infallible, and that a conditional Provision of Salvation is made for the Non-Elect. The just Censure therefore which the pious and learned Dr. passes upon him equally concerns and affects this Author. If good Dr. Owen was now in Being, I doubt not but his holy Zeal for the Protestant Doctrine of the real Merit, and Satisfaction of Christ, would engage his able Pen against this Writer. I sincerely wish that some such worthy Person, had now been employed in the Defence of so glorious a Truth. ft2 Theolog. Christ. Lib. III. Cap. 21. Edit. Quarto, p. 270. ft3 Socin. de Christo Salvatore Pars secunda, Cap. I, 2, 3. ft4 Shlictingius in Hebrews 7:22; and Limborch Inst. Lib. III. Cap. 21. ft5 Inst. Limborch, Lib. III, Cap. 23. ft6 Socin. de Christo Salvatore Pars prima, Cap. 8. ft7 Inst. Lib. III, Cap. 23. ft8 Deinde, ut Potestatem habet Deus infligendi Poenam, ita & noninfligendi. — Caeteroquin Justitiae Dei nequaquam repugnat, Peccatori, quem punire Jure posset, ignoscere. ft9 Nemini enim, sive puniat, sive non puniat, facit Injuriam. ft10 Neque enim nocenti, ut supra monuimus, debetur Poena, sed is e mdebit: Et debet quidem illi, in quem Injuria omnis ultimo redundat: Quiin nostro Negotio est Deus. ft11 Jus autem suum, si Rem per se spectes, ut persequi cuique licet: Ita & non persequi, ae de eo, quantum libet, remittere. De vera Religione, Lib. I, Cap. 23. ft12 Ita ut Peccatis Deum ignoscere, nihil aliud fit, quam earn de Jure fuo remittere. Unicuique autem de Jure fuo, quantam velit, remittere licet. Deus igitur, &. De Jesu Christo Salvatore Pars tertia, Cap. 1. ft13 Justitiam istam, cuivos satisfaciendum omnino esse Contenditis in Deonon refidere, fed effectum esse Voluntatis ipfius. Ibid. ft14 Divina Justitia quae Misericordiae opponitur, etc. Pars prima, Cap. 1. ft15 Hanc ipsam Dei Justiam, quae Misericordiae opponitur, de qua nosagere, ut jam videre poaisti, probe memini, duplice esse: Non focusatque Misericordia duplex Hatni potest. Ex his, ut dixi, duplicem effeDei Justitiam liquido apparet: unam, qua perpetuo utitur, etc.,. Alteramqua Peccatores nonnunquam, etc. Unde, ut diximus, etiam duplex DeiMisericordia apparet: Una videlicet, qua Resipiscentibus, etc. Altera, qua plane Homines pravenit, etc. Pars prima, Cap. I. ft16 Si ea (i.e. Justitia) in Deo residereo, nunquam is, ne minimum quidemdeltum, cuiquam condonarct. Ibid. Pars tertia, Cap. I. ft17 Ista Justitia, ut supra vifum est, in Sacris Litteris, non Justitia, fedseveritas, aut vindicta, nuncupatur, etc. Ibid. ft18 Punire Delicta, Deliria condonare, invicem prorsus adversantur. Ibid. ft19 Puniri per hanc Justitiam delictum posse, etiamsi delinquens ipse nonpuniatur, id, ut infra apparebit, & ab hac & ab omni Justitia alienissimusest. Ibid. ft20 Misericordiam, quatenus isti Justitiae, hoc est Severitati, et Vindictae opponitur, in Deo non residere, fed effectum voluntatis ejus. Ibid. ft21 Cum igitur Sacrae Litterae testantur, Deum Mifericordem esse, nihilaliud sibe volant quam Deum saepiffime, et

facillime Peccata condonare. Ibid. ft22 Hinc manisestum fit, quam graviter errent illi, qui Dei hanc turn Justitiam, turn Misericordiam insinitam esse affirmant. Ibid. ft23 Quod enim ad Justitiam attinet, vocabule Specie decepti non vident, fenihil aliud dicere, quam Dei Severitatem atque Iram infinitam esse. ft24 Si Deus non possit Peccata fine Satisfactione remittere; tum vel quianon potest per Potentiam, vel quia non potest per Justitiam. vindic.

Grat. de Elect. Digr. 8. Sect. 25. Lib. I. Pars secunda, p. 199. ft25 Arg. II. Si Deus non potest Peccatum impunitum dimittere; tum necesseest ut puniat, Necessitate abloluta — Malorum Hominum Poenas in hoc Seculo possit augeri quis dubitat? ibid. ft26Arg. III. Potest Deus mitiorem Poenam inferre quam Peccatum meretur; ergo potest pro absoluta fua Potentia Poenam universam suspendere, p 200. Potest Deus remunerari citra Condignum; ergo etiam potest puniercitra Condignum, p. 201. ft27 Arg. IV. Potest Deus criciatum quantumcunque etiam infernalem alicuiinferre citra omne Demeritum; ergo etiam potest, non obstante Demerito quantocunque, quantamcunque Poenam suspendere. Antecedens alibi, idque non femel abunde probatur est. Consequentia, ex eo nora est ibid. Quod multo nior fit Deus ad benefaciendum quam ad puniendum — Quaero an etiam impossible fit, ut Deus eum qui peccaverit, adducat ad Poenitentiam? etc. — Ergo Deus, per Potentiam fuam absolutam non purer annihilarc Creaturam fuam, quam ex nihitocreavit, ibid. ft28 Sed hoc est quod quaeritur; non, an justum sit Satisfactionem accipifed, an injustum fit non accipi. Non enim seqaitur si Mitericors estDeus hoc vel illud agendo, eo immifericordem fore non agendo. ft29 Praeterea omne agens, quod agit naturaliter, agit in Objectum fuae Actionis naturaliter receptivum: quare si punire, effe naturale (ilianimirum Acceptione, quae secum sert Necessitatem) non possit Actiotalis de Persona Peccatoris, in Personam alteram transire. ft30 Neque etiam Sapientia Dei, quae in hoe Negotio max-ime elucet, Locum habitura videtur, fi per Naturam nequiffet a liter agere. Sapientia enim, eft Electrix Mediorum. Respos. ad Judicium Ravensp in Fine. ft31 Of Christ the Mediator, Book 3. P. 71. ft32 Graviter impingat in Naturam Dei, quippe ex qua fequatur, Deum esseAgens necessarium, non liberum; unde ad Atheismum pateat Adieusmanifestus. Ibid. p. 202. ft33 This I say upon the Supposition, of an Offer, or Proposal of Christ for Acceptance to sinful Men, merely as Sinners: i.e. while and as they are insensible of their Need of him: And that it is the Will and Design of God, that they should receive him, and his Salvation; which I humbly apprehend cannot be: Tho' this I infer not from Men's Want of Ability, to believe in Christ, for I am very far from making the Power of Men, the Measure of their Duty: But I am of Opinion, that an Offer or Proposal for Acceptance of new Covenant-Blessings, is not made to Men, while they am under the old Covenant, or Law of Works, which all Men are, 'till regenerated, or so long as they are under the Dominion of Sin, Romans 6:14. Offers of Grace, as I conceive, are not made, to those who are not under Grace, nor interested in the Covenant of Grace, which many are not, to whom the Gospel is preached. ft34 Salus Electorum, Sanguis Jesu: Lib. 3. Chap 10. the End. ft35 II. Vol. of his Works, of the Creatures etc. p. 52, 53, 54. ft36 Primum suppeditant nobis ilia Loca, quibus expresse Christus dicitur pro omnibus esse mortuus. Theolog. Christ. Lib. IV. Cap. 3. Edit. quarto, p. 319. ft37 Lib. IV, Cap. 3. ft38 Limborch, Ibid. ft39 Lib. IV, Cap. 3. ft40 Limborch, ibid. ft41 Limborch, ibid. ft42 Limborch, Lib. IV. Cap. 3. ft43 Theolog. Christ. Lib. IV. Cap. 3. ft44 Non pro nostris solum: Amplificationis Causa hoc addidit. ut certopersuasi sint fideles, Expiationem a Chirsto partam, ad omnes extendiqui Evangelium Fide amplexi suerint. Sed hic movetur Quaestio, quomodo Mundi totius Peccata expientur. Omitto phreneticorum Deliria, qui hoc Pretextu Reprobos omnes, adeoque Satanam ipfum in Salutem admittunt. Tale Portentum Refutatione

indignum est. Qui bane Absurditatem volebant essugere, dixerunt, sufficienter pro toto Mundo passam erie Christum: Sed pro Electis tantum efficaciter. Vulgo haec Solutio in Scholis obtinuit. Ego quanquam verum illud Dictum fateor: Nego tament praefenti Loco quadrare. Neque enim aliud suit Concilium Joannis, quam toti Ecclesiae commune sacere hoe Bonum. Ergo rubomnibus, Reprobos non comprehendit: Sed eos designat qui simulcreditori erant, & qui per varias Mundi Plagas dispersi erant. Tunc enim vere, ut par est, illustratur Christi Gratia, quum unica esse Mundi Saluspraedicatur. ft45 Family Expositor, Vol, I. p. 9. ft46 On Regeneration, F. 232, 233. ft47 Ruin and Recovery, p, 265. ft48 Ita est, non suspenditur Dei Foedus, a Voluntate nostra, ullisve Conditionibus a nobis praestandis; ab Autoritate, Gratia, & Fidelitate ipsius Dei Virtutem omnem habet et Effectum. Absoluta enim est Promissio Gratiae, neque ulla est Foederis Conditio, quae in ipsa Promissione non continetur. Inepte ideo agunt & prepostere, qui ex Natura Foederis rater Homines sanciri soliti Naturam thv tyrb Divinae exponere conantur. Qeologoumena, P 149. Edit, Breae. ft49 Servata femper Lege & Ratione loquendi. Satyr VI. v, 452. ft50 Foedus Gratiae, sive Evangelium stricte sic dictum, quod illius Foederis Formula est, quum in meris consistat Promissis, nihil proprie praescribit ut Officium, nihil eyigit, nihil mandat; ne hoc quidem, crede, confidespera in Dominum, & quae sunt similia. Sed resert, nunciat, significant nobis, quid Deus in Christo promittat, quid sacere velit, & facturus sit. mnis Praescriptio Officii ad Legem pertinet, quaemadmodum, postalios, optime inculcavit venerabilis Voetius Disput. Tom. 4. p. 24. & sequentibus. Et hoc omnino tenendum est, si cure omnibus Reformatis Perfectionem Legis, omnes Virtutes, omnia Sanctitatis Officia, Ambitusuo continentis, constanter tueri velimus. De Faed. Lib 3. Cap. I. p 257. Edit. tertia. ft51 Ruin and Recovery, p. 289. ft52 Quavis ideo in Re non majoris Momenti nolim cum quoquam aliter sentiente Contentionis Serram ducere, neminem tamen adhuc, aut Rationibus, aut Testimoniis Fide dignis, Usum Literarum proprie sic distarum, nomoqesia Mosaica Antiquiorem demonsrasse, non dubito affirmare. Dr. Owen Qeologomma p. 294. Edit. Breae. ft53 Eft autem Poena generali Significatu malum Passionis quod infligitur ob Malum Actionis. De Jure Belli & Pacis, Lib. II, Cap. 20, Sect. I. ft54 De Jure Natur. & Gent. juxt. Discipl. Ebrae. Lib. I. Cap. 4. ft55 Quia statuimus Nerainem Jus tale habere in Vitam, ut eam sibi ipse adimere aut adimendam obligate poffit, Ibid. Cap. 21, Sect. 11. ft56 Quod de Vita diximus, idem & de Membris intelligi debet: Nam & in illa Jus Homini datum non est nisi Corporis servandi Causa. Grotius Ibid. ft57 R. R. 387. ft58 Ruin and Recovery p. 405. ft59 Ruin & Recovery, p. 405, 406. ft60 De Jesu Christo Scivatore, Pars tertia Cap, 3. ft61 Conditio, ut alibi quoque desinivimus, est adjectio, qua id quod dari aufieri volumus, confertur in aliquem Cafum: Ad quem Modura hic desinitur. Itaque duo haec Conditionem saciunt, Dilatio, et Casus, five incertus Eventus — Vis Conditionis omnis haec est, ut pendente eanihildum debeatur ea impleta perinde habeatur, ac si ab Initio pure debitum fuisset; deficiente, quaff nulla unquam suisset Obligatio. — Vinnii in Inst. Imper. Comment. Lib. 3. Tit. 16. de Verborum Obligationibus, p. 561, 562. ft62 Respons ad 31 Artic. Artic. 4 ft63 Serm, on Salvat. by Grace, 15, 16, 17, 18. ft64 De Jesu Christo Servatore Pars tertia. Cap. 3. ft65 Philosophical Essays. Essay 5. Sect. I. ft66 Supplicium autem est Poena Peccati, Orat. in Pison. ft67 Est autem Poena generali. Significatu, malum Passianis, quod infligitur ob mature Actionis. De Jure Bdli ac Pacis, Lih, II. Capt. 20. Sect I. ft68 Qui punit, ut recte puniat, Jas habere debet puniendum, quod Jus ex Delicto nocentis nascitur. Ibid. Sect. 2. ft69 Puniendus Nero oest ultra meritum. Ibid. Sect. 28. ft70 Cavendum est etiam major Poena, quam Culpa fit. de Offic. Lib. I. Cap. 25. ft71 Atque etiam hoc Praceptum Officii diligenter tenen. alum est, hic NE QUEM unquam innocentem Judicio Capitis arcessas. Ibid. Lib. II. Cap. 14. ft72 Quae est

igitur Poena? Quod Supplicium? Id mea Sententia, quod accidere nemini potest nisi nocenti. Orat. in Pison. Nec vero me fugit, quam sit acerbum, Parentum Scelera Filiorum Poenis sui. Epist. 12. ad Brutum. ff73 Dikaiwsav wn ta Amarthmata toutwn einai kai timwriai. deLeg. Spec Lib. II. ff74 At cum Haeres in universum Jus desuncti succedat, & regulariter tam incommoda, quam in commoda, quae Ratio est, quod in Propositotantum commodum Actionum poenaliu ad Haeredes transire placet? Nimirum quia aequum visum est, Poenam ex hac Successione excipere, ne ibi Poena sit, ubi Noxia non est. Lib. IV. Tit. x.,. ff75 Nam ex Ratione & Effentia Poenae proprie dictae est, ut pro Peccatoseu Culpa aliqua impendatur. de Jure naturali et Gent. Juxt. Discipl. Ebrae. Lib. I. Cap. 4. ff76 Formali enim Poenae Causa certe in hoc maxime consistit quod fit timwria, seu Vindicta atque satisfactoria, feu purga, toria, feuexpiatoria aliterve Scelus, feu Peccatum commissum respiciat. Sed vetoPana, proprie loquendo, atque ut in Jure qaalicunq locum habet, sumitur pro eo quod est malum Passionis pro malo Actionis, feu quod redditur ut malum insequens Poenae pro eo quod est malumpraeteritum Culpa. Scilicet Pinna est Noxae Vindicta, feu utJurisconsulti Graeci loquuntur, Amarthmatov Ekdikhsiv CulpaeVindicta. ff77 Ou gar apalav ton Anqrwpon h Anqrwpov kolazei o nomovall h kakov, in Carm. Pythag. ff78 A regali Solio, velut a Sole distensi Radium, singulae tem-porales prodeunt Dignitates. Second Part, p. 538. ff79 1533. ff80 Primum, ut ne Poena Capitis cum Pecunia jungatur. Orat. pro Domosua. ff81 Illud autem durum & crudele videtur, quod ob Parentum Crimen etiamLiberi plectantur, perpetua nimium Egestate & Insamia. Sane Legidivinae et vere Justitiae repugnat. 2 Kings 14:1-29:2 Chronicles 25:1-28. Comment. in Inst. Imper. Lib. IV. Tit. 18. ff82 Confiscatio odiofa est quia Liberia adimit Successionem quae eiscompetit de Jure Nature, tendique in Perniciem eorum innocentes sunt, quique Culpam Parentum ferre non deberent. Christinaei Decif. Vol. I. Dec. 400. n. 99. ff83 Sic Parentum bonis consiscatis sentiunt quidem incommodum Liberi, fed proprie ea Poena non est, quia Bona illa illorum furura non erant nisi a Parentibus ad ultimum Spiritum effent confervata, de Jure Belli acPacis, Lib. II. Cap. 21. Sect. 10. ff84 Second Part 810, 811. ff85 Praeterea notandum, interdum imponi alicui aliquid mali, out bonialiquid auferri, Occasione quidem alicujus Peccati; sed non ita utPeccatum Causa fit proxima ejus Actionis quod Jus ipsum agendiattient. Sic qui Occasione alieni Debiti aliquid promittit malum potitur, ex veteri Verbo, egtua para data. Sponde, naxa praesto est; at proxima Caufa Obligationis est ipfa Promissio. Nam ut qui pro Emptore fide jussit, non proprie ex Empto tenetur, fed ex Promisso: Ita & qui pro derelinquente, non ex Delicto, fed ex sua Sponsione. Atque hinc fit quod malum illi ferendum Mensuram accepit non ex Delicto alterius, fed ex Potestate quam ipse in promittendo habuit — Occidi Nemopotest ex Fide Jussione, quia statuimus Neminem Jus tale habere in Vitam, ut earn sibi adimere aut adimendam obligare possit — Quod deVita diximus, idem & de Membris intdligi debet: Num & in illa JasHomini datum non est, nisi Corporis servandi Cause. Quod si Exilium, si

Peeuniaram Damnum in Promissione fuerit, & alterius Delicto impletafit Conditio, Damnum feret Fidejuffor, quae tamen in ipso, si exacteloquimar, Pinna non erit. De Jure Belli & Pacis. Lib II. Cap, 21. Sect. 10, 11, 12. Nimirum aequum omnino est, Fidejuffor ejus, quod pro reolvit, recuperandi Causa Actionem Mandati dari, ne cui Officium faumfit' damnofum: At Poenae Corporalis nulla est Restitutio: & quidproderit Fidejuffori, ream eadem Poenam, postea subite? PostremoNemo contrahendo se ad Poenam Corporalem obligare potest: Quoniam Membrorum faorum Nemo Domi-nus videtur, neque Justitiae Ratio patitur, eum, qui non deliquit, Poenam hujusmodi fustinere. Comment. in Intl. Jus. tin. Imper. Lib III. Tit. 21. ff86 Igitur it Morte immatura ac violenta rapit Liberos Acanis, Saulis, Jeroboami, Achabi, in ipsos Jure Dominii non Poenae utitur (Deus),

sedeodem Facto gravius punit Parentes, de Jure Belli ac Pacis. Lib. II. Sect. 14. His
Distinctionibus positus dicemus Neminem Delictiimmunem ob Delictum alienum punire posse, cujus
Rei Ratio vera est—Obligatio ad Poenam ex Merito oritur: Meritum autem est personale, quippe ex
Voluntate Ortum habens, qua nihil magis nobis proprium, unde autem exorsio vocatur. Grotius ibid.
Sect. 12.

S. A Charge of Publishing a Palpable Falsity

A CHARGE OF PUBLISHING A PALPABLE

FALSITY EXHIBITED AGAINST, AND FULLY PROVED UPON, THE AUTHORS OF THE MONTHLY REVIEW, In a Letter to those Gentlemen:

Wherein is contained A DEFENCE OF 'THE VINDICATION OF DIVINE JUSTICE, IN THE INFLICTION OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN', In ANSWER to An anonymous Pamphlet, intituled, 'The Scripture-Account of a Future State considered'

Printed and Sold by JOHN WARD, against the Royal Exchange;

GEORGE KEITH, in Gracechurch-Street; and JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North-Side of the Royal-Exchange. By John Brine,

London 1755.

[Price Sixpence.]

GENTLEMAN,

IF this Address is displeasing to you, I apprehend, that I am not to be blamed; because you have given just Occasion unto me of a warmer Resentment, than I shall take the Liberty to shew, by imputing to me a Notion, which is most ridiculous and absurd; viz. That there are Degrees of Infinity. As I knew that such a monstrous Absurdity never entered into my Mind; and not being sensible, that I had said any Thing, which could justly cause you to suspect my entertaining such a Supposition, I took the Freedom to charge you with the Guilt of a palpable Falsity: From which Charge you endeavour, in an Appeal to the Public, to clear yourselves. In order that the Public, unto whom your Appeal is made, may form a true Judgment in this Cause between you and me, I will lay before them the following facts: The Ground of your Charge: The Form of your Charge: My Call upon you to vindicate yourselves; or, rather, the Charge, which I exhibited against you, of publishing a Palpable Falsity: And your Defence, or Vindication of yourselves from the Guilt of such an atrocious Crime. The Ground of your Charge is, what I offer to prove, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, by Way of Answer unto that, which the Author of the Scripture-Account advanced against it; speaks thus: "In whatever Manner Sin or Vice be estimated, it must be finite, because it is the Production or Act of a finite Kind, of finite Principles and Passions." My Answer unto which, is this: Very well: Whoever said, that Sin, or a sinful Act, is infinite? No Mortal, I am persuaded. That which is infinite cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being. We know this, full as well as this Writer does. But, with his Leave, or without it, we must distinguish between the Act of Sin, and the Demerit of that Act. Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, yet there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, because it is committed against all possible and infinite Good. Its Demerit arises from the Object, against whom it is committed; and, therefore, as the Divine Object against whom all Sin is directed is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite: If it as not, then there is not, there cannot

be greater Evil and Demerit, in an Act of Sin against God, than attend an Act of Sin against a Creature.

Why, do not such Persons, as our Author, speak out plainly what they mean, and tell us roundly, that there is no greater Evil in sinning against God than there is in sinning against a poor Mortal like ourselves? This is what he intends, it certainly is what he designs, though it was too impious a Thing for him, directly and explicitly, to assert. If this is not his Meaning he says nothing which is to his Purpose; for, if he allows, that there is greater Evil in Sin against God, than there is in Sin against a Creature, that Reason, which obliges him to grant, that it is, in any Degree, a greater Evil to offend against God, will compel him to yield, that it is infinitely greater, viz. the infinite Majesty of the Divine Being. f1 The Form of your Censure, or Charge, was this:

“This Person would persuade the Public of his Abilities, as a Critic and a Philosopher; Characters to which he may be justly intitled, if wild Conjectures, and dogmatical Affirmation be allowed in the Place of clear Reasoning and solid Judgment; by which alone, the Author of the Scripture-Account ought to have been tried, and by which, perhaps, it might be possible to convict that Gentleman of having sacrificed as much to Imagination, though not to Dullness, f2 as Mr. Brine, who supposes, that there are Degrees of Infinity, and that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death.” As I thought myself, in some Measure, injured by this Censure, or Charge of yours, particularly, in this Assertion, that I suppose, that there are Degrees of Infinity; which I knew I did not, and also was sure, that I had not expressed a Tittle, from which it might be inferred, that I entertained such a ridiculous and absurd Supposition; I apprehended, that I had a Right to wipe off this false Imputation; and, therefore, I took the Liberty, to exhibit this Charge against you, in some of the public Papers: “To the Authors of the Monthly-Review. Gentlemen, in your Review for December, 1754, you mention a small Pamphlet, which I lately published, intitled, A Vindication of the Justice of God, in the Infliction of endless Punishment for Sin; in Answer to the Scripture-Account of a future State considered. And you say, that I would persuade the Public of my Abilities, as a Critic and a Philosopher. This I deny; and, unless you know me better, than I know myself, you cannot prove it. Farther, you represent me as dogmatical and dull; both which, it is possible, may be true. But what Censure may I not pass upon you, for affirming, that I suppose, that there are Degrees of Infinity! This Assertion is a palpable Falsity. Such a Supposition I have neither expressed, nor, in the least Degree, suggested. If, therefore, you should be able to defend yourselves from a Charge of Ill-manners, which you exhibit against me, I am sure you will not be capable of vindicating your Veracity. I acknowledge that I suppose, {as you say I do} that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death. It is my Opinion, at present, that Annihilation is not Death.

If you will be pleased to condescend so far, as to clear up to me my Mistake in this Matter, {if I am mistaken herein} the Favour will be gratefully acknowledged, by, Gentlemen, your humble Servant, etc.”

Very soon after this Advertisement of mine, the following Lines were inserted {#by your Order, I presume} as News in the Evening Advertiser:

“If Mr. Brine will wait till the Publication of the Review for the present Month, he may then see, if he pleases, on the blue Cover of the said Number, a proper Notice of an Advertisement {wherein he has more than once exposed himself} relating to the JUST Account given, in a late Review, of his

profound Answer to the Scripture-Account of a future State considered, for the Reviewers will have no News-Paper Controversy, "with such an Opponent."

Agreeably to this Piece of News, I find on the blue Cover of the said Number, your Defence, or Vindication of yourselves:

"The Authors of the Review have been called upon by ONE Mr. John Brine, in an Advertisement inserted in the public Papers, wherein he accuses them of having falsely charged upon him, Notions not entertained by him. In the Review for December, 1754 Page 477, Mention is made of a Pamphlet, entitled, A Vindication of divine Justice, etc. written by Mr. Brine, and it is there said, that Mr. B. supposes there are Degrees of Infinity, and that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death. Mr. B. acknowledges, and still avows, this curious Doctrine of Annihilation; but denies his having in the least suggested the above express'd Notion of Infinity. Undoubtedly this Writer best understands his own Meaning, or Un-meaning; but whether we have erred, or not, in the Conclusion we drew from the following Passage, let the Reader determine: "In Page 28, Mr. B. has these Words: Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, yet there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, because it is committed against all possible and infinite Good. Its Demerit arises from the Object against whom it is committed; and, therefore, as the Divine Object against whom all Sin is directed, is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite: If it is not, then there is not, there cannot be greater Evil and Demerit in an Act of Sin against God, than attend an Act of Sin against a Creature. - Here we are taught, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin; and that as the Divine Object against whom all Sin is directed, is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite. Now, will Mr. B. maintain, that all Sins are equal in Demerit, or that one Infinite is greater than another, and that Blasphemy, Idolatry, and Murder, are not more heinous than petty Theft, Drunkenness, Lying, Scandal etc.? The Assertion would shock a rational Christian; and yet this Mr. B. will, we apprehend, be driven to, unless he admits, as a fair Deduction from his Premise, that there are Degrees of Infinity. This absurd Consequence occurred to us, on Perusal of his Pamphlet; and how far we are justifiable, in charging Mr. B. with such a Supposition {for he is not charged with any direct Assertion} let the candid By-stander pronounce: As for our Author, it is probable, as he is a very profound Writer, he will yet have a great deal to urge about, and about this Alternative; he is welcome to say what and how much he pleases; we shall look upon ourselves as unconcerned in the Matter.

We have shewn the Ground upon which we first formed our Opinion of his Pamphlet; that Opinion, and its Foundation, are now before the Public; and if, in the Judgment of that Public, we stand acquitted of any Intention to impose upon them, or misrepresent any Author whatever, whose Writings are mentioned in the Review, it will be quite indifferent to us what this Writer may have to say, in the Defence of his own peculiar Notions." Having laid before the Reader the true State of this Cause between you and me, I will now proceed to consider, calmly, that Defence which you make for yourselves, in Answer to the Charge, which I exhibited against you. In this Defence, you say, One Mr. John Brine, by which Phrase, doubtless, you intended to put me in mind of my Obscurity; whereof I am not insensible, and did not need this Memento of it from you, though, that I confess, you might not know, and, therefore, you did well to give me this Hint, that I might not imagine myself to be much known, and taken Notice of in the World: Yet, I must say, there would have been a greater Propriety in the Hint, if you had not, more than once, honoured me with the Mention of my Name, on former Occasions; whereby that became as extensively known, as your

Reviews are spread: I cannot tell whether that is far or not, {nor is it the Matter of my Concern} you best know: However, that is a sufficient Evidence, that I am not just now dropt out of the Clouds, and that your Readers are not Strangers to my Name, nor to that Respect, which you have formerly shewn unto it. But enough of this trivial Matter.

Again, You say, "Mr. B. still acknowledges and avows this curious Doctrine of Annihilation." The Manner of your expressing yourselves may occasion some less attentive Readers to think, that I suppose Men will be annihilated, and perhaps you are willing they should, although you know, that I utterly deny and disavow the Doctrine of the Annihilation of any of the human Race, and plead for the eternal Existence of both good and bad Men. By this Ambiguity, you cleared yourselves of the Trouble of offering any Thing, to prove the Absurdity of supposing, that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death. This is a considerable Instance of your Prudence. Truly, it was a wise Thing in you to decline attempting, at an Impossibility. And, that this is such, I imagine, you are, by this Time, convinced; and are sensible, that Persons may be annihilated, and yet not suffer Death. When you say, of Annihilation, you cannot mean Annihilation itself; but must mean, about, or concerning Annihilation. The Thing itself I deny, which you need not be told; but this Doctrine concerning it, I still acknowledge, and avow, viz. that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death: For Annihilation is not Death. Much is not necessary to be said, to evince the Truth thereof. If Death is a Privation of Life, which it hath been thought to be, and a Creature must exist, in suffering that Privation, it is very clear, that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death. If a Privation of Life takes Place in a Creature, I own, that I think it must be while it exists, because, I cannot comprehend how it should when it is not. Notwithstanding, Gentlemen, the Reproof, which you have given me, for pretending to philosophize, I cannot refrain from saying: That it is very unphilosophical, to conceive of a Privation, without the Existence of some Subject. And, if a Privation necessarily supposes the Existence of some Subject, is it not evident, that the Being of a Creature, which suffers Death, must be of somewhat longer Duration, than that of its Life? If the Life of Peter is of the same Duration, with his Existence, how is it possible, he should suffer Death? He does not, while he is, and when he is not, it is certain, he cannot. In Annihilation, a living Creature, would not suffer a Privation of Life; because, so long as he exists, he lives, and, consequently, his Annihilation can be no other than a Cessation of Life, together with the Cessation of his Being, and in the very same Moment: For, his Existence and Life must be exactly of equal Duration. We cannot for this Reason, suppose him to suffer Death, in his Annihilation, unless we will suppose, there may be a Privation of Life, without the Existence of a Subject, of such Privation. And, therefore, I conclude, the Author of the Scripture- Account, etc. was mistaken, in thinking, that Annihilation is Death; particularly, as he stiles it, the second Death.

You suggest, 'The Opinion of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, is a peculiar Notion of mine.' For, relating to that Point, you say: "It will be quite indifferent to us what this Writer may have to say, in Defence of his own peculiar Notions." Of which Notions, therefore, you must mean this is one. Pray, Gentlemen, do you speak as you think? Or do you prevaricate, in this Case, and take the Liberty to insinuate, that this is my peculiar Notion, though you know it not to be so? Perhaps, your Reading may not have been very large, on divine and religious Subjects; yet, I cannot be persuaded, that it hath been so very scanty, as to leave you under a Possibility of imagining, that this is a Peculiarity of mine. This Doctrine hath been maintained and defended, by all our

Protestant Divines, who have opposed the Popish Notion of venial Sins. It is not necessary to produce many Testimonies hereof; but the Reader, I hope, will excuse my citing a Few. And they shall be such, as are not only full and explicite on this Head; but also from such Writers, as even the Reviewers themselves, free as they are in their Censures, upon any who differ from them, may not, it is probable, choose to impute Dullness unto; though, indeed, I pretend not to be certain of their Civility and Respect to the Names following, since they stand directly in their Way. Bishop Downname, speaking of Sins, expresses himself thus: "None being so small, but that it is of sufficient Weight to press down the Sinner to Hell, being of infinite Guilt, committed against infinite Justice, deserving infinite Punishment, for which the Justice of God cannot be satisfied, but by a Propitiation of infinite Value." f3 Bishop Davenant asserts the same: "God, says he, is of infinite Majesty and Goodness: Whoever, therefore dishonours such Majesty, by any Transgression, be it great or small, demerits infinite Punishment." f4 Bishop Reynolds speaks thus: "This Demerit {i.e. of Sin} is founded, not only in the Constitution, etc. - of God, but in the Nature of his own Holiness and Justice, which in Sin is violated, and turned from; and this Guilt is after Sort infinite, because it springeth out of the Aversion from an infinite Good, the Violation of an infinite Holiness and Justice." f5 Bishop Hopkins, his Words are these: "Every Act of Sin, yea the least that we ever committed, is an infinite Debt, and carries in it infinite Guilt, because committed against an infinite Majesty. For, all Offences take their Measures, not only from the Matter of the Act, but from the Person against whom they are committed: As a reviling Word against our Equals, will but bear an Action at Law; but against the Prince, it is High-Treason and punishable with Death. So here, the least Offence against the infinite Majesty of God, becomes itself infinite." f6

Now can you, Gentlemen, persuade yourselves to believe, that these great and excellent Divines, supposed, that there are Degrees of Infinity? I will not peremptorily say, that you will be so favourable to their Character, as not to impute such an Absurdity to them; because I know not unto what Extent your Freedom, in Censuring, may be carried, against any, whose Opinions you dislike: Yet, I cannot allow myself to think, that you will be disposed fix such an Odium upon those venerable Names; though you have just the same Reason for it, with respect to them, as you had for so doing, with regard to myself.

Doubtless you thought yourselves, at full Liberty, to affirm whatever you pleased, concerning me, provided, the least: Colour of a Foundation might be pretended, for what you should assert, though ever so ridiculous and absurd; and, therefore, affirmed, that I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity. Being, by me, charged with a direct Breach of Truth, in this Assertion: All that you have to offer in your Defence, is only this, you apprehend, that this is a Consequence naturally arising from my Notion of the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin. But, good Sirs, are the Consequences which justly follow from Opinions, always seen, by those who hold them? I presume you know they are not. Fair it is, to urge the absurd Consequences of any Doctrine, against it, in order to shew, that it cannot be true: But it is very unfair to charge any with supposing the Consequences of a Doctrine, however justly they may follow therefrom, which the Asserters of it do not discern. Not long since, I took into Consideration, an Assertion of a learned and worthy Author, from which, a Consequence most absurd, is fairly deducible. f7 I apprehended, that it was lawful for me to observe it, and to caution against assenting to that Assertion; because of the Absurdity, which it cannot be cleared of. But if I had said, that, that Author supposed that Consequence; upon Reflection, I could not have acquitted myself, of having acted an exceedingly disingenuous and

unfair Part. For this Reason, he did not discern the Consequence of his Assertion, and, therefore, could not suppose it, or, which is the same Thing, think that to be a Truth. You it seems, apprehend, that the Doctrine of the infinite Evil and Demerit of Sin, is unavoidably attended with this absurd Consequence, that there are Degrees of Infinity. Well, what if it is, must it necessarily be concluded, that our Protestant Divines saw that Consequence, and supposed it to be a Truth? Will you proceed so far in Censuring, as to affirm that of them? And, if such Writers, as are produced above, did not discern this to be the Consequence of the Doctrine, which they maintained; is it any Wonder, that so dull a Person as I am, should not make the Discovery? You cannot think it is. Why then did you charge me with supposing this Consequence? Can you produce any Expression, Phrase, or so much as a single Word, from which it may be inferred, that my Notion of Infinity, is different from your own? You cannot. All that you can pretend unto, is this: That I attribute Infinity unto that which is only finite. The clearest Proof that the Evil and Demerit of Sin, is finite, will be no Proof, that I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity: Or, that I entertain a mistaken Notion of Infinity. Such Proof, indeed, would evince, that I am mistaken in applying Infiniteness unto that, wherein, in Fact, it is not; but nothing more. And that would not, in the least, clear up your Veracity. I think, I may be allowed to say, that I have given such Evidence, that in my Account, Infinity hath no Limit, and, consequently, that there cannot be Degrees in it, that no Scruple can be made thereof. Have I not said, that which is infinite cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being. We know this full as well as this Writer does.

If I had conceived, that there are Degrees of Infinity, I must have thought it possible, for that which is infinite to proceed from a finite Being. Yea, if Infinity is really to be found with any Being at all, it must be with some created Being, if there are Degrees in it. Are not these my Words also? Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, etc. Is it not manifest from hence, that my Opinion in, that the highest Degrees rise not up to Infinity? The Thing, is as clear, as a Matter can well be rendered by the Force of Language. And when I express the endless Punishment of Sinners, do I not say, Punishment, which is infinite, in its Duration? If you really thought, that my Opinion is, that there Degrees Infinity is limited or, that are Degrees in it, why did you not observe to me, that, according, to my Notion of Infinity, the Punishment of the wicked might be infinite, in its Duration, and yet not be endless; because I suppose Infinity to have its Limits. So full and clear Intimation I have given, that I think Infinity is unbounded, that it requires a very large Stretch of Charity, to conclude, that you did not act directly against the Remonstrance of your own Consciences, in charging me with the Supposition of there being Degrees of Infinity. But I hope you did not do this, under the Influence of this Consideration, that there is not an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. If the Evil of falsly accusing, is not infinite, as it is a Sin against God, it is not a light Thing, to violate the Divine Precepts, which require us to speak Truth of, as well as unto our Neighbour. The candid Bystander, to whose Sentence you seem willing to submit, it is highly probable, will conclude, that, as you have falsly charged me, with entertaining a very absurd Notion, it is but equitable, that you should, in as public a Manner, retract that Charge, as you exhibited it. Why should you not dare to be ingenuous, in your Acknowledgment of Guilt, which it is impossible for you to conceal? And, that you cannot cover it over, at any Rate, the Defence you make, is a full Proof of. You have nothing to say in your Vindication, but this, the Consequence, which you infer, occurred to you, on Perusal of my Pamphlet, and, therefore, you asserted, that, that Consequence is my Supposition, although you had that in full View, which demonstratively proves, that it is no Supposition of mine. As you think this to be the Consequence of my Opinion,

you might have declared it, and urged it too, as an Objection to the Truth of that Sentiment, without the least Blame from me, had you not affirmed, that I suppose that Consequence, or, which is the same Thing, think that Absurdity to be Truth. For I am heartily willing to allow others the same Liberty, in objecting to my Opinions, as I make free to take, in opposing theirs.

You militate against the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in sin, with a very formidable Dilemma, and enquire thus:

“Now will Mr. B. maintain, that all Sins are equal in Demerit, or that one Infinite is greater than another; and that Blasphemy, Idolatry, and Murder, are not more heinous than petty Theft, Drunkenness, Lying, Scandal, etc.? The Assertion would shock a rational Christian, and yet this Mr. B. will, we apprehend, be driven to, unless he admits, as a fair Deduction from his Premises, that there are Degrees of Infinity.” I will not dissemble, even in the Defence of what appears to me, a most important Truth. That which is here offered, may seem a considerable Objection, to the Doctrine under Debate, until it is thoroughly canvassed, and weigh’d in the Balance of right Reason. As to the latter Member of this Dilemma, viz. that one Infinite is greater than another, I imagine, that I may soon ease myself of it. For, I never dreamed of an Inequality, in Infinity, or, that one Infinite is greater than another. Nor do I believe you ever thought I did. But, having worked up yourselves unto a great Contempt of me and my Writings, under the Influence of what Considerations, you best know, your Virtue, it seems, was not sufficient to guard you effectually, against a Temptation, to endeavour to render me and them, contemptible in the View of others, even though it was at your own Expence. And, therefore, you took the Liberty to affirm, that which, I think, you must then know to be false, for you had before your Eyes, sufficient Evidence thereof, viz. That I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity. The only Difficulty, wherewith I am pressed, is the former Branch of your Dilemma. And as to that, I do maintain, that all Sins are infinite, {and so equal} in Demerit. But not that all Sins are equally heinous: Nor that all Sins will be equally punished. The Punishment for all Sins will be infinite, {and so equal} in its Duration. But the Punishment of no Sin will be infinite in Intensity; for that is absolutely impossible: And, therefore, more heinous Sins, will be punished with greater Torments, and less heinous ones, with lighter. I continue to insist upon it, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. When I say, that there is an infinite Evil, in Sin, I do not mean, that the Act of Sin is infinite. Or, that the Privation of moral Rectitude is infinite. Or, that the whole Compound, or Sin considered, in its Concrete, is infinite. If it was, there could be no Disparity in Sins; but every Sin must be equal. I make no Difficulty of granting, that there is a great Difference in sinful Actions, and also in their Aggravations: And shall never shock the rational Christian, by suggesting, that all Sins, are equally heinous. I assure you, that you need not entertain the least Jealousy, that I shall ever so do.

Yet, I affirm, that there is in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin, an infinite Evil.

First, Objectively: As God is the Object against whom it is committed, there must be an infinite Evil in it. If the infinitely transcendent Excellencies of the Divine Being, are allowed to come into Consideration, in forming an Estimate, of the Evil, of Sin, I think this cannot well be denied. Indeed, if God is struck out of the Account, whose Law is broken, and whose immense Perfections are dishonoured by Sin, the Infinity of Evil in Sin, cannot be proved. But Things do not seem to be quite come to that Pass yet, as explicitly to disallow of taking into Consideration, the Divine Attributes when we form an Estimate of the Evil, which there is in Sin. Even you, Gentlemen, do

not say, that this is not to be allowed; but artfully pass it over in Silence, without the least Remark, although you law I argued for the Infinity of Evil in Sin, wholly from this Principle, that it is committed against Infinite Majesty. And it was better, not to take any Notice of it, than impiously, to deny, that Respect is to be had, unto the infinite Perfections of the great Creator, when we form a Judgment of the Evil which there is in Sin, as it hath him for its Object. An explicate Denial of it, {to use your own Phrase} would shock a rational Christian. And granting of it, must have involved you in an inextricable Difficulty. For, if it is allowed, that the Evil in Sin, takes its Measure from the Nature and Perfections of God, the Infinity of its Evil cannot be denied, without a most manifest Contradiction. And, therefore, your Wisdom is to be applauded, in taking no Notice of an Argument, which really is unanswerable; and which, you could not deny, Without fixing Infamy upon yourselves; because of the dreadful Impiety, that such a Denial evidently carries in it.

Secondly, There is in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin, an infinite Evil extensively. My Meaning is this: The Spot and Stain of Sin will continue for ever: Or, its Guilt and Pollution will eternally remain; unless it is atoned for and pardoned, through the Blood of Christ. If Atonement is not made, and Satisfaction is not given to the violated Law, and offended Justice of God, the Sinner will always remain under a Charge of Guilt. Nothing which he can do, not any Thing which he can offer, nor Sufferings which he is able to endure, will ever be sufficient to obtain a Discharge from that Guilt, which he hath contracted. As the sinful Creature is under a Charge of Guilt, this Moment, without Atonement made, and Pardon extended unto him, upon that Foundation, his Guilt will remain upon him, unto a Duration, which is infinite in its Extent. So that, there is in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin, whether great; or small, an infinite Evil, both objectively and extensively considered.

Now, such as the Evil in Sin is, it is, surely, reasonable to conclude, that such is its Demerit. The Evil in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin, is infinite, objectively, and extensively: And, therefore, there is in Sin, as Sin, an infinite Demerit. It is no Absurdity to conceive, that the Demerit of Sin is proportionate to the Evil, which there is in Sin. And that, Evil is not infinite, will never be proved, until Proof is given, that the Infinity of the Divine Object, against whom Sin is committed, must not come into Consideration, when we form an Estimate of the Evil, which therein is. And who will dare to engage in such an impious Undertaking, I know not. I am willing to hope no Man whatever. There being in Sin an infinite Evil, and an infinite Demerit, or a Demerit proportionate to its Evil, therefore,

I. The reasonable Creature suffers an infinite Loss, in Consequence of Sin, as Sin, whether the sinful Action be more, or less heinous. This Loss is a Want of the Enjoyment of an infinite Good. An infinite Loss would not be the penal Effect of Sin, if there was not an infinite Demerit in Sin. It is absurd to suppose, that the penal Effect of Sin, in any Sense, is infinite, if the Demerit of it is not infinite. For, in that Case, there would not be a Proportion between Demerit and the Penalty, unto which it relates; but the Disproportion would be such as exceeds all Degrees. Wisdom and Justice, most certainly, infinite Wisdom and Justice, will, in all Respects, proportion Punishment, unto the Demerit of Sin: Without great Impiety we cannot think otherwise, And, therefore, if it is to be proved, that it is the Constitution of God, that Sin shall subject the rational Creature, unto the Suffering of an infinite Loss, as a penal Effect of Sin, the clearest, the most undeniable Proof, even such as rises up to evident Demonstration, will be given, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. And which of these two Things requires Proof? Which of them will be disputed? viz.

Whether a Want of Communion with God, or of the Enjoyment of him, who is the Origin of all Felicity, be an infinite Loss? Or, whether, it is the Appointment of the most holy, most wise, and most just Creator, that Sin, as Sin, and so every Sin, whether great, or small, and whether more, or less heinous, shall subject reasonable Creatures, unto the Suffering of such an infinite Loss? I think neither can be contested. And until either one, or the other is denied, we may take them both for granted. This is an irrefragable Argument, for the Proof of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin. Such an Argument it is, that all the Skill and Force, of all the rational Christians, {as they call themselves} in the World, will never be able to answer. You see, Gentlemen, notwithstanding your Reproof, I remain dogmatical still. At which you need not be surprized, because you knew what Solomon says: Though thou shouldst bray a Fool in a Mortar, among Wheat with a Pestil, yet his Foolishness will not depart from him.

II. This Loss is infinite extensively, as the Evil in Sin is, and the Demerit of it too, for that Reason. For, as the Guilt and Pollution of Sin will eternally remain, if not atoned for, and pardoned, so the reasonable Creature will for ever suffer the Loss of the Enjoyment of God, as the penal Effect of Sin.

III. The Infinity of the Demerit of Sin, arising from the infinite Evil, which there is in it, as to Punishment of Sense, respects the Extent of its Duration; but not its Intenseness and Weight. Punishment for Sin, in this View, will be infinite in Duration, but finite in Intenseness. It is not to be supposed, that Sin demerits infinite Tortures. For which, three Reasons are assigned, by the most learned, and very accurate Witsius.

1. Because such Punishment {i.e. which is infinite in Intenseness} is absolutely impossible: For, no Creature is able to endure Tortures, which are infinitely intense.

2. Because it would follow, God could never satisfy his Justice, by the Infliction of condign Punishment on the Ungodly.

3. Because it would follow, that equal Punishment is due to all Sins: Or, that in Fact, all sins are equally punished, which is absurd to suppose, and contrary to { Matthew 11:22}." f8 From hence, it is evident, that the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin, may be maintained, without the Absurdity of supposing, that there are Degrees of Infinity. It is also clear, that this Doctrine may be defended, without supposing, that all Sins are equally heinous, and also without supposing, that all Sins are equally punished. The Punishment of all Sin is infinite, {#and so equal} in its Duration, as I laid in Page 30 of my Pamphlet. But the Intenseness of the Torments inflicted by God, for Sin; for no Sin whatever, will be infinite; but they will be more, or less, intense, as the Sins, for which they are inflicted, are more, or less heinous, and more, or less aggravated. And, therefore, there will be Degrees, in Divine Punishment, as Men are more or less guilty. Which I also observed, in Page 26.

Upon the whole, I think, it is most clear, that your very formidable Dilemma, being thoroughly examined, appears to have no Weight or Force at all in it. And it can do no Execution, upon the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, against which it is levelled. It does not in the least affect that Doctrine. Take it in both its Branches, the Distance, between it, and that Doctrine, is as great as the Distance of the two Poles, and far greater too. I am not driven by it to suppose, that there are Degrees of Infinity. Because I plead not for the Infinity of Evil and Demerit in Sin,

from Sin materially considered; but: from the Infinity of the Divine Object, against which it is committed. And, in this Consideration of Sin, {i.e. objectively} there is no Difference in Sins, however great the Difference may be in Acts of Sin. Nor am I driven by it, to maintain, that "Blasphemy, Idolatry, and Murder, are not more heinous than petty Theft, Drunkenness, Lying, Scandal, etc." Because I have not contended for the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, from its Heinousness; and, therefore, I may, as I do, allow, that Blasphemy, etc. are more heinous, {as you say} than petty Theft, etc. can be supposed to be, perfectly consistent, with my Opinion of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, as Sin, and so in every, sin, whether great or small; because I plead, that this Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin, arises from the Infinity of God, the Object against whom it is committed, and not from the Heinousness of the sinful Act. If I had done that, as you say, I must have been driven to assert one of these two Things: Either, that one Infinite is greater than another: Or, that all Sins are greater in Heinousness. But, as I argue upon quite another Principle, your Dilemma does not come near me. It is as far from me, as the Earth is from Heaven. And I am much secure from being hurt by it, as a Man would be secure from being injured by the Discharge of a Pistol, if he was placed in the highest Heavens.

It is astonishing, that you could prevail with yourselves, to pretend, that you have not misrepresented me to the Public; because you must know, that you were guilty of a Misrepresentation of me, in saying, that I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity, except you are exceedingly dull, as I am. For, I absolutely denied the Infinity of every Being, and of all Acts, wherein there can be Degrees. Did I not say: That which is infinite, cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being? There are my Words also, and you quote them, and thereby prove upon yourselves, that Guilt, which I charge you with: Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings. Is not here a full and absolute Denial of Infinity, wherein there is a Possibility of Degrees? How unaccountable is it, therefore, that you could allow yourselves to assert, that I suppose here are Degrees of Infinity! And it is more strange still, that you can now pretend to acquit yourselves of the Guilt, of a Misrepresentation of me unto the Public. This Assertion is as gross a Misrepresentation of me, as affirming, that I suppose, that God is finite in his Being, Powers, and Acts, and his rational Creatures are infinite in their Beings, Powers, and Actions, would have been. You had as much Ground to assert this of me, as you have to affirm the other. That Assertion implies, that I think Infinity is limited; which you could not but know, is a palpable Falsity. You were certainly convinced in your Consciences, that I entertain no mistaken Notion of Infinity, though you dared to affirm I do. You might, indeed, think, that I attribute Infinity, unto that wherein it is not; and, therefore, mistook in that Respect. But as to Infinity itself, you must, undoubtedly, know, that my Apprehension of it is, the very same with your own, and the Apprehensions of all other Men; viz. That it is absolutely without a Limit. The clearest Proof, that I am mistaken, in thinking, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin, {could such Proof be given} would not in the least prove, that I suppose, that there are Degrees of Infinity. But with respect to the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, I think, I may take Leave to say, that such Evidence and Demonstration of its Truth is given, as will not admit of a solid Reply. As you have grossly, misrepresented, me, in falsely charging me, with supposing, that there are Degrees of Infinity, I have a Right to demand of you a full Retraction of that Charge, I do demand it. And, unless you comply with this Demand, and, in the very same public Manner, withdraw your Charge, {in the Body of your Number for the Month of April} as you exhibited it, I shall take the Liberty to expose you farther, than I have yet done. When I consider unto whom I now write, I

think, it may not be improper for me to add this: The Punishment of Sins will be equal, in its Duration; but unequal, in its Intenseness; because I have said, that Punishment for Sin will be infinite, and so equal: Lest you should tell your Readers, that I suppose an Equality and an Inequality, in the same Thing, and in the very same Respect. To conclude, if you, on your Part, will be pleased to allow me the Liberty, of defending what appears to me to be true; I assure you, on my Part, you shall always have full Leave to represent me, unto your Readers, as ostentatious, dogmatical, dull, ill-mannered, very profound, and unmeaning: But if, in Contradiction to the last Encomium, you shall say my Un-meaning, is a Meaning, and such a Meaning, as is absurd, which is the Fact here, if it comes within my Notice, you shall not fail of hearing from me. As to every Thing else, I shall be silent, say of me whatever you please, that you shall think is agreeable to Politeness, Civility, and Candour. For, it is Matter of as much Indifference unto me, what Epithets, you shall be pleased to honour me with, as it is to you, what, or how much, I may have to say, in Defence of the Notions, which I entertain. I think it not amiss to make some Improvement, on the important Subject, of this Letter, in a little pious Enthusiasm, and Cant. But, as you are rational Christians, such Stuff cannot be acceptable to you, and, therefore, I will not presume to offer it to your Consideration: But bid you Adieu, for the present. I am,

Gentlemen, Your humble Servant,

JOHN BRINE Bridgewater-square,

March 31, 1755 Some Improvement of the Doctrine of the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin: In a few Reflections

I. Our Indignation against Sin, ought to rise up, unto the highest Degree, from the Consideration of the infinite Evil, which there is in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin. One of its numerous Ways, whereby, an a Time of Temptation, it surprizes us, into Acts of Folly, is by hiding its Vile Nature. This is a Deception extremely dangerous, and without a speedy Interposition of Divine Grace, and Power, in our Favour, to awaken us, unto due Consideration, of the dreadful Evil of sinning against God; such woful Effects, may be expected to ensue, as will overwhelm us, in Sorrow, Shame, and Confusion, upon a Reflection. It is to be feared, that not a Few, can bear Testimony, unto the Truth of this, from their own, sad Experience. Men are apt to compare sinful Actions, with one another; and because there is a Difference in them, materially considered, some being far more heinous, than others; they think, that without much Danger to themselves, at least, a little Gratification, may be allowed unto the Flesh, in some particular instance, or, to such a Degree, though not in a higher Measure. Hence we are prevailed with, {i.e. through Inattention, unto the Evil of Sin, as Sin} to think within ourselves of this or that Sin, is it not a little one? There is no great Harm therein, or it is not an atrocious Crime; and so Sin obtains a Conquest over our Minds, and we are in the utmost Danger, of contracting such Guilt, as will be just Cause of the deepest Resentment against ourselves, so long as Life shall last. The only Way of being secured from Sin's Prevalence, is to have our Souls impressed with a due Sense of its exceeding Sinfulness: Without this, Men will make a Trade of committing lesser Evils, which will most assuredly prove for ever ruinous unto them, if infinite Mercy prevent it not, by a timely Conviction of their Guilt and Misery in Consequence of it. Slight Thoughts of the Evil of Sin, wilt certainly be productive of the most pernicious Fruits, in some Way, or other. And, therefore, it is our Wisdom, to take into our most serious and fixed Consideration, what an abominable Thing it is, to sin against infinite Goodness,

Holiness, and Justice, even in the lowest Instance: For, then, only, we are safe from Sin's Encroachments. And, without this, we shall never exercise that Repentance for Sin, which God accepts. Because we shall extenuate our Guilt, and palliate our Offences, if we have not a Sense of Sin's Evil, as it is committed against infinite Goodness, and Majesty. As we value our precious Souls, therefore, let none persuade us to think, that there is not an infinite Evil in Sin, unless they produce such Evidence for it, as will not admit of the least Scruple, concerning its Truth. Such Evidence can be no other than this; viz. that God's infinite Perfections are not to be taken into View, when we form our Judgment of Sin's evil Nature. The Supposition of which, surely; must be shocking, unto every pious Mind.

II. The Infinity of the Demerit of Sin, objectively considered, proves, that we are all, and every one, in a miserable Condition. Men universally are chargeable with Sin. Every Mouth is stopped, and all the World is become guilty before God. And, none can possibly, by any Means, make a Compensation for their Offences, to the Law and Justice of God. Dost thou, O Sinner! because thou art not so guilty; as some others are, think that it may be in thy Power, to procure thy Pardon, and secure thy Person from suffering Divine Punishment? Thou art dreadfully deceived herein.

For, the least of thy Transgressions, even in Thought, exposes thee unto the Suffering of an infinite Loss, for evermore. Sin as Sin, and so every Sin, whether great, or small, forfeits a Title, unto the Enjoyment of God, the Origin of Blessedness. And, therefore, no Creature, who is guilty, though but in the lowest Degree, hath a Claim upon God, the Fountain of all Goodness, for Communion with him, a Sense of his Favour, and the Enjoyment of him. The least Act of Sin, subjects the rational Creature, unto the Suffering of this infinite Loss; because of the infinity of Evil, in Sins, as committed against God. And, as the Guilt of the Sinner, will for ever remain upon him, if not atoned for, and pardoned, on the Foundation of Atonement made. He must eternally suffer that infinite Loss. Never, never, can he be admitted into the Presence of God: Where is Fulness of Joy. But must always be separated from him. And though, through the dreadful Enmity, which there is in the Heart of a Sinner, against God, he will not desire the Happiness of Communion with him, in his infinitely glorious Perfections; his infinite Indignation, discovered, in his Expulsion from his gracious Presence, will pierce him through, and through, and fill his Soul with agonizing Tortures. This! O dreadful! This! is what we all and every one deserve, let our Guilt be ever so small, or how little soever, it may be aggravated, in its Circumstances. How stupid, therefore, are our Hearts, which are unaffected with our deplorable Condition! Very justly we are compared unto a Man asleep, upon the Top of a Mast: Who is every Moment, in Danger of being swallowed up, in the Waves of the Sea; but is insensible of that Danger. And thus it is with sinful Men.

III. This Doctrine of the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin; must surely, convince us, that our Redemption from Sin, and its penal Effects, could not be effected, by a mere Creature. Infinite Merit can never attend the Obedience, and Sufferings of one, who is not of infinite Dignity, in his Person. Now, if it be a Truth, that there is an infinite Demerit, in Sin; the Sufferings of Christ, great as they were, could not atone for our Guilt, if; he was no other than a voluntary Production, or a created Being; because infinite Merit, had not attended them. And, therefore, those, who sacrilegiously rob him of the Glory of his proper Divinity; are driven by it, to deny, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. For, if that is allowed, it necessarily follows, that Christ by his Obedience and Sufferings, could not have obtained eternal Redemption, for one Individual of the human Race. If Men expect Salvation from Sin, and its penal Effects, by the Acts and Sufferings of

a mere Creature, it behoves them, to prove the Possibility of it, if they are able; for, otherwise, they must acknowledge, that such high Expectations, which are, indeed, the greatest a Creature can possibly entertain, are without a solid Foundation, and must certainly be disappointed. From hence appears, the evident Necessity, such Men are under, to maintain, that there is not, an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin; who insist upon it, that Christ is not a Divine Person, or truly God; but a Creature, or, a voluntary Production only.

IV. This important Doctrine lets us see, that we are infinitely indebted, unto the Grace, Kindness, and Mercy of God. If there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin: And our sinful Actions are more, than we can possibly number, and in all of which, there is an infinite Evil and Demerit: O what a Profusion of Goodness and Grace, is there in our Pardon! Infinite Mercy alone, can be a proper Ground of a Hope of Remission, since the Demerit of every one of our numerous Offences, is infinite, agreeably unto the infinite Evil, which there is in all, and every one of them.

Surely, upon a due Consideration of the Multitude of our Transgressions, in every one of which there is an infinite Evil and Demerit; we must be filled with an Admiration of the boundless Exuberancy of the Mercy of God, which is so conspicuous, in the Forgiveness of them. If, we have a suitable Apprehension thereof, in any Degree, we shall not fail of expressing our holy Adoration, of that immense Goodness and Mercy, in the devotional Language of the Church: Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the Remnant of his Heritage? He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy. {Micah 7:18}

V. No less adorable, is Divine Wisdom, which contrived the Way of our Remission, than Divine Grace, which resolved upon our Pardon.

Infinite Wisdom only could provide for Sin's Atonement, which is of infinite Demerit, as its Evil is infinite. In that Provision, the unbounded Understanding of God, discovers itself, more than in all his other Works; for which Reason, the Scheme of Redemption by Christ, is emphatically stilled: The Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom.

It is what could never have entered into any created Mind, angelic, or human. But, if the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, is not true, the evangelical Scheme of Redemption, is not so mysterious, as it is represented to be. Of this, those who deny that Doctrine are fully sensible, and, therefore, do not allow it to be, in the Depth of its Wisdom, any more than, in the Riches of its Grace, what it really is. To close, if we give up this Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, I am not able to discern, that we can possibly have any Objection, against joining with the Socinians, in a Denial of Christ's Atonement; which is what we can never do, I am lure, if we have any just Sense of God's Rectitude and Holiness.

POSTSCRIPT To the Authors of the Monthly-Review,

GENTLEMEN,

I AM persuaded, that the Public, to whom you appeal, will conclude, that you were guilty, of misrepresenting me, in laying, that I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity; when they are informed, that my Words, concerning Infinity are there: Indeed, we have learned to speak very familiarly of Infinity; but we have not, nor can have an adequate Idea of it. Infiniteness is only

knowable unto an Understanding which is infinite. A finite Mind, when it hath stretched its Conceptions as far as it possibly can, it is still in its Ideas infinitely short of comprehending that which is infinite. Every Person upon reading these Words, must think, either, that your Capacity is extremely dull: Or, that you were guilty of a wilful Misrepresentation of me, in laying, that I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity. My Opinion is, that you had much rather, be charged with wilfully publishing a gross Falshood, than be thought incapable of discerning, when Infinity, is in a proper Manner spoken of; and, therefore, it is not your Understanding, that I call in Question, but it is a Want of Virtue, in this Particular, that I charge you with. For, I would willingly act that Part, in this Affair, which may be least offensive to you. As you have dared, against the Remonstrance of your Consciencs, to assert this gross Falshood, of me, it may be, that you will not have Ingenuity enough to confers your Guilt, and retract your Charge: But if you do not, in the very same public Manner, as you exhibited that Charge, withdraw it; be assured, that the Consequence of denying this Justice, will be farther exposing yourselves. J.B.

FOOTNOTES Ft1 Vindication of Divine Justice, etc.

Ft2 We might add Ill-manners.

Ft3 Of Justification, p. 508.

Ft4 Deus est infinitae Majestatis & Bonitatis: Qui igitur talem Majestatem imminutam, it quantulacunque Transgressionem, infinitam Poenam incurrit. Determ. Queit. qua Theol. Q. 31.

Ft5 Treatises, p. 262, 263.

Ft6 Works, p. 412.

Ft7 My Sermon on the Divine Decrees, etc. p. 6, 7, 8.

Ft8 Quia talis Poena est absolute impossibilis, etc. OEcon, Foed. Lib. 1,

Cap. 5, Sect. .

S. A Discourse on the Prayer of Jabez

A Discourse on the

Prayer of Jabez by John Brine London: Aaron Ward, 1736 A DISCOURSE ON THE PRAYER OF JABEZ;

CONTAINING THE SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL SERMONS PREACHED WITHIN CRIPPLEGATE.

Publish'd at the REQUEST of some who heard them. Printed for AARON WARD at the Kings Arms in Little Britain. LONDON 1736. [Price One Shilling.] {1 Chronicles 4:10} And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my Coast; and that thine Hand might be with me; and that thou wouldest keep me from Evil, that it might not grieve me. And God granted unto him that which he requested. THIS Chapter, with several others, contain an Account of the Families of the Children of Israel. The Person whom these Words concern was of that Race, but of what particular Family is not very evident f1 He is declared to be more honourable than his Brethren in the Verse preceding, viz. for his Piety, as we have reason to conclude from these Words, which are taken by some as a Vow, by others as a solemn Deprecation f2 The latter Sense is agreeable to me. In this commendation of Jabez, we may observe:

I. His solemn Worshipping of God; He called on the God of Israel.

II. The Favours he humbly asked.

III. The gracious Answer he received; God granted unto him that which he requested

I. We are to consider his solemn Worshipping of God. I shall, First. Attend to the Title the great Jehovah has here given him.

Secondly. To Jabez, his Adoration of him.

First. It will be proper to take Notice of the Character ascribed to the Divine Being, which is the God of Israel. This Name Israel was given to Jacob upon his wrestling with God by Prayer and prevailing {Genesis 32:28}; which Name his natural Posterity afterwards, bore; by it the Body of the Jewish Nation is frequently designed, as in these Words, But Israel which followed after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness {Romans 9:31}. Thus also in the same Epistle, Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for {Romans 11:7} The Lord stiles himself the God of this People in general; I am the Lord thy God {Exodus 20:2}. Which Words refer to the Jews understood collectively, and design taking them under his providential Care and Protection, and conferring upon them such Immunities as no other Nation in the Earth at that Time enjoyed; but are not expressive of God's standing in an everlasting Relation to, them, by virtue of the Covenant of Grace. In other Places, a peculiar People among them, with many of the Gentiles, are plainly designed: Thus in these Words of the Apostle, And so all Israel shall be saved

{Romans 11:26}. The whole Race of the Jews cannot be here intended, for they were not all eternally saved; and since the Apostle in this Place designedly treats of the Calling of the Gentiles, he must intend, by the Term Israel, a special and peculiar Number of Persons, of the Jewish, and Gentile Race: To whom God stands in a new Covenant-Relation, or he is their God in such a Sense, as he is not: the God of any others'; he became so in all that he is and has, by an Act of free Donation.

1. God gave himself to them; which is evident from that comprehensive Promise of the new Covenant; And they shall be my People, and I will be their God {Jeremiah 32:38}.

1. The Father formed a Resolution in Eternity to render the Elect happy, and in infinite Wisdom fixed upon Methods no less surprizing than effectual, to bring; about this gracious Intention: All his Decrees are subservient to this Purpose, and his Acts in Providence as well as Grace tend to its Accomplishment; so that the Whole of what he does, is wisely calculated, to promote the Happiness of those to whom he stands in a federal Relation. It is his unalterable Determination to enjoy, and for ever to be enjoyed by them, or eternally to communicate consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory to them in Heaven. With very good Reason therefore, it may be concluded, that the Person of the Father is theirs.

2. This is as true of the Son, who, with the Father, concurred in the Design of their eternal Salvation, and is given to them, and for them; For God so loved the World, he gave his only begotten Son {John 3:16}. This Donation of Christ was the Result of his own, as it is of the Father's good Pleasure. All that he did, or acts, is with a manifest View to the Welfare of these Persons: His Assumption of our Nature, obeying the Law, suffering on the Cross, and rising from the Dead, his Ascension to Heaven, and making Intercession there, all directly tend to secure the everlasting Felicity of God's Chosen. Whence it is easy to observe, that God the Son is become theirs.

3. They have the same Interest in the Holy Spirit, who is also given to them: Because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us {Romans 5:5} The third Person in the Trinity agrees with the Father and the Son in carrying on the Design of the Salvation of Sinners: He is not less concerned this great Affair; pursuant to the Father's Purpose in Election, and the Son's in Redemption, the Holy Spirit quickens the Elect, when dead in Sin, and continues Influences upon them, to ripen the Work of Grace in them, until it is perfected in Glory. At the Time of Regeneration he enters into the Soul, and remains there as a Spirit of Illumination and Consolation: He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever {1 John 5:21}. Thus all the Persons in the Godhead are the Saints.

2. All the Divine Attributes are the Elects; every Perfection in God displays it self in bringing about their Salvation.

1. Love gave birth to the Design, and runs through every Part of it. Our Predestination to immortal Dignity and Honour, such as is proper to the Sons of God, is to the Praise of the Glory of Free Grace {Ephesians 1:5-6}. All the Steps that God has took in order to its Accomplishment, are Fruits of the same infinite Goodness, All his Procedures towards these Persons spring from , and are perfectly consistent with his Love to them.

Hence the Apostle John observes, that God is Love {1 John 4:16}, i.e. to those who by his Spirit know and believe their Interest in Divine Favour.

2. The Wisdom of God hath as deeply interested it self in promoting of the Saints Happiness: His Love and Grace formed the Resolution, and Wisdom directed to all the Means leading on to the Execution. As only boundless Grace could give Rise to the stupendous Decree of saving Sinners, so infinite Wisdom alone could surmount the Difficulties attending it, and point out Methods suitable to accomplish it. In our Salvation Sin is pardoned and yet punished; we escape the Curse of the Law notwithstanding its just Menaces are suffered; we are delivered from the awful Stroke of Sin-avenging Justice, and yet it loses nothing of its Demands. We are wholly unable to obey the Law, but yet we are justified by it, and pronounced perfectly righteous; all which is through the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ for us. This Way of securing Divine Honour, in conjunction with our Happiness, sufficiently evinces, that infinite Wisdom contrived our Recovery. For this Reason the Apostle calls the Gospel, which is a Revelation hereof, the Wisdom of God in a Mystery; and the hidden Wisdom, that God ordained to our Glory {1 Corinthians 2:7}.

3. The Power of God has ever acted in favour of the Elect. Such Obstructions attended their Salvation that Omnipotence only could remove; and such Adversaries are engaged against them, that almighty Power alone could conquer. They are naturally in such a State which requires the Exertion of the same unlimited Power to meeten them for Glory. And the Number, Policy, and Vigilance of their Enemies, with their own Weakness, make it necessary for them to expect all their Protection from above, Their Redemption was a Work of Divine Power; hence Christ, as crucified, is laid to be the Power as well as the Wisdom of God {1 Corinthians 1:24}. Nor is this Divine Perfection less apparent in their Preservation to Glory, who are kept by the Power of God unto Salvation {1 Peter 1:5}.

4. Divine Faithfulness stands engaged for the Security of God's People.

Many and full are the Promises that refer to the Salvation of Israel: All which may be safely relied on, because of the eternal Veracity of their infinitely great Author, who it is absolutely impossible should ever fail of accomplishing what he has given his Word to do for any. This the Apostle improves as an Encouragement to Faith, under Sufferings for the Gospel's sake; If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. {2 Timothy 2:1}. He is not mutable, as Creatures are, but is eternally above all Variableness or shadow of Turning {James 1:17} He never declines in his Favour, nor sinks below his gracious Engagements. Since therefore he designed, and has promised the compleat Happiness of his own, as appears in these Words, In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lye promised {Titus 1:2}, it may be justly concluded, that they shall be Sanctified wholly, that their Soul, Body and Spirit, shall be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; as the same Apostle observes, Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it {1 Thessalonians 5:24}.

5. The Justice of God acts in favour of the Elect, as well as the other Divine Perfections; that is an Attribute which strikes a guilty Creature, without hope of an Interest in Christ, with the greatest Terror; it speaks nothing but eternal Destruction to a Sinner out of him, and therefore the Consideration of it must be most awful, without a View of his Satisfaction. But as its Demands have been fully answered by Christ, the Surety of his People, it concurs with Goodness in promoting their Salvation; Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and peace have kissed each other {Psalms 85:10}. Since plenary Satisfaction is made for the Sins of the Elect, this Perfection in God stands engaged for their Security. Justice to Christ; their Head, who suffered for

them, requires their eternal Felicity; and therefore this Divine Attribute, which cannot be thought of, by guilty Creatures as such, without the greatest Emotion, affords solid Peace and Tranquillity, to those who are interested in Christ, because the Honour of it is as much concerned in their Happiness as the Glory of rich Grace; whom God hath let forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness, for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this Time his Righteousness, that he might be just, i.e. appear to be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus {Romans 3:25-26}.

3. All that God has is the Saints: His infinite Treasures of Grace and Glory are all made theirs by an Act of his sovereign Will, in order to their eternal Happiness.

1. His Grace. He is infinitely rich in Mercy in himself; but God who is rich in Mercy {Ephesians 2:4}. And he has an immense Stock of Grace by him, which he designed to communicate to the Objects of his Favour; hence lays the Psalmist, O! how great is thy Goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the Sons of Men {Psalms 31:19}. The Apostle Peter stiles the Lord, the God of all Grace {1 Peter 5:10}. There is no Grace the Saints can need, but it is in their Covenant-God, and will be communicated to them. As guilty Creatures Pardon is necessary, this they plentifully receive, yea, equal to the Greatness of their Guilt, how much soever it is aggravated; in whom we bare Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace {Ephesians 1:7}. As stripp'd of original Righteousness, a compleat one they must be furnished with from another, in order to their Acceptance; this they have in Christ, according to the same Grace {Titus 3:7}. As polluted Creatures, Holiness is necessary to be wrought in them, to meeten them for everlasting Happiness; this also they partake of, from the same Fountain of God's Free Grace. Their Regeneration is an Effect of that abundant Mercy {1 Peter 1:3} which there is in their heavenly Father. As they are weak or unable to defend themselves, and their Enemies are numerous and potent, continued Supplies of Grace are absolutely needful to preserve them from falling; this shall not be wanting to them, For God will supply all their Needs according to his Riches in Glory, ejn Crisw-}, in Christ Jesus {Php 4:19}. Thus the God of all Grace, will dispense all that Grace which is necessary for them; he will give Grace {Psalms 84:11}, yea, more Grace to the humble {James 4:6}, whatever they need.

{2} Glory is made theirs; a never failing Fountain of which there is in God; hence he is stiled the Father of Glory {Ephesians 1:17} as he is the Father of Lights {James 1:17} because all spiritual Illumination and eternal Rays of Light spring from him. Our Ideas of the happy State of Saints departed, fall vainly below the Greatness of its Glory: It doth not yet appear, i.e. it is not at present known what we shall be {# The most we are now able to say of heavenly Bliss, is: that it consists in uninterrupted Communion with God and Christ, and transforming Views of his ever glorious Person, who is fairer than the Children of Men {1 John 3:2}: When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Christ, the Sun of Righteousness {Malachi 4:2}, sheds Beams of Light upon all the Inhabitants of the upper World, which they reflect to their mutual Pleasure and Admiration, as we are fully assured; but while we are here our Conceptions cannot rise up to the Blessedness of that State, the Imperfection of our present, renders us unable to form adequate Ideas of the amazing Glory of our future State: It is not possible to know what the Happiness of Heaven is before its Enjoyment; it is an exceeding and an eternal Weight of Glory {2 Corinthians 4:17}; it far exceeds the Compass of our imperfect Understandings, we cannot comprehend it; and

the Weakness of our mortal Frame, which must be changed in order to bear it. Now all this inconceivable Glory is absolutely given to God's Israel, by him who is the Source of it, and is able to persevere them to it: In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lye promised before the World began {Titus 1:2}.

4. There are several things concerning the Act of God's giving himself to his Israel very worthy of our Notice. As,

1. It was an Act of pure Grace, This Procedure of God, in favour of his People, can be resolved into no other Cause, than that of his own good Pleasure. He stands in such a Relation to them which he does not to others; but it is not because they are preferable to those who have no such foederal Interest in him, their Nature is as depraved, and their Actions are as contrary to his Law. The Apostle answers this Question, Are we better than they? in the Negative, no, in no wife {Romans 3:9}; and therefore nothing in them could induce God thus to become theirs in a Covenant way, it's the Result of his own Free Grace alone.

2. This was an Act of Sovereignty. It was merely owing to the Divine Will that Peter was interested in God, and not Judas. None among the Sons of Men lay claim to so high a Privilege as their Due, for they all deserve to be eternally banished from God, and to lie under his awful Vengeance, on Account of their Corruption and Guilt: Hence it is evident, that the Interest any of them have in God, must be ascribed to his sovereign Determination, thus, to shew Favour to them, while he refuses this Dignity and Happiness to others, not more undeserving of his favourable Notice than they are; agreeable to the Apostle's Observation, He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth {Romans 9:18}.

3. It is an irreversible Act. The Elect can never be deprived of that Covenant-Interest which they have in God. The Cause and Spring of it will never cease; that is to say, the Love of God, which is absolutely immutable, and therefore eternally secures their Interest in himself. It is by virtue of a firm Covenant of Grace that God is theirs, in which he engages, they shall be his People, and he will be their God {Jeremiah 32:38}. This Covenant he will not break, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of his Lips {Psalms 89:34}. But unless the Covenant of Grace can be violated, the Saints will not lose their Interest in its infinitely great Author, which never can be, for the Accomplishment of all its glorious and precious Promises entirely, rests on the Veracity and Faithfulness of God himself: It therefore is a sure Covenant {2 Samuel 23:5}, and being so, all in that Covenant stand in an inseparable Relation to God. Farther, there is an indissoluble Union subsisting between Christ and the Saints he is their Head, and they are his Members; nor will it ever be in the Power of any to rend them from him, And so long as this Union continues, they may depend upon a peculiar and foederal Interest in the Father; till he ceases to be a God to the Head, he will not cease to be a God to the Members. Christ is ascended to his God and our God, to his Father and our Father {John 20:17}. These Things abundantly evince the eternal Duration of Our Interest in the great Jehovah.

5. From this Doctrine I infer two Things,

1. That Believers have no cause of Fear: 'Tis true, their Enemies are very numerous, and their Power, is exceeding great, and they are not capable of defending themselves a Moment; notwithstanding which, they have no reason to be terrified, for Omnipotence it self is engaged their

Security, and therefore the Will of their Adversaries shall never be accomplished upon them: Each of them may say with the Psalmist, The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid {Psalms 27:1}?

2. Believers only are happy Persons. Happiness all Men are seeking to obtain, but they are either fatally mistaken in their Notions concerning it, or in the Way to arrive at the Possession of it: Many conceive that it consists in Riches, Pleasures and Honours; others imagine, that extensive Knowledge, and Tranquillity of Mind, is true Felicity. These come nearer to it than the former, but yet fall short; 'tis only the Knowledge of, and Communion with God in a Mediator, a settled Peace, and Composure of Mind arising from thence, that our real Happiness consists in here; and consummate Felicity hereafter will consist in Conformity to, and in the Enjoyment of God and Christ, which is not attainable by any Thing that we can do, as Men naturally conceit. The Children of God are, many of them, poor, afflicted, and despised in this World, yet they alone are truly happy Persons, because they only are interested in God, the Source and Fountain of real and perfect Bliss. Happy is that People whose God is the Lord {Psalms 144:15}, to them he will shew the Path of Life; in his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand are pleasures for evermore {Psalms 16:11}.

Secondly. I proceed to consider, Jabez's solemn Worshipping of God, He called on the God of Israel. By this is sometimes intended Worship in general, as in these Words, Then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord {Genesis 4:26}, i.e. to join together in his publick Worship. In other Places; it designs a particular Branch of religious Worship, viz.

Prayer; thus in these Words, and call upon me in a Day of Trouble {Psalms 50:15} This is a Part of natural Religion; or, it is a Duty of a moral Nature, and is incumbent on all Persons; as well on the Unregenerate as on those who are born again; hence the Apostle Peter, at the same Time he tells Simon Magus that he was in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity, puts him upon the Practice of this Duty; and pray God {Acts 8:22-23}. Although the Prayer of an unregenerate Person, is an Abomination {Proverbs 28:9}, he is not excusable in the Neglect thereof: Greater Guilt is contracted by the entire Omission of a Duty, than attends the improper Discharge it. If Prayer can be neglected by unregenerate Persons, because they cannot perform it in an acceptable Manner, they may also decline to perform the civil Actions of Life upon the same Principle, for the Plowing of the Wicked is sin {Proverbs 21:4}; which, I suppose, none will think it proper they should. What I shall farther offer on this Head, immediately concerns the Saints; and it will be contained in shewing this to be their Duty that the Holy Spirit is their Director in it; and, that they have great Encouragements to practise it.

1st. Prayer is the indispensable Duty of Believers. This is so evident, that I imagine I might be excused insisting on the Proof of it, however backward, through various Causes, they may sometimes be to engage in it. 1. Personal and private Prayer is a Duty they are under Obligation conscientiously to regard; Jesus Christ exhorts to this, But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly {Matthew 6:6}. The Variety of our Wants, the Multitude of our Difficulties, the great Number of our Temptations, our own Inability, and absolute Dependence on God, should excite us to a constant Attendance at the Throne of Grace, I am of Opinion, we may best judge of the Care of our Souls, by a Readiness to draw nigh to God in secret Prayer, or

Backwardness to approach his Presence in our Closets. If a spiritual Frame is maintained in us we shall closely attend to this Duty; but if we are lukewarm, and sunk in the Exercise of our Graces, we shall be ready to improve every trivial Affair which may occur, as an Excuse for our Neglect in this Thing. This is as well our Privilege as our Duty. In Prayer to God we may use the utmost Freedom in Complaints: We need have no Check upon us, from, an Apprehension that he will take Advantage against us for, or upbraid us with, those Evils we complain of before him; this too frequently is the Manner of poor guilty Creatures towards one another, but it is not the Manner of an infinitely gracious God, we therefore may unbosom our whole Souls to him, and tell him of any, or all the vile Lusts that distress and plague us: We may mention all our Temptations, and freely confess how ready our corrupt Nature is to yield to them, or how far it may have so done, in any Instances, to our unspeakable Grief, without the least Thought of being upbraided therewith hereafter, We also may be full as free in our Petitions: As God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think {Ephesians 3:20}: He allows us to intreat for whatever is needful to our spiritual Support, Relief, and Consolation. Since we have this liberty of Access to the Throne of Grace, and may use such freedom in our Addresses to our heavenly Father, how base are our Hearts, which frequently tempt us to decline the Practice of this important Duty, and the Improvement of so inestimable a Privilege.

2. Family Prayer should be constantly attended to. The Worship of God ought to be maintained in all the Families of the Saints. That Family in which solemn and joint Prayer is wholly neglected, is far from being such as it ought to be; in this Particular 'tis very much unlike a Christian one; happy would it be with us were we wrought up to the same Resolution that Joshua was, who said, As for me and my House we will serve the Lord {Joshua 24:15} for we should certainly find our own Advantage in it. The great God will shew very high Resentment against those Families that neglect his Worship: Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen, that know thee not, and upon all the Families that call not on they Name {Jeremiah 10:25}. It cannot but be thought a Duty incumbent on Matters of Families, to pray with, and for their Children and Servants, whom Providence has put under their Care and Inspection; a faithful Attendance hereon may, at least, strike their Minds with an Awe of God, and lay such a Check upon them, which may prevent their sinning as others do. I doubt not but many can attest to the Truth of this by their Experience. Besides, as we ought to endeavour the Conviction of those under our immediate Notice, we can't tell how far God may please to succeed the Discharge of our Duty in this Particular that way; however, whether or not the Effect follows, which we should desire, that is to say, the spiritual Good of those about us, we shall keep clear of their Blood, if we are found in the Practice of our Duty towards them. It is not improbable but some may say, they are convinced it is their Duty to pray in their Families, but that they are not furnished with suitable Gifts, and therefore they are obliged to omit it; such I would ask, if they have at all attempted it? If they have not they must allow me to say, it is trifling to urge their Want of proper Furniture, as an Excuse for this Neglect. Besides, it can hardly be thought, that a Person sensible, of himself, his State by Nature, his Need of Christ, and of his Suitableness as a Saviour, can be utterly unable to perform this Branch of religious Worship in his own Family, where strict Method, proper Coherence, and Fluency of Expression, are not absolutely necessary to the useful Discharge of it. Again, Gifts improve by using: I have known some who were not eminently furnished for such a Work, that upon the Exercise of the Abilities they had, a Blessing has attended, and their Improvement has been very visible. I add, that since Family Prayer is a Duty, we ought to be careful, lest we render our selves unfit for it, or incapable of it, by

Conversation, or otherwise, when we are abroad.

3. Social and public Prayer Believers ought to practise. The Advantages arising from the conscientious Observance of this are more than, perhaps, are commonly thought of; hereby the Saints are mutually edified, comforted and strengthened, their Hearts are strongly cemented together in Love; and it has a wonderful Tendency to promote spiritual Affection to Divine Things. It is no small Part of the Commendation given by the Holy Ghost of the primitive Churches, that they practised this Duty; they continued stedfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine and Fellowship, in breaking of Bread and in Prayers {Acts 2:42}. Such who are in Church-Fellowship are doubtless under Obligation jointly to confess their Imperfections, and intreat the Divine Blessing on the Word and Ordinances preached and administer'd among them, that their Souls may be built up in their most holy Faith, and to pray that Peace maybe within Zion's Walls, and Prosperity in all her Palaces {Psalms 122:7}. There is at this Day a sorrowful Neglect of this Duty, which, among many other Things, makes it but too evident, that the Glory of our Religion is greatly eclipsed: May the Lord hasten a Revival of it, if it be his Will.

2nd. The Holy Spirit is the Director of the Saints in this Duty; on Account of the Assistance which he gives in the spiritual Performance of this Branch of Worship he is called, the Spirit of Supplications {Zechariah 12:10}. The Preparation of the Heart in Man for this Duty is from God, as well as the Answer of the Tongue. {Proverbs 16:1}.

1. The Divine Spirit teaches us what to pray for: We know not how to order our Speech by reason of Darkness {Job 37:19}. Our spiritual Ignorance renders, it necessary for Us, to depend on heavenly Influence and Guidance, when we draw nigh to God in Prayer, for we know not what to pray for as we ought. Without Instruction from above we are incapable of a proper Discharge of this important Duty; as we are not sufficient of our selves to think any Thing as of our selves; {2 Corinthians 3:5}; we must needs be unequal to a Service of this Nature, wherein are required a profound. Reverence of the Divine Majesty, an humble Opinion of our selves, spiritual Ideas of Things naturally unknown, fervent Desires of what we naturally are not disposed to seek after, and our Thoughts intently fixed on, invisible Objects. Hence it is evident, that our spiritual Prayers are effected under a Supernatural Influence; it is the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, and makes Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered {Romans 8:26}.

2. He excites our Desires after those Things which we pray for. Our Supplications consist only of a few cold and formal Petitions, unless our Affections are moved, and our Hearts ascend up to God, whose Name we invoke: It is the Heart he looks at; Lip-Service is far from being acceptable to him. In this Duty our Heart should always be the Guide to our Lips. What we express with our Tongues ought to be the unfeigned Desire of our souls. Now as we are bent to backsliding {Hosea 11:7} it is absolutely necessary that we should be divinely attracted: The Church was justly sensible of this when she thus expressed her self, Draw me, we will run after thee {Song of Solomon 1:4}. The Necessity of such an heavenly Attraction and Influence is evident to every Believer, who finds himself naturally indisposed to Things of a spiritual Kind. The great Difference he experiences in his Soul, in his Solemn Approaches to God, sufficiently convinces him, that all his Dependance ought to be on the Holy Ghost in his Addresses at the Divine Throne. Sometimes his Heart is cold, vain, and wandering, in the Beginning of this Duty; before the Conclusion, it may be, it is greatly enlarged, and is made like to the Chariots of a willing People {Song of Solomon

6:12}; at other Seasons, when he imagines himself to be in a most suitable Frame for a Work of this Nature, and therefore chearfully engages in it, on a sudden his Affections cool, his Thoughts rove, and his Soul is greatly contracted: Wherefore: he cannot but conclude, it is a vain Thing. to attempt this Duty without a View to. the gracious Operation and Aid of the Spirit of God.

3. He gives them Liberty and Freedom in Prayer. The People of God have always Liberty of Access to him through Jesus Christ. Under every Temptation, Distress and Affliction, they may freely draw nigh to their heavenly Father, and spread their Case before him; but it is not at every Season they have Liberty in their Access to God; as the Psalmist was they all sometimes are, shut up, and cannot come forth {Psalms 88:8}: A Sense of their Guilt fills them with Shame, and almost forces them to Silence. It is only when the Spirit of Christ takes of his Things, and shews them {John 16:14} to their Souls, that they have inward Freedom. A View, by Faith, of his Blood, Righteousness, Grace, and Intercession, are the Foundation of the Believer's Boldness; In whom we have Boldness and Access, with Confidence, through the Faith of him {Ephesians 3:12}; and the Spirit of Grace is the Efficient, or Author, of that Freedom: Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty {2 Corinthians 3:17}.

4. He causes us to hope for what we ask, The Exercise of Faith is necessary in this Duty. Let him ask in Faith {James 1:6} is the Direction of the Apostle James, If we have no Expectation Of receiving a Favour, upon an Application to a Friend, we are easily prevailed with to decline it; so, if we. have no Hopes of obtaining a gracious Answer to our, Prayers from God, our Inclination to call upon him will sensibly abate. Without some Encouragement to expect a favourable Audience with God our Petitions to him will be very faint and cool; and therefore the Influence of the Spirit of Faith should always be desired by us when we engage in this sacred Duty, as what is absolutely needful to our comfortable Performance of it. With what Satisfaction, Liberty and Pleasure, as well as Assurance of Faith {Hebrews 10:22}, do the Saints draw nigh to God, when the Holy Ghost powerfully applies the Divine Promises to their Souls; such as, Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you {Luke 11:9} I the Lord will bear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them {Isaiah 41:21}.

3rd. The Encouragements to this Duty are many, which, if they have a suitable Influence upon us, will cause us diligently to attend on it. 1. God's Relation to us. He hath been pleased, of his infinite Goodness, to make us his Children. Behold, what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God {1 John 3:1}; which our Saviour proposes as an encouraging Motive to Prayer, If ye then, being Evil, know how to give good Gifts your Children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good Things to them that ask him {Matthew 7:11}. A tender Parent can't but be moved with the Intreaties of his Child under Distress, and be ready to give Relief if he is able. The Compassion of God, towards his People, infinitely exceeds the tenderest Bowels of any earthly Parent, and therefore we may call upon him with a full Assurance of obtaining all needful Supplies and Succour from him.

2. His Perfections may encourage us to engage in this important Duty.

1. His Omniscience. That God to whom we pray has a perfect Knowledge of the Frame and Desires of our Souls; which, as it ought to strike us with an humble Awe, when we come before him, to it may justly be improved, as a great Encouragement to Us, in all our solemn Acts of Devotion, to hope for what we ask, however imperfectly we may express our selves to him: He that

searcheth the Hearts knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit {Romans 8:7}.

2. The Omnipotence of God raises our Expectations of Relief in our Addresses to him, A real and intimate Friend may sympathize with us Under Trouble, and be strongly inclined to free us from it, but it is often out of the Power of our best Friends to relieve us when in distress. This cannot be supposed of our heavenly Father, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think {Ephesians 3:20}. The Saints Help in God is like Water in a Fountain, ever flowing and never dry. Neither the Number, nor the Greatness of their Difficulties, should discourage them in a Dependance on omnipotent Power, because that makes hard Things easy, and pressing Things light.

3. His infinite Goodness. The Ability of a Person to extricate us out of great Troubles, without a Will to do it, affords us no hope of Relief. Now, as God is able to help us, be our Case ever so desperate in it self, his immense Favour will certainly induce him to regard; and seasonably succour us. The infinite Love, which is in his Heart towards his People, will always draw forth his Power to their Support, and speedy Deliverance out of threatening Dangers. What great Encouragement Is this to wait upon him in Prayer!

3. The Promises God has made of hearing the Prayers of his People, may well encourage them closely to attend on this Duty: Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear {Isaiah 65:24}. Divine Promises are sure and firm; they are all yea and amen to the Glory {2 Corinthians 1:20} of their Author. This, among others, the Lord will inviolably keep, and therefore we ought never to be discouraged in praying to him, from an Apprehension that he will deny us a gracious Audience or Answer.

4. Christ's Intercession wonderfully encourages the Saints to address the Throne of Grace. His Regard to his People, now he is in Heaven, is the same that it was, when he was here on Earth; his Exaltation at God's right Hand makes no Alteration in his Affections towards Sinners; He ever lives to make Intercession for them {Romans 8:34}, he is their Advocate with the Father {1 John 2:1}, and will throughly plead their Cause; {Jeremiah 1:19}; he prays the Father for all necessary Grace to be communicated to his People here, and declares it to be his Will, that they should be with him for ever in Glory hereafter {John 17:24}; and therefore they cannot, in their Petitions to God for spiritual Favours, exceed him in his Intercession for them. O! what Encouragement is it to Faith in this Duty, that Christ continually intercedes with God, to grant those Blessings to us, which we pray to him for, as what are requisite to our spiritual Advantage and Comfort. I go on, II. To consider the Favours he asked. They are various, and very great,

1st. He intreats that God would bless him: O that thou wouldest bless me indeed. It was real Happiness that he was desirous to obtain from God, who is the Fountain and Spring of all true Blessedness. No Creature can be happy in a State of Distance from him, or without Nearness to him, and Communion with him. The Happiness of guilty Creatures, as we are, consists in a Deliverance from that which renders us Unhappy, and in the Communication of special spiritual and eternal Blessings to us.

1. The Felicity of a fallen and guilty Creature consists in a Deliverance from that which renders him unhappy.

1. From Guilt contracted. Sin is the procuring Cause of all Misery and Infelicity; It Is that which exposes us to Afflictions and Death in this World, and that draws down upon Sinners the Vengeance of God in the next. The Wages Sin is Death, i.e. eternal Death, as the Gift of God is eternal Life {Romans 6:23}; and therefore there is no possibility of being Happy without a Discharge from Guilt. Those only are to be esteemed happy Persons, who obtain the Remission of their Sins by Christ's Blood: Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered. Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin {Romans 4:7-8}. Which Words plainly teach us, that Pardon is absolutely necessary to Happiness. Unless a Man's Sins are forgiven him, whatever his outward Circumstances may be, he is a miserable Person; on the contrary, such who are discharged of their Guilt are truly happy, how much soever they are afflicted and despised in this Life.

2. It necessarily supposes a Freedom from Condemnation. Sin subjects us to a Curse: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them {Galatians 3:10}. God, as a Lawgiver, pronounces dreadful Menaces against guilty Creatures as such; nor is it possible to escape the Malediction denounced, without an Interest in Christ's Satisfaction; that, indeed, effectually secures us, from it: There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus {Romans 8:1}. A Charge of Guilt and Condemnation, are inseparable. If a Man is under the Imputation of Sin he is also Condemned; but if he is acquitted of his Crimes, by virtue of Christ's Blood, he is not liable to any Divine Threatenings.

3. The Happiness of guilty Creatures supposes a Security from Divine Anger, which their Sins have exposed them to. Every Act of Transgression against the Law subjects us to the awful Displeasure of God; and therefore it is the greatest: Unhappiness to lie under a Charge of Guilt. Eternal Misery hangs over such whose Sins are not remitted; but those who obtain a Discharge of their Guilt through Jesus. Christ, are eternally secured from the Stroke of Divine Justice; being justified by Christ's Blood we shall be saved from Wrath through him {Romans 5:9}.

2. Our Felicity is inclusive of the Communication of all special, spiritual and eternal Blessings.

1. Adoption, or being made Sons to God. This unspeakable Honour and Dignity is conferred upon us who are Vile and sinful Creatures; having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ, to himself. {Ephesians 1:5} By Virtue of this Relation to God we are constituted Heirs of him; If Children these Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ {Romans 8:17}. It is an inexpressible Happiness to be interested in this glorious Privilege for hereby we are entitled to Grace and Glory, or are made Heirs of all that God is, and has, who is the Fountain of real Felicity

2. Justification is another Branch of true Blessedness. The Righteousness of Christ being put upon a Person recommends him to, and gives him eternal Acceptance with God. Now such who have the Divine Approbation must necessarily be concluded Happy, according to David, and the Apostle, who quotes his Words, Even as David also describeth the Blessedness of the Man, to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works {Romans 4:6} This gives us a proper and just Claim to everlasting Happiness; That being justified by his Grace we might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life {Titus 3:7}. Those who are justified have an indisputable and unalienable Title to all the Glory of Heaven, and shall certainly be brought to the Enjoyment of it: Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified {Romans 8:30}. These Benefits of Adoption

and Justification ensure to us Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

3. Regeneration and Sanctification. We are naturally dead in {Ephesians 2:1}, and under the Dominion of Sin {Romans 6:14}, and are also in Bondage to Satan, which is a very unhappy Condition; but God of his rich Mercy quickens us {Ephesians 2:1}, or communicates spiritual Life to our Souls, and delivers us from the Power of Darkness, and translates us into the Kingdom Of his dear Son {Colossians 1:13}; he implants a Principle of Holiness in us who are naturally carnal and sold under Sin {Romans 7:14}; devoid of any Inclination to, or Ability to perform spiritual Good: God hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling {2 Timothy 1:9};. This Work is the Beginning of everlasting Life: It is Glory begun in us; he that believeth hath everlasting Life {John 6:47}; that is to say, in the Seed or Beginning of it. And this Work shall be cherished and carried on by the same Hand that formed it, notwithstanding all Opposition from Sin within us, and from Satan, or the World without us; being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Christ {Php 1:6}. Those who are the Subjects of true Grace are at some Times admitted to sweet Communion and Fellowship with God and Christ: Truly, says the Apostle John, our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ {1 John 1:3}; which fills them with far greater Satisfaction, Joy and Pleasure, than can possibly arise from the Enjoyment Of all sublunary Things: Thou hast put Joy and Gladness in my Heart more than in the Time that their Corn and their Wine increased {Psalms 4:7}. The largest Affluence of the Things of this Life is not comparable to a Prospect of, and Communion with God through a Mediator.

4. Perfect and consummate Happiness consists in the eternal Enjoyment of God in Heaven, which it is the Will of Christ, all that the Father hath given him should be brought to enjoy; wherein are several Things to be observed.

[1.] The Removal of all that Darkness and Ignorance which at present attends the Understandings of the Saints. Through Divine Illumination they are now enabled to form some Ideas of heavenly Things, but their Conceptions thereof are low and imperfect, by reason of that Darkness which remains in them; hence says the Apostle, We know in part, and prophesy in part. Perhaps never had any Servant of God a more clear, distinct, and extensive Knowledge of Divine Mysteries, than this great Apostle had, if ever any were equal to him therein, and yet he acknowledges, that his Acquaintance with the deep Things of God, was but partial and imperfect, when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away {1 Corinthians 13:9-10}. The Excellency of the human Nature principally consists in its rational Powers, or a Capacity to form Conceptions of God, and what is good. Knowledge therefore, with suitable Affections, is our chiefest Glory. If Knowledge is to be esteemed more or less excellent, as it hath Objects lower, or more sublime, certainly that of which God is the Object must be accounted infinitely the Best. The greatest Skill in the Secrets of Nature, is to be valued only as it strikes us with a Reverence of its infinitely great Author, and induces us to love him, who, it is manifest from his Works, is a Being of immense Goodness and unlimited Power. In this Philosophy is exceedingly defective; 'tis only the Revelation of Salvation to lost Creatures by Jesus Christ, that is suited to conquer the Rebellion of our Hearts; and in this there is a fuller Display of the Benignity, Wisdom, Power and Purity of God, than appears in the Works of Creation or Providence. For which Reason it may justly be concluded, that. The Knowledge of evangelical Doctrines far transcends in Excellence and Worth, the most extensive Acquaintance with natural Things; these are the refined Subjects about which the Faith of a Believer is now conversant, and which he shall eternally contemplate upon, and form

perfect Conceptions of, in the blessed State above; then shall he know even as he also is known {1 Corinthians 13:12}, and see his Covenant-God as he is {1 John 3:2}: This is a Happiness which infinitely exceeds the most raised Ideas our present State admits of.

[2.] No Perverseness, or bias to Evil, will then attend the Will. Believer's are Persons possessed of Flesh as well as Spirit: Whilst they are in this mortal State, they are bent to backsliding {Hosea 11:7}; the Law of their Members too frequently prevails against that of their Minds, and brings them into Captivity to the Law of Sin {Romans 7:23}, which is in their Members. The Disquietude and Grief which the Deceitfulness, Strength, and Motions of Lusts within them, often occasion to their Souls, are not to be expressed, they can't but say, O wretched Persons that we are, who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death {Romans 7:24}; they groan within themselves, and with longing Expectation wait for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of their Body {Romans 8:23}. In the future State they shall enjoy a perfect Freedom from all Impurity and Corruption. As soon as they put off their mortal Bodies their Souls will be perfected in Glory. When no sinful Thoughts will ever arise within them to their Disturbance and Grief, as now they do, even such Times when they most desire, to be delivered from them, the whole Heart Will then be intently fixed on God and Christ, and a holy Flame of Love to their dear Saviour, will be eternally glowing in their Breasts, who that considers the Happiness of such a State, can be without earnest Breathings after the Profession of it? May God, of his infinite Goodness, prepare us unworthy Creatures for it, and safely conduct us to it.

[3.] No Corruption will then remain in our Affections, which at present are very impure. Now we are apt to set them on Things on the Earth {Colossians 3:2}: Although we are convinced that invisible Objects infinitely better deserve our Regard, yet through the Imperfection that attends us, the Things of Time and sense deeply affect us, and engross far too large a Share of our Thoughts, Desires and Affections but then we shall be entirely delivered from all such Rovings that break our Peace, and damp our spiritual Joys in this Life; no irregular Motions, or disorderly Passions, will then find any room in our Hearts, but we shall for ever be transported with rapturous Views of the dazzling Glories which shine in the Mediator's adoreable Person.

[4.] No Discomposure of Mind will attend us in the heavenly State. Here our Souls are ruffled and perplexed by various Causes; by none so much, as by the Sin which dwells in us; but that we shall be completely delivered from, when we enter into that pure Place, where nothing is admitted that defiles {Revelation 21:27}. The Disappointments, Losses and Afflictions which occur in this State of Uncertainty, give us great and frequent Uneasiness; but when once we are arrived to the happy Shore of the other World, no Storms will ever any more at all arise upon us, or tempestuous Waves of Trouble overwhelm us. Now we are attended with Spiritual Darkness and Desertions, Clouds interpose between God and our Souls, and hide his Face from us; but when we are above we shall always behold him in his Son; nothing shall then intercept or prevent the Rays of his Favour from shining upon us. Those happy Regions above are all Serenity and Peace, and every joyful Inhabitant these, possesses eternal and undisturbed Rest and Tranquillity; all Sorrow is eternally banished from that Place; no Signs of Grief will ever appear in the Faces of those who are in Heaven, for God will wipe away all Tears from their Eyes {Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4}.

[5.] That is a State of uninterrupted Communion with God. His spiritual Presence that is enjoyed by Believers here, is attended with an Agreeableness and Pleasure which rises far above our

Expression; but yet it is infinitely below the Delight that springs from his immediate Presence in Heaven, where there is a Fulness of Joy, and at whose right Hand are Rivers of increasing Pleasures for evermore {Psalms 16:11}. The Fellowship which the Saints have with their heavenly Father in this State is often interrupted by Sin, Unbelief, and Temptations; but that which will subsist between God and them above, will not be broke by any of these Things: They Will be eternally swallowed up in the boundless Ocean of his everlasting Love.

[6.] Their Views of him will then be clear, permanent, and abiding. Now they see him by Faith, and beholding the Glory of the Lord, they are changed into the Same Image from Glory to Glory. But these Prospects are inconstant, seldom and short; then, as they will be clear, distinct and full, not as through a Glass darkly {2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 13:12}, so they will be invariable and never ceasing. No small Part of our Happiness hereafter, will consist in viewing the Glory of our Redeemer, who is exalted at God's right Hand. Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me, that they may behold my Glory {John 17:24}. The Pleasure which will attend this View of our dear Saviour, as crowned with Glory and Honour {Hebrews 2:9}, far transcends our Comprehension at present. It must certainly be an exquisite Delight to the Saints, to see their Redeemer, who once wore a Crown of Thorns {Matthew 27:29} for their sakes, have a never ceasing Crown of Glory on his Head; and to view him, who was once clothed with Shame on their Account, inverted with shining Robes of Majesty and Light.

[7.] They will receive inconceivable Glory from Christ. The Father has given him Power over all Flesh, that he might give eternal Life to as many as are given him {John 17:2}. He will always be the Medium of God's communicating Favours to us, which is greatly to his Honour. Our Glory will very much consist in a Conformity to Christ. It was this God resolved upon in Predestination; He predestinated us to become conformed to the lineage of his Son {Romans 8:29} And this seems to comprehend the Utmost of that Glory which God designed to bring us to the Enjoyment of; the Greatness of which we are unable fully to conceive of or describe. Since the Happiness of the future State will be thus surprizingly great, it is not to be wondered at, that the Believer, in the Exercise of a lively Faith upon it, cries out, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly {Revelation 22:20}. Persons appointed to this State tour be accounted really happy ones. From this Petition of Jabez we may easily collect, that his Heart was chiefly set upon those Things which are of a solid and durable Nature; he prays for Blessings that out-last Time, and which would accompany him beyond the Grave. And thus it becomes us all, to pray for a View of our Discharge from Guilt, Security from the Law's Curse, and from eternal Vengeance, which our Sins render us justly deserving of; and also, that we may be meetened for the Enjoyment of God and Christ, and be safely brought to that Happiness, when with respect to us, Time shall be no more.

2ndly. His second Petition is, and enlarge my Coast. It is probable that his Possession or Inheritance was too strait and narrow, not equal to the Number of his Family, which drew this Supplication from him. This was the Care with the Children of Dan, who were obliged to enlarge their Coast by Violence, as we are informed, in the Book of Joshua {Joshua 19:47}. It appears by this Branch of this Prayer, that Jabez considered God as the Disposer of all Things, as he who fixes the Bounds of our Habitations, as his Protector, and as his beneficent Benefactor.

1. He considered God as the Disposer of all Things. He framed the Universe, and gave Being to every Thing that exists; he is the Creator of the Ends of the Earth {Isaiah 40:28 hew:28 hew:28}.

The whole Frame of Nature is dependent on him, and supported by him, and therefore every Thing is under his Direction, and at his Disposal: The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof; the World, and they that dwell therein {Psalms 23:1}. The almighty and universal Creator, it is highly reasonable to suppose, has all Things under his Management and Influence. It is irrational to conceive, that he who made the World doth not govern it. Whatever God created doubtless he rules. Divine Providence is conversant about the minutest Parts Of the Creation; a Sparrow, two of which are sold for a Farthing, doth not fall to the Ground without the Permission Of our heavenly Father {Matthew 10:29}. We may therefore strongly conclude, that God exercises a special Care about, and Rule over Man, who is the Chief of the lower Creation. The Commencement of our Being, the Circumstances of our Life, whether they be high or low, the Time and Manner of our Death, are all under Divine Direction.

2. Jabez considered God as his Protector. His humble Application to God for the enlarging of his Coast, may direct us to conclude, that he was sensible of the Necessity of Divine Protection, to preserve him in a safe and quiet Possession of what was his present Property. If we are persuaded, that the Increase of our temporal Favours is from God, we cannot doubt of our holding whatever we may enjoy, by virtue of his governing Will. The peaceable Enjoyment of what Providence has made our own, is owing to the watchful Care, and powerful Protection of the great God; Safety is of the Lord {Proverbs 21:31}. He causes the Needy, that is to say, such as are poor, weak, and defenceless, to lie down in safety {Isaiah 14:30}. The Psalmist expresses his deep Sense of Divine Preservation in these Words, I will both lay me down in Peace, and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety {Psalms 4:8}.

3. He acknowledged the Lord to be his bountiful Benefactor. None can suitably apply to God for an Addition to their temporal Estate, but such who believe his universal Providence, and know that what they already enjoy, be it less or more, is the Beneficence of the supreme Being. A right Application to the Lord for such an Increase of our Substance as we apprehend to be necessary, carries in it a just Sense of all the Accommodations of Life, being his Gifts, and what we are wholly undeserving of Believers, when they humbly and spiritually look up to their heavenly Father, for the Communication of what is needful for them, gratefully acknowledge it is he who giveth them richly all Things to enjoy {1 Timothy 6:17}. This Petition gives us a proper Occasion to enquire, whether it be lawful to desire more than we possess, if our necessary Wants are supplied? or, if having daily Bread, we may be justified in desiring more? I apprehend there are some Things, which, if they attend those Desires, render them absolutely unlawful; and that there are different Views Which may make such Desires strictly justifiable.

1. Those Things which, I conceive, render these Desires unlawful, are as follow:

[1.] A Diffidence and distrust of the continued Care of Divine Providence about us. It is too Commonly seen, that after Men have had a long Experience of the Goodness of God discovered in providing for them, they rink into a lamentable Distrust of the Continuance of his beneficent Regard to them, and foolishly propose to defend themselves from Penury, by advancing their Circumstances to such a height as may be thought to raise them to an Independance on Providence.; that is to say, they diligently attempt to lay up so much Store by them as they think will be sufficient to prevent their ever being Necessitous, Such a Conduct is exceedingly blameable; for, besides the Uncertainty of human Life, which ought to check all such anxious

Desires, what Reason can be assigned, why we should scruple that the Providence which has suitably supplied us for thirty, forty, or fifty Years, will not take the same Care of us the short Time we may longer continue in Life? But oftentimes to such an excessive Pitch does this Temper arise in many, that they entirely lose all agreeable Relish of those Mercies they are favoured with, because they are disappointed in their Views of this low and diffident Kind. This covetous Disposition is very unbecoming those who profess Faith in Christ; it is what he severely censures, as the Effect of Unbelief, or of a weak Faith: Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith? Therefore take no Thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed {#for after all these Things do the Gentiles seek} for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things. {Matthew 6:31-32} Having Food and Raiment we ought to be therewith content, and not distress our selves with Thoughts of what we have no just Reason to fear, viz. the want of Divine Beneficence towards us.

[2.] If Ambition and Pride give rise to, or cherish these Desires, we cannot acquit ourselves of Guilt in this matter. I imagine that Persons of ambitious and aspiring Views, are under a strong Temptation too eagerly to pursue the enriching of themselves; to such the Want of Respect and Honour from others is intolerable, And as Riches frequently recommend a Man in the room of good Sense, strong Parts, Affability, and strict Probity, except to the judicious Few.; it is no wonder, that some Men are seen to labour after the amassing of Wealth together, who are not able to make Pretensions to Honour {but can't be easy without it} above what others in lower Life may claim by the Qualifications and Virtues which adorn their Mind, and Conduct. Men of this Cast cannot patiently bear, that any should exceed, if equal them, in Gaiety and Grandeur; but are far from imitating, such as are superior to them in the brighter Excellencies that beautify a Person.

[3.] If we aim at enriching our selves with a View to indulge a sensual Appetite, we are highly culpable. Ease, Luxury, and Wantonness, are Vices, that often captivate Persons of plentiful Fortunes; numerous Temptations attend those of a superior Rank, which such that are below them are not subject to. The Pleasure that arises from the Abundance of Wealth is far from over-balancing the many Dangers to which it exposes Men: A thorough Conviction of which caused. Agur wisely to decline seeking of it; he knew that the Corruption of our Nature prompts us to Pride and Insolence, if we are in elevated Circumstances, as it tempts. us to Actions fraudulent and, unjust when we are in the Reverse; which drew this Prayer from him, who, perhaps in this Particular is imitated but by few; Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, but feed me with Food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?. Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain {Proverbs 30:8-9} If we desire to be rich, from an Inclination to gratify our carnal Affections, Providence is infinitely kind in denying us what would be unspeakably to our Disadvantage: Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your Lusts {James 4:3}

[4.] When our Endeavours this Way are accompanied with oppressive Designs towards others, we are guilty of a very great Evil. Oppression is a cruel and inhuman Vice; but many whose circumstances enable them to it, seldom discover the Want of an inclination to practise it. Do not rich Men oppress you {James 2:6}? Says the Apostle James. The Heart of Man is so abominably wicked, as to abuse that to the Detriment of others, which he ought to improve to their Assistance and Advantage. But thine eyes and thine Heart are not but for thy Covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood; and for Oppression, and for violence to do it. {Jeremiah 22:17} Too many, whose

Ability renders them capable of relieving the Distressed and Necessitous, are so far from Christian Generosity, as to increase the Poverty of their Dependants, by abating them of their Wages, without any manner of Necessity, but merely from an insatiable Desire after adding to their own Wealth. I can't tell, whether the Frequency of this may not have so far blinded the Minds of some Men, as to make them think it no Crime: If any Check is given by the Conscience for such a Conduct, it is presently silenced by this pitiful and shameless Excuse, If I do it not others Will. It would be well if those Words were seriously considered by such, I will be a swift Witness against those that oppress the Hireling in his Wages {Malachi 3:5}. Let not any think to join with others in Sin, and imagine that they shall not share with them in the Punishment. If any of these Things attend our Desires of enlarging our Treasure, those Desires proceed from a low and base Principle.

2. There are some very justifiable Reasons that may be mentioned in favour of such Desires, and which sufficiently defend us in cherishing of them.

[1.] That we may be able to assist others who are in want. This is a Duty incumbent upon us all; we are required to do good to all Men, especially to them who are of the Household of Faith {Galatians 6:10}. In this we ought to imitate the Beneficence of our heavenly Father, who causes his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good; and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust {Matthew 6:34}. Now, if we use our Diligence to render our selves capable of this Charity and Benevolence, it is to our Commendation.; to this we are, directed, Let him. that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with. his Hands the Thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth {Ephesians 4:28} We are under Obligation to be. industrious, with a View to the Service of our Fellow-Creatures, but more especially, that we may enable our selves to relieve poor and distressed Saints. As in all other Things; so in this, perhaps our treacherous Hearts too frequently deceive us; We may sometimes think, that we would be extensively charitable, if our Circumstances were but once advanced to such a Height; an eager Desire of which holds our hand, and prevents our present Liberality; and if, so, we may be assured, that our Desire of encreasing our Stock is not for the sake of others, but wholly for our selves; or, that it is a selfish Principle, which governs us.

[2.] It is lawful, to desire an Increase of our Substance, with a View to our Improvement in useful Knowledge. There is a great Variety of Subjects that well deserve Your diligent Study, in order to any considerable Acquaintance with which such Helps are necessary, that cannot be obtained without great Expence; and therefore Persons in low Circumstances, though they may have an excellent Genius, or their Intellectuals maybe such as fit them for sublime Studies, yet their Situation of Affairs does not furnish them with suitable Opportunities, and necessary Advantages, for that Improvement of which they are capable. In the Opinion of Solomon, an Advancement in Knowledge is far preferable to the Increase of Riches. How much better is it to get Wisdom than Gold; and to get Understanding rather to be chosen than Silver {Proverbs 16:16}. The Works of Nature are very worthy of our diligent Enquiries, for those Discoveries Which are to be made of the Order, Dependance, Beauty, and Harmony of natural Things, may justly lead us to adore the great Creator, whose infinite Wisdom and Power will visibly appear to us in all our Disquisitions of this kind. But the gracious Design of the Salvation of Sinners, or evangelical Mysteries, best deserve our assiduous Studies, because the Divine Perfections are more eminently displayed therein, and our dearest Interest is most nearly concerned in our Acquaintance with those heavenly Things.

Now it is lawful to desire an Increase of our temporal Substance, in order to capacitate us for Improvement {by obtaining of necessary Helps} in such valuable Knowledge.

[3.] We may lawfully desire an Enlargement of our Treasure, out of a Regard to the Interest of Religion: The Promotion of Christ's Kingdom, and the Propagation of his Gospel, challenge our warmest Zeal. If we have a deep Sense of the many Obligations we are under to Christ, we shall certainly be influenced to contribute all we can to the Support and Spreading of his Cause in the World: We cannot neglect, and be indifferent towards his Interest, without involving our selves in Guilt. Besides, a proper use of what Providence entrusts us with, is very likely to be attended with a Blessing. It is to be questioned, whether Liberality tends to impoverish us, but we are assured, that to withhold more than is meet tends to Poverty {Proverbs 11:24}. Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the First-Fruits of all thine Increase, so shall thy Barns be filled with new Wine {Proverbs 3:9-10}. Now, though these Views may justify us, in desiring an Addition to our temporal Riches, yet our Application to God for it ought to be with entire Submission to his Will, as considering, that he knows what is most proper for us, and best understands how we should use what we might be entrusted with, For my Part, I freely confess, that I apprehend Riches are no farther desirable than as they subserve these valuable Ends mentioned; and what Account those will be able to give hereafter, who are possessed of them, and do not improve them to these Purposes, they will do well seriously to consider. I imagine it must be much such a one as that Servant gave, who laid up his Pound in a Napkin {Luke 19:20}, and neglected to occupy it.

3dly. The third Branch of this Prayer is, and, That thine Hand might be with me. By the Hand of God may be intended his powerful Grace; as it is in these Words, The Hand of the Lord was with them, and a great Number believed {#Acts 11:2 |}; which God promises to turn upon his People; and I will turn mine Hand upon the little ones {Zechariah 13:7}. These Words are expressive of God's gracious and effectual Influence in and upon his Saints. Jabez was sensible that this was necessary to his Assistance, Protection, Guidance, and Consolation, and therefore intreats that he might be favoured therewith.

1. The Hand of God's Love and Favour is necessary to our Aid and Assistance. We are unable to excite, or put into Exercise, and maintain the Vigor of those Graces, that are formed in us, which yet are very needful to the Comfort and Joy of Our Souls. Our spiritual Vivacity and Liveliness is wholly dependant on Christ, with whom is the Fountain of Life {Psalms 36:9}. As Branches in the natural Vine cannot bear Fruit without a continued Communication of Nourishment from it, for Believers, who are Branches of Christ, the true Vine, cannot bring forth any spiritual Fruit to God's Glory, unless they have a constant Supply of Grace from him; without me ye can do nothing {John 15:5}. Again, they are unequal to a spiritual Performance of any Duty, without Divine Assistance: Their religious Exercises are gone through in a very cold, dull, and heavy Manner; if heavenly Influences are with-held, a Sense of which drew this Request from the Church, Draw me {#Song of Solomon 1:4}. Various Temptations attend the Saints; and their corrupt Part is very ready to comply therewith. Nor are they, of themselves, able to repel the Force of the least which may befall them. All our Ability to withstand Satan's urgent Solicitations to Evil is derived from Christ, who is our Strength, as well as Righteousness {Isaiah 45:25}. A Multitude of Snares surround us in this sinful World, which is, as it were, a Land of Deserts and Pits {Jeremiah 2:6}; and therefore super-natural Assistance is absolutely requisite to our comfortable Walking, where we can't but be sensible that manifold Difficulties and Dangers are before us. Besides, many Afflictions seize upon

us while we are here, which are not joyous but grievous {Hebrews 12:13}, though they yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness in the End. How necessary it is that Christ's left Hand should be under our Head {Song of Solomon 2:6}, to keep us from sinking, those fully know, over whom the surging Waves of deep Distresses have rolled.

2. Omnipotent Grace is necessarily required to our Protection. It is not to be imagined, that we are furnished with a Power sufficient to defend our selves against the violent Assaults of that roaring Lion, Satan, who walketh about, reeking whom he may devour {1 Peter 1:8}. The treacherous and powerful Enemies which are within our own Breasts would certainly prevail against us, and involve us in endless Destruction, if Divine Power did not frond engaged for our Defence. Our Ruin would be inevitable, if Christ was not as well a Shield to defend us as a Sun {Psalms 84:11} to enlighten us: So great is our Danger, which arises from the Deceit and Power of Sin in our Hearts. The Number, Malice, and Rage of the Saints Adversaries in the World, would strike them with the greatest consternation were they left to defend themselves; it is only the Knowledge of their having an impregnable Place of Defence to retreat to in all Dangers; which bears up their Courage and Fortitude of Mind. The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower; the Righteous runneth into it and is safe {Proverbs 18:10}. It is by the Power of God alone that they are kept through Faith unto Salvation {1 Peter 1:5}.

3. The Skilfulness of God's Hand {Psalms 78:72} is very heedful to our Guidance and Direction. We are full as defective in Wisdom as in Strength; The Way of Man is not in him self; it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps {Jeremiah 10:23}. We are often at as great a Loss how to conduct our selves under difficult Circumstances, as we are unable to act the Part which becomes us; hence the Psalmist entirely depended on Direction from above; Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel {Psalms 73:24}. The true Knowledge of what is our Duty is a Gift from Heaven, as well as the Ability to perform it, Teach me to do thy Will, is a Petition suitable to the Condition of us all. The Path in which we should walk is frequently out of our View; we know not where or how to take one Step. So far as our Actions are agreeable to the Character of good Men they are directed by God; the Steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord {Psalms 150:6}. We should turn aside, and eternally wander, if a gracious God did not say to us, when we decline to the right Hand, or to the left, this is the Way, walk ye in it {Psalms 37:23}.

4. The kind Influences of God upon us are necessary to our Consolation. All our spiritual Comfort takes its Rise from rich Grace, and is effected by the good Hand of God upon us {Nehemiah 2:8}: Hence the Lord is stiled the God of Consolation {Romans 15:5}. Believers never have any solid Peace and Joy but when they are favoured with the Smiles of their heavenly Father: He only can comfort them when they are cast down {2 Corinthians 7:6}. This he graciously promises to do for them, As one whom his Mother comforteth so will I comfort you {Isaiah 66:13}. And this his free Promise he effectually makes good, by shewing to them the Immutability of his Counsel, concerning their Salvation, which he has confirmed by an Oath, That by two immutable Things, wherein it is impossible for him to lye, they might have a strong Consolation {Hebrews 6:17-18}. Through a Contraction of Guilt they sometimes are deprived of their spiritual Joys, their Graces grow languid, and their Hearts are exceedingly troubled: This was David's Case, when he thus expressed himself to his God, Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation {Psalms 51:12} What he earnestly desired on his own Account, God will indulge his distressed Children with, notwithstanding their Backslidings from him. I have seen his Ways, and will heal him; I will lead

him also, and restore Comforts to him, and to his Mourners {Isaiah 57:18}

4thly. Jabez prays to be kept from Evil: And that thou wouldst keep me from Evil. He urges a Reason for this Petition, it is this, That it may not grieve me. I shall, 1. Consider the Request.

2. Observe the Argument or Reason he pleads for obtaining the Favour he asked.

1. I am to consider the Request, which is, And that thou wouldst keep me from Evil In this Branch of his Prayer are three Things to be enquired into.

1. What is designed by Evil.

2. What is supposed by Jabez his applying to God to be kept from it.

3. How the Lord keeps his People from Evil.

1. Evil sometimes designs Penalty; thus in these Words, I will bring Evil upon them which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me I will not hearken unto them {Jeremiah 11:11}. In other Places it intends Affliction; as in these Words, and comforted him over all the Evil, i.e. Affliction that the Lord had brought upon him {Job 42:11}. All Punishment is Affliction; but all Affliction is not Penalty. Job's Affliction had nothing of a penal Nature in it. Evil is elsewhere taken for Sin; as here, Ye that love the Lord hate Evil {Psalms 97:10}, i.e. Sin. This I apprehend to be principally designed at least; in this Place, under our Consideration. It is not improbable but Jabez might have in View Afflictions, and desire to be delivered from them, which are grievous in their Nature. But I imagine it was Sin that he chiefly had Respect to, and was desirous of being kept from. A very evil Thing it is.

[1.] It is Evil in its Nature. It is contrary to God; It's the abominable Thing that he hates {Jeremiah 44:4}. It is a Transgression of the Divine Law; Whosoever committeth Sin, says the Apostle John, transgresseth also the Law, for Sin is the Transgression of the Law {John 3:4}. In sinning we act in direct Opposition to the Will of God, despise his Authority, and strike at his Government; who therefore will ever be able fully to describe the disagreeable Nature of this hideous Monster?

[2.] Since Sin is thus vile in its Nature it can't be imagined to be good in its Effects. The Consequences arising from it have been fatal to all chargeable with it. Man's Apostasy from God, or his first Breach of the Law, involved us all in Misery and Woe. By that Sin the Rectitude and Purity of our Nature was loft, and we are become polluted, and prone to all Iniquity. Besides, it is Sin that exposes us to the Curse and Condemnation of the Law, and renders us liable to God's eternal Vengeance; for which Things sake {#i.e. the Lusts mentioned above} cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience {Colossians 3:6}. That is the cursed Fountain from which all penal Evils spring here, and from whence everlasting Destruction will arise hereafter; eternal Death is the Wages {Romans 6:23} of it, or that is properly demerited by it: Its Nature therefore must be inconceivably vile and abominable.

2. Jabez having a proper Sense of the evil and odious Nature of Sin, applies to the Lord to be kept from it. Thus all Believers do; as David, who expresses himself after this Manner, Cleanse thou me from secret Faults; keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous Sins, let them not bare Dominion over me {Psalms 19:13}. Christ gives us Advice to this in his Directory for Prayer, Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil {Matthew 6:13}. The Necessity of a Dependance

on God for Preservation from the Commission of Sin, thus appears.

[1.] Sin dwells in every Believer. 'Tis true, the Saints are born from above {John 1:8}, or a Principle of Holiness is implanted in them {2 Timothy 1:9}, which influences them to desire a perfect Conformity to Christ; but their Experience sufficiently convinces them, that it is far from being attainable in this Life: Whoever shall conceit that he hath attained to Perfection already, will give bur too evident a Proof of his being under a dreadful Delusion; If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us {John 1:13}. There is a carnal and fleshly, as well as a spiritual Part in every Child of God; contrary and jarring Principles reside in his Breast; The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other {Galatians 5:17}, According to the carnal Part he is bent to Backsliding {Hosea 11:7}: The natural Turn and Biass of his Will is to Evil; hence the Apostle thus complains, In me {#that is in my Flesh} dwelleth no good Thing {Romans 7:23}. The Danger we are in of being overcome by the Deceitfulness and Power of indwelling Corruption, is far greater than many, who would be esteemed Christians, seem to be aware of. It is difficult to determine, whether the Deceit, or the Strength of Sin, is the greatest. Its Deceitfulness appears many Ways. It often hides the Vitiosity and sad Consequences of a sinful Action, to which the Will is solicited to yield, and endeavours to keep the Thoughts, wholly exercised about the Pleasures, or imaginary Advantages that will attend it: It offers many Things to extenuate the Nature of a Crime, and strongly insists upon it, that there cannot be any great Harm in indulging such a particular Desire that may arise in the Soul; that at least some Advances may be made towards what our carnal Affections are desirous of, without the Contraction of any great Guilt. Thus by gradual and slow Steps, if the Grace of God doth not prevent, it gains considerable Ground in our Hearts. The Power and Prevalence of it is equal to its Treachery; this the Apostle sets forth by calling it a Law, and a Law that wars against the Law of the Mind; and, as he observes, not without Success, for it brings us into Captivity {Romans 7:21-23}; or prevails against us, which, if we duly consider, we must allow it is highly necessary for us, earnestly to pray to God, to be kept from Evil.

[2.] We are liable to a great Variety of Temptations. Satan is an unwearied Adversary, and hath had long Experience in tempting of Men; whence it is reasonable to conclude, that he may be capable of guessing, what our Constitutions principally incline us to, or what Temptations are most likely to prevail with us: It is not to be questioned, but he diligently considers our Age, Circumstances in Life, natural Inclinations, and the different Occasions to Sin which may turn up, and thereby takes us at great Disadvantages, and without a Standard is lift up against him we are carried away as with an impetuous and violent Flood {Isaiah 59:19} The Craft of this old Serpent {Revelation 12:9}, in soliciting us to the Commission of Evil, is as great as the Sting, that attends his accusing us of those Sins which we have committed. His Subtlety is not unequal to his Poison, and therefore it becomes us to depend on Christ for Preservation from, and Aid under his Temptations, who hath bruised his Head {Genesis 3:15} , and Will shortly bruise him under our Feet {Romans 16:20}.

[3.] We are unable to check and subdue the Motions of Evil in our Hearts, or to withstand Temptations. A Person may at some Times think of a Crime with the greatest Detestation, and imagine himself to be Proof against all Enticements to it, and say as Hazael did, Am I a Dog that I should do this great Thing, i.e. Evil {2 Kings 8:13}, and yet be prevailed on to commit it. Peter imagined, that he should much rather choose Death than deny his Master; but not withstanding his

Abhorrence of so vile a Fact, he became guilty of it, with dreadful Aggravations attending it. And why we should suppose, that we are furnished with an Ability sufficient to guard and defend us, in a Time of Temptation, any more than that Servant of Christ was, I know not, If we conceit that there is no Danger of our committing any Evil, because at present our Souls rise up against it, let us not be too confident, but be humble, knowing that our Hearts are deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked {Jeremiah 17:9}, left the Lord leave us to our selves, to check our Vanity, as he did Hezekiah, who after a Recovery from a threatening Sickness, was guilty of very great Pride and Vain-Glory, upon which It is said, That God left him, to try him, and that he might know all that was in his Heart {2 Chronicles 32:31}. He was a good Man, but entertain'd either too high an Opinion of the Exactness of his former Conduct, or cherished improper Thoughts concerning his own Strength; or it may be both, and therefore God permitted him to fall, to humble and abase him, by his Grace, in recovering of him from his Sin. If the Lord saw it meet, that a humble Paul, who thought himself less than the least of all Saints {Ephesians 3:8}, should be grieved with a Thorn in his Flesh, or be buffeted by a Messenger from Satan, left he should be exalted above Measure {2 Corinthians 12:7}; certainly we cannot think too meanly of our selves, nor have too strict a Dependance on Divine Grace, to keep us from Evil, to which we are naturally inclined, and are often strongly tempted to commit. We never walk so rarely as when we Walk humbly. May the Lord therefore enable us to watch, and to join Prayer to Watchfulness, which is no less necessary; Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation {Matthew 26:41}.

3. God keeps his People from falling into the Commission of gross Evils.

Thus,

[1.] By maintaining in their Souls a proper Sense of Sin. If an Apprehension of the vile Nature of Sin declines in us, we are in great Danger of being overcome by it. Slight Thoughts concerning a Crime certainly pave the Way for the Commission of it, be it what it will. If once our Conscience is so far overcome by the Strength of our Passions, as to abate of its Testimony against any particular Vice, nothing can possibly prevent our thinking into it, but special and seasonable Influences of Divine Grace, to awaken the Conscience out of that Lethargy Sin has thrown it into; for it is certain we are not far from the Perpetration of that Evil, how great soever it may be. It is only at such a Time that we make a proper Resistance against Sin, in which we say as Joseph did, How can we do this great Wickedness and sin against God {Genesis 39:9}.

[2.] By keeping up a just Sense of our own Weakness in our Hearts. If once we so far forget our selves, as to imagine that we shall be able to stand in a Time of Temptation, without a strict Dependance on Christ for Strength, it is very much if we do not make bold, even with Occasions to Sin; for presuming on our own Ability, naturally tends to take us off from necessary Caution, and therefore it is a Miracle of Grace, if we do not perpetrate the Evil which we begin to make Advances towards; this, perhaps, may have been the Case with some, but they have been preserved, yet it can hardly be supposed, without the Contraction of a great Degree of Guilt; and they have infinite Cause of Thankfulness, that they were not fully drawn on to the Finishing of Sin {James 1:15}. An humble Reliance on Christ for Preservation from Evil, directs us to avoid all Occasions to Sin, as well as best fortifies us against all Temptations to it. Let us therefore say with the Psalmist, I will go in the Strength of the Lord {Psalms 71:16}; and take the Advice which the Apostle gave to Timothy, Thou, therefore, my Son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus {2

Timothy 2:1}.

[3.] Abiding Thoughts of our Union with Christ directly tend to keep us from sinning. The Relation in which we stand to him is our greatest Honour, and the inn-moveable Foundation of our Security. Christ is our Head, and we are his Members; He is the Head of the Body the Church {Colossians 1:18}; and we are said to be Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones {Ephesians 5:20}; which the Apostle improves as an Argument to Purity and Charity of Life, Shall I then take the Members of Christ and make them the Members of an Harlot, God forbid {1 Corinthians 6:15}. It is exceeding disagreeable in a Member of Christ to act in direct Opposition to his Will; he is the Husband of the Church, from hence her Duty is inferrable, as much as her Dignity. This conjugal Relation of Believers to Christ, plainly suggests the great Obligations they are under to love, submit to, and reverence him; according to the Strength of their Faith in this Union, they will certainly be desirous of action agreeable to his Command.

2. I proceed to consider the Reason which Jabez renders of this his Petition; which is, That it may not grieve me. Sin is a certain Occasion of Grief sooner or later; however bold Men may make with it now, they will undoubtedly find it {#if rich Grace prevent not} to be the Cause of inexpressible and eternal Anguish and Sorrow. The Grief arising from it here, is either legal or evangelical.

1. It is the Occasion of legal Sorrow, which discovers it self in these two Things.

[1.] A Dread of God's Anger; something of which may frequently attend a Believer; thus Asaph informs us, that he remember'd God and was troubled {Psalms 77:5}. An Apprehension of God's immense Knowledge, infinite Purity, and omnipotent Power, when attended with a Sense of our own Guilt, raises the greatest Confusion, and deepest Distress in our Minds; for hence we collect, that he is fully acquainted with all our Disobedience to him; that as Sin is contrary to his pure Nature, he cannot but hate it; and as his Power is boundless, to our increasing Sorrow, we can't but be sensible that he is able to inflict upon us the Punishment we deserve; that it is impossible we should screen our selves from Justice before such a Judge; let not any be deceived, for God is not mocked {Galatians 6:7}.

[2.] A Departure from God. Guilt drives Men from making an Application to him, who alone can save them. Thus when Adam had sinned, and saw his Nakedness, or that he had lost the Rectitude of his Nature; and that he had, by his Transgression, exposed himself to the just Displeasure of his Creator, he was so far from humbly prostrating himself before him, acknowledging his Guilt, and asking of Pardon, that he turns his Back upon him; nor. would he ever have returned, if God had not fought him {Genesis 3:8-10}. A Sense of Guilt forces all his Posterity to act such a Part, without a View of Mercy. These Things attend a legal Sorrow, or Grief arising from Sin and Guilt, which it is to be feared too many take to be Repentance Unto Life.

2. There is an evangelical Grief on account of sin, which the Grace of God produces in Believers, by enabling them to act Faith on a crucified Jesus; They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn, as a Man mourns for his only Son; and be in Bitterness for him, as one is in Bitterness for his First-born {Zechariah 12:10}. Many Considerations maintain the Flow of this kind and ingenuous Sorrow in the Heart of a Believer. As,

[1.] That Sin is committed against a gracious God and Father. The Guilt of those Sins is highly aggravated which are committed after Discoveries of Grace and Mercy, which when duly weighed

by the Saints, it troubles them exceedingly to think, that they have so often offended the Lord, after Intimations of his Love have been given to their Souls. With deep Humility, and flowing Grief, they acknowledge their Unworthiness, as did the Prodigal, saying, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee {Luke 15:18}. Thus David seems to be pierced very much, with the Consideration of his having sinned against a God of infinite Mercy; According to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Transgressions {Psalms 51:10}. God's great Mercy was the only Foundation of his Hope of Pardon; and the Sense he had of sinning, against such a God went very near him; Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy sight {Psalms 51:4}. There is this great Difference between legal and evangelical Sorrow for Sin, the former arises from an Apprehension and Dread of God's Anger; the latter springs from the Exercise of Faith on his infinite Grace and Goodness.

[2.] When a Believer considers that he has sinned against a kind and gracious Redeemer, a large Vent is given to this Gospel-Sorrow. It was a Sense of Christ's Love which Peter had, that melted him into Tears: Immediately upon his great and dreadful Fall, he received a Look of Love from his suffering Saviour; the Lord turned and looked upon Peter {Luke 22:61}; this caused him to depart from those vile Persons who were the Occasion of his Sin, and to seek a private Place where he might give free Vent to his swelling Grief; he went out and wept bitterly {Matthew 26:75}. Could you over-hear a Believer in his private Devotion, when under a broken Sense of his Guilt, I imagine you would find him to confess and mourn over it much, after this Manner. How exceedingly vile and ungrateful is my Heart, which has led me to the Commission of Sin, although I have seen that to be the meritorious Cause of all those dolorous and cruel Sufferings. that my dearest Saviour underwent upon my Account, to deliver me from deserved Vengeance? O wretched Ingratitude that I have been guilty of, to sin against thee my precious Redeemer, who didst shed thy Blood, and make thy Soul an Offering for my Sin. {Isaiah 53:10}! The Aggravations that attend my Guilt arising from hence, are far beyond my Expression or Conception; however, still permit me to prostrate my self at thy Feet, and humbly hope in thy Merits for Pardon, and depend on thy Grace for the Destruction, of those abominable Lusts that dwell, in my Heart. I greatly long for the entire Extirpation of them, that I might sin against thee no more, to the Grief of my Soul, nor to thy Dishonour.

[3.] The Saints are very much troubled that they have grieved the Holy Spirit by their Sin: It was by him that they were convinced of their natural Corruption and Danger, their Need of Christ, and of his Suitableness as a Saviour; by his Influences were they enabled to hope in him, and to commit the Keeping of their Souls to him. Also as a Comforter and Witness he gave them an Evidence of their Interest in Christ, and of their being Sons to God; The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children Of God {Romans 8:16}. All which being considered by a Believer, When under a Sense of his Guilt, inexpresssibly wounds him, because he clearly apprehends that he has grieved the Holy Spirit, by whom he has been sealed to the Day of Redemption {Ephesians 4:30}.

[4.] The Reproach that is brought upon Religion, by the unbecoming Conduct of a Believer, is the Occasion of deep Distress to his Soul. A virtuous Life is an Ornament to the Gospel which we profess to believe, and justifies the Doctrine of Grace from the foul Aspersions that are thrown upon it, by such as are opposite to it on the contrary, an irregular Conduct gives Occasion to those, who are not Favourers of that Doctrine, to load it with Calumny and Odium. When any are

suffered, through the Strength of disorderly Passions, and powerful Temptations, to fall, who have tasted the Sweetness of those Doctrines, they are exceedingly troubled that the Truths and Interest of Christ should be reproached through their Sin and Folly.

[5.] That Darkness, which follows upon the Commission of Sin, in the Soul of a Believer, is very grieving to him. It is the Happiness of the Saints that they are inseparably interested in the Divine Favour; that nothing shall be able to separate them from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus {Romans 7:25; Romans 7:25}; and that they are indissolubly united with Christ. For their eternal Security is wholly dependent thereupon. But tho' their Interest in the favourable Regard and Love of God can never be lost, yet the Sense and Apprehension of that Interest may be interrupted by Sin for a Time. Now, as the Enjoyment of the Divine Presence is the chiefest Joy of the Saints: When their Guilt separates God and them, with respect to present and gracious Communion {Isaiah 59:2}; or when it veils his Face, and hides the Light of his Countenance from them, and they are covered with Clouds and Darkness; great Sorrow fills their Hearts; Weeping endures for such a Night {Psalms 30:5}, of black and melancholy Desertion, as David found by Experience, which gave rise to this Petition of his, at the Time in which he confessed his Guilt, Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit {Psalms 51:12}.

[6.] The Weakness which the Commission of Sin occasions to the Graces of the Saints, is the Cause of great Distress to their Souls. The Work of Grace upon the Heart of a Believer cannot, shall not be destroyed, but be carried on until the Day of Christ {Php 1:6}; notwithstanding he is liable to spiritual Decays, with respect to the Exercise of Grace, and the Comfort he may have enjoyed. Sin naturally tends to interrupt the Exercise of Faith, to cool our Love, and to abate the Vigor of our Hope, as, I imagine, must be evident to every true Christian. The Irreverence which the Church at Corinth was guilty of, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, was much to their disadvantage; their coming together was not for the better but for the worse {1 Corinthians 11:17}; on Account thereof many among them were weak and sickly, and many slept {1 Corinthians 11:30}. Which Words either intend bodily Indisposition and Death, or spiritual Weakness, Disorder, and slumbering, drowsy Frames. I see no Inconvenience to attend the latter Sense. Since such Consequences follow upon Sin, certainly it becomes us, as we regard the Comfort of our own Souls, and the Credit of Religion, to pray, that we may be kept from it, that it may not grieve us. But to proceed,

III. Jabez received a gracious Answer; God granted unto him that which he requested. The Lord will hear and answer the Prayers of his People. The Church expresses her Faith in this Matter thus; My God will hear me. Here I shall observe,

First. That several Things may serve to encourage us to believe, that we shall be favourably regarded in our Petitions at the Divine Throne.

Secondly. The Nature of God's answers, Thirdly. That we should not conclude the Lord doth not regard us, if we are not speedily answered.

First. To begin with the first, several Things may serve to encourage us to believe, that we shall be favourably regarded in our Petitions at the Divine Throne.

1. The special Love and Grace of God, The Saints are interested in the peculiar Favour of the most High; for having loved them with an everlasting Love, therefore with Loving-kindness be

draws them {Jeremiah 31:3}, His Love to them is such, that it has prevailed with him to give his Son to them, and for them {Isaiah 9:6; John 3:16}, which was the greatest Gift that could be bestowed upon the Saints; from whence the Apostle concludes, that God will communicate all Things needful to us: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, bow shall he not with him also freely give us all Things {Romans 8:32}? We are easily persuaded to grant a Favour to a Person for whom we have a particular Respect; and much more may it be thought, that the Lord, who bears an infinite Love to his People, will hear their humble Supplications to him, and give the Blessings which they shall ask.

2. Their Relation to God may justly be improved as an Argument that he will regard their Prayer: They are his Children, and the Objects of his tenderest: Compassion. An earthly Parent, who is not become inhuman, will not be unmindful of the Petitions of his Child, when in Distress, but will give Relief if he is able; then certainly, much more, our heavenly Father will not turn a deaf Ear to our Cries, and refuse to grant us the necessary Favours we crave at his Hand.

3. Divine Promise's may assist our Faith in this Thing. God calls upon us to attend to this Duty of Prayer, and promises to hear us; Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you {Matthew 7:7}. We ought to credit the Word of God, and upon a firm Persuasion of the Stability of his Promises of this kind, come boldly to the Throne of his Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in Time of need {Hebrews 4:16}.

4. The Glory of God himself is concerned in communicating those spiritual Favours to us for which we ask, as well as the Consolation of our Souls. The Happiness of the Saints is inseparably connected with Divine Honour, which is a wonderful Support to their Faith; for hence they may safely conclude upon their eternal Security. The Christian's Fruitfulness is to the Glory of his God: Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit {John 15:8}. But the Commission of Sin is to his Dishonour; and therefore we have sufficient Ground to hope, that the Lord will hear our Voice, and that his Ears will be attentive to the Voice of our Supplications {Psalms 130:2}, when we pray for an increase of Grace, and the subduing of our Iniquity.

5. The spiritual Prayers of the Saints are directed by the Holy Spirit, as has been already observed; it is he who makes Intercession for us with unutterable Groanings, and this agreeable to the will of God {Romans 8:25-26}. Now it may be justly concluded, that the Lord will attend to those Cries of his People which he influences them to, and answer those Prayers in his own Way and Time that his Spirit enables them to put up to him.

6. God has promised to give those spiritual Blessings to his People which they pray to him for. It is impossible that our Prayers should exceed, or equal Divine Promises. God hath engaged to pardon our Guilt, to justify our Persons, to support and defend us, and to thoroughly sanctify and cleanse us: From all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols, will I cleanse you {Ezekiel 36:25}. He will give Grace and Glory; no good Thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly {Psalms 134:3}: More than which could not be promised, nor ever can be enjoyed; and therefore we have no Occasion to imagine, that our Petitions of a spiritual Kind will not be answered, because of their great Extent, for the Compass of our Prayers is not equal to that of the Divine Promises.

7. Christ presents our Supplications to God, which in themselves are very mean, but they find Acceptance through him; he is the Intercessor of the Saints at God's right Hand, and he

strengthens their Petitions to him, by praying for them, and offering up their Prayers to the Father, as perfumed with the sweet Incense of his prevalent Intercession; and thus they come up before God with Approbation, which affords sufficient Ground of Encouragement to believe, that we shall receive Answers of Peace from him, although we chatter but as a Crane, or a Swallow {Isaiah 38:14} when we pray unto him.

Secondly. Some Things may be observed concerning the Nature of those Answers, which God gives to our Prayers.

1. Sometimes he answers very speedily and quick; thus he did Daniel, And whiles I was speaking in Prayer, the Man Gabriel talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee Skill and Understanding; at the Beginning of thy Supplications the Commandment came forth {Daniel 9:21-23}. As soon as this Man of God began to pray to the Lord, a Commission was given to the Angel Gabriel to go and comfort him, and inform him of the favourable Designs he had about his People the Jews, who were then in Captivity, The Psalmist desired, and was favoured with a speedy Answer to his Prayer from God, in the Day when I call, answer me speedily {Psalms 102:2} In the Day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with Strength in my Soul {Psalms 138:3}

2. It is the Pleasure of the Lord, at some Seasons, to defer giving us an Answer to our Prayers: We may call, and not be sensible that we are regarded, for a considerable Time; this was the Case with the Church: Says she; speaking of her Beloved, I sought him, but I found him not; I called him, but he gave me no Answer {Song of Solomon 5:6}; which was a just Reproof for her ill Treatment of him. God's acting thus towards the Church, caused her bitterly to complain elsewhere, When I cry, and shout, he shutteth out my Prayer: Thou hast covered thy self with a Cloud, that our Prayers should not pass through {Lamentations 3:8-44}. When God thus delays to answer our Petitions, let us not imagine that he is regardless of them, since he has acted in this Manner by his Saints heretofore, nor think of neglecting to call upon him, but as enabled, wait patiently for him {Psalms 40:1 thew:1 thew:1}: The Vision may. be for an appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak, it shall not lye; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry {Habakkuk 2:3}. God defers his Answer to exercise the Faith, Hope, and Patience, of his People.

3. In some Instance the Lord's Answers to the Saints Prayers have been direct and full: Thus David was. not only immediately, but fully answered, or God granted him that very Favour he asked. He had been guilty of Sin in numbering the People, and God, to shew his Resentment, sent the Pestilence among them, which swept away Seventy Thousand, and taught David, that the vast Multitude of his Subjects might soon be reduced to a very small Number; upon this he confesses his Sin, and earnestly intreats of the Lord, to put a Stop to the Raging of the Plague, and is answered according to his Desire {1 Chronicles 21:28}.

4. Some Divine Answers to the Prayers of the Saints are not direct and full, but yet they are sufficient and satisfactory. The Apostle, when he had a Thorn in his F1esh, the Messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, he applies himself to God for Relief; he prays a first and second Time and receives no Answer, and the third God doth not grant him what he desired, which was, that he might be delivered from his present Distress, but the Answer given, Was My Grace is sufficient for thee, my Strength shalt be made perfect in thy Weakness {2 Corinthians 12:7-9}. So that the Lord deferred to give any Answer at all for a Time, and when he did it was not directly suited to the

Apostle's Prayer, but yet it was a gracious one, and fully satisfied Paul. God's all-sufficient Grace is a sufficient Support under the heaviest Trials and Temptations; and therefore, if he doth not immediately deliver us out of a particular Affliction, or from a particular Temptation, it will be enough if he is but pleased to say, My Grace is sufficient for thee. This leads me to observe,

Thirdly. That we should not conclude the Lord is unmindful of our Prayers, if we do not receive an immediate and direct Answer from him in some Instances. As,

1. When we are under great afflictions we may earnestly intreat the Lord to deliver us Out of those Distresses, but not have our Desires fulfilled. God designs to answer the best Purposes by afflicting of his Children. All Occurrences of Providence, however afflictive they may be, work together for the Good of those who love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose {Romans 8:28}. He knows infinitely better than we do, what is best for us, whether Adversity or Prosperity: He intends to wean us from this World, by the Troubles he suffers to invade us, and to bring us nearer to himself by all our Trials. When the wise Designs that he has in view in afflicting of us are brought about, he will stay his Hand, and say it is enough. Since we are incapable of forming a Judgment, when it will be proper that we should be delivered out of any Affliction, we ought to ask for it with an entire Submission to the Will of God; and if he continues it longer upon us than we imagine may be necessary to our Advantage, although we have fervently pray'd for its Removal, let us not from thence infer, that God is unmindful of our Petitions, or that it is in vain to call upon him.

2. The same may be observed concerning a particular Temptation attending a Believer. All the Methods that Satan makes use of to provoke the People of God to Commit Sin, are very distressing to their Souls; sometimes when they are violently pushed on to the Commission of Evil, they conceive that it will be impossible for them to avoid it, which causes them to say, Lord save, or I perish. A Saint may cry earnestly to God for a Deliverance from Temptation, and yet be suffered to labour under it for a considerable Time longer. But this is no Indication, that the Lord is unmindful of our Petitions; he had a merciful Regard to Paul's Prayer, though he did not immediately free him from his Trouble.

3. If a particular Evil which we may have often prayed against is not subdued, so far as we expect it should be, this is not to be improved as an Objection to the Lord's regarding our Prayer. To instance in Unbelief: The Believer, it may be, has been frequently thrown into deep Distress by the Prevalence of that Evil, notwithstanding he has made a fervent Application to God, for the Strength and Power of it to be reduced; and to his Apprehension it has been so, he has flattered himself it would never more gain such Advantage against him, as formerly it did, but on a sudden he finds himself to be greatly mistaken; for whereas but a little Time since he thought his Mountain flood strong, yet now, being under Divine With drawings, he is troubled {Psalms 30:7}, not only loses, in a great Measure, the Sweetness of those gracious Discoveries he has been favoured with, but also very much hesitates, whether those Comforts were really from God or not, is afraid that they were not the Produce of powerful Grace: Which may hold true of other Evils, for ought I know, though I chose to instance in this.

4. If the Lord doth not give us such a Degree of Comfort as we have intreated for, yet he may mercifully hear our Prayer. It is the Pleasure of God to favour some of his Children with much of his spiritual Presence, so that their Consolation aboundeth by Christ {2 Corinthians 1:5}. He gives

to them clear and distinct Conceptions of his everlasting Love, and of the Designs of that Love; and also of the surprizing Steps which he has taken, in order to accomplish those Designs: He assists them to act a strong and lively Faith on these Things: Thus they are blessed with an Eminency of Knowledge of, and Faith in, the deep Things of God {1 Corinthians 2:10}. Weaker Christians may be discouraged because their Experience is not so enlarged and ripened; especially when they have applied to the Throne of Grace, and earnestly prayed, that God's Comforts might in the same Manner delight their Souls {Psalms 94:19}. But we ought to consider, that in God's Family there are some Fathers, or such who are more grown and experienced; and, that there are young Men and Babes {1 John 2:12-13} whose Acquaintance with heavenly Mysteries is not so great. Christ hath Lambs, as well as full grown Sheep, in his Fold, and under his Care; there he acts tenderly towards, for he gathers them with his Arms, and carries them in his Bosom {Isaiah 40:11 hew:11 hew:11}. Now, if we are not equal in Understanding and Faith to some Believers; or, if we are not Fathers in God's House, this should not discourage us, but rather we ought to be thankful, that we are Babes in Christ; or that we do partake of the same Life and Grace with those who are Fathers, though not in the same Degree.

5. If our Gifts are not enlarged equal to our Desires, we are not to infer from thence, that the Lord is regardless of our Prayers. A Believer, when he has a lively Sense of Christ's Love to him, and his Heart glows with Love to Christ, he may ardently desire such a Communication of Gifts from him that might fit him for eminent Service, and yet not have these Desires answered; this is no Objection to God's favourably accepting of them. As David's Desire, and Intention to build an House for the Lord, was approved of by him {2 Samuel 12:7}, so these Desires of his People, to be furnished with such Gifts as would render them extensively useful, are far from being unacceptable to him, although he may not design them to that extensive Usefulness; as he did not intend that David should erect his Temple, though he approved of his Inclination to do it.

6. God may not see meet to make us of that Service in the World, and in the Church, which we desire to be; but neither should this occasion us to think he is unmindful of our Petitions. He is resolved upon carrying on his own Interest, in spite of all Opposition; and he makes use of what Instruments he pleases in doing it. Sometimes he effects the most wonderful Things by such Means that we should imagine are very unlikely to be attended with Success; nay, which certainly would not be, but that they are used by Omnipotence, which puts Efficacy into the Means it uses, how much soever they may seem unsuited to the Nature of the Work for which they are designed. It may be the Pleasure of the Lord to make some of his Servants more eminently serviceable in his Interest than others, to whom they are far inferior in Gifts; this he does to hide Pride from Man {Job 33:17}, and to teach us, that Whatever our Abilities be, the Success attending the Exercise of them is wholly from God. If we are not of that Service which we desire to be, it ought to keep us humble; but we should not sink into Diffidence and Unbelief on that Account. The Lord may not see it proper to answer us in these Particulars mentioned, in that Manner or Degree which we could be glad of; but hence we ought not to infer, that our Prayers are unacceptable to him, or that he will not hear us, in what more immediately concerns our Welfare and Happiness. The Reason of which is plainly this, he hath not given us such clear Evidence of his Designs concerning us in these Things, as he has given of his kind Thoughts about us, respecting our Felicity hereafter. The Divine Word doth not inform us, how far we shall be afflicted and tempted whilst here; nor how far Sin shall be subdued, or what Degrees of Grace we shall have, how large our Gifts shall be, nor of

what Service we shall be in this World, but it gives us clear Evidence concerning those Things which relate to our eternal State; such as,

1. The Knowledge we have of our Danger and Misery by Nature. Whilst Men are unregenerate they are insensible of their spiritual Wretchedness and Poverty, and Blindness, and Nakedness; they imagine themselves to be rich, and increased with Goods, and to have need of nothing {Revelation 3:17}; in their own Esteem they are whole, and have no need of the Physician {Matthew 9:12}; but when born again, or divinely enlightened, they behold the exceeding Corruption of their Nature {Romans 7:18}, the great Transgressions of their Lives {Romans 5:20}, their own Inability to perform any Duty in an acceptable Manner {Romans 8:8}, the Necessity of a perfect Righteousness, in order to Justification before God, and the Imperfection that attends their own, that it's no better than filthy Rags {Isaiah 64:6}; hence they conclude, that they are entirely in themselves, or Irrecoverably soft, unless Divine Favour interposes, and prevents their sinking into eternal Ruin.

2. The Apprehensions we have of Christ: as a Saviour. An Acquaintance with the excelling Glory of his Person is a free Gift {2 Corinthians 4:6}. The Knowledge of his Merits being the only and effectual procuring Cause of the Remission of Sins; of his Righteousness, as being available to, and the alone Matter of a Sinner's Justification before God; and a Sense of the Fulness of his Grace being solely equal to the Supply of our spiritual Needs, are owing to the Influences of the Holy Spirit upon us {John 16:14}.

3. An entire Dependance on him, as thus suited to our Case, is an Effect of powerful Grace; for he expressly tells us, That no Man can come to him, except the Father, which hath lent him, draw him {John 6:44}. And therefore if we have experienced such a Work, we may be assured that we are passed from Death to Life {1 John 3:14}, or are spiritually quickened, though we were once dead in Trespasses and Sins {Ephesians 2:1}; and may say with Manoah's Wife, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a Burnt-Offering, and a Meat-Offering at our Hands; neither would he have shewed us all these Things, nor would, as at this Time, have told us such Things as these {Judges 13:23}. It will be no Presumption to conclude, that God has loved us with an everlasting Love, if he has thus drawn us with Loving- Kindness {Jeremiah 31:3}; or, that God has predestinated us to become conformed to the Image of his Son {Romans 8:29}; for he has really begun to accomplish such a gracious Decree upon us, and will fully perfect it. Our Confidence hereof is securely built upon the never-failing Foundation of his unalterable Love, and steady Purpose {Psalms 103:1; Romans 8:30}; Being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you will perform it, until the Day of Christ {Php 1:6}, when he will present us faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy {Jude 1:20}.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Quis hic fuerit non constat, neque quis Pater vel Avus ipsius. ft2 Votum fait conditionale, quid vero promicium fit eo voto recicetur. Nameficut Hebraei in jurando, Poenam quam in. Eimprecantur faepe omittunt; ita etiam quandoque, votum sive promissum tacent in precibus eorum. Alii volunt esse formulam deprecativam & to siaffirmative capieadum pro utinam. Poli Synops. in loc.

S. A Refutation of Arminian Principles

A Refutation of Arminian Principles, Delivered in a Pamphlet, Intituled, 'The Modern Question concerning Repentance and Faith,

Examined With Candor, etc.,' In a Letter to a Friend by John Brine London: Aaron Ward,

1743

SERMON 9

Lhs A REFUTATION OF ARMINIAN PRINCIPLES DELIVERED IN A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'THE MODERN QUESTION CONCERNING REPENTANCE AND FAITH, EXAMINED WITH CANDOUR, ETC.' IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

Printed for, and Sold by

A. WARD, at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain,

London 1743.

WORTHY SIR, My Opinion of your solid and accurate Judgment in divine Things, and of your Candour and generous Disposition towards those who differ from you, in Articles not affecting the Fundamentals of Christian Doctrine, as well as of your firm attachment to the Truths of the Grace of God; Determines me to give you, an Account of the Rise of the Controversy, relating to evangelical Repentance, and special Faith, being the immediate Duties of unregenerate Men; an Account of my own Apprehensions with relation thereto, and my Thoughts of the Performance, intituled, The modern Question, concerning Repentance and Faith, examined ,with Candour. I hope, Sir, this Liberty, I take with you, will not be thought too bold or indecent, and as I desire to submit the whole to your Examination, which I am assur'd will be fair and impartial, the Result of your Thoughts, will be received with all that Regard, which your great Abilities, singular Modesty, Christian Charity, and pious Zeal for the Truths of Christ, may justly challenge, from one fully sensible of these your rare and uncommon Qualifications. The Rise of the Controversy was this. A Lecture had been carried on for some Years, with great Success, in a Village called Brigstock, in Northamptonshire. Many young Persons were converted, among whom were several Relations of mine; upon hearing of which, I determined, that when I went into that Part of the Country, I would pay them a Visit, and accordingly I did. When I was with them, and the rest of the good People there, at that Time, I thought them some of the most happy Persons, I have ever had the Pleasure of converting with, in this Day of Lukewarmness and Division among Professors. The Conversion of these young People, was a happy Means of Revival to the elder Christians there residing. With Zeal and Fervour they attended the public Worship of God, on Lord's Days, tho' the Places where they had Opportunity of so doing, were five Miles distant from them, and but a few of them enjoyed the Convenience of riding. Upon their Return Home in the Evening, after a little Refreshment, they met together in private; and Exercises of Prayer and Christian Conference, were carried on with

perfect Unanimity, spiritual Affection and mutual Edification. Besides which, they had three or four of the like Evening-Meetings in a Week; but what is justly to be observed to their Honour, is, they diligently attended their Business, and the Management of the Affairs of Life: So well was their pious Zeal tempered with Prudence, and honest Industry. - Would to God, That that Harmony, sincere Love, and holy Zeal, had flourished among them to this Day. But, alas, oh unhappy Change! Now there are Divisions, Contentions and animosities fomented, among that once very happy Number of Christians. The Occasion of which, in short, was this: Some of the worthy Persons concerned in carrying on the said Lecture, had different Apprehensions about the Manner of addressing Sinners, with Relation to evangelical Repentance, and special Faith in Christ: I say about the Manner of it, for with Respect to the Necessity, Nature, Object, Author, and the genuine Effects of Faith, as far as I am able to learn, they were fully agreed. Some of the Lecturers were of Opinion, that special Faith is the immediate Duty of unregenerate Persons, who hear the Gospel. Others of them, apprehended, that unregenerate Persons are not bound to exercise this special Faith in Christ. But were fully convinced of, and constantly asserted and inculcated, the Necessity of Faith in Christ, and were not wanting in the Explanation of its Nature, and proper Fruits. This Matter, was at length controverted by the Pen, between two of the Lecturers, not without too much Heat on one Side, and a great many very ill and dangerous Consequences, were affirmed to follow the latter Opinion. This caused a Dissension among those serious Christians, some taking one Side of the Question, and some the other. At length, the Opposition rose to such a Height, in those who took the Affirmative Side In this Debate, that they formed a Resolution to set up another Lecture, in which Antinomian Principles were to be exposed, and this Opinion particularly. This Design was put into Execution; another Lecture was opened by Dr. Doddridge, who is well known for his remarkable Candour of Temper, and Catholic Sentiments: Which was therefore, thought very strange by many, who had not, as yet observed, that but a small Mistake, in those Persons who steadfastly adhere to Principles, which have heretofore been esteemed the Doctrines of free Grace, in Opposition to Arminianism, raises the keen Resentment of Persons, of great Reputation for their extensive Charity and Catholicism: When large Advances towards general Grace and universal Redemption are highly applauded, by those very pacific Gentlemen. That this Lecture was set up in Opposition to the former, Sir, you cannot doubt, when you are told, that it was proposed that the Gentlemen who carry it on, should come into the old Lecture, and take their proper Turns, with the former Lecturers, to the End that Peace, Unity and Love might be still preserved, which it was apprehended might very well subsist, notwithstanding this Difference in Judgment, with relation to that particular Point: But this amicable and friendly Proposal, was not agreed to by those on the Affirmative Part. A Person of your Penetration and Impartiality, will soon discover; and as readily allow, on which Side Christian Love and Forbearance were attempted to be maintain'd. My Apprehensions, of the Point controverted, I shall very briefly lay before you, Sir, and submit them to your Enquiry and Censure.

I.

I apprehend, that whatever was, or would have been the Duty of Man, upon the Supposition of a Revelation, super-added to what he enjoyed in his Creation-State, is the Duty of Men in their fallen State, upon the said Supposition.

II. That Man in his perfect State was bound to love, reverence and adore God; and that Men in their lapsed State are obliged to these Acts, notwithstanding their present Want of Ability, in

Consequence of the Fall.

III. That it was the Duty of Man in his primitive State, to believe the Truth and Importance of every Revelation, he should receive from God; and that it is the Duty of Men in their fallen State so to do.

IV. But with Respect to special Faith in Christ, it seems to me, that the Powers of Man in his perfect State were not fitted and disposed to that Act. My Reasons for this Thought are these:

1. The Communication of such a Power to Man, in his primitive State, would have been in vain; for there was no Necessity, nor Use of believing in Christ: in that State; and I humbly conceive, that Man was not furnished with a Power, the Exertion of which was unnecessary, so long as he should remain in his perfect State.

2.

Because God could not require Man, while in a perfect State, to put forth such an Act, as special Faith in Christ is. The Reason is evident, this Act necessarily supposes a Dependence on Christ for Salvation, as Creatures lost and miserable in ourselves; but 'till Man was fallen and become miserable, he could not exercise such a Trust in Christ, as a Redeemer. And therefore, if it is supposed that God furnished Man, in a State of Innocence, with a Power of acting this special Faith in a Mediator, it must, I think, be allowed that he gave Man an Ability, which so long as he continued to possess it, he could not require him to exert. Whether this is likely, I leave to your judicious and impartial Enquiry.

3. My third Reason is, special Faith in Christ belongs to the new Creation, of which he as Mediator between God and his People, is the Author, and therefore, I apprehend, that a Power of acting this special Faith in him, was not given to Man, by, or according to the Law of his first Creation.

4.

It seems to me a very extraordinary Dispensation, that Man should be furnished with a Power, he could not exercise in his perfect State; and in his corrupt State be deprived of that Power, wherein alone the Exertion and Exercise of it can be necessary or useful. The Substance of these Reasons, Arminius delivers in his Apology, Article the Nineteenth. Maccovius endeavours to answer them, but in my humble Opinion, his Answer is not sufficient. His Answer, Sir, is, that there was in Man, in his innocent State, Justice as to the Nature of it, which we now call punishing, and yet he could not punish others in a State of Integrity; and there was that in Man which we call Mercy, as to the Nature of it, and yet he could not exercise Mercy, because there is no Place for Mercy, except in a State of Misery^{f1} This Answer, Sir, Is by no Means satisfactory to me, because Man might have exercised both Justice Punishing, and Mercy, while in his innocent State, in Care of proper Subjects for the Exercise of this Justice, and this Mercy. But the Exercise of special Faith in Christ, necessarily supposes the Subject of that Act, to be himself a guilty and miserable Creature; and therefore, the Fall of Man must precede this Act, but a perfect Creature, may reasonably be supposed capable of exercising punitive Justice towards the Guilty, and of exercising Mercy towards the miserable, as the holy Angels doubtless do towards miserable and helpless Men.

I shall now, Sir, consider, The Arguments this Gentleman advances to prove that evangelical Repentance and saving Faith, are the Duties of all who hear the Gospel. He begins with the

Institution of Sacrifices. f2 It is readily granted, that they were of divine Appointment, vicarious, Types of Christ, and of that real Atonement he has made by his Death for Sin. They also directed to an Acknowledgment of Sin, and that Men deferred Death; and to Christ: as the Object of Trust and Hope for Remission and all spiritual Benefits; but these Things afford no Proof, that all who offered Sacrifices stood obliged to exercise that Repentance and Faith whereof we speak; for if so, then none but true Penitents and Believers had a Right to offer Sacrifices, which cannot be thought. Christ: as a suffering Saviour was typically represented by those Sacrifices, and it was a Duty incumbent on all who offered Sacrifice, to believe the fulfilment of the divine Promises, concerning the Appearance, Work and Sufferings of the Messiah; but I apprehend it can never be proved, that the Exercise of special Faith in him, was required of all, who offered Sacrifices; or, that the Offering of Sacrifice obliged any to the Exercise of this special Faith. It cannot be pleaded that this Faith was enjoyed, as a Qualification on those who offered Sacrifices; for then, none but Believers might lawfully do it, which we know is not true: and therefore, the Institution of Sacrifices, can only be considered, as a typical and external Representation of the Messiah, and by Consequence could be only a proper Foundation for common, and not special Faith. The Proof he brings from the general Exhortations to Repentance, delivered to the People of the Jews in the Writings of Moses and the Prophets, is altogether impertinent in my Opinion. 'Tis to be observed, that the Jews were a People separated from all others, they dwelt alone and were not reckoned among the Nations, and God became their God providentially, to confer temporal Favours upon them, to protect them; he entered into a Covenant with them, as a Nation, and required on their Part, that they should worship him only, observe his Laws, exercise Justice shew Benevolence and Kindness one to another; on his Part, he promised them a peaceable Possession of the good Land, Plenty, Victory over their Enemies, and their Multiplication in that Land, and long Life, on Condition of their Observance of his Statutes and Judgments, which they on their Part promised; God threatened them with Evils of the forest Nature if they did not, viz. the Sword, Famine, noisome Beasts and Pestilence, and with Captivity; but at the same Time assured them, that if they humbled themselves under these Judgments, and turn'd to him, he would remove those Evils, and restore to them Peace, Plenty, and Security from their Enemies, and that he would not totally destroy them. {Leviticus 26:1-46}; {Deuteronomy 4:1-49}; Chap. {Deuteronomy 28:1-68} and {Deuteronomy 29:1-29} Agreeable to the Plan of this Covenant, the Prophets treat with that People, remonstrate against their national Crimes, exhort to national Repentance, Humiliation and Reformation, denounce temporal Evils, promise temporal Blessings, in Case of Amendment, as may be abundantly seen in their Writings. {Isaiah 1:19-20}. {Ezekiel 18:1-32}. {Amos 2:3-6} But it is not to be proved, that spiritual and eternal Blessings were promised in that Covenant, nor, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith were therein required, it will as soon be made evident, that when the Land of Canaan, and Affluence and Plenty therein are promised, that Heaven is intended or included in those Promises, as that, when the People of the Jews are exhorted to Repentance and turning to the Lord, evangelical Repentance is designed and implied in those Exhortations. That Covenant contained not spiritual Blessings, neither did it oblige to any spiritual Acts, such as evangelical Repentance, and special Faith are. It will as soon be proved, that Earth is Heaven, as that the Repentance required and enjoyed by Vertue of that Covenant, was of a heavenly Kind. This Writer, Sir, sometimes makes a great Difficulty of admitting the Distinction of natural and evangelical Repentance, of historical and special Faith; but here he is obliged. to allow of it, tho' he pleads that natural Repentance and historical Faith, were not the whole of the Duty

required and enjoyed by the Law of Sacrifices, on the Nation of the Jews; this he argues from God being represented as their Redeemer in Christ. When he is able to prove this fine Point, I shall freely grant his Work is done. This contains, if I mistake not, a tacit Acknowledgment, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith, are the Duties only of such Persons, to whom God reveals himself in his Word, as their Redeemer through Christ He seems to suppose, that God so revealed himself the Body of the Jewish Nation, than which nothing is more false in Fact; and therefore all his Reasoning on this Head is impertinent, groundless, and inconclusive. There is not any thing advanced from the Old Testament, which amounts to the Proof of the Point.

Let me now observe to you, what he brings from the New Testament.

He begins with the Preaching of John the Baptist, who exhorted to Repentance, repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. 1. Repentance was required of the Jews, as a Nation, for all the Blood of the Prophets which had been shed amongst: them, and for that Opposition they made to the true Interest and spiritual Kingdom of the promised Messiah; the Want of that Repentance proved their Destruction, which soon followed the Introduction of the New Testament State.

2.

Evangelical Repentance was the Duty of particular Persons, which he also preached, and show'd the Necessity of, but it can't, I think, Sir, be proved, that he ever asserted it to be the Duty of unregenerate Persons, to exercise that Grace. This becomes the Duty of Men, when they have Warrant from the divine Word, to consider God as their Redeemer in Christ, which no unregenerate Men have any Warrant to do. It is not question'd, but he also preached Faith in the promised Messiah, but what Proof does this afford, that Faith is the Duty of such Persons, as have not at present Warrant to consider God, as their Redeemer through Christ? None at all. Christ in his Ministry also preached Repentance.

1. A general and national Repentance.

2.

Evangelical, as did also his Apostles; but pray, Sir, do you think, that there is no preaching of Repentance evangelical, and special Faith in Christ, without allowing that Men unregenerate stand obliged to exercise that Repentance and Faith? To me it seems very evident there may. This Writer produces a Multitude of Texts to prove the Point he contends for, but in many of them Repentance and Faith are not so much as mentioned; it will be sufficient to refer you to those Scriptures in the Margin {Acts 4:10-12; Acts 5:42; Acts 13:46-47}; {Acts 18:5-6; Acts 20:26-27; Acts 28:24; Acts 28:31}. In others, where Repentance and Faith are exhorted to, it evidently appears, that the Persons addressed were the happy Subjects of a Conviction of their Misery by Nature, and therefore not to be considered in a State of Unregeneracy; to these Places I will also refer you in the Margin {Acts 2:37; Acts 13:26}. He farther observes, that Men will be condemned for the Want of Faith in Christ, and brings several Texts in confirmation of this Observation; which are also referred to in the Margin {John 3:18-19; John 3:36; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8}; {Hebrews 10:28-29}. But because he who believes not is condemned now by the Law, under which he is, as a Covenant of Works, and not under Grace; it follows not, that his Want of Faith is the Cause of that Condemnation. With Respect, Sir, to what the Author observes of all Men being commanded to repent, it intends a forsaking of Idolatry, and embracing the Worship of the true God alone {Acts

17:30-31}. F3 The Distinction of natural and evangelical Repentance, of common and special Faith, which he before allowed, he now denies, and demands Proof that John the Baptist uses the Distinction, when he preached Repentance; I think, Sir, I may demand of him to prove that this Distinction, cannot take Place in his Discourses, since it is evidently found in Scripture; and if he is not able to give Proof that his Scope and Design, will not admit of this Distinction, however positive he may be, of being in the Right, at least, it is possible he may be in the wrong. I beg leave to observe to you, Sir, that our Saviour manifestly speaks of Repentance, when evangelical Repentance is not intended. The Place I now refer to is {Matthew 11:21}, they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Ashes. Upon no Scheme can Repentance here mean evangelical; it cannot upon the Calvinistical Scheme is certain, this is so evident that nothing is required to evince it. Nor can it intend such Repentance upon the Arminian and Baxterian Schemes, for if God foresaw that they would have repented, in Case such Works had been done among them, he would have wrought those Works in their View to bring them to Repentance; upon the Foresight of which, he decreed the Happiness of Men, according to these Schemes, and therefore this Writer, who is no Calvinist, but a Baxterian, I should think must grant that evangelical Repentance, is not there intended; for 'tis strange to suppose God to decree the Happiness of Men, upon Condition of Repentance and Faith, and yet determine to withhold those Means from them, which he foresees would bring them to Repentance and Faith. The Author, Sir, makes the Calvinist: object to him, that special Faith cannot be the Duty of all; because it is said, that some believed not, because they were not of Christ's Sheep; the Meaning must be this: That as those who believed were of Christ's Sheep, so they believed because, they were so; i.e. they believed because they were chosen to Faith and Salvation. And if others believed not, because they were not of Christ's Sheep, they believed not, because they were not chosen to Faith. And then saying Faith could not be their Duty, but must belong to the Sheep of Christ alone. I confess I do not see the Force of this Objection, for Men not being chosen to Faith, is no solid Objection, as I apprehend, to that being their Duty. The Author was in the right, not to start a Difficulty which he could not remove; it is no Point of Prudence, to frame an Objection to one's Opinion, which will not admit of a full Answer. But, perhaps, Sir, this was done with a Design to introduce Arminianism, rather than confirm the Opinion of special Faith being the Duty of unregenerate Men: For, says he in Answer, you cannot but know it has been very much doubted, whether these Words have any immediate Reference to the Decree of Election. When those that believed are called the Sheep of Christ, this may be as they were of a more teachable Disposition than the others. So say the Socinians and Arminians, whom Dr. Doddridge, in his Family-Expositor has followed.^{f4} This Gentleman insists much upon the obvious and literal Sense of Scripture, when it makes for his own Opinion; but here, Sir, you see, he can allow that the Disposition of Persons, is put for the Persons themselves, and such a Disposition as is not natural, but given to and created in them, when the Scope of the Place requires not this improper Sense but only his anti-evangelical Sentiments. Christ's People are not called Sheep, because of a natural Disposition in them to Goodness, for that they have not, and if this Character is expressive of their natural Temper, it is a wandering one: All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way. 'Tis evident, that the Words are expressive of this, that there Persons believed not, because they were not of the Number of such, who were made the Care and Charge of Christ, and in Consequence of that, hear his Voice, follow him, to whom he gives eternal Life, do not perish, and whom none can pluck out of Christ's Hand, nor out of the Father's Hand. This is clear from the

very Scope of the Place. However, says he, your Conclusion from there Words, is directly contrary to the Intention of them. For, when the Jews demand an open and direct Declaration from Jesus, whether he was the Christ, v.23. he blames their Unbelief in there Words, v. 24. I told you, and ye believed not: The Works that I do in my Father's Name bear Witness of me. And pray let it be observed, that it is one and the same Object of Faith, viz. Christ Jesus in his Character of the promised Messiah, which is here spoken of; which one Sort are blamed for not believing in, and which the Sheep of Christ did believe in. And therefore the Duty must be one and the same to both. I answer, the Jews Question is, whether Christ was the Messiah, he observes he had told them that he was, and that his Works testified it, and ye believed not, i.e. ye did not think it true that I am the Messiah, which they might have done without special Faith. Special Faith includes common, but common Faith includes not special. And then he asserts, that they believed not, because they were not of his Sheep, in which Words special Faith is intended, or more than common Faith, as appears by what follows; but in the preceding, Faith is put for common Faith, or a bare Persuasion of his being the Messiah, so that this is no Proof, that it was the Duty of these Jews to exercise special Faith. Not content with this Arminian Observation, he proceeds farther and says, others that believed not, were left to their own Prejudices and Perverseness, for opposing and resisting the Light, and the Means of Conviction. And this is what Enmity will eternally do, which the Heart of Man is, against God and all spiritual good.

He very artfully pretends, that he differs not from the Calvinists, except in some lesser Circumstances, concerning the Nature of the divine Decrees in Election and Reprobation, the Condition of Man by the Fall, his standing under the Covenant of Works, the absolute Freedom of the divine Agency and Operations in saving Souls. This, Sir, is an Observation absolutely false in Fact, as his own Reasoning will fully convince you, who are not to be imposed on by any artful Pretences, to maintain the Doctrines of Grace, when the Salvation of Men is made to rest on the Determination of the human Will, not brought to this Determination by the Grace of God alone, but only excited and stirr'd up by divine Influence. This, Sir, you know to be the very Soul of the Arminian Cause, you are sensible, that the Arminians deny not the Aids and Influences of divine Grace, but allow of such Influences, and urge that the Will of Men is left to chose Good or Evil, without the Infusion of spiritual Principles, to effectually determine them in the Choice they make. Some weaker Christians may possibly be led into a Mistake, by this Author's Pretences of believing and maintaining the Doctrines of Grace, but Persons of your Penetration and Acquaintance with the Arminian Controversy, will easily discover the Absurdity of all these Pretences. Had not this Writer attempted to build up Arminianism, upon the Foundation of the Opinion of evangelical Repentance and special Faith, being the Duties of unregenerate Men, I had not given you and the World this Trouble, for tho' I apprehend that Opinion is not to be supported by Scripture, and the Analogy of Faith, it seems not to me to be of such Consequence, but that Persons differing in this Point, may fully agree about the Doctrines of the Grace of God, tho' those who are for the Affirmative may find it somewhat difficult to defend the Justice of God, in damning Men eternally, for not doing, what Man in no State, was furnished with a Power to do.

He tries various Methods to prove the Point.

I. By observing, that the Law, i.e. the moral Law, must command Repentance, or at least include it, in case of Sin, because Men cannot return to Duty without a Sense of and Sorrow for Sin. This seems self evident. But it will not prove the Truth of the Thing contended for. Heathens, who never

heard a Word of Christ and Salvation by him, stand obliged to Repentance for Sin, and Reformation in Life. Farther he observes, that God in the Renewal and Republication of his Law, under the old as well as new Dispensation, has commanded Men to repent and believe. True, but then, in order to prove, that Men unregenerate stand obliged to exercise evangelical Repentance and special Faith, it must be made evident, that such Repentance and such Faith, are intended in those Precepts, which as I think is not yet done. He cannot, Sir, rest in this Account of the Matter, not because {#as I suspect} it fails of proving the Thing he pleads for; but because this State of the Case would prove an unsurmountable Difficulty, to what he has greatly at Heart to introduce, viz Arminianism, and would force upon us, under the Notion of pleading the Cause of Repentance and Faith, against all such Antinomians as you, and I, Sir, are accounted. And therefore he asserts, that the Law demanded perfect Obedience, nothing left. {#very true so far}. He adds And therefore, neither in express Terms, nor by any secret Implication could it command Repentance. To suppose this, would directly contradict the Perfection of the Law, and effectually enervate the Obligation and Design of it. This is strange indeed! What if a Creature offends against God, hath the Law no Power still to command him to practice his Duty? And is not natural Repentance necessarily included in a Return to Duty, when the Creature has revolted? If not, then, no Remorse or Sorrow for Sin, can justly be expected of those who hear not the Gospel: Nor is Repentance in any Sense their Duty. But he seems to provide an Answer for this, in what he immediately subjoins, which is, As for the Law of Reason and Equity, resulting from the Nature and Relation of Things between God and Man in his fallen State, this is no Law of Innocency or Covenant of Works; has no positive Seal or Sanction, unless you will make a new Law of it. To which I answer, is this a Law? So he calls it, and is it not the same Law with the Law of Innocency, or Covenant of Works, but distinct from it, which he asserts it is? Then it is another and a new Law. Did not the Law of Innocency provide for what should or might be expected of Man in his fallen State, in a Way of Duty, upon the Supposition of no Provision being made for his Salvation? If not, Man upon his Sin became free from the Obligation of that Law, 'till a Discovery made of Salvation by the promised Seed; and the Heathen World who are absolute Strangers to Christ, are not now under the Command and Power of the Law, which will not be granted him, Sir, as I think. For, what he calls the Law of Reason and Equity, is that Law which the Apostle affirms to be written in their Hearts, and is the Law of Innocency, {#in its Remains} or Covenant of Works, {Romans 2:15}, according to which they were sensible they became obnoxious to Death, {Romans 1:32}, for their dreadful Sins. He thinks it a Contradiction to say, that Repentance and Faith cannot be the Duties of Believers by the same moral Law, how, says he, shall the standing perpetual Obligation of the moral Law be made to agree with this? Methinks, this makes the Obligation to arise from the Gospel and the Grace of it. For here it seems the Law, tho' the only Rule of Duty, has no Force without the Gospel; and the Duties of Faith and Repentance only take Place, and become Duties from Gospel Grace. These Things look a little perplexed, as if they would not hang together. To these Particulars I answer,

1. That natural Repentance is a Duty inferrible from the Law, without the Supposition of a Revelation of Gospel Grace.

- 2.

It is certain, That that Law which obliges Men to adore God, as a Being of all possible and infinite Perfections, lays them under Obligation to assent to the Truth of what, at any Time, he shall

please to reveal.

3. The Gospel is a Revelation of divine Truths not discovered to Man in his State of Innocence, and in that State therefore, it cannot be supposed he was oblig'd to assent to them.

4.

Man stood obliged to exercise Repentance for his Sin by the Law, immediately and before a Revelation of a Saviour.

5. But before God had revealed to him a Saviour, it was not his Duty to believe in him. The Gospel proposes the Object of Faith, and the Law obliges to the Act of Faith, suited to the Nature of the Revelation of that Object.

6.

Men enjoying an external Revelation merely of Christ, are bound to believe the Truth of his Appearance in the World, and the Truth of those Doctrines relating to him, as a suffering Redeemer.

7.

Such who receive an internal Revelation of Christ, are bound to exercise special Faith, suitable to the Nature of this supernatural Revelation. Thus it appears, that these Things are far from being perplexed in themselves, they only seem so to this Author, they hang together very well. The Gospel presents the Object of Faith, and the Law obliges to the Act, upon the Presentation of the Object, and the Nature of that Presentation, to common Faith if it is only external, to special, if it be internal and supernatural. He represents it as the Opinion of the Calvinist, that Sinners are shut up under the Law, and makes him explain himself as to that Point after this Manner. I suppose the perpetual Obligation of the moral Law; not only for Obedience, but Sinners lie under the Penalty and Curse of it. The Calvinist then, Sir, I should think can't justly be accounted an Antinomian. They have only to do with the God of Nature, and him as an offended angry God. They are shut out from the Gospel of Salvation, 'till God by the sovereign Hand of his Grace brings them in. Have nothing to do with God, as the God of Mercy and Grace in Christ, - have nothing to do for themselves, nor to be done with them for Salvation. No Day of Grace, before God's Day of effectual Grace, - no Offers, nor Tenders of Mercy end Salvation, before Salvation is brought Home to them by the Spirit. And even then

, Salvation is not properly OFFERED, but given, - and not received 'till after it is given. To these Things I answer thus: Men in a State of Enmity against God, as all unregenerate Persons are, cannot justly be supposed, to have proper Ground and Warrant to look upon God, as reconciled to them in Christ. What he makes the Calvinist say of Sinners, being shut out from the Gospel, I cannot well understand, nor do I know of any who so say. If by it is intended, that they are not to hear the Gospel; it is as remote from the Judgment of the Calvinist, as it is from the Opinion of the Arminians, whole Cause, this Writer, is an Advocate for: But if by it is designed, that unregenerate Persons have no open Claim to Gospel Benefits and Privileges, he will I think never be able to disprove it. Sinners have many Things to do, viz. to pray to God, hear his Word, read the Scripture, and meditate upon it; yet not with a View to become the Authors of their Salvation, surely. But who says nothing is to be done with them for Salvation. None as I know of; Calvinists

whole Opinion this is supposed to be, think it their Duty to inform Sinners that they stand condemned by the Law, for their Sins, that Salvation from Wrath and Hell, is only in Christ, and that unless they believe in him, and are made conformable to him, they will perish for ever without Remedy, and is this doing nothing with a View to the Salvation of Sinners? It is not indeed telling them, that the Grace of God, is extended to all without Exception, that Christ died with an Intention to save every individual of Mankind, that God and Christ have done their Part, and that if they will not be wanting to themselves, but will exert their natural Powers, they shall have Aids and Assistances of divine Grace, sufficient, if duly improved, to enable them to secure their eternal Welfare. These Arminian Tenets, the Author, manifestly intends to make Way for and introduce, to the Dishonour of him Grace of God, the Subversion of Christ's Satisfaction by his Death, and the Overthrow of the Doctrine of the Efficacy, of the gracious Operations of the Spirit upon the Souls of Men. What he means by a Day of Grace, before God's Day of effectual Grace, he should, Sir, have told us, if he means a Season in which God willed that Sinners should with his Aids convert themselves, but they would not, 'tis downright Arminianism, and it may justly be enquired, whether when one Season or Day of Grace is over, a Day of effectual Grace will succeed? This he seems to suggest, which I cannot understand to be either Calvinism, or Arminianism, it seems to me to suit no Scheme at all. With Respect to Offers and Tenders of Mercy and Salvation to Sinners I observe: That Christ and his Salvation are to be proposed for Acceptance, to all who see their Need of him, that this includes an Offer in it, but is more than an Offer, and that he is graciously given to them, and 'tis their Duty to embrace and receive him. This Subject I have more largely treated of, in my Answer to the Author of Ruin and Recovery. No Absurdity attends the Supposition of Christ being given before received, and being given in order to be received. This Author, Sir, apprehends, that Sinners may be under the Law, and yet under the Dispensation of Mercy and Reconciliation in Christ Jesus too. What he means by the Dispensation, etc. I cannot understand, and therefore am unable to answer him, if he had said that Sinners may be under the Law or Covenant of Works, may stand condemned by the Law, and yet be under Grace, i.e. the Covenant of Grace, and be thereby acquitted of their Guilt, freed from Condemnation and Death, and appear to have a Right to eternal Life, I should have perfectly understood him to have advanced most manifest Contradictions; but as he uses ambiguous Words and Phrases, I am at a Loss to frame an Idea of his Design. If by a Dispensation of Mercy and Reconciliation, etc. he intends the Season in which Grace and Mercy and Reconciliation are published to Men, the Sense is plain and natural enough; but this makes nothing for the Arminian Principles he artfully endeavours to introduce among Christians. He, Sir, represents the Calvinist as starting a new Turn of Thought, to prove Repentance cannot be of the Law. 'Tis strange he should make Men say, what is contrary to their avowed Principles: Calvinists are persuaded, that all Duties belong to the Law, and here he represents it as their Opinion, That the Duties of Repentance and Faith belong not to the Law. But let us hear this new Turn of Thought. It is this; all that the Law of Creation commanded, it commanded to the first Adam. And if there are Duties of this Tenure, they must have been the Duties of innocent Adam. But it has been proved already, that on this supposition the Perfection of the Law cannot be maintained. And if they were not the Duties of the first Adam in this Way, they cannot be the Duties of his fallen posterity, because the Law is the same to both. I answer, the Law did not command all to Adam in his innocent State, which became his Duty in a fallen State, by Vertue of that very same Law: It was not his present Duty to shew Compassion to miserable objects, or to love his Enemies, for he had no Objects of Misery to pity, in his perfect

State, or Enemies to love, and yet if I mistake not, Christ's Interpretation of the moral Law in his Sermon upon the Mount, proves that our Obligation to pity the distressed, and to love our Enemies arises from the moral Law. Hence it appears: That that becomes the Duty of Man in his lapsed State by the Law, which it could not command of him for Want of Objects suitable in his perfect State. And thus, tho' Repentance could not be required of innocent Man by the Law, because Sin had not taken Place in him, nor could he consider God as an Object offended, yet upon his sinning and looking on God as an Object displeased, Repentance became his immediate Duty by the Law, i.e. natural Repentance or Concern for his Sin, his Obligation to this Repentance, arises not from a Discovery of Salvation, it would have been his Duty, if he had been left without any Provision of Recovery by divine Grace. And is the Duty of all his Descendants, yea, I am persuaded it is the Duty of the Devil himself to repent, this I think must be allowed, if Repentance necessarily attends forsaking of Sin, which I imagine none will deny. Again, if the Obligation to Sorrow and Concern for Sin, arises from a Provision of Salvation for offending Creatures, and the Discovery of that Provision, then, the Devil is under no Obligation to Remorse for his Offence, nor are such of Mankind, who know nothing of Salvation by Christ, under any Obligation to repent of their Vices, how contrary soever to the Light of Nature.

He makes the Calvinist argue very unphilosophically in what he subjoins, representing him as saying, Men must have new Faculties in order to evangelical Repentance and special Faith. But, Sir, I am persuaded that Calvinists may be as good Philosophers as himself, if any thro' Weakness or Inadvertency have so expressed themselves, it is ungenerous and unkind to urge it as the Opinion of the Party. They know perhaps, full as well as he does, that new Faculties are not given or created in Believers, the Mind, the Will and Affections, they consider not as Qualities, but Powers of the Soul, and essential to it, and know that the Supposition of giving new Faculties necessarily implies the Introduction of a new Soul. This is so mean a thing in him, that he may be ashamed of the mention of it. Calvinists know that the reasoning Powers of Men, are the same before and after Conversion; before Conversion, the Mind is the Subject of natural Principles only, and therefore is incapable of supernatural Acts: At, or upon Conversion, it becomes the happy Subject of heavenly and supernatural Principles, and is able to put forth supernatural Acts, suitable to the heavenly Objects presented to View by the Gospel, and which Adam in his State of Innocence was a Stranger to. What the Author proceeds to observe, of the Law opening and enlarging itself, into what we call the Law of Reason and Equity, immediately upon the Fall, Is a mere Invention to serve a Turn; the Law of Reason and Equity, what is it but the moral Law, or Law of Innocence? So far as known to Men, it is no Law distinct, and different from it. Is this Law perfect or imperfect? If imperfect, it is I am sure no Law of God, for he cannot be the Author of any imperfect Law: We Calvinists will have nothing to do with it; let Socinians, Arminians and Baxterians take it to themselves, who are all disposed to make the Power of fallen Man, with common Helps, the Measure of his Duty; we are of another Mind. If it is a perfect Law, it is the moral Law, or Law given to Man in his innocent State, and is the irrepealable and eternal Rule of Righteousness, by which Men will be hereafter tried and judg'd. The poor Calvinists is farther represented, as supposing Adam in his perfect State, incapable of discerning and understanding Objects above what the Law or Dispensation, under which he then was, presented to him. This Person tells us in his Preface, he has taken the Liberty to represent the Opinions of others, in his own Words; so that, Sir, you are to observe, if the Opinions of the Calvinists are not very properly expressed, the Impropriety of Expression, Is to be imputed to this Writer, not to them. But if he

would not express their Sentiments, in their own Words, {#Reasons for which I can guess at, but will not name them}} he should have given their true Sense. I know none who have said, or do say, that Man in his innocent State, could not understand the Nature of Objects above what the Law discovers. For, as the Angels who are perfect Creatures, can discern and understand evangelical Truths, so could Man, I question not, if a Discovery had been made of them to him in his primitive State: And have yielded a firm Assent to their Truth, as revealed by God his Creator. But special Faith in those heavenly Mysteries, the Powers of Man in a State of Innocence, it is apprehended were not disposed to, and fitted for, by his Creation Principles, and therefore it is concluded, that special Faith becomes a Duty, only upon the Supposition of the Infusion of super-Creation-Principles, into the Souls of Men. He repeats the Nonsense of the Necessity of new Faculties; for Shame why is this done? Calvinists insist upon the Necessity of new and supernatural Principles, but are far from urging the Necessity of new reasoning Powers, they are not for two Souls in Men; their Opinion is, that Believers are the Subjects of two Principles, Sin, and Grace; but they have no Notion of two Souls in one Man. As I before said, if any have so expressed themselves, it was thro Weakness or Inadvertency, and the Candour and Ingenuity of the Author, Sir, appear in this Representation of the Calvinists Opinion in this Point. The Author, Sir, argues from a Delay of Punishment, and a Communication of temporal Favours, and enjoying an external Revelation of the divine Will, to a Purpose of saving Men in general. So his old Friends the Arminians have always argued, but very impertinently and inconclusively. Providential Dispensations towards Men are no Interpretation of God's Purposes about them, with Relation to their eternal State, whether he designs to punish them hereafter for their Sins, or to fare them from endless Misery, thro' his Son Jesus Christ. 'Tis true natural Duties are not to be performed merely upon the Foot of natural Religion, as distinguished from revealed, by Men who enjoy Revelation, but as heightened, and improved, and enforc'd by that Revelation, and as required by Jesus Christ, who is constituted the Ruler and Judge of all Men. And this is from the mere Sovereignty of God. To which he objects thus, to suppose that God acts thus with Sinners, by mere Sovereignty out of Christ, and at the same Time by the Hands of Christ, this is what I cannot possibly understand. Strange! no, God will do that hereafter by Christ towards Men, which he will not do in Christ, viz. try, judge and condemn them to eternal Punishment; if he can understand this latter, I should think without any Difficulty, he may conceive of the former; for the former is in Order to the latter, and leads to it. Says he, please to tell us directly why the Sentence upon transgressing Sinners, according to the broken Law, is not fully executed; but sinners in common are spared long? The Apostle, if he will believe him, resolves this Question; it is because God is willing to shew his Wrath, and make his Power known, endured with much long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction. The Answer is direct and full, as he requires it to be; but I suspect his Approbation of it: Tho' the Justice and Equity of the awful Procedure, it is far beyond his Power to disprove. He makes the Calvinist give him this Answer: It is for the Elect's Sake. He enquires, but how for the Elect's Sake? Are they the Purchasers and Procurers hereof? Or is it for their Sakes, thro' the Merits and Purchase of Christ? If the latter is not the meritorious Cause hereof, then the Elect are thus far properly Mediators for Sinners, and something is done for their Sakes, which is not done for Christ's Sake.

Out of Reverence to our Lord, who has told us, that the Days of Distress brought upon the Jewish Nation, should be shortened for the Elect's Sake, one might have expected a more sober Reply from this Writer. Our Saviour did not intend, that the Elect were Mediators for that People: Neither

do Calvinists mean any Thing like it, when they so express themselves. Our Lord suggested, That that People should not become extinct, because Elect Persons were to arise from among their Descendants; and we mean, that Mankind are not destroyed, because God's chosen ones of the human Race, must all be born or rise into Existence, and that for this Reason, Men are permitted to live, and to live under such Circumstances, as will admit of the Execution of this gracious Design concerning the Elect. I am, Sir, surprized at what follows in the Author, which is this, he pretends that he agrees in the Doctrines of God's free Grace with those Calvinists, who think that evangelical Repentance and special Faith are the Duties of unregenerate Men, and apprehend that the Obligation to those Duties arises from the moral Law; whereas there is nothing more false.

They suppose that God has chosen a certain Number of Men to everlasting Life; that for there Christ died in order to save them, and for no others, with that view, that Grace in order to Life and Happiness is given to the Elect alone. He supposes, that God conditionally decreed the Happiness of all, and that the Death of Christ is of unlimited Extent, that Grace is given to the Non-elect in order to Happiness, and that they may obtain Life, through a proper Improvement of this common Grace. Light and Darkness therefore, are not more contrary, than his Sentiments and those of the Calvinists, in many Respects, notwithstanding this pretended Agreement. For this Reason, Sir, I flatter myself, that those of the Calvinists, who are of the Opinion before expressed, will not long join Issue with him; but oppose as heartily, at least, his Arminian Principles, as some of them have opposed the Opinion, that Sinners are not bound to exercise evangelical Repentance and special Faith. May the Lord, of his infinite Mercy grant, that his People may discern, into what Tenets this Person and some others are about to lead them, before Arminianism takes Root, in Societies, where it has long had no Place; but been rejected, as a Scheme of Doctrines not calculated to promote the Honour of God, the Glory of a Redeemer, nor the Comfort of the Saints. When he calls the Opinion he opposes a novel Scheme, he speaks very improperly, for it is not of itself Scheme, it is indeed, in the Opinion of some, it is so in my Apprehension, a proper Method to more clearly answer the Arminian Cavils and Exceptions to the Doctrines of the Grace of God, and carries not that Harshness and Severity in it, which the other Opinion does, of God's damning Men, for not doing, what Man never had a Power in any State to do. The next thing he labours, is to prove that a Day or Season of Grace is afforded to Men in general.

He produces various Scriptures in favour of it; some of which are to be understood of the Permission of Men living a considerable Time before the Infliction of heavy and grievous Judgments. Others are Calls to a reverential Regard to the Gospel, Interest and Kingdom of Christ. Some are Exhortations to the Church and People of God. Others are Calls to external Reformation, in order to escaping temporal Evils and civil Death. And some are Exhortations to an Attendance on the Worship and Word of God. Some are not addressed to Sinners, nor spoken of Men in general, but of some in particular. It will be sufficient to refer you to them in the Margin for your Perusal {Genesis 6:3; 2 Peter 2:5; Luke 19:41; Luke 19:41}; {Psalms 2:12; Isaiah 55:6; Ezekiel 18:31-32}. Chap. {Ezekiel 33:11; Matthew 20:6; Luke 13:24-25}. Chap. {Luke 14:16-17; Luke 14:22-23}; {2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7; Hebrews 3:13}; {2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:21}. The Calvinist is represented as answering that, the Time allowed the old World, was not for their Repentance unto Life, but only for the reforming from Gross Wickedness; and so to avert and keep off the threatened Destruction of the Deluge. And the Time granted to the Jews, was only to ward off by external Reformation, the fore Calamity which afterwards befell them in their Destruction by

the Romans. To which he replies thus, we are under no Necessity of denying this altogether; but may rarely grant, that what you plead was in Part the Design of Providence, but it lies upon you to prove, from evident Circumstances in the Accounts given of these Things, that what you say was the whole of the Design. You, Sir, will I persuade myself, account this a new Way of Reasoning, to desire the Proof of a Negative, in order to oblige a Disputant to give up the Affirmative. I apprehend it always lies upon him who affirms, to prove what he asserts, from the Scope and Circumstances of the Place, which he urges in Favour of the Opinion he advances from it, and if he is not able to do this, he too hastily draws his Conclusion from it. If Texts of Scripture speak of temporal or civil Death, to be avoided by a national and external Reformation, it would be very improper to argue, from that, eternal Death is to be avoided the same Way; which is the Manner of this Author's Reasoning. This is applying Texts to Subjects, of which they do not speak, and therefore cannot be their Meaning and Sense.

Again, if the Scriptures speak of an external Call to the Duties of natural Repentance and historical Faith, to interpret them of evangelical Repentance and special Faith, is applying them to a Sense far beyond what they Design, and therefore it cannot be true, which is also what this Person does. In order to prove, that this cannot be the Sense of those Scriptures, he produces, one of these two things is necessary to be done.

1.

Either to prove, that such a Sense is foreign to the Scripture and is no where expressed, and therefore cannot be the Meaning of the Places alludg'd.

2.

Or, to prove from the Scope and Circumstances of those Passages, that this cannot be the true and full Sense of them. The Proof of the first, I suppose he will never attempt: And the Proof of the second, I am, Sir, of Opinion is beyond his Ability. But if he cannot do this, the Sense he contends for will never be solidly supported. Besides, Sir, the Opinion of a Day, or Season of Grace, appointed to Men in common, supposes that God loves them, that he willed their Happiness, and has provided for it; that Christ died for them to save them, and that the Holy Spirit works upon them with the same gracious Design; but thro' their Folly and Obstinacy, God's Love is turned into Hatred, his Purpose to save them, is changed into a Resolution to damn them, that Christ died in vain with Respect to them, that the Holy Spirit is disappointed of the End he proposed to himself, in his benign Influences upon them. There are not, Sir, you well know the Doctrines of the free Grace of God, which this Writer pretends to have an Approbation of. They are as contrary to those Doctrines, as Light is to Darkness: you see that under a Pretence of maintaining the Opinion of evangelical Repentance and special Faith being the Duties of Sinners, he is for conducting us into rank Arminianism.

He acquaints us, that the Calvinist inclines to the Belief of the Doctrine of absolute Reprobation as the Counter-Part of Election; but the least said of it in the Pulpit is best, for there is no knowing who are reprobate till they prove themselves so by their openly wicked and abominable Lives. But why the least laid of it in the Pulpit is best? If it be a scriptural Doctrine it surely is, at least, a harmless one; nay it is a profitable one, for there is no useless unprofitable Doctrine contained in the Word of God. Some perhaps may think too, it would have been better, if it had not had a Place

in the Bible. If Men abuse this Doctrine, through Unbelief or Lust, that is no Objection to the Truth, Importance or Usefulness of the Doctrine itself; and I am well assured, a proper Explanation of it will never be attended with any hurtful Consequences to Men religious or profane, but thro' their Unbelief or carnal Lust. Farther, why should it be concluded, that Men of openly wicked and abominable Lives are the Objects of Reprobation? Since Christ came into the World to save the Chief of Sinners; Men's present Wickedness therefore, is no Proof at all, that they are appointed to Wrath: It is only final Impenitence which can be a Proof of that. He supposes, that a Provision of Mercy and Grace is made for the Nonelect. Then surely God loved them, and if so, how comes it to pass that he ever hates them? If once he willed not to punish them, how is it he inflicts Punishment on them? He then knew, what Manner of Persons they would be; this seems therefore, to necessarily suppose a Change in God. Besides, either the Salvation of Men is wholly to be resolved into the Will of God, and his Influence upon them, or, it is in Part owing to the Will of Men, if it is wholly and solely the Effect of the divine Will; then it manifestly follows, that God did not will the Salvation of those who perish, and if he willed not their Salvation, he must be supposed to decree or purpose their Misery. If Salvation is in Part of the Will of Man, then it can't be said, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy; then Men are born of the Will of the Flesh, in Part, and not altogether of God, in Regeneration. Besides, this conditional Decree respects either all, or some of the Non-Elect; if all, then all must be supposed to hear the Gospel, for the Conditions of Faith and Repentance, at cannot be thought are expected of them who never hear of the Object of Faith. Again, either there Conditions of Salvation are possible, or they are not, without the Infusion of gracious Principles, into the Souls of Men; is possible, then, they who are in the Flesh may please God, and the carnal Mind may be subject to his Law, which I don't take to be true. If they are impossible Conditions to Men unregenerate, then God decreed to save Men upon Conditions absolutely out of their Power, and yet determined not to give them that Grace, which is necessary to enable them to perform those Conditions: which betides the Absurdity of it, leaves them under an Impossibility of Salvation.

He observes, that many strict Calvinists have allowed, that God's Hatred of Esau must be taken in a comparative Sense, and can mean no more than this, that Esau was not loved and regarded in the same extraordinary Way with Jacob. I thought: Hatred was the contrary of Love, and could not properly be put for a less Degree of it. Besides, the Apostle professedly treats of God's Purpose to lave some and punish others, and produces Jacob and Esau as Instances of it; his Design, therefore, is to shew that the Salvation of Jacob, proceeded from divine Love, and that the Destruction of Esau was a righteous Effect of divine Hatred. If therefore, by Hatred the Apostle means a lesser Love, it was a Love of such a Nature in God, from which the Infliction of Punishment for Sin proceeds, and by Consequence, from that Love, a Decree to inflict Penalty might be formed; an Interest in such a Kind of Love, can afford but little Hope of Salvation to a guilty Creature. He adds, the Apostle Jude doth not speak of any Decree of Reprobation, v.4, but only that God has ordained Condemnation to be the Consequence of Sin, and the Portion of evil Doers. But, Sir, you will please to observe, that the Apostle is speaking of Persons, who were, says he, fore-appointed, or forewritten, oi progrgramhnnoi, to this Condemnation; all the Difference between the Apostle Jude and this Writer is, Jude speaks of Men as the Objects of a divine Appointment or forewriting to Condemnation; and this Author speaks of Punishment as the Consequence of Sin in general, without Relation to any particular Persons. This Difference, great as it is, is not unusually found between the Scriptures, and the Writings of the Arminians, whose

Cause the Author defends {#as I suppose,} in the best Manner he can. The Author endeavours to clear himself of the Charge of holding the Opinion of a New Law. The Method he takes to do it, is this: We maintain, says he, the Perfection and perpetual Obligation of the moral Law of God, and plead for no new Law in the Room of that, so as to annul it. We don't make Repentance and Faith a Covenant of Works, nor Salvation to depend only on these as Man's Duties. But the Gospel we call a new Dispensation, built upon God's Act of Grace in Christ. And as the Fall occasioned a new Relation between God and Man, new Duties necessarily arise from hence. The moral Law is not only kept up in its Perfection, but it is put into the Hands of Christ, as the appointed Lord and King in the Church; and it is also attemper'd to the State and Condition of Sinners and Gospel Grace. The Place which Repentance and Faith hold in the new Covenant, is all of Grace; and there Duties are to be performed by the Help and Strength of God's Grace, and must be accepted thro' Christ. Where then is the Charge of a new Law? Upon which I thus remark: It seems to be allowed, that a new Law is introduced, yet not so as to annul the old Law; that, notwithstanding retains its Power and Force, only Men are also under another Law, which if they keep, they shall not suffer that Punishment the old Law threatens; but in Case they keep not this new Law, they are delivered over to the Curse of the old Law. Again, if Repentance and Faith are proper Conditions of Salvation, they are made a Covenant of Works; all the Difference is, the old Law required perfect Works as Conditions of Happiness, here imperfect Works serve the Purpose. Farther, it is plainly allowed, that Salvation depends on Faith and Repentance, {#tho' not only} as Man's Duties: And therefore Men are in Part causes of their Salvation. I add, I suppose the Act of God's Grace mentioned, is dispensing with the rigorous Demand of Perfection in the moral Law, as a Condition of Life, upon which the Gospel Dispensation is laid to be built, which lowers the Condition to imperfect Obedience. Moreover, if Repentance is one of those Duties, which necessarily arise from the new Relation, occasioned by the Fall, between God and Man, then it would have been the Duty of Men, in Case no Provision had been made for their Recovery, which is what the Author has more than once seemed to disallow. I cannot understand what new Relation between God and Man takes Place upon the Fall. Before the Fall, God was Creator, a Lawgiver and Judge to Man: So he was upon the Fall; Man before it, was his Creature, the Subject of his Rule and Government, and so he is after it; but now a Creature chargeable with Guilt, and obnoxious to Death, these are new Circumstances to the unhappy Creature Man; but in no Sense, as I can at present apprehend, may they be denominated a new Relation to God. I subjoin, it is granted, that the moral Law is put into the Hands of Christ, and he uses that Law, either as a Saviour, or as a Judge merely; in the former Sense, he acquits his People upon the Foundation of his Obedience and Sufferings, and flees them from it as a Covenant of Works: In the latter Sense, he retains Men under the Curie and Condemnation of it now, and will hereafter try, judge and condemn them to endless Misery, according to that Law. I deny, that the old Law is attemper'd to the State, and Condition of Sinners and Gospel Grace, it commands the same Holiness it ever did, and threatens the same Punishment in Case of Sin, or Defect in Obedience; otherwise its Perfection and perpetual Obligation cease, which this Writer a few Lines above professes to maintain perfectly inconsistent with what is here said, unless I mistake. To say that Repentance and Faith are Conditions of Life, as an Effect of divine Grace, will not acquit the Opinion, of being contrary to the Doctrine of the Apostle, who constantly denies, that Salvation is of a Law, or of Works. And tho' these Duties are said to be performed by the Help and Strength of God's Grace, and that they are accepted thro' Christ; yet it is easy to see, that the promised Benefit of Life, becomes due upon the

Foot of Right, on the Performance of those Duties, and therefore, the Reward is not of Grace, but of Debt; and that these Duties are to be considered, as the Matter of our Justification before God for Christ's Sake. To the Author's Enquiry therefore, I must take leave to say, Sir, the new Law is here, and that he will never be able to clear himself of so heavy but just a Charge. All the Art he has used, in the Choice of ambiguous Phrases, could not cover his Design, it was a vain Thing in him to expect it; for if Men deliver Principles, which necessarily resolve themselves into the Opinion of a new Law, it can't reasonably be thought, That that Opinion should long remain out of View. But what follows is exceeding strange, he tells the Calvinist it would not be difficult to make Reprisals. For you must grant, says he, that the Law is no longer in Force as a Covenant of Works, for the Justification of Sinners: This infers so far an Alteration from the original Law; and therefore one might say you make a new Law. The Answer is, that it is not merely as a Law, it requires Obedience of Men as a Condition of Life, but as it is a Covenant. Their Freedom from it, as requiring Obedience to such an End, infers no Change in it as a Law, for it is not essential to it as a Law, to command Obedience to such an End; but it is essential to it as a Law to require Obedience, and if it now demands of Men imperfect Obedience, it is altered in what is essential to It as a Law, and therefore, is not the same Law it was. Farther, it is still in force, as a Covenant requiring perfect Righteousness in Order to Acceptance with God: Believers have such a perfect Righteousness in Christ, and therefore, they stand perfectly justified in the Sight of God, according to this Law, fulfilled for them, by Christ their great Surety and Saviour.

I proceed, Sir, to give you an Account of the Manner of his treating on the Work of the Spirit.

And, he observes, that it is God's usual and ordinary Way to work on such by whom preparatory Works to Conversion are performed, as assisted by his preventing Grace. Various Scriptures he produces to prove, that there is such a Thing as a preparatory Work, to which I shall refer you in the Margin {1 Kings 14:13; Matthew 3:7}; {Matthew 10:11; Matthew 10:13; Matthew 13:20-21}; {Mark 10:17}; {Mark 12:34; Luke 5:31; Luke 13:24}; {Acts 2:5; Acts 2:37; Acts 8:27; Acts 10:1; Acts 16:30; Acts 17:4; Acts 26:28}. Some of those Places intend the Work of Grace itself, and others have no Reference at all to it. As to the Opinion of a preparatory Work, I cannot but be of the Mind of Witsius, that there is no such Thing, he assigns these Reasons for it.

1. Our Nature became as an evil Tree upon eating of the forbidden Fruit, can bear no Fruits really good and acceptable with God, and can act nothing by which it may prepare itself for the Grace of Regeneration: Unless any one should be thought to prepare himself by Sins for Grace.

- 2.

Those who seem best disposed to Regeneration, it is found are most distant from it. Which the Example of the young Man very clearly demonstrates; who seemed full of good Intention, and burning with a Desire of Heaven, and of unblameable Life before Men, insomuch, that Jesus himself, when he beheld him loved him, yet notwithstanding all these Dispositions, he departed from the Lord sorrowful

3. On the contrary, those in whom there hath been nothing, not a Shadow of Preparation, as Publicans and Harlots, have gone before the civilly just, and externally religious, into the Kingdom of God; for these believed not John preaching the Way of Righteousness; but Publicans and Harlots really believed.

4.

God testifies, in the first Influence of his Grace, he is found of them; that fought him not, and asked not after him {Jeremiah 52:34} Excellently Fulgentius, says he, whom he quotes, we receive not Grace because we desire; but while we desire not Grace is given. Milton well expresses the important thought. Grace, - Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought, Happy for Man so coming; he her Aid Can never seek, once dead in Sins and loft.

Paradise Lost, Book III. ver. 231. 232, 233. For there Reasons, I say, with Witsius, who puts the Question, are there no preparatory Dispositions to Regeneration? I answer confidently none, and subscribe with him to Fulgentius, As in the natural Birth, the Formation of the divine Work precedes the whole Will of the Man born: So it is in the spiritual Birth, by which we begin to lay aside the old Man.^{f5} Of the same Judgment was the great Charnock, and the late Dr. Ridgley. The Author, Sir, represents the Calvinist as objecting to him, that he makes upon this Supposition the Salvation of Sinners possible indeed, but barely so. Which he endeavours to answer, by referring to Angels and to Man who fell; his arguing here, I shall take no farther Notice of, than just to observe, the Cafes are far from being parallel, and therefore, his Reasoning has little Force in it. I must take Liberty to affirm, that the Salvation of Men, upon this Principle, is absolutely impossible, unless it can be proved, that without Faith it is possible to please God, and that those who are in the Flesh may please their Maker. He makes the Calvinist object to his Opinion, that supposing the Death of Christ to be of universal Extent, implies he died in vain. To which he answers thus: As often as I meet with this Objection, I cannot find any just Reason or Foundation to support it. There certainly is a twofold Design and Intention in the Redemption wrought out for Sinners. One is, that the Patience and Forbearance, the rich Goodness, Mercy and Grace of God, might be manifested and glorified in his Dealing with Sinners. And the ether is, that his righteous Government, his Power, his Holiness and Justice might be also glorified. Now if thro' the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the Patience and Forbearance of God, and the Riches of his Mercy and Grace are displayed and glorified, in his present Dealings with Sinners, which is the Case on our Side of the Question. And if his Holiness, Justice and Power are glorified to the full, in the Condemnation and Destruction of the impenitent and ungodly hereafter; this is not in vain, but exactly of a Piece with God's great and complicated Designs in Providence and Redemption. Where Grace is rejected and despised, punishing Justice will be glorified. To which I reply, Sir, thus.

1. This seems to suppose, it was a Thing indifferent to God, whether his Mercy is glorified in the Salvation of Sinners, or whether his Justice is glorified in their Destruction, upon the Foundation of the Redemption of Christ; that his End is as fully answered in the Gift of his Son for Sinners in their Damnation, as it is in their Salvation; whereas it was his Intention that his Grace and Mercy might be glorified in their Salvation, and therefore, if they are not saved he is disappointed of his End in this extraordinary Transaction, and his Son suffered Death in vain, or the End intended, in his Death is unaccomplished. That this was the End designed is evident; for God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. The Reader may see this more largely insisted on, in the Answer to the Author of Ruin and Recovery.

2. The Justice and Holiness of God are fully vindicated, and gloriously displayed, in the Remission of Sin, and in the eternal Salvation of Sinners, upon the Foundation of Christ's Death, {Romans

3:25-26); and therefore, the Infliction of Penalty on those for whom Christ died, cannot be to the Glory of his Justice.

3.

It would be contrary to Justice; for Christ having made Satisfaction for the Sins of those, for whom he suffered, it cannot consist with Justice to punish them for their Offences.

4.

How are the Riches of divine Grace now glorified in God's Dealings with the Heathen, whom he suffers to live in gross Darkness and in the Shadow of Death? How can his Justice be hereafter glorified in punishing of them for Impenitence, who never had an Opportunity of hearing of Christ, and by Consequence, could not believe in him nor reject him. The Author, Sir, again advances his Opinion of preparatory Works to Regeneration, but offers nothing worth Consideration to support it. I would just observe to you, Sir, that he objects, if the Soul is intirely passive in all the Steps of the saving Change, how can you assert any thing about the Manner of it. And represents the Calvinists as saying, this is a Point which is divinely revealed to the believing Son. Answer, as the Implantation of spiritual Principles in the Mind is Regeneration, the Soul is passive in it, and it is instantaneous or wrought at once, it is not gradual and progressive, and therefore, it is improper to speak of Steps in this Change. Again, I can't, Sir, but complain here of great Unkindness done to the Calvinist, to represent him as an Enthusiast, there is no Candour in this; Calvinists believe in this Matter, upon the Light and Evidence of God's Word, and not upon an imaginary Revelation, which he makes the Calvinist to express. He seems to flatter himself with having fully proved, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith are the Duties of Sinners, and that he has brought over, at least very nearly so, one of the Disputants in the Dialogue. How much soever he may be satisfied with his Performance, I can't think it will gain the Approbation of many of those, who agree with him in there Points. A great Number of ill Consequences are drawn from that Opinion, in Answer to which, it is sufficient to observe, that Sinners ought to pray, to read the Word of God, to hear it preached and consider of the dreadful Effects of Sin. That Ministers ought to let before them the Danger of their State by Nature, and the Necessity of an Interest. in Christ, and the Necessity of Faith in him. That Sinners, sin against God, as the God of all Grace, when they oppose the Doctrines of his Grace, - against Christ as a Saviour, when they oppose their own Works to his Merits and Righteousness, - against the Holy-Ghost, as the Author of all gracious and sanctifying Influences, when they oppose the Necessity of his Influences, - against the Gospel of Salvation, when they oppose the important Doctrines of it, as this Writer does. Sinners are condemn'd for abusing the Gospel. Parents and Heads of Families ought to warn and exhort their Children and Servants, - to call them to their Bibles, to send them to their Knees before God, or put them upon Prayer, to offer up a Desire, a Cry, to Heaven for Mercy and Salvation for them, - and with Importunity and holy Wrestling. - After he has said, none of these Things can be practised, consistent with this Principle, and made a Supposition of a Visit by the pious Soul of a departed Minister, and his observing, how Things are going with us, what a dismal Report he must carry back to the World above. One might make the same Supposition upon his Principles I am afraid, says he, of every Offence against the royal Law of Charity; I can easily admit, that great Mistakes and real Godliness may inhabit the same Breast: - I would always love and honour every good Christian, tho' not exactly of my Size, and in my Way. And yet I am at a loss to account for it, how

Tenets so formidable in their Aspect, can sit easy upon serious and good Minds. But without farther Aggravation, as there Objections are just, and attended with a Train of Consequences no Way favourable to practical Religion, {#all these dismal Consequences are entirely false, and far from being justly drawn} I leave them to your own Contemplation, and Repentance, and Faith, to the Word and Blessing of God. Magna est Veritas, & prevalebit. You, Sir, will observe his Candour and Charity, which I am sure will be highly agreeable to you, for that Kindness and Charity to those who differ from you, which inspire your Breast, must certainly gain your Approbation, when exercised by others. Whether the Consequences he draws are just, as I think the contrary, I desire you to inform me, whether you concur with me in that Opinion, and pray, let me know, wherein you may think me mistaken: I the more desire this Favour of you, because I suppose, I am a Person too contemptible, to be favoured with a Correction of my Mistakes, by the Author of the Performance. The Qualifications he requires in one, who should undertake to animadvert on his Work, are most desirable indeed; may the Lord of his infinite Mercy make me a real and fervent Lover of Truth, Peace and Godliness. Whether I have acted the Part of an angry Scribe, I submit to your Judgment, and conclude this Address, with hearty Desires, that Truth may prevail, with whomsoever it is found.

I am , Sir, Your most obliged, and humble Servant

JOHN BRINE.

JUST PUBLISH'D, BY THE SAME AUTHOR, THE Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ, asserted: Or, the Necessity, Reality, and Perfection, of his Satisfaction are pleaded for: The Objections of the Socinians, and Arminians are answered: The Moral Law proved to be in full Force: And the unconditional Nature of the new Covenant is demonstrated; in Answer to a Book, called, The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind; the Mistakes of the Author, on various Subjects are Discovered and Corrected, viz. The Annihilation of Infants. The Imputation of Original Sin to Men. The Charge of Sin on Christ. The Imputation of his Righteousness to his People. Also, The Necessity, and Nature of the Work of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration, are treated of: The Scriptural Account of these important Doctrines is clearly stated, and vindicated from his, and the Exceptions of some others. With a Postscript, proving that a Charge of Guilt is inseparable from Punishment. Secondly, The Christian Religion not Destitute of Arguments sufficient to support it. In Answer to a Pamphlet, intitled, Christianity not founded on Argument, etc.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Ecce enim erat in Homine primaevo Justitia quoad Naturam, quae jam vocatur puniens, fuit enim in ipso perfecta Jusitia, & tamen inepte, quis inferret ex hoc hanc Conclusionem, ergo Potuit Homo punire alios in Statu Integritatis. Item in Homine primaevo erat perfecta Charitas. Ergo, suit hoc quod Misericordia vocatur quoad Naturam; Non tamen bene quis intulerit hanc Conclusionem ex isto antecedente; ergo Homo potuit Misericordiam exercere in Statu Integritatis, quia Misericordiae Locus non erat nisi in Statu Miferiae, qui Status diversus est: a Statu Integretatis. Loc. Comm. Cap. 44 p. 419. ft2 Modern Question, etc. P. 13, 14. ft3Note, this Point I have more fully considered, in my Answer to Ruin and Recovery. ft4 Causam adsert tantae illorum Contumaciae: Quafi dicat, quia non estis Homines probi, & veri, ac recti amantes, & sic minime idonei ut fiatis Ores meae. Slichting in Loc. But you do not believe, because you are not Persons such Simplicity and Sincerity, as I have described under the Character of my Sheep. Family Expositor Vol. 2. p 218 ft5 1. Etenim Natura nostra, quum mala Arbor port gusta tam Arborem

vetitam facta fit, nullos Fructas vere bonos Deoque gratos proferre potest, nihilque agere, quo fe praeparet ad Gratiam Regenerationis: Nifi quis Peccatis fe ad Gratiam praeparare cenfeatur. 2. Eos, qui quam optime ad Regenerationem dispositi videri poterant, ab illa tamen quam longissime absuisse compertum est: Quod Juvenis istius Exemplum luculentissime demonstrat; qui bonae, ut videbatur, Intentionis plenus; & Coeli Doliderio flagrans, & Vitae coram Hominibus inculpatae, usque adeo ut Jesus ipse eum intuitus eum deligeret, non obsiantibus tamen omnibus illis Dispositionibus tristis a Domino recessit. Marc. 10:21, 22. 3. Contra autem 2, in quibus nihil suit, quod vel Umbram Praeparationis haberet, ut Publicani & Meretrices caeteros civiliter justos & externe religiose praecesserunt in Regno Dei: quippe hi Johanni annuncianti Viam Justitiae non cre. diderunt; Publicani autem & Meretrices omnino crediderunt.

{Matthew 21:31-32}. 4. Denique testatur Deus, in primo Appulsu Gratiae inveniri se ab iis, qui ipsum non quaerunt, & de ipso non interrogant, {#Jeremiah 65:1}. Optime Fulgentius Lib. I. De Verit. Praedest. p. 62. Non ubique quia volumus Gratiam accepimus; sed necdum volentibus nobis Gratia data est. - Quid ergo, inquires, nullaene ad Regenerationem primam dantur Dispositiones praeparatoriae? Respondeo confidentur nullae. Et subscribo, Fulgentio, de Incarnatione & Gratia Christi. Cap. 12. Sicut Nativitate carnali omnem nascentis Hominis Voluntatem praecedat Operis Divini Formatio; sic in Spirituali Nativitate qua veterem Hominem deponere incipimus: de Oecon. Foed. Lib 3. Cap. 6. p. 333 - 336.

Sir, What this Writer produces from the British Divines, in Favour of Works preparatory to Regeneration, you may find very well explained by Witsius, who observes, that they took Regeneration either for the first Work of Grace, or, for the State of passive Justification, when understood in the former Sense, they did not think, that Works preparatory are done by Men; but when understood in the latter Sense only. So that the Author's Opinion, receives no Support from them, if Witsius understands them truly, in this Point.

S. A Sermon Preached at an Ordination of Deacons

SERMON 5 By John Brine A SERMON PREACHED AT AN ORDINATION OF DEACONS

MARCH 5, 1735.

Published at the REQUEST of some who heard it. Printed, and Sold by AARON WARD, at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain.

London 1735.

{1 Timothy 3:8-9}.

Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience.

I HUMBLY beg Leave of you, my Brethren, who have been at this Time solemnly called to, and invested with the Office of Deacons, to lay before you the Qualifications which are necessary for Persons in that Capacity, the Work that is proper to it, and to offer some Things by way of Encouragement to you therein from these Words. THE Apostle begins this Chapter with observing the Excellency of the Office of a Bishop, Pastor, or Overseer in a Church of Christ; and then gives the necessary Characters of such who are in that Function. AFTER this he proceeds to mention the several Virtues requisite to Persons who serve the Church in the Station of Deacons, most of which are collected in the Words now to be considered. The Method I shall pursue, in my Discourse on this Subject, will be this:

First, I SHALL observe the Notation of the Term Deacon, with the various Application of it.

Secondly, SHEW what gave Rise to this Office in the Church.

Thirdly, THE Qualifications of Officers.

Fourthly, THEIR proper Work.

Fifthly, Offer some Things for your Encouragement therein.

First, I begin with the Notation of the Word, and the different Application of it: Diakonov, Deacon, signifies, a Minister; from the Verb diakonew, to minister speedily. Which imports, that Persons in this Office should closely, and eagerly pursue the Duties of it; that they ought to minister to others, as with Chearfulness, so with Expedition.

It is a Title of Office, Service, or Administration, and is variously applied. 'Tis given to Christ; Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a Minister, Diakonon, of the Circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the Promises made unto the Fathers {Romans 15:8}. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The Apostle gives this Name to Magistrates; for Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil: Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same; for he is the Minister, Diakonov, of God to thee for good {Romans

13:4}. It is applied to Preachers of the Gospel; Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers, Diakonoi, by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every Man {1 Corinthians 3:5}? Every true Disciple and Worshipper of Christ hath this Title given to him; if any Man serve me let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my Servant, Diakonov, be: If any Man serve me, him will my Father honour {John 12:26}. The Apostle bestows this Character on Phebe; I commend unto you Phebe our Sister, which is a Servant, Diakonon, a Deaconess, of the Church which is at Cenchrea. {Romans 16:1}. I am of Opinion, that there were Deaconesses in the primitive Churches, whose Business it was to visit the poor, afflicted, and aged Sisters, and to administer Relief to them; to acquaint the Church with their Necessities, and obtain Help for them. Persons chose to this Work were generally Widows, such who had been married, and behaved in that Station of Life with Chastity, Diligence, and Prudence, who are called Widows indeed {1 Timothy 5:3}. It was required that they should be Sixty Years of Age when appointed by the Church to attend on this Service; let not a Widow be taken into the Number, under Threescore Years old, having been the Wife of one Man {1 Timothy 5:9}. The excellent and learned ecclesiastical Historian Mr. Bingham speaking of them hath these Words:

"There Is some mention made of them in Scripture, by which it appears, that their Office was as ancient as the apostolical Age; St. Paul calls Phebe, a Servant of the Church at Cenchrea, {Romans 16:1}. the original Word is Diakonov, answerable to the Latin Word Ministra; which is the Name given them in Pliny's Epistle, which speaks about the Christians. Tertullian and some others, call them Viduae, Widows; and their Office, Viduatus; because they were commonly chosen out of the Widows of the Church. For the same Reason Epiphanius, and the Council of Laodicea, call them Il Presbotidav elderly Widows; because none but such were ordinarily taken into this Office[i]" Not but that Virgins were sometimes admitted to this Service, as he afterwards observes. And Dr. Cave allows the same, whose Account of them is this: "Their Original was very early, and of equal standing with the Infancy of the Church; such was Phebe in the Church at Cenchrea, mentioned by St. Paul; such were those two Servant-Maids spoken of by Pliny in his Letters to the Emperor, whom he examined upon the Rack[ii]; such was the famous Olympias in the Church of Constantinople, not to mention any more particular Instances. They were either Widows, and then not to be taken into the Service of the Church, under Threescore Years of Age, according to St. Paul's Direction, or else Virgins, who having been educated in order to it, and given Testimony of a chaste and sober Conversation, were set apart at Forty. What the proper Place and Ministry of these Deaconesses was in the ancient Church, though Matthew Blasteres seems to render a little doubtful, yet certainly it principally consisted in such Offices as these; to attend upon the Women at times of publick Worship, especially in the Administration of Baptism, that when they were to be divested, in order to their Immersion, they might overshadow them, so as nothing of Indecency and Uncomeliness might appear; sometimes they were employed in instructing the more rude and ignorant sort of Women in the plain and easy Principles of Christianity, and in preparing them for Baptism; otherwhiles in visiting and attending upon Women that were sick, in conveying Messages, Counsels, Consultations, Relief #especially in Times of Persecution, when it was dangerous for the Officers of the Church| to the Martyrs, and them that were in Prison. And these Women, no doubt it was, that Libanius speaks of among the Christians, who were so very ready to be employed in these Offices of Humanity.[iii] " To these Observations the Words of Clemens Alexandrinus agree; We also know what Things Paul requires of Deaconesses in the first Epistle to Timothy[iv]. It has been thought proper by some Congregations

of late Years, to appoint faithful Women to such Service among them, as the Primitive Churches did; nor can I apprehend that any thing is justly to be excepted against that Practice, since it appears to be apostolical. THIS Name is especially given to the Stewards of the Church-Treasure, and those who take care of the Poor; which is one considerable Branch of their Work.

Secondly, That which gave Rise to these Officers in the Church, was the great Increase of the Disciples through the Apostles preaching. When the Number of Believers was small, the Apostles performed those good Offices which Persons in this Station are called to; but, upon a large Addition of Members to the Church, they were not able to attend on their Ministry, and continue to take care of the poor Saints. Now as they were peculiarly called to preach the Gospel, they judged it improper to engage in other Services, which would unavoidably interrupt them in that their special Business. And therefore they proposed to the Church, to choose Persons who might be thought suitable for that Trust. AN Account of which we have in these Words: And in those Days, when the Number of the Disciples was multiplied, there arose a Murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their Widows were neglected in the daily Ministration. Then the Twelve called the Multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said, It is not Reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve Tables. Wherefore, Brethren, look ye out among your selves Men of honest Report, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this Business. But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.[v] Thirdly, The Qualifications necessary to this Office are many and great.

I. Gravity is required in such as serve the Church in this Capacity; likewise must the Deacons be grave. The original Word is *semno*, which is sometimes translated, honest; as for Instance, finally, Brethren. Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, *semna*, {Php 4:8}. It is highly proper that Persons in this Office should be of honest Report, or Men of known Probity and strict Honour, because they are entrusted with the Church's Treasure, which ought to be faithfully expended in promoting those pious Views, for which it is contributed; no Part of it may lawfully be disposed of to serve other Purposes upon any Pretence whatever. And therefore, in the Choice of Men to this Trust, regard is to be had to their Integrity and inviolable Justice. Farther, the Word is used for Sobriety and Chastity; even so must their Wives be grave, *semna*<v {1 Timothy 3:11}.; that is to say, sober, modest, and chaste. This is a very necessary Part of a Deacon's Character. Levity and Frothiness in Conversation is unbecoming all Professors of Religion, but especially such as are invested with Office-Power in a Church of Christ.

II. Freedom from Guile and Hypocrisy, which is intended by these Words, not double tongued, *dilogouv*; the Word signifies one who, out of the same Mouth, breathes heat and cold[vi], that is, contrary things. The Apostle hereby condemns feigned Expressions of Respect; the Heart and the Tongue ought to perfectly agree in our Profession of Friendship to others; we are commanded to love in Reality, love not in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth. This apostolical Exhortation is too little regarded by many, who are at sometimes very liberal in their Declarations of Value and Esteem, for such with whom they maintain a Correspondence; and yet, by Methods as ungenerous, as they are sly and designing, detract from their real Worth, and sink their deferred Reputation among Men; which Practice is a Shame to the Christian Religion. Those who are in the Office of Deacons, ought to be free from this abominable Vice: It becomes them, to shew all Tokens of Tenderness and Compassion to the Distressed, and to be as diligent in their Endeavours to relieve them, as they are forward to declare their Sympathy with them under their

Troubles; in Imitation of their great Lord and Master, in whom there was no Guile. Is it not an intolerable Imposition upon the Afflicted and Low, to raise their Expectations of Assistance, by fair Speeches, and, notwithstanding, heighten their Distress by a willful Neglect of their Case?

III. Temperance is required in the Character of a Deacon; not given to much Wine. The moderate Use of any of the good Creatures of God, is allowable; Wine is as lawful to be drank as Water, provided it be not to excess. So much is implied in the Words of the Apostle; he doth not forbid drinking of Wine, but only a greedy and excessive Use of it: He advises Timothy to it, drink no longer Water but a little Wine, for thy Stomach's sake, and thine often Infirmities {1 Timothy 5:13}. Our Lord, who was a perfect Pattern in all Virtues, did not deny himself the Use of this, as may be collected from what the Pharisees maliciously objected to him; the Son of Man is come eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous Man, and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners {Luke 7:34} . Immoderate and excessive drinking is absolutely unlawful, it is a leading Vice, and generally draws after it many great Evils; besides that, it is a shameful Abuse of the Bounty of Providence, and of the Person himself who is guilty thereof; and therefore all Professors of Religion ought to carefully avoid it, but particularly such as are invested with any Office in the Church of Christ.

IV. Persons in this Capacity should be clear of Avarice, not covetous. THE same Qualification is necessary to a Bishop: The Apostle gives it as a Part of his Character, *mhacrokerdh*> {1 Timothy 5:3}, the same Word as is here used not greedy of filthy Lucre. It Is very requisite that Persons in this Function should not be of an avaritious Disposition; because that might prove a strong Temptation to them to desert their Service in the Church, it being seldom in their Power to provide for themselves and Families in such a manner as Men of Trade and secular Business are able to do; and they perhaps, not less capable of it, if they thought proper to devote themselves to it. A free and generous Temper is required in a Deacon, no less than in an Elder, for which there are special Reasons: These Officers are to receive the Collections of the Church, and dispose of them to those Ends for which they are made; therefore it is proper that they should excite the Members to true Generosity, by a liberal Contribution according to their Ability; for it is well known, that Example has a far greater Influence upon Men than Precept: Besides this, if they are backward in communicating of their Substance to pious Uses, it must be a Check upon them when called to stir up others to Works of Charity and Beneficence; and an exorbitant love of Money, may tempt them to act an unfaithful Part, in their Distributions of the Church's Treasure. From whence it is easy to collect, that covetous Persons are wholly unfit for this Office; and, that a Community is guilty of the greater Imprudence in the Choice of those who be so.

V. They ought to be such Persons as govern their Families well; let the Deacons be the Husbands of one Wife, ruling their Children and their own Houses well {1 Timothy 3:12}. In order to which, it is needful that they behave with Prudence, Sobriety and Caution, to be exemplary in real Virtue and Religion. It is the Duty of all Parents and Masters of Families, to instruct their Children and Servants in what manner to demean them selves, to sharply reprove them for Sin, and to cherish all Appearance of Concern about the eternal Welfare of their Souls; as a Connivance at an Evil in those under our Care and Government, necessarily involves us in Guilt, it will certainly occasion the Enemies of the Gospel to reflect on our holy Profession. It is more especially the Duty of Officers in the Church of Christ, to discountenance all unlawful Actions, and to encourage undissembled Piety in those about them; the Man who neglects to maintain a due Decorum in his

own, is a very improper Person to be entrusted with any Authority in God's House; for it is hardly to be supposed, that he who is negligent in exercising his Power over those that are under his immediate and constant Inspection, will be diligent and faithful in his Watch over such as are not so near to him. And therefore it must be allowed, that it is requisite Deacons should govern their Domesticks well, and wisely.

VI. IT is necessary that these Officers should be Men of sound Principles, holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience. Here I shall inquire, 1. WHAT is intended by Faith?

2. WHAT a Mystery ?Isaiah 3:1-26. OBSERVE that there are mysterious Doctrines in divine Revelation 4:1-11. THAT these are to be embraced, and stedfastly held by the Deacons of the Church.

5. IN a pure Conscience.

1. FAITH is taken in different Senses.

1. IT is to be understood of a new and spiritual Principle wrought in the Saints by divine Power, which believes in and accepts of Christ as the alone Saviour of Sinners: Thus, in these Words; by Grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God {Ephesians 1:8}. The Nature and Actings of this Grace, cannot be spiritually discerned by any but those who are the Subjects of it: All unregenerate Persons are unacquainted with this Grace, for it far exceeds the Reach of the unsanctified Understanding. It is held in a pure Conscience. The Exercise of this gracious Principle purges our Consciences, which are naturally defiled; and put no Difference between us and them, purifying their Hearts by Faith {Acts 15:9}.

2. THE Gospel is sometimes designed by it: As for Instance, Do we make void the Law through Faith, i.e. the Gospel, God forbid; yea, we establish the Law {Romans 3:31}. This is the Sense in which we are to take it here.

2. A MYSTERY is something that is incomprehensible and inexplicable: Some affix no other Idea to an evangelical Mystery than, that it is a Matter which has been secret and hid, and suppose, that upon a Discovery of it, we may be able to fully understand and account for it, they will not allow that its Nature is incomprehensible, but think, that it immediately ceases to be a Mystery, when once it is revealed. This is done with a manifest Design to subvert all such Notions or Principles contained in Revelation, which are not to be comprehended by Reason: But this is much too low a Sense of the Word, as it is applied to the Gospel in the inspired Writings. There are many Things of whose Existence in Nature we cannot possibly doubt, which are yet unaccountable, mysterious, and inexplicable; for the proof of which, we need not look any farther than our selves; the Constitution and Frame of human Nature is really so. LET such as object to any Doctrine #which is supposed to be a Branch of revealed Truth| because it is mysterious, and not capable of Demonstration by Reason, first acquaint us, how the Soul, which is Immaterial, is united to the Body, in Man? What are the Bands and Ligaments of that Union, which it is certain there is between these two Parts so very different in their Nature? How the Soul actuates and moves every Member of the Body at pleasure? How it is that the Mind becomes affected with the Indisposition of the Body, and that with the Disorder of the Soul? Which are Things as indisputable as they are inexplicable. I say, let those Persons, before they reject Mysteries in Revelation, clearly explain these things to us. If they decline this as a Task to which they are unequal; must they not grant

that their own Make is a standing Evidence against their Incredulity in divine Things? which is cherished by this vain Pretence, that nothing is to be credited that is incomprehensible.

3. THE Gospel is a Mystery, or Chain of Truths which far transcend our Reason. We are so far from denying this, that it is our avowed Principle. In this Light it is constantly represented by the Apostle: Thus he speaks of it; even the Mystery which hath been hid from Ages and Generations, but now is made manifest to his Saints, to whom God would make known, what are the Riches of the Glory of this Mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory {Colossians 1:26-27}: And elsewhere; but we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World, to our Glory {1 Corinthians 2:7}. The Revelation of the Scheme of Salvation by a crucified Jesus, is in it fell a Mystery; it doth not bear this Name merely because it was eternally hid in the divine Mind where it was formed: If all sacred Truths were reducible to the Reason of Man, it might be justly expected that Persons of superior Understandings would most readily embrace them, and give the best Account of them; whereas the contrary of that is true. Hence are those Words of the Apostle; but the natural Man *υικικον*, the Man of Soul {1 Corinthians 2:14}, i.e. a Person furnished with the utmost strength of Reason, receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned. Which, in my Opinion, is a sufficient Proof, that the Things of God are far above the Reach of the most improved Understanding, and greatest Genius; and discovers the great Vanity of those who plead the Sentiments of polite Persons, in their Favour. Doctrines of the greatest importance are very mysterious and incomprehensible, among which are these:

1. THE Doctrine of the Trinity, or the proper Deity and distinct Personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Concerning the Divinity and Personality of the Father, there is no dispute; and I apprehend, that if the scriptural Account of the Deity of the Son were diligently, and with due Humility attended to, no Objections would ever be advanced against it; because it is as expressly asserted in the sacred Oracles as any Truth therein contained; It; the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God {John 1:1}. The Works performed by Christ, the Perfections which reside in him, and the religious Worship which is given to him distinctly from the Father, clearly evince his proper Deity. And since the same Attributes are said to be in the Holy Spirit, as are in the Father and Son, and the same humble Worship is to be paid to him, as distinct from them both, we have no just Reason to doubt of his real Divinity and distinct Personality. This Doctrine is a great Mystery; but because we cannot explain how it is consistent with the Unity of the divine Essence, will it be safe or prudent for us to refuse Credit to the clearest Evidence for it in the Word of God? Surely, No.

2. THE Union of the divine and human Nature in the Person of the Mediator, is a glorious Truth, and as great a Mystery; the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us, we beheld his Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth {John 1:14}. The Man Christ Jesus subsists in God, and God resides in him, in a manner not to be explained or conceived of by us; in him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily {Colossians 2:9} . The Apostle pronounces this a great Mystery; great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh. Let it be observed, that the Thing it self is so; which is more than some seem willing to allow, who suppose that a Mystery in Scripture, only intends something which has lain hid and reefer, and that there is nothing mysterious or inexplicable in its Nature. As for those who grant that the Union of Christ

with God, is ineffable and inconceivable, they have the less reason to object to the Doctrine of the Trinity; because that cannot be accounted for and explained by us. Upon the same Reasoning they may as well deny the Union of Christ with God, as his proper Deity, and distinct Personality from the Father; which they would do well to consider.

3. THE whole of Salvation by Christ crucified, is a Mystery: The Imputation of our Sins to him, the Infliction of the Punishment due to us upon him, and our Discharge from Guilt on account thereof, the Justification of our Persons by his Obedience, are precious Truths, but very wonderful and mysterious; natural Men, tho' ever so much improved in Knowledge, esteem them irrational and unintelligible Notions. Thus the Apostle acquaints us, that the Cross of Christ, or the Doctrine of Redemption by his Blood, was treated with Contempt by the wise and learned; we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness {1 Corinthians 2:16}. Reason concludes, that a Charge of Guilt to an innocent Person, and punishing of him as if he was the real Offender, is an unaccountable Method by which the Criminal is to be discharged, and wholly freed from an Imputation of Offence. Nor doth it determine more in Favour of accounting the Righteousness of one perfectly holy, to sinful Men, and acting towards them as righteous therein. There are Mysteries not to be understood without divine Illumination; the Knowledge of them is a free Gift, and he is a happy Person who is enabled to spiritually discern and embrace them. In these Doctrines he clearly sees divine Wisdom and Goodness are most eminently display'd; to him Christ as crucified is the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.

4. THE Doctrine of the Resurrection is a great Mystery. The Body of Man is composed of Dust, to that it returns at Death, and is changed into numerous Forms; how far those Particles of Matter which once made up the Body of a Man may be separated, or with what a Multitude of other Bodies they may be mixed, none can tell. And therefore if Reason is consulted in this Article of Faith, 'tis no wonder if it be thought an incredible thing. It is only a strict regard to the infinite Knowledge and Power of God, that will bring Men over to the Belief of it, the Difficulties which attend it to human View, are too many and great. And yet this is a fundamental Doctrine, and necessary to be believed, as is most clearly asserted by the Apostle; if there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your Faith also is vain. {1 Corinthians 15:13-14}.

5. THE Change which will pass upon the Saints who shall remain, and be alive at the second Coming of Christ, is a Mystery; Behold, I shew you a Mystery, we shall not all sleep, i.e. die; but we shall be changed in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump #for the Trumpet shall sound| and the Dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed {1 Corinthians 15:51-52}. I apprehend the Secrecy of this Matter, before this Revelation of it, is not the only Reason why the Apostle calls it a Mystery; for if so, it must be concluded, that there is nothing wonderful and mysterious in the Thing It self, which no Person, as I conceive, can imagine; for if our present Frame be considered as mortal, and naturally tending to Corruption and Death, we shall see evident Cause to allow it is exceeding wonderful that all shall not die: As it is impossible Corruption should inherit Incorruption, it is absolutely necessary that our corrupt Bodies should be freed from those Qualities which now attend them. But then, how can we apprehend this will be done without our dying, and being reduced to Dust as others are, especially that this surprizing Change should be wrought in a Manner so sudden as the Apostle declares it will be. Certainly there is not any, taking the Thing in this View, but will readily grant it to be a great Mystery.

4. IT is necessary that Deacons should embrace, and stedfastly hold these heavenly Truths. Every Officer in a Christian Community, we may reasonably suppose, has some particular Interest in, and Influence upon the Members; and therefore may, with the more care, bring them over to his Opinion; consequently it is very proper that his Sentiments should be just, and, in all things of importance, agreeable to divine Revelation; if not, what less than the Spread of Error can be expected from him? Hence there is special Reason why these Officers should hold the Mystery of Faith. All the Saints are called upon to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to them; such as are chosen to Office, are more especially under Obligation to propagare and defend evangelical Doctrines, the Form of sound Words ought to be held fast by them, and not departed from upon any Score whatever.

5. THEY ought to hold the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience, the Word is sundhsiv, which is sometimes put for the whole Heart, Soul and Spirit, working inwardly upon it fell by way of Reflection; and herein do I exercise my self to have always a Conscience void of Offence toward God, and toward Men {#Acts 24:16}; that is to say, a Heart clear from Guilt upon a most serious Reflection on my Conduct The Heart of every Man is naturally polluted, and the Conscience is defiled by Sin contracted, and cannot be pure but as sanctified by the Grace of God, and cleansed by the Blood of Christ; therefore these Doctrines are to be embraced and held with the Heart, as made holy by the Operations of God's Spirit upon it. The Head is not the Seat of evangelical Truths when they are received in a spiritual Manner, but the Soul, the Heart, and Mind. Persons who have thus believed them, will never be prevailed upon to part with them, either thro' the Flattery of pretended Friends, or the ill Treatment of avowed Enemies.

Fourthly, The Business of Deacons is to serve Tables Acts 6:2-3; that is to say, those which are to be furnished by the Church.

1st. The Table of the Lord. Christ hath instituted a solemn Ordinance, by which his People commemorate his Sufferings and Death; of which Institution the Apostle gives this Account, for I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread: And when he had given Thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is My Body, which is broken for you; this do in Remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the Cup, when he had supped, saying, This Cup is the new Testament in my Blood; this do ye in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come {2 Corinthians 11:23-26}. The great Care, Wisdom, and Love of Christ, appear in this Appointment; his evident Design therein, is the Consolation of the Saints; it is, that their Faith may be strengthened in his Favour to them; and that they may increase in an Abhorrence of Sin, which was the Cause of his Passion and Death. The Deacons are to provide every thing necessary for the Celebration of this Institution, but not at their own private Expence, for that is the common Concern of the Community; therefore nothing more is to be expected from them in this Particular, than to furnish the Table, and acquaint the Church with the Charge, and bear their Part in defraying of it. These Officers are also to communicate the Bread and Wine to the several Members of the Society.

2ndly. It is a Branch of their Work to relieve the Poor out of the Church's Stock raised for that Purpose. The Saints are commanded to shew Tenderness and Compassion to the Afflicted and Low, it is the Will of God that they should assist the Necessitous, that is an acceptable Service to

him; to do good and communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased {Hebrews 8:13} This is a Duty not only incumbent on those who abound in Riches, tho' a larger Contribution is justly to be expected from them; because much is required of such to whom much is given: But Persons of a lower Rank are under Obligation to perform Acts of Charity, even those who live by, the Labour of their Hands; let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth {Ephesians 4:20}. A warm Affection to Christ, sincere Love to the Saints as his Members, and a true Sense of divine Bounty towards us, will certainly prevail with us to cheerfully, and without grudging, practise this Beneficence. It is the Deacon's Business to receive the Collections made by the Church, and assist such therewith whose Circumstances call for help; and therefore, that the Community may be put to no unnecessary Charge, it is proper that these Officers should visit the Members who apply for Assistance, and examine whether it is needful, or if their Poverty arises from Profuseness and Indolence, which, if they find upon Examination, they must reprove these Persons and exhort them to Frugality and Diligence, that the Church may not be burdened with the Cases of such: Besides, visiting the poor Members is necessary on another Account; viz. that none may suffer by their too great Modesty, which will not allow them to ask for that Assistance which they really want; some such Persons these are, tho' perhaps their Number is not equal to that of those who are guilty of the other Extream: Again; it may encourage the Indigent and Afflicted, to be visited by their Brethren. If any shall think, that Deacons are not obliged to this by Virtue of their Office, I apprehend they are greatly mistaken. Whatever is given to the Poor, it ought to be with Pity, and sweetness of Disposition; not with sharp and unkind Words, because the Grief occasioned by rough Language, may far exceed the Service done them by what is communicated to them; and then also let it be considered, that the Lord loveth a cheerful Giver.

3rdly . Another Part of their Business, is to take care of the Minister's Table. It is very evident, that a Minister of the Gospel ought to be provided for by those who enjoy the Benefit of his Ministrations; let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good Things {Galatians 6:6}. The temporal Assistance which a diligent Preacher of the divine Word receives from those who attend upon his Ministry, is not to be compared with the Advantage of his Instructions, as is observed by the Apostle, treating on this Argument; if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things {1 Corinthians 9:11}. It belongs to the Deacons to consider, whether the Elder of the Church is agreeably furnished with the Accommodations of Life, and if he is not, to recommend the Consideration of his strait Circumstances to the Members, in order to obtain a more liberal Contribution from them, that he may not be pressed with Difficulties; which, in no small Degree will incommode him for the Discharge of his important Service. And if there be any of the Society that either wholly neglect to bear a Part in the Minister's Support, or do not contribute to it according to their Ability, they ought to reprove such, and exhort them to a faithful Performance of their Duty in this so just and reasonable a Thing. IT must be confessed, that some considerable Difficulties will attend a strict and religious Regard to the Duties proper to this Office, and therefore that you, my Brethren, who have been now invested therewith, may not conclude that you have undertook a Trust to which you shall prove unequal. I proceed, Fifthly, To offer a few Things for your Encouragement in this Undertaking.

1. The Service to which you are called is Christ's; his Interest, and the Good of his People are concerned in this Matter. That being duly considered, will be sufficient of it self to inspire you with Courage, and raise you above all the Troubles which you are apprehensive will necessarily attend the Execution of your Office. We are all under infinite Obligations to him; how great were the Sufferings to which he freely submitted upon our Account! What a Variety of precious Benefits do we receive from him! our Deliverance from eternal Ruin cost him his Life. A vast Treasure of Grace he expends upon his People to meeten them for Heaven, and will eternally communicate to them, to compleat their Happiness there. Therefore what Work #wherein his Honour is interested| shall we esteem too arduous for us to undertake, or what Difficulties too great to encounter with? so we may but be instrumental in advancing the Cause of one to whom we are thus highly obliged. If these Things have their proper weight upon our Minds, we shall think his Yoke is easy and his Burden is light {Matthew 11:30}.

2. He that has called you will certainly assist you in his Service, and therefore you have no reason to be discouraged: Christ, the Head of the Church, has a fulness of Grace in his Hands; which is abundantly more than equal to the Wants of his Servants and Members. Whatever Exercises he brings upon his People, he is able and determined to afford them suitable Support; as their Days are, their Strength shall be {Deuteronomy 33:25}. And whenever he directs any in his Providence to engage in his sacred Work, he furnishes them for it. I am apprehensive, my Brethren, that your Minds may be struck with some Concern, by hearing the Qualifications that are necessary for Persons who undertake this Office and the Duties proper to it, as being conscious of your own Inability. But consider that your Lord is able to communicate every needful Virtue, and to carry you through those Difficulties which appear to you insuperable; his Grace is sufficient for you, and his Strength will be made perfect in Weakness {1 Corinthians 12:9}. It is with me unquestionable, that your Eyes are directed to him from whom all your Strength is derived. And may you of his Fulness receive, and Grace for Grace {John 1:16}.

3. The Office is difficult, but the Honour arising from the proper Discharge of it is great. I am very far from thinking that it is prudent or safe for us, to embark in the Cause of Religion with a View to acquire Applause from Men, or to raise our Reputation in the world; that is an evident Sign of a base and low Disposition of Mind. But then, it is lawful to animate and raise our Spirits under a Prospect of the Troubles to which we expose our selves, in an Adherence to the Interest of Christ, by considering, that it is an unspeakable Honour put upon us, to be called to the meanest Post in his House: Thus the Psalmist did, as appears by his own Words; For a Day in thy Courts is better than a Thousand: I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness {Psalms 84:10}.

I UNFEIGNEDLY wish, that you may be enabled to use the Office of deacons well, and so purchase to your selves good Degree, and great Boldness in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus {1 Timothy 3:13}.

[i] Origen. Ecclesiast. lib. 2. cap. 22. p. 304,

[ii] Quo magis necessarium credidi ex duabus Ancillis quae Ministrae dicebantur, quid esset veri & per tormenta quaerere. Plini lib. 10. Ephesians97.

[iii] Primitive Christianity, Part I. chap. 8. p. 157.

[iv] Ismen o[sa peri< diakrwnwn gunaikw~n th~ eJte>ra pro>v Timo>qeon ojpisolh~ oj ghnai~ov diata>wetai Paulov. Serom. lib. 3. P. 327.

[v] {Acts 6:1-4}. From this Instance it evidently appears, that the Right of Choosing Officers in the Church is lodged in the Members. The Apostles were very far from assuming such a Power over the Church, as some have usurped since, who could never pretend to their extraordinary Call or Furniture from Christ. They acted upon this just Principle, That all Societies have an undoubted Right to fix upon the Persons who shall serve them in any Office or Capacity. The Election of these Officers was wholly referred to the Community; indeed the Apostles hinted what Qualifications were necessary to Men employed in this Service, but left the Members to determine among themselves, in whom the excellent Virtues mentioned were found. And therefore they considered the Multitude as capable of judging, without their uncommon Abilities, what Persons were fit to be called to Office among them.

[vi] Qui ex uno ore calidum & frigidum Spirat:. Vid. I eigh's cvit. Sac.

S. Amimadvwesions Upon The Letters

Animadversions Upon, 'The Letters on Theron and Aspasio,' Addressed to that Ingenious Author by John Brine {London: John Ward, 1758}

SERMON 28 ANIMADVERSIONS UPON, 'THE LETTERS ON THERON AND ASPASIO', ADDRESSED TO THAT INGENIOUS AUTHOR.

Christo, sive Christi Verbis credere, idem significet, atque, illi obedire. - Christo autem, five ejus Verbis non credere, idem fit, atque, illi non obedire. Socin. de Jesu Christo Servatore. Pars Quarta, Cap. XI.

It is Time that I should now, in my Turn, contend for ACTS OF FAITH PROPERLY SO CALLED;

I mean, THOSE WORKS, which Jesus Christ in His new Commandment enjoins all who believe in Him for Righteousness, and by which He would have them known to one another, and to all Men, for his Disciples. Letters on Theron, etc. p. 406.

Printed for J. WARD, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal Exchange: And sold by G. KEITH, at the Bible and Crown, in Gracechurch-Street; and by J. ENYON, Print-seller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal Exchange.

London 1758

Price

Sixpence. A Book, consisting of two Volumes, intitled, Letters on Theron and Aspasio, hath lately appeared in the World, which is written in a Manner very extraordinary. Such is its Obscurity, that some have said, that, upon reading the whole Performance, they were not able to collect a single Idea from it. Many Calvinists, it seems, tho' they do not relish every thing, which is advanced in this Work, yet, they greatly admire it, are much struck with many thoughts it contains, and apprehend, that this Writer favours most of their Sentiments. I confess, that my Opinion is wholly different from theirs, and that The Arminians have much more Right to the Honour of claiming him, as a Patron of their Cause; which I will attempt to make appear, in the following Sections.

Sect. 1. The Gospel is called a Mystery. We speak the Wisdom of God, in a Mystery. It bears this Name, because it was undiscoverable by Reason, and, consequently, could never have been known, without supernatural Revelation. But this is not the only Reason, why the Evangelical Scheme is so called, there is another Reason for it; which is, its Doctrines far exceed our Comprehension. And, therefore, though the Revelation of it, in all its Branches, is most clear and full, so that we cannot have any just Cause to doubt of its Truths, yet, it is Still a Mystery. It consists of a Set of Principles, which infinitely surpass the most extensive Ideas of any created Understanding. Hence, it is the Object of the holy Adoration of Angels and Saints, and will so be, for evermore. This Writer is much offended, with the Use of the Epithet Incomprehensible, in relation to Christian Doctrines. He speaks thus: Nothing can be more foolish or absurd than to join

the Epithets of incomprehensible, obscure, or unintelligible, to a Mystery after it is declared^{f1}. To say, that a Thing is hid, or secret, after it is declared, is indeed foolish and absurd; but to affirm, that a Truth is incomprehensible, whose Nature is infinitely above a finite Capacity, is not so, how clearly soever that Truth may be revealed. And such is the Nature of Evangelical Truths, wherefore, they are rightly termed Mysteries, notwithstanding the dear Revelation of them. Why does this Author connect together the Epithets, incomprehensible, obscure, or unintelligible? Are they Terms synonymous? Is he so weak a Man, as to think, that they mean the same? I am persuaded, that he is not. I cannot but consider this as an Instance of Unfairness, and Disingenuity in him. He knows, that infinite Duration is a Truth incomprehensible, but I think he cannot account it obscure, or unintelligible. It may easily be proved against any Man breathing, that without we allow some incomprehensible Truths, we can have no Religion at all; for, the Whole of Religion is founded on Mysteries; or Truths, whereof no Creature whatsoever can frame adequate Ideas.

Sect. 2. The human Mind is possessed of a Capacity to discern some most important Truths, viz. That there is a God. That He is an eternal and self-existent Being. That He is infinite in every Perfection. That all Things are, because He wills their Existence. That He is the Origin of Good and Happiness. And that all intelligent Creatures are under indispensable Obligations to honour and obey Him. This Ability is innate, or natural to Men, and is inseparable from our Minds. But I can by no means agree with this Author, in thinking, that we have an actual Perception of the abovementioned Truths, or of any other, without Reasoning^{f2} That supposes., the Truth of the Doctrine of innate Ideas, in the utmost Sense, that can be imagined, and which is more apparently false. A Man knows the Truth of the Existence of Deity, upon a Perception of Evidence of that Truth; and, therefore, that Knowledge follows upon Reasoning. It is a Conclusion, which the Mind draws from some Premises, which it hath under its Consideration. It is certain, that the human Mind cannot but discern, that some Things are true, and others false; that some are right, and others wrong; that some are fit to be done, and others unfit, upon Examination. But this is no Proof, that it hath an actual Perception, or Knowledge of any Truth, without Reasoning, which this Author maintains, and calls Conscience, or right Reason. This the Quakers mean, by the Light within. This is that Light wherewith every Man is lighted, that cometh into the World. Natural it is to Men; but is greatly impaired, an Consequence of Man's Apostacy, and, is unworthy of the Name of right Reason, which our Author gives it. In many Things. it is wrong. Right Reason is not wrong, an any Thing, which God, the Fountain of all Reason, intended our intelligent Nature should be conversant about.

Sect. 3. Language is the Medium whereby Men communicate their Ideas one to another. By that God conveys to us the Knowledge of His Will. The Mean, therefore, of the Conveyance of the Knowledge of Divine Truths is natural; and, yet, the Scripture is properly called a supernatural Revelation, because the Penmen of it, were divinely directed, in the Use of this natural Mean, of conveying the Knowledge of Truth, and, therefore, they could not err, in their Mode of speaking. Now, as this is a natural Medium of imparting Knowledge, and is not above the Capacities of Men, it is fitted to gain their Assent unto the Truth of those Doctrines, which by this Medium are proposed to their Consideration. This Assent is the Duty of all Men, who enjoy the written Word. And it is not an Act, that surpasses the natural Power of the human Mind. There is nothing supernatural in it, any more, than there is, in yielding an Assent unto the Truth of the most self-evident Proposition. It does not include a Perception of the Nature of the Things themselves,

which are expressed, and unto the Truth of which, this Assent is given. With equal Truth it may be said, that a Man's Belief, that two and three make five, is supernatural, as that a bare, mere, and simple Assent, to the Truth of scriptural Propositions is so. For, the latter is no more beyond the Power of Nature than the former. The Cause why Men withhold an Assent from sacred Truths, is not, because they are unable to understand the Medium, which God makes use of to convey to them His Mind and Will; but because they disapprove of what He declares. Hence it is, that so much Art and Violence are used, on scriptural Terms, Phrases, and Expressions, in order to pervert their Sense. If Men could but prevail with themselves to admit of the genuine Import of the Language of Scripture, our religious Controversies would quickly cease. But through a Dislike to those Doctrines, which must be allowed to be true, if the Language of Scripture is taken in its natural Sense, they will use marvellous Shifts and Evasions to obscure and elude it.

Sect. 4. Though the human Mind hath a natural Capacity to understand the Meaning of the Language of Scripture, and is able to perceive the Truth of the Doctrines which are therein expressed, and may therefore, without the least degree of supernatural Aid, believe them, or give a firm Assent unto them, as Principles not to be doubted of: Yet, such Blindness attends it, that it is incapable, without Divine Illumination, of understanding the real Nature of those Doctrines, unto the Truth of which it assents. To perceive the Truth of Christian Doctrines, or of the Things of the Spirit of God, and to know the Things themselves, are absolutely distinct. The former, a natural, unregenerate Man is capable of: The latter, is entirely above his Power. The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him: Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Sect. 5. The Doctrine of the Scripture relates either unto the first, or second Covenant. The former is called the old, and the latter, the new Covenant. The first or old Covenant, is the Law: The second or new Covenant, is the Gospel. The old Covenant is a System of Natural Religion, in its absolute Purity and Perfection. It consists of Precepts, Promises, and Threatnings. It requires perfect Love to God, and our Neighbour, which includes all such Acts of Reverence towards our Maker, as His infinite Perfections require; and all Acts of Justice and Benevolence, towards our Fellow-Creatures. Promises of Life and Happiness are made unto Man, in this Covenant, upon a perfect Obedience to its Precepts. And Threatnings of Death and Misery are denounced therein, in care of Sin, or Disobedience. According to this Covenant, therefore, sinful Men can have no Ground to hope for Acceptance with God, or the Enjoyment of Him. Unto Sinners, it is no other than, a Ministration of Death, and Condemnation..

The second, or new Covenant, is a sovereign, gracious, and full Provision for the complete Salvation of the Church of God, in such a Way as establishes the first Covenant, and effectually secures unto it the highest Glory. Christ was constituted Mediator in this Covenant, and therein He became a Surety to God, in the Characters of a Lawgiver and Judge, for all those Persons, whom it respects. He undertook to do and suffer for them, all that was necessary to be done and suffered, in order to their Pardon and Salvation, consistent with the Honour of the first Covenant. The new Covenant, therefore, as it regards our Saviour, was properly conditional, and He could not claim the Fulfillment of any Promises made therein, to Him, in our Favour, without the Performance of what He engaged to do and suffer for us. As it respects us, it is absolutely unconditional Nothing is required of us, as a proper Condition, in order to a Participation of the Blessings, which are therein promised. So that, it is most fitly called, by Divines, a Covenant of

Grace. It contains in it, Pardon, Peace, Justification, Grace for our Regeneration, Conversion, Sanctification, Preservation, in this State, and it also ensures to us eternal Life in the next. This Author says, that he has no Concern with the Distinction betwixt these Covenants, upon which our Systems are formed.^{f3} This is certainly true; for, the Doctrine which he advances agrees to neither. It is contrary to Natural and Revealed Religion: Or, it suits not with the first Covenant, which is Natural Religion in its absolute Purity; nor with the second Covenant, which, in Sum, is Revealed Religion. Like many other erroneous Persons, he disapproves of Systems, I suppose, from a Consciousness, in himself, that his Principles do not consist with any System of Divinity. However that be, in Fact, they do not. In the Covenant, which was made with the People of Israel, at Mount Sinai, there Was a Repetition of the Covenant of Works, and ritual and political Laws were added Unto that. Wherefore, the Covenant, Which was made with that People, included Laws moral, ceremonial, and political, The Observance of all which, God required of them. But not with a View, that they might, thereby, obtain spiritual and eternal Blessings: For, they were not promised therein. All Blessings of a spiritual Nature, were granted in another Covenant distinct from that, and which was confirmed of God, in Christ, four hundred and thirty Years, before the Levitical Institution. For which Reason, among many others, I humbly conceive, that the Covenant made with the People of Israel, at Mount Sinai, was not a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, although the ceremonial Part of it had a typical Relation to the spiritual Benefits, which the better Promises of that Covenant express.

Sect. 6. One grand Article agreed on, and settled in the Covenant of Grace, was Atonement for Sin, and the Remission of it, to the Guilty, in Consequence of that Atonement. Jesus Christ is the Party, in this Covenant, of whom making Atonement was required, and that important Work, He undertook therein. The Father's Will that He should, and His Compliance therewith, are both expressed in these Words: Lo! I come to do thy Will, O my God. The Father transferred Our sins from us, and placed them to the Account of Christ. He made Him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin. And Christ took Our Guilt upon Himself, or freely consented to bear, it for us, that we might be legally acquitted. Upon the Imputation of our Crimes to Him, He became subject to that Curse, which they demerited, And, accordingly, in His Sufferings, He was made a Curse for us. The whole Penalty which we were obnoxious unto, in Consequence of Sin, He endured. For, the Law's Curse, which He was made, includes it all. The Blessed Jesus, therefore, in His Sufferings Was our Substitute; and, by reason of the infinite Dignity of His Person, His Sufferings are of infinite Value, and satisfactory, to the Law and Justice of God, for our whole Guilt. Remission of Sin, on this Foundation, is an Act of Justice, as Well as an Act of Grace: Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.

Sect. 7. The Doctrine of our Justification before God is of the greatest Importance. For, if we are not justified, we shall not be glorified. As we are all guilty, and imperfect in our Obedience, God cannot account us innocent; for that is contrary to Truth and Fact, which with Him is absolutely impossible. In Justification Respect is had to the Law, which is the Rule prescribed for our Conduct, and our Conformity or Inconformity to that Rule. If we are conformable to the Law, we shall be accounted innocent, or righteous; but if we are not, we must be accounted innocent, or unrighteous. Now, as every Mouth is stopped, and all the World, i.e. Men universally, are become guilty before God; no Man, whatever, can be esteemed just by the Divine Lawgiver, on the Foundation of his own Temper, and Actions. A Person of an unmixed Character is not to be found

upon the Earth. All that can be said to the Advantage of the Best of human Race is this, that they are less guilty than others, whose Crimes are more, and whose Defects are greater: Not that they are innocent. And to say, that God may esteem a Man innocent and innocent, or unrighteous and righteous, on the same. Ground, Is an impious Absurdity. For, that necessarily supposes, that the infinite Understanding of God, may pass a false and contradictory Judgment on human Actions. And, therefore, at is most evident, that no Man can be justified, in the Sight of God, by his own Works: Because every Man is guilty of committing Sin, in some Instances, and is not perfect, in any Act of Obedience, which he performs. In the Gospel, we have a gracious, and clear Revelation of a Righteousness, which is absolutely perfect, and of infinite Value, viz. Christ's Righteousness. He condescended to come under the Obligation of the Law, or Covenant of Works, for our Sakes. Not upon His own Account, that by yielding Obedience to it, He might acquire a Right for Himself to Glory. That would have been incompatible with the Dignity of His Person, who is God, as well as Man; and, therefore, He hath a Right to Glory and Blessedness, on an infinitely higher Ground than that, which the Covenant of Works requires of us. As He came under the Law, on Our Account, to redeem us from it, He was perfectly conformable to it, in His Heart and Conduct. His Obedience is such, in Worth, as His Person is in Dignity, viz. immense. This Righteousness, He brought in for us; and God graciously imputes it unto us, whereby we are made righteous, and become, in Consequence thereof, Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life. This Writer affects to be thought, a strenuous Advocate for the Doctrines of Atonement by Christ's Death, and of imputed Righteousness. And, by his uncommon Manner of treating on those Points, he hath been by many, it seems, as grossly mistaken, perhaps, as ever any Author was. Not a Few have apprehended, that he thinks, that the Death of Christ is a real procuring Cause of the Pardon of Sin, and that His Righteousness is the Matter of a Sinner's Justification before God; whereas, in Truth, he no more believes either the one, or the other, than a Christian believes the Alcoran. It may be some of his Admirers will very highly relent this Assertion; but I have no Scruple Concerning its Proof, which I Will immediately give.

Sect. 8. He speaks thus: I am far from thinking, that any honest, or sincere Attempt to please God, ever failed of Success. Yea, I am ready to shew, that all Objections and Impediments have been, by a particular Divine Edict for that Purpose, removed and dispensed with in Favour of all, who are sincerely well disposed, whenever they shall be found⁴. This Edict he produces, and argues upon, afterwards, I apprehend, it would be no great Difficulty to prove, that the Scripture itself will warrant any Man to hope for Acceptance with God, by his own Righteousness, who is influenced by all those good Dispositions toward the Law, which Aspasio considers as Requisites for coming to Christ. He who can say, I feel an Aversion to Sin, and prize the holy Law above all Things: The prevailing Bias of my Affections is to the Divine Law, and the habitual Breathing of my Soul after a Conformity to its Precepts, is, I think, in a fair Way to fulfill the Law, so as to live by his own Obedience, according to what is said, {Ezekiel 33:14-19}. If the Wicked turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right - he shall surely live - he shall not die - none of his Sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him: He hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live - he shall live thereby. Thus the Dispositions made necessary for our obtaining Life by Christ, are sufficient to make us live without Him, and to supersede the Necessity of any Christ, or Atonement at all. - He adds, They {#the Jews} thought, to what Purpose shall we reform, or hearken to the Prophet's Warning, to turn from our evil Way, while our former Transgressions still stand upon Record against us? Let us do ever so well for the Time to come, we must be treated as

Criminals for what is past? God removes the Ground of this Complaint, He assures every Man, who shall sincerely repent, or turn from his evil Way, and do that which is lawful and right, that he shall, be happy, and no Mention made of his former Faults. All this He confirms by His Oath, that there might be no remaining Doubt, or Hesitation, in the Minds of Men, ABOUT THEIR ACCEPTANCE with Him, as soon As THEY REFORMED. - He subjoins: If nothing but Equity had appeared in the Divine Character, nothing but Misery could have been looked for by the Guilty. To Men who are dissatisfied with His Way, as unequal, God proposes to deal with them according to any Rule of Equity insisted on among them: Ye say, the Way of the Lord is not equal. O ye House of Israel, I will judge every one of you after his Ways. So likewise it appears from the New Testament, that every one who is found guilty at last, shall be condemned out of his own Mouth, or for walking unsuitably to his own Maxim. The Field then is left fair and open for every one who wills, to run. Every Let or Hindrance, every Objection that the reasoning Faculty of Man can frame, is entirely removed. - Let all the well-disposed, all the Friends of Virtue, avail themselves of the free Declaration; God Himself hath set His Oath to it, that every one who turns from Evil to do Good shall be happy. Elsewhere he says Perhaps it will be inquired, Are no Rules to be observed, no Means to be used, no Works to be exerted by the human Mind or Body, in order to Justification? The Answer is ready: Yes, very many. And they maybe thus shortly summed up: Be perfect, keep the Commandments, and thou shalt live. - The Obligation of the Law is eternal, so can never be loosed. No Man can be assured that his Sins are forgiven him, but in as far as he is freed from the Service of Sin, and led to work Righteousness. For we must still maintain, that the Favour of God can only be enjoyed, in {#he means by, or, for} studying to do those Things, which are well-pleasing in His sight.

Sect. 9. The Author allows of no other Incapacity in us to comply with Prescriptions of Duty, than an Aversion to it; or Readiness in us to do Evil, than what arises from our Love to it. As for those who are sincerely well inclined, I have no Doubt but they will do that which is lawful and right; even as I make no Question but those who are averse to Sin, will avoid it: For I have no Notion, either from Scripture or Experience, of any Impotency in Man to do Good, but what arises from his Aversion to it; or Readiness in him to do Evil, but what arises from his Love to it. I will freely grant him, that no greater Impotency attends Man, to act in a holy Manner, than attends one who is naturally dead to actuate the several Members of the Body, or perform vital Acts. We cannot act spiritually, as we are dead, or destitute of a Principle of spiritual Life. And we will not, or are disinclined to what is spiritual, as our Minds are depraved and corrupt. Both are equally true of unregenerate Men. No Man is sincerely well disposed until he is born again; or, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.

Sect. 10. He says: It does not signify much, by what Name we call the Mean of Escape, whether we call it the Law or the Gospel; for the great Concern we have with either of them, is to obtain a Righteousness, or Title to Life. I apprehend, that the great Difficulty is over, when a Man - has got his Aversion to Righteousness overcome, and pointed the other Way, toward Sin. - It is common to both, {the Law and the Gospel} that they convey Happiness, or afford Hope to the well disposed. And the Exercise of the Candidates must be much the time, with respect to either; that is, to endeavour to attain a Sense of former Deficiencies, with a proper Value and Esteem for the Mean of Escape; or, in other Words, to attain to the Hatred of Sin, and the Love of righteousness. Why should we seek to repress any Man's Impetuosity to fulfill the Law, who already knows the Reason

and Matter of his Duty, and is already acquainted with the Nature and Duties of the Law? Why should we retard his Course, by entangling him in a Labyrinth about the Use of Means, seeing he may die before he has learned to use them aright, and so never reach his desired End. Methinks it would be much better to direct him to study {Ezekiel 33:1-33}, where he will find that all well-disposed Persons have as much Security for their Happiness, as the Oath of God can give. As for the Gospel, it was only intended to relieve those ill-disposed People, who despair of ever doing any thing to render them acceptable to God, by any Assistance whatsoever. It was never intended to be an Auxiliary to those good People, who are desirous to give acceptable Obedience to the Divine Law. All such, where-ever they are, shall undoubtedly be happy, WITHOUT HAVING ANY OCCASION TO TROUBLE THEIR HEADS ABOUT THE GOSPEL. The Gospel is only a gracious Provision, made, by the supreme Royal Prerogative, for the Guilty and the Desperate. Jesus Christ came only to bring Relief to the Vicious and the Ungodly, without infringing the Privileges of the Righteous in the least. The Gospel was never intended to improve the Righteous, and elevate them to a higher Condition, but to relieve the Wretched. The Author wonders what Business Aspasio had to urge upon Theron, the imputed Righteousness, who had little or no Occasion for it. And says, Methinks he acts below the Dignity of the sacred Theme. In his Opinion, therefore, a Man, upon becoming obedient to the Law, may very well part with the Righteousness of Christ, because, then, he has little or no Occasion for it. And, that it is sinking the Dignity of the sacred Theme. to insist upon it, that the Righteousness of Christ is necessary to the Justification of a Man, Who is holy, or righteously disposed; although that Righteousness only, is commensurate to the Law, as a complete Rule of Action, and his own is far, very far short of being so. Every one who unfeignedly esteems the Divine Law, is awakened into habitual and lively Desires after its Purity, and is willing to receive Life in the Way appointed therein, shall assuredly find it to be, a never-failing Spring of Consolation. The Law, then, can give Life unto a Sinner, upon his yielding Obedience to its Precepts; and he has no Occasion to concern himself about the Gospel, in order to his future Blessedness. Let that be true, or false, rightly understood, or mistaken, it is of no Importance.

Sect. 11. Though the Author thinks, that Persons of righteous Dispositions may discard the Gospel, in the Business of Justification, or of obtaining Life; yet, it is of Use to relieve the Worthless, Wretched, and Desperate, or such who have been profligately wicked; and, therefore, a Belief of it, or an Assent unto its Truth, is needful for them: Which Agent, in his Opinion, is that Faith, which accompanies Salvation. Because, he takes that for granted, or begs it, which will never be proved, viz. That, no Man assents to the Truth of the Gospel, without he approves of, and loves it. Men, as well as Devils, may believe that the Gospel is true, and yet, not like it, any more than they. Nothing in Aspasio, he thinks, deserves greater Censure, than his denying, that any Manner of Advantage arises to us from a bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel. This Assent or Persuasion is no other than a natural Act: It is not above the Power of any Man, who understands common Language. He says, we are to consider Faith as a Principle of Life and Action. If so, it is more than a mere Assent, simple Belief, or a bare Persuasion. For, an Act is not a Principle of Life and Action. It is very great Inaccuracy to call it so. Notwithstanding, he asserts, that Faith is a mere Assent to, or a bare Persuasion of, the Truth of the Gospel, in Opposition to those, whom he is pleased to call popular Preachers; yet, he maintains, that Love accompanies that Assent. Faith, therefore, must be more than a simple Belief of the Truth of the Gospel; an Approbation of it, or Love unto it, is included therein. The great Difference between him, and those

whom he opposes, is this: He supposes that Love to Evangelical Truths attends a simple Belief of them, which is no other than a natural Act of the human Mind, produced by a natural Medium. And they think, that a living Faith is supernatural, as a Principle, and in all its Acts; and that a real Approbation of spiritual Things, cannot be in a Mind destitute of such a Principle. This is that, which exasperates and enrages him unto an excessive Degree, and causes him to cast about Fury and Virulence, in a Manner, scarcely to be paralleled, in any Author, as I think. Love, he says, is the Activity of that Life which a Man obtains by Faith. If Faith is a Principle of Life and Action, how is Life obtained by it? Is not this the same, as to say, the Act of a vital Principle obtains that Principle? The proper Acts of Faith, in his Opinion, are Acts of Obedience, or the Performance of those Works which Jesus Christ enjoins on all who believe. Which are there, Love, Repentance, Self-denial, and working of Righteousness. Upon these Acts being put forth by a Man, he enjoys the Holy Spirit, as the Comforter, and is filled with Consolation, which arises from a pleasing Consciousness, of his being obedient to the Commands of Christ: Or, of his being freed from the Service of Sin, and led to work Righteousness. For, that is the Foundation on which, his Assurance of the Pardon of his Sins, is to be founded, and also his Hope of Blessedness, must be built on that Ground: For, on that the Assurance of Hope rests, as this Author teaches us. I know not but he may be much mistaken by some, on this Subject. Possibly, they may think, that he is not a Friend to Morality; because he inveighs vehemently against what he calls popular Holiness, and sneers not a little at Heart-work. As it consists in Illumination, Conviction, spiritual Sorrow for Sin, and Affiance, or Trust in Christ for Salvation. But he is not an Enemy to Morality. The Cause of his keen Resentment against those whom he calls popular Preachers is this, they do not allow, that Morality is Evangelical Holiness; or, that a Change for the better, in the Morals of a Man, upon a simple Belief of the Truth of the Gospel, is that Holiness which is requisite to future Blessedness. It is this, that raises his Indignation to its prodigious Height.

Sect. 12. The Principles of this Author are plainly these: That the Law under which Man was, in his Creation-State, is dispensed with by the supreme royal Prerogative of God, in our Favour, as we are guilty and sinful. - That, another Law is enacted, or a Divine Edict is published, by obeying which Sinners may obtain Righteousness, or Life. - That, well disposed, virtuous Persons, have no Occasion to concern, or trouble themselves about the Gospel Atonement, imputed Righteousness, and all other Evangelical Doctrines, with respect to them, are needlers, and were never intended for their Relief. - That, such who have been immoral and vicious in their Lives, upon becoming virtuous, and righteously disposed, have no farther Occasion for the Gospel: For, the Divine Edict, whereby the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with, will be a never-failing Spring of Consolation to them - That, Faith in Christ is not a Dependence on Him, or Trust in Him, for Salvation; but a bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel, though he thinks, that Love to it attends that Persuasion. That, the Atonement of Christ secures not the Pardon of Sin to any Man. - That, on the Ground of Justice, Men may expect to be justified at the Bar of God, by their own Obedience to the sovereign Edict, which He hath condescended to publish, by His supreme royal Prerogative, for that Purpose. Now, is it not amazing, that any Calvinist should conceive, that this Author is a Favourer of his Sentiments, since, the Principles which he advances, are diametrically opposite to them?

Perhaps, some will say to me, Surely you mistake him? Does he not contend, that no Qualifications whatever, in us, are necessary, in order to our Acceptance with God, and highly

commend Aspasio for excluding all Sorts of our own Works, in our Justification, in a most excellent Passage, which he cites from the Dialogues? I answer, he does; and that golden Passage I most heartily approve of. It is this: Both Grace and Faith stand in direct Opposition to Works; all Works whatever. Whether they be Works of the Law, or Works of the Gospel; Exercises of the Heart, or Actions of the Life, done while we remain unregenerate, or when we become regenerate, they are all, and every of them, equally set aside in this great Affair. That the Bill of Exclusion is thus extensive, or rather quite unlimited, appears from the Reason assigned; left any Man should boast That all Pretence of glorying may be cut off from fallen Creatures. That the whole Honour of obtaining Salvation may be appropriated to Him, who hid not His Face from Shame and Spitting. - And is He not worthy, unspeakably worthy, to receive this unrivalled Honour, as a Recompence for His unparalleled Humiliation? Our Author's Admirers will, it may be, infer from his applauding of this Passage, that he cannot possibly think, that our own Works are the Matter of our Justification, or the Cause of our Acceptance with God, and the Ground of our Title to Life and future Blessedness. So Aspasio means; but this Author is as distant from such a Meaning, as Earth is from Heaven: And his good Friends the Arminians, and modern Socinians, can help him to get clear of Self-contradiction, in denying, that any Requisites in us are necessary to Reconciliation, Acceptance with God, and Justification; and in affirming, that our Obedience is the true Cause of our real Pardon, Justification, and Title unto Life. You will say, how can they do this for him? I answer thus: They say, there is first Reconciliation; this was obtained by the Death of Christ, nothing in us is required to that; but it includes not real or actual Pardon of Sin: It is a sovereign gracious Edict, by which Men may be assured of Pardon, if they reform and become obedient to the Law, and continue to be so. And, there is a first Justification, and a final Justification. In the former, God is so well pleased with the Obedience of His Son, that He declares Himself ready to accept and justify Men, notwithstanding, all their former Miscarriages, upon their Reformation and future Obedience, which is a very great Act of His Grace and Favour. This is what our Author intends by a Sinner's Acceptance with God, without Works of his own. In final Justification, or Justification at the Bar of God hereafter, Respect will be had unto those good Works, which we now perform, as the Ground, or Cause thereof. So that, as this Author says, Justice, as well as Grace, will appear in the last Judgment; then due Regard will be had to every Man's Works. But in the Justification of SINNERS, God has no Respect to any Man as better than another. Divine Favour, or Grace, will appear therein, because it is by a sovereign, gracious Edict, that it is appointed, that our imperfect Works shall be accepted unto our Justification, and Right to Blessedness: Justice will also appear therein; because in justifying the Righteous, on the Foundation of their own Works, God will act agreeably to that sovereign Edict, by which it is appointed, that their Obedience shall be accepted to that great End, which the essential Righteousness of his own Nature will oblige Him to make good. Calvinists maintain, that Justice, as well as Grace, will appear, in the Justification of Believers, at the Bar of God. Not on the Ground of their own Works: This they will eternally deny; but on the Foundation of the Righteousness of Christ Grace provides for them that Righteousness, by which they are constituted Just; and it is an Act of Justice to justify them, upon their being made the Righteousness of God in Christ, or righteous by the Imputation of His Righteousness unto them. For, God is just in justifying of those who believe in Jesus. Having stated and summed up the Principles of this Writer, I will briefly attempt to refute them.

Sect. 13. He grants, that Man, upon his Apostasy, could not work out a justifying Righteousness, according to the Law under which he was, in his State of Integrity; but insists upon it, that, that Law is dispensed with in our Favour, as we are guilty and sinful, by a particular Divine Edict for that Purpose. Most evident it is, that, that Law requires us to love God with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength. That Love to our Maker comprises, or consists in an Adoration of His infinite Perfections; a Delight in Him, as He is a Being of immense Goodness; a Reverence of Him, as He is infinitely holy, and powerful; and an entire, absolute Subjection to His Will and Authority in all Things. The Reason and Ground whereon this Love is required of the intelligent Creature Man, is the Nature of God, or His infinitely glorious Attributes, unless, therefore, a Change takes place in the Nature of God, the Reason of His requiring perfect, supreme Love to Himself will eternally remain; and, if that Reason continues, He cannot dispense with that Requirement, without acting contrary to His own infinite Understanding, which, with Him, is absolutely impossible. Hence it is clear, that it is an impious Absurdity to imagine, that God hath dispensed With His Command given to Man, wherein He requires perfect and supreme Love to Himself, and those Acts of holy Adoration, Delight, Reverence, and Subjection to His Will, as such Love includes. Farther, if Divine Precepts are now less extensive, than they once were, let us be plainly told, how far the Abatement is carried. What Degrees of Imperfection, in our Love to God, and Obedience to His Will, are allowed of, in our Favour, as Creatures depraved and sinful. As the Law requires perfect Love to our Creator, so it requires perfect Love to our Neighbour; which Love is a friendly, benevolent Disposition. It works no Ill to its Object; but is kind, good, sympathetic, and compassionate in all its Acts. The Reason of requiring such Love to our Neighbour, is the infinite Goodness of the Nature of God, which can never dispense with that Requirement. The Law, therefore, as requiring perfect Love to God, and perfect Love to our Fellow-Creatures, remains, and will everlastingly remain in full Force, without the least Abatement. The Law, as a Ground of the Divine Procedure, in the Justification, or Condemnation of Man, is a Covenant wherein Life is promised to perfect Obedience, and Death is threatened in Care of Disobedience. Believers are not under it, as such; but as it is a Law simply, or a binding Rule of Action only. And, therefore, they are not under its Curse, being redeemed therefrom by the Death of Christ: Yet, their Sins are not less displeasing to God, than those of other Men: Nor do they less demerit the Curse of the Divine Law, and the Wrath to come. Neither does the popular Doctrine, as this Author calls it, suppose the one, or the other. He either understands it not, or wilfully abuses that Doctrine. But it is a precious Truth, that Saints suffer only fatherly Chastisements, and not the Law's Curse, and Divine Vengeance, for their Miscarriages. Christ having endured in their Stead, the whole Penalty, which their Sins deserve, and thereby made complete Atonement for them.

Sect. 14. That sovereign Edict, by which the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with, is contained in Ezekiel, Chap. 18, and 33, as this Author asserts. By a very brief Consideration of these Chapters, it will appear, that no such Edict is therein contained.

1. The Complaint made concerning the Divine Procedure, in the Infliction of Punishment for Sin, is not the Complaint of some Individuals only; but it is the Complaint of the Body of the Jewish People: It is a public national one.
2. The Matter of this Complaint, was what they suffered, as a Nation, or Body politic, that is to say, national Judgments for national Sins.

3. No Respect is had, in this Complaint, unto the Judgment to come, and a future State; it only regards the present Dispensations of God, in His Providence towards them, as a Nation. They had not the least View to God's Treatment of them hereafter; their View was limited to the present State: Or, it was not carried one Jot farther. And, therefore,

4. The Death which they complained of suffering, was not the second, or eternal Death, unto which impenitent Sinners will be adjudged hereafter; but a civil Death, which they now suffered for public Guilt, according to that Covenant, which God made with them, as a Body politic. Consequently,

5. That Life, which they desired, and which God promised, upon their Reformation, was not eternal Life; but the Opposite of that civil Death, whereof they made Complaint, viz. a quiet and peaceable Enjoyment of that fruitful Land, which was given to them, and of those temporal Privileges, which were granted unto them therein. I dare be bold to affirm, that this Author will never be able to prove, that the Jews, in their Complaint, had Respect to a future State, or that God, in answering that Complaint, had any Regard unto Futurity. He must produce some other Proof, of the Publication of a sovereign Divine Edict, by which the Law, as requiring perfection, is dispensed with, in Favour of sinful Men; for no such Edict is there to be found.

Sect. 15 . Our Author's Opinion is, that all well-disposed virtuous Persons have no Occasion to concern, or trouble themselves about the Gospel. 1. There well-disposed Persons are not sinless, or free from Imperfection, either in Heart, or Life. 2. I suppose, it will be thought proper for them to consult that sovereign Divine Edict, by which the Law, as requiring Perfection, is with. How else can they be assured, that their imperfect Obedience will entitle them to future Blessedness? 3. If it is not necessary to concern, or trouble themselves about the Gospel, then that Edict is not the Gospel. This, I think, the Author must be obliged to grant: And indeed the Gospel it is not, nor is it the Holy Law of God. That is no Law of His, which does not require supreme, perfect Love to Himself, and perfect Love to our Neighbour. This Edict is neither the Religion of Jesus, nor the Religion of Nature; but it is a dreadful Corruption of the latter. And nothing more unworthy of God can be devised, than the Publication of such an Edict is. For, the Supposition of it, reflects Dishonour on His infinite Perfections. And, therefore, that Supposition ought to be eternally abhorred. For my Part, I detest it with all my Soul. 4. Permit me to ask, why there well-disposed Persons need not concern themselves about the Gospel? Is it because they are secure of Happiness by this Edict in their Favour? It will be said, they are. And, what then? I imagine our Author will answer, that is enough for them. Having as much Security for their Happiness, as they can reasonably desire, why should they not rest satisfied with that? What is the Gospel to them? That was only intended for the Relief of the Wretched, Worthless, and Desperate among Mankind. It was never designed to be an Auxiliary to them; they may, therefore, well spare themselves the Labour of making any Inquiries into it. Let those worthless Wretches employ themselves in the Study of the Gospel, who want it; as for those well-disposed People, they need it not. They may be happy without it. 5. I desire to be informed, for what Reason the holy Angels, who are not the Subjects of Salvation by Jesus Christ, which the Gospel is a Revelation of, are so intent upon the Study of Evangelical Truths? With a most intense Desire they look into, and humbly adore those sacred Truths, because of that illustrious Display, which there is of the Sovereignty, Wisdom, Kindness, Grace, Mercy, Truth, Holiness, and Power of God, in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and in the glorious Designs, which are by Him accomplished. But there are Things, it seems, which well-disposed and virtuous Persons have no Occasion to trouble their Heads about. I

cannot refrain from expressing great Astonishment, that any Man, who professes to be a Lover of the Gospel, should entertain a favourable Opinion of a Performance, wherein such Slight is cast upon that most precious, and adorable Scheme, which is the only Foundation of our present Hope as Sinners, and will eternally be the Matter of our delightful Contemplation in Heaven, if there we come.

Sect. 16. The Author thinks, that those who have been immoral and vicious in their Lives, upon becoming virtuous, and righteously disposed, have no farther Occasion for the Gospel; because the Divine Edict, whereby the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with, will be a never-failing Spring of Consolation to them. He maintains, that the Gospel was not intended to improve the Righteous, and elevate them to a higher Condition. There Persons, therefore, now being such, though they were formerly of a very different Character, they have no Need of the Gospel. For, now having that Holiness, which is necessary to Happiness, they may, without any Danger, be turned over from the Gospel to the Law, as it allows of Imperfection, and obtain Life by it: Or obey it, so as to live by that. But,

1. No such Edict is extant in the sacred Records, however, not the least Proof thereof is yet given by our Author; it is not to be found in those Places, unto which he refers us for it.

2. Such an Edict cannot consist with the infinite Perfections of God. The Reason of His requiring supreme, perfect Love to Himself, is the infinite Excellency of His own Nature; and, therefore, it is no less absurd to suppose, that He may cease to require such Love of His Creatures, than it is to imagine, that He may cease to be God.

3. No Law was given, which could give Life, in the Time of the Apostle Paul And, I think, that it will never be proved, that such a Law hath been given since. Therefore,

4. The Law cannot be a never-failing Spring of Consolation to any of the Sons of Men. The Gospel only is such a Spring, wherein the Righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith. Which Righteousness, is everlasting; and with that Righteousness, everlasting Salvation is inseparably connected, and Divine Grace will reign through it unto eternal Life.

Sect. 17. He insists upon it, that Faith is not a Dependence on Christ, or Truth in Him for Salvation; but a bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel; though he thinks, that Love to it attends that Persuasion. On this Subject he expatiates largely, and charges those, whom he calls popular Preachers, with many and great Inconsistencies upon this Point; especially, as Assurance is thought to be essential to Faith. My Opinion being different, I shall not undertake to defend it: Nor, do I think myself at all obliged to vindicate any Writers, who through Inadvertency may have, in some Instances, expressed themselves in an inconsistent Manner. It is Truth only, which I shall contend for.

1. A mere Assent, a simple Belief, or bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel, as I before observed, is a mere natural Act of the human Mind, produced by a natural Mean, viz. common Language, whereby Divine Truths are expressed. God speaks to us in His Word, and He requires us to believe the Truth of those Doctrines, which He delivers therein. Now, I would ask, whether He speaks intelligibly, or not? If He speaks so as to be understood; or, if His Language is not above the natural Capacity of Man, it is a Medium sufficient to produce in Men, an Assent to the Truths expressed, without the least supernatural Assistance, This Assent, therefore, cannot be

that precious Faith, which the Apostle says is obtained by Lot, {toiv lacousi} which this Author would persuade us it is. He might as well say, it is by Lot, that Men obtain a Belief, that two and two make four, as assert, that Men obtain by Lot, a simple Belief of the Truth of the Gospel, if God speaks to us intelligibly in the Scripture. And I suppose none will say, that he speaks unintelligibly; because that would be the same, as saying, no End can be answered by His speaking. 2. Love to the Gospel does not, nor can attend a bare Persuasion of its Truth. The Author's Supposition, that it may, is absolutely groundless. Love to Evangelical Truths arises from an Acquaintance with their true Nature, or real Excellency, which a natural Man hath not, nor can have. They are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.

3. No Acts of spiritual Obedience can spring from a mere Assent to the Truths of the Gospel; because, that is no other than a natural Act: It is not a spiritual Principle of Operation. The Mind, notwithstanding, that Assent, is still carnal, and Enmity against God, it is not subject to His Law, neither indeed can be.

4. Those Acts of holy Obedience, which the subjects of supernatural Faith yield unto God, are Fruits of that Faith, and accompany it; but they are not that Faith itself: Or, that Faith does not consist in Acts of Obedience, though Acts of Obedience flow from that excellent Grace. But the proper Acts of Faith, in his Account, are no other than Socinian Obedience, which may be yielded to the Divine Law, without the Infusion of a holy Principle into the Mind.

5. Faith, considered as an Act, is a Trust in, or Dependence on Christ alone for Salvation, upon a Conviction of our miserable and helpless Condition in ourselves, and a Perception of the Wisdom, Fitness, and Glory of the Method of laving Sinners by Him. Without such a Conviction, no Man will ever believe to the saving of the Soul. It is produced by a View of the vast Extent of the Law, a Prospect of our Guilt, an Apprehension of its just Demerit, a Sense of the Plague of our Hearts, and a Discernment of the infinite Holiness of God, as appearing in His Law. Thus, thro' the Law we become dead to the Law, that we may live unto God, upon another Foundation, which is absolutely distinct from that, viz. the Covenant of Grace. Our Author calls this, the idle Process of a Law-Work. But, if he is an entire Stranger unto a Work of this Kind upon his Mind, he is destitute of that Faith, which is of the Operation of God, and under the Power of Unbelief. Let him think of that Matter, as he pleases. No Man will ever receive Christ, or believe in Him, without such a Conviction. In Virtue of that Light, by which we come to know our Misery, and Helplessness, we see the Necessity of such a Saviour as Christ is, and the Glory which arises to God, in saving us, through the Blood, Righteousness, and Grace of the Blessed Jesus: This makes Him precious to us, and keeps us fixed in a Dependence on Him, for Pardon, Peace, Acceptance with God, Wisdom, Holiness, and spiritual Strength, in all Times of Temptation, and Distress. So that, Faith is a cordial Reception of Christ, as the Way of Salvation appointed by God, and an immoveable Adherence unto Him, as our ALL IN ALL.

Sect. 18. This Writer's Opinion is, that the Atonement of Christ secures not the Pardon of Sin to any Man. For, That it cannot do, if our Acceptance with God, and Justification before Him hereafter, depends upon, and is to be secured by our Obedience to that Edict, whereby the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with; which he strenuously maintains. Notwithstanding, therefore, all that he hath said on the Doctrine of Atonement, by the Death of Christ, he does not think, that Sin is really expiated by His atoneing Sacrifice, nor that Sinners are actually redeemed

from the Law's Curse, by what He suffered, nor really secured from enduring the vindictive Displeasure of God, by all those agonizing Tortures, which He endured for them. Real Atonement consists in these Things, viz; a Removal of Guilt - Redemption from the Law's Curse - and, Security from suffering Divine Penalty; or, an actual Right to Impunity, unto which the Sinner was obnoxious, on Account of his Offences. And, for my Part, I will never contend with any Man, for Atonement by the Death of the Son of God, if these Things are not allowed to be included therein. Adored be Divine Favour for it! Christ hath put away Sin by the Sacrifice of Himself. - He hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. - And, Peace is made by the Blood of His Cross. When, therefore, we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the Death of His Son. Hence it is clear, that our Right to Impunity, springs not from our Acts of Obedience; but results absolutely, and alone, from the infinitely meritorious Sufferings of the Blessed Jesus.

Sect. 19. He imagines, that on the Ground of Justice, Men may expect to be justified, at the Bar of God, by their own Obedience to the sovereign Edict, which He hath condescended to publish, by His supreme, royal Prerogative, for that Purpose. 1. If so, then justification hereafter, will not be through the Righteousness of Christ; but by their own Works. In Judgment, a Righteousness will not be imputed to them, for their Justification that is without Works; but their own personal Obedience: Or, their own Works will be the Cause and Ground of their future Acceptance with God. And, therefore, 2. Boasting will not be excluded in the next World, if it be in this. The Proof of which, will be attended with no small Difficulty. 3. It is not yet proved, that God hath published such an Edict, and I think it never will be. For, 4. The Reason of God's requiring supreme, perfect Love to Himself, is the infinite Excellency of His Nature, which Reason will eternally continue; and, therefore, His Law, which is founded on that Reason, will for ever remain in full Force, without the least Alteration, or Abatement. 5. It is not possible with God, to esteem a Creature innocent, on the Foundation of his own Temper and Actions, who is not perfectly conformable to His Law, which requires supreme, perfect Love to Himself; because, that would be passing a Judgment, which is contrary to Truth and Fact. Now, as it is confessedly true, that there is not any Man, in the present State, who perfectly loves God, no Man can be justified, at the Divine Tribunal, by his own Obedience. Perfect Obedience can never Spring from imperfect Love. 6. That Obedience, which arises only from a natural Faith, hath not any Thing of true Holiness in it, and, therefore, it cannot be acceptable to God. A mere Assent to, a simple Belief, or bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel, is no other than a natural Faith, Which is produced, in the human Mind, by a natural Medium; and, therefore, no Acts springing from it, are really holy, and spiritual, nor can be pleasing to God. How should they then be the Ground of our future Justification before Him?

Sect. 20. According to the Principles of this Author, the sincere and humble Christian, when upon the Verge of Eternity, may solace himself thus: Though it is true, that I have sinned against my Maker, and have always been unable to come up to that Perfection, which His original Law required of Man, He has graciously dispensed with that Law, by a sovereign Edict, in order for my Relief, as a Creature guilty and imperfect; in that Edict, He gave me the strongest Assurance, by His Oath, that if I repented of my past Miscarriages, or turned from my evil Ways, and did that which is lawful and right, I should, in so doing, be justified, and live thereby. Being deeply struck with this His merciful Condescension, I resolved to forsake Sin, and work Righteousness. This Resolution I have performed, and, therefore, I have now a Claim upon Him, on the Foundation of my own Obedience, for Acceptance with Him, and the Enjoyment of Blessedness from Him. O my

Soul, be not then afraid to appear at His Tribunal; for He must justify, He cannot condemn thee, without a Violation of that Oath, which He gave thee, for thy Security. According to the Principles of most whom he calls popular Preachers, one whom he esteems a hypocritical, and boasting Christian, must, at the Hour of Death, comfort himself thus, and no otherwise: Though it is true, that my Sins are many, great, and highly aggravated, there is Virtue sufficient in the Blood of Christ to atone for them all. My own Righteousness is very imperfect, and, therefore, it cannot justify me before God. But the Righteousness of Christ is absolutely perfect, and of infinite Value. In that Garment of Salvation, I humbly hope, my Soul is clothed, and constituted righteous; thereon alone I depend for Acceptance with my Supreme Judge, and as my Title to future Blessedness, without any of my own Works, either in Connection with, or in Subordination to that Righteousness. My Nature, I know, is depraved and vile; and is, therefore, unmeet for, and incapable of the Enjoyment of God; but I hope, that, by His Spirit and Grace, He hath been graciously pleased, without any Concurrence of mine, to implant a Principle of Holiness in me, according to which, I delight in, and serve His Law. And all the Actings of that Principle, in holy Obedience, have been produced by His gracious, and benign Influence. For, as to Holiness, I AM NOTHING. BY THE GRACE OF GOD I AM WHAT I AM: And I shall behold the Top-stone laid, of the amazing Structure of my Salvation, with Joy, at present inconceivable to me; and, I am sure, that I shall eternally cry, GRACE, GRACE UNTO IT. The Sneer, Scorn, Contempt, and Virulence, which run through this Performance, I imagine, will as certainly sink, as a Talent of Lead, will immerge in the Deep, with its own Weight; and, therefore, I think myself excusable, in leaving what he presents his Readers with, of such Sort, to fall without any farther Notice.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 102. ft2 Ibid. p. 170. ft3 Ibid. p. 354. ft4 A Note, p. 10.

S. Ancient Prophecy Proved to be Divine

Ancient Prophecy, Proved to be Divine by John Brine {London: George Keith, 1761}

SERMON 32 ANCIENT PROPHECY, PROVED TO BE DIVINE IN A DISCOURSE PREACHED AT The Rev. Mr. THOMPSON's Meeting-House, in a Monthly EXERCISE of PRAYER, with a SERMON, February the 19th,

1761.

Published at the Request of some who heard it.

Printed for GEORGE KEITH, in Gracechurch-street: And Sold by JOHN ENYON, Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal- Exchange. 1761 [Price Sixpence.]

{2 Peter 1:21} For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man; but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. THE Apostle exhorts us, in the preceding Part of the Context, reverentially to regard the Writings of the Prophets. And in order to enforce his Exhortation, he introduces the Words which I have read. In treating the Text, I would First, explain the Terms and Phrase used therein, and Then, advance a doctrinal Proposition from them.

First. Prophecy is the Knowledge and Revelation of Things, not discoverable by natural Light, whether past, present, or future. Things past are Matter of Prophecy. For Instance, the Order of Creation which Moses gives, the Account of; that could not possibly be discovered by Reason. The great Creator, in an immediate and supernatural Manner, made known to Moses how he proceeded in the Formation of all Things which exist. Present Things also were Matter of Prophecy. Thus Elisha by a prophetic Spirit became acquainted with his Servant Gebazi, receiving Gifts of Naaman the Syrian, {2 Kings 5:26}. Future Things likewise are Matter of Prophecy; such as are contingent and free, especially if they are not only in a general Manner predicted, but with the Circumstances of Persons, Place and Time. By this God proves his Omniscience, and strongly asserts his Divinity, against the feigned Deities of the Gentiles; that He by himself knew future Things, and revealed them to whom he would, {Isaiah 23:18; Isaiah 24:1-23; Isaiah 25:1-12; Isaiah 26:1-21; Isaiah 27:1-13; Isaiah 28:1-29; Isaiah 29:1-24; Isaiah 30:1-33; Isaiah 31:1-9; Isaiah 32:1-20; Isaiah 33:1-24; Isaiah 34:1-17; Isaiah 35:1-10; Isaiah 36:1-22; Isaiah 37:1-38; Isaiah 38:1-22; Isaiah 39:1-8; Isaiah 40:1-31 w:1-31; Isaiah 41:1-21}

Secondly. Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man. Old Time means the former Ages of the World. Prophecy was ancient, for it commenced very early. It came not by the Will of Man; the human Will had no Influence therein: For no Man was endowed with a Spirit of Prophecy, because he willed so to be: It was entirely of the sovereign Will of GOD that any Man became a Prophet. And it must be observed, that the Prophets had not an habitual Capacity of prophesying or declaring the Will of GOD. It was not by virtue of an infused Habit residing in them, which they could exert at Pleasure. This is evident an Moses, who did not immediately pass Sentence against a Blasphemer; but he was put into Custody. until the Will of GOD was declared concerning him,

{Leviticus 24:12}.

Thirdly. The Prophets, who were holy Men of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They were holy Men of God; sanctified by divine Grace, and let apart of GOD unto that sacred Function wherein they ailed, and they enjoyed Nearness to, and Familiarity with Him: They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: Who is the third Person in the adorable Trinity. His Office and Work it is to reveal the Will of GOD unto the Church. The Prophets spake as they were moved by him. He furnished them with the Knowledge of the Matter of their Prophecies: And by a powerful Impulse He excited them to speak in delivering them. For the holy Spirit dictated to them in speaking; or the Prophets expressed the Mind of GOD in Language, which He directed them to use. The Medium by which we communicate Knowledge to one another, in this State, as Speech, wherein we may err: For, our Language is not an infallible Mean of conveying Knowledge. If, therefore, the Prophets had been left to themselves, in the Choice of Words, they might have erred. To suppose which, is to overthrow Inspiration itself, as it is intended for the infallible Instruction of the Church of GOD. This is clear, because a fallible Mean cannot infallibly instruct, or infallibly convey the Knowledge of Truth. The Conceptions of the Prophets were suggested to their Minds in an immediate and supernatural Manner, by the Holy Ghost; and they expressed those Conceptions, under his infallible Guidance and Direction. So that, they were effectually preserved from Error, an Thought, and in Language too. And therefore, their Doctrines are not only of GOD; but the Words in which they expressed those Doctrines are of GOD also. As Saints they were not impeccable, but as Prophets they were certainly infallible. For, they both thought and spoke under the infallible Direction of the holy Spirit. From the Words thus briefly explained, I think this doctrinal Proposition naturally arises, viz. The Writings of the Prophets are an immediate and supernatural Revelation from God.

It is reasonable to suppose, that GOD is capable of conveying to the human Mind, the Knowledge of Truth, in an immediate and supernatural Manner; and also, that the Mind of Man is capable of receiving the Knowledge of Truth in such a Manner: Because, I apprehend, without the Supposition of both, we must conclude, it is impossible, that the Knowledge of Men, even in the future State, should be carried farther, than their natural Powers can arrive unto. Which surely none will ever imagine. Hath not GOD the same immediate Access to, and Power of acting upon the human Mind, in its embodied State, as in its separate State? Doubtless he has. And, therefore, he can, while it is united to the Body, enlarge its Knowledge of Truths as far as he pleases, by an immediate and supernatural Manner of acting upon it unto that End. Consequently, Inspiration is not a Thing in the least unreasonable. Our Incapacity to explain it, or declare the Mode of it, is no Objection unto its Possibility. We pretend not to have any Experience thereof; how, therefore, should we be capable of explaining of it, or of declaring its Mode. Reason cannot but conclude upon the Possibility of it, tho' it is unable to describe how GOD acts upon the human Mind therein. In discoursing on the doctrinal Proposition which I have advanced from the Text, I would,

I. Endeavour to prove, that an immediate and supernatural Revelation was absolutely necessary, to teach Men their Duty, and conduct them to Happiness.

II. Offer some Arguments to evince, that the Writings of the Prophets are such a Revelation.

III. Hint some Things to prove, that we now enjoy their Writings pure and uncorrupt.

I. An immediate and supernatural Revelation was absolutely necessary to teach Men their Duty, and conduct them to Happiness. The Truth whereof, I conceive, the following Arguments will most clearly and solidly prove.

1. We know not how we may worship GOD acceptably. By Worship Is understood giving that Glory to GOD which is due from us, on Account of his infinite Perfections, our absolute Dependence on Him, and our numerous Obligations to Him: Reason itself, without the least Hesitation, will at once determine, that it is fit that we should pay religious Honours to our Creator. But in what Way, which will be approved by him it is at a Loss, and cannot resolve. No Man, who thinks, can be without some degree of Consciousness, that he is a Sinner, and unable to perform devotional Acts with that fixed Attention, and absolute Freedom from Vanity in his Thoughts which he ought. How, therefore, his religious Services may be accepted with his Maker, which are not such as they ought to be, he cannot obtain Satisfaction about. Our Religion, is the Religion of Sinners: Therefore very defective and imperfect. Consequently, it is impossible that our Reason should ever discover how our religious Services may be accepted by the infinitely pure and holy Object of our Devotions. I dare venture to affirm, that if all the Deists upon Earth were to unite in a Consultation on this momentous Subject, they would never be able to prescribe to us such a Mode of Worship, as we may be assured will be pleasing to our Maker. This is a Point of the utmost Importance, and fully proves the absolute Necessity of an immediate and supernatural Revelation from Heaven to instruct us in our Duty, and guide us to Happiness.

2. Another Thing of equal Importance, which we are ignorant of, is, how our depraved Nature may be rectified and cured of that moral Disorder which it is the Subject of That Corruption hath overspread human Nature, is as clear as the Sun: But to what particular Cause it is owing, Reason cannot inform us. The Malady is evident to all who seriously think on the Matter, but none can trace it up to its Origin; nor discover by what Means it may be remedied. If Reason is capable of discovering that GOD only can effect our Cure, which perhaps it may, yet it hath no Way of knowing whether He will or not. For no Man hath a Right to claim this Favour of his Maker, and therefore none can tell, whether he will vouchsafe it to any of the human Race or not. From hence it is evident, that an immediate and supernatural Revelation from GOD was absolutely necessary to instruct and conduct us to Happiness.

3. It is a Point unknown to Reason whether GOD will pardon Sin. As we cannot be without some Consciousness of Guilt, our natural Light discerns that Sin demerits Punishment. Divine Benevolence and Goodness assure the innocent Creature of kind Treatment from its Maker: But that He will act mercifully towards the Guilty, cannot be collected from thence; because, Acts of Mercy and Forgiveness are not natural to GOD. They are free Acts of his Will, which therefore must be above the Discovery of our Reason. If indeed there was a Fitness in Pardon, or if it was fit in itself for GOD to forgive Sin, he could not but forgive it. Remission would then be necessary and not free. Nor Can we attain unto a Satisfaction, from the Works and Bounties of Providence, that there is a Purpose in GOD to pardon Sin. Deferring the Execution of Punishment is no Evidence of an Intention, in GOD, to remit our Guilt. And permitting Men to possess Abundance of this World, is no Ground for a Conclusion that He is upon Terms of Peace and Reconciliation with them. The grandest Monarch, from his exalted Station and princely Treasures, hath no more Reason to think that GOD will forgive his Sins, than the meanest and most necessitous of his Subjects have to imagine, that He will pardon theirs. Divine Love or Hatred to the Sons of Men, cannot be known by

what they are in titled unto, or want of the Things of this World. Placability in GOD towards Sinners, cannot with the least Appearance of Truth be inferred from the Dispensations of Providence. The great Governor of the World often suffers the most abandoned to swim in Plenty, and enjoy Ease; while the less vicious drag through Life in Penury and great Distress. Besides, what pleasing Sense of the divine Favour do the Sons of Men enjoy, in all that glittering Show, with which they glide through the short Time of their Existence here? None at all: Nor are they desirous of that delightful Consciousness. As they have their Portion in this Life, they are content with it, and look not higher. This is a farther Proof of the absolute Necessity of an immediate and supernatural Revelation from GOD.

4. We cannot by any Means assure ourselves, that it is possible with GOD to pardon Sin and save criminal Creatures. Some, perhaps, will say this is proceeding very far indeed: But I hope to make it evident, that it is true. The Reason of the Matter asserted. is clear: Which is this. If Sin is pardoned, and guilty Creatures are saved, it is fit that it should be, in such a Way as is glorifying to GOD. It may be, it will be asked, Is not GOD infinitely merciful? I answer, he undoubtedly is. It may be enquired farther, Is it not an Act of Mercy to save a miserable Creature? I reply, It certainly is. May not, therefore, GOD glorify his Mercy in laving Sinners absolutely on the Ground of Mercy, or without any Provision for his Honour in other Respects? I answer boldly, No, he cannot: Because, Mercy in Remission only regards the miserable Object, in sparing him, not his Guilt, unto which his Misery is owing. GOD is not merciful to Sin itself, nor can be: That he cannot spare, or suffer to go unpunished. As he cannot act powerfully, in the natural World, without acting wisely therein: So he cannot act mercifully in the moral World, {if I may be allowed the Use of that Phrase} without acting holily therein. Now, the Manifestation of divine Holiness, in relation to Guilt, can only be in the Infliction of deferred Penalty, And it is not possible with GOD to exercise Mercy towards guilty Creatures, and therein neglect to discover his Holiness, or his just and infinite Abhorrence of moral Evil. To pardon Sin, as an absolute Act of Mercy, would be a total Neglect of Holiness, which is no more possible with GOD, than it is to put forth the Acts of Power without Wisdom. As He cannot act powerfully without the Exercise of his infinite Wisdom therein: So He cannot act mercifully, without manifesting his infinite Holiness therein. But to forgive Sin, as an Act of absolute Mercy, would not be an Act of Holiness; and therefore no such Act of absolute Mercy is possible with GOD. Can finite Wisdom resolve how Holiness, as well as Mercy, may be discovered in the Remission of Sin? No, that is impossible. Holiness is manifested in the Infliction of Punishment for Sin, and Mercy is displayed in the Impunity of a Sinner. It is absolutely beyond the Power of all created Wisdom to determine how both should be; and there' fore our Reason cannot assure us, that the Pardon of Sin, and the Salvation of Sinners, are possible: And consequently our Reason must conclude, that for ought we know, our Salvation may be a Thing impossible. For we cannot tell how GOD may act holily and mercifully towards guilty Creatures in their Remission and Salvation. I make no Scruple to allow, that Reason of itself is sufficient to acquaint us, in some Degree, with our Guiltiness and Misery: But I peremptorily deny, that it is capable of pointing out a Way wherein GOD may save us, consistently with the Honour of his Perfections. And right Reason will never imagine that GOD may act otherwise than becomes himself, Or unsuitable to any of his Perfections. These Things clearly evince the absolute Necessity of an immediate and supernatural Revelation to instruct us in our Duty, and conduct us to Happiness.

II. I would offer some Arguments to prove, that the Writings of the Prophets are such a Revelation.

It is reasonable to think that the Prophets had a full Persuasion in their Minds, that they were inspired of GOD. For they did not acquire Riches, obtain Ease, and gain the Applause of the World, by acting in the prophetical Character; on the contrary; they were exposed to Poverty, Loss of Liberty, the keen Resentment of a rebellious and wicked People, Unto whom, they delivered their Prophecies, yea even unto Death itself, in Consequence of the Part they acted as Prophets. And, therefore, they must, most deservedly, be esteemed Fools or mad Men, if they were not fully persuaded in their own Minds, that they had a Commission from GOD to speak and as they did. Would Men in their Senses, without any View of Advantage; but quite the Reverse, pretend to be divinely inspired, unless they really thought themselves so to be? It is most unreasonable to imagine this. I add, the Prophets were holy Men of GOD. They loved Him, revered Him, trusted in Him, sacredly regarded his Honour, were obedient to Him, and enjoyed Intimacy with Him. And therefore, they certainly conceived, that the Matter of their Prophecies was suggested unto them by GOD. For, Men of their Character could not be guilty of impious Fraud, or of palming a Forgery on the infinite Being, whom they adored. If any shall say, Be it so, that those Men really thought themselves to be inspired, were they above a Possibility of Deception? Might they not be mistaken? What Evidence have we that they were not? In answer, I will say, that We have most clear, and abundant Evidence, that they were not mistaken.

1. The Sublimity and mysterious Nature of the Doctrines, which they delivered, clearly and solidly prove, that they were inspired of GOD. The prophetical Writings contain Principles, which are absolutely above the Discovery of human Reason; and, therefore, those Principles could not possibly be invented by the Prophets. Their Knowledge of them was not acquired; but it must have been conveyed to their Minds, in an immediate and supernatural Manner. Things they are, which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, and which have not entered into the Heart of Man. Yea, they infinitely transcend the Wisdom of Angels. For, they are the Wisdom of God, in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom, which be ordained before the World, to our Glory. They are the manifold Wisdom of God. And the deep Things of God. The Scheme of the Salvation of Sinners, by the promised Messiah, whereof the Prophets treat, was the Contrivance of infinite Wisdom, and could never have been thought of, by Men, or Angels. The Prophets assert, that the Messiah is Jehovah, God, the mighty God, and also a Child born, and a Son given; therefore properly divine, and really human, which is a Mystery, that cannot be comprehended, by any finite Mind, nor could ever have been conceived of, by a created Understanding, how capacious soever. And that this glorious Person should be a Substitute for guilty Men, obey the Law for them, bear their Guilt, and atone for their Crimes, are such Mysteries, as could not have been devised by a Creature, angelic or human. Consequently, the Prophets, who discovered those Mysteries, must have been inspired of GOD. I am sensible, that the Deists assert, that these Doctrines are absurd, and repugnant to Reason, but they have not yet proved them so. And I dare affirm, that they will never be able to give the least Proof thereof. For, they have no Medium, by which such Proof can be given. Because, they are not inconsistent with any Principle of natural Religion. Above it they are; but contrary to it, they are not. This is an intrinsic demonstrative Proof, that the holy Prophets were divinely inspired.

2. The perfect Harmony and Agreement, in all the Writings of the Prophets, relating to those sublime and mysterious Doctrines, clearly prove, that they are of divine Original, In nothing do they contradict one another. They correspond, and exactly agree in all Things.. No Contradictions, or

jarring Principles, can be produced, in what they spake, and wrote. They are one and uniform, in all they express, upon every Point of Doctrine, whereof they discourse. Now, if we consider, at what distant Times, their Prophecies were delivered, if we consider the large Number of the Prophets, their different Capacities, Advantages and Stations, as Men, under what different Circumstances, and also on what different Occasions, they did write, surely, we must be convinced, that it is no less than real Miracle, that a Unity of Sentiments, should run through their Writings: or, which is the same Thing, that they were under unerring Direction in what they wrote. For, without that, human Frailty would most certainly have discovered itself, in some Part or other, on that great Variety of sublime and profound Subjects, whereof they treat. I challenge all the Deists in the World, to try their Skill on this Head. And if they are able to produce a single Contradiction, upon any Point of Doctrine, in the Writings of the Prophets, I will allow, that with Reason they reject the Bible. But I am firmly persuaded, that by this Concession, I am not in the least Danger of being driven into infidelity. And that this is a Task, which no Deist will dare to undertake. Bold and enterprising as they are, in their Attacks on the Credit of the sacred Writers. If any one should be hardy enough to attempt the Thing, he would quickly find, that he could not hope to succeed, in that Attempt. The Uniformity of Doctrines, in the Writings of the Prophets, is a pregnant, and irrefragable Proof of their Divinity: or, that those holy Men of GOD, spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

3. The numerous Predictions of future Events, which could only be foreknown to GOD, and their exact Accomplishment, that we have in the Writings of the Prophets, undeniably prove, that GOD, in an immediate and supernatural Manner, revealed his Will to them. This is an exceedingly copious Subject, a large Field opens itself to our View. And I might greatly enlarge upon it. For, the prophetic Writings abound with such Predictions. But I shall confine myself, in this Discourse, unto two general Heads of them.

{1.} Those relating to Jesus Christ.

{2.} Those which respect the State of the Jews upon their Rejection of Him, and their Opposition to his Gospel, which was preached to them, after his Ascension to Heaven.

{1.} I would observe some of those Predictions, relating to Jesus Christ, which we have, in the Writings of the Prophets, and the exact Accomplishment of them in Him. His Descent is foretold, not only of which Tribe; but of what particular Family He should be. It was a Matter well known among the Jews, from ancient Prophecy, that the Messiah promised to them, was to spring from David. And our Saviour was of the Seed of David, according to the Flesh. A clear Prediction was given of the supernatural Conception of Christ. Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son, and shall call his Name IMMANUEL. This is a Thing miraculous. Which, therefore, could only be foreknown to GOD. For no Creature whatever can possibly tell whether GOD will exert his Power to effect a Miracle, unless He himself makes a Discovery, that such is his Intention, And, therefore, this Prediction of the miraculous Conception of Christ, is a clear Proof, that the Prophet was divinely inspired. Our blessed Lord was conceived and born of a Virgin, by the almighty Agency of the Holy Ghost. He was made of a Woman, formed of her Substance; so that he was the Seed of the Woman, in Distinction from the Man, according to the first Promise which GOD expressed after Adam's Fall. The Place of the Birth of Christ was Matter of Prophecy, which, through a remarkable Dispensation of Providence, was not only accomplished; but the Fact was

rendered so notorious, that it could not possibly be denied. Also full Proof was given, that He descended from David, whose Son the Messiah was to be. Farther, his Behaviour is described in the Writings of the Prophets, in as exact a Manner as if they had seen and been conversant with Him, in the Course of his Conduct. It was declared concerning Him in Prophecy, that he should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Street; in order to gain public Applause, either by what He spake or wrought. And according to the Prediction of the Prophets, Christ was absolutely free from Ostentation. He made use of no Methods to spread his Fame, and obtain Honour and Praise from Men, in the great Variety of stupendous Works, which he constantly effected, wherever he went. Our Saviour wisely performed many miraculous Works, in a public Manner, with a View to render his divine Mission evident and incontestable. But he wrought none with an Intention to gain worldly Honour and Repute. In no Instance did He court the Applause of Men. His sole Aim was to glorify his Father, and give Proof, that He acted by his Commission. Majesty and Modesty centered and met in Him, and were equally manifest in all that He spake and acted. It was foretold of Him, that He should be lowly, riding upon an Ass, upon a Colt, the Foal of an ass. And He was meek and lowly, Which he discovered, when He entered in Triumph, into the City of Jerusalem, upon so mean a Creature as an Ass, agreeable to the Prophet's Prediction. Now, who but GOD could possibly foreknow these Things? Certainly none. And, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude, that the Prophets who predicted them, were divinely inspired. Moreover, the Sufferings and Death of Christ, were prophesied of in a most explicit Manner. It is said, that He gave his Back to the Smiters, his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair, and hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting. Wherein are expressed the rude and cruel Treatment our Saviour met with, and his Fortitude in bearing it. He was spit upon, smitten in the Face, and scourged. In suffering which Indignities and Cruelties, he conducted himself, in the most meek and patient Manner. Not the least Degree of undue Resentment appeared in Him. When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not. But, as the Prophet predicted, He was led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so He opened not his Mouth. His Death not only was foretold; but also the Manner of it, was intimated in Prophecy. His Hands and his Feet were to be pierced, and they were so, when He was nailed to the Cross. That Prediction suggested, that He was to suffer Death, by Crucifixion, and He actually did.

Again, It was prophesied, that the Messiah should be laid in the Grave, and have an honourable Interment. He made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death. That Prediction also was exactly accomplished in our blessed Saviour. I add, his Resurrection from the State of the Dead was Matter of Prophecy. He is prophetically represented, expressing himself thus. Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption. Which was verified in Jesus, Who arose from the Dead on the third Day, after he suffered, as is abundantly verified by numerous credible Witnesses, who could be under no Temptation to affirm a Falshood: And who had sufficient Means of satisfying themselves of the Truth of the Fact. It cannot be denied, that this was an Event really miraculous. And, therefore, it could only be fore-known to GOD, consequently, no one could possibly become acquainted with it, before its Accomplishment; but by an immediate and supernatural Revelation from Him. To which I subjoin, his Ascension to Heaven, and sitting down at the right Hand of GOD, were clearly predicted in the Writings of the Prophets. The Messiah was to ascend up on high; and sit at the right Hand of GOD. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right Hand. This likewise was accomplished in our Saviour. For, He is exalted at the right Hand of the Father, in that Character, to give Repentance to Israel, and

Remission of Sins. Which wonderful and glorious Event, could not possibly, have been thought of, by any Mortal, without a supernatural Revelation of it from Heaven. Hence, it is evident, that the Writings of the Prophets were divinely inspired.

Once more, the Glory which followed, in the Church, upon the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ to Heaven, was foretold. The wonderful Spread of the Gospel, the Conversion of the Gentiles, and the large Effusion of the Holy Spirit, in his Graces and Gifts, were clearly prophetic of. Which are such Events as none but GOD could foreknow.

And, therefore, the Prophets who predicted those extraordinary Events were inspired by Him.

{2.} The State of the Jews upon their Rejection of the Messiah, and Opposition to his Gospel, was most clearly prophesied of. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, irrefragably proves two Things, in general, from the Writings of the Prophets, relating to that People. One is this, that the Covenant made with their Fathers, at Sinai and Horeb, was to be antiquated, become old, and vanish away. That their Heaven, and their Earth, i.e. their ecclesiastical and political States, were to be shaken, yea shaken all to Pieces. According to ancient Prophecy, the Scepter was to depart from Judah, and a Lawgiver from between his Feet; after the Coming of the Messiah. Their civil and ecclesiastical Authority was entirely to sink. And quite a different State of Things was to be introduced upon the Sinking of the Mosaic Oeconomy. A different Mode of Worship was to take Place, and different Persons were to officiate therein. The other Point, which that Divine Writer proves, is this: That nothing was to be expected by that incredulous People, but fiery Indignation, which would devour them, as a Body politic; and which actually did. The Condition of that People, ever since, to this Time, is a standing undeniable Evidence, that the Writings of the Prophets are of divine Original.

4. The Miracles which were wrought by the Prophets, for the Confirmation of their heavenly Mission, and the Truth of their Prophecies, most clearly and solidly evince, that they were divinely inspired. When I say Miracles, I understand stupendous Works of such Sort, which are done beside or contrary to the Laws of Nature, and that exceed all the Power of created Causes, performed of God, to gain Credit to his Word. That Works of such Sort were done, in great Abundance, to obtain Credit unto what the Prophets declared, is not to be denied. Numerous Miracles were wrought by Moses in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, among the People to whom he was appointed a Leader, for their Deliverance out of Bondage, Safety, Supply and Preservation. And a great Variety, from Time to Time, were effected by succeeding Prophets, unto the like important Ends. And, therefore, omnipotent Power was exerted to prove the Truth of their divine Mission, the Verity of the Doctrines they asserted, and of the Predictions which they delivered. Must we not conclude from hence, that it is most unreasonable Incredulity, to disbelieve the Inspiration of those holy Men? GOD will never exert his Power to confirm Falsehood. He can no more do that, than He is capable of affirming what is untrue. Divine Power can only be put forth for the Establishment of Principles, which are divinely true. No false Doctrines can have Attestations in their Favour of that Kind. The external Evidences of the Inspiration of the Prophets are such, that a Man who takes them into Consideration, must be either a Knave or a Fool, that refuses to believe it. Some, perhaps, will say this is very rough and plain. Be it so. I am free to declare to all the World, that I think, not the least Degree of Compliance is due to a Deist. If we may not be allowed to impute Folly to Infidels, who generally pretend unto a superior Degree of

Wisdom, we may take the Liberty to exhibit a Charge of very culpable Partiality against them, for without that, there is no Man of a common Understanding, but must discern, that the Writings of the Prophets were not their own Invention; but that they were penned under the infallible Direction of GOD. I proceed, III. To hint some Things, in order to prove, that we now enjoy those sacred Writings pure and uncorrupt.

Some who seem too ready to allow, that Corruptions have taken Place in the Writings of the Prophets, freely grant us this, that those Corruptions are not such as render it uncertain, whether they were inspired of GOD, or not. Their Books, as they now Read, contain such evident Marks in them, of their coming from GOD, that it cannot reasonably be doubted of. That Point is yielded to us. Which is a Matter of very weighty Consideration. If such Corruptions could be proved in the prophetical Writings, as obscure the Evidences of their divine Original, the Deists might triumph over us. But this is not pretended. Take those Writings as they now stand, they will irrefragably prove, of themselves, that they are no human Production. Such Things are found therein, as are absolutely undiscoverable by a finite Mind. Those Things, therefore, must have been revealed, by GOD. I apprehend, that several Things may be proposed to Consideration, which will render it improbable, that those Writings are corrupted or mutilated.

1. The End of GOD in dictating them, both respecting Himself and the Church.

{1.} The End respecting Himself was his own Glory, That we might know Him, love Him, fear Him, and obey Him. In short, that we might understand how to glorify Him as GOD; which Mankind, without a supernatural Revelation, could never do. That is far above the Reach of our impaired Reason. Philosophy is insufficient to instruct us in our Duty to our Maker, or in what Way we may honour Him as we ought. This End was worthy of GOD, and suitable to his Perfections. For it is fit that He should design his own Glory in all his Works, and in all his Transactions with his reasonable Creatures.

{2.} His End therein with respect to the Church was, not only her Instruction in the Matter of her Duty, but her Consolation, and her safe Guidance unto a state of everlasting Felicity in the Enjoyment of himself. This also is an End becoming the divine Perfections. From hence,

2. A strong Argument may be formed to prove the Purity and perfection of the prophetical writings. For, if these were the Ends of GOD, in granting us such a Revelation of his Will, unless we can suppose that He is become unconcerned about attaining those holy Ends, which He once designed in infinite Wisdom, we cannot imagine that He will ever suffer his Word to be corrupted or mutilated, whereby He would be frustrated of his Ends, in committing that sacred Depositum unto the Church. Now, such an Imagination would be as gross an Impeachment of his Wisdom, as great a Reflection on his Holiness, as dreadful an Abuse of his Goodness, as is possible to be deviled. Far greater Reverence is due to those sacred Writings than some bold Critics have discovered, who allow, that this Fountain of divine Light and Truth is become foul and muddy, or, in some. Instances, grossly corrupt, and have imagined themselves capable of purging it, by their learned Conjectures founded upon Translations, which they conclude, must have been made from Hebrew Copies, much differing from those which are now extant¹. If this be the Fact, may we not say, how happy was it with the Church formerly, when through the Kindness and Care of GOD she enjoyed the Revelation of his Will, pure, uncorrupt, and entire in all its Parts? But alas! for her, in later Ages GOD hath not manifested the same kind Care of her, nor the same Regard to his own

Glory, which He once did, in preferring his Word complete and free from Corruptions; but hath suffered it to be corrupted in a vast Multitude of Places, so that, in a great Variety of Instances, we cannot now determine, with Certainty, whether it is GOD, or Man only, who speaks to us in our Bibles. I very much lament, that any learned Man should advance Positions, relating to the Scripture, which naturally tend to produce Apprehensions in our Minds, that are dishonourable to GOD, and exceedingly dangerous to the Church. That some have so done, it is evident, if I mistake them not. If I do, I crave their Pardon for this Suggestion concerning them.

3. It cannot reasonably be thought, that the Writings of the Prophets were corrupted in the Time of our Saviour's being in the World. He appealed unto those Writings to prove the Truth of the Doctrines which He delivered, concerning GOD and himself, in the Character of the Messiah, without the least Intimation of Errors and Mistakes in them; and, therefore, it is highly improbable that they were then attended with Errors and Mistakes. Much less is It probable, if they had before that Time been wilfully corrupted by the jews, in whole Possession they were, that He would have been silent on that Head. His Zeal for the Honour of his Father, his intense Love to, and tender Care of the Church, would doubtless have caused Him to have detected and condemned their impious Fraud, if they had so done, though but in a single Instance. With what Severity of Language does He reprove the Jews for their false Glosses on, and perverse Interpretations of those Writings. And shall we imagine, that He would pass over in Silence the Wickedness and Impiety of they Jews, in daring to change the Language of the Prophets, in order to make them express a Sense, which they never intended? GOD forbid, that any Christian should ever admit such a Thought, to have the least Entertainment in his Mind. In my Apprehension, such a Conceit, though it should regard but one Instance only, reflects such Dishonour on the blessed Jesus, that I would not for the whole World allow of it, without the most demonstrative Proof of its Certainty, let all the learned Men in it say what they please, in order to vindicate themselves, in their Criticisms, on the sacred Text.

4. There is clear Reason to conclude, that those Writings have not been corrupted since that Time. Who should corrupt them? If any have so done, they must be either Jews, or professed Christians, who had them in their Possession. Now, it ought to. be observed, that neither could act such a Part, without an immediate Discovery. Jews Could not, without being detected by Christians, if they had been inclined to corrupt them, out of their Hatred to Christianity. But it is doing Wrong to the Jews to suggest, that they have ever been inclined to corrupt the prophetic Writings, from their Dislike of Jesus and his Followers. So far have they been from any such Inclination, that they have been strictly, yea superstitiously careful to preserve them exactly correct, and free from Alterations. If any professed Christians corrupted them, they must have been either the Orthodox or Heretics. Now, neither the former nor the latter could possibly make Alterations therein to serve a Turn; but they must have exposed themselves to the Censure of the others, for so wicked and fraudulent a Practice, and which would not have been to the Advantage, but the manifest Prejudice of their Cause. Men must be not only exceedingly wicked, but also extremely foolish, to attempt the Support of any Opinion, by a willful Corruption of the Scripture, because ever since the Spread of Christianity, that hath been impossible to be done, without a Discovery thereof by others, who espouse not that Opinion, which they would maintain. And, therefore, we may reasonably conclude, that the sacred Writings have not been corrupted, either by Jews, or professed Christians of any Party. And, from the Whole, that we now enjoy the Writings of the

Prophets entire, pure and uncorrupt. Which Writings justly challenge our highest Reverence, as they demand our greatest Gratitude, on Account of their divine Original. I shall conclude my Discourse with the Words of my Text. For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man; but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Particularly the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. Whose Folly and Boldness have been justly exposed by many learned Men, and the Purity of the Hebrew Text excellently defended BUXTORF, GLASSIUS, etc. The late very learned Mr. BEDFORD offers some convincing Reasons to prove, that the Samaritan Copy is of later Date than the Septuagint, and copied from thence, in several Places. He concludes, "that we may as well set up to correct Greek Authors by their Latin Versions, or Latin Authors by their English Versions, or the Alcoran of Mahomet, by the Latin and French Translations, as to correct the Text by those. - If a Suggestion, that the Jews had corrupted them {the Scriptures of the Old Testament} shall be sufficient to attempt daily Alterations, instead of fixing the Standard, we shall confound it; instead of one Bible, we shall have as many as there are Critics. We shall search after Truth until we have lost it, and play with this sacred Light until we have put it out. And whilst we arraign God's Providence in suffering such Corruptions to be made, and the World to be imposed on with a Scripture as coming from Him, a great Part whereof was none of his, we too justly provoke Him to enter into Judgment for such unprecedented Impieties, if not to remove his Candlestick out of its Place, and give it to a Nation which will make a better Use of it." This is wisely and piously, said. CHRONOLOGY, p. 49-52.

S. Antidote Against Spreading Antinomian Principle

THE SERMONS OF

JOHN BRINE An Antidote Against a Spreading Antinomian Principle by John Brine (London: John Ward, 1750)

SERMON 12 AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST A SPREADING ANTINOMIAN PRINCIPLE Printed for JOHN WARD, at the Kings's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal- Exchange: And Sold by GEORGE KEITH, at Mercers'

Chapel, Cheapside; and by JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal Exchange. London 1750. [Price Six-

Pence.

{Romans 3:31} Do we then make void the Law thro' Faith?

God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.

ALL, who acknowledge that Man is a lapsed Creature, confess, that it is not possible to obtain Life, if a sinless and unerring Obedience to the Will of our Maker is required of us to that End.

But, It is the Opinion of many, that Men are to acquire a Right to Life and Happiness, by yielding Obedience to a Law less rigorous in its Commands than the Law of Innocency is, viz. the Gospel. That is not, in the Apprehension of Multitudes, a gracious Discovery of a Right to impunity, and a Title to Life, by the Blood and Righteousness of Christ; but is only a Proposal of lower Terms of Life, by a Compliance with which we are to obtain for ourselves a Right to both. And these Terms are Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience. This is the Opinion of the Socinians.^{f1} This is also the Persuasion of the Arminians. ^{F2} And the Baxterians assert the fame. ^{F3} It is not the inseparable Connection of Faith and Salvation, which they intend; but They maintain, that it is a proper Condition of Pardon and Salvation; and that Faith, with its Fruits, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness before God, according to the Gospel; and that That is it, from which our Right to eternal Blessedness results; that, as Adam's Right to a continual Enjoyment of Happiness would have arose from his Obedience to the old Law, so our Right to Life arises from our Obedience to this new, and (as it is call'd) remedial Law. I am fully persuaded, that this Opinion is not true: And I would, First, offer some Arguments to prove the Negative; Secondly, answer the Arguments for the Affirmative.

First, The Arguments against this Opinion are many.

Arg. 1.

If the Gospel is a Law by which Men are justified or condemned, it is very far from requiring a perfect Obedience in order to Acceptance. It must be allowed, that the Commission of the most atrocious Crimes is no Objection to a Person's Justification in the fight of God by his own Works,

viz. Murder, Adultery, Incest, Cursing, Swearing, and a Denial of Jesus Christ, etc. For those, who embrace this Opinion, must be obliged to grant, that some Persons, who were guilty of the Crimes mentioned, were, notwithstanding, justified in the fight of God by their own Works; and, consequently, this Law is far indeed from being a perfect one. If it is laid, that God forbids all Evil, and requires all Good, in Practice, by this Law, then it will follow, that he justifies Men, or accounts them righteous, in relation to their own Actions, whose Conduct hath not been, such as his Law requires it should be; which looks very much like a Contradiction. If God reckons a Man righteous on the ground of his Behaviour, how can he esteem him a Sinner under that Consideration? Are there Things consistent? Who can imagine they are? Is one Sort of Righteousness commanded in point of Duty? And is another, very different from it, the Matter of our Justification? Then, surely we are justified, without yielding such Obedience as the Law requires of us. It seems to me, that no Action can be accounted criminal, which is not preventive of our Justification, by our own Works, according to that Law, whereby we are to be tried. And, therefore, this is such a Law as I heartily disapprove of, and cannot but reject with some degree of Indignation as inconsistent with the Holiness of God. It so falls out. That some Persons, who clamour most against Antinomianism, slide (it may be insensibly) into Antinomian Principles. This is certainly such; for it vacates the Moral Law in its Sanction, and makes no Sin damnable, but final Unbelief.

Arg. 2.

God cannot be the Author of an imperfect Law. His Nature is infinitely holy, and he necessarily, tho' freely, wills what is perfectly pure and holy. His Law is the Expression of his Will, respecting the Conduct of his Creatures towards himself, and one another. Love to him, and Love to our Neighbour, is the Sum of our Duty. And it is absurd to think, that God requires of Men a less Affection to himself and to one another, than heretofore he did. Nor is it less absurd to suppose, that God justifies Men for a partial Obedience to a perfect Law; because then his Judgment concerning them cannot be according to Truth and Fact. If a Subject offends against the Law in any Point, he is a Transgressor in fact, and must be so accounted; and, consequently, he cannot be reckoned righteous on the score of his Behaviour.

Arg. 3.

Men cannot act any thing good and pleasing to God; and, therefore, they are not meet Subjects of a Law in order to Acceptance by the Observation of it. In this Argument I do not insist on a perfect Performance of Duty. I only intend Faith, Repentance, and an holy Obedience. And I utterly deny, that Men, without the Grace of Regeneration, can believe, repent, turn to God, and yield an holy and acceptable Obedience to him. They are not attended with, a Deliquium of Spirits; but they are dead; and, therefore, no Influences, which convey not Life to them, will ever enable them to act. Their Hearts are Stone, and not susceptible of spiritual Impressions. The unregenerate Mind is Enmity against God; and it is impossible to cause it to love God, and become subject to his Law. Every regenerate Person hath within himself sad and full Evidence of the Truth of this. That which constantly lusteth against the Spirit, by reason of the Contrariety of its Nature, by no Influence whatever can be brought to act as the Spirit does even in spiritual Persons; much less is this possible in Minds wholly carnal. Until, therefore, it is proved, that Grace, as a Principle, is not necessarily prerequisite to gracious, spiritual Acts, (which yet has not been done, and I am bold to say never will be) it must be concluded, that Men are not meet Subjects of a Law, requiring Faith;

Repentance, and holy Obedience, as Conditions of Justification and everlasting Salvation, If this is the Facet, nothing is more certain than their eternal Ruin. The Reason is, no Helps and Influences: which, do not communicate a gracious Principle, will ever be effectual to the Production of spiritual Acts in Men, whether Elect, or Non-elect; and, consequently, the Salvation of no Man is possible, according to this Scheme. Baxterians, indeed, assert the Certainty of the Salvation of the Elect; but, as they allow not of the Infusion of gracious Habits, they leave even the Elect in a State of certain Damnation. Men may talk, while they please, about Grace sufficient as afforded to all, and of Grace effectual being given to some; but, if Grace doth not really produce a new Principle of Action, it is sufficient for no Man, nor will ever be effectual in any Man. They who are in the Flesh, i.e. in an unregenerate State, cannot please God. No Assistance can enable them so to do. Nor can the natural Man be enabled to know the Things of the Spirit of God. He may by divine Grace be made a spiritual Man; but no Influence upon him, while he is a natural Man, will render him capable of understanding spiritual Things. A Man that is blind may have a visive Power given him; but he cannot be made to see without such a Power. And a Man who is dead may be inspired with a Principle of Life; but it is impossible by any Operation upon him to cause him to act while he is dead. Omnipotence can give Being to Intelligence where it is not; but infinite Power cannot produce reasonable Acts, without a rational Nature, for that implies a Contradiction. And God can, and of his sovereign Mercy he doth, produce a Principle of Love in Minds which are Enmity against him; but he cannot cause Enmity to love him, and delight in his Law.

Arg. 4.

God is the Author of all that is good and pleasing to him in Men; and, therefore, the Gospel cannot be a Law. Spiritual Life is from him, which capacitates for spiritual Action: You hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins. He is the Origin of heavenly Light, whereby we become capable of discerning the Nature of heavenly Things: God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts to give the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory, in the Face, or Person (Prospw) of Christ. And he creates us in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Faith and Repentance are his Gifts, not acquired with his Help. Faith, as a Habit or Principle, doth not arise from Acts of believing; but the Grace of Faith is given, and believing Acts follow upon it. A Man does not first act, and then live; but, on the contrary, he first lives, and then acts. A Person does not discern Objects, and upon that become the Subject of a visive Power; but he first hath that Power, and then sees the Objects that are before him. And a Man does not first repent and act holily, and then his Heart becomes Flesh, i.e. soft, and susceptible of good Impressions; but, on the contrary, God gives him an Heart of Flesh, whereupon he repents, and receives good Impressions, and acts in a holy and acceptable Manner. From hence it is evident, that the Gospel cannot be a Law, wherein a Provision is made for the Salvation of all who hear it; because God doth not give Life to some, because he doth not communicate Light to some, because he doth not give Faith and Repentance to some, nor create them in Christ Jesus unto good Works, without which the Salvation of any Man is impossible; for all Men naturally are dead, blind, their Hearts are Stone, devoid of a holy Principle, and are averse to Good. To say, that the metaphorical Expressions used in Scripture, whereby the deplorable Condition of Men is represented, are not to be understood in a strict, but qualified Sense, and that it is not to be thought, that Men are in fact dead and blind in a spiritual Sense, is in effect to assert, that the holy Spirit expresses his Intention in a very improper Manner, in a Way which naturally tends to deceive us, and to lead us into false

Conclusions, concerning a Subject, which to us is of the last Importance, of the Truth of which we shall never be persuaded: Especially, since our own Experience fully convinces us of the Justness of that Representation of our natural Condition. If good Men would but be determined in their Sentiments about the dreadful Corruption of our Nature, by what they find within themselves of Blindness, Hardness of Heart, Aversation from God and Holiness, and of a Propension to Evil, all Contention with them would cease concerning the Ability of Mankind with common Helps to act a Part holy and acceptable to God. In short, if the Gospel is a Law, which enjoins on us Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience, as Conditions of obtaining Life and Happiness, and our Nature is left to act, as it can, with Aids, Assistances, Excitations, and Impulses upon it, without a divine Influence effectual to the Production of spiritual Life and a Principle of Holiness in our Hearts, our eternal Ruin is inevitable; and, therefore, this is falsely called a remedial Law, for, according to it, our Misery is certain and remediless. This Scheme is only calculated to nourish Pride in the Flesh, and to lay the Spirit in Believers under the greater Discouragement, let Men flourish upon it as much as they will.

Arg. 5. The Gospel cannot be a Law, because that would enervate the Satisfaction of Christ. The Socinians know this perfectly well; but with them it is no Objection, for they wholly deny that Doctrine. The Arminians and Baxterians are in some measure affected by it, because they both grant the Truth of Christ's suffering in the Room and Stead of Sinners, tho' neither allow his Satisfaction to be full, proper, and plenary. They insist upon it, that what Christ paid for our Redemption was not the same with what is in the Obligation; and that, therefore, his dolorous Sufferings were not a proper Payment of our Debt; and, consequently, a proper and full Satisfaction for our Sins could not arise from his Death to the Law and Justice of God: And from hence, they, conclude, that Right to Impunity is not obtained by the Sacrifice of Christ; but that, the Death of Christ notwithstanding, God may and doth enjoin Conditions on Men, and require the Performance of them, in order to Pardon and Justification, viz. Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience. The Baxterians suppose, that effectual Grace is given to the Elect to enable them to perform those Conditions, (herein they differ from the Arminians) and that sufficient Grace is afforded to the Non-elect, and, therefore, they are put into a salvable State; but that their Salvation, tho' possible, is not certain, which they think the Salvation of the Elect is.

I would here first take notice of a great Mistake, which lies at the Bottom of this Manner of Rating the Doctrine of Satisfaction, viz. It is taken for granted, that it is just to require an innocent Person to suffer corporal Punishment for Delinquents, and their Impunity notwithstanding remain uncertain; and, if not secured by the Performance of some Conditions enjoined on them, then Punishment may be inflicted on them, tho' an innocent Person hath suffered in their Room and Stead. Such a Procedure may take place in pecuniary Punishments, but not in corporal; because the suffering Party in that Case would be really injured. In pecuniary Punishments it is otherwise; because Money paid may be returned, (and in Right it ought to be) if the Delinquent is not actually released. In corporal Punishments this cannot be; and, therefore, the suffering Person sustains Injury, if the Delinquent, in whole Stead he endured bodily Pains and Penalties, is punished for those Crimes, on account of which he suffered. This is said on a Supposition of an innocent Person's suffering for a Criminal, tho' it is not lawful for Men to require it. Hence it is evident, that our Freedom from the Obligation is not an Uncertain and precarious Matter, if only what Civilians call Acceptilation is found in this Transaction of the Death of Christ for Sinners: But clear it is, that

his Sufferings were a Solution, or proper Payment, from whence real Satisfaction arises to the Law and Justice of God for our whole Guilt.

1.

All our Sins were imputed to him on the Part of God, our righteous Judge; and Christ on his Part took them all upon himself. His Susception of our Guilt was his Submission to the Will of the Father, that he should bear it for us. He was made Sin for us, who knew no Sin. And the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all.

2.

He was made a Curse. That which we are freed from, in consequence of his Death, he was made, which is the Law's Curse; and, therefore, his Punishment was that which the Law threatened, and unto which we were obnoxious.

3.

Christ endured a painful Sensation of God's Displeasure against Sin.

4. An infinite Value attended his Sufferings, arising from the infinite Dignity of his Person.

Mr. Baxter often observes in his Writings, that Christ did not suffer the *Idem*, i.e. the same that was due to us, because the Law requires the Transgressor to suffer; but this was no more than a Commutation of Persons, and not a Change of the Nature of the Punishment. This is also contended frequently for; because the Law threatened eternal Death, and the Sufferings of Christ were but short, and, therefore, not the same unto which we were liable. But this infers no Change in the Nature of the Punishment: It don't follow, that it was not the same in Kind, because it was short in Duration. His Sufferings were satisfactory, and, therefore, they ended; ours are not satisfactory, therefore they are continued. Again, it is urged, that Christ did not suffer Desperation; and, therefore, his Sufferings were not the same with ours.

Answ

. Sufferings that are satisfactory can't be attended with Desperation; but Sufferings that are not satisfactory must be attended therewith, by reason of their Perpetuity, because not satisfactory. And it is not merely from the Nature of the Sufferings of Christ, that they became satisfactory; but from the Dignity of his Person: Nor is it from the Nature of our Sufferings, that they are not satisfactory; but from the Want of Value in them, thro' the Meanness of our Persons. To deny, that the Sufferings of Christ were in Kind, that Penalty which our Sins demerited, enervates his Satisfaction, obscures the Glory of divine Justice in our Remission, and it infinitely detracts from the Honour of the Grace of God; but this must be denied, in order to support the Opinion of a conditional Scheme of Salvation.

Three Things are observable in this Affair.

1.

It became God to act thus in bringing many Sons to Glory. The wonderful Procedure was condecant and agreeable to his Perfections.

2.

It is honourable to his Law. That is greatly magnified and exalted. Far greater Honour is done to the Law by our Saviour's enduring the Curse, than could ever be, by our suffering what it threatens.

3.

It is just to forgive Sin on the Foundation of Christ's Sufferings and Death. The Justice of our Remission springs not from our Faith, Repentance, and Obedience; but from the Merit of the Sacrifice of Christ. God could not but make Provision for the Satisfaction of his Law and Justice in the Business of our Salvation, by reason of the Righteousness of his Nature; and, since Satisfaction is given to both by the Death of his Son, he cannot but pardon and save all those for whose Sins Satisfaction is made; because contrary Acts cannot agree to Justice, viz. to pardon and punish. If it is just to forgive Sins for which Christ suffered, it cannot be just to punish for those Offences. The Opinion of the Gospel being a Law requiring Obedience as a Condition of Pardon, and for Want of it adjudging Men to endless Misery, overthrows the Satisfaction of Christ, and can never consist with the Righteousness of God, which is only displayed in pardoning of Sin on that Ground, and not in the Infliction of Punishment on Transgressors. According to this Scheme, God punishes Sin twice, once in the Sinner's Surety, and also in the Sinner himself; which Justice can never direct unto. Right to Impunity immediately takes Place upon Satisfaction being made; and, therefore, Conditions cannot be enjoined on Sinners for whom Christ died, which will render their Impunity precarious. The Death of our Saviour is, in itself, effectual to these great Ends, entirely without the Existence of any good Dispositions in us, viz.

1. The Expiation of Sin. His Blood cleanseth from all Sin: He purged our Sins, and put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself: He finished Transgression, and made an end of Sin. As he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, he bore them away from us: So that no Charge can be brought against us, as we are interested in his Death. Hence is that Challenge of the Apostle: Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died.

2.

Freedom from Condemnation. We are redeemed from the Curse of the Law: And there is no Condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus.

3.

Security from penal Suffering. Reconciliation is made. Peace is made by the Blood of the Cross of Christ and Salvation from Wrath follows Pardon thro' his Blood. Faith is the Evidence of our Title to Pardon; but the Sacrifice of Christ gave Being to our Right to Impunity.

Arg. 6.

Grace, in its Principle, and Acts, is absolutely promised; and, therefore, it cannot come under the Notion of a proper Condition of Life. That it is necessarily prerequisite, as a Meetness for Heaven, is a most certain Truth; for an unsanctified Mind is wholly indisposed to heavenly Communion, the Viewing of heavenly Objects, and unto heavenly Service; and, consequently, it is impossible, that

an unregenerate Person should enjoy the heavenly State. This being affirmed, all just Occasion is entirely cut off for Cavilling and Reproach, which sometimes even good Men, thro' their present Imperfection, are too forward to load Principles with, which, they do not think meet to admit into their Creed. Grace, as a Principle, is Matter of absolute Promise. I will take away, the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh: I will put my Law in their inward Parts; I will write it in their Hearts. And the Exercise of that gracious Principle in holy Obedience is also absolutely promised. I will cause you to walk in my Statutes; and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them. Which precious Promises ascertain the Communication of Holiness, as a Principle, and the Exercise of that Principle in a holy, acceptable Obedience, to all those unto whom those Promises relate; and, therefore, Duties included, in that Obedience cannot be proper Conditions of Life and Happiness: Hence it undeniably follows, that the Gospel is not a Law. Some say, that, tho' these Promises are absolutely expressed, yet a Condition is supposed, or implied; and that, therefore, the Duties included in those Promises, are Conditions of obtaining Blessedness. But what Reason have Men to imagine, that a Meaning so very different from the natural Import of the Language of Scripture is intended? None at all; only a false Apprehension of the Power of depraved Nature to do, what it has neither Ability nor Inclination to act, nor can possibly be influenced unto by any Aids and Assistances whatsoever; and a mistaken Notion concerning the Grace of God, which is wholly free, and is the efficient Cause of all in Men that is good and pleasing to him. Again, I desire to know what it is, that is required of Men as a Condition of receiving Grace from God: If it be any Acts of Holiness, they can never arise from the corrupt Hearts of Men; for without the Grace of Faith it is impossible to please God. Until, therefore, that Grace is wrought in a Man, he is absolutely incapable of acting any thing that will find Acceptance with his Maker. In short, this Way of reasoning sup-poses, that, if Men will believe, repent, and turn to God, then he will make them Believers; which how absurd it is, I think, that it is not difficult for any Person to conceive.

Arg. 7. To suppose, that the Gospel is a Law, destroys the Opposition, which the Scripture puts between the Law and Gospel, or between Works and Grace, in the Business of our Justification and Salvation . The Holy Spirit, who foresaw the numerous Ways that Men would take to establish the Doctrine of Justification by Works, hath so expressed himself on this Subject, as to meet with all their subtle and surprizing Arguments and Evasions, in what manner soever they express themselves. If they say, that Justification is not by perfect Works, true, it cannot, for Righteousness is imputed without Works. If they say, that it is not of Works meritorious, that is certain; because it is not of Works. If they say, that Justification is not by ritual Works, it is right; for it is not of Works. If they say, that it is not of Works Wrought before Faith, it is true; for Justification is not of Works. The Apostle does not exclude from Justification in the light of God this or that Kind of Works, in Distinction from others; but Works, by what Names soever Men shall like to call them, viz. Dispositions, Qualifications, Conditions, sincere Obedience, or whatever else you can imagine. And, therefore, to assert, that we are justified by the Performance of any Duties, is directly to contradict the Apostle, who affirms, that Righteousness is imputed without Works: For, if our Justification before God is by our personal Obedience to his Commands, a Righteousness without Works is not imputed to us for Justification in his sight. Besides, Grace excludes Works, as Causes and Conditions of Salvation. By Grace are we saved: And, if it be of Grace, then it is no more of Works, without all Distinction, as was before argued. Hence we conclude, that the Gospel is not a Law promising Life on condition of Obedience; for, if it is, we are to be saved by our own Works.

The Righteousness and Blood of Christ have procured for us only a conditional Grant of Life and Salvation: Our Title to future Blessedness results not from what he hath done and suffered for us; but it is to arise from what we ourselves do. Than which nothing is more false.

Mr. Baxter often speaks of our Righteousness, as subordinate to the Righteousness of Christ; but how can that be deemed a subordinate Righteousness, which gives right to Life? That is a greater Benefit than the conditional Grant of Life: The Righteousness of Christ obtained only the latter for us, our own Righteousness secures the former. And, therefore, according to him, greater Advantage accrues to us from our own Obedience, than springs from the Righteousness of Christ: That is, if an actual Right to Life is a greater Benefit than merely a conditional Grant of it is; whereof, I think, that no Man will ever doubt.

Arg. 8.

If the Gospel is a Law, Boasting is not excluded; and, therefore, it is not such. That all Boasting, or Glorifying in ourselves, as we are the Subjects of Salvation, is entirely cut off by that Method, which God hath took to save us, is as clear in Scripture, as if it was written with a Sunbeam. It may not be improper to observe, that, when Boasting is laid to be excluded, it is spoken of Men, as Creatures fallen, guilty and corrupt; and, therefore, it is necessarily supposed, that Remission takes Place in them: And, consequently, by Boasting is not intended any Pretence of a perfect Compliance with our Duty, so that according to strict Justice we are not liable to Misery, but, on the contrary, are entitled to the Reward promised on that Condition. Let us now consider, what Kind of Boasting may be supposed in Creatures, who cannot lay claim to Favour on the Foundation of strict Justice. And, 1. We may suppose, that Men have been so far obedient to some Law, as gives them a Right to Life. 2. That this Obedience, tho' it was facilitated by Helps afforded, yet it was not wholly owing to a divine Influence upon them; but was the Result of a wise Improvement of such Advantages, as in Kindness were granted unto them. It is easy to see, that, if the Gospel is a Law, Foundation is laid for both these Things, viz. pleading a Right to Life by Works, and acting a wise and prudent Part: As thus, Peter and Judas are Subjects of the same Law; that is to say, the fame condescending Terms of Life are proposed to each; and each hath such Helps afforded, as render the Performance of those Terms possible. Judas is so unwise as to neglect his own Interest, when, with the Advantages granted to him, he hath an Opportunity of making himself for ever: On the contrary, Peter is so prudent as to consult his own Welfare, and wisely improves the Advantages which are granted to him, and so secures his Happiness. This is all that can be included in Boasting, when the Reward is not due upon the Foundation of strict and rigorous Justice. And

, such Boasting there is Ground for in those who are saved, if the Gospel is a Law; especially, if it is denied, that the Infusion of a gracious Principle is prerequisite to Acts of acceptable Obedience; which Mr. Baxter did deny: And that Denial is necessary to support his Opinion of the Possibility of obtaining Life by this new and remedial Law; which the late Dr. Watts did not seem to be apprehensive of, and, therefore, granted it, to the utter Overthrow of what he endeavoured to maintain concerning a conditional Provision of Salvation, for the Non-elect.

According to this Scheme, the subjects of Salvation may affirm two Things concerning themselves, 1. That their actual Right to Life is the proper Result of their own Obedience. 2. That this Obedience of theirs, tho' facilitated by the Grace of God, was not wholly owing unto that as the

Cause thereof; but in part it was the Effect of their own Prudence, and Care, wisely to improve those Advantages afforded unto them; while some others have foolishly neglected so to do, and, therefore, failed of acquiring that Right to Blessedness, which they, by acting a wiser Part, have obtained for themselves. Hence it is apparent, that Heaven is not the Gift of God's good Pleasure to those who enjoy it but a Prize won by their own Care and Industry, not indeed by Obedience to the Law of Innocence; but by the Observance of a Law of milder Terms, which God condescended to give, when he might have insisted on a sinless Obedience. The Constitution of this milder Law was an Act of Favour; but the Enjoyment of the Blessings it promises is Matter of due Debt, its Terms being fulfilled; because the Constitution of this Law gives no Title or Claim to the Reward, that results from the Subject's Obedience to it. And, therefore, as the Apostle asserts, Boasting is not excluded by a Law of Works. Again, it is evident, according to this Scheme, that Men may have it to lay, that what they have done in Obedience to this Law was not intirely owing to the Efficiency of divine Grace; because their Obedience sprang not from a supernatural Principle communicated unto them of God, but was performed by their natural Powers, as aided only by the Grace of God. If we could once persuade Men to believe the absolute Necessity of the Infusion of a new Principle in order to perform Acts of Duty in an acceptable manner, we should hear no more of this conditional Scheme of Salvation; that is, if they will not embrace Inconsistencies: For Salvation cannot be conditional, if what is required of Men in order to it, is the sole and intire Work of God upon them. The Reason of it is evident; that cannot be a proper Condition of enjoying a Benefit, which is absolutely given, and wrought in the Subject of it, by him who bestows that Benefit: If you assert this, you explain away the Nature of a proper Condition. This is certainly the Care with respect to Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience; for God worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure. If it is not thus, Boasting is not excluded in the Opinion of the Apostle, who infers that Exclusion from God's creating us in Christ Jesus unto good Works.

And, therefore, we conclude upon it, that this new Law-Scheme is of Men's devising, and that the Salvation of none is a possible thing according to that Scheme; because It is supposed, that Faith is not infused, but acquired with divine Help, which it can never be; for Acts of Grace cannot spring up in a Mind destitute of a gracious Principle. A dead Man cannot be assisted to act; he may be made alive, and then act; but no Influence upon him, which conveys not Life, will ever be productive of Actions in him. This Scheme, therefore, however plausible it may seem to some, leaves even all Mankind, Elect and Non-elect, in a State of remediless Woe and Misery; and the Reason why, none will have ground of boasting is, if this Scheme is true, no Man will be saved.

Arg. 9. The Experience and Acting of Grace in the Souls of Believers, are inconsistent with the Notion of the Gospel being a Law, or Covenant of Works. It is supposed, that our own Obedience, according to this new and remedial Law, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness before God. If in Fact it is so, then surely it might be expected, that the Saints would plead their Obedience for the Acceptation of their Persons with God, or as the Ground of their Hope of standing in Judgment. Let us, therefore, briefly consider, what some eminent Saints have expressed concerning themselves, and their Obedience; and, whether their Language will allow us to think, that they expected to be justified in the sight of God by virtue of what they had done. I begin with Job, who had not his Equal in Holiness at the time he liv'd. He says thus, when impressed deeply with a Sense of the Greatness and Majesty of God: Whom, tho' I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make Supplication to my Judge. If I justify myself, mine own Mouth shall condemn me:

If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse; If I wash myself with Snow-water, and make my Hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the Ditch, and mine own Cloaths shall abhor me. Elsewhere says he, I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes. This does not seem to be the Language of a Man who expected to be justified by his own Obedience. David, a Man after God's own Heart, deserves well to be consulted on this Subject. And it is observable, that he was so far from esteeming his own Righteousness as a sufficient Plea for Justification at the divine Tribunal, that he prays he might not be tried at the Bar of God on that Foundation; and at the same time (if I mistake him not) asserts, that no Man will be justified in the sight of his own Works. Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant: For in thy sight shall no Man living be justified. He, therefore, had no Expectation of being accepted, with God by virtue of his own Obedience. And Isaiah humbly confessed, that he was a Man of unclean Lips. Daniel at large acknowledges his Iniquity, and disclaims all Title to divine Favour, on the ground of his own Works. The Church declares herself to be as an unclean Thing, and that all her Righteousness were as filthy Rags. The Apostle Paul, who had as much to say of his Piety, Zeal, Diligence, and Sufferings, for the sake of the Gospel, as any Man ever had, is far from letting us an Example of Dependence on our own Obedience; for his Part, he desired not to have his own Righteousness. Inherent Holiness, and the good Works springing from it, were his own; for what a Man is the Subject of, and acts, is his own: He, therefore, rejected all his Works of Piety in the Business of Justification before God. If any Man will shew me, that one Saint in the Scripture ever looked for Acceptation with God, and the Enjoyment of future Blessedness, on the Foundation of his own Obedience, I promise to embrace immediately this new Law-Scheme, tho' I know it will be a Renunciation of the Gospel in some of its fundamental Truths. But there is not the least Danger of my being obliged unto this; for the gracious Experience of good Men, is never counter to evangelical Truth. And therefore, I declare, that I had much rather be determined in my Sentiments of the great Doctrine of a poor Sinner's Justification in the sight of God, by the Thoughts of the plainest Christian on this subject, than by what are esteemed the most exact and accurate Disputations of the most learned Men on that Point. And I am satisfied, that, if Men of Learning, who were also holy and gracious, had but attended to their own spiritual Experience in writing on the Doctrine of Justification, they would never have given Disturbance to the Church of God by advancing anti-evangelical Notions relating to that Doctrine; which is what too many have done; or given too much Countenance unto, in the Manner of their treating upon it.

It is one Thing to have to do with Men, in a way of Dispute about Acceptance with God, and another to have our Minds impressed with a Sense of the Solemnity of an Appearance before the divine Tribunal: Without the latter we may be able to object and wrangle, and frame numerous Evasions to elude the Force of Truth, and to spin out of our own Brain many Cobweb Arguments to countenance Error: But, when we are in our Apprehensions placed at the Bar of God, and we have a Prospect of our Guilt, Impurity, Imperfection in all Graces and Duties; when we see the Majesty, Purity, and Omniscience of God, our righteous Judge; other Thoughts immediately arise in our Minds concerning the Consequence of our Trial at his Judgment-Seat on the Foundation of our own Actions, than our Minds entertain without this View, and Consideration of our Condition, in spite of all the subtle and new-fangled Divinity, where-with disputing Men may labour to furnish us, for our Encouragement and Support in so awful a Season. All quaint Distinctions, all vain Objections against divine Truth, all plausible Arguments in Defence of Error, on this solemn

Subject, vanish, and leave us in a hopeless State. Nothing then, but the Blood and Righteousness of Christ, can ingenerate in our poor Souls the least Expectation of Pardon, Peace, and Acceptation with our tremendous Judge. We tremble at the Thought of appearing before God in our own Fig leaf Righteousness; and the Language of our Hearts is: May I be found in Christ, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but the Righteousness of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.

Arg. 10.

If the Gospel is a Law, or conditional Scheme of Salvation, it cannot furnish any Believer with an Assurance of enjoying Happiness. That Assurance of Salvation is not essential to Faith, I have lately assigned some Reasons for: But to assert, that there is not proper and sufficient Foundation for it in the Souls of the Saints, is to overthrow the whole Gospel, as might with much Ease be abundantly manifested: And, that it is a Favour which many of them have enjoy'd, is as evident from Scripture, as it is, that there were in the World such Persons as Believers. And, consequently, that Scheme must be false, according to which Assurance of Salvation cannot be enjoyed. Nothing is more clear, than that no Man can be assured of final Happiness, by the Gospel of Christ, if it is a conditional Scheme of Salvation; because that Assurance cannot exist, until the Condition on which Salvation depends is fulfilled: Now, that Condition is Perseverance in Faith and Holiness: And, therefore; a Person cannot know that he shall arrive to Heaven, until he finds himself in that happy State.

Baxterians

, indeed, say, that the Elect shall persevere and be saved: But, according to this Scheme, no Believer can possibly know from the Word of God, that he is elected; for it supposes, that the Non-elect may believe, repent, and turn unto God: And, of course, Holiness cannot evidence to any Man his Election of God. The Reason is plain: Sanctification is not proper to the Elect. How well soever, therefore, Paul is satisfied of the Truth of his Faith, and of the Reality of his Holiness, it is impossible that he should be able to collect from thence the Certainty of his eternal Salvation, because a non-elect Person may have true Holiness, but fail of Perseverance therein, and be eternally damned; of which Number notwithstanding all his Exultation and Triumph, he may be, for ought he can possibly learn from the Gospel of Christ. Hence it is most clear, that this new Law-Scheme is no proper Ground of that strong Consolation, which God is abundantly willing that the Heirs of Promise should enjoy: And, therefore, with some Degree of Boldness, I dare pronounce, that it is utterly false, and no Gospel of Christ. Blessed be God for that gracious and abundant Provision which he hath made for our everlasting Consolation and good Hope, thro' Grace, in the Gospel of his Son: Let us prize it, and never be so ungrateful to him, and so much wanting to ourselves, as to embrace a Scheme for Truth, which must: necessarily deprive us thereof, and leave us unavoidably at great Uncertainties in relation to the Salvation of our precious and immortal Souls, what Degrees of Holiness soever we may know ourselves to be the Subjects of now: For it seems, some true Believers may apostatize and perish for ever; and we have no possible Way of knowing that we are not of that Number.

Arg. 11.

Divine Love secures Salvation to all its Objects: And, therefore, those who perish were never interested in the Love of God; consequently, the Gospel cannot be a conditional Scheme of Salvation. That divine Love secures Salvation to all its Objects, fully appears from its Nature and Effects. 1. The Nature and Properties of the Love of God is a solid Foundation of the eternal Security of all those on whom it is fixed; for it is immense, immutabable, and inseparable. And what Blessings may not be expected to flow from infinite Goodness and Favour? What greater Security can be desired, than springs from Love, which is not only capable of conferring all that is necessary to the Happiness of its Objects (which infinite Love must be), but is also absolutely above all Possibility of Abatement, Change, and Separation from the Persons interested therein?

Love in God is not a Passion; but it is his holy, sovereign Will to do good to Men, or make them happy, and a Delight in their Felicity. This his Will can never alter, no more than his Nature can change. I am the Lord; I change not; therefore, ye, Sons of Jacob, are not consumed. Nothing which can come within the Compass of Imagination, shall ever make a Separation between divine Love and its Objects. 2. All saving Benefits spring from the Love of God, and are certain Effects of it: The Gift of his Son, the Gift of his Spirit, the Bestowment of Grace, which is effectual to Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification, yea, and eternal Glory also. Hence lays the Apostle: What shall we say to these Things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things - (ta panta, with the Article) all these Things? Nothing can prevail against the Saints to their Ruin and Destruction, because God is for them. No Favour shall be wanting to them, that is necessary to their final Happiness; for, God having delivered up his Son for them, he will give them whatever is included in Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, for they are the Blessings, whereof the Apostle before speaks, and unto which he manifestly refers, and concludes with the greatest Certainty upon the Communication of, unto all those, for whom God delivered up his own Son. If this conditional Scheme of Salvation is true, then God loves some to whom he doth not give effectual Grace, in order to their Conversion: Then God loves some to whom he doth not communicate Grace to preserve them infallibly in a State of Holiness unto eternal Glory; thro' the Want of which they may finally and totally apostatize, become the Objects of his Hatred, and eternal Wrath and Vengeance. But these Things are intirely inconsistent with the Nature of those, precious Promises, which God hath graciously condescended to express, for the Confirmation of the Faith, Peace, and strong Consolation of Believers; whereby he intends to assure them of their Safety, under their Discouragements and Fears, while they are engaged in fore and dreadful Conflicts with Sin and Satan. If those Promises are not designed for the Confirmation of the Faith of all Believers, but only of those who are chosen to Salvation, let the Authors of this conditional Scheme shew us, if they are able, what is the Difference between an elect Believer, and a non-elect Saint, if any distinguishing Difference there be, by which the one may be known from the other; that the elect Believer may conclude upon his everlasting Interest in the Love of God, and of his Title to that Grace, which Promises of Perseverance express; and that the non-elect Saint may not be guilty of such Presumption, as to imagine, that his Interest in divine Love will certainly be lasting, and that he hath Foundation to conclude upon a Title to that strong Consolation, which God is abundantly willing that the Heirs of Promise should enjoy. Is the elect Believer sanctified, and the non-elect Believer unsanctified? Is the elected Believer a Subject of true Faith in Christ and the non-elected Believer destitute of that Grace? Does the former truly love Christ, and the latter not? Does one really repent of Sin, chose Holiness, and the other not? Is the Delight of the

former in spiritual Things, and hath the latter no Pleasure therein? Or are they the same as to these, and other Particulars, that might be mentioned? If they be, then there is no distinguishing Difference between an' elected Believer and a non-elect Saint; they are both Subjects of the same Holiness, Knowledge, Love, Repentance, and every thing else that is of a spiritual Nature; and their Acts are the same about spiritual Things: And, therefore, there is no distinguishing Criterion between them. Hence it follows, that the elect Believer can no more conclude upon his eternal Security, than the non-elect Saint can. The Consequence of which is, God fails of his Intention, that those who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them, should enjoy strong Consolation; for it seems, some, who have so done, may lose their Interest in divine Love, become Objects of God's Wrath and Curse, and perish for ever. Nor can any Believer whatever know, that this will not be his dreadful Case; and that Consolation cannot have any great Strength in it, which is not built upon the Immutability of God's Counsel concerning our Salvation, which to us, if this Scheme is true, must, thro' Life, be an impenetrable Secret, tho' the inspired Writer tells us, that God hath shewn it by two immutable Things, wherein it is impossible for him to lie. But, blessed be God! This conditional Scheme of Salvation is as surely false, as his Gospel is certainly true.

Arg. 12.

All Believers are the Sons of God, and in Union with Christ. That Relation cannot cease, nor that Union ever be dissolved. And, therefore, this conditional Scheme of Salvation is false. The Apostle expressly affirms, that, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. And is not every Believer led, taught, and guided by the Holy Spirit? Or do some believe without his Instruction and Guidance? If none act Faith, but such as are under the Conduct of the Blessed Spirit, then it is a just Conclusion, that all Believers have the Honour to stand in the near Relation of Sons to God. This may also be argued for from this Consideration, viz. Adoption precedes, and is the Cause of the Mission of the Spirit: Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts. I observe, that sometimes Regeneration is confounded with Adoption, by good and wise Men, for this Reason; they are not free to grant the Precedency of Adoption to Faith, it seems, thro' an Apprehension of an ill Tendency in this Opinion; tho' some, who embrace it, they allow, have their Minds preserved from the Influence of that Tendency. This is a favourable Judgment of Men; but it is casting sad Reproach on sacred Truth.

Whatever the Persons are, who believe, that Adoption is previous to, and is the Cause of Faith, the Sentiment is a Doctrine according to Godliness, and can give no Encouragement to irreligious Persons, because, as that is one Reason of our Sanctification, no unsanctified Man can have any Evidence of his Adoption, nor the least Ground to imagine from thence, that he may be happy hereafter without being holy here. And, therefore, all such Suggestions are groundless, and mere Calumny cast upon an evangelical Truth. If the Holy Spirit is sent into the Hearts of Men, because they are Sons to God, then it is most certain, that all those, in whom he operates, as a Comforter and Sanctifier, are the Objects of adopting Love. Now, this Relation to God can never cease, because it was by an irrevocable Act of the divine Will, that Men were constituted his Sons. This Relation gives a Right to Grace and Glory: If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ. And this is the Privilege of every Believer; for all the Saints are now the Sons of God. They are as near to him in Relation, as they will be when in Heaven. This conditional Scheme supposes, that true Believers may become Children of Wrath, and not enjoy the heavenly Inheritance, Woful Tidings to spiritually humble Souls!

Again, The Saints are in Union with Christ. He is their Head, and they are his Members. Christ is the Husband of the Church, and she is his Bride. One Believer hath the same Reason to conclude upon his Union with Christ, as another; and, consequently, may infer from thence his Interest in the tender Love, Kindness, and Care of the Blessed Jesus, with as much Certainty, as any other Christian may; and hath the same Reason for a Persuasion of his eternal Security, arising from his Union with Christ, and Interest in his Favour, as any other Saint can have. But, according to this conditional Scheme, real Saints, who are not elected, have no ground to conclude upon their Safety, because they may become Apostates, lose their Faith and Holiness, their Union with Christ may cease, and they, who once were Objects of the intense Love of Christ, may become Objects of his terrible Anger and Vengeance. And what Saint in the World can know, that this will not be his dreadful Care? Not one amongst them all. For there is the same Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, and every thing else of a spiritual Nature, in a non-elect Saint, as an elected Believer is the Subject of, or acts; and, consequently, the elect Believer can no more enjoy an Assurance of his lasting Union with Christ, and of future Happiness, as a Fruit thereof, than the non-elect Saint can be allured of both. This is very melancholy Doctrine for the Righteous, whom the Lord would not have made sad! But it is intirely contrary to the Gospel, which is a joyful Sound, and glad Tidings of great Joy, unto all the Saints. Spiritual Life is the Effect of a foederal Union with Christ, our spiritual Head; as Condemnation and Death in Sin follow upon our foederal Union with Adam, our natural Head, in consequence of his Apostacy, the Guilt of which devolves upon us, as Members of him, whom he represented. When we were not, a real Union subsisted between us and Adam, our first Head: And, when we had no Existence, a real Union subsisted between us and Christ, our second Head, who was constituted such to us in the Covenant of Grace. And we derive from him, in consequence of that Union, Life, Holiness, and Grace, in our Regeneration. This Union is not the Effect, but is the Cause of Faith; and this it is that secures, and will secure the Continuance of the Being of it in, our Hearts. It is as proper to say, that our Union with Adam commences upon our becoming sinful and depraved, as it is to affirm, that our Union to Christ commences upon believing: Tho' some, who assert the latter, I suppose, will not care to affirm the former. This Doctrine supposes not the Non-necessity of Holiness, but insures it; and, therefore, I am free to declare, that I am always unmoved, when I hear it vilified, as a licentious Principle, which I sometimes do. I only wish, that good Men would leave reproaching divine Truth.

Arg. 13. This conditional Scheme is inconsistent with Non-election, or Preterition; and, therefore, it is not true. Election is a Choice of Men to Holiness in this World, as a Meetness for the Enjoyment of Happiness in the next. God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit. Those, therefore, who are the Subjects of effectual Vocation, are said to be called according to a divine Purpose: Hath called us with an holy Calling, - according to his own Purpose. Who are the called according to his Purpose. Hence it is evident, that the Decree of Salvation is not of larger Extent, than the Decree of Sanctification is: Nor is the Decree of Sanctification of a wider Compass, than the Decree of Salvation is. And, consequently, those, who are not chosen to eternal Salvation, but were passed by in that Decree, God had no Design to communicate Holiness unto, as a Preparative for future Glory. Besides, if it is the Intention of God to call Men by his Grace, who are not included in the Decree of Election to everlasting Life, either all, or only some of the Non-elect, he intended to call: If some of them only, then this conditional Scheme destroys itself, for its Extent is universal. If God designed to make all the Non-elect holy in Time, as a Meetness for enjoying Happiness in Eternity, then I would ask, why Christ, and

Salvation by him, is not revealed to them all? Again, if it was the real and serious Design of God to make the Non-elect holy, I desire to know, why they are not made so? Is it because God cannot sanctify their Hearts, and prepare them for Heaven? This is absurd and false to suppose. It is absurd, for it implies, that God purposes to do what he is not able. It is false, because, if it was his Will to sanctify them, he is able to do it. For, if he would but put forth the same Power upon the Nonelect, as he does upon the Elect, they also would become holy, and believe in his Son Jesus Christ, unto the Salvation of their Souls. Since he doth not, it is falsely sup-posed, that he ever had a Design of making them holy.

If, therefore, any of them believe in Christ, repent, and perform holy Obedience, it will be without a divine Purpose of their Sanctification and Faith. But none of them never have, nor ever will believe: For, the Election hath obtained it, and the rest, i.e. the Non-elect, were blinded. This new Law-Scheme, therefore, is utterly false: It consists of Principles no way profitable to Men, in common, tho' it is pretended to be calculated for the Benefit of Mankind universally. - It is destructive of the Comfort and Joy of the Saints. And is not conducive to the Glory of God; which will be shewn in the next Argument.

Arg. 14.

Altho' it is supposed in this Scheme, that effectual Provision is made for the Security of the Elect, together with a conditional Provision for the Salvation of the Non-elect, yet it is not in such a way as exalts the Glory of God; and, therefore, it is not true.

Gracious Persons, in proportion to that Sense they have of their Safety, in consequence of the Designs and Actings of divine Favour about and towards them, will admire and adore the sovereign Goodness and Mercy of God, therein displayed; and that is their indispensable Duty. But it is by no means to be thought, that a Regard to the Glory of God is lost in that solicitous Concern, which at any time they discover for their own Safety: With others it is, but with them it is not. Salvation they desire, but not upon Terms any way lessening to the Glory of God, and of his infinite Perfections. And, as they discern, that God would never save Sinners, but in a Method most honourable to himself, they acquiesce therein, as what is proper, wise, and fit. If, upon Enquiry, this conditional Scheme appears to be calculated to bring most Glory to God in the Salvation of Sinners, I heartily acknowledge, that it ought, without any Hesitation, to be embraced as a certain and sacred Truth; for sure I am, that the ultimate End of God in saving Men is his own Glory.

Let us, therefore, carefully view this Scheme, and embrace, or reject it, as we shall find, that it is, or it is not, glorifying to God and his Perfections. Is it then for the divine Honour to fix upon such a Method to save Sinners, as is not effectual to the Accomplishment of the End intended, with respect to the far greater Number of them, when it was in the Power of God to have secured that End, respecting them all? How is this to the Glory of his Grace? Would not that have been more magnified, if the End had been ascertained, when it was with God a very possible Thing? The Salvation of the Non-elect was as easy to God, as the Salvation of the Elect. A greater Expend of Grace and Power was not required, in order to it. Is it honourable to divine Wisdom to form a Scheme that is not brought into Execution, or to design an End which is not accomplished? What can this proceed from, except a Want of Foresight, or a Defect of Power, or a Resolution in God not to do what he knew to be necessary for him to do, if he would effectually bring to pass his own

gracious Intentions? Is it to the Glory of the Justice of God to imagine, that its Rights are not secured, and its Demands answered, by the Sufferings and Death of Christ? And, if they be, is it for the Honour of Justice eternally to punish those, for whose Sins Satisfaction was made? Nay, can it so much as comport with Justice to punish to the full the Sinner's Surety, and eternally to damn the Sinner himself for the same Offences? surely it by no means can consist therewith. Is it to the Glory of the Grace of God to conceive, that Holiness, or a Meetness for Heaven, is not produced in Men by a divine Influence upon them; but that, with some Assistances only, they act in a holy Manner, without the Communication of a holy Principle? Is this that sovereign and distinguishing Goodness of God, which the Scripture so much extols in the Regeneration and Conversion of a poor sinner? It is no more that, than the wan Light of the Moon is comparable to the dazzling Light of the Sun.

Once more, I ask, is it to the Glory of God, and the Honour of Christ, to leave our Salvation to rest on Conditions impossible to be fulfilled? I suppose, all will conclude it is not, and that the Supposition of it is most absurd. But some will say, why is this strange Enquiry made? What Foundation is there for it? I answer, however surprizing and causeless this Question may seem to many, there is sufficient Ground for my putting it. For it is supposed, first, that the Salvation of all depends on the Performance of certain Conditions, viz. Faith, Repentance, and persevering Obedience. Farther, it is sup-posed, that God does not give the Grace of Faith, etc. to any Man; but only affords to Men some Help, whereby they may acquire it, which it is impossible for any Man to do; because, without a Principle of Life and Action, which gracious Habits are to the Soul of a poor Sinner, no Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, can possibly be produced in him. This must be granted, until it is proved, that Men are not dead in Sin; which yet has not been prov'd, nor ever will be. Upon the whole, this conditional Scheme is not calculated to bring Glory to God, as it is far from securing Salvation to Men. On the contrary, an unconditional Scheme of Salvation. enhances the Glory of Father, Son, and Spirit. The Grace of the Father illustriously shines in the free and sovereign Election of Men to eternal Salvation. The Compassion of the Son is incomparably displayed, in the Redemption of their Persons by the invaluable Price of his own Blood. And the Kindness of the Spirit with an amazing Lustre, discovers itself in the Regeneration, Conversion, Sanctification, and Preservation of Men. Farther, all the divine Perfections in their full Glory, flame forth with an amazing and delightful Refulgency in that Scheme. Infinite Wisdom hath eternal Honours accruing to it, which contrived the happy Method, so becoming God, and so secure for Men. Justice sparkles in its brightest Rays, in our Remission thro' the Sacrifice of Christ. The Riches of divine Grace are opened to the transporting View of Angels and Men, in the Gift of Christ to us and for us, in the Donation of the holy Spirit, and in the Bestowment of Grace upon us here, and of eternal Glory hereafter. This pleasing View fills the Minds of the Saints with holy Wonder, Joy, and Adoration, now; and the clearer Prospects thereof, in Heaven, will eternally fill them with Raptures, unknown to us at present. What then can be objected to a Scheme so wise, so righteous, and so secure for miserable and helpless Sinners? Nothing at all, either respecting God, who saves, or Men, who are saved; but what springs from Ignorance, pride, Self-love, etc. Unhumbled Minds have much to object to it, because, if this Scheme is true, then nothing can be ours, but Shame, Confusion, and Self-abasement, on account of our Guilt, Misery, and Unworthiness; which are hard Things for our vile and proud Nature to submit unto and acquiesce in'. But true it is, let Men think of it as they please, either we must be willing to enjoy Heaven, merely on the ground of sovereign and distinguishing Mercy, wholly and alone thro' the Mediation

of Christ, and by an effectual Work of the holy Spirit on our impure Hearts, or we shall unavoidably sink down into the bottomless Pit, from which there is no Redemption. And it is holy, wise, and fit, that so it should be, however severe this may seem to Men, who are destitute of the Grace of God.

Lastly. This Opinion is absolutely contrary to many express Testimonies of Scripture. My intended Brevity prevents my taking into Consideration a large Number of Texts, which most evidently refute this Doctrine. A few must suffice. I begin with those Words of the Apostle: Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to become conformed to the Image of his Son. This Conformity to Christ is begun in effectual Vocation, and is compleated in Glorification. And those, who are effectually called, shall be glorified. This is evident by what is subjoined: Moreover, whom he did predistinate, them he also called; whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Two Things are clearly expressed in these Words. First, the Subjects of effectual Calling are Objects of divine Predestination unto a Conformity to the Image of Christ. Secondly, Glorification, which is the Complement of that Conformity, will succeed Vocation. Hence we may conclude, that none are effectually called, but such as are predestinated to be conformed to the Image of Christ; and that those, who are so called, shall certainly be glorified. This new Law-Scheme supposes the direct contrary of both there, viz. that some, who are not Objects of Predestination, may be effectually called; and that some, who are so called; may not be glorified: Both which are manifest Contradictions unto the precious Truths these Words with so much Perspicuity and Force express. The same two Things are clearly deducible from what our Saviour asserts.

Ye believe not, because ye are not of my Sheep. My Sheep hear my Voice; I know them; they follow me; I give to them eternal Life; they shall never perish etc. Clear it is from what is there affirmed, that those, who hear the Voice of Christ, and follow him, which all Believers do, are his Sheep, shall enjoy eternal Life, shall never perish, shall not be plucked out of Christ's Hand, nor out of his Father's Hand; and that none, but such as are the Sheep of Christ, believe in him, hear his Voice, and follow him. The contrary of both is supposed in this Scheme: That some may hear the Voice of Christ, and follow him, who are not of his Sheep; and that some may so do, to whom Christ Will not give eternal Life, who may perish for ever. Our Lord elsewhere asserts, that the living Water he gives, i.e. Grace, shall be a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life, in its Subjects. According this Scheme, in some it may entirely fail, and its Subjects may sink down into eternal Death. Again, our Lord declares, without any Exception, that he who heareth his Word, and believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation; but is passed from Death unto Life. This Scheme takes it for granted, that some, who hear the Word of Christ, and believe on him that sent him, may come into Condemnation, and suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire. Our Blessed Saviour acquaints us, that this is the Will of him that sent him, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life. This Scheme supposes, that some, who truly believe, may perish, and not have everlasting Life. And, consequently, its Authors must either deny, that this is the Will of God concerning all such as believe, or affirm, that the divine Will is not accomplished in some. The former contradicts our Saviour: The latter evidently supposes, that either the Will of God is mutable, or that his Power is insufficient to bring his Purposes of Grace concerning Men into Execution. Farther, all Believers are interested in the Intercession of Christ; and what he prays for in their Behalf shall certainly be communicated to them. That all, who believe are interested in the Intercession of Christ, appears

undeniably from what he lays in relation thereunto. I pray not for these alone, but for them also that shall believe in me thro' their Word: And he prays for their being with him, that they may behold his Glory. And, therefore, from the Prevalency of his Intercession, we must conclude upon the final Happiness of all Believers. But, according to this Scheme, some, who believe, may be with Devils and damned Spirits, and never behold the Glory of Christ: Let it also be observed, that the Apostle was confident, that the good Work begun upon the Philippians would be performed until the Day of Christ. But, according to this Scheme, his Confidence was without Foundation; for it is supposed, that Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, specifically the same, and equal in Degrees, may be in the Non-elect, as are found in the Elect; and, therefore, to no Man are they distinguishable. Hence it follows, that, tho' it is apprehended, that the Elect shall persevere, since none have a possible Way of knowing who they be, or of distinguishing them from the Nonelect, it must be Rashness in any Man to be confident of the carrying on of this good Work in any particular Believers. The Conclusion of course must be this: That the Apostle Was an intire Stranger to this Scheme, and that it is not that Gospel which he preached, but quite of another Nature, no Gospel of Christ. That Gospel, which he was commissioned to preach, furnished him with a solid Foundation of that Confidence he expressed; and, therefore, he cannot be charg'd with the least Degree of Temerity, or undue Boldness, in his Language relating to this Matter. And, as this is the Security of all Believers, it demands their Gratitude, and Adoration of divine Goodness, which hath so effectually provided for their eternal Welfare. The more I think of, and examine the Nature of this Scheme, the more dearly I discern, that it is calculated to bring humble Souls into great Perplexities and Discouragements; and that it can only serve to countenance unhumbled Minds, in a mistaken Opinion of the Capacity, and the Extent of their own depraved and corrupt Faculties, to the Dishonour of God, and their own everlasting Perdition, if Grace of no other Kind is given to them, to open their Eyes, and sanctify their Hearts, than what this darling Scheme, is an Exhibition of.

Before I consider the Arguments in favour of this Scheme, I would premise there Things, viz. It is the Gospel which reveals Life and Immortality, not the Law. Again, the Gospel informs us of our Title to that happy State, and not the Law, which is the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Besides, the Gospel acquaints us with our Meetness for that State, which is our Sanctification by the Spirit of God. This is a Doctrine not contained in the Law, tho' it requires Purity of Heart and Holiness in Life. Hence, at Judgment, Christ will condemn the Unsanctified, and pronounce the Sanctified, blessed, according to that wise and holy Order, which God hath fixed in our Salvation, whereof the Gospel is a Discovery, and not the Law. Let but the Reader distinguish our Title to Glory, and our Meetness for it, and it will free him from Mistake on this important Subject. This Scheme confounds them, and makes them one and the same; whereas they are distinct Things. Our Title to Heaven is supposed, but not expressed, in that Invitation, which Christ will, at Judgment, give us to take Possession of eternal Glory, tho' our Meetness for it is therein express'd: And the Want of a Title to Life is implied in that Sentence, which Christ will pass upon the Wicked; but it is their Want of a Meetness for it, that is expressed therein, and not their Want of Title: And, therefore, it is the Doctrine of Justification, which our Blessed Saviour discourses of, in {Matthew 25:1-46}. From thence is clearly proved, that unholy Persons shall not enjoy the heavenly State; but it is not to be learned from that Place, what is our justifying Righteousness, or our Title to eternal Life, because it is our Meetness for Heaven that is there treated of, and not our Title to it.

Secondly, Let us consider the Arguments for this Scheme.

Arg. 1. The Gospel is called a Law.

ANSW. 1. That Term is sometimes used for Doctrine, or Instruction.

2. For a fixed and stated Order. Both which are true of the Gospel: And, therefore, it is called a Law. {James 2:12; Isaiah 42:4; Romans 3:27}.

Arg. 2.

Obedience is proper to a Law, and we read of Obedience and Disobedience to the Gospel.

ANSW. 1. Disobedience intends not attending to it, which Men ought to do, as a Revelation from God. 2. Despising it, as foolish and absurd. 3. Opposing the Gospel. Neither of which proves that it consists of Precepts.

Arg. 3.

It will be the Rule of Judgment.

ANSW. 1. According as Men are sanctified, or insanctified, so they will be, at Judgment, glorified, or sentenced to Hell, agreeable to the Declaration in the Gospel. For, 2. That Declaration is proper to the Gospel; the Law knows nothing of it. But, 3. This is not, as it is a Law, but as it a Discovery of the wise and holy Order of our Salvation.

Arg. 4.

Justification is a judicial Act, and, consequently, the Gospel, by which we are justified, is a Law.

ANSW. 1. The Gospel supplies us with a perfect Righteousness, that is the Matter of our Justification. But, 2. It is the Law, by which we are absolved from all Sin thro' the Blood of Christ, and are justified by it in his Righteousness.

Arg. 5. The Gospel confers its Benefits on Conditions, and, therefore, it is a Law.

ANSW. 1. This Argument takes for granted, what is not prov'd, but is the Point in Question. 2. Right to Gospel Benefits arises not from our Acts, but from Christ's Obedience and Death.

Arg. 6. The Saints will be tried, whether their Faith was sincere, which must be by the Gospel, and, consequently, it is a Law.

ANSW. I. Many Saints have long been in the Enjoyment of heavenly Glory, viz. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, David, Isaiah, yea, all the Old-Testament Saints, and blessed Paul and Peter, etc. It is strange, that they must pass under a formal Trial, whether they were meet for Glory, who have been so long in the Possession of it.

2. The living Saints at the Coming of Christ will be changed in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, i.e. their Bodies will be rendered immortal, Spiritual, and glorious, their Souls will be purged intirely from all Sin, and they will be caught up to meet their triumphant, descending Lord; they will undoubtedly salute him with the higher Praises, and he will receive them with Joy and Delight. It is suprizing, that any should think, that they will after this be tried concerning the Sincerity of their

Faith.

3. They will be separated from the Wicked, and placed at the right Hand of their dear Lord.

4. Christ will declare before Angels, Devils, and Men, that Love they had for him, and that Obedience they yielded unto him, which was a Meetness for eternal Glory. In all which not the least Countenance is given to this new Law-Scheme.

Arg. 7.

Christ is a Lawgiver, and, therefore, the Gospel is a Law.

ANSW. 1. Christ, as a divine Person, is a Lawgiver. 2. As Mediator, he revealed evangelical Truths, but gave no new Law. 3. He hath the Covenant of Works in his Hand, as a Judge; some he condemns by that, others he acquits on the ground of his Obedience and Sacrifice. I confess, that I have met with more Arguments in Number for this Opinion; but some of them are illogical, and others coincide with those above answered; and, therefore, I thought it unnecessary to mention them. If I might be allowed to express a certain Truth, I should say, that some learned Men are very far from Accuracy in Disputation, how much soever they are pleased to despise illiterate Persons.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Sed per Legem Fidei: Id est, per Legem quae Fidem requirit, eique Justificationem ex Dei Grattia & Liberalitate promittit; quae Lex est Evangelii. Schlichting in {Romans 3:27}.

Ft2 Vid. Curcell. Inst. Christ. Lib. V. Cap. 16.

Ft3 See Mr. Baxter's Aphorisms and his Answers to Dr. Tully and Mr Cartwright.

S. Avindication of Divine Justice

A Vindication of Divine Justice, in the Infliction of Endless Punishment by John Brine {London: John Ward, 1754} Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the truth

SERMON 20 A VINDICATION OF DIVINE JUSTICE, IN THE INFLICTION OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN CONTAINING AN ANSWER TO AN ANONYMOUS PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'THE SCRIPTURE-ACCOUNT OF A FUTURE STATE CONSIDERED.'

Printed and Sold by JOHN WARD, against the Royal-Exchange;

GEORGE KEITH, in Gracechurch-Street; and JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal-Exchange. London 1754. [Price Six Pence] AN anonymous Pamphlet hath been published lately, which bears the Title of, The Scripture-Account of the future State considered. It is a Matter of very small Concern to me, for what Reasons the Author chose to lie concealed, nor shall I make any Enquiry of him, concerning the Causes of that Concealment; but, As I apprehend various Notions are advanced by the author, which are both unphilosophical and unscriptural, I shall take the Liberty to examine, and endeavour to refute them. I cannot but object to his Philosophy, in Relation to the cogitative Part of Man. The human Soul thinks, compares its Ideas, assents and dissents, wills, nills, loves; and, on the contrary, it hates, or it takes Delight in some Objects, and hath an Aversion to others: No Man can doubt of such Acts in himself, who reflects upon what passes in his own Mind. And the Soul doth not think, because it wills so to do; for if Thought followed upon Volition, we might cease to think at all, whenever we please; but that is absolutely out of our Power. We are no more able to forbear thinking, than we can prevent, pleasing, or painful Sensations in us, by the impressions which different Objects make upon our various Senses. Thought and Consciousness, therefore:, seem to be essential to the Soul, and inseparable from it. That Matter cannot think, reason, and draw Conclusions, seems to me very evident: These are such Acts as can't reasonably be apprehended to spring, either from the Solidity, Qualities, different Composition, or various Motions of Body. All Matter, however tenuous or subtle we imagine it to be, must certainly have solid Extension; because, if it hath not, it differs not at all from Space: But that, I suppose, none will allow is true; and, consequently, the subtlest Matter must have solid Extension, and that which hath solid Extension is divisible, and may be separated. Hence it will necessarily follow, that, if Matter is endowed with a cogitative Faculty, or Power of Thinking, there may be an Inch, a Foot, or an Ell of Consciousness, which it is absurd to imagine. Body, be it great or small, gross or subtle, and Thought, are as different and distinct as any two Things can be. Consciousness, therefore, cannot be a Property of Matter. If Thought belongs to any Portion of Matter, what Reason can be assigned, why it should not be attributed to every Particle, which composes that thinking, solid Extension? And, if it may, then Consciousness will be capable of being divided into as many Parts as that thinking, solid Extension consists of, however numerous they are. If Cogitation belongs not to every Particle of that solid Extension, how can it be a Property of the whole? Doth the Contact or Union of its Parts render it cogitative? Can

Consciousness result from the Union of the Parts of unthinking, solid Extension? How is that possible? Besides, many of our abstract Ideas are purely intellectual; and, therefore, there is clear Reason to conclude, that the human Soul, which is a thinking Substance, is immaterial, indiscernible, and consequently immortal; f1 that in its Nature it is distinct from the Body, is able to exist without it, will be active, or not cease to think in its separate State. As the Soul is immaterial, in a philosophical Sense, it is not in any Place; it fills up no Part of Space; is not near to one Body, and distant from another, which is in a different Part of Space. Nor is it capable of local Motion, for that is a Removal out of one Part of Space, into another Part thereof. The Soul not being solid Extension, it takes up no Part of Space at all, and, therefore, properly speaking, it is not any where. It is, or exists, but it does not exist in Place; it is not any where, and can move no where. This Writer, very unphilosophically, speaks of the Soul's sleeping, or ceasing to think, upon its Separation from the Body, and of its removing from one Place to another; f2 neither of which can be proved, until it is demonstrated that the human Soul is Matter, or solid Extension. Body, if it is, it must be in some Place, i.e. in some Part of Space; but Spirit, by Reason it is not solid Extension, it is not in any Part of Space at all, and, consequently, local Motion agrees not with the Nature of Spirit. He also speaks of the Organs of the Soul, and of their being folded up and unfit for Action, for some Time after Death, and of their unfolding after a while, whereupon it begins again to think. Is the human Mind an Embrio? Are its Parts closed or folded up at Death? If so, in what Womb does it receive fit Matter to increase it, or to cause its various Parts to unfold, or open and expand? This is very strange Philosophy! Our Author seems to dream while he is awake and writes, whether he does or not when he is asleep. But, be it just as he fancifully imagines, until he can prove, that Matter may be endowed with a Power of Thinking, he cannot prove that the Soul will ever think and become conscious of its Acts. He will find it very difficult to demonstrate, that Thought and Consciousness can arise from the Solidity, different Qualities, Composition, or various Motions of Matter. The Author supposes, that the Soul will awake out of its Slumber, or State of Inactivity, with the same moral Temper and Disposition it had before Death. f3 This Supposition seems to me as hard to be explained and proved possible, as any Thing he advances is. How can the Soul, when it awakes out of its Sleep, recover its former Consciousness? Can those new Ideas, which in this Case it will acquire, enable it to recollect its former Ideas, which must have been obliterated and entirely lost: in its State of Stupidity?

Let our Author shew the Possibility of this, if he is able. Much less can the Soul awake with the same dispositions, or Habits, whereof it was the Subject before its sinking into this State of Slumber, and Inactivity. It is unreasonable to imagine, that Dispositions either to Good or Evil remain in the Soul, if all Consciousness is utterly lost; and therefore, tho' the Soul should be rouzed out of its Slumber, upon its awaking, it can have disposition neither to Good nor Evil, unless it is given to it, or wrought in it by God; and, if he gives the waking Soul its Disposition, it cannot be to Evil, it must necessarily be an Inclination to Good. And he conceits, that the Soul is united to some Vehicle, whereby it is affected, and by the Help of which it frames its Ideas. Some learned Men have thought this is probable; but, so far as I can perceive, they have not been able to explain how that Vehicle can assist the Soul to think. However that be, since he imagines that the human Mind sleeps upon Death, notwithstanding its Union with that Vehicle remains, he will not be able to explain how, at any Time, it can awake and begin to think again, by the Help of it. If the Mind, upon its Separation from the Body, becomes incapable of being affected by its Vehicle, how can it begin again to exert, itself in Thought and Consciousness, by the Means of it? If the

Soul sleeps therein for a single Moment, it may continue in that Slumber to Eternity; nay, it will, unless an Act of Omnipotence be put forth, to raise it out of that State of Stupidity into which it is supposed to be sunk. This Doctrine, of the Soul's sleeping at Death, receives no Countenance from sound Philosophy, or right Reason. Let us now consider what the Author alledges from Scripture to support it. What he brings from thence, for the Proof of this Doctrine, will admit of quick and very easy Dispatch. It is only this: That Lazarus, and Jairus's Daughter, and the Widow's Son of Nain, who were raised from the Dead, gave no Account of the separate State. f4 Lazarus and Jairus's Daughter are said to sleep, by which is meant, that they were really dead. Death is compared to Sleep, because there is some Similitude between that and Death. The entire Silence of these Persons, who were raised to Life, about the separate State, gives not the least Degree of Countenance to the Doctrine of the Soul's sleeping, or ceasing to think at Death; for it is the Will of God, that we should wholly collect our Notions of the future, or separate State, from that Account which he hath been pleased to give us thereof, in his sacred Word. All our Faith concerning it must rest upon, and be resolved into, Divine Testimony. Again, those Instances of Resurrection from the Dead, were intended to a very different Purpose from that of giving us Information about the separate State, and are Exceptions unto the fixed Constitution of God, concerning Mankind, in general; and, therefore, nothing can reasonably be argued about this Matter from those Instances. Farther, was it not possible with God to prevent Lazarus, etc. conversing with other separate Spirits, that they might not obtain from them any Acquaintance with the Nature of their State and Employ? And might not God forbear to communicate to them, any Knowledge of the State of separate Spirits, who are to remain in that State of Separation from their Bodies, until the Morning of the Resurrection? Why might he not, if these Things are possible? And who will, who can say, that they are impossible? Then they could not know any Thing more of the State of such separate Spirits than if they had not died. And yet there is no Necessity to suppose a Suspension of Acts, in those separated Minds; for they might be active, or converse in and with themselves, during their Separation from their Bodies; or their rational Powers might be exerted, tho' their Knowledge was not enlarged, either by Converse with separate Spirits, or an Emanation of Light from God, while they were separate from their Bodies. Hath not the Mind of a Man a large Stock of Ideas treasured up in it? And, if it is separated from the Body, can it not exercise itself in recollecting of, and reasoning upon those Ideas wherewith it is furnished, tho' no new Discoveries are made unto it? We can do this while in the Body; and for what Reason should we think, that we could not do it if our Souls were separated from our Bodies?

It is far from being unreasonable to suppose, that a separate Mind hath such a Capacity; On the contrary, it is highly unreasonable to think that it hath not; which clearly appears from these Instances of Resurrection from the Dead: For if, when their Souls were separated from their Bodies, they lost all Thought and Consciousness, upon the Re-union of their Souls and Bodies, they must have been no other than great Babies, and as incapable of Conversation as they were at the Time of their Birth. It is a clear Case, that they had not lost that Stock of Ideas which they had acquired before their Death; because, as soon as they were restored to Life, they were as able to converse with their Friends, as they were before they died; which must have been absolutely impossible, if they had lost all Consciousness by the Separation of their Souls from their Bodies. These Instances, therefore, are so far from proving what they are produced for, viz. that at Death Men become stupid and thoughtless, that, on the contrary, they clearly prove, that the human Mind loses not its Stock of Ideas by its Separation from the Body, which it must necessarily

do if it becomes stupid, or inactive and thoughtless. The Author proceeds to treat of Hades, or of the State of the Dead before the Resurrection. The Hebrew Word {#lwaç}, and the Greek Word {Adhv}, whereby the separate State is expressed, have different Significations: 1. The Grave is sometimes meant; {1 Kings 2:6} 2. Hell, or the State, of the Damned; {Luke 16:23} 3. Extreme Sorrow and Anguish of Mind; {Psalms 18:6} 4. The lowest State of Abasement in this World; {Isaiah 14:15} The first Respects good and bad, for the Grave is the House appointed for all living; {Job 30:23} the second and third, the bad only. He fancies, that an interior Sun and an interior Earth are enclosed, by this Globe which we inhabit, which is nothing but an Arch or Shell: That this interior Earth does not revolve upon its own Axis, and therefore one Half of it enjoys perpetual Day and an eternal Spring, and the other is in perpetual Darkness. That the Patriarchs had the Knowledge of this by Revelation, and the Antients derived it from them by Tradition, which gave Occasion to those Descriptions that they have given of Elysium and Tartarus. f5 A strange Chimera! Such Philosophy as this is was never taught the Sons of Men by the Author of Nature, that an eternal Spring would be maintained in the Earth by the Sun perpetually shining on it. That would make it become a dry Heath, thro' the intense Heat which must be communicated to it by the constant and uninterrupted Emission of the Sun's Rays. As one half of this Earth must be frozen and locked up by Extremity of Cold, the other half must be scorched and rendered barren by the Intenseness of Heat in it. The Recession and Intermission of the Sun's Rays are necessary unto the Fertility of the Earth. How is it possible that an invariable Degree of Heat can maintain a continual Spring? The Author's philosophical Principles are as unreasonable as his Notions of Divinity. Thus he divides Hades into two Regions, Paradise and Tartarus: The former he supposes is the Residence of good, and the latter of evil Spirits; that good Souls are under milder, and bad under severer Discipline; that the former may be perfected in Virtue, and the latter may be reclaimed from Vice, and so at length be admitted to Heaven. The intermediate State between Death and the Resurrection, therefore, is a State of farther Trial of the Wicked, and, if they prove not incorrigible, they shall be happy. In such a State he thinks the Devils also are; and, if they are not irreclaimably bad, they shall enjoy Happiness. f6

According to this Account of Hades, both the Godly and Ungodly are in it, for it includes Paradise and Tartarus; or Heaven and Hell. But this is a Mistake, for {Adhv} Hades is never put for Heaven, or the State of the Blessed; Hell, indeed, or the State of the Damned, is designed by it. Thus, of the rich Man, it is said, {en tw Adh, not en to>Adh, as the Author hath it}, in Hell he lift up his Eyes. Heaven may be considered as a State of Happiness, without including the Idea of Place in it. Into this State the Souls of the Saints immediately enter at Death: And it may be considered, not only as a blessed State, but, as inclusive of Place, where Enoch, Elias, and Christ, in his human Nature, now are, and all the Saints shall be, for evermore. Hell, also, may be considered as a State of Misery, without including the Idea of Place in it; into this State the Ungodly immediately enter at Death: And it may be considered, not only as a miserable State, but, as inclusive of Place, wherein the Ungodly will suffer Punishment both in Soul and Body. The Souls of departed Saints are now in Heaven, as a State; and the departed Spirits of the Wicked are now in Hell, as a State; but the Souls of neither, properly speaking, are in Place; for, to exist in Place, or in some Part of Space, is proper to Body, and it cannot, with Propriety, be said of Spirits, which are not solid Extension.

If this interior Earth is the Habitation of good and bad Souls, and the good dwell in the light Part, and the bad in the dark Part of it, as the Author supposes, then both are in the Abyss, for Paradise as well as Tartarus must be meant by the Abyss; and the Apostle Paul, who says of himself that he was in Paradise, must have descended into that Abyss; and, therefore, he doth not speak properly when he says that he was caught up; he should rather have said, that he was thrust down into Parade, or the third Heaven. Paradise, or the third Heaven, is the Place where the human Nature of Christ is, and will be until his second Coming. His Disciples saw him go up or ascend into Heaven; but, if Parade, or the third Heaven, is this interior Earth, they must have seen him descend, and not ascend. And Stephen, who saw him standing at the right Hand of God, if Paradise is this interior Earth, must have seen the Earth, on which he stood, open, instead of seeing the Heavens above him open, in order unto his beholding of Christ in his exalted State; the Chasm thro' which he beheld Christ must have been in this Earth which we inhabit, and not in Heaven that is far above us; and, instead of looking up, he must have looked down into that Abyss which our Earth incloses. But it is a Shame to dwell upon the Refutation of this idle and senseless Fiction. The main Point in View to be proved is this, That the Souls of bad Men are in a State of Probation after Death, and not in a State of Punishment. That which is offered for Proof hereof is very little, and of no Force at all: Because the Devils, as yet, are not tormented in that Degree which they will hereafter be, and are not in the View of Angels and Men adjudged to infernal Torments, which they will be at the grand Assize, it is concluded, that they are not in a State of absolute Misery and Torment, and, therefore, it seems reasonable to think, that the Souls of wicked Men are not. f7 Devils now suffer Punishment, for God spares them not. And, because departed Spirits are reserved to be punished, therefore they are upon Terms of Peace with God, their righteous Judge, and do not at present suffer Punishment, only some medicinal Afflictions, in order to their Amendment and Happiness in the Issue, if they are reclaimed by those Afflictions, which they suffer in Hades. f8 This is very extraordinary Reasoning; it is such as scarcely deserves any Notice. Both Devils, and the Souls of the Ungodly, in the intermediate State, suffer proper Penalty, tho' they are not publickly sentenced to Hell, as they will be at the Day of Judgment. But what may seem of more Weight is this: Says the Author, the Benevolence of our Lord led him to visit Tartarus, and he preached to the Spirits in Prison. f9 But this was at the Time of their Existence in this World, and it is not meant of his going to Tartarus, and preaching to them there; Reference is plainly had to the Days of Noah. f10

Having finished his Account of Hades, he next treats of the Resurrection and general Judgment. There is but little that I shall take Notice of here. He grants the Resurrection of the Wicked, as well as the Resurrection of the Righteous, which the Socinians delay; but is mistaken, in thinking, that the Resurrection both of the Just and Unjust, is treated of by the Apostle, in {1 Corinthians 15:1-58}, as every intelligent Reader will quickly discover, by a careful View of the Context: It is of the Resurrection of the Saints only, that the inspired Writer discourses in that Place; and, therefore, nothing is from thence to be collected to prove, that the Bodies of the Wicked, after the Resurrection, will be mortal, or of a periling Nature; which is what he at least would insinuate from some Part of that divine Discourse. If Proof is to be deduced from thence, of the Mortality of the Body, when raised from the Dead, it must refer unto the Bodies of the Saints, and not the Bodies of the Impenitent, for nothing is spoken concerning them throughout the Place. He comments thus: Of the Wicked it is only said, as the first Man was of the Earth, earthy, such are they that are earthy; they are as the first Man was, whole Image they bear, living Souls, in Bodies which are of

the Earth, earthy; natural Bodies, which may corrupt and perish. f11 I am persuaded, that the Reader will think this Person is a miserable Interpreter of Scripture. He observes not what is the Scope of the Apostle, viz. to prove that there is a natural, and that there is a spiritual Body, nor that the Body is natural before its Resurrection, but spiritual when raised from the Dead; which are the two Things that the Apostle designs to prove; which is as evident, as that it is Light at Mid-Day. And, therefore, by the natural, or earthy Body, is not meant the Body, when raised from the Dead, but the Body in its present State, which stands in Need of Food to nourish and sustain it; the Observation of which alone is sufficient to discover, what an egregious Trifler, this Writer is in the Interpretation of Scripture. My present Haste, will not allow me to enlarge on this so illustrious a Testimony unto the important Truth, of the exalted State of the Saints, in their Bodies, upon their Resurrection from the Dead. All I shall observe is this, that the Bodies of the Saints, which, before their Resurrection, were natural and earthy, when raised from the Dead, shall be spiritual and glorious, like unto Christ's glorified Body; for, as they have bore the Image of the Earthy, they shall then bear the Image of the Heavenly. Our Author having advanced so far on his Subject, as the general Resurrection and Judgment, It might have been expected, that he would now treat of the Sentence of the infinitely great Judge, whereby the different States of Men will be determined; but he in a great Measure waves this, only using some general Expressions in Relation to this Point; whereas, the opposite States of the Righteous and the Unrighteous are not represented by them; because He had it in Design, to raise Mist before his Reader, that he might prevent his discerning, that the State of the Wicked is, in Fact, the Opposite of the State of the Godly.

And, therefore, Before he proceeds to treat of the State of Punishment, and of the State of Blessedness, after Judgment, he spends no less than nine Pages in an elaborate Consideration of the Terms and Phrases, for ever, for ever and ever, everlasting, perpetual, or eternal; and, because he finds, that, sometimes, they express a measurable Duration of a longer or shorter Continuance, he would have his Reader conclude, that these Terms and Phrases are not properly expressive of Eternity, or endless Duration. There is not the least Necessity, that I should imitate his prolix Discourse on this Matter; what he offers will admit of a short and speedy Answer. The Hebrew Word {μlw}, f12 and the Greek Word {Aiwv}, f13 properly signify perpetual Duration, or Eternity.

It will be sufficient to shew the Reader very briefly, the different Senses wherein these Terms are used, in order to render his Parade absolutely useless, unto that Design which he hath in View. And the Term Everlasting, sometimes, means absolute Eternity, or Duration, which is without Beginning and without End: From everlasting {μlw[m]} to Everlasting { μlw[Ad]} thou art God { Psalms 90:2}. Sometimes it designs a measurable Duration, of a longer or shorter Continuance. Thus the long Duration of the Hills is expressed by it; and for the precious Things of the lasting Hills {Deuteronomy 33:16}. So the Years of Jubilee are intended by it: And he shall serve him for ever; { Exodus 21:6} i.e. until the Year of Jubilee, when all Hebrew Servants were to be discharged from a State of Servitude. And the Term of Life is intended by it: So shall I keep thy Law continually; for ever and ever, {d[w μlw[]]; {Psalms 119:44} i.e. thro' the whole of my Life. Again, it is used metonymically, and the Period of the present State of Things is designed, or the End of the World, as our Translators very properly have rendered the Phrase; and of the End of the World {kai thv sunteleiav tou Aiwvov} {Matthew 24:3}. It is the Cessation of the present State of Things that is meant in those Words, and not the End of that measurable Duration, wherein the World

exists, as this Trifler would have it, tho' that Duration will end with the Dissolution of the World. And the Things of Time and Sense are also intended by it; for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved {ton nun Aiwna} this present World {2 Timothy 4:10}. The Apostle plainly means, Things which exist in Time, or measurable Duration, and not that Duration itself Farther, Everlasting expresses an immeasurable Duration, which hath no End, tho' it had Beginning: This is called Eternity restrict, and differs from Eternity absolute, which is proper to God. This Eternity restrict, is proper to the human Nature of Christ, to Angels, and unto Men, who will exist for ever, tho' once they were not: Their Existence began, but will never end. Our blessed Saviour's endless State of Dignity and Glory, is thus expressed by himself; And behold I live {eiv touv Aiwnav twv Aiwnwn} for evermore {Revelation 1:18}. And the endless State of the Blessedness of his People, is thus represented by him; He that believeth in me {ou mh apoqanh eiv ton Aiwna} shall never die {John 11:26}. He will give to them {Zwnh aiwnion} eternal Life {John 1:28}. Likewise the endless Duration of the Punishment of the Ungodly, is in the same Manner represented; And the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up, {eiv Aiwnav Aiwnwn} for ever and ever {Revelation 14:11}. The Author denies, that these Terms and Phrases, properly mean an endless Duration. None of these Words, says he, in their natural Import, do signify an absolute Eternity, in the metaphysical Sense of that Word, unless when applied unto God, and then the Nature of the Object gives a Sense to the Words, whereof they are otherwise incapable. f14 Why does he speak of Eternity absolute? It is Eternity restrict, that is the Subject of Enquiry, and not Eternity absolute, which is proper to God. We are not such Blunders in Metaphysics, as to plead for the absolute Eternity, of either Angels, or Men, or even of the human Nature of our blessed Redeemer. We know, that they once were not, and do not need the Instruction of this Person, or the Instruction of any, who are of his corrupt Principles, to inform us, that the human Nature of Christ, and the Existence of Angels and Man, had Beginning. We are fully sensible, that it is peculiar to God, to be without Beginning. The Author hath betrayed either Ignorance, or, what is much worse, a Want of Regard to Truth and Ingenuity, in this Assertion. If he really thinks, that {μλw[in the Hebrew Language} Everlasting, does not properly signify an immeasurable Duration; and, that {Aiwn aiwniov in the Greek Language} Everlasting and perpetual, do not properly signify an unlimited Duration, it must be owing unto Unacquaintedness with those Languages. The very Reverie of what he asserts, is the Truth. The natural Import of these Terms, is Duration infinite, or Eternity; and, when they are to be understood differently, the Reason is, the Nature of the Subject requires that limited Sense. I challenge him to produce a Greek Word, which more properly signifies Eternity, than this Word {Aiwn} does. If he knew not the natural Import of these Words, why does he so boldly assert concerning their proper Signification? If he did know, then he was highly disingenuous in asserting this. The Assertion must proceed either from Ignorance or Disingenuity, and a Want of Regard to Truth. Nothing is proved by that large Apparatus of Texts, with his Version, which fill up nine Pages, but this, that the Terms for ever, everlasting, etc. are used to express a measurable Duration, which every one knows; not that they do not properly signify Eternity, nor is he able to give Proof thereof. I am so well satisfied of his utter Incapacity to give such Proof, that I dare promise to become his Proselyte, on Condition of his proving it; which is what I would not be for the whole World. The Amount of his Reasoning can be only this: I have proved by various Instances, that the divine Writers, by these Terms and Phrases, sometimes, express a measurable Duration of a longer or shorter Continuance; and, therefore, they do not properly import unlimited Duration, or Eternity. Thus another might say, that the Latin Adverb {aeternum}

always, or for ever, does not properly mean endless Duration, but a Duration which hath an End, because sometimes it is used in such a limited Sense. f15 I would ask this Person, whether he thinks, that the Terms, everlasting, eternal, for ever, etc. in our own Language, properly mean an endless Duration? And there is Reason for my putting this Question to him, for we sometimes use these Terms in a different Sense; as, when we say of a spruce Gentleman, he is an eternal Beau, and of a Man who delights in walking, he is an eternal Walker. He instances our using these Words to express Duration which hath End; as when we say, such a Person is gone to live in such a Place for always; or such Things are everlasting, or will wear and last for ever; will he affirm, because we thus use these Terms, that they do not, in their natural Import, signify an endless Duration? Should he assert this, he would justly expose himself to Hissing. It is probable, that some may think, he deserves no better Treatment, for affirming, that these Greek Words, {Aiwn aiwniov} in their natural Import, do not signify Eternity, or endless Duration.

I acknowledge, if he could produce an Instance of the inspired Writers using these Words, to express a measurable Duration, after the Dissolution of the World, or the Close of Time, wherein it exists, it would be every considerable Difficulty upon us, and it might greatly tend to shock our Faith, concerning the endless Bliss of the Saints; and also it might be thought to give Countenance unto the Author's Opinion, that a Period will be put unto the Punishment of the Wicked; but this I am sure he cannot do.

Let him do this, and I will immediately embrace his Opinion; tho' that would not prove, that the natural Import of those Phrases is a measurable Duration. What hath he proved by his prolix Parade? Nothing, but this; that these Words certainly express a limited Duration, of a longer or shorter Continuance, before the End of this World: And, therefore, he begs the Favour of his Reader, to allow, without the least Proof of it, that such a limited Duration is really meant by these Phrases, after the End of the World. What trifling is this? in a Word, he is a pitiful Beggar, and is absolutely unable to bring the least Degree of Proof, for what he is extremely desirous his Reader should believe the Truth of.

He closes his learned Discourse on this Subject thus: And the State of the Righteous and the Wicked, when described under these Words, {for ever, etc.} can in no wise be proved without End, since every Age has an End, and every AEra or Period of Time, however long, has still a Conclusion. But we find that Immortality is promised to the Righteous, and it is said of them, that they shall not die any more; so that the Duration of their Existence no ways depends on these Words, eternal and everlasting, but is built on plain and express Promises. f16 This is admirable indeed. Who knows not that Time will certainly have an End? But hath he proved that Time is meant by the Greek Words {Aiwn and aiwniov} when used about the Existence of Men in the future State? No; nor is it in his Power to prove it, I am bold to affirm. As I have above observed, the Greek Word {Aiwn} properly signifies perpetual Existence, and it imports endless Duration. It is {cronov apeirov} infinite Duration. If he requires more Proof of it than is already given, I will promise to oblige him with it; but if he is wise, he will excuse me herein. I demand of him to shew how the Promise, that the Righteous shall not die any more, proves their endless Existence? May they not be annihilated? Annihilation is not Death; and, therefore, tho' that Promise secures them from suffering Death again, it doth not ascertain their perpetual Existence. But the gracious Promises made unto them of the Enjoyment of everlasting Life, must clearly evince the endless Duration of their Existence, notwithstanding this Author's feeble Attempt to prove the contrary. If

these Promises do not prove the eternal Existence of the Saints, I am sure it will be impossible to give Proof of the eternal Existence of our blessed Saviour, as Man, for that is not capable of other and more evident Proof. If his Reasoning is right, we know not, nor can know, whether our precious Redeemer, and the whole Church of God, may not some Time or other be annihilated, or sink into nothing. This is a Consequence so exceedingly horrid, that it may well make one shudder to mention it; but it is natural and unforced. By that Medium, wherewith he can prove, that Christ will exist for ever, in his human Nature, we shall be able to prove the endless Existence of his Body, the Church. The Author having, as he imagines, proved, that the Terms and Phrases, for ever, for ever and ever, etc, do not properly signify endless Duration, He advances to treat of the State of Punishment after the general Judgment; and he allows, that God may inflict Punishment for Vice, but observes, that the proper Ends of Punishment, are reclaiming the Offender, and deterring others from Vice: That Penalty ought to be proportioned to the Crime for which it is inflicted: What crime will be punished more than others: That Sin doth not deserve infinite Punishment, because Virtue deserves not infinite Reward: And, that divine Punishment will certainly have an End. f17 I shall briefly consider each of these Particulars ideas. I will begin with what he says are the proper Ends of Punishment, viz. reclaiming the Criminal, and for the deterring others. With Respect to the first End, human Laws, in many Instances, are not calculated to serve that End. I cannot be persuaded to think, that our Law hangs a Man, or takes off his Head, to make him better; nor ought any Law to adjudge a Person to Death, {#in Terrorem}} for a Terror to others, if his Crime deserves not capital Punishment. That is unjust in itself, and what is so, cannot be sanctified by the End, which may be pretended, or really designed, in the Infliction of such unequal Punishment. But, surely, he was asleep, and knew not what he wrote here; for tho' he says, that the End of all Punishment is, either to reclaim and reform the Criminal, or to deter others from of offending, yet he insists upon it, that God designs, in the Infliction of Punishment, after Judgment, to destroy the very Being of the icked, and that all Vice and Misery will be exiled the World. So that God cannot possibly intend the Amendment of any, whom he will then punish, nor can he design to deter others from Vice, for all the Sons of Vice will cease to be, according to his Opinion; and, therefore, neither of these Ends can have Place, in the Punishment of the Impenitent, after the general Judgment. It is surprising, that this Person should so far forget himself, as to affirm, that these two Things are the End of all Punishment; when it was his Design to prove, that such is the Nature of divine Punishment, after Judgment, that it is not possible, that either one, or the other, can be intended therein. God, in the Infliction of penalty, acts agreeably to the infinite Rectitude of his own Nature. He shews his necessary, tho' voluntary Hatred of Sin. That is his End, and not reclaiming the Offender. Besides, Punishment will never alter the Disposition of the sinful Creature; that will continue the very same, whether he is punished more or less. Let this be disproved, if it can be done, by producing an Instance of a sinful Creature, whose Mind hath been changed, thro' the Influence of Punishment inflicted, from a Love to Sin, unto a holy Delight in God, and his Duty.

It is certain, that Equity will always proportion Punishment, to the Crimes for which it is inflicted, but who shall be Judge of the Demerit of Sin against God? Shall the guilty Creature, who, thro' Self-Love and Tenderness for itself, as well as other Causes, may form a wrong Judgment in this Point? Or shall God, who cannot but do the Thing that is right? Surely, it is most fit to refer the Determination of this Matter unto Infinite Wisdom and Justice, which, we are sure, will determine equitably, in this and all other Things. That there will be Degrees in divine Punishment, I suppose

all will grant, as Men are more or less guilty, in the Sight of God. But who is most fit to determine concerning the Guilt of the sinful Creature, as to its Nature, Weight, and Aggravations, God or Man? Certainly, he who searches the Heart and tries the Reins; and he only is capable of determining who are most guilty; and, therefore, none but he can appoint, what Punishment it is fit to inflict on the criminal Creature. But Men are so daringly, insolent, as to assume the Prerogative, of their infinitely great Judge, and imagine themselves fit to determine, in their own Cause, as Transgression of the divine Law.

What the Author objects unto the infinite Evil and Demerit of Sin, is trifling, or false. He argues thus: In whatever Manner Sin or Vice be estimated, it must be finite, because it is the Production or Act of a finite Kind, of finite Principles and Passions. f18 Very well: Who ever said, that Sin, or a sinful Act, is infinite? No Mortal, I am persuaded. That which is infinite cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being. We know this, full as well as this Writer does. But, with his Leave, or without it, we must distinguish between the Act of Sin, and the Demerit of that Act. Tho' all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, yet there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, because it is committed against all possible and infinite Good. Its Demerit arises from the Object against whom it is committed; and, therefore, as the divine Object against whom all Sin is directed, is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite: If it is not, then there is not, there cannot be greater Evil and Demerit, in an Act of Sin against God, than attend an Act of Sin against a Creature. Why do not such Persons, as our Author, speak out plainly what they mean, and tell us roundly, that there is no greater Evil in sinning against God, than there is in sinning against a poor Mortal like ourselves? This is what he intends, it certainly is what he designs, tho' it was too impious a Thing for him, directly and explicitly, to assert. If this is not his Meaning, he says nothing which is to his Purpose; {#or, if he allows, that there is greater Evil in Sin against God, than there is in Sin against a Creature, that Reason, which obliges him to grant, that it is, in any Degree, a greater Evil to offend against God, will compel him to yield, that it is infinitely greater, viz. the infinite Majesty of the Divine Being. His other Objection unto the infinite Demerit of Sin, is absolutely false. And it should be remembered, that if our Vices were deserving of infinite Punishment, our Virtues would, by the very same Rule, be deserving of an infinite Reward. f19 This Man, at present, is upon high Terms with his Maker, and hath the Front to insist on it, that his Virtues merit as great a Reward from him, as his Sins deserve Punishment at his Hand. Let him see to it, how he will be able to maintain his Plea, at the awful Tribunal of God, before which he must shortly appear. Demerit attends Sin, but even perfect Virtue is not meritorious. We do but our Duty, in yielding Obedience to divine Precepts; it is a Debt we owe to our Maker, and no Desert of a Reward from him, can arise from the Performance of our Duty. The Spring of Merit principally, is performing a Work not due, and which another hath not a Right to require of us; for, he that doth that unto which he is perfectly obliged, only fulfils his Obligation, and hath nothing redundant, from which Merit can arise. - From whence it is manifest, that no Merit with God, can accrue to any Mortal, even tho' he should exactly, and as he ought, obey and fulfil the divine Law. f20 So says the learned Puffendorf. The Civil Law would have furnished this Writer with a better Notion of Merit, than he appears to have; but, perhaps, that is not much the Matter of his Study, his Head being filled with Laws of another Kind. Tho' there is Demerit in Sin, there is not Merit in Virtue; and, therefore, his Reasoning, that if Vice is infinite in Demerit, Virtue must also be infinite in Merit, is most unreasonable and false. In order to prove, that the Punishment of the Wicked will have an End, he observes, that God will not retain his Anger for ever: That, his tender Mercies are over all

his Works: That, as the Father of Mercies, he will have Compassion of the Workmanship of his Hands: f21 Altho' he hath before told us, that God will determine the Measure of our Misery, in exact Proportion to our moral Tempers and Conduct; f22 that is to say, he will punish us as far as our Crimes deserve. How, therefore, does he exercise Mercy towards us? It is not an Act of Mercy to cease to punish, when a Criminal hath suffered as much as his sins deserve, but an Act of Justice: Besides, these Acts of Chiding, relate unto the Correction of the Righteous, and not the Punishment of the Ungodly. By the second Death, he would have us understand Annihilation. For Proof of it, he observes, that the Wicked shall be burnt up, as Tares, Chaff, and Stubble. f23 That is a metaphorical Representation of their Pain and Misery, but it imports not the Destruction of their Being. Fire does not destroy the Being of any Body; it separates its Parts, and alters its Form, but it still exists. And the Destruction of the Wicked, is not the Loss of Existence, but of Well-being, and suffering Torture, which is compared to that painful Sensation, which Fire causes in our Bodies. And his Observation, that the Greek Word {apollumi} signifies, to kill, to put to Death, to break to Pieces, to corrupt, f24 by which the Punishment of the Ungodly is expressed, is not of the least Service to his Cause, for Annihilation is not implied in either of these Senses. The Loss of Happiness, and enduring Torment, are designed, but Loss of Existence, is not meant. His next Attempt is to answer what may be objected to his Opinion from several Scriptures: And those, that have done Evil shall go away {eiv Kolasin aiwnion} to lasting Punishment; our Translation has it, into everlasting Punishment; but the Righteous {eiv Swhn aiwnion} to lasting Life, f25 Why is it wrote {Swhn?} it should be {Zwhn.} This might be the Printer's Mistake, but I think it runs thro' the Performance. Our Translation is just; for the Word {aiwniov} properly means everlasting, or endless Duration; nor will he ever prove the contrary: Neither will the Punishment of the Ungodly end in Death or Destruction, i.e. Annihilation, as he affirms, without the least Proof. Let him prove, that they will be sentenced unto Annihilation, and I will yield the Point; but this he cannot do, These Words are a clear Proof, that the State of the Ungodly, and the State of the Godly, are directly opposite, and will be of the same Duration. The Godly will enjoy eternal Life, and the Ungodly will suffer eternal Death, and the Duration of the Existence of both will be endless; otherwise their States will not be opposite, which the Words clearly evince they will be. Besides, the Death and Destruction of the Wicked plainly mean Tortures, which they will feel, as the Life of the Righteous designs Pleasures, which they will enjoy; and, therefore, Annihilation cannot be intended, by the Death and Destruction of the Wicked. They are dead and destroyed, they existing at the same Time, and, consequently, they are not annihilated, by that Death and Destruction which they will suffer. By the Life of the Godly. is not meant their Existence, tho' that is necessarily included; and by the Death of the Ungodly is not meant their Nonexistence, or ceasing to be, but the direct Opposite of the Life of the Godly, which is suffering Misery. The second Scripture which he endeavours to reconcile with his Opinion is: Where their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched. The Sense of these Words is, as he pleads; the Sufferings of the Wicked will be of the same Duration, as their Existence. f26 But, when they shall cease to exist, can their Worm survive, and their Fire not be quenched? He very well knows the Impossibility hereof, and says, that all Vice and Misery will be exiled the Worlds. f27 Will not the Worm of the Wicked then be dead? He is sensible it will. And will not their Fire be then quenched? He cannot but think it will. So that this is not to interpret, but flatly to contradict Scripture. That which he offers to defend himself in thus contradicting the express Assertion of our Saviour, is extremely weak and foolish, and also manifestly false: It is this; If the Punishment of the Wicked be as durable as their Beings, it will be

and appear to them everlasting, tho' at last extinguished in Death, f28 i.e. Annihilation. The Misery of the finally Impenitent being lasting, as their future Duration is to them, in the common Acceptation of the Word everlasting, because they will not survive their Misery; so that, in the most literal Sense, their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched. f29 How can it be everlasting, if it hath End, which it must, if they cease to exist? Can it appear to them everlasting? If it does, it must be before they are annihilated, for it is impossible it can appear such to them, when they are not; nor can it appear to them everlasting while they exist, for they must know, that they have not reached an endless Duration. This Testimony, therefore, remains in full Force, against the Doctrine which he advances; and, I dare say, it will never be in his Power, to blunt this two-edged Sword, which mortally wounds the Cause he is engaged in the Defence of. The third Text which he attempts an Answer unto, is: The Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up {eiv Aiwnav Aiwnwn} for ever and ever. This Phrase is properly expressive of endless Duration, and many Instances may be produced, wherein Duration without End, is designed by it. Our Saviour says of himself, And behold I live for evermore, or for ever and ever {Revelation 1:18}. The Duration of Christ and the Church will be the same, and the Duration of the Wicked will be the same with the Duration of Christ and the Church. We shall be able to prove the endless Duration of the Ungodly, by the same Medium, that he can prove the endless Duration of Christ, as Man, and of his Body, the Church. He says, doubtless this Punishment, both as to Measure and Duration, will be such as the holy Angels and the Lamb approve; for we are told, that it will be inflicted in their Presence. f30 Without all Question: Neither the holy Angels, nor the Lamb, will disapprove of Punishment being continued so long on Men, as they shall retain an implacable Hatred of God and all Good, tho' this Man may; and such Hatred will possess their Minds for evermore. He adds: But bow long the Period of their Sufferings may be, none can say; only the Subjects of it being mortal and perishing, we cannot suppose it will be endless, for then they must be deathless, and so incapable of a second Death and utter Destruction, which the Scriptures declare will be their End. f31 He hath not proved, nor can prove, that the Death and Destruction of the Wicked, means Annihilation. Positive Sufferings, when and while they exist are intended, and they are dead and destroyed, they frill existing, and, therefore, Annihilation is not designed by the second Death. It is contrary to common Sense, to think, that their Annihilation would be unto them a Punishment; that which puts an End to suffering Punishment, cannot be Punishment; and, therefore, if they will be annihilated, in their Annihilation they will not suffer Penalty. If Annihilation is a Punishment, it must be so to the Creature, while it exists, or when it is not. It can't be a Punishment endured by the Creature, while it exists, for it is not annihilated while it exists, and that which is not, cannot suffer Punishment. He says, the common received Notion of the endless Duration of Sinners in a State of Torment, for the Sins of this short Life, appears to me, not only wholly unscriptural, but likewise highly absurd, and contradicts all our best and primary Notions of Deity, as a Being of infinite Justice end Benignity. f32 If it appears to him unscriptural, it is the Doctrine of the Scripture, nor will he ever prove the Contrary. The Demerit of sinful Actions, arises from their Nature, and not from the Length or Shortness of the Time, wherein they are perpetrated. If I were to kill a Man, in an Instant, which I might do, by shooting him thro' the Head, should I not demerit capital Punishment, for that wicked Action, tho' it was done in a Moment? And, the Desert of Sin against God, springs from its Nature, and not from the Length of Time, which is taken up in sinning. That is infinitely evil, in its Nature, which is a direct Opposition to infinite Good; such is all Sin, and, therefore, the Demerit of Sin must be infinite, and it justly exposes the Creature unto Punishment, which is infinite, in its

Duration. Besides, Men will not only be punished for sinful Actions, but also for their wicked Disposition. The Ungodly are Enmity against God. Tho' they tremble at his Wrath, they have no Desire after, nor Relish for the Joys, which spring from a Sense of his Love, nor ever will have; and, therefore, it is fit, and agreeable to divine Justice, to take eternal Vengeance on Creatures, who will eternally slight divine Goodness. Accordingly, of the Wicked it is expressly declared: That, he who made them, Will have no Mercy on them; and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour {Isaiah 27:11}. His Account of the heavenly State is carnal. Heaven, in his Opinion, is an earthly Paradise, spontaneously bringing forth Fruits, f33 for the Entertainment and Delight of its Inhabitants. If he should come there, therefore, there will be no Need for him to drudge at the Dung-Cart or the Plough; without Toil and Labour he will be supplied with elegant Food, and cheering Drink. f34 This is that Heaven, which our Author is, I suppose, in Expectation of enjoying, after the Resurrection; but this is not that Heaven, which real Christians have in View. It is an Account of the heavenly State, which is much more agreeable to the Alcoran, than the Bible. A Turk it may in some Measure please, but a Christian, I am sure, is in Hope, of an Arrival unto a State of Bliss, which infinitely exceeds this, in the Purity of its Pleasures, and the Sublimity of its Glories. This Performance, taken together, is nothing, but mere Scepticism. What is proved therein? Nothing, except this one Thing, viz. that the Salvation of no Mortal is possible. Perhaps, my Reader may be surprized at this, but it is a Fact; for, he grants, that unblemished Holiness is necessary, in order to an Admission into Heaven: f35 That there is scarce a Person to be found, whose Sanctification is finished in this Life: f36 That, whenever Men shall awake out of the Sleep of Death and Inactivity, they will awake with just the same moral Tempers and Dispositions, whereof they were the Subjects before their Death: f37 And, after all, he knows not whether they will awake out of this State of Inactivity, before the Resurrection; for he says: If the intermediate State between Death and the Resurrection, should prove a State of Sleep and Inaction. f38 It is plain, therefore, he knows not but it may. Then all will arise imperfect, and unfit for Heaven; and such will all the living Saints be, when Christ shall come to Judgment, And he asserts, that we have no Ground from Reason or Experience to imagine, that Men are made holy in an Instant, by a Kind of Metamorphosis. f39 Now, if we compare these Things together, we must allow, that, if he hath proved any Thing, it is this, that the Salvation of no Man is possible; so that but few, surely, will think, he deserves Thanks for his Labour.

FOOTNOTES.

Ft1 When the Soul is said to be immortal, because it is immaterial, its Independence on the Will of God, with Respect to its Continuance in Being, is not meant, which some seem to be so weak as to think is designed; but that, as the Soul is not Matter, and therefore does not consist of Parts, nor is the Subject of Qualities, which inhere in Body, it cannot be destroyed by a Change in its Nature, or by Separation, as the Body may. The Death of the Body is not the Annihilation of it; but such a Change therein, as it ceases to be what it was before, and its Parts are thereupon soon separated; nevertheless, the innumerable Particles, which compose the Body still exist, or are not annihilated, when it is deprived of Life. Death, therefore, as the Body is the Subject of it, is not the Loss of Being, but of a Principle of Life and Activity. By the Immortality of the Soul is meant, it is impossible that Death can pass upon it in a physical Sense. It may be annihilated, but die it cannot, or it can't be deprived of Activity by any physical Cause whatsoever; and, therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude, that it is the Intention of the great Creator, that the Soul shall exist for ever: For, since he

hath given Being to that whose Nature is such, that no physical Cause can possibly deprive it of Activity, no probable Reason can be assigned which may induce us to think, that he will annihilate such an active and deathless Nature. Some Persons, it seems, understanding by the Doctrine of the Immortality of the soul, its Independence on the Will and Power of God, {which is most absurd} have fallen into the Opinion of its dying, or sleeping, when the Body dies, and imagine that it is immediately awaked out of its Slumber by Divine Power. These Persons are as unskillful in Philosophy, as this Author is. It is Pity that they do not forbear to philosophize, until they have a better Notion of philosophical Principles, especially on Subjects relating to Religion, To act this Part in Things merely natural, is a pardonable Weakness; but, to do this on Subjects, which are moral and religious, is intolerable.

Ft2 Scripture Account of a future State considered, P. 4, 7, 13.

Ft3 P. 15.

Ft4 P. 8.

Ft5 P. 14.

Ft6 P. 16.

Ft7 P. 18, 19, etc.

Ft8 P. 18, 19.

Ft9 Ibid.

Ft10 Praedicatio non dicitur facta Spiritibus in Carcere existentibus, quisiPraedicationis Tempore in arcere effent, quorsum enim fieret, cum exco non detur Reditus? Sed dicitur facta olim Tempore Noachi, quoPatientia Dei expectabat Homines, illis, qui hoc Tempore quo Petrus scribit, sunt in Carcere: Unde Petrus non dicit ekeruxe toiv Pneumasi en fulakh, sed toiv en fulakh Pneuasi ekhruxe utnecessario supplendum sit Verbum substantivum, non ut Vulgata reddit, iis qui in Carcere erant, quasi Praedicationis Tempore in Carcere, essent sed qui sunt toiv ousi, eo scilicet Tempore quoApostolus scribebat. Illud enim pote Petrus Jungit, non cum Verbis, enfulakh, sed cum apeiqhsasi hoc Modo, toiv en fulakh Pneumasi apeiqhsasi pote, Tempora non obscure distinguens, quibus rebelles fuerant in Diebus Noe, and quibus in Carcerem detrusisunt propter Rebellionem. Turretin Inst. Theol. Lec. 13, 2, 15.

Ft11 P. 33, 34.

Ft12 This Word properly signifies a Duration, which is unknown to us. It comes from the Root $\mu\lambda$, which imports to hide. Eternity is hid from us. It is no other than a negative Idea, or we know not what it is. Indeed, we have learned to speak very familiarly of Infinity; but we have not, nor can have an adequate Idea of it. Infiniteness is only knowable unto an Understanding which is infinite: A finite Mind, when it hath stretched its Conceptions as far as it possibly can, it is still in its Ideas infinitely short of comprehending that which is infinite. Eternity, therefore, which is an infinite Duration, is properly expressed by this Word, and unto us it is a hidden Thing.

Ft13 This Word is of aei wn, and signifies always existing; and, therefore, as Porphyry says, Aiwn is infinite, interminable Time or Duration. Kai ton aiwna wv efamen ton apeiron cronon And Aiwn,

as we have said, is infinite, interminable Time, or Duration. Porphirii Sententiae. P. 280. Clemens Alexandrinus, a Greek Writer, says, Ou gar esi tauton Aiwn kai cronov; that is, Aiwn and Time is not the same. Paedag. Lib. 1, P. 70. And he asserts, that Aiwn includes Time future, present, and past; and, therefore, it must be proper Eternity. Og oun Aiwn ton cronou to< mellon kai to< eneswv. Siromat. Lib. 1, P.

Ft14 P. 44.

Ft15 Serviet aeternum parvo nesciet uti. Hor. Epist. Lib. 1, Ephesians 10.

Ft16 P. 44.

Ft17 P. 48, 49.

Ft18 P. 46.

Ft19 P. 46.

Ft20 Scaturigo Meriti praecipue est Praestatio Operae indebitae, and quam a nobis exigendi alter Jus non habebat. Qui enim praestitit, ad quod persecte obligabatur, Debitum duntaxat fuum explevit, and nihil velut redundans habet, ex quo Meritum possit enasci. - Unde manifestum est Mortali adversus Deum nullum comparari posse Meritum, si vel maxime is Legi Divinae examussim implendae par foret. De Jure Nat. & Gen. Lib. 1, Cap. 9, Sect. 5.

Ft21 P. 46, 47.

Ft22 P. 35.

Ft23 P. 48.

Ft24 P. 49, in the Margin.

Ft25 P. 51.

Ft26 P. 53.

Ft27 P. 35.

Ft28 P. 52.

Ft29 P. 53.

Ft30 P. 54.

Ft31 Ibid.

Ft32 P. 55.

Ft33 P. 68.

Ft34 Ibid.

Ft35 P. 20.

Ft36 Ibid.

Ft37 P. 15.

Ft38 P. 32.

Ft39 P. 20.

S. Cause of Salvation and Vocation Considered

The Causes of Salvation and Vocation Considered by John Brine {London: John Ward, 1752} THE CAUSES OF SALVATION AND VOCATION

CONSIDERED IN A SERMON PREACH'D ON LORD'S DAY, DEC. 22, 1751, TO THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN CRISPIN-STREET, SPITAL-FIELDS, WHEREOF THE Late Revd. Mr. WILLIAM BENTLEY was PASTOR Published at their own Request Printed by DAN. NOTTAGE, for JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal-Exchange: And Sold by GEORGE KEITH, at Mercers' Chapel, Cheapside; and by JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal-Exchange,

LONDON 1752 [Price Six-Pence.] TO THE CHURCH Assembling in Crispin-Street Beloved Brethren in our common Lord, YOUR Desire of this Publication is an Evidence that you approve of the Doctrine delivered in the Discourse. As I am persuaded, upon the most serious and deliberate Enquiry, which I have been able to make, that nothing is advanced, but what strictly agrees with Scripture, and, as to the Substance of it, hath been the common Faith of Christians, I was willing to comply with your Request; not with the least Expectation, that the Principles pleaded for, or my Manner of Treating on them, will meet with a favourable Reception from any considerable Number of Professors. My Acquaintance with the prevailing Sentiments and polite Taste of the present Age will not permit me to hope for either. But, if the Perusal of what you candidly heard, when delivered from the Pulpit, may be of any Service to establish you in the important Truths, which are the Subject: of this Sermon, that, with me, will much over-balance the highest Contempt, which the Adversaries of those glorious Truths may be pleased to cast upon it:

For, if I am not absolutely a Stranger to myself, {which I would not be} I am desirous to assert and defend Evangelical Principles, and confirm the Faith of the Saints therein. My Persuasion that you with for Success in every such Attempt emboldens me to acquaint you, that I have prepared an Answer to a Pamphlet on the Subject of Atonement, wherein the Fundamental Doctrine of the Satisfaction of Christ is entirely explained away. That Piece had not lien so long, as it has, without Notice taken of it, if I had not entertained Hopes, that some Person, better qualified for such a Service, would have undertook it. There are some Remarks upon it just now published: But, as the Author of that Performance is very far from answering my Wishes on that momentous Doctrine, I shall not suppress what I have drawn up in Answer to it: And, probably, I may acquaint the Reader with some of my Reasons for my Conduct in Relation to this Matter. You have my Condolence in your present Situation; and I shall rejoice in an Opportunity to congratulate you on the happy Occasion, of a Supply with a Pastor every Way qualified to build you up on your mast holy Faith.

I am Yours to serve in the Gospel of Christ,

J.B.

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our own Works; but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the

World began.

THE Zeal of the Apostle Paul for the Propagation of the Gospel, and his indefatigable Endeavours to spread the Interest of Christ drew upon him the keen Resentment of such, who were Adversaries to both. In Consequence of which, he was exposed to Penury, Reproach, and violent Persecution. But what he suffered, for the Sake of the Gospel, did not make him, in the least Degree, ashamed of it: Because he knew, that it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one who believes: And, that therein is revealed the Righteousness of God, from Faith to Faith. He exhorts Timothy to shew the same Resolution and Fortitude, in the Discharge of that important Service whereunto he was called in the Church of God. Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the Testimony of the Lord, nor of me his Prisoner, but be thou Partaker of the Afflictions of the Gospel according to the Power of God. And, In the Text, he proposes to his Consideration various important Truths, in order to enforce the Exhortation, and animate him in his ministerial Work.

First. Two Acts of God towards, or upon us, are expressed: Who hath saved us and called us, etc.

Secondly. A negative Assertion, in Respect to those Acts: Not according to our Works.

Thirdly. A positive Assertion: But according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the World began.

First. Two Acts of God towards, or upon us, are expressed, in the Text.

I. Who hath saved us. This leads us to consider our State. To enquire what Salvation includes in it. And to shew, that Salvation is effected: Or that those Things are accomplished, which Salvation comprises, as it is here to be understood.

1st. Our State is wretched and deplorable. We have destroyed ourselves, and are obnoxious unto the greatest Misery: We are wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.

{1.} We are chargeable with original Guilt. By one Man, Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin: Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned, or, in whom all have sinned {Romans 5:12}. By one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners {Romans 5:19}. Adam, from whom we descend, was constituted our Representative; his Act of Transgression, therefore, was not his Act, as a private, but a public Person: And we sinned in him, and fell with him, in his Apostacy. In Consequence of which,

{2.} We derive a corrupt Nature from him. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh: And that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit {John 3:6}. It is not difficult to understand what is meant by Flesh; for, as it stands opposed to that which is born of the Spirit, it must mean corrupt and evil Dispositions of Mind. And, consequently, every natural Descendant of Adam, in his Conception and Birth, becomes the Subject of depraved Habits. David confesses his early Depravation: Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me {Psalms 51:5}. This Confession respects not the Sin of his Parent, but his own: Besides, it is as ridiculous to say, that David's Mother sinned in Conception, as to affirm, that she sinned in digesting her Food, the former being natural and involuntary, as well and as much as the latter.

{3.} We have contracted much Guilt. We were naturally under the Dominion of Sin: Servants to it, and it bore the Sway in us. Our Omissions of Duty have been many, and we performed no Branch

of it, in that holy Manner which the Law requires; in numerous Instances, have acted directly contrary to the Command of God. All have sinned and come short of his Glory: We have all had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lust of our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh, and of the Mind; and were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others {Ephesians 2:3}. For we ourselves also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another {Titus 3:3}. The Eruptions of Lust have been more and greater in some, than in others; but all have acted a criminal Part, and not been subject to the Law, the Rule of Action. So that every Man is far, very far, from being innocent in his Behaviour.

{4.} We are condemned by the Law. Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them {Galatians 3:10}. Every Deviation from the Rule of our Duty, and the improper Performance of it, subjects us unto the Law's Curse; and, therefore, as our Offences are innumerable, we must needs be in a very deplorable Condition, in Consequence of our multiplied Transgressions. So many as are our Sins, are the Curses due unto us on Account of them.

{5.} We are obnoxious to Divine Vengeance. There is no Exemption in this Case. For, what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under it, that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God {Romans 3:19}. If any Man pleads his Innocence, he necessarily rejects Christ, as a Saviour, and renounces that Salvation, which the Gospel reveals through his Blood and Righteousness, and openly declares that his Condition is such, as makes it unnecessary for him to crave the Exercise of pardoning Mercy in his Favour. All Men are worthy of Death, of eternal Death, which is the Wages of sin, as the Gift of God is eternal Life. These Hints are sufficient, if we have a Capacity of spiritual Discernment, to convince us of our wretched and miserable State and Condition in some Measure. This is the sad State of us all: I and each of you are naturally in this perishing Condition.

2nd. Salvation, as it is here to be understood, implies the following Particulars.

{1.} Non-Imputation of Sin. This necessarily enters into, and is a considerable Branch of Salvation, for no Deliverance from deferred Penalty can be without it. God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespasses unto them {2 Corinthians 5:19}. Redemption supposes the Pardon of Sin: In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins {Ephesians 1:7}. The Imputation of Sin is followed with Condemnation, and the Infliction of Punishment, and, consequently, Salvation implies a Discharge from Guilt.

{2.} Redemption from the Curse of the Law. This is a Consequence of the former. For, as the Imputation of Guilt is necessarily attended with, or brings us under an Obnoxiousness to the Law's Curse: So the Remission of our Sins supposes a Right unto Freedom from Condemnation. There is no Condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus {Romans 8:1}. It cannot, with any Propriety, be said that we are saved, if we have no Right to Freedom from those Menaces, whereunto our Crimes justly exposed our Persons.

{3.} Deliverance from Divine Wrath, or Security from suffering the vindictive Displeasure of God. Our Misery is an Obnoxiousness to suffering his terrible Anger and Vengeance, and, therefore our Salvation must imply an actual Right unto Deliverance from his fiery Indignation, which would

devour us.

{4.} A Right to Life and Blessedness. If we are left without a Title to Happiness, our Salvation is incomplete: For, that not only is Deliverance from Evil, or the Suffering of Punishment; but it is the Fruition of Good, and, therefore, a Right to eternal Life is no less included in the Idea of Salvation, than a Right unto an Exemption from suffering Punishment is therein contained. That, being justified by his Grace, we might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life {Titus 3:7}.

3rd. God hath saved us; or our Salvation, as it is inclusive of these Things, is effected already.

{1.} Sin is expiated. According to ancient Promise and Prophecy, Christ hath finished Transgression, and made an End of Sin {Daniel 9:24} in its Guilt: He hath removed our Transgressions from us, as far as the East is from the West {Psalms 103:12}. And those contrary Points will sooner meet, than the Persons of God's People and their Sins will meet in Judgment, to their Condemnation. Once in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself {Hebrews 9:26}: When the Iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none, and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve {Jeremiah 50:20}.

{2.} Redemption from the Law's Curse is obtained fully and effectually. Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us {Galatians 3:13}. The penal Death of our Saviour, procured for us a Right unto a Freedom from Condemnation; if not, we shall never have such a Right, but must for ever lie under the dreadful Malediction of the Covenant of Works, and perish under that Curse.

{3.} Exemption from suffering Punishment. Right unto this is the certain and immediate Effect of his Sufferings and Death. If it is not, then, if ever, we have such a Right, that must: be the Fruit and Effect of something else, and not of his penal Death: What that can be, let us be informed. Until we are, we shall conclude with the Apostle: Much more then being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him {Romans 5:9}. If the Death of Christ, in a proper Sense, is the meritorious Cause of our Pardon, Right to Impunity must be the certain and immediate Consequence of it.

{4.} Right to Life is also what exists. Christ hath brought in an everlasting Righteousness for us, which is the Foundation of our Claim to future Blessedness: That, being justified by his Grace, we might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life. As our Breach of the Law subjected us to Death, so our Saviour's Obeying it for us, as our Surety, gives us a proper Title and Claim to Life and Happiness, without the Intervention of any Thing, which can be named.

Before I proceed farther, I beg Leave to observe,

[1.] Salvation precedes, and is the Foundation of Calling. We are saved in order to, or that we may be called. Our Vocation is among those Things, which were promised to Christ, in our Behalf, when he undertook to effect the Work of our Redemption: When thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he shall see his Seed {Isaiah 53:10}; i.e. he shall see them regenerated, sanctified, and made meet for Heaven, and in the Possession of it. As this was promised, upon his stipulating to offer himself a Sacrifice for our Sins: His Performance of that Engagement, procured for us a Right to Grace and Glory. Hence it is evident, that our Vocation follows upon the

Impetration of our Salvation by his Death and Sacrifice.

[2.] It is certainly false, that what Christ obtained for us, was an Offer of Pardon and Salvation: Or a Declaration and Promise from God, that he would pardon and save us, upon our performing such, or the other Conditions. The Vertue, Efficacy, and Merit of the Redeemer's Blood and Righteousness are not dependent on any Thing in us; they result entirely from the Nature of his Sufferings, Obedience, and the Dignity of his Person, and, therefore, of themselves, without the Performance of any Conditions by us, are available to procure for us what Benefits were promised to us by the Divine Father, upon his Undertaking, as our Surety, to obey the Law and suffer its Curse: And, consequently, it is false, that Christ obtained for us only a Proposal, or verbal Grant of Salvation; and we are not left to acquire for ourselves a Right to Pardon, Peace, and eternal Blessedness, which many affirm we are.

[3.] God is the Origin, as Christ is the meritorious Cause of Salvation. It is of him, that we are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption {1 Corinthians 1:30}. The Father drew the Plan of our Salvation. It springs from his infinite Love, and all the Branches of it were fixed and settled, in his infinitely wise and eternal Counsels. But more of this, by and by.

II. Hath called us with an holy Calling

1st. This Call is internal and effectual. It is not to be understood of an Invitation, or external Call, given to us in the Gospel to repent and reform, as many, in our Times, interpret it. This Vocation is an internal Work upon us. And it is the same as the Apostle expresses in these Words: Being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you {Php 1:6}. It is begetting us again. Quickening of us when dead in Trespasses and Sins. And it is creating us in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Therefore, something is produced in us, except there may be a Regeneration without any Thing being generated. Unless Quickenings may be, without a Communication of Life. And, unless a creating Act may take Place, when nothing is produced, or brought into Being; neither of which can reasonably be supposed. It is effectual: Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power {Psalms 110:3}. Every Man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Christ {John 6:45}. None remain unwilling, when Divine Power is exerted to make willing. And no Man refuses to come to Christ, or believe in him, who receives gracious Instruction from, and is drawn by the Father.

2nd. It is a holy Calling. It may be fitly so represented; for,

{1.} It is an Implantation of a holy Principle in the Mind, but not an Expulsion of Sin. The Subjects of this Vocation are the Workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. The Author and End of this Work evince the Holiness of its Nature. And it is a Meetness for Heaven, and, therefore, it must be good, pure, and holy. But it is not an Expulsion of Sin. It deprives Sin of its Dominion, but leaves it its Being in the Heart. If any Man seriously thinks, that he hath nothing of Sin in him, it is a sad Evidence, that he is destitute of Holiness, and hath in him nothing but Sin. If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us {1 John 1:8}. This may be of Use to guide us, as a Rule, in the Examination and Trial of our Hearts. For, on one Hand, when we search for Evidences of Grace in ourselves, we are not to expect to find a Freedom from the Being and Actings of Sin in us, and, therefore, we should not conclude, that we

have no Grace, because we have Sin: Which some are sometimes tempted to think of themselves, on Account of their Imperfection: And, on the other Hand, we must not imagine, that we are regenerate Persons, without we have some Evidence of Holiness in us; for, though the Being of Corruption consists with the Truth of Grace in the Heart, that can evidence to none his Regeneration. As an excellent Divine observes, The Being of Cockle in a Field is no Proof that Wheat is there: So Corruption cannot evidence to us the Being of Grace in our Souls. We may have the Lust of the Saints, and have none of their Graces. We may possess their Deformities, and be wholly destitute of their Beauties. This brings me to observe,

{2.} All the Actings of our Minds, according to this Principle, are holy and spiritual. The regenerate Part of a Believer delights in the Law of God, and serves it. And, therefore, we may know from what Principle the Acts of our Minds spring, by a proper Consideration of their Nature: Whether they arise from the Flesh, or from the Spirit. All vain Imaginations: All irregular Thoughts: All disorderly and inordinate Desires: All evil Tendencies in our Affections, take their Rise from the Flesh in us. And every pure, spiritual Act, springs from the heavenly Principle in our Souls. The Want of a due Attention unto this hath sometimes been the Occasion of great Perplexities and distressing Fears, to truly humble and holy Persons. And let us carefully remember this, that whatever we think of ourselves, and what Opinion soever others may have of us; we are no farther holy, than this spiritual Principle is exercised in our Minds, upon Objects of a spiritual Nature, to which it is congruous. This, it may be, will furnish many of us with just Cause of great Humiliation, and convince us, that we have sad Reason to cry out; Oh, our Leanness, our Leanness, the treacherous Dealers have dealt treacherously!

Secondly. Neither Salvation, nor Calling, is according to our Works.

Grace and Works are set in Opposition, whenever the Causality of our Salvation is treated of. They cannot be, therefore, Con-causes of it, If it is of Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace: If it be of Works, then it is no more of Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work. It is not of Works, lest any Man should boast. {Romans 11:6; Ephesians 2:9}. Men have always endeavoured to establish the Doctrine of Salvation, by Works, at least, in Part; and on this Subject they have expressed themselves variously, but much the same Thing is meant. It ought to be observed that Language is entirely arbitrary, and, therefore, variable, and may be changed according to the Inclination of Writers. But Principles are eternal Things, whether true or false. That which was once a Truth will for ever remain such, and that which once was false can never become true. But a Change in the Mode of Language, whereby Doctrines are expressed, sometimes is taken for an Advancement of new Thoughts, or the Striking out of new Light, upon Subjects, natural, and, supernatural. Whereas no new Ideas are brought forth, and presented to View; they are no other than old Thoughts put into a new Dress, which makes not the least Alteration in their Nature; they are still the very same they always were, whether true or false. And, therefore, it is an Evidence of Weakness and Vanity in those Men, who seem willing to have it thought, that they make new and farther Discoveries, when they convey only old Notions, put into a later and more fashionable Garb, according to the Fancy and Humour of the Age, wherein they happen to live. Thus it hath fallen out on the Subject under our present Consideration: Sometimes it hath been said, that Works are a proper Condition of Salvation, on which it is suspended: Or it is by sincere Obedience, in Opposition to feigned: Or there is a Congruity and Fitness, in Repentance and Obedience, to entitle us to the saving Benefits of Christ: Or, as the modish

Authors of our Times speak, real, i.e. personal Holiness, or personal Worth, renders us fit Objects of pardoning Mercy, and of the Complacency or moral Approbation of God, which, they say, it was absolutely impossible that the Obedience and Sacrifice of Christ could do.

Now it is easy to observe, that the same Thing is contended for, in these various Forms of Speech, viz. that Salvation and Happiness are the proper Fruits of our Repentance and Obedience, and not Effects obtained for us by the Righteousness and Sacrifice of Christ. For, it seems, the whole Efficacy of his Obedience and Sacrifice, in the Business of Remission and Acceptation with God, is wholly dependent on, and in Pursuance of a Divine Decree, that so it shall; it results from our good Dispositions and worthy Actions. This is a Renunciation of the whole Gospel. We are told, that the Grace of God confers, and the Death of Christ procured for us, antecedent Blessings, and that this is the grand Point, which the Apostle Paul, with so much Reasoning, proves, particularly, in his Epistle to the Romans. Well, what are these antecedent Blessings? Are they Pardon, Peace, Reconciliation, Acceptance with God, Regeneration, Sanctification, and a Right to future Blessedness? No. What are they then? They are nothing more than God's telling us, that he will pardon and save us, if we render ourselves, by a suitable Temper and becoming Behaviour, the fit Objects of his moral Approbation. The Divine Declaration, that God will save us, if we fit ourselves for Salvation, is said to be owing to the Sacrifice of Christ; but our Right to Salvation results from that Fitness in us, and not from his Sacrifice. And, God's acquainting us, that he will save us, upon that Fitness being found in us, is an Act of Favour, and is to be ascribed to his Grace; but our Title to Salvation arises from that Fitness in us to be pardoned and saved. Men may dispute, while they please; but the Truth is, it is Salvation itself that is the Thing intended by the Apostle, and not a Declaration, that God will pardon and save us: And he designs good Works, call them what you will, when he excludes them as a Cause of Salvation. If, therefore, any Works save us, they must not be good, but sinful Works.

I. Neither is according to the Desert of our Works . It ought to be observed, that, by Works, Obedience is intended, or Actions which are materially good. For, surely, no Man can be so stupid as to imagine, that a direct Violation of the Law merits the Divine Regard, and entitles the Offender to Benefits: And, therefore, Works must mean Duties performed, and not Sins committed, Now, Salvation is not according to the Desert of that Obedience, which Men endeavour to yield to the Law of God. For, though Duty is good, materially considered, yet it hath the Nature of Sin in it, by Reason of the Vitiosity of the Person who performs it. And so he demerits Punishment, even in Duty, not as he attends to Duty; but as he performs it not, in that holy Manner which the Law requires him to do it. And if the best Actions of Men render them worthy of Censure, because of the wrong Manner of their Performance, it is senseless to imagine, that they merit the Favour of God, or thereby qualify themselves for the Reception of Benefits from him. How then can it be thought, that Salvation, or Vocation, is according to the Desert of our Works?

II. Neither is according to the Nature of our Works Such as we are in our natural Dispositions, such are all our Actions, as to their Kind. I do not mean, in Respect to the Matter of our Actions: Or that they are materially sinful. But what I intend is, that whatever we do, is, in its Kind, or as it is acted by us, congruous to the governing Disposition of our Souls. So that, in doing what is materially good, we are evil, and all our Actions have the Nature of Sin in them. Such as the Spring of Action is, such must the Action be, evil, if that is evil, though not materially, yet as proceeding from a corrupted Principle and Fountain. No Action that is properly good, can be performed by a Person,

who is destitute of good Principles, any more than sweet Streams can flow from a bitter Fountain, which is impossible. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to his Law, neither, indeed, can be {Romans 8:7}. And, without Faith it is impossible to please God {Hebrews 11:6}. It must be concluded, therefore, that Salvation is not according to the Desert, or Nature of our Works. And this leads me to observe two Things, with Respect to our Vocation.

III. It is an Act of pure Grace or free Love. For, prior to this Work upon us, we are not the Subjects of any good Dispositions, nor are capable of performing Service, in an acceptable Manner. And, consequently, our Vocation is the mere Effect of the Grace and Mercy of God. Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but of his Mercy hath he saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost {Titus 3:5}. But God who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Trespasses and Sins, quickened us together with Christ {Ephesians 2:4-6}. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead {1 Peter 1:3}.

IV. Grace specifically differs from the best Thing that is in a natural Man. An unregenerate Person may be humble, modest, affable in his Temper and Behaviour; he may maintain strict Probity and Honour, attend unto religious Duties, and have what is lovely and amiable, as the young Man of whom we read in the Gospel, concerning whom it is said, that our Lord loved him, i.e. approved of his virtuous and just Behaviour. But Grace is of a nobler Nature, than the most excellent Thing that is found in an unregenerate Person. Regeneration is not a Work upon Dispositions which are in us previous unto itself, but at as the Implantation of Principles in us, which are entirely new. And, therefore, it is represented, as giving us a new Heart, and a new Spirit within us. This it is which distinguishes us from Persons unregenerate, and makes us truly excellent. Hence the Saints are said to be the excellent in the Earth, in whom is all Christ's Delight. The Fruits of the Spirit are in none, before they are born of the Spirit. Grace is not the Excitation or drawing forth of natural Principles into Act, by Influences and Impulses from God; but it is a new Nature created in the Soul. For which Reason it is said: If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature; old Things are passed away, and all Things are become new {2 Corinthians 5:17}. So that, there is no Congruity between Grace and those Principles, which are in us before its Production. Nor is it communicated to us, because of any Fitness in us for it, or because we are disposed to receive it, or act agreeably unto it. Faith, Hope, Love, Fear, Humility, Meekness, and all other gracious Principles, differ specifically from all that is in us, while we are in an unregenerate State. Nor is it possible, by any Operation whatever, to cause an unregenerate Mind to believe, hope, love God, or reverence and adore him, and yield a holy spiritual Obedience unto him. The Mention which some make of a Divine Influence, in Regeneration, means no more, than stirring up natural Principles unto holy Acts; which is far from Truth, and is absurd, for Enmity cannot be made to love; that involves a Contradiction. But, by the Allowance of a Divine Influence to excite corrupt Nature unto gracious Acts, many are imposed upon, and persuaded to think, that it is ancient Truth which is meant; but it is entirely a Mistake, which might be easily discerned, if too many among us were not foolishly credulous, and disposed to entertain a favourable Opinion of some Sort of Men, who court their Esteem. I am sure it is high Time for us to be upon our Guard, if we design to retain the Truth of the Gospel. For no small Number make sad Improvement, of those Modes of speaking on Evangelical Doctrines, which are now much come into Fashion. But I go on to consider,

Thirdly. The positive Assertion in the Text: God hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ, before the World began.

I. Purpose intends the Decree of God, which is called, the Counsel of his Will {Ephesians 1:11}; because of the Wisdom which is displayed therein, and because it is his good Pleasure, or the pure Result of his sovereign Will; he formed the Plan and Model of our Salvation, in his infinite and eternal Mind, and fixed upon all the adorable Methods, whereby it was accomplished. He willed not to impute Sin to us: God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespasses to them. His Intention was, that Christ should come under the Law, obey it, and bring in for us an everlasting Righteousness. He decreed, that our blessed Lord Should bear our Sins, and become an atoning Sacrifice for them, that we might go unpunished, or escape that dreadful Wrath and Vengeance, whereunto we were obnoxious: And his Law and Justice sustain no Loss by our Pardon and Impunity. Again, he formed a Design and Resolution to communicate Holiness unto us, or to regenerate and sanctify us, and make us meet for the Fruition of himself.

II. This is his own Purpose, properly his; for it is the Effect of his own Love without any external Motive and Inducement. And it is his own Contrivance, peculiar to himself. He only could determine in what Way it became him to recover us from Ruin, and bring us to Glory. So wonderful is the Method of our Pardon and Salvation, that the Nature of it evinces it to be the Contrivance, not of finite, but infinite Wisdom. Whether Holiness, Righteousness, and Justice, or Kindness, Grace, and Mercy, are more illustriously displayed therein, we are not able to say, but must eternally adore the infinitely wise Provision, which is made in the Scheme of our Salvation, for the astonishing Discovery and Exercise of each, ill entire Harmony and Agreement: Mercy and Truth meet together: Righteousness and Peace kiss each other, in the Affair of our Redemption.

{1.} Salvation is according to this Purpose. The Father, in Pursuance of his own Decree and Christ's Undertaking, said our Iniquities upon him: And made him to be Sin for us. Agreeably to his everlasting Counsels, when the Fulness of Time was come, he sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem us that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons {Galatians 4:4-5}. Our Saviour's being made a Curse for us, to redeem us from Condemnation, was according to this gracious Purpose. And the Expiation of our Guilt, by his Susception of it, and Atoning for it, was the Accomplishment of the Decree of the Father, who eternally resolved upon our Remission. The whole Order of Salvation, in all its Branches, and in Relation unto all its Subjects, is according to that Plan, which was formed in the Divine Mind. For it is of the Father that we are in Christ Jesus, and he makes him unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Hence all that our Saviour did and suffered, was the Fulfillment of the Father's Will, and the Discharge of that Work, which he gave him to do: I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me. I bare finished the Work, which thou gavest me to do. Our Salvation, therefore, or our Right to Pardon, Freedom from Condemnation, and Title to Life, arising from the Obedience, and Sufferings, and Death of our blessed Lord, is according to the wise, the gracious, and sovereign Will and Counsel of the Father. And, herein be abounded towards us, in all Wisdom and Prudence.

{2.} Vocation is according to this Purpose of God. The Subjects of it are the Objects of his eternal Choice unto Salvation. God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth {2 Thessalonians 2:13}. Calling, therefore, is

the Accomplishment of God's gracious Decree concerning us. And hence, we are said to be called according to his Purpose: We know that all Things work together for Good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his Purpose. Since it was the Determination of God to regenerate, sanctify, and make us meet for Heaven, or to call us unto his eternal Glory: Calling doubtless is effectual. For God did not purpose to work that in us, which he could not effect; nor could he design to produce Holiness in us by his powerful Influence upon us, if he knew our Nature and Make to be unfit, or improper, to be operated upon by his infinite Power. And, consequently, this Vocation is effectual. God intended what he knew himself able to produce: He purposed to convey to us what he knew we were capable of receiving, though not of acquiring, even with Helps and Assistances afforded to us. Capable we are of being wrought upon, by infinite Power; but capable we are not of being helped to see, because we are destitute of a visive Power; capable we are not of being assisted to act, because we have not Life, a Principle of Action. Capable we are not of being enabled to love God and Holiness, because we are Enmity against God, and all real Holiness. But we are capable of receiving, by Infusion, Light, Life, and a Principle of Love, though we are Darkness, are in a State of Death, and are Enmity itself against God. It was the Purpose of God to give us new Hearts and new Spirits, as his Promise evinces; and, when a new Heart and a new Spirit is given, we are capable of being assisted to act in a holy spiritual Manner, but not before: Any more than a Man can be assisted to see, without a visive Power, or be enabled to act without Life, or a Principle of Action, or than Enmity can be assisted to love. As the Purpose of God took Place, in our Redemption: So it shall be accomplished, in Vocation, in all its Objects. And this Work must be effectual in every one, who is the Subject of it.

III. Salvation and Vocation are according to "Grace", which was given us in Christ before the World began.

1st. It is necessary here to enquire what is intended by Grace.

{1.} That sometimes means the Goodness, free Love, and Kindness of God.

Thus in these Words: By Grace are ye saved {Ephesians 2:5}. The sovereign and unmerited Favour of God, is the Origin of our Salvation. That is the Fountain of all the Branches of our Recovery and Happiness. Election to Salvation was not of Works, but of Grace. The Constitution of Christ to be our Head, Mediator, and Saviour was an Act of free Favour. The Gift of Christ to us, and for us, was an amazing Instance of rich and glorious Grace. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son {John 3:16}. It was an illustrious Act of Grace in God to deliver him up to Suffering and Death for us. God commended his Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us {Romans 8:7}. Our Redemption, or the Forgiveness of our Sins, is according to the Riches of the Father's Grace, as the meritorious Cause is Christ's Blood: Our Justification is a gratuitous Act: That being justified by his Grace {Titus 3:7}. In a Word, all the Parts of our Salvation spring from the Fountain of God's good Pleasure, or his rich Mercy and Kindness. Pardon, Peace, Acceptation, Freedom from Condemnation, and our Right to eternal Life are all derived from the everlasting Love and Grace of God. Our Vocation is the Fruit and Effect thereof: I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. And abundant Mercy is manifested in begetting us again unto a lively Hope. The rich Mercy and great Love of God are gloriously discovered, or shine forth, in quickening us, when we are dead in Trespasses and Sins. Our Nature and Conduct are a full and irrefragable Proof of this

important Truth. We are Enmity against God, and have not the least Degree of a friendly Disposition towards him, nor any Desire of an Acquaintance with him, or of enjoying him, the Origin of Blessedness. To suggest, that Men naturally have any such Desire, or can have, is the ready Way to flatter them into Hell, I am bold to say it, though I am sensible, that it is absolutely contrary, to the fashionable Divinity of our Times. I use this Plainness and Freedom in Speaking, because I am more and more convinced, by various melancholy Things, which daily occur, that this is a Season, wherein, in an especial Manner, we ought to be open and explicit, in asserting Truth, if ever there was such a Season, since the Christian Name was known in the World. It is evident, that Salvation and Vocation are according to the free and unmerited Love of God. But I humbly apprehend, that is not designed here; my Reason for it is: This Grace was given us, which is a Mode of speaking, that is not properly used of the Love of God, itself. His Love was fixed upon us in Christ before the World began; but it seems to me not agreeable, strictly speaking, to say of Divine Favour, itself, that it was given us. And, therefore, I rather think, that by Grace here we are to understand,

{2.} The Effects of Divine Love, which may be called Grace, because they spring from it. And, those Effects, are all spiritual, and eternal Blessings: Or Grace and Glory, which we receive from God in this World, and shall enjoy in the next. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ blessed us with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places, in Christ. There is no spiritual Blessing, which is not included in this Act of the Divine Father. It comprehends all and every one, Adoption, Pardon, Peace, Acceptation, Grace for our Sanctification, and Preservation in this State, and everlasting Blessedness, in the immediate Presence of God, hereafter.

2nd. This Grace, or these spiritual Blessings, were given us in Christ. This supposes that Relation, or Union, which subsisted between Christ and us, when this Act of the Father was put forth. He was our Head and Representative, and we were included in him, and represented by him. And, therefore, what was given to him for us, as standing in the Capacity of a Representative Head, with the strictest Propriety, may be said to be given to us in him. And this Act of the Father was a real Grant, Promise, and Donation of Grace, in that comprehensive Sense, which is above explained.

3rd. This Grant, or Donation of all spiritual Blessings, was before the World began: That is to say, in Eternity, or before the Commencement of Time. For this Phrase is used to express the everlasting Date of that to which it is applied: In Hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lye, promised before the World began. And the same Idea is expressed by another Phrase, which is much like to this, viz. before the Foundation of the World: God blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places, in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World {Ephesians 1:4}. The Act of blessing us with all spiritual Blessings, is, therefore, of the same Date with our Election, which is eternal. Our Non-Existence is no Objection at all to this Conferring of a Right upon us to these Blessings, any more than it is to our Election. For, if they who are not, may be chosen, they who do not at present exist, may have a Right conferred upon them unto Benefits, in one who represents them. If any shall say, this is a Collation of Right upon nothing, since they were not: I would say, God chose nothing, since they did not exist, who are supposed to be the Objects of the Divine Choice. Our Reception of Divine Blessings necessarily supposes our personal Existence; but the Conferring of a Right upon us to those Blessings, no more requires, or supposes, our present Existence, than the Divine Election of our

Persons to eternal Salvation requires, or supposes, our present Existence. I confess, that I have been somewhat surprized, to hear some very intelligent Persons object, in this Manner, unto what is now pleaded for, and am persuaded, that, if they thoroughly examined, into the Nature, Force, and Consequence of Objections of this Sort, they would be convinced, that they are by no Means to be admitted. If our Faith in heavenly Mysteries is to be directed by, and accommodated unto, Rules, which pass for Learning among Men; I am satisfied, that it must be very incomplete, and in many other Particulars much corrupted, as well as in this Instance we have now before us. In order to set this Doctrine in as clear a Point of Light as I can, I would propose to Consideration the following Things:

{1.} Christ was constituted a Head to us, in Eternity, by the Divine Father, with his own Consent. I suppose it will be granted, that the Covenant of Grace and Peace, wherein the Business of our Salvation was settled, provided for, and secured, was entered into, in Eternity, by the Father, and Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Surety. That Covenant was not made or entered into with him in a private but public Capacity; or, therein he was appointed to be, and, in the Repute of the Father, he then was, the Head and Representative of all the chosen People of God. And, consequently, the Covenant of Grace not only had Relation unto, or concerned them, and respected their final Happiness; but it was made with them in him, as their Representative in that Transaction. I have always much approved of what the Assembly of Divines say on this Subject, viz. That the Covenant of Grace was made with Christ, as a Head, and with all the Elect, in him, as his Seed. Our Saviour was set up from everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was {Proverbs 8:23}: Which respects the Father's Designation and Appointment of him to be our Mediator and Head, unto which he consented, and became invested with that Office, tho' his human Nature did not then subsist, wherein he was, in the Time agreed on between the Father and himself, to do and suffer for us, all that which, in this Covenant he stipulated to do and suffer, in order to our Security, in Subordination to the Glory of all the Divine Perfections. Upon this Designation of the Father, and his own undertaking to be our Mediator and Head, he became such in the Divine Repute, and represented us, notwithstanding his human Nature then subsisted not, and tho' we were not then personally existent. The Promises, therefore, which the Father made to him in this Covenant, that had Respect to us, or which express the Privileges and Blessings, which are to be received and enjoyed by us, are to be considered as made to us in him, as our Representative. If Christ was then constituted a Head, it must be concluded, that he then had Members, who were considered in him, or who were his Body, and in Union with him; for he was not a Head without Members. And it must be observed, that both the Natures of Christ are included in this his Relation to us as a Head: And, as the present Subsistence of his human Nature was not necessary unto his becoming a Head to the Church of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven, so our personal Existence was not necessary unto our becoming his Members. The certain future Subsistence of his human Nature was a sufficient Foundation for his Headship to us; and the certain future Existence of our Persons, was a sufficient Ground, for our becoming Members of him. If this Reasoning is not allowed of, for my Part, I am not able to discern how it was possible, that our Saviour should be a Head unto the Church of God, before the Time of his Incarnation. But, surely, it is not to be imagined, that the Church was without a Head, until Christ became incarnate. This is a farther Proof, that heavenly Mysteries are not to be limited by, nor accommodated unto, those Rules which are called Learning among Men; and may justly convince us that those Rules, of what Use soever they may be in other Things, in divine Truths, are, not only useless, but

pernicious: Which is a proper Reason for an utter Rejection of them in Evangelical Doctrines, let some Persons say what they please in their Favour. If we will form our Notions of the sublime Mysteries of Christianity, by Rules of Art, or human Science, which are allowed to be of Service in reasoning upon natural Truths, I am sure, our Conceptions concerning super natural Truths must be, not only exceedingly imperfect, but also, in various Instances, certainly false: The Reason of which is evident; those Mysteries are Truths which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man {1 Corinthians 2:9}; i.e. they are Doctrines absolutely unknown to the human Mind, and are not inseparable from, nor have any Connexion with, such Truths, as Men, by the utmost Stretch of Reasoning, can acquire the Knowledge of. All Objections, therefore, unto God's eternal Acts of Favour towards us in Christ, our Head, which proceed upon, or arise from this Axiom, That nothing can be predicated of a Non-ens, or what is not, or hath not present Being, are fond, and not of the least Weight.

{2.} The Father promised and gave, or made a Grant of, all those Favours and Blessings unto us in Christ, which are comprised in our full Salvation. The Covenant of Grace contains in it every saving Benefit: And, therefore, David says concerning that Covenant, This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire {2 Samuel 12:5}. There is one grand Promise of the Gospel, which is comprehensive of every Thing that is conducive unto, and wherein our final Felicity consists, viz. the Promise of eternal Life. This Promise was made in Eternity: In Hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lye, promised before the World began {Titus 1:2}. Pardon of Sin, and all that is therein included - the Acceptation of our Persons - Grace for our Regeneration, Sanctification, and Preservation in this World - and that Glory which we shall possess in the next, were promised by the Father to Christ, our Head, from everlasting, or before the World began, and unto us in him, as our Representative, in those federal Transactions which pass'd between the Divine Father and himself, as Landing in the Capacity of Mediator. What he did and suffered, in order to our Salvation, in his mediatorial Capacity, was in the Fulness of Time; but his Investiture with the mediatorial Office was before the Commencement of Time: And whatever spiritual Blessings we now receive by Faith, and all that Blessedness which we shall partake of in the future State, were given us, in Christ, in this everlasting Covenant.

{3.} Right to Grace and Glory, or unto all spiritual Blessings, arose from this Divine Grant and Promise of them to us in Christ, our Head. As by a Deed of Conveyance a Child unborn may become Heir unto an Estate, or as Right to an Inheritance arises to one not yet born by Virtue of a Deed of Conveyance, so Right to Pardon, Peace, Freedom from Condemnation, Acceptation with God, and unto Grace and eternal Glory, arises from the Divine Promise and Grant of those Blessings to us in Christ, our Head, in the everlasting Covenant. And this Grant was made to Christ on Conditions required to be performed by him, and which he stipulated to fulfil. His Performance of these Conditions, therefore, confirms our Right unto those Blessings, and ascertains our Reception of them. They are free Gifts to us; but on the Part of our Saviour they are Debt, or he hath procured them for us by doing and suffering the Will of the Fathers; on Condition of which this Grant of them was made to him, as our Surety and Head. Hence he makes a Demand of Glory in Behalf of his People: Father, I WILL, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me {John 17:24}. This Right is not known to us, is not actionable or pleadable by us, until we receive Grace from God to make as meet for Heaven; but the federal Transactions of the Father and Christ inverted us

with a Right to all spiritual Blessings, tho' we knew it not, nor could plead it.

IV. Salvation and Vocation are according to Grace, which was given us in Christ "before the World began".

1st. Salvation is according to that Grace. The Bestowment of spiritual Blessings upon us in Christ did not prevent our Apostacy, and Ruin, in Consequence thereof. Adam was the Head and Representative of the Elect as well as of the Non-elect, and they are equally chargeable with his Offence: They, no less than the Rest, derive a corrupt Nature from him, and nothing differ from them in the natural Dispositions of their Minds; they are Children of Wrath by Nature, even as others; and their Deportment is of the same rebellious Nature against God, as is the Behaviour of the Nonelect; and, therefore, they come under a legal Charge of Sin, are under the Sentence of the Law's Curse, and are obnoxious unto, and worthy of, eternal Death: Consequently, the Grant of spiritual Blessings unto them in Christ, as their spiritual, federal Head, did not prevent their Ruin and Misery by Sin; but it was a gracious and effectual Provision for their Recovery out of that miserable Condition, whereinto they are involved by Guilt, original, and that which they themselves contract. The Nature, Terms, or Articles, and Promises of the Covenant of Grace most evidently suppose our Misery, as we are included in, and are Transgressors of, the Covenant of Works: And it is no Contradiction to affirm, that, according to the latter, we are lost, undone, and miserable, and that, according to the former, we are safe, secure, and saved; because with our natural Head we are included in the Covenant of Works, and in our spiritual Head we are included in the Covenant of Grace, and both at the same Time. This cannot be denied, without denying that the Church was related unto Christ, as a Head, when the Covenant of Grace was made with him; which is, perhaps, what some may be inclined to deny; but they cannot do it, without destroying the proper Foundation of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and of the Imputation of his Righteousness unto the Church of God. Our Salvation is according unto the gracious Promises made unto Christ, our Head, in this Covenant. Agreeably to the mutual Transactions of the Father and our Redeemer in the Covenant of Grace, he assumed our Nature into Union with himself, came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, obeyed that Law for us, and so brought in an everlasting Righteousness. The Father imputed our Guilt to him; he took it upon himself, or consented to bear it, and endured that Punishment, which, according to the Constitution of the Law, was due to us, as Transgressors of it. Thus he bare our Guilt, and bare it away from us, and out of the Sight of God, as a Judge. Redemption, therefore, or the Remission of Sin, Peace, and Reconciliation, are according unto that Grace, which was promised, given, and granted to us, in Christ, in the everlasting Covenant; so also is the Justification of our Persons through the Righteousness of Christ, the Mediator of that Covenant. And, agreeably unto what was stipulated between the Father and the Son from everlasting, our Persons, while in a State of Unregeneracy, are preserved from many Dangers, which would be of fatal Consequence to us, and we are recovered from, or out of, it may be, some very threatening Sicknesses and Disorders; and so we are, in the Dispensations of Providence, preserved until the Time appointed for our partaking of the Grace and Blessings of that Covenant, wherein is the Whole of our Salvation, and all our Desire, as spiritual Persons. Hence we may learn, that none, who are included in the Covenant of Grace, are taken out of the World, before they receive Grace from God to prepare them for the Fruition of himself, nor can die in a State of Unregeneracy. And, therefore, it is a vain Objection, which some have made to the Doctrine of our Right to Salvation and Happiness by Virtue of a

Divine Grant in the everlasting Covenant, that, if we die unregenerate, we could not be admitted to Heaven; for the Objection supposes what is not supposable, nor can be; because, as this Grant intitles us to eternal Life, so it gives us a Right unto, and ensures our partaking of, Grace and Holiness, as a Meetness for the Enjoyment of it. The Promise of eternal Life, which was made by God, who cannot lye, before the World began, as it gave us an unalienable Right unto that State of complete Happiness, so it secured to us a Participation of that Purity and Holiness, which are necessary, as a Preparative for the Possession of that future Blessedness, and fully proves the great Impropiety and Impertinence of this Objection to our Right unto Salvation and everlasting Life, prior to Faith in Christ. Sanctification is necessary to, and must precede, the Enjoyment of heavenly Bliss: For without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord. But Right to eternal Life as previous unto our Sanctification, and secures it.

2nd. Vocation is according unto Grace, which was given us in Christ, before the World began.

{1.} Those only are the Subjects of this Divine Work, to whom Grace was given in the everlasting Covenant: And, who those Persons are, it is easy to determine: They are the Elect, No more nor other than they are called to God's eternal Glory. Election to Salvation is the Ground and Foundation of Regeneration and Sanctification. This gracious Decree is the Fountain of all that Purity and Holiness, which Men receive as a Meetness for Heaven: God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit. Love to God is the Fruit and Effect of Divine Love to us. We love him, because he first loved us. Heavenly Attraction springs from an Interest in the Favour of God: I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. Vocation is the Execution of the Decree of Election; and, therefore, they are parallel, and exactly of the same Extent. Some suppose, that the Influence of the Spirit of God upon Men, in order to Salvation, is of wider Compass than Election is: That Influence, therefore, and those Effects, whatever they be, which it produces, cannot evidence to any their Election of God: And, consequently, none can possibly know, that their Names are written in Heaven, or that they are chosen to Salvation, let their Convictions, Repentance, Trust, and Obedience be what they may: Which is a sufficient Proof of the Falshood of this Supposition; for it is not consistent with the Will of God, which is that the Heirs of Promise should have a proper Foundation for strong Consolation. If any of those who embrace this Opinion have such Consolation, I am sure, their Experience is not founded upon, but contradicts, their Principles. Besides, this Opinion supposes, that Men who have no supernatural Principle in them, may be assisted to act spiritually, which is impossible. That which opposes Grace, cannot be excited unto Act of Holiness, by any Impulse whatever.

{2.} Calling is the Communication of that Grace unto us, which was given us in Christ, before the World began. It was the Pleasure of the Father that all Fulness should dwell in Christ: That, of his Fulness, we might receive, and Grace for Grace {Colossians 1:19}. The Donation of Grace to us, in Christ our Head, inverted us with a Right unto a Participation of it. And Regeneration is the Bestowment or actual Conveyance of that to us, which he received and had in keeping for us, as the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace. Vocation, therefore, is according to that Grace, unto which we had a previous Right, by Virtue of a divine Grant and Promise, in the everlasting Covenant. {John 1:16}

{3.} That Grace, which was given us in Christ, is very comprehensive. For, it includes those spiritual Blessings which we receive now, and shall enjoy hereafter. Grace bears the Name of Glory: But we all with open Face, beholding in as a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory {2 Corinthians 3:18}, i.e. from one Degree of Grace to another. And Glory is called Grace: And hope to the End, for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ {1 Peter 3:12}. It is so called, because it springs from the free Grace of God. Grace is the same in Kind with Glory, and is the Beginning of everlasting Life: He that Believeth hath everlasting Life, not only in Title, but also in the Seed and Beginning of it. So much Grace, therefore, as you have in your Hearts, so much you have of Heaven. And, if you are now Partakers of Grace, you shall enjoy future Bliss: For the Father hath given Power to Christ over all Flesh, that he might give eternal Life to as many as he hath given him {John 17:3}.

S. Christ The Object of God's Eternal Delight

Christ the Object of God's Eternal Delight, And the Church the Object of Christ's Everlasting Delight by John Brine {London: George Keith, 1761}

SERMON 33 EXPLAINED AND PROVED IN A SERMON PREACHED NEAR DEVONSHIRE-SQUARE, TO THE SOCIETY, Who SUPPORT the Wednesday - Evening -Lecture.

December 31, 1760. Published at their Request.

Printed for GEORGE KEITH, in Grace-church-street; and Sold by JOHN EYNON, Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal Exchange. London 1761.

{Proverbs 8:30-31}

Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; I was daily His Delight, rejoicing always before Him: Rejoicing in the habitable Part of His Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men. THAT the Divine Speaker, in this Context, is a Person, it is clear from the personal Characters, under which He speaks concerning Himself, and the personal Acts, which He expresses of Himself. And it is equally evident, that this Speaker is Christ, who is the Wisdom as well as the Power of God. For, the Things expressed, are true of Him only. In the Text, the following Things are to be observed: That Christ existed by God, $\frac{3}{4}$ as one brought up with Him. - That He was daily his Delight. - That He rejoiced in the habitable Part of his Earth. - And that his Delights were with the Sons of Men.

I. Christ existed by GOD, Then I was by Him. When He was present with the Father, appears from the Words immediately preceding the Text. It was when He, the Father, gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment: When He appointed the Foundations of the Earth. Christ was by, or, existent with God the Father, when He exerted His Power, in the Creation of the World. In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. And He was present with the Father, as a Cooperator, in Creation. For, all Things were made by Him, and without Him was not any Thing made, that was made {John 1:1-2}. All Things were created by Him, as an efficient Cause, and for {#him {Colossians 1:16} as a final Cause. The Divine Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms, that He who built all Things is God {Hebrews 3:4}. Christ, therefore, if that Assertion is Truth, must be God, or a divine Person. For, He made all Things. No one Thing was made without Him. As the Word was with God, so, the Word was God. Our Saviour is God over all, blessed for ever {Romans 9:4}. He is the true God, and eternal Life {John 5:20}. The Father's Equal. For, He being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God {Php 1:20}. And He being such, He was a joint-Agent with the Father, in the Work of Creation. He was then by Him, not as an inactive Spectator of what He wrought; but as a Co-operator with Him, in giving Existence unto whatsoever is.

II. Christ was with the Father, as One brought up with Him. Which I apprehend denotes two Things. 1. The Character He bore, or the Capacity wherein He then stood, 2. The Intimacy, and sweet Converse He then had with the Father. I conceive, that this respects Christ in His mediatorial Capacity, or considered as God-man. He was the Object of the Father's Choice, to act in the Office of Mediator between Himself, and the Church. It was his Will, that He should assume our Nature, or become Man. And the Will of Christ concurred with the Will of the Father herein. And, therefore, He verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World; but was manifest in these last Times {1 Peter 1:20}. By Reason whereof, He was considered and held in Repute, as God and Man, from ever-listing, though neither Part of his human Nature then subsisted. Not his Soul, any more than. his Body. For, it was not possible, that either constituent Part of his human Nature should subsist in Eternity, when the Counsel and Covenant of Peace were held and entered into, between the Father and Himself. But that is no Objection, unto His being then, viewed and considered, as God and Man. Because the present Subsistence of his human Nature, was not necessary to such a View and Consideration of Him For, the Father's Appointment, that he should become Man, and his Concurrence, were a sufficient Ground for such a View and Consideration of Him. 2. I apprehend, that this Phrase, as One brought up with Him, signifies, that Intimacy and sweet Converse, which He then had with the Father, in his mediatorial Character. He was in the Bosom of the Father, and privy to all the gracious and glorious Designs of his everlasting Love, concerning the Elect. The Father loved the Son, and shewed Him all Things, that Himself doth {John 5:20}. And Christ in his mediatorial Capacity, it was then agreed on, fixed and fettled, should carry his Purposes of Grace into Execution. Thus he, from everlasting, enjoyed the greatest Intimacy and sweetest Converse with the Father, in his mediatorial Capacity, he being then, by him, as one brought up with him, in that Capacity.

III. Christ, in the Character of Mediator, was daily, or Day by Day, as Arias Montanus renders it { $\mu\omega\gamma \mu\omega\gamma$ } His Delight. This Phrase does not denote Succession. For, there was not a Succession, in Eternity past. The Import of it is this: That Christ, from everlasting, was constantly the Object of the Father's Delight, in his mediatorial Capacity, or, considered by him as God and Man. Being Man, he was, 1. Capable of obeying. He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham. For as much as the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself, likewise took part of the same {Hebrews 2:16}. As Man, He was meet and fit, to become subject to the Covenant of Works. And, he actually came under its Obligation. For, as he was made of a Woman, so, also, he was made under the Law, to redeem his People, who were under the Law {Galatians 4:4}. And by Reason of the absolute Purity and Perfection of his Nature, he was able to yield Obedience to the Law, in the utmost Extent of its Commands. And, therefore, in his human Nature, he was the Object of the Father's Delight.

2. As Man, he was capable of suffering penal Death, in order to the Redemption of the Church. For,

{1} As such, he was a fit Subject to bear their Sins, and he really did. He knew no Sin; but was made Sin for us {2 Corinthians 5:21}. The Father laid on him the Iniquities of us all {Isaiah 53:6}. And he bore our Sins, in his own Body on the Tree {Hebrews 9:26}. The Guilt of his People, was charged on him, and he bore it away. For, he put away their Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself {1 Peter 1:24}. Which he could not have done, without the Assumption of their Nature, into union with his divine Person.

{2} He also was capable of bearing the Law's Curse, in his human Nature. As Man, he not only came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, respecting the Obedience which it requires; but also, to suffer the Malediction which it threatens. And in his Sufferings and Death, he was made a Curse. That which we are redeemed from, he was made upon our Account, we are redeemed from the Curse of the Law, and, therefore, he was made a Curse. Christ bath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us {Galatians 3:13}. And therefore, there is now no Condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh but after the Spirit {Romans 8:1}. His human Nature only, was capable of being made a Curse, and, consequently, if he had not been Man, he could not have effected our Redemption from the Curse, of the Covenant of Works, by which we stand condemned, for our Violation of it.

{3} Christ being Man, he was a fit Subject to bear the vindictive Displeasure of God. And he actually did bear it for us. Wherein are two Things to be observed, [1.] Dereliction and Withdrawment, as to present Communion, and a delightful Sense of divine Favour, which Christ always enjoyed, until the Time of his Sufferings; but then the Father hid his Face, and withdrew from him, which caused him to utter that fore Complaint, when on the Cross: My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me {Psalms 22:1}

[2.] Suffering divine Wrath and Vengeance. The Father in the Character of a Judge, bruised and put him to Grief {Isaiah 53:12}. By positive Acts, which he immediately put forth on his Mind, he impressed a deep Sense of the Guilt, which was imputed to Him, upon his Soul, and produced in him a most painful Sensation of its Demerit. He commanded the Sword of Justice to awake against and finite him {Zechariah 13:7}. Thus he spared him not {Romans 8:32}; but took full Vengeance on Sin in him: That he might spare, pardon and save his People, without Dishonour to his Law, and eclipsing the Glory of his Holiness and Justice. Not that Christ had the least Consciousness of the Contraction of Guilt, or of his Person being the Object of the Father's Displeasure. Neither of which, was possible. And the Father was never more delighted with Christ, than, when he presented himself a willing Victim, before divine Justice, to make Atonement for our Sins. Now, if Christ had not assumed human Nature, he had not been a meet Subject for Suffering on Account of the Sins of Men. But by the Assumption of our Nature, he became a fit and proper Subject of Suffering for our Offences. And, therefore, in his human Nature, he was the Object of the Father's Delight.

3. Christ being God, as well as Man, and the divine and human Natures, being ineffably united in him, he was capable of meriting, both in what he did and suffered. If he had been Man only, he might have obeyed, and also have suffered, but he could not have merited, either in obeying, or suffering. As the very learned and accurate Divine, Witsius observes: A mere Man, might have been upheld by infinite Power, in Obedience and Suffering¹. But no proper Merit could possibly attend, either his Obedience, or his Sufferings, how great soever. Infinite Power, resident in the divine Person of Christ, sustained his human Nature, in his Obedience and Sufferings; but the Union of his human Nature, with his divine Person, renders his Obedience, and Sufferings properly meritorious. If he had not been Man, he would not have been a meet Subject to obey the Law on the Account of Men, nor to suffer a penal Death for the Sins of Men. And if had not been God and Man, and both united, he could not have merited, by his Obedience, or Sufferings. For, it is the infinite Dignity of his Person, which gives infinite Worth to his Obedience, and from that arises the immense Value of his Sufferings. Thus the Constitution of the Person of Christ fits him,

for carrying into Execution all the wise and glorious Purposes of the Father, concerning the Objects of his everlasting Love. And, he having such a View of him, in Eternity, his Soul then delighted in him {Isaiah 42:1}. Because the Father, from everlasting, foresaw, how he himself, would be infinitely glorified, and the Church be effectually secured, by the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ, therefore, he, eternally had the highest Complacency and Delight in Him.

IV. Christ rejoiced always before the Father. Arias Montanus translates it literally, in all Time: According to the Original {ty[lkb}. Here we must observe, as before, that Time, or Succession, had not Place in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past. We have no Language, by which, Eternity may be properly expressed, nor can have. The Reason whereof, is clear. It surpasses our Comprehension. I apprehend, that the more seriously, and fixedly, any Man contemplates Eternity, the more evidently he will discern, that it exceeds his most enlarged Ideas. Our Ideas may possibly exceed our Language, but our Language, if we understand it, cannot exceed our Ideas. As our Minds are finite, and limited, it is impossible, that our Conceptions should be extended unto Infinity. And, therefore, none of the Sons of Metaphysics, are able to explain what Eternity is. The Idea which we have of it, as not positive; but negative. It is, we know not what. God, who alone is Eternal, only knows what Eternity is. The Import of the original Phrase, in all Time, is, perpetually, without any Interruption, or Intermission. Christ, in the Character of Mediator, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past, constantly rejoiced before the Father. I would shew, in some Particulars, what was the Matter of his Joy: Or, wherein he then did rejoice.

1. The Matter of his Joy, from everlasting, was his human Nature, as fitted to accomplish, in Union with his divine Person, the whole Will of the Father. That Individuum of human Nature, which was ordained unto a personal Union with the eternal Son of God, was meet and fit to be taken by him, into such a Union with himself. The Father prepared him a Body {Hebrews 10:5}, a Nature. As Man, he was the curious Workmanship of the Holy Ghost. And, therefore, he was perfectly qualified, for being thus united with his divine Person, not only because he was all Purity and Perfection; as he was the miraculous Production of the blessed Spirit, and, so, holy, harmless, undefiled, and Separate from Sinners {Hebrews 7:26}: But also, because, he was replenished with all the supernatural Graces and Gifts of the holy Spirit, in their utmost Perfection and Plenitude. And by the Assumption of that Nature, it became his own, in a peculiar Sense. In Consequence of which, infinite Power, resident in his divine Person, became engaged, to support, and carry that Nature, through the whole of its Obedience and Sufferings. Hence, it was impossible, that he should fail, in either. And, as was before observed, the infinite Dignity of his Person, gave immense Value, to his Obedience and Sufferings. Wherefore, by both, the Will of the Father is accomplished, which he undertook to perform. And the highest Glory redounds to all his glorious Perfections thereby. The Fore-view, and Prospect, which Christ had thereof, in the eternal Counsel and Covenant of Peace, was Matter of infinite Joy to him. The Constitution of his Person, as Mediator, fitting him for carrying into Execution, the wise, holy, and gracious Purposes of the Father, he rejoiced therein, from everlasting. For, he ever delighted to do his Will {Psalms 40:8 thew:8 thew:8}.

2. The Glory, which he then knew, that he should bring to the Father, by the Accomplishment of his Will, in our Nature, was the Matter of his Joy. The Father is glorified, by the Son, as Mediator, in the highest Manner, in all his infinitely glorious Attributes. In his absolute Sovereignty, boundless Grace, Kindness and Mercy: In his immense Wisdom, infinite Holiness and Justice, in

his Power, and in his eternal Truth and Faithfulness. Yea, the Glory of all his Perfections, shines forth most conspicuously in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and in his Performance of the Father's Will, in our Nature: Hence, our Lord speaking to him, expresses himself thus: I have glorified thee on the Earth; I have finished the Work, which thou gavest me to do {John 17:4}. That View, which Christ had thereof, when he undertook to accomplish his Will, in the everlasting Covenant of Grace, was Matter of infinite Joy to him. For, therein, he eternally rejoiced.

3. The Salvation and Happiness of the Church, were the Matter of his Joy. The Glory of the Father, and the Recovery, and eternal Felicity of his People, were the joy, that was fit before him, which caused him, to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame {Hebrews 12:2}; at the Time of his Crucifixion. And he rejoiced in both, when he agreed to make his Soul an Offering for Sin {Isaiah 53:10}. Which he did, from everlasting, in that Covenant, whereinto, he entered with the Father, relating to the Salvation of the Elect. That which animated him, in his Sufferings, gave him Joy., when he undertook to suffer and die, which was the Glory of God the Father, and the endless Bliss of those for whom he suffered and died. And, therefore, in Eternity, he always rejoiced before the Father, in the View which he then had of both. The Thoughts which he had before Time, of glorifying his Father, and saving the Objects of his Love, afforded him, without Intermission, infinite Pleasure and Joy.

4. Christ then rejoiced in the Dignity and Glory, which he, himself, was to enjoy, upon finishing that Work, which the Father gave him to do. He prayed for the Possession of it, when he was about to suffer, laying, Father, glorify thou me with thine own fill, with the Glory, which I had with thee, before the World was {John 17:5}. As hath been before observed, he existed with the Father, from everlasting, in his mediatorial Capacity, though neither constituent Part of his human Nature, then subsisted. The present Subsistence of either Part of that Nature, was not necessary unto his standing, and being considered, in that Capacity. The Glory for which our Lord prayed, was not that which is essential to his Divine Person; but his mediatorial Glory. Which he had with the Father, before the World was, in Promise and Grant. For, as the Father, in the everlasting Covenant, assigned him Work, he also promised him a Reward. And that Reward was ever with him, or present to his View, as his Work was always before him. And he eternally rejoiced in the Prospect which he had, of that immortal Dignity, unto which his human Nature was advanced, when he had completed the Work of Redemption. There Important and glorious Things, were the Matter of the eternal Joy of Christ, existing with the Father, in his mediatorial Capacity. The Meetness of his human Nature, for a Subsistence, in his Divine Person, and his Fitness, by Reason thereof, to accomplish effectually, .the whole Pleasure of the Father, concerning the Objects of his sovereign, eternal, and infinite Love. That Revenue of Honour and Glory, which the Father receives, by the Obedience, Suffering and Death of his human Nature, as subsisting in his Divine Person, The everlasting Security, consummate, and endless Felicity, of all those among the Sons of Men, whom he most intensely loved. And that State of Dignity, and Glory, unto which his human Nature was advanced, when he had finished the Work allotted to him, by the Father, in the Capacity of Mediator. They are the noblest, and most grand Effects of immense Wisdom. And, therefore, fit Matter of the Joy of Christ. There Things are the Wisdom of God, in a Mystery, the bidden Wisdom, which he ordained, before the World to our Glory {1 Corinthians 2:7}. Hence, the View, which Christ had of them, in the eternal Counsel of Peace, held between the Father, and Himself, gave him infinite Pleasure always, without the least Interruption, or Intermission.

V. Christ rejoiced in the habitable Part of the Father's Earth. The Earth is his. For, he created, and upholds it. He is the Creator of the Ends thereof {Isaiah 40:28 hew:28 hew:28}, The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof: The World, and they who dwell therein {Psalms 24:1}. Heaven, yea, the Heaven of Heavens, is the Lord's: The Earth he hath given to the Children of Men. He permits them to possess it, and the Treasures of it. The habitable Part of the Earth, designs those Parts thereof, which are inhabited by the Objects of his peculiar Love. He is an everlasting Father to his People, and most tenderly loves them. He, therefore, rejoiced in those Places, which his Children would reside in, during their mortal State. Christ is the Husband of the Church, and hath the greatest Affection for her.

Hence, he rejoiced, in those Spots of Ground which they were to dwell in, until he took her, to his Embraces, in the heavenly Mansions. O what a tender Thought does this Phrase express! The Joy which the Mediator had in this World, in Eternity, arose from this Consideration, that it was to be the Place, wherein, his People were to rife into Existence, and abide, until they were made meet for the everlasting Enjoyment of himself, in another, and infinitely better World than this.

VI. His Delights were with the Sons of Men. The radical Letters, in the original Word, are doubled {çç}, which increase its Signification. Great Delight is meant. Farther, at is in the plural, not the singular Number. So that, according to the Idiom of the original Language, it is to be understood, in the superlative Sense. The highest Delight is intended. Hence we must conclude, that the Love of Christ to his People, was, from everlasting, a Love of Complacency and Delight. And not merely a Love of Benevolence or Pity. Some, perhaps, will say, why is this Antinomian Tenet advanced? That Christ delights in his People, before they become Subjects of Holiness, How is that possible? It is not Antinomianism; but a glorious, evangelical Truth, which I hope to explain in such a Manner, as to place it above all reasonable Objection. The Persons with whom his Delights were, are the Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven {Hebrews 12:23}. Those whom the Father loved, chose, and gave unto Christ, to be saved by him. To whom He was appointed a Head. Who are his Members, his Body, and Fulness {Ephesians 1:23}. His Children. Those many Sons, whom God designed to bring to Glory {Hebrews 2:10}, They are the Persons, with whom the Delights of Christ were, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity part. In order to explain this important Point, I observe, that Christ had, from everlasting, a twofold View of his People.

1. In the Counsel of Peace, which was held between the Father, and Himself, he viewed, and considered his People, as lapsed, depraved, guilty, and therefore, miserable, I suppose, that good Men, who agree not with us, in the Point, which I am about to prove, will grant the Truth of this. Because, the Denial of it, would evert entirely, the precious Doctrine of a Counsel, and Covenant of Peace, being held, and entered into, from everlasting, between God, and Jesus Christ, wherein, infinitely wise, and effectual Provision, was made, for their Recovery and Salvation, Now, let me ask our good Brethren, whom I much honour and esteem, if Divine Benevolence and Compassion, respected them, as Criminals, and guilty, or, as miserable, in Consequence of their Guilt? Surely, they will not say, that Divine Benevolence, and Compassion, respected them, as Criminals, and guilty, but as miserable, in Consequence of their Guilt. Human Benevolence, and Pity, to an Offender, do not respect him, as such; but as obnoxious to suffering Penalty, for his Offence. No wise and just Judge will ever bear good Will to, and pity a Malefactor, as so considered; but only as he is subjected to Condemnation, for his Breach of the Law.

Much less, is it possible with God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; to bear good Will unto, or pity Transgressors of his righteous Law, as so considered. Sinners as Sinners, are not Objects of Divine Benevolence and Compassion; but of Divine Disapprobation. Infinite Mercy and Compassion, are extended and exercised towards sinful Men, yet not under the Consideration, of their being Criminals, but under the Consideration of their being miserable, in Consequence of their Crimes. God and Christ, do not pity Sinners, as Sinners; but as they are obnoxious to Misery, on Account of their Sins. We do not say, that Christ delighted in his People, considered, as Sinners. Nor, that he took Pleasure in them, as liable to Misery, in Consequence of their Sins. If we affirmed the one or the other, we might be justly charged with Absurdity. So far are we from asserting either, that we deny, that the People of Christ, are the Objects of his Benevolence and Pity, viewed and considered, by him, as Sinners. And maintain, that his Pity to them, regards them only, under the Consideration of their being miserable, and not of their Guiltiness. Viewed by him, as Guilty, they are not the Objects of his Compassion; but of his Disapprobation. But that is no Objection to the Truth of what, I am now engaged, in the Defence of. If Christ had no other View of his People, in Eternity, than, as guilty and miserable, it must be granted, that they then, could not be the Objects of his Complacency and Delight. For it is not possible, that he should ever take the least Pleasure in them, considered as guilty, and involved in Misery. But, I hope to make it evident, that, from everlasting, he had another and very different View of them. I suppose, that it will be allowed, that a Counsel and Covenant of Peace, were held, and entered into, between the Father and Christ, before the Commencement of Time, wherein, the Salvation of the Church, was fully provided for, and effectually secured. I persuade myself, that our good Brethren, who object to the Doctrine of Christ's everlasting Delight in his People, will not call the Truth of either into Question. Because, if they are not granted, we must conclude, that God and Christ, in Eternity, did not concern themselves about the Salvation and Happiness of the Church. That Christ was not appointed and constituted Mediator. That no federal Transactions passed between the Father and Christ, before Time, relating to the important Affair of the Redemption of his People. But surely, the precious Doctrine of an everlasting Covenant of Grace, being entered into, by the Father and Jesus Christ, for the Security, final, and endless Happiness of the Church, will not be parted with; out of Opposition to the Sentiment of Christ's delighting in his People, before Time. I apprehend, that an impartial, and candid Consideration, of the federal Transactions, of the Father and Christ, from everlasting, will oblige us to conclude, that it is true, that he then had such a View of his People, as was infinitely pleasing and delightful to him.

2. That the Prospect, which Christ had of his People, in the eternal Counsel, and Covenant of Peace, was a pleasing one to him, will evidently appear, by the Consideration of the following Particulars.

{1} He therein viewed them, as washed in his Blood, and so clear of all Guilt. The Father, in the everlasting Covenant, required Christ to lay down his Life for his People. It was his Will, that he should make his Soul an Offering, for their Sins. That he should shed his Blood, in order to their Remission. Christ, on his Part, agreed, and became engaged, to suffer and die for them. Hence, he was under Obligation, to submit to Suffering and Death. Ought not Christ to have suffered those Things? Upon this Account, his Blood, is called the Blood of the everlasting Covenant. The Church, as washed in his Blood, is without Spot, or wrinkle, or any such Thing. Since, this was an Article fixed and settled, between the Father, and the great Mediator, in the Covenant of Grace, it

is reasonable to conclude, that Christ then had a View of his People, as clear of all Guilt. For, surely, it cannot be a Mistake, to think, that he, from everlasting, fore-saw what would be the issue of his Sufferings and Death, respecting the Persons, for whom, he undertook to suffer and die. And that Fore-view, which he then had of them, doubtless, was infinitely pleasing, and delightful to him. If any will say, that Christ had not, in Eternity, a View of his People, as purged from the Guilt of Sin, in Virtue of his atoning Blood and Sacrifice, I conceive, that they will be obliged to deny, that the Affair of his Death, was an Article agreed on, from everlasting, between the Father, and himself. As freed from the Guilt of Sin, they ever were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

{2} He delighted in his People, from everlasting, as he beheld them clothed, with the Robe of his Righteousness, and constituted righteous thereby. The Righteousness of the Saints, whereby they are justified, is compared, on account of its Purity, to fine Linnen, clean and white. Unto her it was granted, to be arrayed with fine Linnen, clean and white, which is the Righteousness of Saints. Therefore, as they are invested therewith, they, are all fair, and without Spot; perfect, through that Comeliness, which is put upon them. This Righteousness, for its Value, and curious Texture, is comparable to wrought Gold. The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her Clothing is of wrought Gold. Because, of its Splendor, it is comparable to the Sun. The Church, in regard to her Sanctification, is fair as the Moon; but in respect to her Justification, she is clear as the Sun. Most splendid and glorious. Now Christ, in the Covenant of Peace, undertook to work out, and bring in this Garment of Salvation, this Robe of Righteousness, for his People. Having then, a View of them, as naked, and destitute of a justifying Righteousness, in themselves. For, Obedience to the Law, was required of him, by the Father, as well as suffering its Curse. And he agreed to fulfil the Father's Will in both. Hence, he not only, was to make Reconciliation for Iniquity; but also, to bring in everlasting righteousness. His undertaking to do the Latter for his People, as a clear Proof, that they were then, present to his View, in their own filthy Garments. And if, from everlasting, he beheld them, as unrighteous in themselves, may we not conclude, that they were present to his View, in Eternity, as clothed with change of Raiment, whereby, they are constituted righteous? And if they were so viewed, and considered by him, surely, they were, under that View, and Consideration, the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

{3} Christ took Pleasure, in his People, from everlasting, as he beheld them beautified with the Graces of the Holy Spirit. The Saints are internally beautiful, as such. They are the happy Subjects of a lovely Image, which is delightful and pleasing to Christ. For, it is the Image of himself. The Graces of Faith, Hope, Love, and a holy Fear of God, are very ornamental to them. On account thereof, they are denominated, the Excellent in the Earth, in whom is all Christ's Delight. In the eternal Counsel and Covenant of Peace, he had a View of his People as adorned with those Graces. That, therein, he beheld them, as naturally depraved, and destitute of Holiness, will, I suppose, be freely granted. It cannot be denied, if it is allowed, that it was a Point settled, in that Covenant, that he should become Sanctification to his People, by a Communication of Holiness to them, Which cannot surely be called in Question; because, their holy Vocation, or Regeneration, and Sanctification, are according unto Grace, which was given them, in him, before the World began {2 Timothy 1:9}, And that Grace was given, in the everlasting Covenant, which was entered into, between the Father, and himself, as the Mediator, and Head of the Church. Is it not evident from hence, that Christ had a twofold View of his People, in the everlasting Covenant, one, as unholy, and the other, as adorned with Grace and Holiness? No Difficulty attends conceiving, that

they were present to his View, in Eternity, as sinful. And is it not equally easy, to conceive, that they were then also present to his View, as sanctified? And that as so considered by him, they were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

{4} Christ had a Prospect of his People, from everlasting, as perfectly holy, and consummately happy. He foresaw them, in the Beauties of Holiness, from the Womb, before the Morning, i.e. the earliest Part of Time {Psalms 110:3}. The Father blessed them with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places in Christ. According, as he chose them in him, before the Foundation of the World. And, therefore, he then viewed them, as all glorious within {Psalms 45:13}. Or as possessed of that spotless Purity, which they will be the happy Subjects of, in the heavenly State, Eternal Life was promised to them, in him, before the Commencement of Time, In hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie promised before the World began {Titus 1:2}. As the federal Transactions of the Father, and Christ, respecting the Elect, in Eternity past, provided for their being completely holy, and consummately happy, in Eternity to come: So the View, which Christ had of them, in the immeasurable Duration, of Eternity past, extended itself, unto the immeasurable Duration of Eternity to come. And from everlasting, he foresaw them, as possessed of that spotless Beauty, consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory, which they will be the Subjects of, in the heavenly Mansions, And, therefore, his Delights were then with them. Those eternal Thoughts which Christ had of his People, being with him, in Heaven to behold his Glory, were infinitely pleasing and delightful to him. That he had such Thoughts concerning them, from everlasting, cannot be scrupled, if it be allowed, that their final, and endless Bliss, was then agreed on, in Covenant, between the Father, and himself. Which, I hope, will not be doubted of. If our Brethren will not deny, that Christ had such a Prospect of his People, from everlasting, in the Counsel, and Covenant of Peace: I would intreat them to consider, whether, it is more proper to say, that he pitied them, as he beheld them washed in his Blood, and so clear of all Guilt. As clothed with his Righteousness, and thereby constituted righteous. As beautified with the Graces of his Spirit. And as possessed of complete Holiness, consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory, for evermore: Or to say, that he delighted in them, as they were so viewed, and considered, by him. I cannot but think, that upon a candid and impartial Consideration of the Matter, they will grant, that it is more proper to say, that they were the Objects, of his Complacency and Delight, than of his Benevolence, Compassion or Pity: And if so, why should they object to the Doctrine of Christ's everlasting Delight, in his People, and represent it, in an odious Light. If it can be proved, that Christ had no such Prospect, of his People, in Eternity, I will immediately give up, what I have been pleading for.

Because, I am persuaded, that Christ cannot take Pleasure, in his People, otherwise, than, as he views, or considers them washed in his Blood, clothed with his Righteousness, sanctified by his Spirit, as perfectly holy, and, completely happy, in the Enjoyment of himself. All which, were not only decreed concerning them; but federal Transactions passed, between the Father and Christ, in Eternity, relating to those important, and glorious Things. And, consequently, it is to be concluded, that the People of Christ, in the everlasting Covenant, were not only present to his View, as guilty, depraved, condemned, and miserable; but also, as clear of Guilt, constituted righteous, sanctified by his Grace, free from Condemnation, yea, as perfectly holy, and eternally happy, in the Fruition of his Father, and himself. Which View of them gave him infinite Pleasure and Delight: What is there in this, that should occasion us to think, that it is not a Doctrine, according to Godliness?

Nothing at all. It does not suppose, that Christ delights in his People, considered, as unholy, or unlike to himself. It does not imply, that they may be happy, without being made holy; but the direct Contrary. Are not the Elect, meet and fit Objects of Christ's Delight, as washed in his Blood, clothed with his Righteousness, as all glorious within, and completely happy with himself, an the World above? Surely, it will be allowed, that they are. I will not pretend to maintain, that Christ delights in the Persons of his People, simply considered. That is to say, considered, neither, as guilty, nor innocent, neither, as unholy, nor holy, neither, as miserable, nor happy. For, I think, it is impossible, that he ever should so consider them. Because it is not possible, that a reasonable Creature should exist, and be neither guilty, nor innocent, neither unholy, nor holy, neither miserable, nor happy.

What I am inclined to maintain, is this only: That the People of Christ, were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight, from everlasting, as he then beheld them, clear of Guilt, constituted righteous, made holy by his Spirit, and completely happy in his glorious Presence.

If, in Eternity, he had no such View of them, I will grant, that he could not take Pleasure in them. But that he had such a Prospect of them, in Eternity, I think, the federal Transactions between the Father and himself, most clearly, and fully evince. Christ's View of his People, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past, extended itself, unto the immeasurable Duration of Eternity to come. And, therefore, as it is true, that Christ was the Object of the Father's eternal Delight, in the Capacity of Mediator: So it is an evangelical Truth, that the People of Christ, from everlasting, were the Objects of his infinite Complacency and Delight. That is a Doctrine, which I conceive, cannot be disproved, without overthrowing the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace, which is more stable and firm, than Mountains of Brass. I conclude with the Doxology of the Apostle Jude: Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and ever, Amen.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Deus Naturam humanam, personaliter siti non unitam, Divina Virtute sua ita sustentare queat, ut sarendis & vincendis omnibus Doloribus par fit.

AECON Foed Lib 11. Cap. 4. Sec. XXII.

S. Diligence in Study

Diligence in Study Recommended to Ministers by John Brine {#London: John Ward, 1757}

SERMON 25 DILIGENCE IN STUDY RECOMMENDED TO
MINISTERS.

IN A SERMON, PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REVEREND MR. RICHARD RIST,
IN HARLOW, ESSEX. DECEMBER 15, 1756.

Published at the Request of the Church.

Printed for and Sold by JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, against the Royal Exchange; by
GEORGE KEITH, in Grace-church-street; and by JOHN EYNON, Printseller the Corner of Cattle
Alley, by the

Royal Exchange.

1757.

{1 Timothy 4:15-16}

Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine, continue in them, in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

IT being allotted to me, to address you my honoured and beloved Brother, on this very solemn Occasion of your Investiture with the Office of a Pastor, or Overseer, to this Church of Christ. I shall do it, in an Attempt to explain the, Words, which I have now read. The Apostle, before the Text, gives to Timothy various important Exhortations, and Directions, relating unto his ministerial Function: Which I shall not take into particular Consideration; but I will immediately apply myself, to the Explication of the several Branches of the Text, in that Order, wherein they stand.

I. The Apostle exhorts Timothy to serious and close Meditation, Meditate on these things. Diligent study is the indispensable Duty of a Minister of the Gospel. That, my Brother give me Leave, to recommend, and stir you up unto, as what is absolutely necessary, for the proper Discharge of those Services, which belong to your Station in the Church. Without a due Attention to it, your Discourses will be crude and indigested, and, therefore, not well suited to the great End, of improving the Saints, in Christian Knowledge and Experience. The Subjects of your assiduous Meditations must especially be, the holy Scriptures, and the glorious Truths, which they contain. The Word of God ought to be carefully and diligently read, and meditated upon by all; but Ministers, in an especial Manner, are obliged unto a diligent Perusal of it. Give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine. Read the Writings of good Men, wherewith, in the kind Providence of God, the Church is blessed, which under a divine Influence will be helpful and instructive to you; but above all, search the Scriptures, which are profitable for Doctrine, for

Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that you may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished to all good Works. You must carefully consider the several Parts of sacred Writ, and compare spiritual Things with spiritual, whereby, through the gracious Assistance of the holy Spirit, you will gain a clear and comprehensive View of the Harmony of the Whole, and a full convincing Evidence of its divine Authority. Be diligent in enquiring into the proper Meaning of every Text, which you shall at any Time undertake to explain and treat upon. Content not yourself, as some Preachers do, with expressing what is true, though it be not the genuine Sense of the Words, which are the Subject of their Discourses. Labour to find out the real Import of that Portion of the good Word of God, which you make Choice of, for the Subject of your Sermons. And, also see to it, that you produce proper and pertinent Testimonies, for the Confirmation and Illustration of those Truths, which you apprehend are contained in your Text¹. Some Preachers seem to be at very little Pains, in either Respect, now mentioned, and, therefore, their Performances, are far from being judicious. And it is very requisite, that you should meditate much on the Doctrines which are contained in the holy Scriptures. If you do not, you cannot reasonably hope to discern their admirable Variety, adorable Depth, strict Connection, mutual Dependence, and beautiful Harmony, nor, in what Respects, some evangelical Truths, agree with others, and wherein they differ. This is your proper Business, as a Minister, and it is that painful Labour, which claims your constant Attendance. For,

II. You are required, to give yourself to them. Or, as the Words may be read: Be thou in them {en toutoiv isqi}. Your Heart ought to be fixed on them, and your Thoughts exercised about them, most intently, and generally also. Not occasionally and cursorily; but constantly, and closely. This is the noblest Employ, wherein our intellectual Powers can possibly be engaged. And it justly demands the Whole of your Time. Do not think it is sufficient, if you now and then devote a few Hours unto this sacred and important Labour, in order to prepare for your Services, in the Pulpit. But fill up your Time with Contemplations on the glorious Truths of the Gospel, even when you are not soon to be engaged in the Work of Preaching. Ministers are not, without Necessity, to be entangled with secular Affairs, to their Interruption in an Attendance unto what is of far greater Moment. And, therefore, it is the Ordination of Christ, that those, who preach the Gospel, should live the Gospel. The End of this Appointment is not, that they may be slothful, and waste their precious Moments in doing Nothing, or worse than Nothing. It is that they may be devoted entirely, unto that honourable Service, to which he has called them, with a gracious View, to the Instruction and Edification of the Church. My honoured Brother, do not loiter away the Beginning of the Week in trifling Recreations, or in needless and unprofitable Visits, and think it is enough, at the latter End of it, to prepare for your public Services. Begin to study on the Monday, and continue to do so throughout the Week. Some Persons in this sacred Function, of an extraordinary Genius, and who have had a Taste for polite Learning, it is to be feared have been under a Temptation, to neglect their more necessary and important Studies, unto their own Prejudice, and the Disadvantage of the Church, by the alluring Pleasures which their ingenious Minds have found in Studies of another Nature. Not that I think it is unlawful or unprofitable, for a Minister, somewhat to gratify his Inclination in that Way. But as Ministers are not to be entangled in the Affairs of the World, unto their Hinderance in a necessary Study of divine Things: So they ought not to spend too much of their Time in the Study of the liberal Arts. For, they are called chiefly to attend to what is far more noble, sublime, and important. Except, nay Brother, you thus devote yourself, unto there divine Studies, you cannot justly expect to improve in an Acquaintance with evangelical Truths, which ought to be your Desire

and Aim. As it follows,

III. That thy Profiting may appear to all. Endeavour to give convincing Evidence to all Sorts of Persons, of your Growth and Proficiency in divine Knowledge. To the Friends, and also unto the Adversaries of Truth. In the Church of God there are different Classes of Christians, viz. Fathers, young Men, and Children. Such who are Fathers, are said to have known him, that is, from the Beginning. Their Judgment and Experience are much advanced, and, therefore, unless you treat of the deep Things of God, and in a judicious Manner, your Profiting will not appear to them. Discourses which are crude, and indigested, though the Matter of them may be true, can never gain their Approbation. Others of less Understanding, in spiritual Things, may approve thereof, but they cannot. For, they expect spiritual Demonstration of spiritual Things. Bare Assertions of evangelical Doctrines, without a clear stating of them, and offering pertinent Testimonies for their Proof and Illustration, will not be pleasing to them. Injudicious Preaching cannot be acceptable to judicious Hearers. It is true, that the Number of such Hearers is very small; but that is not a just Reason, why we should content ourselves with treating of the sublime Truths of the Gospel, in a superficial, and unworkman-like Manner. Let it be your Desire, and laudable Ambition, to give Satisfaction in the Course of your Ministry, unto the most improved, in Christian Knowledge and Experience, by the Depth, Solidity, Pertinence, and Clearness of your Composures, on those important and glorious Truths, which you are commissioned to preach. Good Judgment, much Care and Diligence, you will find necessary unto this End, and, therefore, be not remiss and negligent; but be painful and laborious in Study.

Again, your Proficiency should appear to young Men. That is to Christians, who are strong, and have overcome the wicked one. You must in order to this, consider well, the Nature, and Variety of Satan's Temptations, upon different Occasions, and under different Circumstances. What numerous Wiles and Stratagems he makes use of to stir up Lust, to entice to Evil, and to interrupt the Exercise of Grace, unto the great Perplexity, and Grief of the Soul. And you must shew how the gracious Principle opposes and resists this Adversary, by the Guidance and Influence of the Holy Spirit. What are the Reliefs he administers, in Seasons of Temptation, to the Joy of the Soul, and the Increase of the spiritual Part. You will find, that this Branch of your Work, requires a careful Review of those Temptations, which you, yourself, have been attended withal, and the Workings of your Mind, under them: As well as a just Observation of the Experience of other Christians. Farther, you must also aim that your Profiting may appear to Children. Christ hath Babes in His Family and Lambs in His Fold. It is your Duty to feed and nourish them, as well as more knowing and experienced Christians. Then you will give a Portion of Meat to every one in due Season. A Minister should descend to the Experience of the weakest Saint in flaming his Discourses, that he may comfort, and bring him forward, in heavenly knowledge. This requires much Tenderness, Care and spiritual Skill. Without a proper Consideration, of, what are the genuine Actings of Grace, under Convictions of Sin, and the Temptations, which usually attend the Soul, upon a Sense of Guilt, being impressed on the Mind, together, with those Fears, which are often, thereby produced, you will not be well qualified to assist and comfort the weak Saints, in their distressing Perplexities, concerning their Pardon and Salvation, about which, this Class of Christians, are often Times, very solicitous. Be careful, in treating on Faith, that you do not stumble these Weaklings, in Christ's Family, by the Manner of your expressing yourself. Consider that Faith in all, is not strong, that in some it is weak. Its Nature, and the Kind of its Actings, are the

same in all, and it respects always the same Objects, and is productive of the same Fruits; but it does not act with equal Vigor in all, nor in the same Person at different Times.

Once more, let your Proficiency be manifest unto the Adversaries of Truth. Ministers are set for the Defense of the Gospel. And, therefore, they should endeavour to obviate those Objections, which are raised against it, by erroneous Persons, and to confirm its glorious Truths, with clear and solid Arguments, drawn from the Word of God that the Mouths of Gainsayers may be stopped. Some are Enemies to Revelation itself, and employ all their Wit to banter and run it down. There Infidels we must labour to silence, by shewing, that, what they object to the Holy Scriptures, is fallacious, groundless, or absurd, and, therefore, by no Means conclusive. And, we should labour to prove, that our Belief of Divine Revelation, is built upon rational and just Evidence, which is not attended with any Difficulty; For, that Evidence is as clear, as the Sun, in itself, though not discerned, perhaps, by some, through a Want of due Attention to it, or by the powerful Influence, of unreasonable and strong Prejudices, which they have contracted. Thus, my Brother, your Aim and your Endeavour ought to be, to give Proof to all Sorts of Persons, that you are a good Proficient in Divine Knowledge. May the Lord assist you, conscientiously to use those Means, which he hath appointed to that End; and may his Blessing be upon you therein! And this your Proficiency should be in all Things {en pasin}, in every Branch of your Work, as a Minister. And, therefore, it is necessary, that you should thoroughly study every Doctrine, legal and evangelical All Cautions, Exhortations, Precepts, Reproofs, and comforting Promises, that you may be apt to teach, and that you may be a Son of Thunder, to the stupid and careless, and a Son of Consolation, unto the Mourners in Zion.

IV. Take Heed to thyself. This Branch of Advice respects you as a Man, a Christian, and a Minister.

You should take Heed to yourself, as a Man. Though Ministers are called to Self-denial, that they may serve the Church of Christ, and preach His Gospel, it is lawful for them, prudently to consult their own Welfare, and the Good of their Families, that they may be supplied, with the Necessaries of Life. And this is a Duty incumbent on them, in common with other Men. Take a prudent Care of your Health, to preserve it, that you may continue capable of attending to those laborious Services, which belong to your Station, in the Church. It is of greater Importance to take Heed to yourself, as a Christian Be careful of your spiritual Welfare. While you aim at the Edification of others, neglect not your own, if you do, it will be attended with sorrowful Effects. For, Leanness of Soul will be the Consequence of such Neglect. Consider this awful Truth, that you may profit others, and not yourself, by your ministerial Services. Spiritual Advantage can no otherwise accrue to our Souls, by the Doctrines we preach, than in mixing Faith with them. And, therefore, it is very necessary, that we should design acting our Graces, in the Exercise of our Gifts Without that, though our Abilities may be improved, our renewed Part, will decline in its Vigor - Grace will not thrive in our Hearts, unless it is frequently acted on those precious Truths, which we are commissioned to preach. Remember, my Brother, that in this Sense, you must be mindful of your own Vineyard. You can't be too much so. It is a melancholy Thing to feed others, and starve our own Souls, through Negligence in this Matter, which, perhaps, may have been too much the Care, at least, with some of us. May the good Lord convince us of, and humble us for our Sin, and Folly herein! It is not enough, to please, and even to do Good to others, by our ministerial Labours, if we ourselves receive no spiritual Benefit by them. We ought to observe with what Frame of Mind, we

study and preach. Whether we think and speak of the great Things of God, with that holy Reverence, which they justly demand. They are adorable in their Nature, and, therefore, we ought to contemplate on, and express them with great Seriousness and Awe. Evangelical Mysteries should be studied, and treated of in the most reverential Manner, because of the Divine Glory which there is in them, above all other Subjects whatsoever. A due Consideration thereof, will tend to engenerate and promote in you, a becoming Frame of Soul, when you are conversant about them, in your Study, and in the Pulpit. Again, take Heed to yourself, as a Minister. Neglect not; but stir up the Gift, that is in you. Be diligent in the Use of all those Means, which God hath appointed, for the Cultivation, and Improvement of it. If you are not, how can you hope for its Increase, or even for the Continuance of it, with you, in any tolerable Degree? If we are negligent and slothful, we can't reasonably, have any Expectation of increasing our Furniture, for the Service and Benefit of the Church. And be cautious how you conduct yourself, in Conversation, and in those Visits, which you pay your Friends. Christians are of very different Tempers, and sometimes it falls out that they have different Interests, and are at Variance. And, therefore, great Prudence, is necessary in converting with them, in such a Circumstance. Without it, you may do much Injury. Let the Wisdom of the Serpent, and the Innocency of the Dove, be united, in whatever you express, on such Occasions. Sometimes, Silence may be best. Very often, a silent Tongue, is an Evidence of a wise Head. I lay it again, very often, a silent Tongue is an Evidence of a wise Head, in a Minister, whose Office leads him to converse with Christians, among whom, through one Cause or another, Differences arise in this State of Imperfection. If you cannot heal Breaches, be sure not to widen them, through a Want of Caution, in what you at any Time, say, to either of the Parties, at Difference.

V. You must, my Brother, take heed to thy Doctrine. Consider well and examine, what you deliver in the Name of God, to his People.

See to it that those Principles, which you advance and inculcate, agree with the Holy Scriptures. Permit me to mention five infallible Rules, whereby all Doctrines, may be tried, and their Truth, or Falsehood, determined, viz. Doctrines which are calculated, to promote the Glory of Divine Grace: Which exclude Boasting in the Creature: Which are a Foundation of Strong Consolation, in the Saints: Which are according to Godliness: And which are consistent. I call them infallible Rules, because they are most plainly scriptural.

1. The first Rule, whereby, I would advise you to try Doctrines, is this: If they are calculated to promote the Glory of Divine Grace. By Grace, I do not mean the Benevolence and Bounty of God, as the Creator, and Upholder of all Things, which are of universal Extent. God is good to all, and His tender Mercies are over all His Works. Wherein, He acts according to that infinite Goodness, which is natural to Him. Some seem to have no other Conception of Divine Favour, which is the Cause of Salvation, than that it is, this universal Good Will of God, as Creator, whereof all Creatures, are the Objects in their Creation-State, which is as great a Mistake, as can be, on this momentous Subject. Divine Love, which is the Origin of our Salvation, is the sovereign Pleasure and Good Will of God. There is a Fitness in the Exercise of Goodness towards all Creatures, as they were formed by their Almighty Creator; but God does not provide for the Recovery of guilty Creatures, because it is fit, in itself, that He should so do: Or, because it is agreeable to Goodness, as it is natural to Him. If this was the Fact, then God would not be at Liberty to save, or not save Sinners; but making Provision for their salvation, would be necessary to Deity. For, all

Acts of Goodness, as it is natural to God, are necessary, and not free Acts of His Will, though His Will acts freely, in determining to put forth such Acts of Goodness. Divine Grace to which our Salvation is owing, is absolutely free Favour, which acts without any Inducement, or Motive, in its Objects. If we consider the Temper and Conduct of the Subjects of Salvation, naturally, we must be convinced of the Truth of this, I think. Are they not under the Dominion of Sin? Is not that the governing Principle in them? Are not their carnal Minds Enmity against God? Are not their Minds alienated from the Life of God? And as to their Conduct: Have they not their Conversation, according to the Lusts of the Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh, and of the Mind? Are they not foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice, and Envy, hateful, and hating one another? What can there be, in such, to invite the merciful and kind Regard of God to them? Men in order to disprove, the absolute Freedom of Divine Favour, in the Affair of our Salvation, are obliged, to rise up in flat Contradiction, to this displeasing Representation, of the Disposition of our Minds, and of our Conduct, in our natural State. And to maintain, that in Fact, we are not so corrupt, in our Hearts, nor so criminal in our Behaviour, as the Scripture represents us. By Grace we are saved {Ephesians 2:8}. The Kindness and Love of God our Saviour towards Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done; but of His Mercy hath He saved us {Titus 3:5}. It is of Faith, that it might be by Grace {Romans 4:16}. Our Salvation is entirely, and absolutely of the Grace of God, without any Works of ours. The Admission of them, as concurring Causes, with the Grace of God, destroys its true Nature. For, if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace {Romans 11:6}. The Design of God, in our Recovery, is to magnify the Riches of His Grace: My Brother, try all Doctrines by this Rule, it is an infallible one. And, therefore, you may be assured, that whatever Principle, is not calculated to promote the Glory of Divine Grace, it cannot be true, by whom soever it is embraced or advanced. Let it, therefore, never have Place in your Preaching.

2. The second Rule for your Trial of Doctrines, is this: They must be such, as exclude Boasting. Where is Boasting then? It is excluded? By what Law, of Works? Nay, but by the Law of Faith {Romans 3:27}. Not of Works left any Man should boast {Ephesians 2:9}. Boasting is absolute, or comparative. Absolute Boasting, is this: A Man's affirming, or insisting on it, that he has in the Course of his Life, performed the Whole of his Duty, and in such a Manner, as the Law requires, and, that, therefore, he has a Right to Life, according to that Law, which is the Rule of Action to him. This Kind of Boasting cannot have Place, in any, who acknowledge, that they are Sinners, and stand in Need of Salvation. And, therefore, it is not that which the Apostle contends, is not to be admitted, in the Affair of Salvation. Comparative Boasting only can be intended, which is this: An Opinion, that by a proper and wise Improvement of those Means, which are afforded us, to that End, we have secured to ourselves Life and Happiness, which some others, have foolishly neglected to do, and, therefore, perish. In the apprehension of many, the Fact stands thus, with Men, in the Business of Salvation. God is pleased in infinite Benevolence and Goodness, to make Proposals of Pardon and Peace to them, and affords them, such Helps and Advantages, as are sufficient, if they are not wanting to themselves, to enable them to obtain these Blessings. Some act the wise, and others the foolish Part, in the Enjoyment of those Helps and Advantages, and, therefore, the Event is different, according to their different Behaviour, in the same advantageous Circumstances. For Instance, Peter and Judas, through Divine Clemency and Mercy, are favoured with Overtures of Pardon and Salvation, and both have Assistances of the same Kind, to facilitate obtaining those Blessings, yea, which are sufficient to that End, if wisely improved by both. Peter

he is so prudent, as to consult his own Welfare, and makes the best Use of those Helps, and Advantages, and, thereby, obtains the great Blessings, which God, in his infinite Mercy offers, and promises to bestow, upon such a wife and prudent Behaviour. On the Contrary, Judas he is foolishly regardless of his eternal Peace, and neglects to improve those Aids and Assistances, which God mercifully grants him, whereby, he also might obtain Life and Happiness, and, therefore, he misses of the Blessings, which are offered and promised, to be given, upon a different Behaviour, Now, if this is the true State of the Case, Peter hath proper Ground for a comparative Boasting, or the same Reason, for paying himself a Compliment, and applauding his own Wisdom, as Judas hath for Censuring himself and condemning his own Folly. Because, each had the same gracious Tenders, and the same Kind Helps, and, therefore, the Welfare of Peter is owing to his own Wisdom and Care, as the Destruction of Judas is the Effect of his own Folly, or Neglect. For, Peter was not determined, by Divine Influence, to act, as he has done; but his Determination, to act the wise Part, he hath acted, followed, upon a rational Consideration of the Fitness and Wisdom of so acting. And it was possible, for Judas, to have determined, to act in the very same Manner, and, thereby, to have obtained the very same Benefits, as Peter hath acquired a Right unto. This is that Boasting, which is excluded in our Salvation, and, which it is impossible, that any should have Foundation for. Because, the Whole of our Holiness, in Principle, and Acts is from God, as the efficient Cause thereof. And if he intends to save you, he will certainly bring you to this humble and grateful Acknowledgement, that you are nothing, and that it is: By His Grace, you are what you are.

Allow me, my Brother, to press it upon you, to try your Doctrine by this Rule, which is so plainly laid down in Scripture, and be lure to reject every Principle which agrees not with it.

3. The third Rule for your Trial of Doctrines is: If they are a proper Foundation, for strong Consolation in the Saints. It is the Will of God, that Believers should enjoy such Consolation {Hebrews 6:18}. And, therefore, Sentiments which are not suited to produce and maintain it in them, cannot be true, by whom soever they are embraced, and propagated. Their Peace and Comfort, spring from, and are founded on the Security of their most important Interest, viz. The eternal Salvation of their Souls. If that is save and secure, their Joy will be full; but if it is a Matter, uncertain and precarious, in itself because it is not effectually provided for by God: They will fall into Dejection and inexpressible Perplexity. Nothing can more make the Hearts of the righteous sad, whom the Lord would not have made sad, than a Supposition, that their everlasting Welfare is doubtful, in itself. Which it must necessarily be, at least, if the Pardon of their Sins, if the Justification of their Persons, and if their Perseverance, in Faith, and Holiness, depend on their own fickle and corrupt Will, without a determining Influence, upon it by Divine Grace. Others, who are unacquainted with the Plague of their Hearts, may think it is a sufficient Ground of Peace, to have Offers of Pardon and Salvation, with Aids afforded, to facilitate obtaining a Right to them. But such, who are convinced of their Impotency, and the Naughtiness of their Hearts, can hear of Nothing more dismal, than this: That their future Happiness depends upon, the free Actings of their own Will, without being determined in its Volitions, by the good Spirit of God. Because they know, that their Determination, to chuse what is spiritually Good, is only and entirely the Effect of the Grace of God. I may proceed much farther, and affirm, that if it is Fact, that final Salvation, is dependent on the Will of the Saints, without an effectual Influence upon it, by Divine Grace, their future Blessedness, is a Thing impossible, and that they certainly know, it must be. Because, they

are sensible, that all Acts of Holiness in them, are the pure Effects, of an efficacious Operation, of God upon them; Who worketh in them, both to will, and to do, of His good Pleasure. And therefore, my Brother, fail not to examine your Doctrine, by this Rule; you may be assured, that no Principle, which is not calculated, to administer strong Consolation, to regenerate Persons, can be true; however plausible, at first View, it may seem.

4. The fourth Rule for the Trial of Doctrines is: Whether they are according to Godliness? No Principle can come from God, which gives Countenance to Sin. Or, which supposes, that a lower Degree of Obedience, is required of us now, because, of our Incapacity, to yield a perfect and sinless Obedience, through that Depravity, which attends us. To accommodate the Law, to our present Weakness, in its Precepts, is, as I remember, that excellent Divine Dr. Owen, somewhere says, speaking in Relation to some other Things, the worst Kind of Antinomianism. And to affirm, that we are not under the Law, as a Rule of Action is down-right Libertinism. That, necessarily implies, that no Acts are unlawful, or sinful. For, where no Law is, there is no Transgression. We are not freed from the Law, as a Rule of Conduct, nor is any Abatement made, in its preceptive Part. Neither, does the Divine Law-giver make any Allowances, for our Defects, or Imperfections, and what are sometimes called, our unallowed, and involuntary Sins, and justify our Persons, on the Ground of a partial Obedience, to His just and holy Law. My Brother, you ought strictly to examine your Doctrine, by this Rule, and not advance any Principle, which is inconsistent with the Purity, Perfection, and extensive Commands of the Law. For, God cannot abate of the Strictness of his Precepts, in order to save Sinners, nor justify their Persons, without a Righteousness, that is fully answerable to them, in their utmost Extent. As you are not to corrupt evangelical Truths; so you must maintain the Doctrine of the Law, in its Purity, and full Compass. If you fail of doing that, you will not approve yourself to God, as a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, nor, rightly divide the Word of Truth.^{f2}

5. The last Rule, whereby you should try your Doctrine is: If it be consistent - Truth is one and uniform. Contradictory Principles, cannot possibly be Truths. One, or other of such Principles, must certainly be false. There is no Inconsistency in the Gospel. It is all of a Piece. Your Word, or your Preaching, let it not be yea and nay; but yea, yea. If the Trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the Battle? Works and Grace, as Causes of Salvation, are Opposites. And, therefore, do not attribute it partly to Works, and partly to Grace; nor ascribe it, sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other. There have been many, and I fear there are still too many inconsistent Preachers. Sometimes the doctrinal, and applicatory Part of a Sermon, clash and disagree, either through the mistaken Conceptions of the Preacher, relating to some Points, or for Want of a due Consideration, in what Manner to express himself, so as that his Discourse, may in all Parts of it be uniform, and consistent. The former, is the Effect of a wrong Judgment, the latter is a Discovery of a Neglect to compare spiritual Things, with spiritual. Let it be your Care, that neither may be found in you.

These Rules are most plainly scriptural, and, therefore, infallible. No Doctrine, which eclipses the Glory of Divine Grace: Which excludes not Boasting: Which is not a proper Ground of strong Consolation, in the Saints: Which is not according to Godliness: Which is inconsistent, or agrees not with the Analogy of Faith, can be true. My Brother, carefully examine every Sentiment, by those plain and easy Rules. You may be certain, that those Principles, are Divine Truths, which agree with them, and, that those which do not, are Errors, let who will embrace, and defend them.

If Men would but try their Notions, by those Rules, and be determined, in their Opinions, by them, which we all ought to be, they could never pester the Church with pernicious Doctrines, which many have done, to the Dishonour of God, and the inexpressible Grief of pious Souls. I hope, that you will never be guilty of acting such a Part, through Inattention to this necessary Duty. Which, I beg Leave, most earnestly to recommend, and press upon you. By no Means fail of closely attending to it. And never be ashamed of, nor afraid to preach Doctrines, which are capable of being proved true, by those Divine Rules; though many may object to them: The Gospel always had, and we must expect it will have, numerous Opposers: So long as the human Mind remains carnal For, that will eternally esteem the Things of the Spirit of God Foolishness, and such, as ought to be rejected, by every wise Man.

VI. Continue in them. It is the Duty of a Minister to abide, in the Ministry, into which he is put by Jesus Christ. No lucrative Views, or temporal Advantages, ought to induce him, to desert that most important Service. Nor should Discouragements, which he may meet with, therein, cause him to quit it. Neither, should he think of discontinuing, in that Station, unto which he is called, by the Head of the Church, because of those Oppositions, which the Enemies of the Gospel, make against. him, in his Work. He ought to endure Hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ. No Man can justify himself, in leaving a Service, unto which, he hath Reason to think, that he was called of God, either for Profit, or on Account of Difficulties, which arise to him, in his Attendance unto it. Having put his Hand to the Plough, no enticing Allurements, or formidable Oppositions, should prevail with him to look back. And, my Brother, as you are to abide in this honourable Vocation, so, you must continue, conscientiously, and diligently, to attend unto the Duties of it. You must not grow weary of a painful and close Study of the Holy Scriptures, and the Doctrines, therein, contained, although it is a Weariness to the Flesh, and it may impair your natural Strength. Pray, that you may be enabled, by Divine Grace, to persevere, in the Practice of those Duties, which are en-joynd on you, in your ministerial Character. That you may meditate in a proper Manner, on the Things of God. That you may give yourself wholly to them. That your Heart may be fixed on them, and your Joy and Delight be in them. That you may be influenced to take Heed to yourself, as a Christian, and as a Minister. That you may be assisted, to take Heed to your Doctrine, and strictly try it, by those infallible Rules, which I have mentioned, and which are so plainly Scriptural. To this End, that your Proficiency, in the Knowledge of sacred Things, may appear to all Sorts of Persons, both to the Friends, and Adversaries of Truth. And also, in every Article of the Christian Faith. Unless you so do, you can't reasonably hope, to be a Workman, that needeth not to be ashamed. Nor expect, that happy Effect to follow, which is proposed to our Consideration, as Ministers, in order to quicken us unto Diligence and Care, in our important Work. That is,

VII. In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them, that hear thee. A very animating Consideration indeed! What, that is more important, and striking can be urged, to engage us to Diligence, Care, and Perseverance in our Work, as Ministers? Our own spiritual Welfare, and that of others, who attend on our Ministry, under the Blessing of God, it seems, will be promoted, thereby. Your due Attendance to the several Branches of Advice, given in the Text, will be conducive, to the Preservation of yourself, and your Hearers, from embracing Principles, which are dishonourable to God, destructive of the Consolation of the Saints, and are likely to have an ill Influence, on the Morals of Men. And, therefore, be diligent, in your Studies, in order to increase

your Acquaintance, with those Doctrines which it is your Duty to preach, unto Ends so salutary and important. We cannot be engaged in a more noble Service, than the Propagation of evangelical Truths, the Establishment of the Faith, of the Saints, and the Promoting of Holiness, in them. Shall we then think any Labour too great, to answer Purposes, of such vast Moment? Surely we cannot. Besides, as the Gospel is the Power of God to the Salvation of them that believe, and, that Faith cometh by Hearing, wherewith, Salvation, is inseparably connected: No Consideration, more weighty, can be thought of, to excite us, unto Care and Assiduity, in our ministerial Function. Let us never grow weary of intense Study, and laborious Preaching, since it is the Pleasure of God, thereby, to save them, who believe. If we have a due Concern for the Glory of God, and the Good of immortal Souls, nothing can give us such Satisfaction and Pleasure, as being instrumental, in the eternal Salvation of any of those, for whom, the Son of God, graciously condescended, to obey, suffer, and die on the Cross. This is a Consideration of the most animating Nature, to stir us up to use Diligence in our Work. If we act under its Influence, we shall not faint, and grow weary, of the most painful Labour.

Thus, my honoured, and beloved Brother, I have attempted, briefly, to explain, the several Branches of Advice, given to you, in there Words. May the Lord assist you to practice, the important Duties, therein, recommended! And, my Desire is, that you, and this Church, many Years hence, may have Occasion, to look back, on the Solemnities of this Day, with the highest Satisfaction, and Thankfulness.

Just Published, by the same AUTHOR; A TREATISE on VARIOUS SUBJECTS: viz. On the Original Purity of Human Nature. On its present Depravity. Of the Defects which attended the Doctrine of Morality, as taught by Philosophers and Poets. Of Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification. On the Difference between real Conversion, and the Semblance of it. Of the Assurance of Faith. On the Life of Faith. On the Growth of Grace. Of Declension in the Power of Religion; its Causes, and the Ways and Means of a happy Revival under Decays of Grace. On the Temptations of the present Age; and Cautions against them. Of Communion with God, in the Course of that Obedience, which we are required to yield unto Him. Wherein various difficult Cases of Conscience are answered, as they occur, oft the several Subjects treated of. The Second Edition.

FOOTNOTES ft1 That which I here intend might be illustrated by the divine Reasoning of the inspired Writer to the Hebrews in various Instances. How clear and full are the Proofs which he produces, to evince the Dignity of the Person of Christ, as inclusive of both his Natures, divine and human, in the first Chapter of that most admirable Epistle? In what a convincing Manner does he prove, that Christ is a Priest, and a Priest not after the Order of Aaron; but of another, quite distinct from? And with what Perspicuity does he prove, that the Sinai-Covenant was to wax old and vanish away? Also, that Christ is the Mediator of another, and better Covenant? And that, therefore, the Sinai-Covenant was not intended, really, but only, typically, to take away Sin? And, consequently, that the Pardon of Sin, and Salvation from it, could not be expected, by the Observance of any, or all the Rites, which were instituted, in that Covenant. There and other Instances, in that Epistle, are most excellent Directions, how we are to demonstrate and confirm evangelical Truths. When I consider the Scope of the divine Writer therein, and the Manner of his treating on the many important Subjects, upon which he discourses, I cannot but think it is exceedingly strange, that any should object to an argumentative Way of Preaching in order to

confirm the Truths of the Gospel. Some so do, it may be, out of Supineness, and Indifferency about sacred Truths; and others, perhaps, from a Consciousness, that they are not furnished with proper Talents, for such a demonstrative Way, of Preaching. ft2 Some, of late, affirm, that there is no Holiness in Believers. Or, that they are not new Creatures. That they have no other Holiness, than what is in Christ. Light they have, by which, they see spiritual Things; but Purity they have none. The Medium, whereby, those Persons endeavour to prove their Assertions, is this, that we all have Sin, and commit Evil, which no holy Man, will deny, concerning himself. Every one who is godly, knows he hath Sin in him, as well as Holiness, that evil Acts, as well as good ones proceed from him. By the like Medium, it might be equally proved, that Believers have no Sin. For, it is as just to conclude, that they have no Sin, because they have Holiness, as it is to conclude, that they have not Holiness, because they have Sin. And, that they do not commit Evil, because they perform Good. This is not a Doctrine according to Godliness. It is calculated to persuade us, that we may see the Lord, without Holiness. Than which there is Nothing, more false. The Faith which they speak and boast of, is not worth a Fig. It does not work by Love. It is dead, being without Works. And, it is a dreadful Delusion, to imagine, that Salvation is connected with it. If we have not spiritual Purity, we have not spiritual Light, nor any Discernment of the true Nature of spiritual Things. Light without Holiness is nothing worth.

S. Doctrine In The Supralapsarian Scheme

REMARKS UPON A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'SOME DOCTRINES IN THE SUPERLAPSARIAN SCHEME IMPARTIALLY EXAMIN'D BY THE WORD OF GOD'

CONTAINING A DEFENCE OF SEVERAL EVANGELICAL DOCTRINES THEREIN OBJECTED TO.

Printed for AARON WARD, at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain.

London 1736.

I HAVE lately met with a Pamphlet, intitled, Some Doctrines in the Superlapsarian Scheme impartially examined by the Word of God, which does not bear the Name of its Author: For what Reason he chose to conceal his Name, I don't pretend to determine; only conjecture, it might be to keep clear of a publick Imputation of the Want of Skill in the sublime Subjects of which he treats, and of a due Deference to some worthy Persons on whom he pours Contempt. My firm Regard to religious Liberty, and Desire of Improvement in Knowledge, will not permit me to be offended with any who shall think proper to animadvert upon what I publish to the World; and, if treated with Decency and Respect, by such as examine my Opinions, I shall esteem It as an additional Favour done me. How much I am indebted to this Author, on this Account, the Reader will easily determine. It might be justly thought, from the Title this Performance bears, that Impartiality and Ingenuity, with a steady Regard to the Holy Scripture, run through the whole; but any may readily see, that *Fronti nulla Fides* is a very proper Motto for it. This Writer militates against the Supralapsarian Way of stating the Doctrine of Election; which, he imagines, has run its Savourers into many false Opinions and great Absurdities.

Here he opposes it under these Considerations: As a Doctrine destitute of Scripture-Support; repugnant to God's Foreknowledge; as It lessens the Grace of God; and is injurious to his Justice. The Supralapsarian Opinion, in itself, doth not labour under the Difficulties with which this Author endeavours to clog it. Those who state the Doctrine of Election in this Way, think that the Objects of God's Choice were considered by him in their Election to the End, that is to say, to eternal Glory, as in *massa pura*, or as unfallen; but that in Election to the Means tending to that End, they were view'd, as in *massa corrupta*, as fallen, guilty Creatures.^{f1} And therefore it is sufficient, to obviate the Objections he advances against their Sentiments in this Point, to give a just Account of them. However, I shall briefly consider his Objections: And,

Object. 1.

He charges this Opinion with the Want of Scripture-Support. In Answer to this, let it be observed: That the Supralapsarians think their Opinion receives some Evidence from these Words, Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son^{f2}: And also from these Words of the same Apostle, As he hath chosen us in him {Ephesians 1:4}: Which plainly suggest, that Christ is the Object of Election, as Mediator. Now he could not be considered

but as pure; and it is reasonable to suppose, that his Members were so considered, who were chosen in him. This Author's Sense of these Words is certainly unnatural: He supposes, God chose us to the Enjoyment of spiritual Blessings, in order to effect our Sanctification . Is not Sanctification one of those Blessings? How then can it be said, that we are chosen to the Enjoyment of Sanctification, in order to effect it? The effecting of a Thing is, doubtless, prior to the Enjoyment of it. It is unblameable Holiness, or absolute Perfection in Heaven, that is intended in these Words. And therefore, the Supralapsarians are not guilty of a Contradiction, when they say, that God chose us that we might be holy and not because he foresaw we would so be, previous to that his eternal Choice, as he asserts they are: When they thus speak, they design Election to the Means. The Decree of God to sanctify his Elect necessarily supposes, that they were considered as sinful Creatures; but his Purpose of their standing before him in un-blameable Holiness in Heaven does not, which is the Holiness designed in these Words. Again, it will be very difficult to prove, that the Elect were ever considered as guilty, sinful Creatures, in Christ. Farther, Christ is laid to be chosen from out of the People {Psalms 89:18}. Now, as he was considered pure in his Election, to be an Head to the Church, it is not unreasonable to conceive that those, from among whom he was chosen, were also so considered. Moreover, it is manifest, that Esau and Jacob were not considered as having contracted any Guilt in God's eternal Decree; when the latter was chosen to everlasting Life, and an Act of Preterition was passed upon the former: For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth {Romans 9:11}.

Object. 2. This Doctrine of theirs is repugnant to their own Opinion of God's eternal Fore-knowledge. The Supralapsarians freely allow the Doctrine of God's eternal Prescience; that by one Act of his infinite Understanding, he foresaw all the differing Scenes the Objects of his Election would run through, perfectly consistent with their Opinion of his considering them as pure in their Election to the End, but as fallen in their Election to the Means tending to that End: And this, without the Supposition of Priority, or Posteriority in God, whose infinite Mind conceived of all Things at once; the End, and the Means: Known unto God are all his Works, from the Beginning {Acts 15:18}.

Object. 3. This Doctrine tends to lessen the Grace and Mercy of God in Election. This is a great Mistake; for, though God chose his People to eternal Glory above the Consideration of the Fall, he decreed to permit it in order to render his free Grace eminently glorious in bringing them to Happiness.

Object. 4.

He conceits it is contrary to God's Justice. This Way of Reasoning fixes the Damnation of poor Souls on God's Act of Preterition; if they are rejected as Creatures only, and not as sinful Creatures. In answer, let it be observed, an Act of Preterition was pass'd on the apostate Spirits, considered as unfallen; yet this was not the Cause of their Damnation, but the Sin which they voluntarily committed: Thus, as to the Non-elect among Men, God's Act of Preterition past upon them, is not the Cause of their Damnation, but their own Guilt. Besides, Pre-damnation, or an Ordination to Punishment, supposes the Consideration of the Fall and Guilt contracted by those who are the Objects of this Ordination to Penalty. The Act of Preterition, or negative Election, was no other than a Determination not to confer such Grace upon the Non-elect, which was no way

due to them: And Pre-damnation, or Ordination to Punishment, was only a Decree to inflict upon them the Demerit of their Crimes. In all which there is not the least Injustice. Our Author proceeds to take Notice of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification; which he ignorantly imagines naturally springs from the Supralapsarian Opinion:

Whereas this is a Sublapsarian Doctrine, or follows upon the Consideration of the Fall, as every judicious Reader will easily, observe: For, if we were not unrighteous in ourselves, we should not stand in need of Christ's Righteousness to justify us. To that Doctrine he objects, that we no where read of being justified before Faith. Though we do not read this syllabically, or in such Terms expressly, yet we read that which is equivalent to it, as will be seen hereafter.

He goes on to observe some dangerous Opinions, as he apprehends, that follow upon the Doctrine of Eternal Justification:

Such as these; that we are only to pray for a Manifestation of the Pardon of Sin; and that Sin was imputed to Christ: Two other Things he mentions; that God was eternally reconciled to the Elect, which I shall presently consider; and that God loved and delighted in his People while in Sin, the Defence of which I leave to Mr. Gill; he being more particularly concerned in that Part of the Argument. And therefore, I shall only consider what he offers on the Head of praying for the Pardon of Sin, the Imputation of it to Christ, and Reconciliation.

1st. To begin with, Praying for the Pardon of Sin And it will be proper to consider what Remission, or the Pardon of Sin is: Which I take to be this; The Will of God, to acquit and discharge us of the Guilt that we contract, or the Non-imputation of it; as seems dear from the Apostle's Words, Who shall say anything to the Charge of. God's Elect? it is God that justifies {Romans 8:33}; i.e. he acquits and discharges them. Now God eternally willed not to impute Sin to his Chosen: For, when he was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, i.e. drawing the Plan of their Reconciliation, it was thus; Not imputing their Trespases unto them {2 Corinthians 5:19}: And therefore, their Pardon is as ancient as God's Decrees. See this more fully vindicated in my Defence of eternal Justification. If God's Will, not to impute Sin to his People, or his Will, not to charge their Guilt upon them, is their Pardon or real Discharge, which this Author has not thought proper to deny; and this Will is eternal in God, as all the Acts of his Will most certainly are; then, when we pray for Pardon, it ought not to be with Ideas of God's beginning to will not to impute that Sin to us, which we pray for the Remission of; but only an Application of Pardon to our Souls, through Christ's Blood, can be justly intended by us in our Petitions of this Kind. The Instances of Saints praying for Pardon, and the Directions given to us so to do, this Author should have proved intend more than this, in order to establish what he designed: Since he has not, they are of no Service to his Cause; nor do they militate with our Opinion in this Article. I freely confess, I think myself under Obligation humbly to pray to God for Pardon, i.e. a View of it; although I conceive, if I am so happy as to be of the Number of God's Elect, he has forgiven me all Trespases {Colossians 2:13}, past, present, and to come. Let not our Author start, as one in a Surprize, at complete Remission; for 'tis an Evangelical Truth, whatever he may think of it.

2nd. He opposes the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ; in which I wish he had shewn more Temper and Moderation: I imagine, the Reader can't but think him guilty of intemperate Zeal, how knowing soever he may conceive him to be. I apprehend, this Doctrine receives evident Proof from the Sacred Scriptures; which declare, that our Iniquities were laid on Christ {Isaiah 53:6}; that

he, who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us {2 Corinthians 5:21}; and that he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree {1 Peter 2:24}: Which intend a Charge, or Imputation of our Guilt to Christ, as our Surety, as what was necessary to his suffering the Penalty due to us. Our Author does not fairly represent our Opinion, when he makes us say, it cannot consist with the Justice of God to wound his Son, if he is not really the Sinner; for we say punish his Son, not merely wound him: An Innocent Person may suffer, but he cannot be punished, without manifest Injustice, unless some Crime is charged upon him. Since, therefore, Christ was made a Curse {Galatians 3:13} in his Sufferings, or the Punishment due to us was inflicted on him, the Imputation of those Crimes to him, that were the meritorious Cause of that Penalty, is necessarily supposed. This Writer thinks, that when Christ is said to be made Sin, it is to be taken in a metonymical Sense: And in his Margin gives us this Account of that Trope; A metonymy is a changing of, or putting one Thing, or more, for another. I excuse his bad Orthography; it ought to be Metonymy. It is not the putting of any Thing in the room of another, as the putting of one Contrary for another, which he conceives: Unbelief is not put for Faith in these Words, Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief {Mark 9:24}. The Sense of which is not, Lord help my Faith, but assist me against my powerful Unbelief. Since Christ's being made Sin is a scriptural Mode of speaking, he ought to have treated It with greater Decency than he has done. It is not designed thereby, that he became impure, either in his Nature, or in any of his Actions; but a Sinner, or Guilty, by Way of Imputation only. As the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us works no Change in our Nature, from sinful to holy, so the Imputation of our Sins to him effected no Alteration in his pure and holy Nature: That remained untainted, notwithstanding this Imputation of our Guilt to him. He imagines, sin cannot be imputed, because 'tis not Substance; by which it appears, he is ignorant of the Nature of Imputation. A Substance, or Body, as Stone, may be cast at, or let fall upon a Person, but cannot be imputed to him, or placed to his Account. Farther, The Filthiness of our Nature was imputed to, and atoned for by Christ; or else it will prove our Destruction: And so also, the perfect Holiness of Christ's Nature is imputed to us; though I do not take this to be our Sanctification, but a Branch of our justifying Righteousness: The Law requiring Purity of Heart, as well as Conformity in Life, in order to our Justification. It is true, that Christ healed distempered Persons of their bodily Disorders, not by taking them upon himself; but it doth not thence follow, that he did not bear away Sin,. By having it imputed to him, and atoning for it, as this Author suggests. It is no other than a Socinian Gloss he puts upon the Words of the Prophet: The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all³. Christ was not in all Respects separate from Sinners, except in the blasphemous Accounts of his Enemies, as he asserts: For Sin was as really imputed to Christ, as his Righteousness is imputed to us for our Justification: But this Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness he seems as averse to, as to that of the Imputation of our Sins to him; for he tells us, We are made Saviours thereby. To let aside which, it is sufficient to observe, that we contribute nothing, either to the Being or Value of this Righteousness; nor to its Imputation: And how, therefore, the Imputation of it to us, in order to our Salvation, infers that we are Saviours, will be very difficult for him to demonstrate. The Liberty he takes with Dr. Crisp is very indecent: Let not this low Defamer conceit, it will ever be in his Power to risk the Reputation of that excellent Person, who has been well defended by such as are no way inferior to him in Learning, good Sense, and Knowledge in Divinity; the Doctor's own Son, 'Squire Edwards, and Dr. Chauncy⁴. In the Writings of which learned Gentlemen, such Arguments are advanced in Favour of Christ's being made Sin by Way of Imputation, in which Sense only Dr. Crisp understood it, that, perhaps, he may never dare attempt an Answer to. If

some particular Expressions have dropp'd from his Pen, that are not so well guarded as might be wished, the Substance of his Doctrine is solid, Spiritual, and evangelical; infinitely more valuable than what the Performance of this Author can boast. Next he is pleased to treat the learned and great Mr. Hussey in a very scurrilous Manner; him he calls a ridiculous Writer. It might have been thought that his great Learning, extensive Knowledge, and Zeal for Truth, would have raised him, at least, above the Contempt of this Person; who, it will hardly be allowed, is equal to that learned Author in any Respect. The Charge he brings against him, of endeavouring to prove that Christ was not only guilty by way of Imputation, but filthy too, hath no more Truth in it, than the Author of the Charge has Modesty: For he is so far from suggesting any Thing like this, that he very cautiously guards against it. The Simile he makes use of, and which this Examiner mentions, is a sufficient Vindication of him in this Particular: It is this; suppose, says he, a Drop of Ink, or Poison, falls upon a fiery Globe {Mark 1:1-16}} could that Ink, or Poison, leave any sullyng Mark behind itf5?

Now, though Mr. Hussey, in his Simile, mentions only a Drop of Ink, or Poison, it was not with a Design to extenuate the Sin Christ bore, or the Greatness of the Filth there is in the Sins of the Elect: For he calls it, a Deluge of Corruption, and a Sea of Filthiness to us; though but as a Drop, in comparison with Christ's infinite Power to Subdue Sin: Which, if this Writer had observed, it might have prevented his making the first Remark upon the Simile, as it effectually answers it. His second is; He should have mentioned the polluting Stuff as poured into the Globe, and not as dropped upon it . I answer, Mr. Hussey did not design a Communication of Sin or Filthiness to Christ; but the Imputation of Sin, with all its Filthiness to him, and the quick Sense Christ had of the Father's charging Sin upon him, and of the Pollution of that Sin imputed to him; all which was, without his being, in the least, defiled by it: And therefore, our Author is altogether mistaken, in supposing the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ: to be Blasphemy, and vile Nonsense. I hope he is one interested in the Intercession of Christ, and shall therefore obtain the Pardon of the Guilt he may have contracted, by his too warm and ignorant Opposition to the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ; who, when on the Cross, prayed thus to the Father, in behalf of those of his People, who, through Ignorance, were concerned in his Death, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do {Luke 23:34}: Which cannot, I think, be urged in his Favour, to abate the Greatness of his Crime, in charging Mr. Hussey with making Christ inherently filthy.

If the Evil he has been guilty of in defaming those, who believe and defend the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, should lie on his Conscience, as what was not imputed to, and atoned for by him, whatever he may think of the Matter, now it will inexpressibly wound him. Sin, which Christ was made, stands opposed to Righteousness, which we are made {2 Corinthians 5:20}. Now suffering for Sin, or the Penalty due to it, is not to be opposed to God's Righteousness, or Faithfulness: But Sin, which Christ is laid to be made, may very justly be opposed to that Righteousness which we are made; if we understand by Sin our Guilt, and by Righteousness Christ's perfect Obedience, which is the true Sense of the Text: For the Apostle certainly intends two Contraries, by Sin and Righteousness. Christ's being made an Offering for Sin {Isaiah 53:10}, designs his being made Sin, or Guilt; when thou shalt make his Soul, *μῆρα*, that is, Guilt; which plainly suggests the Imputation of Sin. The Word is sometimes rendered Trespass; and he shall recompense, *ωμῆρα*, his Trespass. It is used to express Guiltiness; and thou be found Guilty {Numbers 5:7}, *τμῆρα* Therefore, that it was Guilt or Sin that Christ was made, appears from these

Words.

It is very unaccountable, that he should pronounce this Doctrine as absurd and vile, if not more vile than Transubstantiation. In his next Performance, let him prove it to be so, in a single Instance, if he can; he has done nothing towards it in this. I now proceed to consider what he offers on the Doctrines of Reconciliation, Justification and Adoption.

3rd. I shall attend to what he delivers on the Article of Reconciliation: And to prevent Mistakes, the Reader will please to permit me to state my Opinion in this Point; I readily allow, that Sin has caused a Distance between God and the Elect, as considered in themselves, on God's Part, which I need only consider. It supposes, I. A Disapprobation of their Persons, as viewed in themselves: Herein I conceive God is to be considered as a Lawgiver.

II. That God, by his Law, pronounces a Curse against them on account of their Transgressions: So that God's Justice, or infinitely pure Nature, and holy Law, stand engaged against them. These two Things, I apprehend, are designed, where they are said to be Children of Wrath {Ephesians 2:3}., and nothing more. A Purpose of inflicting any Part of the Penalty, demerited by their Sins, cannot be intended; for the Apostle says expressly, God hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ {1 Thessalonians 5:9}. Besides, Christ bore the whole Punishment due to their Crimes; or else he is not a complete Saviour, which he certainly is; for the Father has made him the Captain of his Peoples Salvation, perfect through Sufferings {Hebrews 2:10}, that is to say, a perfect Saviour: And therefore, Reconciliation cannot design either of these two Things;

1. That God did not love his People prior to Reconciliation made. Such a Supposition is subversive of the Doctrine of God's Love to the Elect, as the Cause of the Gift of his Son for them; which is a Truth our Saviour himself plainly teaches us {John 3:16}.

2.

It does not intend a Change in his Thoughts concerning them. It is not to be imagined, that God entertained a Purpose in his Heart to take Vengeance on Sin in the Persons of the Elect; but was diverted from such an Intention, by the Sufferings and Death of his Son; for he is not liable to any Change in his Resolutions: The Council of the Lord standeth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations {Psalms 33:11}. And therefore all that can be designed by Reconciliation, is the Satisfaction of Law and Justice; that the former might be magnified, and the Glory of the latter be effectually secured in the Salvation of God's Chosen: No Alteration in the Affections, or Disposition of the divine Mind, can be intended. This Author strenuously opposes eternal Reconciliation; and very justly, if he had designed Christ's making Reconciliation in Eternity: But, since he intends the Reconciliation of God, or of divine Justice, to the Persons of the Elect, he is egregiously mistaken; for the present Being of Christ's Satisfaction is not necessary to Reconciliation: Divine Justice, or God, as a Law-giver, was reconciled to the Elect, upon Christ's undertaking to suffer and die for them; although he did not then lay down what Justice demanded. Nor can I apprehend any Difficulty to attend this, more than may be thought to attend God's punishing of his Son for Millions of Sins that were not as yet committed: Actual Reconciliation doth not necessarily suppose the present Being of Christ's Satisfaction, is evident; for, doubtless, God, or divine Justice, was reconciled to the Old Testament Saints, who were glorified before the Time

of Christ's Crucifixion. Now, as actual Reconciliation to those of the Elect, did not set aside the Necessity of his making Satisfaction for their Sins, or answering the Demands of Law and Justice in their behalf; Why should it be thought, that actual Reconciliation to them, and all the Elect before Time, renders Christ's making Satisfaction, or answering the Demands of Law and Justice unnecessary, and makes what he did and suffered ineffectual, yea, needless? Let our Author shew this if he can. But, in order to remove this Difficulty, which expresses his Opinion very hard, let him not imagine, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with other Believers, were not admitted to Heaven till Christ had suffered. When he shall demonstrate, that actual Reconciliation to them, was consistent with the Necessity of Christ's acting in the mediatorial Character, and dying for their Sins, I shall be able to prove, that the Doctrine of Reconciliation to all the Elect, before Time, perfectly agrees therewith. If he pleases, I will acquaint him with my Notion in this Matter: It is this; Reconciliation to the Persons of the Elect, is founded upon the foederal Engagements of Christ; and therefore, the Certainty of his Suffering was necessarily supposed. From whence it follows, that, unless that which supposes the certain, though future Being of a Thing, destroys the Necessity of its Being, this Doctrine renders not Christ's Death, and Satisfaction to Law and Justice, or to God, as a Lawgiver, unnecessary. Thus, all our Author's Reasoning on this Subject sinks at once, which fills up so many Pages. Some Time since, I published a Defence of the Doctrine of eternal Justification, from some Exceptions made to it by Mr. Bragge, and others; several Things in which, this Author has thought proper to take Notice of: He begins with what I have advanced in Favour of actual Reconciliation before Faith. The Words cited by me, as an evident Proof of that Doctrine, are, If, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life. The Sense of which, I take to be this; That Paul, and all the Elect of God, were reconciled while Enemies by Virtue of Christ's Death; and that, in Consequence of this Reconciliation, they become reconciled in themselves, or the Enmity of their Hearts is slain; and, being thus reconciled, they may be assured of eternal Happiness by Christ's ever living to intercede for them: So that Reconciliation, in the first Branch, intends the Satisfaction of Justice by the Death of Christ; and Reconciliation, in the second, designs the conquering of our perverse Minds by omnipotent Grace. Herein the Apostle's Reasoning appears very clear and strong; which stands thus: If Law and Justice were satisfied for our Sins by Christ's Death, when we were in open Rebellion against God; much more, since the Perverseness of our Hearts is subdued, we may steadily expect everlasting Happiness by his Life of Intercession for us: This doth not make the Apostle guilty of Nonsense, or bad Divinity, as our Examiner weakly imagines. It is not a little observable, that, though this Writer militates so much against Reconciliation before Faith, he is yet obliged to grant it: When he comes to give his own Sense of the Words, it is thus; God was hereby reconciled to the Elect, by Virtue of the Price of our Redemption, etc. Doth he allow, that God was reconciled by Virtue of Christ's Death! How then could he assert, that Reconciliation is not before Faith? Perhaps, he may find it no easy Matter to reconcile Petitions so clearly opposite. Unless I am mistaken, he has, in these few Words, overthrown all that he offers against the Doctrine of Reconciliation before Faith: It may be, hereafter, he will write with a better Guard, and deny, that Satisfaction is made by Christ's Death, in order to destroy the Doctrine of Reconciliation before Faith; since he is so great an Adversary to it. He conceives, that the Price of Pardon, or the Atonement, must be pleaded either by the believing Soul, or else by his Advocate above for him. But, to what End? Surely, not in order to Satisfaction; for that wholly arises from the infinite Dignity of the Person who suffered: Christ's

Intercession with God, in behalf of his People, adds no Efficacy to his Death, as a Propitiation for their Sins; but his Intercession is founded upon the Compleatness of his Satisfaction. Besides, doth not the Elects Advocate plead his Sufferings in their Favour, while in Unbelief, in order to their believing? And can he imagine, that Christ's urging his Death, in Favour of his People, is less prevalent with God, than their pleading it when they believe? Moreover, Faith, in pleading the Sufferings of Christ, considers divine Justice as fully satisfied thereby, for the Sins of those Persons on whose Account he suffered; which the Apostle designs in Part, at least, by receiving the Atonement {Romans 5:11}. And if so, it necessarily follows, that Reconciliation has not the least Dependence on Faith, but is prior to it, and doth not commence with the Being of that Grace.

4th. I go on to answer what he objects to the Doctrine of Justification before Faith

It has been thought, that these Words afford full Evidence thereof: But believeth on him, that justifieth the ungodly. Whereupon he thus delivers himself: I understand, that what Faith applies to, and lays hold of, is intended hereby, and not the Act of Faith only. Not the Act of Faith only; is Faith then, in his Account, a Part of our justifying Righteousness? This is not sound Protestant Doctrine, which teaches that Christ's Righteousness alone is the Matter of a Sinner's Justification before God. Those, who favour the Doctrine of Justification before Faith, think it is strongly maintained in this Text; because it is expressly said, that God justifieth the Ungodly: By which they conclude, Believers cannot be designed; nor has this Gentleman thought proper to suggest, that they ever pass under such a Character: And if they do not, then Unbelievers are the Objects of Justification, how unwilling soever he may be to allow it. Why, therefore, does he affirm, that Justification before Faith is a mere human Conjecture, that hath not Scripture to support it? Unless he can prove, that Believers are ungodly Persons, this Text will remain an immoveable Bar to the Truth of what he asserts with such an Air of Assurance: He supposes the Difficulty may be removed; but it is a very odd Method he takes to do it; not by proving that Believers are designed, but charges the Apostle with down-right Contradiction. It is thus: The Apostle, says he, by a long Train of Arguments, is proving that our Justification is by Faith; therefore, it is highly, irrational to suppose, that he should intend here, that the Believer was pardoned, or accepted of God, while he was in Unbelief. If this is not to make the Apostle contradict himself, it will be difficult to determine what Self-contradiction is: He grants, that the Apostle designs Unbelievers, by the Term ungodly; and yet represents him as proving, by a long Train of Arguments, that the Believer was not accepted of God, or justified, while in Unbelief. He adds, This would render the Apostle's Meaning as remote from good sense as possible, and as ridiculous, as if he should say, If you believe, you shall have Righteousness imputed to you for your Justification; because that Righteousness was imputed to you while you were Unbelievers, or ungodly Sinners. If this is not the native Style of their Doctrine the Supralapsarians then will I submit to be censured for an Idiot. He may be assured, I shall never censure him for an Idiot; yet, I cannot think his Talent, in Disputation, will be much admired; not but he might have succeeded better, if he had understood the Subjects upon which he writes. In order to clear the Supralapsarians, as he loves to call those who entertain the Doctrine of Justification before Faith, from supposing the Apostle guilty of such bad Sense, I need only observe, that they think their Opinion of the Commencement of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness before Faith, is clear from his affirming, God justifieth the ungodly, and that he only can intend the Knowledge of Justification, when he declares it is by Faith; and therefore, they are far from imagining it is, as if he should say, if you believe, you shall have Righteousness imputed

to you for your Justification: They think, that cannot consist with his Declaration of God's justifying the Elect, while ungodly; but allow, it is agreeable enough to the Apostle's Sense, That, upon believing, the Elect, by Faith, apprehend the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and are ready still to maintain, that the Apostle designs nothing more, when he says, we are justified by Faith; if Faith is to be taken in a proper Sense, and the Object of it is not intended. Again, he farther observes, that some-times Justification is spoken of as future: By the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. I suppose, by this, he means it cannot be an Act which was past upon the Elect before Faith; but, if he considers that to be, frequently intends the Manifestation of what is; as for Instance, in those Words of Christ, So shall ye be my Disciples {John 15:8}; i.e. appear to be; I say, when he shall consider this, perhaps, he may conceive such Modes of Expression, he here refers to, make not so much for his Opinion as he imagines they do. Next he informs us, that Mr. Henry would have the Text read, but believeth on him that justifieth that ungodly one; meaning Abraham, who was an Idolater. The words are not thus rendered by any learned Person that I know of; Arias Montanus, Beza; Calvin, Pareus, and Hutter, in his Hebrew Version, all read as we do, and the Syriac reads Sinners; and, what Mr. Henry says, will hardly be thought of greater Weight, than the Authority of so many learned Men; nor is there any Necessity for this reading: t ajebh is, indeed, in the singular Number, but it is not unusually taken in a collective Sense; as in these Words, If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly? OJ ajebhv, in the singular Number, as here, yet it designs all the Non-elect; and the Sinner appear {1 Peter 4:18}. Besides, if that Reading be admitted, unless it is proved that the Apostle considered Abraham as ungodly when a Believer, the Argument loses nothing of its Force; if he respects him as an Idolater, and not as a Believer, then God justified him prior to his Faith; and, if he thus justified Abraham, he also does every other elect Person.

He objects to Faith being a Manifestation of our Justification, thus: Certainly we must be very uncharitable to the greatest Part of exemplary Christians, if we will not admit any to be true Believers, but such as have the undoubted Manifestation of their being in a justified State. I do not dissent from him in this: But, I think, he will not be capable of proving, that the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, in our Sense of it, involves such Uncharitableness in it: For, though we understand Justification by Faith to be the Evidence, or Perception of Justification, we do not assert, that this must arise to an undoubted Manifestation of our Interest in Christ's justifying Righteousness. What we maintain is, that Faith acting on the Righteousness of Christ alone, for Acceptance with God, is, in itself, a clear Evidence of the Imputation of that Righteousness to us; inasmuch as it is a Branch of the Spirit's Work to convince us of the Necessity of an Interest in that Righteousness, in order to our Justification; although, through Unbelief, we may be prevented of apprehending this to be such an Evidence. We farther maintain, that Hope ever acts in Conjunction with Faith; when the latter is wholly out of Exercise, it will be difficult to discover any Actings of the former. Besides, the good Measure of Hope that a Believer has of an Interest in Christ, and his justifying Righteousness, has some Degree of Evidence of such an Interest, or else it would be entirely without Foundation to support it; altho' that Evidence is not so strong as to carry him to a full Assurance of Faith. Thus it appears, that Faith is an Evidence of Justification by Christ, and that that Evidence is clearer, or less evident, according as that Grace is weaker or stronger: And therefore, this Author mistakes us, if he thinks we assert Justification, by Faith, to be art undoubted Manifestation of our Interest in that Benefit. He tells us, that {Ezekiel 16:8}. is urged in favour of Justification before Faith, but does not acquaint us by whom; perhaps, he met with it in

Conversation with some Persons upon the Subject: Which if he did, and thinks it impertinent, Why does he expose it to publick View? Can he be ignorant, that, if every Thing which is offered in Defence of Truth in private Converse among Christians should be made publick, it would not be much to its Advantage? However, I shall consider his Observations on the Text; and he thus remarks upon it, If this Verse is to be understood, as let it be so God's imputing the Righteousness of Christ, when he is said to spread his Skirts over the Sinner, then I presume, that that Day of the Sinner's being born, refers to the new Birth, or Regeneration in the fifth Verse. 'Tis not a little strange, that the allegorical Representation of our filthy, miserable, and helpless Condition by Nature, should be thought by this Author to refer to our Regeneration; for that is all that is designed in the 4th and 5th Verses. I imagine, every judicious Reader will easily see that the Birth mentioned cannot be the new. The 6th and 8th Verses give us an Account of our Regeneration, as a Work that passes upon us when in the deplorable Condition that is let forth in the 4th and 5th Verses. He is very much mistaken in thinking the Soul is represented in the 5th Verse, as conscious of its own miserable State; that is a plain Account of our natural Condition, but not of our Apprehension of that State. Besides, he is as far from the Truth, in supposing, that when God says to us, live, we have such just Apprehensions of our natural Condition; the true Knowledge of that, follows upon the Communication of spiritual Life, and doth not precede it: We are very far from that Humility, and Self-abasement, which this Author suggests to be in us, when God says to us, live. Farther, I apprehend, the justifying Righteousness of Christ may be intended in the 8th Verse, and that, by spreading of it over us, respect is had to a Ceremony used by the Jews in their Nuptials⁶. But this designs not the Commencement of the Imputation of that Righteousness, only the Discovery of it to our Souls for our Consolation and joy; as that Phrase, and thou becamest mine, does not intend that God's Interest in us commences upon our believing, but only the Manifestation of that Interest, which I shall more particularly consider hereafter. Upon the whole, although this Text doth not furnish us out with a Proof of justification before Faith, it contains nothing inconsistent with it, as this Author imagines.

5thly. I shall consider his Remarks on what I have offered in favour of Adoption before Faith

. The Scripture I quoted to support this was; Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father {Galatians 4:6}. I pass over his insinuating that I am infatuated with a blind Zeal, as below my Notice; all such Insinuations will meet with a Contempt from me, equal to that with which he can possibly deliver them. He observes, the Apostle informed the Galatians of the Medium of their Adoption in these Words, For ye are all the Children of God, by Faith in Christ Jesus {Galatians 3:26}. How Faith is the Medium, or Mean of Adoption, I am utterly unable to conceive; it is certain, that Adoption is God's Act, or he fixes us in the honourable Relation of Sons to himself. Now, it is not to be conceived, that God makes use of Faith in this Act of his, it cannot be; for, as we are the Subjects of this Grace, all the Actings of it are proper to us: Unless, therefore, we make ourselves the Sons of God by Faith, or Believing, Adoption itself cannot be by this Grace. Whence it follows, that the Apostle must design by these Words, that Faith is that Grace by which we know our Adoption, and receive the Immunities arising from that Relation. Faith is the Medium, Mean, or Instrument, by which we partake of the Benefits of Adoption, but it cannot be the Medium of Adoption itself; the manifest Reason of which is, that is God's Act, and not ours. I cannot tell, whether some of his Readers may not think him chargeable with rash Boldness, which he is very forward to fix upon others, when he says, That there is not

one Word in the Text that favours the Opinion of Adoption before Faith. He adds, If it had been written to suit their Scheme, it must have read in the past Tense, thus; and because ye were Sons, etc. Had it been thus wrote, the bold Maintainers of Sonship before Faith might have made their Triumphs with a better Grace. Our Author seems to take a peculiar Pleasure in representing the Savourers of the Opinions he opposes, as bold, daring, and insulting Persons: How much to the Advantage of his Argument, it is not difficult to determine. 'Tis not improbable, but many, at least, may conclude, that his contemptuous Way of Writing carries no great Force of Reasoning in it. He should have considered, that we apprehend our Sonship, or filial Relation to God, is the Cause of the Mission of the Holy Spirit into our Hearts; and that these Words are an evident Proof of it, though expressed in the present, and not in the past Tense. We conceive, the Design of the Apostle is to shew, that the Mission of the Spirit results from this our Relation of Sons to God, which this Author has not so much as attempted to disprove; and of Consequence, that we must be Sons before the Holy Spirit is sent into our Hearts; for the Cause is previous to its Effect. Its being expressed in the present Tense, is no Objection to this, as may be evinced by this Supposition: Suppose a Father having a rebellious Son, yet continues to confer Favours upon him, it should be observed to the Son, that his Carriage renders him undeserving of his Father's paternal Affection, notwithstanding such a Favour he has bestowed upon you, because you are his Son; would not every one clearly discern that the Relation was the Cause of the Favour being granted to him, no less than if it had been laid, because you were a Son? As easy it is to discover this to be the true Meaning of the Apostle's Words: And, I am persuaded, this Author will never be able to fix any other upon them; though, through his warm Opposition to the Doctrine irrefragably supported by them, he may be induced to stretch his Thoughts to the utmost, in order to it.

I must confess my way of Reasoning to be very unhappy, if it is justly Rated by this Writer: It is thus; Because the believing Galatians were adopted Children of God, when Paul writ his Epistle to them; therefore Paul was in the same State when he was a Persecutor, and an Enemy to God. He might well ask, if there is any good Divinity, or Reasoning in this Way of Arguing? But, it may be, the impartial Reader will acquit me of such a Way of Disputing, when he considers, that my Design was to argue for Adoption before Faith, from the Mission and Work of the Spirit upon the Hearts of the Galatians, as an Effect of their Sonship to God, and so applied it to Paul, it being no less true of him, than of them; and think him either ignorant of the Force of my Argument, or which is worse, highly disingenuous in hating it. Since the Communication of the Holy Spirit follows upon our Adoption, as an Effect doth its Cause; that Observation of mine is true, Regeneration doth not make us Sons; but, because we are Sons, we are regenerated; although he is pleased to call it a daring Assertion. Nor are these Words opposite to it: But to as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God {John 1:12-13}: Which intend not Adoption, but the Benefits arising from it: To Believers Christ gives a Liberty, Power, or Right, to claim and enjoy such Privileges as are proper to Children. Neither is this Text; And were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others. These Words consider the Elect as in their natural Condition; thus they are under a Sentence of Wrath or Condemnation by the Law, which is not at all inconsistent with their Relation to God by Grace; as the Descendants of Adam, they are Children of Wrath; as in, and Members of Christ, they are the Children of God: Nor is it any Contradiction to affirm each of these Things concerning them at the same Time; because they are considered in a two-fold Respect, as what they are by Nature, and what they are by Grace, or as they have Christ for their foederal Head.

He tells us, That the Act of Adoption is the owning us to be Children: But he is greatly mistaken; for, if that is Adoption, it is repeated as often as the divine Spirit witnesses to a Believer that he is a Child of God, that is, God's owning him for a Son, and evidencing to his Conscience, that he stands in such a Relation to him: But the Act of Adoption is not reiterated, tho' the giving Evidence of such a Relation is in infinite Mercy repeated. Adoption is an Act in God himself towards his People, it is not a transient Act upon them; and therefore is eternal, as all God's immanent Acts are. It is no other than an Act of his Will, or a gracious Resolution within himself to account them his Children, and to confer such Privileges upon them, as are suitable to the Nature of so great a Privilege. And therefore, I am very far from being scrupulous to affirm, that there is no Necessity for the Change that Conversion makes, in order to prepare us for Adoption; nay, farther, that Regeneration is so far from being our Meetness for Adoption, that it properly springs from it. The Elect are no less Heirs of regenerating Grace, prior to that Work upon their Souls, than they are Heirs of all future Supplies of Grace and Glory, by Virtue of God's eternal Will, that they shall be his Sons; which Act of the divine Will constituted them Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ.

I do not except against the Account he gives of Regeneration, and the Actings of a regenerate Person, as consequent upon such a Work in his Heart: That he thinks it supposes a thorough Conviction of Sin, and of the Necessity of a perfect Righteousness, and an Apprehension of Christ as the only suitable Saviour, I am glad to find. But he is guilty of a great Mistake, in thinking Adoption to be God's acknowledging the new-born Soul to be a Son or Daughter of his own begetting; that respects the sealing Work of the Spirit upon a Believer, and cannot be Adoption itself, as was before observed. The Scriptures which he mentions, to support his Assertion, carry no such Meaning in them; the one is, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God {Romans 8:14} ; that is, says he, they, and none but they. This is too free Addition of his own words to the Apostle, {#as he understands them}, who lays down the Leading or Instruction of the Holy Spirit, as a certain Evidence of Adoption: If therefore, he had said, that none but such as are led by the Spirit have the Evidence of their Adoption, it would have been agreeable to the Apostle's Design. Neither do these Words militate with the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith: Now, if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his {Romans 8:9}. Can this Author imagine, That Christ has no Interest in the Elect, before the Time of their believing? when they were given to him by the Father, he laid down his Life for them; they are called his People by the Father, tho' unwilling, or in a State of Rebellion against him {Psalms 110:3}; and are also acknowledged by Christ himself to be his, even while in that State: Other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold, them also I must bring {John 10:16}. Surely, he cannot thus think; these Things so clearly evince the Elect to be Christ's before the Time of their Regeneration: And therefore, it is not our Interest in him, or his in us, that the Apostle intends, but the Evidence of that Interest. The next Scripture which our Author takes Notice of, that is urged in favour of Adoption before Faith, is; And not for that Nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the Children of .God that were scattered Abroad. Upon which he thus remarks; If we should grant for Argument's Sake, that, by the Children of God, is intended all elect People of God, whether the uncalled, or unborn, as well as them that are called. This he must be obliged to allow, not merely for Argument's Sake, but as the real Sense of the Words; for all those, whom Christ gathers together in one, are plainly designed by the Children of God: And therefore, the uncalled, and unborn of the Elect, are no less intended, than those who were living at that Time, and called by divine Grace. Yet, says he, I suppose these Men will find no small Difficulty, to engage it on their Side; because this is a

Prophecy: And it is well known, that the Nature of prophetic Writings is to speak often of Things to come as present, or past, by calling those Things that are not, as though they were. As for Instance, we read in the 22nd Psalms 16:1-11th and 18th Verses, {Psalms 22:16; Psalms 22:18} of our Saviour's Hands and Feet being pierced, as if past and over . The Force of which Reasoning stands thus; Since it is usual in Prophecy to speak of Facts, that are to be accomplished hereafter, as if they were already done, we may not conclude, from such prophetick Writings, that God, at the present, stands in Relation to the Elect; although such Characters are given to them, in those Writings, which are expressive of his Relation to them. If this Manner of Arguing be allowed of, we may deny, that Christ stood in the Capacity of a King to .the Old Testament Church, from his being so called in a Prophecy {#to which our Author has Reference} that mentions his riding to Jerusalem on an Ass {Zechariah 9:9}; which, I presume, he will not think proper to do. Evangelical Prophecies contain Doctrines, as well as Predictions of future Events. Now, though we are not to conclude, that those Events, or Facts, are past and done, because the Prophecy is delivered in the present, or past Tense; yet, certainly, we may be allowed to conceive of the Doctrines, those Prophecies contain, as present Truths: Therefore, though this is a Prophecy, in which all the Elect at, called the Children of God, it is not to be objected to their present Adoption any more than Christ's being called a, King, in a Prophecy that relates to a future Fact, may be improved as an Objection to his present standing that Capacity. 'Tis not a little strange, that our Author should be unable to distinguish between Doctrines and Facts, as he seems not to do in his Observations here.

What he offers farther, concerning its being as reasonable to attempt to prove, that Judas had actually sold Christ in Eternity, etc. as that the chosen Number were actually adopted in Eternity, is altogether impertinent, and deserves little Consideration. If his Observations of this Kind are just, I allow, that I am very unhappy in my Way of Arguing, and must be concluded guilty of the greatest Absurdities: But, he may be pleased to observe, I maintain that Adoption is God's Act, and an Act of his Will, or within himself, and therefore must be eternal. Now, 'tis not a little unaccountable, that any should imagine, it is as reasonable to suppose the Acts of a Creature are eternal, as that God's immanent Acts are so. If this Author shall think proper to reply, I desire he would either allow Justification and Adoption to be immanent Acts of God, or else prove them transient Acts; or demonstrate, that, though they are immanent Acts, they are not eternal; every Thing short of this will be nothing to the Purpose. Let him shew us, that there is an Exertion of divine Power, in order to our Adoption, or that a transient Act of God is put forth, which gives Being to this Benefit, or else freely grant, that it is an Act of his Will only. He goes on to observe, that the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith, receives no Countenance from these Words; This, my Son, was dead, but is alive again: He imagines the Difficulties attending this Account of the Prodigal, taken as a Parable, are exceeding great; and also, that he is able to prove, that, if it is so to be understood, the Doctrine of Justification before Faith is destroyed by it {Luke 15:24}; which, I should think, might reduce him to take it in that View, in order to the Service of his Cause. One of the Difficulties he mentions is this; If they understand by the younger Son, the Gentiles, and by the elder, the Jews; How will this comport with the believing Jews giving Glory to God, for his giving Repentance to Life unto the Gentiles? This Difficulty is mutely removed by observing, that not believing Jews are intended, but pharisaical, self-righteous Ones; such as were offended at Christ's receiving Sinners, and eating with them. Another is started by him.: It is this; If they will have it to be a Spiritual Life that is intended in the Text, then certainly it must refer to one who was formerly possessed of that Life,

and so can only relate to a Backslider returned to his God, and to his Obedience; since the Text faith, that he is alive again; which supposeth, that he once, or before his Rambles, was alive. I answer, a backsliding Believer loses not his spiritual Life, though his Liveliness and Vigour may be abated very much by his Backslidings; therefore, Believers cannot be intended. Besides, it may be truly said of Sinners upon their

Regeneration, that they are alive again, who were once dead in Trespasses and Sins; because Regeneration is a Communication of spiritual Life to them: But it is not necessary to understand, that the Life they receive, is of the same Nature with that which they lost; any more than it is, that the Life which the Saints will be possessed of at the Resurrection, when they shall live again, will be of the same Kind with that mortal and perishing one they now live in this World. If he has no greater Difficulties to raise against this being a Parable, it may be taken for one, as far as I am able to conceive; and, since the Prodigal was considered as a Son when dead and lost, it has a very favourable Aspect upon the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith. Our Author is pleased to assert, that Predestination is not Adoption. True, the Act of Predestination is not Adoption, or our Relation of Sons to God; I never met with any who conceived it is. He adds; Nor does it make them Sons, but is an Appointment to Sonship only, appears plain by Ephesians 1:5, Having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, This is too freely affirmed, and without any Proof; Adoption is to be distinguished into the Relation of Sons, and the Benefits proper to that Relation: It is frequently taken for the latter, as in these Words, That we might receive the Adoption of Sons {Galatians 4:5}; so also in these, Waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body {Romans 8:25}. The Saints are not in Expectation of becoming Sons to God, though they are of receiving that eternal Glory, which arises from their being Sons; according to the Words of the Apostle John, Now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is {1 John 3:2}. In Predestination we became Sons to God; because God's Will, that we should be his Sons, gave Being to that Relation; although it did not give present Being to us, or to the Privileges proper to Adoption, and is to be considered as an Ordination, or Fore appointment, of our Participation of those great Immunities only. This is so far from militating with eternal Adoption, that it involves it: For Predestination to the Honour, Dignity, and Privileges of Children, supposes us to be so considered in that Act. That {Romans 8:9}. is not inconsistent with Adoption, has been already observed. He asks, If it is agreeable either to Scripture or Reason, to call any of our sinful Race Children of God, before they are either born or begotten of God? I hope it has been made evident from Scripture, that the Elect Part of the sinful Race of Mankind, are the Children of God before Regeneration: But, I think, Reason is not to be a Judge in evangelical Mysteries, which are above it; though, at the same Time, I affirm, that it is beyond the Ability of this Author to prove this Doctrine to be contrary to Reason.

I have one Thing more to take Notice of: It is this; Can they be Members of Christ, and yet barren of all Good, but fertile in all Evil? Can this be, when our Lord informs us, that all fruitless Branches are so far from being respected that his heavenly Father taketh them away? Does he then think, that the Elect, while unregenerate, or unfruitful, have no Interest in divine Favour and Respect? or, that God deals with them., as with formal, barren, and hypocritical Professors, who are only in Christ by Profession? This is not impartially to examine our Opinions by the Word of God, but plainly to contradict it; which acquaints us, that, because God loved his People with an everlasting

Love {Jeremiah 31:3}, therefore he communicates Grace to them here, in order to Fruitfulness, and crowns them with Glory hereafter, as the certain Effect of the same Love. To conclude, it will be of great Advantage to this Author in his Writing, if he replies, closely to consider the true Nature of the Subjects upon which he shall treat. The Want of that, in this Performance, has occasioned him to be guilty of very great Mistakes, in stating the Opinions of those whom he opposes; in drawing such Consequences from them, that are intirely foreign to their Nature; and in advancing such Objections, as do not, in the least, affect the Argument under Consideration: Greater Blemishes than which, can hardly be thought to attend a Polemical Writer.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Vid. Twiss. Vindic. Gratiae. lib. I. p. I. Digr. I. Sect. 4. P. 16. Digr. 3. Sect. 4. P. 32. Maccov. loc. Com. p. 222, 223. Polan. Syntag.Theolog. 1. 4. c. 9. P. 691. ft2 Romans 8:29. Keckerman, as cited by Dr. Goodwin in his Discourse on Election, 1. 2. c. 1. p. 81. thus comments on those Words: The Apostle distinguisheth the Decree of God into two Acts; I. Foreknowledge of such as are his. 2. Of Predestination. Which when I weigh, I understand, by the Fore-knowledge, his Decree simply considered of giving to Men eternal Life; as Man is considered without the consideration of the Fall: But, by Predestination. I understand God's Decree concerning Man fallen; as he was to be raised up again, and to be brought to eternal Life. ft3 Isaiah 53:6. Vid. Socin. de Servat. p. 2. cap. 4. inter Opera, Vol. II. p. 149. ft4 Christ made Sin, by Mr. Crisp. Enquiry into Gospel-Truth, by Thomas Edward, Esq; Neonomianism Unmask'd, by Dr. Chauncy. ft5 Glory of Christ Unveil'd, p. 497, 498. ft6 Ruth 3:9. Vid. Buxtor. Synagog. Judai. c. 28.

S. Duty and Divine Efficiency Represented

A Christian's Duty and Divine Efficiency Represented by Elder John Brine (London: John Ward, 1750) A CHRISTIAN'S DUTY AND DIVINE EFFICIENCY

REPRESENTED IN A SERMON PREACH'D ON LORD'S-DAY, NOV. 11, 1750, NEAR CRIPPLEGATE.

Printed for JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal-Exchange: And Sold by GEORGE KEITH, at Mercers'

Chapel, Cheapside; and by JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal-Exchange. London 1750.

Php 2:12-13

Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling: For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure. THE Apostle recommendeth Humility to the Philippians, and proposes to their Consideration, the great Example of Jesus Christ, in order to engage them unto the Exercise of that excellent Grace: And he commends them for their Christian Obedience, not only while he was present with them, but also when he was absent from them. They flourished in Faith and Holiness, even when they had not the great Advantage of his Ministry and Conversation.

Wherefore, my Beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my Presence only, but now much more in my Absence, work out,. etc. The Text consists of two Parts.

I. An Exhortation: Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

II. An important Truth is asserted, with a View to the Enforcement of it: For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.

I. We have in the Words an Exhortation; wherein are two Things observable: Work out you own Salvation, with Fear and Trembling First. The Duty itself: Work out, etc.

Secondly. The Manner in which we are required to attend unto it; viz. with Fear and Trembling.

First. Believers are required to work out their own Salvation. If we consider what of Salvation is already effected, it will prevent our falling into Mistakes. The Salvation of the Saints is secured and far advanc'd, by what each divine Person hath already done in order to it.

1st. God the Father appointed them not to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ. He chose them to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth. And it is according to the Purpose of his free, sovereign Grace and Mercy, that they are saved and called with an holy Calling. This gracious Decree is that solid Foundation, whereon their eternal Salvation securely rests.

2dly. He formed the Plan of their Recovery from Ruin in his everlasting Counsels. The Difficulties attending their Salvation were such, as infinite Wisdom alone could devise Means for the Removal of, Sin must be taken away: The Honour of the Law must be maintained: The Rights of Justice must be fully secured, if they are saved, as well as all their spiritual Enemies conquered, and they rescued from under their Power, and Tyranny. How either of these Things might be effected, no finite Understanding, could ever have determined, as finite Merit and limited Power are absolutely unequal to such an Undertaking. The Contrivance of the fit Method of their Redemption, is as much to the Honour of the Wisdom of God, as the Design of it is to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace: For, herein he hath abounded towards us in all Wisdom and Prudence. Hence the Gospel of our Salvation is called the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the bidden Wisdom, which be ordained before the World to our Glory. And much is done by Jesus Christ in order to our Salvation from Sin, and the dreadful Consequences of it.

1st. Sin itself is taken away. Once in the End of the World he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. When he had by himself, purged our Sins, he sat down on the right Hand of God. The whole Guilt of God's People was transferred from them to Christ, their Surety. It was laid upon and imputed to him, or placed to his Account; and he removed it from them, as far as the East is from the West. He finished their Transgression, and made an End of their Sin. And, as he was justified or acquitted by the Father, in the Character of a Judge, upon Satisfaction made by his Sufferings and Death to Law and Justice, they, in consequence thereof, are as clear of all Charges of Guilt by divine Justice, as if they had never transgressed the Law of God. When their Iniquity shall be sought for, it shall not be found; there shall be haste: Not because they are innocent in themselves, but because Remission contains in it all their Offences. For I will pardon them, whom I reserve. The Lord hath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel. None think that justified Persons are without Sin, or that their Sins are concealed from the Knowledge of God: But true it is, let Men cavil as they please thereat, justified Persons are without all Spot in the view of God, as a Judge, because Christ hath wafted them from their Sins in his own Blood.

2dly. Our blessed Saviour made Peace and Reconciliation by that infinitely valuable Sacrifice which he offered unto God. Hereby is not intended a Procurement of Divine Favour towards Sinners. It is indeed sometimes said, that the Death of Christ procured the Favour of God towards us: But that is as great a Mistake and Error, as Men can fall into; for Good-Will in God to poor Sinners is the Cause, and not the Effect, of the Death of Christ for them. God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son. The Gift of Christ, therefore, results from divine Love, and did not procure it. Making Peace supposes not a Change in the Disposition of God towards Sinners. His Affection to the Persons of Men is invariable and eternally the same: Nor can it be thought otherwise, without the gross Absurdity of Imputing Passions to Deity. Tho' some, it must be confessed, express themselves on this Subject, in such a Manner, as necessarily implies this absurd Thought. Reconciliation by the Death of Christ is God's Approbation of and Well-pleas'dness with the Sacrifice he offered for Sin, or a full, proper, and plenary Satisfaction of Justice for all the Crimes of all the Persons, in whose Stead our blessed Lord made his Soul an Offering for Sin. Hence Justice hath no Demand to make, either upon the Surety or the Principals, whom he undertook to redeem and save; nor any Thing to object to their Salvation and Happiness; but it moves for, grants, and concurs with Sovereign Grace, in securing Life and a Happy

Immortality unto all those, who are interested in the Death of Christ.

Peace with God must be an immediate Effect of Christ's Death, if that was a fit atoning Sacrifice for Sin; which cannot be denied, without sapping the Foundation of all our Hopes, as Christians, and impeaching the Wisdom of God, which contrived this Method of our Pardon and Salvation. Hence, surely, we must be convinced, that God is reconciled to his People, before they are reconciled to him: Tho' some confidently assert, without any Explanation of what they intend, that he is not. If the Justice of God is not satisfied for our Sins by the Death of Christ, it never will be; for nothing, whereof we are the Subjects, can contribute, in the least Degree, unto the making Satisfaction for any of our Offences, Besides, it is on the Ground of Satisfaction already made, that we receive Grace from God, by which we become capable of performing Services acceptable to him by Jesus Christ; and therefore, Faith hath no causal Influence into, nor is a proper Condition of Reconciliation and Peace with God.

Faith receives Atonement, as what existed prior to its self; and, consequently, its Being is independent of that Grace, and previous to it in Existence: Nor is this inconsistent with any Truth contained either in the Law, or in the Gospel of Christ: Nor does it take from Faith any Thing which the holy Spirit attributes to it, either in its Nature, or its Office and Work.

3dly. The Death of our Saviour was (Lutron and Apolutrwsiv) a Price, and an adequate Price of Redemption, or a valuable Consideration by him paid into the Hands of God, our righteous Judge, for our Freedom from Condemnation, and Deliverance from that Misery, whereunto our Sin rendered us obnoxious. We are not our own; we are bought with a Price. We are redeemed, not with Silver and Gold, as with those corruptible Things, but with the precious Blood of Christ. He hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. He gave his Life a Ransom for many. This Price is of such a Nature, that not only it is in Value equal to that Good it was intended to obtain for us; but, if that Good is not actually bestowed on us, or if we enjoy not that Liberty and Impunity, which it was designed to procure for us, God, to whom this Price was paid, must restrain Justice; for no suitable Return can be made to Christ for what he suffered, but the actual and full Release of all the Persons, for whom he died, from every Charge of Guilt, from all Condemnation, and from the Suffering of penal Evil. The Reason is clear: The Sufferings of Christ were of a penal Nature, and that Penalty which we were liable unto: And, therefore, nothing but our Impunity is a proper Return to him for his penal Death. Nor can any Thing be required of us, in order to our escaping divine Wrath and Vengeance, which will render that uncertain. Justice requires the Bestowment of a Benefit, which is obtained, by the Payment of a valuable Consideration.

4thly. The blessed Jesus brought in an everlasting Righteousness. Christ, our Surety, became subject to the Covenant of Works. And he was that in his Nature which the Law requires; absolutely free from all sinful Taint and Impurity, holy, harmless, undefiled, the Subject of perfect Holiness and Purity in his Heart: And in his Conduct he was such as the Law demands: He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth. So that his Obedience was as extensive as the Law's Precepts; and in him was found all that Righteousness which the divine Lawgiver expects. And the infinite Dignity of his Person puts an immense Value upon his Obedience; for, such as his Person is in Greatness, such is his Obedience in Worth and Efficacy: And, therefore, it is available unto the everlasting Justification of the many, whose Surety he was, and for whom he yielded that

Obedience unto the Covenant of Works.

5thly. The Father accepted this Obedience of Christ, and graciously imputes it to us; this gives us a Right unto eternal Life. The Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness Sake. And we, being justified freely by his Grace, are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life. God, our righteous Judge, ceases not to require of us Obedience to his holy Will in all Things: He abates us nothing in Point of Duty; but he requires not any obediencial Acts of us, in order to our Acceptance with him, and as the Ground of our Claim to future Blessedness: For Christ is the End of the Law, for Righteousness, to every one who believes.

Again, the Holy Spirit, who reveals and applies what the Father designs unto, and what the Son hath impetrated, for the Elect, had begun a good Work in the Philippians. The Apostle takes this for granted; Being confident of this very Thing, that he who hath begun a good Work in you will perform it until the Day of Christ. They were not, therefore, in the State of Death and Darkness, nor under the Dominion of Sin and Power of Satan, or destitute of Grace and Holiness. But, on the contrary, they were Subjects of spiritual Life, and capable of performing spiritual Acts. They were made Light in the Lord. An Understanding was given unto them to know him that is true. In virtue of heavenly Light communicated to them, they discerned spiritual Things. Grace reigned in their Hearts, in Opposition to Sin, and would reign in them thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ their Lord. They were translated out of the Kingdom of Satan into that of God's dear Son. In a Word, they were the happy Subjects of Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, Patience, Meekness, Humility, or of a Meetness to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. For they were regenerated, converted, and sanctified by the Spirit of God. Since all these Things were wrought for them, and in them, by the Father, Son, and Spirit, none of these Particulars can be included in that Exhortation the Apostle gives them to work out their own Salvation. They are not called upon to get an Interest in the Love of God, to contrive the Method of their Recovery; for they were Objects of God's everlasting Love, and the Scheme of their eternal Redemption was drawn in his eternal Counsels. They are not required to expiate their Guilt; for Christ had purged their Sin.

It was not a Branch of their Duty to make their Peace with God; for Peace was made by the Blood of the Cross of Christ, complete Atonement for Sin was already made by his Sacrifice. Nor was the Redemption of their Persons from Curse, Wrath, and divine Vengeance, a Thing to be effected; it was done already by the infinitely- valuable Price of Christ's precious Blood. Farther, it was no Part of their Business to work out a justifying Righteousness before God, and thereby procure a Right to eternal Blessedness; because an everlasting Righteousness was brought in by their dear Redeemer: It was graciously imputed to them, and they were therein accepted with God, and were intitled to eternal Life. Moreover, as they were Persons regenerated, converted, and sanctified by the Grace of God, it can't be thought, that the Apostle requires them to get the Grace of Faith, Hope, or any other Grace of the Spirit. His Intention is not to put them upon acquiring a Meetness for Heaven, because he considers them, as being already the Subjects of that Meetness. If some Persons were to hear me express these Things, they would, it is probable, say, What was left for the Philippians to do? If all these Things are done, what remains for Christians to do? I answer, I fear much more than some, who discover a Concern left they should not have Work enough left for them, are really willing to do: I am afraid that it is not Labour, which they have any great Inclination unto; but it is Wages for their Work, that they are concerned for. If the Particulars above-mentioned are true, then whatever we do in Obedience to the Will of God can have no causal Influence into

our Salvation, nor can be a proper Condition of it. This is the distasteful Matter, that which galls and irritates Men. If it was Work only, that they ere intent upon, there Principles could not be displeasing to them. The Gospel abates nothing of Duty; but it allows us not to expect Heaven, as a Reward due to us on account of our Obedience: And that is it which offends Men. This Exhortation, doubtless, includes in it the whole Compass of our Duty, as Christians, viz. Opposition to Lust in all its Branches; Caution to avoid all Temptations to Sin; Mortification to the World in its Pleasures, Honours, and Advantages; Patience, and Submission to the Will of God, under Sufferings; Readiness for the Cross; Self-Denial; Diligence in the Practice of religious Duties; Prayer; Reading; serious, close, and fixed Meditation on spiritual Things; a reverential Regard to the Gospel, and a Christian Contention for it; the solemn Celebration of evangelical Ordinances, and a conscientious Discharge of all Duties towards the Saints; such as Sympathy, Compassion, Forbearance, brotherly Love, Kindness, Charity, yea, every Thing that tends to their spiritual Advantage; and a Behaviour towards all Men, just, benevolent, humble, meek, and friendly.

Besides, in all Duties suitable Graces ought to be acted; Faith, Hope, Love, Fear, Humility, and Zeal for the Glory of God. These Things tend unto the Salvation of the Soul from Sin, and its Perfection in Holiness, and, without Scruple, are intended in this Exhortation, with every other Christian Duty. He who shall take them into proper Consideration will not be of Opinion, that the Saints have not Work enough assigned unto them. If Men would but be content with Labour, without challenging a Reward of God, as a due Debt, they could have no Reason to complain for Want of Business and Employ thro' Life: But the Occasion of their quarrelling with the Gospel is, it permits them not to expect eternal Blessedness, as proper Wages for the Toil of Duty; but represents it as the free, unmerited Gift of sovereign and distinguishing Grace. This is what is so displeasing to the Generality of Mankind, and not the Want of Labour; for to that merely they have no Inclination, or as it is a Duty which they owe unto their Maker. Who that will may work for them, if they may not have Life for working. And, because they are governed by a selfish Disposition, they think others are so too; and that the Reason, why any embrace the Gospel of free Grace, is, they are unwilling to perform Duty, and hope to be happy hereafter without being holy here; which is a great Mistake. But I confess, that this is not to be wondered at; for without a Principle, that is in its Nature congruous to the Gospel, Men will always adhere to the Law, and the Works of it, in Opposition to the Gospel of the true Grace of God. Or the Sense of this Exhortation is, Work about your own Salvation; i.e. attend unto those Duties which accompany Salvation, and the spiritual Performance of which is no inconsiderable Part of your Salvation, and in its own Nature tends unto your Salvation from Sin, and Perfection in Holiness; which is the Aim of the gracious Principle in the Hearts of the Saints, tho' it is not attainable in this State.

Secondly. The Manner, how Believers should do this, must be considered, viz. With Fear and Trembling. With Fear: This intends not Consternation, or servile Dread, and Terror of Mind, thro' an Apprehension of divine Vengeance being likely to fall upon them for Sin. As this may be without the least Degree of real Holiness in the Heart, it will not ingenerate and promote it: For it genders to Bondage, and drives the Mind from God. We shall never love, delight in, and adhere to, an Object we dread; but, on the contrary, seek to avoid and flee from it, as Adam did, under the Influence of a Fear of this Kind, upon his Apostacy, and Tokens of God's approaching to him. His Conduct is a just Representation of that Part we shall always be inclined to act, under a Sense of

Guilt, Wrath, and Vengeance, without some Degree of Hope of Mercy and Pardon. This Fear is a holy Reverence of God, arising from a Perception of his Glory in Christ, our gracious Mediator. It springs up in the Soul from an Apprehension of Divine Goodness: They shall fear the Lord and his Goodness. And it is cherished by a View of Remission of Sin thro' the Blood of Christ: There is Forgiveness with thee, that thou may'st be feared. Men cannot be guilty of a greater Mistake, than to imagine, that a Hope of the Pardon of Sin excludes a holy Fear of God, and a Dread of sinning against him. Where such a Disposition rules the Mind, as that Imagination necessarily supposes, there all real Religion is wanting, whatever a Man's Profession and Character may be. He, who hath not some gracious, spiritual Experience of a holy Fear of God, springing up in his Soul from a Sense of Pardon, thro the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, is at present utterly unacquainted with the Actings of that Faith, which is of the Operation of God, and is absolutely necessary unto the Salvation of the Souls of Men. By how much the more Believers act Faith on free pardoning Mercy, by so much the more will their Reverence of God, and their Hatred of Sin, be promoted. And he is no Christian, who is otherwise minded. A Principle of Grace is acted on God, under the endearing Character, of the God, of all Grace; and that influences them to serve him acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear. Blessed be God!

Some can attest, from their own happy Experience, that a Sense of Pardon, Peace, and eternal Redemption, being obtained and secured by the Sacrifice of Christ, engages to a free, gracious, and spiritual Obedience of all God's Command and unto a holy Reverence of his infinite Majesty; let others reproach the Doctrine of free and full Pardon of Sin thro' the Blood of the Son of God, as they please.

Again, this is to be done with Trembling, not with a dreadful Panic, which throws the Mind into Confusion, and, therefore, is not productive of an orderly, becoming Obedience; but with suitable Awe, and proper Humility, considering in whole View we are, to whom we are accountable, and whole Glory is concerned in all our Actions; viz. God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; in whose Sight the Heavens are not clean, and who charges his Angels with Folly. Some object to an inspired Phrase - Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling - as improper, strange, and uncouth: But it is a certain Truth, that such have not a suitable Apprehension of the Majesty of God, who can persuade themselves to think, that the deepest Humility, the greatest Self-Abasement, and the highest Reverence, are inconsistent with spiritual Peace, and the largest Measure of holy Joy in God, that Christians are at any Seasons favoured with. Some will tell you, and tell truly, that they never have been possessed with such an Awe of God, as when they have enjoyed clear Prospects, by Faith, of the glorious Display of the divine Perfections in the Contrivance and Accomplishment of' the Salvation of poor Sinners by Jesus Christ. They know, that the greatest Indignation against Sin, Self-Loathing and Abhorrence on account of it, and Trembling in the divine Presence, not only consist with, but also are always produced and cherish'd in the Saints, by the fullest Persuasion, their Souls can be blessed with, of an Interest in Pardon, Peace, and all spiritual Blessings. The contrary Opinion is a sad Evidence of an Unacquaintedness with a holy, spiritual Experience of the Glory, Sweetness, and Power of real Religion, in the Minds of those, by whom it is embraced; let their Convictions of Sin, Dread of Wrath, and their Concern to escape infernal Torments, be what they may. A Reverence of God's infinite Greatness, Abasement under a Sense of his immense Purity, and Trembling at the Thought of his peerless and incomprehensible Majesty, perfectly consist with the highest Degree of Joy,

which our Minds can possibly possess, under the Consideration of an everlasting Interest in him, as a reconciled God and Father, thro' the glorious Mediator, Jesus Christ. If these Things are duly considered, we shall see, that there is no Reason to complain of the evangelical Revelation, as what lessens the Compass of our Duty: The Truth is, it enlarges it, not by additional Precepts, as new Law, but as it is a farther Discovery of God in the Perfections of his Nature; which Discovery heightens and increases our Duty, by virtue of the Authority of the moral Law, which is an eternal Standard and Rule of Righteousness unto Men.

II. An important Truth is asserted to enforce the Exhortation, and to encourage the Saints in their Attendance unto it, For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.

1st. Believers are Subjects of a Divine Operation; they are under an immediate, positive Influence of God.. This is clearly expressed, in various Phrases, in the Scripture. You hath been quickened. For we are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Who hath begotten us again to a lively Hope. Who were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God. Therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. No Man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts: Hath given us an Understanding to know him that is true. Unto you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom. And hath revealed them to Babes. Every Man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. They shall be all taught of God. These Expressions, and abundance more which might be produced, are a full Evidence, that God in an immediate and positive Manner operates upon the Minds of Men, to make them holy and spiritual, and to excite and stir up the Christian unto spiritual Acts. This Influence must be of Efficacy unto the Production of the Effect therein intended: For, if God will work, who shall let? God either designs to make Men holy by his gracious Operations upon them, or he does not. If not, then what is his End in those Operations? If any Man can, let him declare the divine Intention therein. If he really purposes to make them holy, in order to their eternal Salvation, by his gracious Operations on them, the Effect intended must certainly be produced, except God is unable to accomplish his own Designs, or operates in such a Manner only, as he knows will be ineffectual. If the former is supposed, then the Power of God is not equal to his Goodness and Mercy, or it is not infinite, as his Grace is; and it must be concluded, that he wills, and endeavours to do, what is beyond the Extent of his Capacity; which is a most absurd Imagination. If the latter is supposed, then God disappoints himself of his own End in working, because he wills not to operate in such a Manner, as would secure it; which is not less absurd than the former Supposition. And, therefore, it is impossible but that the gracious Influence of God upon Men, to regenerate and sanctify them, must be effectual thereunto. The Sanctification of a Sinner includes in it a holy Principle, and the Exercise of that Principle. That God is able to excite a holy Principle into Act, when it hath Existence in the human Mind, is, I suppose, what none will scruple: The only Things, therefore, which can be questioned, relating to this Matter, are, whether God is capable of creating such a Principle, or whether it becomes him to give Existence unto such a Principle, in the Minds of Men, or whether the Nature of the human Mind will admit of it. All allow, that it is not impossible to the human Mind to become the Subject of good Habits; and the Generality of Men suppose, that it is capable of acquiring such Habits with divine Help. Cannot God then, by an Act of his all-powerful Grace, give Being to what is possible to be? Doubtless he can. And, since this is a good Work, it is not unbecoming God to exert his Power unto its

Production. Nor is the Nature of the human Mind such, as not to allow of that Work upon it; for it offers no Violence to the Will, because there is no Reference had unto it, in this Influence upon the Mind, in order to its Consent, or Refusal: And, consequently, such a creating Act of God may be put forth on the human Mind, as infallibly and immediately is productive of a holy, spiritual Principle therein, without the least Abridgment of the natural Freedom of the Will. And, when such a Principle is produced in the Heart, a divine Influence upon it, to excite it unto Acts, can't reasonably be thought destructive of its free Agency; because that is no more than stirring up the Will unto such Volitions and Acts, as are agreeable to it, being thus truly sanctified by the Grace of God. And, therefore, it is a just and reasonable Conclusion, that God never fails of making Men holy, when he operates upon them by his Grace with that View. To doubt hereof, is to question his Capacity, or his Will, to bring to pass that, wherein his Glory is more concerned than in any other Work of his. Besides, the Greek Word signifies to work in an effectual Manner, (*energwn*), or with Power and Energy. And as to what is objected, from the Use of it to express the Influence of Satan upon the Minds of Unbelievers - The Spirit that now worketh (*energountov*) in the Children of Disobedience - it is of no Weight at all; for, tho' the Devil is not able to accomplish the utmost of what he wishes to effect, even when he exerts all his Force, that is no Reason to think, that God doth not assuredly and infallibly execute his Purposes of Grace, when he powerfully works to that End. The Energy expressed, or implied, when attributed to Acts of a finite Power, may not in all Instances be effectual; but it don't follow, that that Energy in divine Operations is insufficient to bring about the End intended. The Philippians were already regenerated, as was before observed; and, therefore, the Work of Regeneration was not now to be wrought in them. And, with respect unto that Work, we may observe, that it is an habitual Disposition unto Holiness, as the Depravity of our Nature is an habitual Disposition unto Evil: So that the Will is habitually inclined to what is good according to the regenerate Part, as it is habitually inclined to sin according to the unregenerate Part. God's disposing the Will to Holiness, by regenerating Grace, is here included; but I think, that his Influence upon it, to produce holy Volitions and Acts, is principally intended. Until the human Mind is the Subject of this habitual Disposition to Holiness, it is absolutely impossible to raise in it any holy, spiritual Desires, by the most striking and rational Considerations, which can be represented and set before it, of the evil Nature of Sin, and its dreadful Consequences, of the Excellency of Holiness, and of the substantial Good, or Happiness, which consists in the intelligent Creature's Conformity to the Will of God, and in the Enjoyment of a Sense of his Favour. Some will say, this is exceedingly strange indeed! What! is Reason lost? Are Men irrational, and utterly sunk into Brutality?

Answ. No: Their Nature is rational, and ever will be; but it is the subject of an Infatuation and Madness, in relation unto spiritual Things, which is incurable without the Grace of God. That, Opposition to God, and the Choice of Evil are unreasonable, is undoubtedly a Truth; but an apstote intelligent Creature will never be disengaged from that Opposition, and withdrawn from that Choice, by any Reasoning, however just and forcible it is. Good Men, I think, must be convinced that this is Fact from their own Experience; tho' sometimes they may express themselves, in Expostulations with Sinners, in such a Manner, as supposes the contrary. We are not to conclude, from the Reasonableness of Duty, upon the Inclination and Power of corrupted Reason to comply it, even when it is represented in the best Light any Man is capable of doing it. If the actual Infliction of Punishment for sin changes not the natural Disposition of a Sinner, (than which nothing is more true) there is no Reason to think, that Threatenings of Penalty, when

pressed in the closest Manner on the Consciences of Men, will ever alter the corrupt Bias of their depraved Will. If it is a real Fact, that the human Mind is alienated from the Life of God, and is Enmity against him, then not the most affecting Representations of eternal Felicity, which consists in the Enjoyment of Him, the Origin of all Blessedness, will prevail with it unto a Choice of God. And that this is really the Care, both Scripture and Experience testify, beyond all modest and reasonable Contradiction. Hence we must conclude, that a Disposition or habitual Inclination to Holiness is not, cannot be, acquired, even with divine Help; but that it is a supernatural Effect, which is solely produced by the infinite Power of God; and that no Acts of an holy, spiritual Nature, can spring up in the human Mind, before such a Disposition is created therein. And, therefore, God is the alone Author of all holy Volitions and Acts in Men. In Regeneration he gives Existence to a Disposition, which is the Root and Spring of all obedient Acts to his holy Will: That is the Holiness of the human Will radically; and good Volitions arising from it, as it is sanctified and influenced by divine Grace, are its Holiness actually.

2dly. The Necessity of a gracious and heavenly Influence upon the Will of a Christian, to draw it forth into Acts of holy Obedience, will appear, if we consider, that he is the Subject of a Law of Sin. None who are Subjects of Grace, I dare to say, will scruple to grant, that Sin dwells in them. All, who are Spirit, know themselves to be Flesh also. There is the old Man, as well as the new Man, in all the Saints. The Heart of every Believer hath in it a Fountain, which is corrupt, as well as a Spring and Source of Purity. Nor is this bitter Fountain sweeten'd by Grace. Its Nature is as vile, impure, and deadly, as ever. Neither are the Acting's of the Mind, according to this corrupt and evil Principle, of a Nature different from what they were, before that Principle of Grace was infused into the Soul. All its Imaginations are evil, and only evil, continually. The Thoughts which spring up in the Mind from it are disorderly, vain, and wholly unspiritual. Its Volitions likewise are of a sinful Nature. The Objects it pursues are carnal, vain, and pernicious. The Tendencies of the Affections, as under its Influence, are unto Thing, unprofitable, light, and attended with baneful Effects, to the better Part. And the old Man is ever ready for Action; he is at no Time unprepared for that Service wherein he is engaged. Nor does the Mind tire and wax weary in sinful Gratifications. So far is it from that, that its Desires after what is evil are enlarged, by those Gratifications. The Power, Deceitfulness, Treachery, and Violence of the Law of Sin, in the Minds of the Saints, are wonderful, terrifying, and extremely dangerous. As far as indwelling Sin acts its Part, so far is the gracious Principle interrupted and impeded in its Exercise: For, as far as the Mind is under the Influence of the old Man, so far it is prevented from acting under the Direction of the new Man. These contrary Principles may and do inhabit in the same Breast but the Will can't be determined in its Volitions at the same Time by each Principle. If it makes a Choice agreeable to the Flesh, it cannot, at that Season, and in those Instances, determine itself on the Side of the spiritual Part. Now, if we take these Things into due Consideration, with much more that might be observed concerning the corrupt Part of the Believer, surely we must be convinced, that a divine Influence is absolutely necessary unto the Will's closing with a spiritual Good, presented to it, even where it hath an habitual Inclination thereunto; because the Counteracting of Lust are great Hindrances, and Impediments to the Acting's of Grace in the Soul.

Farther, nothing more is required to the Acting of the Flesh in a Believer, than the Preservation of the Mind in a State of Being and Activity; but the Spirit in a Christian, with relation unto its actual Exercise, is dependent on the Influence of that Grace, which gave it Existence. Saints can act in a

sinful Manner, without any Operation upon them to elicit and draw forth their corrupt Inclinations; but they are not able to act in a holy, spiritual Sort, unless that gracious Principle in them is drawn forth into Exercise by Influence upon it from above. If divine Power supports but the depraved Mind in Being, it can act in an unlawful Manner of itself; but supporting in Existence the spiritual Principle is not the only the Thing required unto the Exertion of itself. The Flesh in all its Motions acts without any positive Influence upon it from God; but the Spirit is dependent on his Aid, Assistance, and gracious Influence in its actual Exercise. Such who are Sanctified can think of and chose what is evil of themselves; but they are not sufficient of themselves, as of themselves, to think any Thing that is good and holy. And, therefore, all holy Thoughts, all holy Desires, and heavenly Motions in their Hearts, owe their actual Rise, unto the Influence of the Grace of God upon their spiritual Part, which, as to its Exercise, is dependent on that Influence, as, with respect to its Continuance in Existence, it is dependent on a constant Influx of divine Power to support it. The latter is common to it with all created Beings: The former hath a Specialty in it, agreeable unto its special and peculiar Nature. Natural Being is derived from God, as the Author of Nature; and an Influence from him, as such, is sufficient to its Acts: But a spiritual Being is derived from him, as the God of all Grace; and the Influences of his Grace are necessary unto the Acts of that Being.

3dly. It is by virtue of a divine Influence that a Christian performs what his spiritual Part wills to do. The Volitions of the gracious Principle are always pure, spiritual, and holy; for, such as that Principle is in its Nature, such are all the Acts of the Mind springing from it. As the corrupt Part is an Inclination to Evil, so Grace is an Inclination to Holiness: And it is, in its actual Exercise, a Will to universal Purity, or a Desire to yield a perfect and uninterrupted Obedience to the Will of God. Unholy Desires naturally arise from the Flesh; and it is capable of pursuing and acting what it chooses; yea, many Times it is with great Difficulty, that it is prevented proceeding in a sinful Pursuit. But the regenerate Part being dependent on an external Influence in its actual Exercise, it is incapable of reiterated Acts of Holiness, without the Favour of a heavenly Influence upon it is continued to maintain its Exercise. And, as the Flesh is constantly counter-acting the Spirit in a Believer, he is often prevented doing what he chooses to do thro' that Opposition from his corrupt Part. O! how many delightful, sweet, and spiritual Meditations are quite marr'd, and broke off, by the contrary Acting's of the carnal Part! In what a sad Manner does the Mind of a poor Believer many Times change from a holy, heavenly Frame, in solemn Duties, into a carnal, cold, wandering, and careless one! How soon is the Mind diverted from converting, with the most glorious Objects, which fill it with Joy and Complacency, by the Presentation of some worthless and vain Object, thro' the Strength of Corruption, and the Weakness of Grace, in itself! These Things give a full Conviction to the Saints of the Necessity of gracious and constant Supplies of spiritual Strength from God, to enable them unto a uniform, holy, and continued Obedience to his righteous Precepts. To will is sometimes present with them; but how to perform what is good they find not. And, therefore, they resolve to go in the Strength of the Lord, and to be strong in the Grace, which is in Christ Jesus, not depending on their innate Ability; for they are sensible, that what they are: as to Spirituality and Holiness, both in Principle and Acts, they are by the Grace of God; that it is not they who live, but Christ liveth in them, as they are Christians; and that whatever is done by them in a holy Obedience, it is not they that do it, but the Grace of God, which is with them. They are most free to acknowledge, that they are NOTHING, and that without Christ they can do Nothing; that they are unable to think a good Thought, to raise any holy Desires in their Minds, and are incapable performing any Duty in a holy, acceptable Manner, without Supplies of

Grace from Christ, their Head of Life, and Influence, who filleth all in all. They know, that all they do without him is nothing; that there is no more of Spirituality and real Holiness in any of their Meditations, Prayers, or other Duties they perform, than what they are filled with from Him, the Fountain of all their Life and Purity.

Hence we may see what a foolish, as well as evil Thing spiritual Pride is. What Ground can we have of Self Commendation and Applause, who have no more of Holiness, either as to Principle or Acts, than what is derived from the Fountain of free Grace, and unto which we are influenced by the Spirit of Christ? And from hence we may safely collect, that we are real Saints, if there is any Thing of true Holiness in our Hearts, tho' we may have much Occasion of Sorrow, Humiliation, and Self-Abasement, on account of indwelling Corruption: But let not that prevent us giving Thanks to God, for making us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Let us also be encouraged to hope, yea, firmly to believe, while we are struggling with our strong, raging, and furious Lusts, that God will take care of our better Part, and perfect what concerns us: He certainly intends to give us Glory, if he hath given us Grace. This surely is also sufficient to convince us, that Salvation is not properly conditional. The Experience of every Christian is an Evidence thereof in itself; tho' some, for Want of due Attention to it, may endeavour to maintain that it Isaiah 4:1-6 thly. God works in a gracious Manner upon the Minds of Men, of his good Pleasure.

1. The Implantation of the spiritual Principle in Regeneration is of the free and sovereign Favour of God. Nothing in them could induce him to it; for their Nature is wholly corrupt, and their Conduct is one continued Act of Rebellion against him, until that Principle is created in them. They are under the Dominion of Sin, and entirely engaged in serving of Lusts, either of a sensitive intellectual Kind, before this good Work is begun in them.

And, therefore, Grace communicated in Regeneration is what springs from Goodness, sovereign, free, and entirely unmerited. There was nothing more in the Subjects of this Work, than a mere natural Capacity to receive Grace from God; which the greatest Sinners upon Earth are capable of. There was no Congruity to Grace in the Disposition and Temper of our Minds, moving unto the Communication of it. The most we can say of ourselves is, that our Souls, as they are of a rational Nature, were Subjects capable of being thus wrought upon by God, the Father of Spirits. And, therefore, this was an Act of pure Mercy and Grace to beget us again to a lively Hope by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead. As we are fared, so we are called with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to God's Purpose and Grace. That is the sole Cause of it, without any Motive in us. And it is a glorious Instance of rich Mercy, that we were quickened, when dead in Trespasses and Sins. It is a Fruit of Love to our Persons, yea, of great and infinite Love in the Heart of God towards us, when we were altogether unlovely, and the Subjects of nothing but what rendered us hateful and abominable. His Grace was exceeding abundant with Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus. Divine Love to our Persons was prior to, and is the Cause of, all in us that is good and pleasing to God. No other Reason can be assigned, why God formed us for himself, that we might shew forth his Praise, but his own rich Grace. He had Mercy on us, because he would have Mercy, and for no other Reason whatever. Let us, therefore, give him all the Glory, and say always, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, unto thy Name give Glory. We had no more Concern in this gracious Work upon our Hearts, than our Lusts have in the Cherishing and Improvement of this holy Principle, to which they are entirely contrary in Nature, and in all Instances, more or less, oppose its Acting's.

2. Influence upon this Principle, to preserve its Being, and draw it forth into Act, is of God's good Pleasure. As we were brought into a State of Grace by sovereign Kindness and Mercy, so we are upheld in that State by the same Cause. This is the solid Basis of our Security. If we consider our many Imperfections; if we consider our numerous and great Provocations, thro' the Power of Sin in us, and the Force of Temptations without us; if we consider how little we honour God, and how much we dishonour him by Unbelief, Pride, Covetousness, and a Fondness for Things that perish in the Using; if we consider, that we are regardless too often, not only of God and his Glory, but also of our own best Interest, (which we always are, when we neglect to glorify our heavenly Father by a humble, close, and spiritual Walk with him); if we consider that in nothing we can be profitable to God, when we are most holy in our Dispositions and Behaviour; I say, if we consider these Things, surely we cannot but fully be convinced, that divine Good-Will and Favour is the Cause of the Preservations of our Persons in a State of Grace, and of the Animating and Reviving of our Graces, Faith, Hope, Love, and all others, unto the unspeakable Joy of our Souls. Now, what Enforcement may this important Truth give unto the Exhortation before considered? If it is God who works in us, in the Acting's of all our Graces, and in our spiritual Performance of all Duties, what Fear, Reverence, and holy Awe, ought ever to possess our Minds in our Acts of Christian Obedience! God dwells in our Hearts, not as an unconcerned Spectator of the Part we act but as an exact Observer of our Thoughts, Volitions, Pleasures, and of all the Tendencies of our Affections: And, therefore, how watchful, holy, humble, and spiritual, ought we ever to be, in walking before him! Again, what Encouragement does this precious Truth afford to our Faith and Hope! Tho' we are conscious to ourselves of the greatest Unworthiness, which might provoke God finally to withdraw from and leave us, we may conclude upon it, that he will not so do, since all his benign and salutary Influences are Effects of his good Pleasure, that is a never-changing Cause: And, consequently, what Effects soever depend on that Cause will assuredly continue to be. Infinite Grace, which gave us Life, when we were dead in Sin, will certainly maintain, revive, and perfect that living Principle in a Life of eternal Glory, whereunto the God of all Grace hath called us.

S. Eternal Justification

SERMON 1 A DEFENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION, FROM SOME EXCEPTIONS MADE TO IT BY MR. BRAGGE, AND OTHERS A DEFENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION, ETC. THE doctrine of Eternal Justification has been lately objected to by Mr. Bragge, in some sermons of his on that subject, published with some other sermons preached at Lime street, by several ministers; wherein they propose, according to the general title, to state and defend the great doctrines of the gospel, and to answer such objections as are usually advanced against them. As I have reason to believe Justification from Eternity to be a scriptural doctrine, I think my self under obligation to appear in its defense; and therefore have determined to communicate my thoughts on that subject in this public manner.

I hope that my attempt to establish, what I apprehend to be a truth of the gospel, though opposed by Mr. B. will not be interpreted as an instance of disrespect towards him; who, I am sensible, deserves well of all who are friends to the interest of Christ, for his long standing and eminent service in the church of God. I am humbly of opinion, that it would have been to much better advantage, if Mr. B. had spent those pages which are taken up in treating about the time of Justification, in more fully proving that Christ's righteousness is the matter of it, instead of militating against Justification from eternity; which he cannot but know has been asserted by some able and judicious divines. It is generally allowed, that in refuting any opinion, it is necessary not only to raise objections against it, and to consider with what difficulties it is clogged; but also to answer the arguments offered in defense of it, by those who believe it a truth. The latter of which Mr. B. has wholly neglected: His reasons for it he best knows. I am persuaded he could not be insensible, that there are several arguments made use of, to clear up and defend that important truth, which deserve consideration; and therefore his passing them over in silence gives just reason to conclude, that he thought those arguments too cogent and forcible to admit of a real answer. This great doctrine has been fully stated, and strongly defended, by Mr. Gill, and others before him; whose arguments ought to be considered, and answers given to them, if any thing is done to purpose in this controversy. In the vindication of this great point, it is not necessary that I should treat of the matter or form of Justification, for in neither of them do I differ from Mr. B. The matter of our Justification I firmly believe to be the righteousness of Christ and the form of it, the imputation of his righteousness to us: Though I must confess, that some expressions have fell from this gentleman's pen, which do not very well consist with his own sentiments with respect to the form, as we shall have occasion to observe hereafter. Nor is it needful, that I should largely treat of Justification, as it is eternal, seeing it has not long since been let in a good light by the author whose name is mentioned above; that would be actum agere, doing the same thing over again, which cannot be judged necessary: Yet it may not be improper to mention briefly those arguments, by which this truth is confirmed. The method I shall observe, in treating on this subject, will be as follows:

First, I shall enquire what it is to be justified by faith. Secondly, Mention those arguments which have been advanced for the proof of eternal Justification. And, Thirdly, Attend to Mr. B's objections

against that point, as well as some additional objections from other persons. First, I am to enquire what it is to be justified by faith. Very great controversies have been moved concerning this. Some affirm, that we are so, in a proper sense; or that faith is the matter and cause of our Justification, as the Arminians and Socinians: This others justly deny; and assert, that Christ's righteousness alone is the matter and cause of our Justification. I shall here endeavour to prove, that Justification by faith has no causality in this affair; it is not the impulsive, material, nor instrumental cause thereof.

1. Faith is not the impulsive or moving cause of Justification. It is an act of pure and free grace, without any motive in the creature: Therefore the Apostle saith, "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ" {Ephesians 1:7} But this benefit would not be of grace, but of works, was our faith the impulsive cause of it: because faith is a work or act of ours, as we learn from the words of Christ: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" {John 6:29} Salvation is not of works, in any branch of it; "for by grace are we saved, through faith; that not of our selves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." {Ephesians 2:8-9} From whence it is evident that Justification, which is a considerable part of salvation, cannot be by works. The grace of God eminently appears in contriving the way of our Justification by Christ's righteousness, and in sending him into the world to work out a righteousness for us, in which we stand compleat in his sight: Hence we are said, "to be justified by his grace, that we might made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." {Titus 3:7} No other cause can be assigned why sinners are justified in the sight of God, than his free favour and sovereign pleasure, as the effect of which he determined to justify them in the righteousness of his Song of Solomon 2:1-17. Neither is faith the matter of our Justification; which appears by these arguments.

(1.) Because that righteousness, by which we are justified before God, is not our own. All true believers, as the great Apostle did, esteem "their own righteousness and works but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord; and desire to be found in him, not having their own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." {Php 3:9} It is manifest, that the Apostle excluded every thing from the business of his Justification which might be accounted his own; and, consequently, faith itself, which though it is a fruit of special grace, may properly be reckoned our own, as we are the subjects of it. Hence it is that the Holy Ghost speaks of faith as ours: "But the just shall live by his faith." {Habakkuk 2:4} All dependance on faith for Justification is laid aside by the saints, who are sensible that many deficiencies attend it, and that nothing which is imperfect can recommend them to God.

(2.) A perfect righteousness is required, in order to our Justification in God's sight. His law insists upon a compleat obedience to all its precepts, and condemns where it is wanting; for the language of it is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." {Galatians 3:10} Nor will God, in any instance, act contrary to his own law, which cannot be made void; for it is the eternal standard and rule of righteousness, according to which he will always proceed in judgment. Faith is not a righteousness free from imperfection, and therefore it is not such as is demanded by the Law; wherefore we cannot be justified by it.

(3.) Faith receives that righteousness by which we are justified, and therefore cannot be that righteousness it self. That which is laid hold on, and embraced by faith, must needs be something different from it, as the act and the object are distinct. Christ's righteousness is that to which the faith of a believer looks, and on which it wholly depends for Justification before God: Therefore faith is not the matter of his justifying righteousness.

(4.) Justification is not by works; for if so, boasting will not be excluded, as it must eternally be in the whole of our salvation: For "it is not of works, lest any man should boast;" {Ephesians 2:9} as was observed before. Faith is an act and work of ours, and therefore cannot be the matter of our Justification.

(5.) We are justified by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and consequently not by faith. The Apostle expressly asserts that we are justified by his blood; "Much more then being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him {Romans 5:9; Romans 5:19}." And also, that we are made righteous by his obedience; "As by the offence of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous:" Therefore not by faith.

3. Faith is not the instrumental cause. In this I am entirely of Mr. Baxter's opinion, who reasons thus: "If faith be an instrument, it is the instrument of God or man; not of man, for man is not the principal efficient, he doth not justify himself; not of God, for it is not God that believeth¹" No act of man can be an instrument in those acts of God which are immanent: Justification is such an act; and as Justification is not an act of man's, or he doth not justify himself, faith cannot be his instrument in an act which is none of his. Upon the whole, it may be strongly concluded, that the to credere, or act of believing, is not imputed to us for righteousness, but the object of faith. That this was the Apostle's meaning, when he thus expresses himself, "for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness, is justly observed by Maresius. "^{f2} This faith, which is imputed to us for righteousness, ought, to be taken metonymically for Christ being apprehended by faith; inasmuch as faith apprehends and applies the righteousness of Christ to us, not simply, or as altogether anothers, but as ours: As Paul, his own inherent legal righteousness being rejected by him, fought that which is through the faith of Christ, and of God by faith; whence also it is called the righteousness of God, as that fear by which Jacob sware, was called the fear of his father; where fear is metonymically put for God, whom he feared." Thus far he. It is evident, that sometimes by faith Christ must be understood; as when it is said, "but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master:" Galatians 3:25 That is to say, since Christ, the object of faith, is come into the world, we are no longer under the law as a schoolmaster. Faith is not so much as *causa sine qua non* in this affair, as appears by the eternal justification of the elect: It has not the least concern herein, if Justification is properly taken. But,

If Justification be considered in the knowledge or perception of it, it is by faith; and that is intended when we are said to be justified by faith, if faith is to be taken in a proper sense. By this grace we behold our natural pollution and inability to perform that which is good; the perfection and spirituality of the law; the necessity of an interest in Christ's righteousness, in order to our acceptance with God; the glory and excellency of it: In consequence of which we renounce our own works, and wholly depend upon the spotless righteousness of Christ. At some times also we by faith view that we are all fair, and without spot in the sight of God, as he considers us in the glorious robe of his Son's righteousness, though full of impurities and spots in our selves. In those

seasons we are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and can draw nigh to God, as our Father, with a holy freedom and liberty. This is the concern which faith has in our Justification: It beholds and views it, but doth not give being to it, or impute the righteousness of Christ to us, that is God's act without us; and therefore Justification by faith, is only the comfortable knowledge or perception of that gracious privilege.

4. Two reasons may be offered why we are said to be justified by the grace of faith, even in our apprehension thereof.

(1.) Because faith is the eye of our souls, by which we view it, or discern the justifying righteousness of Christ, as imputed to us.

(2.) This grace is of a soul-humbling, and Christ-exalting nature, as Mr. B. observes: "Of all the graces of the Spirit, faith is the most emptying, and accordingly goes poor and indigent to Christ; other graces bring as it were something along with them, whereas faith brings nothing to Christ but a naked back³" And so it is eminently suited to the design of God in the Justification of sinners: "For it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." Romans 4:16 It may not be improper to observe here, that It is asserted, that "elect infants dying in infancy, are justified by faith in the habit, though not by faith in the act." If this is true, it follows, that God doth not justify all his elect in one and the same way, but some by the habit, and others by the act of faith: For the proof of which, I am of opinion that no solid argument can be offered.

Again, a principle or habit cannot see, or receive an object: Now if Christ's righteousness is to or upon us, in a way of believing, and it cannot be ours till actually received by faith, both which are affirmed by our author; how come elect infants, who die in infancy, to be actually interested in that righteousness, seeing they cannot act faith, and consequently are incapable of receiving Christ's righteousness? Therefore it must necessarily be concluded, that the gift of Christ's righteousness becomes actually theirs, without any receiving act in them: And unless it can be proved that God justifies his elect in a different manner, that is to say, some by the habit, and others by the act of faith; the same must be granted concerning those of the elect, who live to riper years. Farther, from hence I cannot but conclude, that no act of faith is necessary to the being of Justification; for, if so, those of the elect who die in infancy, cannot be justified. But why an act of faith should be required to the actual Justification of some of the elect, and not to the Justification of others, I am not able to conceive. The grace of faith, by which we apprehend our Justification is of the operation of God, It is an effect of powerful and efficacious grace, and not the produce of human power, skill, or industry. It is not got, but given, as is evident from those words of the Apostle: "By grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of your selves, it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:9 And the grace of God is abundantly displayed, in working faith in our souls; over which, as I take it, a veil is drawn by our author in this exhortation of his, "With all your gettings, get faith." Dead sinners, or such as are void of spiritual life, cannot act spiritually, and therefore it is not in their power to get faith; and as they have no ability to believe, they have no inclination to it, for their hearts are full of enmity against God. Besides, if faith is got or acquired by men, they make themselves to differ, and have whereof to boast, for then they have something which they did not receive as a gift of free grace; which is constantly denied in scripture, and will never be owned by the saints. Again: It may as well be required of sinners to form divine and supernatural principles in their souls, or to create spiritual life in themselves, as to get faith, for the meaning is the same,

which is a work proper to God. Moreover, such an exhortation is not likely to debase and humble proud sinners, or to convince them that they are impotent to good; but rather to swell their haughtiness and pride, and occasion them to imagine they are possessed of a power which they are not: Thereby also, it is not improbable, but many saints, who are sensible of their weakness, and of the strength of unbelief, may be dejected in their souls, because they cannot, many times when they desire it, exercise that faith which is wrought in their hearts by the Spirit of God. But this by the by.

Secondly, I now proceed to mention those arguments, by which the truth of eternal Justification is confirmed. And,

1. Justification is an immanent, and consequently an eternal act. This argument must be allowed conclusive, unless it can be proved that Justification is a transient Acts 2:1-47. The elect were by God considered and viewed in Christ from everlasting; which is excellently expressed by Dr. Goodwin in these words: "Look, as God did not, in his decrees about creation, consider the body of Adam singly, and apart from his soul, nor yet the soul without the body (I speak of his creation and state thereby) neither should either so much as exist, but as the one in the other: So nor Christ and his church in election, which gave the first existence to Christ as a head, and to the church as his body, which each had in God's decrees⁴." Now as God considers his elect in Christ, they are either objects of condemnation, or Justification. The former must be denied, and therefore the latter evidently follows; except, as God beholds the elect in Christ, they are neither objects of condemnation, nor Justification; which is an absurdity that none will admit. 3. The elect were blest with all spiritual blessings in Christ before the foundation of the world; and therefore with Justification, for that is a spiritual blessing. "This grace by which we are justified, was given us in Christ from eternity, because from eternity God loved us in Christ, and made us accepted in him⁵." 4. When Christ, as a surety, engaged for the elect, they were Justified. "At the same time in which Christ became a surety for us, and our sins were imputed to him, we were absolved from guilt, and reputed just; that is, actively justified⁶:" Which was from everlasting, or before the foundation of the world. 5. God eternally decreed not to punish sin in his people, but in his Son. His decree to punish sin in his Son, includes his will to impute it to him; and his purpose not to punish it in his elect, takes in his will not to impute it to them, and must be their Justification from all sin in his sight. 6. "Christ's atonement and bearing sin was in the eye of God from eternity, as if already done: Hence the patriarchs were actually and personally justified by it ⁷," as Dr. Chauncy well observes. Therefore, why may it not be concluded that the elect were justified from everlasting, since God had the atonement of Christ then in his eye? I should be glad to see their arguments thoroughly examined, and solidly refuted, if they do not sufficiently prove what they have brought forth. Thirdly, I shall now go on to answer those objections which are advanced against eternal Justification.

Here I shall, 1st, attend to those raised by Mr. B. and, 2dly, to various objections made by some other persons.

I Amos 1:1-15, to begin with those objections which Mr. B. has advanced against eternal Justification. Now he objects thus:

Object. 1.^{f7} "Faith must be more than a manifestation of our Justification, because the saints are said in scripture to have access, by faith, into the grace wherein they stand;" "being justified by

faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand." {Romans 5:2} That is, we stand actually pardoned, and actually justified before God, as well as actually reconciled with God. In the opinion of our author, this text is a sufficient proof that the saints, by faith, enter into a justified state, and consequently cannot be justified before they believe. In order to shew that he mistakes the sense of the text, I would observe these things.

If by faith we are actually brought into, or fixed in a justified state, it will follow that this grace has a causal influence on our Justification; which it is evident it has not, because Justification is no other than the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, which is an act proper to God. If our actual Justification is by faith, it is either by the habit, or the act of faith: Now, as I apprehend, there is no ground to assert that Justification is by the habit of faith, because no action can be ascribed to faith as a habit; and should any assert that it is by the act of faith, I would enquire of them, whether Justification is only by the first act of faith, and not also by renewed acts? If it is only by the first act of faith, it then evidently follows, that faith has not the same concern or use in our Justification, in its renewed acts, as in the first act of it. Besides, if our actual justification depends upon, or is by repeated acts of faith; this, as a necessary consequence, will arise from thence, That when faith is not in exercise, believers are not justified; because, according to this, faith gives actual being to Justification.

Wherefore, I cannot but conclude, that if Justification be the benefit designed by that grace, into which the saints are said to have access by faith, thereby is not intended, that Justification, as to its actual being, commences when they believe, but only that at that time they have the comfortable apprehension of it. But I am persuaded, that upon a due consideration of that strict connection which these words have with the first verse, we shall see reason to conclude, that some other privilege, and not Justification, is intended by that grace, into which the saints are said to have access by faith: For it is to be observed that the Apostle, in the first verse, asserts that we are justified by faith; "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, if we suppose that he intends the same thing in the second verse, we shall make him guilty of a gross tautology, and shall then be obliged to take the words in this view; "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access, by faith, into the grace of Justification;" or thus, "being justified by faith, by faith also we are justified. But I imagine, that none will allow that the Apostle could possibly be guilty of such a needless repetition; and, if not, it must be granted that some other privilege, and not Justification, is to be understood by that grace, into which the saints are said to have access by faith.^{f8} Now our access to the throne of grace is usually intended, when the Greek word for access is made use of in other places. And I can see no reason why that may not be allowed to be the sense of it in this. The design of the Apostle in the words, seems to me to be this; That through Christ we have freedom of access unto the throne of grace: The preposition εἰς may as well be rendered unto, as into: Whereat we stand; for ἐν maybe translated at, as it sometimes is: As for instance; ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου Θεοῦ, "at the right hand of the throne of God." {Hebrews 12:2} So that the words strongly imply, that our access to the throne of grace, is a standing privilege or benefit, of which we shall never be deprived, because our liberty of access to God depends upon, or is secured by the infinite merit of Christ's blood and righteousness, which will eternally remain the same. From the whole, it is evident, that this text affords nothing for the proof of what is collected from it by Mr. B.

that the elect of God are not actually justified before they believe, or that their actual Justification is by faith.

Object. 2. "Was faith only a manifestation, i.e. of our Justification, why is it compared to a hand, as well as to an eye?"

I answer: Faith, as an eye, views that it is necessary we be furnished with a righteousness which is perfect, and that we have no such righteousness of our own. It also beholds the perfection and glory of the righteousness of Christ; and, as a hand, it lays hold on and receives that righteousness for our Justification in the sight of God. But our act of receiving this righteousness, is not the imputation of it to us, which is the ratio formalis of our justification, and is God's act alone; our receiving act can have no concern therein. Besides, we receive Christ's righteousness as justifying, and consequently are justified before our reception of it. Further, if the act of receiving Christ's righteousness is our actual Justification, we justify our selves; whereas Justification is an act of God's grace towards us in Christ, as has been before observed. Moreover, if actual Justification is by our receiving Christ's righteousness, it is repeated as often as we act faith on the justifying righteousness of Christ, except this grace, after the first act of it, ceases to have the same concern in Justification as it has in its first act; which, if any take the liberty to assert, I hope they will make it fully appear: To conclude; when it is said that Justification by faith is the comfortable knowledge of it, therein is included the act of renouncing our own righteousness, and applying to Christ's, as that which alone can justify us before God. But what proof this affords, that Justification by faith is to be under flood in a proper sense, and cannot precede it, I am at a loss to understand.

Object. 3. "Faith, in the business of Justification, must be more than a manifestation; because, was it no other, other graces would share with faith, in its use and office, as it respects our Justification, for they all speak by way of manifestation, and evidence our being loved, and chose in Christ from everlasting." In this objection there are several grand mistakes. There is something in it which is perfectly irreconcilable to what our author has before asserted. Here he tells us, that faith, and other graces, are a manifestation of God's everlasting love, and his choice of us in Christ; which are immanent acts, or I know not what acts of God must be looked upon to be such: Nay, he himself allows they are, in these words; "All the purposes of God, as they are in him, are immanent acts." Therefore God's purpose or will to love his people from everlasting, and his eternal election of them in Christ, must needs be such acts. He elsewhere asserts that it is impossible the immanent acts of God should be known by any creature: For, concerning them, he delivers himself in this manner; "As he must be a man, and not an inferior being, who knows what the immanent acts in man are, or how things lie in his mind and will; and he must be an angel, who knows what the immanent acts of an angel are; so he must be God, who knows what the immanent acts of God are, or how things lie in the divine mind and will. Thus God himself speaks of them; "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

It must be allowed, that it is a most palpable contradiction to assert, that the Immanent acts of God cannot be known, and yet that faith, with other graces, is a manifestation of those acts. Again, let us consider what Mr. B. has said about the impossibility of knowing the immanent acts of God. Now, that no creature below man can understand his immanent acts, must readily be granted;

because no creature inferior to man, is endued with reason: But that no creature, unless an angel, can know the immanent acts of angels, is a mistake. Their acts are rational acts, and may be understood by a principle of reason, with which the mind of man is furnished; not but the immanent acts of angels must be discovered to man, in order to his knowledge of them; and so likewise the immanent acts of men must be declared, before they can be known by others. The same also is to be observed concerning the immanent acts of God; they, in some measure, are to be understood by rational or intelligent creatures, as our author himself is obliged to allow in another place, though he is so unhappy as to contradict himself here. It is certain that God's immanent acts could never have been understood by us, if God himself had not revealed them: But have we not, in the Bible, a clear discovery of his immanent acts, which relate to the salvation of his elect; and are they not revealed, in order to be known by them for their peace and comfort? Further: Are not God's purposes to save the elect, and the contrivance of proper ways or methods to effect such a gracious design, his immanent acts? And are not they declared to us in the holy scriptures? And also are they not, in some degree, known by us, as we are illuminated by his grace? Besides, if it is impossible for us to conceive of God's immanent acts, we must remain eternally ignorant of them, for we shall not be deified in heaven.

Add to this, If it is absolutely impossible for us to know the order of things in the divine mind, we shall not, to eternity, be able to resolve this question, Whether God, in his decree of election, foresaw that we would believe, prior to, and independent on his purpose, that we should believe, and be holy? And therefore all disputes with the Remonstrants about it must needs cease, and be acknowledged vain and impertinent. Whence it appears, that this observation favours eternal election no more than eternal Justification. I also add, that how much forever it may be thought, upon a cursory view of this text, ("My ways are not as your ways," etc.) that it affords sufficient evidence to support what it is brought in favour of; I doubt not, but upon a close enquiry into it, the judicious reader will easily see that the true meaning of the words is this: That God's mercy, which is displayed in the remission of our sins (and is spoken of in the verse before) is not to be limited by our narrow conceptions, but that it infinitely exceeds those notions which we are too ready to entertain concerning it. To this purpose are those words of Calvin upon the text: "I am not a mortal man, that I should act towards you as one severe and implacable. f9" If our author intends that God's immanent acts cannot be comprehended, I believe none will oppose him in that. But there is a wide difference between conception and comprehension; we are capable of conceiving, or forming ideas of God's love, but shall never be able to comprehend it. I observe, that faith is not a manifestation of God's love to us, and choice of us in Christ from everlasting. This grace cannot pry and search into God's heart, and acquaint us with his secrets, any farther than they lie open to our view in divine revelation; our knowledge of them arises wholly from the discovery God himself makes about them. The manifestation of these things, is either external or internal. The external manifestation of God's favour to his elect, and his eternal designs of grace concerning them, is in the Gospel: "That is the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" {Ephesians 3:9} Herein are made known God's eternal love to his chosen, and the secret actings of his goodness to them before the world was, his covenant-transactions with Christ their Head, to secure their eternal salvation and happiness. For what is the gospel but a manifestation of the contrivance of our redemption, and the actual accomplishment of it by Christ? Upon this account it is called the "wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory." {1 Corinthians 2:9}

There is also an internal manifestation of these things to our souls, of which the Spirit of God is the author: "For he searches all things, yea, even the deep things of God," and reveals them to us, or enables us spiritually to understand them; as is evident from those words of the Apostle: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit {1 Corinthians 2:9-10}." It is therefore very obvious, that faith is not the manifestation of these things, neither externally, nor internally. It may be farther observed, that other graces, as well as faith, are manifest proofs of our interest in God's eternal love, and of our being the objects of his eternal choice in Christ; because they are effects which flow from thence. But tho' they are an evidence of these things, as effects are clear proofs of the existence of the cause by which they are produced, that ought not to be confounded with the manifestation of God's everlasting love to our souls, and of our eternal election in Christ: For then we must be supposed to have a constant sense of God's love to us, and choice of us, because our graces, at one time as well as another, are evidences of these things. Besides, the revelation of God's love to us, is only received by faith. For neither love, nor fear, nor repentance, can embrace the witness of God's Spirit; that is peculiar to the grace of faith, "which alone is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen:" That {Hebrews 11:1} is, it is by faith only that we view invisible things. Therefore this grace has its peculiar use distinct from all others, in the sense or apprehension of our Justification, and, consequently, this objection vanishes.

Object. 4. "If faith, in the business of Justification, is no more than a manifestation, one believer may be more justified than another, as his manifestation thereof may be dearer and fuller." I answer, that Justification is God's act, not ours. He only justifies the ungodly by imputing Christ's righteousness to them. Therefore Justification by faith is not to be understood properly, i.e. the being of Justification is not designed; for that has no dependance on faith, but the knowledge of this benefit is intended, when it is said we are justified by faith. Nor is it any absurdity to affirm, that one believer has a fuller discovery of his Justification by Christ than another; and that the saints, at one time, may have a stronger assurance of their Justification, than at some others. Farther, Mr. B. suggests, under this head, that the doctrine of eternal Justification smells rank of the Arminians. Every one knows they are no friends to it, any more than some others. And I am well assured, if those who embrace it, could once discover what connection there is between that doctrine and Arminian principles, they would, with the greater freedom, part with it: For, in their opinion, that scheme is wholly contrary to scripture. To conclude: If Justification is by faith, in a proper sense, or if it has a dependance on faith as to its actual being, and faith has always the same use in Justification, I may take leave to return our author's words upon himself: "That a believer in the dark would be no more justified, than whilst he was shut up in unbelief." All which is unscriptural, and smells rank of the Arminians, who hold a falling from grace. This absurdity is a natural consequence, which arises from the opinion of actual Justification by faith; because, when that is not in being, upon which any thing depends, that which has its dependance on it cannot then exist; but faith, on which actual Justification depends (according to this author) is not always in the act, though it is in the habit. The consequence is easy to be understood.

Object. 5. "To talk of God's actually imputing a thing of that worth, as is Christ's righteousness, to nothing, or to that which as yet has no actual being; that he should actually impute Christ's righteousness to a non ens, or to one who as yet is not, is to talk, not only unscripturally, but

unintelligibly." To this objection I answer: The immanent and transient acts of God are to be distinguished; the latter produce a real change in their subjects, and necessarily require their existence; but God's immanent acts are not productive of any physical change in their objects, and consequently it is not necessary that they should exist, when those acts take place. Justification is not a transient, but immanent act: It is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, which is an act in God's mind, and effects no real change in us; therefore our existence is not necessary to our Justification before God. Let it be farther observed, that if the imputation of righteousness requires our actual existence, the imputation of sin doth also. There is the same reason for asserting the one, as the other. That sin was imputed to us before we had an actual being, is evident; for sin was imputed to us when we were made sinners, which we were immediately upon, or by the fall of Adam, as we may justly collect from those words of the Apostle: "For by one man's disobedience many were made sinners:" {Romans 5:19} That is, all the posterity of Adam were by God reputed sinners, because they sinned in him as their public head. This clearly proves the imputation of sin to us long before our actual existence. Again: That sin was imputed to the elect (as considered in themselves) from everlasting, is fully demonstrated by the covenant of grace, which God and Christ entered into in eternity, to save them from the dismal consequences of their sins. Sin must be first imputed, before any penal evil can be inflicted on us. The corruption of our nature follows the imputation of sin: That is the cause why we are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin. Therefore we stand charged with this in God's sight, before our conception in the womb. For, as Maccovius well observes: "This sin, i.e. original sin, arises from sin imputed, as the desert of it; or, as some love to speak, the demerit. For God, on account of this imputation, most justly punisheth all who are propagated from Adam in a natural way.f10" And elsewhere he answers this question, When, or at what time, is sin imputed, after this manner:

1. "To impute, says he, is a moral, act; that is to say, that this or that thing is accounted as done by one for another, as tho' the other had done it." He adds,

2. "That this act may be, where the object, or rather the subject, to which something may be imputed does not have existence; and that it may have respect to this future subject; or, that sin may be imputed to any one, who doth not as yet exist, but whose future being is certain. Thus, for instance: Our sins were imputed to Christ the Saviour, as man, and were imputed to him as soon as he was promised as a Mediator, hence it was that believers, who lived before Christ was incarnate, were delivered from eternal death, There things being thus, we now answer to the question, That sin was imputed to all who were to be propagated from Adam, as soon as Adam sinned. For as to what Scharpius supposes, that sin is imputed when man first exists, or begins to be, that is refuted from hence; that the matter of which man is to be born, is already polluted with inherent sin. Hence the Holy Spirit is said to have sanctified the mass of which Christ was to be born; which is taken from {Luke 1:35}. So then sin inherent is later than sin imputed f11" And, in his book of metaphysics, he makes use of this as an argument for Justification preceding regeneration. He asks this question, Whether or not Justification goes before regeneration? And answers: "Thus it is; for as sin inherent supposes that sin is imputed, so also inherent righteousness presupposes righteousness is imputedf12." Now as sin may be, and actually is, imputed to us, before we exist; so righteousness may be, and actually is, imputed to use prior to our existence.

Object. 6. "All the purposes of God, as they are in him, are immanent acts; his whole counsel is so, as it takes in his works of nature, grace, and glory. Now if this, without the intervention of his power, gives actual being to any thing, to our Justification, for instance, it should, by a parity of reason, give actual being to every thing, to this world, and to all that is therein; to the church militant, and to the church triumphant."

I answer: All transient acts of God are put forth in time, and they give being to something which did not exist before, and therefore cannot be eternal. Creation is such an act; it is an act, without God, not in him: Therein his infinite power is exerted, for the production of that which had no existence, till such a creating act takes place, His decree to create, and creation it self, are different acts; the former is an immanent, the latter a transient act; the one is eternal, the other is in time. But Justification is an immanent act, not without, but in God, and is not expressive of any real or physical change in its objects: It therefore must be eternal. Again, it is altogether impertinent and inconclusive to argue thus: If God's decree gives actual being to any thing, to our Justification, for instance, by a parity of reason, it should give being to every thing, etc. For God's bare decree gives not actual being to any thing out of himself; but his will, purpose, or decree, as it respects an act in his own mind, is no other than the act it self: As for instance, his will or immutable purpose to love his elect, is his actual love to them, and his will to elect, is election; or it gives actual being to the thing it self, which has no existence but in his infinite mind. So his will or purpose not to impute sin, and to impute righteousness, is his real non-imputation of the one, and actual imputation of the other; and is the complete Justification of the elect, which has no being but in God's breast, I add, it ought to be proved that Justification is a transient act, by which actual being is given to something out of God himself; or that it is effective of some real and physical change in its objects, as it needs must be, if there is an intervention of God's power between his decree to justify, and Justification it self. If this is not done, as I am of opinion it can't be, it will evidently appear that it is far from solid reasoning to infer, that as God's mere decree to create, gives not actual being to any thing so his will and purpose to justify, doth not give being to Justification.

Object. 7. "Paul was a chosen vessel before he believed; but where is he said to have been pardoned, or justified, or reconciled, or adopted, whilst lying out from, and persecuting of the Lord Jesus Christ?" Why should it be enquired whether these things were spoken concerning Paul, before he believed? If they are declared of God's elect in general, that is sufficient to support the doctrine of their actual Justification, reconciliation, and adoption before faith. It would no way affect the argument, if we no where read any of these blessings about Paul in particular, whilst he was a persecutor of Christ. But, because "Paul was justified, reconciled, and adopted, even when in a state of unbelief, therefore he was converted in God's appointed time. If Christ's righteousness had not been imputed to him when he was dead in sin, he would never have received spiritual life from Christ; for regeneration is the effect of Justification, or follows upon it. Agreeably to which this gentleman himself asserts, "That Christ first is made righteousness, and so sanctification; and adds, that "this order ought not to be inverted." Had he always delivered himself consistent with what is here said, he would have prevented this publication. Again: Paul was actually reconciled, or God was so to him, when a persecutor; "for peace was made," for Paul, as well as other elect persons, "by the blood of Christ's cross." {Colossians 1:20} If God was not really reconciled to his elect before they believe, and he was full of anger and wrath against them, they never would believe: For wrath in God, is his purpose to inflict the desert of sin on guilty sinners; which cannot

consist with designs of love and favour to them.

Therefore those who are the objects of God's wrath, in this sense, never will believe. The death of Christ did not render God reconcilable to sinners, as some say, but actually reconciled. And it may be observed, that it is said of Paul, that he was reconciled, whilst an enemy; that is, a persecutor of Christ: For he speaks it of himself, in these words; "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Moreover, {Romans 5:10} he was in a state of adoption, when he persecuted Christ in his members: For, because he was a child of God, "the Spirit of God's Son was sent into his heart;" by whole influences he was enabled "to cry, Abba Father." {Galatians 4:6} Regeneration doth not make us sons; but, because we are sons, we are regenerated. That the elect "are by nature children of wrath, even as others," {Ephesians 2:2} is certain; and that they are the children of God by grace, is equally so. And both there may be said of them at one and the same time, but in different respects. As the descendants of Adam, they are children of wrath; that is, they are under a sentence of condemnation by the law: As in, and members of Christ, they are the children of God, and free from condemnation in his sight; yea, they are the objects of his special love and delight, and were so from everlasting; which is the reason why they are regenerated in God's due time, when their adoption becomes open and visible. Junius hath this note on Galatians 4:5. *Adoptio filiorum aeterna, sed suo tempore exhibitur;* that is, the adoption of sons is eternal, but is manifested in time.

Object. 8. "A sinner's Justification may, and should be considered as the birth of time and so personal and actual, in the joyful and blessed application thereof." I answer: Justification, as it is an act in God, or as it is taken for his non-imputation of sin, and imputation of righteousness, ought not to be considered as the birth of time, but is eternal, because all his immanent acts are so. Again: Is actual Justification the same with personal, and cannot persons be justified before they exist? then they cannot be personally elected, before their actual existence. If there is a personal election from eternity, there also may be a personal Justification from eternity, because the latter requires our existence no more than the former.

Those who object against eternal Justification, That the existence of the persons justified is necessary to Justification, would do well to consider, that the Remonstrants, in the same manner, object against eternal election. For say they, "It cannot be, that any one should be actually elected, who doth not as yet actually exist, for as much as no qualities belong to a non ens. f13' Let our opponents see how they can remove this difficulty, which is railed against eternal election; and closely examine if that answer, which removes it, as levelled against a personal election from everlasting, doth not also fully take off its force against the personal Justification of the elect before time. I am persuaded they will: For as election is an act in God, and is not effective of any real change in us; so is Justification, and works no physical change in us, as has been before observed. If by actual Justification, or the application of that benefit, is intended the discovery of it to God's elect, for their consolation and joy, it certainly follows faith; and is that Justification by faith which the scripture speaks of, when faith is taken in a proper sense, but is no evidence that Justification it self is not eternal.

Object. 9. "The distinction of virtual and actual, has its use and place in scripture, as well as in nature. In nature the care is plain; for the earth virtually contains all the fruit that will be brought

forth and ripened, not only the next summer, but an hundred years hence; whence it follows not that trees are now full of ripe fruit. The sea also virtually contains all fountains and rivers that can possibly flow from it, as eternity contains all possible time. And no less plain is the case as to scripture, where Christ is said to be a lamb slain from the foundation of the world: Which cannot be understood of Christ's being actually crucified, before he was born; but the slaying there must be virtual, not actual." This distinction of virtual and actual I cannot well understand, especially as it is used in the affair of Justification. Virtual seems to me to signify something which has effect in potentia, being in power, or that which is possible to be effected; and may be considered as uncertain, with respect to actual being. Thus all possible things may be said to be virtually in the divine mind, or to lie before God as things which may be produced by his infinite power, though never brought into real being: "For ens is divided into ens in power and act.^{f14}" Wherefore I conceive it may be as well to make use of the word potential as virtual, when the actual being of any thing, which, may be, is not designed, but only its being in power. I will not pretend to say what farther may be designed, by virtual (than potential imports) when it is made use of in the business of Justification, But I am not able to understand that the term it self signifies any thing more. Again: It appears very strange to me that any thing, which has no being but in God himself, (as Justification has not) should be said to have only a virtual being till time, and that its actual being commences in time; because, whatever is in God, must needs be eternal. Therefore it is an improper way of reasoning to infer, that because trees are not now full of ripe fruit, that God doth not actually, but only virtually justify his people. before faith. Justification, as It is an act in God's mind, ought not to be considered as future, but as it always has been in himself, though not known to us till we believe, I add, that virtual, as standing opposed to actual, seems to be made use of by some in such a way, as, in a great measure, destroys the true notion of a public head and representative. Whatever is done by a public head, as so considered, is reckoned as done by those whom he represents, or, what he acts, as such, is looked upon as acted by them. This was the case with all mankind, who sinned in Adam, their public head; they were accounted really guilty of his transgression, the not in actual being, which is the cause why they are conceived in sin. And the elect were as really justified in Christ their public head, when he was justified from all their sins: As he, in God's account, was discharged from all guilt, so were they also: For he was not acquitted without respect had to them, as the persons whom he represented. To talk of being virtually justified, in opposition to a real or actual discharge from sin in God's account, is directly contrary to all just notions of Christ being the representative of his people. To conclude: How Christ could be virtually slain, in the common acceptation of the word, which is taken to signify the being, action, or suffering of a person in another, I can by no means understand: I know of none who could represent Christ, and in whom he might be said to do or suffer any thing. It must therefore be understood as that which certainly should be, according to the divine decree; and that his sufferings and satisfaction was then in the eye of God, as if he had already suffered, and atoned for our sins, as was before observed. But because Christ did not actually suffer from everlasting, it follows not that the elect were not justified from everlasting; because the same is not to be concluded of God's immanent, as is of his transient acts. Justification is an immanent act, and is eternal; the punishing of Christ was a transient act, and could not be eternal.

I shall now observe some things concerning the use of the word actual in Justification, as it is said to be so upon believing, and not before. And if it is intended, when it is said that the elect were not actually justified from everlasting, that God did not acquit them of their sins in his mind, it is a

mistake, as appears by what has been already observed; or if it is designed that they are not declaratively discharged from them before they believe, it is not true, for that they are by the gospel in general, though that declaration cannot be received till faith is wrought in their souls. But if the meaning is, that they have no evidence of the remission of their sins, and the Justification of their persons, till they believe, that is readily granted: But it is denied that this is Justification it self, for it is only the manifestation of Justification. This seems to be all which is intended by some, who say that the elect are actually justified when they believe. Dr. Twisse takes actual Justification in no other sense; for, says he, "What is it that. the remission of sins, and our acceptance, signify, if not inward and immanent acts In God; acts of which kind do not arise in God anew f15?" A little after he speaks of actual Justification, and expresses himself thus: "God erects his tribunal in our hearts; our own conscience, according to the law of God, accuses, terrifies, and wounds us: At length the mercy of God thus shewing it self, the Spirit of God, by the voice of the gospel, raises, comforts, and refreshes us, and pronounces that our sins are forgiven us, for Christ's sake." This is what he intends, when he afterwards says actual Justification is not, unless to such as believe; which, in his sense, is certainly true, for only believers have a sentence of Justification pronounced in their consciences by, the Spirit of God.

Object. 10. "Actual possession, be it of a crown, takes place, according to the constitution of the kingdom, and the methods of government, which in all wise administrations are settled, and not left uncertain and precarious: Now is the order of civil governments great, and God's government of the world of nature yet greater; and is there no such thing as order in the gospel?"

I answer, that without doubt there is a beautiful order in the gospel; and that this gentleman has offered nothing, which in the least degree proves that eternal Justification breaks in upon that order. I hope it will not be said that God's immanent acts do follow upon, or in order succeed, his transient acts, but on the contrary; as for instance, creation follows God's decree to create: Justification is an immanent act, and doth not follow any transient act; nor is there any transient act of God that is our Justification, or which is the execution of his decree to justify us, as creation is the execution of his purpose to create. Again, I can t apprehend what the actual possession of Justification is, unless it be the sense and knowledge of it, which certainly follows faith, for none of the elect can know they are justified till they believe; the consequence of which may easily be gathered from what has been said before.

Object 11. "How expressly are we told in scripture, that in point of actual existence, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual?" And, if so, the elect not only actually exist, but are actually condemned by the law of God, before they are actually justified." The answer is, that the inference drawn from the words is not just; for they intend that we first receive a depraved nature from the first Adam, and afterwards holiness, or spiritual life, from Christ the second Adam. Besides, the existence of the elect is no more necessary to their actual and personal Justification, than it is to their actual and personal election. Rutherford speaking of election, hath these words: "But this, i.e. election, is an immanent and eternal act; for no act of God's will is in time, or transient; what God wills, he willed from eternity f16." He observes the very same concerning Justification, in these words: "These acts of imputing, and not imputing, are immanent acts in God, and therefore eternal f17." Farther, we grant that the elect are sententially condemned by the law of God, but this is not inconsistent with their Justification in Christ, and freedom from condemnation in him: For, as the author just now quoted

observes, "The elect always, yea, before they believe, are free from condemnation, for, and on the account of, the death of Christ f18." To conclude: That which is called their actual Justification, is no more than the discovery of it, as was before observed.

Object. 12. "Though now we are glorified in Christ, we who believe, hope one day to be glorified together with Christ." The design of our author, in there word, is to suggest, that as our glorification in Christ from everlasting is not actual, so the Justification of the elect in him from everlasting is not actual. In answer to which it may be said, that glorification is a work of God upon us, and is expressive, of a real change in us, and therefore requires our actual existence; but Justification is not such an act, therefore our actual existence is not necessary to it.

Object. 13. "Christ's righteousness is not upon us, in the sense of the gospel, before faith; for the gospel is express, that it is to, or upon us, in a way of believing; and should men or angels tell us the contrary, let us not regard them." In order to remove this objection, I would observe, that this author himself allows, that the imputation of Christ's righteousness is our Justification, and that this is God's act; which he strongly expresses in there words: "None, save God the judge of all, could make Christ to be sin for us; and none, save God the judge of all, can make any of us the righteousness of God in him." I apprehend him to mean, that as Christ was made sin, by God's imputing our sins to him, so we are made righteous, by God's imputing Christ's righteousness to us: Which, if he does, he is not consistent with himself; for then it follows, that Christ's righteousness is to, or upon us, in a way of imputation, and not in a way of believing.

Therefore, should it be granted that only believers are the objects of Justification (which cannot be, because God justifies the ungodly) yet it would not follow that Christ's righteousness is upon them in a way of believing, or that it is by their faith imputed to them; for if so, they make themselves the righteousness of God in him; which our author justly denies, and grants, that Justification is God's act, and not theirs. Farther, I admire that a person of Mr. B's humility should express himself with so assuming an air as he does, in laying, should men or angels tell us the contrary, let us not regard them. Had an anathema been pronounced against such as assert Justification before faith, this sentence would have had the same force and degree of resentment in it, as that of the Apostle against the perverters of the gospel: "if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:9 However, it must be allowed, that his delivering himself in as positive a manner as if he had the infallible guidance of an inspired writer, is going far enough in all reason, without pronouncing any dreadful anathemas against those who differ from him. What is the reason why those must not be regarded, who affirm that the elect of God are justified before faith? Is not Mr. B. as likely to be mistaken as they are? I am indeed tempted to think that he has not much regarded what has been offered for Justification before faith, for if he had, certainly his resentments could never have carried him these lengths.

Object. 14. "Gifts, how freely soever they may be designed for us, and given to us, they are not ours, before we receive them: There must be the receiving, as well as the giving hand, before the poor are actually possessed of the rich man's gift."

I answer to this, it is a mistake, that gifts are not ours before received; for the donor's act of giving makes them ours, and not our receiving act; and we receive them as what we have a proper right because given us by him whose they are, to bestow. Therefore it is not the poor man's receiving a gift that makes it become his, but the act of the giver. Besides, legal possession depends upon a

prior right to the thing possessed, for otherwise our possession of it cannot be just and lawful; because legal right is founded either upon purchase or free gift, and not on our receiving any thing we enjoy. Again: This makes our right to, and interest in pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace, and glory it self, to depend as much upon our act of receiving these benefits, as on God's act of giving them to us; which is absurd. Moreover, it follows hence that heaven is not the saints, or that they have no right to it whilst here upon earth; which is apparently false, for they are now heirs of the kingdom. To conclude: That which is given by any person's friend into the hand of another for him (he not being present) is as much his, as if he had actually received it at the hand of the donor. Thus all grace and glory was given to the elect in Christ before the world, began; and both as much became theirs, by virtue of God's gift, as if they had been present, and actually received the one and the other at God's hand. I hope it will be allowed that the doctrine of eternal Justification stands unshaken, notwithstanding this author's attack; for all his objections have not weight enough to bear it down. If many of the similes he makes use of, in treating about the doctrine of Justification, should die buried in some dark cavern of the earth, where he makes a supposition of putting the sun, I imagine the danger will not be much to the churches.

2dly, I shall now consider some objections which are raised by others against this doctrine. And it is objected:

Object. 1. "To this purpose, that as sanctification, and all the fruits of the Spirit, perseverance in grace, and eternal glory, were granted to the elect in Christ from everlasting, no less than Justification; so they were not then justified, in any other or farther sense, than they were sanctified, etc. which they could not actually be."

I answer, that sanctification, and glorification, are transient acts of God, and do produce a real change in us. To these acts our personal existence is necessary; we must first be, before we can be made holy by God's grace: Therefore the gift of sanctifying grace, in the eternal covenant, could be no other than a representative sanctification in Christ, not actual. Justification is an act of God's free grace towards us in Christ, and is not productive of any real or inherent change in us; whence it follows, that our personal existence is not necessary to it. Now as Justification is not the implantation of grace in us, but is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, which is an act in God himself, the grant of Justification was not a lodging of grace in Christ's hand for us, to be communicated to us, by which we might become justified, as the gift of sanctification was: Nor could it be a promise to Christ, that God at any certain time would begin to justify us, because justification is an immanent act, and consequently must be eternal. As the nature of this grace greatly differs from sanctification, it ought not, in the promise of it, to be considered in the same light.

Object. 2. "If Adam's sin, and our own personal sins, were imputed to us in time, we were not personally justified from eternity, but do need a true and real Justification in time. But the former is true, therefore the latter. The reason of the consequence is this; where the guilt and charge of sin is, and law-condemnation for it, there Justification is not." I answer, that Adam's sin was imputed to the elect, as well as to the nonelect, before they had a being; and that the elect are under a charge of sin by the law, and a sentence of condemnation for it, as soon as they exist. But all this is not inconsistent with their secret Justification before God, as he considered them in the righteousness of Christ; that being as really imputed to them for their Justification before him, as

their sins were to their guiltiness in his sight. Therefore they need no farther justifying act in time, than passed towards them from everlasting.

Object. 3. "God's eternal will to justify or pardon, or non-impute sin, is not Justification." For the support of which two reasons are offered; as, First, that act or benefit, which is not the fruit of Christ's death and bloodshed, is not Justification; but God's will nor to impute sin, is not the fruit of Christ's death and bloodshed, and therefore it is not Justification. I answer, God's will to save, and make his elect happy, is not the fruit, but the cause of Christ's death. But though God's will not to impute sin, and his will not to pardon it without a satisfaction from Christ, to secure the honour of his law, and the glory of his justice, may be distinguished, yet they ought not to be separated; for his will not to impute sin to his elect, intrudes his will to impute it to Christ, and to punish it in him, without any abatement. Therefore it cannot be said that God ever absolutely willed not to charge sin on his people, or without respect to their redemption from it by Christ. Again: God had in his eye, even from everlasting, the atonement made by Christ; and, on the account of Christ's engagement to suffer for the sins of the elect, he acquitted them as really as though Christ had actually suffered the penalty demerited by their transgressions. The second thing, which is offered, is this: "That act of God, which is no discha

S. God : The Defense and Glory of His Church

God: the Defense and Glory of His Church by John Brine {London: Aaron Ward, 1734} A SERMON PREACH'D AT DEVONSHIRE-SQUARE ON THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, TO THE SOCIETY, Who Support the Lord's Day Evening Lecture, In that PLACE Publish'd at the REQUEST of some who heard it. Printed for AARON WARD at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain. LONDON:

1734.

{Zechariah 2:5}. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a Wall of Fire round about, and will be the Glory in the Midst of her. THIS Prophecy was delivered about the Time of the Jews Return from Babylon, where they were in a State of Captivity seventy Years: In which the Prophet excites them to a speedy Departure out of their Enemies' Country to their own Land, and encourages them to re-build the City of Jerusalem; assures them of Success in that Undertaking, altho' it was attended with Difficulties which, to them, might seem insuperable. IN order to obviate an Objection to the Safety of the City, which this People might form from the large Number, great Power, and Nearness of their Adversaries; the Lord, in these Words, declares, that he would be its Protector: For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a Wall of Fire round about; that is to say, I will securely guard and defend it, and consume all those who attempt to destroy it; and adds, that he would fill it with Glory, and will be the Glory in the Midst of her. The great Privileges which are promised, not only refer to this People, for they concern the whole Church in every Age and Period of Time. The Text furnishes us with this Doctrine, that God is the Defence and Glory of his Church: This doctrinal Proposition consists of two Branches.

First, THAT the Church's Safety and Security is in her God.

Secondly, THAT she derives all her Glory from him.

First, I begin with the first Branch: The Church could not have subsisted in any Age, unless divine Power had been exerted to support and protect her. The People of God are not in a Capacity to defend themselves, or maintain their Interest, against the violent Attempts of indefatigable Enemies, which is evident from these Things:

1. THEY are much inferior in Number; the Church is but a small Collection of Persons out of the numerous Crowd in the World, hence Christ declares that his Followers are a little Flock; fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom. {Luke 12:32.} THE Enemies of real Religion are far more, than its true, hearty, and constant Friends; it is the Multitude that let themselves to oppose the Cause of God, and only an inconsiderable Few, who appear in its Defence.

2. THE Church in general, is composed of Persons mean and contemptible; there is but a small Number of the Wealthy and Powerful, that have Humility enough to espouse and defend the despised Interest of a Redeemer. The Apostle's Observation holds true to this Day, that not many

wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called {1 Corinthians 1:26.}: Some indeed of a higher Rank are Instances of sovereign Grace, the Consideration of which should inflame their Zeal for the Honour of God, and quicken their Desires to contribute to the Spread of his Gospel: But the much greater Part of Believers are in low and obscure Life; therefore it is not to be expected that the Cause of Religion can be maintained by the Power and Influence of such as embrace it.

3. THE People of God are not equal in Wisdom and Policy to their Enemies: The Generality of those who profess the Name of Christ, are Persons of weak Understandings; therefore our Lord observes, with Thankfulness to the Father, that he had hid the Mysteries of the Gospel from the wise and prudent, i.e. Men Superior Knowledge and Abilities, and revealed them to Babes; that is to say, to such as are of mean Capacities {Matthew 11:25.}: Nor will the Circumstances of these Persons allow them to take the Methods for Improvement in Knowledge and Experience, as those in the opposite Interest are capable of; therefore the Cause of Christ is destitute of such temporal Assistance for its Support and Propagation, which the contrary to it is furnished with: These Things being thus, it must necessarily be allowed, that the Churches Defense and Security arises not from within her self.

Secondly, HER Enemies are ready to improve every Opportunity and Advantage which offer to disturb and distress her. The carnal Mind of Man is filled with a fixed Aversion to God, and all spiritual Good, as the Apostle affirms, the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be {Romans 8:7.}: And therefore the nearer any Saint approaches to the Likeness of God, the greater as the Hatred of wicked Men to him. Thus Cain slew his Brother Abel, because his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous {1 John 3:12.}. This fettered Enmity in the Hearts of Men to powerful Godliness, pushes them on to treat the Professors of it with the greatest Severity: This Matter is capable of abundant Proof from the many Plots, and Conspiracies, which were formed against the old Testament Church before her Captivity in Babylon: But my Design is briefly to observe the Opposition which her Enemies made to obstruct and prevent the Re-building of the holy City and Temple; in which we shall discover Hypocrisy, Calumny, and inveterate Malice, the common Principles upon which the Churches Opposers act. It was predicted by the Prophet Jeremiah, that Cyrus, King of Persia, should enact a Decree to empower the Jews to return to their own Land, and rebuild the Temple of the Lord, which Prediction had its exact Accomplishment at the Time prefixed, as Ezra informs us: Now in the first Year of Cyrus King of Persia, {that the Word of the Lord, by the Mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled} the Lord stirred up the Spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made a Proclamation throughout all his Kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, the Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and he hath charged me to build him an House at Jerusalem, which is in Judah {Ezra 1:1-2.}. Whereupon the Principal and Chief of the People joyfully departed from Babylon to execute the Royal Will of Cyrus, who ordered that they should be furnished with every Thing requisite thereto. As loon as this Work was begun, the Samaritans pretended Alliance, and Friendship, with the Jews, and offered to assist them therein; yet not with any real Design to advance it, but to hinder its Progress, as their future Conduct evidently proves: Such Dissimulation and Hypocrisy is not unusual with the Church's Adversaries, in order to obtain the greater Advantage against her. These very Persons sent a Letter full of heavy and false Accusations to Cambyses {who in Scripture is called Artaxerxes, and Ahasuerus}

the Son of Cyrus, against the People to whom they expressed so much Respect, representing them as full of seditious and rebellious Principles, which caused the King to give strict Order that a Stop should be put to the Work; and accordingly there was, with Expedition and great Force {Ezra 4:1-24.}: Nor was it revived 'till the second Year of the Reign of Darius, who succeeded Cambyses on the Throne; at which Time also, the

Enemies of the Church fought how to prevent its farther Success: But Providence over-ruled the Methods they took to strengthen the Hands of those engaged therein {Ezra 5:1-17; Ezra 5:6.} It is frequent with God, to turn the Measures of the Adversaries of his People to a far different Use, from what they design. THE City and Temple of God were rebuilt, notwithstanding the violent Opposition. made against it by a large Number of implacable and malicious Adversaries, who stuck at nothing that might have obstructed the Work. THUS the Lord was a Wall of Fire round about it; for this Undertaking was not effected by humane Force, or Policy, but by the miraculous Blessing of Providence, as we learn from these Words, "Not by Might, nor by Power, but by my Spirit, faith the Lord of Hosts {Zechariah 4:6.}. As the Church, in the former Dispensation, was encompassed with Enemies, so under the present, she hath suffered many Afflictions from the Hands of powerful Adversaries. WHEN Christianity was first planted, great Persecutions were raised against it by Rome Pagan, of which History informs us, "Nevertheless, the Purity and Power of Religion exceedingly flourished; and large Numbers embraced the Christian Faith, being encouraged to it by the pious Lives and holy Triumphs of the Saints, when in the most cruel Torments that hellish Rage and Malice could invent". I am of Opinion that the Interest of Christ never lost Ground by the strongest Oppositions its most inveterate Enemies have been able to make against it; Adversity has always proved more to the Advantage of the Church than Prosperity: This is evident in the different Turn which the Affairs of Religion took in the Reign of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor; for under his Government, Corruptions in Doctrine, and superstition in Worship, were soon introduced by many ambitious Clergy, who valued the Christian Religion no farther than the Profession of it served to promote their temporal Interests. AND to this Cause, I apprehend, are owing the abominable Errors, and detestable Idolatries, of the Romish Church. WHEN it pleased God to set the Reformation on Foot, by Wickliff in England, Huss and Hierom of Prague; How did the Devil rage? What Troubles did he bring upon those, who embarked in this glorious Cause? But it being of God, it prospered in spite of all Opposition; and since the Establishment of the Reformed Religion here, What numerous Methods have been taken to reduce England, the Bulwark of the Protestant Interest, under the Roman Yoke? THIS has been often attempted by open Violence, secret Intrigues, and devilish Projects: The cruel Papists designed to have given a fatal Blow to the Protestant Cause in England, by taking off the King, Lords and Commons, at once: If they had succeeded herein, What Rapine, and barbarous Murders, would have immediately followed throughout the Kingdom? But kind Providence discovered the execrable Plot, at the very Time, when it was to be executed {which was on this Day} to the great Confusion of its Authors, and the inexpressible Joy of the Nation: A memorable Deliverance indeed! which ought never to be forgot by all true Lovers of Religion and Liberty f1. IN many other Instances since, God has eminently appeared for us. In King James the Second's Reign, a Scheme was laid to enslave the Nation, to introduce Popery and arbitrary Power; but the Design of the Church's Enemies was, at that Time, also miraculously frustrated by the Prince of ORANGE coming over, and ascending the abdicated Throne. As this Prince was a Hero in the Field, so on the Seat of Government, he was remarkably mild and gentle, always steady in his Principles of Religion, and

to the Cause of Liberty. THROUGH the whole of his Reign, he discovered a fervent Zeal for securing the Protestant Interest; and in nothing did he give a clearer Proof thereof, than fetting the Crown on the illustrious House of Hanover: A Family, which he was persuaded would pursue the same generous and noble Designs, that he had in View; nor was he mistaken in his Opinion, as is evident, since the Accession of that House to the Throne. But let us not forget what Measures were taken in a late Reign to deprive us of the happy Prospect of so just and mild a Government; and how seasonably God disappointed the Designs of our Enemies, in making way for GEORGE the First of glorious Memory, to ascend the British Throne, To which he had an indisputable Right. GOD grant that the same Principles which he always stood firm to may fill the Breasts of all the Branches of his noble Family, and that they may continue to wear the English Crown to the latest Posterity: Some useful Observations may be deduced from these Things.

1. THAT the Christian and Reformed Religion are true, or of God, what less than divine Power could have propagated the Christian Faith in the first Ages of the Church, when the whole World was let against it, and resolved to overthrow it; especially as a few ignorant and illiterate Men were employed to spread it: And yet, the Word of the Lord had free Course, and was glorified {2 Thessalonians 3:2.}. It obtained Conquests over almost all the Nations in the World, but not by humane Force, for of that it was destitute; as it is really very foreign from its Nature: And pretty much the same may be observed of the Reformed Religion. The Persons engaged in the Reformation were very few; their Enemies numerous and potent, who made the most fierce and cruel Oppositions against it: Nevertheless, it gained surprising Advances in a very short Time, which evidently discovers it to be the Cause of God.

2. THE great Folly of those, who leek the Ruin of the Church, one would imagine, that as they have often been defeated in their Designs against her, and in such a Manner, as plainly demonstrates that God is resolved upon her Defence. THEY might easily collect, that it is in vain to attempt her Subversion; and that the Consequence will certainly be fatal to themselves. THAT the Church hath sufficient Incouragement in the greatest Dangers to depend upon the Protection of Providence, God is in the Midst of her, she shall not be moved, God shall help her, and that right early {Psalms 46:5.}. That the Lord will be the Security of his People may be concluded from these Things:

{1} HIS Value for them above all others, the Church is most nearly interested in his Favour, he treats all others with Neglect in Comparison of her: When Nations, or Kingdoms, stand in the Way of his gracious Purposes concerning his Saints, he gives them over to Ruin and Destruction; hence he thus lays unto the Church, I gave Egypt for thy Ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee, I will give Men for thee, and People for thy Life {Isaiah 43:3-4.}. THERE are none in the World of which he makes any Account but his Children; and therefore he expresses himself after this Manner, What have I here, that my People is taken away for nought {Isaiah 52:5.}. This Language clearly intimates, that all others are as nothing in his Esteem; his tender Concern for the Church he lets forth in the most moving Way in these Words, He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of mine Eye {Zechariah 2:8.}. THAT is, as a Man is industriously concerned to defend that valuable and useful Member from Injury; so I am thoroughly engaged in your Welfare and Safety from that infinite Love and Value I have for you.

{2.} HE has promised it, and his Word may be depended on; the holy Scriptures abound with Promises of this Kind. The Church may expect perpetual Protection from God, as we learn by those Words of his, Sing ye unto her, a Vineyard of red Wine, I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every Moment; left any hurt it, I will keep it Night and Day {Isaiah 23:3.}. The sacred Oracles declare, that the Saints shall dwell on high; and that the Place of their Defence shall be in the Munitions of Rocks. The Church though a small, is yet a strong City, because God will appoint Salvation for Walls and Bullwarks: Now the gracious Promises of God may be fully relied on; for he is in one Mind, and who can turn him? And what his Soul desireth, even that he doth: God is not a Man, that he should lye; neither the Son of Man, that he should repent: Hath said it, and shall he not do it? Or, Hath be spoken, and shall he not make it good {Job 23:13; Numbers 23:19.}.

{3.} His own Glory is nearly interested in this Matter: The Welfare of the Church is interwoven with the Honour of her God; his Name is publickly professed by her, his Word is precious to her, and in his Institutions the delights: Her several Members are called Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified {Isaiah 56:3.}. The Lord allures us that they are a People formed for himself, and that they shall shew forth his Praise. The Church is the proper Seat of divine Glory on Earth; hence the Apostle hath these Words, To him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages, World without end, Amen {Ephesians 2:21.}: Therefore a Regard in God to his own Honour will influence him to protect the Saints.

{4.} He will destroy those who seek the Ruin of his Church, none can afflict the Saints without the .greatest Injury to themselves; since God is as tender of them, as a Man is of the Apple of his Eye: The Church is a burdensome Stone, and all that burden themselves with her shall be cut in Pieces, though all the People in the Earth be gathered together against her {Zechariah 12:3.}. God may for wise Reasons permit the Enemies of his People to harass and distress them, yea, he may use them as his Rod for the Correction of his Children; yet this will not excuse them from his most severe Resentment and Anger, which, I apprehend, to be the Import of these Words, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeased with the Heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the Affliction. To the Saints the Lord is a Wall for their Security, and round about them, so that they are not any way open to Invasion: As he is a Wall of Fire, it is most certain that he will consume and burn up those who attempt the Destruction of his Church, the City about which he is a Wall of Protection and Defence. However. formidable her Enemies may be, and though they may imagine that it is an easy Thing to devour her, because she is weak and defenceless in her self, as was before observed; yet they will ever find it absolutely impossible, and will eternally sink under the intolerable Weight of divine Vengeance.

THEY are but as combustible Matter before devouring Flames, they are comparable to Briars and Thorns, not only on account of the Grief and Pain which they occasion to the Church; but also because they will be consumed in a Moment by the burning Wrath of a provoked God: For to them he will for ever be a consuming Fire {Hebrews 12:28.}, without any Intermission or Allay.

I proceed to consider the second Branch of the Doctrine.

Secondly, The Church derives all her Glory from God: And will be the Glory in the Midst of her. These Words may be understood passively, or actively, as Cornelius a Lapide observes, though he. prefers the latter Sense, "This Glory may be taken in a two-fold Manner; first passively, i.e. in

her I will be Glorious, that is, I will be glorified and revered with honourable Worship in Jerusalem: Thus several take it, as he tells us; secondly, and better actively; i.e. I will glorify Jerusalem, I will bring Glory to it f2"; in this Light others understand it, as he informs us.

I SHALL consider it in both Senses, God as glorified in the Church by what he works in her; and by that which he enables her to do with a direct View to his Honour.

1. God is greatly honoured in the Church by what he works in her. And,

{1.} In the Conquests he makes upon the Hearts of rebellious Men. BY his omnipotent Grace, he subdues the stubborn and perverse Will of Man, brings him to submit to Christ as King in Zion, or chearfully to yield Obedience to him in that Capacity. It is true, the Language of every natural Person's Heart is, I will not have this Man to reign over me {Luke 19:14.}; but God conquers the inflexible Will of the Sinner, according to his Promise in the everlasting Covenant, thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power {Psalms 110:3.}. FROM this Work abundant Glory redounds to the Riches of God's Grace, as is most evident from these Words, But God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by Grace ye are saved: That in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace in his Kindness towards us through Christ Jesus {Ephesians 2:4-5; Ephesians 2:7.}.

{2.} IN upholding of his Saints; they are insufficient of themselves to perform any Thing that is spiritual, their corrupt Part strongly inclines them to back-slide from God; hence the Lord says of them, My People are bent to Back-sliding from me. {Hosea 11:7.} THEY are subject to many Temptations, and unable to resist the least; a great many Enticements to Evil frequently present to them, which entangle the Affections, and influence the Will: And therefore they cannot persevere in Holiness in their own Strength; but they shall be kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation {1 Peter 1:5.}. In their Support and Preservation the Wisdom of God is display'd; for the greatest Enemies are over-come, Sin, Satan, and the World, by such as are impotent in themselves; and this is readily acknowledged to be all of free Grace by the Saints: Also the almighty Arm of God is most clearly discovered in enabling such weak and feeble Creatures to withstand and conquer potent, subtle, and unwearied Adversaries.

2. God is greatly glorified in the Church, by what he enables her to perform with a direct view to his honour.

{1.} BY that Faith she exercises in him: The true Church is composed of Believers in Christ; the is a spiritual House made up of lively Stones, as faith the Apostle, And ye also as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual House {1 Peter 2:5.}. THAT is to say, they were Persons endued with supernatural Life, which is the proper Principle of all spiritual Acts: Those who are in a State of Unregeneracy are destitute of such a Principle of Grace; and therefore the Apostle observes to the Ephesians, that they once were dead in Sin, and you hath he quickened who were dead in Trespasses and Sins {Ephesians 2:1.}. Life must necessarily precede Motion as a Cause doth its Effect; all Acts flow from Life; spiritual Acts proceed from spiritual Life; such an Act is resting on God's Promise, which is Faith: By the Exercise of that Grace God is highly honoured; hence it is said, that Abraham staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief; but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God {Romans 4:20.} THIS is an excellent Grace, it abases the Creature, and

ascribes the Whole of our Salvation, and of every Mercy to God, it adores his incomprehensible Wisdom, admires his infinite and immense Favour, extols his Power, and cheerfully submits to his Sovereign and absolute Dominion in all Things.

{2.} THE holy Obedience of the Church advances the Glory of her God, she hath a tender Regard to his Honour, and desires a perfect Conformity to his most righteous Will. SIN is the greatest Burden of the Saints, and it gives them, when it is prevalent in their Souls, inexpressible Disquietude; under divine Influence their Language is really this to their heavenly Father, Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God, thy Spirit is good, lead me into the Land of Uprightness {Psalms 143:10.}. The Spring of their Obedience is not Selfish and carnal, but evangelical and spiritual; it is not performed with an Expectation of procuring Favours from God, but to acknowledge with a humble Gratitude his undeserved Regard and Love: This is a truly generous and noble Principle, which is formed in the Saints by the holy Ghost, and is cherished by all his Operations upon them.

{3.} GOD is honoured by Ascriptions of Glory to him; this will be the delightful Service of the Church in Heaven, without any Interruption; and it is a Work which the Saints begin on Earth, when they have a lively Sense of their own Unworthiness, or view the Impurity of their Hearts, and the Imperfections that attend all their Duties, when they have a Prospect of their aggravated Guilt: And behold how God's super-abounding Grace rises over their Mounts of Sin and Rebellion, that it has secured to them the most valuable Blessings, they are struck with Wonder, and cannot but give him the Glory thereof in such low and humble Expressions as these, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give Glory {Psalms 115:1.} with the greatest Pleasure at such a Time they join with the Apostle in laying, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all Spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ {Ephesians 1:3.}: Thus God is glorified in the Church.

3. The Words may be understood actively, I will fill her with Glory: The Church's Glory doth not consist in the Multitude of her Members, a Christian Community may be large and numerous, and yet dishonourable; the Riches and Grandeur of her Members are not her Glory, nor are beautiful Edifices for the publick Exercise of religious Duties any Part of her Honour, neither doth it consist in a pompous and gay Mode of Worship; the Church may be truly Glorious, although all these Things are wanting: This must be granted if it be allowed that the purest Church which ever was upon Earth might lay claim to true Honour, which was composed of Christ and his Apostles; indeed, where these are not, the far greater Part of Mankind imagine that the Glory of Religion doth not attend. THE Church's Beauty is not discoverable by a carnal Eye, for it is spiritual and invisible, fine is truly Illustrious; but internally so, The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her Cloathing is of wrought Gold {Psalms 45:13.}. Her outward Appearance is mean and despicable, yet she possesses inwardly the greatest Glory, upon which Account she thus speaks of her self, I am black, but comely as the Tents of Kedar, as the Curtains of Solomon {Song of Solomon 1:5.}; the outside of which were coarse and rough, but within they were very beautiful and rich: Her real Beauty and Lustre consists in these Things:

{1.} THE Purity of the Principles she embraces and defends. The Gospel is an excellent System of Doctrines, which are calculated for the Honour of God, and that center in the Glory of the Mediator; hence it is called Glorious, according to the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God {1 Timothy 1:11.}.

Now it is to the Advantage as well as Honour of the Saints to preserve the Gospel pure and free from the invented Schemes of Men: The Primitive Church is highly commended for a close Adherence to divine Truth; and they continued stedfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers {Acts 2:42.}. WHENEVER the Church becomes corrupt in her Opinion, she declines in her true Glory; and therefore let all the Saints, as the Apostle exhorts, stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel {Php 1:27.}. Such as never discerned the Excellency, felt the Power, nor tasted the Sweetness of Christian Doctrines, may conceive that it is of little or no Moment, what Reception and Entertainment they meet with: But Persons enlightned by divine Grace discover an excelling Glory in them, and pay the strictest Regard to all the Branches of heavenly Truth: For they are sensible that the Doctrines of the free Grace of God are the Source of all their present Consolation, and the Sum of their future Hopes; therefore they cannot but esteem them more than all Things else; they know that they are more to be desired than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; they are sweeter to them than the Honey, and the Honey-comb {Psalms 19:10.} That which heightens the Glory of the Gospel-Revelation is, it contains the fuller Display of the divine Perfections, as they harmoniously agree in the Salvation of lost Man, through the Obedience, Crucifixion, and Death of Christ: If therefore it is to the Honour of the Church to receive and maintain a Set of Doctrines, wherein the Glory of God is most nearly concerned, it must be allowed that it is her peculiar Glory to stand fast in the Truth.

{2.} HER Honour lies much in Strictness of Disciple. Christ the Head of the Church hath prescribed the belt of Rules to preserve Unity, Holiness of Life, and Uncorruptness of Opinion, among his Followers, which it is the Glory of every Christian Community strictly to observe. A religious Society cannot countenance Persons of pernicious Principles and scandalous Lives, without Censure from Christ: Thus he reproveth the Church at Pargamos, because some of her Members entertained erroneous Doctrines, and were guilty of evil Practices, I have a few Things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a Stumbling-block before the Children of Israel, to eat Things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit Fornication; so thou hast also them that hold the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Thing I hate {Revelation 2:14-15.}. THE Enemies of Religion are very forward to improve every irregular Step of the Saints to the Disadvantage of those Truths which they profess, their sinful Actions they charge upon their Sentiments, and represent the Doctrines they embrace as licentious and loose, affirm that they have no good Influence upon the Hearts or Lives of Men; and therefore every particular Congregation of Christ is under an indispensable Obligation to eject all such, whose Conduct is not answerable to their Profession, in order to prevent open Reproach from the World.

{3.} ANOTHER Branch of her Glory is the Holiness of her Members. It is certainly her Honour to be conformable to her Lord, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners {Hebrews 7:26.}, free from all Blemish in Heart and Life; he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth {1 Peter 2:22.}; he is the perfect Pattern whom she ought to follow: This he recommends to his People, laying, learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart {Matthew 11:29.}; we are to imitate no others any farther than they tread in his Steps. The great Apostle proposes himself as an Example to the Corinthians, but with this Limitation, Be ye Followers of me, even as I also am of Christ {1 Corinthians 11:1.}: Looseness and Immorality among Professors is a great Dishonour to the Christian Name; it causes the Gospel, and Ways of Christ, to be evil spoken of, as was before observed. On the contrary, a regular and holy Walk recommends Religion, and vindicates the

Doctrine of Grace. from the false Aspersions which are thrown upon it by Opposers; and. is an evident Proof, that what is objected to it, as abating Mens Regard to Holiness, is mere Calumny and Falshood; that it really influences such that have experienced its Power, to shun Vice, and practise Vertue: These were the happy Effects it produced in the Primitive Christians, as the Apostle affirms; for the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and hath appeared to all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World {Titus 2:11-12.}.

{4.} THE Church's Glory consists in Unity and Love. Jars and Contentions, Heats and Animosities among, the Saints, weaken their Hands, and give an Opportunity to the Enemies of the Gospel to prejudice their common Interest; not that all Contention is unlawful, for it is a Duty incumbent upon us to contend for the Faith, we are expressly exhorted to it, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints {Jude 1:3.}; that is to say, for revealed Truth. When the Doctrine of Christ is opposed and Error is advanced, Providence calls upon his Servants to vindicate the one, and to expose the other, which ought to be done with Zeal and Fervour; but not with undue Heat, or personal Reflections on any: It very ill becomes those, who profess to have a Value for Revelation, to be luke-warm and indifferent about the Doctrines it contains, whatever may be the Opinion of the Generality concerning them. No Branch of sacred Truth ought to be sacrificed to Peace, although some may presume to pronounce it of little Consequence or Weight: If the latter is not to be maintained without giving up the former, Dissension is rather to be chosen: To purchase Peace at the Expence of Truth, is buying it at too dear a Rate; but where the Cause of Truth is not concerned, we are to follow the Things that make for Peace, and the Things wherewith one may edify another {Romans 4:19.}; which is beautiful and excellent, as the Words of the Psalmist plainly intimate, Behold, how good and how pleasant a Thing it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity; it is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments; as the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the Blessing, even Life for evermore. {Psalms 133:1-3.}

{Lastly.} HER greatest Honour is the Enjoyment of the divine Presence. The Glory of the Christian Religion principally consists in the Influences of God upon his People, and in the Manifestations of his Love to them: The external Part, without these Blessings, is but like the Picture of a Man, In which, though there may be Likeness and Proportion, Life is wanting. IT is only a dead and lifeless Form, without Nearness to, and Fellowship with God, the Object of our Worship; Communion with God, elevates our Souls, strengthens our Graces, and gives Vigour to all our religious Acts. UPON a serious Reflection on the general Disposition of our Minds, and the usual Manner in which we perform the Exercises of Religion, whether in the Closet, and in the Family, or in the House of God; I fear we shall find that we have but too great Reason to confess, that the spiritual and experimental Part of Religion is very much loft amongst us. Is there not in us an in-differency to Duty? Are we not dull, heavy, and wandering from God in the Discharge of it? But little of powerful Godliness is seen, or felt, by us; and therefore our Glory is greatly eclipsed: There is just Occasion for us to say, How is the Gold become dim? How is the most fine Gold changed? The Stones of the Sanctuary are poured out in the Top of every Street; the precious Sons of Zion, comparable to fine Gold, how are they esteemed as earthen Pitchers, the Work of the Hands of the Potter

{Lamentations 4:1-2.}. May the happy Time be hastened, when the Church shall be a Crown of Glory in the Hand of the Lord, and a royal Diadem in the Hand of her God {Isaiah 62:3.}. When he will say to Zion, Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

FOOTNOTES ft1 The horrid Gunpowder-Treason, which Plot was formed in the third Year of the Reign of King James the First, by Henry Garnet, a Jesuit, Robert Katesby, Thomas Peircey, Thomas Winter, Guy Faux, and other desperate Papists. ft2 Gloria haec dupliciter accipi potest Primo passive. q.d. In Gloria ero, ideft, glorificabor & colar in Jerusalem; per latriae Cultum, Secundo, & melius active, q.d. glorificabo Jerusalem, gloriam ei asseram. Vid. Loc.

S. Grace at the Sovereign Disposal of God

Grace at Sovereign Disposal of God by John Brine (London: George Keith, 1760) IN A DISCOURSE PREACHED JULY 19, 1760, AT THE REVEREND MR. BURFORD'S MEETING, IN A MONTHLY EXERCISE OF PRAYER, WITH A SERMON.

Published at the Request of the Church.

Printed for GEORGE KEITH in Grace-church-street; and sold by JOHN EYNON, Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley by the Royal- Exchange. London 1760.

[Price Six-Pence.] {Deuteronomy 29:4}.

Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

MOSES observes to the People of Israel, that they had beheld the miraculous Works, which God had wrought, in a way of Vengeance on their Enemies, and in a way of Favour towards them, in order to their Deliverance out of Egyptian Bondage. How he had conducted, supplied, and defended them in the Wilderness in a miraculous manner. Though they had seen all those Signs, and great Miracles, yet the Lord had not given them an Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, and Ears to hear unto this Day. In discoursing on the Text, I propose to shew,

I. That these Phrases, an Heart to perceive, etc. mean an Ability to discern in a spiritual manner, receive and delight in spiritual Things, because of their Excellency and Glory. And what that Ability is.

II. I would attempt to prove that there is such an Ability in Believers.

III. That it cannot be acquired.

IV. That it is the Gift of God.

V. That he gives it to some and not to others, according to his sovereign Pleasure.

I. These Phrases, an Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, mean an Ability, in a spiritual manner, to discern, receive, and delight in spiritual Things, because of heir Excellency and Glory. Such a Perception, Embracement of, and Pleasure in heavenly Things, are intended, as issue in the Glory of God, and the Salvation of the Soul. Whereof natural Reason is incapable, how much soever it may be cultivated and improved. This Ability, is not a Capacity to understand the Import of the Language of Scripture, concerning the most mysterious Doctrines which it contains. Such as the Doctrine of the Trinity; of the Incarnation of Christ; the Union of the Divine and human Natures, in his Person; of Regeneration; and of other sublime Truths. Nor is it a Power to discern the Dependence, Connection and Harmony, of evangelical Doctrines. Men in common are the Subjects of an Ability for the former, and of a Capacity for the latter; otherwise they could not be required to believe the Verity of those Doctrines, which are supernaturally revealed. The

Reason why Men do not believe the Truths of the Gospel, is not the want of an Ability to understand the Language of Scripture, or of a Capacity to discern the Dependence, Connection and Agreement of evangelical Principles: But the Cause thereof is, they disapprove of them, and account them to be the very Reverse of what they are in fact. They are the Wisdom of God; but in the Esteem of natural Men, they are Folly, and therefore, unfit to be believed and embraced. On the contrary, they think they are to be despised and rejected, as irrational and absurd. The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, to him they are Foolishness, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. He is a spiritual Man, who judges, or discerns spiritual Things themselves, and consequently, he must be possessed of a spiritual Ability. And that Ability is, a holy supernatural Principle, whereof the whole Soul is the subject, and it is permanent and abiding therein. From that Principle, all holy, spiritual Acts spring.

II. I would attempt to prove the Being of such a Principle in Believers. And I shall argue from various Modes of Expression, relating to its Production: And from the Representation given of it, and Acts, which are ascribed unto it.

1. I will argue from various Modes of Expression, relating to its Production.

(1.) It is said to be born, or ingenerated. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh: That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit (John 3:6.). Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World (1 John 5:4.). Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man; but of God. The Wind bloweth, where it listeth, thou hearest the Sound thereof; but canst not tell from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3:3.). No Acts, internal or external, can with any Propriety, be said to be born. But a Principle, which is a Spring of Action, may be said to be born, for it hath proper Subsistence in him, in whom it is produced.

(2.) It is a Vivification, or an Infusion of Life into Men, who are dead in Sin. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespass and Sins (Ephesians 2:1.). Life is a vital Principle. Death is no other than a Privation, or loss of a living Principle. And therefore, quickening us, when dead in Sin, must mean, the Communication of a Principle of Life. And, consequently, there is, in Believers, a vital, holy, and supernatural Principle, from which proceed all their Acts of a holy spiritual Nature.

(3.) This Work is a Creation. We are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works (Ver. Ephesians 2:10.). By Reason hereof, the Saints are denominated new Creatures: If any Man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new Creature. Acts are not created, they flow from that which previously exists. Creation is giving Being to something, which had not Existence before. And, therefore, this must mean the Production of a Principle in the Mind, which it was not the Subject of until this Time. From hence, it is evident, that there is in Believers, a holy supernatural Principle, which is a Spring of holy, spiritual, and supernatural Acts.

(4.) It is giving a new Heart. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you (Ezekiel 36:25). Acts cannot be denominated the Heart; but a Principle may, which is feared in the Heart; and the Heart is properly said to be good, or evil, as that Principle, whereof it is the Subject is good, or evil. The new Heart, which God gives, is certainly holy and good, and that is not Acts; but it is a Principle from which holy Acts take their rise. These Things, I think, very clearly prove the Being of a holy, supernatural Principle in Believers.

2. I will argue from the Representation given of it, and the Acts, which are ascribed unto it.

(1.) It is declared to be Spirit. That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh. They are opposites, and contrary in their Nature. The Flesh is not Acts; but a Spring of Actions, which are evil. And its opposite, the Spirit, is not Acts; but a Spring of Actions, which are holy and spiritual. And, therefore, there is, in the Saints, a holy supernatural Principle.

(2.) It is an Image. Actions are not an Image; but a Principle is. This is an heavenly Image. But we all with open Face beholding, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory (2 Corinthians 3:18.). It is the Image and Likeness of God. For after God it is created in Righteousness and true Holiness (Ephesians 4:24.). After the Image of Him that created him (Colossians 3:10.). Acts internal, or external, with no Propriety, can be said to be an Image, for they are transient and passing. An Image is not so. Hence we may conclude, that Believers, are the happy Subjects of a Principle, which is the Image and Likeness of God. And that Principle is holy, spiritual and supernatural.

(3.) It is a new Man, the contrary of the old Man. And put ye on the new Man. And have put on the new Man. The old Man is not Acts, either internal or external; but is a corrupt Principle, from which unholy Actions flow: And the new Man, as not Acts, either internal, or external; but a pure Principle, from which arise holy, spiritual Actions. As the former is a Principle, so is the latter, For, they are direct opposites. And therefore, there is in Believers, a holy, supernatural Principle.

(4.) It is called a Law of the Mind, and is the opposite of a Law, which is in the Members. I see another Law in my Members, warring against the Law of my Mind. The former Law, is not Acts, neither is the latter Law, Acts. Each is a Principle from which Acts proceed. The Law in the Members, is an evil Principle. The Law of the Mind, is a good Principle. Unholy Actions flow from the former, and holy Actions from the latter. This is, I think, a full Evidence, that there is, in Believers, a holy, supernatural Principle.

(5.) It is represented as a Nature. That by these ye might be Partakers of the divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4.). By which must be intended, a holy, heavenly Principle. For, Acts internal, or external, are not a Nature. Spiritual and heavenly Acts, spring from this Nature, whereof the Saints are made Partakers. But that Nature they are not, nor can be. And, therefore, there is, in Believers, a holy, supernatural Principle. For, such that must be, which is denominated, the divine Nature. Acts it cannot be, it, therefore, must be a Principle. The Truth of this important Point, will farther, appear, by taking into Consideration, those various Acts, which are ascribed unto it. And in general, lusting against the Flesh is attributed unto it. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh (Galatians 5:17.). This is very comprehensive. For it comprises all the holy Actings of the Mind, in opposition to the Dictates and Motions of the Flesh. It is highly improper, to ascribe Acts to Acts. For Acts do not flow out of Acts. They spring from a Principle. An evil Principle, if the Acts are evil: A good Principle, if the Acts are good and holy. It cannot reasonably be thought, that the Flesh, is a Principle, from which evil Actions arise, and that the Spirit is not a Principle, from which holy Acts take their Rise in the Saints.

If the Flesh is a Principle of Action, so is the Spirit. And therefore, there is, in Believers, a holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle. There are particular Acts ascribed unto it, viz. Consenting to

the Law, that it is good. Delighting in it. And serving of it. I delight in the Law of God, after the inner Man (Romans 7:1-25.). So then with my Mind, I myself serve the Law of God: But with the Flesh the Law of Sin. And the same Apostle observes, that the Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith (Galatians 5:22.); There is, therefore, in Believers, a holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle, from which all the holy and gracious Actings of their Souls do proceed. This Principle, I have said, is permanent and abiding. That it is so, maybe concluded from the End of God, in creating, or infusing of it. That End was the everlasting Enjoyment of himself. Blessed be the God and Father of Lord Jesus Christ, of his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3-4.). This Work upon Men, is calling them to his eternal Glory (1 Peter 5:10.). And the Apostle Paul, speaking of the State of future Blessedness, says, He that hath wrought us for this selfsame Thing is God (2 Corinthians 5:5.). Since God, in the Creation, or Infusion of this Principle, which is our Meetness to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, really intended that we should enjoy Himself hereafter, it is impossible, that this Principle should ever become extinct. For, in that Care, He would be disappointed of His End, in its Creation, or Infusion. And it is to be observed, that the most vigorous Actings of Grace, in the Saints, expel not the Flesh, and the most violent Actings of the Flesh in them, expel not the Spirit. This is evident in David and Peter. David, in a very extraordinary manner, acted Grace, as we are informed, (2 Samuel 7:18). to the End of the Chapter. His Soul was full of holy Adoration, steady Faith, and flaming Love, and Affection to God. Is this the manner of Men? What can thy Servant David say more! Therefore have found in mine Heart to pray this Prayer unto thee. Did those extraordinary Actings of Grace expel, the Flesh? No such Thing. That kept its Possession in the Soul of this holy Man. And, what is enough to make one tremble, soon after this, he acted the very worst Part, that he ever did act, through the whole Course of his Life: So far was Sin from being expelled out of him. An Account is given of the evil Part he did act, in the eleventh Chapter of the same Book. I need not name it, you well know what it was. On the other Hand, the violent Actings of the Flesh in Peter, in the Denial of Christ, with very dreadful Aggravations, did not expel the Spirit. Grace did not become extinct in him. His Faith did not fail thereby. Christ had prayed, that it might not. He turned, and looked upon Peter, with a Look of Reproof, and Love, which struck him with Awe, and wrought him up to a high degree of evangelical Repentance, for his great Offence. Hence, I think, it is clear, that as the most eminent Actings of Grace expel not Sin: So the worst Actings of Sin, expel not Grace. That is a permanent, abiding Principle in the Soul, which nothing can possibly eradicate. The End of God, in its Production, above mentioned, will eternally secure the Continuance of its Being in the Heart, against all Opposition whatsoever¹.

III. This holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle cannot, be acquired. No holy Acts can be exerted, in a Mind destitute of Holiness. Such as Faith, Repentance, and evangelical Obedience. Hence our Lord says; No Man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him (John 6:44.). And the Apostle affirms that the carnal Mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7.); and that, without Faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). There are many Professors; who cannot bear to hear it asserted, that Men unregenerate, are incapable to act a Part, pleasing and acceptable to God. Let such Persons speak out, and tell us whether it is lawful for us to make use of, and explain these Texts in our Bibles, or not. There is Reason to think, that if the Lord Jesus Christ was now upon Earth, and they were to hear Him

express Himself, as He did, in relation to this Subject, they would censure Him for it. Their Censuring of us for asserting this Inability of unregenerate Men, gives us no other Concern, than what arises from this Consideration, that through others, they censure our blessed Lord Himself, and His Apostles, who spake, as they were dictated by the Spirit of Christ.

Men cannot be assisted to acquire this Principle of Holiness, and spiritual Life. He who is dead cannot be enabled to put forth vital Acts. And he who is blind, that is to say, is destitute of a visive Faculty, cannot be helped to see. Natural Men are dead, destitute of a Principle of spiritual Life, and of a spiritual visive Faculty, and therefore, they cannot be enabled to act, or to see in a spiritual Manner. It is unreasonable to think, that the Mind, as carnal, can be influenced unto holy Acts. The Flesh is only and entirely engaged in the Service of Sin. And it perpetually lusteth against the Spirit in Believers. It concurs not with the gracious Principle, in the Saints, in any of its Actings; but ever opposes it. Hence there is a Tincture of Evil in all the holy Actings of their Minds, and in all the Duties which they perform. By reason of the perpetual Presence of Evil in them, they sin in Meditation, Prayer, Reading, Hearing, and in every other religious Exercise. The sad Experience of Believers, is a standing Evidence of the Truth thereof. How then, can it be supposed, that those, who only have Flesh in them, may be excited to exert holy Acts, in order to acquire a holy Principle? If the Flesh in unregenerate Men may be enabled to put forth holy Acts: Surely it may be brought to concur with the Spirit, in its Acts, in the Regenerate; but that is false, both Scripture, and the Experience of all the Saints testify. And, therefore, it is impossible, that it should be enabled by any Aids whatsoever, to act in a holy, spiritual Manner. And, consequently, no Man, who is in the Flesh, or in an unregenerate State, can be enabled to exert holy Acts, whereby a holy Principle may be acquired. I would speak it with Reverence, and I hope you will hear it with Reverence; Omnipotence itself cannot cause Enmity to Love. For, that implies a Contradiction. And as the carnal Mind is Enmity itself against God, it is absolutely impossible to cause it to love Him. In our depraved Nature, there is nothing but a mere passive Capacity to receive a holy, spiritual. Principle from God, in a way of Creation, or Infusion. That is all which we can with Truth, say of ourselves, as we are carnal and corrupt. The Will of the Flesh does not, it cannot co-operate with the Grace of God, in our Regeneration. For, that would be acting contrary to its Nature. And, therefore, at cannot, even by divine Influence, be caused to act spiritually. And, consequently, it is impossible, that Men, who are destitute of a Principle of Holiness, should be enabled to acquire such a Principle. It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth; but of God that sheweth Mercy.

IV. This holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle, is the Gift of God. He is the sole Author, and efficient Cause of it.

Hence the new Birth is always ascribed to Him. The Saints are said to be born of God. To be born of the Spirit. Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man; but of God. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh: That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. God of his abundant Mercy begets us again. Of his own Will begat He us. This Principle is a good, and perfect Gift, which cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights. With respect to Faith, the Apostle asserts negatively, that it is not of ourselves: And he affirms positively, that it is the Gift of God. By Grace are we fared through Faith, that not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God. And declares to the Ephesians, that we are, as Saints, the Workmanship of God. For we are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good

Works. This Principle, therefore, is a divine Gift, and is not acquired, by those in whom it is. It is so the Gift of God, that the Subjects of it had not, nor could have the least causal Influence in its Production. For this Principle, is not only superior unto, and above all that was in them before, in its Nature; but also, it is absolutely contrary to the natural Disposition of their Minds. And, consequently, it must have been produced in them by divine Grace, without any concurrent Act of their Will therein, or in order thereunto. It is unreasonable to suppose, that one contrary, is capable of exerting Acts, which tend to the Production of another. Is not the Flesh contrary to the Spirit? It is. And is not the Spirit contrary to the Flesh? It is. And they counter-act one another perpetually. And, therefore, this holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle, must be a divine Gift, in the most full, and absolute Sense. It is a new Life in the Soul, which was dead before. And it is as much the Gift of God, as Life is, which is communicated to a Man, who before, was dead naturally. As a Man who is naturally dead, cannot contribute to the Production of Life in himself: So such who are dead in Sin, can contribute nothing to the Production of a vital Principle of Holiness, in themselves. If God doth not graciously give to them such a Principle, they will eternally remain destitute of it: Or continue dead in Trespasses and Sins for evermore. For, as hath been before observed, they cannot possibly be assisted to acquire it. As a Man naturally dead cannot be enabled to acquire Life: So one who is dead in Sin, cannot be assisted to acquire this new, and heavenly Life.

V. The Lord gives this Ability to some, and not to others, according to His sovereign Pleasure.

God is not under Obligation to communicate Holiness to any sinful Creature. He bestows His Grace upon, or withholds it from fallen Creatures, as He Himself is pleased to determine. But the Exercise of His Sovereignty, in dispensing His Grace, Men cannot bear with. If He will give Grace to some, and not to others, they will impiously dare to reproach Him to His Face, on Account thereof, But let them know this, that they must one Day be accountable to Him for it. Men allow one another to do what they please with their own. To bestow their Favours on whom they think proper. On this Person, and not on another. Yet they will not allow that Liberty to their Maker. On the contrary, if He bestows what is absolutely His own, on some, and not on others, they will censure Him for it. Which is most unreasonable Impiety in them. If Grace is not God's own, and at His sovereign Disposal, He hath nothing that is so. For, what Claim, can an unholy Creature have upon God to communicate Holiness to him? If you shall say, that it is fit, convenient, and becoming, that God should bestow Grace upon, or communicate Holiness unto a lapsed Creature, I will prove, that He cannot but give Grace to apostate Spirits, and unto Men universally. If you enquire how. I answer thus: God cannot omit doing what is fit, convenient, and becoming, that He should do it. And, therefore, if it is fit, convenient, and becoming, that He should communicate Holiness to a fallen Creature, he cannot but bestow his Grace upon, or communicate Holiness, unto apostate Spirits and Men universally, Without Distinction, or Difference. The Reason is most clear, which is this: It is not possible with God, ever to omit doing, what it is fit, proper, and becoming, He should do. As it is impossible with Him to do what is improper, unfit, and unbecoming, that He should do it. So, it is impossible with Him not to do what is fit, proper, and becoming, that He should do it.

Since, therefore, He does not bestow His Grace upon, or make all His fallen Creatures Partakers of His Holiness; but some only: It is evident, that the Reason why He bestows His Grace upon some, is not because it was fit, convenient, and becoming, that so He should do; but because such was His sovereign Pleasure, concerning them, He was at full Liberty to dispense Grace to

Paul, and not to Pharaoh: To communicate Holiness to Peter, and not to Judas. Because, the Communication of Holiness unto, or the Bestowment of Grace upon an unholy Creature, is not due from God, by Reason it is fit, that He should bestow it. And, therefore, to make a sinful Creature holy, by a Communication of .Grace and Holiness, is a pure sovereign. Act of God; if it is not, no divine Act is such. If it is not free with God, to love, do Good unto; and render eternally happy, guilty and sinful Creatures, or the contrary, as He Himself, pleases to determine, in nothing can His Will be at Liberty, in his Resolutions about them. Our blessed Lord resolves this wholly into the sovereign Pleasure of his divine Father, when He addresses Him thus: Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, I thank Thee, that Thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. When spiritual Things are said to be hid from the Wise and Prudent, by God. The Meaning is not, that He took from them their natural Power of Understanding: Nor, that He did not externally reveal those Things unto them. For they had an external Revelation of them, as well as the Babes. But the Meaning is plainly this: He did not give to them, a Capacity to understand those Things, which He did give to Babes, who were much their Inferiors in natural Knowledge, because such was His Pleasure: And no other Cause can be assigned why heavenly Things were concealed from the former, as to their Nature, and made known to the latter but the sovereign Will of God. I hope It appears, that Believers are the Subjects of a holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle.

- That this Principle cannot be acquired. - That it is the Gift of God; and that he gives it to some, and not to others, according to His sovereign Pleasure.

Some Observations may now be made.

Observ. 1. Hence we may easily see, that the Irresistibility of divine Grace, is consistent with our natural Freedom, or the natural Liberty of our Will.

For,

(1.) The Will is entirely, passive, in the Infusion, or Creation of this Principle. It is not actively concerned therein. The Will holds itself absolutely inactive in the Infusion of this spiritual Principle. It neither chuses, nor refuses: Neither concurs, nor opposes, in this divine Work upon the Soul. The Nature of the Thing is a full Evidence thereof. For it is the Communication of a Principle of Life to the Soul, which is dead in Sin, and, therefore, it is impossible that the Mind should exert any concurrent, or opposing Act therein. The natural Liberty of the Will, therefore, cannot be infringed, in the Infusion of this Principle.

(2.) By the Creation of this Principle in the Heart, the Will is sanctified, and becomes habitually inclined to Holiness, in Consequence of this Work upon the Soul. And, therefore, as there is a Disposition in the Will of Believers to Acts of sin, as it is corrupt: So, there is a Disposition in their Will to Holiness, as it is sanctified by the Infusion of this Principle. And their Choice of Evil is free, and their Choice of Good is voluntary. For, the Will suffers no Violence, in acting agreeably to the Nature of the evil, or good Disposition, whereof it is the Subject. The effectual Influences of divine Grace upon the Will, as sanctified, are no other, than exciting it to such Acts, as It hath an habitual Disposition unto. It is, therefore, absurd to conceive, that those Influences put any Force upon the Will. It is undoubtedly free, in acting agreeably to the Nature of that holy Disposition, whereof it is the Subject, though it is by the Grace of God stirred up, so to act. There Things are observed, by

Doctor Preston, in a Latin Oration, which he delivered in the University of Cambridge. Which Oration, for its Conciseness, Perspicuity, and nervous Reasoning, is most orthy to be read.

Observ. 2. These Things will enable us to set the Doctrine of Election, in a very familiar and unexceptionable Light. For, it is no other, than the eternal Purpose of God, to give Grace to some, which no sinful Mortal upon Earth hath a Right to claim of his Maker. Let us consider this Point calmly and seriously. As we are depraved, we are unmeet for, and indisposed unto present Communion with God, and the Enjoyment of Him, hereafter. And we are so far from being worthy of His Favour, that we are justly deferring of His Vengeance. Is He then obliged to give us Grace to fit us for present Communion with Him, and the everlasting Enjoyment of Himself hereafter? Who will dare to say, that God is under such an Obligation, to any guilty Creature? And if He is not, then he may bestow His Grace upon us, or not, as He Himself pleases. And if the actual Bestowment of Grace upon us, is what God may do, or not do. Surely. He was fully at Liberty, to determine, in his everlasting Counsels, on whom He would bestow His Grace, and on whom He would not. Now, as Election is God's eternal Purpose to communicate Holiness to those, who are the Objects of that Decree, to fit them for Communion with Him here, and for the Enjoyment of Himself hereafter. This His Determination concerning them, was such an Act, as He was not obliged unto, with respect to any sinful Creature. And, therefore, at was absolutely free with Him, to fix on the Particular Persons, unto whom He would communicate His Grace. It is evident, that Election is no other than such a Purpose in the divine Mind. For, our holy Vocation, is according to God's Purpose. We are saved, and called with an holy Calling, according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us, Christ, before the World began. If God in Time, may sanctify whom He pleases, by His Spirit, it must have been absolutely free with Him, to chose whom He would, to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit. As the Lord in Time, may do that in favour of some, which He is not under the least Obligation to do in favour of any: So he might in Eternity, form such a Resolution, and He actually did. Which. Act was the Election of those Persons, unto a Participation of His Holiness here, in order unto the future Enjoyment of Himself.

Observ. 3. Hence we learn, that it is not acting a pharisaical and legal Part, to look into ourselves, for Holiness, in order to our Consolation, and to give Praise to God, for what He has wrought in us. Some censure so doing, as Pharisaism and Legality, under a high Pretence of Zeal, for the Doctrine of imputed Righteousness. As if considering with ourselves, whether we are the Subjects of Sanctification, was inconsistent with a Dependence on the Righteousness of Christ for Justification. If I am not the Subject of Holiness, what Evidence can I possibly have, that I am the Object of Justification? If indeed, we taught Men, that they are to look into themselves for Holiness, in order to encourage them to trust in the Righteousness of Christ for Acceptance, they would be furnished with Matter of just Objection. But no orthodox found Divine, who understands himself, does so teach. The Reason why I depend upon the Righteousness of Christ is, I see the Necessity of an Interest in it, and the Glory of it, and not because I am made holy by the Grace of God. There are Things most clearly distinct, and easily to be distinguished. And yet, there are some it seems, even among ourselves, and who are Masters, in our Israel, who cannot, or will not distinguish them. I hope you will excuse my familiar way of speaking; there things are but A, B, C, in, Divinity. Heart-work is become the Subject of Sneer. And, Dr. Owen, whole experimental, and practical Writings, will, I am of Opinion, render his Memory precious, as long as spiritual savoury Christians shall subsist, is charged, with having much self-righteous Chaff, on Account of them.

This is that sad Pass unto which Things are now arrived with some amongst us. For my Part, I am free to declare to all the World, that as on one Hand, I care not in the least, by whom, I am represented as an Antinomian, for preaching the distinguishing Doctrines of the Gospel: So, on the other, I shall never be concerned by whomsoever I am censured, as a Pharisee and Legalist, for recommending, experimental, and practical Religion. A late learned Writer militates against the Doctrine I have advanced, in a Discourse on the Words of my Text, and objects, as follows,

Object. 1. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the perfect Goodness, and Justice of the divine Being. - Is it the Character of infinite Goodness to injoin Men what is above their Abilities, and not to give them proportionable Strength, if their Duty does, in any particular Circumstances, exceed the Measure of their Capacity? Does it become a Being of perfect Justice to punish Men for not doing what is above their Strength, and what he never intended they should do?f2

Answ. Men's Inability for the Performance of their Duty, is the Consequence of Sin. This arguing, therefore, is no other than this: A Master is neither good, nor just, who blames his Servant for not performing his Duty, when he is incapable of it, though his being so, is the Effect of a Debauch, or Intemperance. This reasoning, though often used, as below Men of Strife and Learning.

Object. 2. It is no less disagreeable to the Kindness, which God had shewn this People, and to the whole Course of his Providence towards them, than it is to his own Perfections.

Answ. Arguing from the Goodness of God, towards that People, in the Course of his Providence, to prove an Intention in Him, to make them holy and eternally happy, is inconclusive and impertinent. And His giving them excellent Laws, is no Proof, that He gave them an Ability to yield spiritual Obedience to His Commands.

Object. 3. This Sense will not agree with the End of Moses in speaking to them, nor with the other Parts of his Discourse. His Design manifestly was to move them to a serious Consideration of their past Sins, that they might repent of them, and make this Covenant with a hearty Resolution not to rebel against God, as they had often done; but to continue obedient to his Voice, that they might enjoy the promised Land. How could he hope to work them into a godly Sorrow for their past Transgressions, or a firm Resolution of acting better, by affirming, that God had not given them Ability to keep his Commandments? - Besides, this makes Moses contradict himself, for he plainly declares in the next Words, that God designed they should know and obey his Will. - That ye might know that I am the Lord your God.

Answ. Spiritual Blessings were not promised in this Covenant. Nor was a spiritual Obedience required of the People therein. No other than temporal Favours were promised, in that Covenant. And no other than an external Obedience was required of the People therein, which they, as Men, without sanctifying Grace, were capable of yielding. And sometimes they did externally obey those Laws, which God gave them, then it went well with them. But when they rebelled, it went ill with them. And a spiritual Knowledge of God is not designed but a natural Knowledge of Him, as Creator, and their Preserver, and a bountiful Benefactor to them, as a Nation. And, therefore, Moses is far from contradicting himself, in affirming, that God had not given them an Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, Ears to hear in a spiritual Sense. The learned Man seems to disapprove of our Translation, and to prefer a different one. The Septuagint, and all ancient Translations, the Vulgate Latin, and Junius, read the Words negatively, as we do. The Lord hath not given. He

observes, that the Hebrew Particle, *al* is sometimes used in an interrogative Sense, the Prefix *h* being understood: And, is for reading the Words thus: And hath not the Lord given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear? The Meaning of which is, according to the Use of such Interrogations; and God hath given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, Ears to hear, even to this Time.

Answ. This Part is often acted by those who differ from us. Hebrew Particles, and Greek Prepositions, are a large Field. wherein they exercise their critical Skill, in order to pervert the Scripture. It is freely granted, that the Hebrew Particle, is sometimes so translated, where the Scope and Subject of the Writer require it. But that is no Proof that it should be thus rendered in these Words. For being negatively taken it supplies no ill Sense: Or which is contrary to other Parts of Scripture and the Analogy of Faith. And, therefore, our Version may justly be allowed.

Allowing our Translation, he says, It is absurd to suppose he (Moses) means, that God had not given them a Capacity to understand, consider, and obey, his Will, for then he could not have justly blamed them for not doing better; but that they had as little reflected upon the Wonders they had seen; and observed the Precepts given them, as if God had not blessed them with these Faculties, but they were quite blind and deaf.

Answ. 1. It is absurd to conceive that God may not justly blame Men for not perfectly performing His Will, though to them It is impossible, through an Inability, which attends them: Because their Incapacity to yield perfect Obedience to God's Commands, is the Effect of Sin. That Incapacity, therefore is no Excuse for their Defects in Obedience.

2. It is a very forced and unnatural Sense, which the learned Man puts upon the Text. Moses says, The Lord hath not given you an Heart to perceive. That is to say, according to this Writer: "You have not well used those Powers, wherewith God hath endowed you; but have acted, as if you had them not." What can be more unnatural than this? The Words of Moses, express what God had not done; but it seems, they are to be understood of what this People had not done. He speaks of God indeed; but in Fact he hath no Regard to him, he wholly and only respects the People. This is not to interpret, but contradict the Scripture, He adds: An Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, may denote an understanding Heart, seeing Eyes, and hearing Ears; not a bare Faculty of perceiving, seeing, and hearing; but a good Disposition to understand and obey, acquired by that Faculty.

Answ. 1. An evil Heart cannot exert good Acts, whereby a good Disposition may be acquired. The Hearts of all Men are naturally evil and desperately wicked, how, therefore, is it possible, for them to put forth good Acts, in order to acquire a good Disposition? It is as reasonable to think, that an evil Tree may bear good Fruit: Or a bitter Fountain may send forth sweet Streams, which all know to be impossible.

2. According to what is here said, the meaning of Moses must be this, when he says, the Lord hath not given you, etc. Ye have not acquired an understanding Heart, seeing Eyes, and hearing Ears. He affirms what God had not done for this People; but he does not mean as he speaks; his Meaning is, what they had not done for themselves. Can greater Violence be offered to Language than this is? God hath not given, Moses says; but he means, ye have not acquired; as this Author will have it. Moses says one Thing but means quite another. And designs to express what the

People had not done, by asserting what God had not done. Farther, the Author observes that, Moses says not that God had denied them a Capacity and Means sufficient to understand and do his Will; but that he had not given them an understanding Heart, and an obedient Will, or had not made them wise and good Men.

Answ. 1. Men destitute of spiritual Wisdom and Goodness, are incapable of understanding and doing the Will of God in an acceptable manner. 2. The Author's Meaning is not, that God makes Men wise and good; but that those, who are wise and good, have made themselves so, by a proper Use of such Means as he afforded them for that Purpose, when they had no spiritual Wisdom, or Goodness, in them. So that it is supposed, or taken for granted, that Men may act wisely, before they have Wisdom, and do that which is good, before they have Goodness in them. Whereupon, and in Consequence of which, they become wise and good. If this is true, then those who are in the Flesh may please God. He proceeds thus: When it is said, that God had not given these Blessings, this is not to be understood of his Intention, as if he was not willing to give them; but may be understood of the Event only, that he had not actually given them, whatever was the Cause. That is said to be given, which is accepted; and that not to be given, which is refused by him, to whom it was offered. - God was willing to give them true Wisdom, and to have made them virtuous God does not actually bestow these Things, is Men's wilful neglect of Means, and wickedly resisting his Grace.

Answ. 1. This Discourse supposes, that God was prevented doing what He really intended to do, through their Obstinacy and Perverseness. His Will, therefore, was resisted, or overcome, by their stubborn and perverse Will. Which the divine Will never can be in any Instance. For, who hath resisted His Will?

2. It is taken for granted, without offering the least Proof, that Men may act wisely, and make Choice of Holiness, before they are wise and holy. Than which, there is nothing more false. Full Proof, I hope, is given thereof, above. Yea, that no Aid whatsoever, can assist the carnal Mind to become subject to the Law of God. And, therefore, no Acts of Holiness can be exerted, by an unregenerate Man.

3. The Will of Man, in Regeneration is wholly passive. It neither wills, nor nills. It neither concurs with divine Grace therein, nor opposes. Nor is it possible that it should. For, no Proposal is made to the Mind, whether it will receive a holy, and gracious Disposition, or not. Such a Disposition, or a Principle of Holiness, is immediately, and imperceptibly created, or infused into the Soul. The Will, therefore, hath not an Opportunity of exerting itself, either in a way of Choice, or Refusal.

4. If that is true, which this Writer pleads for, the Holiness and Happiness of Men, is, at least, as much owing to themselves, as to the Grace of God. For, divine Grace, according, to his Sentiments, cannot be effectual, without the Concurrence of the human Will. And our Holiness and Happiness, must ultimately be resolved, into our Will, as the Cause thereof, and not the Will of God. And, therefore, boasting, in ourselves, upon this Principle, is not, nor can be excluded. Wherefore, this Doctrine is repugnant to the Scripture, which excludes all boasting in Men. As to Holiness, we are nothing casually; but by the Grace of God, we are what we are. Unto Him, therefore, let us ever ascribe the Glory.

FOOTNOTES ft1 If any should object to this, and say, an Act of Sin in the Non-elect Angels, expelled out of them that Holiness, which was con-created with them: And an Act of Sin in Adam expelled out of him that Holiness, which was con-created with him, why therefore, may it not be concluded, that sinful Actions in a Believer may possibly expel Grace our of his Heart, or cause it to become extinct? I would answer thus: God, in endowing those Angels with Holiness, in their Creation, did not intend, that they should enjoy Himself for ever, by Means thereof. Nor did He design that Adam should enjoy Himself for ever, by Means of that Holiness wherewith he endowed him in his Creation. But it is his, Design, that Believers should enjoy Himself for ever, by means of that Holiness, wherewith He endows them in their new Creation. And therefore, though those Angels lost their Holiness and Adam also lost his, which was con-created with him, it doth not follow, that Believers may lose those gracious Habits, or that holy Principle, with which they are endowed in their new Creation. Again, the Divine Nature in Believers, never concurs with the Flesh in Acts of Sin; but lusteth against it. And the Prevalence of the Flesh against that Nature, effects no Change in it, for it still remains what it was. And the Continuance of its Being in the Soul depends not upon his Acts; but absolutely on the Will of God, who infused or created it. If indeed, God created this Principle without an Intention, that by means of it, those, in whom it is, should enjoy Himself for ever, it might become extinct. But as He did create it with such an Intention, it cannot. Or, if this Principle itself were to sin, or if the Mind, according to this Principle were to sin, its Nature would thereupon be changed, or it would become extinct; but that it doth not, nor ever will. Hence with respect unto it, the Apostle says: It is no more I that do it; but sin, that dwelleth in me. Upon the whole, I think, it may be concluded rarely, that holy Habits created of God, with a Purpose, that by Means thereof, those, in whom they are, may come to the blissful Enjoyment of Himself, can never be lost, through any Cause whatsoever. ft2 Vol. of Sermons, by Mr. Joseph Morris, Page 267.

S. Job's Epitaph Explained

Job's Epitaph Explained by John Brine {London: John Ward, 1755}

SERMON 22 JOB'S EPITAPH EXPLAINED A SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF MRS.

ELIZABETH TURNER, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE, OCTOBER 14, 1755 Printed for JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal-Exchange: And Sold by GEORGE KEITH, at the Bible and Crown, Gracechurch-Street; and by JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal Exchange.

London 1755.

{Job 19:25-27} For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. And though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another; though my Reins be consumed within me.

GOD, who is the sovereign Disposer of all Things, hath been pleased to remove by Death, a very worthy Person, which mournful Dispensation, I am desired to improve, by explaining these Words, amongst you, at this Time.

Every attentive Reader will readily observe, that these are the Words of Job. Concerning whom a most honourable Testimony is given by God himself, viz. That he had not his Equal in Holiness, on the Earth. Satan dared to accuse him with a Want of Integrity; and desired Leave to afflict him. The Lord complied with his Desire, to try the Faith and exercise the Patience of this most excellent Person. His Children, who were the Delight of his Eyes, and his growing Hopes, were taken from him, in a very affecting and awful Manner. He was stripped of all his Substance, which was great. At once deprived of all his Descendants, and reduced to Penury, from affluent Circumstances. In these melancholy Changes he behaved himself, in a becoming Manner; with great Patience and Resignation, saying, The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord. Satan, notwithstanding, renews his Charge against him, and impudently tells God, that if he should afflict his Person, he would curse him to his Face. God gives Permission to Satan to do this. He goes forth, and smites Job with sore Boils, from the Sole of his Foot unto his Crown. So that, as he expresses it, he escaped with the Skin of his Teeth. That is to say, his Gums only were free from those noisome and painful Ulcers, wherewithal he was smitten. In this sad Condition, for some Time, he conducted himself, in a patient and submissive Manner. But at length, thro' Weakness, he became impatient, and uttered rash and unbecoming Speeches, cursed the Day of his Birth, Those who are most eminent in Holiness, without continual Supplies of Grace, will not be able to bear patiently, long and heavy Afflictions. His Friends, who came to visit and comfort him, were filled with Astonishment at his deplorable Case, and entertained a mistaken Opinion concerning him; they thought he was a Hypocrite, which must add much Weight to his Affliction. In his Debates with them, he asserted and bravely defended his Integrity, against their false Charge

of Hypocrisy. After representing, in this Chapter, the Greatness of his Affliction, and the Neglect and Unkindness of his Relations, Friends, Acquaintance, and even of his Servants, under it, in very strong and striking Language, he fixes his Thoughts upon his Dissolution. He wishes not for a pompous Funeral; but for a Monument to be erected to his Memory, and desires that the Words of the Text should be the Inscription on it, that so the Remembrance of his Faith might be perpetuated to all succeeding Generations. O that my Words were now written. O that they were printed in a Book: That they were graven with an Iron Pen, and Lead, in the Rock for ever. This important and earnest Wish of his is granted, and the Memory of his Faith will not be lost, while the Earth endures. In this Inscription, or Epitaph, the following Things are observable:

I. He asserts his Interest in a living Redeemer. I know that my Redeemer liveth.

II. That he should stand at the latter Day upon the Earth.

III. He expresses the Consumption of his mortal Frame.

IV. That in his Flesh he should see God.

4 V. Describes the Advantage and Nature of that happy Vision.

VI. Suggests, that the entire Consumption of his Body in the Grave was no Objection to it, nor should prevent it.

I. The holy Man asserts his Interest in a living Redeemer.

1. Some understand this of God the Father, who delivers his Church and People out of Affliction and Trouble. But it best agrees to Christ, who stood at the latter Day upon the Earth, and obtained eternal Redemption for us by his Sufferings and Death. And, in the most proper Sense, he is our {lawg} Redeemer; for he is that unto us, and hath done that for us, which the Name imports.

{#1.} He is our near Kinsman, or is nearly allied unto us; as the Person was to be, who acted the Part of a Redeemer under the Levitical Dispensation. A Brother, an Uncle, or an Uncle's Son, had the Right of Redemption. Christ was of the same Nature with us: Forasmuch then as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, Christ also himself likewise took Part of the same. He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. They are of one Nature: And they are not only of the same Nature, but are also of one sovereign and gracious Decree. For, I apprehend, that it is not merely Identity, or Sameness of Nature, that is designed; but near Alliance and Union is intended. Christ the Head, and his People the Members, were included in the same sovereign Purpose. He was foreordained, as the First-born, and they were predestinated to be his Junior Brethren. This Divine Decree gave Subsistence unto that near Union and Relation, which there is between him and them. And, therefore, he is not ashamed to call them Brethren. He being our near Kinsman, the Right of Redemption was his.

{2.} He is our Revenger. The Person, under the Law, who endeavoured to avenge the Death of a Man slain, on him that flew him, is called the Revenger, as we translate it, or, as some render it, the Redeemer of Blood. {Numbers 35:19; Numbers 35:21}. Our Blessed Lord is our Redeemer in this Strife. For, according unto the first Promise, he hath broke the Head of the grand Adversary of our Souls, Satan, by whom we were involved in Ruin. I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, between thy Seed and her Seed; it shall break thine Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel

Our glorious Revenger hath destroyed him, that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil. And hath spoiled Principalities and Powers, and made a Shew of them openly. Hath triumphed over all the infernal Spirits, as a complete Victor. He led Captivity Captive, and, in Consequence of that, the Prey is taken from the Mighty, and the lawful Captives are delivered.

{3.} Christ hath redeemed our Persons from justly-deserved Destruction. Our Apostasy from God, the Depravity of our Nature, and the Guilt which we have contracted, expose us to the Curse of the Law, and the vindictive Displeasure of God. Our Saviour, in the Fulness of Time, was made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law: And, by being made a Curse for us, he redeemed us from the Law's Curse. In him we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins. In Vertue of his Death, which was the Price of our Redemption, we are delivered from that Obnoxiousness, which we were under, to suffer Divine Wrath and Vengeance.

{4.} He obtained for us a Right to the heavenly Inheritance. We have forfeited a Title to Life, and cannot claim the Enjoyment of future Blessedness, as our Due, because of our Guilt. That is an Obstacle and Bar to our Happiness. The Blessed Redeemer, by his Sacrifice, removed the Impediments to our Felicity; and by his Subjection to the Law, and Obedience unto all its Precepts, as our Surety, he hath acquired for us a legal Title unto eternal Life. The immortal Crown of Glory, is a Crown of Righteousness: And God, in the Character of a righteous Judge, will place it on the Heads of the Saints. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that Day; and not to me only, but unto all them also Who love his Appearing. Grace reigns gloriously unto eternal Life; but its Reign is through Righteousness, by Jesus Christ our Lord. For, being justified freely, we are made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life. And, therefore, there is an inseparable Connection between Justification and Glorification. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.

2. He lives, I know that my Redeemer liveth. Job doth not say, He shall live, or he hath lived; but in the present Tense, Liveth.

{1.} We may observe he existed then. His human Nature at that Time had not Subsistence. He did not exist as Man: But he always existed in his Divine Nature. He was before the Mountains were settled, etc. Then was he by the Father, as one brought up with him. Christ: the Word was in the Beginning, i.e. in the Commencement of Time; and, therefore, his Existence must be prior to Time, and was eternal, or without Beginning. For, if he was when measurable Duration began, his Existence must have been of earlier Date than that Duration, and, consequently, eternal. Because it is absurd to suppose, that there is a limited Date, which is not included in measurable Duration. This glorious Person is the same Yesterday, and To-day, and for ever.

{2.} He lives. In him is Life, and the Life was the Light of Men. Life he hath in himself. And he is the Life, as he is the Way and the Truth. With him is the Fountain of Life. And natural, spiritual, and eternal Life, is derived from him. We live, as Men, by Vertue of his Almighty Will. He communicates to us, as Christians, a Principle of heavenly Life, and by his gracious Influences, he preserves, and maintains it. And our blissful Life, in the future State, will spring from him.

{3.} Christ lives, and ever will live, as Man: As our Surety he submitted unto Death, in order to redeem and save us. But, being raised from the Dead, he dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion Over him. For in that he died, he died unto Sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto

God. Hence he says of himself, I am he that liveth, and was dead: And behold, I am alive for evermore. And because he lives, we shall live also.

3. Job knew him to be his living Redeemer. I know that my Redeemer liveth. He had an Assurance of an Interest in him. As the Church had, who said, My beloved is mine, and I am his. Likewise the Apostle, whose Language is this: He loved me, and gave himself for me. Some seem to think, that this Assurance is essential to every Act of Faith: Or, that Faith is never acted without it. I confess, I can't but be of Opinion, that this is a very great Mistake, and that there may be many precious Acts of Faith put forth, wherein this Persuasion of an Interest in him is not enjoyed. This I will say, that every Person who is the happy subject of the Grace of Faith, hath proper Foundation of such a firm Persuasion of a personal Interest in a dear Redeemer, But I cannot be prevailed with to think, that Faith is at no Time acted on Christ, as a Redeemer, with but this Assurance, of an Interest in him, and in There are two Ways whereby this Assurance may be ingenerated in holy Souls.

{1.} By the Witness of the Spirit. He beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God. This, I apprehend, is an immediate and positive Act of his upon our Minds, powerfully applying some particular Promise, or Promises to us, which are suitable to our Case and present Frame; by which powerful Application, Unbelief is subdued, and we are encouraged to embrace the Promise, and to conclude upon our own Interest, in those precious Benefits, which are therein exhibited to our Faith.

{2.} By a Discernment of that in us, which is the Effect of Divine Favour, and of an Interest in, this living Redeemer. Spiritual Knowledge, holy Desires, and heavenly Affections, are sure Evidences of an Interest in the Love of God, and in Christ. He, who is the Subject of Sanctification, may safely conclude, that he is the Object of a Divine Choice to Salvation; God hath from the Beginning chosen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit. Those whose Minds are, in any Measure, spiritualized, are Members of Christ, as a Head of Life and Influence, and interested in him, as a living Redeemer, though they may often be afraid, they are not; because of the Presence and Power of that contrary Principle of Sin, which they feel very active in them. If we are called with an holy Calling, or if Christ is made unto us Sanctification, he is also made unto us Redemption. Job knew, that the Root of the Matter was in him, and, therefore, was sensible of his Interest in a Redeemer. Hence we may observe, that Faith is not Conjecture, or merely Opinion, it is Knowledge. He hath given us an Understanding, that we might know him that is true. And this is most excellent Knowledge, nothing is comparable to it. All Things are to be accounted Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. The holy Man knew, that his Redeemer would stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. This Phrase, the latter Day, may be understood of the near closing of the Legal Dispensation, or Jewish Oeconomy, and the Introduction of the Evangelical State. The original Word {μωq} stand, hath various Significations. To rise: To be stable and firm: To rise again: To stand against. I shall consider it in each of these Senses.

1. The Sense may be, he shall rise out of {the Particle I[often expresses out of } the Dust, or Earth. So the learned Noldius renders this Phrase. f1 The Incarnation of Christ, or his Assumption of our Nature, is the Matter expressed; if taken in this View. We are called Dust, because that is the Original of our mortal Frame: Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return. He knoweth our Frame, and remembereth that we are Dust. Our Redeemer is the Seed of the Woman, for he was

made of a Woman. Conceived and Born. Thus He, who is the Truth, sprung out of the Earth, according to that Prediction and Promise: Truth shall spring out of the Earth. This supernatural Production of the human Nature of our Lord, fitted it for its Union with his Divine Person, and unto that blessed Work, which was therein to be accomplished. He being, in a proper Sense, the Seed of the Woman, his Nature is the same with ours; but absolutely free from that Defilement, which attends us. And, therefore, he is an High Priest, which becomes us. Holy, harmless, and undefiled.

2. He stood, and stood firm upon the Earth. Christ dwelt, or tabernacled among Men. And was firm, steady, and stable, in the midst of all the Temptations, Oppositions, and cruel Persecutions, which he met with. Hell and Earth, Men and Devils combined against him, and he suffered grievously from both. Under all his Sufferings, he behaved with amazing Firmness of Mind. He did not fail, nor was discouraged. He set his Face like a Flint, and was not at all ashamed. When he was apprehended, with what Majesty did he conduct himself, laying to the Multitude, who came to take him, Whom seek ye? They answer, Jesus of Nazareth. He replies, I am he. If ye seek me, let these go their way. And, Voluntarily surrenders himself. When he was before the High Priest, what Fortitude and Intrepidity did he discover, though insulted and blasphemed by the insolent and rude Croud that were about him. He gave his Back to the Smilers, his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair, and hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting. And when he was in the Presence of Pilate, he was no less courageous. Not the least Sign of Fear discovered itself in his Countenance, Language, or Conduct. When he was mocked, derided, and most cruelly treated by the merciless Soldiers, he behaved with the same Greatness of Mind. The Ignominy and all the Tortures of the Cross he bore in an undaunted Manner. Presented himself to Divine Justice a willing Victim for our Sins, and endured the terrible Shock of the Wrath of God, without sinking, or fainting under it. At once he shewed himself to be the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the Lamb of God. The Courage of the Lion, and the Meekness of the Lamb were united in him, under his most dolorous and unparalleled Sufferings. He was led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearer is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth. Magnanimity without Haughtiness, Meekness without Meanness and Demission of Spirit, our Saviour discovered throughout the astonishing Tragedy of his Death. Thus the God shone through the Man: Or, in other Words, the Divine Powers of the blessed Jesus displayed themselves in supporting his human Nature under all suffered.

3. Our Lord rose again. In this Sense is the Word to be understood sometimes. Thy dead Men shall live, my dead Body shall they arise, or rise again {zwmwqy}: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust, for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and the Earth shall cast out the Dead. {Isaiah 26:19} The blessed Jesus made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death. But it was impossible that he should be held of the Bands of Death. The Divine Father, in the Character of a Judge, inflicted Punishment on him, and in that Character he dispatched from Heaven, a Messenger of Justice, to roll away the Stone from the Door of the Sepulchre, wherein the Lord lay, honourably to set free his imprisoned Body. Thus he was raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father. Which is a full Evidence of his Approbation, of what Christ had done and suffered for us.

4. He will stand against the Earth, when he shall appear, the second Time, without Sin unto Salvation. This is his unalterable Resolution. I will ransom them from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death. O Death, I will be thy Plagues; O Grave, I will be thy, Destruction, Repentance shall be hid from mine Eyes. Then, Death will be swallowed up in Victory. Which holy

Job had in View, as his following Words evince. Before I enter upon the Explanation of them, it will be proper to answer some Objections, which are raised against their literal Sense. Which is Job's Belief of the Resurrection of his Body, notwithstanding its Consumption in the Grave. Socinus denies this Sense, and some who follow him herein object thus:

{1.} Jewish Writers, who labour to prove the Resurrection, never produce these Words to confirm it, and, therefore, it seems to them not likely to be the true Sense. I answer, the Sun certainly shines at Noon, though blind Men see it not. This Objection deserves no other Answer. We know that Jewish Guides, in the Time of our Lord's being on the Earth, were blind, Leaders of the Blind. And I know no Reason we have to think they see, since their Rejection, and Wrath is come upon that People to the uttermost.

{2.} How could Job know the sublime Mysteries of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the happy Resurrection of the Just? I answer, 1. By a Revelation before given, that the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head, or destroy the Works of the Devil. If this Answer satisfies not, I add, 2. He might know these Mysteries by Inspiration. Let me, in my Turn, ask these Objectors, how Job could know, that he should be freed from his present Affliction? His Flesh become fresh as a Child's? The Vigor of his emaciated Body be renewed? His Life prolonged? And his Substance vastly increased? How could he then know either of these Things? If it is answered by Inspiration, or immediate Revelation. Then I say, might he not become acquainted with the sublime Mysteries mentioned, in the same Manner? Was not he inspired? Surely he was. He was one of those holy Men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Why, therefore, should it be thought he knew nothing of Evangelical Mysteries, but what was revealed before his own Time?

{3.} It is said, that a metaphorical Interpretation of the following Phrases agrees with the Context, and Sequel. I answer, it is true, that Job did, after this, see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living, in that wonderful Change, which took place in his Circumstances. But, there is not the least Evidence given by him, either before or after the Text, that he had then the Knowledge of that Change, or the least Hope and Expectation of it. Which is the Point to be proved. It is not the Fact, which can support the Objection; but Job's Knowledge of that future Fact, only can countenance it. And such Knowledge he had not. Having removed these Objections, I proceed to observe, III. Holy Job expresses the Consumption of his mortal Frame.

After, or beside, my Skin; that is to say, this beautiful Covering, which incloses all the Parts and Members of my Body, is to be consumed, and not only so; but after, or beside that, they destroy this. The Verb is impersonal, and Destroyers are understood. Our Translation well supplies Worms. Concerning which Job had before spoke thus: I will say unto Corruption, Thou art my Father; and to the Worm, Thou art my Mother, and my Sister. They destroy This. It is an elegant Conciseness in Speech, much like that which the Apostle uses: "This Corruptible, and This Mortal; that is, this corruptible, and this mortal Body. It is a demonstrative Mode of speaking. He named, not his Body, scarcely knowing what to call it, by reason it was so grievously emaciated: But pointing with his Finger to it, and uttering this Phrase, he very emphatically expresses the Consumption of it, when it should be covered, and fed upon by Worms. The original Word signifies to destroy, as Beasts were destroyed in Sacrifice, and as Trees are destroyed by being cut down. And, therefore, holy Job speaks not of the present Wasting of his Body, by those noisome Ulcers,

wherewith it was then all over covered. But he intends the entire Consumption of his mortal Frame, when committed to the Ground, or lodged in the silent Grave. And it is to me astonishing, that any should raise a Scruple concerning a Point, which is so clearly expressed. Obscurity in the Phrase is pretended as the Reason, but that is not the Cause. Indeed, the Phrase is concise, but it is not obscure. The true Reason is, it is a strong Proof, that Job must, be acquainted with the happy Resurrection of the Just, which the Socinians, and Persons socinianized, say was then unknown. This is the true Cause or their disallowing the literal Sense, and contending for a metaphorical one. Not the Obscurity of the Text. As Noldius well argues: It is a destructive Excision, that is designed, like that of felling Trees, and slaying Beasts. The Socinians, therefore, act vainly, and those who with them, pretend, that this Place does not treat of the Resurrection from the Dead, but only of a temporal Restoration. For, that, after a total Consumption by no means could be expected. Job speaks of Things that he knew: I know, says he. But such was not a temporal Restoration, whereas that is a Benefit of this Life, {which depended on the Condition and Free-will of God} Job could not know, or promise it to himself. Then he had no temporal Hope. Which is what he publishes often. Besides, the Words foregoing, {which intimate this Confession and Triumph of Faith} Signify something greater and more important, than a Hope of a Restoration to the Benefits of this Life. f2

Reason there is none to think, that Job, in these Phrases, designs the Wasting of his Flesh by Affliction, while he was living; but there are solid Reasons, for, interpreting them, of an entire Consumption of his mortal Frame upon his Decease. The Thoughts of which were not terrifying to him, because he had in View a happy Resurrection, as the following Phrase evinces.

IV. He declares his Faith, that in his Flesh he should see God.

1. Some understand it, of seeing Christ as cloathed with Flesh, or in human Nature. The Word was made Flesh. And, the Divine Glories, of the blessed Jesus will eternally be viewed by the Saints, shining in and through his human Nature, which Prospect will fill them with the highest Delight. And, his Will it is, that those whom the Father hath given him may be with him where he is, that they may behold his Glory. But this is not what Job intends by this Phrase, in my Flesh. For,

2. He designs Flesh which was properly his own, and a constituent Part of himself. His Sense is evidently this: Though, or notwithstanding, the entire Consumption of my mortal Frame by destroying Worms, yet in my Flesh, raised to a new, immortal, and happy Life, in a Reunion with my Soul, I shall enjoy a blissful sight of God. This Corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal shall put on Immortality. He speaks of that, in this Phrase, which he speaks of in the preceding Phrases; in them, he expresses the destructive Excision of his Body; in this, he declares his Belief of its Restoration to a blessed Life after: Or, notwithstanding that Excision, 3. Job knew that he should see God.

{1.} Enjoy a Prospect of the Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, in that gracious and kind Part each acted in his Favour.

[1.] The Father, who, from everlasting, infinitely loved his People, chose them to Salvation, and fixed upon the wise and gracious Method of their Recovery, Blessed them with all spiritual Blessings in Christ. Gave his Son to them, and for them, at the Time appointed. On the Foundation of his Fulfilment of the Law for them, he justifies their Persons. Thro' his Death and Sacrifice he

pardons their Sins, and delivers them from justly deserved Punishment. He sends his Spirit into their Hearts to regenerate, sanctify, comfort, and preserve them safely to that eternal Glory, unto which he calls them. And all this he doth for them, as the Effect of the Riches of his Kindness, thro' Jesus Christ, without the least Motive and Inducement in them. The View whereof, wilt for ever possess their Souls with Joy inconceivable, and holy Adoration.

[2.] Christ will also be beheld by the Saints; in the Freeness and Intenseness of his Love. Who became a Subject of the Law for their sakes. Fully obeyed it, as their Surety, and thereby brought in everlasting Righteousness for them. Laid down his Life, rumored Death in their stead, that he might redeem them to God, and deliver them from Curse, Wrath and Vengeance, in such a Way as comports with Divine Justice, as well as magnifies the Riches of Divine Grace. How great must that Pleasure be, which will arise from a View of the Love, Compassion, and Kindness of a dear Redeemer, and of all the numerous Ways wherein he hath made a Discovery thereof?

[3.] The blessed Spirit, in the important Part which he acts in the stupendous Design of our Salvation. He comes into the Hearts of God's People. Quickens them when dead in Sin. Makes them meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Guides them, comforts, revives, seals and establishes them. Dwells in them, and will abide with them for ever, though they often grieve him by their provoking Carriage. He maintains the good Work begun in them, and will perfect it. Oh, what Delight will spring from a Prospect of the gracious Actings of Father, Son, and Spirit, in our Favour! No Tongue can express it.

{2.} The Divine Perfections will also be clearly seen by the Saints, as they are displayed, in their Recovery from Ruin, and Advancement to Happiness and Glory. Sovereignty is the Basis whereon it rests, and the absolute Cause into which it must be resolved. For, if any Thing is the mere Effect of the Free-will of God, the Salvation of Sinners most certainly is. The Reason why God saves guilty Creatures is not because it is fit they should be saved. If it was so, their Salvation would not be the Effect of his good Pleasure, nor would it be free with him to save, or not save them. Because, God is not at Liberty to act, or not act, what it is fit for him to act. True it is, he saves us in a Way that is fit, condecant, and becoming himself; nor could he do otherwise: But it is not because it is fit that we should be saved, that God resolved upon our Salvation. This Design is the Result of his sovereign Will, no Perfection of his Nature requiring it. And, therefore, hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, or leaves in a State of Impenitence. Again, infinite Wisdom abundantly shines in this Affair; The Means fixed upon to bring about our Salvation are sufficient and effectual, so that the grand Design cannot fail of being accomplished. And every noble End respecting God himself, and the Subjects of this Redemption, was had in View, and fully secured. The highest Glory redounds to all the Perfections of the Deity in this Business. Full Provision is made for advancing the Honour of every Divine Attribute. As the Riches of Grace, Kindness and Mercy are gloriously displayed herein; so the Holiness and inflexible Justice of God is vindicated, and illustriously shines through the Whole of this amazing Design. Sinners are freely pardoned, and eternally saved, to the Praise of the Glory of Divine Grace. And, infinite Indignation against Sin is manifested, in the Infliction of Punishment on our Redeemer, with Relation unto our Guilt, which was made his by imputation, on the Part of God the Father, and by a voluntary Susception of it on his Part. Mercy and Grace, Holiness and Justice, harmonize, and equally triumph, in our Remission. Eternal Life is a free Gift of God to us; but we are furnished with a legal Right unto it, through the Obedience of Christ. And, the Evangelical Scheme advances the

Honour of the Law infinitely above the Glory, which it could have had by our perfect Obedience to all its holy Precepts, even unto Eternity. That is magnified and made honourable in our overlaying Salvation, through the Righteousness, and Sacrifice of our dear Redeemer. Besides, a Meetness is imparted to us, in order to our Enjoyment of future Bliss. None are brought to Heaven without Holiness, to prepare and fit them for that State of Blessedness. And Pride is hid from Man. All Boasting is excluded in those, who are saved. Shame and Confusion for their Iniquities, they are obliged to acknowledge is only their Due, in that wise and holy Method, which God hath fixed upon, to bring them unto the Fruition of himself. Farther, all our Enemies are conquered, vanquished, and utterly destroyed, Sin, Satan, Hell, and Death. And, this Victory was obtained for us in our Nature, as taken into Union with the Son of God, whereby it was fitted to accomplish all the grand and noble Views, which were intended, and resolved upon in the Divine Counsels, relating to our Redemption. Therein, therefore, God hath abounded towards us, in all Wisdom and Prudence. And every other Perfection of the Deity hath an equal Shine in this adorable Design. Truth, Faithfulness, Immutability, and infinite Power. Who, that duly considers these Things, can forbear to express his Wonder, in the admiring Language of the Apostle: O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God: How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! These Things the Saints will for ever be conversant about, and have in full Prospect, when raised from the State of the Dead. O happy Vision! O transporting View! And the Prospect of them hereafter will be immediate, clear, permanent, uninterrupted, and endless. This the Faith of holy Job was now fixed upon, and, therefore, it is no Wonder, that he was, at this Time, so much elevated, and so earnestly desired, that the Words he expressed might be preferred till Time should be no more. They are truly worthy of perpetual Remembrance, nor shall they be forgot to Eternity.

V. The holy Man describes the Advantage and Nature of this Vision. Wherein several Particulars are to be observed. He says,

1. Whom I shall see for myself. The Particle {yI} for myself, sometimes denotes personal Benefit and Advantage. The Happiness of the Saints will very much consist in this Vision of God. Hence, our Lord says: This is Life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. An immediate, clear, and constant View of the Divine Perfections, as exercised and displayed in our Salvation, will certainly produce, and maintain the highest Satisfaction and Delight, in our Minds for evermore. A Sight of infinite Goodness, Grace, Kindness, and Mercy, as acting in perfect Agreement with infinite Holiness and Justice, under the Direction of infinite Wisdom, in the Affair of our Recovery, and Salvation, must raise in our Souls the greater Pleasure, and a holy Adoration. For, every Thing that is grand, noble, good, and wise, is therein contained. And, therefore, complete Felicity: Or, all that our ennobled and enlarged Minds can wish for, is comprized in this beatific Vision.

{1.} Sometimes this Particle expresses the Presence and Nearness of an Object to a Person. The holy Man knew, that he should see God near him. Behold him not as an Object at a Distance, which is the Case with the Saints now; but as present with him, or near to him. And, therefore, this Sight of God will be clear and full. There will be no Need of a Medium, in the future State, to present to our View the Object of our chief Joy. For, there we shall be with him, and see him, as he is.

{2.} In some Instances, the Particle seems to have the sense of before. f3 And it may well be thought to mean this here: Whom I shall see before me. The future View of God, in the heavenly State, as it will be near, so it will be direct. Christ is represented, as fitting in the Midst of the Throne, and the Church, as standing round about it. Which is a more advantageous Situation, for all the adoring Spectators to enjoy a direct Sight of him. And their Views of him, as he is crowned with Glory and Honour, will possess them with Joy inconceivable. Their grateful Minds will certainly be filled with exquisite Pleasure, at seeing him advanced to such Dignity, who bore the Shame, and endured the Torture, of the Cross, for their sakes.

2. Mine Eyes shall behold.

{1.} The Saints will see God with the Eye of their Mind. Their Understanding shall then be wholly freed from Darkness, which now attends it. And they will be rendered capable of seeing, in a perfect Manner, the Glory of God in the Person of Christ. Their Conceptions of heavenly Mysteries will not be imperfect, as now they are; but absolutely without Defect, and Mixture of Error. Nor, will they be interrupted by any Cause whatever, in their Contemplations on the Display of the Perfections of the Deity, in the stupendous Design of their eternal Redemption. Their Prospects of the sublime and deep Things of God, will be then most extensive. For, they shall see, as they are seen, and know, as they are known. They will clearly discern the Love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Their Ideas of the Divine Counsels relating to their Salvation, will then be perfectly just. And their Apprehensions of the Wisdom and Condecency of the Way of their Recovery, will be exact, and full. Then they shall behold, with delightful Amazement, how Grace reigns through Righteousness unto eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. That Divine Justice equally triumphs, with Divine Grace, in their Pardon, Acceptance, and Glorification, on the Foundation of the Obedience and Sacrifice of the Son of God. Who can determine which they will most admire, when they are brought to Glory, the Grace of God, which is the Cause and Origin of it, or his Wisdom and Justice, which are so illustriously displayed, in their Recovery from Ruin, and Advancement to that State of Dignity, and immortal Bliss? I am persuaded, that no one can.

{2.} They will behold Christ, who is their Lord, and their God, with their bodily Eyes. And, there is Reason to think, that holy Job designed this, by the Phrase. The Eyes of my Body, which are much impaired, and almost ready to sink in my Head, and are likely to be soon closed, shall hereafter see God, who is my living Redeemer, in that Glory, which he will for ever possess. The bodily Eyes of the Saints, when raised from the Dead, will be rendered capable of steadily looking upon the glorified Body of Christ, whose Face shines like the Sun in its full Strength. The dazzling Glories of his human Nature will not then offend, or be too much for their Sight. That will be fitted for beholding those glorious Rays of Light, which, in this mortal State, it can by no means bear. And, in this Vision of the Blessed Jesus, no small Part of our Happiness will consist.

3. Holy Job says, and not another, or a Stranger, as the Word {rz} signifies.

{1.} Some understand it of a Hypocrite, who is a Stranger to the Grace of God. And, most certain it is, that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord. This beatifical Vision would not be agreeable to an unsanctified Mind, because it is destitute of a Disposition, which is suitable to the Nature of it. The Enjoyment of the heavenly Inheritance is impossible, without a Meetness for it. But,

{2.} I think it is best to understand the Phrase of another or strange Body. The holy Man was persuaded, that the Body, wherein he should see God, would be his own, and not another. This Sense well agrees with what he has before expressed, and, therefore, it is much preferable to the former. That very same Body, which is now in Union with the Soul, and which, after Death, will be reduced to Dust, shall rise again, and be reunited to the Mind. How great soever, the Difficulties may be, which attend the Resurrection of the same Body, they are not insuperable, to infinite Wisdom, and Almighty Power, whereby it is to be effected. Job had a firm Persuasion hereof. And, therefore, VI. He suggests, that his Consumption, in the Grave, was no Objection to it, nor should prevent it:

Though my Reins be consumed within me. Notwithstanding, the mortal Frame of the Saints shall be consumed, or resolved into Dust, in the silent Grave, it shall be raised again, into an immortal, spiritual, and glorious Life, be reunited to their perfected Souls, and they shall in their entire Persons, for ever, enjoy a blissful Vision of God; and a dear Redeemer. Some read the Phrase without the Supplement, though. And consider it, as a concise, abrupt, and elegant Speech, wherein Job expresses his earnest Desire of enjoying the Resurrection State. The Reins, they think, may be understood of the Affections, which is not unfrequent, and by the Consumption of them, they apprehend, that Job expresses the Ardency of his Desires after that happy State, which he now had in Prospect, and whereof he so clearly before speaks. If this is the Sense of the Phrase, then Job's Design is to acquaint his Friends, that his Desires were vehement after the Enjoyment of that consummate Bliss, which would succeed his happy Resurrection from the Dead, This was the Matter of the most earnest Wish of the Apostle Paul, who speaks thus: If by any means I might attain to the Resurrection of the Dead; not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. He had in View that Perfection, whereof he knew his Soul would be possessed after Death, before the Resurrection, but his Wishes were extended farther, even unto that Glory, which will succeed the happy Resurrection of the Just. And certain it is, that the Views of Job, at this Time, were of the same Extent. This Prospect by Faith of future Blessedness, supported him under his extraordinary Afflictions, and was the Foundation of his Triumph, in his present View and Expectation of Death, and of the entire Consumption of his mortal Frame, in the Grave.

Thus I have endeavoured to explain these copious Words, as briefly as I could. The principal Design of Funeral Sermons, is not to bestow Encomiums on the Dead. And I confess, that I have not much Inclination to it, nor Satisfaction in it. But, with respect to the Worthy Person, on Account of whole Decease, I was at this Time desired to treat on this Subject, I think I may say, without Imputation of flattering her Memory, that she was prudent, humble, and modest; of a tender and sympathizing Disposition. In Friendship sincere and steady. - That she filled up every Relation, in which Providence placed her, in a becoming Manner. As a Child she was obedient and dutiful: As a Spouse very affectionate, and truly faithful. As a Child she was obedient and dutiful: As a Spouse very affectionate, and truly faithful. As a Mother extremely tender, and solicitously concerned, for the Good of her Children, especially for the Welfare of their Souls. And, therefore, she did not fail of giving them pious Instructions, from Time to Time. O that those Instructions may never be forgot by you; but be deeply impressed upon your Hearts, and be productive of those good Effects, which she intended, and so earnestly desired. In her Youth, she was called by Divine Grace, and made a Profession of her Faith in Christ, and gave up herself, first to the Lord, and

then unto his People, according to the Will of God. And walked regularly, in Fellowship, with a Church of Christ. Through bodily Weakness, occasioned, as I suppose, by a nervous Disorder, she was prevented attending on publick Worship, for some Years. In her last Affliction, which was exceedingly great, I am informed, that she was very comfortable, and, as the Time of her Dissolution grew nigh, the Strength of her Faith increased, in Covenant-love, and, therefore, Death was not a Terror to her. Which she expressed in Words to this Purpose: Though this frail Body shudders, through Pain, I am not afraid to die; for I am sure, the Covenant of Grace is sealed to me, and is a sure one. Tho' my Flesh and my Heart fail, God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever. This View of her Interest in the Covenant of Grace, kept her Mind composed, resigned, and even chearful, in the Prospect of approaching Death. Various important Inferences may be drawn from what hath been delivered, on this noble subject. Since we are sinful, mortal, and dying Creatures, surely, we ought to be humble. Art thou a mortal Creature, which must soon turn to Corruption, and mingle with the Dust, and art thou proud? Then I say, thou art a Fool. Thou Beauty, who admirest thyself, on Account of the nice Proportion of thy Parts, the Comeliness of thy Features, and because of thy fine Complexion: Think, O think with thyself, what an horrible Spectacle thou wilt quickly be, when thy Countenance shall be changed, and thou shalt be sent away. Consider, that thou art now the Subject of Lusts, which are infinitely more hateful, than the loathsome Worms, which will prey upon, and consume thy Flesh, in the Grave. Due Thoughts of our Original, Tendency, and End, will pull down our Pride, and abase our haughty Minds. Swelling Looks, proud Language, and a disdainful Behaviour, extremely ill become Creatures, who are destined to Putrefaction, and Rottenness, which is our Case.

Again, Christ alone is the Author of our Redemption. He only was equal to it. He freely undertook it, and he hath obtained eternal Redemption for us, by his Sufferings, and Death. And, therefore, our Hope of Pardon, and Deliverance from the Curse of the Law, and the Wrath of God, ought to be fixed on him, and him alone. For, nothing which we can do, nor any Thing which we have, to offer unto God, will ever compensate for our Crimes, expiate our Guilt, and free us from that Condemnation, unto which we are so justly obnoxious, in Consequence of Sin. Farther, only Views by Faith of the Redemption of Christ, can furnish our Minds with solid Peace, Joy, and Triumph, in the Prospect of approaching Death. For, upon no other Foundation, will sinful Man be able to stand, before God, in Judgment. All other Ways of Relief, will certainly fail us. But on this Ground, our most important Interest is secure. Once more, the Saints will eternally admire, and celebrate the Praises of redeeming Love, in Language like this: Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood. And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God, and his Father; to him be Glory and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Qui Postremus ex Pulvere {Terra} surget: on the Particle I[ft2 Caeterum, pqn quum notet Excisionem destructivam {qualis Sylvae excisae, Esa. 10:34, vel Victimarum mactarum, Esa. 29:1} frustra sunt Sociniani, & qui cum iis pertendunt, Locum hunc non agere de Resurrectione ex mortuis; sed tantum de Restitutione temporali. Namhaec post pqn & totalem Dialasin, nullo modo expectari potuit. Jobus loquitur de iis quae novit {yt{dy yna} inquit 5:23. Ut talis non fuit temporalis Restitutio, {quod pendebat a Conditione, & Voluntate Dei libera} Jobus scire, aut promittere sibi non potest. Imo, Spem temporalem nullam habuit. Quod dispalescit ex Cap. 7:21 & 17:13, 14, & 19:8, 9, 10, & seq. Sed & Verba antecedentia {Intimatio ad hancFidei Confessionem & Triumphum} scribi in Libro, etc. majus aliquid prae serunt, quam ut de Spe ad

Restitutionem hujus Vitae explicari possint. Annot. & Vindic. No. 80 ft3 I refer the Reader to Noldius for Satisfaction, as to the different Senses given of the particle.

S. Motives to Love and Unity Among Calvinists

Motives to Love and Unity Among Calvinists, Who Differ on Some Points by John Brine {London: John Ward, 1753}

SERMON 18 MOTIVES TO LOVE AND UNITY AMONG CALVINISTS, WHO DIFFER IN SOME POINTS A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTOPHILUS, PHILALETES, AND PHILAGATHUS.

Wherein is contained an ANSWER to Mr. ALVEREY JACKSON'S Question Answered, Whether saving Faith in CHRIST is a Duty required by the moral Law, of all those who live under the Gospel Revelation?

Printed and Sold by JOHN WARD, at the King's-Arms, Cornhill, against the Royal-Exchange; GEORGE KEITH, at the Bible and Crown in Grace-Church-Street; and by JOHN EYNON, at a Print- Shop on the North-Side of the Royal-Exchange. London 1753.

CHRISTOPHILUS and Philalethes were excellent Persons, firmly attached to the Christian Religion, and, many Years, intimate Friendship subsisted between them. But they had different Apprehensions, in some Particulars, about which they several Times conversed. And, as in this imperfect State, the best of Men may not think alike, in all Respects, thro' a Variety of Causes, Prejudice and undue Resentment sometimes get Possession in their Minds, both against Opinions, which they think are not true, and those who hold them. It seems, this was the Fact, in the two worthy Persons above-mentioned: For, that Amity and Friendship entirely ceased, which they had a long Time cultivated to mutual Advantage; and Displeasure filled the Breast of each.

Philagathus, receiving Information of it, was much affected with Grief, on Account thereof. He, therefore, formed a Resolution to make a particular Enquiry, concerning their Differences in Opinion, and, if possible, to bring, them unto a Reconciliation. That he might execute this generous and laudable Design, he gave each a kind Invitation to his House, which was gratefully accepted by both. They came at the Time he desired. He quickly acquainted them with the Information he had received, with the Grief it occasioned him, and with his good Intention, in desiring the Favour of their Company; and expressed his Hope, that Christian Friendship might be renewed, and continue to subsist between them, notwithstanding a small Difference, in their Apprehensions, about some particular Points of Doctrine. He thought it very proper solemnly to address God, upon this important Occasion, for the Aid and Instruction of the holy Spirit, herein they both agreed with him. He desired Christophilus to pray, which he did, with that Reverence, Humility, and Fervency, as greatly affected both himself and Philalethes. He requested the Favour of Philalethes to succeed him in that good Work; he readily consented; and, therein, he discovered such an Acquaintance with, and Savour of evangelical Truths, as much delighted not only himself, but Christophilus also. Philagathus closed this Service with a very suitable and pathetic Request to Heaven, for a Blessing upon the Conversation designed.

And, then, addressing himself to them, he said, My dear Brethren in Christ, {#for such I acknowledge you both to be} it was with very great Grief I heard, that, that Friendship, which

subsisted between you many Years, is now broke, and a mutual Animosity succeeds it in your Breasts, on Account only, I am persuaded, of some lesser Differences, in your Conceptions, wherein none of the Essentials of Christianity are affected, on which Side soever the Mistake may be. My Desire, therefore, is, that you would be pleased to permit me to mention the peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel, and that you will express your Assent, or Dissent, as you approve, or disapprove, of those Principles. Both agreed to this Proposal.

Whereupon he thus said:

I. I will begin with the Foundation of our Recovery and Happiness, viz. Election. God chose a certain Number of Men to Salvation. This Act was eternal, and it is the mere Effect of sovereign Favour, without any Motive to the divine Will, in the Persons who are the Objects of this Choice. Farther, it is irrevocable; and it ascertains the Sanctification, in Time, of all those who are included in this Decree, and their complete Happiness and Felicity hereafter.

II. Adam was constituted the Representative of all his natural Descendants; they were included with him in the Covenant of Works, and, therefore, his Act of Disobedience was imputed to them; in and with him they came under the Condemnation of the Law, and from him they derive moral Depravity and Corruption. So that all Men naturally are Subjects of Darkness, Obstinacy, and Rebellion against God; are averse to Good, and inclined to Evil.

III. A Covenant of Peace was entered into, between the divine Persons; wherein, full and effectual Provision is made for the Salvation of all the Elect, in such a Way, as exalts the Glory of all the infinite Perfections of God. In this Covenant Christ engaged to do and suffer, what Law and Justice required, in order to the Salvation of the Elect, viz. to obey the Law, which he punctually did; his Obedience is accepted for, and imputed to them, and that is the sole Matter of their Justification, before God. He, also, voluntarily became obliged to offer himself a Sacrifice for their Sins, to redeem them from Curse and Wrath. Agreeably to this Obligation, which he took upon him, he bore their Sins, was made a Curse, endured the vindictive Displeasure of God, suffered and died, in their Room and Stead. His Sufferings and Death were satisfactory to the Law and Justice of God, for their whole Guilt; from hence, in Equity, results a Right to Pardon and Impunity, unto every one of them. And this Redemption is proper and peculiar to the Elect of God, or it is not of larger Extent.

IV. Regeneration and Sanctification are the proper Work of God, in the Souls of Men. Regeneration is absolutely necessary, none can be fared without it. Men are passive in it, and the human Will is not a concurring Cause, with the Grace of God, in its Production. God operates effectually herein, and is not, nor can be frustrated of his End in his gracious Influences on the Souls of his People. The regenerate Principle consents unto the Law, that it is good, delights in, and serves it. So that true Faith in Christ is productive of holy Obedience, and worketh by Love.

V. Those who are effectually called, according to God's Purpose, in the Decree of Election, shall certainly persevere unto the End, and be eternally saved, notwithstanding the Treachery of their own Hearts, the Temptations of Satan, and the numerous Snares to which they are exposed in this World.

Christophilus. I cannot but express my Belief and great Approbation of the Doctrines, which you, Philagathus, have mentioned.

Philaethes. I declare myself no less satisfied of the Truth and Importance of those Principles; and hope, that I shall always most religiously regard them, as Doctrines calculated to promote the Glory of God, in the certain and complete Salvation of his Chosen.

Philagathus. Since you both are firmly persuaded of the Truth of the several Articles, which I have briefly mentioned, I cannot think it is possible, that either of you can embrace any Opinion which affects the Essentials of Christianity, what Difference soever may be in your Apprehensions, or in the Mode of your expressing yourselves, in Relation to those Points; and, therefore, surely, Friendship may be revived and continue to subsist between you, notwithstanding some lesser Differences, in your Conceptions, and Mode of Language.

Christophilus. I must be obliged to acquaint you, that Philaethes gives into some over nice and subtle Speculations, relating to the Doctrine of Election. He will needs have it, that God chose his People, considered as unfallen, or in the pure Mass, and that he decreed to permit the Fall, with a View to illustrate the Glory of his free Grace and Mercy, in the Salvation of the Elect, thro' the Mediation of Christ. This Notion of his he hath advanced in Public, which, in my humble Opinion, could not edify common Hearers; for which Reason, I took the Liberty to remonstrate against it, whereby I incurred his Displeasure, not a little, it seems.

Philaethes. This is the Fact, I acknowledge it.

Philagathus. Good, wise, and very learned Men have had different Apprehensions of this Matter; but, as to the Substance of the Doctrine of Election, they were fully agreed. The Difference of Rating this Doctrine, as above the Consideration of the Fall, or under it, is only in Apice logico, in a logical Point; it respects the Order, not the Cause of the Decree; Divines, who differ in this, are agreed that sovereign Favour is the Cause thereof. And, as to the Edification of common Hearers, I am of Opinion, that this Sentiment may be represented in such a plain and easy Light, as to answer that important End. If, indeed, Philaethes is not capable of representing it in a Manner intelligible to common Capacities, he would act more wisely to decline the Advancement of it. Which, it must be confessed, is not the Talent of every one, who may discern the Truth in his Mind. There is certainly no Cause why the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian should differ with one another; they are agreed in the substance of the Doctrine of Election, and, therefore, ought to bear with one another in the different Manner of Rating it. Divines who lived in the former Century wisely did so.

Christophilus. I have another Thing to object to Philaethes.

Philagathus. What is that?

Christophilus. He affirms, that the Elect are united to Christ before Faith.

Philaethes. That is my Opinion. In the Act of Election, God considered its Objects in Christ, for he chose them in him. And, Grace was given them in Christ, before the World began. Besides, he represented the Elect of God, in his Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection; and he now represents his People, in his Session at the right Hand of God; hence they are said to fit together in heavenly Places in Christ. As Adam was constituted a representative Head to all his Seed, and they were considered in him: So Christ, in the Covenant of Grace, was constituted a representative Head to the Elect, and they were, from everlasting, considered in him.

Philagathus. I cannot perceive any Error in this. We were chosen in Christ, as a Head, says Zanchy. The same Author observes, because Christ our Head is risen, and sits in heavenly Places; therefore we are held and accounted of the Father to be raised, and sitting and living in Heaven. f1 God's Choice did completely terminate itself on him {#Christ} and us, us with him, and yet us in him; he having the Priority to be constituted a common Person and Root to us, for that is the Relation wherein we stand unto him, and in that Relation we were first chosen. Thus Dr. Goodwin. f2 Christophilus, I am also somewhat dissatisfied with Philalethes, because he maintains, that Adoption precedes Faith.

Philalethes. I apprehend that to be a Truth. Predestination to the Adoption of Children was an eternal Act of the divine Will, wherein God willed to be a Father to us, and that we should be Sons unto him, which made us such. For the Will of God to be a Father to us, and that we shall be Sons to him, constitutes our filial Relation unto him. Besides, all those who are the Subjects of Redemption by Christ, were considered therein as Sons and Children of God. It became him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect thro' Sufferings. In divine Repute, all were Sons for whom Christ died. Again, the holy Spirit is sent into our Hearts, because we are Sons; and, therefore, our filial Relation to God, is not subsequent upon, but precedaneous to the Mission of the Spirit, to regenerate and sanctify us: Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts. Regeneration is not Adoption, nor is the latter founded in the former, tho' they are sometimes not distinguished, but confounded; they are, I think, very distinct Blessings. If Adoption be understood of the Participation of those Honours, Privileges, and Blessings, unto which we have a Right as Sons, that is, at, upon, or after Regeneration, and doth not precede it. Thus it is sometimes taken, as in these Words: Waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.

Philagathus. This hath been the Opinion of eminent Divines. God putteth us into Christ, he chuseth us to be in him, to be married to him, and he hath betrothed us to him from everlasting; {#for Jesus Christ then betrothed himself unto us, when in Election he undertook for us with the Father} and so we became Sons-in-Law to God. - I am in this of learned Mr. Forb's Mind: That Adoption, as primitively it was in Predestination be flowed upon us, was not founded upon Redemption, or Christ's Obedience; but on Christ's being personally God's natural Son. Dr. Goodwin. f3 Christophilus. Another Thing in Philalethes is displeasing to me.

Philagathus. What is it?

Christophilus. He embraces the Antinomian Error of Justification before Faith.

Philalethes. That is my Sentiment; and, if it is a Mistake, I think it is abusively called an Antinomian, Error. Justification, properly speaking, as it seems to me, is an immanent Act in God, viz. the Act of his Will not to impute Sin to his Elect, but to impute to them the Righteousness of Christ; wherefore, in his Mind, they are discharged of Guilt, and reputed righteous. Now, as this is not a transient, but an immanent Act, it requires not so much as the present Existence of the Object, much less the Being of Faith in the Object justified. God's Purpose to lay their Sins on Christ necessarily supposes, that it was his Intention not to impute them unto their Persons: And his Decree, that Christ should come under their Obligation to the Law, that he might obey it for them, as necessarily supposes a Will in God to impute his Obedience to them, which is their Justification in the divine Mind. Yet, I deny not Justification, when it is understood of the declared

manifest State of this, or that particular Person, to be by Faith, and do not think that it is previous to Regeneration.

Philagathus. I am not able to discern the least Mistake in this Account of Justification. Permit me to recite what some eminent and learned Divines have said upon the Subject. Justification is understood either actively in Respect of God, who justifies, or passively in Respect of Man, who is justified. Justification active Signifies the Absolution of God, whereby he absolveth a guilty Man from Guilt, on Account of the Satisfaction of Christ, and reputeth him just for the Sake of his Righteousness imputed. From hence, first, it is evident, that this differs from passive Justification, because it is done by one undivided Act: But passive, which consists in the Application of the Righteousness of Christ, is not; for, as often as we sin, we should apply to us the Righteousness of Christ. Hence, in the Lord's Prayer, we are commanded to pray daily that God would remit to us our Sins. Secondly, active precedeth Faith, passive followeth, as that which is thro' Faith. For, thro' Faith, we receive Remission of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are sanctified. And, that active precedes Faith, may be proved. 1. Because every Object is prior to its Act, for this depends on that. 2. Because by the Act of believing, as Pareus teaches on Justification, Remission of Sins is not effected, but received. 3. Because, thro' the Satisfaction of Christ, we not only obtain Justification, but also

Faith itself, and Repentance, that is, the Circumcision of the Heart: For God hath blessed us with every spiritual Blessing in Christ. {Ephesians 1:3}. Yea, before Faith and Repentance, the Satisfaction of Christ is applied to us, as that on Account whereof we obtain effectual Grace to believe in Christ. The same Thing Daniel Toffanus teaches, who sometime was a most learned Divine in the Academy of Heidelberg, in an Epistle {#a Copy of which Lucius published, Professor at Basil} to Vorstius, whose Words are: You confound, says he to Vorstius, the Acquisition of Justification, and the Blotting out of Sin, which is done by the Blood of Christ, with the Application of it: Wherefore you feign to yourself a Contradiction, where there is no Contradiction: All the Elect are justified in Christ, if you respect his Merit, yea before they are born; and so, before we believe, we, are justified and redeemed in Christ; but afterwards he {#God} giveth Faith to his Elect, whereby they seek their Righteousness in Christ alone. Thus far Toffanus. Passive Justification is that by which a Person is absolved from Guilt, and reckoned righteous; or rather it is a Reception of Absolution from Guilt, and of the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ. The Sentence of Justification was:

I. Conceived in the Mind of God, by the Decree of Justifying. {Galatians 3:8}_ The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro' Faith.

II. It was pronounced in Christ our Head when he rose from the Dead. {2 Corinthians 5:10}. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases to them.

III. It is virtually pronounced on the first Relation which ariseth out of Faith ingenerated. {Romans 8:1}. There is therefore no Condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus.

IV. It is expressly pronounced by the Spirit of God, witnessing, with our Spirits, our Reconciliation with God. {Romans 5:5}. The Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the holy Spirit, who is given unto us. In this Witness of the Spirit, Justification itself doth not so properly consist, as the actual Perception of it, before granted, by a reflex Act of Faith. We think, that the Form of active

Justification is both a full Remission of Sins, and the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ; nor do we apprehend these Phrases to be the same, or to be confounded. f4 Thus far these learned Professors and Divines, and many other eminent Divines agree with them. Says Mr. Pemble, Sanctification and inherent Righteousness goes before our Justification and imputed Righteousness, but with a double Distinction of Justification. 1. In Foro Divino, in God's Sight; and this goeth before all our Sanctification, for, even whilst the Elect are unconverted, they are then actually justified and freed from all Sin by the Death of Christ: And God so esteems them as a free, and, having accepted that Satisfaction, is actually reconciled to them. By this Justification we are freed from the Guilt of our Sins; and, because that is done away, God in due Time proceeds to give us the Grace of Sanctification, to free us from Sin's Corruption still inherent in our Persons. 2. In Foro Conscientiae, in our own Sense; which is but the Revelation of God's former secret Act of accepting Christ's Righteousness to our Justification. The Manifestation of which, to our Hearts and Confidences, is the only Ground of our Peace and Comfort: And it follows our Sanctification, upon and after the Infusion of saving Faith, the only Instrument of this our Justification. This Distinction is needful to be observed, as giving Light to many Things. - 'Tis vain to think with the Arminians that Christ's Merits have made God only placabilem, not placatum, procured a Freedom that God may be reconciled, if he will and other Things concur, but not an actual Reconciliation. A silly Shift devised to uphold the Liberty of Man's Will, and the Universality of Grace. No, 'tis otherwise; the Ransom demanded is paid and accepted, full Satisfaction to the divine Justice is given and taken, all the Sins of the Elect are actually pardoned, God's Wrath for them suffered and overcome, he rests contented and appeased, the Debt-book is crossed, and the Hand-writing cancelled. This grand Transaction between God and the Mediator Christ Jesus was concluded upon and dispatched in Heaven long before we had any Being, either in Nature or Grace; yet the Benefit of it was ours, and belonged to us at that Time, tho' we never knew so much, till after that by Faith did apprehend it. As, in the like Case, Lands may be purchased, the Writings confirmed, the Estate conveyed and settled upon an Infant, tho' it know nothing of all, till it come to Age, and find by Experience the present Commodity of that which was provided for him long ago. And the Reason of all this, is, it is not our Faith that works God's Reconciliation with us, but Christ believed on by our Faith. Now his Merits are not therefore accepted of God, because we do believe, but because they of themselves are of such Worth and sufficiency, as do deserve his most favourable Acceptance of them for us. f5 Mr. Crandon, speaking of the Non-Imputation of Sin, and of the Imputation of Righteousness to the Elect, say: To what Time shall we reduce this Imputation to find its Original, if not to Eternity? When began God to reckon and account us righteous in Christ, or not to impute Sin to us, if he did not actually do it in himself before Time from Eternity? f6 The Reader, if he pleases, may consult him; he copiously treats on this Subject, with great Judgment and Strength of Reasoning. The late Dr. Ridgley hath these Words: When we speak of God's being reconciled to his Elect, according to the Tenor of his secret Will, before they believe, that is in Effect to say, that Justification, as it is an immanent Act in God, is antecedent to Faith, which is a certain Truth, inasmuch as Faith is a Fruit and Consequence thereof. - There are some, adds he, who not only speak of Justification before Faith, but from Eternity; and consider it as an immanent Act in God, in the same Sense as Election is said to be. I will not deny eternal Justification, provided it be considered as contain'd in God's secret Will, and not made the Rule, by which we are to determine ourselves to be in a justified State, and as such to have a Right and Title to eternal Life, before it is revealed, or apprehended by Faith. f7 Christophilus. I am surprised to find

so many able and learned Divines do maintain Justification before Faith, and agree that it is an immanent Act in God. There is no material Difference between the Opinion of Philalethes, and their Judgment, in this Point.

Philagathus. Why are you surprised?

Christophilus. Because, I have often heard that Notion spoken of with great Contempt by good Men, and have heard the Persons, who embrace it, represented in a very despicable Light, as Men of very little Consideration or Worth.

Philagathus. I believe you. But this was not the Case, in the last Century, says Mr. Crandon: The very Flower of all our Protestant Writers have asserted it in such Numbers as would fill up a Page to name them. Neither know I any one Writer, which {having not Occasion to manifest himself of the same Judgement} hath ever expressed himself to dissent from it, 'till Dr. Downham excepted against Master Pemble for delivering it, and that upon a strange Ground, that declared great Inadvertency in the Reading of the Dr. viz. that he believeth no Man had so written before Mr. Pemble. I think you pronounced it an Antinomian Error, did you not? Christophilus. I did, and esteemed it such. Philagathus. Mr. Candon observes, that Mr. Baxter reproached it in the same Manner: This, says he, I take to be the Sum of the Doctrine which Mr. Baxter asperseth with Antinomianism, which I believe no other, Papist, or Arminian, had done before him. I shall say no more to wipe away that Reproach cast on the Opinion, than Mr. Crandon did in Answer to the same Aspersion of Mr. Baxter's, viz. As well and properly might he have termed it Mahometanism; for as agreeable is it with the Principles of this, as of that. f8

Christophilus. I cannot but inform you, Philagathus, that Philalethes denies it to be the immediate Duty of unregenerate Men, who hear the Gospel, to believe in Christ, with special, or saving Faith.

Philalethes, I must confess, that I have not as yet met with clear and convincing Proof of that Point, nor with satisfactory Answers given to those Objections, which occasion my Scruples about it. Some Months since, a Friend of Christophilus's published a Pamphlet on that Subject, wherein he advances his Reasons for the Affirmative, and attempts to answer one Objection to his Opinion. In this Piece, he hath been pleased to treat me with great Contempt, and more than insinuates, that there are no Consequences, so bad and vile, but what do unavoidably follow, not granting the Truth of that for which he contends. I have carefully considered what he urges to support his Assertion; but my Doubts are not removed, nor in the least Degree abated, by any Thing he offers to Consideration. His Manner of handling the Subject is such, that if I had not other Reasons, than what arise from the Performance itself, I should not be at all inclined to bestow any Animadversions upon it: But, as I have Reasons for it of another Kind, which with me are not of little Moment, I shall attend unto the small Labour of a thorough Examination of his 'Answer' to the Question propounded, viz. Whether saving Faith in Christ is a Duty required by the moral Law, of all those who live under the Gospel Revelation? f9 I think it not improper to acquaint you, Philagathus, that I am persuaded, if the Desire of the Author had been complied withal, respecting the Revisal of his Manuscript, and if the Publication of it had been thought expedient, by those, under whose Correction, he wished it to pass, much less Room would have been left for displeasing Remarks upon it. My Authority is unquestionable, for what I now say. But my Business is to consider it, just as the Editor thought it fit, to make its Appearance in the World. And I will begin with observing some Mistakes and Inconsistencies, which are in it.

First, The Author apprehends, that there is no Difference between the Principle of Grace in Believers, and that holy Principle of Life which we had in Adam f10 The Image of God, wherein Man was created, consisted in a perfect Knowledge of God, and of his Duty according to the Nature of the Covenant, under which he then was, in a holy Affection to God, and in a habitual Disposition to Obedience. These Things ought constantly to be maintained again, the Socinians, who deny original Righteousness, to the Disparagement of human Nature, in its primitive State, and unto the Dishonour of God our Creator. For, to imagine, that God gave Existence to a reasonable Creature destitute of Principles, suited to enable it to walk before, and with him, in all holy Obedience unto his Will, is to cast impious Reproach on his Wisdom, Goodness, and Holiness. Nevertheless, there is a great Difference, between that Life which we had in Adam, and that which we now have. The gracious Principle in Believers, springs from the Fountain of eternal Love, in the Heart of God towards them, as the God of all Grace. But the Life we had in Adam did not. Our spiritual Life is derived from Christ, and by him it is maintained, and influenced in all its Acts, which the living holy Principle in Adam was not. Again, the regenerate Principle is a Disposition to Acts towards God, agreeable to the Nature of the new Revelation, which he hath given of himself in the Covenant of Grace. But the holy Principle in Adam was n Disposition unto, and exerted itself, in Acts of God, suitable to that Revelation, which the Covenant of Works gave of him. As the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace differ in Nature: So our Life unto God is of a different ind, according to the Difference and distinct Nature of the two Covenants: Says Dr. Owen: For neither would the Life of Adam be sufficient for us, to live unto God according to the Terms of the new Covenant; nor is the Life of Grace we now enjoy, suited to the Covenant, wherein, Adam, stood before God. Wherefore some Differences there between them, the principal whereof may be reduced into two Heads.

1. The Principle of this Life was wholly and entirely in Man himself. It was the Effect of another Cause, of that which was without him; namely, the Good Will and Power of God; but it was left to grow on no other Root, but what was in Man himself, It was wholly implanted in his Nature, and therein did its Springs lie. Actual Excitations, by Influence of Power from God, it should have had. For, no Principle of Operation can subsist in an Independence on God, nor itself unto Operation without his Concurrence. But, in the Life, whereunto we are renewed by Jesus Christ, the Fountain and Principle of it is not in ourselves but in him, as one common Head unto all that are made Partakers of him. He is our Life, { Colossians 1:3} and our Life {as to the Spring and Fountain of it} is hid with him in God. For he quickeneth us by his Spirit,{Romans 8:10}. And our spiritual Life, as in us, consists in the vital Actings of this his Spirit in us, for, without him, we can do nothing, { John 15:3}. By Virtue hereof, we walk in Newnesss of Life, {Romans 6:4}. We live therefore hereby, yet not so much we, as Christ liveth in us, { Galatians 2:20}.

2. There is a Difference between these Lives with Respect unto the Object of their vital Acts. For the Life, which we now lead by the Faith of the Son of God, hath sundry Objects of its Acting, which the other had not. For whereas all the Actings of our Faith and Love, that is, all our Obedience doth respect the Revelation that God makes of himself, and his Will unto us. There are now new Revelations of God in Christ, and, consequently, new Duties of Obedience required of us, as will afterwards appear. And other such Differences there are between them. The Life which we had in Adam, and that which we are renewed unto in Christ Jesus, are so far of the same Nature and Kind, as our Apostle manifests in sundry Places, {Ephesians 4:23-24; Colossians

3:10}, as that they serve to the same End and Purpose. From hence he proceeds to observe, That, with respect to the Life we bare in Christ, unregenerate Men never had it, neither deFacto, nor de Jure, in any State or Condition. Wherefore, with respect hereunto, they are dead only negatively; they have it not; but, with respect unto the Life we had in Adam, they are dead privatively, they have lost that Power of living unto God which they had. f11 Thus far he. Our spiritual Life, therefore, is not that Principle of Life, which we had in Adam restored to us, but another Principle, which we had not in him, either in Fact, or in Right. The Author assigns two Reasons to prove, that these Principles are the same. 1. The Use of the Terms renewed, and renewing, in Respect to the Work of Grace, in the Souls of Believers, { Ephesians 3:21; Ephesians 3:21; Colossians 3:10; Titus 3:5}. Renovation, says he, is not the making, producing, or bringing into Existence, a Thing that never was in Being before: But it is a new Framing of that which hath once existed; but hath been spoiled and defaced. f12

But, 1. This gracious Work is the Renovation of the Mind, and not of a Principle which was in the Mind, antecedent to it, and the Restoration of that Principle to its primitive Beauty, it having been defaced. 2. The Soul may be said to be renewed, with strict Propriety, by the Implantation of a new Principle of Life in it, when dead, even though that Principle differs from that living Principle, by Reason of the Absence of which, it was really dead. The Soul is renewed unto Life; but that Life is of a higher and nobler Kind, than that which Man originally possessed. 3. There is a Revival of the Principle of Grace in Believers, which is meant by Renewing, in { Ephesians 3:21} and { Colossians 3:10}. 2. The second Reason he calls a cogent and demonstrative Argument; it is this: It is not possible in the Nature of the Thing, that there should be two specifically different Images of the moral Perfections of God impressed upon a reasonable Creature, any more than that there are two Gods possessed of two different Kinds of moral Perfections. f13 If by a specific Difference be intended, that the one is holy, and the other not so, it is Blasphemously absurd to admit the Thought. But, 2. If by it is meant, that it is impossible, that a reasonable Creature should bear a more glorious Image of God, to qualify it for, and dispose it unto higher Acts of Obedience, than that which Adam bore, it must: be a Mistake, unless we will affirm, that the second Adam did not excel the first, as he was in his human Nature the Image of the invisible God, and that he was not called and disposed unto a higher Obedience than the first Adam was. Which is what, I hope this good Man will not care to assert. And it is into the Image of the second Adam, and not into the Image of the first Adam, that the Saints are changed, from Glory to Glory, by beholding the Glory of the Lord, with open Face. That an innocent Creature, that Adam, particularly, while innocent, was capable of receiving a Revelation of new Truths from God: That he was under an indispensable Obligation to believe the Truth of what God did, or might reveal unto him: And that an innocent Creature is capable of discerning not only the Truth of the Evangelical Revelation; but the Wisdom, Goodness, Grace, and Mercy of God, therein discovered, are all freely granted. For, the holy Angels adore and bless God upon a Discernment of Gospel-Mysteries: They are all Attention unto them, and, with intense Desire and the highest Delight, they constantly contemplate on them. The Grace of God, the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory following thereupon, are the Matter of their delightful Study, and of their holy Adoration, and will be so for evermore. But to say, that an innocent Creature could believe in Christ, on a Supposition of his being revealed to him in the Character of a Saviour, is to speak palpable Contradictions. And, therefore, the Author is grossly mistaken, in thinking that Adam, in a State of Innocency, would have been obliged unto, and could have believed in Christ, even upon the Supposition of a Revelation being given to him of

Christ in the Character of a Saviour. f14 Man must be, and must know himself to be lost, before he can believe in Christ to the Saving of his Soul.

Secondly, Another Mistake of the Author's is, he imagines, that the Life, which the Covenant of Works promises, is the same with that promised in the Covenant of Grace. f15 It is granted, that they are the same in Duration, both are eternal. They consist in Likeness to God: In the Enjoyment of him, and Communion with him. And, yet, they differ very much: In the former, Divine Benevolence to the innocent Creature is apprehended: A Sense of Divine Approbation of the innocent Creature is enjoyed: Therein the Glory of God, as Creator, Preserver, and Upholder of all Things is seen and adored: The guiltless Creature, hath a Persuasion of the endless Fruition of God, the Origin of Blessedness, and, therefore, this is a happy and glorious State. But the State of Bliss, promised in the Covenant of Grace, as much exceeds it in Glory, as the Ministration of the Spirit exceeds in Glory, the Ministration of Death, which is not to be conceived in Thought, much less can Language express that vast Difference. This Subject is so grand, sublime, glorious, and attractive, that with peculiar Pleasure I could dwell and enlarge upon it in my Meditations; but my narrow Limits will not allow of such Enlargement. I can only give you brief Hints for your further Consideration, and may the good Lord, by his Spirit, guide your Thoughts, and assist you to fix your Meditations on this most delightful and ravishing Theme. In the heavenly State, God is known, in the endearing Character of the God of all Grace. The exceeding Riches of his Kindness towards us, in Christ Jesus, are clearly, steadily, and without any Interruption, viewed by the Blessed for evermore. The eternal Son of God, as incarnate, God and Man in one Person, is always beheld, and the Divine Perfections through him. He is with inconceivable Delight, perpetually viewed as the Head and Husband of the Church, and each perfectly happy Member of him enjoys a constant transporting Sense of the Assertion of his Heart, which is suitable to the near Relation, wherein he stands, unto the Church, which is his Body and Fulness. They will all know the Satisfaction, Delight, and Complacency he takes, in their Blessedness, who once were the Travail of his Soul. The Saints will in Heaven be perfectly acquainted with the Dignity and Glory to which they are advanced, in being made Sons unto God, by Adoption. They shall for ever see Christ, as their Surety to God for them, and herein will open to View all the glorious Mysteries of Redemption, by his Sufferings and Death. And will contemplate on all the infinitely holy Properties of God, as they are displayed, in that stupendous Affair. Moreover, their Communion, with Father, Son, and Spirit, will be most near, and without the least Interruption. This is Heaven indeed. And such a State of Bliss and Glory it is, as the Covenant of Works neither knows, nor makes the least Discovery of. Says Dr. Owen, the whole of what was intrusted with Adam comes exceedingly short of what God hath now prepared, as the Inheritance of the Church. There is Grace in it, and Glory added unto it, which Adam neither had, nor could have Right unto. f16

Now, though Adam had not that Principle of Life, which is in Believers, which capacitates them to live unto God according to the Covenant of Grace: He had a Principle of Life in him, suited unto the Nature of the Covenant of Works. That Principle he lost and we all suffer a Privation of it, and so are dead in Trespasses and Sins, or are alienated from the Life of God. And, though the first Covenant did not promise to him the Enjoyment of God in a Mediator, yet it promised unto him the Enjoyment of God, as Creator; by his Sin he lost his Title to that Happiness, and became obnoxious unto eternal Death, or an everlasting Separation from God. And, therefore, it is true, that the Law promises Life eternal, on Condition of Obedience, though not the same with that

promised in the Covenant of Grace, Right unto which could not result from Obedience yielded to the Covenant of Works. It is also Truth, and not an idle Dream, that we are naturally dead, for we have lost that Life we had in Adam. Again, eternal Death in Hell is not a Fiction, but an awful Reality, threatened for Sin in the first Covenant. One would imagine, that this Writer was not thoroughly awake, and, therefore speaks, as here he does, That Death in Sin is a Dream, and eternal Death in Hell a Fiction, if Adam had not the same Life in Possession, as Believers now have, and if he had not the Life in Promise, which they have in Right, and shall eternally enjoy. f17

Thirdly, The Author observes, That those who appear most warm against Faith in Christ being a Duty, do yet own and acknowledge that Faith to be the Duty of all Men to whom the Gospel is preached, which the Scripture declares is a saving Faith. f18 These Persons, then, are a Parcel of extremely weak and silly Creatures, who thus contradict themselves. But the Contradiction will be found in Mr. Jackson, not in them. What is that Faith which they maintain, is the Duty of unconverted Sinners? It is a Belief of the Truth of the Report of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, in his Person, Offices, and Benefits. This he asserts to be saving Faith, than which there is nothing more false. Thus the Devils believe: Thus Simon Magus believed; and such a Faith as this is a Man may carry to Hell along with him. It is merely a rational Act excited in the Mind by rational Evident. This is not a Sinner's fleeing to, receiving of, and resting on the Lord Jesus Christ alone for Salvation, which, Mr. Jackson has before observed, is true saving Faith, f19 in perfect Contradiction to what he here affirms. So that this Argument to prove his Point is absolutely and entirely lost. It was no Instance of Kindness in the Editor to permit such an Error and Self-Contradiction, as this is, to see the Light. Friendship would have made Use of the Sponge, and wiped it out.

Fourthly, Another Mistake the Author is guilty of: viz. That regenerate, as well as unregenerate Persons, are under the Covenant of Works: The Subject of the moral Law is a reasonable Creature, considered as such; and it knows no Difference of Elect, or Non-elect, Regenerate, or Unregenerate, etc. f20 Since Unbelievers, as well as Believers, are by him spoken of, he must mean the moral Law {#under which both are, as he affirms} in the Form of Covenant, and not consider it, as a Rule of Conduct only, and, therefore, Believers, if this is true, lie under the Curse of the Covenant of Works. But I will not press hard on this Mistake, for believe, it was mere inadvertency in him. This, I also think, the Editor should have corrected.

I will now consider his Arguments, to prove, that special Faith in Christ is the immediate Duty of all who hear the Gospel. In Number his general Arguments are eight, and, therefore, if they are forcible, the Point is abundantly confirmed: But, as to the first, he seems to be convinced, that it hath very little, if any Weight at all in it. And the second cannot justly be thought, to have more than the first. The fifth is already fully answered, and proved to be a gross Mistake, and a Self-contradiction. The sixth is entirely impertinent. The seventh seems to be advanced only for the Sake of saying something, for no Man can possibly think it of any Force at all. The eighth is no other than an Objection to his Opinion, which he endeavours to prove absurd, and utterly destructive of all true Religion. The third and fourth coincide, or the fourth is nothing more, than a Conclusion arising from a Supposition of the Truth of the third, and, therefore, no great Skill in Disputation is discovered, in making that an Argument distinct from the third. So that, if his third Argument proves insufficient to bear the Weight of his Cause, it is likely to sink. However, there may be Reasons for taking some Notice of each Argument, and, therefore, I will not decline it.

First, Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ hath eternal Salvation inseparably affixed to it, by the Word and Promise of the faithful God, with which it is infallibly connected. f21 This is readily granted, and thankfully embraced, as a precious Truth: It receives Confirmation from the whole Gospel: And cannot be denied, without dreadfully corrupting, at least, if not overthrowing the Christian Scheme. For he that believes shall be saved. But what Degree of Proof does this afford, that special, supernatural Faith is the immediate Duty of every one who hears the Gospel preached? Not the least. Whereof the Author seems to be fully conscious, and, therefore, argues not at all from it, to establish what he had in View; but observes, what was not pertinent to be observed, under this Argument, viz. that those who obey not the Gospel, and receive not Christ, but oppose and reject him, sin, and perish. Which properly belongs to his second Argument. And that is this:

Secondly, It is equally clear, and as certainly declared in the Oracles of Truth, that the contrary to this Faith, even not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, is assigned as the Cause of Men's Condemnation, and stands reprov'd in the Word of God, as a damning Sin, which it could not possibly do, if Faith in Christ was not a Duty required by the Law. f22

1. This Argument ought to be considered in a Light directly opposite to the former, as expressing the contrary State of Unbelievers to that of Believers, according to the Gospel-declaration: He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. But, 2. As it is not inferrible from that Declaration, that the Faith of Believers is the procuring Cause of their Salvation: So it is not to be inferred from thence, that the Want of that special Faith in Unbelievers is the procuring Cause of their Damnation. That Declaration contains in it the different descriptive Characters, of those who are saved, and of those who are damned; but it assigns not special Faith to be the procuring Cause of the Salvation of the former; nor the Want of it to be a procuring Cause of the Damnation of the latter. 3. Unbelief is negative and positive. 1. Negative; as such it is twofold: {1.} The Want of Faith in Christ for Salvation, or of an Affiance and Trust in him to be saved by him. {2.} The Want of a Belief of, and reverential Regard to the Gospel. The former is not required by the Covenant of Works, and, therefore, the Want thereof brings not Men under its Curse: The latter is required in the Covenant of Works, and, consequently, the Want of that in Men is their Sin, and it renders them obnoxious to its dreadful Curse. It is positive: This is an Opposition to, and Rejection of God's appointed Way of Salvation, by Jesus Christ, as unfit, yea, as Folly. And this is in the Heart of every unregenerate Man, even though he may give an Assent to the Truth of the Gospel. And for this he stands righteously condemned by the first Covenant. For that Covenant requires Men, not only to believe those Truths, which God reveals; but also, that they are worthy of himself, or becoming his Goodness, Holiness, and Wisdom. It is not the Want of special Faith in Christ, but the Want of a reverential Regard to the Gospel, and a positive Act of rejecting it as Folly, which involves Men in Guilt, and demerits Punishment, according to the Constitution of God, in the Law. If Men are eternally damned for Want of special Faith in Christ, they will suffer endless Torments, for Want of a Principle of Life, that they never had in any State, either in Fact, or in Right. Which to imagine, I must confers, is an Idea so severe, that I think, it cannot be reconciled, either to divine Goodness, or unto divine Justice. But there are sufficient Reasons for Men's Condemnation, without allowing this to be the Cause thereof, viz. original Guilt: By the Offence of one, judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation: Again, the Want of perfect Obedience to the Law: Human Nature was furnished with Ability to yield such Obedience, and the Loss of that Power is the

Consequence of Sin, and, therefore, it is just still to require it, and to punish Men for the Want thereof, which, I suppose, this Writer will acknowledge, though, in order to press me with a Difficulty, he expresses himself in such a Manner, as is not to the Advantage of the Doctrine of original Sin. That I do not impute to his Disbelief of that Doctrine, but unto Unskillfulness, for the Management of the Business, which he took in Hand. Besides, Men's Opposition to God's appointed Way of Salvation is another just Cause of Condemnation, of which every unregenerate Person is guilty. So that my Opinion leaves all the Fuel to feed the Flames of Hell, this Author can possibly desire, though he seems to be greatly afraid, that they will be extinguished, if it is admitted. But this Fear is entirely causeless. And, inasmuch as Men are capable of suffering Punishment for Sin, it is just with God to inflict Penalty upon them, though they cannot make Satisfaction for their Crimes, by all the Sufferings, which they are able to endure. Nor does my Opinion suppose the contrary. And I cannot but say, that the Author's Unfitness for the Talk, he imposed upon himself, in no small Degree, appears, in suggesting that it doth. The Equity of the Infliction of Punishment arises from Sin's Demerit, and, therefore, it is just to inflict it, though the Sinner is not able to make Satisfaction, by suffering Penalty. It is exceedingly weak, in our Author, to object Man's Incapacity to make Satisfaction for Sin, by suffering Penalty, unto the Justice of the Infliction of Punishment, which he does. It is a full Evidence, that he did not understand the Business wherein he was engaged, that he suggests my Opinion supposes it. How could the Editor suffer such Weakness to come forth into the World? Surely, he understood better; if not, the good Man's Performance had very ill Hap, in being referred unto his Correction. 4. The Author, in order to prove the Justice of punishing Gospel-Sinners, {#as he speaks} arminianizes, for, he insinuates, that God hath promised to unregenerate Men, that he will give his holy Spirit unto them, if they ask it, and that the Faith of the Report of the Gospel, that is an Assent to it, is abundantly sufficient to enable and encourage them to call on the Name of the Lord, or to pray for Faith. f23 Which are gross Mistakes. God hath made no Promise of bestowing spiritual Blessings on unregenerate Men, upon their Performance of any religious Services. Duties, not discharged in a spiritual Manner, are unacceptable to God, for without Faith it is impossible to please him, and no Promise of the Communication of Grace is made to them, or unto Performing them. And such are all the Duties of unregenerate Men. Besides, if Promises of Grace, and of Heaven itself, were made to the Unregenerate, on Condition they would humbly, and in earnest ask for both, at the Hand of God: Such is the cursed Opposition in their Hearts unto God, and all spiritual Good, that nothing could drive, draw, or encourage them to petition in earnest, for either. I can dare to affirm, that, if an Offer were to be made to a Sinner of enjoying Heaven, after his suffering Punishment for his Sins, a Million of Years, that Offer he would not accept. A Release from Hell is eligible, but the Enjoyment of Heaven is not desirable to a depraved Mind. For, Enmity neither can, nor will desire the Enjoyment of an Object, against which it is Enmity. Lust, or evil Concupiscence, is in a rational Nature; but itself is unreasonable and outrageous too: Hence it is represented as Madness, or irrational Fury. What good Men say sometimes, in expostulating with Sinners, upon this Subject, contradicts their own Experience; if they duly attended to that, they would never suggest, that any Considerations whatever, are sufficient to excite and encourage corrupt Nature to desire Holiness, Communion with God, and the Enjoyment of him. If that is possible, then, the Flesh may be prevailed upon to cease Lusting against the Spirit, and to unite with it, in its spiritual Actings. But alas! The Coldness, Formality, and Wanderings of Mind, in Prayer to God, even in the best, are a sad Evidence of the Mistake of all such Suggestions. If good Men were more cautious to express

themselves, agreeably to what they discern in themselves, we should have fewer of such Kind of Addresses to Sinners, than we have, through a Want of that Caution. I know not any Thing, wherein the genuine Acting of the gracious Principle in Believers, more clearly discovers itself, than in Desires of Holiness, of Communion with God, and after the Fruition of him, through Jesus Christ, If the carnal Mind may be wrought up hereunto, by any Sort of Motives and Considerations, I am sure it will be impossible to distinguish between Regeneracy, and Unregeneracy. It is no more possible, by any Means whatever, to cause the Flesh to chuse, adhere unto, and delight in God, than it is to draw the Spirit into hostile Acts against him. The Reason is clear; no Principle of Operation can ever be prevailed with, to act contrary to its Nature. And, therefore, no unsanctified Heart, will ever pray to God for Grace and Holiness. This is Men's dreadful Sin, and it justly exposes them unto direful Vengeance. But in his third Argument lies almost the entire Strength of his Cause, which, therefore shall be thoroughly weighed, and, whatever, properly belongs unto it, in the whole Performance, shall not be paired over, without Notice. It is this:

Thirdly, The holy Scripture declares, that Faith in Christ is a commanded Duty; and proves, that it is a Work, which, God, by the moral Law, requires of all Men, to whom the Gospel is preached. f24 That we may proceed clearly, in our Enquiries, into what we have now before us, I would observe, that the moral Law is to be considered, either as a Covenant of Works, or, merely, as a Law and Rule of Conduct: This twofold Consideration of the Law is absolutely necessary. For, without it, we must grant, that Believers, are under the Covenant of Works, or deny, that they are under the Law. Whereas, neither may be allowed. They are not under the Law, as a Covenant, but under Grace; nevertheless, they are not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ. Now the Question is plainly this: Whether Faith in Christ for Salvation is required by the Law as a Covenant? The Answer must be, I think, in the Negative; my Reasons for it are these: 1. The Law is not of Faith: It doth not present the Object of Faith, that all will allow. Nor doth it direct to the Act of Faith in Christ, as a Saviour. The Law, as a Covenant, requires Obedience, in order to Acceptance, and receiving the promised Reward. Do and live is the Language of it, but not believe and be saved: Yea, it is so far from requiring Faith in Christ for Salvation, that it allows not the Subject of it to hope for Deliverance from Misery. That Constitution is nothing but Death to the Sinner: The Soul that sins shall die. How, therefore, can it require Faith in Christ in order to Salvation? The Grace of the Gospel, by its Revelation, makes no Change in the legal Constitution; that is the same it was before the Discovery of Salvation in the Gospel, and so it will eternally remain. But this is no Bar to the Hope of a regenerate Man: For, 2. A Believer is dead to the Law, as a Covenant: He is brought from under its Power; and therefore, in acting Faith on Christ, he yields not Obedience to the first Covenant, which he must be supposed to do, if that Covenant required it. No Actings of Grace, which the new Covenant gives, are Obedience to the Commands of the old Covenant. 3. The Law is dead to a Believer. Now, that which is dead to him can't reasonably be thought to give him Direction about, and oblige him unto, the Actings of a Principle, in Consequence whereof its Death to him follows. The Exercise of Faith in Christ, therefore, is not Obedience to the Covenant of Works. 4. Until a Man, thro' the Law, is dead to the Law, he hath no Warrant to receive Christ as a Saviour, or to hope for Salvation through him. Conviction of Sin, a Sense of Misery, as justly deserved, and despairing of Relief from the Law and Works of it, in Order of Nature, at least, precede the first: Act of Faith on Christ for Salvation. The Act is of that Kind as necessarily supposes it. And as, in the Nature of the Thing, such an Act cannot be put forth, previous unto the Relinquishment of all Hope of Life by the Law, there is not any Thing, in the whole Gospel, which

directs and encourages Men to exert such an Act, without the Supposition of that Conviction wrought in them; which Conviction is the Effect of Regeneration; and, therefore, a Man is not under the first Covenant, even when he puts forth the first: Act of Faith on Christ. Now, tho' special, supernatural Faith is not required by the Covenant of Works, it requires a Belief of the Truth of every Revelation, which God, at any Time, shall be pleased to make of his Will to his Creature, Man, who is the Subject of that Covenant. 1. The first Covenant most certainly obliges Man to believe that is true, which God expresses. 2. The Christian Revelation hath such evident and indelible Characters of its divine Original, or that it really is a Revelation from God, as are abundantly sufficient to satisfy any rational, unprejudiced Enquirer. 3. That Covenant obliges Man to conclude upon the Wisdom and Holiness of all God's Designs and Acts about and towards his Creatures, both in a Way of Justice and Mercy. 4. The Mysteries of Redemption by Christ are expressed in Language, which is not above the Capacities of Men; and, therefore, they are able to perceive the Truth of those Mysteries, though they are not capable of understanding the real Nature of them, without an additional supernatural Revelation, or Illumination of the Mind, is graciously vouchsafed to them. Hence it follows, 5. Contempt cast upon the Gospel, or a Disapprobation and Rejection of the wise and gracious Method of Salvation by Christ, involves Men in Guilt, and justly subjects them to Punishment. And, especially, 6. If they, thro' Prejudice and Pride, throw off all Regard to Christian Doctrines, after a Conviction of their Truth, or being the Matter of divine Revelation. Many awful Instances of this Kind our perilous Times furnish us with. The first Covenant requires of Men a Belief of, and reverential Regard to, the Doctrine of the new Covenant, tho' it doth not oblige them unto acting Faith on Christ for Salvation. Every Man, who despises the Grace of the second Covenant, by so doing brings himself under the dreadful Curse of the first. This is what an holy innocent Creature would never do; but, upon the Revelation of it, he would give Credit to, and reverentially regard it. Thus do the holy Angels, as I before observed. And it is thro' Ignorance, Pride, and corrupt Prejudices, that Men disbelieve, and reject it as Folly, unto their just Condemnation, But thus far of the Law, as a Covenant, and of the Obligation it says Men under to believe, and not reject, the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Again, the moral Law is to be considered as a Law merely, or Rule of Action; as such, regenerate Persons are under it, and by its Authority they are obliged unto all the Actings of the regenerate Principle, in Faith, Repentance, Love, and evangelical Obedience. For, 1. The new Man, or the Believer, as a new Creature, is under the Command of the Law, to love God, and to love his Neighbour; and, consequently, he stands obliged unto all those Acts, by Vertue of that Command, unto which that new Principle in him is suited. 2. As by a new Revelation, both external and internal, new Objects of Love, Adoration, and Delight, are presented to his View, those Acts are the Matter of his Duty. Yea, 3. All the Actings of this Principle, in the future State of Glory, will be due unto God, by Vertue of the moral Law, which is no other than his Will, that his Creature, Man, should yield Obedience unto him in every State, suitable to those Principles wherewith he furnishes him, and unto those Discoveries of himself, which he graciously affords him. I am so far from thinking, that Believers are not, in this State, under the moral Law, or that their Acts of Faith, Repentance, Love, and filial Fear of God, are not Obedience to it in the present State, that I am most firmly persuaded, that they will be under that Law in Heaven, and that all their holy Acts of Love, Adoration, and Delight, in that blissful State, will be Obedience due to their heavenly Father, by Vertue thereof.

Mr. Jackson proposes two Things in this third Argument: 1. To prove that special Faith is required of unregenerate Men. 2. That it is the moral Law which requires that Faith.

1. For the Proof of the former, he produces several Scriptures: These Words of our Lord; This is the Work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent: Which Words contain a Declaration, that Believing in Christ for Salvation is necessary to the Enjoyment of eternal Life, and that Faith in him is an Act acceptable and pleasing to God; but afford no Proof, that it is required of Men in a State of Unregeneracy. To declare to unregenerate Persons the Necessity of Faith in order to Salvation, which is what our blessed Lord here does, falls very far short of asserting it to be their present Duty According to the Commandment of the everlasting God, the Gospel is made known to all Nations: That Commandment refers to the Publication of the Gospel among all Nations, and not unto the Obedience of Faith: And it is a Discovery of Inattention in Mr. Jackson, that he did not observe it. It is positive Unbelief, or an Opposition to, and Rejection of, the Gospel, as Foolishness, that is intended in { Romans 10:16; 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9}, which is highly criminal, and will be awfully punished by God. But what Proof arises from hence, that special, saving Faith is the Duty of unregenerate Men? Not the least.

2. He attempts to prove, that special Faith is a Duty required by the Covenant of Works: He means by the moral Law that Covenant, because he speaks of Unbelievers being under it, as I have before observed. I deny, that the Covenant of Works requires Believing in Christ for Salvation of any Man in the World, for the Reasons above-mentioned: And it is with some Degree of Boldness, that I shall insist upon this. That which requires Working for Life, as the Covenant of Works does, cannot injoin Believing unto Salvation and Life. It is wholly inconsistent with the Nature of that Covenant. But he thinks, if this Faith is not commanded by the moral Law, if it is required at all, then it must be by the Gospel, and so we shall make a Law of that. We are in no Danger of this, tho' the good Man seems to be greatly afraid of it: For, tho' we deny, that special Faith is required of any by the moral Law, considered as a Covenant of Works, we grant, that it requires it, considered as a Law merely, or Rule of Action, of all who are under it, and there are regenerate Persons. All others are under it, as a Covenant, and in that Form it requires it not. But I proceed to consider what the Author calls a fourth Argument:

Fourthly, For any Man to affirm, that this Faith in Christ is not required by the moral Law, is no less than in Effect to oppose and contradict the express Word of God, spoken unto us by Jesus Christ himself; by his beloved Disciple John, and by the great Apostle Paul. f25 This is not a new Argument; it is not distinct from, but the same with the Third, or at least a Conclusion arising from it, as every one will see. The Words of the Apostle John, which he produces, are these: And this is his Commandment that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. It is granted, that God requires regenerate Persons to act Faith on Christ: for Salvation; none deny it. The Author's Reasoning must be this: God requires those who are born again to exercise special Faith in Christ, therefore, he commands unregenerate Men who hear of him to act saving Faith in him: Or, his Reasoning must stand thus: We who are Believers, and not under the Law, as a Covenant of Works, but as a Rule of Conduct, are required to receive Christ for Salvation, therefore, Unbelievers, who are under the Law, as a Covenant. are commanded to believe in Christ to the Salvation of the Soul. The bare mention of which, I suppose, will be acknowledged a sufficient Refutation of it. The Words of the Apostle Paul, which are brought to prove the Point, are these: Now the End of the Commandment is Charity out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and

of Faith unfeigned { 1 Timothy 1:5}. If by the Commandment is intended the Ministration of the Gospel, as it is in { 1 Timothy 6:14}, then the Gospel, and not the Law, is that whereof the Apostle speaks: But I will not now insist upon that Sense, tho' something might be offered from the Context in Favour of it, because I will cut off all Cause of a Charge of Evasion. Be it so then, that the Commandment means the Law, it must not be understood as a Covenant of Works, as Unbelievers are under it; but as a Rule of Action, in which Sense Believers are under it: For, as a Covenant of Works, it knows nothing at all of a pure and sanctified Heart by the Grace of God, nor of a good, that is, a Conscience purged from Sin by the Blood of Christ, nor of unfeigned Faith in Christ for Salvation; there Things are not the End of the Law, as a Covenant of Works; but perpetual Purity of Mind and constant perfect Obedience in Life, unto all its Precepts. They are the End of it, as a Law merely, or Rule of Action unto the Saints, in which Sense only they are under it, and not as a Covenant. Nor do the Words of our Lord afford any Proof of this Matter: And have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith { Matthew 23:23}. Trust in God, as the Upholder and Preferrer of his Creatures, and as a bountiful Benefactor to them, and Credit to his Word, or a Belief of the Truth, Importance, Wisdom, and Holiness of whatever he reveals, is that Faith, which the Covenant of Works requires; but not Faith in Christ for Salvation. For, the Law is not of Faith, in that Sense. Obey, and live, are the Command, and the Promise of that Covenant: Not believe, and be saved. The Consequences, which the Author draws from the Denial of special Faith in Christ for Salvation being a Duty contained in, or required by the Covenant of Works, are merely imaginary. No Liberty is hereby given to Men to transgress the righteous Precepts of the first Covenant. They may not plunder their Neighbour, and fall to Cutting of Throats, because special Faith in Christ, is not their Duty. What the Author expresses of this Kind in several Places, is nothing but Rant, not Reasoning. f26 And it is an extremely unkind, and also a most false Insinuation of his, that I think Believers are freed from the Obligation of the moral Law. f27 Freed from it, as a Covenant, they are; if not, they are under its Curse. But, there is no one Principle, that I more firmly believe, than I do this, that Believers are now, and eternally will be under the moral Law, as a Rule of Action; nor shall I ever think otherwise, unless, I should happen to fall into such a wretched Infatuation, as to imagine, that there is no God, and that Believers are not Creatures. This leads me to his sixth Argument.

Sixthly f35, Such a Faith and Repentance, Love, and Fear of God, as are no Duties required by the Law of God, can have no Concern at all in the Holiness and Happiness of Men. f28 1. The Covenant of Works now requires of its subjects, and it required of Adam, Faith, but not Faith in Christ for Salvation; Love to God as supremely good and the Origin of Blessedness, but not, as the God of all Grace, for that Covenant makes no such Discovery of him. A Fear, or Reverence of God, as a Being possessed of all possible and infinite Perfections; but not a Fear of him, as a Sinpardoning God through a Mediator, for he had no Revelation of him, as such. And in these Things his Holiness very much consisted. Repentance was not required of him in a State of Integrity, for that necessarily supposes Guilt, in the Creature of whom it is required. And, therefore, there is a Faith, a Love to God, and a Fear of him, which bear no Relation to the Evangelical Scheme of Salvation by Jesus Christ, wherein the Holiness and Happiness of Man have a Concern. And, there are Duties required of all Men. 2. The Covenant of Works, by Implication, requires Repentance: And to repent and turn to God is the Duty of all Men; it would have been so, if no Provision had been made for the Salvation of one Individual of Mankind. Yea, it is the Duty of the Devil, of all the Devils in Hell, to repent and turn unto God, by Obedience, though they never

will. 3. I most freely allow, that Faith in Christ for Salvation, Evangelical Repentance, Love to God in a Mediator, and a holy Reverence of him, as a new Covenant-God, are Duties of the moral Law, though not, as it is in the Form of a Covenant; but as a Rule of Conduct to Believers, who are under it as a Law, but are not under it as a Covenant; in that Sense the Law is dead to them, they are dead to it, and none of the Actings of the gracious Principle in them is Obedience to the Covenant of Works. I am fully of Opinion with Dr. Owen, who says: There are some Graces, some Duties belonging unto Evangelical Holiness, which the Law knows nothing of: Such are the Mortification of Sin, godly Sorrow, daily Cleansing of our Hearts and Minds; not to mention the more sublime and spiritual Acts of Communion with God by Christ, with all that Faith and Love, which is required towards him. For although these Things may be contained in the Law radically, as it requires universal Obedience unto God, yet they are not so formally. And it is not used as the Means to beget Faith and Holiness in us: This is the Effect of the Gospel only. f29 An Answer is before given unto what he offers under this Argument, to prove, that the holy Principle in Adam, and the gracious Principle in Believers, are the same; and also unto what he advances to prove, that the Life promised in the Covenant of Works is the very same with that Life, which is provided and promised in the new Covenant; this Argument may therefore be dismissed. Proceed we now unto the Seventh:

Seventhly, It is no where declared, affirmed, nor taught in the Word of God, that Faith in Christ is not a Duty; or that it is not the Duty of those to whom he is made known to believe in Christ. I have never yet found the Place where it is written, it is not the Duty of those who have a Bible to believe in Christ. f30 Doth not the Author know, that he who affirms is to prove, and, that, if Proof cannot be given of what is affirmed, it is reasonable and just to embrace the Negative? This Argument seems to be formed merely to add to the Number of his Arguments, and for the Sake of laying something, whether to Purpose, or to no Purpose. What if a Papist should ask him, if he hath any where read in the Scripture, that Bells are not to be baptized? I believe he could not point out the Place where it is so written. Would he, for that Reason, grant to the Papist, that the Baptizing of Bells is lawful? I am persuaded he would not. I am not a little surprized, that the Editor suffered such Impertinency, to be exposed to public View. In the Revisal of any Piece for Publication, Amendment of Style, and the Correction of Peccadilloes, in Language, are of small Importance, unto expunging what the Public will deem impertinent to the Case argued. Indeed I must confess, that, if, this Method had been taken with this Piece, very little would have been left for the World to see. But my Suprize is much heightened, by what is advanced to prove the Absurdity of an Objection unto his Opinion, viz. this,

Eighthly, The only Argument produced to prove, that Faith in Christ is not a Duty, {#he means the Duty of unregenerate Men} is both unscriptural and utterly destructive of all true Religion. Both natural and revealed. f31 This Objection, then, is a Blow at the Root, and, if you will believe him, there are no Principles so bad, nor any Practices so vile, but what may be defended eternally by it. Doubtless, your Curiosity is much excited to know, what this Objection can be, which is calculated to serve every impious Purpose. The Objection, as he states it, is: Adam had not Faith in Christ, nor was obliged to have it before the Fall; and neither did nor could lose it, either for himself, or for his Offspring, and, therefore, none of his fallen Posterity are obliged to believe in Christ. f32 I do not know, that any one Person in the World ever objected thus, unto its being the Duty of unregenerate Men to act Faith on Christ for Salvation. The Objection, in Fact, is this: The holy

Principle connatural to Adam, and, concreated with him, was not suited to live unto God through a Mediator; that kind of Life was above the Extent of his Powers, though perfect; and, therefore, as he in a State of Integrity had not a Capacity of living unto God, agreeably to the Nature of the new Covenant, it is apprehended, that his Posterity, while under the first Covenant, are not commanded to live unto God after that Sort, or, in other Words, to live by Faith on God, through a Mediator. Capable he was of receiving a Revelation from God of other Truths, than what are contained in the first Covenant, if it had been the Pleasure of God to make such a Revelation unto him. He was able to give an Assent, to the Truth, of what God should please to reveal to him, and had a Capacity of reverentially regarding Truths divinely revealed to him, though not included in that Covenant, wherein he was to walk with, and live unto God. And I would observe, 1. He did not become incapable of receiving a Revelation of new Truths from God, nor of yielding an Assent unto them, nor could he, without he lost his Reason and became a Brute. And, therefore, Heresy, and Deism, are not at all countenanced by this Objection, much less will it clear all the Deists and Infidels in the World of all Sin, and secure them from Punishment, which the Author, says it will. f33 I am amazed, and cannot Possibly conjecture, for what Reason, the Editor suffered such Stuff as this is to come abroad into the World. Surely, the End could not be, that the Writer might be exposed to Contempt.

2. Nor, does this Objection give the least Support to Arminianism, though Arminius was convinced of its Truth. For, if pure Nature was not furnished with a Power of believing in Christ, much less is corrupted Nature. All the Use that Arminius could make of it, was only to urge it as a Difficulty upon those Calvinists, who maintain, that Faith in Christ is required of all Men, upon Pain of eternal Damnation, who hear the Gospel. Many of them in order to get clear of this Difficulty, endeavoured to prove, that Adam had a Power of believing in him. And, that, therefore, this Faith may justly be required of Men, because the Loss of Power for that Act is the Consequence of Sin. If Proof could be given, that Adam had such Power, their Reasoning is most certainly right. But the Truth is, this is a Difficulty, that is insuperable, upon the Scheme of Arminius, though he did not discern it. For, if that holy Principle of Operation, which Adam had, was not sufficient for, nor suited unto the Act of Faith on Christ, as a Saviour, it undeniably follows, that, without Existence is given unto a Principle of Operation, which in its Nature is fitted and disposed unto that

Act, in the Hearts of Men, they neither can, nor ever will believe to the Saving of the Soul. All kind of Assistances whatsoever will eternally, be insufficient for producing an Act, in any Subject, who hath not a Principle of Operation, in its Nature agreeable to the Act. And, consequently, if this Opinion is true, the whole Scheme of Arminianism must fall to the Ground. Sometimes, Men of great Abilities, designing to clog an adversary with a Difficulty, advance that, which embarrasses themselves, as much, or more, than it does those whom they oppose. Whereof this is an Instance. I should not desire any greater Advantage against Arminianism to be granted, than this is, that, Adam, in his innocent State had not Power to believe in Christ, as a Saviour; that is to say, that he had not a Principle of Operation, in its Nature suited to that Act. For, that being allowed, it follows by necessary Consequence, that, unless such a Principle is created and infused into the Minds of Men, the Act of Faith in Christ will be impossible to them, whatever Helps, Impulses, and Excitations they may receive. And, therefore, the Opinion of conditional Election, conditional Redemption, of Free-will in Man to Good, etc. must unavoidably sink. In a Word, by this one Thing being granted, with much Ease the whole Arminian Scheme may be demolished.

3. Nor, is any Encouragement given to Antinomian Principles and Practices, by the Opinion, that Adam in a State of Integrity, had not a Power, of living unto God, according to the new Covenant. Ability he had of living unto God according to the first Covenant, and it is the Duty of his Descendants, who remain under that Covenant, so to live unto him. Neither,

4. Is God, by it, precluded from demanding Satisfaction for the Breach of the Law. For, though human Nature, is incapable of making Satisfaction for Sin, by Suffering, capable it is of Suffering, and it is just with God to make it suffer, and that for ever; because no Satisfaction arises to Law and Justice, by all the Sufferings it is able to endure. And such Obedience is still due from Men, as the Law requires, because, though they have not Power to yield it, that Power was lost in Consequence of Sin, on the Part of Man. And, therefore,

5. The Undertaking, Obedience, Sacrifice, and Satisfaction of Christ for us, is not totally subverted for ever, by this Opinion, which our Writer says it is. It does not deny, that Obedience is due from us to the holy Law of God; it does not suppose, that we are unable to suffer Punishment, though we cannot satisfy the Law, by what we suffer; and, consequently, for any Thing, that, this Opinion implies, God might require, as he graciously has required, Obedience of Christ as our Surety, and his Offering himself a Sacrifice to atone for our Guilt, with a View to our Justification. But I am ashamed to dwell upon the Refutation of such senseless Stuff as this is. I think it exceeds, in Impertinence and Extravagance, any Thing, that I ever read, in the Course of my Life, to this Time. Surely, the Author, could not hope to be believed, when he says: It Justifies the Principles and Practice of the Deist, Socinian, Arminian, Antinomian, and Libertine, and saves us the Labour of disputing any longer, whether it is our Duty to believe in Christ; for it leaves us no Christ to believe in, nor any Thing for which to believe in him. f34 What can be said of this? But that the Author is transported through Heat, and a much mistaken Conception of Things, quite beyond his Reason. I shall not trespass any farther on your Patience, in animadverting on this Piece; I suppose it wholly needless to add any Thing more, by Way of Answer unto what is advanced by that Author. It will be very agreeable to me, if Christophilus pleases, that you, Philagathus, should now offer, to our Consideration, what you apprehend may heal the Breach between us, and be a lasting Foundation of our mutual Friendship.

Christophilus. I am not less inclined to give Attention to you, Philagathus, with the same View.

Philagathus. I shall most gladly attend unto this Service; and, if I may be instrumental to bring you, my dear Brethren, unto a Reconciliation, it will give me a much greater Degree of Pleasure, than I can express.

Some Motives unto Love and Unity between you I beg Leave to mention.

I. You both hold the Head, or are agreed in every fundamental Point. I must tell you, Philalethes, that Christophilus resolves the Whole of Salvation into the free, sovereign Love and Mercy of God. He believes Election to be an Act of sovereign Mercy in God, and that all Holiness, in the Persons chosen, is the Result, and not the Cause, of that Decree, He is persuaded, that the Covenant of Grace, from everlasting, was made with Christ, as the Head of the Elect, and with them in him, as his Seed: That, therefore, they then stood related to him, in Vertue of that federal Transaction; and speaks of this, as a Fountain and fundamental Union between Christ and the Elect. He denies, the

universal Extent of Christ's Death, affirms that to be a pestilent Heresy, and maintains, the Reality and Persecution of Satisfaction for the Sins of all the Elect, by the Sacrifice of Christ: That Right to Forgiveness is the proper, and immediate Effect of his Death, tho' that Right is not actionable by the Persons for whom it is obtained, until they believe. He says, that there is no such Placability, or Reconcilableness, in God, as the Effect of Christ's Death, which some speak of: That this Placability is neither in the Covenant of Works, nor in the Covenant of Grace; that is, that truly it is not at all. But Peace with God is made, and that Reconciliation itself is effected, by the Sacrifice of Christ. He strenuously insists upon it, that the Righteousness of Christ is the sole Matter of our Justification before God; and denies, that there is a Free-Will in Men, naturally, to Good; and, therefore, is firmly of Opinion, that the Grace of God alone can purify their Hearts, and make them meet for Heaven; that it is certainly effectual unto that important End in all the Elect, and that this good Work will be performed in them all until the Day of Christ, and, consequently, their Salvation is not precarious, but sure and certain. Now, Philalethes, since Christophilus is fully persuaded of the Truth of these Things, you cannot have just Reason to charge him with any Mistakes, which affect the Essentials of Christianity, tho' his Apprehensions are different from yours, respecting some Points, which have been before mentioned; and, therefore, it is your indispensable Duty to esteem and love him, as a Brother in Christ. I pray you, Christophilus, permit me to observe some Things to you concerning Philalethes. He believes, that the Elect of God are under the Covenant of Works, until they are regenerated, and stand condemned by it, notwithstanding their federal Union with Christ, and the secret Acceptation of their Persons with God, through him, the Beloved. That they are not, as to themselves in a Manifest State of Justification, nor can know and plead their Right, to Pardon, Impunity, and Life. This Right actually subsists; but by them, it is not actionable, even in the Opinion of Philalethes, and, consequently, no Countenance is by him given unto carnal Confidence and Presumption in Men. He believes, as firmly as you do, the absolute Necessity of Regeneration and Sanctification, or that, without Holiness, no Man shall see the Lord. And, he is fully persuaded, that the moral Law continues in the whole of its Force. That unregenerate Men are under it, as a Covenant, and, by it, are obliged unto all that Obedience, which, as a Covenant, it requires: That the Regenerate are under it, as a Law, or a binding Rule of Conduct, and that the Compass of their Duty is not lessened, but, on the contrary, greatly enlarged, by that new Revelation of God, which the new Covenant gives. And, therefore, when you pronounce him an Antinomian, you abuse him. Besides, he neglects not to preach the Law, he explains its Precepts, vindicates the Equity of its Curse, treats of the Nature of the Punishment, it threatens for Sin, and demonstrates the Justice of that Constitution. Nay, he affirms, that none can well understand the Grace of the Gospel, without an Acquaintance with the true Nature of, the Doctrine, of the Covenant of Works. What Reason, therefore, can you possibly have to treat him unkindly? I am free to tell you plainly, that it is your Duty to cherish Affection for him, as a Brother, in the Lord. For, wherein, his Sentiments differ from yours, no Fundamental Principle, I am certain, is in the least affected. And, though, he differs from you, in thinking, that special Faith in Christ is not a Duty enjoined by the Covenant of Works: He believes the Necessity of that Faith in order to Salvation, and agrees with you fully, in respect to the Author, Object, Nature, Fruits, and Effects of it. So that, there is no just Cause of ill Resentment against him, on that Account, or indeed on any other.

II. If you, Christophilus, think of gaining the Esteem of such who are somewhat inclined to Baxterianism, or Arminianism, by censuring Philalethes, for what you account Peculiarities in him,

you will find yourself mistaken. For, provided you continue to insist upon it, which I believe you will, that the Infusion of a gracious Principle, into the Hearts of Men, is Pre-requisite unto gracious Acts; and that Right to Pardon and Life is the immediate Effect of Christ's Death, with respect to all those for whom he died; how, much, soever, they may flatter you, for condemning the Peculiarities of Philalethes, I know, that you will never find them your hearty Friends. The Difference between you and them is fundamental, but the Difference between you and Philalethes is not so. No essential Point is affected, if he is mistaken, wherein he differs from you.

III. Let me intreat you both to consider how numerous they are already, who oppose those important Principles, wherein you are agreed, and that the Number of such is every Day increasing. If that Consideration hath its proper Weight with you, I think, that you cannot long keep at a disrespectful Distance from one another. Those bold Attacks, which are made upon Principles, that you both esteem fundamental, should cause you heartily to unite in their Defence, while you agree to differ in lesser Matters.

IV. Take into your most serious Consideration, from what Spring of Action, your mutual Animosity arises. It is not the Spirit, or the gracious Principle in you, but the Flesh, and, therefore, you ought to be ashamed of it, and humbled for it before God, as a great Offence unto him, who is a God of Love, and Peace.

V. Are you not Subjects of the same Grace? Objects of the same Love? Children of the same Divine Father? Members of the same spiritual Head? And are you not embarked in the same Cause? Do you not both aim to advance the Glory of the Grace of God, as the entire Cause of Salvation? Are you not both concerned to promote the Interest of Holiness, to the Praise, and Glory of God, by Jesus Christ? What a Shame then is it, for you, who agree in there important Views, to cherish Wrath in your Breasts, one against another, because of some lesser Differences, in your Apprehensions, wherein, no one fundamental Principle is affected? Surely, you may allow one another Liberty of Thought, and Freedom of modest Expression, upon those subjects, about which, your Conceptions are not exactly alike. Be scrupulously cautious, in what Manner you express yourselves. My Meaning is, be sure to use sound Speech that cannot be condemned. If I may be permitted to say it without Offence, you have both been too much wanting, in this very necessary Caution, and have made Use of such Phrases, as are at least capable of an ill Construction, and which may be taken in a bad Sense, though, your Meaning hath been good, and wholesome. Not only take Care, that your Thoughts be just, but also to express them in such Language, as will need no Explication to qualify it. And I beseech you, forbear charging one another with dangerous Consequences, which you neither allow, nor do naturally arise from your differing Sentiments. In Disputes, this sometimes is done, unto a great Discovery of the Weakness of the Head, or Badness of the Heart, of the heated Disputant. And, the Effect, thereof, cannot be good. I am sorry, that I have Reason to say it, neither of you are fully clear in this Matter. And, lastly,

VI. For I must conclude, well consider how excellent, and beautiful, Unity among Christians is. It is ornamental to their Profession, pleasing unto God, and greatly advantageous to themselves. If you fail not of your Duty, in this Thing, I am persuaded, that, your mutual Anger will subside, and a lasting Friendship be renewed, between you. I close my humble Advice, with the elegant Commendation, which the Spirit of God, gives of Peace and Concord among the Saints: Behold

how good and how pleasant, it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments. As the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the Blessing, even Life for evermore { Psalms 133:1-3}.

FOOTNOTES.

Ft1 In {Ephesians 1:3-4}.

Ft2 On the same Place.

Ft3 On {Ephesians 1:4}.

Ft4 *Justificatio sumitur vel active respectu Dei, qui justificat, vel passive, respectu Hominis, qui justificat, etc.* Hoornb. Instit. Theolog. p. 361, 362.

Ft5 *The Nature and Properties of Grace and Faith*, p. 24. 25.

Ft6 *His Answer to Mr. Baxter's Aphorisms, Part 1*, p. 243, 244.

Ft7 *Body of Divinity, Vol. 2*, p. 55.

Ft8 *Answer to Aphorisms*, p. 245, 246.

Ft9 *Mr. Jackson's Question answered, etc.*

Ft10 *Question answered*, p. 37.

Ft11 *Discourse of the Holy Spirit*, p. 241, 242.

Ft12 P. 37.

Ft13 P. 37.

Ft14 P. 6.

Ft15 Pages Matthew, 41, 42, 43.

Ft16 *Of the Person of Christ*, p. 280.

Ft17 *Question answered*, p. Matthew, 41.

Ft18 *Ibid.* p. 32, 33.

Ft19 P. 13.

Ft20 P. 27.

Ft21 P. 27.

Ft22 P. 16.

Ft23 P. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Ft24 P. 23.

Ft25 P. 29.

Ft26 P. 52, 53, etc.

37

Ft27 P. 32.

Ft28 P. 35.

Ft29 Discourse of the Spirit, P. 445.

Ft30 P. 46.

Ft31 P. 48.

Ft32 P. 49.

Ft33 P. 50, 51.

Ft34 P. 56.

Ft35 In the original work the author moved from "fourthly" to "sixthly" in an apparent numbering error.

S. Solemn Charge of Christian Minister Considered

The Solemn Charge of a Christian Minister Considered by John Brine (London: John Ward, 1750)

SERMON 14 THE SOLEMN CHARGE OF A CHRISTIAN MINISTER CONSIDERED A SERMON PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REVD MR. JOHN RYLAND, ON THE 26TH OF JULY, 1750.

Printed for John Ward, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, opposite the Royal-Exchange. London 1750
{2 Timothy 4:1-2}

I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his Appearing and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-Suffering and Doctrine. AS that Part of the Service of this Day is allotted unto me to address you, my dear Brother, who have now taken upon you the Care of this Church, I shall do it in an Attempt to explain this awful Charge of the Apostle to Timothy. This Charge consists of two Parts,

I. The Preface.

II. The Matter of the Charge, or the several Branches of Duty thus solemnly enjoined on him.

I. I would briefly consider the Preface , I charge thee, therefore, before God, who is infinitely Holy, All-knowing, and Immense in every Perfection: And the Lord Jesus Christ, who tries the Reins, whose Ambassador you are, to whom you are accountable, whose Gospel you are to preach, whose Church you are to feed, guide, and preside among. Who shall judge the Quick and the Dead. All Judgment is committed to him, as God-Man, and Mediator: For the Father hath given him Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. The Subjects of his Judgments are the Quick and the Dead. The Quick intend such of Mankind, who will remain and be alive at his Coming: And the Dead are such, as in all Ages of the World have passed under the Stroke of Death, whose Spirits returned to God who gave them, and their Bodies to Corruption and Dust. This Judgment he will execute at his Appearing. The Son of God hath already appeared in our World at the Time appointed of the Father, which is called the Fulness of the Time. Once in the End of the World he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. When he had done and suffered all that was necessary to the eternal Redemption of the Church, he sat down on the right Hand of the Majesty on high; and the Heavens must receive him until the Times of Restitution; when he will appear the second Time, without Sin, unto Salvation. Then every Eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him. Farther, this Judgment he will execute at his Kingdom. He now rules over all; for all Power in Heaven and in Earth is given unto him. He is the Head of all Principality and Power in Heaven, and by him Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice. By him Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth. Besides, he exercises a special Government over the Church: For he is that King, whom God hath set on his Holy Hill of Zion. He gives Laws unto her, which are wisely calculated to preserve Order, Peace and Harmony, and he defends her from the Rage and Fury of her

numerous and potent Enemies. So that he now exercises a regal Authority. Hereafter he will reign before his Ancients gloriously. He will take to himself his great Power, and reign, tho' the Nations be angry, and shower down Wrath and Vengeance on all his and the Church's Enemies, who will be offended at his Dignity and Glory. The Sense of this solemn Preface is, As thou regardest the Honour of God, his Authority, and art desirous to approve thyself to him, diligently and faithfully attend unto the Duties of thy Station in the Church: As thou expectest to appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, neglect not those important Services which are proper to thy Character, who art his Ambassador, and to whom thou must give an Account of thy Conduct, in that high and honourable Office. This is a very awful and solemn Charge indeed; and, doubtless, those Duties which the Apostle introduces with such Solemnity must be of the greatest Importance to the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church; which I shall now proceed to consider.

II. The Matter of this Charge consists of several Branches.

First. Preach the Word; The Word of God; The Word of Truth; The Word of Life; The Gospel of Salvation: The Gospel of the Grace of God: Of the true Grace of God, and not the Counterfeit of it. Unto these Things all will assent who profess Christianity, how different soever their Sentiments are concerning Doctrines. Papists, Socinians, Arminians, and others, must allow the Truth of what is expressed in these several Modes of speaking. And, therefore, you must permit me to declare in an explicit Manner, my Apprehensions of Christian Principles. And I would propose a Query, and give an Answer to it. Query. How may we know that any Doctrine is that of the true Grace of God?

Answ. If it exalts the Glory of the Grace of God, as the sole and entire Cause of Salvation: If it humbles the Creature, and excludes all Boasting: If it provides for the Honour of the Law and Justice of God: If it is a solid and sure Ground of strong Consolation to the Saints: If it is a Doctrine according to Godliness. There are infallible Rules, whereby you may form your Judgment of Doctrines. No Principle can be true, which is not calculated to subserve and secure these important Ends; and, therefore, it will be your Wisdom to examine all Sentiments in Divinity by them, and, as you shall find them agreeing, or disagreeing with those Rules, embrace, or reject them. The following Doctrines, in my Apprehension, upon Enquiry will be found Truths by those Rules; and, therefore, in my Opinion, you ought to preach them.

1st. Publish the Doctrine of God's free, sovereign, and eternal Love. It is his good Pleasure, and irrespective of any Motive in the Objects of it. Divine Love is sovereign, and is fixed on whomsoever it was the Will of God favourably to regard. God hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy. Again, it is eternal: I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; and, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. The Father hath loved the Elect, as he hath loved Christ; and he loved him before the Foundation of the World; and, consequently, they were interested in the Favour of God before the Commencement of Time.

2dly. Preach the Doctrine of personal and unconditional Election to everlasting Life. This is a Doctrine clearly expressed in the Holy Scripture: According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called. Because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation. And this is an Act of free Grace: According to the Election of Grace. Again, it is an irrevocable Decree. The Foundation of God standeth sure; having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.

3dly. Preach the Doctrine of the invariable Acceptation of the Persons of the Elect with God in Christ their Head. They were chosen in him: Grace was given them in him, and in him were they, preserved, before Calling, and in order to it. As Adam was the Representative of his Seed, they were considered in him, they sinned in him, and fell with him in his first Transgression. By his Act of Disobedience they were made Sinners, and with him came under the Condemnation of the Covenant of Works: So all the Elect, who are the Seed of Christ, were considered in him, and represented by him, as the Head of the Covenant of Grace, and their Persons always were accepted with God, as view'd in Christ their Representative; having made us accepted in the Beloved. Nor is there the least Inconsistency between these Things, viz. The Condemnation of the Elect in their natural Head, and the Acceptation of their Persons in Christ their spiritual Head. It is to me astonishing, that any of those, who grant the Truth of their actual Union with Adam, by Virtue of a divine Constitution, and their Guiltiness and Condemnation upon his Sin, in Consequence of that Union with him, should deny their real and actual Union with Christ, by Virtue of a divine Constitution, in the Covenant of Grace, and the Acceptation of their Persons with God on that Foundation. Let me advise you carefully to take a complete View of every Subject, about which you shall at any Time treat. This is absolutely necessary: For, by a partial View of a Doctrine, many Persons are led into Mistakes concerning it. I will give you an Instance or two of this Kind. Sometimes it is objected to the Doctrine of absolute and unconditional Election to eternal Life, that, if this is true, then Holiness here is not necessary to Happiness hereafter. If it was considered, that Election is a Decree to make Men holy in Time, as a Meetness for the Enjoyment of Felicity, in Eternity, such an Objection could not, with any Shew of Reason or Justice, be raised against that Doctrine. Again, it is objected to that View which God takes of the Elect in Christ, that it hath a Tendency to make Men easy under a Prevalency of Sin, or to flatter themselves that they are in a fare State, tho' they are under the Dominion of Lust. But, if it was considered, that the Acceptation of the Persons of the Elect in Christ is that Foundation on which Grace is communicated to them, and that without Holiness none can have the least Evidence that they are of the Number of those, whole Persons are accepted with God in Christ, a Man must have a very small Degree of Discernment indeed, who is not able to see that such an Objection is groundless and wholly foreign to the Nature of the Doctrine. That Reasoning is always false, in any Science, which proceeds upon a partial View of a Subject; and those Consequences, which are drawn from it, have nothing more than the Appearance of Weight; in Fact they are mere Wind and Emptiness: And yet, sometimes good and wise Men in popular Discourse are guilty of this Weakness, and frequently they are so, when discoursing on this important Subject. Farther, be sure to distinguish well. Without this, you may sometimes find yourself at a Loss to answer Objections against the most momentous Doctrines of the Gospel; among which I reckon that of God's eternal and invariable Love to the Persons of his People. Some will say, if this is true, then God is as well pleased with them, when they neglect their Duty, and sin against him, as he is, when they are obedient to his Commands. In answer to which, you must distinguish between God's Love to the Persons of his People, and his Approbation or Disapprobation of their Actions: Neither of the latter is included in the first; they are both quite of distinct Consideration from it. His Displeasure with their sinful Actions, and the awful Tokens of it, are not at all inconsistent with his invariable Love to their Persons.

4thly. Preach the Doctrine of full and proper Atonement, and Satisfaction for sin, by the Death of Christ. Herein you will consider the Origin of it, viz. the sovereign Will of God, which is clearly seen

in determining to admit of a Surety. This was not a Relaxation of the Law, either in its Commands or Threatenings; but a Commutation of Persons, or a Purpose to permit another to take our Obligation upon himself, in order to our Release. Again, it was an Act of Sovereignty in God to appoint and provide this Surety for us. Besides, you must shew who this Surety is: That he is the Son of God, and truly Divine, the Father's Equal in every Perfection: The Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person: In the Form of God; and that he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God: That he is truly Man, of the same Nature with us, but absolutely free from that moral Impurity which attends us: That he took real Flesh, but only the Likeness of sinful Flesh: Moreover, that he is God and Man united. This is one eminent Branch of the Mystery of Godliness. Without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the Flesh. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us. You must shew his Coming under the Law, in order to our Redemption from it, as a Covenant. When the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them who were under the Law. You will observe, that, as he came under the Law for us, our Crimes were imputed to him. All we, like Sheep, have gone astray: The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. He who knew no Sin was made Sin for us. He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree. As we are made righteous by the Imputation of Christ's Obedience to us, who in ourselves are unrighteous, so he was made Sin by the Imputation of our Sins to him, who in himself was absolutely spotless and innocent. Farther, you will observe, that he was made a Curse: Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. God drew all the keenlypointed Arrows of his Law, and directed them against our Surety; they penetrated deeply into his Breast, and gave him Wounds inexpressible. And I think that you must necessarily discern, that he endured the Wrath and Vengeance of God, unto which we were obnoxious in Consequence of Sin. Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow; smite the Shepherd, was the awful Language of the Father in the Character of a Judge, punishing our Sins in the Person of Christ our Surety. This Doctrine will lead you to treat of the Covenant of Grace, wherein this amazing Transaction was agreed on and settled between the Divine Father and the Eternal Son. And from hence I am persuaded that you must conclude, that Sin is expiated, Transgression finished, and Sin made an End of, as to its Guilt: That the Curse of the Law is removed, or the Persons of God's People are delivered from it: That there is no Fury in God against them; but that he is pacified towards them for all that they have done. For, Peace is made by the Blood of Christ's Cross: And we, being justified by his Blood, shall be saved from Wrath thro' him. Satisfaction was given both to Law and Justice for all our Sins by the Death of Christ; and, therefore, Reconciliation is a necessary and immediate Effect of his Death. From hence it evidently follows, that the Death of Christ could not be of universal Extent. He who shall undertake to prove, that Christ made Satisfaction for the Sins of no Man, if he died for all Men, will have a very easy Task before him. Nor do any of those, that understand themselves, believe the Doctrine of proper and full Satisfaction for Sin by the Sufferings of Christ, who embrace the Opinion of the universal Extent of his Death. It is impossible that they should so do, tho' they speak of his Atonement, Ransom, and Satisfaction, whereby they sometimes deceive and impose upon the Unwary. My Brother, let me advise you to study thoroughly this important Article of the Christian Faith: Make yourself Master of the Objections of the Socinians against it, and learn to answer them solidly; and then you will have nothing to fear from some others, whose Sentiments in this Point have no final Affinity with theirs, how much soever they pretend to be their Adversaries on this weighty Subject. By a close Enquiry into this Doctrine, you will obtain a clear

View of the sovereign Grace and Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, and inflexible Justice of God, as displayed in our Salvation, and such a Prospect of the Harmony of all the Attributes of God therein, as will fill your Soul with Delight and Astonishment, and will be an unshaken Foundation of your Hope, in the darkest and most trying Seasons, you may meet withal in your Christian Race: Which are very sufficient Reasons to engage you unto an assiduous Study of this momentous Doctrine of our holy Religion, and to cause you to use your utmost Efforts to defend it, by whomsoever it is opposed.

5thly. Preach the Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ. In treating on this Subject, it will be needful to shew, that Christ was not a proper Subject of the Covenant of Works on his own Account. His human Nature, tho' in Union with the Son of God, is, and ever will be, under a Law; that necessarily results from the Dependence of it upon, and its Relation unto God, as a Creature. The Angels are under a Law. The Saints in Heaven are under a Law, and eternally will be so; for it is impossible, that any Creature should not be in a State of Subjection to the Will of God; and the divine Will is a Law, and everlastingly binding on the Creature. This is inseparable from the Relation which is between God and the Creature. The Covenant of Works is more than a Law; it is a Law with Sanction, it promises Life on condition of Obedience, and threatens Death in case of Disobedience. Now, as Christ was God as well as Man, it was incompatible with the Dignity of his Person to come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works on his own Account. Besides, as he was not a natural Descendant of Adam, nor related to him, as a Member, whom he represented, he could not have any Concern with that Covenant, which was made with him as the Head of all who naturally descend from him, but by a special Constitution and Appointment of God, for Ends not respecting himself, but others. These Things will enable you to answer the most plausible Objection against the Doctrine under Consideration, viz. that Christ stood obliged to fulfil the Law for himself, and, therefore, could not fulfil it for others: Also hence you will be furnished with an irrefragable Argument in favour of this glorious Truth. For, if it is true, that Christ could not come under the Covenant of Works on his own Account, then it evidently follows, that his becoming a Subject of that Covenant was for others, and his Obedience to the Terms of it is intended for the Benefit and Advantage of others. Again, his Righteousness is accepted of the Father for his People, and is by him imputed to them. Farther, they are justified therein, and thereby are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life. Once more, you must shew, that the Law is magnified and made honourable by Christ's Subjection to it, and his Fulfilling of it. And that, therefore, the Wisdom and Righteousness of God, as well as his rich Grace and Mercy, illustriously shine in this most admirable Constitution.

6thly. Preach the Doctrine of the efficacious Grace of God. Here you must shew the Necessity of Regeneration, which will lead you to treat of the Depravity of our Nature. Two Things are true of us all in a natural State: One is, that we cannot come to Christ: The other is, that we will not come to him. Say some, our Cannot consists in a Will-not; but it is a very great Mistake; they are distinct Things, and not the same. We cannot, as we are destitute of a Principle of Life; and we will not, as we are the Subjects of vicious Habits, which determine us against such an Act. I am sorry to find any to confound Things that are so manifestly distinct, with a View to give Countenance to what may with far less Danger be given up, than that of our natural Inability to act Faith on Christ. What Opinion soever requires the Denial of our Want of Power to believe to support it, ought eternally to sink; for true it is, we are dead, and cannot act spiritually, no, not in the least Degree.

Again, you must shew, that the Grace of God is the sole and effectual Cause of our Regeneration: That it is the sole Cause of it: That Men do not, nor can, prepare themselves for it: That the Grace of Regeneration is not given to any on Conditions, or because of fit Dispositions and Qualifications in them for it: And that the Production of Holiness in us is without the Concurrence of our Will with the Grace of God. Besides, you are to shew the Efficacy of the Grace of God. That, as Light sprang up into Existence in the old Creation upon God's saying, Let there be Light, so in the new Creation spiritual Light rises into Being in our dark Minds immediately upon God's willing it to be. As Grace in us is a Principle of new Life, the divine Influence to give it Existence must necessarily be effectual unto its Production: For God can never attempt what he is not able to effect. He will not do all he is able to perform; but he always and infallibly accomplishes what he designs: If he will work, none shall let. He takes away the Heart of Stone out of our Flesh, and gives us an Heart of Flesh. We are made willing in the Day of his Power. And we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. We make not ourselves to differ. Faith is not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God. And it is God that worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure.

7thly. Preach the sweet, glorious, and important Doctrine of the final Perseverance of the Saints. The Arguments are many, by which this precious Truth may be established, besides direct scriptural Proofs of it, viz. God's unchangeable and inseparable Love. His unalterable Purpose. His Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure. That sufficient Provision of Grace, which he hath made in the Covenant of Grace, in order to it, which is all our Salvation and all our Desire. His Relations unto his People. He is their Father, for he hath predestinated them to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself. And, because they are Sons, he sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their Hearts. Being Sons, they are Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ. God stands in a conjugal Relation to them. Their Maker is their Husband. He hath betrothed them to himself for ever. Again, their Union with Christ is a strong Argument in Favour of this Doctrine. He is their Head, and they are his Members: Of his Flesh, and of his Bones. Besides, they are his Purchase: They are not their own, they are bought with a Price, which Price is the Blood of Christ. They are redeemed, not with Silver and Gold, as with those corruptible Things; but with the precious Blood of Christ. Those whom he hath purchased, at such Expence, he will never lose, if all the Power he is possessed of is sufficient to preserve them safe. Moreover, they are justified by his Blood and Righteousness: And Justification gives a Right unto, and certainly will be succeeded by Glory. Whom he justified, them he also glorified. Farther, the In-dwelling of the Spirit in Believers secures their Perseverance. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. He is in the Saints as a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life. And direct Scriptural Proofs of this comfortable Doctrine are many. The Righteous shall hold on his Way, and he that hath clean Hands shall grow stronger and stronger. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, that can never be moved. He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. And they shall not depart from me. The Lord will give Grace and Glory. And this is the Will of him that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life. My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them; they follow me; I give to them eternal Life; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand. These Testimonies abundantly confirm the important Truth of the final Happiness of Believers. You will observe, that it is not intended, that in no Instance Sin shall gain a Prevalency in and over them: And that it is not designed, that God will not correct his disobedient

Children; but that he will not kill them, as one observes. That he will humble and bring them to a Sense of their Duty again, either when a Stupor seizes them, or Sin prevails and breaks forth in them. That he will heal their Backslidings, and love them freely, and not turn away from them to do them good. And, therefore, they have the firmest Ground for a holy Confidence, in all their Conflicts, Trials, Temptations, and Distress of Soul, that he who hath begun a good Work in them will perform it until the Day of Christ. The Lord will not forsake the Work of his own Hand; but perfect that which concerneth his Saints. If you try these Doctrines by the Criteria before mentioned, I think that you will easily, plainly, and fully discover, that they are the Doctrines of the true Grace of God. They certainly are calculated to exalt and enhance the Glory of divine Grace in the Business of our Salvation. And they are wisely designed to hide Pride from Man, and to exclude all Boasting in him. Besides, these Sentiments are calculated to vindicate the Holiness, Righteousness, and Justice of God, in our Recovery and Salvation. Moreover, they are a solid and immovable Ground of strong Consolation to all who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them. Once more, they are Doctrines according to Godliness. A Scheme of Principles suited to ingenerate and maintain in the Minds of all those, whose Comfort is in them intended, Love to God, a holy Reverence of him, and most fervent Desires to obey and serve him in all Things. It is only the Want of an Acquaintance with their Nature, and the Prevalence of a legal Disposition in the Minds of Men, with a secret Love of Sin, how much soever they are filled with Terrors on account of it, which can cause them to entertain a contrary Opinion of these Doctrines. Such, who have any Experience of their Sweetness and Power, are taught by them to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.

Some Persons seem unwilling that these Doctrines should be preached, at least they don't approve of their being much insisted on. They will do well to consider, whether Heaven is likely to be an agreeable Place to them, or no: For there the Grace of God and the Glory of Christ are the principal Subjects the Minds of Men will be entertained withal unto Eternity: And, therefore, those, who don't now like to hear much said of these glorious Subjects, give but small Evidence of a Meetness for the heavenly State. Some, it may be, will say to you, it is most profitable to treat on practical Subjects chiefly, and to shew the Necessity of Holiness. This you ought by no Means to neglect; but, if you recommend the Practice of Duty upon an evangelical Foundation, and clearly shew what true Holiness is, and how it differs from mere Morality, I am greatly mistaken, if your Discourses of that Kind will meet with a more cool Reception from any, than from such sort of Persons.

Consider, my beloved Brother, you are shortly to appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ: Let me, therefore, intreat you closely to examine what Doctrine God hath revealed, and preach it, yea preach it boldly, whether Men will hear, or whether they will forbear. If you do not, how will you be able to look our dear Lord Jesus in the Face?

Secondly. Be instant in Season, out of Season. You must abide and continue in this Labour, although you may meet with many Difficulties, Discouragements, and much Opposition in it: You must not think of quitting this Service, either on account of Reproaches cast on you by Enemies, or because you may be neglected by Friends. None of these Things should move you. Nor must you ever propose to disengage yourself from this Work by Views of secular Advantage, what Offers of that Kind soever may at any Time present. You ought to be diligent in this Service, and endeavour to be ready for it, at all Opportunities, and on all Occasions: In Season, i.e. on the Lord's Days,

which are stated Times for the Worship of God, and the Instruction and Edification of the Church: Out of Season, that is to say, you must labour to prepare for, and be willing to exercise your ministerial Talents, as often as the Church shall require you, whose Servant you are. If they have an Ear to hear, it will be your Duty to speak to them of the Things of God, as well out of as in Season: For the Gift of Preaching is bestowed upon you for their Sakes, and they have a Right to expect you to exercise it on every suitable Occasion, and you stand obliged to comply with their Desire in this Matter, as far as you are able.

Thirdly. Reprove. Two Things are signified by this Word, (*elegcw*), viz. to convince by Reasoning, and to give Reproof. You are set for the Defence of the Gospel, and it is your Business to vindicate the Truth of it, by just and solid Reasoning, in order to the Conviction of the Opposers of it. And herein it will be proper to proceed after this Manner.

1st. Endeavour clearly to prove one Principle, which makes way for and leads on unto other Principles, and from which they follow. This Method is observed punctually by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. That Epistle is argumentative, and the Reasoning in it is clear, regular, and nervous.

2dly. You must shew how those Principles, which you design to establish, result from or follow upon that Doctrine; whereof evident Proof is already given.

3dly. It will be expected of you to answer Objections. In doing which you must observe what Fallacy is in them, and labour to make that plain, which will be a sufficient Refutation of them. And, if there is no Fallacy in them, then your Business will be to shew, that in Fact they are no Objections to that Truth, which you are engaged in the Vindication of, but consistent with it.

4thly. Let your Proofs of a Doctrine be clear Testimonies of Scripture. By which I do not mean, that the Proposition you intend to prove, must be in so many and in such a Form of Words found in the Scripture; but that the sense of that Proposition is agreeable to the Word of God. Give me leave to instance in two or three Things. And, 1st, God is one and three, one essentially, and three personally. 2dly, We are justified by the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us. 3dly, The Persons of the Elect were always accepted with God in Christ their Head. Neither of these is syllabically found in Scripture; but the Sense of each is plainly scriptural. Some who allow the two former dispute the Truth of the third, and object to it, because it is not syllabically contained in Scripture with just the same Propriety, and no more, as the Anti-trinitarians object to the Doctrine of the Trinity, because in Terms that Doctrine is not express'd in Scripture. This Method of arguing, how much soever it may be agreeable to some People, is very weak, and concludes nothing at all. For it is Thought, that is to be proved from Scripture; and, unto the Confirmation of that, it is not necessary that the Terms, wherein it is express'd, should be there found. Again, you must reprove the Haughtiness, disingenuity, and Impertinence of the Enemies of the Gospel. Many such there are; and that Contempt and Reproach, which they frequently cast on sacred Truth, call for severe Reproof.

Fourthly. Rebuke. This is a Part of our Work which it is necessary for us to attend unto, though to ourselves it is not so pleasing as some other Parts of it. My Brother, decline not to preach the Law, to open and explain it, deliver the whole Doctrine of it. Shew what it commands of Men, of all Men. Set before your Hearers that Misery which it threatens for a Violation of its Precepts: And shew the

Equity and Justice of that Constitution. Never be afraid of being accounted and called by some, in a way of Reproach, for that Reason, a legal Preacher. He who preaches the Gospel, also ought to preach the Law. Follow you the Example of your great Master in this Matter, who explained the Law, and vindicated it from the false Glosses put upon it by the Jews, in his excellent Sermon on the Mount. Imitate the Apostle Paul, who in his Epistles delivers the Matter of the Law, as well as the glorious Truths of the Gospel; and proves the Equity and Justice of that Constitution, according to which all Men are obnoxious to eternal Death and Misery for having acted contrary to it. You must not consult the Taste and Choice of Men. Many, who are in the most deplorable Condition, love to have smooth Things declared unto them, and to have Pillows placed under their Armholes, wherein you can't gratify them, but at your own Peril. You must endeavour to be a Boanerges, a Son of Thunder, to Sinners of all Sorts. The Manner of the Spirit's Work on the Hearts of Men, if you attend unto it, will happily guide you to fulfil this Part of your Charge. He directs the Arrows of the Law into the Heart of a poor Sinner, and then applies the precious Balm of the Covenant to heal the Wounds he has given. Besides it is proper to acquaint Believers, as much as in you lies, with the Nature of the Covenant of Works, and with their Misery, according to that legal Constitution, in order to excite in them Gratitude and Praise to God, for that great Salvation, which they obtain thro' Jesus Christ. It will be of Service to the Heirs of Heaven to be well informed of Hell, and of the Nature of infernal Misery, unto which their numerous Sins, and the Corruption of their Hearts, so justly rendered them obnoxious. Farther, it will be your Business to rebuke the Remiss, Negligent, and Scandalous. And also you may find it necessary sometimes to rebuke sharply erring Persons, that they may be found in the Faith.

Fifthly. Exhort. The Word signifies to comfort, as well as exhort, (parakalew.)

1st. You must comfort the Mourners in Zion, by proposing to their Consideration the sweet Promises and precious Truths of the Gospel. Many under a spiritual Conviction of their Sin and Danger are afraid, that their Salvation is impossible. Shew such, that all Things are possible with God: That the Salvation of Sinners, even of the Chief of Sinners, is not contrary to his Nature: That it is not contrary to his Will, nor at all inconsistent with his Law and Justice, on the Foundation of Christ's Obedience and Sacrifice: That, therefore, they have no Reason to conclude, that their Salvation is an impossible Thing, tho' their Guilt is great, and their Corruptions strong and raging. Again, you must comfort the Tempted. Shew such, how the People of God have been tempted, and those Effects which Temptations have sometimes produced in them: And that no Temptation shall overtake them, but what is common to Men: That God will find a Way for their Escape, that they may be able to bear it: That no Danger attends their Temptation, so long as they consider and oppose it as such: And that the prevalent Intercession of Christ will secure their Faith in the greater Winnings they may meet with from Satan, the Enemy of their Souls. I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not. Farther, you must comfort the Afflicted. Affliction is not joyous, but grievous, tho' it yields the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness, to the Saints under a divine Blessing. Believers are sometimes weary and ready to faint in their Minds, when pressing Difficulties and Trials are upon them: And, therefore, they have Need of a reviving Cordial to cheer their drooping Spirits. Shew them in this Circumstance, that many are the Afflictions of the Righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all: That they are Fruits of paternal Love, and not Effects of vindictive Wrath: That they are intended for their Advantage, and shall certainly terminate in their Good: For all Things work together for Good to them who love God, and are the Called according to his

Purpose.

Moreover, you must comfort such as are in Distress, under Darkness and Desertion. Shew them, that the Children of Light, sometimes walk in Darkness, and have no Light of Comfort and Joy, for a Season: And that, therefore, it is no other than a Temptation to think, that, because at present they enjoy not the Light of God's Countenance, they are not the Objects of his Love. Encourage them to wait for the Lord, yea to wait patiently for him. Shew them, that the Lord rests in Love: And that, tho' his Dispensations towards them vary, no Change occurs to his Affection unto their Persons.

I add, you must endeavour to comfort the Saints, who mourn under the heavy Weight of the Body of Sin. Sometimes they are tempted to think, that their Spot is not the Spot of God's Children, upon a View of the Plague of their Hearts: That surely there can't be true Grace, where there is so much Corruption. Shew such, that it is proper to a Principle of Grace to discern the evil Nature of Sin, to loath and oppose it, as Sin. And, that where Sin, as Sin, is opposed, and its Destruction desired and fought after, there it hath lost its Dominion, tho' it swells, rages, and ever so violently exerts itself: That tho' their Conflicts with their Lusts may be sharp, their Victory is sure in the End. Let them but continue fighting, and they will certainly be Conquerors.

Once more, you must endeavour to comfort convinced, mourning Backsliders. Encourage and promote in them Sorrow for their Miscarriages; but labour to confirm their Faith, and renew their Joy, with all Meekness and Compassion to their distressed Souls, considering yourself, left you also be tempted. This is a very necessary Consideration for us all. Let the best Man in the World be but tempted, and left to himself, and he will fall an easy Prey to the Temptation, be it what it will. But permit me to observe to you, that it will not always be safe for you to attend to this Part of your Charge, merely in a Common-Place Way: You must carefully consider and observe the Nature of that Trouble which Men are under; whether it is spiritual, or legal only; whether it springs from a pressing Sense of Guilt and of its Demerit only, or whether it arises from a spiritual Principle in the Mind. If it doth, it will be attended with an Hatred of Sin in itself, and a strong Desire of Freedom from the Prevalence, Power, and Being of it. Where you cannot discover some genuine Actings of this Principle, you must not apply those excellent Rules, which are prescribed in casuistical Writings, for comforting afflicted Consciences, for, if you do, you will not profit; but it may greatly prejudice the Souls of Men, and occasion them to think, that their Case is fare, when in Fact it is not so. And, on the other Hand, you must be very cautious, that you use no spiritually-mourning Soul with Severity, Slight, and Neglect; if you should, you will make the Hearts of such sad, whom the Lord would not have made sad. If you would be as God's Mouth, you must separate the Precious from the Vile. This Part of your Work is attended with great Difficulty, and much Skill is required unto a proper Discharge of it. By a diligent Study of the Word of God, and a strict Observation of your own Heart, in Seasons of Temptation, Affliction, Trouble, and Darkness, you will be best qualified for comforting Zion's Mourners. The Book of Psalms is a rich Treasury of spiritual Experience; and, therefore, I would advise you to study that Book closely. From thence you may learn, what Temptations, Troubles, and Distresses, sometimes attend the Saints; what Vicissitudes they pass under; what is the Matter of their Support; how they are relieved, encouraged, delivered, and filled with triumphant Joy, in the Issue. And, therefore, hereby you will become capable of administring Comfort to such as have a clear Title to Gospel- Encouragement, but, thro' a Variety of Causes, are most backward in receiving it. The Care of such will require your

greatest Tenderness, and the Exercise of your utmost Skill, as a Son of Consolation, to give them Relief under their Distress.

2dly. You must exhort. Men in general you must exhort to shun the Practice of Sin, and to avoid all Occasions of it: And put them on the Practice of Duty. Exhort them to read the Scripture; and exhort them to Prayer, which is a Part of natural Religion, and a Duty incumbent on all Men. Exhort them to hear the Word of God preached; this is also their Duty: For the Gospel justly demands the Attention of every Man, how much soever it is neglected and despised by the Generality of Mankind thro' the Blindness and Prejudice of their Minds. Again, you must exhort the Saints to decline every evil Way and Work; to practice every Duty in every Relation and Capacity, Providence places them in. Be sure that you do this in an evangelical Manner. Never content yourself, with Discourses of bare Morality. But shew from what Principle good Works spring: That they flow from Love, are performed in Faith: And that the Motives to them are God's Purposes of Mercy, the Acts of his Goodness; the Benefits which flow from that Origin, thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ. You must shew for what Ends Duty is to be attended unto upon the Gospel-Plan: Not in order to Justification before God, and with a View to obtain Life by that; but for the Glory of God, and to shew our Gratitude to him for his Kindness to us, to manifest our Approbation of Holiness, and Abhorrence of Sin, and our willing Subjection to his Authority, and for the Honour and Credit of his Gospel, which is the Source of our Comfort, and the Foundation of all our Hopes of Salvation and Happiness.

Never be moved from this Part of your Charge by the Cavils of those, (should you meet with such) who have no Relish for any Thing but Doctrines. See to it, that you take the Apostle's Advice, and obey his Injunction, in this Matter. These Things I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works, for these Things are good and profitable to Men; tho' some may put you upon neglecting one Part of this Advice, and others oppose you in attending to the other Part of it¹. And observe, that you must do this with Long-Suffering and Doctrine: That is to say, with Gentleness, Meekness and Patience. Moroseness becomes not a Minister of the Gospel of Peace, and an Ambassador of the meek and lowly Jesus. Not but that you may meet with some, whom you must rebuke sharply. If you engage in the Defence of Truth against a sneering, insulting, and impertinent Caviller, you will not lay yourself open to just Censure, if you treat his Manner of objecting with Spirit and Smartness, and call it by the Name it deserves, viz. Impertinence. Besides, you must do this with Doctrine, i.e. with Instruction in the glorious and important Truths of the Gospel. Hence you will see, that close Study, indefatigable Labour, and a diligent Observation of your own Heart, are necessary. What a Compass of Knowledge? What a Treasure of Experience? What Acquaintance with yourself? What an Understanding of the Nature of the Devices of Satan, and of the serpentine Windings of the old Man, are needful? And, in the Defence of the Gospel, what Ability of Discerning and Ripeners of Judgment are required, in order to shew the Weakness, Impertinence, and Fallacy of Objections against divine Truths?

Thus, my dear Brother, agreeably to your own Desire, I have let before you your Duty in a faithful Manner, according to that Light in and Apprehension which I have thereof. On the Consideration of these Heads of Advice, I am persuaded that you will say, Who is sufficient for these Things? But be not discouraged, neither at the Difficulties of the Work itself, nor the Opposition which you may meet with in it. Endure Hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ. May the Lord, who hath called

you to this Service in his Church, assist you to fight the good Fight, to keep the Faith! And, when (after Usefulness for many Years) you shall have finished your Course, may you clearly see, that you shall receive a Crown of Righteousness, which God will give, not to you only, but unto all them who love his Appearing, not as a Reward of Debt, but of sovereign Grace! Amen.

FOOTNOTES ft1 The attentive Reader, I think, must discern, that the Apostle enjoins on Titus Preaching the several Doctrines, whereof some Hints have been before given; and, therefore, it certainly is the Duty of a Christian Minister to explain and inculcate those Principles, however unsuitable they may be unto the Taste of some Hearers. No Reasons, which by many are esteemed prudential, will be a sufficient Plea to justify him in a Neglect thereof. And evident it is, that those Truths, in their own Nature, are calculated to promote Holiness in all, who understand and relish the Things themselves. The Doctrines of the true Grace of God have no licentious Tendency. Some Persons abusing those important Principles is no Objection to the Truths themselves, nor is it a justifiable Reason for a Minister's Silence about them, or a slight and superficial Manner of treating on them: They are what he ought to affirm constantly. And, in order to prevent an Abuse of those Doctrines, it is a Duty equally incumbent on him to shew, that these Doctrines of divine Grace do not lessen, much less dissolve, our Obligation to Obedience: And, consequently, one necessary Branch of his Work is, to treat on Practicals, and to shew that the Gospel hath no greater Adversaries than those are, who, under a Pretence of Value for its momentous Doctrines, and of Pleasure in hearing them preached, can't bear with Exhortations to practice Duty. These are some of the worst Enemies of the Cross of Christ, and justly deserve the most severe Reproof, let them be who or what they may. Doctrine are not to be neglected or curtailed under the specious Pretence of promoting practical Religion: Nor must we decline to treat of Duties, and our Obligation to Obedience, under a like Pretence of Esteem for the Doctrines of the Grace of God. Tho' the Gospel delivers us from the Covenant of Works, it leaves us under it as a Law. And, tho' Obedience is not required to the same Ends, yet still it is required, and it is to be enforced by weightier Motives, wherewith the evangelical Scheme furnishes us. Nor does that Preacher make full Proof of his Ministry, who neglects to practice either Part of this apostolical Injunction.

S. Some Account of The Choice Experiences

Some Account of the Choice Experiences of Mrs. Anne Brine, As Written by Herself, and Collected out of Her Letters by Her Husband, John Brine by John Brine (London: John Ward, 1750)

SERMON 15 SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CHOICE EXPERIENCE OF MRS. ANNE BRINE, AS WRITTEN BY HERSELF, AND COLLECTED OUT OF HER LETTERS Printed for, and sold by JOHN WARD, at the Corner of Pope's- Head-Alley, in Cornhill; and by JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal-Exchange,

London

1750

PERCEIVING, that you are desirous to have an Account of the Dealings of God with my Soul, and being willing to gratify you therein; I shall give you a few short Hints thereof,: Though the Badness of my Memory, and the Sense of Things being too much wore off, will not admit me to give a particular Relation, how I was carried on, Step by Step. When I was young, I was very much taken with. the Vanities and Follies of Youth. My greatest Concern was, that I was hindered by my Parents, of taking my full Swing, in that, in which, I so much delighted: For they would sometimes be talking to me about the State of my immortal Soul, and asking what I thought would become of me, if I should die without an Interest in Christ: But, I in disregardful Manner used to turn my Back upon them, and laugh at them; thinking myself as good as they, only I could not talk so finely about religious Matters, For, thought I, I am not guilty of any very heinous Sins, all that I desire, is only to play and be merry, as most of my Years are willing to do. What, thinks I, would they have me be mopish, and lay aside all Pleasure thus soon, it will be Time enough for me to betake myself to a melancholy Life when I attain to their Age; should I do it now, I shall be laughed at by all my Companions. I heartily wished, that my Parents were like the Parents of some of my Play-Fellows, that I might have the same Liberty, which they enjoyed. I accounted myself to be in a worse Case than any Body, because I was deprived in some measure of the Liberty, I would have had. When I was at the Meeting, my Thoughts were wholly employed about my vain Delights and Pleasures, instead of being attentive in hearing the Word of God preached. Sabbaths were very burdensome to me, and I did, as often as I could, make Excuses to stay at Home, under Pretence of Illness.

Thus I went on till I was near fifteen Years of Age, about which Time, it pleased God to awaken me, and bring me to consider, what a State I was in. One Night being in my usual manner, at Play with my Companions, and hearing them swear at a sad Rate, and taking the Lord's Name in vain, in almost every Sentence they spoke, having met with something that vexed them, which provoked them, as they said, so to do. This, I thought, was not right in them; though I myself had much ado to keep from bad Expressions, thinking I looked foolish amongst them, because I did not do as they did: But I was kept from it, though the Temptation lay very hard upon me. This terrified me very much, not only for that, I was so much put to it, to keep from bad Words myself; but to think, that I should delight in such wicked Company, contrary to the Mind of my Parents, and

certainly displeasing to God, against whom, thought I, I have sinned to a great Degree. I went home that Night with a sad and heavy Heart, concluding, that I should certainly be damned. And fully expected every Night when I went to Bed, for about a Fortnight, that I should never awake any more in this World, but should be in everlasting Punishment before Daylight appeared.

I resolved to amend my Life, and to pray to God for Forgiveness of past Sins. After this Resolution was taken, my Terror began to abate: And glad I was, thinking that God was pleased with me, but I soon began to break my Resolutions; for no sooner was the Terror I had felt, a little over, but I had a hankering Mind to return to former Pleasures. And Satan let in with this Temptation very strongly, that I was too young to mind Religion, and that if betook myself therefore to all Pleasure would be at an End with me. And likewise, these Thoughts were suggested to my Mind, that the Lord was merciful, and so if I did but repent, and pray earnestly to him to forgive my Sins, when I should be past taking Pleasure, in those Things, in which most of my Years delighted, I need not fear Acceptance with him. After these Thoughts, with many others, which I cannot now remember, had passed through my Mind, I came to this Conclusion, to go amongst my old Companions once more; and accordingly, when Evening came, out I went to them. They seemed glad of my Company, and told me, they wondered at the Change they perceived in my Countenance towards them, and that they were afraid they had done, or said something displeasing to me, tho' they knew it not; but if it was so, they were very sorry, for they would not do any Thing to anger me if they could help it. This Speech of theirs knit my Love to them, and made me resolve not to forsake them again whatever came on it; but before the Night was spent, I was again seized with sad Terror of Conscience, so that I could not be brisk amongst my Companions.

I went home, and betook myself to my former Resolutions, not to offend God on this wise and that I would read and pray, in order to merit his Favour. For, thought I, I must not expect to find Mercy any other Way. With these Promises, I contented myself, in a great measure, tho' I was not able to perform them. For, no sooner than the pleasant Evenings drew my Companions together; but my Mind was with them, and I allowed myself to go one Night after another, thinking every Time it should be the last, and I neglected Reading and Praying, with these Thoughts, I will omit but this Time, and go to my Play-fellows but once more. Thus I went on for some Time; but could not take that Pleasure, in Vanity and Folly, as formerly I did. At last, it pleased the Lord, to work such strong Convictions in me, as I hope ended in saving Conversion. One Day, these Thoughts darted into my Mind, that it was, as likely, I might die that Day, as live to another, and then what Good would all my Resolution to reform do me, since I was never found in the Practice of known Duties. These Thoughts set me all in a Tremble, and I concluded myself to be in a miserable Condition, for that I was deeply guilty of Sins of Omission and Commission, and that too, after I had been called to forsake them, and therefore, they could no longer be termed Sins of Ignorance. So I began to conclude the Day of Grace was now past, for I did not hearken to God's Voice when he called, and, therefore, he would now turn a deaf Ear unto me.

Then were my Sins, as it were, set in Order before me. Things that I had done in my Childhood, which had been long forgotten by me, came fresh to my Remembrance: Upon which, I thought, that I was undone to Eternity. At the same Time, I was made sensible of my Incapacity, to do any Thing that is good. I saw there was a Want of Power, as well as of Will, in me. About this Time, my Father preached from those Words: Nevertheless, the Foundation of God, standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them, that are his, and let every one, that nameth the Name of Christ

depart from Iniquity. From these Words he took Occasion to talk of Election, and of God's Foreknowledge from Eternity. Well, thought I, is it so, that the Lord, did before this Choice, well know what Rebels we should prove, then I may be well assured, that I shall be damned, for he would not fix his Love unalterably upon so vile, so sinful a Creature, as I am. When my Father came to speak from the latter Part of the Text, he spoke how it was the Duty of Believers to be pressing after Holiness. This made me begin to think of working for Life again, though I doubt not, but my dear Father made a Distinction between working for Life and from Life; but so ignorant was I, that I could not take it in aright. So I attempted to pray, and in so doing, found something of a secret Hope, that the Lord would pardon my Sins, tho' they were very great, if I could but keep to this Duty: But the Lord did not suffer me long to rest here. For that Scripture came into my Mind: Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done; but of his Mercy hath he saved us. And these Words followed: Not of Works, left any, Man should boast. Now was I quite brought off from having any Dependence upon my own Doings, and was at once quite stript of all Hopes: For I thought these Words came only to convince me, that my Righteousness would avail me nothing in Point of Salvation: For it is not said, according to his Mercy hath he saved thee, but us, and, therefore, no Encouragement to me. Thus I went on for some Time in a distressed, disconsolate manner.

One Day, as I was going about some Business, that Word fell upon my Thoughts: Thou art chosen of God and precious, I was not for taking any Notice of them. They ran in my Mind very much all Day, at last, I began to wonder at the Reason of their following me so much. I chosen of God, and precious thought I, that can never be, the Words do not belong to me, I dare not take Comfort from them. However, I looked into a Concordance; but could find none nearer than those in 1 Peter 1:4. This concerned me very much, for now, I thought it was plain, that Satan was endeavouring to deceive me. I was in sad Distress, and knew not what to do: Look which Way I would, I could see nothing but Ruin and Destruction before my Eyes. Pray I durst not, that Word ran so in my Mind, the Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination unto the Lord. At length Satan began to come in again with this Temptation; that I was but young, and, therefore, need not be thoughtful about Eternity; and that if I was elected I should be brought home at last, tho' I lived ever so carelessly the mean while; but if not, my Thoughtfulness would never save me. But it pleased the Lord to give me to see, that this was from the Devil, because it did not lead to Christ, but to Carelessness; and that Scripture came with some Power: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Whereupon, I desired, that I might so seek him as to find him, so call, that he might answer, so knock, that he might open unto me: For, I thought there was nothing in the World so desirable. That Word was given in for my Comfort: Tho' your Sins be like Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; tho' they be red as Crimson, they shall be as Wool.

I was then helped to admire at the distinguishing, unparalleled, superabounding Love of God. Oh! that he should come over all my Sins and Rebellions, and also manifest and discover it to me. Then I could cry out, why me, why me, indeed! Why should I, that am viler than the vilest Sinner that lives, be thus favoured, thus honoured! 'Tis Cause of Wonder and Astonishment! But, alas! this abode not long. I soon began to be under Fears and Questionings, whether ever the Lord had been at work upon my Soul, or not, and whether the Things I met with, might not be only Delusions. And, At length, Satan came in with his Temptations and Assaults upon me, and tempted me to question the Being of a God, and of the Truth of the Scriptures: Many Thoughts I

was distressed and perplexed with, which are not fit to be spoken, which brought me at last into such a Frame, that I knew not what to think of any Persons or Things. But one Day, as I was standing at the Garret Window, and looking out into the Garden, I began to consider how the Trees did grow; sure, thought I, it can be no natural Power that produced them: Then those Words came to my Mind, lift up your Eyes on high, and behold who hath created these Things; from which I was made to believe, that there is a God: And those Words followed; hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth? Then was I strongly persuaded, that there is an all-seeing, an all-knowing God, and wonder-working God, who is infinite in Power. But now the Thoughts and Conceptions which I before had, were like Arrows piercing me: For now I concluded, that if there was a God, I could have no Hopes of ever finding any Favour or Mercy from him; for I had found myself out of Hopes, by questioning his Being. Nay, I thought, that I had committed the unpardonable Sin, and, therefore, I could not be saved. In this Distress I continued some Hours, 'till it pleased the Lord to come in with these Words; Is my Arm shortened at all, that I cannot save? Or have I no Power to redeem? Which for the present a little supported me, for I was persuaded, that his Power is not limited, but that he could fare the worst of Sinners. But then I began to doubt of his Willingness to save me. I was by this Trial made more sensible of the Wickedness of my Heart, and of the natural Propensity that is in me to commit Evil, than ever before I was. It was a Means of discovering to me the Sin and Corruption that dwells within me. I then saw myself to be nothing but a Mass of Sin, and Heap of Uncleaness. I saw myself to be full of Ignorance and Darkness, which made me question the more, whether there was any Thing of a Work of Grace upon me or no: For I thought if I have Grace, why do I not grow; I find myself ignorant, and that is a Sign that I have no Grace. I used often to wish that I had died in my Infancy, and then I should not have committed so many, and so heinous Sins against my dear Lord; tho' I was sensible, that if I had died when but one Day old, and had not the Application of Christ's Righteousness, I had even then been miserable; for I was convinced of original Sin before this Time, from those Words, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me: Tho' it was a strange Doctrine to me at first; but after a strict Enquiry, I found by the Scripture, the first Sin which caused the Fall, was Pride and Unbelief. It was Pride in that, Man aimed to be as God, knowing Good and Evil; and Unbelief appeared in that he hearkened unto the Voice of Satan, and did not obey God: And upon a little Search, I found that these Sins were very predominant in my Nature. By which I found, that I was tainted with original Contamination. Those Words likewise were often in my Thoughts; who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? Not one. By these, I was convinced of original Sin, and was made to see, that from thence all actual Sins did flow. But to return. After some Time, the Lord was pleased to break in with Discoveries of Love to my Soul afresh, with these Words, As the Father hath loved me; so have I loved you, continue ye in my Love. This was a sweet Cordial indeed, to my drooping Spirits. And soon after these Words were made very sweet to my Soul: As the Bridegroom rejoiceth over his Bride; so shall thy God rejoice over thee. Oh! how did I then admire the distinguishing Grace of God, that was thus largely displayed and revealed to vile, sinful, and unworthy me. Then was my Heart knit and united to the Lord Jesus; so that I could say, whom have I in Heaven, but thee? And there is none in the Earth, that I desire besides thee. I then counted all earthly Things, but as empty Vanities, in Comparison with that Comfort I had in the Enjoyment of the Presence of my dear Lord. Then could I freely commit myself, my all into his Hand, believing him to be my Head, my Husband, my Saviour, my Redeemer, and my Advocate. I was for some Time wholly taken up

in the Contemplation of the divine Perfections of him, who is fairer than the Children of Men: And in adoring the Love of the divine Persons in the glorious Trinity. I saw that the Love of the Father was great, in making Choice of such a rebellious Creature, as he well knew I should prove. The Love of the Son was no less, in accepting of us at his Father's Hand, freely, willingly, and voluntarily undertaking to satisfy divine Justice, and to answer all the Demands of the Law. The Love of the Spirit may be seen, in discovering this, so matchless and marvellous Love and Grace unto us.

Now, I thought, I could be content to be any Thing, or nothing; so that God might be glorified in me. I was fearful of acting, or speaking any Thing, that was in the least contrary to the Mind of my God. I then hated every Thing that looked like Lightness, or was in the leastwise sinful, and was as much afraid of sinning, as knowing it was offensive to the holy and pure Nature of Deity, as of being damned for it. And desired as much to be holy here, as happy hereafter. Then Sabbaths were a Delight instead of Burdens. For as soon as the Sabbath was ended, I longed for the Return of another. Then were God's Ways, Ways of pleasantness, and all his Paths, were Paths of Peace unto me. Those Words were pleasant to me: Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name: And thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel; the God of the whole Earth shall be he called. Many other sweet and precious Promises were made very comfortable to my Soul, which I need not mention here.

I was for a considerable Time, at it were dandled on the Knee of Love. I seldom was a Day without fresh and repeated Discoveries of pardoning Love and Grace; which so melted my Heart, and so raised my Affections, that at some Times I was in such Transports of Joy, as cannot be expressed. I was so settled in the Belief and Persuasion of my Instatement in an everlasting inviolable Covenant, that I thought with David, my Mountain stood so strong, it could never be moved. I was ready to say with Paul; nothing shall separate me from the Love of God, nor interpose, nor hinder my Enjoyment. I could then go to God in Duties, as to my own God and Father, and claim a Right to, and Propriety in the Promises of the Gospel. At that Time, I had an earnest Desire after the Welfare of those, who had formerly been my Companions: I mean the Welfare of their immortal Souls. O! thought I, did they but know what I feel, and could they but conceive what Satisfaction, Comfort, and Joy, there is in the Enjoyment of, Nearness to, and Communion with a reconciled God, and, did they but see what a Beauty, Loveliness, and Glory there is in him, they would freely forsake all their foolish Pleasures, and vain Delights for an Interest in Christ. I thought I would not have returned back to my former Course of Sin and Vanity, might I thereby gain a thousand Worlds. For there is more true Peace, and solid Comfort, in one Moment's Communion with God, than in an hundred Years, in Sin and Folly. Some Time after this, the Lord was pleased to withdraw the Light of his Countenance, and to leave me in the Dark: Whereupon, I presently began to question my Interest in him, and to fear, that what I felt, was only a Delusion from Satan, or else the Fancy of a distressed Mind, or some Notion, that I had got, by giving more Attention in Hearing the Word preached, than I was wont to do.

About the same Time I heard, that one of my Companions should say, that it was only Pride, that made me forsake them, that I did not think them rich enough to play with me, and so they reflected upon me very much. The Parents of this Girl were Professors, and they spoke as bad of me, as the Girl herself could do. This troubled me greatly, for now I thought the Lord was about to discover what I was, and that I certainly was, as they said; tho' my Heart was so deceitful, that I did

not discern it before: Or else he would not have suffered his own Children to have had such Thoughts of me. In this Distress, I remained some considerable Time: One Day, I happened to fall into the Company of this Girl, and one, who was a Friend to me being present, she began to tell me what the other had said of me. The Girl at first denied it: Upon that, I talked to her pretty sharply, for telling of Lyes to excuse herself, then she owned, that she had said so, to one, or two, and what then? Its true, said she. I told her, that I thought I might truly, say, it was false. Then those Words were given in: If ye were of the World, the World would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the World, therefore, the World hateth you. But thought I, it is not only the World, but Professors likewise, who cast these Reflections upon me. Then those Words came to my Mind: In the World, ye shall have Tribulation; but in me, ye shall have Peace: Be of good Cheer, for I have overcome the World. Then I considered, that it is not said, from the World, or from the Persons of the World, but in the World; and inferred from thence, that Persons may meet with Trouble, and Trials, even from the Men of their own House. Then was I helped from these Promises, to admire Grace, that the Lord should so condescend to such a poor unbelieving Creature as I. Soon after this, I began to examine myself, whether, or no, I could freely, and willingly part with all Creature-Comforts for the Sake of Christ: Or whether, if I was put to my Choice, either to have great Things in the World, and all the Pleasure, that Heart could wish, or to have Christ and the Cross, which of the two, I should chuse? I thought my Heart replied, I should rather chuse Christ and the Cross, than all the Riches and Pleasures of this World. But I again reflected, that my Heart was deceitful, and it might be, if I was put to the Trial, and should have Riches, Honours, and Pleasures set before me, I should chuse them, rather than Christ with the Cross, and so this could be no Evidence of my being right. Whereupon I was greatly troubled, and desired of the Lord, that if I was his, he would by a more than ordinary Power let me know it. Then was I for chalking out a Way for God to walk in. Thinking, that if this, and the other Thing might be according to my Wish, then I could believe. After this Desire had passed, I began to be much troubled to think what I was now about. Must I direct the Almighty? Could not I take him at his Word, without desiring he should take such a Way to raise up my Faith. Yet for all this I could not help still having the same Desire, till those Words were brought to my Mind: My Ways are not as your Ways, nor my Thoughts, as your Thoughts: For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts, than your Thoughts. Soon after this, those Words were impressed upon my Thoughts: Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the Right Hand of Righteousness. It was a good Word indeed to my Soul, for many Days. About this Time, my Father was preaching from these Words: Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. My Memory is too bad to give any particular Account of what was then delivered. But this I can remember, that I had sweet Times under hearing.

One Sabbath-Day in the Morning I was very ill, so that I was forced to stay at Home. But no sooner was the Family gone to the Meeting; but I began to reflect upon myself, for letting a little Illness detain me from going. If I had a right Value for Hearing the Gospel of Christ, thought I, I should have gone: Or had I any right Esteem for the Comfort, and Refreshment of my Soul, I should readily, have gone, that I might have met with it; but now I thought it was plain, that I was nothing but a painted Hypocrite. I had at that Time such a Sight of the Darkness of my Understanding, the Hardness of my Heart, and of the Perverseness of my Will, that I thought there were none like me. For thinks I, such as are indeed Christians, take more Delight in the Means of Grace, and in

discoursing of the Things of God. They can speak of a new Birth, and of Faith in Christ, and this I thought myself a Stranger to. So, I then judged, there was nothing right in me: But if there is not yet, it is high Time there should, thought I; and I am well assured, that if I return back to my former Course of Sin and Folly, I shall perish. If I have any Dependence on any Thing in myself, that is too short: There is no other Way, whereby we can be saved, but in, and thro' Christ, thro' his Righteousness alone, without any of our own to be joined therewith: Therefore, I will now, as helped, venture my Soul upon him, if I perish, I perish.

Then that Word was given in to me with an irresistible Power, so that I could not withstand it: I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy, Transgressions, for my own Sake, and I will not remember thy Sins. Then was I again helped to admire the free, rich, and distinguishing Love of God: That he of his good Will and Pleasure. and for his own Sake, not for any Worth, or Worthiness in me; no, for I deserve not the least of his Mercies, should thus freely pardon the most vile of Sinners. Then I desired, that since Grace is thus free, I might never be suffered to do any Thing to offend, so kind, so merciful a God: For, thought I, is it so, that Grace, Love, and Mercy, is so abundant, and super-abounding, then am I under the highest Obligation in the World, to be found in Acts of Obedience to all God's Commands, so far, as capable, not for Life, but from Life: Not expecting to merit Salvation; but being chosen of God, redeemed by Christ from the Curse of the Law, he having answered all the Demands thereof, and given a full and plenary Satisfaction to divine Justice on my Account therefore, I ought to endeavour to promote his Honour and Glory, in all Holiness, and godly Conversation.

I had at that Time a deep Sense of the odious Nature of Sin, that it was of so heinous a Nature, that nothing less than the Blood of the spotless righteous Lamb of God could satisfy for it. That the Son of God must: take upon him our Nature, stand in our Room and Stead, be made Sin for us, who himself knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him. O Matchless Grace, unparalleled Love, that ever the Lord of Life and Glory, should leave his Father's Bosom, to die so shameful, so ignominious a Death, even the Death of the Cross, for poor rebellious Creatures, and that he should endure such Sufferings, and undergo his Father's Wrath and Displeasure, to that Degree, that he cried out: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! And all this for, and on Account of poor sinful Mankind. The Consideration of this, made me abhor Sin, and loath myself on Account of my Transgressions, I desired, that I might never be suffered to sin against God, in Heart, Lip, nor Life. Nay, I thought, that if I was sure to be damned, yet I desired, that whilst I remained here, I might live to the Praise and Glory of God.

I had a comfortable Time all that Week, and the Week following. Many sweet, and precious Promises were given in, which I cannot now remember: So that I was filled with such Transports of Joy, as I cannot express, nor could I willingly admit of any Discourse, or Company, that might interrupt my Enjoyments. And to the End, that nothing of that might hinder my Meditations, I commonly sat in my Lodging Room, where I enjoyed many pleasant Hours, as well as some distressing ones. I had now an endeared Love for any, that I hoped were the Children of God. And, if I heard of any young ones, being under Convictions, I soon found my Affections strongly engaged to them, who before I had no Esteem of, and an earnest Desire after their Welfare. After this, hearing some, in telling their Experience, speak of the dreadful Temptations they had met with, and also reading Mr. Barry's Account of the Dealings of God with him, what sharp Conflicts he met with, and how long he was under the Spirit of Bondage, and upon his receiving the Spirit of

Adoption, what glorious Effects ensued; I began to fear again, that I was not in a converted State. For, I thought, I was never loaded with the Guilt of Sin, as some be: Neither was I ever assaulted with such dreadful Temptations from Satan, as many are; nor yet have I ever enjoyed such wonderful and glorious Revelations of Christ, as some express, therefore, I fear that I am still in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity. My Trouble thro' these Fears, increased daily for some Time. Whereupon, I acquainted one of my intimate Friends therewith: Who directed me to a Passage in Mr. Bunyan's Come and Welcome to the Chief of Sinners, which just answered those very Objections. The reading whereof little removed my Doubts. And also reading Mr. Barry's Postscript, to caution such doubting tempted Believers, that might be ready to draw sad Conclusions against themselves, from hearing of the wonderful Dealings of God with him, in handling him so sharply by the Spirit of Bondage; as also his bountiful Dealing with him, in making his Soul the Receptacle of such Joy and Consolation, upon believing. Saith he, Some pass thro' greater Horror, and are brought, as it were, to the Gates of Hell, and Desperation, as I was: Others are dealt more easily, and gently with, being sweetly allured, and as it were insensibly transplanted into Christ, they not well knowing what is done to them. The reading of these Things, I say, together with those Words, following of me very much: He leadeth thee by the still Waters, did give me some Hopes, that I was one of those, that the Lord was pleased thus by the gentle Drawings of his Spirit to bring to close with Christ. Then those Words were very pleasant to me: I taught Ephraim to go, leading them by the Hand; but they, knew not, that I healed them. I drew them with the Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love. I was to them, as they that take off the Yoke on their Jaws, and laid Meat unto them. Then was I helped to see, that tho' I had not been so strongly beset with Temptations as some are, yet that was not an Indication, that the Work of Grace was not right, in, and upon me; for the Lord can work in what way he pleases. And surely, I have great Cause of Thankfulness, on this very Account, that I was not left to the Buffetings of Satan, nor to be so long under that sad Horror and Bondage of Conscience, as some be, and tho' I had not such great Revelations of Christ, nor such ravishing Joy and Comfort as some have; yet I had such Views of him, as a suitable, and sufficient Saviour, that I would not part with my Hopes of an Interest in him, for the World: And also had received such Joy and Comfort from him, as did far surpass all the Comfort, that can flow from the belt, and greater Enjoyments of this World's Things: Yea, for one Moment's Communion with God, is far preferable to all the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this World; for it yields more Satisfaction, and Peace, than can be met with in the highest Station of worldly Grandeur.

Thus was I helped to meditate on these Things, and to stand and admire, that I should be so highly favoured, as to have any Discovery of pardoning Grace, any Manifestation of redeeming Love. It had been a great Mercy, if the Lord had fixed his Love upon me, and had not made it known to me: But O it is matchless and unparalleled Grace indeed, that he should send his Spirit to reveal this his altogether unmerited, and inconceivable Love to my Soul! I can never enough admire this great, this inexpressible Love. Neither am I able - Something is here wanting, by Injury her Writing hath suffered, thro' one means or other. She proceeds thus. Then was the Language of my Heart, O that I might never commit one Sin more! How can I bear to think of offending so kind, so loving a God. What Sin against such Love and Mercy, that hath been discovered to sinful unworthy me? How can I bear it Wretch that I am, are there yet the

Remainders of Sin in me; I hate it, I loath it. O! that I might be wholly and entirely freed therefrom. This, I say, was the constant Language of my Heart for some Time. Unwilling was I, as I have before said, to leave my Lodging Room, so much as to eat a little Victuals, for fear of having my Thoughts diverted from Things that are heavenly and divine. And, when I was in Company, I was restless till I got by myself again. One Time I well remember, having been in Company, when I got to my Chamber again, I was thinking over something that passed, till on a sudden, those Words came with such Power: My Son, give me thy Heart; I answered, Lord, do thou take it, thou alone art worthy - here also some Injury hath happened to her Lines.

I admired, that the eternally glorious God should stoop so low, as to desire a Place, in the Hearts of such poor, Nothing-Creatures, as we are, who is glorified and adored above, by the blessed Angel, and hath no need of the Adoration, and Services of such poor Dust and Ashes as we are. O wonderful and matchless Grace! I had that Afternoon, such Views of the Glories of Heaven, of the Bliss and Happiness, that the Angels, and glorified. Saints are possessed of, that made me even long to be dissolved, to be with Christ, which is far better. Some little Time after this, one Sabbath-Day, as I was going to the Meeting, this Thought darted into my Mind, that I was all this while, but a deceiving myself, and building my Hopes on a sandy Foundation, and not on Christ, who is the only Way of Salvation. This Thought set me on a Tremble, and sad Distress was I in, till those Words came in: I will deliver thee from going down to the Pit, for I have found a Ransom, which a little supported me, tho' I could not tell whether there was a Scripture, or not; but when I came home, I looked into a Concordance, and found it. In the Afternoon, when I was in the Meeting, my Fear seized me again that all I had met with, was only a Delusion, that Satan was endeavouring to deceive me, and so took this Method, which he thought was the likeliest to keep me quiet, persuading me, that I was in a safe State; when alas! it was no such Thing. I thought he could transform himself into an Angel of Light, and can bring Scriptures, to those that he brought to trust in, and depend on something short of Christ. This I fully thought was nay Case, for about Half an Hour; then those Words were brought to my Mind: I am not a Man, that I should lye, nor the Son of Man, that I should repent.

Here the Narrative she gives is broke off, and left unfinished. I shall present the Reader with some farther Account of her Experience, and of the carrying on of the good Work upon her soul, out of some of her Letters, which she wrote to Relations, Friends, and

Acquaintance.

I shall begin this Account with some Lines taken out of a Letter to her Mother, whom she much honoured and tenderly loved. She writes thus:

Dear Mother,

I AM very glad to hear of your being in such a comfortable Frame, whilst under your late Affliction. The Presence of God is very comfortable and delightful at all Times; but in a special Manner in a Time of Affliction; it makes Affliction seem very light and easy. Thro' Grace I know something of it. I also know something how dismal and distressing it is to be on a sick Bed; and to my own Apprehension, to be ear the Time of Dissolution, and to be wholly deprived of his comforting Presence, to have not one Glimpse of Love, no sealing Evidence of an Interest in his Favour; but quite on the contrary, writing the most bitter Things against myself: Lying for some Time under the

dreadful Apprehensions of approaching Wrath and endless Misery. This is a very sad Case; but as I before hinted, this is not always, nor indeed not often mine; but it has been the Pleasure of my dear Lord, most Times, when attended with bodily Illness, to favour me with Visits of Love, to give me repeated Discoveries of my Interest in him, and to let me see, that it is in very Faithfulness, that he afflicts, that it is for my real Good and Advantage; tho' I at present may not discern how, or which Way. For what he doth, we know not now; but we shall know hereafter. I have been filled with Admiration and Astonishment, that my Afflictions are not the Rebukes of an angry God; but his fatherly Chastisements for my Profit, that they come not in vindictive Wrath; but are as the Rod in the Hand of a loving and tender-hearted Father. That he will lay no more upon me, than he will enable me to bear. That they are Part of my Portion: Yea, that they are really Part of the Blessing designed for me in the eternal Covenant. That they are mine, in the Sense the Apostle speaks of, when he enumerates the many Benefits that are the Saints' Property: Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Things present, or Things to come, or Life, or Death all are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ, is God's. But I must conclude for Want of Time, etc. To the same she thus expresses herself on a very mournful Occasion, viz. the Death of an only Child, who was not five Years old.

Dear Mother,

YOU desire to know how we are in our Minds. Indeed I have often thought to write to you on that Subject; but it being a melancholy one, I omitted it: Tho' I may say, that for my own Part, I am mostly better reconciled to that mournful Providence, than I could have expected. Not that my dear Babe is much out of my Mind, for that she is not, Day, or Night; but at some Times I am pretty much resigned to the Will of God, in what he has done; and can believe, that he doth all Things well. And that his Thoughts towards me, in that Respect were Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil. I at some Times hope, that these Words, which so much ran in my Mind, in my dear Babe's Illness, have in some Measure been made good, viz. This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification. Now, what is Sanctification, but to have our Will wholly resigned to and swallowed up in the Will of God? And I think, if I know anything of my own Heart, I can say, that at Times, I have been helped quietly to acquiesce in the Will of God, In the Removal of one of the most engaging Babes, merely because it was the Will of my heavenly Father. The sweet

Frames that I have at some Times been in, since her Departure, I cannot otherwise express, than that it was, as if my Will was indeed wholly swallowed up in the Will of God. But alas! This is not always the Case: I meet with some Intervals, and such too, that at those Seasons, I can hardly tell how to bear up under my Loss, which I don't find, that length of Time has any Tendency to abate the Sense of. In answer to a Letter from her Mother, upon this delicate and affecting Subject, she speaks thus:

I Thank you for your seasonable Advice; but alas! I am too apt to murmur at this Dispensations of Providence, and think it is a Stroke too heavy for me to bear. I am sometimes like unto Jonah, think I do well to be angry; I am ready to call Providence to an Account, in this Manner; thinks I, why was she not removed sooner, before she was so exceedingly engaging? Or why had she not continued longer, that she might have been more capable of giving an Account of herself; that so we might have had full Satisfaction about her State. I have indeed been sadly distressed about that, tho' I sometimes think I have less Reason so to be, than many others have, (the means under

such a Circumstance) for it is certain, she had uncommon Impressions upon her Mind some Time before her Illness. For she talked much about dying and being in Heaven, she wanted to know what would be her Employ there, and if she should not see more and know more, than she did here. In the midst of her Gaiety and Briskness, she would often change her Countenance, and look as grave and solid as any body could do; and running to me would say, Mamma, doth he that is above see me now? And is he angry with me? And many such Questions she often asked, that I many Times could not tell how to answer her. It would fill Sheets of Paper to relate her pretty Speeches, which were something remarkable. It will likewise be too tedious to inform you here, of the various Trials and Temptations that I have laboured under, and the particular Supports I have had, in my dear Babe's Illness and since her Death: Only this I may say, that if I had not had some Supports, I think I could not have bore up under so sore a Trial, but I purpose to see you very soon: If the Lord permits me, I think to be at Northampton in less than a Fortnight, tho' it will be a melancholy Journey to me now. I pleased myself very much with the Thoughts of coming with my dear Lamb to Northampton, to shew you what a fine Babe she was grown. She was so much improved in less than two Years, that she was a Wonder to all that saw her: Her Temper was so sweet, and her Carriage so affable, and pretty, that rendered her agreeable to all our Acquaintance. She was generally beloved, her Company was much courted, she was much admired, and the Loss of her is much lamented, She was, I believe, as desirable a Child, as ever lived, an obliging dutiful Babe indeed, and a tender one, if we were not well; but as lovely a Creature, as she was, she was not too lovely for him, who, I would hope, has taken her to himself. But it will be of no Service to go on thus.

She thus writes to one, who acquainted her with some Matters of Complaint relating to spiritual Things. MY Experience is the same with yours, as to Disorders in Duty, and the Workings of Corruptions out of Duty. I find my Heart, as vain, and as carnal as ever, nay, I think far worse than ever; so that I often think, surely there is none in the World like me. You complain in yours of Heart wanderings; so that you know not how to approach unto God in Prayer many Times. But remember that Covenant, wherein you are provided for, both in this Life, and that which is to come. By Vertue of that Covenant, Believers are fed with the finest of the Wheat, and Honey out of the Rock: And, indeed, we stand in great need thereof, at this Day, when we are encompassed with the Waters of Marah, viz. Bitterness, when we are troubled on every Side, yet (if we are made to act Faith in Christ) not distressed, 2 Corinthians 4:8. It is a small Thing to be buffeted of Satan, to be reproached by Men, if we can claim an Interest in the Power of Christ our Lord, that will support us, when all Creatures fail us. Outward Discouragements seem many and great, when Faith is weak and feeble, Unbelief stumble at many Things, which Faith steps over with ease. Oh! may we be helped to wrestle with God for more Faith; surely, a Believer is under spiritual Decays, when he, or she, under a Want of Faith can neglect the Throne of Grace. Happy are those, whose Wants make them more importunate, and earnest with the God of all Grace; such shall be supplied, according to the Riches of his Glory. He that prepares the Heart to ask, will cause his Ear to bear. Psalms 10:17. When God makes us earnest Beggars, in his Son's Name, he will make us successful ones for his Son's Sake. We have great Encouragement to ask, God takes Delight in Acts of Mercy, Micah 7:18. He gives liberally, and upbraideth not; he will not always deny us, because of our former Negligence. The Pleasure he takes in manifesting his Mercy, cannot be allayed by our Unworthiness, Darkness, Deadness, or any Thing of that Nature. We must consider, the Justice of God is fully satisfied, therefore, Fury is not in him. God can now deal

with us sinful Dust and Ashes, in a Way of Mercy, without any Hindrance from his Justice; he hath regard to the perfect Satisfaction made thereunto, by his Son Jesus Christ; and as long as that is presented at the Right Hand of God the Father, so long we have Ground to think, and believe, that no Shower of Wrath shall fall upon us: For altho' Faith in the presented Obedience of Christ, makes us comfortable, yet its Christ's presenting of it for us, makes us safe. The Actings of our Faith ebb, and flow; but the Righteousness of Christ is one, and the same for ever, it shall never be abolished. Neither Sin, nor Satan, Time, nor Eternity, can make any Alteration in it. It is Raiment, that waxeth not old upon us, notwithstanding we are, in this Wilderness-State exposed to many Storms and Tempests. Christ is the Bread of Life, and his Righteousness, is a Robe and Garment of Salvation. Oh that we might be enabled to believe in him more stedfastly, not doubting, but we shall be preferred in the midst of the Tempest, remembering, that this Man, Christ, is a hiding Place from the Storm, a Covert from the Tempest; as Rivers of Water in a dry Place, and as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land. He is both Protection and Refreshment to us, in this howling Wilderness; but I must break off for Want of Time. In another Letter she gives some Account of a Sermon, she heard from these Words: Lo! the People shall dwell alone, and of the Frame of her Mind while hearing of it: The Account she gives of the Sermon is this; that the People of God may be laid to dwell alone, as Objects of God's eternal Choice from among others: As Christ became their Surety, and by Reason of the Spirit's Work upon their Hearts. That they dwell alone in God's Love, in Christ's Love, and in the Love of the Spirit. And, that they may be said to dwell alone, in Respect of their Desires of Grace, their Aim, and End being God's Glory. All indeed, said he, may desire to be saved from Wrath and Misery; but their Desire is, that God may be glorified in, and by them, as well as that, they may partake of Happiness. Besides, they give Thanks and Praise to the Lord, in the Reception of Mercies, they are, in some measure, helped to eye from whence their Mercies flow, and so give God the Glory of all; whereas, others, if they enjoy the good Things of this Life they ascribe it to their good Endeavours, and good Management, etc. I was, says she, pretty much affected under hearing. I wish I had a Memory to retain what was delivered, so as to give you a particular Account thereof, and of my Frame under that Sermon, it was (some Particulars of it especially) very searching, which put me upon Self-Examination, and on the strictest Search, I thought, at least, that my Experience could witness to the Truth of what was said, and so I was in a comfortable Frame; but I have been often attended with questioning Thoughts this Week, and am now in a very discomposed Frame, unfit indeed to write. I do not love Writing; but when I am in pretty lively Frames. In another Letter to the same Person, when she was under Trouble of Soul, she thus expresses herself. I cannot see, that I have any Grounds to suppose, that I have in Truth and Reality ventured my Soul upon Christ. It is one Thing to believe the Truth of his Word, and the All-sufficiency of his Grace, and another Thing to believe in him, and receive him, and rest upon him, for Life and Salvation. Neither am I, as I think, I ought to be, concerned about it; but am indeed possessed of Carelessness, and Indifferency too often: Tho' at some Times, I am almost overdone with Distress for a few Hours; but then it wears off again without any Application of pardoning Grace, and is succeeded by a careless Frame of Spirit; which seems to be a plain Demonstration, that I am still, in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity. As to the Concern, that at some Times siezeth upon my Mind, I think its only the Accusation of a wounded Conscience, against which, I do to a very great Degree Sin daily; being guilty of Sins both of Omission and Commission; the which I know to be a Duty to do, or to avoid, and which doubtless will greatly aggravate my Torments in another World, Christ,

himself saith, { John 15:22}. If I had not spoken unto them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin.

I have sometimes thought, that my neglecting to be found in the Ordinances of Christ, might be a Cause of my being left sometimes to careless Frames, and sometimes to unbelieving ones: And, that I had thereby given just Occasion to the holy Spirit, to withhold his gracious Influences; but I do now conclude, that I am still in an unconverted State, and, therefore, the Lord did not suffer me to deceive his Church and People: He would not permit me to be ranked amongst his dear chosen ones. And well it was, that I was kept from it. For, perhaps, I might then have brought a greater Dishonour to his Name, and a greater Reproach to his Gospel, than now I can, Tho' better it would have been, had I been wholly silent, and not acquainted any with what I, thro' a Delusion, fancied, that I met with. Surely Satan used more Subtlety in his Devices against me, than against any other. He took this Method to blind my Mind, and make me think, that I was in a safe State: Thus he hath deceived me: And now he lets me rest quietly. It is said of him, { 2 Corinthians 11:14} that he transforms himself into an Angel of Light.

I do not apprehend, that the Distress, that I am sometimes in, is from him; but as I before hinted, that it ariseth only from a Conscience wounded by Sin, which he perceiving, puts me in Mind of what I before met with, for my Relief at some Times. At other Times, brings other Things into my Mind, to take my Thoughts off from what should be the Matter of my greatest Concern. Thus is he, as I conceive, Time after Time, endeavouring this Way to deceive me, and to keep me from seeking after Salvation in a right Way. These Words have often run in my Mind, of late especially, when I have been for fetching in Comfort from former Experience, then have they darted afresh into my Mind: Be not deceived, God is not mocked. And also there: So are the Paths of all that forget God; and the Hypocrite's Hope shall perish. Yet how little am I concerned about it? Sometimes, as I before said, I am in sad Distress for a short Time; but certainly, if my Concern was of a right Kind, I should not rest satisfied without Discoveries of pardoning Grace. And if ever I had savingly closed Christ, then surely, I should find more earnest Desires after the Enjoyment of Communion with him. Can a Soul, that hath tasted of his Grace, that hath enjoyed his comforting Presence, be contented to go from Day to Day, yea from Week to Week, without one View, or Token of his Love? You will doubtless say, no; then the true Reason of my so doing is, because I never tasted the Sweetness of it, and, therefore, cannot so thirst and breathe after it, as such do, who have (to the comforting of their Soul) received renewed Love-Visits from himself. A real Child of God values, and esteems Christ above all the World; but it is evident that I do not, because my Heart is so much taken up with the vain Things of this Life, that is at most not a Moment, when compared with Eternity. How happy are they, that have a well-grounded Assurance, that they shall live, everlastingly possessed of all true joys, and Delights, such cannot be satisfied with earthly Riches, Honours, or Pleasures; but they are for the Riches and Glory of Heaven: It is a Crown of Glory, they have in their Eye, nothing but God himself will satisfy them, they count all Things but as Dross and Dung, in Comparison of Christ, and are freely willing to part with all for him, they are willing to deny themselves, and take up their Cross, and follow him, willing to do, or suffer any Thing; so that he may but be glorified in, and by them: His Glory is what they aim at in all they do. This I sometimes have thought I could say of myself; but now I see it is otherwise. I wish I could, with Truth, say thus. These are the Friends of Christ, and the only Favourites of Heaven: Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. They cannot by so doing purchase, or procure

Christ's Love and Friendship; no, no, his Favour cannot be bought. When they have done all, they must say we are unprofitable Servants. Heaven is not a Reward of Debt, but of Grace. But Christ doth freely vouchsafe this Blessing to his chosen, who keep his Word, and its hereby they are assured of his Love: He that hath my Commandment, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. Persons may have Christ's Commandments in their Heads, and in their Mouths, may know what his Commandments be, and yet not have them in their Hearts, so as to keep them, or subject to them; but a truly godly Person loves them, approves of them, and sincerely keeps them. The Saints yield a ready and hearty Obedience to the Precepts, Christ hath given forth in the Gospel. God be thanked, that ye were the Servants of Sin; but ye have obeyed from the Heart, that Form of Doctrine, which was delivered unto you. The divine Doctrine hath great Efficacy on their Hearts. The Word makes an Impression on their Souls; so that with Joy and Delight they obey it, and from a right Principle, from a Principle of Life, from Faith in, and Love to Christ. Holy David could say: I love thy Commandments above Gold; yea above fine Gold. { Psalms 119:127}. And he also says: Therefore, I esteem all thy Precepts, concerning all Things to be right; and I hate every false Way. But as for me, sad is my Case, I do not find that Hatred to Sin, as its an Offence to the most high God, which he speaks of. I may, perhaps, be afraid of sinning, for Fear or heightening my Torments; but I do not think I ever was made rightly sensible of the odious and abominable Nature of Sin. Nor do I find that Love to Christ, his People, and to his Ways, as I think his dear Children do. Is it a Sign of Love to Christ, when the Heart is almost wholly taken up with the Things of this World, and the Mind is remiss, careless, and of one kind, negligent, in discharging Duties and another, which are by Christ enjoined upon us to observe? No, no, this is no Testimony thereof; but on the contrary Hand, it is a very evident Proof, beyond all Denial, either that there is no Grace at all, in such who are thus vainly carried away, or else, that it lies dormant; but I fear the former is my Case, nay, I am almost certain of it: For those faint Desires I have of being saved, proceed not from a Desire that God may be glorified; but only for Fear of the Torments of Hell, nor are those Fears strong enough to make me willing to forsake the vain Things of this World, as I can perceive; notwithstanding the greatest Joy, and worldly Riches and Glory, are not to be compared to the Glory of Heaven, nor the greatest Sorrow, or Trouble here, to the Torments of Hell. Can you (now I have in a small Degree made known my Case to you) I say, can you suppose me to be a true Believer in Christ? Be not so deceived, neither pray for me, as such: But if the Lord inclines your Heart to put a Petition for me, then beg, that I may be rightly convinced of the Evil of Sin, and of my woful and undone Condition thereby, and of the Necessity of a Mediator, or Saviour, and also, that that I may see the Excellency of that the blessed Saviour, and the great Power and Ability, he is clothed with to save, and that I may be helped to venture my Soul upon him, that I may receive him, and rest, and rely upon him alone for Salvation. I know, my Sins, tho' they be very numerous, are not too many, nor too great to be pardoned, if such a Mercy is but in Reversion for me. Christ's Arm is not shortened, his Power is not limited. He can, if he pleases, come over all the Mountains of my Rebellion. In another Letter to the same Person, she writes thus: YOURS I received, in which are contained Intimations of the Love and Kindness of the Lord Jesus taking hold of your Soul; and making you a Partaker of the Grace of Life. In the Views of which you are led into the Admiration of his Excellency, and the Wonders of his Grace. That the Saviour and Power, of those Soul-refreshing Truths, are in some measure experienced by you. Oh! that lovely one, how sweet are the least Glimpses of his peculiar Favour; when he is pleased to give some special Discoveries of it, in our

attending upon him. But what will it be, when we shall enter into the Joy of our Lord, and be made to swim in that vast unfathomable Ocean of eternal Love and Glory? in the mean Time, it must be testified, that the blessed Jesus deserves the highest Seat and Entertainment in our Hearts. Where should he be let, but in the midst of our dearest and most ardent Love, to command all in us to a most willing Obedience, and to the utter abolishing of all our Idols, that he alone may be exalted? It is his own Power and Spirit, that only can maintain his noble Cause, or effectually plead for his Royal Prerogative in our Souls. But, Oh! what need have we to be begging of God, that there may be a reviving Time, after such a long Winter-Season, for if these withering, backsliding Days be not shortened, how will his Honour be vindicated?

It is Matter of great Concern to me, at Times, to see the Decays there are amongst the Professors, in this our Age; as well as to feel the Declining in my own Soul. And I am sometimes ready to say, what will become of God's great Name? But this may be our strong Consolation, that there is no limiting of his Power, nor searching of his Understanding. He knows how to restore in a Moment the Desolation of many Generations. He can, if he pleases, revive his Children, and make them to rejoice in him, and cause them to flourish in the Courts of their God. The Lord help us to live by Faith, and to rejoice in the Hope of his Glory, knowing, that none ever trusted in him, and were confounded. You desire to hear how it fares with me, as to the present Frame of my Soul. I have not Time to give you a particular Account thereof. I could wish, that it was with me, as in Days past; but alas! it is quite otherwise. I find a great deal of Coldness and Indifferency attending me, and Abundance of Sin mixed, even with the best of my Performances. I seldom can go to God in the Duty of Prayer; but my Heart is roving after vain Things. O the Thousands of Thoughts, that will even at such Seasons crowd in, to interrupt, and disturb me in my Supplications to the most High. Neither do I find my Heart so drawn out to the Lord, nor do I enjoy that Nearness to, and Communion with him as I was wont to do. Yet I am not left to give up all Hopes. At some Times the Thoughts and Consideration of the Frames I am too often in, is very distressing to me; at other Times, I am wholly careless, and unconcerned about it.

One Day, not long since, as I was thinking how I have been in Times past, how much of the sensible Presence of God, I then enjoyed, and how pleasant and delightful it was; I had a great Desire to participate of the same Favour once more, and to that End, I resolved to betake myself to the Duty of holy Meditation. I retired to my Room, for that Purpose; but when I came there, I found my Thoughts much confused and rambling, and could not come at one serious Thought of God, or his Works, for a considerable Time. I then thought with myself, I came here to think, and contemplate upon divine Things, and not to have my Thoughts, thus vainly carried away. I then reflected again, that if I was to watch my Thoughts, but one Hour, I might observe a Multitude of sinful ones; but find it hard to have one serious Thought of God, or for him; so that I thought I had Reason to stand and wonder, that God did not cut me off, and cast me among the damned. But whilst I was thus thinking, my Thoughts were still wandering; so that I saw I had not Power over one Thought. Under a Sense of this I went to God, desiring that he would direct my Thoughts and assist me. He was pleased graciously to answer my Request. I was for a few Hours very comfortable, but alas! it abode not long. Oh! I long to feel more of the kindly Power of Christ in subduing my Will, and bringing every Thought in Subjection to his Law. In another of her Letters she thus speaks. I AM willing to embrace an Opportunity of writing to you, by which you may understand that I have you still in Remembrance; and am, as helped, in my Prayers to the Lord

making Request for you, that you may be filled with all Joy and Peace in Believing, even Joy unspeakable and full of Glory; and that you may be led more fully into the Knowledge of divine Truths, as they are in Jesus. It is not a bare Notion of Things in the Head; but a real Experimental Knowledge of Christ, and him crucified that will stand us in Stead. The great Apostle accounted all Things but Loss and Dung, in Comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, rejecting all Confidence in his own Righteousness, and resting wholly and only on Christ and his Righteousness for Justification and Acceptance with God. Indeed, it is in the Lord Jesus only, that we have Righteousness and Strength. And this is such a Righteousness, as can answer all the Demands of Justice, and all the Requirements of the Law of God, and all the Guilt of Conscience, yea, and all the Accusations of Satan, and render a Person spotless and amiable in the Sight of God. We are complete in Christ. Fair and comely tho' in ourselves, we are unworthy, vile, and deformed; so that we may say with the Apostle, who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect, etc. Oh! the Wonders of divine, glorious, sovereign, distinguishing Grace, that such poor, sinful, polluted Wretches as we, should be so highly favoured and dignified, brought into such Nearness of Union to, and Communion with God, by the blessed Jesus. Oh! How comfortable and pleasant is it to live in the Views of God's reconciled Face, and to taste the Sweetness of his Love, which is better than Wine. How should such Love and Grace engage us, to love God and live to him? Yea, and to trust in him? It is Matter of Astonishment and Admiration, that it should please the high and lofty one, to set his Love on such unworthy Wretches, and to draw them with the Cords of his Loving-kindness. There is nothing so sweet and excellent, as to behold the Beauty, or to be taken with Love of the most excellent Jesus. It is a sweet Life to dwell in the Secret of his Pavilion, to have a Place among them that stand by, and see the lovely Face, where the divine Majesty may be approached unto, in a Way of intimate holy Communion and Acquaintance, where we shall hear of nothing but Peace; nothing but the Law of Kindness and Liberty is delivered from Mount Zion, where God hath commanded the Blessing, even Life for evermore. A Liberty not of Slaves, which is Freedom from Duty; but of Sons, which is Freedom in Duty; especially to live upon, delight in, and chuse him above all, who is graciously multiplying Experiences of his Grace to our Souls. What Reason have we to be praising of him with the greater Thankfulness of Heart, that ever he should cast one favourable Look upon such vile Dust, who deserved to be cast into the Dungeon of utter Darkness for ever? I think, that I above all have Cause to admire the stupendous Grace and Love of God, that he should come over the Mountains of my Rebellions, and reveal pardoning Grace unto me, (who am viler than the vilest Sinner that lives) as I cannot now, but hope he hath.

I am often, yea, very often attended with Questionings and Fears, that I may be mistaken herein. I am sometimes, as it were, raising the very Foundation of all my Hope of Happiness, concluding, that the Work of Grace hath never yet passed upon me, and supposing that if the Lord had ever been at work upon my Soul in a true and saving Manner; then I should have had a deeper Sight and Sense of my own Vileness, than ever yet I have had, and Satan would have been busier with me, and I should have met with stronger Assaults and Temptations from him, as most of the Children of God do, when under first Workings. These Objections, with many others rob me of my Comfort. Sometimes I think my Desire of being saved, was never from a right Principle, nor to a right End; but arose from a selfish Bottom, to the End, that I might be delivered from eternal Wrath and Misery, not aiming at God's Glory therein. Thus am I many Times writing bitter Things against myself, concluding, that I have not yet been helped to venture my Soul on Christ; for think I, I fear

that I am still leaning to, and depending upon something in myself, and not resting upon the Merits of Christ, as the only Way of Salvation. Besides, think I, if there ever had been a real Change wrought in my Soul; then would my Heart, my Thoughts, and Affections, be let more upon Things that are heavenly and divine, and I should be weaned from the Things of this World, in a far greater Measure; I should find my Heart more drawn out in Love to the Lord Jesus, and should see a greater Beauty and Excellency in his Person and Righteousness, and likewise Sin would appear more hateful and odious in my View. I should not be attended with such vain Thoughts and Backslidings of Heart from the Lord, and with careless, lifeless, and indifferent Frames, as I too too often am. Are there Spots, like the Spots of God's Children? Surely they are not. Neither are such, who have indeed passed from Death unto Life, left so often to question their State. They have clearer and more certain Evidences and Testimonies of their Security, and are enabled to rely upon, and trust in the Lord, even when they do not enjoy his sensible Presence. Job could say, tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him. And the Lord, by the Prophet Isaiah saith, who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness and hath no Light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God: Yet how prone am I at every turn to dishonour the Lord, by unbelieving Frames?

There are some of the Fears, which I am very frequently filled with; but Oh! what a Mercy is it, the Lord rests in his Love? He is the same towards us yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Tho' we vary in our Frames, yet he abideth faithful; he changeth not. There is no Variableness, nor so much as a Shadow of turning in him. Oh! that the eternal Spirit would come down more abundantly, and persuade us of the Freeness and Fulness of eternal Grace: That we might be made to behold our living in the Root of David, from the utmost Bounds of Eternity, yea, also while we were in the Depths or our Rebellions, which thro' Grace, I have been at Times made to believe; did I believe God's Love to be but of Yesterday, it would much damp my spiritual Comforts; but when I am brought to see the Fountain of this great Depth of electing Love to be eternal, as ancient as God himself; how am I made to rejoice sometimes, and to wish I could do more for my dearest Jesus? Surely, there is no Spring of Obedience like that of Love, yea, from that it becomes us to act under this new Testament Dispensation, in an especial Manner.

She finishes this Letter with some Account of a Sermon, which she heard from these Words: O my Dove that art in the Clefts of the Rock, in the secret Places of the Stairs; let me see thy Face, let me hear thy Voice; for sweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely. The Method in treating on which, she says, was this: To shew why the Church is compared to Doves, viz. because the Dove is a clean Fowl, hath a piercing Eye, is choice, or delicate in its Meat, and is sociable: Doves flock together and are weak Creatures, not able to defend themselves. That they are Christ's Doves, or that the Church is his by Election, Covenant-Agreement, Purchase, Conquest, and Resignation; that the Rock is Christ, who is so called, because he is strong, durable, and immoveable; that the Church's Voice may intend her Voice of Prayer, Praise, Acknowledgment, and the Voice of the Ministry. That the Voice of the Church in these Respects is sweet to Christ. That she is comely thro' the Comeliness Christ puts upon her.

She was no injudicious Hearer. In forming her Opinion of Sermons, she closely considered whether the Subject treated of, was properly attended unto. If the genuine Sense of the Text was given, and if its several Parts were distinctly considered. If there were no unnecessary Digressions. If the Scriptures brought in Confirmation of the Doctrine delivered, were pertinently

applied. If such Distinctions were made, as the Points discoursed of required, for the greater Benefit and Instruction of the Hearers, which I could give Evidence of, if I thought it proper; for her Talents were truly great. It is needless to say, that she greatly valued the Gospel of Christ in its Purity, for that appears in the fullest manner. The sad Effects which she experienced in one Part of her Life, thro' the Want of it, she long retained a deep Sense of. Which appears in Part of a Letter to one, for whom she had a great Affection, then in much the same Situation, as to Hearing, that she herself, many Years before had been in. She begins thus: I pity your Case, yet dare I not so much as desire you might be easy in your present Situation. This I desire, that you may learn Good thereby, and that you may let a higher Value on the Doctrine of free, rich, sovereign Grace. 'Tis a Just Observation, that we do not prize our Mercies, as we ought, but in the Want of them. I doubt not, but you do now so much prize, in the Want of it, i.e. the Gospel, as to long for the Re-enjoyment thereof. I wish you may continue thus minded: And that that sort of Preaching which you chiefly hear, may not have the same Influence on you, as it hath upon too many, viz. flatten your Graces, and lull you into a lethargic Frame, as was once my unhappy Case. For fitting under the Ministry of one, who either thro' Ignorance, or which I rather think, out of Prudence, as he thought, avoided preaching on those peculiar, evangelical Truths, which are the Life of a Believer: By Degrees, I became dead, dull, and lifeless; a common Round of Duties satisfied me, and Grace lay dormant, as to the Act and Exercise of it; yet here I wilfully staid. When I might have heard that Word dispensed, which I had thought had been sweeter to me, than the Honey, or the Honey-comb. When I came to my wonted Place, and heard the same sweet comfortable, and Soul-reviving Truths delivered, tho' by another Hand: Oh! what did I not feel? I was struck with Shame and Confusion, for having wilfully deprived myself of so great a Privilege, which I ought to have esteemed more than my necessary Food: I thought it was just for the Spirit to withdraw his Influences and Operations. But alas! Shame for my Negligence was not the worst, for now I called in Question, whether ever I had felt the Power, and Efficacy of the Word upon my Heart, or not, and at length drew sad Conclusions against myself. This may serve for a Caution to you, not to stay longer in a Place, than you are obliged, where you cannot have spiritual Food for your Soul.

30 In another Letter, she expresses herself thus: MAY Grace, Mercy, and Peace, thro' the Love-Passage of our Father's Heart be multiplied to you, to your abundant filling with the first Fruits of Glory unspeakable; in the Faith-Views, and irradiating Influences of that Love, Life, and Light, which as an eternal unchangeable Flow of Favour encircles you in the Person of the Beloved. The Spirit giving us to drink of the Streams of the Waters of Life, makes us glad in the Wilderness, as the certain Earnest and Foretaste of our being hereafter swallowed up, in that Love, Life, Light, and Glory, which flew thro' the Channel of Christ's Flesh, as a River to Swim in, that can never be passed over: When once that happy Day comes, when we shall no more drink of the Water of this River, as now we do, thro' the Conduit-Pipes of Ordinances; but shall drink of the pure River of the Water of Life, clear as Crystal, as it riseth, out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb; there (if I may so say) we shall drink our Fill: Tho' this will be our Privilege, that the living Vertue of this living Water, will constantly maintain in us, a living Appetite, yet not such an one as will be in the least inconsistent, with our being abundantly satisfied. We shall never more know any Pain of Desire, for Want of Enjoyment: We shall drink, and forget our Poverty, and remember our Misery no more. And our Appetite being always new, will only fit us for the Participation of that Glory, which will be new to Eternity. When that longed for Day comes, when the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall lead us to living Fountains, and give us to eat of the hidden Manna, on

which we shall feed with Wonder, and sweet Surprise; as the Children of Israel, when they tasted the Manna, in a kind of Amazement at the Goodness thereof, cried out, What is it? What is it? I had such a View of this Glory one Day last Week, and an home Application of my being entitled unto it, and having a Right to all the Benefits, which flow thro' Christ, as filled me with Astonishment. A sweet Time it was, indeed, while it lasted; but it was but for a few Hours. Such Times are very desirable, and very delightful. I was ready to cry out, as he of old did: How is it Lord, that thou wilt manifest thyself to me, and not unto the World? I knew then for a little Season, what it is, to take up my Rest, where my God and Father rests. I am, at Times, thro' Grace, made to believe, that I have received the Spirit of Adoption, not only to witness my Relation to God, and give me Faith-Views of the Inseparableness of that Union, in which I stand to the Person of Christ, as the Security of all my Happiness; but also, at Times, to give me the greatest holy Freedom, thro' the Blood of Jesus, to draw nigh to God, as my own Father, to unbosom my Soul to him, and tell him all my Wants; and blessed be his Name, I have not been sent away empty.

I have found the Enjoyment of God to be Strength in Weakness, Joy in Sorrow, a reviving Cordial in Time of Trouble. And in all that I meet with in my Way homeward; I can fly he is God All-sufficient, I find him so thro' Grace. Oh! how sweet is it to enjoy this Love of Loves? Oh! the Height, and Depth, the Length, and Breadth, of the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord. If the Enjoyment of God be so great here, whilst in a Body of Sin, and in a World of Temptations and Snares; what will the full Enjoyment of him be, where there will be no Mixture of Sin, nor Sorrow? if the Earnest be so great, what will the Inheritance be? Well may it be said: Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

What this dear Saint so much longed for, he took Possession of, now some Years since. May we be enabled to follow those, who through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promise.

S. The Baptist Against The Baptist

THE BAPTISTS VINDICATED FROM SOME GROUNDLESS CHARGES BROUGHT

AGAINST THEM BY MR. ELTRINGHAM, IN A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'THE BAPTIST AGAINST THE BAPTIST, etc. By John Brine WHEREIN He represents them as Erroneous, Persecuting, Diabolical, and Guilty of Deism.

Printed for JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal-Exchange: And Sold by GEORGE KEITH, at the Bible and Crown, Grace-church-Street; and by JOHN ENYON, Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal-Exchange. A Great deal hath been said, on the Ordinance of Baptism, by many relating both to the Subjects of it, and the Mode of its Administration. And, therefore, it is not to be thought that much new can be offered, on an Argument, which has been so often canvassed. For which Cause, some may think, that I now engage in a needless Undertaking. But, as I have Reasons for it, which are satisfactory to my own Mind, I shall not make the least Apology, for the following Lines. The Author of a Pamphlet, lately published, intitLED, The Baptist against the Baptist, etc. proposes to prove, that the Antipaedo-Baptists imagine, that Believers' Baptism, by Immersion, is a Cause of Justification, before God. - That the Mode of Baptism is not dipping, but sprinkling. - That the Antipaedo-Baptists are sensual, and have not the Spirit, because they do not admit unbaptized Persons, into Communion with them. - Lastly, that they are Deists, or guilty of Deism. If they are, woe be unto them, and away with them then.

I. He undertakes to prove, that the Antipaedo-Baptists think, that Believers' Baptism is a Cause of their Justification, before God. His Opinion is, that this is Dr. Gill's Sentiment. Strange indeed! Who would have thought it? I am persuaded, that no Man, who is acquainted with his Writings, will ever think so, besides Mr. Eltringham. Let us see upon what Ground it is, that he imputes this Notion to him. In an anonymous Letter, which he now acknowledges to be his, he observes that Dr. Gill says, a Man is to be justified, in renouncing Infant-Baptism, because it is a human Invention^{f1}; which evidently means, a Man is to be vindicated, in renouncing an Error, when he is convinced of it. If Mr. Eltringham, cannot distinguish this, from the Justification of a Man's Person, before God, others can and will. But if this will not serve his Purpose, he hath something more to offer, to support his Charge, viz. The Doctor says of Baptism, it is of Use to lead the Faith of God's People to his {#Christ's} Blood and Righteousness, for Pardon, and Justification ^{f2}. This, no more than the former, proves what he aims at. I will not multiply Words, on a Matter, which is so plain, that no intelligent and attentive Person can mistake upon it, however this Writer came so grossly to mistake herein. The Spirit leads, or directs the Saints efficiently; Ministers direct them instrumentally; and evangelical Institutions, as Means appointed, by Christ, unto that important End, lead, or direct Believers to look unto his Blood and Righteousness, for Pardon, and Justification. That is the Cause of Justification, to which the Believer looks, not that by which he is directed to the Act of looking, which is most easy to be conceived of. I shall only observe, that Mr. Eltringham, through Inadvertency, does infinite Dishonour to the Blessed Spirit, in calling him a Mean in conjunction with the Word^{f3}. The Holy Spirit is not a Mean in conjunction with the Word;

but an efficient Cause, working by the Word. As the Charge of this Error upon us, is without Foundation, it is needlers to consider the Arguments, which are brought, to confute it. I therefore pass to another very severe Charge, which he exhibits against us.

II. He says, that we are sensual, and have not the Spirit, because we do not admit those who differ from us, in the Point of Baptism, into Communion f4. This extremely harsh Censure, affects only a Part of the Baptists: For some of them, receive such into Fellowship, who are not of their Sentiments, in this Particular. Mr. Eltringham is a Member of such a Congregation of Baptists. And, as to those who are not of this Latitude, if they are mistaken in their Apprehensions, I hope they are not sensual and destitute of the Spirit of God. It is great Uncharitableness, to think, merely on this Account, that they are Mockers, and such as walk after their own ungodly Lusts. Persons of that Sort only, the Apostle Jude intends. This Writer thinks himself unkindly treated, because he hath been charged with Ignorance, Stupidity, etc. But far greater Severity he uses interpretatively, though not intentionally, towards others, who differ from him. A Man may be weak in his Intellects, and, in the Manner of his Arguing, discover much Ignorance, Stupidity, etc. and yet be a real Christian: But Mockers, and such as walk after their own ungodly Lusts, who are sensual, and have not the Spirit, they must be utter Strangers to true Christianity. I cannot allow myself to think, that this was his real Intention; but he applies the Apostle's Words, which are plainly expressive of a State of Unregeneracy, unto regenerate Persons, because he is of Opinion, that they have not the Mind of the Spirit, in that Thing, whereof he treats, which if true, they have the Spirit, though not the Mind of the Spirit, in that particular Point. Perhaps, Mr. Eltringham himself may not have the Mind of the Spirit, in every thing, which he holds; but because he is mistaken, in something, and hath not the Mind of the Spirit in all Things, which he believes, it would be extremely wrong, on that Account, to say, that he is sensual, and hath not the Spirit. That would be a sad Misapplication of the Apostle's Words; whereof he will do well to think. He presents us with a View of Mr. Bunyan's Reasons against making Baptism, a Term of Communion. It must be allowed, that he was a Person of an extraordinary Genius, had a curious Invention, great Grace, and a large Stock of spiritual Experience; all which, his various Works abundantly terrify. But it is no Detraction from his real Worth, to say, that he was not eminently qualified for polemical Writing. I cannot but confess, that I think, there is no Disagreement, between the strict Baptists, and others, who differ from them, respecting the Subject and Mode of Baptism, in this Matter; for both make Baptism a Term of Communion. In that they are fully agreed. Their Difference lies wholly in this: The Baptists, apprehend, that Infant-Baptism is not agreeable, to the Institution of Christ, and, therefore, is invalid. Other Christians think, that the Baptism of Infants, is Christ's Appointment, and, therefore, valid. The latter may admit such into Communion with them, who have been baptized in their Infancy, consistently, with their Opinion, of the Necessity of Baptism, in order to Church-Communion. But the former cannot, because they esteem Infant- Baptism invalid. And, consequently, they ought not to be censured by their Brethren, who agree with them, that Baptism is necessary in order to Church-Fellowship, for denying Communion to those, who will not submit to Baptism, when adult, because they are of Opinion, that Baptism in Infancy is invalid. Their Brethren would act as they do, if they thought Baptism in Infancy invalid. For what Reason, therefore, they should be represented as uncharitable, etc. I cannot apprehend, at least by those, who think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion. Their Mistake can only be this, even in the Opinion of their Brethren, that Infant-Baptism is invalid, and not that Baptism ought to be a Term of Christian Communion: For that is also their Sentiment. Mr. Bunyan's Arguments, if they

prove any thing, it is this: That Baptism, infant, or adult, ought not to be made a Term of Communion: Or, that Believers, as such, ought to be received by a Christian Church, although they were not baptized, in their Infancy, nor are willing to submit to Baptism, upon their Conversion; which cannot be pleasing, either to Paedo-Baptists, or Antipaedo-Baptists, who think, that Baptism is prerequisite to Christian Communion. If Saints, as Saints, are to be received, into, Christian Churches, for which Mr. Bunyan pleads, then it is not requisite, in order to their Admission, that they should have been baptized in their Infancy, or when adult, upon a Profession of their Faith. And, indeed, this is the true State of the Care, relating to Communion, mixt, or strict, viz. Whether Persons for, and against Baptism, infant, and adult, may lawfully unite in Christian Fellowship; and not whether such as are for Baptism, in Infancy, and those, who are for Baptism, upon a Profession of Faith, may incorporate together, as a Church. Those of the Paedo-Baptists, who will deny this, are no more for Communion with Saints, as Saints, than the Antipaedo-Baptists are, who cannot admit such into their Communion, that have had no other than infant Baptism, because they think that invalid. That Person who will not join in Christian Communion, with a Believer, who hath not been baptized at all, may pretend, that he is for: having Fellowship with Saints, as Saints; but his Practice contradicts that Pretence, for he requires something more than true Grace, in order to it, viz. Baptism, either infant, or adult. A due Consideration of these Things, will be sufficient, to prevent an angry Resentment, in unprejudiced Minds, against the Baptists, who cannot join in Christian Communion, with Persons, who have had only infant Baptism, which in their Account is invalid. This Matter hath been improved very much, by many, to their Disadvantage. On account hereof they have been represented, as narrow, straight-laced, and uncharitable, and as thinking themselves more holy than other Christians: With what Justice it is not difficult to determine. Those, who thus censure them, think, as they do, that Baptism is necessary to Christian Communion, and, therefore, they cannot justly blame them for that. If they are blameable at all, it is for this, viz. thinking that Infant-Baptism is invalid: And as to that, they apprehend, that they are very excusable, because Infant-Baptism, in their Opinion, is destitute of scriptural Proof, and is no Institution of Christ. If our Author hath been uncivilly treated, by some of the Baptists, he is, at least, equally severe, in censuring them: For he says, they are persecuting and devilish⁵. And he supposes them to be inconsistent, because some of them think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and others of them think differently, and, therefore, admit such into Communion with them, who have not submitted to Baptism, upon a Profession of Faith.

Herein they are not inconsistent, as Baptists, for they are agreed fully, respecting both the Mode, and Subject of Baptism. Their Difference lies altogether in this: Some of them think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and others of them think it ought not. How this Difference proves, that they are inconsistent, as Baptists, it is beyond the Power of my Understanding, to conceive. Inconsistency may, I think, be justly objected to those of the Paedo-Baptists, who suppose, that Baptism is an initiating Ordinance, into a visible congregational Church, and, yet, do not admit many, who are by Baptism initiated, into the Church, unto a Participation of its Privileges, as a Church. In what Manner such can clear themselves of Inconsistency, who say, that Infants are initiated into the Church, by Baptism, and yet deny them a Participation of the Privileges, herewith the Church is invested, into which they are initiated, I cannot tell, If they shall say, that they are not qualified, to partake of those Privileges; I would ask, Why then are they initiated into the Church? Can it be the Mind of Christ, that such should be initiated into his Church, who are

unfit to partake of those Privileges, which he hath granted unto the Church? This seems to me wholly improbable. I think this is such a Difficulty, as can no other Way be solved, than by denying, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation, into the Church: And, yet, I am persuaded, that very few, if any, of the Paedo-Baptists, will deny this. Let it be proved to the strict Baptists, that Baptism is not an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, and I dare say, that they will quickly prevent all Occasion of those severe Censures, which are passed upon them, by admitting those to Communion, who are not of their Sentiments, in the Point of Baptism. And this may be expected to be done, by the Paedo-Baptists, for their own Sakes; because they do not allow a large Number of such to partake of Church-Privilege, who, they think, are regularly baptized. How that can be reconciled, with their initiating them into the Church, by Baptism, for my Part, I cannot conceive. The strict Baptists are uniform, in their Sentiments, and Practice: For, as they think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and that it is an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, they admit all who are initiated into the Church, unto a Participation of its Privileges. But the Paedo-Baptists, though, they think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and that it is an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, yet they do not admit a Multitude, of those, who by Baptism are initiated into the Church, unto a Participation or its Privileges. This is a Fact too notorious to be denied. They initiate Infants, into the Church, by Baptism, and when they have so done, will not allow them to partake of any Church-Privilege. What Uniformity, therefore, is there, in their Sentiments, and Practice? None, as I think, in this Particular.

III. He charges us with the dreadful Guilt of Deism f6, because we say, that Infant-Baptism, or sprinkling Infants, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is a human Invention. In his Account this is Deism, because he thinks, that the Infants of the Levites were to be sprinkled, by vertue of a Divine Command. I should not use more than two or three Words, on this Subject, were it not, that I am willing to convince him, of the great Impropriety of his Reasoning on it, if that is possible. We grant, that a Command was given, to sprinkle some of the Levites, with the Water of Purification, but we deny, that they were to be sprinkled in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is essential to Christian Baptism: Neither dipping into, nor sprinkling with Water, without that, is Christian Baptism. And, therefore, we do not deny Revealed Religion, when we affirm, that baptizing Infants is a human Invention: For, that Sprinkling was not Christian Baptism; even on this Supposition, that sprinkling is the proper Mode of the Administration, of that Ordinance; for, the Form of Christian Baptism was wanting therein; which Form, as I have before said, is essential to it. Nor is Immersion, into Water, or sprinkling with it, Christian Baptism, without that Form, viz. The solemn Pronunciation of the Names of the Divine Persons, in the Administration of it. Besides, Mr. Eltringham should have considered, that this was only a Command to sprinkle the Males of the Levites, and not the Females: And, therefore, he hath no Command to sprinkle, or baptize female Infants, unless he can produce some other. This is none, Why, then, does he plead for the Sprinkling of female Infants? He tells us, that we fulfil Unrighteousness, or Sin, in dipping Persons, when we baptize them, because we have no Command for so doing; and that we act as Nadab and Abihu did, in offering strange Fire to the Lord f7. Now let him, either produce a Command for sprinkling. female Infants, or acknowledge, that he is guilty of that dreadful Sin, which he charges us with, and acts just as Nadab and Abihu acted, when he sprinkles female Infants. I am sure, that the Males of the Levites only, were commanded to be sprinkled. He will do well, when he engages in Controversy again, to reason with more Caution, Perhaps he may, upon a close Review of what he hath wrote, be convinced,

that Controversy is more entangling than he once apprehended it to be.

Farther, I flatly deny, that a Command was given to sprinkle the male Infants of the Levites. God required them, from a Month old and upward, to be numbered, with the Adult, even all the Males {Numbers 3:15}; and their Number was twenty and two Thousand, and Threescore and Thirteen {Numbers 3:43}. Another Command was given to number the male Levites, from thirty Years old and upward, even unto fifty, who were to be Assistants to the Priests, in the Service of the Tabernacle: Their Number was eight Thousand five Hundred and Fourscore {Numbers 4:47-48}. This Number, and this Number only, and not the twenty and two Thousand, etc. wherein the male Infants were included, were to be sprinkled with the Water of Purification, by which, and other Rites, they were cleansed, and devoted to sacred Service, as Assistants unto the Priests. Infants of a Month old, and upward, would have been but very feeble Assistants to the Priests, in the Discharge of their Work. The Command to sprinkle the Levites, respected only such of them as were thirty Years old and upward, not the male Infants of that Tribe {Numbers 8:22}.

Notwithstanding it was more than a Year, since this Writer, in his anonymous Letter, published this great Mistake, he had not discovered it, when he published this Pamphlet, which is an Evidence, that he had not read the Writings of Moses, with that Care and Attention which he ought, though he professes to have, and I believe he hath, a great Veneration for them; for, of his real Piety I have no Doubt. Upon the whole, I think, that we may be fairly acquitted of the Guilt of Deism, or of denying Revealed Religion, though we continue to insist upon it, that Infant-sprinkling is a human Invention, unless Mr. Eltringham can produce some other Command to defend that Practice; for, here is no such Command, I am confident. It is very kind in him to express a Desire, that we may be convinced, and repent of that dreadful Sin, which he imputes to us, without going to Hell⁸. But I must tell him, that we have no Hope of Repentance there, for, we do not take Hell to be Purgatory. Whether one, who writes in this Manner, is qualified to engage in Controversy, I will not say, but refer it to the Determination of the Reader.

IV. This Author asserts, that we are under the Sinai Covenant. If any, says he, should ask me, if we be now under the same Covenant that was delivered or manifested at Horeb? I answer, yes, the very identical Covenant, only differently administered⁹. I imagine but very few, if any, will assent to this. It is, so far as I know, universally agreed, among Christians, that, that Covenant, is become rid, and vanished: And, I am sure, if they are mistaken, in this Matter, the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, hath led them into this Mistake, by an express Assertion of it. In my Opinion, a thorough Consideration, of the Nature of that Covenant, may be of singular Use to clear up some Points, in Divinity, as well as, serve to let the Subject we are upon, in a proper Light; and, therefore, I will endeavour to explain it, in as full and perspicuous a Manner, as my narrow Limits will allow. And,

1. The whole Body of the Jews were taken into that Covenant, regenerate, and unregenerate, even all that were redeemed out of Egypt, and the Seed of both, without the least Distinction, or Difference: I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage {Exodus 20:1}. The Lord declares himself to be a God to all the Israelites, who were the Subjects of this temporal Redemption, to the graceless of them, as well as to those, who were gracious among them. This Covenant was made with the Captains of their Tribes, their Elders, and Officers, even all the Men of Israel, their little ones, their Wives, the Stranger that was

in their Camp, etc. and with their Posterity, who were not present, as well as with themselves, who were present {Deuteronomy 29:10-14}. It is most clear, therefore, that the unregenerate Part of the Jews, were taken into this Covenant, no less than the regenerate among them, and the Seed of both. The Elect, by virtue of this Declaration, and Covenant, could not claim a further Interest in God, or a Right to superior Advantages, either for themselves, or their Seed, than the Non-Elect might claim for themselves, and their Seed, by virtue thereof.

2. The Lord, acting in the Character of God to them, required such Obedience from them, as his infinite Perfections, and their absolute Dependence on him, as his Creatures, made it necessary for them to yield unto his holy Will. And, therefore,

3. He published, in their Hearing, the Covenant of Works, with very awful and tremendous Signs of his infinite Majesty, which struck them with Amazement and Terror: Whereupon the People removed and stood afar off, and said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die {Exodus 20:18-19}.

4. God took upon himself, the Person, or Character of a King and Ruler over them, as a Nation: And, therefore, their political State is rightly called a Theocracy. And the Laws, which he gave them, were most excellent; calculated to promote his Glory, and their Good, as a Nation. They are usually distinguished into three Sorts, viz. moral, political, and ceremonial.

{#1} Moral The Laws of this Sort, were summarily comprehended, in the Command to love God, and in the Command to love their Neighbour: Hence our Lord says, On these two Commandments, hang all the Law, and the Prophets {Matthew 22:40}: And for this Reason, the Apostle says, that Love is the Fulfilling of the Law {Romans 13:10}. By the Publication of this Law, the People were taught, that perfect Love to God, and their Neighbour, and those Acts of reverential Obedience, which flow from Love to the Lord, and those Acts of Benevolence, as well as of Justice, which spring from Love to our Neighbour, that their Relation to God and one another, rendered meet and fit.

{2} An excellent System of political Laws were given to them, according to which, every Transgression and Disobedience, received a just Recompence of Reward {Hebrews 2:2}: But it is to be observed, that a Breach of the moral Law, as it respects the Heart, did not subject them to Penalty, as Members of the State: If that had been the Case, not a Man amongst them, would have enjoyed Life; for, every Individual of them was guilty, and worthy of Death, in that View. Besides, their Judges and Rulers, to whom the Execution of the penal Laws were referred, could not take Cognizance of internal Acts; only external Acts could fall under their Notice. The Lord, therefore, in governing them, as a State, took upon himself, and acted in the Person and Character, of an external Ruler: And, in the Exercise of Rule over them, as a Body politic, he proceeded towards them, as an external Governor, and not as the Heart-searching God.

Hence all their penal Laws, respected outward, and not internal Acts. Some Breaches of the moral Law, were made capital, and subjected the Offender to Death: As Idolatry, Blasphemy, Murder, etc. Some very atrocious Crimes, were not capital: As Perjury, and Uncleaness, in one Instance. Every Transgression of the moral Law, both internal and external, subjected them to Death, before God, as the Judge of all; but not as an external Ruler of that People, as a State, and Body politic. This Distinction is necessary to be observed, in order to have a clear, and consistent idea, of the

Jewish Oeconomy.

{#3} A large Body of ritual Laws were prescribed, which respected Worship, in great Part: 1. Those Rites were carnal Ordinances: The Matter of them was Flesh, viz. Beasts offered in Sacrifice; and they had no farther Efficacy, than sanctifying to the purifying of the Flesh: None of them could purge their Consciences from dead Works. 2. Carnal, unregenerate Persons, were let apart to officiate in Divine Service. Perfection of bodily Parts, and Freedom from any outward Blemish, were required, as Qualifications, in their Priests; but Holiness of Heart was not {Leviticus 21:17-21}. Such who were absolutely destitute of true Grace, might lawfully act in that sacred Office, and perform all the Parts of religious Service, for the People. And what they did agreeable to Divine Appointment, as to the Matter of it, was approved of, by God, in that Character, wherein he appointed those Services, viz. that of an external Ruler, though not as the Heart-searching God, and Judge of all. Faith was then necessary, as it is now; unto the Acceptation of religious Services, with the Lord, in that Character: But it was not, in the former Character; or in that of an external Governor to that People. 3. Carnal, graceless Persons were admitted to engage in all Acts of religious Worship, which were required by the levitical Law: And their Compliance with; and Practice of, what was commanded, respecting Worship, by the Law of Moses, was accepted with God, in the Person, and Character, of an external Governor, though their Acts of Worship did not proceed from piritual Purity, and Holiness of Heart: Yet they were not approved, by him, in the Character of the Judge of all, and the Heart-searching God; because not performed, in Faith, and from a Principle of Love. Gracious Persons did not enjoy any external distinguishing Privileges, from graceless ones, under the mosaic Oeconomy. The unholy among them had the very same Right, unto all external Privileges, as the most holy Persons had.

5. Temporal Blessings only, were promised, in this Covenant. None of its Promises rise higher, than this World. Nothing greater, and more noble, the Jews could claim, by vertue of this Covenant, than a safe and peaceable Enjoyment of the good Land {Exodus 20:12}. Neither Grace, in this World, nor Glory and eternal Life, in the next, were promised therein. Spiritual Pardon, Peace, Adoption, Justification, Regeneration, Grace, and the Perseverance In endless Fruition of God, as the God of all Grace, were not promised in this Covenant. In a Word, no one Blessing, which springs from electing Love, and which properly belongs to the Covenant of Grace, was contained, in any of the Promises of the Sinai-Covenant. It was made by God, with that People, in the Person, and Character, of an external governor, and, therein, he granted unto them, only external Privileges and Favours. No one Benefit of a spiritual Kind, on the Foundation of that Covenant, could any of that People expect to receive from him.

6. Temporal Punishments only were threatened, and inflicted, for the Breaches of this Covenant. By the Publication of the Moral Law, the Jews were taught, that God required perfect Purity of Heart, and that all Acts of Sin, as well internal as external, rendered them worthy of Death, in his Sight, as the judge of all. But this Law, was not the Foundation, on which he entered into this Covenant with them, and according to which he proceeded towards them, in the Person, and Character, of an external Governor, to them, as a Body politic. If he had so done, they must have been all cut off to a Man; for, every Individual of them was guilty of transgressing that Law, in Thought, Word, or Deed, and that continually. As he entered into this Covenant with them, in the Character of an external Governor, he did not threaten them, therein, with Penalty for the internal Actings of Lust but only for the Eruptions of it, in outward Acts of Sin: And. that Punishment which

he did threaten, was not eternal, but temporary and corporal, or civil, viz. The Sword, Famine, the Pestilence, and Captivity, as a Nation {Deuteronomy 29:1-29}.

7. This Covenant was to remain in Force, throughout their Generations; or, so long as they were continued a State, or Body politic; which they were to be until Shiloh came, and their Rejection of him. Then, and not till then, their State was to be shaken all to Pieces, both ecclesiastic and civil: And this Covenant, made with them, as a Nation, was then to be antiquated, and vanish. This leads me to observe,

8. With respect to its Duration until that Time, it is to be considered, as a Covenant of Promise: For, not all the Idolatry, Impiety, and Corruption, which took Place among that perverse and obstinate People, from Time to Time, could make this Covenant null; because its Duration, until the Appearance of the Messiah, among them, relied on, and was secured by, an absolute Promise, made to Abraham, their Father, that, in his Seed, all the Families of the Earth should be blessed which promised Seed was Christ, as the Apostle tells us expressly {Galatians 3:16}. And, therefore, in the midst of all those desolating Judgments, which were brought, on that People, for their Idolatry, Inpiety, and Profaneness, the Lord declared, that he would not cast them off, nor make a full End of them {Jeremiah 31:37; Jeremiah 4:27}, or suffer their ecclesiastical and political State to sink. But when the Messiah was come, and they had rejected him, it was foretold, that the Lord would shake the Earth, and the Heaven {Haggai 2:6}. {Hebrews 12:26} of this People, i.e. their political and also their ecclesiastical State, wherein their chief Glory, above other Nations, consisted, and whereupon they much valued themselves.

9. The Covenant of Circumcision made with, or given to Abraham, was a Prelude to, and the Foundation of, this Sinai-Covenant. And they agree in several Particulars:

{1} All the natural Posterity of Abraham, were included, in that Covenant, whether Elect or Non-Elect, godly, or ungodly, without any Distinction, or Difference., and not only, while they were in a State of Infancy, but when they became adult. Thus, all the Israelites were taken into this Covenant, as well the ungodly as the pious among them, and they continued therein through Life, though they perished, in their Sins, at Death.

{2} The Possession of the Land of Canaan was promised, in both Covenants {Genesis 17:8; Exodus 20:12}.

{3} Circumcision was an outward Sign, of an Interest in each, and a visible Token of a Right to the Enjoyment of the good Land Hence those Jews, who were born in the Wilderness, whose Circumcision had been neglected, were ordered to be circumcised, before they took Possession of that Land {Joshua 5:1-15}.

{4} Their Duration was of the Same Extent: Each was to continue in Force, throughout their Generations {Exodus 40:15; Hebrews 15; Genesis 17:8; Genesis 17:12}. So long, and no longer, than they subsisted, as a Body politic, in the Enjoyment of the Land of Canaan, were these Covenants to last. Some useful Observations may be drawn from this brief Account of the Sinai-Covenant, as the Covenant of Circumcision made with Abraham was a Prelude to it, and the Foundation of it.

1. The Church under the mosaic Dispensation was national.

2. Regenerate Persons, and their Seed, did not enjoy any external Privileges, under that Oeconomy, unto Which unregenerate Persons, and their Seed, had not, with them, an equal Right, by vertue of this Covenant.

3. It was not an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, with Abraham, which gave his Seed a Right to Circumcision: For, {1} Ishmael was circumcised, who was not, with him, included in the Covenant or Grace.

{2} Esau was circumcised, although it was declared, before his Birth, that he was not interested in the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace.

{3} None of his Posterity might be circumcised, until they were eight Days old. If with him they were included in the Covenant of Grace, and that was the Foundation of their Right to Circumcision, it would have been lawful to circumcise them before. This Right arose from a positive Command, in an external Covenant, and not from an Interest with Abraham, in the Covenant of Grace.

{4} Circumcision being deferred unto adult Age, did not deprive his Posterity of their Right to it, though it was a sinful Neglect of their Parents {Joshua 5:1-15}. Now, it can't be thought, surely, that the Body of the Israelites, who were born in the Wilderness, and had arrived to adult Age, and who were in a State of Unregeneracy, were, with him, included in the Covenant of Grace: Yet, they all had, even then, a Right to Circumcision, and accordingly were circumcised.

{5} His Bond-Slaves, and every Male born in his House, though not of his Seed, were to be circumcised, who cannot be justly thought to have, with him, an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, and, consequently, their Right to Circumcision, did not arise from an Interest in that Covenant: Wherefore, the Covenant of Circumcision, was not the Covenant of Grace; but it was the Foundation, of that Covenant, which God entered into, with the Jews, as a Nation, at Mount Sinai, wherein no one Blessing, which is proper to the Covenant of Grace, was promised.

4. The Sinai-Covenant was both conditional and absolute, though not in the same Respect. External Obedience to its Laws, was required of the Jews, as a Condition of the safe and peaceable Enjoyment of the good Land {Exodus 20:12}: But the Duration of their political and ecclesiastical State, until the Appearance of the Messiah, amongst them, and their Rejection of him, was absolutely promised {Genesis 49:10}. And it is to be observed, that the Promise of the Messiah, did not properly belong to this Covenant, but the Continuance of their civil and ecclesiastical State, until his coming was absolutely promised therein {Nehemiah 1:9; Deuteronomy 30:4}. And for this Reason, notwithstanding all their dreadful Impiety, and Wickedness, they were continued a Body politic, and in the Enjoyment of the good Land, until that Time. Thus, this Covenant endured throughout their Generations {Leviticus 7:36}.

5. By this Covenant that Nation was separated, from all other People, in the Earth, unto the Worship of God, according to his own Appointment, as to the Mode of it. On this Account they are called a holy People, even the whole Body of them. And, because their Descendants were taken into this Covenant, and thus separated to the Lord, from others, of the human Race, in their successive Generations, they are claimed by him, as his own, being born unto him, and are called a holy Seed, even though their Parents were ungodly, and of profligate Lives {Ezekiel 16:20; Ezra 9:2}

6. External Obedience, without Holiness of Heart, gave them the Denomination of just and righteous, before God, as an external Governor, and entitled them to his Favour and Protection, in that Relation and Character, though not as the Judge of all {Deuteronomy 6:25}.

7. An Interest in the Covenant of Grace, was not the Foundation, whereon any, under the mosaic Dispensation, had a Right to those external Privileges, which were then granted to the Church. The Right of the godly to those Privileges, was founded on this national Covenant, by virtue whereof, the ungodly among them had the very same Right to all external Privileges; which they could not have had, if that Right afore from an Interest in the Covenant of Grace.

8. Many were saved, under that Covenant; but none were saved by virtue of it: For, eternal Salvation was not contained in it, nor promised to any by it.

9. This Covenant, in my humble Opinion, is improperly called a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace; because it contained none of its Promises, nor did it exhibit any of its Blessings, except in Figure, and by way of typical Representation only; which, I think, is not a sufficient Foundation for calling it a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. The Law, or this whole Covenant, taken together, had only a Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Image of the Things {Hebrews 10:1}.

10. The Blindness of the Jews was exceedingly great, who expected Salvation, by virtue of this Covenant. This was their fatal Mistake, and that Ground, on which they rejected the Messiah, unto their utter Ruin, as a Nation, and Body politic.

11. The Deists are very stupid, in denying, that Moses, and the Prophets, were inspired of God, who predicted, agreeably to the Nature of this Covenant, what would be the State of the Jews, for so many Ages, and the dreadful Catastrophe, of that People, when it should cease, upon the Rejection of the Messiah. I fear not to say, that Man is a Fool, and to be despised, let him be who he will, that is capable, of calling in question, the Divine Authority, of the Writings of the Old Testament.

12. The Arminians, and Baxterians, act impertinently, in pleading, for the Conditionality of Salvation, or Justification, by our own Obedience; - for the Power of Free-Will, to chuse what is spiritually good; - and for a final Defection from Faith, from those Addresses of the Prophets, to the People of the Jews, which are founded on, and are adapted wholly to the Nature of this Covenant, made with them, as a Nation; for, no Respect was had therein, unto eternal Salvation.

13. This Covenant is antiquated, and vanished. Those Generations, are long since gone, with whom it was to continue in force. It entirely ceased with the Jewish, ecclesiastical and political State. There is, therefore, a

Change, of the Times, Place, and Mode of religious Worship, and of the Persons, who are to officiate in Divine Service, for the Edification of the Church. The Jews, now, have no Ground to claim the Favour and Protection of God, on the Foundation of this Covenant: It is, absolutely, at an End: Nor are they a People separated to God, from others, as their Ancestors were, by virtue of it, though they still remain distinct from others, to answer those holy and wise Designs, which are had in view, in another and better Covenant, respecting them, i.e. the Elect among them, in the Time appointed of God. And, therefore, it is a Proof of the wretched Blindness of that People, to address

the Lord, in their Devotions, as their God, and the God of their Fathers, than which, nothing is more frequent with them¹⁰. Nor is the Cessation of this Covenant, any Reflection on the Wisdom of God, as Mr. Eltringham seems to think it is, for his holy Ends, in that Covenant, were fully answered, before the Antiquation of it: And what Mr. Eltringham can mean by asserting, that we are under this very identical Covenant, I am not able to conceive, unless his Design is to introduce the whole Jewish Oeconomy, and to subject us unto that servile State, which is entirely inconsistent with Gospel-Liberty.

Lastly, The Argument for Infant-Baptism, drawn from the Right of Infants to Circumcision, even on this Supposition, that Baptism succeeds Circumcision, is invalid. Be it so, that, that is true, {this is a Point I will not now contest} yet, Is no Proof at all, that Infants have a Right to Baptism. That is taken for granted, in the Argument, which is not proved, but begged, viz. that there is an external Covenant, under the present Dispensation, as there was under the former, in which Children, with their Parents, are included, that gives them a Right to Baptism, at least. This, as yet, is only begged, not proved. Let Proof be given of it, and we will instantly yield the Cause to our good Brethren, who differ from us. It was not an Interest in the internal Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, which gave the Infants of the Jews a Right to Circumcision, but their Interest in an external Covenant. And, therefore, if there is not, under this Dispensation, an external Covenant, unto which Baptism belongs, and into which Children, with their Parents, are taken, that cannot be a solid Proof of their Right to Baptism, even though it should be granted, that Baptism came in the Room of Circumcision. That the Right of Abraham's Seed to Circumcision, did not arise from an Interest with him, in the internal Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, it is most clear: For, Ishmael was not included with him therein; nor was Esau; yet, both had a Right to Circumcision: And all the Posterity of Jacob had a Right thereunto, even though the greater Part of them were not interested in that internal Covenant. Besides, all the Israelites, even in adult Age, had a Right to Circumcision, though destitute of the Grace of the internal Covenant, and never partook of it. Hence, those who were born in the Wilderness, and were not circumcised in their Infancy, they were circumcised in adult Age. The graceless among them had the very same Right to it as the gracious Part of them had {Joshua 5:1-15}: And, therefore, it could not be an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, which was the Foundation of that Right: Nor, could the Covenant of Circumcision be the Covenant of Grace. I suppose, that it will be granted, that all who were circumcised were within the Covenant of Circumcision. Many ungodly Persons, in adult Age, were circumcised, who it cannot be thought were under the Covenant of Grace, and, consequently, the Covenant of Circumcision was not the Covenant of Grace, but another and distinct Covenant from that: A Covenant external, and not internal, as that Covenant is. According to the Reasoning of our Brethren, on this Subject, if a Parent is converted, when he hath several Children, I will suppose two, one thirteen Days old, and another thirteen Years old, both have an equal Right to Baptism with himself. Ishmael, who was thirteen Years of Age, was taken with Abraham, his Father, into the Covenant of Circumcision, and was circumcised, as well as himself. And, therefore, if Children, with their Parents, are taken into the Covenant of Grace, and for that Reason have a Right to Baptism, then, as Abraham's Seed were, with him, taken into the Covenant of Circumcision, and Ishmael was circumcised, for that Reason, who was thirteen Years old, in the Care supposed, a Child of a believing Parent, who is thirteen Years old, hath the very same Right to Baptism, as his Child hath, who is but thirteen Days old.

Let me further suppose, a Baptist, who hath several Children, to be convinced of his reputed Mistake, that his Seed have not a Right, with him, to Baptism; in that Case, according to the Arguing of our Brethren, a Child of his, who is twenty Years of Age, hath the same Right to Baptism as his Child hath, who is not more than a Week old: For, the Command in the Covenant of Circumcision, though it required Infants, eight Days old, to be circumcised, yet it did not limit Circumcision to Infancy; if it had, Ishmael would not have been circumcised, nor would those Israelites have been circumcised, who were born in the Wilderness, whole Circumcision, in their Infancy, was neglected, by their Parents. If the Covenant of

Circumcision is to be the Rule of forming a Judgment, who have a Right to Baptism, then not only Infants, but such who are past the State of Infancy, have a Right to Baptism, although they have not a Divine Faith. But what Need was there for me to say this? Our Brethren, themselves, do not think, that the Covenant of Circumcision is to be such a Rule, though they argue for Infant-Baptism, from it: For they, at least many of them, require more than an external Profession of Christianity, in the Parents of those Children, whom they admit to Baptism, wherein they certainly depart from that, which is the Ground of their Plea, for their Practice; because the Covenant of Circumcision, required nothing more, than an outward Profession of Judaism, in the Parents of those Children, who were admitted to Circumcision. That which will defend them, in refusing to baptize the Children, of such Parents, who only make an outward Profession of Christianity, so far, at least, as Infant-Baptism is pleaded for, from the Covenant of Circumcision, will also defend us, in refuting Baptism, to the Infants of real Believers. For, nothing can defend their

Practice, but a Denial, that the Covenant of Circumcision is to be a Rule to us, in forming a Judgment, who are the proper Subjects of Baptism; which Denial would effectually defend us, and condemn their own Practice, at least, the Practice of many of them; even of all such who refuse to baptize the Infants of nominal Christians. The Argument for Infant-Baptism, drawn from the Right of Infants to Circumcision, either proves, that the Infants of all who barely believe the Truth of the Christian Religion, have a Right to Baptism, or it cannot prove that the Infants of godly Parents have a Right to it; which, I think, is not allowed by our Brethren, in general. In a Word, if there is not an external Covenant, that is distinct from the internal Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, unto which Christian Baptism belongs, the Right of Infants to Baptism can never be proved, from their supposed Interest, with their Parents, in the internal Covenant, or Covenant of Grace; because an Interest in that internal Covenant, is not the Ground of that Right. The Right of Believers themselves to Baptism, does not arise from their Interest in the Covenant of Grace, but from a positive Command of Christ, who is the Head of the Church. The internal Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, never did give any Persons a Right to external Privileges, of a religious Nature. The Foundation of that Right always was, and ever must be, a positive Command of God, or an external Covenant, wherein those Privileges are granted. And, consequently, though we should allow, to our Brethren, that the Infant-Seed of Believers are interested in the internal Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, their Right to Baptism cannot be proved, without a positive Command, or an external Covenant, now subsisting, wherein that Right is conveyed, both to themselves and their Infant-Seed. When such a Command for Infant-Baptism is produced, or Proof given of an external Covenant subsisting, wherein a Right to Baptism is conveyed unto Infants, I will immediately become a Proselyte, to our Brethren, in this Matter. But I must beg their Excuse, in not granting,

that their Argument, for Infant-Baptism, taken from a Covenant, which long since ceased, is solid, and just. I will not, upon this Occasion, dispute about the Interest of their Infant-Seed, in the Covenant of Grace; because, they may be interested therein, and yet have no Right to Baptism: For, that Right arises not from an Interest in the Covenant of Grace. This is what I shall insist on, until clear Proof is given of the Contrary, which hath not yet been given, and, I think, never will be.

If they can maintain the Stability of the Covenant of Grace, consistently with their Opinion of the Interest of their Infant-Seed, therein, they may quietly enjoy that Opinion, without the least Prejudice to that for which I contend, or the least Advantage to the Cause of Infant-Baptism, for which they are Advocates. Their Business, on this Subject, is to do two Things:

One is to prove, that an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, is the Foundation of a Right to Baptism: The other is to demonstrate, that the Infant-Seed of Believers, are interested therein. Until they give a Proof of the former, on this Occasion, I will have no Contention concerning the latter. Nor is there any Reason why I should: For, if the former cannot be proved, it is needless, as to this Thing, to dispute about the latter.

V. The Author puts in a short Plea for Infants. So much for the Ceremony, says he; now for the Substance {#he means the Subject} of Baptism:

Let me put in a Plea for my dear Brethren Infants; it is {Ezekiel 36:25}. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you¹¹. He grants this is to be understood of the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit; and says, the Sanctifying of the Spirit, and this one Baptism, are one and the same Thing¹¹. This is very extraordinary Reasoning, if it may be called Reasoning. His Meaning is, the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit is the Ordinance of Baptism. And, as Infants are capable of being sanctified, by, the Spirit, they are to be baptized: For the Proof of which he refers us to {Numbers 8:7}. As to that, it hath been before proved, that Infants were not included, and that adult Persons only were commanded to be sprinkled. He hath not yet produced a Command to sprinkle Infants, under the Law, or under the Gospel: And I think, that he will never be able to produce such a Command, either in the Old or New Testament. This Plea, for his dear Brethren, Infants, as it is short, so it is invalid, and absolutely groundless. On this Occasion, I will consider the Arguments, which are urged, by some others, in favour of Infant-Baptism, particularly by Dr. Ridgley, whom I cannot mention, without paying Respect and Honour to his Memory, having had the Advantage and Pleasure of his improving Conversation, as well as of his solid Labours, from the Pulpit, and the Press, though I cannot but differ from him, in this, and in some other Points also. And,

1. The Doctor observes, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Dedication; That Parents may devote their Children to God in Baptism, provided they can do it by Faith¹².

Answ. I freely grant, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Dedication: And also, that it is the Duty of Parents, to devote, or dedicate, their Children to God. Nor is it to be questioned, whether pious Parents devote them to the Lord, or not for, doubtless they do, by solemn and earnest Prayer, in their Behalf; even such godly Parents, as dare not dedicate them, in Baptism, because, they think, that they have no Warrant for that. As Hannah lent, or gave up, her little Son Samuel to the Lord, for ever, wherein, it may be, there was something extraordinary, and which cannot be supposed to be in common Cases, because Samuel was to be engaged in ministerial Service, whereon her Faith was acted, under Divine Direction: Yet, I say, as she gave him up to the Lord, to be his for

ever, so godly Parents give up their Children to God, in solemn Prayer, and desire nothing, so much, as that they may partake of Grace, by which they may fear and serve him, in this World, and be fitted for the Enjoyment of him, in the next. And this is their indispensable Duty. But I deny, that they may lawfully dedicate their Children in Baptism, for this plain Reason; Baptism is a Branch of instituted Worship, and not included in the Duty of the Dedication of ourselves, or ours, to the Lord: But this Manner of Dedication is of positive Appointment, and, therefore, the Divine Command, respecting this Manner of Dedication, is to determine us, who are to be dedicated, after this Sort; and by that Command only are we to be determined, in this Matter; because it is not inferrible, from the Duty of Dedication, in general, but is founded on a positive Injunction. And, since God hath no where commanded Parents, in this Manner, to dedicate their Children to him, in so doing they act without his Authority, which they ought not to do, in any Instance. Whatever Degree of Faith and Hope, a believing Parent, may have of the Salvation of his Child, which he dedicates to God, that does not make it lawful for him to dedicate it, in Baptism, because that is a Branch of instituted Worship, and, therefore, it ought not to be performed, upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, whereby this Branch of Christian Worship is instituted, which Infants are not. Let it once be proved, that they are, and this Dispute will be at an End. The Duty of Believers to devote themselves to God in Baptism, does not arise from their being Subjects of true Grace, but from a Divine Command, in that Manner to dedicate themselves to him: For, without a Command, requiring it of them, it would be an Act of Will-Worship in them. And, as they have no Command to dedicate their Children to God, in Baptism, their Dedication of them, in this Manner, or in this solemn Act of instituted Worship, is absolutely without Divine Authority, and unlawful. How much soever, therefore, their Faith and Hope may be acted, respecting the Salvation of the Child, who is dedicated to God, Faith cannot be acted, relating to the Manner of its Dedication, in Baptism, because it is done without any Warrant from God. No uncommanded Act of Worship can be performed in Faith, nor be a Branch of the Obedience of Faith. Such is the Baptizing of Infants.

2. The learned Man says, The Right of the Infant-Seed of Believers to Baptism, may be farther proved, from their being capable of the Privileges signified therein¹³.

Answ. I freely grant, that they are so: And the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers are also capable thereof; if not, they cannot be saved: Which is what, I hope, none will think is true. This Argument, therefore, as much favours the Baptism of the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers, as the Infant-Seed of Believers. The Infant-Seed of both, are capable of having regenerating Grace, and of being discharged of the Guilt of original Sin, which are those Privileges the Doctor mentions. None will deny, that Infants are capable of those Privileges, who think them capable of Salvation. But I absolutely deny, that this Capacity gives them a Right to Baptism, for this clear Reason; Baptism is a solemn Act of instituted Worship, and, therefore, it is not to be performed upon any Subject, who is not included in that Command, by which this Act of religious Worship is instituted. Until, therefore, Proof is given, that Infants are included in that Command, whereby Christian Baptism is enjoined, which is not yet done, I shall strenuously insist on it, that baptizing them is an Act of Will-Worship, or not commanded by God. The Right of Believers themselves to worship God, in a Submission to Baptism, does not arise from their Faith, but from his Command, which requires this solemn Act, or Mode of Worship, from them. It is certain, that Baptism is a Privilege; but that is not the only Idea we are to have of it, nor, indeed, is it the first and chief: It is an Act of solemn Worship; which latter Idea seems not to be regarded, as it ought to be, in those Debates which are

had about a Right to it, as it is a Privilege. This is wholly neglected, by the learned Man, in his Discourse upon it; which is a very great Defect. We ought first to consider it as an Act of Worship, and enquire upon whom God requires this Act of Worship to be performed; for, that is the only true Way of determining who they are that have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege. Those, and only those, have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom God hath commanded it to be performed, as an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am sure, either of Unbelievers, or Believers! but Believers only. All those Arguments brought to prove the Right of Persons to Baptism, as a Privilege, which are irrespective of it, as it is an Act of solemn Worship, must be inconclusive; because, none can have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege, but those on whom God requires it to be performed, as an Act of Worship. And, of this Nature are all the Arguments, which the learned Man produces, to prove the Right of Infants to it, as it is a Privilege. He does not consider it at all, as it is an Act of Worship. Nor is this great Neglect in him to be wondered at; for, if he had done that, it would have effectually enervated the Force of his Arguments to prove the Right of Infants to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, unless he could have proved, that God requires it to be performed upon them, as it is an Act of Worship. He adds,

3. It appears, that the Infant-Seed of Believers are to be consecrated, or devoted to God, in Baptism, because they are included in the Covenant wherein God has promised, that he will be a God to his People, and to their Seed; who are, upon this Account, stiled holy f14. By this Covenant, he understands the Covenant of Circumcision, made with, or given to Abraham, and refers to it. I admire the great Caution, which he uses, in his Mode of speaking, on this Subject, that he might not give any Advantage to those, who advance Doctrine which is inconsistent with the Stability of the Covenant of Grace. The Doctor does not say, as some have said, that this Covenant was the Covenant of Grace; nor, that the Seed of Believers, are, with them, included in the Covenant of Grace. All he pleads for, is an external Covenant-Relation; not a Title to the saving Blessings of the Covenant of Grace; which external Covenant-Relation, and a Right to external Privileges, on that Foundation, were true, of all the Descendants of Abraham, in the Line of Jacob, Elect and Non-Elect, and that not only while they were in a State of Infancy, but when they arrived to adult Age; yea, through their whole Lives, though they never partook of any Blessing, which is promised in the Covenant of Grace. And, this external Covenant-Relation gave them the Denomination of holy, when they were adult, although they were absolutely destitute of internal spiritual Purity {Ezra 9:2}. This Argument, therefore, no more proves the Right of the Infant-Seed of Believers, to Baptism, than it proves the Right of the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers, to that Ordinance; for, the Seed of both had the Honour of standing in this external Covenant-Relation, and had. the very same Right unto all external Privileges; on that Foundation. Let it once be proved, that there is now an external Covenant subsisting, which gives a Right to the Seed of Believers unto the external Privileges, which are granted to the New Testament-Church, as there was an external Covenant, which gave the Jews, in common, a Right to external Privileges, and we will make no further Opposition on this Head. The Doctor argues, that the Children of Believers are called holy, {1 Corinthians 7:14}. and by that, he thinks, is meant, that they are included in the external Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace: Upon which I observe,

{1} Here is nothing peculiar to the Infant-Seed, or that belongs to the Children of Believers, while they are Infants, and which may not be said of them when they are past their Infant-State: And,

therefore, they are not unclean; in the Apostle's Sense, when they are adult, even though they remain in an unregenerate State. And, consequently,

{2} If this Holiness, which stands opposed to Uncleanness, gives the Children of Believers a Right to Baptism, it is as lawful to baptize them, when they are part the Age of Infancy, on that Foundation, as it is while they are in their Infant-State.

{3} The Children of nominal Christians are included in {or are under, which, I think, is the same} the external Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, yet, our Brethren will not allow, that they have a Right to Baptism.

{4} The Sanctification of the unbelieving Husband, and of the unbelieving Wife, is to be understood in a civil, and not in a religious Sense.

{5} The Apostle does not say, that the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the Faith of the believing Wife, or on account of her Faith, but barely this; that he is sanctified by his believing Wife, without assigning her Faith as the Cause of that Sanctification.

{6} The Holiness of the Children is not inferred from the Faith of the believing Parent, but from the Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent, by the believing one. And, therefore,

{7} The Holiness of the Children is not to be understood in a higher Sense than the Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent is, from which that Holiness is inferred. The Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent does not mean a Right to evangelical Privileges, in consequence of the Faith of the believing Parent; nor does the Holiness of the Children intend a Right to those Privileges, in consequence of the Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent, by the believing one. This Sanctification, and this Holiness, are to be taken in a civil, not in a religious sense. This, I think, will clearly appear, if the Design of the Apostle is duely considered: For,

{8} That is to prove, that the believing Wife ought not to depart from her unbelieving Husband, and that the believing Husband ought not to put away his unbelieving Wife; because Faith, neither, in one, nor in the other, dissolves their conjugal Relation, or renders it unlawful for them to cohabit together, in the matrimonial State; which was the Point that the Corinthians wanted Information about. They scrupled the Lawfulness of a Believer cohabiting with an Unbeliever, in a married State, and were inclined to think, that a believing Wife might depart from her unbelieving Husband, and that a believing Husband might put away his unbelieving Wife. To rectify this Mistake, the Apostle very appositely observes, that the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, and that the unbelieving Wife is sanctified by the believing Husband; whereby is meant, that which united them together, as Husband and Wife, and rendered it lawful for them to dwell together, as such; which was not Faith, but the Act of taking the Man for a Husband, and the Act of taking the Woman for a Wife. Now, as this Scruple wholly respected the believing Wife, and the believing Husband, it was strictly proper to observe the Act of the believing Party, rather than the Act of the unbelieving Party, by which the Marriage-Relation was constituted; and to show, that Faith did not free the believing Party from that Obligation, which arose from her own, or his own voluntary Act, previous unto it. As a Servant is not freed from his Obligation to his Master by becoming Believer; so Wife, or a Husband, is not freed from that Obligation, by becoming a Believer, she is under, as a Wife, or he is under, as a Husband; and, therefore, it is not lawful for the believing Wife to depart from her unbelieving Husband, nor for the believing Husband to put away his unbelieving Wife.

This is plainly the Apostle's Sense; and he enforces it, by observing, Else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy: That is to say, they are not spurious, but legitimate; because your Marriage-Relation still continues, and it is lawful for you to cohabit together, as Wife and Husband, and as Husband and Wife, notwithstanding one of you remain in a State of Unbelief.

{9} Whatever may be understood, by that Holiness, which the Apostle attributes to Children, it cannot give them a Right to Baptism, if they are not such Subjects as Christ requires that solemn Act of Worship to be performed upon; which Infants are not, I am sure. None but those can have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom he requires it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship. And, therefore, since he hath not commanded that Ordinance to be performed upon them, as it is an Act of Worship, they cannot justly be supposed to have a Right unto it, as it is a Privilege. As the Command given to baptize, limits the Administration of that Ordinance to Ministers, so it confines it to such, who are described in the Commission, to baptize, which Dr. Ridgley grants are Believers only, or such as are taught¹⁵: For, the Reason of both is the same. None may lawfully baptize, but Ministers, because the Command to administer Baptism is given to them, and to them only; and none but such as are taught may lawfully be baptized, because their Commission to perform this solemn Act of Christian Worship, only authorises them to perform it upon those who are first taught. If the Commission does not confine Baptism, to that Sort of Persons, who are mentioned therein, how can it limit the Administration of it to Ministers? Why may not a Midwife, in a Case of Necessity, baptize a Child? for which the Papists plead. Mr. Eltringham, indeed, hath a very uncommon Way of reasoning, which, if allowed, will prove, that every Man, and every Woman, may both preach and baptize. It is this: All Duty belongs to the Law: All Men are under the Law: Therefore, what is the Duty of one, is the Duty of all¹⁶. Women, as well as Men, are under the Law, and, therefore, it is the Duty of Women, to preach and baptize, as much as it is the Duty of Men. This is a notable Argument, in favour of Women's Preaching; for which the Quakers, if they are not ashamed of it, may do well to give him their Thanks.

4. The learned Doctor argues for the Right of Infants to Baptism, from its being an initiating Ordinance, as Circumcision was, under the legal Dispensation: And, that as Infants were devoted to God, by Circumcision, then, so they are, now, to be devoted to him, by Baptism¹⁷.

Ans. 1. This Argument proves too much, if it proves any thing, viz. That the Infants of nominal Christians have the same Right to Baptism as the Infants of real Believers have, which he would not allow a His Caution here also is remarkable; for, though he speaks of Baptism as an initiating Ordinance, yet, he does not say, into what Infants are initiated by it: Whether it is the Covenant of Grace, or the Church. The former, indeed, he could not say, because he had before pleaded for their Right to Baptism, from their being included in the Covenant, wherein God has promised to be a God to his People, and to their Seed: Nor even there does he assert, that, that Covenant is the Covenant of Grace; so very great was his Caution, left he should give any Advantage to those, who advance Doctrines, which are incontinent with the Stability of the Covenant of Grace. And, by declining to say, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation into the Church, he was not obliged to acquaint us, whether Infants are initiated into a national, or congregational Church. The New Testament-Church, he well knew, is not national: And, he did not care to say, that Infants are, by Baptism, initiated into a congregational Church, I suppose, because he could not allow, that they have a Right to those Privileges, which Christ hath granted to such a Church: And, therefore, he barely speaks of Baptism, as an initiating Ordinance, without letting us know into what Infants are

initiated by it.

3. If Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation into the Christian Church, as Circumcision was into the Jewish Church, and Baptism succeeds Circumcision, as it was such, then Infants ought not to be baptized, because they are not fit Materials for a Christian Church, nor have any Right to those Privileges, which Christ hath granted to it, for Edification, and spiritual Improvement. 4. Without Circumcision, none might lawfully join with the Jewish Church, in any external Acts of Worship. Circumcision in the Flesh, though not of the Heart, was required, in order to that {Ezekiel 44:7; Ezekiel 44:9}: But Baptism is not required, in order to enjoy the Advantages of attending on that Worship, which is performed in the New Testament-Church; if it was, the Children of Unbelievers, not being baptized, could not be allowed that Advantage; which is what, I think our Brethren will not agree to. 5. The Infants of ungodly Parents were initiated into the Jewish Church, by Circumcision; why therefore, may they not be initiated into the Christian Church, by Baptism, if that succeeds Circumcision as an Ordinance of Initiation? 6. Christian Baptism is a very solemn Act of Worship, which Circumcision was not; and, therefore, though it should be granted, that it succeeds Circumcision, as an initiating Ordinance, it will by no means follow, that Infants have a Right to Baptism, because they had a Right to Circumcision; for this clear Reason: No Act of religious Worship may be performed, upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, by which that Act of Worship is instituted.

Infants are not included in the Commission, which Christ gave his Disciples, to baptize; and, consequently, it is not lawful to perform that Act of religious Worship on them. I am determined not to take any Advantage of our Brethren; but will allow them their Reasoning, as far as can fairly be expected, which I may do, without the least Prejudice to the Cause, wherein I am engaged, if they cannot prove, that Infants are included in the Command, by which Baptism was instituted, they will never be able to prove, that they have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege: For, those only have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom Christ hath commanded it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am sure; but only such as are taught. Thus much in answer to those Arguments, which Dr. Ridgley brings to prove, that the Baptism of Infants is lawful. I hope they may be allowed to be sufficient and full.

5. I will now consider another Argument for Infant-Baptism, which a learned Man thinks, is by far the most solid. It is this, as he states it: All the Infants of all Believers, during Infancy, are in a relative State of Grace, in their Parents, by a certain special Oeconomy, or Appointment, of God. By the State of Grace, I understand, says he, a Right unto the Benefits of Grace and Glory, and, therefore, unto Remission of Sins, Sanctification, and Glorification, or eternal Life: Yet he apprehends, that they do not actually partake of these benefits, while they are in this relative State, but upon its being changed into an absolute State; which Change is either by Death, or the Use of Reason. Those whom Death removes in this relative State of Grace, they must all necessarily pass into an absolute State of Grace. Hence, as many Infants of Believers as die in Infancy, none excepted, are blessed with Grace and Glory, and so are saved, the relative State of Grace being graciously changed into an immortal and absolute one¹⁸. Of this Opinion was the late learned Dr. Watts, which he delivers in his *Ruin and Recovery*. In my Answer to that Book, I did not take it into Consideration, because I thought it not a proper Place: But, as I have Reason to think, that this Sentiment obtains, and this Occasion offers for an Examination of it, I will now attend unto the Consideration thereof. Venema observes, that when Children come to the Use of Reason, the

Relation to God by their Parents ceases, and they no longer enjoy a Right to the Benefits of Grace and Glory, on that Foundation, by which they enjoyed it through their Infant-State. A new Dispensation of Grace takes Place with the Adult, which, under the Condition of Faith and Repentance, conveys, not only a Right, but also the Benefits themselves: Wherefore, Infants who after embrace Christ with a sincere Affection, are brought into an absolute State of Grace: On the Contrary those whose Minds are alienated from Christ, stand in a State of Wrath. This Hypothesis cannot be true, because it is inconsistent with various Doctrines of the Gospel.

{1} It necessarily supposes, that Divine Love is mutable. All such, who have a Right to the Blessings of Grace and Glory, are Objects of the Love of God, for that Right springs from thence, as the original Cause of it: And, therefore, the Loss of that Right infers a Change in Divine Love, from which it flows, as the Origin of it.

{2} If this Hypothesis is true, then some must be supposed to have a Right to saving Benefits, whom God never intended to save, or whom he did not chuse to Salvation. Right to Salvation cannot be of larger Extent, than the Decree of Salvation is; for, to what Purpose are any invested with a Right to Salvation, who are not included in the Decree of Salvation? Can such be thought to have a Right to Salvation, whole Salvation is not designed by God? Besides, none are inverted with a Right to Salvation, in the Persons of others, {of Parents, for Instance, which the learned Man supposes,} but in their own Persons; as none were chosen to it, in the Persons of others, but in their own.

{3} None have a Right to Salvation, but those who are the Sons of God: If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ. The Relation of Sons to God cannot cease: If, therefore, all the Infants of Believers are the Children of God, they will always be so, and cannot be deprived of that Right to Happiness, which belongs to them, as such; which effectually overthrows this Hypothesis.

{4} Right to Salvation is founded in Justification, by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness: Being justified by his Grace, we are made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life. Now, if it is true, that all the Infants of Believers have a Right to Life, they are all justified by Christ's Righteousness, and shall certainly be all glorified, even those who arrive unto adult Age, except some of them, may be justified by Christ's Righteousness, while in their Infant-State, and cease to be so, or lose their Interest, in his Righteousness, when they are adult, which cannot be.

{5} Christ obtained, by his Death, a Right to Faith, for all those on whose Account he laid down his Life; and, therefore, if he died for all the Infants of Believers, which the learned Man supposes he did, then they shall all be blessed with Faith, and, consequently, none of them, when they become adult, can perish. Indeed, he says, Christ did not so much obtain Faith for Men, as Grace and Glory, for them who believe. But that is a false Principle, which he begs, in order to support his Hypothesis. I think it needless, to offer more Particulars, to evert this Opinion; those mentioned are sufficient to that Purpose. The learned Man endeavours to prove his Hypothesis, from the Words of our Lord, concerning Children, who were presented to him, and blessed by him; of whom he said thus: For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Three Things he observes:

{1} That they were young Infants¹⁹.

{2} That they were brought to Christ by their Parents, who believed, etc.

{3} That for this Reason Christ admitted them to him, and in this Relation declared them Heirs of his Benediction, and of the Kingdom of God.

I allow, that these Children were Infants: But it is not said, that they were brought to Christ by their Parents: Nor is any Respect had unto those, who presented them to our Saviour, whether they were their Parents, or others; nor to their Faith, whoever they were: And, therefore, the Hypothesis receives no Support at all, from hence. He apprehends, that {1 Corinthians 7:14}. fully proves it: His Discourse on this Place is very prolix: After rejecting various Interpretations given of the Text, by Erasmus Schmidius, Chrysostom, Elsner, Lightfoot, Knatchbul, Hammond, and Dodwell, etc. he proceeds to deliver his own Sense concerning it; and, in order to that, observes, that the Scruple²⁰ which was railed concerning Believers, joined in Marriage before Conversion, lay in this; Whether, if a Husband or Wife, should continue in Heathenism and Idolatry, the Believer might abide in the matrimonial State, entered into, or contracted before Faith, and the Holiness of Marriage be preserved? In the Opinion of the Ancients, the conjugal Relation had a spiritual Respect to Christ, which represented the Union of Christ with the Saints, and raised up a Seed to Christ. If now either of the married Parties was an Alien from the Faith, that seemed to destroy the Holiness of Marriage, and the mystical Relation to it. The Apostle, answering to this Scruple of Conscience, affirms, that Infidelity of the other married Party did not binder, but that the Marriage might be holy; for here the Unbeliever is not at all reckoned by Christ, but he asserts, that he is in this Matter esteemed in the believing Party; so that the Marriage, notwithstanding the Impurity of the one married Party, will still remain, and be approved of by Christ. In this Observation some Things are supposed, which are not proved, and may not be granted: 1. That the Marriage-Relation, itself, is not a Representation of the Union of Christ with the Saints; or, that it may not be considered, as an Emblem of it, unless either the Husband, or the Wife, is a Believer; which is not true: For, the Apostle speaks of the Marriage-Relation, in itself, as such an Emblem, without any Respect to Faith, in the Husband, or the Wife. 2. That Faith constitutes the Marriage-Relation holy. This is a Mistake: Marriage, indeed, is honourable, as it is appointed of God, and is subservient to the Accomplishment of his wife and holy Designs; but Faith, in the Parties married, makes not the Relation holy. Farther, 3. It is supposed, that the Corinthians thought, that Children born of Parents, who were both Believers, were holy, and a Seed raised up to Christ; but the Children, born of Parents, one whereof was an Unbeliever, were not so; and, therefore, they scrupled the Lawfulness of a believing Wife, to cohabit with an unbelieving Husband, and the Lawfulness of a believing Husband, to cohabit with an unbelieving Wife: Of the Truth of which there is not the least Appearance, in the whole Context. Indeed, they scrupled the Lawfulness of a Believer's cohabiting with an Unbeliever, not for the Reason here assigned, but because it seemed to them unfit, that a Christian, and a Heathen, should dwell together, as Man and Wife; and, therefore, they thought it might be lawful for a believing Wife, to depart from her unbelieving Husband, and for a believing Husband to put away his unbelieving Wife; which it could not be, unless Faith dissolves the Marriage-Relation, and frees the Subject of it, from that civil Obligation he is under, arising from his own voluntary Act; but that it doth not: And, therefore, the Apostle pertinently observes, that the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, etc. which Sanctification must be understood in a civil Sense, because it is assigned, as a Reason, and Proof, of the Continuance of the Obligation, on the believing Party, whether Wife, or Husband, still to dwell with the unbelieving one; and, consequently, the Sanctification of the unbelieving Party, arises not from the Faith of the believing one, but from that which makes it unlawful, for the

believing one, to depart from, or put away the Unbeliever; which can be no other, than the Act of taking the Man for a Husband, and the Woman for a Wife. As this Doubt of the Corinthians wholly respected the believing Party, whether Wife, or Husband, it was strictly proper, to observe the Act of that Party, rather than the Act of the other Party, whereby she, or he, became obliged unto the unbelieving Party. The Matter under Consideration, was not the Lawfulness, or Unlawfulness, of those Parties marrying; for, there could be no question of its Lawfulness, they both being, at the Time of Marriage, in a State of Infidelity: But the Point to be determined was this; Whether it was lawful for a Believer to continue in the State of Matrimony with an Unbeliever? And the Apostle determines it is; because the unbelieving Party was sanctified by the believing one. That, therefore, in the believing Party, which sanctified the unbelieving one, made it not only lawful for, but also binding on the believing Party, to abide in the married State, with the unbelieving one; which could not be Faith; it must be the voluntary Act of that Party, in the Contraction of Marriage, and nothing else: For which Reason, the Apostle does not say, that, by the Faith of the believing Wife, the unbelieving Husband is sanctified, etc. but barely this; the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, etc. without assigning Faith, as the Cause of that Sanctification; nor is that deducible from the Words. That, and that only, is the Cause of this Sanctification, which makes it lawful for a Believer, to continue in the married State, with an Unbeliever; and that cannot possibly be Faith; it must be that which constituted the Marriage-Relation, on her, or his Part, viz. her, or his, voluntary Act, in contracting Marriage.

Wherefore, it is clear, that this Sanctification of the unbelieving Party, is not to be understood in a religious, but in a civil Sense: And the Holiness of the Children, which is inferred from the Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent, is not to be understood in a religious, but in a civil Sense likewise. The Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent, gives no Right to religious Privileges, and the Holiness of the Children does not entitle to such Privileges. Most evident, I think it is, that this Hypothesis, receives not the least Proof from any Part of the Apostle's Reasoning, in this Place. The learned Man begs, and takes for granted, what he ought to have proved, and then interprets the Text, in such a Way, as might serve to countenance his Opinion. But, if this Hypothesis was true, it would not prove the Right of Infants to Baptism, though he says, it is, by far the most solid Foundation of Infant-Baptism²¹; for two Reasons: One is, this Holiness is not predicated of the Children of a believing Parent, as Infants, in Distinction from her, or his Descendants, who are past the State of Infancy.

It is spoken of, and attributed to them, as her, or his Descendants, whether Infants, or not: And, this Holiness is not lost when they become adult, nor are they then unclean, in the Apostle's Sense, though they remain in an unregenerate State. He takes it for granted, that the Apostle speaks of Infant-Seed, in Distinction from Adult, of which there is not the least Intimation, in the whole Context: So that, Holiness must mean Legitimacy; for in no other Sense can it be said, that an adult Child of a Believer is holy, who remains unregenerate: And, this Holiness is attributed to the Children of a believing Parent, without any Respect to their Age, whether infant, or adult. The other Reason is, if this Holiness is to be understood in a religious Sense, Baptism being a solemn Act of instituted Worship, it is not lawful to perform it upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, by which it is instituted, {as I have before said,} which Infants are not: And, consequently, this Holiness can be no Proof of their Right to Baptism, even though it should be allowed, that it is to be taken in a religious Sense. None can have a Right to Baptism, as it is a

Privilege, but those, on whom Christ hath commanded it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am certain. Having answered the Arguments advanced by our Brethren, for Infant-Baptism, I will now briefly state our Objections, against it.

Object. 1. There is no Command for, nor any Precedent of Infant-Baptism, in the New Testament. I cannot but think, that this is a very strong Objection; because, as no Mode of Worship is lawful to be practised, which is not commanded, or recommended to us by the Example of Persons, acting under Divine Direction; so no Act of religious Worship, may lawfully be performed upon any Subject, without Authority for it, from God, either by his Command, requiring it, or, by the Example of some Person, acting under his Direction, therein, from whence it may be concluded, that it is agreeable to the Divine Will: Neither of which, in this Case, is pretended, except by some less skilful Advocates, who argue, that whole Households were baptized, wherein, they seem desirous to have it sup-posed, that there were Infants, without any Evidence of it. They are willing to beg, what they cannot prove: But this Cause is of too great Importance, to allow of such Liberality to them. Dr. Ridgley, in answering to this Objection, observes, that consequential Proof is sufficient. This is a tacit Acknowledgment, that direct and express Proof cannot be given: And, as to his consequential Proofs, they have been before considered, and found invalid. I freely grant, that consequential Proof of Doctrines is sufficient; because they are capable of such Proof: For, as there is a Connection between Principles, and one is inferrible from another, express Proof being given of any Principle, wherewith another is connected, and from which it is justly inferrible, that Proof is direct and explicit, respecting the Truth of the former Principle, and it is a consequential Proof of the Truth of the latter, which is a Deduction from the former. But I cannot allow, that the Mode and Subject of instituted Worship, are capable of consequential Proof, because they are not inferrible from any thing, but that Command, by which the Act of Worship is instituted, or they are not deducible, from any Principle whatever, but are wholly of Divine Appointment, if legal; and, therefore, they will not admit of consequential Proof. The Proof of the Legality of the Mode and Subject of instituted Worship, must be direct and express, or it is none. He farther observes, that Baptism was in use with the Jews, and that they baptized Children with their Parents, who became Proselytes; and, therefore, there was no Need for Christ to give particular Direction to his Disciples, to baptize Infants, because they would conclude upon that, from the Custom of the Jews, who baptized the Children of such as became Proselytes. It does not appear, by any thing expressed, either in the Old or New Testament, that this was the Practice of the Jews, before, or in our Saviour's Time; and, therefore, I confers, that I am not very forward, to give Credit to the Testimony of Jewish Rabbies, concerning the Antiquity of that Custom. Nor can I think, that a Command given to the Israelites, to wash their Cloaths, was an Order to wash their Bodies, which Jewish Masters say it was²². Besides, if this was Fact, and the Disciples of our Lord did conclude upon the Right of Infants to Baptism, from thence, it is reasonable to think, that they would have given some Intimation of it, either in Words, or by their Practice; whereas they have not. There is not the least Ground for a Pretence, that they had any such Apprehension. Our Brethren, therefore, upon being asked, Who hath required the Baptism of Infants, at your Hands? will never be able to answer, that Christ, by whom this solemn Act of Worship was instituted, requires it of them.

Object. 2. Several Things in the Commission, by which Ministers are authorized to baptize, evince, that Infant-Baptism is unlawful: Go ye therefore, teach all Nations, baptizing them, in the Name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.

{1} Teaching ought to precede Baptism; and being taught is required, as a Qualification for Baptism, than which nothing can be more evident: For, Christ's Command to baptize, only respects them who are taught; not any, or all, in all Nations, but those, and only those, in all Nations, who are instructed. And, therefore, Infants not being capable of Instruction, they are not capable Subjects of Baptism, nor can be qualified, as Christ requires those should be, whom, it is his Pleasure, that his Ministers should baptize. And, this Instruction must be effectual for ingenerating Faith, which appears, not only from the Sense of the Word, in the New Testament {Acts 14:21}, but also from what Mark expresses, in his shorter Account of the Commission; He that believeth and is baptized. Hence, it is most clear, that Christ intends such Instruction, as is productive of an Act of Faith; which entirely everts that Sense, which some have given, of the Command to teach, viz. Disciple, by baptizing, without Instruction first given; and, which Dr. Ridgley acknowledges, is not defensible.

{2} The Form of Baptism will not allow us to think, that Infants are the proper Subjects of it. That Form is the Pronunciation of the Names of the Divine Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; without which, neither dipping into, nor-sprinkling with Water, is Christian Baptism. This, therefore, is as solemn an Act of Worship, as was ever instituted by God.

Now, that only can be a sufficient Authority for a Minister's performing this Act of Worship, which gives him express Direction, on whom to perform it: And, since Infants are not included, in that Direction, but such only who are taught, performing this solemn Act of Worship {than which none is more so} on them, cannot be lawful. Besides, it is reasonable to conclude, that it is the Will of God, that both the Parties, who are concerned in this Act of Worship, should be capable of adoring him, therein; not only the Administrator of the Ordinance, but also the Subject on whom it is administered; which Infants are not. That Proof, I am sure, ought to be very clear and strong, which may justly demand our Assent to this; that it is the Will of God, that any such shall be Parties concerned in his Worship, who have not the Use of Reason.

{3} Christ requires his Ministers to teach those, whom they have baptized, to observe all Things whatsoever he hath commanded them: And, therefore, if they baptize any, who are incapable of receiving such Instruction, and of yielding Obedience to Christ's Commands, therein, they act without his Authority: Consequently, Infant-Baptism is unlawful.

{4} Our blessed Lord promises his Presence: Lo, I am with you alway, even to the End of the World. This gracious Promise is intended, not for the Encouragement of Ministers only, who administer the Ordinance of Baptism, but also for the Encouragement of those, on whom it is administered: And, therefore, Christ designed this Institution, for the present spiritual Advantage and Edification of those, on whom it is his Will that it should be administered; of which, I suppose, none will say, that Infants are capable. His gracious End in its Institution, cannot possibly be answered, in them. It will be impossible to prove, that it is the Will of Christ, that Infants should be baptized, without denying, that he intended that Institution for the present Edification of those on whom it is administered: And, such a Denial would come with a very ill Grace, from any one, who professes Faith in that precious Promise, which is here expressed, for the Encouragement of both the Administrator of Baptism, and of the Persons who are baptized. Upon the whole, I think, that it

may be fairly concluded, from the Commission, that the Baptism of Infants never came into the Mind of Christ.

Object. 3. The Baptism of Infants is not lawful, because it cannot be the Answer of a good Conscience. This Objection is drawn from what the Apostle Peter says of Baptism; whole Words are there: The like Figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us {#not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience} by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ {1 Peter 3:21}. I suppose, it will be allowed, that in this Place, either the Baptism of the Spirit, or the Ordinance of Water-Baptism, is intended. Let us enquire which. The Baptism of the Spirit means, either his sanctifying Operations, or the extraordinary Effusion of his Gifts, upon the Apostles. There is Reason to think, that John designs the latter, when he says of Christ, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire; because, he speaks of it, as a Thing future, and not present, the Holy Spirit not being yet given, in that extraordinary Way. Now, if the Baptism of the Spirit is to be understood of that, it cannot be designed in this Place, because this is a Privilege common to the Subjects of Salvation; whereas, that is not: And, if the Baptism of the Spirit designs his sanctifying Operations, it cannot be meant here; for, his Work of Grace upon the Heart, is not a Figure, which this Baptism is; nor, was it needful to say of that, not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, i.e. external Defilement, since that Work is not outward, but inward, and the Heart is the Subject of it. The Apostle means a Baptism which is external; and asserts, that its outward Effect, viz. cleansing from external Defilement, is not what he hath in view, but the Answer of a good Conscience, therein, which is internal, and properly opposed unto, the cleansing from outward Defilement, or putting away the Filth of the Flesh: And, therefore, it is not the Baptism of the Spirit, taken in either Sense, that is designed, but the Ordinance of Baptism. I have another Reason to offer, for not understanding it of the Baptism of the Spirit; which is this: Infants cannot be the Subjects of it; for, there cannot be the Answer of a good, or bad Conscience, in them, because they have not the Use of Reason. This Answer respects not the Principle of Grace, but the Acts of it. Infants are capable Subjects of a Principle of Grace, but not of gracious Acts. Such this Answer of a good Conscience is. If, therefore, it is allowed, that Infants are capable Subjects of the Baptism of the Spirit, that cannot be here meant, because they are incapable of the Answer of a good Conscience. I may be censured, as cruel to Infants, because I think they ought not to be baptized; but I would not, for the World, give into any Opinion, that supposes them incapable of Salvation, which they must be, if they are incapable of the Baptism of the Spirit, as it is taken for his sanctifying Work on the Heart, and if that Work necessarily includes in it, or is the Answer of a good Conscience. Wherefore, it seems most clear to me, that it is the Ordinance of Baptism, which is here meant, and not the Baptism of the Spirit. Baptism is said to be the Answer of a good Conscience, because Enquiry is, or ought to be made of every Candidate for it, concerning his Faith in Christ; as Philip examined the Eunuch, concerning his Faith, when he proposed to be baptized by him, saying, Here is Water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip answers him, If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayest: Wherein this Question is implied; Dost thou believe with all thine Heart? Unto which he replies, I believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God {Acts 8:36-37}. This was the Answer of a good Conscience; whereupon Philip baptized him. Since the Apostle plainly supposes such an Answer, in Baptism, it may fairly be concluded, that he was unacquainted with the Baptism of any, who were naturally incapable of giving such an Answer. The Baptism of Infants was not practised in his Time, so far as he knew, nor ought it to have been since, because it is impossible it should be the Answer of a good Conscience, which he asserts

Baptism is.

Object. 4. Infant-Baptism is not lawful, because Baptism is a Branch of Righteousness, which the People of God ought to fulfil. This is evident, from the Words of our Lord to John, concerning it; Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us, to fulfil all Righteousness {Matthew 3:15}: Wherein it is plainly supposed, that, not only the Person, who administers Baptism, fulfils Righteousness, but also the Party, on whom it is administered, fulfils it. And, therefore, such as are naturally incapable thereof, which all will allow, that Infants are, cannot be the legal Subjects of Baptism. And, those Parents who offer their Infants to Baptism, and, when they are grown up, endeavour to make them believe, that it is not necessary they should be baptized, upon their Conversion, do what in them lies, to hinder their Children fulfilling a Branch of Righteousness, which God most certainly requires them to fulfil, as Followers of the Blessed Jesus; whereof our good Brethren, who differ from us, in this Point, would do well seriously to consider. How they will be able to defend themselves, in this Matter, I cannot tell. If the Opinion of the Right of Infants to Baptism, were to obtain universally, there would be but a very inconsiderable Number of Persons left, in a Christian Nation, from whom this Branch of Righteousness could be expected to be fulfilled. Christ, in that Care, would scarcely have any Followers, in this Act of holy Obedience; which ought to be well weighed by our Brethren, for it is a Matter of great Importance. They only plead for the Right of the Infants of Believers to Baptism; and, therefore, one would think, that they should conclude, that it is the Duty of the Children of Unbelievers to be baptized, when they believe, although they may know, that they were baptized in their Infancy; but, if I am not mistaken, very few, if any of them, put them upon a Submission to Baptism, when they are converted, thinking their former Baptism sufficient, though, according to the Principles from which they argue, they then had no Right unto it. Thus they endeavour, as much as they can, to prevent Christians yielding Obedience to the Will of God, in this Branch of Righteousness, which all his People ought to fulfil, after the Example of Christ, upon an Apprehension, that Infants have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege; not considering, that none can have a Right unto it, as it is a Privilege, who are naturally incapable of submitting to it, as it is a Branch of Righteousness, which God expects his People to fulfil.

VI. Mr. Eltringham undertakes to prove, that the Mode of Baptism, is not dipping, but sprinkling. In his Letter, he says, the Word baptizo may signify to dip, or wash all over, for any thing I know to the contrary; and adds, but that it signifies to dip in Water always, is a most glaring Absurdity. When it is used to express the Action of dipping into some other Liquid; dipping in Water is not there meant; I suppose, that none will think it is. But his Meaning, I imagine, is this, viz. That it does not always signify dipping, when it is used to express the Action of making a Person, or Thing, wet, with Water. Our Brethren do not deny, that the Word {baptizw} baptize, properly, and primarily, signifies to immerse, plunge, or dip, though they say it also signifies to wash, where dipping cannot be intended: But then, as learned Stockius observes, the Word is not used, in its proper, but in a tropical Sense²³. I am determined, in this Matter, to ask no more, than must be granted, for the Cause I am to defend, does not at all oblige me to it. Be it so, therefore, that the Word does not always signify to dip, but some-times to sprinkle, or pour; What is proved by it? Not that Baptism ought to be administered by sprinkling, or pouring of Water, on a Person. The utmost which can be pretended from hence is, that Baptism may be administered, either by dipping, or sprinkling, as the Administrator and the Subject shall chuse, because it cannot certainly be

determined, in what Manner it is the Will of Christ it should be performed, by reason of the Ambiguity of the Word. It must, therefore, be allowed, that, at least, it favours us Dippers, as much as it does Sprinklers. Is it reasonable to think, that this is the real Fact? Can it be thought, that Christ hath left us to perform this solemn Act of. Worship, in what Manner we ourselves shall like best, without any plain Direction, respecting the Mode of that Act of Worship? We cannot think so, without charging upon him, a Want of Uniformity, as the Institutor of New Testament-Worship. In all other Instances, he hath given us plain Directions, respecting the Mode of Worship, either immediately, or by his Apostles, in Words, or by their Practice, under his Direction: And, I cannot be persuaded to think, that, in this Particular, he hath not acted like himself; which he hath not, if there is that Ambiguity, in this Affair, that is pretended, and it is lawful for us to administer Baptism, either by dipping, or sprinkling, as we please. Let us, therefore, impartially, and seriously enquire, whether there is not some Medium, by which we may arrive at a Certainty, concerning the Mind of Christ, in this momentous Affair? And,

1. I cannot but be of Opinion, that the Import of the Word {baptizw} baptize, notwithstanding it is said to be ambiguous, is sufficient to that Purpose. It is a Rule with Divines, that Words ought to be taken, in their proper, and primary Sense, though they are sometimes used in a different one, except there are some Circumstances in the Text, which will not admit of that Sense. This is a good Rule: And, I am sure, a Departure from it would be attended with very dangerous Consequences, on some of the most important Doctrines of the Gospel; which those must know, who are at all acquainted with Socinian Controversies. If this Rule may be allowed to hold good, in other Points, why should it not be allowed in this? If it may, then we need not look any further, than the Commission, to adjust the Matter under Consideration; because, our Brethren grant, that the Word, properly, and primarily, signifies to immerse, dip, or plunge, though, they say, it is sometimes used to express sprinkling, or pouring. And, since there are no Circumstances, in the Text, which will not admit of the Word being taken in its proper, and primary Sense, it is reasonable to interpret the Commission, as a Command, to administer Baptism, by dipping. Wherefore, dipping, in Baptism, is commanded, and is not an Act of Will-Worship, which Mr. Eltringham affirms it is²⁴.

2. We may next consider the Circumstances of, and the Places wherein, the Baptism of the primitive Christians was performed, in order to settle this Matter. Our Brethren, here also endeavour, rather, to puzzle the Cause, than to discover Truth, by criticizing on the Greek Prepositions, {en, apo, eiv;} in, out of, and into,} which are used, on this Subject: Yet, I doubt not, but to oblige them to acknowledge, that our Translators have rendered them very rightly, or compel them to confess, that it is not to be proved, that Christ was baptized, in or with Water, or, that his Apostles ever practised Water-Baptism. Perhaps, the Reader may be somewhat startled at this, and be afraid, that Countenance will be given to Quakerism by it. I must say, that I delight not to act this Part, on the sacred Scriptures, nor would I by any means do it, but to confirm Truth, and to shew our Brethren the Tendency of their Criticisms, on Greek Prepositions. I allow, that en does not always signify in, but sometimes near to²⁵; that apo signifies from, as well as out of; and, that eiv means to, as well as into. This is granting as much as can be desired. Now let us see what Use can be made hereof, on this Subject. To begin with the first Preposition; it is said, And were baptized of him, {en tw lordanh} near to Jordan {Matthew 3:6}. Who can say with what they were baptized, {#the Text does not inform us,} if the Preposition is to be rendered near to, instead

of in? Thus also, we shall not be able to determine with what our Blessed Lord was baptized, if the second Preposition must be translated from, as it is used, on the Subject of his Baptism. When he was baptized, he straightway came up {apo tou Udatov} from the Water, or up the rising Ground {Matthew 3:16}; as Dr. Guyse says. John might baptize Christ with Wine, or Oil, for ought the Text expresses, if He was not in the Water before, and in order to his Baptism, and so came up out of it when he was baptized. Likewise, the third Preposition, which is used concerning the Baptism of the Eunuch, will be attended with the same Obscurity, and we shall be left at an Uncertainty, with what Philip baptized him, if the Phrase {eiv Udwr} is rendered to the Water, instead of into the Water. Our Brethren, in thus criticizing upon, or playing with these Prepositions, make not the least Advance towards the Discovery of Truth. If this is of Service to any thing at all, it is Quakerism. The whole Amount of their Endeavour, on this Subject, is, rendering it uncertain what the Mode of Baptism is, and what Liquid, whether Water, Wine, or Oil, was used, by the Apostles of Christ, in the Administration of that Ordinance; for which, the Papists may think themselves obliged unto them; because it is said, that they sometimes baptize the Children of great Persons with Wine: And who can say, that John did not baptize Christ with Wine? Or, who can prove, that the Eunuch was baptized with Water, if he did not go down into the Water, in order to his Baptism, and come up out of it, when he was baptized. If he, with Philip, only went to the Side of the Water, before his Baptism, and, after it, came from the Side of the Water, how can it certainly be concluded, that he was baptized with Water? For both might be done, and, yet, he not be baptized with Water. Indeed, it may be argued, that Philip had recommended the Baptism of Water to him, and also informed him, that it was usual to administer Baptism, in Places where a considerable Quantity of Water was; because he says, upon coming unto a certain Water, See, here is Water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? But that will not prove the Certainty of his being baptized, with Water, if he did not go down into it, in order to his Baptism; because the Account of his Baptism no further proves the Use of Water, therein, than it expresses his going to, or into the Water, in order to be baptized, and his coming up from it, or out of it, after the Administration of the Ordinance upon him. Going to the Side of the Water, in order to be baptized, and coming from it, when he was baptized, is not a certain Proof, that Water was used in his Baptism: But, if he went down into the Water, with an Intention to be baptized, and, accordingly, was baptized, in the Water, and if he came up out of the Water, after being baptized in it, no Doubt can be admitted, concerning the Use of Water in his Baptism; because, it is unreasonable to suppose, that he went down into the Water, to be baptized with any other Liquid: Nor could going to the Side of the Water be necessary, in order to be sprinkled; for, doubtless, his Attendants were able to supply Philip with a sufficient Quantity of that Water, for sprinkling him, if they had any Vessels with them, in travelling; which is not to be doubted of. He, therefore, certainly went down into the Water, as the Greek Phrase {eiv to Udwtr} properly imports, and came up out of the Water, as the original Phrase {ek tou Udatov} properly signifies. Dr. Doddridge says, Considering how frequently Bathing was used, in those hot Countries, it is not to be wondered, that Baptism was generally administered by Immersion, though I see no Proof, that it was essential to the Institution. It would be very unnatural to suppose, that they went down to the Water, merely that Philip might take up a little Water in his Hand to pour on the Eunuch. A Person of his Dignity had, no doubt, many vessels, in his Baggage, on such a journey through so desert a Country; a Precaution absolutely necessary for Travellers, in those Parts, and never omitted by them. See Dr. Shaw's Travels, Pref p. 4.f26 It seems the Doctor thought, that Baptism may be administered, either by dipping, or by sprinkling. A credible Person,

now living, informed me, that when he applied to the Doctor for Communion, he acquainted him, that he apprehended it was his Duty to be baptized, by Immersion; to which he answered, that he had no Objection to it, and, that he could freely do it for him, only he thought it might not be well taken by his Friends, whose Mind, and Practice, were different. But, surely, the Mode of so solemn an Act of Worship, is not left undetermined by Christ; which it most certainly is, if the Reasoning and Criticisms of our Brethren are just; nor can it be certainly proved, that the Apostles used Water in Baptism. All they do, and attempt to do, in this Matter, is to reduce us unto an Uncertainty, respecting the Mode of Baptism, and what Liquid was used in the Administration of it, whether Water, or something else. They prove nothing; nor is their Manner of arguing calculated to prove any thing; which sufficiently discovers the great Impropriety of It. The Circumstances of Baptism, as administered by John, and by the Apostles of Christ, and the Places wherein it was administered by them, will not allow us to think, that they administered it by sprinkling. John baptized the Jews in the River Jordan {Matthew 3:6}: But Dr. Guyse thinks, that he could not baptize, by Immersion, the prodigious Multitudes who came to him. A large Number, indeed, being excited by Curiosity came to hear him; but that vast Multitudes were baptized by him does not appear. If such prodigious Multitudes were baptized by him, as the Doctor supposes, what became of them? Were they Believers? If Believers, where were they when Christ was risen? We have no Account of such a prodigious Number of Disciples after Christ's Resurrection: And yet, doubtless, some were converted by his Ministry, and the Ministry of his Apostles, and of the seventy-two Disciples. Therefore, there is no Necessity for supposing, that they flood in Ranks, near to, or just within the Edge of the Water, and of John's passing along before them, and casting Water upon their Heads, or Faces, with his Hands, or some proper Instrument, which the Doctor imagines he did²⁷, not to John's Honour, nor to that of the Ordinance, which certainly requires far greater Solemnity, than such a Manner of Administration would admit of; for, Baptism is a very solemn Act of Worship, and ought not to be administered in such a huddling Way. Besides, those whom he baptized made Confession of their Sins; How, therefore, could John baptize many, Thousands in a Day? which the Doctor supposes he might: If he did, there was but little Solemnity, in their Confessions, and in his Manner of baptizing them, after they had confessed their Sins.

3. Christ calls his Sufferings a Baptism. I have, says our Lord, a Baptism to be baptized with {Luke 12:50}; whereby his dolourous Sufferings are intended. Now, the Administration of Baptism, by sprinkling, or pouring a little Water on the Face, cannot be thought a fit Emblem of his overwhelming Sorrows; but Baptism by Immersion may justly be accounted such. And, therefore, we have solid Reason to conclude, that dipping into Water, and not sprinkling with Water, is that Mode of Baptism, which Christ instituted.

4. Baptism is a Representation of the Burial and Resurrection of Christ: Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, through the Faith of the Operation of God. I suppose it will be granted, that Baptism here means, the Baptism of Water, or the Baptism of the Spirit. The latter cannot be meant, if it be understood of the extraordinary Effusion of the Spirit, because this is common to all Believers, but that is not: Nor can it be meant of the Communication of the Spirit, in Regeneration, because it is through Faith; for Faith follows upon that, and is not acted in it. And, therefore, Water-Baptism is intended; which, when it is administered, by Immersion, is a proper Representation of Christ's Burial and Resurrection, as Bishop Davenant observes, with whole Words I shall conclude: This Burial of the Body of Sins, or of the Old Man, is represented in

Baptism, when he who is to be baptized is put into Water, as the Resurrection is when he is brought out of it; for, in the ancient Church, they not only wetted, but plunged those in Water, whom they baptized²⁸.

FOOTNOTES ft1 The Doctrine of Believers' Baptism, etc. p. 12. ft2 The Doctrine of Believers' Baptism, etc. p. 12. ft3 The Baptist against the Baptist, etc. p. 6. ft4 Ibid, p. 24. ft5 The Baptist against the Baptist, p. 32. ft6 The Baptist against the Baptist, p. 33. ft7 The Baptist against the Baptist, etc, p. 21, ft8 The Baptist, etc. p. 37. ft9 His Letter, p. 11. ft10 See their Book of Prayers. printed at Amsterdam. ft11 The Baptist against the Baptist, etc. p. 34. ft12 Body of Divinity, vol. 2. p. 408, 409. ft13 Body of Divinity, vol. 2. p. 409. ft14 Body of Divinity, vol. 2. p. 410, ft15 Body of Divinity, vol. 2. p. 408. ft16 The Baptist against the Baptist, etc. p. . ft17 Body of Divinity, vol. 2. p. 412. ft18 Omnes omnium Fidelium Infantes, etc. Venema Differ. fac. lib. 3. cap. 3. p. 526, 527. ft19 Infantes tenellos intelligi, etc. Venema Differ. fac. lib. 3. cap. 4. p. 544. ft20 Scrupulus, qui Fidelibas ante Conversionem Matrimonie copulates subnascebat, etc. Venema Differ. fac. lib, 3. cap. v. P. 554, 555. ft21 Cumque longe solidissimum Paedo-Baptismi sit Fundamentum. Venema Disier. sac. lib. 3. cap. 3. p. 520. ft22 Ea Levatio Vestium erat. Per vestes, inquit, totum Corpus intelligitur. Id unde constat; Magistri, ita docent. Verum, ut iis credamus adversus expressa Scripturae Testimonia, Ratio nulla est. - Dr. Owen, Qeologoumena. edit. Bremac. p. 425. ft23 T Clavis Nov. Test. in baptizw. ft24 His Letter, p. 7. ft25 En tw Topw; near to the Place. <431941>John 19:41. ft26 Family Expositor; the Note on <440837>Acts 8:37. It is as reasonable to scruple the Use of Water in the Baptism of the Eunuch, as it is to doubt of his going down into me Water in order to it, and of his coining up out of the Water, when he was baptized; for, katebhsan amroteroi eiv Udwr properly expresses his, and Philip's going down into the Water, and anebhsan ek tou Udatov as properly expresses their coming up out of the Water; and, anebh apo tou Udarov, which is the Phrase used to express the Action of Christ's coming up out of the Water, after his Baptism, means the same, {Matthew 3:16}. As apo tou Ofqalmou is the same with ek tou Ofqalmou, {Matthew 8:3-4}. May not a Quaker, in some such Way as this, attempt to elude the Evidence, that it was Water-Baptism, which the Eunuch desired, when he said, See, here is Water, etc.? viz. That it is probable he was thirsty; for which Reason the Sight of Water gave him Pleasure, and, therefore, he said thus, in an abrupt Manner, See, here is Water, without any View to Water-Baptism, and that it was the Baptism of the Spirit which he desired. The Vanity of such a Subterfuge would immediately appear, if it was allowed, as it ought to be, that the Eunuch went down into the Water, in order to be baptized. It must then be concluded, that it was Water-Baptism which he desired, and which was administered on him. Unless our Brethren can produce a Greek Phrase, which more properly expresses the Action of going down into the Water, than that which is used, his going down into the Water ought, not to he called in question: But that, I suppose, they will not pretend to do. ft27 Practical Exposition; the Note on {Matthew 3:6}. ft28 In Baptismo designatur haec Sepultura Corporis Peccatorum, velveteris Adami, cum in Aquam demittitur baptizandus; quemadmodum Resurrectio cum educitur: In veteri enim Ecclesia non tingebant solummodo; sed in Aquam immergebant eos quos baptizabant. In {Colossians 2:12}.

S. The Believer Triumph over Death

The Believer's Triumph Over Death by John Brine (London: Aaron Ward, 1735)

SERMON 4 THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH CONSIDERED IN A SERMON OCCASION'D BY THE DECEASE OF MR. HUGH LLOYD, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE FEB. 11, 1735 Published at the REQUEST of some who heard it.

Mortuus Christus sed in morte mors Mortua, quia Vita Mortua occidit Mortem Plenitudo Vitae deglutivit Mortem: Absorpta est Mors in Christi Corpore.

Mors non Vitam rapit, sed reformat. Augustin. in Joan. Prudentius.

Printed for AARON WARD at the King's Arms in Little Britain, LONDON: 1735. Price Six-Pence.

{1 Corinthians 15:55-57}}

O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. THE Infinitely wise God, at whole Disposal all Persons are, has been pleased to take from this Society a Member of long Standing and Usefulness. This mournful Providence I am desired by his surviving Relatives to Improve; for which Purpose I have made choice of these Words. IN this Chapter the Apostle largely treats of the Resurrection of the Dead, and fully proves it by many irrefragable Arguments. This Doctrine cannot be disputed whatever Difficulties may seem to attend it, without giving up the whole Christian Religion; for if there be no Resurrection the Dead Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not risen then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith also is vain; {1 Corinthians 15:13-14} says the Apostle. The Earth is but a refining Place to the Bodies of the Saints, they will be railed from thence with unspeakable Advantage, free from Corruption and Death, spiritual and glorious; and therefore there is sufficient Foundation for this holy Triumph of the Apostle over Death, that formidable Enemy, and the devouring Grave. 'Tis thought by Interpreters, that this is a Quotation of the Septuagint's Version of those Words in the Prophecy of Hosea; O Death! I will be thy Plague; O Grave! I will be thy Destruction; but with a small Variation which affects not the Sense. The Apostle makes use of a Metaphor, taken either from Spurs and Pricks by which Oxen are driven, or rather from the Stings of Wasps and the like Creatures; from which if you take the Sting they are the same, but are not able to hurt.^{f1} Thus the Sting being taken from Death, it can do no Injury to Men. In speaking to the words I shall endeavour to do these Things.

First, SHEW that Sin is the Sting of Death.

Secondly, THAT the Law is the Strength of Sin.

Thirdly, THAT Sin, which is Death's Sting, is taken away.

Fourthly, DEMONSTRATE that the Saints Victory over Sin, Death and the Grave, is the free Gift of God.

Fifthly, THAT this Conquest is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, OBSERVE that we are under Obligation to praise God on this Account.

First, I am to shew, That Sin is the Sting of Death.

MAN consists of two Parts, Soul and Body, Spirit and Matter: These are widely different in their Nature. The Soul is immaterial, it is not made up of Parts, is invisible, not subject to Corruption and Mortality. THE Body is indeed a most curious Frame, in the Formation of which the infinite Wisdom of God is wonderfully discovered; but its Original is Dust, and to that it naturally tends, as appears from God's Threatning to our first Parents after the Fall; Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return. {Genesis 3:19} In Man these two Parts, tho' so very distant in their Nature, are most nearly united, the Dissolution of which Union is natural Death; 'tis of that the Apostle here speaks. SIN is any Want of Conformity to, or Transgression of the Law of God, is evident from the Apostle's Account of it; whosoever sinneth transgresseth also the Law, for Sin is the Transgression of the Law . {1 John 3:4} It was Sin that subjected the human Nature to Mortality and Death; for by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men, in whom all have sinned. {Romans 5:12} THE Bands and Ligaments which keep the Soul and Body together would never have been dissolved, if Sin had not rent them asunder; that is the meritorious Cause of Death. Hence, says the Apostle, the Wages of Sin is Death ; {Romans 6:23} it is the Sting of it also, Death receives all its Poison and Venom from this evil Root; that is it which arms it with Terror and renders it formidable; when Death approaches, and Guilt attends it, what inexpressible Horror and Anguish doth it raise in the Minds of Men! Which Disquietude is but the small Beginning, of an eternal Spring of Sorrow and Distress. That Sin is the Sting of Death thus appears.

1. IT is that which makes Death a Curse: In it self it is not so, when it is inflicted with relation to Guilt contracted, as the proper procuring Cause thereof, it is a penal Evil, and a dreadful Curse; but without respect to Sin imputed, it has nothing really injurious in it. Our Lord, in his Crucifixion and Death, was made a Curse, as the Apostle asserts; Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. {Galatians 3:13} But then this was as he stood in the Sinners Place, and bore the Guilt of his People. The Saints are not exempted from the Stroke of that Enemy: What Man is he that liveth and shall not see Death? Shall he deliver his Soul from the Hand of the Grave ? {Psalms 89:48} notwithstanding they are secure from Curse, to them it is not a Token of divine Vengeance and Wrath, all things are theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things, present, or things to come, all are theirs, for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's ; {1 Corinthians 3:21-23} it is to them an unspeakable Advantage and glorious Privilege.

2. SIN deprives Men of Happiness after Death is executed upon them, It Is that which secludes them from the Presence of God, the Company of blessed Angels and glorified Saints; this is the Bar which eternally keeps the Gates of Heaven shut against them, and for ever prevents their Admission into that Place of perfect and everlasting Bliss, which Christ himself plainly teaches us; many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy

Name have cast out Devils? and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work Iniquity . {Matthew 7:22-23}

3. THIS is the Weight that sinks them into Hell, that Place of inconceivable Horror and Torment, where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched . {Mark 9:44} It is Sin that causes God to sentence Men to those Regions of Blackness and Despair in which there will be wailing and gnashing of Teeth . {Matthew 13:42} And that it is which will for ever hinder their Release from thence.

4. SIN draws down upon them the Vengeance of God. All Threatnings of divine Displeasure immediately refer to the commission of Sin; 'tis that which incurs the Anger of God, and for that only is his Fury poured forth upon any of his Creatures; the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance; but it will be solely on such that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Distraction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power . {2 Thessalonians 1:7-9} The Apostle, after the mention of various Sins, acquaints us, that for those things sake the Wrath of God cometh on the Children of disobedience. {Colossians 3:6}

There is an awful Cup of Anger in God's Hand for Sinners, but it is of their own filling up; they treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath . {Romans 2:5} It is the Guilt that Men contract, which exposes them to the fierce Resentments of an angry God. And therefore, What a dreadful Sting is Sin? which is attended with such Consequences.

Secondly, The Strength of Sin is the Law, which, as I conceive, includes in it all those Duties that God hath in joined upon us in his Word; every Branch of Holiness is referable to the Law, and comes within the Compass of it. The Law is to be considered either as it is in the Hand of God, thus it is a Covenant of Works, and has a Curse annexed to the Breach of it; or as it is in the Hand of the Mediator, thus it is not a Covenant of Works, but a Rule of Obedience; in which Sense the Saints are under it, being, not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ . {1 Corinthians 9:21} It is in the former View that. we are to take it here, the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just, and good ; {Romans 7:12} and therefore it doth not incourage Evil, or communicate Vigour and Strength to the Lusts of Men; yet in some Sense it is the Strength of Sin.

1. IT is an Occasion to it: The Heart of Man is full of impure and unlawful Desires, these are strictly forbid and restrained by the Law; but Concupiscence in Men is like to a Torrent of Water, that rises and swells till it bears away all Opposition which is made to its Flow; or the Fire, which grows the more vehement when it is pent up by the cold ambient Air. Thus the Law is an accidental Cause or Occasion of Sin; but not properly, for it is wholly repugnant to all Evil; in this Sense some think, it may be call'd the Strength of Sin. Parcus observes, that "Sin is irritated by the Law, and becomes the more sinful; the Fault is not the Law's, which forbids, reproveth, and condemns Sin; but it is the Fault of our vicious Nature, which with the greater Violence is carried after that that is forbid, as an unruly Horse leapeth, and is the more head-strong in that he is the more held in by sharp Bits2."

2. THE condemnatory Power of Sin is lodged in the Law: Hence every Sin subjects us to its Curse; Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book off the Law to do them . {Galatians 3:10} This condemning Power of Sin is universal, it is extended to all Men without Exception, considered in themselves; Persons of every Rank are obnoxious to it, the Great

and Noble as well as the Mean and Low, the Rich no less than the Poor. This Power of Sin to condemn is not to be disputed, for it is supported by the Authority of God the supreme Judge, it is his awful Voice that pronounces the Curse, nor is it a Power that is unjustly exercised; it is a righteous thing with God to recompense Tribulation , {2 Thessalonians 1:6} to such as sin against him. The Condemnation of a Sinner is equitable, because he acts in direct Opposition to the revealed Will of God; no Exemption can possibly be obtained from it but by the free Grace of God through Christ, which the Psalmist strongly expresses; none can by any Means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ransom for him; for the Redemption of their Soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever . {Psalms 49:5-6} SOME useful Observations may be drawn from hence.

1. THAT it is impossible to attain Happiness by the Works of the Law: There is not any Law given which cloth not furnish Sin with a Curse; all Men are corrupt, end unable perfectly to obey divine Precepts, and of Consequence none can be justified by the Law. It is certain that that Law which condemns Sin, will never justify a Sinner, as so considered; but all Persons are sinful, and therefore by the Deeds of the Law (nomou, a Law without the Particle, i.e. any divine Law whatever) there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin . {Romans 6:20}

2. THE Law cannot subdue and conquer Sin, it justly condemns every Sin, but its Office is not to subdue it; the Grace of God alone can do this. So long as a Man is under the Law as a Covenant of Works, Sin retains its Tyranny and Dominion in the Heart; it is not the most dreadful Denunciation of Wrath against Evil, that will influence a Sinner to hate it; nothing less than a Discovery of free and sovereign Grace, which is gloriously displayed in the Pardon of Sin through Christ, can produce an Abhorrence of it: Hence, says the Apostle, Sin shall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace . {Romans 6:14}

3. THE Law is of Service to convince us of Sin, and inform us of its Consequences: To this End the Spirit of God makes Use of it, he impresses its Precepts upon the Mind, and presents its Threats to the View of a Sinner, to acquaint him with his Sinfulness and Misery upon which he dies. This Effect it produced in the Apostle, as he declares; I was alive without the Law once, but when the Commandment came Sin revived and I died . {Romans 7:9} Its Nature is to wound but not to heal; the Curses of it are as so many Arrows fixed in the Heart of a Sinner, which deeply pierce it, nor can any thing heal it but the Name of Christ, which is as Ointment poured forth (Song of Solomon 1:3.)

Thirdly, The Sting of Death is taken from it: O Death, where is thy Sting? this Mode of Expression strongly implies, that it is taken away. Here I shall observe,

1. The Person by whom it is removed, and that is Christ: It was predicted of him, that he should finish Transgression, and make an end of Sin . {Daniel 9:24} Agreeable to which Old Testament-Prediction, the Gospel assures us, that he has by himself purged away our Sins . {Hebrews 1:3} John the Baptist with Wonder beheld and spake of him as the Lamb of God, that took away the Sin of the World . {John 1:29} Sin was such a Burden that none but himself could stand under, it would have sunk any mere Creature into eternal Ruin; if all created Power had centred in one Subject, yet this Man, or Angel, furnished with all this Strength, would have been infinitely unequal to that Load of Guilt which Christ bore.

2. ALL Sin is taken away, no part of Death's Sting is left remaining: The whole Guilt which the Elect of God contract was imputed to Christ; all we, like Sheep, bare gone affray, we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all ; {Isaiah 3:6} and therefore they are entirely acquitted by divine Justice, no Charge can be justly exhibited against them, and if any is, it will prove invalid, as is most evident from that bold Challenge of the Apostle; Who shall say any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies, Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again . {Romans 8:33-34} Numerous Offences they commit against God, their Number vastly exceeds their Observation, and yet they are conscious of so large a Multitude, that at some times they very much hesitate concerning the Remission of them; but they are perfectly cleansed from all their Stains and Spots, by Christ's Blood, for the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them from all Sin; {1 John 1:7} none is to be found upon them as Persons justified, so considered, they are as clear from Guilt as if they had never contracted any, which is very manifest from these Words; In those Days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the Iniquity of Israel Shall be fought for, and there shall be none; and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve . {Jeremiah 50:20} All their Crimes are carried at the greater Distance from their Persons; hence are those Words of the Church; as far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our Transgressions from us . {Psalms 103:12}

3. SIN is taken out of God's Sight; it must be allowed in some Sense, that God sees no Sin in his People, since it is plainly declared in the divine Word; he bath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel. {Numbers 23:21} This is not inconsistent with his Omniscience, for we do not assert that the Sins of God's People are hid from the Eye of his Knowledge; he is certainly acquainted with every Transgression that any of his commit, and hates Evil in them no less than in. others; but it is the Eye of his Justice that is intended, which beholds them as all fair and without Spot (Song of Solomon 4:7).), as washed in Christ's Blood, and clothed with his most perfect Righteousness. I AM tempted to think, that some who have objected to the Removal of all Sin out of God's Sight, must have wilfully mistaken the Intention of such as affirm and vindicate it, with an ungenerous Design to calumniate and traduce them, because it is expressly asserted in the holy Scriptures, and doubtless is inseparable from a perfect Justification of the Saints, through Christ.

Fourthly, GOD gives his People Victory over Sin, Death, and the Grave. Here I shall consider, 1st, The Conquest they have over these Enemies;

2dly, Observe, That it is the Gift of God.

1st. THE Saints are Conquerors over all their Adversaries, as the Apostle most clearly teaches us in those exulting Words of his; Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword: (As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the Day long, we are accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter:) Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. {Romans 8:35-39}

1. BELIEVERS are Victors over Sin, the most formidable Adversary of their Souls; this bore the Sway in their Hearts, before Conversion it exercised Rule and Dominion over them; it subjected them to the Maledictions the Law, and exposed them to the Anger of God, as in themselves; that is it which rendered them deferring of eternal Death: But this cruel Enemy is conquered, condemned and destroyed.

(1.) THEY are Conquerors over Sin as a usurping Tyrant, its destructive Reign in their Hearts is taken away by omnipotent Grace, the Spirit of God dethrones it in Regeneration; it is true, the Being of it is continued in Believers, till Death; but it is deprived of its reigning Power, for Grace reigns in the Soul in Opposition to Sin; that as Sin hath reigned unto Death, even so might Grace reign through Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord; nor will it ever regain that Power which before it possessed, how violently soever it may rage and swell; so long as the Saints are under Grace they are secure from the Reign of Sin, which is the evident Import of these Words; Sin Shall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law but under Grace . {Romans 6:14}

(2.) THEY are above the Reach of its condemning Power: Hence, says the Apostle, There is therefore now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; from this they are redeemed by Christ's Blood, and until that loses its Virtue, or becomes of little Worth in God's Account, the Saints shall be secured from all Condemnation and Curse; which it never will do: Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us . {Galatians 3:13}

(3.) THEY are raised above all Danger of lying under the Consequences of Sin after Death; something of which you have heard Since Sin it self is expiated there is no ground to fear its fatal Effects for Justification from it secures from all the penal Evils that attend it; as appears by these Words, being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him .Divine {Romans 5:10} Anger is not poured down upon any but for Sin, those therefore to whom it is not imputed, have an eternal Security from God's Displeasure.

2. THE Saints have Victory over Death by Christ; they are not exempted from its Stroke, but must submit unto it. Persons of the greatest Usefulness in the Church, when they have done their Generation-Work, must lie down in the silent Dust; our Fathers, where are they, and the Prophets, do they live for ever (Zechariah.) But, blessed be God, Death hath lost its Terror, 'tis deprived of its Sting, it cannot draw after it any hurtful Consequences, which when the Believer views by Faith, he is not terrified at its nearest Approach; no melancholy Apprehensions arise in his Mind, nor would he have this Enemy slacken its Pace, and delay to give the fatal Blow. Thus doth he bespeak this King of Terrors: I am sensible 'tis in vain to think of withstanding thy Arrest, I am certain that my Soul must be rent asunder from my Body, and enter into an unknown World, and that my fleshly Tabernacle must be dissolved and crumbled into Dust; the Thought of which strikes me with no manner of Dread, for I am comfortably persuaded, that I shall only die to eternally live in the immediate Presence of my heavenly Father and gracious Redeemer, which is a Happiness that infinitely exceeds my most extended Ideas; and that my Body shall certainly be delivered from thy Power, be railed immortal, and never feel the Weight of thy cold Hand any more. I therefore welcome thee as my Friend, and wish not thy Departure: The chillness of my Blood, the lowness of my Pulse, and dimness of my Eyes, are not in the least disagreeable to me. He looks upon this Enemy Death with a pleasant Countenance, and joyfully receives it with open Arms. To see a

Believer thus depart, is, in my Opinion, the most glorious Prospect that can be beheld on this side Eternity.

3. The People of God are Conquerors over the Grave; the Earth Is to be a Receptacle for the Bodies of the Saints till the Time of the Resurrection. Hence Job says, I know that thou wilt bring me to Death, and to the House appointed for all living . {Job 30:23} But they shall be raised from thence by the almighty Power of God; their Dust is securely kept by the watchful Eye of God upon it, he will collect its scattered Particles, and frame their Bodies spiritual and immortal, make them capable of eternal Duration; the Lord will change this vile Body that it may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able even to subdue all Things to himself . {Php 3:21} Then will Death be swallowed up in Victory. Thus it appears that the Saints are Conquerors over all their spiritual Adversaries, and have sufficient Reason to triumph in the View of Death.

2dly, THIS Victory is not obtained by them, but it is the free Gift of God; which is very evident from these Things.

1. GOD'S Will to remit Sin is voluntary, free, and sovereign; it was not influenced by any external Motive, his Determination to forgive the Offences of his People arises wholly from his good Pleasure, nothing in them Induces him to it; neither is the divine Will moved to this gracious Act by Christ's Death. God did not first will that his Son should die, and then resolve to pardon Sin; but, or, the contrary, he first determined not to impute Sin to his Elect, and then fixed upon the Death of Christ as the only Way in which the Honour of his Law, and the Glory of his Justice might be secured in their Discharge; divine Favour is not the Effect, but the Cause of Christ's Suffering for us, as he himself hath taught us; God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life . {John 3:16}

2. It was infinite Love that gave Christ for us, our Forgiveness is the Purchase of a Redeemer's Blood; taken in that View it is an Act of Justice; whom God hath let forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time his Righteousness: That he might be just, i.e. appear to be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus . {Romans 3:25-26} It is also an Act of free, rich, and glorious Grace, the Price that is paid for our Redemption is so far from being incompatible with the Freeness of it, that it is a greater Illustration thereof than if we had been pardoned without any Satisfaction by a Surety, because free Love provided the Sponsor, and paid the Debt for us. It as a Commendation of divine Goodness towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us . {Romans 5:8} To us our Salvation is altogether as free as if both Law and Justice had been wholly neglected in the Affair. In Christ we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of God's Grace . {Ephesians 1:7}

3. GOD justifies us in a Way of free Grace; being justified by his Grace, we are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life , {Titus 3:7} the Righteousness of Christ is our Title to everlasting Life, 'tis that only can secure us from the second Death. This is the free Gift of God to us, and is an Instance of infinite Love; God justifies us freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Christ.

4. HEAVEN and eternal Glory is his gracious Donation; we are wholly unable to do anything which may procure us a Right to future Happiness, if we must be kept from Heaven till we recommend our Persons to the divine Regard by the Observance of the Law, we shall never come there. The Crown of Glory designed for the Saints is not won by them, but freely given to them. As Death is the Wages of Sin so eternal Life is carisma, the Gift, the free Gift of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23).), the Saints will live and reign with him for ever, as Conquerors over Sin, Death, and the Grave; but not by Virtue of what they have done: All their Felicity springs merely from undermerited Goodness. Hence are those Words of our Lord, Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom {Luke 12:32} Fifthly, We have this Conquest through Christ. He only fought our Battle, and slew our Enemies As this Victory is a free Gift of immense Favour, it is the Purchase of Blood, the way in which Christ obtained it is really surprizing.

1. He took Sin upon him; all the Sins of all the Elect of God were amassed together, and laid upon him, all we like Sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all . {Isaiah 53:6} In himself he was pure and innocent, free from any Stain or Pollution; he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth ; {1 Peter 2:22} that of all things was most hateful to him, and yet, in order to condemn, conquer, and destroy it, he must bear it. This was a Weight which would have sunk an Angel into the lower Hell, Christ alone could stand under, and carry it into an eternal Oblivion.

2. In him Sin was condemned, for what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the Flesh . {Romans 8:3} The whole Curse demerited by it, was inflicted on it in the Believers Surety; the fierce Threatnings of the Law are pardoned, not in vain though Sinners are pardoned, for they were all poured down upon Christ, as bearing the Guilt of his People. Oh! amazing indeed! that the most holy and blessed Person, he from whom all Blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal flow, should be made Sin and a Curse.

3. HE bore the Wrath of God against Sin; What a Cup of Anger must the Sins of the Elect fill up! This was put into Christ's Hand by his Father, he readily received it, and freely drank it. God acted towards Christ as one chargeable with Guilt, having his People's upon him; Sin could not be imputed to him without his undergoing the whole Penalty demerited by it: As God did not withhold his Son from suffering for the Guilty, he did not make him any Abatement of what Law or Justice might have demanded of the Persons in whose Place and Room he stood; he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all . {Romans 8:32} The Father withdrew from him when on the Cross, which caused him to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? {Psalms 22:1} The thick Cloud of our Sins interposed between God and Christ, and hid his smiling Countenance from him; God smote and wounded him with the Sword of Sin-avenging Justice; awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, smite the Shepherd , {Zechariah 8:7} was the awful Language of God. Christ suffered from the Hands of Men and Devils, but infinitely more from the Hand of his Father; it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to Grief ; {Isaiah 53:10} his inconceivable Wrath flowed into the Soul of Christ, and most deeply affected him.

4. HE submitted to Death, the painful and ignominious Death of the Cross: Hence the Apostle speaks of it in this emphatical manner, he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Sin subjected us to Death, according to the Law, and therefore it was necessary that Christ, in making Satisfaction for our Offences, should suffer this Part of the Penalty due thereto.

5. CHRIST was laid in the Grave, his Body was committed to the Ground; he made his Grace with the Wicked, and with the Rich, in his Death ; {Isaiah 53:9} but it was preserved from Corruption there; his Soul was not left in Hell, nor did this Holy One see Corruption . {Psalms 16:10} He who had a proper Right to Heaven, was for a time shut up in the dark Confines of the Earth, and encompassed with Dust. 'Tis true, it was not for a long Continuance, because it was impossible he should be retained under the Power of Death. WE have taken a short View of Christ in his Sufferings, or as submitting to the Enemies which he undertook to conquer. Let us now behold him in his Triumph over them all.

1st. HE rose from the dead as a compleat Victory over Sin, Death, and the Grave. By dying he was the Death of Sin, and overcame Satan that had the executive Power of it; had he not fully satisfied for the Sins of his People, he would have been held by the Bands of Death; but God being perfectly reconciled, and having no farther Demand to make, dispatched a Messenger of Justice from Heaven to honourably set free the imprisoned Body of Jesus: A shining Seraph descends at the Command of God, and rolls away the Stone from the Mouth of the Sepulchre in which our Lord was interred. {Matthew 28:2} An evident Proof was this, that he had finished our Redemption. As the Battle he sought was none of his own, but his People's, the Victory he has gained is theirs; they were considered in him in his triumphant Resurrection from the Dead, they were raised up together, {Ephesians 2:6} and are as secure from a Charge of Sin and everlasting Death as Christ himself is, who as he is raised from the Dead, dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion over him . {Romans 6:9} And because he lives, the Saints shall live also.

2ndly. HE is ascended in Triumph to Heaven, having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a Shew of them openly, and triumphed over them. {Colossians 2:15} Satan and all the infernal Spirits were led captive by him in his Ascension to Glory, thou hast led Captivity captive, and this as the Representative of his People. So that they may be assured of a perfect Deliverance from Sin, and that Satan cannot destroy them; as a roaring Lion he walketh about seeking whom he may devour ; {1 Peter 5:8} but we may depend upon it, that he will never be permitted to devour those on whose Account Christ engaged with, and conquered him.

3rdly, CHRIST sits at the Right Hand of God: When he had by himself purged away our Sins, he for ever sat down at the Right Hand of the Majesty on high . {Hebrews 1:3} The Father thus glorified the Son upon his completing the Work that he undertook. And this Honor is conferred upon him as the Head of his Saints, for they are raised up together, and made to fit together in heavenly Places, in Christ . {Ephesians 2:6} He is gone to Heaven as their Forerunner, and they shall as certainly follow him as they are now let down in him; 'tis his Will that they should, nor can the Father in Justice deny it; Father, I will that they also when thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me for thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World . {John 17:24} Thus it is evident, that the Believers Conquest over Sin, Death, and the Grave, was obtained by Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, We are under the greatest Obligation to praise God for this Victory which may include these things.

1. AN hearty Acknowledgment that we were utterly unable to conquer these our potent Enemies. It was absolutely out of our Power to defend our selves from the fatal Consequences of Sin, that would have involved us into the blackest Horror and Despair, and have drew down upon us the infinite Anger of God. Nor were we capable to withstand and conquer Death, that terrible Adversary, unless we are sensible of our Inability to succour our selves, the Victory we enjoy will not be properly valued by us, we shall not ascribe that Glory to God for it, which it demands at our Hand.

2. THAT we were as unworthy of God's giving us this Victory, as we are unable to obtain for our selves we deserve nothing but Wrath from God, because our Hearts are impure, full of Sin and Enmity to him; our Conduct is disagreeable to his Law, we have been guilty of many open and direct Breaches of it; in no Action are we perfectly conformable to it, in many things we offend all . {James 3:2} If therefore he should treat us according to our Demerit, we must eternally lie under his awful but righteous Vengeance.

3. TO admire and adore his free Love, which gives us this Victory. God is resolved upon the Honour of his Grace, he will not suffer its Glory to be lessened or eclipsed, his grand Design in saving Sinners, is to exalt it to the highest Pitch; it is to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace . {Ephesians 1:5} Nor will he ever raise a Soul to Heaven who will not readily allow it to be an Act of undeserved Goodness, all boasting is as effectually prevented in his People, as their Happiness is eternally secured.

4. TO readily allow that the Whole of this Victory is from God. The Design was formed by him in his everlasting Counsels, and the Method of gaining it is entirely his Contrivance; no Creature could ever have thought of the Way in which it is accomplished, his Power was exerted to effect it; all created Strength would have proved infinitely unequal to it. To imagine a Creature might contribute to it, Is a base Detraction from divine Honour.

5. TO live as those who have a true Sense of the Conquest obtained, which is to act to the Glory of God, who fared us when sinking into eternal Ruin, delivered us out of the Hands of our Enemies, and placed us far. Above their Reach, we are certainly under Obligation, whether we live to live to the Lord, or whether we die to die to the Lord . {Romans 14:8} This is the Judgment which we ought to form, that if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them . {2 Corinthians 5:14-15}

Lastly. SINCE Christ is the Person Who wrought this Victory for us, let him share in our Praises; Can the Saints refuse him this Honour? when they consider what a Load of Guilt he bore, and dolorous Sufferings he went through; that he was made Sin and a Curse, lay under his Father's Vengeance, and suffered Death for them; I say, Can they refuse him this Honor? Surely, no. I beg leave to observe here, that the Person whose Death occasioned this Discourse, discovered a just Sense of his own Unworthiness, and Christ's great Goodness. In his last Affliction, a few Days before his Departure, he said to me, and a Friend who went with me to visit him, That he had sometimes thought he could endure any Sufferings for Christ, or Death it self; but that he found his Heart to be deceitful above all things. That under sharp Pains he could not forbear to complain,

yet, says he, not of God, but to God. Under the exquisite Pain that attended him, as I am informed, many sweet Expressions dropt from him, such as these: It is appointed for Men once to die, but what is Death, or the Sufferings of this Life, to the Torments of Hell, blessed be God, for Christ, I am delivered from. At other Times he expressed himself thus: What are the Afflictions that I bear, to the Sufferings of my dear Redeemer? And declared the Steadiness of his Faith in God, as his God, to his Daughter, in these Words: God has been a God and Father to me all my Days, and I am satisfied he will be a God and Father to you and yours. IT has been observed by some Friends among whom he used to exercise his Gift in Prayer, that of late he has improved in Fervency, and Spirituality in that religious Duty.

I MAKE no doubt but that as he is removed from the Church Militant on Earth, he is taken to the Church Triumphant in Heaven, and is now perpetually engaged in the Celebration of the Redeemer's Praise, with the rest of the Saints above who thus express their Gratitude to him for Redemption from Sin. Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Haec ex Ose, 13, 14. petita sunt, & quidem ex Versione 70. Cure inversione Vocum, nicov & centron 70 sic, pidich sou, etc. sensueodem qui hic est, verbis paululum mutatis. Metaphora est, sive a stimulis, quibus aguntur boves; vel potius ab Aculeis Vesparum autsimilium Bestiarum, quibus si demas Aculeum, sunt illae quidem, sed nocere non possunt, Vid. Poli synops, in loc. ft2 Peccatum per legem irritatur, & fit magispeccans; non culpa Legis, quaepeccatum prohibet, arguit, damnat; fed. culpa Naturae vitiosae, quaemajore impetu fertur in vetitum: Sicut Equus effrenis magis exultat & est refractarius quo magis constringitur Lupatis. Pare. in loc.

S. The Chief of Sinners Saved Through Jesus Christ

The Chief of Sinners Saved Through

Jesus Christ by John Brine {London: Aaron Ward, 1747}

SERMON 10 THE CHIEF OF SINNERS, SAVED THRO'

JESUS CHRIST A SERMON, OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF MRS. ANNE WILDMAN, WHO DIED JULY 12, 1747.

PREACHED JULY 19.

Printed for and fold by AARON WARD, at the King's-Arms in Little- Britain, London 1747.

{Price SIX-PENCE.} {1 Timothy 1:15}, This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners; of whom I am Chief. THE Apostle, in some preceding verses expresses the grateful Sense he had of being called to the ministerial Work: And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry. Next to his being a Subject of divine Grace, he esteemed it his Honour to be employed in the Work of Preaching the Gospel. Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given; that I should preach among the Gentiles,. the unsearchable Riches of Christ. {Ephesians 3:8} The Consideration of his Behaviour before Conversion, caused him to admire greatly at both. Who was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained Mercy, for I did it ignorantly and in Unbelief and the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus. He is not content to say of that Grace by which he was called, that it was abundant; but he adds to it the Epithet exceeding. Grace exceedingly abounded towards him, in making him a Minister and a Saint, who had been so great an Offender. In treating on the Words, I propose to shew, I. That All Men are Sinners.

II. That the Apostle thought himself to be the Chief, or greatest of Sinners.

III. That Sinners are lost, miserable, and helpless and unworthy.

IV. That Christ Jesus came into the World, to save Sinners, the chief, or greatest of them.

V. That an Assurance of Salvation thro' Christ, is very consistent with an Apprehension of our being the chief of Sinners.

VI. That the Report of Christ's coming into the World to save the chief of Sinners is true, and worthy of the most grateful Reception.

I. All Men are Sinners. By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned. {Romans 5:12} Adam was our Head and Representative, and, therefore, his Act of Disobedience is reckoned to us. By one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners. {Romans 5:21} In Consequence of our sinning in him,

and falling with him, in his first Transgression; we derive a corrupt Nature from him. We are shapen in Iniquity and Conceived in sin. {Psalms 51:5} That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. We are naturally Flesh, the contrary of that which is produced by the Holy Spirit: And, therefore, we are the Subjects of putrid and carnal Lusts: which the Apostle distinguishes into Lusts of the Flesh and of the Mind. Among whom also we all had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of our Flesh fulfilling Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind. {Ephesians 2:3} By the Lusts of the Flesh, he designs those corrupt Inclinations, which are agreeable to our animal Nature, or inferior Part; and by the Lusts or Desires of the Mind, he intends, those unlawful Inclinations, Whereof our superior and intellectual Part is the subject. So that our whole Nature is corrupt and vicious, even that Part of us, which distinguishes us from the Brute-Creation, and which we glory in. The truth is, we are the Subjects, not only of brutal, but also of diabolical Lusts; and have a larger Capacity of sinning than the apostate Spirits have. Besides all those vicious Lusts which are agreeable to our inferior Part, and which immaterial Beings cannot be the Subjects of, nor act; we are the Subjects of those abominable Lusts, which are the Depravation of impure Spirits. Such as Pride, Envy, Malice, Hatred and Revenge; and, therefore, Men are not only capable of sinning in those Ways the Devil is, but in a greater Variety also. As our Nature is thus corrupt, our Conduct is criminal. We have a Disposition to what is evil, and Sin is the governing Principle in us. Duties we omit, or practise them in art improper Manner, neither from a right Principle, nor to a right End, nor under the Influence of spiritual Motives and Considerations; and, consequently, tho' they are materially good, they have the Nature of Sin in them. Our carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and it is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be. Not so much as a spiritual and holy Desire can arise in our unsanctified Hearts; hence it necessarily follows, that those who are in the Flesh cannot please God. Until a divine Principle is wrought in our Souls, we cannot perform any Service in an acceptable Manner to our Maker: For without Faith it is impossible to please God. {Hebrews 11:6} So long, therefore, as Men are in a State of Unregeneracy, their Actions are either materially or circumstantially sinful. Those which the Law forbids, are materially evil, and those which it commands, are circumstantially so, or they have the Nature of Sin in them, and, consequently, our Guilt must be very great: But, some are more criminal than others. I confess, that I have no good Opinion of distinguishing upon Sins, or of calling some great and some little Sins. for no Sin is little; thus to distinguish upon sins; has no good Influence on our Minds; under various Circumstances, before and upon the Commission of Evil. Yet some it must be allowed may justly be accounted greater Sinners than others; viz. who continue longer in a State of Rebellion, and indulge to the Gratification of a greater Variety of evil Lusts, and abide in a sinful Course against Knowledge, and sharp Remonstrances from the natural Conscience, improved in its Light by the Word of God. Such are great Offenders.

II. The Apostle thought himself to be the Chief, or greatest of Sinners, 'Of whom I am chief'

1. He was a virtuous Person before his Conversion to Christianity. A Pharisee of the Pharisees, a Student in the Law, and strictly attended to the Duties it required, so far as he understood it, and touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, he was blameless, living in all good Conscience before God. He did not allow himself in the Omission of known Duties, nor in the Commission of known Sins. And yet,

2. He was guilty of very great Evils. This he confesses in there Words, who was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious. Full of Rage and Fury against Christ, and all who

adhered to his Interest. He was exceedingly mad against the Saints, and punished them in every Synagogue, compelling them to blaspheme. Not satisfied with blaspheming himself, he forced them to do the same. As he injured them in their Persons and Liberty and Property, he also compelled them to act a Part contrary to their Persuasion and Conscience; at least, he attempted it, and they could not decline it, without increasing the violent Flame of his cruel Rage and Fury against them. But,

3. In all this he acted not against Knowledge, or a Conviction of Mind and Conscience. These his Sins, were Sins of Ignorance. For what he did in Opposition to the Interest of Christ, he did it ignorantly and in Unbelief. he verily thought with himself that he ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. {Acts 26:9} And, therefore, he was sincere in perfecting the Church. This plainly shews us, that Sincerity, if it is not exercised about Truth and Duty, is of no Advantage to the Souls of Men. A Zeal of God, without Knowledge, will never profit any; and it is very likely to grow into a furious Rage, against the Interest of divine Truth, as it did in our Apostle and the carnal Jews.

4. He now considered himself the Chief of Sinners. Grotius, that great Perverter of the Word of God, in his Annotations, understands the Phrase hyperbolically. He conceits, that the Apostle uses an Hyperbole, or that his Language was much stronger than the Nature of the Thing he expresses would bear.^{f1} But this was his Figment only. Our Apostle retains a Sense of what he was, before his Conversion, and the Consideration of it greatly humbled his Soul. Thus he practiced what he exhorted others to do, viz. to remember what they were in their Nature, State, and Conduct before divine Calling. So he exhorts the Ephesians to remember, that they were Gentiles, in the Flesh. {Ephesians 2:11} We Ought never to forget, What was our deplorable Condition by Nature,. and what was our Deportment, while Sin had the Dominion over us. The Apostle doth not say, I have been the chief; but I am the chief of Sinners: Every Saint in this World is a Sinner. It cannot be said of every Sinner, that he is a Saint; but it is true of every Saint in this militant State, that he is a Sinner; If not, he hath no Combat in him between Flesh and Spirit. In all Believers here, the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh. There is not a just Man upon Earth that doeth Good, and sinneth not. I am not insensible, that some have pretended, and that some do pretend to great Degrees in Holiness; and a Freedom from the Power of Sin; that if they are not wholly clear of Sin, they are very near it. But I am persuaded, that none will think themselves more holy, than Abraham, David, and Peter, and other good Men, of whom we read in, the Scripture, except such, who have no Holiness at all, and know not what it is, nor wherein it consists. A fuller Evidence of being under the Dominion of Sin, cannot be given, than an Imagination of a Freedom from the Being and Working of it in the Heart is. If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. Paul was very eminent in Holiness, and by the Grace of God, he was enabled to conduct himself in such a Manner, as that he could say, I know nothing by myself, i.e. I am not sensible, that in any Instance, I have acted unsuitably to my Character, as a Minister, or a Christian: And yet he thought himself the chief of Sinners. He found himself to be the Subject of Sin, as well as of Holiness, of Flesh, as well as of Spirit. He experienced to his Sorrow, that Sin was always present with him; that it attended him in the Closet, and in the Pulpit, and that, therefore, he could not pray without sinning, nor preach without sinning, nor discharge any Christian Duty without a sinful Defilement attending it. Persons most eminent in Holiness, have always had the deepest Sense of their Sinfulness. They look not upon themselves, nor on Sin, in

the same Light, as others do. And, therefore, they think and know that to be Sin in itself, and in themselves, which others do not esteem to be so, nor accuse themselves of sinning on Account of. 'Tis not because they are more sinful, or less holy, than Others; but because they are more acquainted with themselves, and with what Sin is, that they esteem themselves the chief of Sinners. The Apostle's Sense of his Imperfection and Sins, caused him to sigh and groan, and consider himself as wretched. Oh! wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death.? It is an excellent Observation of one, viz. that our Sense of Sin, is not according to what it is in itself, but according to what Impression God is pleased to make of it upon us. Those who are most favoured with heavenly Influences, as they above others aim at Spirituality in Obedience, they best discern their Carnality, and, therefore, think themselves less holy, and more vile than others. Besides, the peculiar Aggravations, which they discover in their Sins, greatly increase their Guilt, in itself, and in their View, and for that Reason, they think themselves the chief of Sinners.

III. Sinners are lost, miserable, helpless and unworthy.

1. They are condemned by the Law. Every Breach of the holy Law of God subjects us to a Curse. Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all Things, which are written in the Book of the law to do them {Galatians 3:10}. Which is not the Curse of a Creature, but of God himself. Every vain Imagination, every irregular and inordinate Desire, all disorderly Motions of our corrupt Affections, expose us to the Condemnation of the Law, which requires perfect Purity of Heart. And, therefore, since our Hearts are a Fountain of Impurity, from which continually spring defiled and defiling Streams, how many must those penal Threatnings be, that the Law breathes out against us. Multiplied Transgressions, bring us under multiplied Curses.

2. We are obnoxious to the Vengeance of God: Whose Wrath is as his Power, i.e. infinite. As we are not able to say what infinite Power is, so we cannot declare what infinite Wrath is: Both have no Measure or Limits. Our Obnoxiousness to the vindictive Displeasure of God, is a Misery not to be expressed. It far exceeds the Reach of Language and Thought too. This is our sad State by Nature. What Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them, that are under the Law; that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God {Romans 3:10}. We deserve to be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. Which includes the Loss of the Enjoyment of the highest Good, and suffering the extremest Torture and Pain, our Make can be supported under, and that for ever.

3. We are absolutely helpless, and unworthy of Succour, in these our sad Circumstances. We cannot atone for a single Offence, much less are we capable or satisfying a violated Law and offended Justice, for our numerous Transgressions. The Weight of one Sin would sink us deeply into the infernal Pit; much more, therefore, must our vast and accumulated Guilt, press us down into unfathomable Depths of Misery. We are without Strength, and unable to do any thing towards our Recovery from Ruin. The Redemption of our Soul is precious, and ceases for ever {Psalms 49:8}, with respect to what we are able to do towards it. We are irrecoverably lost as to ourselves. We are wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked {Revelation 3:17}. And .we are not more miserable, and unable to help ourselves, than we are undeserving of Succour from him, who alone can deliver us from this Ruin. For our Nature is corrupt, and vile, and our Conduct is a continued Provocation to the most high, and yet blessed be his Name, he has in infinite Goodness

and Wisdom, effectually provided for our Recovery, and Happiness, in the Fruition of himself. This leads me to discourse of the next Thing proposed to be considered, that IV. Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, the chief of them

1. He was before he came into this World. He existed in another and higher Nature, than that, in which he dwelt with Men, before his Entrance into the World. Hence he tells the Jews, that Abraham rejoiced to see his Day; he saw it, and was glad: they answer, thou art not yet fifty Years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Our Lord replies, Before Abraham was, I .AM {John 8:56-57}. They were much displeased at this Reply, for they well understood him to assert his Existence in another Nature than what they conversed with, or would own him in, viz. a Nature truly divine. The Name I AM, they were sensible, belonged to God alone, who revealed himself to Moses, under that Name, when he was about to deliver their Fathers out of Egyptian Bondage: I AM hath lent me you {Exodus 2:24}. He al-ways was in the Form of God, and, therefore, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God {Php 2:4}. In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made, that was made {John 1:1-3}. He, himself, must therefore, be uncreated, and, consequently, he existed in that increated Nature, before he was made of a Woman, in another Nature infinitely inferior to that.

2. His coming into the World, includes his Assumption of our Nature into Union with himself, his Subjection to the Law, his Obedience, his low Estate, and Sufferings, and Death for us.

(1.) He assumed our Nature into Union with himself. The Word that was in the Beginning with God, and was God, was made Flesh, and dwelt among us {John 1:14}: This was not by a Conversion of the divine Nature into the human, for that was absolutely impossible: That which is infinite, can never become finite and limited, or other than it is. Nor was it by a Confusion or blending of these infinitely distant Natures together. They continue distinct, and neither Nature possesses those Properties, which are peculiar to the other. The divine Nature does not become finite and limited, nor the human become infinite and unlimited, by this Union: Some who lie in wait to deceive, or at least endeavour to Conceal their Disbelief of the Deity of our gracious Redeemer, say, that he exercises the divine Perfections for the Good of the Church, and that this is the Meaning of those Words, I and my Father are one {John 10:30}. But can our Lord exercise Perfections which he don't posses? Or can his human Nature become the Subject of infinite Perfections? Some who seem to suppose this, charge us with holding absurd Notions; And cannot they discover the Absurdity of there Imaginations? that Christ, as Man, may exercise Perfections, he neither does, nor can possess; Or, that a finite Nature can become the Subject of infinite Perfections: I say, have they not Sense enough to know, that neither can possibly be? If they have not, they are very unfit Persons to determine what is, or what is not absurd. I question not, but they are capable enough of judging in so plain a Case; but they say, that Christ is so one with the Father, as to exercise his Perfections for, the Good of his People, that they may conceal from the View, of some, their Denial of his proper Deity. I can never be persuaded, that this Art will meet with Approbation in an awful Time, that is hastening, however Men may please themselves in this Disguise. This Assumption of our Nature by the Word, is its personal Union therewith. And this is one principal Branch of the Mystery of Godliness. Without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness, God was manifest the Flesh. And this is the Foundation of the Merit which attended the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ. For my Part, I shall never contend about the Dignity and Use of his Obedience to the Law, nor concerning, the End and Efficacy of his Sufferings and Death; if his proper Deity is not granted,

and the Union of his human Nature with his divine, is not allowed; because the Obedience and Death of a mere Man, can never be of saving use to me, or any other poor Sinner in the World.

(2.) Christ became subject to the Law; And the Law is to be considered as a Law, merely, or as it is a Covenant. In the latter Sense, it requires Obedience in Order to Life; and threatens Death in Case of Disobedience. Do this and live, sin and die, are the Terms of it. As our Saviour was not a natural Descendant of Adam, and not included in him, nor represented by him, the Covenant of Works made with Adam, had no Concern with Christ, nor was he included in it, by Virtue of its original Constitution. And as he had a Right to Life and Glory in his human Nature, in Consequence of his Union with the Son of God, he could not become subject to the Law, as a Covenant; but by Vertue of a peculiar Appointment of the Father's, with his own free Consent. Nor could his Subjection to that Covenant, be upon his own Account, it must wholly be on Account of others, to redeem them from it, who, otherwise, inevitably would have perished under its Curse. Each of these Things is clearly expressed in these Words: but when the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman; made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law {Galatians 4:8}. As the Manner of the Production of his human Nature, was extraordinary and peculiar, the Way of his coming under the Law was peculiar to himself, in order to a special End, wherein others are concerned, and not himself, viz. their Redemption from the Law, in the Form of a Covenant.

(3.) Our Redeemer obeyed the Law; or fulfilled the Terms of the Covenant. He was pure and holy in his Nature; holy, harmless and undefiled, and separate from Sinners. In his Conduct he was unblemished, for he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth {Isaiah 53:9}. And he is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every Believer: And the Father is well pleased for his Righteousness sake. We are justified in him, and in him we have a proper Foundation to Glory.

(4.) He submitted to a very low and mean Condition. Our Saviour was rich; but for our Sakes he became poor, that we, thro' his Poverty might be made rich. He was Lord of Glory, and Heir of all Things; but possessed Nothing, hence, he says: The Foxes have Holes, and the Fowls of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man bath not where to lay his Head. And this was one Part of that Curse our Sins demerited.

(5.) The blessed Jesus was the Object of the greatest Contempt, Scorn and Reproach. He was despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grievs. In a Way of Contempt he was called this Fellow, and Deceiver, and a. gluttonous Man, and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners. On which Account he is represented, in Prophecy, as saying, Reproach hath broken my Heart {Psalms 69:20}. Oh! The amazing Condescension of Christ, to endure such Contradiction of Sinners, against himself, with this kind View to save the chief of them.

(6.) His Sufferings and Death are included. His Visage was so marred, more than any Man, and his Form more than the Sons of Men. He suffered from Men, from Devils, from God himself, as a righteous Judge, taking vengeance on Sin in him; not his own, for he had none; but the Sins of others, which were imputed to him, or laid on him. He suffered in his Body the most acute Pains, and he suffered in his Soul: and those Sufferings of his Soul were far more grievous than his bodily Pains: My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death {Matthew 26:38}: And, now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say? {John 12:27} was the mournful Language of the suffering

Redeemer. The extremest Pain, the greater Shame, and the forest Vengeance, all met in the Death of our gracious Saviour. And he for that Joy, that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame.

3. Salvation is effected by these Things. This Was not an unsuccessful and fruitless Attempt to save Sinners; but real, full and everlasting Salvation is secured by Christ's coming into the World. If he had not obtained eternal Redemption for us, he had never entered into Glory. To suppose, that certain Salvation is not effected, by this astonishing Transaction, is to eclipse the Glory of divine Grace, to impeach divine Wisdom, and to arraign and censure divine Justice, in the most stupendous of all its Acts.

(1.) Sin is expiated. The Removal of the Guilt of Sin, is a considerable Part of Salvation, and that is done by the Death of Christ. When he had by himself purged our Sins {Hebrews 1:3}. Once in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself {Hebrews 9:26}. And therefore, Sin is not imputed to those Persons, for whom Christ died. God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself not imputing their Trespases unto them {2 Corinthians 5:19}.

(2.) Peace is made. One Branch of the Work of the Messiah, was to make Reconciliation for Iniquity. And this he did by his Sufferings and Death. Having made Peace by the Blood of his Cross {Colossians 1:20}. So that both Law and Justice are satisfied, and either hath any farther Demand to make. God as our righteous Judge is pacified towards us, for all that we have done: And there is no fury in him. It was not a procuring of Terms or Peace, that our Saviour died for us; but it was a making Peace. And Peace with God is a certain and immediate Effect of his Death, and, consequently, we are not obnoxious, to divine Wrath and Vengeance. Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him {Romans 5:9}. The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed {Isaiah 53:5}. There is now no Threatening of Punishment to the Saints, for there is now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus: And hereafter, Penalty will not be inflicted on them, because complete Atonement is made for all their Sins, by the penal Sufferings of their Surety in their Stead. His Death is a full Security to them, from all Condemnation. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died {Romans 8:34}.

(3.) An everlasting Righteousness is brought in Christ's Subjection to the Law, as in Form of a Covenant, could not be on his own Account His Dignity, State and right to Glory, arising from the Union of his two Natures, render'd that impossible; and, therefore, it was solely on the Account of others, whose Surety he was. His Obedience to the Covenant was commensurate to its Commands. And that Obedience he yielded to that Covenant, wholly for the sake of his People. The Father accepts it for them, imputes it to their Persons, and this Imputation of that, Obedience makes them righteous: By one Man's Obedience shall many be made righteous {Romans 5:19}. These Particulars the Messiah was to do for his People. According to divine Promise and Prophecy he was to finish Transgression, to make an End of Sin, to bring in an everlasting Righteousness, and to make Reconciliation Iniquity {Daniel 9:24}. He has finished the Work which the Father gave him to do, and, therefore, all these Things are done. And these Things being accomplished, real, full, and certain Salvation is obtained for all those Persons, on whose Account he was made under the Law; and, they all shall certainly receive the Adoption of Sons. This leads me to observe, farther,

(4.) Christ has a Right to demand Grace and Glory of the Father, in Behalf of all those Persons, for whom he obeyed and died. This Right arises from his punctual Performance of what was required of him to do, on Condition of which, the Father promised him, that he should see his Seed, prolong his Days, and that his Pleasure should prosper in his Hand. The fulfilling of the Conditions, whereon Benefits are promised, gives Right to those Benefits. And, therefore, since our Lord has exactly fulfilled the Conditions, on which these Promises were made to him, he has a Right to demand the Benefits those Promises express; and accordingly he does: Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me {2 Corinthians 5:19}. This not merely a Request, it is a Demand. I will. And this is comprehensive of Grace, by Which we are made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light: And of such Supplies of Grace, as are necessary to preserve us safe to the heavenly Kingdom and Glory. It includes the Whole of that Perfection and Blessedness whereof the Saints will eternally be possessed in their entire Persons. Their Bodies will be made like to Christ's most glorious Body, fit Receptacles of their perfected Spirits, and capable of beholding the Glory of their exalted Redeemer at the Father's Right Hand. It is the Will of the Father, that of all which he hath given to Christ he should loose nothing; but that he shou'd raise it up again at the last Day. This is an Obligation upon our Saviour, to take care, even of the Bodies of the Saints; Nor will he fail of executing the Will of the Father, in raising them from the State of the dead, with unspeakable Advantage. Besides, their Bodies are a Part of his Purchase, as Well as their Souls, and what he bought, at the Expence of his Blood, he certainly will take especial Care of: And, therefore, he will gather the scattered Particles of their precious Dust, and form their Bodies, which are now corruptible, and often dreadfully emaciated, by wasting Sickness, before their Dissolution, immortal, spiritual, and inconceivably glorious. Christ will collect them all together, and bestow upon them all that Glory designed for them: And the View he will then have of his Seed, will fill him with the highest Pleasure. Then will he present them to the Father, saying, Behold, I and the Children whom thou hast given me. And this Presentation of them, will be made, with exceeding Joy {Jude 1:24}. Then will be accomplished fully, the glorious Contrivances of eternal Love and infinite Wisdom concerning the Person of Christ and all his Members, wherein the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Church, and Angels will eternally rejoice. This Salvation is not only a Deliverance from the lowest Depths of Misery; but it is an Advancement to the greatest Heights of Glory, our Nature is capable of enjoying. It is a Glory suitable to the Relation of Sons, and is called the Adoption, i.e. the Dignity, Honour, and Blessedness of sons. It is a Glory suitable to the conjugal Relation between Christ and the Church, and that certainly must be very great. It is reasonable to think, that the Glory of the Saints, will exceed in Greatness that of the Angels. Because their Relation to God and Christ is nearer, than that those blessed Spirits enjoy. They are Sons to God, by Creation; but Believers are his Sons by Adoption, which constitutes them Heirs of God, and Fellow-Heirs with Christ, which Creation doth not. Besides, as the Church is the Bride of Christ, and Angels are not taken into so near a Relation to him, there is Reason to conclude, that a Glory superior to that which Angels enjoy, will be conferred upon her, corresponding with her nearer Relation to the glorious Mediator. The more close and intimate the Union is, which is enjoyed with Christ, the Glory arising from it, doubtless, is the more abundant. It is proper, that the Spouse should be favoured with greater Nearness to her Husband, than Servants: Angels are Servants to Christ; but the Church is the Lamb's Wife; and, therefore, shall she be nearer to him, and enjoy his kinder Embraces, while the Angels will keep at a respectful and humble Distance

both from him and her. And what adds much to the Wonder, and is a proper Ground of Encouragement, under a Sense of our Unworthiness, is this:

(4.) The chief of Sinners share in, or are the Subjects of this great Salvation. Christ came, not only to save such who were lost; but to save those who are guilty of the foulest Crimes, whose Offences are attended with the most aggravating Circumstances, and who have long continued in Rebellion against God. Publicans and Sinners, i.e. notorious Offenders, are the Objects of his Compassion, and obtain the Remission of their Sins thro' his Blood. He never did refuse, he never will refuse to receive kindly, the greatest Criminal, applying to him for Pardon, Peace, Grace, and eternal Salvation. Whosoever will may take the Water of Life freely {Revelation 22:17}. The greatest Unworthiness is no Objection with Christ, to a most welcome Reception of those, who come unto him, on a Conviction of the Necessity of an Interest in him. Nothing is required to a Participation of his Benefits, but a Sense of Our Need of them, and a Will to receive them, as he communicates them, viz. freely, without Money and without Price {Isaiah 55:1}. The Salvation of the Chief of Sinners is agreeable to the impulsive, the meritorious, and final Causes of it.

1. It well suits with the impulsive Cause, and is a glorious Display of it. That is no other than the free and rich Goodness, Grace and Mercy of God: By Grace are we saved. And the Pardon of Sin and Redemption thro' the Blood of Christ, is according to the Riches of the Grace of God {Ephesians 1:7}. Infinite Compassion alone, could so far extend itself, as to forgive the Worst of Sinners. The abounding Sinfulness and Sins of notorious Offenders, require the Exercise of superabounding Grace. What but the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God could raise and cherish in the Breast of a Sinner, conscious of heinous, repeated, and highly aggravated Crimes, the least Hope of Forgiveness? Nothing. This was David's Ground of Hope, and the Matter of his Plea. Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving Kindness: According unto the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Transgressions {Psalms 51:1}. Since we are required to forgive an offending Brother, not only until seven Times, but until seventy Times Seven, who are too backward thro' the Scantiness of our Compassion to a forgiving Temper; surely God, whose Mercy is immense, will extend Pardon to the greatest Sinners. Where Sin has abounded, Grace will much more abound; that as Sin has reigned unto Death, even so Grace may reign thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord {Romans 5:20-21}. God will stand as much distinguished from all his Creatures in Acts of Pardon, as in Acts of Power. If the Chief of Sinners should not be saved, it might be thought that divine Grace hath its Limits which it can't exceed; but no Room shall be left to Men to admit a Thought so derogatory to its Glory, which appears as much in its extensive Exercise in pardoning, as it does, in its Freedom and Sovereignty.

2. The Salvation of the Chief of Sinners is to the Glory of the meritorious Cause. That is the Blood of Christ. The infinite Dignity of his Person, gives infinite Worth to his Sufferings; and, therefore, they were as sufficient to discharge a Debt of ten thousand Talents, as of fifty Pence. 'Tis not the Nature of our Sins, nor their Number, nor their Aggravations, can hinder our Pardon and Salvation, since a Sacrifice of immense Value has been offered to God for their Atonement. He who is the mighty God, is mighty to save; able to save even to the uttermost; so that no Guilt is so great; but the Death of the Son of God is sufficient to atone for it. The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.

3. This suits with the final Cause of our Salvation. {1.} Respecting God. His supreme End in the Scheme of our Recovery is his own Glory. The Glory of all his infinite Perfections. His Wisdom, Holiness and Justice, and Truth and Faithfulness; but he peculiarly aimed at the Display of the Glory of his Grace and Mercy. The Salvation of any sinner, as to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace; but the Salvation of the Chief of Sinners is eminently to the Praise of that Glory. 2. The End relating to Christ is his Honour, in the Character of a Redeemer. His Glory is great in our Salvation {Psalms 21:5}. And to Christ: Unto him, that hath loved and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever, Amen {Revelation 1:5-6}. These Ends are all brought about; by the Salvation of the Chief of Sinners, and they are such as it became the Wisdom of God to design in this wonderful Transaction.

V. An Assurance of Salvation thro' Christ is very consistent with an Apprehension of our being the Chief of Sinners. The Apostle accounted himself the Chief, or greatest of Sinners, and yet, the Life lived, it was by the Faith of the Son of God. He doubted not of an Interest in a Saviour, under the deep Sense he had of his Sins and Sinfulness. It is not unusual with those, who enjoy the clearest Evidence of an Interest in divine Favour to consider themselves most deserving. of divine Vengeance. The strongest Faith may very well consist with a Sense of the greatest Unworthiness; because it is founded on infinite Grace, and infinite Merit, to which no Difficulties are insurmountable. This Assurance is not essential to Faith. True Faith may be where that is not.

1. Faith is a Dependence on Christ alone for Salvation, upon a Conviction of our Misery. A Conviction and Sense of our Misery necessarily precedes the Act of Faith on Christ, as a Saviour. Until we are sensible of our being miserable and helpless in ourselves, we shall not be persuaded, of the Necessity of a sole Trust in another for Help and Succour. They that be whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick This Conviction is becoming dead to the Law, and it, is effected by a Work of the Law upon the Heart, in the Hand of the blessed Spirit. I thro' the Law, am dead to the Law, The Mind of a Sinner is impressed with a. wounding Sense of his Guilt. His Sins are fit in order before him. And he clearly discerns, that he stands righteously condemned by the holy Law of God, for his numerous Violations of it. Upon which he acknowledges, that it would be just with God to punish him, in particular, with everlasting Destruction from his Presence, and from the Glory of his Power. In this Work upon him he is convinced the Plague of his Heart, as well as of the Transgressions of his Life. In that divine Light which is communicated to the Soul, he discovers the exceeding Sinfulness of Sin, and the exceeding Sinfulness of his Heart; and the Spirituality, Purity, and Extent of the Law; whereupon, he concludes, that it is absolutely impossible, that one so vile as he is, should ever be able to recommend himself to, or interest himself in, the Approbation of God his righteous Judge, Thus he sees his lost and miserable, and helpless Condition in himself, and dies to all Hope of Life, by his own Righteousness and Works. When the holy Spirit hath in this Manner, convinced a Man of his deplorable State by Nature; and his Heart is overwhelmed, he leads him to the Rock that is higher than he. He makes a gracious Discovery of Christ to the Soul, in his Blood, Righteousness, and in the Fulness of his Grace. And, then the Language of a poor trembling Sinner is: My Sins are many, great, and dreadfully aggravated; but the Blood of Christ hath a Sufficiency of Merit in it to atone for them all. In myself I have no Righteousness, nor can have, whereby I may be Justified in the Sight of God; but the Righteousness of Christ, is every way sufficient to justify me before God, and to give me a Right

to Life, who am worthy of Death. My Heart is impure, and without Holiness I shall never see the Lord. That Treasure of Grace which is in Christ, it is sufficient to make me holy, and meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Besides, in the Light of this Grace, a Person discerns, in some Measure, how God is glorified; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all the divine Perfections, Goodness, Grace, Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Truth and Faithfulness, in this Way of Salvation; and herein he rejoices, even tho' himself should not be a Sharer in it. The holy Resolution of the Soul upon this View of Things, is, to renounce, all other Ways of Relief, which may be proposed to its Consideration, and to cleave to Christ alone, as the only proper Object of his Hope; this it is to flee to him for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before us. And this is that Faith, which is of the Operation of God and is peculiar to the Objects of a divine Choice to eternal Salvation, for which Reason, it is called the Faith of God's Elect.

And, therefore, we observe,

2. Where there is this Dependence, there is a proper Foundation for Assurance. Persons thus wrought upon, and influenced to such holy Actings of Soul towards Christ, as a Saviour, have that in them, which is in itself, a clear and sufficient Evidence of an Interest in him, and in his Salvation, tho' they may not discern that Evidence; nor be so ready to allow it an Evidence, as they ought to be, thro' Darkness, Jealousy of themselves, and Fears of being mistaken, in an Affair of so great Importance. This solemn and humble Application to Christ, for Pardon, Peace, Righteousness, Grace and Holiness, under a Sense of our Misery and Helplessness, is the Effect of a super-natural Work upon us: Coming to Christ follows upon divine Drawing. For no Man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him. .And this heavenly Attraction is a Fruit of everlasting Love: Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, and, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. If we are drawn with the Cords of Love; with the Bands of a Man, 'tis because we are Objects of Love. If we come to Christ, approve of him and cleave to him, it is a certain Consequence of our having seen, and heard, and learned of the Father. And, therefore, it must necessarily be an Evidence, that we are passed from Death to Life, and that we shall not come into Condemnation. Besides, Christ has declared expressly, that he will in no wise, i.e. upon no Consideration, on any Accounts, cast out those who come to him. If therefore, he should not receive and save us, his Veracity would be impeach'd. With Reverence, I desire to speak it, If any one Soul, at the last Day, shall be able to stand up and say to him, upon a Conviction of my Sins; Sinfulness, and Inability to help myself, I applied to thee for Salvation, being encouraged so to do, by thy Declaration, that thou wouldest not cast out him that comes to thee; but I am now lost for ever, because thou hast refused to receive and save me, Christ would be proved guilty of a Breach of Truth in the View of Angels and Men. But this can never be, we are confident. And, consequently; this gracious Work upon the Soul, is in itself, a full and certain Evidence of an Interest in his Love, Care, Tenderness and Compassion, and is a proper Foundation of Assurance of Salvation by and thro' him.

3. Faith sometimes rises up to this Assurance of Salvation. Some lately risen up among us, who have had the Vanity to take to themselves the Name of Reformers, assert that it is of the Essence of Faith, and that there is nothing of Faith, or Holiness, where there is not a Confidence of being saved. And many of them make large Pretensions to such an Assurance. But ask them what Convictions of Sin, what a Sense of their Misery and Helplessness, what Views of Christ and spiritual Things have preceded this their Confidence? And they can give you but a very slender Account of either of these Things. Ask them how they came by this Assurance? By what Means it

was begotten in them, and what is the Foundation of it? They are not able to return you any solid Answer. Assured and confident of being saved they are, but they cannot tell how they came to be so assured. Ask them what Effects this their Assurance has produced in them? They are at a stand, and can make you no Reply; which ought to be satisfactory to a Christian. This among many other Things, make it evident, that we are referred to live in Times, wherein Errors of all Kinds abound. I make no Question, but that some Saints are favoured with this full Assurance of Faith, and are able to say with the Apostle, concerning their dear Redeemer, who loved me and gave himself for me, and as the Church my beloved is mine and I am his. The Happiness they desire, they see to be theirs. And, that Christ has set them as a Seal upon his Heart, and as a Signet upon his Arm. That he neither will, nor can forget them, nor cease to employ his Power in their Protection and Defence. They know and believe the Love that God hath to them. They dwell in his Love, and in him, and are persuaded, that nothing shall separate them, from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. Thus the Holy Spirit bears witness with their Spirits, that they are Sons of God. And, therefore, they enjoy much of Heaven in their Way thither. But this is not the Case of all the Saints; and Faith of the Operation of God, often is, where this Assurance is not. Tho', as I have said, there is a proper Foundation for it, in the Souls of all those whose Dependence is on Christ for Salvation, upon a Sense of their Misery, a View of his Glory and Suitableness, as a Saviour, to the Wants of their Souls in particular. Farther, frequent Actings of the Faith of Recumbency on Christ, usually raise in the Mind, some Degree of this Assurance, or a comfortable Hope of obtaining Salvation thro' him.

VI. The Report is true, pisev o Logov, a true Saying, and worthy of the most grateful Reception, that Christ came into the World, to save the Chief, or greater of Sinners.

1. This Report is true, and may safely be depended on. Abundant Proof is given of its Verity, and in a Variety of Ways.

(1.) By the Testimony of Angels. A Multitude of those blessed Spirits, descended from Heaven, at the Birth of our Saviour, and celebrated, with an holy Adoration, the gracious Design of his Incarnation, and declare that it was to render sinful Men happy, as an Effect of the good Pleasure of God towards them. And suddenly there was with the Angel, a Multitude of the heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on the Earth Peace, and Good-Will towards Men {Luke 2:13-14}.

(2.) The Truth of this most astonishing Report is fully proved by Divine Promises. Remission of Sin is promised in the most full and explicate Manner, by God himself, who cannot lye. And not only Pardon but multiplied Pardon. God so expresses himself upon this Subject, as is sufficient to convince us, if we are to be convinced, that his Design in the Exercise of forgiving Mercy, far transcends those limited Thoughts, we are apt to form and cherish concerning it. Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: Let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways, saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts {Isaiah 55:7-9}. When we have stretched our Conceptions as far as we can, concerning the pardoning Grace of God, we are as much below its real Extent, as the Distance of the Heavens is from the Earth: So he plainly tells us, who will not, nor can deceive us. And, therefore, there is not

the least Room left us, to admit a Scruple concerning the Pardon and Salvation of the chief of Sinners. His Promise is a sufficient Security, for he cannot violate it; but he has confirmed it, with his Oath, that by two immutable Things, wherein it is impossible for him to lye, we might have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay bold on the Hope set before us. This is amazing Condescension and Goodness!

(3.) Divine Predictions may be offered in Confirmation of this Truth. The Prophet Isaiah not only describes in a very particular Manner the Sufferings of the Messiah, when he should appear; but he gives the Character of the Persons, for whom he was to suffer, and for whom he would intercede with God. And made Intercession for the Transgressors {Isaiah 53:12}. $\mu\upsilon\{\rho\}$, i.e. for the rebellious. For such who were his Murderers, and imbrued their Hands in his Blood. According unto this Prediction of the Prophet, our Saviour, when on the Cross, put up this Request to God: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do {Luke 23:24}.

(4.) Many stupendous Miracles were wrought to confirm this Truth. That great Salvation whereof the Gospel is a Report, so far exceeds our Imagination, that we are very slow in giving Credit to it. To the End, that the Truth of this Report might be established, beyond all modest Contradiction, the holy Spirit hath given his Witness to it, by a Multitude of miraculous Operations. God also bearing them witness both with Signs and Wonders, and with diverse Miracles, and Gifts of the holy Ghost, according" to his own Will {Hebrews 2:4}.

(5.) The Author of this Salvation, has not been wanting to give in his Testimony to this most precious Truth. And we know that his Witness is true; for he is the Truth, and, therefore, his Testimony cannot be false: He is the faithful Witness {Revelation 1:5}. Christ has plainly and fully informed us, that the largest Debts are forgiven: Or that Pardon is extended to the greatest Sinners; And, that in Consequence of much being forgiven; much Love is ingenerated in the Hearts of pardoned ones. Five Hundred Pence are as freely forgiven as fifty, our Lord assures us {Luke 8:41}. And, consequently, Pardon is not limited to smaller Offenders; but it is extended to the greatest Transgressors. He certainly knew, whole Sins are remitted, thro' whole Blood Remission is obtained. Shall we then admit the least Doubt of the Salvation of the Chief of Sinners? Surely not; since we cannot do it, without invalidating the Testimony of him, thro' whom Salvation is enjoyed.

(6.) The State and Work of Christ when he was here, give the fuller Evidence, that his coming was to accomplish such a Design. He was constituted Heir of all Things, and was Lord of Glory, when he possessed nothing; and became the Object of Scorn, Reproach and Shame among Men. His Subjection and Obedience to the Covenant of Works, which we have violated, were not on his own Account; to imagine, that he came under that Covenant, upon his own Account, divests him of that Right to Life, Happiness, and Glory, which is inseparable from his Person, as God and Man; and subverts all our Hope of Salvation, by any Thing he did or suffered. He was made under the Law, not only to obey it, but also to suffer its Curse; or to endure the Penalty it threatens upon a Breach of its Precepts. This could not have been with a View to himself, if he had been no more than a Man, since he was innocent. For it is contrary to Justice to make Innocency subject to a Curse, and, therefore, his being made a Curse, is in itself a clear Demonstration, that so he was made for Sinners, in order to their Redemption from it.

(7.) The Exaltation of Christ, and the Glory which followed upon it, is a pregnant Proof of this Truth. When he had completed the Work of our Redemption on Earth, he ascended to Heaven, and took Possession of that Glory which was his due. And he is to be considered as our Fore-runner in his Entrance into the World above, and as the public Head and Representative of all those for whom he had offered himself as a Sacrifice to God, Hence, we are laid to fit together in heavenly Places in Christ. He is entered not into the holy Places made with Hands, which were the Figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us {Hebrews 9:24}. This Admission of Christ to Heaven, and his taking the Possession of Glory in the Name, and as the Forerunner of Sinners, is an undeniable Proof of his having obtained Salvation for them. For which Reason the Apostle Peter makes it a Ground of Christian Trust and Confidence. Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead and gave him Glory that your Faith and Hope might be in God {1 Peter 1:22}. Consequent upon this Exaltation of our Saviour, an eminent Glory attended his Church below. The Holy Spirit was poured forth in an extraordinary Manner, both in his Graces and Gifts, which was a clear Proof, that he had done every thing requisite to the Salvation of Sinners. And, that the Father highly approved of his executing his Will, in the Redemption of the Objects of his Favour from Misery. What an admirable Concurrence of the most cogent Proofs are given of this glorious Truth, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save the chief of Sinners? If therefore we disbelieve it, we must be exceedingly culpable, for we shall make God himself a Lyar, who has in such a Variety of Ways given his Testimony in Confirmation of this most precious Truth. And this is an Instance of his infinite Condescension, Goodness, Compassion and tender Care of his People! that their Souls may have Support, Relief, and Consolation, under a Sense of what above all Things occasions their Minds the greatest Distress, viz. their Guilt and Sinfulness.

2. This Report is worthy of the most grateful Reception. It consists of Principles, which are calculated to promote the Glory of God, in a most eminent Manner. The Glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the Glory of all the divine Perfections, far above any other of the Designs of God. Besides, it is the Foundation of all the spiritual Peace, Rest, Consolation and Joy, which the Saints are favoured with, in this World, and it is the Ground of their Hopes of the Enjoyment of future Blessedness; and, therefore, it is highly deserving of the most grateful Reception. But,

(1.) Some reject it, yea the most, the Generality. Christ as crucified, is a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of Offence, to many who make Pretensions to Christianity. The Mysteries relating to his Person, Work, and the admirable Effects of his Mediation, are accounted unintelligible and absurd Notions. And the Saints Experience of Consolation, Peace and Joy, in believing in him, as the Gospel represents him, as pronounced a fond Imagination and Enthusiasm, by Multitudes, who yet would be esteemed Christians. No unregenerate Man receives the Things of the Spirit of God, nor is he able to understand them. Without supernatural Light Men may know the Truth of the sublime Doctrines of the Christian Revelation; but that greatly differs from an Understanding of the Things themselves. The Truth of the Things of the Spirit hath such Evidence in the Scripture, as is suited and sufficient to procure an Assent to it from all Minds, which are free from Prejudice, and, therefore, unregenerate Persons may, and it is reasonable to require and expect them to yield an Assent to the Truth of those Things. But the Things themselves they can never understand. No, not the most intelligent and knowing Part of Mankind. The Things themselves often are hid from the wise and prudent, while they are revealed unto Babes, i.e. Persons of mean Capacities, and of

little Improvement. The most learned among Mankind are not more capable of understanding heavenly Things, than the weakest, silliest Creatures in the World are. Nor is any Branch of what we call Learning, possessed in how great Eminency soever, suited to increase our Knowledge of this Kind. A Consideration sufficient this is, one would think, to humble the Pride of Men's Hearts, which springs up in them on Account of their learned Accomplishments. He must be an absolute Stranger to the theological Writings of learned Men, or not exercise his Reason in reading them, who does not discern, that Learning is not a sufficient Preservative, even from Dotage, Childishness and Absurdity in the Things of God. They deliver themselves so foolishly, on many of those Subjects, that if they were not had in Repute for Learning, what they say would be despised, and themselves would fall under Contempt, and not unjustly, for, not to say, reasoning, but cavilling, as they do. If we have no supernatural Principle in us, we shall not, we will not, we cannot approve, embrace, adhere to, nor take the least Delight in Spiritual Things themselves. The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The learned, therefore, have no Advantage above the unlearned, as to the understanding of the Mysteries of the Kingdom. And, consequently, the rude and unpolished, may know those Mysteries, and such, who on Account of their Superior Talents are greatly admired, may be as blind to those Things, as Bats, or Moles. An high Way shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it; it shall be for those, way-faring Men, tho' Fools, shall not err therein.

(2.) A few receive this Report most joyfully, with the highest Gratitude, approve of it, admire and adore it. By a Communication of divine Light to our Understanding, we become capable of seeing our true State by Nature; the Excellency and Glory of this Way of Salvation by Christ. And that gracious Work upon us, which furnishes our Minds with spiritual Knowledge, sanctifies our Wills to chuse, and causes our Affections to cleave to, and delight in those Things, which our Minds discern the Excellency and Glory of. For Grace conveyed in Regeneration, is a sanctifying Principle, to our whole Souls, and, therefore, every Faculty acts in a spiritual Manner, about, towards, and upon spiritual Things, in Consequence of this Work in us. That which is Light in the understanding, is Holiness in the Will, and it is Spirituality in the Affections. If this had been duly attended to, some unprofitable Disputes concerning Faith, would never have taken place among learned Men. Those Truths which many; yea the Generality of such who are called Christians, esteem Foolishness, Persons spiritually enlightened, account most sacred. They discover the infinite Riches of divine Grace, the unfathomable Depths of divine Wisdom, and the Holiness, Justice, and Truth, and Faithfulness of God, which have a most illustrious Display therein, and, therefore, their holy Souls approve of, admire and adore those blessed Truths, which they plainly see are incomprehensible. Some there are, I dare say, who take the highest Satisfaction in there Things, because of that peculiar Glory, Which arises to God from them; and will still continue so to do, let a Generation of formal and nominal Christians, call them by what Names they shall please, on Account of this their Faith and Hope, in God and Christ. Of this Number was the Person whose Death occasioned this Discourse. She was many Years a Member of this Community. Her Character was ornamental to her Profession, without any Fear of being charged with a Breach of Truth, I may say, that her Conversation was as it becometh the Gospel of Christ. It is, If I remember right, now near nine Years since she had a very fore Fit of Sickness, which in the Apprehension of others, and in her own, was likely to have issued in her Dissolution. It was the Pleasure of God, at that Time, to favour her With extraordinary Discoveries of his Love, and with

an Assurance of everlasting Salvation thro' Christ, under a most humble Sense of her own great Unworthiness, The Words on which I have been discoursing, she then pronounced with a very striking Accent, and declared her Desire, that they might be preached from on the Occasion of her Death, if she was removed; and this has been her Desire ever since. She never lost the Sweetness and Savour of those gracious Visits she then enjoyed. She had not a great Deal of Conversation, nor did she desire much; because, but little which is spiritual to be met with. She would often say, I am the chief of Sinners, and have the greatest Reason to admire at the Grace of God, in saving me. And my Praises in Heaven will have the highest Note of any there. Her Soul was frequently filled with an adoring Sense of distinguishing Favour, and she expressed it in the Language of the inspired Writer. He takes One of a Family, Two of a Tribe, and brings them to Zion. Her last Illness Was long and heavy, in which she was very comfortable. In a Visit I made her some time before her Death, I found her filled with Joy, at the Thoughts of its being near. I am going, said she, I hope, in a few Hours. It might be {#that is the Sentence} depart from me, thou Worker of Iniquity; but it will be, Come thou blessed of my Father. Strike, Death, strike; not that I want to be out of my Pain, but I want to be praising my Lord. Glory to the Father, Glory to the Son, Glory to the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one God. She said again thus, Glory to the Father, Glory to the Son, Glory to the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one God. And now I must deliver what may not improperly be called her dying Request; it was this: Do you tell the Saints, that the Sweet Doctrine of the free Grace of God, which you have preached has been the Comfort of my Soul, and is now on a Death-bed: and, while you are preaching, I shall be singing. It can't be otherwise, for his Covenant he will not break. He cannot deny himself. I have nothing to carry, not a Thought, but Sin, and that I shall drop. Thus she exulted, when she thought Death to be very near. I saw her several Times after this, and tho' she was not so full of Triumph, she enjoyed solid Peace and Comfort; and declared, that she did not desire in the least a Return. Taking Notice of her poor emaciated Body, she sometimes said, it is the Purchase of Christ, and he will change this vile Body, and fashion it like unto his most glorious Body. Thus she lived by Faith, and departed in the steady and vigorous Exercise of that Grace. Oh! the Happiness of those pious Souls, whole Trust is in Christ, thro' him they are more than Conquerors over all their Spiritual Enemies. And in the Exercise of Faith upon him, they can triumph in the Views, and at the nearest Approach of Death. May we be enabled through divine Grace, to follow those, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.

FOOTNOTES ft1 So I call him and not unjustly, for there is scarcely any Thing, relating to the Grace of God, the Person of Christ, his Work, and the Benefits arising from thence; which in his Annotations, he does not pervert and corrupt. For which Reason a Socinian Writer says, that his Annotations contain a complete System of Socinianism. And Schichtingius, another of that Tribe, affirms, that the Church had waited for such a Man, for more than fifteen Ages since the Apostles, as Lubieniecus observes, de quo dicere solebat, Orbem Christianum per 15 amplius post Apostolos fecula, talem expectasse virum:

S. The Christian Religion

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION NOT DESTITUTE OF ARGUMENTS SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT IT IN ANSWER TO A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'CHRISTIANITY NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT, etc.' A Testibus dicemus secundum Auctoritatom, & Vitam Testium & Constantiam Testimoniorum - Cum multa concurrant Argumenta, & Signa, quae inter fe consentiant, Rem peripicuam, non suspiciosam videri oportere. CICERO Heren. Lib. 2.

Printed, and sold by A. WARD, at the King's Arms in Little Britain.

LONDON {Price Six-Pence.} In this Age, great Liberties are taken with the Holy Scripture, in order to lessen its Authority, and bring its peculiar Doctrines into Disesteem. The Penmen of it have been represented in the most invidious Light: Their Characters have been used in a most unjust Manner, and a false Turn has been given to almost every Thing they acted. All Rules of Decency, Good-Manners, and Justice, due to the Memory of the Deceased, have been violated, by Gentlemen, whose highest Pretensions are, to Politeness, good Sense and Honour: And if we were to be determin'd, in our Opinion concerning them, by what they say of themselves, no doubt could possibly arise in our Minds: respecting the Justness of their Claim, to the beautiful Characters they profess to be enamour'd with, viz. rational, polite, and ingenious but if we may be allow'd Freedom of Thought and Enquiry on our Part, in making use of that Liberty, we can't fail of discovering, that they are not the Men, they are extravagantly fond of being accounted. The Author of Christianity not founded on Argument does not indeed proceed altogether in this Method; but it is his apparent Design, to prove that we are Christians, without being able to assign any convincing Reason why we are so, and that Christianity is really destitute of Arguments sufficient to support it. How he succeeds in this laudable

Attempt, I purpose, under the Assistance of him, whose the Scripture is, to impartially weigh and consider. And I promise him all the Advantage that a Searcher after Truth can desire: I will not crave more in Favour of Revelation than, I presume, he will readily allow in everything else, and leave him to determine, why that which is thought a proper and rational Evidence of Truth and Fact, in any Thing but Christianity, must not be so esteemed, where that is concerned.

I freely grant him, that Reason is to judge of the Truth of Revelation, and that when rational Proofs are not to be produced in Favour, of any pretended heavenly Discovery, its no better than Enthusiasm, to be persuaded of its divine Original Farther, I allow that Reason is to judge of the Terms and Expressions, used in that Revelation, which it hath been the Pleasure of God to afford to Men. And surely it is just and proper, to interpret the Language of Scripture, agreeable to those Ideas, which are commonly intended to be conveyed by it, when we use the Words and Expressions of which it consists.

First. This Writer strenuously contends that Christian Faith cannot be rational f1. Several Things he advances against it.

I. We are required to think all alike. This he supposes is impossible; but I am of Opinion that it is far from being so, that, on the contrary, it is very practicable. If we consider what is necessary to Unity of Sentiments among Christians, how different soever their Capacities are, we shall easily discover, that it might reasonably be hoped for. The Scripture contains the Sum of what they are required to believe, and if the Word of God, which is the only Rule of their Faith, in its Terms and Expressions was duly attended to, and their natural and obvious Interpretation, was freely allowed of by all, there would not be any material Difference among Christians. For Instance, the holy Scripture affirms that God is one, and that he alone is to be worshipped. The Lord thy God is one Lord. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Farther, it as expressly requires us to worship three, Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Commission given to the Apostles, to teach and baptize {Matthew 28:19}. Hence it is easy to see, that Unity of Sentiments, in this Doctrine, upon the Evidence of Revelation, relating to it, is no difficult Matter: It is as easy, as to understand, that in Numbers, one is not three, and that three consist of three times one. It is not difficult to discover, that there is but one God, and that these three, Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one only living and true God. The Scripture doubtless, has a proper and determinate Sense, and that Sense certainly is, what the Words and Expressions of it properly import; and therefore, when Christians are required to be of one Mind² no more is design'd, than, that it is a Duty common to them all, to interpret sacred Writ, without any Force or Violence, and to readily allow, those Ideas to be true, which are therein express'd. If this was done, it seems evident to me, even to a Demonstration, that very little Difference in Opinion would be found among them. And such is the Language of the Bible, that a Reader of ordinary Capacity, and unfurnished of Learning and Science, may understand it, and form a true Judgment of its Doctrines.

II. Men are threatened into Consequences, says he. If by Threatening, he means human Threats of Punishment, in case they form not their Judgments, agreeable to the Opinion of others, as that is foreign to the true Nature of Christianity; I have no Concern with it, shall not defend, but condemn it, as much as himself. But if he intends the divine Expression of Displeasure, in Case Men disbelieve that Doctrine to be true, which they can't but know, is agreeable to the Language of Scripture, and is the proper Import of the Words and Expressions, It uses, it is highly just. For surely if God condescends to reveal his Will to Men, and addresses them in such Language, as is in common Use among them, and which they are capable of understanding, it is nothing unreasonable to threaten them with Punishment, and actually inflict it, if they refuse to believe, that when he speaks of one, he means as he speaks, and that when he speaks of three, he intends as he expresses himself.

III. He observes, that we are baptized into Christianity when we are Infants, and know nothing of the matter. As I think this Practice not agreeable to Christianity, and can't but esteem it an Innovation, I shall not say any thing to it. Let them defend it whose Practice it is, if they are able.

IV. Praying for Improvement in Christian Knowledge, he thinks inconsistent with a Conviction of the Truth of Christianity, upon rational Evidence. Is Prayer then needless, where we are to exercise our reasoning Powers? It is by our Faculty of Reasoning, that we discover the Difference between Right and Wrong, Truth and Falsehood. Now is it an improper Thing, to pray to God, to bless the means, which in Providence he hath afforded us, of the Conviction of our Duty, for our Increase in the Knowledge of it: And to pray, that our corrupt Habits and evil Inclinations, may not influence us to act a Part, for which our Consciences would certainly condemn us? Is it then

preposterous to offer him our Praises, for the good Influence our Knowledge, under his Providence, has over our Lives, to make us virtuous, wife and just in our Conduct? Of this Opinion indeed was Cicero, and some other Philosophers, and also Poets³ But this immediately strikes at the Root of all Religion, not only revealed, but also natural, and perhaps, by so much the more, it may gain the Approbation of this Infidel.

V. Says he, The rational Christian, whoever be he, must have originally set out a Sceptic, and hesitated for a Time, whether that Gospel were true or false. But why is this necessary, is there nothing, that we rationally believe, but what we doubt of the Truth of for a Time? If so then let me become a Sceptic in some other Matters, besides Christianity. For Instance, let me doubt whether Language had the same, and not a contrary Meaning, in the Times of Plato, Cicero and Epictetus, etc. as it hath now, and call upon this Man to prove it had the same, if he is able: This I assure him is done with a favourable View to those Philosophers, and he may thank me for it, because if we fall into the Opinion, of a Change of Language, Plato and some others may be defended from allowing the detestable Practice of the promiscuous Use of Wives⁴, and Cicero may be acquitted of Pleading for Obscenity and Uncleaness, and by this means Epictetus may be cleared of encouraging Dissimulation and Hypocrisy in the Worship of God⁵. And therefore I should think this Gentleman, who it is probable has a great Veneration for these extraordinary Men, may consider this as a happy and ingenious Thought, and deferring his Thanks. But the Mischief is, if it should be allowed, that Language had in those Times a contrary Meaning to what it now hath, then we must understand those excellent Philosophers, to recommend Vice, when they condemn it, and to condemn Virtue when they extol it. Then it will follow, that in their Opinion, not the wife and virtuous Man is happy, but the Fool and the Knave. Then we may prove, that when they deliver the best Sense, they express the greatest Nonsense. This would lead us to conclude, that Xenophon thought God knows nothing of Things past, nor present, nor Things to come⁶. Again if Doubting is necessary to rational Belief, then why may I not doubt, whether it is unlawful to take away this Man's good Name if he has one to loose, whether it is unlawful to deprive him of his Property, or even of Life itself? Why should I think, that Slander is a criminal Thing, or that Theft is unjust, or that Murder is sinful, before I have examined upon what Principles I am to view these Actions in such a Light? And, if while I am undetermined in my Opinion, and am only upon the Enquiry, I should do either or each of these Acts against him, why should I expose my self to Censure and the Penalty of the Law, for doing what I have received no Conviction, is criminal, but so far as I can discover, is, if not virtuous, at least indifferent? Farther then, why may I not doubt, whether there is a first Cause of all Things, whether there is indeed a God, and if, while I am in Scruple, {#which by the Way may be the whole of my Life} I deny him all Honour, Worship and Adoration, surely I am nothing Criminal, in this Matter, for however evident it is in itself, that the World rose not into Being, without the Exertion of an infinite Power, I am incapable of seeing that Evidence; and therefore, it is nothing at all to me, and by Consequence, I may lead my Life, without any Fear of God, without paying him any Honours, or Desires of his Favour and Protection, and be perfectly innocent all the while. To proceed no farther in this wild and extravagant Manner of speaking, as there is, a rational and irrational Belief, so there is a rational and irrational Doubting. If it be the Character of a Sceptic, to doubt without Reason, whatever he may think of it, he excels not in Wisdom and good Sense the Enthusiast, who believes without Reason. One is as irrational as the other. And to speak freely, the Sceptic is that in Doubting, which without Reason, he charges upon the Christian in Believing, not the wife and understanding Man, but the foolish and unreasonable one. To doubt

whether there is any Difference, between Right and Wrong, Truth and Falsehood, Virtue and Vice, whether Right, Truth and Virtue are amiable, and Wrong, Perfidy and Vice are monstrous and evil, will hardly be allowed rational, and if not, then there are some Things rationally believed, where Doubting cannot reasonably take the least Place. And question not, but Christianity will appear to have such Evidences and Arguments in its Favour, as will necessarily oblige every rational and unprejudiced Enquirer, to allow, that no Doubt can reasonably be admitted concerning Its Truth and great Importance.

VI. He objects that, Morality is of no esteem without this Christian Belief. In answer to which, I observe, that Virtue and a good Life, are certainly very advantageous, a Person who indulges not to Pride, Coveteousness, Uncleanness, Malice and Revenge, will not be attended with the uneasy Consciousness of having so done. But if Men-actually are defective in Morality, if they still are not what they ought to be, if they have in any Instances, acted what they ought not to have done, they are justly liable to the awful Resentment of that God to whom they are, accountable in their Conduct in all Things. And, if Men in Fact are such in their Behaviour, either thro' Defect in Duty, or in acting contrary to it, as that they on account thereof, deserve the Displeasure of why should it be thought unreasonable, that they are not accepted and rewarded by him, for an Obedience, which is allowed to be deficient and stain'd with Guilt? If indeed, any Man, this Writer for Instance, is as pure and regular in all Things, as he ought to be, I am free to grant he will not be condemn'd, but be approved by his Maker, and receive Happiness from him. But if he is not the Man he ought to be, in every Branch of his Conduct, he will find nothing contrary to Goodness or Justice in his Condemnation.

Here he seems to discover a Dislike of expecting Pardon, alone through the Mediation of Christ, if Revelation had not recommended that Doctrine to us, I suppose this Author would not have represented it as destitute of Arguments and Evidences, sufficient to support its divine Authority. In this Place he also observes that we may not live long enough to go through with a proper Enquiry, into the Evidences of Christianity, and that, that may prove of fatal Consequence. Prodigious Labour, great Pains and long Study it seems, are necessary to a rational Belief of Christianity! Labour as great, as to learn the Import of the Terms, God, Sin, Punishment, Saviour, Mediation and Suffering, to which how few are equal! Labour as difficult as to discover, that none but God can foreknow the free Actions of Men, and declare the Parts they will act, Centuries of Years before they exist, that none but God is able to alter the Course of Nature, raise the dead to Life, and work Miracles of the like kind. A Talk attended with as great Difficulty, as discovering that Men existed more than seventeen Hundred Years ago, and what Proof can be given of that, which may be thought a proper Foundation for a rational Belief of it? Extraordinary Labour this, doubtless! to which every Man of common Sense is equal, and may, and must, be assured of the Truth of Christianity, if he exercises Reason, the very Moment he takes into Consideration the Evidences of it, upon such Testimonies, as he would believe any else in the World, better Testimonies than which, he has not, to found his Belief upon, that the World existed, so long a time since, as Christianity is supposed to have been introduced into it.

VII. Few Men, says he are qualified for Reasoning. This Writer would doubtless be esteemed of the Number of the happy Few, who have this rare and uncommon Qualification. He is able, by his superior Penetration to discover that Works proper to God, are not clear and sufficient Proofs of the Exertion of his Power, that Predictions of the Parts Men Will act Hundreds of Years before their

Appearance on the Stage of Life, which he only can be acquainted with, is no infallible Evidence of his conveying to us the Knowledge of his Will⁷. He is able to prove, by his admirable Talent of Reasoning, that we have no certain Ground to believe, that there ever were such Men in the World as Alexander, Plato, Cicero, or Julius Caesar: Nay, that it is a Thing disputable, whether the World is two Centuries old, for we have it only upon Report and Hearsay, which are very fallible and uncertain Things. And if indeed the World is of such Standing, as the Times in which these Men are supposed to have liv'd, he can teach us, that it is uncertain whether Language has not passed under an entire Change, that those Terms which now stand for Virtue might then mean Vice, and these Words which now express Valour, might then be used to express Cowardice, and therefore, we learn from this accomplished Reasoner, that it is uncertain, when we read Plato, or Cicero, Quinius Curtius, or Caesar's Commentaries, whether we are to understand them of recommending Virtue or Vice, whether Alexander was a Coward, or a bold and resolute Man, whether Curtius and Caesar speak of Flight or of Victory. Rare Discoveries these indeed, and truly worthy of a Free-thinker or Infidel.

VIII. The Reasonableness of Religion in Speculation nothing to the purpose, says he: It is one Thing whether a Proposition be indeed true in it self, and another whether a Man be bound to apprehend and believe it. A Man is bound to believe where doubting is unreasonable, for Diffidence is unsupported by Reason, is as irrational, as Faith without Evidence, and Foundation. And with Respect to the Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Revelation, they are such, as admit not of rational doubting. Works, which men really must and cannot but know, to be truly divine: And discoveries of future Events, which depend on the free Actions of men, are incontestable Proofs of a heavenly Appearance and Instruction: And if we have such Evidence, of Works of this Sort, being performed, and such Discoveries being made, as is thought sufficient to support us in the belief of other Facts done, as long a Time since, it is here doubtless, altogether as valid and sufficient, and it is not Reason to scruple that Evidence, but downright Madness and Obstinacy. Besides, no uncommon Degree of Knowledge and Improvement, are requisite to enable a Man, to discover that, interrupting the Course of the sun, or of the Earth, is a Work proper to him, who gave Motion to the one, or to the other; whether it is a Work truly divine and proper to God, the Fountain of Life, to raise a Person from the State of the Dead. A Man must as certainly, and as soon be persuaded of this, as that God formed the World, and upholds the Frame of Nature.

IX. Says he, The ablest and best of Men are disqualified for fair Reasoning, by their natural Predjudices. How! yes, how! The ablest and the best Men disqualified, etc. I ask how Man came to be rid of all his natural Predjudices and Prepositions, is he so happy? Why then may not some others also enjoy that Happiness? Does he think, that he is the only Person in the World who possesses this most desirable Privilege? After this, surely, we may credit him, if not our Savior, or his Apostles. Here is a Man divested of all Predjudices, the thing which prevents the ablest and best, of Men {#well then he is not of that Number} of finding Truths: That to believe a doctrine attested by supernatural Works to be true, is sound and credulous: That to yield an assent to the Truth of Facts; which all the Reason we have, dictates to us are indisputable, upon the Evidence afforded us in Confirmation of those Facts, is unreasonable. In short, let us give up ourselves to the Instruction, of this singularly happy Man, and let him enjoy an Honour, which the ablest and best of Men, because of their natural Predjudices, have no just Claim to viz. to be esteemed fair and impartial in Reasoning. He is no doubt an Interpreter of Ten thousand. Had he not conceal'd

his Name, what Honours would have been paid him, and what humble Submissions, would have been made to him! How in the World came this non-such Man to affect Secrecy? If thro' Humility, he is more modest, in my Opinion; than he is discerning, whoever he be; but I don't take it, that this is the Fact: I rather think somewhat else, viz. a Consciousness of endeavouring to shock the Christian in his Faith, upon Grounds, far from being rational or just.

X. A rational Faith when attained would not answer the Ends. He instances in several Things,

1. It would not work Miracles. A mighty Discovery! Who ever thought that a Persuasion of the Truth of Christianity, upon the most reasonable Conviction, would enable a Man to perform miraculous Works? Christianity requires it not, suggests it not.

2. It would prove too cold. This is also granted without any Prejudice to the Cause of Christianity.

3. Too changeable. That some have altered in their Sentiments, with relation to very important Doctrines the Christian Religion, is well known; and it is equally well known, that they have so chang'd, without reasonable Grounds and Motives: As did Dr. Whitby, to whom this Writer has Reference.

4. Would not administer that Spirit of Comfort, in the Reflection. This is freely granted.

5. Not of Force, sufficient, to command the Passions. This is also readily allow'd.

6. Much left to suffer Martyrdom. This is not denied. But what are all these Things to the Point in View? What if a Persuasion, upon the most rational Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion, will not influence a Person to all, or any of these Things: but something must be superadded to that Persuasion, is this any Proof, that the Belief of Christianity, is without rational Ground and Evidence?. Because Men act not up to their Principles, is that to be objected to the Reasonableness, of the Belief of those Principles? A small Degree of Reason, far less to be sure, than this Author is Matter of, will enable a Person to discover the Absurdity of such an Imagination.

Secondly. This Writer undertakes to prove, that Christ and his Apostles, never proceeded in this Method of giving rational Evidence of the Truth of those Doctrines they taught, but constantly required Men to believe without it.

Before I enter upon the Consideration of what he offers, on this Head, I desire it may be carefully observed, that those Things which were Proofs of the divine Mission of Christ, or of his being a Teacher come from God, ought to be allow'd Proofs of the Truth of those Doctrines he delivered: And that if his Apostles failed not to give full Evidence, of their having a heavenly Commission to teach, it is Unreasonable, not to allow that Evidence to be a Proof of the Truth of those Points of Doctrine they inculcated. Now Christ gave the fullest Proof of his divine Mission, such as would not admit of the least reasonable Doubt. He proves it by the Writings of the Prophets, who all spake of him, of his Family and Birth, of his Circumstances and Wisdom, of his surprizing Works, of his Sufferings, Death and Resurrection, all which Particulars were exactly fulfilled in him, and therefore, were evident and undeniable Proofs, of the extraordinary Mission of those Prophets, as well as of the divine Mission and Authority of our Saviour himself. Again, he confirms it by his Works, the miraculous Works which he performed bore witness of him, he healed the sick, gave Sight to the Blind, cleansed Lepers, cast out Devils, and raised the Dead to Life; which were the Works of such a Nature, as could only be effected by divine Power, and therefore, not to be

performed by a Person who had not a divine commission. To these Works Christ appeals, and urges them as Proofs of his being sent by God, both with the Jews and with his Disciples. With the Jews, If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not: But if I do, tho' ye believe not me, believe the Works: That ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. {John 10:37-38} In the same Manner he reasons with his Disciples: The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the Works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: Or else believe me for the very Works sake. {John 14:10-11} Since our blessed Redeemer gave abundant and unexceptionable Proof, of his being clothed with divine authority, is it reasonable to think he was too assuming, when he taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes, who were not invested with such heavenly Powers? Surely not. And since his disciples had clear and full Evidence, of his divine Mission, was it unreasonable to expect, that they should readily assent to the Truth of what he taught: And were they not justly blamed for not believing him to be the Person, they had the highest Reason to conclude he was? Christ's reproving them for Incredulity, when they had all reasonable and sufficient Ground to believe, is objected to the Clearness and Sufficiency of the Evidence afforded to them, in order to the Faith. And if they had appeared forward of Belief, then, no doubt, this Man would have represented them, as credulous, and disposed to believe, without a solid and substantial Ground for Faith, and have argued that, for that Reason their Testimony is less deferring of our Notice. - This Man's Sneer at the Disciples of our Lord, how much soever he may be delighted with the fine Turn of Wit it contains in it, is as bold and impious, as 'tis low and trifling: It is this, they knew nothing of Reasoning, it was quite out of their Element; they had had their Education on the Water, and tho' they understood their Trade so far as to be well versed in mending their own Nets, would go near it is likely to be entangled themselves, when they had to do with the figurative ones of sophistry or Syllogism. The Art of Logic is doubtless of Use in Reasoning; but that Men know nothing of Reasoning, who have not made themselves Masters of that Art, is an Observation, that a Man of the least Degree of good Sense or Modesty, would even blush to make. But why does this Man mention Sophistry? I hope he don't think that every Syllogism is a Sophism; if he does, he is not much better acquainted with Logic, than the most credulous Christian he despises. Sophisms either express what is not true, or less than is true, or more than is so, and therefore, Truth is not to be taught or demonstrated by Sophisms; and by Consequence, a Teacher of Truth only, as our great Lord was, can't be supposed to make use of Sophisms. Besides, Christ reasoned in the most clear and nervous Manner, infinitely better than this Man any where does; and if he pleases, he may, put his Reasoning into a syllogistical Form, if that will give him Satisfaction: Thus, Whatever God gives Testimony to, is true; he gives Testimony to my Doctrine by his Word and by Works, and therefore nay Doctrine is true. This is the Manner of Christ's Reasoning in {John 5:36-37}, The Truth of the Proposition or Major must be evident to every Man, I suppose to this Author, and the Truth of the Minor cannot be call'd into Question, without giving the Lie to Christ, who is Truth; and at the same Time offering Violence to Reason, and therefore, the Assumption; I should think must necessarily be allow'd.

Again, tho' the Disciples were Persons unprovided with Learning in the common Way, they did not remain illiterate, for by a Miracle they became such Linguists, as this Author may despair of ever being {Acts 2:4; Acts 2:8-10}; which by the way is an evident Proof of their divine Mission. And Christ, who sent them to preach; was a Mouth and Wisdom to them, which all their Adversaries were not able to gain say nor resist. Farther, is it to be expected of a divine Teacher. that he shall evidence the Truth of his Doctrine, by Argumentation and, Reasoning from natural Principles?

What Need. is there, for a Teacher, who proceeds in this Way only, to prove his Call to teach, by a pompous Shew of Miracles, since he advances no other Doctrines, than what he confirms by Argument and Logic? Is there any Necessity to excite Men's Belief of such Principles, by supernatural Works, which when clearly stated and fairly propos'd, they must needs know to be true by the Light of Nature? This surely is unnecessary. But, as our Saviour taught Doctrines, which, Reason could never discover, tho' they are not contrary to it, it was proper and necessary, that his Mission from Heaven should be well-attested, as it really was, that no Ground of Scruple might remain concerning the Truth of those Doctrines. Moreover, since many of the Principles, our blessed Lord and his Apostles preached, were not discoverable by Reason, it is irrational to expect, that he or they should prove them by Reasoning and Logic: For that is arguing from some known and allowed Principle of Truth, to the Truth of Some Other Thing connected with it, dependent on it, and necessarily arising from it. This Author charges Our Lord with being backward of explaining to his Disciples the Doctrine he taught, but without the least Foundation, for tho' he reprov'd them sometimes, for their Incredulity, as he very justly might, he was never wanting to favour them with farther Instruction and Explication, upon Application to him for that Purpose. Another false Charge this bold Man dares to exhibit against him, viz. that he expected Conviction to precede Evidence, as the germs of a Favour consequently to be enjoyed: Because in some Instances he asked Persons desiring a Miracle to be wrought by him, in their Favour: Believest thou that I am able. But how is this a Proof, that he expected Conviction to precede Evidence? He only call'd upon them to express that Faith they acted on him, supported by preceding Evidences of his divine Power and Mission. Farther, whereas he infers the same Thing, from the Pharisees requiring a Sign, and Christ's blaming them for it, he is quite beside the Truth, It by no Means appears, that Christ consider'd it Presumption and wanton Curiosity to expect Evidences of his heavenly Power and Authority, in order to believe in him, for many such he gave, to that End; But the Case in Fact was this, they wanted a Sign from Heaven {Matthew 16:1}, they would chouse the Sign themselves. Most unreasonable and impious! What if divine Power is exerted to confirm the Truth of any Doctrine, in working a great Variety of Miracles, shall Men refuse to believe, because such a particular Miracle is not wrought, as they desire, and take upon them to dictate to the Almighty what Sort of Wonders he shall work, if he gains their Credit? Well might our Saviour call them an adulterous Generation, for this daring Presumption and Impiety, Yet let it be observed, that our Lord gave at the same Time, Assurance of such a Sign, Which is an unexceptionable Proof of his divine Misson, viz, his Resurrection from the Dead, which was attended with an Appearance of Angels from Heaven.

We now come to the Apostles: This Writer might have spared every Word he here expresses, He observes they had not Leisure, nor Qualifications for Reasoning. And what then, if they' had not Leisure nor Qualifications, for doing what it was not their Business to do, no Damage will thence arise to the Cause of Christianity. They brought Doctrines agreeable, to, and of which, Reason was capable of making some feebler and less evident Discoveries. And they discoursed of those Doctrines, in a much better Manner, than ever any Philosopher did, or than this Man, who despises them and their Writings, is able to do; and urged the Practice of all moral

Virtues, upon the Command and Authority of God, and the Pain of his Displeasure, if Men did not; which Manner of treating on moral Subjects, is, I suppose, exceeding disagreeable to the Taste of this extraordinary Man. It is farther to be observed, that they taught some Doctrines, quite cut of

the Verge of Reason, concerning God, and his Purposes, concerning Sin and its Consequences, and a Deliverance from all the dreadful Effects of it, by the Mediation and Death of Christ: Things out of the Reach of Reason, and which it could never have discovered; it is therefore irrational, to expect Demonstration from Reason of their Truth. What the Apostles had to do, as Teachers of Mankind, was to prove their heavenly Mission and Authority, which when done, as it actually and fully was done: For God bore them Witness both with Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost; they might lawfully claim a Right to be heard and credited, without Wrangling and Dispute. But this Person will not allow Miracles to be a sufficient Proof of Doctrine, because, as he is pleased to assert confidently enough, they have Time out of Mind undoubtedly been performed in Favour of false Doctrines. I find however incredulous the Author is, with Relation to Bible History, he is not so with Respect to other Histories, it requires, as he pretends, an extraordinary Degree of good Sense, and the Acquisition of a considerable Share of Learning, to be able to form a true Judgment of the Facts, recorded in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles: And they at most have only a Probability of Truth; but other Histories are easily understood, and the Facts reported in them may be proved true, and relied on, without that labour'd Reasoning necessary to prove the Truth of those Facts related in the Holy Scripture. I must take the Freedom to tell him, that as he is a Sceptic, with regard to Revelation, I am so with Respect to this confident Assertion of his, I doubt of its Truth, and challenge him to prove, that real Miracles were ever wrought in favour of false Doctrines: Let him tell us of what sort, by whom, when, in what Place, upon whom, and before whom, they were performed. He who is so incredulous himself, where the Authority of Scripture is concerned, may surely allow another, not to take up with a Thing, upon his bare Affirmation, without proper Vouchers. I am tempted to think, how reasonable soever this Demand is, he will excuse himself of the Labour, from a Consciousness of the Difficulty attending it. Let him not take lying Wonders for real and true Miracles, as here he does: This, says he, the Scripture it self confesses, when it warns us of lying Wonders, and false Christs. We see a Man of distinguished Capacity, and singular Accomplishments may mistake, where the rude and unpolish'd would not, he takes false Christs for the true Christ, and lying Wonders, for real and true Miracles: If he does not, he argues most impertinently. He is speaking of true Miracles, the Scripture speaks of lying Wonders, of Things that seem to be of an extraordinary Nature, but are not in Fact: what they seem to be. But, because lying Wonders and feigned Miracles, may be performed by Imposters and false Teachers, it by no means follows, that real and true Miracles. may, such as were wrought by Christ and his Apostles. Lying Wonders may be done by lying Teachers, but true Wonders can only be effected by Teachers of Truth, in Confirmation of their Doctrines. I can no more believe, that God would exert his Power to work Wonders, to confirm a Lye, than I can think, he is able to express a Falshood, the former seems to my Understanding, as irrational as the latter, and as much contrary to the Rectitude and Truth of the divine Nature. Next follows a very extraordinary Observation, in our Author's Performance, viz, The Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, says he, were natural Effects of Gospel, Benevolence. And what then, do they lose any thing of their Force, because of that? What, because they were Works of Mercy, as well as of Power, is the Evidence they afford less clear and shining? It may be it would have greatly gratified this Writer, if the Miracles of our Saviour and of his Apostles had been of a contrary Nature, if Men had been rendered miserable instead of being made happy: If they had been delivered into the Hand of Satan to torment and rack them, instead of being rescu'd out of his power, if they had been kill'd instead of being raised

to Life when dead: I say perhaps, Wonders of such a Sort would have highly gratified him, that he might have had an Opportunity of objecting to the Christian Religion, as introduced with Cruelty and Vengeance, and not suitable to the Goodness of God, and therefore not likely to be any Religion supported by his Authority, Let this Man perform Works of the same Nature, and display the same Benevolence as Christ and his Apostles did, in healing the sick, giving Sight to the Blind, cleansing Lepers, and raising the dead to Life, if he is able, and I will acknowledge him to have a better Title to being credited in his bold Assertions, than at present, I can persuade myself, he has a just Pretension to. Again, he observes, especial Care was taken not to have them made public. Our Lord then was not ostentatious and ambitious of popular Applause. So far sure he may be intitled to the Characters of humble and modest. It had been happy for this Man, if in any Degree, his Temper and Conduct had given him a Claim in Characters like these. But, what this Person aims at, in this Observation, he will never be able to prove, viz. that our Saviour did not work Miracles, in the Presence of a sufficient Number of Men, to give an undeniable Testimony to their Truth: For various of his Miracles were done in the Presence of many Witnesses, yea in the View of his Enemies, and they were obliged to confess the Truth of them; that is to say, such of his Miracles, as he intended should stand in the Face of the World, for Proofs of his Authority and heavenly Powers. And his forbidding those on whom miraculous Cures were wrought in private, spreading them abroad, is an Evidence, that he was resolved the Proof of his divine Power and Authority, should not rest on Facts, which, on Account of their Secrecy might be disputed; but on such Facts, as were well known and might be attested, beyond all Possibility of Contradiction.

Farther, he remarks that, seeking them was discouraged, and instances in Herod. This is recorded in {Luke 23:8}. If an extraordinary Person appears in the World, and gives Proof of his heavenly Mission, in the Presence of many Witnesses, shall it be Matter of Charge against him, or thought a Defect in the Evidence of his Authority, if he will not satisfy the vain Humour and Curiosity of every one who shall expect it, and take upon him to demand it? Is it fit that infinite Wisdom should be directed by the unreasonable Will of Man, and Almighty Power be called forth to work Wonders, to gratify the Curiosity of every impertinent Seeker of Signs. Apprehensions of this Sort, can only be agreeable to such kind of Men as this Writer as, who have less of Reason than Incredulity. His principal Objection is still behind, and he seems to expect its Weight will bear down all before it, 'tis this: Miracles are no longer Evidences of the Truth of any Doctrine than they are continued: Nor, to any other Persons, than those who see them. By Age, it seems they lose all their glaring Evidence, and by Time intervening the whole of their Force sinks and vanishes. Fine Reasoning indeed and suitable enough to a Freethinker, i.e. a Man free from Prejudice it may be in every Thing except Religion, wherein, in an especial Manner he ought to be: But, in that, deeply and perhaps irrecoverably sunk into the basest and most unreasonable Prejudices. This Person of free Enquiry, thinks it, I suppose, reasonable to conclude, that the World has existed more than seventeen Hundred Years, that such Men as Alexander, Cicero and Julius Caesar really were, and that the last named was assassinated by Brutus and others. And yet he cannot know. either of these Particulars, upon other or better Testimonies, than he may know the Certainty of the Miracles of Christ, which are related not only by his Friends, but by Enemies also. If we consider that the Disciples of Jesus were not credulous, but diffident, and with great Difficulty were persuaded who Christ was, and what was the true Nature of his Work, and not without the fullest Evidence: If we consider, that they had nothing to expect in embracing his Religion, {that is to say in this World} but Hatred, Reproach, Contempt and the most cruel Persecution, and Death itself: Things which

Men don't usually chuse, except for some very important Reasons; and that they chearfully took up with the greatest Afflictions, and voluntarily submitted to Death, out of a religious Regard to their great and good Master, and to seal the Truth of their Testimony concerning him, and the Truth of those Doctrines, they had learned from him: If we consider that one of his Apostles was a Zealot in a Religion as corrupted in that Age opposite to his, was miraculously converted to it, readily embraced it, and bravely defended it, tho' he hereby expos'd himself to the greatest Dangers and Sufferings, to Perils by Sea, to Perils by Land, yea that Bonds and Afflictions attended him Wherever he went, and that at length he also sealed the Truth of his Testimony concerning his Lord, in whom he gloried, with the Loss of his Life: If we consider the Predictions of future Events Concerning the Nation Of the Jews, the Destruction of their Temple, and of their Polity and Government, and their Dispersion in the World; and the Predictions of future Events relating to the Church of Rome, in her Principles and Manners, delivered in the Gospels and Epistles; and the exact Accomplishment of those Predictions: I say if we consider these Things, we must surely be unreasonably incredulous, if we hesitate a single Moment concerning the Truth of Christianity. As I have before observed, it is as irrational to doubt without Reason, as it is to believe without Evidence. He who does the latter is an Enthusiast, and he who does the former, acts a Part equally absurd and unreasonable.

Now, what is it that the Sceptic with any plausible Shew, can object to the Evidences of Christianity? Were those Evidences few? No, but numerous. Were they performed in a Corner and in the Presence of Friends only? No, but publicly and in the View of Enemies, and the Truth of the Facts they attest, tho' they ascribe them to a wrong Power. Did the chosen Witnesses of Christianity gain Ease, Wealth, Honour, or Power, by their Testimony? No, it exposed them to Disgrace, Poverty, Loss of Liberty and Life it self; if therefore, they imposed upon the World, it was without any Temptation, nay even contrary to all their own Interests, {#that is supposing their Testimony is false} and consequently we must think they acted not only a fraudulent, but a most foolish Part, and ran upon their own Destruction, without any thing of Moment, or Weight to invite them to it. This Man, inconsistent as he is., when he thinks that he shall gain some Advantage to the Cause of Infidelity, and do prejudice to the Interest and Truth of Christianity by it, can observe a rational conviction of the Evidences of the Christian Religion, will not enable Men to part with present Good and Pleasures, for distant Hopes and future Enjoyments: And now he can be content to suppose, that the Apostles resigned all their Ease, Pleasures, and the Enjoyments of Life, without and future Good in Hope or Expectation. Is there a Disagreement in the Testimony of these Witnesses, do they contradict one another? No, their Relations of Facts agree in all material Circumstances. Was there any Age, in which the Christian Religion was unknown, and in which there were none of that Sect: Or can any other Account be given of their Rise and Spread, of their Principles, Conduct and Sufferings, sufficient to let aside the Account of them in all these Respects, which is transmitted down to us, in those Pages they esteem sacred? No. Do those Writings contain any thing absurd, that is to say, which contradicts our Senses, and is repugnant to Reason? Not so: They indeed inform us of some Things, we could never have known, without such heavenly Intelligence; but tho' those Things are undiscoverable by Reason, they are not repugnant to it. Are their moral Rules defective, do they make any Allowances for the Weaknesses and Foibles of Mankind, do they spare a darling Lust and permit Men to indulge a favourite Passion? No, but their Precepts of Morality are pure and strictly rigid, and such as might be expected to come from God. Were they immoral and dissolute in their Behaviour? No, they had a

true Fear of God, a zealous Concern for his Glory, ador'd serv'd and obey'd him, even to the Hazard of their Lives. They were inoffensive, meek, patient, submissive, temperate, compassionate, just and humble in their Department. These are the true Characters of the Men this Infidel would persuade us, palm'd a Forgery upon God, and put a Cheat on the World, and to their Disadvantage in this State, and to their certain Destruction in a future one, if this Man in Reality will allow us to think that Men do and will exist after Death. What Reason therefore can be offered, why these Evidences and Testimonies of the Truth of Christianity should not be credited? No solid, no substantial one can be assign'd, and therefore he is not a wise Man, who withholds his Assent, when such Evidences demand it; he is not governed by Reason, how much soever he boasts of it; but Humour and the most unreasonable Prejudice.

Miracles are necessary to confirm a Doctrine, that is absolutely undiscoverable by Reason; but that when Miracles are done to that End, to suppose there must be a Succession of other Miracles, to support the Truth of those before done, is a wild Imagination. The Miracles already wrought, ought to be eternally allowed what they are in Fact, viz. sufficient Evidences of the Truth of those Doctrines they were perform'd in Confirmation of. The Intervention of Time changes not the Nature of these Evidences and Testimonies, as this Person urges it does; they were truly divine, and cannot become human, Which he asserts they do. The utmost which can be pleaded by this Infidel, or any other on this Head, is, that our Knowledge of these supernatural Proofs of the Christian Religion, is acquired in the same Way we get the Knowledge of other Facts done as long a Time since; but this proves no Change in the Nature of those Evidences. I find our Author's Logic fails him sometimes, as great a Proficient as he is in that Art. To believe Doctrines concerning God, his Purposes, and his Methods of Procedure towards offending Creatures, either in a Way of Penalty or Mercy, which Reason could not discover, or the Light of Nature could not point out to us, without any supernatural Evidences, or divine Testimonies of their being true, might I think, be very justly censured and pronouc'd Enthusiasm: But, to expect the Continuation of such Evidences, or to require a perpetual working of Miracles, in order to our yielding an Assent to those Doctrines, is bold and impious. It is sufficient that in our Age, we have such Proof that Miracles, great and wonderful, were once wrought to confirm the Truth of Christianity, as we allow to be full and convincing in any Thing else. And why that Proof may not be thought so here, I should be glad if this Infidel, or any other, would plainly tell us. Will this Man believe nothing but what he has seen, or does see? Does he think it any unreasonable Thing so to do? I imagine not. Does he think the World to be no larger in Compass, than what has fallen under his View? Can he persuade himself that more Men have not liv'd, or do live upon the Earth, than he has seen, or does see? Would he scruple to punish a Person, as the Law directs, that should privately steal his Property, upon the Testimony of credible Witnesses, tho' it was done in his Absence? Would he decline to bring a Murderer of a Friend or of a Relative to Justice, because he did not see the horrid Fact committed? I can't think he would be so incredulous, as not to prosecute such a Wretch, upon the Testimony and Evidence of others: That Kind of Evidence which he will not allow to be a rational Proof of a divine Testimony, being often given to the Truth of Christianity, will serve his Turn, yea far less, I doubt not, where Life is concern'd. And therefore, he is most unreasonable, not in grant, That that Kind of Proof is here rational, certain, and every Way sufficient. I cannot think that he would have his Manner of Reasoning take place in any Thing besides Christianity, or, that he would stand to the Consequences of it, in any one Thing else. That seeing indeed is believing, has ever been allow'd Reasoning, says he, but that I am to believe a

Thing because another says he saw it, and it is not in my Power to prove a Negative, and contradict him, is surely a very unprecedented and new fort of Logic. Not so unprecedented and new, but this Infidel has acted, doth and will act upon it, in the most weighty Affairs which can occur in Life, or else he really is a Noun Substantive, and differs from all the rest of Mankind.

Thirdly. I now proceed to consider what he offers under his third Head of Discourse. Here he sets up for an Interpreter of Scripture, the Authority of which he disputes and therefore, according to him nothing is to be proved by it. In this Place he labours exceedingly to render it ridiculous, and puts such a Sense upon the Terms and Expressions of the Word of God, as he thinks will effectually answer his Design. This Infidel contends, that the Scripture makes it the Privilege of every Man in the World to be infallible, that every Individual of Mankind, is immediately, and at once render'd perfect in heavenly Knowledge, without the Exercise of his reasoning Faculties, or taking into Consideration, what Discoveries are made in the Bible of divine Truths. But what if this Man mistakes the Scripture, and the Principle he advances, and palms upon it, is not there found; but is as contrary to that, as it is to all Experience and good Sense? Then his Sneer upon the Bible, and its holy Doctrines, Will appear as groundless as it is impious. And that this is the Fact, will quickly be evident. The Word of God, is the Rule of our Faith, or it contains all those important Truths, which it concerns us to know, in order to Our Happiness; it is able to make us wise unto Salvation: For as it is the only Rule we have, by which we are to form our Judgments of divine Things, it is a perfect one. - It is plain and explicit, and suited to the Capacities of Persons unfurnished with Learning and Science. Its Doctrines, are sublime and mysterious, but the Language in which they are there express'd, tho' not destitute of the greatest Beauties, is easy to be understood: So, admirably are Simplicity, Elegance; and Majesty attemper'd together in the sacred Style. - It is the Duty of all Men to read and study the Bible; they ought to search the Scriptures, and search them daily, and compare Spiritual Things with spiritual, i.e. one Part of holy Writ with another. And it is their indispensable Duty, to pray that they may have Hearts disposed to conform their Conduct to the excellent Rules therein prescrib'd. - And therefore, no immediate Inspiration is to be expected from Heaven, to instruct us into the Knowledge of Truth, That is absolutely unneedful, according to the scriptural Account of Things: For every heavenly Truth we are required to believe and embrace, is therein discovered and proposed to our Enquiry: To the Law, and to the Testimony: If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them. Hence it is evident, that this Writer puts a forced and unnatural Sense upon various Texts, to introduce he knew to be absurd and false in Fact, and must of Necessity expose Christianity to the greater Contempt. The holy Scripture gives us no Reason to expect: an immediate Revelation of any divine Truth to our Understanding, as he confidently affirms it does; but whatever we are oblig'd to believe, by Vertue of its Authority, is already therein reveal'd, and proposed to our serious Consideration and free Enquiry. Indeed we have need of divine Illumination, to enable us to discover the Excellency, Glory, and Importance of those momentous Doctrines, the Scripture teaches us, and which we, as Men, by a due Exercise of our reasoning Powers, without this Illumination, may discover are therein contain'd: This is graciously promised, and is certainly communicated, to whomsoever it is agreeable to the Will of God so far to favour. What then becomes of all the curious Observations of this Infidel, with Relation to a Conveyance of heavenly Knowledge, in an immediate Manner to the Soul? As of universal Influence, of proper Weight, of instant Effect, of absolute Certainty, and such as Books could never furnish. This is no Principle of Revelation: Nor will he ever be able to prove, that it countenances Enthusiasm, which he so

eagerly charges it with, and with an uncommon Assurance palms upon it, to promote his wicked Design of bringing it under Disgrace. This is no other than a Notion of his Invention, and therefore, he is only exposing a Brat of his own fertile Brain. The Christian Religion is not in the least affected by all he is pleased to say upon this Head. The Infidel is guilty of the most flagrant Contradiction, when he says, the Tender of this Conviction. greatly depends upon the Disposition of our Minds to give it Reception, for its Efficacy. It seems after all, it is not an actual Conveyance of Light, to the Soul, but is only an Offer of it: Just now it was so strong a Light flashing into the Mind, that it was of instant Effect, and bore away all Prejudices and Darkness before it. But by this Time it is sunk into a bore Tender of Knowledge, if Men will receive it. Can this Man expect to be in the least regarded, when he so egregiously trifles, and manifestly contradicts himself? Infidelity is a Crime, and may be so proved, but not in the Way he points out. If Men have the same rational Grounds to believe that Christianity is true, as they have that the World has existed so long a time, as that is supposed to have been introduc'd it, they must be guilty of Perverseness and Obstinacy, to call the Truth of it into question: And that they have such rational Grounds, is unquestionably Fact. That Men are culpable in embracing of Heresies is certainly true: For if the Scripture expresses its Doctrines, in Words easy to be understood, but Men will not allow them their proper Meaning, because they disrelish the Doctrine, they must in that case grant to be true; they act a very criminal Part; and this is really the Fact. - The Infidel speaks of the sudden Conversion of some Persons as a Thing ridiculous. But he ought to have proved, that those Conversions were without rational Grounds; since he has not done this, he truly becomes what he falsely represents them to be, exceeding ridiculous. The Samaritans had just Reason to conclude that Person to be endued with heavenly Powers, who could give a Woman a Narrative of her Life, whom, till that Time, he had not seen, and with whom he had not before conversed. The Writings of the Prophets plainly foretold the Sufferings and Death of the Messiah, and his Resurrection from the Dead, and therefore, the Disciples of our Lord, were culpable in not believing what they had such Means of knowing to be true, consequently they were justly reprov'd by Christ for their Incredulity, notwithstanding all this Infidel offers to prove the contrary. The next Thing he labours to prove is that there is a Repugnancy between Religion and Reason. It is allowed that the Christian Religion contains Mysteries, which are above and not discoverable by Reason; such are the Doctrines of the Trinity, of the Incarnation of the Son of God, his Substitution in the Sinner's Room, bearing his Guilt and Punishment, etc. But neither of these Things is repugnant to Reason, nor will ever be prov'd opposite and contrary to it, by this Man, or any other breathing. It is no Prejudice to the Cause of reveal'd Religion, or Evidence that it is destitute of rational Proof, that Philosophers have opposed it, because they could not comprehend it. All that in Justice can be demanded to a rational Proof of its Doctrines, is, that it is a Revelation from God; that once prov'd, it is unreasonable to hesitate concerning the Truth of its Doctrines, how much soever those Doctrines may exceed our Comprehension. The Conduct of the Philosopher, who disbelieves Revelation, because he finds it contains Principles that transcend his Reason, speaks the Language of his Heart to be this: That if God will reveal his Will to Men, if he expresses more, or any other Thing, than what might be known and demonstrated, before and without this Revelation of himself, the Truth he expresses can lay no Claim to his Assent. This is the impious Principle of Philosophy and vain Deceit, which the Scripture warns us against. And hence arises all the Philosopher's Opposition to the Gospel of Christ. The holy Word of God contains nothing, teaches not any Thing contradictory to Reason, tho' it discovers some Things that Reason could not come at the Knowledge of, without this

Revelation of them; which Things therefore, it is not to be expected should be proved by Argumentation, or Reasoning from such Principles, as the Light of Nature leads us to acknowledge are true. Nor is it to be thought strange, that revealed Religion should contain Principles mysterious and incomprehensible, since natural Religion obliges us to believe what we are unable to comprehend, viz. the eternal Existence of God, his Immensity and Infinite Knowledge: And the Production of all Things out of nothing, by an Act of his almighty Power. But why do I mention natural Religion, when I am considering what this Infidel objects to revealed; since he seems to give very little Credit even to that? I have sometimes thought it is impossible, that any one in human Shape can be an Atheist: in Opinion but, perhaps, I may be mistaken in that: For this Infidel seems to apprehend that the Being of God, will not admit of evident and unexceptionable Proof: It seems to be a Question with him, whether natural Religion hath rational and sufficient Evidence to support it. I own, I hardly thought it possible, that a Creature possess'd of the lowest Degree of Reason, could advance any Thing so irrational. Dr. Clarke, it seems, by producing ingenious Arguments to prove the Being of God, has, in the Opinion of this Infidel, contributed to Atheism, and thrown Men into Doubting and Scruples about it; what Sort of Men they are, is easy to guess, such as this Man is, or who have as little Reason as himself, and really are a Disgrace to human Nature.

He thinks that a Christian's Examination of Christianity is absurd. But why must it be thought so? A Man has undoubtedly a Right to examine the Evidences of the Christian Religion; but then, as he may examine freely, I hope it Will be allo'd he ought to examine impartially, and admit those Evidences to be sufficient here, which he will not deny to be so in any Thing else, if such Evidences are here to be found, and that they are not this Infidel will never be able to prove. - Infallibility he makes a necessary Qualification of a Christian Preacher. But very absurdly, for as the Preacher and the Hearer have one and the same Rule of Faith, the Hearer, tho' he may not be capable of expressing so well, and illustrating those Ideas of divine Truths, which he forms in his Mind, and discovers are contained in the Word of God, yet he is able to discern, when that Doctrine the Preacher delivers, is agreeable to the holy Scripture, for all divine Truths are therein express'd in such Language as he understands himself. And therefore an infallible Interpreter of this infallible Rule is unnecessary. Farther he asserts that, Examination can't be under any Obedience. Strange! no, what if the Evidences of the Thing examined are clear, full, and every way sufficient? Then a Man is not bound to believe, where his Reason demands a ready and firm assent of him. What may be examined may be rejected, says he, May it so? I hope not merely because it may be examined. The Opinion of the Being of God may be examined, but a Man is not at Liberty to reject it: And he must be a Fool that does. The Opinion of God's creating the World may be examined, or the Evidences of it may be enquired into, but it may not be rejected. The Opinion of the Immortality of the Soul may be examined, but it may not be rejected; and a Man must offer Violence to Reason, if he will reject it. The Opinion that intelligent Creatures stand obliged to honour God and practice Virtue may also be examined; but it may not be rejected: Nor is it necessary a Man should doubt of the Truth of either of these things, when he begins to examine into the Evidences of them. Christianity may doubtless be examin'd; but it ought not to be rejected: For it hath such Evidences and Arguments in its Favour, as would certainly be allowed sufficient, to prove the Truth of any one thing else in the World. Neither is it necessary for a Man to become an Infidel, in order to his being a rational Christian: as it is not necessary to become an Atheist, in order to discover with Certainty the Being of God. And as a Man wou'd not be

excusable in becoming an Atheist, when he examines the Evidences and Arguments of the Existence of Deity; so he would be inexcusable in becoming an Infidel, when he sets him self about the Examination of the Evidences of Christianity. And yet a Man can't be suppos'd to believe the Being of God without Evidence; nor the Truth of the Christian Religion without it. For as soon as a Man knows, what Idea the Words God and Deity stand for, so soon he must necessarily discern the Evidences of the Existence of God, and therefore, cannot reasonably admit any Doubt concerning it. And as soon as a Man can frame an Idea of what Christianity is, or understand what it means, so soon must he necessarily discover sufficient Evidences of its Truth, and by Consequence cannot reasonably be in doubt about it. I dare say, if a Man will but allow that to be sufficient Evidence and Proof here, which he will not deny to be so in any thing else, he will not, he cannot hesitate concerning the Truth of Christianity a single Moment. - And tho' we esteem the Religion of Jesus the most sacred Thing in the World, as we have nothing to fear from a fair Opponent, {if such it can possibly have} we are not against the most rigid {let it be but impartial} Examination, of the Evidences and Arguments on which we form our Persuasion of its Truth. Neither will we ever call upon the civil Magistrate, to put a stop to the Reasoning of Infidels against Christianity: For 'tis Pity but they should be allowed the free Exercise of the little Reason they have, and from which we know, no Prejudice can ever arise to the glorious Cause we defend, Yet we can't but wish {for their own sakes} that their Talents in arguing were better employ'd. - With Respect to what this Man observes, of its being the Opinion of Bishop Beveridge, that a Conveyance of heavenly Light is necessary to a saving Knowledge of the Doctrines of Christianity; it is a Truth which Revelation abundantly teaches us. A Man may know those Doctrines to be true, by the bare Exercise of his reasoning Faculties, upon the Word of God; but he cannot enter into the Spirit, Importance and Glory of them, without the Super addition of heavenly Light. This gracious Influence upon the Mind is not a Discovery of Truths which Men had not Means of knowing before, and which they could not by the Help of such Means discover without it. For those Doctrines, which under this benign Influence and heavenly Guidance, are apprehended to be of the greatest Importance, glorious, and every way worthy of their divine Author, are express'd in the holy Scripture, in such Language as Men may easily understand, and therefore may learn that those Doctrines are Truths, by a proper Exercise of their reasoning Powers, upon Revelation, without this Supernatural Light and Influence.

I. Let me instance in the Doctrine of the Deity of our Saviour. He is represented to have been, or existed in the Beginning, and is asserted to be God: In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God {John 1:1}. He is called the mighty God {Isaiah 9:6}, the true God {1 John 5:20}, over all, God blessed for ever {Romans 9:5}. He hath ascribed to him those Perfections, which are incommunicable to a Creature, and are certainly proper to a Deity, viz. Eternity {John 1:1}, Immutability {Hebrews 13:8}, Omniscience {John 21:9}, Omnipresence {John 3:13}, Omnipotence {Revelation 1:8}. He is affirmed to have made all things, and 'tis denied that any Thing was made without him that was made {John 1:3}. He is declared to have laid the Foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are asserted to be the Works of his Hands {Hebrews 1:10-12}: Even in those very Records, which constantly make Creation a Work proper to God, and argue his Being, Power and Wisdom from it. He is propos'd as the Object of Worship, in those very Writings which throughout condemn the Worship of a Creature. He is thy Lord and worship thou him {Psalms 45:11}. Again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the World, he saith and let all the Angels of God worship him {Hebrews 1:6}. Christians are to be baptized into his Name eiv

to onoma {Matthew 28:19}. Prayer is directed to him jointly with the Father {2 Thessalonians 1:12}. And of him Grace and Peace are implor'd {Ephesians 1:2}. Doxologies of Praise are ascribed to him {Jude 1:24}. And together with the Father he is adored {Revelation 7:10}. These Particulars concerning our Saviour are asserted in the Scripture, in Language, so plain, expicite and full, that Art and Criticism are not necessary to understand it. Much of both indeed are required to evade the Force of these clear Testimonies, in Favour of this fundamental

Truth of the Christian Religion. And the Use Men of Letters make of both, to obscure the Light of these Evidences, only serves to shew us, that learned Accomplishments enable them to argue in such a. perverse and unreasonable Manner upon the Scripture, as a Man of Sense would even blush to do, upon any human Writings in the World. But I suppose it is excusable to argue most perversely here, provided it is learnedly.

II. I desire to instance in the Doctrine of Atonement and Satisfaction, by the Death of Christ. He is said to have bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree {1 Peter 2:24}. The Lord laid on him the Iniquities of us all {Isaiah 53:6}. For he hath made him to be sin, for us, who knew no Sin {2 Corinthians 5:21}. Christ was wounded for our Transgressions he was, bruised for our Iniquities {Isaiah 53:5}. The Messiah was cut off, but not for himself {Daniel 9:26}. Our blessed Saviour was made a Curse for us {Galatians 3:13}. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and he hath put him to Grief {Isaiah 53:10}. The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes are we healed {Isaiah 53:5}. He gave his Life a Ransom for many {Matthew 20:28}. Our gracious Redeemer purges our Consciences from dead Works, in Consequence of his offering himself thro' the eternal. Spirit, without Spot to God {Hebrews 9:14}. Once in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself. {Hebrews 9:26}. Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own Blood {#d}, The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin {1 John 1:7}. Christ has made Peace by the Blood of his Cross {Colossians 1:20}. He has made Reconciliation for Iniquity {Daniel 9:24}. Much more then being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him {Romans 5:9}. When we were Enemies we were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son {Romans 5:10}, He is the Propitiation for our Sins {1 John 1:2}. A Man who shall tell us, that Art and Criticism are necessary to discover the Truth of the Satisfaction of Christ, which is to clearly and explicitly declared, in these Scriptures, may with equal Reason tell us, that the Sun is not visible, when it shines brightest upon us, and we are unable to bear its dazzling Rays, and that a Telescope is necessary to discover it. Men of Learning have long endeavour'd, by Art and Criticism, to darken and hide from View the strong Light, which flows in upon us, from these and other sacred Testimonies, in Favour of this important Doctrine, but all in vain. Their Endeavours this Way, only evidence, that their Acquirements enable them to argue against the clearest Testimonies, which can possibly be given of divine Truths, that approve not themselves to their Likeing and good Opinion.

III. I beg leave to instance in the Doctrine of the Necessity and Efficacy, of the Operations of the Spirit of God, upon the Souls of Men, in order to their Regeneration and Sanctification. Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God {John 3:3}. No Man can come to Christ, except the Father. draw him {John 6:44}. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be {Romans 8:7} They who are in the Flesh cannot please God {Romans 8:8}, Without Faith it is impossible to please God {Hebrews 11:5}. Who were born not of Bloods, nor, of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God {John 1:13}:

Who of his abundant Mercy hath begotten us, again, to a lively hope {1 Peter 1:3}. Thro' Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God {Ephesians 2:8}. We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works {Ephesians 2:10}. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure {Php 2:13}. Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done; but of his Mercy hath he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the holy Ghost {Titus 3:5}. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began {2 Timothy 1:9}. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these Things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto Babes: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight {Matthew 11:25-26}. God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face, or Person of Jesus Christ {2 Corinthians 4:6}. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh {Ezekiel 36:26}. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power {Psalms 110:3}. For thou also hast wrought all our Works in us {Isaiah 26:12}. And what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power, to us-ward, who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power; which be wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead {Ephesians 1:19-20}. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and sins {Ephesians 2:1}. The Evidence which these numerous Texts with many others, afford to prove the Doctrine of the Necessity, Efficacy, and gracious Effects, of the Operations of the Grace and Spirit of God upon us, has cost many learned Men great Pains and Labour, in Art and Criticism to obscure it; but altogether in vain. For like the Sun will shine thro' the thickest Clouds, they will ever be able to raise in order to darken and keep it from our Sight. Here again I must observe, that Art and Criticism are absolutely unnecessary to discover that shining Evidence. Persons of mean Capacities, and unfurnished with Learning and Science may discover it. Upon the whole, it is very apparent that, this Writer dreadfully abuses the Scripture, and puts a forced and unnatural Sense upon it, with relation to what it delivers concerning the heavenly Influence of the Spirit of God, upon the Souls of Men. That is not a Conveyance of the Knowledge of any divine Truths, which Men had not Means of discovering before, and which they were incapable of knowing to be such: But by this Influence, they are enabled to see the Excellency of, and to discern the Goodness, Wisdom, Holiness and Faithfulness of God, which are therein displayed in the fullest Manner. To imagine that God now affords such Light, as will enable us to make Discoveries of Truths, not already revealed to us, in his Word, is real Enthusiasm; and has nothing to support it in the holy Scriptures: On the contrary, such a wild Conceit stands there awfully condemn'd But that he communicates Light and Grace, to assist us in our Enquiries into those Truths, he hath graciously been pleas'd to inform us of, in his Word, and by the Help of which, we discern the Glory of these Truths, is a precious Doctrine the Bible contains, and is at a great Remove from Enthusiasm, and is not in the least absurd or irrational.

It is Time for me to recapitulate and sum up what I have before observ'd, and I must take leave to give the Reader this Infidel's Recapitulation revers'd: or to assert the contrary of what he does in every Particular. 'Tis evident that Men would very little differ in their Sentiments, relating to Christian Doctrines, if the Language of the Scripture, which is plain and easy to be understood, was interpreted in its obvious and natural Sense - That such Accomplishments, as require Time and Pains to attain, are not necessary to understand the Scripture, in the most momentous Points

of Doctrine, it requires us, to believe That the Proofs of a Christian Faith are such, and so clear, and so full, that a Course of Study to apprehend them is not necessary: Those Proofs may be understood as soon as Men have learn'd to know, what Ideas the Terms and Expressions used in the holy Scripture stand for - That a rational Conviction therefore, of the Truth of the Christian Revelation, is not the Privilege only of a few Students and Speculatists - That there is a certain Connection betwixt the Notion of Duty, and assenting rationally to a Proposition well supported. The Reason is plain, a Man is inexcusable to disbelieve that which he sees evident Reason to conclude is true. - That tho' Arguments are but Motives to Assent, it is not a Contradiction to assert, that we are oblig'd to let them be conclusive, if they are clear and justly founded, and regularly drawn. - That there is not such a Complication of Circumstances to be determined upon, Consequences regularly drawn, and a summoning of Evidence in order to the Proof of Christianity, that should hinder the Certainty of the Event, in an impartial Enquirer, and therefore, it may be foretold and prescribed That the Proofs of Christianity are so evident, and of such Force, that they are calculated to produce an Assent, from every Man, to whom they are proposed, as soon as understood. And those Proofs are of so easy and plain a Nature, that it is a Dishonour, to the Names of Locke and Newton, to suggest that Capacities like theirs, are necessary to understand their Force and Weight - That Christianity may not only be enforced, as a Fact, but it may also be prov'd true as a Gospel, in Vertue of such Arguments, as approve themselves to that Reason, of which all Men are profess'd - That all Men have Leave and Right to examine the Evidences of Christianity, and determine of its Truth, as the Matter shall appear to their Reason; but it is to be observ'd, that those Evidences are such, that they must necessarily appear pregnant Proofs of its Truth. And therefore, by granting Men Liberty to examine these Evidences and Proofs, we are in no Danger of authorizing Infidelity in Form, and setting it upon the same Footing, in Point of Conscience, with the Profession Christianity itself, as this Author affirms we are. The Man has ill Success indeed, for he has not proved one single Point, with all these Pains and Labour. He might therefore, have very well spared the whole of his pathetic and moving Expostulation, with the Oxonian, whom he addresses, for it is entirely founded on Principles unprov'd and false; it therefore demands no Regard from me, or any other Christian, let the unreasonable Infidel, such as this Man himself is, pay his Respect to it, and make the best of it, he is heartily welcome.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Christianity not founded on Argument, p. 8. ft2 Some learned Men seem inclined to give up this Sense, and to understand it of Unity in Affecion; but I humbly apprehend, that suits not the Design of the inspired Writer: oronew is indeed a Word of general Signification, and, sometimes denotes the Act of the Will, and Affections, but then it is also put for the Act of the Understanding or Judgment in several Places; thus in {Acts 28:22}. A froneiv, what thou thinkest; so in {Php 1:7}. Kaqvw esi dikaion emoitouto fronein uper pantwn umwn, as it is meet to think this of you all; and unless it is understood in this Sense in Chap. 2:2. the Elegance and Beauty of the Apostle's Language, will not so evidently appear. Verbum autem fronein modo Voluntatis, modo ad Intellectus Actiones resertur. - Ab Animorum id est Voluntatum Conjunctione, transit ad Doctrinae Consensum ut picna justaque fit Concordia. Beza in loc. ft3 Num quis, quod bonus Vir effat, Gratias Diis egit unquam? Cicero de Nat. Deor. Lib 3. C. 36. - Quid Votis Opus est? Fae te ipse felicem: Facies autem, si intellexeris bona esse, quibus admixta est Virtus: Turpia, quibus Malitia conjuncta est. Seneca Ephesians 31. Quam stultum est optare, cure possis a te impetrare. Ephesians 41. Haec satis orare Jovem, quae donat et ausert, Det Vitam, det Opes, aequum est mi Animum ipsa parabo. Hor. Ep, Lib. I, Ephesians 18. Monstro quid ipse tibi possis dare: Semita

certe, Tranquilla per Virtutem pater unica Vitae. Juv. Sat. 10. ft4 Aresken de autoiv kai koinav einai tav gonaikav dein paratoiv sofoiv wste ton entukonta th entukoush crhsqai kaqafusi Zhnwn en th politeia kai Crusippov en tw peripoliteiav alla te Diogenhv o Kunikov kav Platwn. Diog. Laert. on the Life of Zeno. ft5 Verum fi quis est, qui etiam meretriciis Amoribus interdictum Juventuti putet: Est ille quidem valde feverus; negare non possum: Sed abhorret non modo ab hujus faeculi licentia, verum etiam a majorum Consuetudine, atque Concessis. Quando enim hoe factum non est? Quando reprehensum? Quando non permissum? Quando denique suit, at, quod licet, non liceret. Cicero Orat. pro Cerlio. Spendein de kai qusin kai aparcesqai kata patria. Epict. Enchr. Cap. ft6 Qeov de w pai aiei ontev panta isasi ta ghghenmenna kai taonto kai o ti ex ekasou autwn apwbhsetai Zenop. de Cyri Instit. Lib. 1. Cap. 24. ft7 Cicero is against him in this Matter; says he, Signa ostenduntur a Diis Refum futuraram, de Nat. Deor. Lib. 1. C. 4. From the foretelling of Things to come, he argues the Certainty of the Existence of Deity. And from the Predictions of future Events delivered in the Bible, we may justly argue in Favour of its divine Original. Nor have we the least need to make Excuses for the Sacred Writers, which the Philosopher it obliged to do for his Diviners.

S. The Covenant of Grace Opened

SERMON 2 THE COVENANT OF GRACE OPENED IN A SERMON Occasioned by the DEATH OF Mrs. Margaret Busfield WHO Departed this Life, May 13th, 1734 By JOHN BRINE LONDON: 1734 Printed for Aaron WARD at the King's Arms, in Little-Britain.

{2 Samuel 23:5}.

Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

It has pleased God, the Sovereign Disposer of all things, to remove by death an honorable member of this community to whom these words were very useful and instructive: for which reason she desired they might be publicly improved after her decease, with a view to the edification of the saints and conversion of sinners. They are some of the last words which David spoke, as we are informed, in the first verse of the chapter; that is, the last which he spoke by inspiration.^{f1} There is a very beautiful and elegant Preface to them, in which David gives an account of himself, in these respects: his parentage, David the son of Jesse. This is an eminent instance of his humility. He was not ashamed of his low and mean descent, though an illustrious and powerful monarch. Besides, he mentions his call and unction to the royal station, which he filled up with so much honor. Also he declares his admirable gift of composing sweet and spiritual songs, for the use and edification of the church. Further, he acquaints us Who was the efficient cause of his spiritual composures, and the words now to be considered, viz., God. He spake as he was divinely guided, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my tongue. The Holy Ghost was the Author and Inditer. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me. Some think the Doctrine of the Trinity is not obscurely hinted at in these words: By the Spirit of the Lord, they understand the Third Person; the first by the God of Israel, and the second the Lord Jesus Christ by the Rock of Israel, who really is the Rock of Ages, on which the church is securely built. Then he gives the necessary character of a governor, and describes the happiness and flourishing estate of a prince so qualified; serenity, peace, and increasing glory attend his rule {2 Samuel 23:2-3}.^{f2} Some suppose he intends the Messiah, Who is a King that reigns in Righteousness, and Whose subjects are blessed with peace and prosperity, under His most just administrations. The words of the text are now introduced, Although my House be not so with God," that is to say, I have not so pleasing and happy a prospect in my family, yet that Covenant which God has made with me, is my support and comfort. Many irregularities were in his house; Tamar was ravished by Amnon, who was afterwards murder'd upon the advice of Absalom. He raised an unnatural rebellion against David, banished him from the royal city, and miserably perished in pursuing his traitorous design. Adonijah, a favorite son, attempts to seat himself on the throne by violence, for which usurpation he was slain {2 Samuel 13:14; 2 Samuel 24:25}; { 1 Kings 2:25}. These were melancholy facts, which, doubtless, very much depressed the mind of the Psalmist," but the Covenant of Grace furnished him with relief and comfort under them. Glassius upon the words

says, "The sense is, although in the administration of my kingdom I have, indeed, done many things advantageously, and with great happiness, yet all this glory of my government is perishing and mortal: And if it be compared with the Kingdom of my Son, that is, the Messiah, it is obscure, and as a withered branch and trunk, which doth not sprout. This seems to be the plain meaning of this place."f3 This Covenant filled him with solid joy and satisfaction, although he was conscious to himself of many imperfections, because he evidently saw that his salvation was secured by it; wherefore I conclude, that the Covenant of Grace is here designed. My method in treating on the words of the text will be as follows:

First, I shall shew that the Covenant of Grace was made with the Elect in Christ, as their public Head and Representative.

Secondly, That this Covenant is of Eternal date.

Thirdly, the wise Order and Disposition of All things in this Covenant.

Fourthly, The Stability and Firmness of this Agreement.

Fifthly, That our Whole Salvation is contained in it.

Sixthly, That this Covenant is equal to the utmost Desires of the saints.

Lastly, That this Covenant furnishes believers with Joy and Comfort, under the most afflictive dispensations of Providence.

First, The Covenant of Grace was made with the Elect in Christ, as their public Head and Representative.

It was not personally entered into with them, when we read of God's making a Covenant with His people, which we sometimes do, as in these Words, I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David { Isaiah 55:3}. And elsewhere, I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn a way from them to do them good { Jeremiah 32:40}. By such modes of expression we are to understand the discovery of Covenant promises and blessings to the saints, and not taking them into Covenant; for they are interested in the Covenant of Grace, previous to any such act of God upon them; which I apprehend is very evident from these things. If the Covenant of Grace is made with the elect in their own persons, it must be either before or after their regeneration. It cannot be before, because in an unregenerate state they have no proper love to, or desires to fear and obey God; and therefore they are incapable of devoting themselves to His service. There is no disposition in them to such a spiritual act. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7). If the Covenant of Grace is made with them, after, or upon their regeneration, then they partake of one eminent blessing of that Covenant, before they are interested in it, which is not to be supposed; for a right to the benefits of the Covenant depends upon an interest therein. That faith is a gift, the Apostle expressly affirms; By grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God { Ephesians 2:8-9}. Nor is it less manifest, that it is a blessing secured to the elect by the Covenant of Grace; Faith and all other graces are absolutely promised therein, as we learn from these words, Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power { Psalms 110:3}. Therefore those to whom this grace is communicated, must be interested in the Covenant of Grace before, and in order to the production of it in their Hearts. Besides, elect-infants who die in infancy, are incapable

of entering into covenant with God; or they cannot give a personal consent unto the Covenant of Grace: They are unable to dedicate and devote themselves to the service of God, and of consequence no covenant can be entered into with them; yet doubtless they are saved by virtue of an interest in the Covenant of Grace, which sufficiently proves that our personal consent to that Covenant is not necessary, in order to partake of its benefits.^{f4} It is readily granted, that the saints under divine influences give up themselves to the Lord, and engage to serve Him as assisted by His Grace; but such a dedication of themselves, to holiness and the fear of God, gives them no further interest in the Covenant of Grace, than what they had before; for all their sanctification and holiness is derived from that Covenant. That there was a covenant entered into between God and Christ, and that that is the Covenant of Grace, I shall now endeavor to clear and prove. A covenant is an agreement between two parties, wherein the one proposes terms and conditions to be performed, the other engages to fulfill those conditions; which agreement is a formal covenant. Such a contract was settled between God and Christ, as the Holy Scriptures sufficiently demonstrate. God the Father is brought in and represented by the Prophet, as proposing to Christ a work wherein His Glory was nearly concerned. Thus, Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified; and at first offers but low terms to Him as a reward for His service, that is to say, the salvation of the elect among the Jews: Whereupon Christ says, I have labored in vain, I have spent My Strength for naught and in vain; yet surely My Judgment is with the Lord, and My Work is with my God { Isaiah 49:3-4; Isaiah 49:6}: i.e., if it is Thy Pleasure that My saving benefits should be confined to the elect among that people, I readily submit to Thy Will. After which God the Father enlarges His offer, promises to give Him for a Light to the Gentiles, that he might be his Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: which proposal gave Christ a full satisfaction. Wherefore He readily consented to undertake and finish the work, that the Father assigned to Him, which consists of several branches.

1. God propounded to His Son, that He should assume our nature into a personal union with Himself, which was absolutely necessary to our redemption: For unless He became man, He could not bear and expiate our guilt. Wherefore, God, to infallibly secure our recovery and salvation, decreed and fore-ordained, that His Son should appear in our nature. Hence the Apostle observes, that Christ was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, and was manifest for us in these last times { 1 Peter 1:20}. As I apprehend we have Christ's full and free consent to this, expressed in these words; Then said I, lo I come {Psalms 40:7 thew:7 thew:7}: i.e., since it is Thy Will that I should visit the lower world, and reside among men, I cheerfully agree to it.

2. Another proposal was, that He should stand in our law place, or stead, and become our Substitute, that He might deliver us from the menaces of the violated Covenant of Works. As the time of His Incarnation was settled in counsel and covenant between Him and the Father, which seems evident from these words of the Apostle, But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son { Galatians 4:4-5}, so also His being made under the Law, to redeem them that are under the Law, was a matter pre-determined and before agreed to.

3. The Father propounded to him to obey the law for us. We are unable to exhibit such an obedience to it, which is absolutely necessary to our justification, because our nature is very much weakened and vitiated by sin. One branch of the Mediator's Work was to bring in an everlasting Righteousness { Daniel 9:24}; which He has done. That Righteousness is accepted for and imputed to us, and will always avail to our acceptance in the sight of God.

4. It was the will of God, that Christ should bear our guilt, without which it could not possibly be removed. He proposes this affair to Christ in this manner; When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin { Isaiah 53:10}. His being a Sin-Offering, necessarily supposes a charge of guilt, which always must be in order to suffering of any penal evil. Thus the same Prophet affirms, that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all { Isaiah 53:6}: And the Apostle asserts, that He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him { 2 Corinthians 5:21}. The ponderous load of our guilt was not laid on Christ, contrary to His own Will, but with His free and voluntary consent.

5. God propounded to Christ that He should suffer the demerit of sin, or to die for us, that we might be delivered from eternal death, which is the proper reward demerited by our offenses. To this He freely consented, and laid himself under a federal obligation to become obedient unto death; yea, even the death of the Cross. His crucifixion was what He could not avoid, consistent with fidelity to His own free engagement. Wherefore He observes to His disciples, Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and then enter into his glory { Luke 24:26}? According to the Father's Will and His voluntary promise, He was to die before His advancement to honor and dignity.

6. The Father proposed to Christ to take the care and charge of the elect. Those who were the objects of God's special Love and free choice, He gave into Christ's Hands. Hence He says unto the Father, Thine they were, and thou gavest them Me { John 17:6}. With what view this was done, it is easy to collect from these words of our Lord; I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day {John 6:38-39}. That is to say, it is the pleasure and fixed determination of my Father, that none of those should perish, whom He has made My care and charge. Christ, with the utmost freedom promised to redeem and preserve them safe; wherefore when He shall have collected all these persons together, he will present them to the Father, with saying, Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me. As Christ consented to fulfill the whole will of the Father, concerning our redemption, the Father promised several things to him, some of which respect Himself, personally considered; such as,

1. That He would suitably furnish and qualify Him for the work of mediation, to the discharge of which an extraordinary unction of the Holy Ghost, in His graces and gifts were necessary, as well on account of the greatness and difficulty of the undertaking, as for that He was to be an Head of life and influence to all the elect; for of His fulness they were to receive, and grace for grace { John 1:16}. Such an uncommon measure of the Spirit He received from the Father, is evident from these words, thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows { Psalms 45:7}, the same is affirmed by the Evangelist; for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him { John 3:34}.

2. Assistance and support in it, of such a nature is this promise; He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the Earth, and the isles shall wait for his law {Isaiah 42:1-25}; which federal engagement on the Father's part, animated and encouraged Him in the most difficult branch of His Work, at the time of His dolorous sufferings; when, He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting { Isaiah 1:6}; for then He said, The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded, therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed {

Isaiah 1:7}.

3. As a reward for His Service, when He appointed Him work He promised Him wages; for which reason it is said, His reward is with him, and his work before him {Isaiah 40:10 hew:10 hew:10}; which was,

(1.) The salvation of all His seed. On the condition of making His soul an offering for sin, the Father engaged that He should see His seed, prolong His days, and that the pleasure of the Lord, i.e., the salvation of sinners should prosper in His hand.

(2.) Everlasting honor and dignity. It was the will of God that Christ should suffer on the Cross; but as a reward for such an eminent instance of obedience to Him, He promised Him an immortal crown; on which account it is said, that his glory is great in the Father's salvation; (that is to say, which He decreed and contrived) Honor and Majesty are laid upon him { Psalms 21:4-5}; because he became obedient unto death; yea, even the death of the cross. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name { Php 2:8-9}; i.e., a glory far superior to that of men or angels. These things were the joy that was set before him, which caused him to endure the cross with so much cheerfulness and courage, and to despise the shame. There are other promises which have their immediate reference to the elect, though primarily made to the Lord Jesus Christ in their behalf; such as, I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more { Hebrews 8:12}; All promises of pardon, peace, justification, regeneration, final perseverance and eternal life, concern His members. These transactions of the Father and Son amount unto a full, formal and explicit covenant, which is called a Covenant of Peace; because the terms and articles of our peace were agreed on in it. The mountains shall depart; and the bills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee { Isaiah 54:10}.

Some suppose, that this is not the Covenant of Grace, but another distinct from it; though without reason, as a judicious writer observes, who upon this argument delivers himself thus: "It may be asked, whether there is not a real difference, between what several divines call the Covenant of Redemption or Suretyship, made by God the Father with Christ, and that which they call the Covenant of Grace, or Reconciliation, made by God with believers through Christ. To this I answer, custom without reason, has given a kind of sanction of this way of speaking, and many persons of great piety and learning have fallen into it, without considering the bad use men of corrupt minds make of it; turning what they call the Covenant of Grace into a more rigorous Covenant of Works to us than Adam's Covenant was. The Distinction of the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace, is a distinction without any real or material difference, it is to make two covenants of Grace of one. The Covenant of Redemption, as it is called and described by them, who say it is a distinct Covenant, is of pure Grace."⁵ In order to prove that this is the Covenant of Grace, and not another distinct from it, I would offer these things to be considered,

1. The Distinction of the Covenant of Redemption from the Covenant of Grace is unscriptural; I cannot apprehend, that the sacred Oracles give any countenance to it; the Word of God is so far from supporting this distinction, that it seems to militate against it⁶; we therein read but of two covenants, in which the eternal state of men is concerned, the one is called, a Law or Covenant of

Works; the other is called, the Law of Faith { Romans 3:27}; that is to say, a Covenant of Grace; since the Scriptures give us an account but of two covenants wherein the future state of man is interested: It is anti-scriptural to conceive of the covenant which God made with Christ, as the Head of the elect, as distinct from the Covenant of Grace; for hereby an addition of a third covenant is made to the two covenants, of which the Divine Records treat.

2. This compact is the result of pure Grace; it was merely the Love and free Favour of God the Father, that moved Him to exercise His Wisdom in the contrivance of our Redemption, and to enter into covenant with His Son, to secure this stupendous design: nor can any other reason be assigned, why Christ so voluntarily became our Surety, or undertook for us, than His boundless Goodness and Grace.

3. It was founded upon a purpose of Grace; the resolution which God fixed upon in His eternal mind to bring us to Glory, was the effect of infinite Love; hence our election is called an Election of Grace { Romans 11:5}. That was an act put forth by God, without any external motive; it was His own Sovereign Will, and nothing else that determined Him in this matter. This purpose of God rose up into a covenant between Him and His Song of Solomon 4:1-16. All Grace is promised in this Covenant; doubtless, that Covenant in which all Grace is granted to the elect, is the Covenant of Grace; but thus it is in this compact. The privilege of Adoption in it, is this, God engaged to be the God and Father of Christ, as Mediator and Head of His seed in this Covenant, as is evident from these words, He shall cry unto me, my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation { Psalms 89:26}. Now by the same act that God became the Father of Christ as Mediator, He also became the Father of His members; and therefore our Lord says unto His disciples, I ascend to my God and to your God, to my Father and to your Father {John 20:17}. Again, remission of sin is contained in this Covenant, as the very nature of it plainly demonstrates; Christ on His part promised to bear our guilt, and suffer the demerit of it; and God the Father on His part engaged fully to acquit and discharge us; for he was in Christ, (i.e., from Everlasting, when this Covenant was entered into) reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them { 2 Corinthians 5:19}. Besides, justification is a privilege given in this eternal compact, which we learn from the words of God the Father; by His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many," for He shall bear their iniquities {Isaiah 53:11}. Moreover, the grace of regeneration is treasured up herein, as is manifest from these words, thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power {Psalms 110:3}; that is, Thy members who are naturally perverse and obstinate, shall freely bow to Thy scepter, and submit to Thy laws, as King in Zion. Add to these things, final perseverance is insured to the elect, by this Covenant; this gracious benefit is fully and clearly expressed in this sweet promise; As for Me, this is My Covenant with them, i.e., those who turn from transgression in Jacob, and are described by that character in the preceding verse, My Spirit that is upon thee, that is to say, the Redeemer who came to Zion; and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds' seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever {Isaiah 59:20}. Young converts may be called the seed of the church, because they are born, nourished and brought up there; for of Zion it shall be said, that this and that man was born in her, and the Highest himself shall establish her {Psalms 87:5}. The carnal seed of believers are not intended, but the spiritual seed of Christ: I add once more, that everlasting life is given to the elect, in this Covenant; this is very evident, from the words of the Apostle, in Hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world

began {Titus 1:2}: thus the members of Christ were blessed with all spiritual blessings in this eternal Covenant, which was entered into by God and Christ before time commenced; therefore it is the Covenant of Grace. For though, as Mr. Petto observes, "In covenants between princes, some articles may be concerning prerogatives and royalties, peculiar to them in their public capacities, which the people share not in, but in them, as striking sail, etc. Other grants may concern the people in their private capacities, as merchants, mariners, etc., yet prince and people are within the same contract: so doubtless there may be divers grants to Jesus Christ in his public capacity, in the office of mediator, and other promises made to his seed; yet king and subjects, head and members, are within the same covenant, as the principal debtor, and the Surety are within the same obligation."f7

There being some promises in the Covenant which regard Christ, as personally considered, and others that concern His people, is not a foundation sufficient to support the distinction we have been now considering. In the opinion of the Assembly of Divines, this is the Covenant of Grace; thus they express themselves concerning it in their larger Catechism: "The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ the second Adam, and with all the Elect in him, as his Seed." This is a very full and clear definition of the Covenant of Grace, and plainly shows that they understood the agreement between God and Christ, to be that Covenant; but to proceed.

Secondly, This Covenant is of Eternal date, which I apprehend may be thus made evident.

1. It is called an everlasting Covenant: I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David {Isaiah 55:3}. And elsewhere, Now the God of Peace which brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant {Hebrews 13:20}. It is so called, not only because the benefits of it will eternally continue, but also on the account of its being actually entered into, before time began; which will further appear by what follows.

2. Christ is an everlasting Counsellor: Some of his titles are wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father {Isaiah 9:6}. Dr. Goodwin observes, that Everlastingness which is affixed to him as a Father, is also true of him as a Counsellor.f8 It is with relation to this Covenant, that He bears such a character, being jointly concerned with the Father in the contrivance of our salvation, which is agreed on in it. He was in His bosom from all eternity, and privy to the secret purposes of His heart.

3. He was invested with the office of Mediator before time began, which is manifest from the words of wisdom of Christ: I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was {Proverbs 8:23}: i.e., I was constituted the Head and Mediator of those persons on whom My delights were fixed. It is the Covenant of Grace, of which He is the Mediator, and therefore the Covenant is of the same date with the office and capacity which he bears in that Covenant: but He stood in the capacity of Mediator before the world was framed; hence it follows, the constitution of this Covenant was in eternity.

4. Grace was given to the elect in Christ before the world was formed, as I have already shown. God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began {1 Timothy 1:9}. All Grace and Glory were granted to Christ as the federal Head and Representative of His people,

in the Covenant of Grace; since therefore this was done before the commencement of time, it may be justly concluded, that this Covenant is eternal.

5. If it was not thus, the Old Testament saints could not be saved by virtue of the Covenant of Grace: They were saved even as we, by the very same Covenant. It was from hence that they were furnished with all necessary supplies of Grace, as believers now are. God did not save them by one Covenant, and under this dispensation brings us to happiness by another. Though Christ had not actually accomplished the work of redemption, yet having re-stipulated and agreed with the Father to perform it in the appointed time; all the blessings of the new Covenant were communicated to the elect of God, as much as if it had been really completed, but with a view to the future Satisfaction of Christ, promised in this Covenant; which seems clear from those words of the inspired writer, And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance {Hebrews 9:15}. I pass on, Thirdly, To consider the wise Order and Disposition of All things in this Covenant. The original word signifies aptly or fitly disposed and ordered.^{f9} All things relating to our salvation are most wisely and beautifully disposed in this federal agreement, for the Glory of God, abasing the creature, the security of the church, and the confounding of Satan.

1. This Covenant is most wisely ordered for the Honor of God. The Glory of the Father as the Contriver of our Redemption, is greatly displayed in this compact. He is to be considered as the first Mover in this weighty affair: He drew the plan and model of it, and concerted the best methods to accomplish it. The Honor of the Mediator is herein highly advanced, His Glory is great in our salvation. It was agreed on, that He should perform the work of our redemption, in every branch of it, that all the glory arising from thence might be attributed to Him. Nor is the Honor of the divine Spirit less secured by this Covenant; for as the Father projected the way of our recovery, and the Son completed the work of our redemption, agreeable to his Word and Promise in this great transaction, the Holy Ghost discovers and applies what the Father and Son have done for us. Wherefore the three divine Persons equally divide the glory of our salvation, according to everlasting agreement. Besides, the Perfections of God have a most beautiful display in our recovery, as it was fixed and settled in this Covenant. Wisdom shines with an eminent lustre in the whole affair; hence the revelation of salvation, by a crucified Jesus, or the Gospel, is called the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory {1 Corinthians 2:7}. How the Law might be fulfilled, Justice satisfied, and sinners saved, was worthy of infinite Wisdom to contrive. Again, the Power of God is abundantly discovered in this business, upon which account, Christ as crucified is called the Power, as well as the Wisdom of God {1 Corinthians 1:14}. A finite or created strength was insufficient to support our Lord under the intolerable pressure of guilt and sufferings which He bare and underwent: Divine Power is also manifest in quickening the souls of the elect in their regeneration, and carrying on that work in opposition to sin and Satan: 'Tis only by the Power of God that we are kept through faith unto salvation {1 Peter 1:5}. Moreover, the Love and Grace of God is gloriously displayed in this Covenant. It was mere favor in God that moved him to ordain Christ to be the Mediator and Surety of it, to give our persons and all spiritual blessings into His Hand: it was pure Grace in Christ which induced Him to undertake for us to secure our eternal felicity: 'Tis stupendous and boundless Grace that forgives our abounding sins {Romans 5:20-21} according to the full and precious

promises of this Covenant. Farther, Justice has an equal shine with all the other attributes of God: The honor of Mercy is not advanced to the prejudice of Justice, but that hath the same Glory with Grace. The Righteousness and Justice of God is clearly seen, and fully vindicated in the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons, through the obedience and blood of Christ; so that He appears to be just, in justifying of those who believe in Jesus {Romans 3:26}. Thus there is a perfect harmony between Grace and Justice, Goodness and Holiness in our salvation, which is expressed in these words; Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other {Psalms 85:10}. Add to these things, the Faithfulness of God is evidently seen, in fulfilling Covenant promises, and communicating Covenant blessings to His people; for His Faithfulness He will not suffer to fail {Psalms 59:17}, but will perform all that He hath promised to the elect, in this Covenant; says the Apostle, Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it {1 Thessalonians 5:14}. Believers shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing, to shew the Lord is upright; he is their rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him {Psalms 92:14-15}. Therefore the attributes of God are greatly glorified in this Covenant.

2. It is disposed in the best manner for abasing the creature. Man is naturally full of pride and arrogance, entertains a very high opinion of his ability, and the worth of his services; falsely imagines that it is within the compass of his own power to secure his future happiness: He is really poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked {Revelation 3:17}, yet conceits himself to be rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing. This haughty disposition in man, God is determined to bring down, and to lay his glory in the dust. In order to which, every branch of our salvation is of Grace, in direct opposition to works; as the Apostle affirms, By Grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast {Ephesians 2:8-9}. All boasting and pride are entirely excluded by the Covenant of Grace; for where is boasting? it is excluded: by what law? Of works? nay, but by the Law of Faith {Romans 3:27}; that is, by the New Covenant, or the Gospel.

3. The Covenant is well ordered for the security of the church. Had our Salvation rested on the uncertain will of man, how precarious, nay, impracticable would it have been? But since it is wholly dependent on the immutable Will of God, it is indubitable, certain, and sure. Grace alone could secure it; and therefore it is of faith, that it might be by Grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed {Romans 4:16}. Pardon, peace, nor justification, nay, not any of the blessings of the New Covenant are suspended, till we have performed conditions on our part; but all of them are effectually secured to us, by the mutual engagements of God and Christ in this everlasting Covenant, which are a solid and firm foundation.

4. It is most agreeably disposed for the confounding of Satan. When man was in a state of innocence, Satan formed a design against him, resolved to bring him into the same miserable circumstances with himself, if possible; which to effect, he tempts him to violate the Law of his Creator: man unhappily yields to his temptation, acts contrary to the express command of God. It was no small satisfaction to this fallen spirit, to see his malicious design so far succeed; but that which he thought would have issued in the eternal destruction of man, God takes the advantage of, to render His own Glory the more conspicuous, and to advance apostate man to a far higher dignity than that of which he was possessed in his primitive estate. According to the gracious Decree of God, the works of the Devil are destroyed, his design is frustrated, and eternal confusion is thrown upon himself: For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might

destroy the works of the Devil {1 John 3:8}.

Fourthly, The Covenant of Grace is Stable, Firm and Sure. The Stability and Firmness of it may be concluded from these things:

1. The Love of God, which gave rise to this Covenant, is invariable: it is without any alteration, and always the same. God freely fixed His favor upon the elect; and not because He foresaw any qualifications in them which recommended them to His Goodness; the direct contrary of that is true: for when He placed His Love upon them, He knew that their necks would be as iron sinews, and their brows brass {Isaiah 48:4}. As the foreviews of their obstinacy did not prevent His kind thoughts concerning them, their unworthiness cannot cause Him to change. His Immutability is the solid foundation of their security, which is affirmed by Himself in these words; I am the Lord, I change not; and therefore ye the Sons of Jacob are not consumed {Malachi 3:6}. His Love admits of no vicissitudes; it is as unchangeable as Himself, yea, it is Himself; and He will as soon cease to be, as cease to love His people, says the Apostle, God is Love {1 John 4:16}: that is, it is His Nature and Essence. The interest which the saints have in Divine favor, can never be lost; nothing shall ever separate them from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord {Romans 3:31}: therefore the Covenant of Grace, which is the result of that Love, will eternally remain inviolable and sure.

2. It is founded upon a steady purpose of Grace. The designs of Love which God has formed in His infinite Mind about His elect are unalterable. They are infinitely more firm than mountains of brass: we have His own Word for it; that His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure {Isaiah 46:10}. Eternal Election, on which the everlasting Covenant is fixed as its proper basis, is a foundation that standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are His {2 Timothy 2:19}; from whence the stability of that Covenant may, with very good reason, be inferred.

3. This may be argued from the inviolable Word of God. The blessings of this Covenant are all promised by that God Who cannot lie. If any of the promises of the New Covenant should fail of their accomplishment, the Truth of God would be impeached; but that shall not, nay, never can be: for His Covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips {Psalms 89:34}). Therefore the Covenant of Grace is more firm than the most immovable things in nature, which is expressly affirmed: The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee {Isaiah 54:10}.

4. God hath confirmed this Covenant with His solemn Oath. Thus He speaks concerning it; Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David my Servant {Psalms 89:35}. Wherefore the Covenant of Grace is forever established by God's Word and His Oath. They are the two immutable things wherein it is impossible for him to lie. If the God of Truth cannot break His Promise, nor act contrary to His Oath, then the Covenant is stable and firm; but neither of these He can do, for that were to deny Himself.

5. Christ has ratified this Covenant, by fulfilling all the Conditions of it. The work which the Father gave him to do, He has fully completed, and thereby confirmed the Covenant of Grace. That no part of the Father's Will concerning our redemption remains to be fulfilled, our Lord Himself assures us, by the last words which He delivered on the Cross; for just before He resigned His

Soul, He said, It is finished {John 19:30}; that is, I have now perfected the whole pleasure of My Father, concerning My Sufferings to atone for sin. Now as Christ on His part has punctually performed the utmost of what He promised, Justice requires on the Father's part, that He make good all His federal engagements to Christ. From the whole we may strongly conclude that this Covenant is stable, firm, and sure. It is sure in its promises; not one of those many sweet and gracious promises, with which it is so well stored, shall fail of its fulfillment; for all the promises of God in him are, yea, and in him, Amen, to the glory of God by us {2 Corinthians 1:10}. The blessings of this Covenant are sure, therefore called sure mercies; I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David {Isaiah 55:3}. The remission of our sins, the acceptance of our persons, effectual calling, final perseverance, and eternal blessedness in the fruition of God are all as certain and sure as the unchangeable Love, steady Purpose, firm Promise, and solemn Oath of the God of Truth, and Faithfulness can make them: wherefore not one good thing shall fail, of all that the Lord hath promised. Let the saints adore the free Grace and infinite Goodness of God, which has rendered their everlasting felicity thus secure.

Fifthly, All our salvation is contained in this Covenant. For this is all my Salvation. Some think Christ is designed,^{f10} He is sometimes so called. Simeon gives him this character; Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation {Luke 2:29-30}. He may very justly be styled salvation, because there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved {Acts 4:12}. The whole of our recovery and redemption was effected by him: He is our pardon, peace, justification, and sanctification; yea, our all, and in all. Besides, He is given to us, and all things with Him, in this everlasting Covenant. Salvation itself may be intended; all the various Parts of which were fixed and settled in this Covenant. Our acquittance and discharge from guilt was promised by God on the condition of Christ's suffering the demerit of our crimes. The acceptance of our persons was agreed to upon the terms of Christ's being made under and obeying the Law for us. Grace and glory were absolutely granted to us in this compact; every branch of our salvation comes within the compass of it. Wherefore it is a very dangerous mistake, that men may safely depend upon the uncovenanted Mercy of God for eternal happiness; because it is only through, by, and in the Covenant of Grace, that Divine Goodness is discovered to poor sinners. But I apprehend it is not necessary to enlarge here, having before observed what promises God made to Christ, concerning our Salvation, when this Covenant was entered into between Them.

Sixthly, The Covenant of Grace is equal to the largest Wishes, and most extensive Desires of the saints. And all my desire, says the Psalmist Some understand this of Christ, in Whom really there is every thing which is excellent and desirable: hence He is called the Desire of all Nations {Haggai 2:7}. Infinite Excellencies center in His Person, all Beauties and Perfections reside in Him, and everything that is necessary to our happiness dwells in Him, and flows from Him: the Amiability of His Person, and the Fulness of His Grace, render Him the proper Object of the saints' highest love and pleasure. He indeed is all their delight.^{f11} It may intend that ample and large provision which is made in the everlasting Covenant, for the supply, consolation, and future felicity of God's people. Under the influences of Grace, they ardently desire the extirpation of sin, and a perfect conformity to Christ; greater nearness to God, more clear and lasting prospects of His Love, and a fuller knowledge of the mysteries of Grace: they cannot but aspire after, yea, they vehemently long for an uninterrupted enjoyment of God; nor can any thing less afford them a full and constant

satisfaction. All these things, and far more than we are able to express or conceive, are comprehended in that one promise of this Covenant. They shall be my People, and I will be their God {Jeremiah 32:38}. Therefore it may well be called all our desire, and all our delight.

Lastly, The Covenant of Grace furnishes the saints with suitable Support and Consolation, under the most affective dispensations of Providence.

Although He make it not to grow, Some think the Messiah is intended in these words, and take this to be the sense; though the promised Branch of Jesse and David doth not as yet appear, or is not come, yet He is all my salvation, and all my desire; and He certainly will bud, grow, and flourish in the time appointed in this Covenant.^{f12} Others thus; Christ, Who is all my salvation, and all my desire, shall not grow as the tender grass of the field, which soon fades, decays, and withers, but He shall always reign and govern.^{f13} There be others who understand it of the disorders and irregularities of David's family, and of those afflictions that attended him in his royal station,^{f14} under which the Covenant of Grace was His support and comfort. That this Covenant is well suited to comfort the saints under pressing difficulties and trials, thus appears;

1. The Covenant of Grace has severed them from all penal evil. No curse attends their afflictions, however great or heavy they may be; for it was agreed and settled by God and Christ in this compact, that the curse due to their offenses should be inflicted on their Surety: therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus {Romans 8:1}. There is not the least drop of wrathful anger, or vindictive displeasure poured into their cup.

2. They spring from Love, as we learn from these words; As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten {Revelation 3:19}. In the Covenant of Grace a rod is laid up for the correction of Christ's seed; but from the nature of the Covenant, we must necessarily conclude, that everlasting Love provided it, and that infinite Compassion only uses it.

3. All afflictions, under the influence of this Covenant, serve the true interest of their souls. The apostle affirms, That all things work together for good to those that love God, and are the called according to his purpose {Romans 8:28}. They are brought nearer to God, are weaned from the things of this world, and their graces, faith, hope, and patience, are exercised by the tribulations which attend them {Romans 5:4-5}.

4. The Covenant of Grace secures their deliverance out of all afflictions. In this world they shall have tribulation {John 16:33}: but to this world, blessed by God, it is limited; for none will invade them in the next. A period will be fixed to their lives and their griefs at the same time. When we say that a believer is dead, we pronounce him so from all sin and sorrow. These things being thus, it may well be allowed that the Covenant of Grace administers suitable comforts under distresses. An instance of which we have in the person, whose decease occasioned this discourse. Many things might be mentioned concerning her, worthy of our imitation; but I shall not enlarge on her character: her manner of life was well known to many of you. This I think may be said of her, without any suspicion of flattery to her honorable memory, that the Grace of God, which bringeth salvation, and has appeared to all men, taught her to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. Her afflictions were many, which so far as I am able to judge from my acquaintance with her, she bore with patience, resignation, and cheerfulness. In her last tedious and heavy one, she was generally comfortable, and the nearer

her time of dissolution drew nigh, her faith grew stronger in Covenant-Love. When I paid her my last visit, she spoke very freely of divine things, with a remarkable degree of pleasure: but the state of her body being then very low, I was fearful speaking too much might be prejudicial to her, which I signified: She answered, "What can I say too much about my dear Lord? Can I talk too much about him who has done and suffered such great things for me?" Thus joyful she then was, at the prospect of approaching death. She now is, I doubt not, delivered out of all affliction and trouble, and received into the blessed mansions above, by her dear Saviour, with this rapturous invitation: Come thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee, before the foundation of the world; where the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne feeds, and leads her to living fountains of water, and God wipes away all tears from her eyes.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Vid. Poli Synop. in loc. ft2 Vid. Poli Synop. in loc. ft3 Glassius', Philol. Sac. 1. 3. Gram. Sac. p. 616. ft4 See my, Defense of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification, pp. 60- 64. ft5 R. Taylor's, The Covenant of Grace, pag. 233. ft6 Neonomianism Unmasked, 2nd Part, pag. 127 ft7 Petto on The Covenant, pag. 20. ft8 Goodwin, Christ the Mediator, 1. 4, pag. 136. ft9 A Rad. Ær[ordinavit, disposuit, aptavit, Roberts' Lexicon. ft10 Vid. Poli Synop. in loc. ft11 xpjlk ft12 Vid. Poli Synop. in loc. ft13 Ibid. ft14 Ibid.

S. The Doctrine of Imputation

The Doctrines of the Imputation of Sin to Christ and the Imputation of His Righteousness to His People: Clearly Stated, Explained, and Improved by John Brine (London: John Ward, 1757)

SERMON 26 THE DOCTRINES OF THE IMPUTATION OF SIN TO CHRIST, AND THE IMPUTATION OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO HIS PEOPLE: CLEARLY STATED, EXPLAINED, AND IMPROVED IN A SERMON PREACHED TO THE SOCIETY, WHO SUPPORT THE WEDNESDAY EVENING- LECTURE, IN GREAT-EAST-CHEAP. DECEMBER 29TH, 1756.

Published at their Request. Printed for and Sold by JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, against the Royal Exchange; by GEORGE KEITH, in Grace-church-street; and by John Eynon, Printseller the Corner of Castle Alley, by the Royal Exchange.

{2 Corinthians 5:21} For He hath made Him to be Sin for us; who knew no Sin: That we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him. IN Consequence of our Apostacy from God, the Depravation of our Nature, thereupon, and of that personal Guilt, which we have contracted: We cannot, according to the Tenor of the Law, be admitted to Fellowship with our Maker either here, or hereafter, without Satisfaction for our Violation of it, as through the Corruption of our Nature we desire it not. Of which important Doctrine the Apostle treats, in some of the preceding Verses. God was in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing their Trespases to them, and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation, or, the Gospel of Peace, which Christ gave Commission to his Apostles and Ministers to preach. In the Words of my Text, we are informed, how this Reconciliation was effected and brought about. I suppose, that every intelligent Reader will easily observe, that they consist of three distinct Branches - Christ knew no Sin - He hath made Him to be Sin for us - That we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.

I shall consider the Words in the Order I have now mentioned them.

I. Christ knew no Sin. Sometimes, Sin is put for our natural Depravity. Thus it is to be understood, in several Verses of the seventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: But Sin, that it might appear Sin, working Death in me, by that which is good, that Sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful (Romans 7:13.). The Apostle expresses his Experience by the Phrase I know, in this Part of the Verse, as he does by the Phrase I find, in the following Branch of it. The Holy Jesus knew no Sin, in this Sense. He had not the least Experience of Evil in him, For, He was harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners (Hebrews 7:26.). A Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot (1 Peter 1:19.). No moral Taint or Imperfection attended him: And his Conduct was absolutely perfect. He did no Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth (1 Peter 2:22). I would offer to Consideration three Particulars, to shew, that it was impossible, that Christ should know Sin, in either Sense now mentioned.

1. His miraculous Conception in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin. Christ not being conceived in a natural, but supernatural Manner, he did not partake of our natural Corruption. It was impossible he should, because he was the supernatural Production of the holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost shall

come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee: Therefore also, that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee (Luke 1:35.). This was an absolutely new Thing, the like was never before, nor ever will be. Behold a new Thing do I create, a woman shall compass a Man, i.e. a male Child by Conception, through the Agency of the divine Spirit. To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given. This was plainly a new Creation. The human Nature of our Lord being produced by the Exertion of the Power of the Spirit of God, no moral Taint or Impunity could attend it. For, the holy Spirit could not give Subsistence unto as unholy Nature.

2. The human Nature of Christ was replete with all the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him (Isaiah 61:1.). And the Father gave not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Superaddition of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit unto the Purity of Christ's Nature, rendered it impossible that he should know sin. He having all the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit in their utmost Plenitude and Perfection, superadded unto the Purity of his Nature, nothing of Evil could possibly take Place in him: Such as the holy Spirit formed him, in the Virgin's Womb, such he infallibly preferred him, by his continual Presence with him, in the Fulness of all his Gifts and Graces. 3. The human nature of Christ hath its Subsistence in his Divine Person. That Individuum of our Nature which was miraculously produced by the Power of the Holy Ghost, the Son of God took into a personal Union with himself. He assumed it to be his own in a peculiar Manner, that it might be at his Disposal, and always under the Direction of his divine Will. The human Will, and the divine Will of our Saviour are, and eternally will be distinct; but his Will as Man is in absolute Subjection to, and in all Instances, acts under the Direction of his divine Will. And, therefore, it is not possible that he should ever know Sin. Moral evil can never take place in a Nature which is ineffably united with the Person of the Son of God.

There Things clearly evince the Falsehood of the Abomination of the Socinians, who impiously imagine, that Christ might have sinned, and, consequently, that the Design of our Salvation by him might have been entirely ruined. Than which, nothing more false and dishonourable to God, can depraved Reason devise. We grant, that the Will of the most holy Creature, is in itself mutable, and, therefore, if left unto itself, it may make an unfit and unwise Choice: But, since the human Nature of Christ is the Workmanship of the Holy Spirit, and is replenished with all his supernatural Gifts and Graces, and also is in Union with the eternal Son of God, and, therefore, his human Will acts in all Things under the Direction of his divine Will; it is absolutely impossible that his human Will, at any Time, or in any Instance, should make an unfit and unwise Choice. The supernatural production of our Lord, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, is a clear Proof of the Purity of his Nature, in his Formation. And the superaddition of his Gifts and Graces, and the Subsistence of that holy Nature, in the Person of the Son of God, certainly raise it above a Possibility of Defilement and unfit Acting, for evermore. I would make two Observations on these Particulars, before I proceed farther.

(1) Adam was not a Head to Christ. Our blessed Lord was not a Member of him, included in him, nor represented by him, in his public Capacity. He was the Representative of all his natural Descendants; but his Headship was not, nor could be of larger Extent; the holy Jesus not being so, he did represent him. The first Man could not be a Head to the second Man, who is the Lord from Heaven. It would be the highest Incongruity imaginable to conceive, that Adam was a Head to one who is so much his Superior in all Respects In Gifts, Graces, and in Nearness of Union with God. It was not possible that he, who is personally united with the eternal Son of God, should be a

Member of, and be represented by Adam. And, therefore, our Lord had no Concern in his Guilt, as a Member of his. Which is the Case of all his natural Descendants. Original Guilt becomes theirs, in Consequence of their Relation to Adam, as a Representative to them. For which Reason it is imputed to them, It is not the divine Act of the Imputation of Adam's Sin that makes it ours; but because it is ours, in Consequence of our Relation to him as a Head, therefore it is imputed to us.

(2) Christ was not, nor could become Subject of the natural Consequence of Adam's first Sin By which Consequence, I understand, the Depravation of our Nature. That immediately followed, in Adam, as the natural Effect of his Transgression. And, it takes Place in us, because his Act of Offence was ours, tho' not committed by us; but by him; as our Representative. That Act of Sin being legally ours, we share with him, in the natural Consequence of it: Or, we derive Depravity from him, on Account of becoming guilty with him. This sad Effect does not follow upon the Imputation of his Sin, as the Cause thereof; but It follows upon his Sin being legally, ours, he acting therein, as our Representative Head, and no otherwise. Now Christ not being concerned in original Guilt, by Virtue of Union with him, as a Head, the natural Consequence of that Guilt could not take Place in him, as it does in us, by Reason it is ours, as we are Members of him. Thus the holy Jesus was separate from Sinners, and it was not possible, that he should participate with them, in that which is the natural Consequence of Sin, viz. Moral Defilement and Impurity. Unless the human Nature of our blessed Lord had been thus infallibly preserved from all moral Evil, both in Principle and Act, our whole Salvation would have been uncertain and precarious. For, if the holy Jesus had been under a Possibility of Defilement, and of acting illegally, in any Instance, the Design of our Salvation by him might possibly have been defeated, to the eternal Reproach of the Perfections of God, and the everlasting Ruin of the Church. The Thought of which must surely be shocking to every pious Mind! That which Christ knew not, nor could know, he was made.

II. He hath made him to be Sin for us. There are three Things to be considered in this important Subject: Whose Act this was - The Act itself - And, on whose Account, or, for whom Christ was made Sin: For us.

1. This was not the Act of any Creature, angelic or human: but the Act of the divine Father. We pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be Sin for us. i.e. He to whom the Apostle prays the Corinthians to be reconciled, made him to be Sin for us. It would have been daring and impious Insolence, in any Creature, to will that the Son of God should be made Sin. God only had a Right to resolve upon it. and he alone could place it to his Account. This was the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom, and the Determination of his sovereign Pleasure, In forming the Plan of our Reconciliation; he willed not to impute our Trespases to us, and decreed to impute them unto Christ, in order to his making Atonement for them. And according unto this his sovereign Decree: He laid on him, or made to meet in him, the Iniquities of us all. The Foundation of this Procedure was it federal Agreement between the Father and Christ. Which is clearly expressed in a blessed divine Context by the inspired Writer to the Hebrews: Wherefore, when he cometh into the World, he saith, Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not; but a Body hast thou prepared e. In Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices for Sin thou hadst no Pleasure.

Then said I, Lo, I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and Offering, and burnt Offerings, and Offerings for Sin, thou wouldst not, neither hadst Pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law: Then said he, Lo, I

come to do thy Will O God; he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are Sanctified, through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:5-10.) In these Words it evidently appears, that it was the Will of the Father, that Christ should become an Offering for Sin; unto which he freely and fully consented. This Paction, or federal Agreement, was the Ground on which the Father made him to be Sin for us. And, therefore, wonderful as it is, there is not the least Injustice therein. The divine Decree, to impute Sin to Christ, was an Act of absolute Sovereignty, and afore from the mere Pleasure of God, with a View to the Glory of his Perfections, in our Remission and Salvation. But the Act itself, of imputing our Guilt to him, hath for its Foundation, the free and full Consent of Christ to bear it, in compliance with the Will of the Father that he should. So that the Charge of our Crimes to him, comports with Justice, and no Injury was done to Christ in that Act. The Sovereignty of the Decree of the Imputation of Sin to him is a most clear Proof that God only could make him to be Sin for us. For, if it had been possible to any created Mind, to have devised this Method of the Expiation of Sin, which it was not, no Creature could have been inverted with a Right to will and move for the Imputation of it unto the innocent Jesus. As the Contrivance of this adorable Transaction was proper to infinite Wisdom: So it was peculiar to divine Sovereignty to resolve upon it. This Act, therefore, of making Christ to be Sin for us, was God's own, and not the Act of any Creature whatsoever.

2. The Act of making him to be Sin: Or how he was made Sin for us, is to be considered. I would do this negatively, and positively.

(1.) Negatively. It was not inherently: That was absolutely impossible. For, that would have been contrary to the infinite Purity of God, and ruinous to his Design of our Salvation by Christ. Besides, as has been before shewn, the miraculous Conception of our Lord, and the Super-addition of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit unto the Purity of his Nature, and the Subsistence of his human Nature, in his divine Person, rendered it impossible that any moral Taint, or Impurity, should ever take Place in him. This Act, therefore, of making him to be Sin, effected no internal Change in him. His Nature remained pure and spotless notwithstanding. And all his Actions corresponded with the sinless Perfection of his Nature.

(2.) I am to shew in a positive Sense, how Christ was made Sin. And He was made Sin in the same manner, as we are made the Righteousness of God in Him. Which is imputatively. Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works. Imputation is, reckoning accounting or placing to Account, and esteeming thereupon. The Act of Imputation, therefore, whether, of Sin, or Righteousness, makes no internal Change in the Object of the Act. For it is not a transient Act; but it is an inward Act of the Mind, which cannot produce a physical Change, in the Object upon whom it passes. And, consequently, the Imputation of Sin to Christ, was not, nor could be productive of any internal Change in him. Notwithstanding the placing to his Account, in the divine Mind, our Guilt, or criminal Actions, he remained, innocent, pure, and spotless in himself. This one thing being duly attended unto, will enable us to answer various of the trifling Objections, which are raised against the Doctrine of the Imputation of our Sins to him, beyond any solid Reply. Some have objected, that if Sin itself was imputed to Christ, he must have been defiled by it. But that is a great Mistake: For Sin, as imputed, defiles not. If it did, the Imputation of it, would be impossible with God, not only with respect to Christ; but also, Sinners themselves; because infinite Purity, cannot put forth any Act which would render the Object of that Act morally

impure. If the Imputation of Sin to the guilty Creature does not pollute him, which is a certain Truth: How should the Imputation of it to the Holy Jesus, defile him? Imputation is not Transfusion. In the latter a Person becomes the Subject of that which is transfused. But in the former, no one becomes the Subject of that which is imputed, by the Act of Imputation. And therefore, though the Transfusion of Sin, if that could be, which it cannot, would necessarily defile: The Imputation of it, does not pollute the Object of that Act. And, consequently, the Imputation of Sin to the Blessed Jesus did not, nor could pollute his holy Nature. This Doctrine contains no false, or mistaken Idea in it, on the Part of the Father, who imputed Sin to Christ; nor on the Part of Christ, to whom it was imputed. Not on the Part of the Father; for, he did not consider our criminal Actions, which he placed to the Account of Christ, as his Acts, or perpetrated by him; but as our Acts, or committed by us: So that his Judgment in this Affair was according to Truth and Fact. Nor, does this Doctrine on the Part of Christ, include any mistaken Conception in it: For, it does not suppose, that he had any Consciousness of the Perpetration of those criminal Actions, which were imputed to him: Or, that under the Charge of them to him, he considered and esteemed them Acts, which he himself had committed. Wherefore, this Doctrine is attended with no dangerous Consequence, relating to Christ, nor is any Thing contrary to Truth, supposed therein, respecting Sin, which he was made for us. Besides, if Guilt was not charged on Christ, his Sufferings could not be of a penal nature. For, Penalty, is suffering under a Charge of Offence, and without a just Imputation of Guilt, Punishment cannot, in Equity be inflicted, on any Subject. It is a most unrighteous thing to punish any one considered, as innocent. And, therefore, if it was not possible with God, to impute Sin to the innocent Jesus, neither could he inflict Punishment on him. And, if Christ did not endure proper Punishment, his Sufferings were not, nor could be satisfactory to the Law, and Justice of God for our Sins. And it is in vain to hope for Salvation, through his Sufferings and Death. Of such Necessity and Importance, is the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ

3. He was made Sin for us. Not for all the Individuals of Mankind. The latter Branch of the Text interprets this. Christ was made Sin for those, and only those, who are made the Righteousness of God in him. Now as Men universally are not made the Righteousness of God in Christ: So he was not made Sin for Men universally, The Extent of there two Things is exactly the same. Such, who remain dead in Sin, and go out of this World under the Dominion and Power of it, surely none can think are made the Righteousness of God in Christ; and there is no Reason to conceive, that he was made Sin for any of them. He bore the Guilt of no others than those to whom he is a Head, who are his Body, and for whom he became a Surety. For, that was the Foundation on which Sin was imputed to him: And, therefore, the Sins of such Persons only were imputed to him, who are related to him as Members. They are the Church which he loved, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing (Ephesians 5:27.). The End of his being made Sin for us, was,

III. That we might be made the Righteousness of God in him. The Things to be considered in this Branch of my Subject are the following: Righteousness - That this is the Righteousness of God - How we are made the Righteousness of God - And our being made the Righteousness of God in Christ.

1. I would shew what Righteousness is. And it consists of two distinct Branches.

(1.) Purity of Nature. The Lord requires Truth in the inward Part. The Law extends to the Mind. All its Dispositions and Acts must be perfectly holy. The eternal Rule of Righteousness allows of no internal Impurity, any more than it does of external unholy Acts. All vain Imaginations, all disorderly Thoughts, all irregular Desires and all evil Tendencies, in the Affections, are condemned by it. Righteousness, therefore, includes in it Holiness of Heart, and such Holiness as is answerable to the Requirement of the Law, viz. absolutely perfect and sinless.

(2.) Obedience to all the Precepts of the Law, in Conduct, is the other Branch of Righteousness. If any Act is done which the Law prohibits, or if any Defect and Imperfection attends those Actions, which it prescribes, Righteousness is wanting. For, if there is not a complete Conformity to the Law, in Heart and Life, or in all Acts, internal and external, both with Respect to the Matter and Manner of those Acts, the Lawgiver must necessarily, if his Judgment is according to Truth, esteem that Obedience imperfect, and not answerable to the Rule of Action. And, therefore, not such as will justify in his Sight. The Holiness of Christ's Nature, and his sinless Obedience in Life, are the two essential Branches of that Righteousness which is required in the Law: And both are equally necessary unto our being constituted righteous in him; who is the Lord our Righteousness .
2. That Righteousness, which we are made, is the Righteousness of God.

(1.) This may be understood of God the Father. For, this Righteousness is the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom. How guilty Men should be just with God, no created Understanding could determine. None but God, himself could resolve how this should be. And it is the Effect of his sovereign Goodwill and Pleasure Christ's Headship to us: Our Relation to him as Members: His Subjection to the Covenant of Works on our Account, are Effects of the Love of God to us, and the Result of his gracious Decree, concerning us. Besides, the Father accepts of this Righteousness for us, and graciously imputes it unto us. And, therefore, this Righteousness is his free Gift. For which Reason it is called the Gift of Righteousness.

(2.) Christ, whole this Righteousness is, he as truly and properly God. He is the mighty God (Isaiah 9:6.). Over all, God blessed for ever (Romans 9:5). In the Form of God, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God (Php 2:6.). He who is our Righteousness, is Jehovah. This is therefore the Righteousness of a divine Person; but not his divine Righteousness. The human Nature of Christ is the immediate Subject of it. For, it is the Holiness and Obedience of that Nature, unto the Law, under which, as Man, he was made. As his human Nature hath its Subsistence in his divine Person; it is the Righteousness of God, as his Blood is the Blood of God. The Dignity of his Person is the Ground and Measure of the Merit and Value of both; his Person is infinite in Dignity, and that gives infinite Worth and Merit to his Obedience. And, therefore, it is properly deferring of all that Grace and Glory, which are and will be communicated to the Elect of God, even unto Eternity. And it is thro' this Righteousness that Grace will reign unto eternal Life. This is the Righteousness of the Mediator; but it is not his mediatorial Righteousness. For, that comprises the full Execution and faithful Discharge of the whole Will of God in his mediatorial Capacity, which is of far longer Extent than the Requirements of the Covenant of Works from us. This is that perfect Holiness and sinless Obedience, which that Covenant demands of us. Hence it is evident that though this Righteousness is included in his mediatorial Righteousness, yet it is not that Righteousness itself. These Things clear the Doctrine of the imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, from several Objections which are brought against it.

3. The Act of making us Righteousness, is to be considered. This is not inherently, but imputatively. Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works (Romans 4:5.). It is not the Transfusion of Christ's Righteousness into us For that is impossible. We do not become the Subjects of it. As he did not become the Subject of Sin, by being made Sin for us: So we do not become the Subjects of Righteousness, by being made the Righteousness of God in him. Sin which Christ was made was not inherent in him: And Righteousness which we are made, is not inherent in us. Sin is ours subjectively, and not Christ's. And Righteousness is his subjectively, and not ours. The Imputation of Sin to him, effected no internal Change in him: Nor does the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, produce any internal Change in us. A due Consideration of the Nature of the Act of Imputation, will enable us to see this clearly. Imputation is an internal Act of the Mind, whether it be of Sin or Righteousness, and, therefore, it cannot be productive of any inherent Change in the Object upon whom it passes. As Christ was not made sinful, by the Imputation of our Sins to him: So we are not made holy, or internally righteous, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. For, as the Imputation of Sin to him did not defile him: So the Imputation of Righteousness to us does not sanctify us. The Reason of which is clear, Imputation is not a Transfusion of that which is imputed, whether it be Sin or Righteousness; but it is reckoning, accounting, or placing to Account, and esteeming thereupon, as was before observed. The Object of this Act, therefore, must still be inherently the same as before, notwithstanding that Act passing on him, because it is not a transient; but an internal Act, which cannot produce a physical Change, in its Object. It is certainty true, that as God makes Christ Righteousness to us: So he also makes him Sanctification unto us; but not in the same Way. He makes him Righteousness to us, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to our Persons: He makes him Sanctification to us, by a Conveyance of Grace from him, into our Souls. So that his Grace, which is conveyed into our Hearts from him, becomes ours subjectively; but his Righteousness, which is imputed to us, does not so become ours. It is still in him, as its proper Subject, and not in us. And in the divine Imputation of this Righteousness to us, it is not supposed, that God accounts it our personal Righteousness, or wrought out by us; but it is freely granted, and constantly asserted, that he esteems it, as it really is Christ's Righteousness, or wrought out by him: Nor, is It thought, that God considers this Righteousness as ours subjectively, or inherent in us; but that he reckons it to be the Righteousness of Christ subjectively, as it truly is. He accounts it ours, no otherwise than by free Gift, and gracious Imputation. And, therefore, this Doctrine contains in It nothing absurd, or any false and mistaken Conception, concerning God, Christ, or us.

4. It is in Christ that we are made the Righteousness of God:

(1.) We are in Christ: Or a Union between him and us subsists. The Act of Election terminated on our Persons in him. For we were chosen in him. In that gracious Decree, God willed him to be a Head to the Church, and appointed the Church to be his Body: Which Act of the divine Will, constituted a real Union between Christ, and the Church. And, the everlasting Covenant was made with him, considered as the Church's Head, which the Assembly of Divines well express: The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ, as Head, and with the Elect in him, as his Seed.

And, therefore, all the Blessings promised and granted, in that Covenant, were given to us in him. We were blessed with all spiritual Blessings, In heavenly Places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3.). And that Grace according o which, we are rived and called with an holy Calling, was given us in Christ, before the World began (2 Timothy 1:9.). Which necessarily supposes the Subsistence of a real

Union between Christ, as Head, and us, as Members of him.

(2.) This foederal, or as some have called it, this Fountain-Union, is the Foundation of the Imputation of our Guilt to Christ and of the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. Because, we are mystically one with him, our Sin was imputed to him, and for that Reason, his Righteousness is imputed to us. Because, we were foederally, in the first Adam, as a Head to us, therefore, is his Act of Disobedience, charged on us: And, because we were foederally in the second Adam, as a Head to us, therefore, is his Obedience placed to our Account. And as we were in Adam prior to the Imputation of his Offence to us: So we were in Christ prior to the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. I lament, I greatly lament, that some even among ourselves, seem to suppose, (though I think they have no ill meaning) that the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, is prior to any real Union with him, which is a great Mistake. They do this left they should give Countenance, to what has been called Antinomianism, viz. Union with Christ from Everlasting. But the Truth is, a Denial of this everlasting foederal Union, between Christ and his People, leaves no Ground for the Imputation of their Sins to him, nor, the Imputation of his Righteousness to them. The divine Decree to impute our Sins to Christ, and to impute his Righteousness to us, was an Act of mere Sovereignty; but the Acts of the Imputation of our Sin to him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, proceed on a fit and just Ground, which God in infinite Wisdom, fixed on, and that is a mystical Union between him and us, whereby it became proper and condecant, that he should bear our Guilt, and that his Obedience should be reckoned, or imputed to us. So that, the Act of Imputation, in neither Instance, is to be considered, as merely sovereign; but as righteous and just. And, therefore, a real Union between Christ and us must have subsisted, antecedent to the Imputation of our Sin to him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to us.

Three Observations will close this Discourse.

Observ. 1. We ought to adore the Wisdom, Purity, Sovereignty, and Grace of God, which are herein discovered. What a Display of divine Wisdom is there in these Things! They are the Wisdom of God in a Mystery: His hidden Wisdom. That Mystery which was hid in God. No created Mind, how capacious soever could possibly have resolved how our Guilt might be expiated, fully atoned for, and our Persons constituted righteous: The Law magnified, and every divine Perfection shine forth, in its brighter Lustre, in our certain and complete Salvation. Upon a due Consideration of the Constitution of Christ's Person: The transferring of our Guilt to him: His Subjection to the Covenant of Works: His Obedience to it, and the infinite Merit of his Obedience, arising from the infinite Dignity of his Person, and that just Ground, whereon, his Obedience becomes ours, and, therefore, is imputed to us: Surely, we can't but say as the Apostle does, in a Way of holy Adoration: O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his Judgements, and his Ways past finding out Again, the Purity of God is clearly seen herein. Sin is not connived at, or spared: Nor, are any Allowances made for our moral Imperfections and Defects, in the Way of our Pardon and Salvation. Neither are our Persons justified, without a Righteousness perfectly commensurate to the extensive Requirements of the Law. And all spiritual Blessings are communicated to us on such a Foundation as is honourable to divine Justice, as well as it is to the Praise of the Glory of divine Grace. The infinite Holiness of God hath not, in any Thing, nor can have so illustrious a Shine, as it hath in making Christ to be sin for us, and in making us the Righteousness of God in him. Besides, the Sovereignty of God most manifestly appears in this whole Procedure. The supernatural Conception of Christ as Man, that

he might not have any evil Taint, was the sovereign Appointment of God. The Ordination of his human Nature, unto a Subsistence in his divine Person, was a sovereign Decree. Yea, it was one of the highest Acts of Sovereignty that God ever did, or will put forth. The Decree, that the holy Spirit, in all his supernatural Gifts and Graces should reside in the human Nature of Christ, was a sovereign one. The Determination, that a Nature so dignified, and raised above the Condition of a mere Creature, by an ineffable Union with the eternal Son of God, should bear Sin, and become subject to the Covenant of Works, on our Account, was entirely owing to the sovereign Pleasure of God. And it was divine Sovereignty which fixed on the Persons whose Guilt he should bear, and for whom he should obey the Law. Than which, nothing can be more evident. For, both are the Effects of absolute Pleasure. And, therefore, it was free with God, to resolve on whose Account he should be made Sin: And to whom he should be made Righteousness. There are such Acts of Favour, as none have a Right to claim, and, consequently, God was at full Liberty to determine by a sovereign Act of his Will, whose Guilt he should bear, and who should be made righteous in him. Thus divine Sovereignty is the Basis of both these Things; thereupon they entirely rest, and into it they must be absolutely resolved, as the original Cause thereof. Farther, the Grace of God shines most gloriously in these Things. Infinite Love to our Persons is discovered in the Transfer of our Guilt from us, and in the Imputation of it to Christ, in order to his suffering the Penalty it demerits, that we might be pardoned and laved. That Redemption which we have through him, the Forgiveness of Sins, is according to the Riches of divine Grace. And the Decree, that he should come under the Covenant of Works, on our Account, and obey it for us, that we might be constituted righteous: justified in the Sight of God, and be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life, is an amazing Purpose of Kindness and Mercy.

Observ. 2. These important Truths are a most solid Ground of strong Consolation. It is the Will of God, that the Heirs of Promise, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before them, might enjoy such Consolation. Sin, in its Guilt, being transferred from us, and imputed to Christ, and atoned for by him, is a firm Foundation of spiritual Peace and Joy. We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. by whom we have now received the Atonement (Romans 5:10.). Permit me to say it, (I shall express no ill Meaning) let not the Saints be afraid of Sin, in its Guilt. I do not say, fear not to commit Sin, no, God forbid, that they ought to fear above all Things. But fear not Sin in the Guilt of it. They sometimes have very terrifying Apprehensions, under a Sense of Guilt contracted, and are afraid to hope for Pardon, on Account of the heinous Nature, and the Aggravations of their Guilt. But they have no just Reason for it. Because Christ hath finished their Transgression, and made an End of their Sin, as to its Guilt. And, therefore, they have no Cause to fear it, in its Guilt, Christ having put it away by the Sacrifice of himself. We ought eternally to fear Sin, in the Love, Prevalence and Power of it, for, therein, it will certainly be ruinous for evermore. But Terrors of Conscience, occasioned by the Guilt of Sin, in those who are freed from the Dominion and Power of it, are groundless, because that is fully expiated, by the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God, who was made Sin. Again, Believers being made the Righteousness of God in Christ, they have just Cause of Triumph. And may say with holy Exultation: Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again (Romans 8:34-35.) Whole Resurrection is a full Proof of their Justification. For, He was delivered for their Offences: And raised again for their Justification (Romans 4:25.). The Righteousness, which they are made, is an everlasting one, and everlasting Salvation is inseparably connected with it. Their joyful language, even under the

deeper Sense of their Guilt, Imperfections and Unworthiness, in themselves, should be this: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God, because he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation, and covered me with the Robe of Righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10.).

Observ. 3. These are Doctrines according to Godliness. It is a very gross Mistake to imagine, that these Principles are calculated to encourage Negligence, Sloth, or Evil. On the contrary, they are calculated to promote an Abhorrence of Sin, and a cordial Approbation of Righteousness, and true Holiness. What stronger Motive to forsake Sin can be thought of than Christ's bearing it, and his suffering the Penalty which it demerits? Wherein, divine Indignation against our Crimes was discovered to the utmost. And as his being made Righteousness to us, does not dissolve our Obligation to Obedience: So it is a most powerful Incitement unto it, in a Way of Gratitude for that eminent Favour. That our corrupt Nature may abuse these, and other evangelical Truths, is granted. As it may also abuse the Law. For, Sin will take Occasion by the Commandment to work in us all Manner of Concupiscence. But the Law is not culpable, and blame-worthy, on that Account. And the same evil Principle may abuse the Gospel, and turn the Doctrine of the Grace of God, into Lasciviousness. But the Gospel is not culpable, nor ought any Blame to be charged on it, for that Reason. Our Opinion of the Nature and Tendency of Doctrines, is not by any Means to be formed from that Use, which our depraved Minds are inclined to make thereof. If that may be allowed, we shall be led to entertain unworthy Conceptions of legal as well as of evangelical Truths. For, there is nothing, which the Flesh in us, will not pervert and abuse, unto the Gratification of its cursed Desires. If we have a real Acquaintance with the Nature of these most precious Truths, and act under their genuine Influence, we shall deny all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and shall live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present World (Titus 2:12.)

S. The Faith of God's Elect Noted and Rectified

SOME MISTAKES IN A BOOK OF MR.

JOHNSON'S OF LIVERPOOL, INTITLED, 'THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT, ETC.'

NOTED AND RECTIFIED, Printed for JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal-Exchange: And Sold by GEORGE KEITH, at the Bible and Crown, Gracechurch-Street; And by JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal Exchange.

London 1755 [Price Six-Pence.]

I AM sensible that it is a very displeasing Thing, to undertake a Discovery of the Misconceptions of Writer, upon any Subject. And, that there are but Few, who have Temper enough to bear with an Examination of what they publish, without at least some Degree of undue Resentment. Notwithstanding, I shall always think myself at full Liberty, to animadvert upon, and point out the Mistakes of any Author, even though he is my Friend, provided I am not guilty of Indecency, in my Manner of doing it. And I hope to have such a Guard upon myself, in the following Lines, as not to give Occasion for a just Censure of Unfairness and Disingenuity, much less of Rancour and Indecency: And such Freedom I will allow any one to take with me. I have often observed, that our Mistakes, on many Subjects, arise from a partial Consideration of the Matter of our Inquiries. For want of examining a Doctrine, in every Point of Light, wherein it is to be viewed, we many Times form very mistaken Conceptions concerning it, and fall into such Notions, relating to the Subject of our Disquisitions, as are, by no means, defensible. Unless I am greatly deceived, unto this Cause are owing, Most of the Mistakes of Mr. Johnson, in his Treatise, intitled, 'The Faith of God's Elect' Which may, chiefly, be summed up under the following Heads, or Positions:

I. That Grace and Glory might have taken place upon God's Elect, on the Ground of Adoption, without the Intervention of Sin, and Salvation from it.

II. That Adam was called earthy, in respect to his Mind, as well as his Body: Or that the Apostle called him earthy, in Relation to his Person, and Nature.

III. That Grace in the Hearts of the Saints, is not a new Creature.

IV. That Faith, though it hath Activity, it is not an Act.

V. That Faith is not, nor can be a Duty.

VI. That Faith is not purchased by Christ.

VII. That Ministers are not commissioned to preach the Law.

VIII. That they are not to admonish Sinners to leave their Sins, and amend their Lives.

I. Mr. Johnson thinks, that Grace and Glory might have taken place upon God's Elect, on the Ground of Adoption, without the Intervention of Sin, and Salvation from it.

Thus he speaks: I cannot conceive any Reason, according to the original Constitution of Things, why Grace and Glory might not have taken place upon God's Elect, according to his everlasting Love in Adoption, supposing Sin, or Salvation, has {had} never had a Being. f1 The Love of God to his People is from everlasting, and never began, as it will be to everlasting, and will never end. It is invariable, there is no Alteration in it, whatever Changes take place in them. It admits not of Increase, or Decrease. It is not of one Kind now, and of a different Kind hereafter. An Alteration in their State makes no Difference in Divine Love to their Persons. In my humble Opinion, it may be thus defined, viz. A Will in God, arising from his sovereign and immense Goodness, to do them good, with infinite Delight. If this is a just Definition of the Love of God to the Persons of his People there can be no proper Reason to take Offence at asserting, that while they are in a State of Unregeneracy, they are interested therein; nor the least Necessity, to distinguish Divine Love, into a Love of Benevolence, and a Love of Delight. Because, neither the Disposition, nor the Actions, of the Objects beloved, come into Consideration herein, but their Persons only. When they are in a State of Unregeneracy, God approves not of their Disposition, or their Actions, yet he loves their Persons. And when they are regenerated, he approves of their Graces, and delights in their Exercise, and their spiritual Obedience is pleasing to him. But his Love to their Persons doth not consist therein. It is quite distinct there from. And well it is for them, that it is. For, if it was not, the Ruin even of the best of them, would be inevitable. This sovereign, eternal, and invariable Love of God to his Elect, is the Origin of all their Felicity. That the Elect were made the Sons of God in Predestination, is, I think, a certain Truth, and it is excellently explained by Dr. Goodwin, on {Ephesians 1:5}. That God may chuse perfect Creatures, unto the everlasting Enjoyment of himself, render them impeccable, by Supercreation-Grace, and make an Addition to their Happiness, by farther Discoveries of his Perfections to them, than that which they enjoy in their State by Creation, are Things unquestionable. For, thus it hath been his sovereign Pleasure to proceed towards the holy Angels. But to imagine, that, that Grace might in this World and take place upon the Elect in this World, and that Glory, which they will enjoy, in the next, without the Intervention of Sin, and Salvation from it, is as great a Mistake, as can be imagined. Nay, the Glory of the Angels themselves had not been what it is, without the intervention of Sin in Men, and Salvation from it. For, herein only is the Lord known, in the endearing Character of the God of ALL GRACE. In this Knowledge will consist the Summit of the Happiness, both of Angels and The Church, for evermore. And I am resolved to have no Dispute with Mr. Johnson, or any other Man, about Grace, or Glory, whereof the Evangelical Revelation makes no Discovery. Men may, if they choose it, please themselves with Thoughts of Grace and Glory, that might have taken place on God's Elect, without the Being of Sin and Salvation from it; but, I think, they must be at a Loss, to determine what that Grace and Glory are. This I am sure of, it cannot be the Grace of the Gospel, nor that eternal Glory, unto which, God of his infinite Mercy calls his Elect.

And, therefore, they shall never be the Matter of my Contest with any Man.

1. Without the Intervention of Sin, Evangelical Grace could not have been exercised towards, nor taken place upon the Elect. The Patience and Forbearance of God towards them while in a State of Rebellion against him, which how great it is, no Tongue can express, nor Mind conceive, had never been, if Sin had not overspread our Nature. The Communication of Holiness to us, had not been an Act of sovereign, and infinite Mercy, if we had not lost our original Purity by Sin, regenerating Grace could not have taken place in the Elect, without their Apostasy from God. If

they had not become dead in Sin, the Riches of Divine Mercy, manifested in quickening them, would for ever have lain concealed. And, if Sin had not a Being, as an active Principle, in the Hearts of God's Elect, after their Regeneration and Conversion, how could the Kindness and Mercy of God have been exercised towards them, in passing by their numerous Provocations, in healing their Backslidings and in maintaining the good Work in their Souls, in Opposition to their impetuous and raging Lusts? Yea, without the Intervention of Sin, the whole Work of the Blessed Spirit, in enlightening, quickening, comforting, sanctifying, witnessing, and establishing them, had never been, or taken place in their Hearts. Which, next unto that of the Redemption of our Persons, by the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God, demands our Wonder and highest Praises. Besides, if Sin had never been, God had not commended his Love to us in the Gift of Christ for us, to redeem us from our Iniquities, and save our Souls from Destruction. The infinite Riches of Grace in pardoning us, would not have been displayed: Nor should we have ever known the Grace of Christ, in the Character of a Redeemer. Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his Poverty might be made rich. The noblest Effect of Divine Love, and infinite Wisdom, without the Intervention of Sin, could never have taken place, viz. our Redemption by Christ. Which is the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom, which he ordained, before the World, to our Glory. Farther, without our Breach of the Covenant of Works, that wise and holy Constitution, could not have had that Honour done unto it, which it hath by our Lord's Subjection to it, and the exact Fulfilment of all its sacred Precepts, in the Character of our Surety. We had never stood before God, our righteous Judge, in a Righteousness of infinite Value and Splendor, as now we do, if we had not been unrighteous in ourselves. What Place would there have been, for the Grace of free Justification, by the Obedience of Christ, if we had retained the Perfection of our Nature, and punctually obeyed the Law, in our own Persons? None at all. Nor could the Bestowment of eternal Life have been an Act of Justice, as well as an Act of Kindness and Grace, on any other Foundation, than that of the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ to us. The Reign of Grace, unto eternal Life, is through Righteousness: Or the Justice of God is as clearly seen, in this Way of our enjoying everlasting Bliss as the exceeding Riches of his Kindness, and in no other could it be so. In a word, this Position entirely evacuates the whole Grace of the Gospel. As to Favour, which Mr. Johnson may think might have been extended towards the Elect, without the Entrance of Sin, it could not be that Grace, any Branch of it, whereof the Gospel is so glorious a Discovery. And, it is what God never intended to extend unto them, nor had the least Place in the Divine Counsels. And, therefore, I will not have any Debate with him, or any other Person, about it: But am determined to be silent concerning it, as I will be of every other Thing, which is not revealed. Since it is not Evangelical Grace, Mr. Johnson, and others with him, may exercise their Thoughts, as much as they please, concerning it, but I will not be so employed.

2. That eternal Glory, unto which God calls his Elect, could not be enjoyed without the Intervention of Sin. The future Felicity of the Saints will very much consist, in the perfect Knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. And, therefore, therein, Respect must be had unto Salvation, from Sin, and its Consequences, which was the important End of Christ's Mission. In the blissful World, we shall have clear Conceptions of the federal Transactions of the Divine Persons, and of those mutual Obligations, they came under to each other, relating to our Recovery, and Happiness. The Father, required Service of the most important and difficult Nature to be performed by Christ, as our Surety, promised a glorious Reward on that Condition. Christ consented to the Will of the Father, and thus the Obligation was mutual between them. Christ

became obliged to fulfill the Father's Will, by his own voluntary Engagement, and the Father, by his Promise to Christ, brought upon himself an Obligation to bestow the Reward he promised; and, the Blessed Spirit undertook, in this federal Transaction, to reveal and apply to the Elect, what the Father purposed, and Christ obtained. And, this Agreement on his Part brought an Obligation on him, to come into the Hearts of the Elect, and operate in them, at the Will of the Father, and the Will of the Son. And, thus, as their Engagements were mutual, their Obligations to each other are so. Now, as our Salvation was the grand Affair settled and secured, by these federal Transactions, between the Divine Persons, it is most clear, that the Knowledge of this gracious Compact could not be comprized, in the future Glory of the Elect, without the Intervention of Sin. The Being of that is necessarily supposed, in this everlasting Covenant, which the Blood of it, obtains the Remission of, and that is Sin. And, therefore, if distinct, clear, and perfect Conceptions of these mutual Engagements of the Divine Persons; in our Favour, will be a Part of the Glory, which the Saints, will possess, in Heaven. Which surely no Christian will deny; then, it must undeniably be granted, that without the Being of Sin, it was impossible, that this Glory, should ever take place, in God's Elect. Again, the Divine Perfections, without the Intervention of Sin, could not possibly have been displayed, in such a Manner, as they are, in our Salvation from it. Divine Sovereignty hath a most illustrious Shine herein. It was the highest Act of Sovereignty to ordain the human Nature, unto a Union with the Divine, in the Person of the Son of God. By Vertue of which Union, Christ, as Man, was invested with a Right to Dignity and Glory, far superior to that which Angels, or Saints, will ever enjoy. Some perhaps will say, this might have been, without a Purpose in God, to permit of the Entrance of Sin. Be it so, that this was possible, yet, it is evident, that such was not the Divine Intention; and, therefore, our Reasoning upon it, I think, to say no more, can answer no important End. But the Subject, which we are upon, will by no means permit our Thoughts to stop here. For, that is heavenly Glory, as it is a Perception of the Display of the Divine Attributes, in the Business of our Salvation, and, consequently, our Ideas must be carried farther. And, therefore, I add, Divine Sovereignty exercised itself, in a very eminent Manner, in determining, that Christ, who was raised above the Condition of a mere Creature, by his personal Union with the Son of God, should come under our Obligation to the Covenant of Works, obey it for us, bear our Guilt, suffer its Curse, and endure the whole Punishment, our Crimes demerited. Thus Sovereignty provided the Victim, by which Divine Justice, was to be satisfied, for our Sins. It was acted upon the greatest Personage, and its Resolutions concerning him, for the full Manifestation of itself, were carried to the utmost Extent. Christ was the grandest Subject, the sovereign Will of God could form any Purposes about, and his Determinations relating to him, are such, as gave no Parallel, nor possibly can have. As our Blessed Lord, the Subject, on whom this Divine Attribute exercised itself, was far superior to all, in Greatness and Dignity; so the Resolution of the absolute Will of God, was, to demand such Submission from him, as never was, nor ever will be required of any Creature. Sovereignty first exalts him, as Man, unto the highest Glory, in a personal Union, with the Son of God, and then resolves upon his deepest Abasement. It made all Things his in Right: and determined that, for a Season he should not have any Thing in Possession.

Again, Grace, Kindness, and Mercy, have a most illustrious Display, in this whole Business. It was with a direct View to the Salvation and Happiness of Criminals that Sovereignty in God, formed the Resolutions above mentioned. The Persons, in whose Favour these Resolutions were taken, had nothing to recommend them to him. No Disposition, whereof he could approve, and were incapable of performing any Actions, acceptable to him. And, therefore, Goodness, Grace, and

Mercy, alone gave Rise to those amazing Purposes. Whether, the Freeness, or the Abundance of Divine Grace, in this sovereign Constitution, is most to be admired, perhaps, is not a Point to be determined by any Creature. However, both, I am sure, demand our holy Adoration; and will be the Matter of the highest Joy and Wonder, in the Saints, for evermore.

Besides, the justice of God shines forth, in full Blaze, in this sovereign Appointment. Divine indignation against Sin is manifested, in the Perdition of apostate Spirits, and sinful Men. But, in the Debasement of the Son of God, and in the Infliction of Punishment on him for our Crimes, there is a far greater Discovery of the Divine Resentment against Sin, than there is, in that Penalty, which they will suffer unto Eternity. For, both the Dignity of Christ's Person, and the Interest, which he had, in the Love of God, beyond all others, are to be taken into Consideration, as well as the Weight of those Sufferings, which he endured for our Sins; all which taken together, shew the infinite Indignation of God, against moral Evil, unto the utmost. Which was not possible to be done in any other Way.

Moreover, infinite Wisdom is no less conspicuous in this sovereign Appointment. It became God, in pardoning Sin, and saving Sinners, to provide for the Honour of his Law, which is violated, and to secure the Rights of his offended Justice, as well as magnify the Riches of his Mercy. All which are fully and effectually done herein. The Law is magnified and made honourable, and the Demands of Justice are answered by the Sufferings and Death of Christ, as our Surety. And, free, rich Mercy illustriously shines, in the Gift of Christ for us. It cannot be said, that God, in our Salvation, connives at Evil, or makes Allowances for the moral Imperfections of his Creatures. He pardons their Iniquities indeed, but not without taking Vengeance on their sinful Inventions, and that most awfully, in the Person of our Saviour. And, what a wonderful Discovery of Divine Wisdom was there, in ordaining the human Nature unto a personal Union with the Son of God, that it might be his own, in a peculiar Manner? Hence, it was absolutely at the Disposal of his Divine Will, and under its Direction in all Things. And, therefore, it was impossible, that his human Will, in any Instance, should act counter to his Divine Will. This, O this, is the deepest of all God's Designs! And all the infinitely holy Properties of his Nature, by this Constitution, shine out in their full Splendor. This is that manifold Wisdom of God, which astonishes Angels, and will fill the Church with rapturous Delight, in the Ages to come. Now, future Glory will consist, in an immediate, clear, and perfect Vision of the. infinitely glorious Perfections of God, as they are thus displayed, in our Salvation. And, therefore, it must be a great Mistake to think, that Glory, that is to say, this Glory, which the Gospel is a Revelation of, might have taken place upon the Elect, if Sin, and Salvation from it, had never had a Being. I say now, as I said before, concerning Grace, if Glory of another Kind is meant, than that which the Gospel reveals, I will have no Concern with it, nor any Debate about it, with Mr. Johnson, or any other Person. Let it be what it may, I dare say, that it never came into the Mind of God, to confer it on his Elect; and, therefore, I think myself fairly excusable, in refusing to attend unto the Consideration of it. I suppose, that Mr. Johnson had in his Thoughts, the supralapsarian Way of Rating the Doctrine of Election, and for want of considering the whole Decree of Election, as viewed in that Point of Light, he fell into this great Mistake. Notwithstanding, God, in that Decree, considered the Persons, of whom he made Choice, unto the Fruition of himself, as unfallen; yet, his End, in that Choice, being the Display of the Riches of his Mercy, his Will to permit the Entrance of Sin, is necessarily supposed therein; because without that, this End designed in their Election could not be accomplished. And, therefore, it is easy to observe, that

though, in Election, God might view the Objects of that gracious Decree, as in the pure Mass, yet he could not decree to confer that Grace and Glory on them, which the Gospel reveals, without a Will to permit the Being of Sin, and their Ruin, in Consequence thereof. These deep Things of God, I know, in our sad Times, are slighted by many Professors, and considered as speculative Notions, that are of no Moment at all. Which is not a favourable Symptom of their being made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. I am certain, that if to Heaven they come, quite other Apprehensions must take place in their Minds. For, without that, it is impossible they should ever unite with the Blessed, in adoring the Perfections of God, as they shine forth in there sublime, and mysterious Truths, to the holy Wonder, Joy, and Adoration of Angels, and Saints, unto Eternity. Seeing these Things are the Matter of my present Meditations, I cannot but take Notice of a Conjecture of the learned and ingenious Mr. Ray, which with great Modesty, indeed, he delivers. But I think it is a very great Mistake. He speaks thus: And truly, I do not know, but that the Sins of the Blessed may be blotted out, even of their own Memories. - I am inclinable sometimes to imagine, that the Soul of Man can hardly be entirely happy, unless it be as it were dipped in Lethe. For every sinful Action having a natural Turpitude in it, and being dishonourable, how can the Memory and Thought of it, but beget such an ungrateful Passion as Shame, even to Eternity? f2 I can by no means concur with him in this Thought; because, if we should ever forget that we were Sinners, we could not then retain a Remembrance of our Redemption from our Sins by the Blood of Christ. And, surely, that shall never be the case with the Blessed. If it should, Heaven will not be that, which, holy Souls expect to find it. It is true, that there is a natural Turpitude in Sin, and it is most dishonourable; but the ungrateful Passion of Shame, at the Remembrance of our Sins, will be prevented taking place in our Minds, by that View, which we shall then have, of the Glory, which redounds to God, in the Remission of them, thro' the Blood of his Son. Doubtless, we shall always be fully sensible, that Shame and Confusion were our just Due, and that will excite in us adoring Thoughts of Divine Grace and; Mercy, which, notwithstanding, railed us unto a State of Dignity and Bliss. I am so far from assenting unto this Conjecture, that I am of the same Opinion with Dr. Owen, who says: Even the very Remembrance of Sin is sweet unto them; when they see God infinitely exalted and admired in the Pardon thereof. f3 Not Sin in itself no: Nor the Thought of our having committed Sin. God forbid, that any should imagine this. But the Consideration of the Being of Sin, as an Occasion of God's bringing infinite Glory to himself, in the Way of our Salvation from it:

Mr. Johnson rightly observes, that Sin, in its own Nature, cannot possibly be of any Use to any Being. That it is what God hates; and it is what makes every Creature miserable, where it takes place. And Sin alone makes Salvation needful: Without which no Salvation could have been.

These Things are true. It is certain, that no sinful Act, as such, can be productive of Good. The most precious Benefits spring from the Crucifixion and Death of Christ. But those Benefits are not Effects arising from the Sin of the barbarous Jews, who crucified, and put him to Death. Fruits they are of what Christ suffered; but the sinful Actions of the Jews, which they put forth upon him in his Sufferings, had not the least causal Influence in the Production of those Fruits. They are the proper Effects of the wise, and holy Constitution of God, of the Matter of his Sufferings, and of the infinite Dignity of the Person of the Blessed Sufferer. So that the sinful Actions of his Murderers had no Efficiency at all, in the Production of the happy Effects of his Death. They wholly spring from that which he suffered, and not in the least from the criminal Acts of those by whom he did

suffer. And though, upon the Commission of Evil, great Humiliation, Self-abasement, and Indignation against Sin, may arise in the Mind of a good Man, as they did in David, for Instance; yet, the sinful Act, or Acts committed, have no Efficiency in producing those good Effects. The Grace of God taking Occasion from the Sin committed, to operate on the Mind, in a Way of holy, spiritual, and gracious Conviction, works these desirable Effects. It is not Sin, that humbles the Soul; but Divine Grace, effecting a proper Sense of its evil Nature in the Mind, after the Commission of it, lays the Soul low. We cannot use too great Caution, in the Manner of expressing ourselves on this Subject. Perhaps, some have not been so wary, as might be wished, in their Mode of speaking on it; and Expressions may have dropped from them, which are capable of an ill Construction, {which ought always to be avoided} though their Meaning was good and sound. This by the bye. These Things, tho' true, do not at all serve that Purpose, for which Mr. Johnson urges them, to prove, that Grace and Glory might have taken place upon the Elect, if Sin had never had a Being. For, what though hath no causal Influence into that Grace and Glory, which are conferred on God's Elect, as the Effect of his most holy, wise, and gracious Counsels? it don't therefore follow, that, that Grace, and that Glory, which they do, and shall receive, might have been communicated to them, without the Intervention of Sin. This is so plain a Point, that I will not affront the Understanding of the Reader, by attempting any farther the Proof of it. This I must say upon the Whole, that I do not know, that he could possibly have fallen into a greater Mistake on the Subject, than this Position contains. Of that thus far. I proceed to the next,

II. That Adam was called earthy, in Respect to his Mind, as well as his Body: Or, that the Apostle calls him earthy, in Relation to his Person, and Nature. His Words are these: But this Holiness wrought in Creation, fulfilled in the earthy Man; and could only be such a Resemblance of, and Nearness to God, as an earthy Nature was capable of. f4 I think, that by the Nature of Adam, Mr. Johnson must mean, not his Body, in a distinct Consideration from his intellectual Part; but his Person, as constituted of both. If his Meaning is only this, that Adam is called the earthy Man, with Respect to his Body, in Distinction from his Mind, his Reasoning on the Place loses all its Force. For, his Design is to prove by it, that the Holiness of Adam, was inferior to that of Angels, and Saints. Now, it is possible that a reasonable Soul may be the Subject of the greatest Holiness, in Union with a Body, whose Original is Earth, and which is not yet spiritualized. I am persuaded, that the Holiness of Christ was as great, when he stood crowned with Thorns, as it is, now he fits at the right Hand of God, and is crowned with Glory. He was as holy when he bled, bowed, and died on the Cross, as he is now in the immediate Presence of the Divine Father. He is not more holy, now he is in Heaven, than he was, when he dwelt upon the Earth. The Purity of his Nature was then the very same. But, during that Time, his Body was not Spiritualized. It was then not Spiritual, but natural. This Assertion reflects no Dishonour on the Blessed Jesus. God forbid, that I should ever affirm any Thing, that is dishonourable to him, who is, on all Accounts, most worthy of the highest Praises from Angels, and the Church for evermore. This Subject is of great Importance, and demands our diligent Consideration. It seems to me, that Mr. Johnson hath been too superficial in his Inquiry into it, which occasioned his Mistake upon it. The Scope of the Apostle, in the Place referred unto, is to prove two Things, viz. that there is a natural, and a spiritual Body, contained in this Proposition: There is a natural Body, and there is a spiritual Body. The Proof of the former is a Divine Testimony: And so it is written, The first Man Adam was made a living Soul. The curious Machine of the Body of Man being formed out of the Earth, the great Creator endowed it with Life and Activity. He breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life; and the Man became a living Soul.

The Body of Adam, thus formed, and animated with Life, was natural. As it was of the Earth, so its Life was to be maintained by the Fruits of the Earth. The Proof of the latter, is the Apostle's own Assertion concerning Christ, under infallible Direction: The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. This is to be understood of the Body of our Blessed Lord; for if it is not, it can be no Proof, that there is a spiritual Body. Besides, as the Apostle speaks of the Body of the first Adam, in the former Phrase, it is reasonable to think, that in this, he speaks of the Body of the last Adam. The Body of the one, and the Body of the other, are the Subject of his Discourse. To prevent a Mistake, in Relation to Christ's Body, or lest it should be thought, that his Body was not natural, but spiritual, in its Production, he subjoins unto this Assertion: Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards, that which is spiritual. And, therefore, the Body of our Saviour was first natural, as ours is, and afterwards it was made spiritual, as ours shall also be. And the Subject on which the Apostle discourses, determines, when the Body of Christ was made spiritual; that is, the Resurrection, and, consequently, Christ's Body, before his Resurrection, was not spiritual, but natural. Its Production, indeed, was supernatural; but notwithstanding that, as to its Nature, it was the same with ours, though absolutely free from that ill Temperament, and those corrupt Qualities, whereof our Bodies are now the Subjects. In order to prove the Propriety of this great Change in the Body of Christ, the Apostle proceeds to observe the vast Difference between him, and the first Man, in Dignity. The first Man. is of the Earth, earthy: The second Man is the Lord from Heaven. Our Saviour being truly Divine, who took our Nature into Union with himself, it was fit, when he had finished that Work therein, which he undertook, that his Body should pass under this amazing Change in its Resurrection, that so it might be capable of enjoying, in Union with his Soul, that State of Glory, to which, as Man, he was ordained, and unto which his personal Union with the Son of God gave him a proper Right. According to that Scope, which the Apostle hath in View, viz. the Glory of the Members of Christ, as well as his personal Glory, upon his Resurrection from the Dead, he farther observes, that: As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. As we have natural, mortal, and corruptible Bodies, from the first Man, who was of the Earth, earthy; so we shall have spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible, or heavenly Bodies, from Christ, who is heavenly, and a quickening Spirit. And, therefore, as we have borne the Image of the earthy, we shall also bear the Image of the heavenly. As our Bodies are like the Body of the first Man, in Death, and the Grave, by reason of our being Members of him; so our Bodies shall be like to the glorified Body of Christ, because of our Union with him, as a living Head, when they are raised from the Dead. No Countenance is given, in any Part of the Apostle's Reasoning on this important Subject, unto this Imagination, that Adam was earthy, in Respect to his Mind, as well as his Body. That Part of him, only, was earthy, which was of the Earth. And that was not his intellectual Part, but his Body. And, therefore, it is a great Mistake in Mr. Johnson to think, that the first: Man is called earthy, in Relation to his Nature, as it consisted of Body and Mind. For that Epithet respects him only in his inferior Part, the Body. Nor is it just, and agreeable to Truth, to conceive, that a reasonable Soul, in Union with a natural Body, is incapable of possessing Holiness, in the highest Degree. Christ was as holy, while his Body was natural, as he is, now his Body is spiritual. Low Thoughts are not to be admitted, concerning the Holiness of the Nature of Man, in Creation. If we depreciate our original Purity, it must be at the Expence of infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Holiness; and, therefore, we ought to be most careful, that we advance, or suggest nothing, which hath the least Tendency to lessen our primitive Perfection. Those who are much acquainted with Theological Debates on the Subject,

well know by what Sort of Men this is done, to the Dishonour of their Creator. Let us not give any Advantage unto their wretched Abominations herein. But, on the contrary, let us maintain, and defend, the Perfection and Glory of our Nature, in its original State.

I freely grant, that there are various considerable Differences between that holy Principle, which was concreated with Adam, and connatural to him, and that Principle of Holiness, which is implanted in the Souls of God's Elect. That was derived from God, as Creator: This springs from him, as the God of all Grace. That was the Effect of Divine Benevolence to him, as a Creature: This is a Gift of special and peculiar Favour, and is by no means due. It was not an Act of the sovereign Will of God to create Adam holy, the infinite Holiness of his own Nature made it necessary to him, and he could not do otherwise. But to communicate Holiness to an apostate Creature, it is free to the Divine Will, to resolve upon it, or not, just as it seems good to the Lord. For, no Divine Perfection requires, or makes it necessary. That, as to its Conservation, depended on the free Will of Adam, without a determining Influence upon it by God, in a Way of peculiar Favour. This, in Respect to its Preservation, is wholly dependent on a continual and gracious Influx from God, in the Character of the God of all Grace. And, therefore, it is impossible, that it should be lost, as our original Holiness was. That holy Principle rendered Adam capable of living unto God, and enjoying Communion with him, agreeably to the Nature of the Covenant of Works, under which he was. This gracious Principle fits us for living unto God, and enjoying Communion with him, on the Plan of the Covenant of Grace, wherein all the Divine Perfections have their brightest Display. And, therefore, it is a Life more noble and sublime in its Nature, than that which Adam possessed in his State of Creation. These Differences may all be granted, without degrading, in the least, our original Purity.

III. Mr. Johnson is of Opinion, that Grace in the Hearts of the Saints is not a new Creature. Upon this Subject, he writes in a very inaccurate, confused, and inconsistent Manner. Speaking of Grace in the Heart, he says: If the Principle wrought, did subsist in the Man's self, without immediate Communication from God, it would be the proper Work of the Man to actuate that Principle. ^{f5} Since he calls Grace a Principle, one would imagine, that he thinks, that it is an inherent Spring of Action in the Saints; but he does not. For he affirms, that the spiritual Grace, or Life of Faith, which the Saints enjoy, is not inherent in themselves. ^{f6} Hath this Principle then no Subject, in which it inheres? Or is it in God? Or in Christ? In one Place, he expresses himself in such an unguarded Way, as might induce his Reader to conceive, that he hath such an Apprehension, strange as it is. His Words are these: Nor can this transcendent, glorious Grace come within the Compass of a Duty: But is, from first to last, altogether perfect, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, heavenly, and divine. ^{f7} This unaccountable Assertion needs no Comment, to prove, that he means Grace, which is communicated to us, and not Divine Love, from which it flows: For, none imagine Love in God to be the Creature's Duty. The Origin from which that Grace springs, which the Elect of God receive, is indeed infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; but it is impossible, that, that Grace, which is received by them, should be so. I think it is clear, that Mr. Johnson understands by Principle, in this Place, and by Grace in the other, the self-same Thing. Now, that no infinite, eternal Principle can be inherent in us, it is most certain; and, therefore, his Words are sufficient to tempt one to imagine, that he conceives, that this Principle is not in us, though received by us, but in God himself. If it is not, it can't be infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in its Nature; for nothing out of God can possibly be so. We are capable of perceiving which is infinite, etc. but it is impossible,

even to Almighty Power, to work that in us, which is infinite. Though he speaks of Grace in the Soul, as a Principle, yet he does not allow it to be such; but calls it imaginary. His Words are these: For that imaginary Principle itself, must be a distinct Creature. And I know, this is the Way that some Persons speak, of a new Creature in the Man: Instead of speaking in the Scripture Stile: If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature. But if this imaginary Creature be not perfect, it is not the Work of God; and if it be perfect, the Man must have Perfection in himself, and can neither seek, draw, nor receive Grace from Christ: For, that which is full; and that which is full can hold no more. f8 Why does he first speak of Grace, as a Principle, and afterwards pronounce it imaginary? I cannot reconcile these Things. This gracious Principle is indeed distinct, though not Separate from the Mind, in which it is. It is not the Soul itself; but it is Spirit, or a spiritual Nature, in the Soul, which is born of the Spirit. It is not the human Mind itself, that is born of the Spirit; but a vital and heavenly Principle, or Spring of holy Operation, in the Mind, from which all spiritual Acts arise. That which is born of the Spirit, was not before its Birth. The Soul, wherein the new Birth is, was before that Birth, and, therefore, that Birth cannot be the Production of the Soul itself; but it must be the Production of something in the Soul, which was not in it before. And the same holds true, in Relation to this Work, as it is a new Creation. That which is created, was not before that Creation of it; the Soul was before this new Creation, and, consequently, it cannot be the Production of the Soul; but it must be the Production of something in the Soul, which was not in it, before that creating Act took place; and, that something is the new Man, or new Creature. Our being the Subjects of this new Creation, gives us the Denomination of new Creatures. Which Denomination, by no means supposes, that our Minds are produced in this Creation, for they were before; but something is produced in our Minds, by this new Creation, which was not in us until that Time. And this blessed Work is perfect in its Nature. No Defect attends it, in its Kind; though, it is nor, in its Degrees, what it will be, when it is ripened into Glory.

We are the Subjects of this Divine Work of Regeneration, and new Creation, and, therefore, we are very properly said to be born again, and to be the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. But, that which is produced in this new Birth, and new Creation, is not our Mind; but a holy, spiritual Habit, or Principle, from which all Acts of a spiritual Nature take their Rise. The Flesh, which is its contrary, is inherent in us, and this also is an inherent Principle in us. And, as they are opposite in Nature, so there is a Contest between them, and their Opposition is mutual. A Believer hath that in him, which is perfect in its Nature, but not in its Degrees. And, therefore, it can't be said, that he hath Perfection in himself, because Perfection not only implies, that which is perfect in its Nature; but also its full Proportion, and a Freedom from that which is contrary to that good and holy Principle. And, consequently, a Saint may derive Grace from Christ, to increase the Vigor of that gracious Principle, which is in him. Lust in the Heart is equally evil at all Times, whether its Acts are more, or less vigorous: And so Grace, or the spiritual Principle, is at all Times equally holy; but its Actings, as to Strength and Vigor, are variable. Sometimes more, and sometimes less intense. Surely, an Addition may be made to that, which is not perfect in its Degrees, though it is in its Nature. And Grace in the Saints, tho' it is perfect in the latter Sense, it is not in the former. I confess, that I am ashamed to dwell thus on a Matter, that is so plain, and easy to be understood. I will, therefore, proceed to consider another Mistake of the Author's, which is this:

IV. That Faith, though it hath Activity, it is not an Act. He says, I know Faith is an active Principle. f9 Aye, does he know, that Faith is a Principle? Why then does he deny, that it is inherent in the Saints? If it is a Principle, it must be in some Subject, or else it subsists of itself. If it inheres not in some Subject, and in itself hath proper Existence. And if it is itself a Substance, and hath proper Existence distinct from the Saint, as it must have, if it is not inherent in him: Then it is not the Saint who believes but this Substance, which is distinct from him, and is not inherent in him. This is amazingly strange! and is absolutely beyond the Power of my Understanding, to reconcile with Truth, Sense, and Mr. Johnson himself. I am very sensible, adds he, there is {are} what may be called Acts of Faith. 10 But he does not allow those Acts to be properly our Acts. The Soul ascends towards Christ, not as its own proper Act, says he. Believing in, cleaving to, embracing, and resisting {relying} upon Christ for Life and Salvation, are not Acts of the Person in a proper Sense. f11 He is very voluble, and hath a great Flow of Words, where his Ideas are not many. It is not, therefore, necessary to quote at large, what he expresses. His whole meaning may be understood without it. What can Faith be? It is not an inherent Principle, nor properly the Act of the Saint, as Mr. Johnson thinks.

What then can it be? Is it something which hath a distinct Subsistence from a Person, in whom it is? And are its Acts proper to itself, in Distinction from him? So one would imagine, he thinks; but that he speaks of the Soul's ascending to Christ, etc. According to that Account, which this Writer gives of Faith, to the best of my Apprehension, it is a mere Nullity. Or, if it is any Thing, it is something in a Person, which hath Subsistence of itself, distinct from him, in whom it is, and none of its Acts are the Acts of the Person; but of this something, which is supposed to be in him, and yet is distinct from him, in itself, and in whatever it acts. So that, in Consequence of Faith being wrought in a Man, he does not himself think holily, nor will spiritually; but this something in him, {if, in Fact, it is any Thing} which Mr. Johnson is pleased to call Faith. That excellent Grace, in my humble Opinion, is not distinguishable from other Graces, except in its Actings. It seems to me, that spiritual Acts of every Kind, spring from one common spiritual Principle of Operation in the Soul, which is called the new Man, a new Heart, Spirit, the inner Man, and the Mind. Certain it is, that spiritual Acts are various; but, unless I am greatly mistaken, they all proceed from one Principle, which is Spirit, as it is born of the Spirit. Thus, Faith is Thought of its Object, who is Christ, with Trust in him, or Dependence on him, for Life, and Salvation, under a Conviction of our Misery, and Helplessness, in ourselves. Hope is a Perception of the Excellency of spiritual Blessings, with an humble Expectation of receiving them. Love is Thought, with Approbation, and Liking of its Object. Repentance is Thought, with Contrition, Humiliation for, and a Dislike of Sin. Fear is Thought, with Reverence of the Object, unto which Respect is had. Those different Acts spring from the self-same Principle in the Soul, and not from so many distinct Graces. Now, if it is true, that Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, and Fear, are only distinguishable, as Acts, and not in their Principle, or Root; then it will follow, that there is no such Thing, as Faith, or Love, or Repentance, or Fear, if they are not properly Acts. For, if they are not properly Acts, they are not properly distinguishable; because, as Acts only, they are distinct, their Principle being the same. If Thought, and Volition, are not properly mental Acts, it can't be said, that a reasonable Soul ever acts at all: Or, properly speaking, when we think, will, and nill, we are not active, but inactive, if Thinking, Willing, and Nilling, are not Acts. If they are Acts, they must be the Acts of that which thinks, wills, and nills; for they cannot be the Acts of something else, which is distinct and separate from that, wherein are Thought, Volition, and Nilling. And, therefore, if it is the gracious Principle in

a Believer, as distinct from his Mind, which thinks holily, and will spiritually, those holy Thoughts and spiritual Volitions are not his; but are proper to something, which, though it is supposed to be in him, is really distinct from him. And with that can be, but a new Soul, in whose Actings he hath no Concern, for my Part I am not able to devise. If holy Thoughts and Volitions are properly Actions, and the Actions of our Minds, as sanctified by the Grace of God; then, in thinking, and willing, in a holy Manner, in a proper Sense, we act, or those holy Thoughts, and Volitions are our proper Acts.

Indeed, Actions differ, some are involuntary, as the Action of our Lungs in breathing. The Motion of the Humours of our Bodies in Perspiration, and the Motion of the Blood in Pulsation, or beating of the Pulse, neither of which is under the Direction of our Will, and, therefore, they are called involuntary Motions, or Actions. And, some Actions are under the Direction of our Will, as moving my Fingers to write. The Action of my Fingers, now I am writing, immediately follows an Act of my Will, to move them in such a Manner, as is necessary to form the different Letters, which compose the Words, whereby I express my Meaning. And, my Mind properly acts, in direction, as my Fingers move, or act in writing. Therefore, I am astonished, that Mr. Johnson should argue from the involuntary Motions in our animal Frame, that we are not properly active in Thought, and Volition: Which is what, I think, he must mean, if he hath any Meaning at all. When a Man believes, hopes, loves, repents, and reverences God, he acts mentally, in as proper, a Sense, as he does corporeally, when he walks. Walking is the Motion, or Action of his Body, and believing, hoping, loving, repenting, and reverencing God, are the proper Acts of his Mind.

Mr. Johnson, unless I mistake him, confounds actuating and acting Faith. f12 The former is the Work of the Blessed Spirit upon us. For, it is He who actuates, or stirs up that Grace in our Souls by a gracious Influence, The latter, viz. the Acting, or Exercise of the Grace of Faith, is proper to us. For, the Holy Spirit does not believe; but we ourselves, by Vertue of his Aid. And the Distinction, and Difference of these two Things, is very easy to be conceived of. Mr. Johnson, with as much Propriety and Truth, might tell me, that I do not properly think, when I really have holy Thoughts, as that Faith is not properly my Act, when I believe; because I am actuated in both, by the Spirit of God. He tells us, that he hath no Knowledge, how to go about acting Faith. Does he know how to go about to think, or will? Acting Faith is no other than suitable Thoughts of Christ, and a hearty Choice of him, as God's appointed Way of Salvation. But, perhaps, more than was necessary hath been said on this Subject. I go on to consider his next Mistake,

V. That Faith is not, nor can be a Duty. f13 However strange this may seem, it is a just Deduction from the Premises above-mentioned. For, if Faith is not an Act, it cannot be a Duty. If it is an Act, it certainly is a Duty; except it is a Work of Supererogation, which no Protestant thinks it to be. As it is a Principle, no Calvinist asserts, that it is the Duty of Men to acquire it. For, they all maintain that it is infused by the Grace of God, and not acquired. And, therefore, Mr. Johnson argues very impertinently, in observing, that it is not the Duty of Men to beget, or produce, this holy Principle in themselves. The Author, on whom he animadverts, pleads not for that. The Socinians, Arminians, and Baxterians also, who are consistent with themselves, deny, that the Principle is infused in order to the Act. The late Dr. Watts, indeed, allowed of the Infusion of the Principle, in order to the Act; which one Thing utterly overthrows that conditional Provision of Salvation, which he supposed is made for the Nonelect. Because, if the Infusion of the Principle is necessary, in Order to the Act, none can believe before the Infusion of the Principle. And, if God will not infuse that Principle into

the Hearts of the Non-elect, it is impossible that they should believe. If he will, then they will certainly believe, and their Salvation cannot, be conditional and uncertain; but it must be absolute and certain. Though, it is not the Duty of Men to acquire the Habit of Faith, or to beget and produce that Principle in their Hearts, from which believing Acts spring; yet it is the Duty or those to believe, or act Faith, in whom the Principle is infused.

It is a false, and an unaccountable Foundation, on which Mr. Johnson argues, that Faith is not, nor can be a Duty, viz. That it is not an Act. If it is not an Act, it is not distinguishable from Hope, Love, Repentance, or Reverence of God; for all these Graces resolve themselves into one and the same spiritual Principle: They differ not in their Root, though they differ as Acts. He calls Faith Enjoyment, f14 and concludes, that it is not properly, an Act, because it is Enjoyment. It is true, that when a Saint believes, he enjoys the Divine Presence and Peace, Consolation and Joy, in his Soul; but that is no Proof at all, that the Mind doth not properly act, in a fiducial Application to Christ, as a Saviour, and in the Appropriation of his Benefits to itself in particular. But, surely, enough is said on this Matter. And, therefore, I proceed to consider the next Position:

VI. That Faith is not purchased by Christ. f15 This is a Subject of the greatest Importance. For, the Grace. of God the Design of Christ, in his Obedience and Death, and his Merit in both, are to be taken into Consideration. I hope, that I shall not advance any thing derogatory to the Honour of Free-Grace on one hand, nor extenuate the Merit of a dear Redeemer on the other. Sometimes such Phrases are used, relating to this Matter, as are not strictly defensible, as they may be understood. For Instance, it hath been said, that Christ, procured the Favour of God to Men. If the Satisfaction of Justice is intend in the Phrase, it is true; but if the good Will, and Love of God, is designed by it, it is a great Mistake.

For, the Death of Christ did not procure Divine Love; but is itself the Fruit thereof. God loved his People, and, therefore, he gave his Son to die for them. For which Reason, it would be better not to use such Kind of Phrases. They may possibly beget a mistaken idea in the Minds of some. I am sensible, that several very worthy Persons scruple to use the Terms, purchase, and purchased, concerning Grace, and Glory; but upon a mature Consideration of this Point, I cannot but think, that, without the least Prejudice to the Free-Grace of God, they may be allowed of. And, unless I am mistaken, some who scruple the Use of those Terms, do themselves, in other Modes of speaking, convey the very same Idea, as others, who use these Terms, mean by them. As when they say, that Grace and Glory are communicated to us, through the Righteousness and Blood of Christ: Or, on the Foundation of his Obedience and Death: I am persuaded their Meaning is not, that the Righteousness, and Sacrifice of Christ, are barely Means of Conveyance. But, that a legal Right to Grace and Glory is obtained for us, by Christ's Obedience and Death. Which, if they do, though they are not free to use the Terms, purchase, and purchased, they mean that, which others do, who use them, on this Subject. And, therefore, it is not the Thought to which they object; but the Words, whereby it is expressed.

It may be, that some Persons, of less Accuracy, have mistaken Conceptions herein; and may think, that because God chose his People, as unfallen, or in the pure Mass, and gave Grace, and settled the Inheritance of eternal Glory upon them in Christ, as their Representative; that, therefore, all that Christ did, was to remove an Incumbrance, brought by Sin, upon that Grant of Grace and Glory, in him, as a Head. As an Estate may be settled on a Man; but may afterwards be

mortgaged, and, therefore, it cannot be enjoyed by him, before that Incumbrance is removed: So some seem to think, that there was a Grant made unto the Elect; of spiritual and eternal Life; but an incumbrance is brought upon that Grant by Sin, and that the Removal of that Incumbrance, is the Whole of what our Saviour did, by his Obedience, and Death.

This, in my Apprehension, is a great Mistake, and is built upon a false Hypothesis, viz. That God not only chose his People in the pure Mass, but also made a Grant of Grace unto them, and settled, the heavenly Inheritance upon them in Christ, prior to, and without the Consideration of the Fall, and their Ruin thereby; which ought not by any means to be supposed. For two Reasons, one is, if such a Supposition is true, then God altered his Purpose. He first willed, that the Elect should enjoy Grace and Glory without the Fall, and afterwards determined to permit the Fall, and their Ruin by it. The other is, that Grace, and that Glory, which the Elect receive from God, necessarily suppose the Entrance, or Intervention of Sin; for neither Grace, nor Glory, could be of that Kind, which they are, without Sin took place. This, I think, is most clear, and, consequently, the Grant of that Grace and that Glory, could not be prior to, or without the Consideration of the Fall.

If this is the true State of the Matter, as, in my humble Opinion it is; then the Elect were not invested with a Right to evangelical Grace, and eternal Glory, considered as unfallen; but as involved in Misery and Ruin by the Fall. Not that Sin is any Cause of that Grace, and that Glory; but it is the Occasion of Divine Goodness displaying itself, in conferring Grace and Glory of that Kind upon the Elect, which are, in a way of sovereign Favour communicated to them. The Fall, therefore, did not bring an Incumbrance on that Grant of Grace unto the Elect, and that Settlement of the heavenly Inheritance upon them in Christ; for it was pre-supposed in that Grant, and Settlement. Perhaps, this Point may be more easily conceived by considering the Covenant of Grace, wherein that Grant, and that Settlement, were made. I will, therefore, briefly state it, so far as I apprehend it may serve to set this Affair in a plain and easy Light.

1. In that Covenant God the Father promised Grace and Glory to Christ, for the Elect; or unto them in him on Condition of his doing and suffering, what he, in the Time appointed, did do, and suffer.
2. Christ, on his Part, in this federal Transaction, agreed and consented to do and suffer all that the Father required of him to do and suffer, in order to the Salvation of the Elect. Therefore,
3. This Covenant, though, as it respects the Elect, it is absolute and unconditional, yet, as it respects Christ, their Surety therein, it is properly conditional, and not absolute.
4. Christ's Performance of the Conditions required of him, brings an Obligation on the Father to fulfill all those Promises, which he made to him upon those Conditions: Or, Right to a Participation of all the Benefits promised, respecting Christ, himself, as Head, and the Elect, as his Members, whom he represented, arises from his Performance of those Conditions. This Right, as to us, is wholly free, and unacquired; but, as it respects Christ, our Surety, it is Matter of Debt, and it was properly acquired by him. I add,
5. The Sufferings and Death of our Saviour properly merit, and justly deserve our Pardon, and Impunity. And his Obedience to the Law for us, deserves all that Grace, which we receive in this World, and all that Glory, which we shall enjoy in the next. So that the Remission of our Sins, on the Foundation of Christ's Atonement, is an Act of Justice, as well as an Act of infinite Mercy and Grace. And thus also, the Communication of Grace, and eternal Glory, to the Elect, on the Ground

of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to them, is an Act of Justice. For, it is impossible, that greater Glory should be enjoyed by them, than that infinitely valuable Righteousness properly merits, or deserves. A pecuniary Price was not indeed paid for our Redemption, and Happiness; but a valuable Consideration, both for our Pardon, and eternal Felicity, was given into the Hand of God, in the Characters of a Law-giver and Judge, by our Blessed Lord. And, therefore, thereby he acquired for us a Right unto both. His everlasting Righteousness gives us a legal Title to everlasting Life: As his Death gives us a Claim, on the Foot of Right, unto a Freedom from Condemnation, and eternal Death. Our perpetual Justification, by his Obedience, is that Foundation, whereon our endless Bliss securely rests.

Some seem to think, that when the Saints are in Heaven, they will be justified in the Sight of God, by their own inherent Perfection, and sinless Obedience to the Divine Will. This, I think, is a Mistake; it supposes, that the Righteousness of Christ will not always be the Matter of our Justification before God; but that our perfectly holy Dispositions, and Acts, in the heavenly State, will then be the Matter of our Justification before him. Thus, I think, it will not be. But that, as we shall come to Heaven, by Virtue of Christ's Righteousness imputed to us; so we shall for ever enjoy that happy State, on the Foundation of the Imputation of that Righteousness to us. Grace will reign through this Righteousness unto eternal Life.

Now, when I consider these Things, I am not able to discover any Inconvenience in the Use of the Terms, purchase, and purchased, concerning Grace, and Glory. If I understand their Import, as used on this Subject, it is only this: That Christ, by his Obedience and Death, obtained for us, a Right to Pardon, and a legal Title unto the Participation of Grace here, and eternal Glory hereafter. Not that what he did, and suffered, caused a Will in God to pardon us, and to bestow Grace and Glory upon us. The Thought, however, is true, and, I think, the Terms are not justly exceptionable. The Thing itself I shall always contend for, as a most important Truth. And I know, that it detracts not at all from the Free Grace of God. For, that is absolutely free to us, which cost our Lord most dear. As to the Use, or Disuse of the Terms, let others enjoy their Liberty, as they approve, or disapprove of them. Let but the Thing be maintained, that we have a legal Right to Grace and Glory, acquired for us, by what Christ did and suffered, I shall be content.

Mr. Johnson's Reason against it is of no Weight, viz. Whatever is obtained by Purchase, is procured by the Purchaser from some Hand distinct from himself: But Faith proceeds from Christ, as its native Original. f16 Faith, on this Subject, is put for the whole Grace of Regeneration, or the regenerate Principle. It is true, that, that Principle is derived from Christ, as a Head of Life, and Influence: Which, I suppose, is what Mr. Johnson means. It is also true, that it was the Pleasure of the Divine Father, that all Fulness of Grace and Glory should dwell in Christ, in order to be communicated, by him, to the Elect, who are his Members. And it is equally true, that neither Grace, nor Glory, were to be conveyed unto me Elect by Christ, unless he made Reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting Righteousness. These were the Conditions required of him, in order unto the Communication of that Grace, and that Glory, which were deposited in his Hand: And except he made his Soul an Offering for Sin, he was not to see his Seed Participants of, either Grace, or Glory. His Right to bestow, and the Right of the Elect to receive spiritual Blessings from him, did not arise merely from the Grant of those Blessings to him for them; but from his Performance of those Conditions, on which that Grant was made. This Right, therefore, was his Acquisition. And that is all, I think, which is intended by the Terms, purchase, and purchased,

when used concerning Grace and Glory. If any apprehend, that they are capable of an ill Construction, they are at Liberty, for me, to refrain from the Use of them. For my own Part, I confess, that I think they are not. This I shall strenuously insist upon, that Right to Grace and Glory was obtained for the Elect, by the Obedience and Death of Christ. And, that no spiritual Blessing is, or ever will be, communicated to them, otherwise than through his Righteousness and Blood, not as Means of Conveyance, but as proper meritorious Causes. The whole Dispensation of Divine Grace, in the everlasting Covenant, is an irrefragable Proof thereof. For, all the Grace of that Covenant, as to its Communication, rests upon, and is secured by Christ's Obedience, and Sacrifice. Nor, is the Freeness of the Grace of God, as the Origin of spiritual Blessings, in the least diminished hereby. Because, it was sovereign Favour, which provided that Righteousness, and that Sacrifice, by which our Right to Grace and Glory was obtained, and into which it must be resolved. Those who are much acquainted with the Controversy, relating to the Extent of Christ's Death, well know, that Calvinistical Writers have urged, with great Advantage, against the Universality of his Death, his purchasing Faith thereby, for all those, on whose Account he died. By which they mean, if I understand them, Christ's obtaining a Right to Faith, or the Grace of Regeneration, for all those, on whose Account he shed his Blood, and, consequently, he did not die for Men universally; because some Men never believe. Whereas, all shall believe, for whom a Right to Faith was obtained by his Death. This Argument, in Favour of the limited Extent of Christ's Death, hath not yet been, nor ever will be answered, by any Arminian, or Baxterian. This is a Knot, which they cannot untie, therefore they cut it: And deny, that he purchased Faith, or obtained a Right to Faith, by what he did, and suffered. This Argument is solid, and I am determined never to give it up. For, I am sure, that it is agreeable unto, and is founded on, the whole Dispensation of the Grace of God in the Gospel. And that it is, what gives unto Christ that Glory, which is his Due, as he is the Lord of our Righteousness, and the Author of eternal Redemption.

VII. Mr. Johnson will not allow, that Ministers are commissioned to preach the Law. Our Commission, says he, is not to preach the Law, but the Gospel. f17 By preaching the Law, or the Gospel, I understand, treating of the Doctrines which belong to either. Now, if preaching the Law is not supposed, and included in our Commission, we have no Warrant to preach it. And if we do, we therein exceed our Commission. Can this be true? Surely, it is not, since our Blessed Lord himself preached the Law. Is not his Sermon on the Mount principally, or at least in great Part, an Explication of the Law? Does he not, therein, shew its Spirituality and Extent? Does he not vindicate it from the false Glosses, which the blind Jews put upon its Precepts? And doth he not assert and maintain its Perpetuity? And demonstrate the Equity and Justice of that Constitution? The Apostle Paul followed the Example of his great Master herein. He largely treats of the Law, explains its Nature, asserts its Authority, as a Covenant, and proves, that all Men are in a miserable Condition; because they are justly obnoxious to the Curse of it. Did he herein exceed his Commission? And act a Part, for which he had no Warrant? Can this be thought, since he acted under infallible Direction? Surely it may not be imagined. He preached the Law, as a Covenant to Sinners, in order to their Conviction; he also preached it to Saints, as it is such, that they might clearly see the Greatness of their Misery in themselves, and be excited to adore Divine Favour, which is manifested in their Salvation by Jesus Christ.

Again, he preached the Law, as a Rule of Conduct to Believers, and taught them, that they were not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ. And, does he, not, in all his Epistles,

discourse of the various Duties, which are incumbent on the Saints, and exhort them to the Practice of those Duties? I ask Mr. Johnson, if this was preaching the Law, or preaching the Gospel? He will scarcely say it was preaching the Gospel therefore he must allow, that it was preaching the Law: Or say, that it was preaching neither Law, nor Gospel; but something distinct from both, and he knows not what. This unskillful Way of writing is not likely to be of any Service to Evangelical Truths; but highly prejudicial, let it proceed from what Cause soever. Whether Error in Judgment, or Want of due Attention, and through Inadvertency. I am truly sorry, that I have just Occasion for making so displeasing a Remark. I have apprehended, ever since I entered upon ministerial Service that I ought to preach the Law, as well as the Gospel, and still am firmly of the same Opinion. As I care not at all; by whomsoever I am accounted an Antinomian, for preaching the Free Grace of God, as the sole and entire Cause of Salvation, without Works, as Conditions thereof: So I am wholly unconcerned, who may reckon me a Legalist, for preaching the Law unto an evangelical End. I know, that all preaching the Law is legal Preaching, materially considered; but to preach it to Gospel Ends, as Christ, and his Apostles, preached it, is not legal Preaching, in the ill Sense of that Term.

VIII. One would think, that Mr. Johnson's Opinion is, that Ministers are not to admonish Sinners to leave their Sins, and amend their Lives. For he says: Admonishing Sinners to reform their Lives, to mend their Ways, to practise Virtue and Religion, etc. would not have the least Tendency, to convince, but to reduce them; by causing them to imagine their Salvation depended {depends} on a moral Reformation. f18 I acknowledge, that Ministers ought by no means to neglect preaching the Gospel, as he observes. I also grant, that in reproving Vice, and recommending Virtue, etc. due Care should be taken, that no Countenance be given unto these Imaginations, viz. that a supernatural Work on the Heart is not necessary, and that Men are to be saved by their own Acts of Obedience. And, it is much to be lamented, that many Preachers only act the Part of moral Philosophers, and not that of Christian Ministers. They flatter Men with Hopes of Happiness, by becoming outwardly virtuous, though Lust reigns within. Which is an open Contradiction to the holy Law of God, and the Gospel of Christ also. But what though admonishing Sinners is done in a wrong Manner by some, it don't therefore follow, that it is wrong in itself, and is not to be done at all. Elsewhere he allows, that Repentance, and a moral Reformation, are required of Men every where, and that they have sufficient Encouragement thereunto. f19 Why, therefore, may they not be exhorted unto such Repentance and Reformation? Perhaps he will say, they may and ought to be. Why then does he here express himself in such a loose, and unguarded Way? Which, I think, is not to be reconciled therewith. And, it may be, that he will say also, that he is not against preaching the Law, though that is not his Commission. Since he says, that our Work is to strike at the Root: To open the Purity and Perfection, Extent and Intent, Perpetuity and Severity of God's holy Law. f20 If that is not to preach the Law, I am yet to learn, what preaching the Law is. For my Part, I cannot reconcile these Things. It may be, Mr. Johnson can.

I cannot be persuaded to think, as he does, that it is a very, easy Thing for a carnal Man, to comply with Admonitions, and practise Duties which are recommended to him. f21 My Opinion of the Corruption of human Nature, prevents my concurring with him in this Thought. I dare to affirm, notwithstanding all the fine Things, which are spoken of our reasonable Nature by many, that it is not a very easy Thing for Men to abstain from Vice, and practise Virtue, by reason of the Impetuosity, and Violence of those raging Lusts, which are in the Hearts of us all, and every one.

To what Purpose is it, for any one or us to dissemble in this Case, since all our Hearts are open to God, the Judge of all? I am sure, that such is the Force, Cunning, Deceit, and Treachery of Lust in the Souls of Men universally, that were it not for those Restraints, which are laid upon it by God, in the wise and holy Dispensation of his Providence, there would be no Decorum, and Regularity, in the Earth. But the whole World would be a Hell of Confusion, if Men were left unto the Conduct and Influence of their own Lusts without Restraint. That Order which subsists amongst us, is not owing to the Easiness of abstaining from Vice, and practicing Virtue; but unto the wise Constitution, and Settlement of Things, in such Manner, by the great Governor of all, that various Considerations necessarily present themselves to the Minds of Men, which are a Check upon their furious Lusts, and exorbitant Passions, whereby they are prevented acting, in Instances innumerable, what Lust aims at, and prompts them unto. And this calls for Thankfulness, and Adoration, from us. For hereunto we owe our Peace, and Safety, through the whole Course of our Lives.

I agree with him, that the Corruption of Nature, and the Penalty due to Men on Account thereof, ought to be represented to them. And the miserable, helpless, and hopeless Condition of every Sinner, {i.e. in himself} should be taught and inculcated. That all the natural Virtues, etc. of a fallen Creature have Depravity, Imperfection, and Hypocrisy, etc. in them, as he says, it is certain; and not only so, but farther, there is nothing of true Holiness in those Virtues. The Impossibility of Salvation to any Soul, any other Way than by the Son of God alone; in whose Righteousness we are justified, and by whose Grace we are sanctified, are Truths of the greatest Moment, and ought to be much insisted on. Nothing inconsistent therewith should ever drop from the Lips of a Christian Minister. But what are all these Things to the Point in hand? Nothing at all, so far as I can perceive. This is no other than telling me, that, as a Preacher, I ought to have a farther View, than promoting an external Reformation in Men. I grant it; but it don't therefore follow, that I am not to aim at, and endeavour to promote that. In my Opinion, no Person is qualified to be a Christian Minister, who knows not how to reprove Vice, and recommend the Practice of Virtue to Men, without giving them Occasion to think, that no more is necessary to Happiness than an outward Reformation, and that Salvation depends on, and is to be secured by their own Works. One who hath not such Skill, may be a moral Philosopher; but a Christian Divine he cannot be.

FOOTNOTES

Ft1 Page 88,89.

Ft2 Of the Dissolution of the World, p. 431, 432.

Ft3 Collect. Sermon. p. 426.

Ft4 Page 69.

Ft5 Page 48.

Ft6 Page 92.

Ft7 Page 99.

Ft8 Page 48.

Ft9 Page .

Ft10 Ibid.

Ft11 Page 52.

Ft12 Page .

Ft13 Page 52, 53, etc.

Ft14 Page 44.

Ft15 Page 44.

Ft16 Page 44.

Ft17 Page 259.

Ft18 Page 259.

Ft19 Page 21.

Ft20 Page 260.

Ft21 Page 259.

S. The Glory of the Gospel considered

The Glory of the Gospel, Considered by John Brine London: George Keith, 1762

SERMON 35 THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL, CONSIDERED IN A SERMON PREACHED AT KETTERING IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, MAY 23, 1762.

Printed for GEORGE KEITH, in Gracechurch-street: And Sold by JOHN EYNON Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal-

Exchange.

1762 [Price Six-pence.]

1 Timothy 1:11 According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. THE Law, of which the Apostle before speaks, is to be considered as a Prescription of Duty, or as a Covenant having a penal Sanction annexed. As such, it is not made for the righteous Man, for him who is made righteous by the Obedience of CHRIST, and is imprincipled with Holiness, and also taught by divine Grace to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present World. Such a Person is not under the Law, as a Covenant, but he is under it as a Prescription of Duty, being not without Law to God but under the Law to Christ: according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. In the Text three Things are to be observed, I. GOD is blessed.

II. The Gospel is His.

III. It is glorious.

I. GOD is blessed.

1. He is blessed in himself. GOD is essentially and infinitely happy. His Happiness cannot be increased by the Obedience and Praises of his Creatures, nor can it be diminished by their Disobedience. Eternal, invariable, and immense Delight, the supreme Being hath in his infinitely glorious Perfections, which it is impossible should ever vary, increase, or decline in Glory. He is GOD All-sufficient. The same from Everlasting to Everlasting, without Variableness and Shadow of Turning. None can profit him, nor can any injure him in his essential Glory.

2. GOD is the Fountain of Blessedness to Angels and Saints. The Felicity of an intelligent Creature consists in the Knowledge and Adoration of the Perfections of GOD, in the Enjoyment of a Sense of his Favour, and in a Conformity to his holy Will. The Angels owe their invariable Happiness unto the sovereign and free Favour of GOD towards them; which resolved upon their eternal Fruition of himself: in Consequence of which gracious Decree, they are rendered impeccable and immutably happy for evermore. And the Saints are recovered from Ruin, and advanced to a State of inconceivable Blessedness in his immediate Presence, as the pure Effect of his sovereign Kindness, Grace and Mercy to them. He let them apart for himself; therefore, they shall be for ever with him. Perfectly know him, humbly adore him; be like him, and enjoy a ravishing Sense of his Favour unto Eternity. In his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand are Pleasures

forevermore.

II. The Gospel is His. It is not a human Contrivance, but of divine Original. Which might be evinced by many Considerations. I shall mention two only.

1. The Gospel is a Mystery. It is the Wisdom of God in a Mystery {1 Corinthians 2:7}. A great Mystery {1 Timothy 3:16}. And there are Riches of Glory in that Mystery. {Colossians 1:26}. Now no Man can invent a proper Mystery. That is above the Capacity. not only of Men, but of Angels also. It is impossible that any created Mind should coin a Mystery. Absurdities may be invented; but Mysteries cannot, by any created Being whatsoever. Finite Intelligence may discover that there are some mysterious Truths, which respect the Nature of GOD; but such as result from his Will, are absolutely undiscoverable by the Light of Nature. And all evangelical Truths are of that Kind. For the Gospel is a System of Truths which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, and which have not entered into the Heart of Man {1 Corinthians 2:9} Hence it is evident, that the Gospel is from Heaven, and not of Men. It could never have been known without supernatural Revelation 2:1-29. No natural Man in the World approves of the Gospel. For the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The Prophets and Apostles therefore were not the Inventors of the evangelical Scheme. It is most unreasonable to imagine, that Men in their Wits, would unite In a Design to frame and propagate a Set of Doctrines, which they knew would be displeasing to the whole World; and thereby expose themselves to Ridicule, Contempt, and the Hatred of all Classes of Persons, Rulers and Subjects, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. The Deists are very Fools, if they really think, that the Gospel is the Invention of those who published it to Mankind. For they will never be able to advance any Thing., which may in the least degree render it probable, that the Publishers of the Gospel agreed in palming a Forgery upon Men. If any Number of Persons were to conspire in framing a Set of Doctrines, doubtless they would be such as they thought might meet with Approbation in those to whom they intended to publish them, and not such as they knew would be distasteful to Men universally. Now, as the Prophets and Apostles were lure that the Doctrines, which they were determined to publish, would not please, but irritate; would not ingratiate them into Favour, but draw upon them the keen Resentment of the Generality of those to whom they recommended those Doctrines; it is Madness to conceit, that they were the Framers of them. This Consideration with the former sufficiently evince, that the Gospel is of GOD, and not of human Invention. Being of GOD, it most justly demands our reverential Regard.

III. It is glorious. I know but little of its Glory.

Something of it will most clearly appears by a just Definition of it. And I think it may be defined thus: The Gospel is the Revelation of a gracious, holy, righteous, effectual, and wise Provision of Salvation, made by God for some of the human Race. Because it is the Revelation of a Provision of Salvation, it is called the Gospel of our Salvation. That there is a Design in GOD to pardon Sin, and save Sinners, cannot be known but by the Gospel. Nothing in Nature nor in Providence can furnish guilty Men, with a Ground of Hope of being pardoned and saved. Supernatural Revelation only can supply us with a Foundation of Hope, as we are Creatures guilty, sinful, miserable and helpless.

1. It is a gracious Provision which GOD has made for the Salvation of Sinners. Salvation is wholly of Grace. By which is meant not the Benevolence and Goodness of GOD as Creator, who is good

to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works. Salvation springs not from thence Absolutely free and sovereign Favour is intended by Grace, from which the Salvation of Sinners takes its Rise, By Grace are ye saved. Not of Works, lest any Man should boast {Ephesians 2:8-9}. No Subject of Salvation will have it to say, that it was fit GOD should pardon and save him, because of good Dispositions in him, and obediential Acts performed by him. - Election to Salvation was of the free Favour of GOD. Even so then, at this present Time also there is a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace. - And if it be by Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace; otherwise Work is no more Work {Romans 11:6-7}. Grace and Works are Opposites in the Business of Salvation.

They cannot be blended together as con-Causes thereof. Nor is it partly of Grace and partly of Works. It is of Grace, unto the utter Exclusion of Works, as a Cause thereof, that none may have Ground for Boasting. The Choice of Men unto Salvation must be an Act of pure Favour, without any Motive, in them; because Faith and all its Fruits, in them are the Effects of that Choice. For they were chosen to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth {2 Thessalonians 2:13}. GOD chose them that they might be holy {Ephesians 1:4}, and not because he foresaw they so would be. Holiness therefore, being the Fruit of Election, it could not be a Reason or Motive with GOD to form such a Decree in Favour of its Objects. But it must be an Act of mere Good-will and undeserved Goodness towards them. Again, Remission of Sin is of pure Grace. There is a meritorious Cause of Pardon, viz. the Blood of CHRIST. But the Cause of that Cause is the rich Grace of GOD, and therefore, divine Grace is the Origin from which the Pardon of Sin springs. A meritorious Cause in another, detracts not in the least from the Glory of the Grace of GOD, as the Cause of what is merited, by reason, that meritorious Cause is caused by his Grace. In whom we have Redemption, through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sin, according to the Riches of his Grace {Ephesians 1:7}. The Grace of the Father, and the Merit of CHRIST'S Blood, both have Place in our Remission; and are perfectly consistent. The Merit of the Blood of CHRIST is founded in the Grace of the Father towards himself, as Man; and towards us, for whom it was shed; and therefore, the Father's Grace is the Origin from which our Pardon springs, though it was properly merited by his Blood. I must say, that I am ashamed to find any think, that Grace in GOD, and proper Merit in CHRIST, are inconsistent; and therefore, take the Liberty to deny the Merit of a dear Redeemer. I cannot refrain from laying, that such are very unskilful in divine Things, at least in this Instance. Besides, the Justification of our Persons is of the Grace of GOD. Infinite Love and immense Wisdom provided the infinitely valuable Righteousness of CHRIST for us, whereby we are constituted righteous. Being justified by his Grace. It is of GOD that we are in CHRIST, as a Head, by reason whereof his Obedience to the Law becomes ours of Right, and so it is a Gift by Grace unto us consequently, our Justification through the Righteousness of CHRIST is wholly of divine Grace.

Farther, GOD in infinite Goodness provided for our Regeneration and Sanctification. We are saved and called with a holy Calling, not according to our Works; but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ, before the World began {2 Timothy 1:9}. It is of his abundant Mercy that he begets us again to a lively, Hope {#IPeter 1:3}. Having loved us with an everlasting Love, therefore, with Lovingkindness he draws us {Jeremiah 31:3}. Our Vivification when dead in Trespasses and Sins is the mere Effect of his rich Mercy and great Love. {Ephesians 2:4-5}. He doth not operate upon us to make us holy and meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the

Saints in Light, because of a Pliableness in our Wills to concur with him in his Operations: For, our carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be {Romans 8:7} Wherefore, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, that sheweth Mercy {Romans 9:16}. I add, our Preservation and safe Conduct through this imperfect and. militant State, is wholly owing to the Grace of GOD. As he begins the good Work in our Souls, he maintains and carries it on in us, otherwise we could not possibly persevere in Holiness. Such is the Power of Sin in our Hearts. which lusts against, and opposes the spiritual Part. And such are the Craft, Fury and Violence of Satan our unwearied Enemy, also such are the Oppositions we meet with in our Christian Course from the World. It is by divine Power the Saints are kept through Faith unto Salvation. Once more: Future Blessedness is the Provision of infinite Love and Grace. The Kingdom of eternal Glory is the Gift of God's good Pleasure {Luke 12:32}. It bears the Denomination, of Grace, because it as the Effect thereof. And hope to the End, for the Grace that shall be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ {1 Peter 1:13}. A Title to Heaven through the Righteousness of CHRIST is of sovereign Grace, a Meetness for it is the Effect of divine Grace, and our Preservation unto that blissful State, must be attributed wholly to the Grace of GOD. He calls us unto his eternal Glory, in the Character of the GOD OF ALL GRACE {1 Peter 5:10}, and in that Character, he conducts us to it, and puts us into the actual Possession of it. Eternal Life is a free-Grace Gift to all who enjoy it.

2. It is a holy Provision. The infinite Holiness of GOD shines forth most gloriously in all the Parts of our Salvation.

[1] In our Pardon. Divine Mercy is manifested in the Remission of Sin. But if GOD's Displeasure against our Sins is not discovered, in order to our Impunity, Pardon cannot be an Act of Holiness. Divine Purity, in relation to moral Evil, is only seen in Resentment and Indignation against it, not in the Act itself of remitting it to the Transgressor. Wherefore, it became him, for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings {Hebrews 2:10}. If GOD had pardoned guilty Men, without discovering his Displeasure in this Way against their Crimes, it would have been at the Expense of the Glory of his Holiness. For, to pardon of absolute Mercy, is not an Act of Holiness. But to remit Sin, on the Foundation of a Discovery of proper Resentment against it, is both an Act of Mercy and Holiness.

[2] In the Constitution of our Persons, righteous GOD of his infinite Mercy hath provided for us a Righteousness, which is commensurate to the Law. CHRIST was made under the Law on our Account, and perfectly obeyed it in all its Precepts. And of the divine Father, we are in Christ Jesus, in Consequence of which, he is of God made Righteousness to us {1 Corinthians 1:30}. And therefore, it is agreeable to divine Purity and Holiness to accept of and justify us. But the Act of Justification, without a Righteousness answerable to the Requirements of the Law, would not have been an Act of Holiness; on the contrary, it would have been an unholy Act, and inconsistent with the infinite Purity of GOD.

[3] The Holiness of GOD is manifested in our Regeneration and Sanctification. Our new Creation is an eminent Display of divine Purity. We are the Workmanship of Cod, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works {Ephesians 2:10}. The Communication of Holiness to an Unholy Creature, is an Act of Holiness. And therefore, GOD in making us holy, displays his own Holiness. And as he doth

this in order to our future Enjoyment of Himself, it is a full Evidence, that Holiness is necessarily prerequisite to future Happiness: That without Holiness, no Man shall see the Lord {Hebrews 12:14}.

[4] GOD manifests his Holiness in our Preservation to the heavenly State. As the Creation of a Principle of Holiness in us was a holy Act, so all divine Influences upon us to maintain; and increase the Vigour of that Principle, are Acts of Holiness. Spiritual Supplies of Grace, to Uphold and confirm our Souls in the Practice of our Duty, in this militant State, are Effects of rich Grace, and also glorious Displays of the Purity and Holiness of the GOD of all Grace. Who will not fail of giving us more Grace, until we arrive to Glory. He will give Grace, and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from us {Psalms 84:11}.

[5] GOD will eternally manifest his Holiness our Glorification. Divine Purity shines forth in the gracious Decree, concerning our final and complete Happiness, For, in that Decree, GOD determined to make us meet for the Enjoyment of himself, by the sanctifying Influences of his Spirit. And our Happiness hereafter will very much consist in the Perfection of our Holiness. GOD chose us, that we might be holy before himself in Love as to be without Blame {Ephesians 1:4}; that is, all Cause of Censure, and that for ever. Now; divine Holiness is gloriously displayed in making unholy Creatures perfectly holy, and immutably so. As the Impeccability of a Creature is the Effect of sovereign Goodness; so it is an eminent, Display of the infinite Purity of GOD.

3. It is a righteous Provision of Salvation. The Justice of GOD is therein most gloriously manifested.

[1] Sin is punished. GOD is infinitely merciful to our Persons. He spares us; but not our Sins. Sin he resolved not to spare; but to take full Vengeance, on it. With this View he decreed, that CHRIST should bear our Guilt, and suffer the Penalty it demerited. Unto which the blessed JESUS readily and fully consented. And on that Foundation, the Father laid on CHRIST, or made to meet in him, the Iniquities of us all {Isaiah 53:6}. He made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin {1 Corinthians 5:13}. And CHRIST bore our Sins, in his own Body, on the Tree {1 Peter 3:22}. Our Offences being imputed to him, he thereupon, was made a Curse {Galatians 3:13}. And the Father awaked the Sword of Justice against him, and sheathed it in his Bowels. Thus the Father spared him not, but delivered him up for us all, though he was his own Son, his only begotten Son {Romans 8:32}; and was infinitely beloved by him: Yet he would not deal tenderly with him, nor abate any thing of that Penalty, which the Mass of Guilt that was charged on, him did demerit. Thus the Soul of Christ was made an Offering for Sin {Isaiah 53:10}. Oh what an amazing Display of divine Justice is in this Transaction! Greater Love to our Persons is not discovered, than Vengeance against our Sins. The infinite Dignity of CHRIST'S Person, put an infinite Value upon what he suffered; but the immense Greatness of his Person did not cause the Father to make any Abatement of that Punishment, which Justice directed to the Infliction of, for the Sins which he bore.

[2] The Law is magnified. CHRIST, who is GOD and Man united, became subject to it. He was made under the Law, and punctually obeyed all the Precepts of it. He likewise suffered its Curse {Galatians 3:23}. An infinite Honour was done to the legal Constitution, by the Obedience and Sufferings of the great Redeemer. And because thereof, the Father is well pleased. The Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness Sake, he will magnify the Law, and make it honourable {Isaiah 42:21}. This Provision for the Honour of the Law, is an eminent Branch of the Glory of the Gospel.

The evangelical Constitution, far exceeds in Glory the legal; but it is a Scheme calculated to render that Constitution far more glorious, than it could have been without it. The Obedience and Sufferings of the son of GOD, are an infinite Exaltation of the Glory of the divine Law.

[3] The Justice of GOD is therein exercised, and all its Demands are fully answered. Divine Justice righteously acted its Part, in requiring perfect Obedience of the Sinner's Surety, and tremendously in the Infliction of Punishment upon him, in order, to our Pardon, Justification, and eternal Salvation. GOD set forth his Son to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God. To declare, at this Time his Righteousness: that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. {Romans 3:24-26} Rigorous Justice and boundless Grace meet in this adorable Contrivance: Our Pardon is an Act of Righteousness, as, well as an Act of Mercy. Our Justification is an Act of Justice, as well as an Act of Grace, through the Obedience and Sacrifice of CHRIST.

4. That Provision which GOD hath made for our Salvation, is effectual.

[1] The Pardon of Sin is certain and sure. CHRIST by his Sufferings and Death obtained eternal Redemption. The Benefit itself he obtained, whatever is intended by it, or included in it. Not an Offer, or a Proposal thereof. For, obtaining an Offer, or a Benefit, or a Proposal of Terms, on which a Benefit may be enjoyed, is not obtaining the Thing itself. This is so evident, that it is needless to attempt its Proof. Now Redemption, which CHRIST obtained, is the Remission of Sin In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins {Ephesians 1:7}. If it is not granted, that Redemption is. the Forgiveness of Sins, I will never contend with any about its Extent, whether it respects all, or some Men only. For it is not a Matter of such Moment, as may justly require Debate, if that is denied, It is of trifling Consideration, whether it is limited, or of universal Extent, if it includes not the Pardon of Sin. Clear, indeed, it is, that if Redemption does include the Pardon of Sin, it cannot be of universal Extent, because Men universally are not pardoned, but some only. Those, therefore, who are of Opinion, that Redemption is unlimited, are Obligated to deny that the Pardon of Sin, or a Right to Impunity, was obtained by the Death of CHRIST. An Offer of Pardon, or a Proposal of Forgiveness, on certain Terms, was obtained by the Sufferings of CHRIST; but Pardon itself they think was not. A Right to Impunity they will not allow to be the proper Effect of CHRIST'S Death. Whereby they overthrow the Doctrine of his Satisfaction, and consequentially reflect on the Justice of GOD. For they suppose that GOD put his Son to Death for the Crimes of Delinquents, and yet inflicts the Punishment of eternal Death upon, such for whose Offences CHRIST suffered Death as a Penalty, because they do not perform Conditions on which an Offer of Pardon was made to them. It will, I think, be very difficult to reconcile this with divine Justice. Can it consist with Justice to put an innocent Person to Death, as the Substitute of an Offender, and put him to Death also for that Crime, or those Crimes on Account whereof his Substitute suffered Death? Can Justice direct to punish one who is innocent, in the Room and Stead of a guilty Person, and to inflict Punishment on him likewise for the same Crimes? If it cannot, GOD, who is infinitely just, will not inflict proper, everlasting Punishment on any of those upon whose Account and in whose Stead he most dreadfully punished his own Son, that they might escape with Impunity. The Doctrine of the limited Extent of Redemption is now become very displeasing to many Professors, and therefore it is to be feared that some who believe it, are shy of letting it be known that they do believe it, lest they should give Umbrage to some Persons who cannot bear with an explicit Mention of it, nor with such a Way of stating the

momentous Doctrine of Atonement, as necessarily supposes it. Hence too many superficial Discourses are delivered on that important Subject; though we are told that CHRIST, in suffering, was the Substitute of Sinners, and that he suffered Punishment for their Crimes, it cannot be collected from what the Preacher faith, whether he believes, or does not believe, that proper and full Satisfaction was made for Sin by CHRIST'S Death. Why is such Caution used on this weighty Point? I fear it is because the Preacher is unwilling to offend such who espouse the Opinion of the unlimited Extent of CHRIST'S Death, or universal Redemption, which cannot possibly be that Redemption whereof the Gospel is a Discovery: For that Redemption is the Forgiveness of Sins. As therefore the Sins of some Men are not forgiven, Men universally are not the Subjects of that Redemption which the Gospel reveals. Why are we not plainly told, that CHRIST really put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself? that he finished Transgression and end of Sin, as to its Guilt, by being cut off but not for himself; that he made Reconciliation for Iniquity; that GOD is pacified, towards us for all that we have done; and that when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; that we are justified by the Blood of Christ, and shall be saved from Wrath through him; that he redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us; that the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed; that Peace was made for us by the Blood of his Cross? And why are we not plainly told that these strong Expressions, concerning the Effects of the Death of CHRIST, cannot dwindle into an Offer of Pardon, Or a Proposal of Terms of Peace and Reconciliation, between GOD and our Souls? If the Preacher really believes that JESUS CHRIST made proper and full Atonement for Sin, by his Sufferings and Death, let him tell us so, and that therefore a Right to Impunity is a certain Effect thereof, and wholly arises therefrom, and is not suspended on Conditions to be performed by us. This Doctrine formerly was cordially embraced, and zealously contended for, by reformed Divines, but alas! A very melancholy Change hath taken Place amongst us.

[2] Effectual Provision is made for the Justification of Sinners before GOD. For in the LORD we have Righteousness. CHRIST is of GOD made unto us Righteousness, as a Benefit distinct from Sanctification. And therefore, Righteousness is not included in Sanctification, nor is Sanctification included in Righteousness. If Righteousness. was included in Sanctification, CHRIST in being made Righteousness to us, he would be made Sanctification to us therein; and if Sanctification was included in Righteousness, in being made Righteousness to us, he would be made Sanctification to us therein. In that Case, Righteousness and Sanctification would not be distinct Benefits, but one and the same; which it is evident they are not, because the Apostle speaks of them as distinct Benefits. Hence also it is clear, that whatever is included in Righteousness is no Part of our Sanctification; and that whatever is included in our Sanctification is no Part of our Righteousness; consequently our Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, enter not into our Righteousness, which CHRIST is of GOD made unto us. Our internal and external Holiness taken together, are not that Righteousness. Nothing whereof we are the Subjects, nor any Thing which we perform, can be that Righteousness, or included in it. Our gracious Dispositions and holy Actions cannot be that Righteousness, if it is a Benefit distinct from Sanctification. The Righteousness of CHRIST is imputed to us in order to our Justification, and Grace is conveyed to us from him in order to our Sanctification. So that CHRIST is made Sanctification to us by a Communication of Grace from him but he is made Righteousness by the Imputation of his Righteousness to our Persons, who is the LORD our Righteousness. And as our Sanctification is not included in, nor any Part of that Righteousness which CHRIST is made of GOD unto us, he is

made Righteousness to us in order to our Justification, and not in order to our Sanctification.

Now let us consider whether this Provision of the Obedience or Righteousness of CHRIST, in order to our Justification, is effectual or not. I cannot but apprehend, that it is effectual for the Reasons following.

[1.] CHRIST'S Righteousness is absolutely perfect. He was as holy in his Nature, and as unblemished in his Conduct, as the Law required he should be, under which he was made upon our Account. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. A Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot. He did no Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth. Will not Righteousness, which in all Respects is commensurated to the Law in its Requirements, be effectual of itself unto the Justification of those Persons for whom it was wrought out, and unto whom it is imputed for that End? A complete Righteousness needs not any Thing to be added to it, or connected with it, to answer the important Purpose of Justification. Let us, therefore, never think of joining our imperfect Righteousness, with the perfect Righteousness of CHRIST, in the Business of our Justification before GOD. Nor imagine that our imperfect Obedience will be available to the Acceptation of our Persons with GOD, because of, or through the perfect Obedience of CHRIST. For, the Perfection of his Obedience adds nothing to the Worth and Value of ours. Its Nature is not changed by the Obedience of CHRIST. And therefore, if GOD can justify us, on the Foundation of our own Obedience, consistent with his Truth, Holiness and Justice, CHRIST'S Obedience to the Law for us was not necessary to our Justification in his Sight.

[2.] The Duration of CHRIST'S Righteousness, is an Evidence of its Sufficiency and Efficacy unto our invariable and endless Justification. That which depends upon, and is in Virtue of a never-ceasing Cause, will for ever continue. The Righteousness of CHRIST, on which our Justification depends, and in Virtue whereof it is, will never alter or cease. And therefore, our Justification must be invariable and endless. For an Effect cannot be variable and uncertain, as to the Continuance of its Existence, which springs from an invariable and perpetual Cause. Such is the Righteousness of CHRIST. It is everlasting, can never change, nor possibly cease: Consequently everlasting Justification is effectually secured by it.

[3.] The Value of CHRIST'S Obedience can never be lessened. Its Value is infinite, by Reason of the immense Dignity of his Person. And if it really is infinitely valuable, because he is GOD and Man united, then surely it must be eternally available to our Justification. Can any sober Man think that it became the Wisdom of GOD to provide a Righteousness for us, of inconceivable Worth and Value, in order to our Justification before him, and yet notwithstanding that Provision, our Justification in his Sight is a Matter uncertain and precarious, or that which may be or may not be? Such an Imagination is absurd.

[4.] Eternal Life is through the Righteousness of CHRIST as a meritorious Cause. Grace reigns through Righteousness unto eternal Life. The Reign of Death is through Sin, as a procuring Cause; and the Reign of Grace unto eternal Life is through Righteousness, as a procuring Cause. For as the Reign of Sin was unto Death, because it properly demerited it; so the Reign of Grace through Righteousness is unto eternal Life, because that properly merited it. The Apostle, agreeable to the Scope of his Discourse, in the Place, considers Sin as a procuring Cause of Death, and Righteousness as a procuring Cause of eternal Life. The Reign of Grace unto eternal Life cannot be through the Justice or Righteousness of the Nature of GOD, without the

Subsistence of a Righteousness properly deserving or meritorious of eternal Life. And therefore, I cannot but conceive that we are to understand by Righteousness the Obedience of CHRIST, as that through which Grace reigns, unto eternal Life. If any should say, that the Term Merit is not extant in Scripture, I would answer, as Pareus does. Although the Word Merit is never extant, because neither the Hebrews nor the Greeks, have any which properly answers to the Term Merit. - Yet the Word *Peripoihsewv*, Acquisition, comes up to the Sense of Merit; and the Word *peipoieisqai*, to acquire, which Scripture frequently uses about the Work of Salvation.^{f1} That which renders the Obedience of CHRIST meritorious, is the Subsistence of his human Nature in his divine Person. For, as Witsius lays, Whereas this is not the Obedience of a mere Man, but of Christ God-Man, an, infinite Person, itself also is of infinite Dignity or Worth; consequently, hath a just Proportion unto the greatest Glory answerable to it, and so there is Merit in it, which they call Merit of Condignity, such can agree unto no mere Creature^{f2} which is a farther Evidence that this Provision for our Justification is effectual. A Righteousness, which is proportionate unto the greatest Glory, will doubtless be for ever available to our Acceptance with GOD

[3] Effectual Provision is made for our Sanctification. Grace was given us in Christ before the World began in order to our holy Vocation. It was the eternal Purpose of GOD to call us with a holy Calling. Either he is able to make us holy, or he is not able. If he is not able, then he purposed to do what he could not effect. To suppose which, is an Impeachment of his Wisdom. The Purposes of a wise Agent exceed not his Capacity. And can any Man persuade himself to think that the Designs of GOD, who is infinitely wise, are above his Power? If GOD is able to make us holy, and in Fact he does not, then he must have changed his Purpose if he once designed it. To imagine which necessarily supposes that he is mutable. Hence it is clear, that GOD never intended to regenerate, convert, and sanctify those who are not regenerated, converted, and sanctified. On this important Point we too often hear very superficial Discourses from such, who, if they believe the Efficacy of divine Grace in its Operations on the Souls of Men, are not free it should be known that they do believe it. For it cannot be inferred from What they say, that GOD creates, infuses, or implants a Principle of Holiness in Men, without which no Man whatever can become holy. Operations and Influences on the carnal Mind, which is Enmity against God, will never cause it to love him, nor bring it into Subjection to the Law. The Grace of GOD effects not this in the Regenerate, how should it therefore effect this in those who are not regenerated? I will not say that Sanctification is precarious, a Thing which may be or may not be; but that it is impossible unless a holy Principle is created or infused into the Heart. No Operations, no Influences will ever make us holy, without the Communication of a Principle of Holiness. No Excitations, no Impulses, no Aids will ever cause the Flesh, which serves the Law of Sin, to serve the Law of God. A Disposition in us to serve the Law is habitual Holiness, and serving of the Law is practical Holiness. The former is produced in us by the Power and Grace of GOD, in an instantaneous Manner, without the Concurrence of our Will or Opposition in it thereunto. Divine Grace influences us unto the latter, upon the Production of the former. And therefore, GOD works in us not only to will, but also to do, of his good Pleasure. Consequently he fails not of effecting that in us which he graciously purposes to effect.

[4] The Perseverance of the Saints is effectually provided for. They shall be holden up, for God is able to make them stand. They are in the Hands of CHRIST, Who is able to keep them from falling. He is the Fountain of their spiritual Life; and therefore it cannot become extinct. Because he

lives, they shall live also. Their Life is said to be hid with Christ in God; which denotes both its Secrecy and Security. His Grace is sufficient for them, and he will not fail to supply them in all their Exigences. He declares, that it is his Father's Will, that of all which he hath given him, he should lose nothing. And he certainly will execute the Father's Will in this Matter, if all the Power and Grace which he hath are sufficient to carry it into Execution. Let us heedfully attend to what he saith in relation to this Thing. And he speaks thus: My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them; and they follow me: I give to them eternal Life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father, which gave them or, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand {John 10:27-29}. These blessed Words afford such clear, full, and strong Evidence in Favour of the Security and Certainty of the final Perseverance of the Saints, as cannot be obscured by all the Wit and Sophistry of those who disbelieve that precious Truth. Limborch says: The Meaning of the Lord is not, that those who are his Sheep, through their own Fault may not cease to be his Sheep: But that no Man, so long as they are and continue his Sheep, can pluck them out of his Hand, and by Force hinder their Salvations.^{f3} That is to say, if thro' their own Fault they do not become Apostates, but by Care and Diligence preserve themselves from Apostasy, and persevere to the End, they shall be safe. What a wretched Perversion of the Text is this? The Love and Care, the Grace and Power of CHRIST and of the Father, will effectually prevent their Apostasy. They remain not in the Hand of CHRIST, because they continue to believe; but because they remain in his Head, therefore they continue to believe, and certainly shall be saved; not perish, but enjoy eternal Life. This leads me to observe,

[5] Effectual Provision is made for our future Blessedness. I think it is not necessary to enlarge on this Particular, For if the Truth of the preceding Particulars is established, which I hope it is, the Glorification of Believers cannot be precarious; that which may be or may not be, it is impossible that any Link, in the golden Chain of Salvation, should be broken. Moreover, whom God did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, are certain Effects of divine Predestination, through the Grace, Blood and Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST.

[6]. It is an infinitely wise Provision which GOD hath made for our Salvation. This in some measure appears from what is already said. If it is a Provision gracious, holy, righteous and effectual, the highest Wisdom illustriously shines forth thereto: And it is a Contrivance most worthy of GOD. But if it is not such, there is no Wisdom in it. If the Grace of GOD is not magnified; if his Holiness is not displayed; if his Justice is not exercised therein, I am sure it is no Projection of his; and if it is not effectual, it cannot have GOD for its Author: Because it is impossible that infinite Wisdom should form a Scheme which is ineffectual. Finite Wisdom may; but infinite Wisdom cannot. GOD is glorified in the Plan of our Salvation. All the Parts of it spring from divine Sovereignty. Grace and Holiness, Mercy and Justice, have an equal Share of Glory, and perfectly harmonize therein. As rich boundless Grace is conspicuous in that Title, which we have to Glory by Adoption: So Justice is manifested in that Right which we have to eternal Life, through the Righteousness of CHRIST, it being proportionate to the highest Felicity we are capable of enjoying. Right to Heaven by Adoption does not supersede nor render unnecessary, that Right which we have unto it through the Obedience of CHRIST.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Licet enim Vocabulum Meriti nufquam exstet; quia nec Hebraei nec Graeci ullum habent, quod Merito proprie respondeat - tamen adSensum Meriti accedit Vox Peripoihsew,

Acquisitio, & Verbum peipoieisqai, acquirere. Quibus de Liverationis Opere frequenter utitur Scriptura, in Romans Cap. V. p. 545. ft2 Imo quum Obedientia haec non meri Hominis fit, sed Christi Qeanbrwpou, Personae infinitae, ipsa quoque infinitae Dignitatis est, ccnsequenter justam Proportionem habet ad maximam Gloriam illi respondentem, atque hactenus est Meritum, quod recant de condigno, quale in nullam meram Creaturam cadit. OEcon. Foed. Lib. II. Cap. III. Sect. XXXIII. ft3 Non maim mens Domini est, quod qui Ores ejus sunt, non possint propria culpa desinere esse ipsius Oves: Sed quod nemo, quamdiu Ores ejus sunt & manent, eas de manu ipsuis rapere possit, ac salutem per vim impedire. Theolog-Christ. Lib. V. Cap. LXXXIV. Sect. 7.

S. The Gospel Not Absurd

The Gospel Not Absurd, Not Contrary To Justice, Nor Licentious by John Brine {London: John Ward, 1757}

SERMON 27 THE GOSPEL NOT ABSURD, NOT CONTRARY TO JUSTICE, NOR LICENTIOUS
A SERMON PREACHED APRIL THE 13TH, 1757, IN GREAT

EAST-CHEAP: To the SOCIETY who support, the Wednesday Evening-Lecture in that Place.
Published at the Request of several of the SUBSCRIBERS, who heard it.

Printed for and Sold by JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, against the Royal Exchange; by
GEORGE KEITH, in Grace-Church Street; and, by JOHN EYNON, Printseller, the Corner of
Castle Alley, by the Royal Exchange.

1757.

[Price Six-Pence.] {2 Timothy 2:25} In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging the Truth. THE Apostle in the Context gives Directions to Titus, how to discharge that important Service, unto which he was called, in the Church. Exhorts him to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, because they gender Strifes. And the Servant of the Lord must not strive: But be gentle to all Men, apt to teach, i.e. disposed to it, and in some good Measure qualified for it; patient, not provoked to Wrath, or undue Resentment, by the Opposition, which some may make unto the Gospel.

I apprehend that intelligent Readers will easily discern, that there are four Things, in general, observable in the Text; viz. That some oppose the Gospel - That Instruction is to be given to them - That this Instruction must be given in Meekness. - That the End to be proposed thereto is, their Repentance, and Acknowledgment of the Truth.

I. Some, yea, many oppose the Gospel. A great Number objected to it, in the Time of the Apostles, have in succeeding Ages, now do, and we must expect a continued Opposition unto it, from carnal Men. For, unto them it is Foolishness, and, therefore, they think it is their Wisdom to reject it. They charge it with Absurdity; reproach it, as Inconsistent with Justice, and Licentious. There are very heavy Charges indeed, and if they can be supported, are sufficient to sink its Credit with all wise and virtuous Persons.

1. A Charge of Absurdity is brought against it. I confess, that some do advance absurd Notions, and call them evangelical Truths. One Instance whereof permit me to give, viz. The Pre-existence of the human Soul of Christ, and that the Covenant of Grace was made therewith. Some think that Existence was given to the intellectual Part of his human Nature, before all Worlds. Now either that Duration, wherein his Soul existed before the Creation, had Commencement, or it had not. If it had not, then his Soul is properly eternal; and it cannot be a voluntary Production. For, that which always was, cannot be the Production of any Cause whatsoever. Because, that which is produced, once was not. If that Duration had Commencement, as it must, most certainly; if his Soul was

created, then there are two limited Durations; one wherein the Soul of Christ existed, before the Creation; and another, which began with the Creation. For, according to the Language of the Scripture, In the Beginning God created the Heavens, and the Earth: which cannot possibly mean the Commencement of a Duration, which was long, very long before it. And, therefore, this necessarily supposes, that there are two Beginnings, in finite and limited Duration. For, that Duration, wherein it is thought, the Soul of Christ existed before the Creation, even to the End of the World, is finite and limited; it had a Beginning, and it will have an End. Time is the whole of measurable and limited Duration: And it must include in it all Duration which hath a Limit. And, therefore, as measurable Duration cannot have two Ends; so it cannot have two Beginnings. This Notion therefore, of the Pre-existence of the Soul of Christ, must be false, if it is true, that God created the Heavens, and the Earth, in the Beginning. For it is most clearly absurd to imagine, that limited Duration had two Beginnings. Farther, It seems exceedingly strange to me, that any should think that the Covenant of Grace was made with the human Soul of Christ. His human Nature was contracted for, in that Covenant, by his divine Person, as a constituent Part of Himself, in the Character of Mediator; but it was not a contracting Party therein. To conceive it was, is to raise it unto a Dignity, which is infinitely above its Due. Nor could it possibly be such, because the foederal Transactions of the divine Persons were not external Acts, which they mull have been, if the Covenant of Grace yeas made with the Soul of Christ. They were internal Acts of the Deity, and not external, The Covenant of Grace is the distinct Actings of the divine Wisdom and Will, which are one essentially, in the distinct divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, respecting the Salvation of the Elect. And, consequently, they were not external Acts, but internal: wherefore that Covenant could not be made with the Soul of Christ. Besides, if his Soul existed when that Covenant was entered into, it is not an eternal Covenant. This Consequence is granted; and the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace is denied, by the Advocates for this Opinion. They therefore, mutt also allow, that once there was no Covenant of Grace: That once Christ was not Mediator: That once He was not a Head: That once He had no Body or Members: That once He was not a Surety for the Church: That once the Elect were not given to Him by the Father: That once they were not blessed with all spiritual Blessings in Him: Or, that once, that Grace was not given to them in Him, according to which they are saved and called, with an holy Calling. All there are unavoidable Consequences of that Opinion. It is astonishing to me, that any should esteem that an evangelical Truth, which undeniably everts the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace, which this most evidently does, as the Embracers of it, are free to grant. That very elegant and glorious Context, which you have, in Proverbs, Chap. 8. from Verse {Proverbs 8:21-31} to the 31st inclusive, {Proverbs 8:21-31} hath been abused and perverted to give Countenance unto it; which the Reader may see vindicated in my Sermon On the proper Eternity of the Divine Decrees. The Arians, who would be thought Men of superior Sense and Wisdom, are guilty of the same Absurdity. They suppose, that the Body of Christ was animated by a Spirit, which was created long before all Worlds; and that, that Spirit was concerned in the Creation of all other Beings.

Now if that Duration, wherein that Spirit existed, before the Creation of the World, was immeasurable, it must be Eternity. If measurable, then it is included in Time, for Time is the Whole of measurable Duration; and, consequently, Time must have had two Beginnings; one when this Spirit was created; and another when the World was created; that is, if Moses speaks Truth, who says: In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. But this by the Byef1 The Oposers of the Gospel charge various Doctrines of it with Absurdity.

{1} The Doctrine of the Trinity. It supposes, say they, that there are three Gods.

Answ. This is a Mistake. For the divine Essence is one; though there are three divine Persons subsisting therein. They object to this Answer thus: A distinct Person is a distinct Essence. Unto which it may be replied; Every finite created Person is so; but it doth not follow, that a distinct divine Person is a distinct Being. God may be one essentially, and three personally, for ought we know or can know. Our Reason cannot prove that it is impossible, that three intelligent Agents should subsist in the divine Essence. It can most clearly prove the Unity of the divine Essence; but we have not, nor can have such a Knowledge of that Essence, as to demonstrate, that there cannot three subsist therein, who act with Wisdom, Will, and Approbation: And, therefore, are three Persons; for not to insist on a critical Definition of a Person, I understand, and mean thereby an intelligent Agent. This Doctrine contradicts not the Unity of the Deity, and therefore it is not absurd.

{2} The precious Doctrine of proper Atonement for Sin by the Death of Christ, is also said to be Absurd: The Guilt of one cannot become another's.

Answ. Not by Contraction; but it may by Imputation, bit there is a proper Ground for it, which there is in this Case; viz. Christ's Suretyship for us. His undertaking to expiate our Guilt, is a just and fit Foundation for the Charge of it to Him. Again, it is objected, that the Sufferings of one who is innocent, cannot satisfy for the Crimes of a guilty Person. To which it may be replied, Christ was innocent in Himself; but our Crimes being imputed to Him, He did not suffer, considered as innocent; but as guilty, by the Imputation of our Guilt to Him. And, therefore, His Sufferings were of a penal Nature, and by Reason of the Dignity of His Person, they were satisfactory for that Guilt, in Relation unto which those Sufferings were inflicted on Him.

{3} The important Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, is like-wise pronounced Absurd. The Righteousness of one, it is said, cannot become the Righteousness of another.

Answ. It cannot inherently: Or the obediencial Acts of one cannot become the personal Actions of another. But the Obedience of one may become another's by Imputation, if there is a fit Ground for it; which there is in this Affair; viz. our Union with Christ, and His being made under the Law for us.

{4} The glorious Truth of efficacious and irresistible Grace is also affirmed to be Absurd. It is vehemently urged, that it deprives the human Will of its Freedom in acting. If this can be proved, I grant it is an absurd Principle. But Proof cannot be given thereof. 1st. A holy spiritual Principle is infused, or created in the Mind, in which the Will neither concurs, nor opposes: Or, it neither wills, nor nills, in that Infusion and Creation. The Mind, in this supernatural Work upon it, is entirely passive, or it acts not at all therein, either in a Way of Concurrence or Opposition. Now, the Freedom of the Mind's Agency cannot be affected in a Work upon it, wherein it is not, nor can be active, either in a Way of Concurrence, or Opposition; which is the Fact in this Matter. It is granted, I think, even by all who differ from us in this Point, that Men may, with Helps afforded to them, acquire holy Habits. I ask, therefore, if it is impossible with God, to create such Habits, in the human Mind? If it is, then, Men are able to do more for themselves, than God can do for them. To imagine this, seems to me a real and great Absurdity. Divine Promises, most certainly, do not exceed the Extent of divine Power. God promises to take away the Heart of Stone, out of our Flesh: And to give us an Heart of Flesh. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put

within you., is His gracious Language in the new Covenant. Which Promises very clearly express the Infusion, or Creation of a holy Principle, or Spring of Action, in our Souls. What His Goodness promises, His Power can effect and, therefore, He is able, to imprinciple our Minds, with a holy Disposition. And, this Infusion of Holiness, cannot infringe the Liberty of our Will; the Reason whereof, is most clear, our Will is not active therein. For, the Will acts not, either in a Way of Volition, or Nilling, in that Work upon us. And its Freedom cannot be affected, in that wherein, neither its Consent, nor its Refusal, do, or can take Place.

2dly. Grace excites that holy Principle into Action, wherein the Will acts freely, as it is the Subject of that Principle, or Disposition to Holiness. No unnatural Force, or Violence is offered to the Will, in moving it to act, agreeably unto its own Disposition. And as our Minds are sanctified by divine Grace, there is an habitual Disposition, or Inclination, in our Will, unto that which is Good. As there is, in the Flesh, an habitual Inclination to what is Evil. We act freely both in our good, and evil Volitions: For, the Will's Choice of contrary Objects is voluntary, because there are in it, two contrary Springs of Action. One is Good, and the other is Evil. And, therefore, its Freedom in neither is infringed in the least Degree. If we maintained, that the Will, is determined, by a divine Influence upon it, to chuse what is Good, without a Disposition, or Inclination in it, unto Holiness, it might be said, that we prejudice its natural Liberty; but as we do not, nor suppose it, there is not the least Ground for this Charge of Absurdity, against our Opinion of the Efficacy, and Irresistibility of the Grace of God, in our Regeneration, and Sanctification.

2. Many object, that the evangelical Scheme is Inconsistent with Justice. Particularly, Christ's suffering Penalty, in the Stead of Sinners. I Answer,

{1} He covenanted to suffer for them. It was proposed to Him, by the divine Father, to lay down His Life, for His People, unto which Proposal He agreed.

{2} He had Power over His Life, and He might enter into Agreement to resign it, for perishing Sinners. He had Power to lay it down, and Power to take it again. For, He was Lord of it. Which is what no Man is. And, therefore, none may agree to suffer Death, for a capital Offender. Nor is any Man Lord of his Members, any more than of his Life. And, therefore, it is not lawful for any one to agree to suffer Mutilation, the Loss of an Eye, or a Hand, for another, who by his Crime, hath rendered himself worthy of such Punishment. Nor, would it be just, in a civil Governor, to accept of the Engagement of an innocent Person, to suffer bodily Pains and Penalties for a Delinquent. Because, no Man is Lord of himself, or hath a Right to dispose of his Life, or his Limbs, as he pleases. A Man may not injure himself, in his Person, nor hath a Power of investing others with a legal Right, of doing him, a personal Injury. But all Things, are otherwise with God, and Christ, our Saviour, or else we are inevitably undone for ever-more.

{3} His human Will was wholly in it. No Violence was offered to Christ, our Saviour, by God our Judge, in His Sufferings and Death. He was not reluctant, but absolutely submissive to the Pleasure, and Appointment, of God, in all He suffered. His Language was this: Not my, Will; but thine be done. And, shall I not drink the Cup, which my Father, giveth me to drink? Since our blessed Lord, had a Right to dispose of His Life, and He freely resigned it, in Obedience to the Will of His Father, there was nothing contrary to Justice, in that amazing Transaction.

{4} The Sufferings of Christ were not of long Continuance. If they had been perpetuated, and He had not seen an End of them, it might be objected, that infinite Wisdom, and Justice, could never ordain, that this Holy ONE, should always remain in a suffering State, for guilty Men; because, in that Case, it would have been impossible for Him, ever to receive from God, a Reward for His unparalleled Submission, unto His sovereign Will. But as He was conducted through, and a Period was put to His Sufferings, such a glorious Reward might be given unto Him, as it became God to bestow, and is fully satisfactory to Him, in its Enjoyment. Which is the real Fact. For,

{5} Our Redeemer is amply rewarded for His Sufferings, and Death. On Account of His Obedience to the divine Will, in submitting to suffer the ignominious, painful, and accursed Death of the Cross: God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name, which is above every Name: That at the Name of Jesus, every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth: And that every Tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. He hath done, does, and will eternally see of the Travail of His Soul, unto His entire Satisfaction, and Joy. And, therefore, there is nothing inconsistent with Justice, in this Procedure. That was not required of Christ, which was not in his Right to give. His Life was His own: He was Lord of it. And the Will of that Nature, wherein He suffered and died, voluntarily submitted to Suffering and Death. He is delivered from a State of Suffering, and is crowned with Glory and Honour, as a Reward for His Obedience to the Will of God, in this Affair. This Cause will triumph over all the groundless Cavils of Objectors. A clear Stating, and proper Explication of it, will enable us, to answer the Objections, which are brought against it, in such a Manner, as not to admit of a solid Reply.

3. Many affirm, that the evangelical Scheme is Licentious.

{1} The Doctrine of the superabounding Grace of God. It is said, that it encourages Men to continue in Sin.

Answ. Divine Grace saves the chief of Sinners; but it saves no Man in his Sins, or without Holiness. And, therefore, such as are destitute of Holiness, have no Ground to conclude, that they are Subjects of Salvation. Consequently, this Doctrine gives no Encouragement, unto a Continuance in Sin. But we need not wonder, that such a Charge is brought against it, for it was in the Time of the Apostles. And it is not strange, that the same Doctrine, is now loaded with the same Reproach by the same Sort of Persons. And not rather as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm, that we say: Let us do Evil that Good may come. The Apostle passes a severe, but just Sentence, against these Objectors: Whose Damnation is just {Romans 3:8}. Who thus impiously dare to slander the Doctrine of the Grace of God.

{2} The Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, is also charged in the same Manner. It is said, that it renders our Obedience needless.

Answ. 1st. It dissolves not our Obligation to Obedience. That remains in full Force, and it eternally will. For, it is not possible, that should cease. And, therefore, 2d. Obedience is necessary in Point of Duty, though not for the Justification of our Persons, before God. 3d. Our free Justification by Christ's Righteousness, is a powerful Motive, unto holy Obedience, in a Way of Gratitude, for so eminent a Favour, graciously bestowed on us.

{3} The Doctrine of final Perseverance is likewise so charged. The Opposers of it say, What need of Watchfulness, Caution, and Diligence, is there, if Perseverance is rendered certain by the

Grace of God? Many have much displayed their Rhetoric, in haranguing on this Doctrine, in order to expose it.

Answ. 1st. It is not Perseverance in Sin, but in Holiness, which is pleaded for, as secured, by divine Grace. 2d. Though true Believers shall not finally perish, they may lose their Comforts, Suffer the Hidings of God's Face, and break their Bones. And, he who trembles not, at the serious Thoughts of these Things, is no Christian I am sure. 3d. He who can be negligent, careless, and loose in his Walk and Conversation, upon this Principle, I say, upon this Principle, sins in such a Manner, as apostate Spirits, cannot do; for they have not an Opportunity of sinning, after this dreadful Rate. I will be no Advocate for such an incarnate Devil; he is not travelling to Heaven; but posting down to Hell: And if he shall remain such in his Disposition, and Conduct, there let him perish for ever, without the least Pity from God, or any who love him, Angels, or Saints.

II. Instruction must be given to such, as oppose themselves: Or, think the contrary, {antidiatiqemuouv }to the Gospel of Christ, in its several Branches.

1. Respecting the Doctrine of the Trinity.

{1} It is to be observed, that there is a Plurality, in Deity; clear Evidence is given of this, in there Words: Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness { Genesis 1:26}. Us, and our, properly imply a Plurality, and, therefore, more than one Agent, was concerned, in the Creation of Man. Hence, we read of our Makers, in the plural Number. Where is God {yç[] } my Makers { Job 35:10}? Let Israel rejoice {wyç[b] } in his Makers { Psalms 149:2}. Remember {Æyarzb} thy Creators {Ecclesiastes 12:1}. For thy {Æyç[] } Makers {Isaiah 54:5}. It is reasonable to conclude, that Man was not formed by single Agent; but that more than one acted in his Formation. We do not infer from hence, that there are many in Deity, as Enjedinus, a Socinian Writer very perversely suggestsf2. All which is pleaded for, from there Testimonies, is this: That there must be a Plurality, in Deity, because there Modes of Speaking, manifestly suppose it. We do not pretend, that the Number of divine Agents, can be by them determined. But clear it is, that more than a single Agent is designed in them. We learn from other Scriptures what that Number is.

{2} Divine Agents are not fewer, nor more than three. God the Father. Concerning whole Deity, and Almighty Agency there is no Dispute. Christ, who bears the Characters of Son, and the Word. He is another divine Agent. And by him were all Things created. All Things were made by Him, and without Him, was not any Thing made, that was made. He afro upholds all Things, by the Word of His Power. The Holy Spirit likewise, is a Divine Agent. And, is the Author of Works, which can only be effected, by immense Wisdom and Power. He was an Agent in the first: Creation. For, He moved upon the Face of the Waters, therein. And, He is the efficient Cause of the new Creation. Those who are born again, are born of the Spirit. There three, the Father, the Son, and the Blessed Spirit, are jointly proposed, as Objects of Christian Worship. Christians are to be baptized, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They are truly distinct, the Father, is not the Son, nor the Son, the Father, neither is the Blessed Spirit, either, the Father, or the Son; but another distinct from them both. Yet there Divine Three are One, There are Three, that bare Record in Heaven, she Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, these, Three are ONE {1 John 5:7}. They are three personally, and one essentially. In which Sense only, they can be three distinct Divine Agents, and the joint Objects of the Worship of the Church, which they will eternally be.

2. The Doctrine of Election, is another important Truth, concerning which, Instruction ought to be given. As the Word imports, that is, a Choice of some, from among others. And most evident it is, that God did chuse a certain Number of the human Race. According as He hath chosen us in Him {Ephesians 1:4}. Hath from the Beginning chosen you {2 Thessalonians 2:13}. This Act of God was eternal, before the Foundation of the World. A Purpose which was, in the Divine Mind, before the World began {2 Timothy 1:9}. And, it was a sovereign gracious Decree. It is an Election of Grace {Romans 11:5}. The Objects of it were not considered, in that Divine Act, possessed of such Qualities, as recommended them to the Favour of God, before others. For, all that Holiness, whereof they become subjects, springs from their Election, and therefore, it could not be a Motive to that Choice. God chose us that we might be, and not, because he foresaw, that we would be holy { Ephesians 1:4}. This Choice is unto Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit {2 Thessalonians 2:13}. Consequently our Sanctification, is an Effect of that gracious Decree. And, as Glorification follows upon Sanctification, that Salvation which we were chosen to, must be eternal Glory, unto which we are called, by the God of all Grace, according unto his Purpose in Election { 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Timothy 1:9}. This Decree is unalterable, it is that Foundation, which standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them, that are His {1 Timothy 2:15}. And, therefore, all the Elect, shall certainly be Partakers of Holiness, in this World, as a Meetness, for the everlasting Enjoyment of God, in the next. Unto both which, He eternally designed them, in this His Sovereign, and gracious Decree.

3. The Covenant of Grace is a glorious Subject, about which Instruction should be given. That there is a Covenant, wherein, Provision is made for the Salvation of the Church, it is most dear. This was the Support of David, and the Ground of his Triumph, under his Troubles, and in the Prospect of his Dissolution. Although my House be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant; This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire, though he make it not to grow {2 Samuel 23:5}. The Parties, who contracted, therein, were the Divine Persons, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christ was constituted Mediator, in that Compact. And, in that Capacity, the Father required Him to do and suffer all that was necessary unto the Salvation of the Church, in a Consistency with the Honour of the Law, and the Glory of the Divine Perfections. Christ, on his Part, consented to the Will and Requirement of the Father. On Account of this His free Engagement, He is called the Surety of this better Testament, or Covenant. And this His Undertaking, brought upon Him an Obligation, to perform the Father's Will; who promised Him, on that Condition, that he should see His Seed, i.e. view them in such a State of Blessedness, as would be fully to the Satisfaction, and Joy of his Soul. And, therefore, all the precious Benefits, of Pardon, Peace, Justification, Grace, and eternal Glory, are comprised therein. Christ having punctually performed all he undertook to do and suffer, an Obligation on the Father, arises from thence, to fulfil those Promises made to Him, respecting His Seed, for whom, he became a Surety. And, on that Ground, He hath a Right to expect and demand, the Bestowment of Grace and Glory, in their Behalf. The Holy Spirit, concurred with the Father, and Christ in this Design, and agreed, in this foederal Transaction, to glorify our Blessed Lord, and sanctify His Church, or mystical Body. By there foederal Acts of the Divine Persons, the compleat and everlasting Salvation, of all the Elect, is effectually secured, and rendered certain. This Agreement is very rightly called a Covenant of Grace. Because, free Favour gave Rise to it, and all, or every Kind of Grace is promised therein. This is a very, noble, grand, and sublime Subject, and, therefore, it is most worthy of our diligent Consideration. For, there is therein, an unequalled Display of the Glory of the

Divine Persons, and of all the infinitely glorious Properties of the Divine Nature. And, therefore, we cannot be better employed, than in serious and fixed Meditations on it, and in giving clear and convincing Instruction concerning it.

4. Redemption and Peace by the Blood of Christ, we must explain and give Instruction about. The Demerit of Sin, is to be treated of and maintained. We must shew, that it subjects Men to the Curse of the Law, and the awful Displeasure of God. And it is necessary to prove, that we are all guilty, before God, our righteous Judge; and, therefore, are obnoxious to the Law's Curse, and the dreadful Vengeance, of the Divine Lawgiver. That, without Satisfaction made for our Crimes, it is impossible, we should ever be admitted to Fellowship with our Maker. And, that it is absolutely out of our Power to redeem our Souls, and make our Peace with God, by any Thing, we have to offer, or can perform. We must assert, inculcate, and clearly explain, that eternal Redemption, which Christ obtained, and that Peace, which He made, by the Blood of His Cry. Our Saviour was made of a Woman, and made under the Law, to redeem us, who were under the Law. And, He suffered its Curse, whereby our Redemption from it, was effected. This Redemption is the Forgiveness of Sins. Not a Proposal of Pardon, upon our Performance of certain Conditions; but Remission of Sin itself. Whereof, the Nature of the Thing, is a clear Evidence. For, our Guilt being charged on Him, and He suffering the Penalty, which it demerited, and his Sufferings being such in Value, as Law and Justice required, by Reason of the infinite Dignity of the Blessed Sufferer: It must be real Pardon, and not an Offer of it, which was by His Sufferings obtained. Reconciliation for our Iniquity is made, by the Messiah being cut off, not for Himself; but on our Account. There is, therefore, no Condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died. And therefore, we being justified, i.e. acquitted and discharged of our Guilt, by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him. Such are the Evidences, in Favour of this most glorious and precious Truth, of our eternal Redemption, by the Death of the Son of God, that it will never be possible, for the depraved Wit of Men, to obscure them, by their most sophistical Cavils, and Objections. We shall certainly be able to triumph over them all, in strictly attending unto, and properly arguing upon, those clear and shining Evidences of it.

5. It is requisite to give Instruction, concerning the important Doctrine of Justification. The Guiltiness of Men, before God, is to be asserted and proved. What Things, soever the Law saith, it saith to them, who are under the Law; that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty, before God {Romans 3:19}. And the Impossibility of a guilty Creature, being justified in the Sight of God, as considered in himself, is to be demonstrated, from the Perfection, and unalterable Nature of the Law, and the infinite Purity of the Divine Lawgiver; with whom it is not possible, to account a Man righteous, who hath not a Righteousness, which is answerable to the Requirements, of the Law, which is the Rule of Action to him. One Kind of Righteousness is not required of us, in Point of Duty, and another accepted, by our Maker, as the Matter of our Justification before Him. We are justified freely, or without any Works of our own. Christ is made of God, Righteousness unto us. And, we are made Righteous by his Obedience {Romans 5:19}. So that Righteousness, without Works, is imputed to us {Romans 6:6}. That is to say, without our personal Acts of Obedience. For, that is the only Sense, wherein it can with Propriety, and Truth, be said, that Righteousness without Works, is imputed unto us. The Meaning of the Apostle cannot be, that Righteousness, does not consist of Works, or Acts of Obedience, for, that it most certainly does. But his Design is to prove, that, that Righteousness, whereby, we are justified, before God,

does not consist of, but is without any of our personal Acts of Obedience. And, therefore, it must be the Obedience of another, viz. of Christ who is the Lord our Righteousness. And in Him are we justified {Isaiah 45:25}. This is that solid Foundation, whereon, we may now glory, and upon which, we shall be admitted unto the Enjoyment of future Glory and Blessedness. For, Grace will reign, through Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord {Romans 5:21}.

6. The Doctrine of Regeneration and Sanctification, must be stated, explained, and defended. We ought to shew the Necessity of Regeneration. That without it, Men cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Holiness is our Meetness for the heavenly State. And, without it no Man shall see the Lord. The efficient Cause thereof is God, without the Concurrence of our Will therein. For, as Christians, we are born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man; but of God { John 1:13}. We make not ourselves to differ, neither have we any Thing, which we did not receive; and, therefore, we should not glory, as if we did not receive it. The impulsive Cause, is, the abundant Mercy, and great Love of God to our Persons { 1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 2:4}. It is the pure Effect of his good Pleasure, and is absolutely without any moving Consideration, in us. Of which, the Nature of the Work itself, is a most clear Proof. For, it is the Implantation, Infusion, or Creation of a holy Principle, in our Souls, and from that Principle, all Acts of holy Obedience spring, both internal, and external. Consequently, previous unto the Production of that Principle, no Acts of Faith, Hope, Love, evangelical Repentance, and holy Obedience, could possibly arise in our Minds, or be performed by us. The Grace of Regeneration, therefore, must be freely given, or without any the least Motive in us, to induce God to communicate it unto us.

Farther, it is God, who maintains, and carries on this good Work in us. For it is God, that worketh in us both to will and to do, of His good Pleasure { Php 2:13}. So that, the Whole of our Holiness, or Sanctification, is from Him, in a Way of Efficiency. We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good Works { Ephesians 2:10}. As no good Thing, dwells in our Flesh, or corrupt Nature, no good Acts, can be educed out of it. Holy Actions, cannot arise from that, which lusteth against the Spirit, or the regenerate Principle, which is called Spirit, because it is born of the Spirit, and its Nature is spiritual. The Grace of Regeneration, therefore, is not bestowed on us, because we were Subjects of a Fitness to receive it actively. Nor, can we, by our natural Ability, increase that Holiness, which in Regeneration is wrought in our Hearts. As the Beginning, so the Progress and Advancement of our Sanctification, are entirely of God, efficiently.

7. The final Perseverance of the Saints, is a Doctrine, which we must maintain, and give Instruction about. By that, is intended, the Security of Believers from Falling totally and finally. The Grounds of that Security, are many. The unalterable Love of God. The Immutability of the Divine Counsel concerning their Salvation. The Expiation of their Guilt by Christ's Death. The Justification of their Persons, through His Righteousness, by which, they are made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life. Their Union with Him, as a Head of Life, and Influence. The Dwelling of the Holy Spirit in them, as a Sanctifier, and Comforter. The Intercession of Christ for them. The Will of the Divine Father, that he should rarely keep, and conduct them to Glory. There are some of the numerous solid Grounds of their Security, and they are such as cannot fail. And, therefore, their Faith shall not fail. Grace in them shall never become extinct. It is in them, a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life. God, and Christ are united, in the gracious Design of their final, full, and certain Felicity. And, if the Grace, Power, and Care of both, are sufficient to uphold and defend them, they shall never miscarry and be lost. My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them,

and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of my Hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no Man is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand {John 10:27-28}.

8. The Doctrine of eternal Life is to be explained, and inculcated. We must give Instruction about the Origin of future Blessedness. Which is the good Pleasure of God { Luke 12:32}. It is to us an absolute free Gift. And yet, we have a legal Title to it, which is our Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, imputed to us. For, thereby, we are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life. And therefore, Justification, and Glorification are inseparably connected. Whom He justified, them He also glorified. On this Foundation, the Law is magnified, and the Glory of Divine Justice shines forth, in our everlasting Bliss, to the Amazement of Angels, and the Joy of the Church for evermore. Again, we ought to shew, that Grace imparted to us from Christ, is our Meetness for the Enjoyment of future Glory. None but those, who derive Holiness, and Grace from Him, are fit for, and capable of enjoying Heaven. And, we must shew the Nature of it. That it is the Fruition of God, as the God of all Grace { 1 Peter 5:10}. The Saints, therefore, will for ever be conversant about, the sovereign, free, and infinite Love of God. The glorious Designs of Divine Love. And the distinct Actings of it, in the distinct Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And, about the adorable Discovery of all the infinitely glorious Properties, of the Divine Nature, in their Salvation. There are some of those important Principles, which we ought, as Ministers, to give Instruction concerning, unto them, who oppose themselves, or think contrary to us, on those Points of Doctrine.

III. Instruction must be given, 'in Meekness.' This does not, it cannot mean, that evangelical Doctrines are to be treated of, in a cold and indifferent Manner, as if they were speculative Points, and of small Importance. For, they are of the greatest Moment. The Glory of God, the Comfort, Peace, Joy, and everlasting Salvation of the Saints, are most nearly interested therein, and promoted by them. Nor, is it to be thought, that we must speak of these Principles, in a doubtful Way; as if full Evidence of their Truth was wanting. They are to be constantly affirmed, as certain and undoubted Truths, and with a full Persuasion of their Verity, upon a serious and diligent Consideration, of those clear and cogent Proofs, which we have thereof, in the Holy Scriptures. Coldness and Hesitation, in Relation to evangelical Doctrines, may cause Men to think, that they are, either trivial or doubtful, and, therefore, it is no great Matter, whether they are embraced, or rejected. It is to be feared, that the supine and lukewarm Manner, wherein, some Preachers, have treated of evangelical Doctrines, hath occasioned many to entertain an Opinion, that they are of very little Moment.

They ought to be expressed, with Boldness: And contended for, with Earnestness. Also, in Meekness, towards such, who oppose themselves.

1. With Humility and Tenderness. We should consider, that we are naturally, subjects of the same Darkness, and Aversion to spiritual Things, from whence their Opposition to the Gospel springs. Which Consideration will engage us, to give them Instruction, in a Spirit of Meekness, and with Tenderness towards their Persons. But,

2. Some we ought to rebuke sharply, {apptomwv } severely, cuttingly, that they may be found in the Faith {Titus 1:3}. Their Impertinence in arguing, is to be taken Notice of, and exposed, with Smartness, in defending the Principles, which they oppose.

IV. The End we are to propose is their, 'Repentance, and Acknowledgment of the Truth.'

1. Repentance of their Errors. Which are owing to the Carnality and Pride of their Hearts. They imagine, that their Reason, is first to be consulted, about the Nature of religious Principles, and as that determines, concerning them, so they frame their Belief. And, not according to scriptural Evidence, even on such Subjects, as are peculiar to Revelation. Than which there is Nothing more absurd.

2. Repentance is a Divine Gift { Acts 5:31}. And, as we know not, but God may graciously bestow it, we should continue to give Instruction, unto there Opposers.

3. An Acknowledgment of the Truth will follow. The Gospel, in general, which is the Word of Truth. Or some particular Doctrines of it. We ought to be ready to give an Answer to every Man that asketh us a Reason of the Hope, that is in us, with Meekness and Fear { 1 Peter 3:15}. As we believe with our Heart unto Righteousness: So with our Mouth, we are, to make Confession unto Salvation { Romans 10:10}. To the Divine Father, the Eternal Son, and the Holy Spirit, be equal, and the highest Praises, ascribed, now, and for evermore. Amen.

FOOTNOTES ft1 I know, some vainly conceit, that there was an Everlasting, before the World began, which had Commencement: As others foolishly dream, that there will be an Everlasting, after the End of the World. which will have a Period put unto it. Both have an Hypothesis to serve, which cannot be maintained without the Grant thereof. But the Truth of neither, I dare affirm, will ever be proved by any Man whatsoever. He who denies, that Punishment for Sin will be endless, may as soon prove, that there will be an Everlasting, when this World shall cease to be, that will have an End: As he will be able to prove, that there was an Everlasting, before the Creation, which had a Beginning, who thinks, that the Soul of Christ existed before the World began. ft2 Aiunt enim illas Voces Faciamus, & nostram; Multitudinem denotare; ergo non posse de unica Persona intelligi, fed de tribus accipiendum esse. Ad haec nos responsuri, primo dicimus Si ex hac loquendi Formula Numerus & Natura Dei venanda, & colligenda: Non plus Trinitariis, in hoc Dicto, ad tres Deita-tis Personas stabiliendas Praefidii, quam Gentibus & Idololatriis, ad sua multiplicia & Numero carentia Numina confirmandum. Illud enim Faciamus & nostram, tam potest ad decem, Centum, Mille, quam ad tria reserri. Neque quidquam est futilius & ineptius, quam sic argumentari: Hic dicuntur esse multi, ergo runt ires. Nam possunt esse viginti, triginta, quinquaginta, etc. Ergo si quid Roboris in hoc Argumento est, hoc tantum con-cludit, Deos esse multos. Absit autem a nobis, certe abest a Mose, ista Prophanitas, ut Multitudinem Deorum, sacrarum Literarum Testimonio introducamus stabiliamus. In { Genesis 1:16}.

S. The Imputation of Christ Active Obedience

THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE TO HIS PEOPLE, AND THE MERIT OF IT DEMONSTRATED by John Brine (London: John Ward, 1759) IN A SERMON, PREACHED TO THE SOCIETY, WHO SUPPORT THE WEDNESDAY EVENING-LECTURE, IN GREAT - EAST - CHEAP DECEMBER 27, 1758.

Published at their Request. Printed for and Sold by JOHN WARD, at the King's-Arms, against the Royal-Exchange; by GEORGE KEITH, in Grace-Church-Street; by JOHN EYNON, Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal Exchange; and W. CATER, Bookseller, opposite to Red-Lion-Street, Holbourn.

London 1759.

{Romans 4:6}.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works. IN my annual Discourse, at this Time, two Years since, I endeavoured to state, explain, and improve the important Doctrines of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People. My Intention in the Choice of these Words, for the Subject of the present Discourse, is to defend the precious Truth of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, or active Obedience; and to prove the Blessedness of those, unto whom it is imputed, or their Title to Felicity, in Consequence thereof. In my former Discourse, I shewed what Righteousness is, and the Nature of Imputation; and, therefore, it is not necessary to enlarge on either, in this Discourse. The Place to which the Apostle in the Text refers is {Psalms 32:1; Psalms 2:1-12}, Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is covered.

Blessed is the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose Spirit there is no Guile. It is proper to explain the Phrase, without Works: Or, in what Sense, that Righteousness, which is imputed, is without Works. To say, as some do, that it is without perfect Works; but it consists of good Works, which are done by us, cannot be the Import of the Phrase. For, it cannot with any Propriety and Truth be said, that, our Righteousness, or holy Obedience, is without Works, because it consists of Acts performed by us, which are holy, though not perfectly so. And to affirm, as some others do, that Works wrought before Regeneration, are intended; but not those good Works, which Believers perform, are to be excluded, is liable to the same Objection as the former Sense is. For, it cannot with Truth be said, that the holy Obedience of the Saints, is without Works, because it consists of those good Works, unto which they are created of God in Christ Jesus. Nor can the Meaning be, Though Works are not yet present; but a Mind free from Guile. i.e. Sincere in the Study or Desire of Piety, as Grotius will have it¹. For, though a Course of future Obedience is not included therein, yet, it implies Love to God, Trust in him, art Abhorrence of Sin, and a Desire to obey and honour the Lord, which are holy internal Acts, and are properly denominated good Works.

This, therefore, is not a Righteousness without Works, because it consists of internal Acts, which are good and holy, though not inclusive of a Course of Obedience, in our future Conduct. Consequently, this Sense is not to be admitted any more than either of the former. Wherefore, we must conclude, that the true Meaning of the Phrase, without Works, is this, Without any Works of ours, either, before, or after Regeneration. That the Righteousness of another, and not our own is imputed to us for our Justification. The Phrase is not capable of any other Construction. The Righteousness which is imputed, is Christ's.

Two Things, in general, are expressed in the Text, I. God imputeth Righteousness, without Works, to some.

II. They are blessed, or have a Right to Happiness, on that Ground.

Before I enter upon the Demonstration of the two grand Points, contained, in my Text, I would advance, some Propositions, relating to both, which I apprehend, will very much conduce unto a right Understanding of them, and enable us to refute some Objections, which are raised against them. Some deny the Imputation of the active Obedience of Christ who allow the Truth of Satisfaction for Sin by his Death. Others, though I hope not many, who grant the Truth of the Imputation of his Righteousness, yet, they deny the real and proper Merit of it. The Propositions, which I would advance, are the following:

Prop. 1. Christ's Sufferings, and his Obedience are not the same, but distinct. Prop. 2. Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law is not Righteousness. Prop. 3. Righteousness is a Conformity to the Law, in the Disposition of the Mind, and Acts internal and external, which agree therewith. Prop. 4. Pardon of Sin does not constitute a Delinquent just. Prop. 5. The infinite Dignity of the Person of Christ puts an immense Value, on his Obedience, as it does, on his Death. If he did not merit by his Obedience, he did not merit by his Death. I shall afterwards, some-what enlarge on this Point. These Propositions seem to me clear and indisputable. Now I will endeavour to demonstrate the important Truths expressed in my Text.

I. God imputeth Righteousness without Works to some. That is to say, the active Obedience of Christ, without any of their own Works, for their Justification.

I shall propose various Arguments to Consideration, in order to demonstrate this Point.

Arg. 1. The Gospel reveals a Righteousness for the Justification of Sinners. For therein is revealed the Righteousness of God, from Faith to Faith {Romans 1:17}. But now the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets {Romans 3:21}. That this Righteousness is for the Justification of Sinners, it is most clear, from the Context Now we know, that what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them, who are under the Law: That every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight: For by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin {Romans 3:19-20}. That which cannot possibly be by the Deeds of the Law, certainly is effected, by that Righteousness of God, without the Law, which is manifested; being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. And that is the Justification of Sinners. Now as the Sufferings of Christ, and his Obedience, are not the same; but distinct. According to Proposition the First. And as his Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, was not Righteousness, as the second Proposition expresses. This Righteousness cannot be understood of his Death; but it must intend his Conformity to the Law, in

his Disposition and Conduct: Or his active Obedience, according to the third Proposition. And therefore, his active Obedience is imputed to his People, in order to their Justification, in the Sight of God. I will venture to affirm, that this Argument cannot be everted, without proving that Christ's Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, is his Righteousness: Or that his Righteousness, is not revealed in the Gospel, in order to the Justification of Sinners.

Arg. 2. Redemption and Righteousness are not the same, but distinct Benefits. The latter is not included in the former, nor the former in the latter. Redemption is the Remission of our Sins. In whom we have Redemption, through his Blood the Forgiveness of Sins. Christ's suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, which is the procuring Cause of Pardon, was not Righteousness. Nor, is a Discharge from Guilt, which is the Effect of Christ's Death, as a meritorious Cause, Righteousness. Now, as neither the Cause of Pardon, nor Pardon itself is Righteousness; that must be a Benefit distinct from Redemption, and not included therein. It would be as agreeable to Truth, to say, that Christ's Obedience to the Law's Precepts, was suffering its penal Sanction, as it would be, to affirm, that his enduring the Penalty of the Law, was that Obedience, which it required; which I suppose no one will maintain. And therefore, Redemption and Righteousness are Benefits properly distinct, though inseparably connected. And, the Apostle most clearly represents them, as such, in his Enumeration of those Blessings, which Christ is of God made to us, But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption {1 Corinthians 1:30.} Consequently, they ought not to be blended, or confounded together; but considered, as Things really distinct; which it is most evident they are in their own Nature. For, as Obedience includes not suffering Penalty: So suffering Punishment includes not Righteousness.

Arg. 3. Christ is made Righteousness unto us. From what hath been argued above, it is apparent, that in his being made Redemption he is not made Righteousness. For, as the former is not inclusive of the latter. Christ in being made the former, he is not made the latter. He is made the latter unto us, as well as the former. And therefore, his active Obedience, and not his Death, is that which is of God imputed to us, as our justifying Righteousness. If his suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, was not Righteousness, it cannot with any Propriety be said, he is made Righteousness to us, by placing his Sufferings and Death to our Account But his Conformity, or Obedience to the Law, was his Righteousness, and not his suffering Death; and therefore, he is not made Righteousness to us, by reckoning his Death, or what he suffered, unto us; but by imputing that to us, which was his Righteousness, viz. His Obedience to the perceptive Part of the Law As an innocent Person cannot be made Sin, any otherwise than by the Sin of others being charged to him: So, such who are guilty, can no otherwise be made righteous, through, or by another than by the Imputation of his Righteousness to them. Now Non-imputation of Sin is a negative Act, the Imputation of Righteousness is a positive one. And the Act negative, does not include the Act positive. Whence it follows, according to Proposition the Fourth, that the Pardon, or Non-imputation of Sin, does not constitute us Just. For, that negative Act respects Sin only, and not Righteousness, and therefore, it cannot make us righteous.

Consequently if Christ, is made Righteousness to us, it must be by the Imputation of his Righteousness, or active Obedience to us, which was the Point to be proved.

Arg. 4. The Apostle opposes Christ's Obedience, and not his Death to the Disobedience of Adam. But not as the Offence so also is the free Gift. For if through the Offence of one many be dead; much more the Grace of God, and the Gift by Grace, which is by one Man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many. And not as it ,was by one that finned so is the Gift: For the Judgment was by one to Condemnation: But the free Gift is of many Offences unto Justification. For if by one Man's Offence Death reigned by one: Much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness shall reign in Life by one Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the Offence of one, Judgement came upon all Men to Condemnation: Even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life. For as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners: So by the Obedience of one shall many be made Righteous {Romans 5:15-19}. The important Truth, in whole Demonstration I am now engaged, is abundantly established in this Context. The Things which are therein opposed, are Opposites, or direct Contraries. Adam's Offence, and Christ's Death are not Opposites. To be made Sinners, and to be pardoned, are not Opposites. To be obnoxious to Death on Account of Sin, and to be freed from that Obnoxiousness, by Remission, are not Opposites. Besides, Christ's Death, was not his Righteousness, as has been before observed; but his Conformity to the Commands of the Law, was his Righteousness: Or, his active Obedience, and not his Suffering the Penalty of the Law, was his Righteousness. The free Gift, the Gift by Grace, is not the Death of Christ; but his Righteousness, or active Obedience. For it is the Gift of Righteousness, and it is expressly declared to be his Obedience. The direct Contrary of Adam's Disobedience, which Christ's Sufferings and Death were not. From hence, therefore, it is manifest, that the active Obedience of Christ, is that which the Apostle opposes to Adam's Offence and not his Death. Consequently, his active Obedience is the Cause of our Justification, as Adam's Offence was the Cause of our Condemnation.

Arg. 5. The Apostle desired to have the Righteousness of Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is thro' the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith (Php 3:9.). The Apostle's own Righteousness, which he renounced, was his Obedience to the Law's Precepts. And, that Righteousness, which he opposes to his own, and desired to have, must be Christ's absolutely perfect Obedience, which he yielded to the Law. As it was Righteousness properly understood, though imperfect which he renounced: So It was Righteousness in a proper Sense, which he was desirous of having, and that must be Christ's Obedience, and not his Death. The Reason is clear, which is this: The Suffering of a penal Death, is no Part of that Righteousness, which is required, in the Law. If it was, an innocent Creature, could not fulfil the Righteousness of the Law, without suffering Death, as a penal Evil. The Supposition whereof, is so apparently absurd, that I conceive, none will admit of it. If, therefore, that Righteousness, which the Apostle desired to have, was the Righteousness of Christ, it must be his active Obedience, and not his Death; because that is no Part of Righteousness required by the Law.

Arg. 6. The Saints are clothed with a Robe of Righteousness, as well as stripped of their filthy Garments. Take away the filthy Garments from him. And I will clothe thee with change of Raiment {Zechariah 3:4}. The former, is the Removal of Guilt, or Pardon of Sin. The latter, is another Thing distinct therefrom. It is investing with a Garment, that is pure and spotless. Such the Righteousness of Christ, only is, for Spots and Imperfections, attend the best Obedience, even of those, who are most holy here. This Change of Raiment, therefore, cannot be understood of the

personal Obedience of the Saints. But it must be interpreted of the sinless Obedience of Christ. Which is comparable to fine Linnen, clean and white, and is the Righteousness of Saints {Revelation 19:8}. Wherein they appear, with Acceptance, before God. This is the solid Ground of their spiritual Joy. and Exultation. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God: For he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation: He hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness {Isaiah 61:10}. The penal Sufferings of Christ, are not a Righteousness, that is most clear; because, suffering Penalty, is no Part of that Righteousness, which is required, in the Law. If, therefore, that Robe of Righteousness, wherewith Believers are covered, is the Righteousness of Christ, and not their own, it must intend his active Obedience to the Law, and not his suffering the Penalty of it. For, that which is not included, in that Righteousness, which the Law requires, cannot be a Robe of Righteousness. Death penal, is no Branch of that Righteousness. It is no other, than the Evil of Suffering, which the Law threatens, for the want of Righteousness. And, therefore, Christ's active Obedience most certainly is, that Robe of Righteousness, where-with, the People of God, are clothed. And, wherein, they are justified, or accounted righteous, in his Sight.

Arg. 7. Christ came under the Law for our Sakes, in the Character of our Surety; and, therefore, he obeyed it for us, as well as suffered its Curse, on our Accounts. By so much was Jesus made the Surety of a better Testament {Hebrews 7:22.} His Sponson, or Undertaking, in the Covenant of Grace, was the Ground of his coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. And. without that, he had never been in Subjection to the first Covenant. He was made of a Woman, and made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law (Galatians 4:4-5.). By a sovereign Appointment of God, with his own Consent, as our Surety, he was made under the Law, in order to redeem us from it. Now what he acted, in that Character, as well as what he suffered, therein, was for us, and is placed to our Account. Since, therefore, he yielded Obedience to the Law, in the Character of our Surety, as he suffered its Curse, in that Character, his active Obedience, was for us, no less than his Death. And it is placed to our Account, or imputed to us. The Reason is the same, for the Imputation of what he did, as for the Imputation of what he suffered, viz. His coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, as our Surety. And, therefore, his fulfilling the Righteousness of the Law, was for us, and is reckoned to us, as his Suffering its penal Sanction was for us, and is reckoned unto us. Consequently, his active Obedience is ours, and was yielded by him for us, with a View to our Justification

. Arg. 8. We are made righteous by the Obedience of Christ. As by the Disobedience of one many were made Sinners: So by the Obedience of one shall many be made righteous. The Things spoken of are Opposites, and their Effects are direct Contraries. Now, the Opposite of Disobedience, is not suffering Punishment, or a penal Death. But Obedience to the Commands of the Law is the Opposite of Disobedience. And, therefore, it is not Christ's Sufferings and Death, which the Apostle opposes to Adam's Disobedience; but his active Obedience to the Law's Precepts. The Effect of Adam's Disobedience, is Guiltiness, or we are made Sinners, i.e. guilty thereby. And the Effect of Christ's Obedience is the contrary to that of Adam's Disobedience, we are made righteous, or constituted such, by that, and not by what he suffered for us. Hence, we must conclude, that the active Obedience of our Blessed Saviour, is imputed to us, in order to our Justification, before God.

Arg. 9. Lastly, It is evident from the Nature of Things, that Christ's active Obedience, and not his Death, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness. I argue thus: In our Justification, God, either considers us righteous, or not so. The latter is most plainly absurd. For, to justify, is to reckon, or declare a Person righteous; that is to say, not destitute of that Righteousness, which that Law requires, unto which Respect is had, in the Act of Justification. And, therefore, God cannot justify us, without considering us righteous. Now, if God, in our Justification, does consider us righteous: Either we are righteous, or we are not. If in Fact, we are not righteous: Then, God in justifying us, forms not his Judgment concerning us, according to Truth; which, with him, is absolutely impossible. Both these Things, consequently, must be true, viz. That God considers us righteous, and that we are made so. Christ's Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, was not Righteousness. We cannot be made righteous, by that which is not Righteousness. Nor can God, account us righteous, on the Foundation of that which is not Righteousness. The Death of Christ properly atoned for our Guilt, and procured our Pardon; but it did not, it could not supply our want of Obedience, or Conformity to the Law's Precepts. It is impossible his Death should supply the want of that, which it doth not include; it does not include Righteousness, for which Reason it cannot supply our Want of Righteousness. And, therefore, it is not by his Death, but by his active Obedience, that we are constituted just. Besides, according to Proposition the Fourth, Pardon of Sin does not constitute a Delinquent just. Remission of Sin, or a Discharge from Guilt, is obtained by the Death of Christ; but as Pardon does not include Righteousness, it cannot make us righteous. And, if Pardon does not make us righteous, God cannot esteem us righteous, on the Ground of Pardon. In Justification, he does reckon us righteous. Righteousness, therefore, must be imputed to us.

And, as Christ's Death was not Righteousness, it cannot be that Righteousness, which is imputed to us, and, whereby we are made righteous, it undoubtedly, is his active Obedience, or Conformity to the Precepts of the Law. These Arguments, I apprehend, most clearly demonstrate the important Truth, of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, or active Obedience, and the Necessity of it, in order to our justification. Socinus strenuously contends against this Doctrine, and it is a Point, whereon he hath much laboured. He argues thus: Making Satisfaction for our Sins, and obeying the Law for us, cannot consist together: One, or the other is vain and unnecessary. Because, Satisfaction, by suffering Punishment, manifestly shews, that he for whom Satisfaction is made, is not reckoned innocent. For where Innocence is, that is no Offence, there is no Punishment. And to satisfy by doing of those Things which another ought to have done, really causes, that he for whom they are done, should be accounted innocent, and be esteemed, never to have committed any Offence. And, that one or the other is vain and unnecessary, this demonstrates: What, if any one is reckoned to have done all those Things which he ought to have done, all his Sins are already blotted out. For how can he be thought to have sinned even in the least, or be accounted guilty, who hath done all Things, which he ought to have done. Likewise, if any one should be reckoned to have suffered the whole Punishment due to his Sins, his Sins truly are blotted out². Socinus believed neither the one, nor the other. This Reasoning of his, may at first View seem plausible. Some who have been most remote from his Opinion, concerning the Doctrine of Satisfaction, have been so far missed by it, as to conclude, that there is no Necessity of the Imputation of Christ's Obedience, in order to our Justification; that his Sufferings and Death are sufficient to that End. But there is nothing solid in it. Which thus appears: We are under Obligation to obey the Law, as Creatures: And we are under Obligation to suffer its Curse, as

Sinners. Adam, in his innocent State, was under the former Obligation only: His Violation of the Law, brought him under the latter Obligation. His coming under the latter, did not dissolve the former Obligation: Or his Sin did not free him from an Obligation to Obedience, that still remained upon him. Now, Christ's satisfying the Law, by obeying its Precepts, only respects us as Creatures, from whom Obedience is due, as a Condition of Life, and not as Sinners; and, therefore, his Obedience, cannot free us from that Obligation, under which we are, as we are guilty. And, his satisfying the Law, by suffering its Penalty, regards us not as Creatures; but as Criminals and therefore, it frees us not from that Obligation, under which we are, as Creatures simply considered, viz. Of yielding Obedience to the Law, in order to the Enjoyment of Happiness. Hereby, the Consistency, and the Necessity, of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings for us, are clearly evinced. Our being acquitted of Guilt, by Virtue of his Death, does not suppose, that we have obeyed the Law, or have the Innocency of Righteousness. This only is supposed therein, that we are freed from an Obligation to suffer that Punishment, which is demerited by our Guilt. And our being constituted, and reckoned righteous, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, does not suppose, that we have not transgressed the Law, or that God, upon that Imputation of his Righteousness reckons us, not to have sinned. That can be true on no other Principle than this, viz. It being the Divine Will to impute the Obedience of Christ to us for our Justification, God is regardless of that Part which we ourselves act; or that he does not take it into his Consideration, which is most: certainly false, as it is most manifestly absurd.

II. Those to whom the Righteousness of Christ is imputed are blessed, or have a Title to Felicity in Consequence thereof. That being justified by his Grace, we might be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life (Titus 3:7.). The Reason whereof is: The Righteousness, or active Obedience of Christ merits Grace and Glory, or, those Blessings which are bestowed upon us in Time, and which we shall enjoy in Eternity. The Terms Merit, meriting, and merited, are not expressly mentioned in Scripture. But that is no just Objection against the Use of them. The Term Incarnation is not used in Scripture. But what is intended by it, is therein declared, viz. That the Son of God was made Flesh, made of Woman: He, therefore, was incarnate, or became Man, by the Assumption of human Nature. The Term Satisfaction is not used in Scripture, about the Sufferings and Death of Christ. But the Ideas included therein, are very dearly expressed. And this Phrase, or Expression, the personal Union of the Divine and Human Natures in Christ, is not expressly mentioned in Scripture. But the important Truth, intended, by that Phrase, is therein taught. And other Instances of the like Nature might be produced. I hope ever to contend for the Merit of our dear Redeemer, in his Obedience, as well as in his Sufferings. If the former was not meritorious, the latter was not. Merit is two-fold. There is Merit of Paction; and there is Merit of Condignity.

First. There is Merit of Paction in Christ's Obedience. A Covenant was entered into between God the Father and our blessed Saviour. In that Compact, the Father required him to do and suffer all that was necessary to the Pardon, Justification, and eternal Salvation of his People. Christ on his Part, engaged therein, to perform and endure all that was required of him, as our Surety. And the Father promised to him, on that Condition that he should see his Seed. That he should have such a Prospect of them, as would be to his utmost Satisfaction, i.e. Pardoned, justified, sanctified, and eternally glorified. In a Word, that he should see them, as happy, as his intense Love to their Persons, causes him, to desire they, may be. And therefore, there is no Blessing which they do, or

will receive, that is not comprised in this Promise of the Father. Now, as Christ hath punctually accomplished all that he undertook in this Covenant: Or finished the Whole of that Work; which he gave him to do. From thence arises a Right to him, to claim and demand of the Father, in their Behalf, the Fulfillment of his Promises respecting them. Nor, can the Father, in Justice, fail of performing those Promises. And therefore, it is most clear, that Merit of Paction, attends the Obedience and Sufferings of our Redeemer. And this agrees with what the Apostle expresses in these Words: Now to him that worketh is the Reward, not reckoned of Grace; but of Debt. In as much as Christ hath worked, there springs from the Work which he hath done, a Right to all the Benefits, promised on that Condition. And that is what we understand by Merit, ex Pacto. In order to disprove what is here pleaded for, it must be shewn, either, that no Promise of eternal Life, was made to Christ, for his People, on Condition, of his Obedience and Death; or, that he did not obey and suffer as he was required.

Second. There is Merit of Condignity . That is real and proper. It is an intrinsic Worth and Value, which is intended by it. I hope to make it evident, that Merit, in this strictly proper Sense, attends the Obedience of Christ. And, that, that Merit is infinite, or answerable to the Dignity of his Person. The Requisites of Merit, thus strictly taken, are the following: That the Work done is not due - That it is performed by Power underived - That it is absolutely perfect - That it is proportionate to the Reward - And, that the Reward is due of Justice: or, that it is Justice, which assigns the Reward to the Work done, because of that intrinsic Worth, which therein Isaiah 1:1-31. Obedience to the Law was not due from Christ. The Law is here to be considered as a Covenant. Wherein Obedience is prescribed, as a proper Condition of obtaining Life, and not as a Law simply. The Will of God is, and eternally will be a Law, to Angels and Saints. But the Saints are not even now, in Subjection to the Law, as a Covenant. For, they are not under the Law, but under Grace (Romans 6:14.). Christ as Man, is and ever will be in Subjection to the Divine Will. But he did not, he could not with Men come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. For, he was not seminally in Adam, as a natural Descendant of his. Nor, was Adam a Head and Representative to him. And, therefore, he did not, with Mankind, come within the Compass of the Covenant of Works, which was made with Adam, as the Head of all his natural Descendants. Besides, Christ is God, as well as Man, and the Divine Nature, and the human Nature, are united in his Person, as Mediator. As God, he is Lord of the Sabbath, and of the Law itself by which the Observation of it, is enjoined. Now, though his human Nature was the immediate Subject of the Law, and of that Obedience, which he yielded unto it. That Nature being united with his Divine Person: In that Nature his Person, as Mediator, came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, and yielded Obedience unto it. Thus he who was Lord of the Law, and from whom Obedience to it, as such, was not, nor could become due, for our Sakes, came under Subjection to it, and obeyed its Precepts. The Law hath Power over a Man, yea every Man. But it could never have Power over God-Man, without a special Divine Constitution. The Obedience of Christ, therefore, who is God-man, was not due. And this is the first Requisite of real, proper Merit. And it is a solid Answer, unto what Socinus objects, against Christ's obeying the Law for us, viz. That Obedience was due from him; and, therefore, his Obedience could not be for us, nor can be imputed to us. Here is a Person found, from whom Obedience to the Covenant of Works, could not possibly become due, upon his own Account. That Obedience, therefore, was intended for us, and is graciously imputed unto us.

2. Our blessed Saviour yielded Obedience to the Law, by Power underived. He who yields Obedience to another, by Virtue of Ability received from him, cannot be said, in a strict and proper Sense to merit of him, by the Obedience, which he performs. And, therefore, no Creature can properly merit of God. But Christ obeyed the Law, by a Power resident in his own Person, and which was not derived from another. No, not from the Father, unto whom he yielded Obedience, as a Law-giver and Judge. Not, that his human Nature, was the Subject, of any Power underived. But his Divine Person possesses infinite Power underivative. And his human Nature was supported, both in what he did and suffered for us, by that Power, which he had in himself, as God. Christ, by the infinite Power of his Divine Person, raised himself from the State of the Dead: And by that Power, he, in his human Nature, obeyed the Law, and suffered its Curse. For, it was his Power, as God, which upheld his human Nature, in its Obedience and Sufferings. And, therefore, as this Ability, in his Person, was not communicated to him, by another, in order to capacitate him, to obey and suffer, his Obedience and Sufferings, in the most strict Sense, merit of Him, viz. of God, the Father, as a Law-giver, and Judge, at whose Requirement, he obeyed the Law, and suffered Death: And this is the second Requisite of Merit properly understood. Which it is impossible should attend the Obedience of any mere Creature whatsoever. But it is most unquestionably true of the Obedience of Christ, who is both God and Man. For, the Divine and human Natures, are inestably united in his Person. And his Divine Will, and his human Will, concurred, in the Obedience, which he yielded for us, unto the Covenant of Works. For which Reason that Obedience is to be considered, as the Obedience of his Person, though his human Nature only, was the immediate Subject of it.

3. Our dear Redeemer was perfectly conformable to the Law. In his Nature, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners. Without Blemish and without Spot. For, though he partook of Flesh, he was only, in the Likeness of sinful Flesh. No moral Taint, or Impurity attended him. He was absolute Purity and Perfection, in his Mind. That supreme Love to God, and that benevolent Disposition towards Men, which the Law requires, possessed the Soul of the blessed Jesus, and wholly influenced him, in all his Actions. So that, his Obedience was answerable in all Respects to the Law, which he undertook to fulfill for us. No Defect, or Imperfection, attended it, either, materially, or circumstantially. It was absolutely compleat, respecting, both its Matter and Manner. For, He did no Sin: Nor was Guile found in his Mouth. He fulfilled all Righteousness. And was as holy, in his Heart, and Conduct, as the Law required he should be, under which he was made, on our Account. Christ always did those Things, which please the Father. Infinite Purity itself, can have nothing to object to him, in his Temper, or Behaviour. This is the third Requisite, which is essentially necessary unto a meritorious Obedience: For, Merit can never attend Obedience, which is not absolutely perfect.

4. The Obedience of Christ is proportionate to the Reward, which is promised. That Reward is the Enjoyment of infinite Good. As Sin demerits the Loss of infinite Good, by Reason of the infinite Evil, that is in Sin, objectively considered: So, the Obedience of our Blessed Saviour merits infinite Good, because of its immense value, subjectively, considered. There is an Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, because it is committed against an infinite Object. And there is an infinite Worth, in the Obedience of Christ, because of the Infinity of his Person. Such as the Person of Christ is, in Dignity; such is that Obedience which he yielded to the Law, for us, in its Desert. The former is infinite, and so is the latter. No greater Good is possible to be enjoyed, by a Creature, than the

Righteousness of him, who is Jehovah, in the most strict and proper Sense, deserves. If the obediential Acts, of the Son of God, have a Value in them, above the obediential Acts, of a mere Creature, on Account, of the Greatness of his Person, that Value must be infinitely greater, answerable unto the infinite Majesty and Glory of his Person. And, therefore, in his Obedience, there is not only real; but also immense Merit, or Desert. And no Good transcending that Merit, can be communicated unto, and be enjoyed, by those, for whom Christ obeyed the Law, and to whole Account his Obedience is placed. The Covenant of Grace contains in it, no Blessing, but what Christ properly merited, by that Obedience which he yielded to the Covenant of Works. I humbly conceive, that it is the Design of the Apostle, to prove, that the Superiority of Christ, above Adam, is the Reason and Ground of the superabundant Merit of his Obedience, which he opposes to Adam's Disobedience. As Death is not merely a Consequence of Sin, but a proper Effect of it, as a procuring Cause: So, Life is not merely a Consequence of Christ's Obedience, but it is the proper Effect thereof, as a meritorious Cause. Every Cause is an Antecedant; but every Antecedant, is not a Cause. And every Effect is a Consequence; but every Consequence is not the Effect of that, which went before it, or upon which it follows. For, one Thing may precede another, and yet not be a Cause of that which succeeds it. And one Thing may follow another, and yet not be the Effect of what went before it. If it was the Intention of the Apostle, in comparing Adam's Disobedience, and Christ's Obedience together, to prove that Adam's Disobedience, was a procuring Cause of Death, it must, I think, be granted, that it is his Design, to prove, that Christ's Obedience is a proper meritorious Cause of Life. Some Things may here very pertinently be observed, concerning Adam and Christ, of whom the Apostle speaks, as two Representatives. In Adam there was a Fitness to be the Representative of all Mankind; because all Men were seminally in him, and were to spring from him. But there was not a Worthiness in him to stand, in that Capacity, by Reason of a Dignity, above Human, in his Person. Again, the Demerit of his Disobedience, did not arise from any Thing, in his Person; but from the Object, against whom he sinned, viz. God. That Demerit, therefore, was extrinsecal, or without him, and not intrinsecal, or within himself. Things are quite otherwise with Respect to Christ.

There was not only a Fitness in him to be a Representative to his People, as he is truly Man, perfectly holy, and born for, and given to them. But he being God, as well as Man, he was worthy to be a Head to the whole Number of the Elect.

Again, the Reason, or Ground of the Merit of his Obedience, is the Dignity of his Person. It arises not from the Object to whom he yielded Obedience, which the Demerit of Adam's Disobedience did; but from the infinite Greatness of his own Person. The Merit of Christ, therefore, was not extrinsecal, as Adam's Demerit was; but intrinsecal, or it arose from what he is in himself, viz. God, as well as Man. Infinitely, superior to Adam, therefore. Unto which, I apprehend, the Apostle hath Respect in these Words: Much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by one Jesus Christ. Two Things are clearly suggested, in the Context, viz. That the Obedience of Christ, may fitly stand for many, on Account of the infinite Dignity of his Person, above the Person of Adam, and that, for that Reason also, his Obedience, hath an intrinsic Value in it, deferring of eternal Life. This is the fourth Requisite of Merit, strictly understood. That is to say, Merit of Condignity.

5. The Reward is due in Justice: Or, it is Justice which assigns the Reward to the Obedience of Christ, because of that intrinsic Worth, which is therein. It was an Act of Justice, in God, to appoint

that Adam's Disobedience, should subject us to Death, because of the infinite Evil thereof, objectively considered. And it was, an Act of Justice in him to ordain, that the Obedience of Christ, should entitle us to Life; because of the infinite Worth thereof, subjectively, considered. The immortal Crown, of future Glory, is a Crown of Righteousness. And the Lord will give it, in the Character of a righteous Judge. Those, therefore, to whom, the active Obedience of Christ, is imputed, they most certainly, are blessed: Or have a Title to eternal Felicity, in Consequence thereof. For, that Obedience, properly merits everlasting Blessedness.

Perhaps, some weak Minds may object to this, that what is merited, is not freely given. Unto which, I answer thus: No Act of sovereign Grace, prejudices itself, or eclipses its own Glory. Now, Christ's Capacity to merit, by what he did, is founded in sovereign Grace. And it was sovereign Grace, which determined, to whom his Obedience should be imputed, in order to receive the Reward which is thereby merited. And, therefore, Grace will reign through Righteousness, unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

FOOTNOTES ft1 Etiamsi Opera nondum adfint, quia in illo Psalmi Loco nulla sit Mentio Operum, sed Animi Dolo carentis, id est, sinceri in Studio Pietatis. In Loc. ft2 Praelectiones Theologicae, Cap. 8.

S. The Knowledge of Future Glory

The Knowledge of Future Glory: The Support of the Saints in Present

Troubles by John Brine {London: John Ward, 1759}

SERMON 30 THE KNOWLEDGE OF FUTURE GLORY: THE SUPPORT OF THE SAINTS, IN PRESENT

TROUBLES A SERMON, OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REVEREND AND LEARNED MR. CLENDON DAUKES; WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE DECEMBER THE 12TH.

Preached at Hemel- Hempstead, December 17, 1758. Published at the Request of the Church.

Printed for and Sold by JOHN WARD, at the King's-Arms, against the Royal-Exchange; by GEORGE KEITH, in Grace-Church-Street; by JOHN EYNON, Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal Exchange; and W. CATER, Bookseller, opposite to Red-Lion- Street, Holbourn. London 1759. {#Price Six Pence|} {2 Corinthians 5:1} For we know, that if the earthly House of this our Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. MY honoured, and very much esteemed Brother, your worthy Pastor, now deceased, desired me to improve, the mournful Occasion, of his Death, in an Endeavour to explain among you, the Words, which I have read. The Connection of the Text with what is expressed in the preceding Chapter, is so evident, that it cannot escape the Observation of an attentive Reader. The Apostle mentions the Difficulties, Hardships, and Sufferings, unto which, he, and his Fellow-Labourers were exposed for the Gospel's Sake. And declares, that they did not faint, or sink under them. They were not intimidated by the cruel Persecutions, which they suffered. But bore them with Patience, Courage, and Fortitude, being animated, by Prospects of future Blessedness: For which Cause we faint not; but though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day. For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are temporal; but the Things which are not seen are eternal. Then the Words of my Text are introduced, wherein, are three Things, in general, to be observed, I. A present House, or Building.

II. A future one.

III. The Apostle knew, that there is a future Building, and that he had a Title to it. This was not a Conjecture, or a probable Opinion only. But he had a certain Knowledge, and Persuasion of it.

I. A present House, or Building, is spoken of, For we know that if the earthly House of this our Tabernacle were dissolved. This House is our Body, wherein our Soul subsists and acts, at present. In the Formation whereof, the infinite Wisdom and Power of God are dearly seen. It is admirable for its Beauty, and the important Purposes, unto which it is designed, in subserviency to the Mind, which is united to it. The various Mediums, for Senses are fitly adapted, as the Soul's acquiring a Stock of Ideas, viz. Sight, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Feeling. By the Impressions,

which Objects about us make on our Senses, the Soul acquires its Ideas of Things, and becomes acquainted with their Nature, and perceives their Agreement, or Difference. And being endowed with the Faculty of Speech, we are capable of communicating our Ideas, one to another, which is unspeakably to our mutual Advantage and Pleasure, as we are Creatures formed for Converse and Society. Concerning the curious Machine of our Body, we may justly say, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Three Particulars are expressed of our Body. It is earthly - It is a Tabernacle - And is to be dissolved.

1. The human Body is earthly. This constituent Part of Man was formed of the Dust of the Ground. The first Man was of the Earth, earthy. Our Original, therefore, was Dust. A very humbling Thought, this. But we too little take it, into Consideration. And are strangely apt to forget from whence we sprung. Besides, the Produce of the Earth is the Matter of the Nutriment and Sustentation of our Body. The admirable Variety of rich and delicate Food, which we eat for our Nourishment, and the Recruit of our continually wasting Spirits and Juices, is no other than what the Earth supplies us with. And without which, we could not long subsist. Again, we must soon be reduced to Dust. We are always tending unto it, and we must quickly be lodged in the Earth, and crumble into Dust.

2. Our Body is called a Tabernacle. which suggests the short Duration of our mortal Frame. Tabernacles, or Tents, are not designed for long Continuance. They are soon pitched, and are soon taken down. They were in Use, therefore, by the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who frequently removed from one Place to another. And the People of Israel, also used them, in their travelling through the Wilderness. We are in the Body, not as in a Mansion-House, which is erected, for a considerable Duration; but as in a Tabernacle, which must shortly be taken down. Our Life is like a Vapour, which suddenly vanishes, and disappears. But alas! we are often forgetful of its Brevity, and therefore, we are either perplexed with anxious Fears, or vainly puffed up, and elated with those Things, which we cannot but know, will not long be Matter, either of Grief, or of Satisfaction and Joy to us. This is an Instance of the egregious Folly of our depraved Minds.

3. The Body must suffer a Dissolution. By Sin we are subjected to Death. And it is vain to hope for an Exemption from its fatal Stroke. It is appointed unto Man, once to die. Which is the Separation of the Soul from the Body. immediately, whereupon, the Body turns to Corruption, its various Members are disunited, it is resolved into its first Original, and we mingle with vile Dust, whereon we now tread. Should not this pull down our Pride, abase our haughty Minds, and make us ashamed of our high Looks? Unto this base Condition we must all be reduced, without Exception. What Madness therefore, is it, in us, to cherish Pride, who must unavoidably sink into the dark Region, of the Grave, and therein moulder to Pieces! This Subject, gloomy as it is, does not terrify the Saints, when they have in View, the heavenly State, which the Apostle had.

II. There is a future House, or Building. This some interpret of the Body, when raised from the Dead, as it certainly will be. And the Bodies of Believers will, at their Resurrection, be rendered immortal, spiritual, and glorious. For this Corruption shall put on Incorruption. And this mortal shall put on Immortality. The Bodies of Believers are now sown in Corruption; Out they shall be raised in Incorruption. They are sown in Dishonour: They shall be raised in Glory. They are sown natural Bodies: They shall be raised spiritual Bodies. Christ will change their vile Bodies, and

fashion them like his glorious Body, according to the working, whereby he is able, even to subdue all Things unto Himself. Then their Bodies will be fit Receptacles for their perfected Minds.

I apprehend, that the eternal Felicity of the Saints is included, in this future House, or Building; but not to the Exclusion of their Happiness, in the intermediate State, between Death, and their Resurrection. And, therefore, it is best to understand it of that blissful State, into which they immediately enter, upon their Decease, Three Things I would endeavour to prove, viz. That the Soul is distinct from the Body That it is capable of existing and acting without it That the Souls of the pious, will be in a happy State, immediately upon Death.

1. The Soul is distinct from the Body. If the Body is a House to the Soul, as the Text represents it, the Soul cannot be the same with the Body; but it must really be distinct from it, tho' in the strictest Union with it. For, it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Soul is not distinguishable from that, wherein it is, as its House, or Tabernacle, and in which, it subsists and acts. Besides, the Body is the present Home of the Soul. And the Soul is capable of being absent from it, which it is impossible it should ever be, if it is the same with the Body, and not distinct from it. We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the Body. Now that which may be absent from the Body, must be some other Thing than the Body, and not the same with it. If there is nothing subsisting in us, which is distinct from our Body, with no Propriety, it can be said of us, that at Death, we become absent from it. The Soul and the Body therefore, are properly distinguishable, and not the same. I add, there is something in the Saints, which becomes present with the Lord, upon their being absent from the Body and while they are so. Willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord. That must be the Soul, in Distinction from the Body, for the Body cannot be absent from itself.

2. The Soul is capable of subsisting and acting without the Body. This receives very dear Proof from what the Apostle Paul, expresses concerning himself. Who speaks thus: I knew a Man in Christ above fourteen Years ago {#whether in the Body or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth|} such an one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a Man {#whether in the Body, or out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth|} how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable Words, which it is not lawful for a Man to utter. From hence, it is most evident, that, in the Opinion of the Apostle, there was something in him distinct from his Body. For, if he had thought, that there was nothing in him, distinct from his Body, he could never say, whether in the Body, or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell. Because, he must necessarily have concluded, that nothing of him could be out of, or separate from his Body. Not having any Thing distinct therefrom. And it is equally manifest, that, in his Opinion, that which is capable of being separate from the Body, is the Subject of Reason and Knowledge. Which must be the Soul, or our reasonable Nature. It is likewise, as clear, that he thought the Soul capable, not only of subsisting without the Body, but also of exerting itself, in Thought, if out of, or separate from the Body. He could not, therefore, have any Notion of the Soul's sleeping, or becoming inactive, and losing its Consciousness, by its Separation from the Body. That is no other than, a foolish Chimera of some Dreamers; who sleep with their Eyes open. Whereof, they will be convinced, when once their Eyes are closed by Death. Again, this is fully proved from his Desire, to depart and be with Christ, which, he says, is far better. For, sinking into a State of Slumber, and Inactivity, he would never have preferred, unto his present Enjoyment of Communion, with a dear Redeemer, which afforded him, a Pleasure, that far over-balanced all his present Sufferings, great as they were. Besides, the

Existence and Activity of the Soul, after Death, is confirmed, by the Declaration, of our Saviour, to the penitent Thief, on the Cross. I say unto thee, this Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. Slumbering in the Grave, is not being with Christ in Paradise, surely. The Soul, therefore, does not cease to exist, or act, when the Body is dead. It continues to exist, and retains its Activity, after Death. Once more, the Spirits of just Men are made perfect: Who are deceased. If, therefore, Perfection does not consist, in Loss of Consciousness, and in Insensibility, we cannot reasonably think, that the Souls of good Men, become unconscious, upon Death. This leads me to observe,

3. That the Souls of the pious, will be in a happy State, immediately after Death. As they will continue to exist, and remain active, they will certainly be happy. This cannot be doubted of, if Happiness consists, in being present with the Lord. In whole Presence is fulness of Joy. If Felicity consists in being with Christ. If to be with him, in Paradise, is Happiness, which, who can scruple? If to be made perfect, is to become happy. Which surely none will deny. The Saints, will not only, continue to exist, and remain active, while their Bodies are in the silent Grave; but they will be in a State of consummate Bliss. Blessed are the Dead, who die in the Lord. It is this, raises the Minds of sanctified Persons, above the Fear of Death, and even renders it desirable to them.

{1.} The Souls of departed Saints, are absolutely free from Sin. During their Abode in this mortal State, they are Subjects of Flesh, as well as Spirit. Evil is ever present with them, as an active Principle, opposing the Actings of the spiritual Principle, which is in them. By it, they are indisposed unto, and greatly interrupted, in Duties of the most solemn Nature. It often mars their best Meditations, wherein, they enjoy the highest Satisfaction. Through its Presence and Activity, their Minds, are frequently diverted from attending, in a proper Manner, to the Object of their devotional Acts, even in the solemn Duty of Prayer. All their religious Services are defiled, by this corrupt Fountain and Spring of Action, which is in them. From hence, arise sinful Thoughts, disorderly Desires, and evil Tendencies, in the Affections, even of the best. This Plague of the Heart, is the Plague of the Believer's Life. And it is the continual Occasion of inexpressible Vexation, and Grief, unto every Saint in this World. But immediately upon Death, the Souls of the pious, are freed from all those depraved Habits, which have Being in them here, they are at once delivered from that Law of Sin, which now disturbs, and perplexes, them, above Measure. As the Bodies of the Saints, who shall remain, and be alive, at the Coming of Christ, will be, in an instantaneous Manner, changed, and freed from those corrupt Qualities, which attend them, by the Exertion of his Power: So the Soul's of Believers, in an instantaneous Manner, immediately upon Death, are absolutely freed from all those evil Habits, which are now in them, by the Exertion of the Power of Christ. The former will be effected, in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye. And so is the latter. This Thought, I met with in that excellent Divine, Dr. Goodwin, long since. And it hath often afforded me much Pleasure. It may greatly serve to help our Faith, concerning the immediate Expulsion of Sin, out of our Souls, in their Separation, from our Bodies, by Death. This complete Deliverance from Sin, is most desirable to every sanctified Person, and the Hope of it, yields some Relief, to the Saints, while they groan, under the heavy Weight of that Body of Death, which depresses them.

{2} Grace will be perfected. That good Work, which is begun in Believers, is not imperfect, in its Nature; for God cannot be the Author of any Thing, which is imperfect, in its Kind. That gracious Principle, whereof the Saints are the happy Subjects, is a good, and a perfect Gift, which cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights. But it is not yet complete in its Degrees. And it is at

present liable to an Abatement, in the Vigor of its Actings. It suffers a Decline at one Time, or another, in most, if not, in all the Saints for a Season, through various Causes. Faith becomes weak, Hope is shaken, and Love to Christ and heavenly Things, grows Chill. Hereafter, no Imperfection will attend the Saints in their Knowledge, or Love to the infinitely glorious Objects, which they will view, with a Delight not at present to be conceived of by us. In this State, we know but in Part: When that which is perfect is come, that which, is in Part shall be done away. Here we see thro' a Glass darkly; hereafter, we shall see Face to Face. And Love will then be raised to its highest Pitch, unto God and a dear Redeemer. Then the gracious Design of God, in the Choice of our Persons, will be fully accomplished, in us. Who chose us, that we might be holy and without Blame, before him, in Love. Christ will present us Faultless, before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy. On his own Part, on the Part of his Father, unto whom he will present us, and on ours. The Happiness of the future grate, therefore, will be consummate. As we shall have no Sin dwelling in us, which now we have. So, not the least Languor, will ever attend the holy Acting of our perfected Minds. But the Vigor of Grace will eternally be the same, without Abatement, or any Decline.

{3} The Saints will enjoy most near, uninterrupted, and endless Communion with the Father, Son, and blessed Spirit. Here they enjoy Fellowship, with the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ. The Satisfaction and Pleasure attending which, nothing can possibly equal. But alas! What Interruptions, do now take Place therein, to the unspeakable Grief of pious Souls, whose chief Joy, consists in Communion with God. In the heavenly State they will have clear Views of the Love of the Divine Father, in its adoreable Properties, Of the Designs and Actings thereof, in their Favour. Even from Everlasting. And of those amazing Acts of Grace and Mercy, which he put forth in Time, in order to bring them unto the Fruition of himself. The Gift of his Son to and for them. And the Gift of his Spirit unto them, to regenerate, sanctify, and safely to conduct them, unto that blissful State, they will constantly contemplate upon, and adore, his sovereign Goodness, which so conspicuously shines forth, therein. And, this Fellowship, with the Father, will never, thro' any Cause whatever, be interrupted, nor shall it ever have an End. Again, they will enjoy Communion with Christ. His Glory they will have clear, and steady Prospects of. For it is his Will, that they may be with him, where he is, that they may behold the Glory, which the Father hath given him. A Sense of his unparalleled Love to them, will perpetually possess their Souls. They will always be employed in contemplating on, those unequalled Acts of Goodness and Compassion, which he exerted, in order to their Pardon, Justification, and eternal Salvation. And no Breach will ever be made upon this Fellowship, with their dear Saviour. Nor shall a Period ever be put unto it. As their Communion with Christ, will be most intimate, it will never be interrupted, nor have an End. Further, they shall also enjoy Communion with the blessed Spirit, who is the Author of their Regeneration, and Sanctification, and who safely conducts them, through this mortal State. Their Views of that Part, which he bears, in the Oeconomy of their Salvation, will then, be most clear, distinct, and heady. He is the Glorifier of Christ, and the Sanctifier of his Church. He forms us for Heaven: Or works a Meetness in us to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints, in Light. He instructs us in the Knowledge of heavenly Things, as a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. Gives us an Acquaintance with ourselves. Shews us the absolute Necessity of an Interest, in Christ. Discovers to us his Suitableness and Ability, as a Saviour. Encourages us to look to him, and by his Aid, we make Application unto him, to be saved by him. In Temptations, he succours us, in Distress he graciously comforts us. Under Afflictions, he supports us. In Darkness, he enlightens

us. Under Deadness, he quickens us. And when we backslide, he mercifully convinces us of our Folly, and restores unto us, those spiritual Consolations, which we were deprived of thereby. In a word, he is efficiently, our Life, Light, Strength, and all our Consolation. In Heaven the Saints will held the most near and intimate Communion with him, in his Love, and in all his Acts of infinite Compassion, towards them, in their dangerous Passage, through this militant State. Unto whole kind Care, and Protection, we owe our Safety. Now, the Saints in the future State, will constantly enjoy a Sense of his Love to their Persons, which is the Cause of. his beginning carrying on, and perfecting that good Work in them, which is their Meetness, for Heaven. And this their Fellowship, with him, will be endless. This is a most blessed State indeed! All Believers have a present Title to it, and certainly shall be introduced into it. Faith being acted on it, animates them to fight the good Fight, and to endure present Afflictions, with Patience, Courage, and Fortitude. Several Things are predicated concerning this State. It is a Building of God - Not made with Hands - Its eternal in the Heavens,

1. This State is a Building of God. The Design, and Erection of it, is wholly his. And it is the Effect of his sovereign and immense Love. And the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom.

{1.} He removes all Impediments, which lye in the Way of our coming to the Enjoyment thereof. Sin would have proved an eternal Bar to our Happiness, had not God, in infinite Wisdom, and Mercy, provided for its Removal. Blessed be his Name, he hath effectually done this for us. For, He hath made Christ, to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin. Laid our Iniquities upon him. And he bore them in his own Body on the Tree. In bearing them, he bore them away. Once in the End of the World, he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself The Messiah who was cut off; but not for himself, finished Transgression, and made an End of Sin. He removed our Transgressions from us, as far as the East is from the West. So that, this Obstruction to our Happiness, is entirely taken away. Our Guilt being expiated, by the Death of Christ, it can be no Obstacle, to our Fruition of future Felicity. Sin, which is pardoned, cannot hinder our becoming happy. This Impediment is effectually removed, by the Grace of God, through the atoning Blood of his Son. Which cleanseth from all Sin. Again, He hath fully provided, for the Satisfaction of his violated Laws, which, without a Satisfaction, would not allow of our Happiness. It was the sovereign Determination of God, that his Son should be made under the Law, suffer its Curse, and thereby redeem us from it. That so, that just Constitution, might not have any Thing to object, unto our Admission, into Heaven, taken from our Breach of its Commands. Farther, Divine Justice could not permit of the Happiness of guilty Men, without its Demands were answered. Sovereign Grace, and infinite Wisdom have provided for this also, in the Atonement of Christ. By his Sufferings and Death, full Satisfaction is made, to infinite Justice, which was offended, by our Sins. So that, it can have nothing to object, to our Enjoyment of future Blessedness. But, on this Foundation, the Grace and Justice of God, concur and unite, in raising us unto that State of Dignity and Glory, which we shall possess, in the immediate Presence of God. Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other. There is a perfect Harmony, between sovereign Goodness, .and inflexible Justice, in the Design of bringing us to Heaven, through the Blood and Righteousness of Christ Once more, effectual Provision is made for the Removal of Sin, out of our Souls. Which is absolutely necessary to the blissful Enjoyment of God. Almighty Grace takes away the Dominion of Sin, by implanting a holy Principle, in the Heart, and it will entirely expel Evil out of the Minds of the Saints, at Death, in order to their Admission into the immediate Presence of their heavenly Father.

{2.} A Right and Title to future Glory is of God. Right to eternal Blessedness, arises from Adoption. For, if we are Children, then we are Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ. The Act of God, by which, we were constituted Sons, was sovereign, and it is to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace. Again, the Saints have a legal Title to Heaven, by Virtue of the Righteousness of Christ, which is a Gift, and a Gift by Grace. And that Righteousness, is properly deserving of infinite Good, by Reason of the infinite Dignity of the Person of Christ. As Sin is properly deserving of the Loss of infinite Good, because of the Infinity of the Object, against whom it is committed. That being justified by his Grace we might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life {Titus 3:7}. And, therefore whom God justifies, them he also glorifies. For Justification, entitles us, unto Glorification. The former Right to the heavenly State, does not supersede the latter, or render it unnecessary. Neither, are they inconsistent. The former Right, is founded, in absolute Sovereignty, without Respect to Justice: The latter, must also be attributed to sovereign Grace, as to the Appointment of Christ's Righteousness to be ours, wherein we are Justified: But Divine Justice assigns the Reward of eternal Life, unto the Obedience of Christ, as what is justly due to it; because of the infinitely intrinsic Value of it, arising from the infinite Greatness of his Person. This is a mighty Support to the Faith of the Saints, and is a precious Ground of strong Consolation to them: When they view how sovereign Grace, and infinite Justice, are at once, and equally displayed, in their Title to everlasting Life.

{3.} God in infinite Goodness prepares us for the Enjoyment of future Glory. it is impossible, that an unsanctified Person should possess the Glory of Heaven. Without Holiness, no Man shall see the Lord. A Mind that is carnal, is incapable of holding Fellowship with God. Of viewing with the least Satisfaction, the Objects, which are beheld with blissful Adoration, in the heavenly State. Neither, will the Soul, destitute of Holiness, ever be disposed unto that pure Service, wherein, glorified Saints, are perpetually employed. And, therefore, Regeneration, is absolutely necessary for the Fruition of God. And that Preparative for Heaven, he is the Author of. Giving Thanks alway to the Father, who hath made us meet, to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in our Lord Jesus Christ, who, of his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from the Dead. To an Inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you. This is, his calling us unto his eternal Glory. In the Character of the God of all Grace.

{4.} He preserves the Saints until their Arrival unto this State of Blessedness. Divine Grace maintains the good Work, which is begun in them. Infinite Wisdom directs them. Immense Mercy shields them. Everlasting Strength sustains them. In all their Exigences they are supplied, out of those inexhaustible Treasures of Grace, which are laid up, for that Purpose, in the Covenant of Grace. Thus, God is their Director, Upholder, liberal Benefactor, and constant Preserver, in this mortal, militant, and dangerous State. Who are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation. Now unto him, that is able to keep you from falling. His Love to their Persons, his Purposes about them, and his precious Promises made unto them, may justly beget, and keep up, in their Minds, a firm Persuasion, of a safe Conduct, in all the Mazes of Temptations', Distresses, Dangers, and Difficulties, through which they pass, in their traveling towards the heavenly World.

{5.} God is the Fountain and Object of future Glory. He is the Spring, of eternal Life, whereof they will be the happy. Subjects hereafter. For, their Life is hid with Christ in God. Their perfect Purity is from him. And his Grace will render them for ever impeccable: Or raise them above a Possibility of

Sinning for evermore. His infinite Goodness, will be a neverfailing Source, of refined, ineffable, and inconceivable Joys, when they shall be admitted into his immediate Presence. Where is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand, are Pleasures for evermore. Thus, God will be the Fountain of future Happiness, subjectively considered. And he will be their Glory, objectively considered. For their future Felicity will consist, in Beholding, in a perfect Manner, the infinitely glorious Perfections of God, as they are displayed, in the Design, and Accomplishment of their Salvation, by the Incarnation, Obedience, Sufferings, and Death of his Son. And, in viewing the holy Properties of his Nature, as they shine forth, through the Person of Christ. So that, God will eternally be the Happiness of the Saints, subjectively, and objectively considered. This Building, therefore, where into, Believers enter, at Death, is the Building of God.

2. It is not made with Hands. This negative Phrase, plainly imports, that human Wisdom, Will, and Power, have no causal Influence into it. A created Understanding could never have devised it. The Will of a Creature cannot have any effective Influence into it. Finite Power could not possibly acquire it.

{1.} None could remove the Impediments, which lay in the Way of its Enjoyment. No Creature whatever could atone for our Guilt, and bear it away. That is such a Load, which would have pressed down a mere Creature, into the lowest Hell. And no Merit can possibly attend the Sufferings of a mere Creature, how great soever. Guilt, therefore, as to us, must be eternally inexpiable. No Criminal can satisfy the Divine Law, which he hath violated, for his Breach thereof. Its Curse, which Sin demerits, is insupportable, in its Weight, by the Transgressor. And no Man is able to answer the Demands of infinite Justice, which is offended by his Sins. None, therefore, can redeem his Soul, and give to God a Ransomed for it. No Man is able to shake off the Dominion of sin, or free himself from its reigning Power. Nor, can any Saint expel, those corrupt Habits, whereof his Mind is the Subject. Lusts are so deeply rooted in their Hearts, that they cannot possibly eradicate them. The Removal of the Hinderances, and Obstructions, to our future Happiness, is impossible to us all, and every one. Infinite Wisdom, Grace, and Power alone could do this for us. Blessed be God, he hath, and will, fully effect it, in our Favour.

{2.} No Man is able to acquire a Right to future Happiness. In order to that, the Law, must be perfectly obeyed. For, without complete Obedience, unto its righteous Precepts, it will not allow of the Enjoyment of Life. The Want of such Obedience, subjects us, to Condemnation, and Death. As, therefore, we are all depraved, and enfeebled, in our Powers, it is impossible to every Man, to keep the holy Law of God, so as to obtain a Title to Happiness, according to that just Constitution. The Law is weak, through the Flesh. And no Law is given, which can give Life.

{3.} We cannot prepare ourselves, for the Enjoyment of the heavenly State. Naturally, we are under the Dominion of Sin. Are dead in Trespasses, and Sins. Our Minds are alienated from the Life of God. And, Enmity itself, against him, And, therefore, we are absolutely unable to put forth holy Acts, whereby, holy Habits, might be acquired. A real Preparative, or Meetness, for the Fruition of God, is internal Holiness, whereof, every Man is naturally destitute. And, not having a Spring of spiritual Action, no spiritual Acts, can be exerted, by us, previous unto the Production of such a Principle in our Hearts, by the Grace of God. Consequently, no Man is able, to prepare himself for the future State of Glory.

{4.} It is not in our Power to preserve ourselves, unto that happy State. We are the Subjects of such Lusts, which would inevitably ruin us, if left to oppose them, in our own Strength. Satan, the unwearied Enemy of our Souls, we are unable to resist, and overcome, in his ensnaring Temptations, violent Oppositions, and furious Assaults, in ourselves. The World, in its Allurements, Distresses, or in its Enmity against us, would prove our Ruin, by engaging our Affections, by sinking us in Sorrow, or, by raising our Fears, unto an excessive Pitch.

3. This State is eternal in the Heavens. The Blessedness and Glory of the Saints, hereafter, will have no End. As, no Change can possibly take Place in it: So, no Period will be put unto it. And, it will be in the Heavens. In the immediate Presence of God. Where Jesus Christ, as Man, will eternally be.

III. The Apostle knew, that there is a future House, or Building, and that, he had a Title to it. It was not a Conjecture, or probable Opinion only. But a certain Knowledge, and Persuasion thereof, which he had.

1. He had a certain Knowledge, that there is such a State of Felicity. There are undoubted Evidences of it, in the Christian Revelation. The Divine Promise of eternal Life. The Resurrection of Christ from the Dead: His Entrance into Heaven, as the Fore-runner of his People. And the Promise of his second Appearance; in order to their final and complete Salvation, are incontestable Proofs, of that State of consummate Bliss. Life and Immortality, are brought to Light, by the Gospel.

2. The Apostle knew, that he had a Title to the future State of Glory. It was not a Conjecture, or probable Opinion, which he entertained, concerning his Right to Heaven; but he had a certain Knowledge, and Persuasion of it. And common Christians, may also arrive unto such a Knowledge, and Persuasion: By the following Mediums.

{1} A Meetness for its Enjoyment, is a certain Evidence of a Title to it. That Meetness is a holy, spiritual Principle in the Soul, which, in its Nature, is suited to heavenly Things. The Understanding discerns their Excellency and Glory. The Will makes Choice of them. And the Affections tend and adhere unto them: Upon this Principle being produced, in the Heart. An Approbation of the heavenly State, is a sure Evidence of a Right unto it. They are but few, who have a real Liking of Heaven. No Man, who is unmeet for it, in Reality, desires to enjoy it. All those in whom, God works this Meetness for the Fruition of his eternal Glory, have an unalienable Title to it, and shall certainly possess it. For, He hath wrought them for this self same Thing. Better Evidence, of a Right to Heaven, and of the certain Enjoyment of it, need not be desired, than a present Delight in, and a holy Adoration of heavenly Things, is.

{2.} This may be known by the First Fruits of it. Which the Graces, Consolations, and Joys of the holy Spirit are. Not only they, but ourselves also, who have the, First-Fruits of the Spirit; even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body, {Romans 8:23} From Fore-Views, and Fore-Tasts, by Faith, of heavenly Objects, and celestial Pleasures, the Saints may safely conclude upon their Title to the future State of Blessedness.

{3.} The Earnest of Heaven is a sure Evidence of a Right unto it. That Earnest is the holy Spirit of Promise, by whom Believers are sealed {Ephesians 1:13-14}. If God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into our Hearts, to convince us of Sin, our Misery, and Helplessness: And to reveal Christ

to us, as a suitable Saviour: And he hath directed us to flee to him for Refuge: If under his gracious Influence, we have ventured upon Christ, for Life and Salvation, and we repose our entire Trust in him, for Pardon, Peace, Acceptance with God, Holiness, and eternal Life. We may from thence, draw this Conclusion, without the least Fear of being mistaken, in this important Matter, that the holy Spirit is in us, as an Earnest of the heavenly Inheritance. And, that we shall most assuredly enjoy it.

4. By the Witness of the Spirit we may obtain this Knowledge and Persuasion. The Spirit himself beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God {Romans 8:16}. He doth this, by a powerful Application of Divine Promises, by shedding abroad the Love of God, into our Hearts, and by enabling us, to discern that good Work, which he hath begun in us, as an Effect of everlasting Love to our Persons, and as the Result of our Ordination to everlasting Life.

Thus, I have endeavoured, according to the Desire, of my very worthy deceased Brother, to explain to you, the Words, which he chose, for the Subject of his Funeral Discourse. It may now, be expected, that I should give a Character of him. And a beautiful Representation, might have been given of him. But I must inform you, that he laid an Injunction upon me, not to enlarge on his Character. And, that he expressed a Dislike of bestowing Encomiums, on the Dead. However, a few Words, concerning him, may surely be allowed. He was meek, humble, and modest, perhaps, too modest, wise and learned, Diligent in Study, there is Reason to think, to the Prejudice of his Constitution. He had an enlarged Acquaintance, with the evangelical Scheme, and a spiritual Savour of the Truths of the Gospel. In his last, long Illness, which issued in his Death, he was remarkably favoured, with the gracious Presence of God, and filled with a holy Adoration of sovereign Grace and Mercy. Those glorious Truths, which in the Course of his Ministry, he recommended to you, were the Matter, of his Support, Consolation and unspeakable Joy, in the Views, of his Dissolution. An Address to his surviving Relations; on this sad Occasion, is a Subject, so very tender, and delicate, that I think, I may be excused, if I decline it. May the Lord sanctify, this mournful Providence, unto them, support them under it, and be their Guide through Life! One Thing, I must: beg Leave to acquaint you, the Members of this Church, with. It is this, your worthy deceased Pastor, was much concerned for your future Welfare, as a Community. And desired me to recommend it to you, to endeavour, by all possible Means, to cultivate Love, Christian Friendship, and Harmony, among yourselves. Which will be very much conducive to your mutual Advantage. Study, therefore, the Things, which make for Peace, whereby one may edify another. May the Lord help you, to deny yourselves, and cordially to unite, in an Endeavour, to promote his Glory, and the Edification of one another! I desire, to commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance, among them, that are sanctified.

S. The Nature of True Holiness

The Nature of True Holiness

Explained by John Brine

SERMON 11 THE NATURE OF TRUE HOLINESS EXPLAINED IN A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED AT A MONTHLY EXERCISE OF PRAYER, WITH A SERMON, ON THE TWENTIETH OF APRIL, 1749.

Published at the Request of the MINISTERS, and others, who heard it.

Printed and Sold by JOHN WARD, at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain.

LONDON. 1749.

PREFACE.

IT is an Observation, which I have long made, that those who are charged with being licentious in their Principles, at least, because of their firm Attachment to the Doctrines of the true Grace of God, always express an Approbation of real Holiness: And that Discourses of Evangelical Obedience, are sure to meet with a cordial Reception from them, when others of different Sentiments about the Doctrines of the Grace of God, discover a Dislike to such Discourses. The Reason of which is, I am persuaded, the former really understand the Nature of Holiness, approve of, and aspire after true Purity, and that the latter are both ignorant of it, and Enemies to it. The Consideration of this alone, prevented my being Surprized that I should be desir'd to publish this Discourse. I believe, that those whole Desire this was, are much concerned to promote true Holiness, both of Heart and Life; and that, under the Influence of this Principle, they moved for this Publication, as what, in their very candid Opinion, might, thro' the divine Blessing, in some Measure, be subservient to that important Purpose. That this pious View may be answered by it, I trust, is the sincere Desire and Prayer of its unworthy Author,

J . B.

{Hebrews 12:14} Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness; without which no Man shall See the Lord. The inspired Writer, in this Chapter, offers various Things to the Consideration of the Hebrews, in order to animate and encourage them under those Afflictions which they suffered, viz. that God was their compassionate Father, that he was determined to do them Good by all his Dispensations towards them: Particularly, that he designed to make them Partakers of his Holiness, by those Afflictions. And he exhorts them to endeavour to strengthen one another's Hands under Weakness and Fainting. In the Words which we have read, he recommends to them, the cultivating of Peace with all Men, and a Pursuit after Holiness, as what is necessary to future Happiness.

I. We ought diligently to cultivate Peace with all Men. The Saints are the Children of the God of Peace, and the Subjects of the Prince of Peace, and therefore it becomes them to be careful to

promote Amity and Friendship with all. This is to be done,

1. By declining every thing which may irritate and provoke both in Words and Actions: All just Occasions of Offence are carefully to be avoided: A wrathful and injurious Temper is not by any means to be indulged, if we would preserve Peace among those with whom we are conversant.

2. We must be ready to perform all good Offices for all. It is not enough, that we be inoffensive and harmless in our Behaviour, but we must do Good to all: 'Tis our Duty to imitate our Heavenly Father, by the Exercise of universal Benevolence and Goodness. He maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just, and on the Unjust; and we ought to love our Enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do Good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us. {Matthew 5:44-45}. Farther,

II. The inspired Writer recommends an earnest Endeavour after Holiness. It was my Design principally to insist on this second Part of the Subject, and, therefore, I have thus hastened to it. And, I propose, First, To consider the Causes of Holiness.

Secondly, The Nature of it, or what it is.

Thirdly, I would shew, that we ought diligently to endeavour after it.

Fourthly, That without it no Man shall see the Lord First, I am to consider the Causes of Holiness.

We have lost that which was the true Glory of our Nature, viz. our original Rectitude and Righteousness; The Crown is fallen from our Head; woe unto us, for we are spoiled! Let us then attend unto the Consideration of the Causes of Holiness, wherein consists the true Exaltation of our Nature, which is dreadfully debased by Sin; the impulsive, procuring, efficient, and instrumental Causes or Means of that Purity which is absolutely necessary to future Blessedness.

1. The impulsive Cause, is the eternal Goodwill and Grace of God exerting itself in the Election of our Persons to everlasting Life; God hath from the Beginning chosen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit {2 Thessalonians 2:13}: And the Apostle affirms, that he chose us, that we might be holy. Our holy Vocation is according to his Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the World began {2 Timothy 1:9}: Hence the Character of the Saints is, the Called according to his Purpose. Let some suggest what they please against the Doctrine of Election, as calculated to encourage Sloth, Negligence, and Carelessness in the Minds of those who believe themselves to be included in that gracious Decree; since it is an Appointment to a Participation of Holiness in order to Happiness, that is an entirely groundless Calumny; it is the Origin from which true Holiness springs; nor is there any thing of it in this World, but what is derived from that Fountain; and that which is the Cause of Holiness, cannot reasonably be thought of a Nature suited to encourage the Practice of its direct Contrary, viz. Sin.

2. The procuring Cause of real Holiness, is the Death and Satisfaction of Christ. Tho' it is true, that the Sufferings of our Saviour did not cause a Will in God to communicate the Blessings of Grace and Glory to his People, yet his Atonement is the Foundation on which they are all conveyed to them. Hence is that Prayer of the inspired Writer in Behalf of the Hebrews: Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight {Hebrews 13:20-21}. In that eternal Covenant which was entered into by

the Father and Christ, it was a Condition required of him, and agreed to by him, to make his Soul an Offering for Sin, and a Promise was made him, that on this Condition he should have the Satisfaction of seeing his Seed Participants of Holiness and Happiness. This Condition is fulfilled, hence he has a Right to expect the Fulfilment of that Promise relating to them all; nor can the Father, in Justice, fail of the Performance of his Promise. That invaluable Price which was paid for the Redemption of our Persons from Misery, ascertains our Participation of Holiness here, and complete Happiness hereafter.

3. The efficient Cause of true Holiness is the Spirit of God; Grace in the Mind of a poor Sinner, is his Production; hence we are said to be born of the Spirit. Some speak of Grace, as being partly acquired, and partly infused: I greatly question whether this agrees with good Sense, and the Nature of Things in relation to Habits of the Mind. It may be, that no Habit of our Minds is partly infused, and partly acquired; but that all Habits are either wholly infused, or wholly acquired. That a Man may be assisted in the acquiring of Habits, is easy of Apprehension; but that because Assistance is afforded to a Person in the acquiring of an Habit, it should be said that, that Habit was partly infused, and partly acquired, seems not to me to agree with good Sense, and the Nature of Things. However, this is not the Case here; so far as any Habit is acquired, it is not infused: And if Holiness of Heart is partly infused, and partly acquired, then it will follow, not only that in Part we make ourselves to differ; but also, that holy Acts may be performed, where there is no holy Principle, which cannot be. The Saints are said to be new Creatures, because they are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, and the Holy Spirit is the Author of our Regeneration. Grace in the Heart is the Effect of his gracious Operation upon us; That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. If there is any Thing in us of a truly spiritual Nature, it is the Produce of the Spirit of God, for we are naturally Flesh; the very Reverse of what is holy and Spiritual.

4. The instrumental Causes, or Means of our Improvement in Holiness are various, viz. the Gospel; that alone is the Food of the new Creature, and suited to feed and nourish, and invigorate the Principle of Grace in the Hearts of Believers, and, therefore, the Apostle exhorts us, as new born Babes, to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby {1 Peter 2:2}: And our dear Lord prays the Father to Sanctify, his People thro' his Truth, whose Word is Truth {John 17:17}. It is in vain to hope for an Increase of Grace in the Heart, without receiving, feeding upon, and digesting the Doctrines of Grace. Again, The sacred Institutions of Christ are appointed to this End. In those sacred Rites, Christ Is represented in his Person, Offices, Work, and Benefits, and Grace; and, therefore, they are adapted wifely to corroborate the Heaven-born Principle in our Souls. Farther, the afflictive Dispensations of Providence are graciously designed to this Purpose .Sometimes, it is the Pleasure of God to throw his Children into the Furnace of Affliction, there to try them, as Gold is tried. In their better Part they suffer no Loss, but are Gainers; all his Corrections are intended for their Good, and, under his Blessing, are subservient to that End; thereby, as it is declared in the Context, they become Partakers of his Holiness. And, they are purified from their Dross; By this shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the Fruit, to take away his Sin {Isaiah 27:9}; a blessed Fruit of Affliction this. The Christian, if he does not give Thanks to God for the Matter of the Affliction, he will for the Advantage which he gains to his nobler Part thereby. Besides, spiritual and holy Conversation tends to promote Holiness; No corrupt Communication ought to proceed out of our Mouths; but such as is good to the Use of

edifying, that it may minister Grace to the Hearers: There are the Causes of Holiness, supreme and subordinate. The Nature of true Holiness, as I apprehend, is very much mistaken by many, and that is thought to be Holiness, which hath not any Thing of that Kind in it, and, therefore, an Enquiry into the Nature of Holiness, which we are exhorted to follow after, may be proper and beneficial. I proceed then, Secondly, To shew what true Holiness is: And I would do this negatively and positively.

1. Negatively: This is to be done in several Particulars, viz.

[1.] What Men usually call Virtue, is not Holiness. By this I intend the Propriety and Impropriety of Things, in relation to human Actions; this is very often called, in our Times, the Fitness and Unfitness of Things; this Action is fit to be done, and the other is unfit. Now this is an abstracted Consideration of Actions, as in themselves, without Regard to the governing Authority of God in his Law; and, therefore, it is at a very great Remove from Holiness, which is an Obedience to the Will and Command of that infinite Being, on whom we are absolutely dependent. Hence it follows, that a Man may be virtuous, or practise what is fit to be done, and decline doing what is unfit to be acted, without the least Degree of that Holiness, concerning which the Enquiry is.

[2.] Legal Obedience, which rises higher than the former, is not Holiness. The Light of natural Conscience may be much heightened and improved by the Word of God, and a Man's Sins may be let in Order before him: He also may have an awful View of their Demerit, which will awaken dreadful Fears, and influence him to make an Enquiry how he may escape the Damnation of Hell. In this Enquiry he presently apprehends and concludes, that an Alteration in his Behaviour is necessary, and he determines with himself, that he will immediately change the Course of his Actions, decline what is evil, and perform what is good. Upon doing which, he begins to cherish Hopes of regaining an Interest in divine Favour; on this Principle, that God is a merciful Being, and will make all reasonable Allowances for his necessary and unavoidable Imperfections, and for all those numerous Temptations, wherewith he finds himself surrounded in every State. This indeed is the common Doctrine of our sad Times. Such Persons doubt not, but that if they do the best they are able in their present Circumstances, God will be favourable to them in Judgment, and cry to themselves, Peace, Peace, tho' certain Destruction, if rich and sovereign Mercy prevents not, awaits them. Sometimes, they proceed so far as to celebrate the sacred Rites of Christianity, and in their own, and in the Opinion of others also, they commence true Christians; whereas all their Obedience is carnal, and arises from the Flesh. As one well observes, they obey, not because they love the Gospel; but because they fear the Law. This it is to follow after the Law of Righteousness, as the Jews did, who attained not to the Law of Righteousness, because they fought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law {Romans 9:31-32}. Lust, notwithstanding this Change in a Person, if it retains its Dominion in the Heart, and will so do, until sovereign and efficacious Grace takes it away, and brings a Man to submit to be saved in the Way of God's Appointment. Sin still perserves its Rule in the Mind, tho' the Form of its Government is altered, and none of the Actions of such a one are holy, they all spring from a selfish Principle, and are directed to selfish Ends, which is not serving God, but is a Man's Aim to serve himself. This legal Obedience, therefore, hath not any Thing of true Holiness in it.

[3.] The Knowledge of the Truth of Evangelical Doctrines is not Holiness; Orthodoxy is not Grace; nor is Soundness of Judgment, Holiness. The Perception of the Evidence of divine Truths, is the

Business of Reason, not of Grace. A Man, therefore, who hath no Principle of Holiness in him, may discern that Evidence, and the strict Connection, Dependence and Harmony of the several Branches of Evangelical Truth, and give an assent unto those Truths, tho' the Things themselves he is wholly unacquainted with. It is a sad Mistake to think that we are holy Persons, because we are persuaded of the Truth of Gospel Mysteries, for that Persuasion springs up in the Mind from Acts merely rational upon the Evidence Revelation affords of the Truth of those mysterious Doctrines. Where there is not a spiritual understanding of spiritual Things, and a Savour and Relish of them as such, there is no true Holiness.

[4.] Gifts, and the Exercise of them, is not Grace or Holiness. By Gifts, I mean an Ability to discourse of Gospel Doctrines in such a Manner, as may be very instructive and beneficial to others. And it is with me unquestionable, that a Man may be what we call an accurate Divine, and yet not have the least Measure of Grace; such a one, of what Use soever he may be to others, for their Edification, he is of none to himself, by all he expresses. There are awful Words of our Lord's, Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? They seem to flatter themselves, that their eminent Gifts, and the Exercise of them, would procure them an Admission into Heaven. Very awful indeed is the Answer they receive from Christ: Depart from me, ye that work Iniquity {Matthew 7:22-23}. As Gifts and Grace are distinct Things, it is very necessary for those who are employed in public Work, to look as well to their Graces, as to their Gifts: Without this, a Minister, while he is improving in his Gifts, may, and will, I think, dwindle sadly in his Graces. Other Acts are necessary, and Diligence of another Kind is needful to an Improvement in Grace and Holiness, than those which will serve to the Improvement of our Gifts. Having observed what Holiness is not: I go on to shew, 2. In a positive Sense, what it is: And it is to be considered as a Principle, and Acts flowing from that Principle.

[1.] True Holiness is a new, spiritual Principle or Spring of Action in the Mind. It is new, for which Reason, it is called a new Heart, and the Subject of it is laid to be a new Creature; If any Man is in Christ, he is a new Creature: Old Things are passed away, behold, all Things are become new {2 Corinthians 5:17}. This is called new, in Opposition to the Flesh, or corrupt Habits of the Mind, and it is the very Reverse, and direct contrary of all that was in a Person before. Grace is not corrupt Nature mended, but it is a Disposition opposite and contrary to it. Flesh and Spirit are distinct Principles in the Mind, two Opposites in the same Person; That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. The Flesh still remains what it was, and its Nature will never be changed. From these contrary Principles proceed contrary Acts, and there is a mutual Opposition between them; The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, there are contrary the one to the other {Galatians 5:17}. Again, this Principle may be called new, tho' not in Opposition to, yet in Distinction from, that original Righteousness, which Man possessed in a State of Innocency. There is an Agreement in their general Nature, as the one and the other are truly holy; but, in some Respects, there is a Difference between these two Principles: This latter was not due to Man by the Laws of Creation, and, therefore, as Men have it not in Fact, they never had it in Right; and God may communicate this Principle to whomsoever he pleases, upon the Foot of Sovereignty. The former was not a Life upon God, considered in a Mediator, nor was it, in its Nature, disposed and fitted to such a kind of Life; but this latter is such a Life, agreeable to the Nature of that new Covenant-relation, in which the Saints stand to God. Farther, it

is a spiritual Principle; for this Reason it is called Spirit; That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit; and all the Acts which arise from it, are of a pure and spiritual Kind, and of the same Nature with itself. This Principle alone is the Spring of holy Actions in a Believer; none of his Acts are heavenly, but those which take their Rise from it; his Mind, or spiritual Part only, serves the Law of God. That is a Service into which the Flesh will never enter.

[2.] This Principle exerts itself various Ways, to the Glory of God who wrought it in the Soul, and to the Comfort and Advantage of those in whom it is, viz.

[1.] In believing; or in Acts of Faith on Jesus Christ. It discerns our Need of him, his Suitableness to our Condition; applies to him, and receives him, as he of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption {1 Corinthians 1:30}; yea, as our all in all {Colossians 3:11}; And this Faith purifies the Heart: Putting no Difference between us and them, purifying their Hearts by Faith. It influences unto a cheerful and holy Obedience, for which Reason it is called the Obedience of Faith, which is alone acceptable and pleasing unto God, thro' Christ, For without Faith it is impossible to please him {Hebrews 11:6}; and we are no farther truly holy and spiritual in the Discharge of Duty, than Faith is acted therein.

[2.] This gracious Principle loves and delights in heavenly Things. In the Understanding, it is a Perception of their infinitely excellent and glorious Nature. In the Will, it is a closing with, and Adherence unto them. In the Affections, it is a Delight and Complacency in them, as pure, holy, and spiritual, and congruous to its own Nature; no Acts of which Kind can ever arise in an unsanctified Mind. A natural or unregenerate Person cannot know, nor relish and favour the Things of the Spirit of God, to him they are Foolishness, and, therefore, it is not possible that they should be the Objects of his Choice and Pleasure.

[3.] Grace hopes for better Things than it hath in present Possession. They are good Things it now enjoys, but they are far better which it hath in Right and Prospect. It is an humble Expectation of celestial Glory and consummate Happiness, in the immediate Presence of God and a dear Redeemer; on account of which, that glorious State bears the Name of Hope; Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ {Titus 2:13}. The Christian, in the Exercise of Grace, enters into that within the Vail whither the Forerunner is for him entered {Hebrews 6:19-20}, and hath his Conversation in Heaven. Where he shall actually be, hereafter, there he now is, sometimes, in Desire, and in a way of gracious Communion.

[4.] This spiritual Principle exerts itself in a holy Reverence of God. It adores him on account of his infinite Perfections and Glory, in the religious Services which the happy Subject of it performs: Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear {Hebrews 12:28}; And there is no true Reverence of God in a Mind destitute of this holy Principle, for from that alone it springs; and there is more or less of this Fear of the Divine Majesty, as this gracious Principle is more or less lively and vigorous.

[5.] Grace disposes the Mind to submit to the Will of God, in the various Dispensations of his Providence, whether prosperous or adverse. It is an Acquiescence in his Pleasure concerning us, who knows what is best for us, and whole infinite Love to our Persons, will always so order every Occurrence, as to issue in our Advantage, if not as Men, yet as we are Christians; We know, that

all Things work together for Good, to them who love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose {Romans 8:28}. And,

[6.] This holy Principle is a Disposition to practice all the Branches of Righteousness in our Conversation in the World; Sobriety, Justice, Compassion, Benevolence, and whatever else Morality includes; The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, and hath appeared to all Men, teaches the Saints to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World. True Grace in the Heart is a solicitous Care to maintain good Works in the Life. Farther,

[7.] The regenerate Part of a Believer casts a holy Contempt on the World, and all the most delectable Things in it. It is of a Nature far more sublime than the best of earthly Treasures, and it elevates the Mind towards, and fixes it on Objects infinitely more glorious than the gayest and most splendid Things, which please the Fancy, and attract the Affections of an unsanctified Person. This Heaven-born Principle aspires towards unseen and heavenly Objects. From Heaven it came, that is its proper Centre, and thither it tends. So far as our Affections are under its Influence, they are raised above sublunary Things, and placed on the noble Objects, which Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, constantly view with Wonder and Delight; Seek those Things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of God. Set our Affections on Things above, not on the Things on the Earth {Colossians 3:1-2}. True Grace refuses the latter with a holy Disdain, because it is of a Nature far more noble and refined, than the most eligible of them all. Once more,

[8.] This Principle aims at the Glory of God in all its Acts. Real Grace is the most generous Principle in the World: Nay, I am bold to affirm, that there is no truly generous Principle in the World, but this gracious one: It is disinterested. Grace is not a selfish Thing; it seeks not its own Honour, but the Glory of the God of all Grace, from whom it is derived. Unless we design the Glory of God in our Acts of Obedience, there is nothing of true Holiness in what we do. It is not enough that the Matter of our Actions is good: Works truly good spring from Love in the Heart, are directed to the Glory of God, as their End, and are performed under the Influence of spiritual Considerations and Motives. We may pray, read the Word of God, attend on his Worship, and discharge the Duties of Civil Life in a blameless Manner, as to Men's Observation, and yet not have the least Degree of Grace. Whatever we think of ourselves, and what Opinion soever others may have of us, we are no farther truly holy, than Grace is acted in our Obedience. If our Graces are not exercised in holy Duties, no Holiness attends them. This Account of Holiness, I am sensible, would not be pleasing to many, who are professed Advocates for what, as it is usually called, practical Religion. I have sometimes thought, that it is a little hard, however, it is unjust, they are pleased to object to us, when we treat of the Doctrines of the Grace of God, that we have no Concern for Holiness and practical Religion: And when we discourse of real Holiness, they are disgusted, and say, that we are too precise, strict, and rigid in our Account of it. This is a sufficient Testimony, even from themselves, that they abuse us, when they say, that we have no Regard to practical Holiness, because we assert the Doctrines of Free Grace; they have forgot, as I suppose, what they object to us of this Kind, when they declare themselves to be displeased with our Account of Holiness, as too strict and rigid. But why are they dissatisfied with that Account? the Reason is, they thought themselves rich, and increased with Goods, and had Need of nothing: And, therefore, to be pronounced and proved Bankrupts and Beggars, very much displeases them. All their Gold, on which they valued themselves, if indeed our Explanation of Holiness

agrees with Truth, they find that it is mere Dross. This gives them much Uneasiness, and is what they cannot bear with. As was before observed, Lust maintains its Rule in the Heart, even when it is checked by Conviction, under which there Persons are supposed to act. The Form of its Government in the Mind is altered, but its Dominion is not taken away, nor the Extent of it diminished. Holiness is indeed a great, yea, a most excellent Thing. I fear, that but little of it is found with many, who, yet, go on in a constant Course of religious Duties: And the best among us are very defective herein. Those who most study the Nature of Holiness, and keep the strictest Watch over their Hearts, will best discern their Defects and Imperfections, and be much stirred up to practise the great and necessary Duty here recommended, viz. Following after Holiness, which I proceed to consider, Thirdly, We ought to follow Holiness, i.e. in an earnest Manner we should endeavour after our Improvement therein. The original Word *διωκω* is elsewhere rendered, I press {Php 3:14}. It signifies a Fervency of Desire, and an Earnestness in Endeavour. If we are desirous of an Improvement in Grace, we must, in order to it, make it our Scope and Aim; not rest satisfied with our present Measure of Grace, but use a holy Diligence to increase it; without this, we cannot reasonably expect and hope for an Advancement in Holiness and Spirituality.

1. We must oppose, and make no Provision for the Flesh. So far as we gratify and feed the carnal Part in us, we prejudice our nobler Part. Grace is always a Sufferer by those Acts of the Mind, which spring from, and are pleasing to its opposite; for as Corruption and Grace are contrary Principles in the same Subject, whatever serves the Interest of the one, prejudices the other. If, therefore, we are not careful to deny the Flesh those Gratifications, which it is continually reeking after, we shall diminish the Vigour of the Spirit, and greatly interrupt its Exercise. Hence, we must, I think, be convinced of the Necessity of observing the Nature and Tendency of our Thoughts, whereby we may, without much Difficulty, form a true Judgment of their Origin; from what Spring of Action, in us, they take their Rise, whether from the Flesh, or from the Spirit. All vain Imaginations, all irregular Thoughts, all corrupt Motions of the Will and Affections, arise from the Flesh. Now, if we really design and desire an Improvement in Grace and Holiness, we must be observant of the Acts of our Souls, and oppose those which are vain and carnal; Negligence in this Matter, will issue in unspeakable Advantage to the Flesh, and necessarily end in great Damage to our spiritual Part, which it is our Wisdom, Interest, and Duty, to be solicitously careful of, that we no way prejudice it. The noxious Weeds of Corruption in our Hearts, cannot be nourished without Injury to the precious Seed of true Grace. Worldly, selfish, ambitious, and covetous Thoughts, when countenanced and cherished in the Mind, greatly hinder the Exercise of Grace, and assuredly prevent its Growth. There is great Reason to fear, that many, who go on in a Round of religious Duties, are not able to say, that they are much spiritual in those Duties, thro' the abounding of such kind of Thoughts in their Hearts; and yet there religious Performances give them Satisfaction at least, if they are not with them the Occasion of Self-Admiration and Applause. We shall never arrive to any Eminency in Holiness, without much Self-Denial, and a strict Watch kept upon Lust, which hath numberless Ways of exerting itself, and a constant Opposition to it, in What Manner soever it acts its Part in us.

2. We must make it our Scope and Aim, in religious Exercises, to act our Graces, if we would improve in Holiness: Attendance to them is a necessary Branch of our Duty, and the Neglect of that Attendance is inexcusable; but a bare external Performance of those Exercises, will be of no Efficacy towards our Improvement in Grace. As there is no greater Degree of Holiness in our

religious Services, than what consists in the Actings of the spiritual Principle in our Souls; so all our Advancement in Holiness in those Services, is from the Exercise of this holy Principle. Unless, therefore, we aim at performing Spiritual Duties, in a spiritual Manner, our Expectations of gaining Advantage to our spiritual Part thereby, must be disappointed, because we have no Ground for such Expectations.

3. We ought to desire the Sincere Milk of the Word. The Grace of the Gospel alone is suited to feed and nourish our heavenly Part. The Doctrine of the Law acquaints us what Holiness is; but it is only the Grace of the Gospel which disposes us to the Practice of it. Let us not flatter ourselves with a Hope of increasing the Vigour of the gracious Principle in us, by any other Doctrine, than that of free Grace; for if we do, we shall certainly meet with a Disappointment. Because the Doctrine of Grace is that Food which God has provided and appointed for the Support and Nourishment of the Principle of Grace, and no other than what infinite Wisdom has provided for that Purpose, will ever, in the least Degree, {#let some suggest what they please} serve to that important End. Real Holiness, and the Practice of true Religion, by sinful Men, can only be promoted by those Principles which are peculiar to the Gospel; the Reason is, that Holiness, and that Religion, is no other than the Exercise of Grace in the Hearts of Believers. the Strength and Vigour of which wholly arises from that Nourishment it receives, by digesting the glorious Truths of the Gospel. Evangelical Obedience, than which no other deserves the Name of Holiness, nor is the Thing, can only be promoted by Evangelical Doctrines. Indeed, a Disposition to a merely moral Obedience may be excited by Discourses of Morality and Virtue; but that is not Holiness, or a Meetness for future Blessedness, whereof I am to treat in the last Place.

Fourthly, Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord .

Two Things must be attended unto, in this Branch of the subject, viz. the Sight of God, and, that no Man who is not the Subject of Holiness, shall have this happy Vision of him. In discoursing on the former, I would shew, what are the Properties of this View, and then the Objects, which are beheld with a Joy to us, at present inconceivable.

1. I begin with the Properties of this Vision of God . And they are such as must be exceedingly delightful to every one who truly desires to enjoy it. For,

[1.] It will be immediate, clear, and full. Here the Saints sometimes have spiritual Views of God by Faith, which fill them with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory: But these Prospects are far inferior to that View they will have of God in the heavenly State. They are attended with a double Disadvantage, at present, which renders it impossible to have the same View of God now, that they will enjoy hereafter. So long as they are in this State, they will be Subjects of Darkness, which incapacitates them to discern the Glory of heavenly Objects in a full and perfect Manner. They are Subjects of the Light of Grace: For, God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into their Hearts, to give them the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory in the Person of Christ {2 Corinthians 4:6}. But, then, they are also Subjects of Darkness, and, therefore, must be incapable of taking a complete View of spiritual Things. Besides, they only discern those Objects thro' a Medium at present. Now we see thro' Glass darkly. It is not an immediate View of those glorious Objects we now enjoy, but a Representation of them in the Glass of the Word: And this Representation of them is below their true Nature, for Language cannot fully express it. The Beauty and Glory of those bright Objects, Words can give us but an imperfect Image of. Since, in

this State, we are attended with this double Disadvantage, our Prospects of heavenly Things, must be far inferior to that View we shall have of them in the blessed World When we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. And, if the present imperfect View fills our Minds with inexpressible Delight, what Joy! what Pleasure! what Complacency must possess our Souls, when we shall have an immediate, clear, and full View of those inconceivably glorious Objects!

[2.] The Saints will enjoy an uninterrupted View of God hereafter. Their Prospects of him by Faith, in this State, are often interrupted by Unbelief, and numerous other Causes: But no Interruptions will take place in their future Views of their heavenly Father, thro' the Interposition of any Clouds. No Shades of Darkness will ever pass over them in the World above, which is all Light and Glory; nor will their Minds at all be diverted from beholding God and a dear Redeemer, by a Presentation of any other Objects, which now too frequently is the Case. This Consideration, added to the former, gives us a most delightful Idea of the heavenly State. I subjoin,

[3.] This Prospect will be endless. That State of Happiness is permanent, and will continue forever. Here we have no continuing City; but we seek one to come, a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. The Saints will ever be with the Lord, in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore. As their Existence will be eternal, so their Views of God will be without a Period. As no Change can possibly happen in the Nature of that blissful State, so it shall never have an End. If we consider the infinitely glorious Nature of the Objects seen; if we consider the Properties of this heavenly Vision, viz. that it is clear and full, that it is uninterrupted, and without End; surely we must conclude, that this State is most desirable, and perfectly blessed.

2. This is a Vision, or Sight of God.

[1.] We shall distinctly discern what each Person in the adorable Trinity hath acted, in order to our eternal Salvation and Happiness.

[1.] The kind Part the divine Father hath acted in our Favour. Our Election to everlasting Life, was his gracious Act. He chose us in Christ before the Foundation of the World; and this Choice of us, was unto perfect Holiness. The Contrivance of the Way of our Recovery from that Ruin brought on us by Sin, is his. He appointed Christ to be our Mediator, Head, and Surety, and decreed his taking upon him our Obligation to the Law. It was his sovereign Purpose, that he should bear our Guilt, and suffer that Penalty to which it rendered our Persons obnoxious, according to the just Constitution in the Law, and, thereby, satisfy its equitable Demands, and fully maintain the Rights of Justice, to whose terrible Resentment our Crimes exposed us. He gave all the invaluable Treasures of Grace and Glory into the Hand of Christ for us; and on the Foundation of his Atonement, he dispenses the Blessings of Grace to us in Time, and will communicate to us the Blessings of Glory in Eternity. He will give Grace and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from us {Psalms 84:11}. Since he spared not his own Son, age delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things? If the imperfect Views we have at present of the stupendous Acts of the Father in our Favour, yield us inexpressible Pleasure, what transcendent Delight will be produced in our Minds, by the future Prospect of them?

[2.] We shall forever have in View the compassionate Part, which the eternal Son hath performed in our Favour. His undertaking for us, in the eternal Covenant transacted between the Father and

himself, and the Holy Spirit. His Assumption of our Nature, in the Fulness of Time, coming under the Law to redeem us from it, agreeably to the fore-reign Purpose of the Father, and his own free Engagement. His Susception of our Guilt, and voluntary Submission to the Father's Pleasure, in making his Soul an Offering for our Sins, whereby he expiated our Guilt, made Peace for us, and secured our Persons from that direful Vengeance, which we, in Consequence of our Sins, were liable unto. Besides, he brought in for us an everlasting Righteousness, which justifies our Persons, and gives us an unalienable Right to eternal Life. And now he is in Heaven, it is his continual Employ to make Intercession for us, as a sympathizing and compassionate High Priest, under all our Difficulties, Temptations, and Sorrows, in this State of Imperfection, and Snares and Dangers. The imperfect View we have of these Things now, affords us the highest Pleasure; the clear, distinct, and endless Prospect of them hereafter, therefore, must possess our Souls with a Delight, that far surpasses our present Comprehension. For, since ineffable Joy arises from those low and imperfect Views of heavenly Objects, which this State admits of; certainly unknown and inconceivable Delight will result from the clear and perfect, and uninterrupted Prospects of those Objects, in the happy World above.

[3.] We shall eternally behold what a gracious Part the blessed Spirit acts in our Favour, who inspires us with spiritual Life, when we are dead in Trespasses and Sins; infuses heavenly Light into our Souls, which are naturally Darkness; operates on us in a Way of spiritual Conviction; gives us a Sense of the Evil of Sin; shews us the exceeding Sinfulness of our Nature; presents us with a View of our inevitable Misery, as in ourselves considered; discovers to us the Ability and Suitableness of Christ, as a Saviour; encourages and assists us to make a humble Application to him for Life and Salvation; applies his Blood to our Souls, to ease us of the pressing Load of our Guilt, and heal the Wounds it gives us; shews us the Glory of his Righteousness, and enables us to lay hold on it, and embrace it, as the Matter of our Acceptance with God, our righteous Judge; open, to our View the Secrets of the Almighty, relating to the stupendous Design of our Recovery, and powerfully applies to us the precious Promises of his Word, whereby we are encouraged to hope in him, and draw near to him, as our gracious Covenant-Father, and in this Character to ark of him all that is needful to our Support, Guidance, and Consolation: He bears with all our Provocations, heals all our Backslidings, reduces our Souls when we go astray, revives the good Work under its Decays, and restores to us the Joy of God's Salvation, and establishes us afresh in the Ways of Holiness and Peace, and will continue so to do, until we arrive safe to the heavenly World, where we shall see the Wonders of his Love, in that perspicuous Manner the present State admits not of.

[2.] We shall enjoy a constant View of the divine Perfections, as they are exercised and displayed in our eternal Salvation. Everlasting, free and sovereign Love gave Rise to the Design, and runs thro' every Part of it: That is the Fountain from which all our Salvation, and the whole of our Happiness spring. Infinite Wisdom concerted the fit Methods of our Recovery, fate for us, and glorious to God. Who could ever have thought that Sin might be pardoned, and yet punished; that the Sinner might be saved, and yet Justice executed? This Contrivance is the highest Effect of the Wisdom of God, how much soever an ignorant and proud Generation of Men despise it as Folly. It is the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom, which he ordained before the World to our Glory. Besides, in this Affair, the infinite Rectitude and Righteousness of God most evidently appear. His Love to our Persons is not more conspicuous, than his just Abhorrence of, and

Indignation against our Sins, in this Method he has took to pardon and save us. He appears to be just in justifying those who believe in Jesus, on the glorious Foundation of his Atonement and Satisfaction. This is saving us in a Way becoming himself; It became him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect thro' Sufferings. Again, the Truth and Faithfulness of God, shine most eminently in the Accomplishment of his Promises, relating to our everlasting Salvation and Happiness; and his absolute Immutability, on which our Security rests, is fully manifested. Much of the Glory of Heaven will consist in clear, distinct, and endless Views of the infinitely glorious Perfections of God, as exercised in our Redemption, and as they shine thro' the Person of the Mediator.

[3.] We shall always behold the Glory of Christ our dear Redeemer. He who was crowned with Thorns for our Sakes, we shall have the Satisfaction of viewing seated on a Throne of Majesty, and crowned with Glory, and surrounded with the whole Number of the Elect of God, and Myriads of holy Angels, all uniting in joyful Songs of Praise to him for his redeeming Love to us miserable and worthless Creatures. For this he prays, and this he demands of the Father for us, which he has a Right to do; Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me.

[4.] We shall have a constant and full Perception of the Love of each divine Person to us, and of the infinite Delight Father, Son, and Spirit will eternally take in our complete Felicity. It is Matter of Joy to the divine Persons to do us Good now, and when the Design of our Salvation shall be completed, our Souls will have a ravishing Sense of that Pleasure, which arises to them from the Accomplishment of that gracious Design. The divine Persons rejoice over us to do us Good, as we are the Objects of their infinite Affection and Love. The Design of our Salvation was infinitely pleasing to the Father, Son, and Spirit; and the Accomplishment of that Design will be Matter of eternal Delight unto each of them. When we have once arrived to the heavenly World, we shall enjoy a perfect and constant Sense of that Pleasure which God takes in our Felicity, and that Sense must be productive of a most exquisite Joy. The Knowledge which the Saints now have of heavenly Things, they shall never lose. All Gifts and Acquirements, on account of which Men are very apt to value themselves, will cease in that State, as there will be no need of their Exercise; but our spiritual Knowledge of spiritual Things shall then be fully ripened and brought to Perfection; We know in Part, and prophecy in Part, when that which is perfect is come, that which is in Part shall be done away. The Objects are the same we now see by Faith, that we shall have an immediate, clear, full, and endless Prospect of in the World above; Glory, therefore, is Grace in its full Maturity, or our spiritual Knowledge of spiritual Things grown up to its intended Perfection. A most pleasing Thought this, and it is what may very justly be considered as a most persuasive Motive, diligently to study those sacred Truths. Who that considers this, and is acquainted with the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ, and of God, in and thro' him, wilt not be excited to use the utmost Diligence to increase and enlarge his Acquaintance with those sublime and heavenly Truths? If we really desire to possess future Glory, surely it must be a most eligible Thing, in our Esteem, to enjoy as much as we can, of that Satisfaction and Delight, which arise from a spiritual Perception of the Nature of those Objects, in the perfect Knowledge of which, will consist our complete Felicity, when with us Time shall have an End. Unless somewhat of this Kind is found in us, I know not of any Evidence we can possibly have of a Right unto, or of a Meetness in us for the Enjoyment of the blissful Vision of God. For, if we have no Inclination to be separate from the

World, and all Things in it, in our Thoughts, Desires, and Affections, whilst here we dwell, what solid Foundation can we be supposed to have, to support a Hope, that the heavenly State is really desirable to us? None at all, as I think. If the First-Fruits are not valued and fought after, why should it be thought, that reaping the plentiful Harvest is really desired? Are we at great Pains to acquire Knowledge which will vanish, as useless, at Death, and shall we not labour to add to that Knowledge, which will never be lost; but ripen into Glory, when our Souls shall be dislodged of our mortal Bodies. And, if it be so, our Approbation of, and Delight in those Things, may be allowed as a good Evidence of our Meetness for the Enjoyment of this glorious State. On the other Hand, can we think, that those Persons are in the Way to Heaven, or desire to enjoy it, who discern no Excellency and Glory in there Things; but flight and despise them, as mere Foolishness? No surely; it is not Heaven they desire the Enjoyment of, but a mistaken Image which they have framed to themselves of that glorious State. An unregenerate Person neither knows what Heaven is, nor can desire it. That alone desires the Enjoyment of Heavenly Glory, which is a true Preparation for it, and is the real Commencement of it in the Soul, viz. that gracious, holy, and spiritual Principle which is implanted in a Person, at the Time of Regeneration, and is Regeneration itself. This leads me to observe, Lastly, That no Man, without Holiness, shall have this happy Sight of God. No Man whatever, let him be what he may, as to Descent, Education, State Gifts, Usefulness to others, whether in the Civil or Religious Life, unless he partakes of Holiness in this, he shall not participate of Happiness in the next. As God designed all to become Subjects of Holiness in this World, whom he appointed to eternal Salvation; so holy Persons only are capable of that Glory, which consists in the Vision of him, Communion with him, and in a constant Adoration of him, which is maintained in the Mind by a Perception of his infinitely glorious Excellencies and Perfections; and, consequently, no Man, without Holiness, shall ever see the Lord. Some, it may be, will be ready to fear, from the Consideration of what has been observed concerning the Nature of real Holiness, that they are not the subjects of it, and may say, if that Spirituality enters into the Nature of true Holiness, which you have expressed, I am afraid that, for my Part, I am a Stranger to it; I find, to my Sorrow, so much of the contrary of it in me. To such I would observe, that every Man in this World, who is the Subject of Holiness, he also is the Subject of Sin: Tho' every Man that is the Subject of Sin, is not the Subject: of Holiness; every one here, who is a subject of Holiness, is likewise a Subject of Sin: Do not, therefore, think, because you have Sin, that you have no Holiness. What is it in you, that prays, watches, and strives against Sin, as Sin? Is it the Flesh? No, that will never become an Opposer of itself. What is it in you that approves of the Law, as holy, just, and good? Is it corrupt Nature? No; that is not subject to the Law, of God, nor ever will be; these are Acts proper to a Principle of Holiness and Grace. The Flesh will still serve the Law of Sin, and you will be deceived if you think otherwise, for it is only the spiritual Part of a Believer that serves the Law of God. Hence, the Apostle resolves the contrary Actings of his Heart, into these two contrary Springs of Action in himself; Flesh and Spirit, or Corruption and Grace: So then with my Mind, I myself serve the Law of God; but with the Flesh the Law of Sin. The Being of Corruption in the Mind as an active Principle, engaged in the Service of the Law of Sin, is not to be considered as an Evidence, that there is not present in the Soul, a holy Principle, which is disposed unto, and engaged in the Service of the divine Law. It is the Dominion of Sin that is such an Evidence, and not the Presence of it, as an active Principle, always ready to exert itself in an Opposition to what is truly good, or of a spiritual Nature, and inclined to act what is evil. Regeneration neither takes away the Being of Sin, nor deprives it of a Power to act in

Opposition to what is holy: And as Sin in the Regenerate does exert itself in Opposition to that which is holy, so it is a Disposition to do what is sinful. A Principle of Grace really takes away the Reign of Sin, but leaves it existent in the Mind, and changes not its Nature, it still is, and will always continue to be what it was; Conviction doth not that: The Flesh, as has been observed, how much soever it is checked by Conviction, as to the Manner of exerting itself, it preserves its Rule entire: Tho' the Form of its Government is altered, it still maintains its Dominion in the Unregenerate. If, therefore, there is any Thing at all of this Spirituality and Subjection to the Law', in you, and Approbation of heavenly Things themselves, there is a Principle of Holiness in your Hearts, and you have proper Foundation for a holy Confidence, that he who hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Christ.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IF that assistance which is necessary to finishing of a Work that I have under my Hand, shall be graciously afforded, and the Design meet with Encouragement, I shall present the Reader with a Treatise on various Subjects, viz On the original Purity of human Nature. On its present Depravity Of the Defects which attended the Doctrine of Morality, as taught by Philosophers and Poets. Of Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification. The Life of Faith. Growth of Grace. The Difference between real Conversion. and the Semblance of it. Of Declension in the Power of Religion; its Causes, and the Ways and Means of a happy Revival under Decays of Grace. Of the Temptations of the present Age, and Cautions against them. Of Communion with Gad in the Course of that Obedience we are required to yield to him, etc. Wherein I shall endeavour to give Resolutions to difficult Cases of Conscience, as they occur on the various Subjects treated of.

S. The Opposition of Flesh and Spirit In Believers

The Opposition of Flesh and Spirit In

Believers,

Considered by John Brine {London: George Keith, 1761} THE OPPOSITION OF FLESH AND SPIRIT IN BELIEVERS, CONSIDERED IN A SERMON, PREACHED FEBRUARY THE 8TH, 1761.

Published at the Request of some who heard it.

Printed for GEORGE KEITH, in Gracechurch-street: And Sold by JOHN EYNON, Printseller, the Corner of Castle-Alley, by the Royal- Exchange, London 1761.

[Price Sixpence.] {Galatians 5:17} For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the Things that ye would.

IN this Context the Apostle cautions the Saints to whom he writes, against those Evils, which they ought to a void; and exhorts them to practise those Duties, which were incumbent on them. In the Verse next preceding the Words now read, he says, If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the Lust of the Flesh; that is, if ye act under the Direction and Influence of the holy Spirit, ye will not gratify the Desires of the Flesh.

In the Text, the following things are to be considered,

- I. The Flesh and spirit.
- II. The Lusting of the Flesh against the Spirit, and the Lusting of the Spirit against the Flesh.
- III. The Contrariety of the one to the other.
- IV. The Conclusion, or Inference arising from thence, viz. Believers cannot do the Things that they would.

I. Let us take into Consideration the Flesh and the Spirit.

1. The Flesh. Some who approve not of the Representation which the Scripture gives of the Depravity Nature, and which Believers find to be true by Experience, interpret the Flesh of our inferior sensitive Part, in Distinction from our superior intellectual Part. They think, that sensual Appetite is meant by it, and not our reasonable Part. But this Interpretation is not to be admitted, because our whole Nature is the Subject of Corruption and moral Impurity. Not only our inferior, but also our superior Part. Reason in us is depraved, as Appetite in us is vitiated. And such Works are attributed by the Apostle to the Flesh, which evidently respect our intellectual and superior Part, viz. Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heretics, Envyings. And therefore the Flesh designs moral Evil, which discovers itself in the Actings of our intellectual, as well as of our sensitive Part. Our Mind, i.e. our reasonable Nature, as carnal, is

Enmity against God, and is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be. The Flesh is a corrupt Principle and Spring of Action, which is seated in all our Powers. In this Sense it is to be understood in these Words of our Lord, That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh: that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit { John 3:6}: and this is the Import of it, in what the Apostle expresses concerning himself; In me, that is in my Flesh, dwelleth no good Thing. So then with the Mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the Flesh the Law of Sin { Romans 7:18; Romans 7:25}. From this impure Fountain proceed all the sinful Actings, both of our superior and inferior Part. For our rational, as well as our sensitive Part, is the Subject of it.

2. We are to consider what is meant by the Spirit. Some think that the holy Spirit is intended, who dwells in the Saints. It is certain, that he opposes the Flesh in them. If he is designed, lusting against the Flesh, attributed to him, is to be understood in the same Sense as making Intercession in Believers is, which is ascribed to him: The Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered. He maketh Intercession for the Saints according to the Will of God { Romans 8:27-28}. Making Intercession is not the Act of the Spirit; at is the Act of the Saints under his Influence, as the Spirit of Grace and Supplications, helping their Infirmities in Prayer to GOD. And thus lusting against the Flesh, is not the Act of the Person of the Spirit; for it is the proper Act of the Saints, under his gracious and effectual Influence. As the Person of the Spirit does not pray in Believers, but they themselves, pray under his Direction and Guidance; so the Person of the Spirit does not lust against the Flesh in them, but they themselves lust against it under his powerful Excitation. The Act is properly theirs, and not his, otherwise than influentially, as the efficient Cause thereof. I rather think, that Spirit designs a holy Principle of Action in the Saints, which is the proper Opposite of the Flesh in them. As the Flesh undoubtedly means an impure Fountain, from which spring evil Acts, it seems to me best to understand by the Spirit its contrary, in the Saints, which is a pure Fountain of good Acts. It is the Produce of the holy Spirit; That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. The Wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. As it as his Production in the Soul, its Nature must be spiritual, pure, and holy; and such are all the Acts which arise from it;. The Flesh, in Believers, is a Source of evil Actions, and the Spirit in them, is a Spring of good Actions.

II. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh; the one opposes the other.

1. The Flesh lusteth against, or opposes, the Spirit, in Thought, Volition, and in the Actings of the Affections towards holy Objects.

{1.} The Flesh opposes the Spirit, in Thought. The Spirit is an habitual Disposition in the Mind of a Believer, to spiritual Thoughts; according to that their Desire is this, That the Words of their Mouth, and the Meditation of their Heart, may be acceptable in the Sight of the Lord, their Strength. and their Redeemer { Psalms 19:14}. And sometimes their Meditations on GOD are sweet; their Thoughts of him are precious to them; they think of his Loving-kindness with Joy and Delight; contemplate its Nature with holy Admiration; view with Wonder and Astonishment the glorious Designs which were eternally formed in the divine Mind, about such unworthy Creatures as they know themselves to be; and the infinitely wise Methods which were fixed on for the Accomplishment of those Designs.

The. spiritual Part takes a peculiar Pleasure in thinking of JESUS CHRIST; the Constitution of his Person, who is GOD and Man ineffably united; and therefore is fit to act in the Capacity of Mediator between GOD the Father, and the Church. His Love they meditate upon with the highest Satisfaction, in its Freedom, Greatness, and Perpetuity; and they exercise their Thoughts with Joy and Delight on what He hath done and suffered, in order to save them; the Greatness and Variety of the Benefits which they receive from Him, are the Matter of their most pleasing Contemplations, viz. Pardon, Peace, Acceptation with GOD, Liberty of Access to Him, and Supplies of Grace to maintain and carry on the good Work which is begun in them. Those Things which engage the constant Attention of holy Angels, and which they earnestly desire to look into, the Saints, at some Times, are much conversant about; The Grace of God, the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory which followed. And they esteem these Thoughts the best which they ever have, or possibly can have, while they are in this World; and they give it in Charge to their Souls, to be much employed in serious and fixed Meditations on those Things. But, alas! their Thoughts of this kind are very far from being agreeable to the Flesh in them; that is uneasy and restless when the Mind is thus engaged in holy Contemplations. For, as the Spirit in Believers disapproves of vain and unholy Thoughts, so the Flesh in them dislikes holy and spiritual Thoughts, and seeks to eject them out of the Soul; which it too often, effects, by the vain Imagination presenting to View some trifling Object, which through a Want of Caution in the Mind, diverts and turns it off from a continued Attention unto those glorious Things which before it had in Prospect: Thus a melancholy Change takes place in the Frame of a Believer; his spiritual Meditations are marred, to his Surprise, and before he is aware of it; his holy, spiritual Thoughts are succeeded by carnal and vain Thoughts. Thus the Flesh prevails against the Spirit; and that heavenly Joy which the Soul was filled with, while employed in holy Meditation, now subsides and vanishes for the present; that pleasing Sight which the Saint had of CHRIST, the beloved of his Soul, is gone; Darkness overspreads his Mind, in consequence of which he either censures himself for his Folly, in yielding to the Solicitations of his carnal Part, whereby so sad a Change hath taken Place in the Frame of his Soul, or he sinks into Indifferency through the Prevalence of Corruption, and is in a great Measure insensible of, and unaffected with the Loss he hath sustained; a Train of vain Thoughts crowd in and take Possession of the Soul, and prevent the Mind considering duly what a foolish Part it hath acted, to its unspeakable Prejudice; and therefore it falls into a Lethargy, and becomes stupid. It is so busy an acting according to the Dictates of the Flesh, that it is not at Leisure to hearken to the Remonstrances which the Spirit makes against it; they are not heard nor attended to, by reason of that great Advantage which the Flesh hath gained; and thus it may be even with the best.

{2.} The Flesh lusts against, or opposes, Spirit, in Volition. The Will of a Believer, as sanctified, is habitually inclined to Holiness; his Mind discerns that it is most eligible, because of its Excellency, and his Will, upon that Discernment, exerts itself in an actual Choice of it. But this Choice is not made with the whole Will, because it is not wholly sanctified, but in Part only; and therefore the Will, at no Time, and in no Instance, is entirely engaged in a Desire and Pursuit after Holiness. For there is in the Will a fixed Resistance and Opposition unto what is good; Flesh is seated in the Will as well as Spirit, by reason of which the Spirit hath not, nor can have, a complete Command thereof; it is partly under the Direction of the one, and partly under the Direction of the other. The Flesh dislikes and is Enmity against Holiness, and it endeavours to repress and expel holy Desires which arise from the Spirit. It is not only ever present, and so can immediately exert itself in an Opposition to those holy Volitions which spring up in the Will, as it acts under the Direction of the

Spirit; but it is present as a Law, the Believer finds a Law, that when he would do Good, Evil is present with him. It is coercive, and hath a commanding Force, which too often prevails against the Spirit; hence the holy, spiritual Desires of the Believer abate in their Fervency, and sometimes, for the present, are almost quenched in his Soul. When his Will is thus captivated by the Flesh, Desires of a quite different Nature from those which sprung up in it before, arise therein, and it chooses what is vain and foolish, unto the Gratification of the Flesh, which now hath obtained its End, without which it would not be easy, for it never is, while the Soul acts in a holy and spiritual manner. The corrupt Part in the Saints fails not to check the Will in the Choice it makes of what is agreeable to the spiritual Part in them, out of that wretched Aversion which it hath to all that is good. It is not only true that the Flesh does not concur with the Spirit in those holy Breathings and Desires which arise from it in the Soul, but it constantly opposes them, and sometimes, with great Violence, and ceases not until it prevails, unto their Expulsion. And innumerable are its Wiles, by which it aims to give a Diversion to the Mind, and draw it off from its Attention to the heavenly Objects about which it is conversant. And if the Flesh prevails upon the Mind to abate of Watchfulness against it, in its Assaults, it will be lure to improve the Advantage it hath gained. Quite different Objects it presents to the Mind, which through its Remissness as to its present Duty, strike it, and possess it of many unprofitable and vain Thoughts. Thus it becomes carnal in its Conceptions; which is followed by carnal Acts in the Will. For Vanity in the Mind, if Entertainment is given to it, will assuredly introduce Carnality in the Will. Spiritual Thoughts are Incentives to spiritual Desires; and carnal Thoughts, if not immediately expelled out of the Mind, will quench heavenly Desires, and give Rise unto such Volitions in the Will, as are agreeable to the Flesh; for the Acts of the Mind, and the Acts of the Will correspond in their Nature, and are of the same kind; if the Mind acts spiritually in its Thoughts, the Will acts spiritually in its Volitions; but on the contrary, if the Mind acts vainly in its Thoughts, the Will acts vainly in its Volitions; the Reason of which is, the Acts of our Will follow the Acts of our Mind.

{3.} The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, in the Actings of the Affections towards holy Objects. As the Mind discerns the Excellency and Glory of heavenly Things, and the Will makes Choice of them; so the Affections tend towards them according to the Spirit. For, the Mind is not only enlightened, and the Will sanctified, but also the Affections are spiritualized; in consequence of which, they are elevated above the fading, perishing Things of this World, embrace and adhere to Things which are above, where Christ sitteth, who is even at the right Hand of God. Invisible Glories, when beheld by Faith, powerfully attract the Affections, and produce the higher Satisfaction and Pleasure, which sanctified Persons, at any Time, experience. They afford a Joy that is unspeakable and full of Glory. Nothing can possibly give that sweet and delightful Entertainment to the Saints, which heavenly and unseen Objects do. Grace refines their Affections, and gives them a Relish for far nobler and purer Joys, than can arise from the most delectable Things of this World; they are all of them insipid to the spiritual Taste of the Saints; spiritual Things only are suited to the Nature of the Spirit in them. But the Flesh in Believers is so far from having Pleasure in them, that it is wholly averse to them, and its Aim is to draw off the Affections from them; it entirely disrelishes those heavenly Joys which result from Communion with GOD, and Prospects of his Glory in the Person of CHRIST; and it endeavours to deprive the Soul of that spiritual Pleasure it enjoys while it is conversant about divine Things, and too often it so far prevails, as not only to damp its spiritual Joys, but also to entice the Affections unto an Embrace of carnal Objects, whereby it obtains the End it sought after. Thus the Flesh lusteth

against, or opposes, the Spirit in the Saints; in Thought, Volition, and in the Actings of the Affections towards holy objects.

2. The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in Thought, Volition, and in the Acts of the Affections about carnal and evil Objects.

{1.} The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in Thought. The carnal Part in a Believer is a constant Source of vain Thoughts, according to that the Imagination of the Thought his Heart is only evil, and that continually. The Flesh is never quiet and easy but when it is employed in framing vain Imaginations, and therefore a Multitude of unprofitable and sinful Thoughts crowd in upon the Mind. It is egregious Folly in us to dissemble in this Matter, for GOD, who searches our Hearts, is perfectly acquainted with all the carnal Conceptions which our sinful Minds form; and if we are awake and capable of reflecting upon our internal Acts, we must be sensible that this is the Facet; and not an Exaggeration of our Vanity and Sinfulness, respecting our Thoughts. The Spirit in the Saints disapproves of, hates, and detests all those Thoughts, which are pleasing to the Flesh in them; it esteems them bold Intruders, and treats them as such; for it is wholly against giving them the least Countenance and Entertainment; that desires their Expulsion; and it endeavours to chase them out of the Mind, as Guests which are most unwelcome and disagreeable unto it; nor can it be easy with their Continuance. But let them be driven out of the Soul ever so often, they will return; because the Flesh, though used with the greatest Severity, and may be compelled to retreat for a short Time, yet it is not put out of Countenance; but with daring Boldness, and great Violence, it quickly re-advances, and assaults the Soul again; the Saints hate vain Thoughts, but they cannot possibly get rid of them.

{2.} The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in Volition. The Will, according to the Flesh, is inclined to Evil, and averse to Good; and as it acts under its Direction, it refuses the latter, and chooses the former. The Choice which the Flesh makes is agreeable to its Nature, that is sinful, and such is its Choice; unholy Volitions continually spring up in the Will, even of the most sanctified, by Reason it is the Subject of a carnal and corrupt Principle, which always disposes it to Vanity and Folly; for the Flesh is at all Times engaged in the Service of the Law of Sin. The Spirit in the Saints disapproves of that evil Choice, which the Flesh causes the Will to make, and solicits it to retract that Choice, and puts it upon making a quite contrary one. As the Flesh never concurs with the Spirit, but opposes it in the Choice of Holiness, so the Spirit never concurs with the Flesh in the Choice of Sin, but opposes it in that Choice. Hence, the Volitions of a Believer, at no Time, are wholly evil, nor wholly good; because the Will in them acts partly under the Direction of the Flesh, and partly under the Direction of the Spirit; both are active Principles in it, and each hath an Influence upon it; the Flesh moves it to Evil, and the Spirit excites it unto Holiness. Thus the Spirit, in Believers, lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in those evil Volitions which it causes to arise in their Will. Sometimes indeed its Opposition to the Flesh is very strong and powerful, even unto a Predominancy against it; and sometimes its Opposition is feeble, then the Flesh maintains its Ground, increases in its Strength, prevails against the Spirit, and keeps the Will fixed in that sinful Choice which it hath made, and that is followed with sad Effects in the Soul.

{3.} The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in the Actings of the Affections about vain and sinful Objects. The Affections, as carnal, do not in the least Degree tend towards heavenly Things, nor are they pleasing to them; holy Thoughts and spiritual Desires are so far from affording

Delight to our corrupt Passions, that they often tumultuously endeavour to stifle such Thoughts and Desires in our Souls; there is nothing so vain, unprofitable, and pernicious, but our depraved Affections will embrace and adhere unto, rather than what is sacred; for all their Joy and Delight are in Vanity and Folly; and our vicious Affections have a strong and powerful Influence on our Mind, and our Will, and prevail so far as to banish, for the present, holy Thoughts and heavenly Desires, unto the Gratification of the Flesh. The Spirit in Believers hath no Pleasure in what is agreeable to the Flesh; it dislikes those carnal Joys which that pursues, and is never easy without; and its Aim is, when the Affections are enticed and drawn away after vain Objects by the Flesh, to recall them wandering, and to direct them towards such Objects as are suitable to its own Nature; for the Spirit enjoys no Satisfaction and Pleasure, so long as the Flesh is gratified and entertained in its Dalliances with carnal Objects. Spiritual Things only are the Matter of the Saints Delight, so far as their Affections are spiritualized, and therefore it lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, when it seeks to entice and entangle the Affections in order to its Entertainment. And thus the Spirit counteracts and opposes the Flesh in Thought, Volition, and in the Actings of the Affections, about, or towards vain and unlawful Objects; which I am persuaded all Believers find to be true by Experience, tho' some may be more observant of it than others are.

I would here make two Observations before I pass on.

Observation 1. A Believer hath two Springs of Action in him, one is Evil, and the other Good; the Flesh is Evil, no good Thing dwells in it, nor can any Thing which is Good be educed out of it; no holy Thoughts, no heavenly Desires, nor spiritual Motions and Tendencies. The Spirit is Good, and is a Spring of holy Thoughts, pure Desires, and spiritual Motions and Tendencies.

Observation 2. The Flesh remains the same after Regeneration as it was before, no Alteration takes Place in its Nature for the better. Sin, which dwells in the Saints, is not less vile and sinful than it heretofore was; the old Man is not amended by the Creation of the new Man; I hope that none will mistake me on this Subject, I do not say, that the Heart is not made better, for that it certainly is, by the Implantation of a holy Principle in it; but what I say is this, that the Flesh, or in-dwelling Sin, is not made better; its Nature is still what it was, tho' deprived of its Dominion in the Soul; and therefore the Kind of its Actings is the same, notwithstanding the Presence of Grace; consequently the same sinful Thoughts, unholy Desires, and evil Tendencies, may, and too often do spring from it, which did before Regeneration; and this is matter of great Discouragement unto many holy and humble Persons, who upon their Conversion expected to find it much otherwise; and, therefore, are greatly disappointed.

III. The Contrariety of the one to the other is to be considered.

1. They are contrary in their Nature. The Flesh is contrary to the Spirit, that is the Consequence of our Apostasy from GOD, it followed upon our Breach of the Law of our Maker, and as it is the Fruit of Sin, it must be absolutely evil in its Nature, no Good can be in it; the Flesh is not only sinful, but there is an exceeding Sinfulness in it, and therefore it must be concluded that it is the direct Opposite of the Spirit; for, the Spirit is the Production of the holy Spirit of GOD, He is the efficient Cause thereof, it is born of him, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; in its kind, it is a good and a perfect Gift, which cometh down from above, so that it is the very Reverse of the Flesh. The Difference between the Flesh, and the Spirit is not this, That the Flesh is less good than the Spirit, and the Spirit is less evil than the Flesh; but this, the former is wholly evil, and the latter is wholly

good, and therefore they are contrary the one to the other, as the Apostle asserts and they are altogether so, not partially, there is no Goodness in the Flesh, nor is there the least Evil in the Spirit; the Flesh, in its Nature, is entirely Evil; and the Spirit, in its Nature, is entirely Good.

2. The Flesh and the Spirit are contrary in their Actings. Each acts agreeable to its own Nature; the Flesh being wholly Evil in its Nature, all its Acts are entirely so; not partly Evil and partly Good, but they are altogether evil and sinful: And the Spirit being in Its Nature good and holy, all those Acts which spring from it, are spiritual and holy. Not that the Souls of Believers, at any Time, or in any Instance, are wholly Evil or wholly Good in acting, for at is in Part only that they are so. The Reason of which is this, they act partly under the Direction of the Flesh, and partly under the Direction of the Spirit, in whatever they do. These contrary Springs of Action, being always resident in them, they are ever influenced by each; hence their Acts are mixed, partly Evil and partly Good. This is not to be understood that Actions which are materially Evil, have any Degree of Goodness an them; or that Actions which are materially Good, have any Degree of Evil in them; but it is to be taken thus, That the Minds of Believers are not wholly Good in holy Actions, by Reason of the Opposition of the Flesh in them to those Actions; nor are they wholly Evil in sinful Actions, by Reason of that Opposition which the Spirit in them makes to those Actions; as the Flesh and the Spirit are directly contrary in their Nature, they certainly are so in acting; the Flesh concurs not with the Spirit in its Acts, nor does the Spirit concur with the Flesh in its Acts; a Believer, with his Mind serves the law of God, but with his Flesh he serves the Law of Sin.

IV. The Conclusion, or Inference arising from thence is this, viz. Believers cannot do the Things that they would.

1. With Respect to Good. The Aim and Desire of a Saint, according to the Spirit, is to be all Conformity to the holy Law of GOD; but the continual Presence of the Flesh renders it impossible, even when that acts most vigorously in him; for the Flesh fails not to lust against, and oppose it. Sometimes a Believer retires, and proposes to exercise himself in Reading, serious Meditation and Prayer, and therein to enjoy delightful Communion with GOD and a dear Redeemer. But, alas! the Flesh in him bestirs itself, and rises up with Violence against the Spirit in this holy Design, which it hath formed in the Mind; whereupon a sad Disappointment ensues, Confusion and Distraction take place in his Thoughts, his spiritual Desires abate in their Fervency, and his Affections rove, and are ready to embrace any vain Object, which the carnal Imagination presents unto them; whereby he is prevented acting in that holy and spiritual manner which he intended and desired; through the present Prevalency of the Flesh, in him, against the Spirit, he immediately becomes indisposed to those holy Exercises which it was his Intention and Desire to be delightfully employed in; and thus, I am persuaded, it may at some Times be, even with the best, for the Law of Sin, which is in the Members, and wars against the Law of the Mind, in some Instances, there is Reason to think, gains Advantage over the spiritual Part, in all the Saints.

2. Believers cannot do that which they would with Regard to Evil. The Flesh in them, being entirely sinful in its Nature, all its Projects and Contrivances are so; it always aims at the utmost Gratification of its corrupt Desires, and is for bringing the whole Soul in Subjection to itself, the Mind, the Will, and the Affections; it endeavours to possess the Mind of vain Thoughts, it solicits the Will to chuse what is unprofitable and evil, and it labours to entice and entangle the Affections, to place and keep them fixed on carnal Objects; and many Times, thro' its Violence, or its Artifice

and Cunning, it prevails very far; at which, the Spirit in Believers is alarmed, and rises up in Opposition unto this Prevalency of the Flesh, for that cannot bear with it. The spiritual Part reproves the Mind for its Inattention to the Design of the Flesh, whereby vain Thoughts got Possession of it; the Will for its Carnality, by Means whereof evil Volitions sprung up in it; the Affections for their Folly in wandering at the Instigation of the Flesh; and thus while that is busily employed in acting its vile Part, the Spirit remonstrates against it, checks and controls it, and in a great Measure, for the present, prevents it from making farther Progress in the Soul. And, therefore, as Believers cannot do the Things that they would, according to the Spirit, by Reason of the Opposition of the Flesh; so they cannot do the Things that they would, according to the Flesh, because of the Opposition of the Spirit; and thus it will be With them, so long as they continue in this imperfect State.

I shall close the Discourse with some Observations.

Observation 1. Evil is in the whole Mind, or our whole intellectual Nature is the Subject of Sin. No Faculty in us is free from that moral Contagion, in the Understanding it is Darkness, or an Incapacity to form a true Judgment of spiritual Things; in the Will it is a Disinclination to what is holy, and a constant, fixed Propensity to what is vain and sinful; in the Affections it is a Dislike of what is spiritual, and Pleasure in what is carnal; and thus it is, even in all regenerate Persons. For Regeneration effects no Change for the better in the Nature of the Flesh, that still remains what it was, only it hath lost its Dominion by the Production of its contrary in the Soul, which reigns in Opposition to it; but that notwithstanding, it is resident as an active Principle in all the Powers of the Mind, and they are under its Influence.

Observation 2. Good is in the whole Heart of a regenerate Person. Every Faculty is the Subject of Grace; there is Light in the Understanding, which is an Ability to discern spiritual Things in their Excellency and Glory; Holiness is seated in the Will, by which it is disposed to avoid Evil, and inclined to the Choice of what is Good; the Affections are spiritualized, in Consequence whereof Sin becomes the Object of their Aversion, and Holiness of their Pleasure and Delight. Thus Evil and Good are in the whole Soul of a regenerate Man.

Observation 3. The Heart of a Believer is not wholly Evil, nor wholly Good, it is each in Part; and therefore he differs from Angels, the Spirits of just Men made perfect, from Devils, and from unregenerate Men. Angels are all Purity and Perfection, absolutely free from Evil, and are indefective in their Acts of Obedience to the divine Will. The Spirits of just Men departed have no Impurity attending them, those corrupt Habits which they were the Subjects of in this State, are entirely eradicated, and they are made perfectly like unto JESUS CHRIST; they are so holy as to be without all Cause of Blame before God in Love. Devils are altogether sinful, they have not the least Degree of Holiness in them; and unregenerate Men are Flesh only, they have nothing of Spirituality in them, their Hearts are entirely carnal and sinful. Believers are the Subjects of Flesh and Spirit, of Sin and Holiness, and therefore their Hearts are neither wholly Evil nor wholly Good, but are both in Part, because contrary jarring Springs of Action are feared in their whole Souls, which have a contrary Influence on the Mind, the Will, and the Affections; so that they do not really act under the Direction either of the Flesh or the Spirit, which are in them, but partly under the Direction of the one, and partly under the Direction of the other; consequently they are neither wholly Evil, nor wholly Good, but each in Part, and have such a Combat within themselves,

between Flesh and Spirit, as no others have.

Observation 4. There is in Believers a Principle of Holiness, by which I understand a Capacity and Disposition in the Mind of acting in a holy, spiritual manner. In the Understanding it is a spiritual, visive Ability to discern heavenly Things, and therefore it is Light subjective, which enables him, in whom it is, to perceive the true Nature of Light objective, legal, and evangelical. This Principle in the Will, is a Disposition and Power to chuse what is holy, and to refuse what is evil. In the Affections, it is Spirituality, and a Suitableness to the Nature of divine Things, whereby they are caused to tend towards, and take Pleasure in them. This is what is meant by the Heart of Flesh, the Opposite of the Heart of Stone; the new Heart, the new Spirit; the new Man, which is the Contrary of the old Man; it is the Law of the Mind, against which the Law in the Members wars; it is the Mind which serves the Law of God, the direct Opposite of the Flesh, which serves the Law of Sin. Hence it is clear, that there are in Believers two contrary Principles, or Springs of Action, one is good, and the other is evil; one is holy, and the other is sinful; and the Acts of the one are contrary to the Acts of the other. With no Propriety can it be said that the evil Principle is Error, or false Doctrine in the Mind, though by Reason of that Principle, the Mind forms an erroneous Judgment concerning Truth. Nor can it with the least Propriety be said, that the good Principle in the Mind is Truth, though by Means of that Principle it discerns Truth, and approves of it. Some of late seem to apprehend, that there is not, in the Souls of Believers, a holy Principle distinct from the Word, that is to say evangelical Truth, but that, if there is what may be called a Principle of Holiness in them, it is the Word, or evangelical Truth itself. This is a fond Imagination, which is fully evinced by several Things, one is this; The Spirit, or Principle of Holiness, in the Saints, is born and ingenerated of the holy Spirit, That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Now it is ridiculous to think, that the Word is born of the Spirit of GOD, in the Saints. It was revealed and dictated by him to the Prophets and Apostles, and by him it is opened and applied to the Souls of Believers, for their Instruction and Consolation; but born of him in them it is not, nor can be. Again, the Principle of Holiness in the Saints, is a new Creation, for they are the Workmanship of GOD created in CHRIST JESUS; on which Account they are denominated new Creatures: If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature. It is a monstrous Figment to imagine, that evangelical Truth is created in the Saints. As was said before, it is revealed and applied to them, but created in them it is not. Farther, the spiritual Principle discerns Truth, but the Truth itself it cannot be; for if so, that which discerns, and that which is discerned, must be the same, which they cannot be. How is it possible, that the Object discerned, should be the same with that which discerns it? Besides, this holy Principle receives the Things of the Spirit of God, which Things are evangelical Truths. The Things received, are distinct from that which receives them; and therefore the Word is not that Principle of Holiness which is in Believers, but distinct from it; the Word of Truth is that upon which the spiritual Principle acts, by which it is nourished, strengthened, and invigorated, and, consequently, at cannot be that Principle itself. A mere Whiffler in Reasoning hath misrepresented Dr. Owen on this Subject, who expresses himself thus, in treating on the Efficiency of the Word, as the Instrument of GOD, in the Communication of Salvation to us. In the Regeneration and Sanctification of the Elect, the first external Act of this Salvation, this is wrought by the Word, { 1 Peter 1:1} Sanctify them by thy Word, as the Means and Instrument of their Sanctification. And he tells his Apostles, that they were clean through the Word that he had spoken unto them, {John 15:3} for it is the Food and Nourishment whereby the spiritual Principle of Life, which we receive in our Regeneration, is cherished and increased, { 1 Peter 2:2} and so able to build us up until it give us an Inheritance

among them that are sanctified^{ft1}. Upon which Discourse this Whiffler remarks thus; Here we have Dr Owen against Dr Owen, What are we to do in this Care? whiffle after him? no, but reduce him to a mere Neutral, and allow him no Vote^{ft2}. But how does it appear that the Doctor contradicts himself, which is a Reason why he should be allowed no Vote on this subject? Answer thus: The Doctor elsewhere says, I call this Principle of Holiness an Habit, not as though it were absolutely of the same Kind with acquired Habits, and would in all Things answer unto our Conceptions and Descriptions of them: But we only call it so, because in its Effects and manner of Operations it agreeth in sundry Things with acquired, intellectual, or moral Habits. But it hath much more Conformity unto a natural, unchangable Instinct, than unto any acquired Habit. Wherefore God chargeth it on Men, that in their Obedience unto him, they did not answer that Instinct which is in other Creatures towards their Lords and Benefactors, { Isaiah 1:3} and which they cordially observe, { Jeremiah 8:7}. But herein GOD teacheth us more than the Beasts of the Earth, and maketh us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven, {Job 35:11}. This therefore is that which I intend, a Virtue, a Power, a Principle of spiritual Life and Grace, wrought, created, infused into our Souls, and inlaid in all the Faculties of them, constantly abiding and unchangeably residing in them, which is antecedent unto, and the next Cause of all Acts of true Holiness whatever^{ft3} There is not the least Appearance of Contradiction in what the Doctor advances, for he asserts, in each Place, that there is a vital, spiritual Principle in the Regenerate. So far, therefore, there is no Contradiction, but a perfect Agreement. In the former Place he observes, that the Word, or Gospel, in a Way of Efficiency, begets, or produces that vital, spiritual Principle, not that the Word materially is that Principle. He was no such Blunderer, to imagine that the Word is that which it effects in Men, he well knew it to be distinct therefrom; and that Efficiency, which he ascribes to his Word, is not the Efficiency of an Agent; but of an Instrument, or Mean, used by GOD in the Regeneration of his People; and in their Sanctification, as the vital, spiritual Principle in them is nourished and increased by it. Affirming that the Word is a Mean, or Instrument, used in producing the vital, spiritual Principle, is so far from supposing that it is that Principle, that it most clearly implies, that it is distinct from it; for no Mean, or Instrument, can possibly be that, which it is the Mean, or Instrument, of effecting. The Doctor, therefore, is not to be reduced to a Neutral on this Subject, and denied the Right of a Vote upon it, which this Trifler in Reasoning is desirous of. It is much to be lamented, that any among us should call into Question the important Truth, that there is a Principle of Holiness in Believers; but with Chearfulness we engage in its Defence. May the Lord of his infinite Mercy give us satisfactory Evidence, that we are the happy Subjects of such a Principle! and by his Spirit and Grace increase the Vigour of it in our Souls!

FOOTNOTES ft1 Rational Religion, on Hebrews, Vol. I. Page 178. ft2 Rational Religion, etc. ft3 On the Spirit, Page 416.

S. The Proper Eternity of The Divine Decrees

THE SERMONS OF JOHN BRINE The Proper Eternity of the Divine Decrees, And of the Mediatorial Office of Jesus Christ: Asserted and Proved by John Brine {#London: John Ward, 1754} Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the truth

SERMON 19 THE PROPER ETERNITY OF THE DIVINE DECREES, AND OF THE MEDIATORIAL OFFICE, OF JESUS CHRIST:

ASSERTED AND PROVED IN A DISCOURSE DELIVERED, IN A MONTHLY-EXERCISE OF PRAYER WITH A SERMON, ON THE 19TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1754 Published at the Request of the Ministers and others Printed and Sold by JOHN WARD, against the Royal Exchange;

GEORGE KEITH, in Grace-church-Street; and JOHN EYNON, at a Print Shop, on the North Side of the Royal Exchange. London

1754.

PREFACE IN composing this Discourse, I had no Thoughts of its Appearance in the World. But as the Publication of it, was desired, by such unto whom I pay no small Deference, I have ventured to expose it to public View, although, I am apprehensive, that it may be displeasing unto some; because I have herein, taken the Liberty to animadvert upon an Absurdity advanced by a learned Author, concerning the divine Decrees: viz. That they are not properly Eternal; but later than the Existence of God, and had Beginning. We all profess to believe that we are fallible, and may err, and yet, it is very common with Men, to treat those with Disdain, who think that they are wrong in any Point, and attempt to rectify their Mistakes. Their Friends also, sometimes, very much ill-resent such Freedom. And, this is one of the numerous Ways wherein the Pride and Naughtiness of the Heart discovers itself. However, I am not unprepared for bearing Censure, in the Defence of that, which appears to me, is Divine Truth. I am only sorry that it hath not a better Advocate, when I am engaged in its Vindication. If what is presented to the Reader, shall be of the least

Service, either in guarding him against, or convincing him of the mistaken Conceptions about the Decrees of God, the Person of Christ, and of his Constitution unto the mediatorial Office, so far my Ends will be answered. And, I am not altogether without Hope, that this short Discourse, may in some Measure, be conducive unto those Ends, under the divine Blessing: Unto which I would solemnly recommend it.

{Proverbs 8:22-23} The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his Way, before his Works of old. I was set up, from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was. THESE are the Words of Wisdom, which speaks throughout the Chapter. Different Apprehensions have been entertained concerning this divine Speaker, viz. What, or who is meant by Wisdom. I think there are clear Reasons to conclude, that by Wisdom, a Person, or intelligent Agent is intended: For, Wisdom all

along speaks under personal Characters, and various personal Acts are attributed unto this Speaker. As searching, or finding out. I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, and find out Knowledge of witty Inventions. Also Acts of Love and Affection: I love them that love me. And Acts of Joy and Delight: Then was I by him, as one brought up with him, I was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him: Rejoicing in the habitable Parts of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men. All which are personal Acts, and, therefore, this divine Speaker, is a Person, or an understanding Agent; and the Things which are predicated of this Speaker, are so grand and sublime, that they cannot be applicable to any other Person than CHRIST, who is the Wisdom, as well as the Power of God.

Understanding the Words of our blessed Redeemer, without commenting upon what precedes, I shall immediately proceed to the Explication of them. And it will be proper to shew, what is designed by the Way of the Lord; what the Beginning of his way imports; what is implied in the Act of possessing Christ; what Works of God are intended, before which he possessed our Saviour, and why they are said to be of old; what the letting up of Wisdom designs: when this was done, from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was.

I. I would shew what is designed by the Way of the Lord. The Way of God sometimes intends his wise and holy Dispensations towards the World, and towards his Church in Providence, which are the Accomplishment of his Decrees concerning both, with respect unto their temporal Estate. This is a Sense wherein it is frequently to be understood: And his Way is to be taken for his gracious Purposes and Counsels, which were formed in his infinite and eternal Mind, concerning Christ, and his Church. I apprehend this Sense is designed by it in these Words: For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts { Isaiah 55:8-9}. It is of pardoning Grace and Mercy, that the Lord there speaks: For he will abundantly pardon. We are too apt to limit the Holy One of Israel, in his Acts of pardoning Kindness and Mercy. And it is his Intention, in these Words to assure us, that his Purposes of Grace, Mercy, and Pardon, infinitely exceeds those Conceptions which we are apt to entertain thereof. I apprehend, that in this Sense, the divine Way is to be understood, in the Text: Or, that God's Thoughts and Purposes of Love, and Grace concerning Christ and his Members are meant by his Way. Further I am to shew,

II. What the Beginning of his Way imports . If we understand it of Duration: That must either commence, or not commence, have Limit, or not have Limit. The Term beginning is put for Duration, which had not Commencement, in these Words; God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth. This divine Act of Election was eternal: According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World. From the Beginning, and before the Foundation of the World mean the same. And, there never was an Instant, wherein the Church was not the Object of a gracious Choice unto Salvation, or the Enjoyment of eternal Life. A learned Writer hath been pleased to distinguish upon Eternity, a Parteante, or that Duration, which was before the Existence of the World, or Things created, and speaks of a first, and an after Date therein. The first Date respects, he says, God's Existence, which was eternal, and had no Beginning: The after Date refers unto his Decrees, or Acts within himself relating unto Christ and the Church, which he affirms had Beginning: He sums up what he had before more largely, expressed, and pleaded for, in this Assertion, viz. God himself was

before the Conceptions and Thoughts which he entertained of his Works: Before, besure in Order of Nature; but how long before, the Thing neither speaks nor the Word declares. f1 Let us press this Grape a little, that we may be able to form a Judgment of the Nature of its Juice. The plain Import of this Assertion is, God was before he had infinite Thought and Consciousness; but how long before, is impossible to be known, because neither the Thing speaks, nor the Word declares it. This is a very unsafe, a very offensive, and a most absurd Way of speaking. If God ever was without infinite Thought and Consciousness, he was not, he then could not be God. For, a Being without Thought and Consciousness can't be God. To be quite free with you upon this Subject. The Assertion is so extremely absurd, that it excites my Astonishment. The Divine Decrees are of the same Date with the Existence of God. His Being is not of one Date, and his Purposes of another, a later Date. Besides, to suppose, that there was an everlasting, or a Duration, before the Existence of a Creature, that really had a Beginning, or Commencement, is to imagine, that there was a Duration, which was neither eternal, nor temporary; but something between both, which is an highly absurd Imagination. Duration is, either immeasurable and without any Limit: Or, it is measurable and hath a Limit. If Duration past is immeasurable, it is eternal, and could not have any Beginning. If it is measurable, it is not eternal, but temporary, and must have had Commencement. There can be no Medium between Eternity and Time. A Duration which begins, is measurable and limited, whether it is measured and divided into the Parts whereof it consists, or not, by the Motion of Body, or otherwise. Measurable and limited it is, and there must be some Instant at which we must necessarily stop, when we contemplate a past Duration, which had Beginning. If, therefore, the Divine Decrees are later than the Existence of God, or had Beginning, they must, as to Duration, have been infinitely short of the Existence of God. So that, according to the Doctrine contained in this most absurd Assertion, there must have been an infinite Duration, wherein, God was without any Conceptions and Thoughts of his Works: That is to say, without infinite Thought and Consciousness; and, therefore, for an infinite Duration, he was not God. For, if his Conceptions and Thoughts really had Beginning, they must begin after himself had existed, in a Duration infinite: Because such a Duration must have been before a measurable Duration could begin, and, consequently, though God, in his Existence is eternal, his Love to Christ, and the Church, and his Decrees about them, are not eternal; but only temporary. Which is no more true, than it is, that the Almighty Creator, once, was not God. A certain Writer pours Contempt upon some, whose Works have praised, and will long praise them, in the Gates of the Church, that have endeavoured, to prove Christ's eternal Existence, or proper Deity from this Place. His contemptuous Words concerning them, are these: I wonder not, that Arianism prevails as it doth, amongst us, at this Day, when such poor, blind, ignorant Wretches, undertake to defend the Doctrine of the Redeemer's Godhead; for sure I am, that going to the 8th of the Proverbs to prove it, is for ever to give up the Cause into the Hands of the Arrians. f2 This contemptuous Language the Author prevailed with himself to use, concerning some worthy Persons, as any perhaps, the Church of God was blessed with in the former Century. His great Confidence and Contempt will not deter me from asserting, that in this Chapter, clear Proof is given, in Abundance, and above all Exception, unto the important Doctrine of the eternal Existence, and proper Deity of our precious Redeemer. I shall proceed so far, as to say, that, if that Doctrine is not capable of Proof, from this Context; Proof of it cannot be brought from any Part whatever, of sacred Writ. The Terms and Phrases, used therein, expressing the Eternity of his Existence, are so full, strong, and explicite, that none more so can be produced. But this Writer was led into a Mistake, by what the learned

Author, I before referred unto, had advanced, concerning the Import of the Term everlasting as it is used, in relation to God's Decrees, and Acts within himself, as some other Persons have also been, which is not a little to be lamented. Upon the Whole, if Beginning is understood of Duration, Eternity must be intended: Or that immeasurable Duration, which was before the Creation of the World, and had no Commencement. But, it may be observed, that in the Original, it is not, in the Beginning, as we translate; but the Lord possessed me, the Beginning of his Way: f3 And the original Word signifies the First, or Chief. By which two Things are suggested.

1. That Christ is the First and Chief, in the Decrees of God, as they are all calculated for his Glory, above Angels and Men. The supreme End of God in his Purposes and Operations, is the Glory of his own infinite Perfections, Wisdom, Power, Goodness, etc. For he made, and decreed to make all Things for himself. His next, subordinate End, which he eternally had in View, was the Glory of Christ, in the Character of Mediator, as an Effect of his infinite Love unto his Person. Hence the Apostle speaking of Christ in his mediatorial Capacity, or of his Person, as constituted of the divine and human Natures, says: All Things were created by him and for him. They were made by him, as an efficient Cause, and they were also made for him, as a final Cause.

Again, 2. When it is said, that Christ is the First, or Chief of God's Ways, it implies, that there is a more glorious Display of his Perfections in him, than in any of, or all his other Works taken together. All Divine Works are excellent and worthy of their infinitely good and great Author. The Works of Creation point out unto us the infinite Wisdom, unlimited Power, and Benevolence of the Creator. For the invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead. But, there is a far more illustrious and superior Display of the Wisdom, Goodness, Holiness, Truth, and Justice of God, in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and in the amazing Designs, which are thereby accomplished. And, therefore, with great Propriety, he may be said, as Mediator, to be the Chief of his Ways. I proceed to shew,

III. What is implied in the Act of possessing Christ . The original Word f4 signifies to have or possess by Price, or by Labour, and sometimes by Birth. In this Sense Eve uses it. When she had conceived and bore Cain, she said: I have gotten {#the same Word} a Man from the Lord. In this Sense it may be understood here, for there is not that wanting in the Context, which gives Countenance unto it. Wisdom, or Christ, says of himself, Before the Mountains were settled, before the Hills was I brought forth. The latter Writer, unto whom I before referred, on the Subject of the Filiation of Christ, hath these remarkable Words: I am positive, that Christ as the eternal God {#i.e. as a Divine Person} was never begotten, since it is impossible for me to conceive the begetter and the begotten to be of equal Date. f5

Why is he so confident that Christ, as a Divine Person, was never begotten? He was so, because he was not able to conceive how he could be of the same Date with him, by whom he was begotten. Shall we poor Worms, whose Understandings are finite and limited, take upon us, boldly to pronounce, that, that cannot be in Deity, which we are unable to form adequate Ideas of, or explain how it is? We must forget our own Nature, and the Nature of God also, if we do. We must forget our own Nature, that it is limited and finite, and for that Reason, incapable of comprehending that which is infinite. And, we must forget the Nature of God, viz. that it is infinite, and therefore, unto us incomprehensible. That, therefore, may be in Deity, which we are sure cannot be in finite

and limited Beings. And, that which involves a Contradiction, in Beings finite and limited, may not, in that Being, which is infinite. For Instance, in the human Nature, it implies a manifest Contradiction to conceive, that he who is begotten, is of the same Date with him that begot him. But, it by no Means follows, that it is a Contradiction to conceive, that a Divine Person, who is begotten, is of the same Date with the Divine Begetter. This Writer, notwithstanding his Confidence in this Matter, might have been asked, as puzzling Questions concerning Eternity, as any he could propose relating unto this mysterious Subject. But, I suppose, he would scarcely have denied, that there is a Duration, which had not Beginning, and which will never end, though he might have found it impossible for him to resolve some difficult Questions concerning it. It is beyond Contradiction, that Christ is the Son of God. He is his Son, therefore, either in a proper Sense, or only in an improper and metaphorical one. That he is the Son of God, in a proper Sense, may be concluded from his asserting, that God was his own Father: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work: The Jews inferred, and very rightly, from this Assertion, and not from his affirming himself to be the Messiah, that he made himself equal with God. Therefore, the Jews fought the more to kill him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his {idion, own, or proper} Father, making himself equal with God { John 5:17-18}. He is so a Son, as to be of the same Nature with God, whose Son he is. For which Reason, he is called God's own, or proper Son. God spared not his own, or proper Son. God can't be his proper Father, if he begat him not; nor can he be God's proper Son, unless he was begotten of him. But he is God's begotten, and his only begotten Son: God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son. Some have thought, and some do think, that Christ is called the Son of God, because he is invested with Office. But, that is to confound the very different Characters, of a Son and a Servant, and it necessarily makes them the same. As invested with the Office of Mediator, he is God's Servant: Behold my Servant, whom I uphold. Now if it is true, that he is God's Son, as invested with the mediatorial Office, he is no otherwise a Son, than as he is a Servant, and these very different Characters, of Son and Servant, can contain and convey no different, but in all Respects, the same Idea, which there is no Reason to think. Besides, Christ was a Son antecedent unto his Investiture with the mediatorial Office, which he could not possibly be, if his being in that Office was the formal Reason, or Cause of his Sonship. That he was a Son before his Investiture with Office, is, I think, abundantly clear from these Words of the inspired Writer: For the Law maketh Men High Priests which have Infirmary; but the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. If Christ bears the Character of Son, on account of his being the High Priest, or Mediator of the Church, he could not be a Son, before his Investiture with that Office; but it is most clear that he was: For the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, or constituteth the Son. What doth it make or constitute him? It made or constituted him High Priest, or Mediator: And, therefore, he was a Son before he was made High Priest, or Mediator. This is so clear and illustrious a Testimony unto the Truth of the Sonship of Christ, as a Divine Person, that I am persuaded, it will be impossible for the Wit of Man, by any Arts, or Shifts, to cloud it, and enervate its Force. Farther, Christ as a Son; was not under Obligation to obey and suffer. This is clearly suggested in these Words: Though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience by the Things that he suffered. The Opinion of his being a Son, as inverted with Office, must: compel us to conclude this to be the Sense of those Words: Though he was a Son, and as such under Obligation to obey and suffer, yet learned he Obedience, by the Things that he suffered. But who can think this to be the Import of the Divine Writer? Surely none.

As Mediator, he was under Obligation to obey and suffer: As a Son, he was not, and therefore, his mediatorial Office is not intended by his Sonship; but his filial Relation unto God, as a Divine Person.

Again, the Father possessed him of all those Treasures of Grace and Glory, which he intended the Church should receive here, and enjoy hereafter. And there is that in the Context, which favours this Sense also: That I may cause them that love me to inherit Substance, and I will fill their Treasures. Christ is capable of making good this Promise: For, it hath pleased the Father that in him all Fulness should dwell. He blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ. And that Grace, according unto which we are saved and called, was given us in Christ: Who hath saved us and called us, with an holy Calling, not according to our Works; but according to his own Purpose and Grace which was given us in Christ before the World began. All those precious Benefits, which the Church of God partakes of, in this World, and all that Bliss and Glory, which she will possess in the heavenly State, were deposited, and laid up for her in the Hands of her ever-blessed and glorious Head. In whole Keeping they are eternally secure. Farther, IV. God possessed Christ before his Works of old.

1. The Works which are intended, are the Works of Creation; of this I think there can be no Doubt: Because Wisdom, immediately after the Text, proceeds to give an elegant Description of the Creation: When there were no Depths, I was brought forth: When there were no Fountains abounding with Water: Before the Mountains were settled, before the Hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the Fields, nor the highest Part of the Dust of the World. When he prepared the Heavens, I was there: When he set a Compass upon the Face of the Depth. When he established the Clouds above: When he strengthened the Fountains of the Deep: When he gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment: When he appointed the Foundations of the Earth. There are the wonderful Works designed, wherein Divine Wisdom and Power are manifested. Creation is proper to God. Omnipotence only could give Existence unto Body, out of non-existing Matter: Which it did. For, Things which are seen, were not made of Things which do appear. And infinite Wisdom and Power alone could form the beautiful Fabrick of the Universe, out of that rude Mass of Matter, unto which Existence was first given: The Earth was without Form, and void: And Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep. Creation therefore, is a Work Divine, and peculiar to God. And he challenges it, as his own. Lift up your Eyes on high, and behold who hath created these Things, that bringeth out their Host by Number; he calleth them all by their Names, by the Greatness of his Might, for that he is strong in Power, not one faileth { Isaiah 40:26 hew:26 hew:26}.

2. These Works were wrought of old. Many Ages had then run out since the Creation of the World, and, therefore, they are said to be of old. And as Things created invariably keep those Laws, thro' all the successive Ages of Time, unto which they were subjected, in their Creation, it is an Evidence, that they were formed by infinite Wisdom, and are preserved and upheld in that beautiful Order, wherein they were at first fixed by immense Power. And,

3. Christ was possessed of the Father before a creating Act was put forth: Or before Being was given to any Creature, and, consequently, in Eternity: Or in that infinite, immeasurable Duration, which was before Time commenced. The Beginning of God's Way, therefore, cannot possibly mean a finite and limited Duration. If proper Eternity is not expressed by these Phrases, it will be

impossible to produce any from Scripture, which express it. But the next general thing in the Text demands my Attention.

V. Christ was set up: I was set up . The original Word, {Æsn} signifies pouring forth, or anointing, and as Oil was poured forth upon a Person who was invested with Office: Or, as a Person was anointed with Oil, when appointed unto Office, Christ's Appointment unto and Investiture with the mediatorial Office, is intended by this Phrase. The latter Writer, some of whose Words I took notice of before, entertaining the Notion of the Preexistence of the Soul of Christ, labours to prove it from this Place. He objects unto the Application of the Phrase to Christ, as a divine Person, in this very nonsensical Manner. Now, this cannot have the least Relation to his Godhead, because we cannot say, that was poured out. f6 No, nor can we say, that his Soul was poured out, when he was anointed unto Office. The Person anointed to Office is not poured out, but Oil is poured forth upon him, or he is anointed therewith. He adds: These Words may likewise denote his Unction; and so it may be read, I was anointed from Everlasting. In this Sense it cannot be applied to his Divinity. f7 The Phrase being understood in its true Sense, it will quickly appear, that it may be very well applied to the Person of Christ, as designed unto a Union with the human Nature. For, it intends Designation to Office. And the divine Person of Christ, as he was to become incarnate, was invested with the mediatorial Office: Which was done in the everlasting Covenant, that was entered into by the Divine Persons. Of that Covenant, and the Parties therein contracting, he speaks thus: I am not writing about the Counsels and Purposes, of God in himself, but of his covenanting and contracting with a Person to fulfill and execute these Counsels and Purposes, and of the Person's Willingness, that was covenanted and contracted with to undertake such a Work. - I freely confers, that the Platform of Salvation was laid in the eternal Mind; and that the whole Scheme of our Happiness was drawn in Eternity, infinitely beyond all Date; but yet the Contract between the Father and Christ was not so, unless the Man Christ be infinitely Eternal, {it is absurd to think that Eternity is finite} or else an infinite Being must contract with himself. f8 This is the Sum of what this goodly Author, had to object to the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace, and unto its being an Agreement between the divine Persons. The Whole of this Discourse will be removed out of the Way without the least Difficulty. For, tho' the divine Being did not contract with itself, the divine Persons, existing distinctly in the divine Essence, entered into Covenant with each other. As the eternal Three, Father, Son, and Spirit, are personally distinct, tho' essentially one, they each act distinctly, in the divine Essence: Or the divine Wisdom and Will, which are essentially the same, act distinctly in each divine Person, by reason of their distinct personal Subsistence in the divine Nature.

Thus the divine Wisdom and Will, acting distinctly in the distinct Person of the Father, designed and resolved upon the Incarnation of the Son, and his accomplishing our Redemption, in our Nature, as personally united unto himself, by doing and suffering all that Law and Justice required, unto that important End. And this was the Father's Proposal unto the Son, to undertake that great and arduous Work. And thus also, The divine Wisdom and Will, acting distinctly in the Person of the Son, who subsists distinctly from the Father in the divine Essence, approved of this Design, or concurred with the Father therein; which Approbation and Concurrence, was the Son's Engagement to fulfil the Will and Counsel of the Father, relating unto that wonderful Affair, and it brought him under an Obligation, to do and suffer in our Nature, when taken into personal Union with himself, the Whole of what Law and Justice required, in order to our

Salvation.

Again, the divine Wisdom and Will acting distinctly in the ever-blessed Spirit, who is a Person distinct from the Father and the Son, he approved of the gracious Design, of the Salvation of the Elect: And, as the divine Wisdom and Will, in the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son, willed that he should glorify Christ, and sanctify the Church; he agreed, and consented unto the Will of the Father, and the Will of the Son. Thus he took upon himself the Work and Office of glorifying Christ, and sanctifying the Church, which is that Part that he bears in the Oeconomy of our Salvation. And, therefore, as the Son became obliged unto the Father, as he was to be incarnate, to redeem his People and Members: So the holy Spirit became obliged unto both the Father and the Son to glorify Christ and sanctify the Church.

And, I humbly apprehend, that it is with especial Relation unto this, that the Holy Spirit is so frequently stiled the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of his Son, or of Christ; That for this Reason also, he is said to be sent both by the Father and the Son. By his Engagement he came under Obligation, both unto the Father and the Son, to perform his Part, in the Business of our Salvation. And, this is the Foundation of his Mission by the Father, and of his Mission by the Son. Right arises from hence, unto both to send him: And, accordingly, he is sent by both. He comes at the Pleasure of the Father: Whom the Father will send in my Name. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts. He likewise comes at the Will of the Son: If I depart I will send him unto you, says Christ, concerning the holy Spirit, under the Character of Comforter.

These distinct and mutual Actings of the divine Persons, between themselves, are the Covenant of Grace, wherein the Method of our Salvation was fixed, and that gracious Design effectually secured. And, therefore, this Author hath only discovered his Weakness, in saying, that the Contract between the Father and Christ was not infinitely beyond all Date, unless the Man Christ be infinitely Eternal, {as he nonsensically speaks, for there is no finite Eternity} or else an infinite Being must contract with himself. f9 The infinite, distinct Persons, in Deity, contracted, or entered into mutual Engagements between themselves, in this federal Transaction. This was not the Contract of the divine Nature with itself; but it was the Contract of the divine Father, the eternal Son, and the blessed Spirit, who are personally distinct, tho' essentially one. Nor, can the distinct Actings of the divine Wisdom and Will, which are essentially the same, be denied, without the Denial of the distinct Personality of the Father, Son and Spirit. If they are distinct Persons, without all question they act distinctly: Or the divine Wisdom and Will act distinctly, in each of the eternal Three, Father, Son, and the holy Spirit.

Besides, to imagine, with this Author, that the human Soul of Christ existed when the Covenant of Grace was entered into, and that it was a contracting Party, in that Covenant, absolutely destroys the Eternity of it, which he is obliged to grant. Hence it undeniably follows, that once there was no Covenant of Grace: Once Christ was not the Mediator and Head of the Church. It was in that Covenant, that he was constituted such: If therefore, that Covenant once was not, it must be allowed that once Christ was not the Mediator and Head of the Elect of God: And, consequently, once, his Delights were not with the Sons of Men. This is that Blessed Divinity, which this Writer recommends unto the Embrace of Christians: But it ought to be eternally abhorred, as that which saps the very Foundation of all their Faith and Hope. Farther, the Notion of the Pre-existence of the Soul of Christ, or of its existing before the Creation of the World, is repugnant

to Scripture. That Opinion is as certainly false, as it is true, that in the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. If there was before Creation a limited Duration, that Duration must have had Commencement, and was measurable, tho' not measured and divided into its Parts, by any regular Motion of Body, as I have before observed. And, that Instant, at which we must necessarily stop, in our Conceptions concerning it, was the Beginning, and not that Instant, wherein God's Act of Creation was put forth, And, therefore, if this Notion is true, what Moses affirms must be false, and God did not in the Beginning create the Heavens and the Earth, but after the Beginning; and how long after, it seems, is not knowable, perhaps Millions of Ages. Into such Absurdities will some Men run, in order to support their Misconceptions of Things, or a darling Opinion, which they have happened to embrace.

Once more, for I have not yet done with this vain Conceit. To suppose, as this Writer does, that the Soul of Christ was a contracting Party in the Covenant of Grace, and not his divine Person, is to detract from his Glory as a divine Person, and is advancing his human Soul unto such Dignity, as is by no Means its Due. May the good Lord eternally preserve me, from lessening the Glory of a precious Jesus, in his human Nature, which ought ever to be dear to my Soul! I humbly hope, that I shall never express any thing, detracting from his Honour, in his human Nature. My Heart can't possibly bear the killing Thought: And, yet, with Intrepidity I say, that it was a Glory peculiar to Christ, in his divine Person, to contract with the other divine Persons, the Father and the Holy Spirit, and that it was an Honour infinitely too great for the human Soul of Christ, to become a contracting Party in the Covenant of Grace. The Parties contracting were equal, as it was condecant and fit, that so they should be, Indeed, the Will of Christ as Man, upon his subsisting, in his human Nature, freely and fully consented, unto all the Articles, agreed on in the Covenant, relating unto both his Obedience and Sufferings: But it was his Engagement, as a divine Person, which brought his human Nature under Obligation to obey and suffer, as it hath its Subsistence therein. And it was fit, that the infinitely superior constituent Part of Christ, in his complex Character, should undertake for his inferior constituent Part, as Mediator. So that it was not necessary, that his human Nature should subsist, in either part of it, his Soul no more than his Body, at his undertaking the Work of Redemption, in the Covenant of Grace. In the setting up of Christ, or his Designation unto the mediatorial Office, various Particulars may be observed. As,

1. The divine Father purposed and proposed to him, that in the Fulness of Time he should assume our Nature, into Union with himself. The divine Wisdom and Will, acting distinctly in the Person of the Father, as is above explained, moved this to him. This was a Foreordination of him to become Man, before the Foundation of the World.

2. Christ consented unto this Design, and Proposal of the Father: Or the divine Wisdom and Will, acting distinctly in the Person of the Son, as is before expressed, he approved of this Design and Proposal of the Father, and the Concurrence of the divine Will, in his Person, was his Engagement, to take our Nature into a personal Union with himself, at the Time appointed. His Language in this Transaction was: Lo I come. Hence,

3. Tho' the human Nature of Christ did not then subsist, he was considered, as God-Man, by the divine Persons. Not that the divine Understanding, in either of the divine Persons, accounted him to have Subsistence then, as Man; for that he had not; and, therefore, it was not possible, that the divine Understanding could conceive him to be then existent, in his human Nature; but he was had

in Repute, by the divine Persons, as God-Man, by reason of his certain future Incarnation, which was then resolved upon, between themselves. And in this Character, the Covenant of Grace was made with him. I would observe,

4. The Work assigned unto him, as incarnate; or what was required of him, as his Person is constituted of the divine and human Natures, in order to the Salvation of his Body, the Church. And,

{#1} It was required of him to come under the Command of the Covenant of Works. That Covenant, without a special Appointment, could have had no Concern with, or Power over him, either in its Precepts, or Threatenings, not only because he was not represented by Adam, with whom that Covenant was made, nor a natural Descendant of his: But also, because his human Nature, as united unto his divine Person, is raised above the State and Condition of a mere Creature: And, therefore, it was a gracious Act of Condescension, in his divine Person, to consent, that, that constituent Part of himself, as Mediator, should come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works: Being sound in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself; in becoming obedient unto Death. Again,

{#2} Another Thing required of him, was to suffer and die for his People, to make Atonement for their Sins: When thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin; he shall see his Seed. This Article his divine Person also agreed unto. And the Consent of his divine Will brought his human Nature, under Obligation to submit to Death: Ought not Christ to have suffered these Things? It was an Act of infinite Compassion in Christ to poor Sinners, to content, to give up his human Nature, to the most dolorous Sufferings, and unto the most Ignominious, and also an accursed Death, to redeem them from justly deserved Destruction.

{#3} The human Nature of Christ being united unto his divine Person, these two Things follow upon it.

[1] As Man he was at the Disposal of his divine Will. As God, or a divine Person, he had absolute Power over his human Nature, which was a constituent Part of himself, as Mediator, and, therefore, he had full and proper Right, to covenant and agree, that his human Nature should both obey and die, in Obedience unto the Will of the Father. For, that Nature was his own in a peculiar Sense, and it was fit, that it should be absolutely at the Disposal of his divine Will. His Assumption of it into Union with himself was with a View, that it might so be. And our blessed Lord clearly expresses the Right of his divine Person to dispose of his human Nature, according unto his own absolute Pleasure, in these Words: No man taketh my Life from me; I lay it down of myself; I have Power to take it again. This Commandment have I received of my Father. The Glory of Christ as Man is unequalled, in Consequence, of his personal, Union with the eternal Son of God: But this Union is so far from raising his human Nature, above an absolute Subjection unto his divine Will, that it necessarily infers it: Or the absolute Subjection of his human Will, unto his divine Will, necessarily follows upon it. His Engagement, therefore, as a divine Person, in the everlasting Covenant, brought an Obligation upon him, as Man, to do and suffer all, that was included in that federal Engagement of his, tho' his human Nature was not then existent.

[2] When the blessed Jesus had Subsistence as Man, his human Will, which is absolutely distinct from his Will, as God, was wholly under the Direction and Influence of his divine Will. And it was fit,

that it should so be, for it would have been the highest Incongruity, if the human Will of Christ had not been under the determining Influence of the Will of his divine Person. Hence it was impossible, that the Will of Christ, as Man, should in any Instance, or at any Time, clash with his divine Will. And it is hence also, that the holy moral Operations of the human Nature of Christ, are to be esteemed the Acts of his Person, as Mediator, and that they become infinitely meritorious: Because they are the Adds of his Person, who is God as well as Man, tho' the human Nature only, is the immediate Subject from which they spring; therefore, infinite Merit attends them.

5. The Father gave the Elect to Christ, as his Jewels, or his own peculiar People: Thine they were, and thou gavest them me. He was constituted a Head to them, and they became his Members. And he came under Obligation to preserve them safe, and to conduct them to that State of Dignity and Happiness, which the Father, as the Effect of his infinite Love, designed them, unto the Enjoyment of. For which reason our blessed Lord says: This is the Father's Will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up, at the last Day.

6. A glorious Reward was promised unto him, for the important Services, which he undertook to perform. All the Glory that he possesses, as Mediator, was then granted to him, on Condition of his Obedience, Sufferings and Death. And, therefore, he speaks of his having this Glory before the World was: With the Glory which I had with thee before the World was. He had it, in Promise and Grant, when he engaged to fulfil the Father's Pleasure, concerning the Redemption of his People. Thus, I think it appears very clearly, that Christ the eternal Son of God, as he was to become Incarnate, entered into Covenant with the Father, and undertook to accomplish the Whole of his Will, relating to the Recovery of those unto whom he was appointed a Head, in such a Way, as magnifies the Law, and is becoming all the divine Perfections: And, that all that Glory, which he hath Possession of, was given to him by Promise, in the Character of Mediator, tho' neither constituent Part of his human Nature, his Soul, or his Body, then subsisted.

VI. And lastly: The Constitution of Christ Mediator, was from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was.

These Phrases express either a measurable Duration, or an immeasurable one. It is I think allowed by all, that a Duration is intended, which was before the Existence of the World. That Duration either had Beginning, or it had not. If it commenced, and had Beginning, it was properly Time, and not Eternity. Time and Eternity differ, as finite and infinite differ. Time is finite, and Eternity is infinite. And it is impossible, that there should be a Medium between Eternity and Time: As there cannot be a Mean between infinite, and finite. Whatever is, must be either infinite or finite, unlimited, or limited. And, consequently, this Duration, if it began, it was Time, it could not be Eternity: It was measurable, and certainly had a Limit, at which we must necessarily stop, in our Conceptions about it; if not, it was Eternity: Or a Duration infinite. To say, that it was not measured by the regular Motion of Body, as Time with us, is measured by the Course of the Sun, will not prove it immeasurable, nor can that be intended; because then it must be granted, that it was Eternity, which it is not allowed to be, by those unto whom I have Reference; but it is said to be an AFTERDATE of Eternity, by the learned Author before mentioned, which had Beginning, or Commencement, which if it had, it was properly Time, and it must differ from Eternity, as that which is finite differs, from that which is infinite. And what is to be proved by all this? No other Thing, than, that God's Decrees are later than his Existence, and how much later he could not

determine, because neither the Thing speaks, nor the Word declares it. The Being of God was eternal, or had no Beginning; but all his Decrees, if this is true, were temporary, or had Beginning. And therefore, for an infinite Duration, which must have been, before this After Date, or Beginning, could take Place; God was without any Conceptions and Thoughts of his Works. That is to say, once God had no Love to Christ as Mediator, nor Conceptions concerning him: Once he had no Love to the Church, nor Thoughts about her: Once he was without infinite Thought and Consciousness, and consequently he once was not God. For, a Being without infinite Thought and Consciousness can't be God. As I have before said. The other Writer mentioned above, in order to support his Notion of the Existence of the Soul of Christ before the Creation of the World, interprets these Phrases, in the same Manner; in this, copying after that learned Author, as some others also do, to defend a Notion which is absolutely useless, that hath not the least Connection with, Dependence upon, nor is inferrible from any Branch whatever, of evangelical Truth. But is wholly dissonant to the Scripture, and everts the eternal Covenant of Grace, wherein the Salvation of God's Elect was everlastingly provided for and secur'd.

If there was a Duration before the Production of the World, which had Commencement, why may there not be a Duration, after the Dissolution of it, which will have an End? And if the former is called everlasting, tho' it had Beginning, why may not the latter be so called, tho' it should have an End? As some imagine it will; but both are foolish Dreams and alike untrue. Farther, if this Liberty may be taken in interpreting the Scripture, I am sure, it will be impossible to prove from thence, the Eternity of God himself; for his eternal Existence is not expressed in stronger Language, than is used about his Decrees, and the Designation of Christ unto the mediatorial Office, in respect to that Duration, wherein the divine Decrees were formed, and Christ was set up, or constituted Mediator. And such Liberty can be taken, only to maintain that which is directly absurd, and repugnant unto some of the most glorious Truths of the Gospel, viz. Christ's eternal Relation to the Church of God, and his eternal Engagements in her Favour, in the Covenant of Grace. These Phrases, from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was, so fully express Eternity, or that immeasurable Duration which was before Creation, that I much scruple whether any, which do more strongly express it in Scripture, can be produced. So operose was Solomon, in setting forth the Eternity of Wisdom, lest it should be thought that he spake of created Wisdom, as the learned Gerjerus observes. When God represents unto us his eternal Existence, it is thus: Yea, before the Day was, I am he { Isaiah 43:13}. And when he asserts the Eternity of his Decrees, it is thus: Calling the Generations, {çarm} from or before the Beginning { Isaiah 41:4}. And the plain Sense of the Phrases here used, is, Duration before the Commencement of Time, or the Existence of any Thing created. Christ was set up before the World or Time, before the Beginning, and before the Earth existed¹⁰. I humbly hope that the proper Eternity of the divine Decrees, and the proper Eternity of the mediatorial Office of Christ, are established beyond sober and modest Objection; which were the important Ends that I had in View, in this Discourse. I shall close it with making three Observations.

First Observation. The Evangelical Scheme is wholly new. It is a System of Truths, which Reason in its higher Perfection, could not possibly have acquired any Knowledge of. There are three Principles, from which we derive all our Ideas, viz. Sensation, Reflection and Abstraction; by neither of which we could ever have obtained, the least Acquaintance with the deep Things of God. And this is, I humbly apprehend, the Meaning of the Apostle in these Words: Eye hath not

seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him. The Eye hath seen much, and the Ear hath heard much: A very considerable Part of our Ideas, are gained by Sight and Hearing; which includes in it, the whole of the Instruction that we receive from others, relating to the Nature of Things. But it was not possible that by these Means we should ever have discovered any Evangelical Truths: Sensation could not enable us to make such important Discoveries; neither could Reflection on those Ideas gained by Sensation, help us in this Matter: Nor could Abstraction, which is a Separation of our Ideas; by which Act of the Mind a new Kind of Ideas are obtained, which are purely intellectual, assist us in this Thing. The Reason hereof is clear. The Truths of the Gospel have neither Connection with, nor Dependence upon, any Branch of Truth, which a finite Understanding is capable of discovering. If we had a complete Knowledge of the first Covenant, in the whole Compass of its Principles, Precepts, Promises and Threatenings, we then should be absolutely unable to make the least Discovery of the Doctrine of the second Covenant; for that is entirely new, and altogether distinct in its Nature, from the first Covenant. And it being so, none of its Truths come within the Verge, even of unimpaired and perfect Reason; which fully proves the absolute Impossibility, of the human Mind gaining the Knowledge of its Truths, by any Acts it is able to put forth. Angels themselves could never have known any Thing at all of Evangelical Mysteries, without supernatural Revelation. Truths they are, which were hid in God, who created all Things by Jesus Christ. To imagine, as some have imagined, that the second Covenant is founded on Truths contained in the first; or upon those natural Notions, which we have as Men, of the moral Perfections of God; is effectually to destroy both Covenants: For, that Imagination, is inconsistent with the Nature of the Covenant of Works, and with the Nature of the Covenant of Grace. The mediatorial Scheme, hath no Relation unto, nor Agreement, in its Nature with the Doctrine of the first Covenant; tho' it is calculated to secure the highest Honour to it, by the Obedience and Death of Christ.

Second Observation. Hence we learn what will be the noble Employ of the Saints in the heavenly State: viz. The Contemplation and Adoration of the Divine Perfections, as displayed in the astonishing Affair of their Recovery and Salvation. Some seem to please themselves with the Thoughts of this, that in Heaven they shall become perfect Philosophers, and have a more extensive Knowledge of Things created, than Adam had in Paradise: That they shall be able to unravel Nature in her secret Causes, numerous Operations, and multiplied various Effects. I can find nothing in Scripture, which favours this tickling Imagination: This I know, that the Souls of the Saints, will be eternally entertained, with what is infinitely more noble, sublime and grand, than any Thing which Nature can possibly suggest to the Mind. I am clearly of the Opinion of an eminent Divine in this Matter, who speaks thus: Is it not much to be lamented that many Christians content themselves with a very superficial Knowledge of those Things? {i.e. Gospel Truths} How are the Studies, the Abilities, the Time and Diligence of many excellent Persons, engaged in, and laid out about the Works of Nature, and the Effects Divine Wisdom and Power in them, by whom any Endeavour to enquire into this glorious Mystery {of Christ's Person} is neglected, if not despised! Alas, the Light of Divine Wisdom, in the greatest Works of Nature, holds not the Proportion of the meanest Star unto the Sun in its full Strength; unto that Glory of it which shines in this Mystery of God manifested in the Flesh, and the Work accomplished thereby. A little Time shall put an End unto the Subject of their Enquiries, with all the Concernment of God and Man in them for evermore. This alone is that which fills up Eternity, and which altho' it be now, with some as

nothing, yet will shortly be All. f11 The constant Contemplation on these glorious and sublime Mysteries, fills the Minds of the Blessed with the higher Complacency and Delight, and will maintain in them a holy Adoration of God unto Eternity.

Third Observation. If we approve of these Things, and they are delightful unto us, as the Glory of God shines forth in them; it is an Evidence in itself, whether we allow it or not in our own Favour, that we are the happy Subjects of a gracious Illumination from God. For, such is the Nature of these Heavenly Mysteries, that the carnal Mind hath not, nor can have any Pleasure in them. That receives them not, they are Foolishness unto it, whatever is pretended to the contrary; it cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. And, therefore, if the Things themselves are agreeable to us, if they are our chief Joy, and that State is most desirable to us; wherein we shall perfectly know them, and be for ever conversant about them, we are certainly meet for the Enjoyment of it. Our present Satisfaction and Complacency in these sublime Truths, as they are glorifying unto God in all his infinite Perfections, is a full Evidence of our future Happiness in the Contemplation of them, in the World of Light and Glory above. For, our Approbation of Heavenly Things is a clear Proof, That God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory, in the Face {#or Person} of Jesus Christ.

FOOTNOTES.

Ft1 Mr. Hussey, The Glory of Christ unveil'd, p. 85, 86.

Ft2 Mr. Stockell. The Redeemer's Glory unveiled, p. 36.

Ft3 tyçar Without the Prefix b.

Ft4 hgq Ft5 Mr. Stockell, ibid. p. 41.

Ft6 Redeemer's Glory, etc. p. .

Ft7 Ibid.

Ft8 Redeemer's Glory, etc. p. 34.

Ft9 Upon this Occasion, I cannot forbear to say, it is to be wished, that some Persons could prevail with themselves to rest satisfied, without becoming Authors; especially on sublime Subjects, which they are not qualified to write about, and, therefore, they expose themselves, and do much Prejudice to Truth, by their Publications on such Subjects.

Ft10 Ante Seculum uncta sui, ante Principium, ante Primordia Terrae: So Noldius renders the Words. Vid. Concord. Partic.

Ft11 Dr. Owen of the Person of Christ, p. 290, 291.

S. The True Sense of The Atonement

By Christ's Death, Stated and Defended; In Answer to a Pamphlet intitl'd 'The Scripture Doctrine of Atonement Examined' by Mr. Taylor of Norwich by John Brine (London: John Ward, 1752)

SERMON 17 THE TRUE SENSE OF ATONEMENT

STATED AND DEFENDED; IN ANSWER TO A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT EXAMINED' BY MR. TAYLOR, OF NORWICH WITH An APPENDIX, CONTAINING An ANSWER to the OBJECTIONS of an anonymous Author to the Doctrine of SATISFACTION, in a Pamphlet, intitl'd, Second Thoughts concerning the Sufferings and Death of CHRIST, etc.

Printed by DAN. NOTTAGE, for JOHN WARD, at the King's Arms, in Cornhill, against the Royal-Exchange: And Sold by GEORGE KEITH, at Mercers' Chapel, Cheapside; and by JOHN EYNON, at a Print-Shop, on the North Side of the Royal-Exchange. London

1752 As some Remarks on Mr. Taylor's Piece have been published very lately, the Reader may reasonably expect an Account from me why I now appear, wherein I am willing to gratify him. The Author of those Remarks, is not fond of the Use of the Word Imputation, on the Subject of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings; though he thinks it may be safely applied to both, as Dr. Doddridge hath explained it, i.e. explained it away. f1 He consents to the Truth of false Representation of our Opinion by Mr. Taylor, viz. that we think the Death of Christ made God merciful; and wishes, that what he has said, to correct that Mistake, may not be without Effect. f2 I am not sensible, that any Person ever imagined this. Mr. Hampton grants, that the Sufferings of Christ were not penal, and that there is not a natural Connection between his Death and Remission of Sin; but that his Death is a Ground of our Redemption from Death, through the Will and Appointment of God; f3 as any insignificant Action might have been. This is plainly giving up the Doctrine of proper Satisfaction for sin, or of real Atonement for it. I have some other Reasons for my Dissatisfaction, with Mr. Hampton's Remarks; but I shall not trouble the Reader with them. I suppose, enough is mentioned to convince, that, if our Opinion on this important Point is to be defended, no Occasion was administered by these Remarks, to stifle what I had prepared in answer, to Mr. Taylor. I cheerfully refer my Thoughts on this glorious Subject to the Approbation, or Censure of such Persons as have a proper Conviction of the evil Nature and just Demerit of Sin, a true Sense of the Holiness of God, and his righteous Displeasure with moral Evil; who are willing to be determined by the Holy Scriptures, without wresting them, in their Sentiments concerning this Doctrine, of which we can know, nothing at all, but by Revelation.

{SOME THINGS PREMISED RELATING TO THE SUBJECT}

I FREELY grant, that the Doctrine of Atonement, or Satisfaction for Sin, by the Death of Christ, is not to be explained, by any Judicial Procedures among Men. If it might be illustrated and confirmed by Rules, which do, or can lawfully obtain in human Conduct, towards the Innocent in a Way of Penalty, and towards the Innocent in Consequence thereof: That Doctrine could not

reasonably be represented, as a Mystery, which it is by the Sacred Writers. It is called the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom: And the deep Things of God. I will allow, that human Governments have no Power, or Right, to charge an innocent Person with the Crimes of any Offender, and inflict Punishment on him in his Stead. And that no Man hath Power over himself, either in his Members or his Life, lawfully to consent to suffer Mutilation, or Death, or any kind of corporal Punishment, in the Room of a guilty Person. The Reason of both is very clear to me; Rulers as well as Subjects are under a Law, which is superior to any they have Power to enact, and by which their Constitutions ought, in all Instances, to be directed; viz. natural Justice, according to which, Innocency ever is to be protected, and Guilt alone punished. And, as a Power to punish results from Guilt only, the infliction of Penalty is, in Equity, limited to its own proper Subject, and never ought to be extended farther, it is as just to punish without the Being of Guilt at all, as it is to punish, in any Degree, a Person wholly clear of that Guilt, for which the Law directs unto the Infliction of Penalty. Nor is Guilt transferable from one Man to another, as pecuniary Debts are. This is not pretended.

II. As various of the Terms, which are sometimes used on the Subject of the Atonement of Christ, are borrowed from the Civil Law; it may not be improper to enquire into the Sense of them.

1. Novation: That designs taking away a former Obligation, by a new Stipulation or Agreement, wherein the Consent of the Creditor is required and given. This hath Place in the Affair of Christ's Death. For, according to the Law, we, the Transgressors, were bound over to Punishment for our Crimes; but God, of his infinite Mercy, freed us from that Obligation, by admitting Christ to be our Surety: Or, in virtue of his Stipulation, we are let free, and he became responsible unto God for us. This was an Act of Sovereignty in God.

2. Satisfaction: This is a Term, that is also borrowed from the Civil Law, and it intends a Creditor's accepting what is offered and paid to him, by, or in Behalf of a Debtor, though it is not what he might, according to the Obligation, have demanded. Satisfaction, therefore, does not necessarily imply a full Payment, for that may be, where the latter is not. When we use the Word on this Subject, we mean, that no Demand will, or can be made upon us, because God agreed to accept of the Payment of our Debt by Jesus Christ, and he hath discharged it, or made good his Engagement in our Behalf. The Death of Christ is to be considered, as the procatarctic Cause; and Satisfaction, as the Effect.

3. Acceptilation: That imports a Creditor's agreeing to accept another Thing, or less than what is in the Obligation, whereby the Debtor is no less freed from the Obligation he was under, than if the Idem, or same, was paid, that the Obligation expresses. This is, indeed, understood of Obligation by Words among Civilians, and is not properly applicable to this Affair. But some do at least allude unto it: Yet they allow not that Force unto Acceptilation in this Matter, which, according to the Opinion of Civilians, it contains in it, viz. The Removal of the Obligation. If it should not so do, in this Business, Christ would be injured; for it is not just to require an innocent Person to die in the Room of the Guilty, and suffer the Obligation to remain on him.

4. Solution: This is the Payment of what is in the Obligation, from whence Satisfaction, by Right, follows. Satisfaction, as has been observed, may be, where Solution is not, because the Creditor may be content with receiving less than he had a Right to require: But Satisfaction must needs be, where there is Solution, because, in Right, the Creditor can make no farther Demand. And this is

the Case, in this Affair. For Christ paid the Idem, or the same that was in our Obligation. We stood obliged to suffer the Curse of the Law, and that includes the whole Penalty our Sins demerit; no farther Punishment is due to Sin, than what is contained in the Law's Curse: And, therefore, the Death of Christ was a proper and full Payment of our Debt; consequently, it must be satisfactory to God, our righteous Judge. God might have insisted upon Payment from us, and not have accepted of the Engagement of another for us; but since, by Novation, he dissolved our Obligation, or admitted of a Surety, his Payment of what was required in the Obligation upon the Ground of Justice, gives us a Right to Impunity. And, therefore, when it is said that the Satisfaction of Christ was refusable, we must be careful, that we understand it in a right Sense.

(1.) If by it is meant, that God was at Liberty to admit, or not admit of his Sponson, or Engagement for us, it is true. For he might justly have retained us under the Obligation, and not have allowed of the Payment of our Debt by a Surety. The Acceptation of his Undertaking for us was an Act of sovereign Favour, and, therefore, it is, that we are said to be freely forgiven, although our Surety discharged our whole Debt. But,

(2.) If by it is intended, that what Christ suffered for us was refusable, or might not have been accepted, or allowed to be the Solution of our Debt, it is most false; because he suffered that Curse which the Law threatened, and he was, in his Person, such as gave that Worth unto his Death, which the Justice of God required, unto Sufferings satisfactory for Guilt. The Appointment of Christ to suffer, in our Stead, was an amazing Act of sovereign Mercy, Kindness, and Grace; but the Acceptation of his Sufferings, for our Discharge, was an Act of Justice, because they were, both in Kind and Value, what that required, in Case of a Violation of the Law.

And, therefore, it is a Mistake to think, that, God having required his Son to die for us, he may, that notwithstanding, only grant unto us Terms, or Conditions of Pardon, and, for Want of our Performance of those Conditions, impute our Guilt to us, and inflict upon us the Penalty our Sins deserve. It is Matter of Favour to be content with the Payment of less than is due; but of Right to be satisfied with the Payment of the Whole, which can in Justice be demanded, whether it be by the Principal or Surety. The Agreement between God and Christ, as our Surety, did not render his Sufferings available to procure the Pardon of Sin; if so, then, their Value is not intrinsic; but is extrinsical only, or it is of arbitrary Appointment. His Death was the Result of the sovereign Decree of God, and of his own free and voluntary Engagement to submit to the sovereign Pleasure of the Father. But the Merit, Virtue, and Efficacy of his Sacrifice to take away Sin, or attone for our Guilt, spring not from any Agreement between God, our righteous Judge, and Christ, our Surety. The Merit of it arises wholly from the Nature of his Sufferings, as they were properly penal, and the infinite Dignity of his Person. As the infinite Demerit of Sin is not the Effect of the Divine Will, but results from the infinite Greatness of God, against whom it is committed: So the Value of Christ's Sufferings is not of Divine Constitution and Appointment; but it is the proper and necessary Result of the infinite Dignity of the Person of the Sufferer. Hence it follows, that the Compact between God and Christ did not give Merit to his Death and Sacrifice, nor constitute how far, and unto what Ends, it should be accepted, on our Account: But merely his Act of offering himself a Sacrifice for our Sins. Sovereign Love to our Persons determined upon his becoming a Sacrifice for us, and Justice grants those Effects, which that Sacrifice, because of its intrinsic Worth without an arbitrary Appointment, merits at the Hand of God, our Lawgiver and Judge.

III. It is a Consideration of great Importance, that God acted in this Business, merely in a sovereign Manner, both towards us, and towards our Saviour.

1. Towards us. His Resolution to pardon and save us was an Act of his Goodness; but it was his Goodness acting in an arbitrary Way: For it is not Goodness merely that ordains the Salvation of a criminal Creature; if it was, it would be contrary to Divine Goodness to inflict Punishment on Sinners, which certainly it is not, and, therefore, this was a free Act of God's Will: Or a Purpose of Grace, which is wholly to be attributed to his absolute Pleasure. It was not a natural Act of his Goodness, as his rewarding Innocence is; but a free and sovereign Act of Clemency and Favour.

2. Towards Christ. The Divine Decree to punish Sin was an Act of Justice; but the Decree of punishing it in him was an Act of Sovereignty. The Justice of this Decree is apparent, in that Respect was had unto Sin, as the meritorious Cause of Penalty: And the Sovereignty of that Divine Purpose clearly shines, in fixing upon Christ to be the Subject of the Punishment Sin demerits. It was not a free Act of the Divine Will to decree to punish Sin; if it was, God might have decreed to permit the Creature eternally to sin against him, without suffering any Punishment for his Rebellion. But it was a free and sovereign Act of his Will to decree, that Christ should bear Sin, and suffer the Penalty due unto it. Justice directs to the Punishment of Sin, as what is fit and proper. Sovereignty appointed and provided the innocent subject, on whom Penalty was inflicted, in order to our Pardon and Impunity. So that Sovereignty is that, from which our Salvation originally springs, into which it must be entirely resolved, and whereupon it absolutely rests. And, if we deprive God of his Sovereignty, we must inevitably damn ourselves. For that alone could provide for our Recovery and Salvation. Hence,

(1.) We see the Reason why no finite Mind could ever have thought of this Method of saving Sinners. All Acts of Goodness and Justice which proceed not naturally from those Attributes in God, but are free and sovereign Acts of his Will, must be undiscoverable by Reason; because it hath no Rule to guide it into the Knowledge of such Acts as spring from Sovereignty alone. And, therefore, it is proper to infinite Wisdom to contrive the Way of our Salvation. And such a Mystery this is, as will eternally fill the Minds of Angels and Saints, with holy Adoration.

(2.) This will enable us to discern, why our Lord put his Sufferings wholly upon the Will of God, and why his Sacrifice was so pleasing unto him. He put his Sufferings wholly upon the Will of God; because, tho' it was natural to God to will to punish Sin, it was a free Act of his Will to impute Sin to him, and punish him for it. The Sacrifice of Christ was infinitely pleasing unto God; because his Will was therein subjected to the Will of God, in such Sort, as the Will of no Angel or Saint is, or ever will be. This was such an Act of Obedience, as never was, nor ever will be required of any Creature. And herein God was more honoured by our blessed Lord, in all his glorious Perfections, than he will be, by the Sufferings of the Damned, or the Obedience of Angels and Saints unto Eternity. This, among other Considerations, is the Reason why the Sacrifice Christ offered, was of a sweet-smelling Savour unto God; not merely as Sufferings, but as submitted unto, with his whole Soul, out of a Regard unto his Glory, as a gracious, holy, and just God.

(3.) Hence we also discern, that there was an intrinsic Worth and Efficacy in the Sacrifice of Christ. According to Mr. Taylor, what Virtue it had, or which he is pleased to allow unto it, (that I intend to consider, with the Assistance of the Grace of him, whose this Sacrifice is) arose from the Will and Appointment of God. If so, then there was no intrinsic Virtue in it to answer any important End,

either respecting God, to whom it was offered, or Men for whom it was offered. And, consequently, God is no more honoured in any of his Attributes, in the Salvation of Men, than if he had saved them, without requiring this Sacrifice; nor do any Advantages accrue to Men from it, that they might not as well have enjoyed without it. Which Supposition is such a Reflection on the Wisdom of God, who appointed Christ to suffer and die, as would certainly cause Men to blush who advance it, if they were not wholly given over to Blindness and Stupidity. As our Saviour, in his Sufferings, was, in such an unparalleled Manner, obedient to the Father's Will, his Death hath Virtue and Efficacy in itself, independent of any Act of the Divine Will, to attain the great Ends whereunto it was designed. This Transaction was the Effect of the sovereign Will of God; but the Worth, Virtue, and Efficacy of his Death and Sacrifice are intrinsic, and not of arbitrary Appointment. If it was, God might have willed his Death, without decreeing it should answer any important End, either respecting himself, or Men; and he certainly did, for aught we know, Besides, was it possible for infinite Goodness, Holiness, and Wisdom, to will the Sufferings of the innocent Jesus to an End, which they, in their own Nature, had no Virtue or Efficacy at all to answer? but it is wholly of arbitrary Appointment, that such an End is answered by his Sufferings and Sacrifice.

They are but swelling Words of Vanity which those Men use, concerning the Goodness of God, in this Affair, who deny the real Merit of the Sacrifice of Christ. If Divine Goodness is, as they say it is, exalted gloriously, in freely pardoning Sin, without Satisfaction for it, and the Death of Christ could not, nor was intended to satisfy for Sin, nor had any Virtue in itself; but, what Efficacy soever it hath, it is extrinsical, and of Divine Appointment only; then how is Goodness displayed in delivering him up to Suffering and Death for us? Towards Christ it was an Act of Severity, and to us no Instance of Goodness, which was at all necessary to our Pardon and Salvation. For the Death of Christ could not be necessary to our Remission, if it had no intrinsic Worth in it, meritorious of Forgiveness. There was no Goodness manifested to us Sinners, in the Gift of Christ for us, if his Death had no intrinsic Virtue in it: All the Kindness, which can be pretended in this Matter towards us, is God's Decreeing, that his Death shall be a Condition, or Reason of our Pardon, without any Virtue in it to take away, or atone for our Guilt. And such a Virtue as this, God might have assigned unto the Death of any Martyr, or even of a Beast offered to him in Sacrifice, if that had been his Pleasure. For such Virtue is assignable to another Person or Thing, if it is assignable unto Christ.

IV. The Government of the Jews was Theocratical, or a Theocracy: God took upon himself the Government of that People. And,

1. He gave them a perfect Law, which required the Practice of all Holiness, and forbid every Sin. God, who is infinitely holy, cannot require less than perfect Purity, however depraved the Subjects of his Rule are. He can make no Allowance for their Weaknesses, Temptations, or Occasions to Evil.

2. His Law threatened Sin with Death. The Soul that sins shall die. And this Threatening respected every Sin, and all Degrees of Sin. So that every Deviation from the Rule of Duty, and the Want of perfect Conformity to the Law, in the Manner of the Performance of it, subjected to that awful Menace. If, as their King, he had proceeded according to this Law, no Man among them could have enjoyed any Favour, or even Life; and therefore, 3. God appointed the Offering of Sacrifices to make Atonement for Sin, in many Cases. Wherein we may observe, (1.) He did not charge or

impute Guilt unto the Offerer of those Sacrifices, as the Governor of that People.

(2.) Nor were they subject unto the Commination of Death, upon their Offering those Sacrifices. But,

(3.) Were to be continued in Life, and in the Enjoyment of such Favours and Privileges, as were granted unto them by God, who took upon himself the Rule over them, as a Nation. The Law of Sacrifices was, therefore, political; but intended of God, if the divine Writer to the Hebrews mistakes not their Meaning, as Types of far greater Things than any they really contained, viz. the actual Removal of Guilt, Freedom from the Condemnation, and Curse of the Law, and Escaping Divine Vengeance.

4. Some Sins were not to be atoned for by Sacrifices, in this political and typical Sense; but the guilty Persons must suffer corporal Death for those Crimes, viz. Murder, Adultery, Blasphemy, etc.

5. Sacrifices were appointed for some atrocious Crimes, viz. Defiling a Servant-maid, Theft, and Perjury; and therefore it is not true, that they were instituted only for common Frailties, and Sins of Ignorance. {Leviticus 5:1; Leviticus 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:20.}

6. The anniversary Sacrifice was offered for Sins of all Sorts, as the Terms used concerning it do clearly and abundantly evince, Iniquities and Transgressions in all their Sins. Those Terms include all Sorts of Sins, which was intended to signify, that a spiritual Atonement was to be made even for such Offences, on Account of which, the guilty Person must suffer corporal Death, according unto that Law, which was the Instrument of the Jewish Polity. As to the temporal Life of that People, it was preserved or forfeited, as they were innocent or guilty of such Crimes, for which no Sacrifices were appointed of God: But that was not the Rule according to which God proceeded in the Business of Salvation. If it had been so, no Murderer, etc. could have been pardoned and saved.

It was the Design of the Institution of Sacrifices for lesser Crimes, to teach that People, that the Remission of them, small, as they might be inclined to esteem them, could not be without Atonement made: And the Institution of the anniversary Sacrifice furnished them with a Ground of Hope of the Pardon of such Crimes, for which those, who were guilty of them, must suffer corporal Death. And this seems to be one Reason, why the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews particularly observes, that that anniversary Sacrifice could not take away Sin, in order to prove the Necessity of another. That being more comprehensive than the others, it was most apposite to his Purpose to instance in that, for that Reason; and for that Reason, chiefly, it was so, {Leviticus 16:16; Leviticus 16:21.} Yet, it also seems to be instanced in, with a farther View, viz. to prove the Necessity of another Sacrifice to be offered for lesser Sins, than what the Levitical Law required. For, in this anniversary Sacrifice, there was a Remembrance even of such Sins, for which other Sacrifices had been before offered. And, therefore, tho' the Offerer was not liable to Penalty, by the political Law, yet he could not plead his Pardon in a higher View, by Virtue of that Sacrifice which he offered before unto God; neither could he by Virtue of this anniversary one, for that must be repeated at the Return of the Year.

7. That Law, Commandment, or Covenant which consisted of the Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial Laws given unto that People, did not contain, promise, or convey real, spiritual Remission, Peace, and Reconciliation to Sinners. It was impossible, that those Blessings should be enjoyed by Virtue of that Constitution, wherein there was neither a Priest fit to make real spiritual Atonement for Sin,

nor any Sacrifice offered, which could be of Efficacy unto so important an End. The Law made nothing perfect, neither Persons nor Things; neither those who officiated in Divine Service, nor them for whom they acted, in the Execution of the sacerdotal Office. Hence the inspired Writer speaks of the Whole of their Service in such depreciating Terms as he does, viz. carnal Ordinances, weak and beggarly Elements; the Rudiments of the World; a Shadow, and not the Image. The highest Excellency and Glory of all that Apparatus of Service was its typical Relation unto the glorious Things promised, exhibited, and conveyed in another, and infinitely better Covenant, which is abundantly proved in the Epistle to the Hebrews 8:1-13. The new Covenant promises, contains, and conveys those glorious Things themselves, which the Law was a typical Representation of, and no more: Nothing greater or nobler, can be attributed unto it. And those Things are real spiritual Remission, eternal Redemption, Reconciliation, Freedom of Access unto God, and the everlasting Enjoyment of him, by Virtue of the Blood of this Covenant. As it was not an Offer of political Pardon that was obtained by legal Sacrifices, but Pardon itself, in that Sense: So the Blood of Christ procured not an Offer of Remission, but Remission itself, taken in that Sense which is proper and peculiar unto the new Covenant, wherein his Sacrifice was appointed and provided. The Blood of Bulls and of Goats availed unto the Procurement of political Pardon of Sin, according to the old Covenant, and not unto an Offer of Forgiveness: And the precious Blood of our dear Lord Jesus obtained for us real Pardon in a spiritual Sense, and not an Offer of it, according to that better Covenant, which is established upon better Promises. These Things serve fully to discover the Fallacy and inconclusive Nature of the Reasoning of the Socinians, on the momentous Subject of the Satisfaction of Christ. What Force is there in those Arguments, which are drawn from the Levitical Sacrifices, to prove the Non-imputation of Sin to him? That he did not suffer the Penalty our Guilt demerits? And that real spiritual Remission results not from his Death? None at all. Since that whole Oeconomy only was a Shadow and obscure Representation of these Matters, it is not to be expected, that we can find the Things themselves therein. And, because they were only typical of those Things, therefore was it necessary, that there should be another Priest to act for us, in Things pertaining to God. Another Sacrifice was absolutely needful to be offered, in order to make proper, real, and spiritual Atonement for Sin. Real Spiritual Atonement was not, nor could be made by any, or all the Rites of the first Covenant; nor was it the Intention of that Covenant to supply the Federates with real spiritual Pardon. That Pardon was not spiritual, but typical only of such Remission; and that Atonement was homogeneous, or typical only. As the new Covenant dispenses real spiritual Pardon, so real spiritual Atonement is made by the Sacrifice, which that Covenant provides.

{OF CHRIST'S BEARING SIN}

I. AS I intend, in this Chapter, to prove the Imputation of our Sins to Christ, I would first enquire into the Ground of the Charge of our Guilt to him, and of his Bearing it for us. If no Foundation can be shewn, whereon our Crimes might, in Justice, be placed to his Account, I readily acknowledge, that the Opinion of his bearing our Sin is indefensible, and it must necessarily sink, together with our Hope of Salvation by him. But, blessed be God, our Hopes of Remission, by Virtue of his Sacrifice, are built upon a most solid Basis. For, Christ and the Church constitute one mystical Person. He is the Head, and his People are the Members: Or such a Union subsists between him and them, as is a proper Foundation for the Act of the Imputation of their Sins to him. And he is their Surety. By so much was Jesus made the Surety a better Testament {Hebrews 7:22}. A Surety

is one who undertakes to pay, suffer, or do something for others, either because they are defective in Credit, or Ability. Thus Judah became Surety to his Father for his Brother Benjamin: I will be Surety for him; of my Hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the Blame, (or I will be Sin, i.e. accounted guilty) for ever {Genesis 43:9}). And the Apostle Paul undertook to satisfy Philemon both for Wrong and Debt, in Behalf of Onesimus: If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aright, put that on mine Account, I will repay it {Philemon 1:18-19}. Judah's Sponson respected the Security of the Person of his Brother: The Apostle's related unto the Satisfaction of Philemon, for Wrong and Debt. The Suretyship of Christ includes both: The Safety of the Persons of his People, and the Payment of their Debt, or making Satisfaction for that Wrong which they have done. The latter is here principally intended, which was Christ's undertaking to accomplish the Will of the Father in our Redemption: Then said I, Lo, I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me: I delight to do thy Will, O my God: yea, thy Law is within my Heart {Psalms 40:7-8 ew:7-8 ew:7-8}). The Father's Will, and his own voluntary Engagement, brought upon him an Obligation to suffer and die: Ought not Christ to have suffered these Things {Luke 24:26}? And, therefore, it is false, which one asserts, viz. that Christ was not under a moral Obligation to suffer for us. This Sponson is the Ground of the Imputation of our Sins to him, and of the Infliction of Penalty upon him. Mr. T. objects several Things to evade the Evidence, which is given unto this important Truth, where Christ is expressly called a Surety. Says Hebrews 1:1-14. This is the only Place where he is so called. He is no less truly a Surety, than if he had been so called in a thousand Places. One express Testimony from God is a sufficient Evidence of Truth. 2. Not our Surety. It is not difficult to determine whole Surety he is, and must be. He is the Surety of the defective Party in the Covenant, which is not God, but us. 3. A Surety is one who undertakes for the Performance of a Promise. 1. This is but an imperfect Account of a Surety. Judah was a Surety for his Brother unto his Father, but did not undertake for the Performance of any Promise of his. 2. It is blasphemous to imagine, that God had Need of a Surety, to secure the Performance of his Promises, or to assure us by his Sponson of their Fulfilment. No Creature can be of equal Credit or Ability, with God. And such only Mr. T. thinks Christ Isaiah 3:1-26. He confounds Mediation and Suretyship. f4 A Person may be a Mediator, and yet not be a Surety. Moses was the former, but not the latter. Christ is both Mediator and Surety.

Again, Christ is a Surety in the Discharge of his sacerdotal Office, as the Words evidently suppose. And, therefore, he offered himself a Sacrifice, as a Surety: Or that Act was a Fulfilment of his Sponson. Schilctingius was aware of this, and endeavours to enervate the Force of the Argument, taken from hence to prove, that Christ is our Surety; but it is in a very weak and frivolous Manner. His Reason, that we did not send Christ, is trifling. For, not his Mission, but his Undertaking makes him a Surety. f5 If Christ acted as a Surety, in the offering of himself a Sacrifice for Sin, that was the Matter of his Undertaking, in his Sponson, and he must be our Surety, and not God's: And that he did so, is evident, because he is a Surety, as he is inverted with, and acts in the priestly Office.

II. In his bearing Sin, we may observe the Act of the Father, which was the Imputation of our Sins to him, or placing that Wrong we have done to his Account. This is clearly expressed: The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all. Iniquities mean sinful Actions, the same as Transgressions, for which he was wounded. No Instance can be produced, where (zy) Iniquity intends Suffering, merely, or in an abstracted Consideration from Guilt, as the Cause of Suffering. He made our

Iniquities to meet, or fall upon Christ; so ([gp]) is sometimes rendered. f6 The same Thought is expressed in these Words: When thou shalt make his Soul (μῆσα) Guilt, or Sin, as it is sometimes translated. f7 Christ could not become a Sacrifice for Sin, without a Charge of Guilt or Sin to him. And this Point of Doctrine is asserted by the Apostle: He hath made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin. The Sufferings of Christ were the Consequence of the Imputation of Sin unto him; hence, in Suffering, he was made a Curse, which he could not be, in Justice, considered as innocent.

III. Two Acts of Christ are observable, with Respect to his bearing Sin.

1. The Susception of it. He took it upon himself: Or fully and freely consented unto the Charge of our Guilt to him. This Act is expressed by the Word (αἴν); he bare the Sin of many. In various Places the Septuagint render this Word by, (λᾱμᾱ>νω) which is used to express Taking upon, or Receiving, as may be seen in the Margin. f8 Our blessed Saviour received our Guilt, by consenting unto the Imputation of it to himself.

2. He bare it as a Burden; so the Word (ἴκσ) whereby his Bearing of Sin is expressed, properly signifies: He shall bear (ἴκσ) their Iniquities {Isaiah 53:11}. He stood under the heavy Load of our Guilt, until it was fully atoned for, which would have sunk us deeply into the infernal Pit. The former Word expresses his Taking Sin upon him, and this represents his Standing under that massy Weight. Several Things may be observed, which confirm the Thought of Christ's bearing the Guilt of Sin, in Suffering for it.

(1.) Making his Soul Guilt, and causing our Iniquities to meet in, or fall upon him, express an Act of God, which is distinct from Bruising and Putting him to Grief; and, therefore, they design an Imputation of Sin, in order to suffering Punishment.

(2.) He bare that which we have Conscience of, which must be Guilt. That which our Consciences are purged from, by the Blood of Christ, he bare in his Sufferings for us, which is Sin or Guilt.

(3.) He bare that for which Sacrifices were offered, and that must be Sin committed. Hence, in Opposition to the legal Sacrifices, it is said of him, that he was once offered to bear the Sin of many, without which he will appear the second Time.

(4.) Christ bare that which there was a Remembrance of in the anniversary Sacrifice, which was Guilt contracted.

(5.) He bare that, which, the Blood of Bulls and Goats could not take away, viz. our Guilt, or Sin, which we have committed. I think, that a proper Consideration of the Scope and Connexion of the Divine Writer, in the 9th Chapter of Hebrews, and the Beginning of the 10th, will be sufficient to convince of the Truth of these Things.

(6.) The Death of Christ could not be penal, without an Imputation of Guilt to him, as the meritorious Cause of his suffering and Death. For, where no Charge of Sin is, no Penalty can be inflicted, in Justice. And, therefore, when Christ suffered Punishment, or was made a Curse for us, he was made Sin, by the Imputation of our Sins to him.

IV. Mr. Taylor is pleased to observe, That there are nine Bearers of Sin.

I. God {Exodus 32:32; Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Joshua 24:19; Psalms 25:18; Psalms 32:1}, etc.). i.e. he forgives it. 1. He imputed it to Christ. 2. Punished Sin in him, when he was made a Curse. 3. Acquits us of our Guilt. 2. Christ {Isaiah 53:11-12}. How he bare Sin hath been shewn, 1. Our Lord took upon himself, or received our Guilt, in consenting unto the Charge of it to him. 2. Bare it as a Burden, laid on him by God. 3. The Angel who was with the Israelites in the Wilderness {Exodus 18:21}. This was Christ. And Pardoning Sin is intended, as we translate the Word. 4. The Priests and Levites {Exodus 28:38; Leviticus 10:17; Numbers 17:1-13}, i.e. ministerially, or as they performed those sacrificial Services, which were appointed to take away Sin, in a typical Sense. 5. Such who were offended {Genesis 50:17; Exodus 10:17; 1 Samuel 15:25; 1 Samuel 25:28}. This designs Forgiveness. 6. The Scape-Goat {Leviticus 16:22}. That is to say, typically. 7. The Criminals themselves {Leviticus 7:18}, etc.). 1. Sin was imputed to them. 2. They suffered Punishment. 8. The Children of the Israelites bore the Sins of their Parents {Numbers 14:33; Lamentations 5:7}. 1. They were not, nor could be considered innocent. 2. It was Punishment which they suffered. 9. The Prophet Ezekiel. f9 Unto what Purpose this last Instance is produced, it is difficult to conjecture, and he seems to be entirely at a Loss, how to improve it to his Advantage.

V. The Author proceeds to make Observations, on his laboured Collection of Texts, wherein Bearing Sin is mentioned.

1. No Levitical Sacrifice is ever said to bear Sin. The Scape-Goat did bear Sin; but it was not sacrificed, or slain. f10

Answ. 1. The Imposition of Hands on the Sacrifice, there is Reason to think, was attended with an Acknowledgment of Guilt. 2. If those Sacrifices did not bear Sin, why are they called (μῆρα) Guilt, or Sin? 3. The Scape-Goat, which he allows bore Sin, belonged unto the anniversary Sacrifice, and by that was Atonement made {Leviticus 16:10} 4. Not to mention any of the Stories which the Jewish Writers, relate, concerning the Scape-Goat, two Things are to be observed in real spiritual Atonement for Sin, viz. the Punishment of it in Christ, and its Removal. The slain Goat typically represented the former, and the Scape-Goat the latter. As the anniversary Sacrifice was more comprehensive, or of greater Extent than the other Sacrifices, in that Atonement which was made by it for Sin: So there was in it a fuller typical Representation of spiritual Atonement than in any other. The slain Goat typified Christ's Sufferings, and the Scape-Goat his Removal of our Guilt, thereby, from us, and out of the Sight of God as a Judges 2:1-23. When the great God is said to bear Sin, the Meaning, I apprehend, must be that he took or carried it away, for this is a common and current Sense of the Word (אָחַר) f11

Answ. 1. I grant that the Word is often to be understood in that Sense. But, 2. He must allow, that it is also used to express Taking up and Bearing. 3. Let us consider, how God takes or carries away Sin. Is it making that undone, which is done? No, for that implies a Contradiction. Is it taking away the criminal Action, physically considered? No, that is impossible. Is it reckoning or accounting the Sinner not to have committed the criminal Acts, which are taken away? No, for that is contrary to Truth. It is not imputing, or not reckoning those Actions to him, as relatively considered, or as Breaches of his holy Law. Hence, the Apostle expresses Pardon thus: Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin. 4. Though God cannot otherwise bear Sin, than by pardoning it; Christ could, and did take it upon himself, and bear it as a Burden, in order to take it away, by

making Satisfaction for it. He adds, Iks, too, {Isaiah 53:11}, will admit the Sense of carrying off, or away, {Isaiah 46:4}. Even I will carry you off and I will deliver you. This Word is also used, {Isaiah 53:4}. He hath carried our Sorrows; which, doubtless, St. Matthew {Matthew 8:17.} understood in the Sense of removing, or carrying off, when he saith, himself took [away] our Infirmities, and bare [carried off] our Sicknesses. f12

Answ. 1. He well knows, that this Word properly signifies to bear, sustain, or carry, as a Man bears a Burden; nor can he produce an Instance, where it is used in a different Sense. 2. Bearing in {Isaiah 46:4}, is a distinct Act from delivering, which is afterwards promised, and therefore the Sense of carrying off, cannot be admitted in that Place. 3. That Sense cannot be allowed in {Isaiah 53:4}, because it is evidently the Design of the Prophet to represent, or express what our Saviour endured, or underwent for us. 4. Matthew did not understand the Term in that Sense, for he renders it by a Greek Word, which signifies to bear, (o airwn) as a Man bears a Load. 5. Christ's Curing bodily Sicknesses was an Evidence and Effect, of his Bearing our Sins, and that Penalty which they demerit, and, therefore, he applies, or accommodates the Thing unto its Evidence and Effect, which is not unusual with the New Testament Writers. A plain Instance of this we have: And gave Gifts unto Men: in the Prophet, it is, received Gifts for Men. f13

3. And in the same Sense, or one near akin to it, our Blessed Lord, and the Jewish High-Priests, Priests, and Levites, bare Sin, as they made Atonement for Sin, or suffered or in those Things which God was pleased to appoint, as proper, on their Part, either for the Removal, or to signify the Removal, or Taking away of Guilt. In the Margin, says he: This Idea the Writers of the New Testament give us of Atonement and Pardon; particularly, in Relation our to Lord. {John 1:29}. The Lamb of God, (o airwn) which taketh away the Sin of the World. {1 John 3:5}. He was manifested that he (arh) might take away our Sins. {Romans 11:27}. When (afairein) I shall take away their Sins. Hebrews 10:4. It is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should (perielein) take away Sins. Put way Sin, and bear the Sins of many, signify the same Thing, {Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 9:28}. f14

Answ. 1. In Levitical Services, there was a typical Bearing of Sin. 2. As the Effect of that, a typical and political Pardon of Sin, or Removal of Guilt. 3. What Christ took away, he bare, and was made, if we may believe the New Testament Writers: He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree: He hath made him to be Sin for us who knew, no Sin. 4. That he took away our Guilt, is a certain and precious Truth; but not believed by Mr. Taylor, for, according to his Opinion, Christ obtained nothing more, than an Offer of Forgiveness, and it is left to us to do that, where upon follows the Removal of our Guilt. In his Opinion, Christ neither bare, nor bare away our Sin. 5. In {Romans 11:27}, God's Act of Pardon is expressed, and not what our Saviour did and suffered, in order to the Removal of our Guilt. 6. It is false, which he affirms, that to put away Sin, and bear the Sins of many, signify the same Thing, in {Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 9:28}. For putting away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself, is the Effect, and his bearing Sin, in the offering of himself, is the Cause. Therefore, they differ as a Cause, and its Effect resulting from it, do differ, and are not the same Thing. 4. His fourth Observation not being to the Purpose, I shall take no Notice of it, viz. Forbearing, for a Season, to inflict deserved Punishment. f15

5. Says he, The Word also denotes to bear a Burden; and so metaphorically to bear, or to be liable to bear, or endure Punishment and Suffering. Thus Criminals bore their own Iniquities. f16

Answ. 1. He allows that the Word denotes to bear a Burden, and, therefore, when it is used to express Christ's Bearing our Sin, it may intend his Bearing it upon himself, as a Load. But, 2. He will never be able to prove, that the Word (lks) bear, hath any other Signification, which is used to express Christ Bearing our Sin, or Guilt. 3. When Descendants bore the Whoredoms or Iniquities of their Parents, which he mentions, we must observe, (1.) They were not innocent, but guilty, and guilty of the same Sins, as their Fathers were. (2.) Guilt was charged on them. And, (3.) They suffered Punishment. Therefore, (4.) The Terms used in Relation unto the Sufferings and Death of Christ, or his Bearing Sin, are properly expressive of a Charge of Guilt, of Bearing it, and of suffering Punishment, in Consequence of that Imputation of Sin or Guilt. No unnatural and forced Sense is put upon them, when we interpret them to such a Meaning. This is well worthy of Observation.

6. He seems conscious to himself, that his sixth Observation, which relates unto Ezekiel's Bearing the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, cannot convey any Light to us on this Subject: And, therefore, I may justly pass that over. Now he comes to his Conclusion.

7. Upon the Whole, says he, It is abundantly evident, no Proof can be drawn from Scripture, that Bearing Sin includes the Notion of transferring Guilt from the Nocent to the Innocent. f17

Answ. 1. According to the Scripture all Men universally, are become guilty before God. There is no innocent Person among the Race of Adam, who naturally descend from him; how, therefore, can we expect to find any Account, in Scripture, of transferring Guilt from the Nocent to the Innocent: All this Labour of Mr. Taylor's is but solemn Trifling on this momentous Subject. Nor, 2. Is it to be proved from Scripture, that God ever did, or will decree, that the Innocent shall suffer, on Occasion of the Crimes of the Nocent; will Mr. Taylor for that Reason deny, that Christ suffered, on Occasion of our Sins? He cannot, if he really thinks, that the Death of Christ is a Condition, Reason, or Motive with God to forgive sin. 3. The Affair of Christ's Death is a singular and unparalleled Case, and, therefore, it is preposterous and absurd to argue, that, that cannot be in this Case, which is not to be found in other Cases, which cannot be compared with it. In another Place, he farther objects unto the Transferring of our Guilt to Christ, and recommends a Pamphlet, intituled, Second Thoughts concerning the Sufferings and Death of Christ. I shall consider briefly what that Author offers on the Subject, in an Appendix to these Sheets. Says Mr. Taylor, Guilt is my doing Wrong, whereby I become obnoxious to Punishment. And, therefore, Guilt in its own Nature cannot be transferred. For Punishment is necessarily connected with the Wrong done, and the Wrong is done by none but myself: Therefore Punishment can be due to none, and, consequently can possibly be inflicted upon none but myself. f18

Answ. 1. Actions good or bad, physically considered, cannot be transferred. But, 2. Actions relatively considered, or in their Relation to the Law, may be transferred, or reckoned, or imputed to others, when there is a proper Foundation for it, as there is in the Affair of the Imputation of our Sins to Christ, viz. his Sponsion, or his becoming a Surety to God for us. 3. It is not supposed, that he did the Wrong, nor was Christ reputed to have done the Wrong; but the Wrong done by us was put to his Account. As the Apostle Paul desired, that the Wrong as well as Debt of Onesimus, might be imputed to him, or placed to his Account. And, 4. Hence Punishment, in Justice, was inflicted on Christ, upon the Ground of his Suretyship-Engagement to God for us. 5. The Reason, why nothing parallel to this may be acted among Men in criminal Cases, is, Rulers and Subjects

are equally bound by natural Justice, and, therefore, Lawgivers have no Power to require, or accept of the Sponson of an innocent Person for the Guilty, in criminal Cases; nor hath any innocent Man Power over himself, or a Right to put himself under the Obligation of any Criminal, if he would. 6. The Righteousness of God's Nature will not permit him to suffer Sin to go unpunished. His Will to punish Sin is necessary, though free; if it were not, he might have willed to permit the Creature to fin for ever, without suffering Punishment. But, 7. As God is above the Law, wherein it is constituted or appointed, that Punishment shall be inflicted on the Guilty, by Perpetration of Offence; he can dispense with it in that Particular, and admit of the Sponson of another, who hath Power over himself, to put himself under our Obligation. We know, full as well as any Socinian whatever, that nothing like this may be transacted among Men; but, if we are not greatly mistaken, the Judicial Procedures of God, in the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and punishing it in him, and pardoning Sin to the Guilty, are not to be measured by, compared with, or accommodated unto the Judicial Proceedings of Men, in criminal Cases. And herein consists much, both of the Glory and Mystery of our Redemption, by the Death of Christ. If there was not something singular and unparalleled in this Affair, there would be neither Mystery nor Glory in it. And this is what some Men are labouring to prove, out of Hatred to the Glory of God, as it shines through Jesus Christ, in the fulness of our Salvation, by his Death, as me meritorious Cause thereof. Mr. Taylor elsewhere speaks thus: It may be alledged, that the Lord laid on him the Iniquities of us all, {Isaiah 53:6}. But who knows not, that our Redemption is imaged by various figurative Expressions? As, healed by his Stripes; washed from our Sins in his Blood; he was made Sin for us: Which, if understood literally and strictly, would supply very strange Doctrine. f19

Answ. 1. The Stripes and Blood of Christ are the meritorious Cause. 2. Our Healing, Peace, and Pardon are the Effect. 3. He was made Sin, by a Charge of our Guilt to him. Which Things are not strange, but glorious, and will eternally be so esteemed by those who are the subjects of Redemption. He adds, Taking the Passage, as it stands in our Translation, we ought in Reason to interpret it agreeably to the preceding Phrases, which relate to the same Thing. {Isaiah 53:5}, He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. - And the Lord hath laid on him, (it is in the Margin, hath made to meet on him) the Iniquities of us all; that is, the Sufferings by which we are all redeemed. f20

Answ. 1. Let an Instance be produced, where (zw) signifies merely Suffering, or Suffering without Relation to Guilt, and take what is contended for. 2. In Isaiah 53:5 the Prophet declares for what he suffered, viz. our Transgressions: And, in these Words, he expresses God's Act of charging our Sins to him, when he suffered, and in order to his Suffering. 3. He opposes the Imputation of our Sins to him unto that false Opinion the Jews had of Christ's being stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, for his own Guilt. And, therefore, it is not his Suffering, which is meant, but the meritorious Cause of his Sufferings, Guilt, not his own, but ours. He subjoins, But, considering the Metaphor of Sheep going astray, by which the Wanderings of Mankind are represented, and the Turn which St. Peter gives to this Passage, I am inclined to think, that the Spirit of God, in Isaiah, has Reference to the Meeting of stray Sheep, in order to bring them back again to the Shepherd, {1 Peter 2:24-25; Isaiah 53:6}. - And the Lord hath made to meet (occursare) by him the Iniquities of us all. That is to say, by him the Lord hath caused to meet and stop the Iniquities of us all, wherein we have wandered from him, to turn us back to himself, who is the Shepherd of our Souls.

Answ. 1. The Word signifies to meet, without including the Idea of Stopping. 2. Christ is the Subject, in, upon, or against whom our Iniquities, were made to meet, as the whole Scope of the Place fully proves. 3. The Prophet speaks not of our Persons, but of our Crimes. And, 4. He speaks of Crimes committed, or of Guilt already contracted. 5. Stopping us in a sinful Course, and making us to turn back to the Shepherd of our Souls, is not stopping our Sins which we have before committed. He observes, that the Word we translate, hath laid, is, in Hiphil, which only adds the Idea of causing or making, the same that we render meet, Exodus 23:4. If thou meet thine Enemy's Ox or Ass going, astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again; to no other Purpose, which I can discern, than letting the Reader know, that he is acquainted with the different Sense of Verbs, in different Conjugations, in the Hebrew Language; and that is a Matter of no great Importance. However, this Instance proves, that the Word ([gp]) does not necessarily include in it the Idea of Stopping, for a Man might meet his Enemy's Ox or Ass, and not stop either. Whether Men act with upright and sincere Intentions, who thus shamefully pervert the Scripture, Mr. Taylor, and others, will do well, in a most serious Manner, to consider, lest they continue to wrest it unto their own Destruction. Thus far of Christ's Bearing Sin.

{OF THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, AND OF THE VIDENCES, THAT THEY WERE VICARIOUS. }

I. IF our Saviour really bore the Sins of the many, who obtain eternal Salvation, through the Merit of his Sacrifice, his Sufferings, certainly, were exceedingly great. For the Imputation of such a Mass of Guilt must be followed with Sorrows, Grief and Distress of Soul, inexpressible.

1. Let us consider several Expressions of his, in Relation to this Matter. And, our blessed Lord speaks thus: Now, is my Soul (tetaraktai) troubled, and what shall I say? The Word, which we render troubled, is very significant, and expressive of Terror {John 12:27; Esther 7:6}, Consternation {Genesis 41:8}, Trembling {Isaiah 64:2}, and Bowing down {Psalms 42:6} through Grief and Fear, in each of these Senses, the Septuagint use it, as the Reader will see by examining the Places referred unto. And, therefore, the Anguish and Distress, which our Saviour was now the Subject of, must be extremely great. Add to this: My Soul is (perilupov) exceeding sorrowful even unto Death. The Word signifies to be surrounded, or encompassed with Sorrow on every Side. And the Septuagint use it to express a Dejection and Casting down of the Mind, through overwhelming Grief {Matthew 26:38; Psalms 43:5; Matthew 26:37}. This our Lord said, to express the Sorrow and most grievous Anguish which then attended him: He began to be sorrowful, and (adhmonein) very heavy, or exceedingly full of Anguish, insomuch that he was ready to faint.

2. The Prostration of our Lord shews both his Humility, and the depressing Weight of Sorrow, which his holy Soul laboured under. He fell on his Face to the Earth {Matthew 26:39}, and lay in the Dust, through the Force of that pungent Grief, which took deep and firm Possession of his pure Mind. And he became thus prostrate three Times {Matthew 26:44}.

3. His Agony is an Evidence unto what Height the afflictive Passions of Fear and Sorrow role in him: And, being in an Agony, he prayed more earnestly {Luke 22:44}. The Word (agwnia) Agony, signifies great Anxiety, or Perturbation of Mind.

4. The Tears be shed, and the strong Cryings be poured forth, prove the inconceivable Anguish, Grief, and Sorrow, his whole Soul was filled with (Hebrews 5:5) His Supplication unto the Father, is called Roaring {Psalms 22:1}, because of the vehement and intense Manner, wherein he addressed him, through the Greatness of that prevailing Sorrow, which overwhelmed his Heart.

5. The extraordinary Effect, which the Distress of his Soul produced in his animal Frame, is a full Evidence of its unparalleled Greatness. Through the extreme Anguish of his Mind, he sweat as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground {Luke 22:44} Instances of the like are not at all needful to be produced, to prove the Credibility of the Fact; because, as there never was such a Subject of Suffering, in this World, so never did any one, upon Earth, suffer like him: His Visage was so marred, more than any Man's, and his Form more than the Sons of Men {Isaiah 52:14}.

II. We shall be at no Loss, in accounting for the extreme Dolours of our Saviour, if we duly consider the positive Acts of God, which he, as a righteous Judge, taking Vengeance on Sin, put forth, upon the Soul of Christ immediately. Men wounded him in his Body; but his Father bruised and put him to Grief, in his Soul, when he made that an Offering for Sin. Wherein the Particulars following, are observable:

1. The Father made him Sin for us, and caused our Iniquities to meet in, or fall upon him. Not that the Father accounted him to have committed those Sins, or Iniquities, or produced a Consciousness in him of the Perpetration of those Crimes, which he bore, in order to atone for them; but he impressed his Mind with a piercing Sense of the Charge of our Guilt to him, and excited a most painful Sensation, in his Soul, of the dreadful Malignity and Demerit of Sin, wherewithal he stood charged, as the Surety of his People.

2. He made him a Curse: Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us {Galatians 3:13}. Our Saviour was as really made a Curse for us, as we are, in Fact, delivered from the Law's Curse, in Consequence of his Sufferings and Death. To say, as the Socinians do, as it were, he was made a Curse, or he seemed to be made a Curse, is an impious Contradiction of the express Assertion of the holy Spirit, and not an Interpretation of it. This was not the Act of Men, for they could not make our blessed Lord a Curse; nor the Act of infernal Spirits. It was the Act of God, which he put forth, immediately upon the Soul of our Redeemer, whereby he most deeply pierced and put him to Grief.

3. The Father withdrew from him, or forsook him. This Dereliction affected not his Union to, or with the Father, for no Breach was made on that: Nor the Interest he had in his Approbation and Delight: Neither that Sustentation under his Sorrows by the Father, which he had promised to him; but it was the Want of the Enjoyment of his ravishing and delightful Presence. As in his Crucifixion he enjoyed not the chearing Rays of the natural Sun: So in that most awful Season, he suffered the Loss of the comforting Rays of heavenly Light, by the thick Cloud of our Guilt, interposing, between his holy Soul and the Father of Glory. He was encompassed by Darkness without, and deprived of the Light of Divine Favour within. And, therefore, he uttered that sore Complaint: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me {Psalms 22:1}? This was the Punishment the Loss, which he endured. Farther,

4. The Father impressed his Mind with a Sense of his vindictive Displeasure against Sin. As he had decreed, that Christ should suffer for us, and he had consented to become a Victim for our

Guilt: He (ouk efeisato) did not spare him {Romans 8:32}, or deal tenderly with him; but commanded the Sword of Justice to awake against, and smite him: Awake, O Sword against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, smite the Shepherd {Zechariah 13:7}. Sovereign Mercy towards us provided and presented the Victim before Divine Justice, with his free Consent; and God, as a Judge, calls upon Justice to execute Vengeance: Justice, armed with all its flaming Terrors, rises, and falls upon the willing Sacrifice, and his Soul is absorpt of Grief and Anguish, in Consequence thereof.

III. The Sufferings of our blessed Lord from Men, previous unto, and in his Crucifixion, were extremely great. What Indignity and Reproach were cast upon him! Unto what Scorn, Derision, and Shame was he exposed! How cruelly and inhumanly was he used, in his Examination and Trial! Men do not treat the most villainous Malefactor, in such a Manner, as the innocent and meek Jesus was treated! He was the Subject of the most contemptuous Speeches: Spit upon: Buffeted: Blindfolded, and struck in the Face, taunted at, and called upon to prophesy, or declare who smote him: He gave his Back to the Smiters, and his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair, and hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting: Scourged: Delivered by the Governor, convinced of his Innocency, and of the Malice of his Enemies, into the Hands of barbarous, rude, and merciless Soldiers to be mocked, derided, and crucified. They stripped him of his Garments, arrayed him in Robes of mock Majesty: Platted a Crown of Thorns, and put it on his Head, and smote him with a Reed, whereby his sacred Flesh was torn, and Veins pierced: And, in Derision, bowed the Knee before him, crying, Hail King of the Jews. They led him forth to the Place of Execution, he bearing his Cross, until, as they might reasonably suppose, he was ready to faint, through the cruel Usage he had received: His Limbs were violently stretched, which must put him unto great Torture, and his Hands and Feet were nailed to the accursed Tree; and, by how much more tender and curious the Texture of his Body was, by so much the more, he was sensible of Pain, and, therefore, the Piercing of his Hands and Feet must be attended with exquisite Sensations of Pain. In these dreadful Circumstances, he was forsaken by his Friends, and unpitied by the relentless Number of inhuman Spectators, who surrounded his Cross.

Every tender Passion was banished from the Breasts of the Beholders of him, in his Sufferings; nothing but a savage Disposition possessed them. Hence, instead of Pity, he met with Reviling, Insult, and Blasphemy. They wagged their Heads, and cried out, He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let him come down from the Cross, and we will believe on him; he trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him. And when the Extremity of his Pains, thro' the Dislocation of his Bones, and the Piercing of his Hands and Feet, had brought on him a scorching Fever, which was attended with extraordinary Thirst; there bloody Miscreants presented to him Gall and Vinegar to drink, a most bitter and biting Potion. Thus the innocent Jesus was delivered up into the Hands of Sinners, according to the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, to be crucified and slain. When we consider these Things, surely, we can't but say: Oh, what Wickedness is in the Mind of Man! Oh, what intense Love to poor Sinners filled the Soul of our blessed Lord, that made him willing to undergo such Sufferings, in order to save them from deferred Destruction! Oh, what an evil Thing is Sin, that was the procuring Cause of all the Ignominy, Reproach, Dolors, and Agonies, which our Saviour was exposed unto, and expired under, on the Cross! Oh, how hard are our cursed Hearts, that they are not broken, dissolved, and melted within us, by the Consideration of his agonizing Pains, unparalleled Reproaches, and

taunting Insults from his Enemies, when he suffered for us, to redeem our Souls from Hell and Destruction! And, surely, we must be convinced, if we duly consider what our Lord suffered from the Hand of the Father, what he underwent from Men, by his Appointment and Decree, with a View to our Redemption from Sin, and its penal Effects, that the Transaction of his Death was necessary in order to our Salvation. Can we possibly persuade ourselves to think, that this Affair was willed and decreed of God, without any Necessity, or with no View to the Vindication of his Authority, and Satisfaction of his Justice, in saving us from Misery? Or, that there is no Fitness in the Death of Christ to atone for our Guilt, and procure the Remission of our Sins, for which he suffered, both in his Soul and Body, in this amazing, Manner? Surely, no such Imagination can find Admittance in our Minds, if we will allow ourselves seriously to consider of those Things.

IV. Christ suffered in our Stead: Or, his Sufferings were vicarious and in our Room.

1. This is evident from what is observed above. For, if he was made Sin, if he was made a Curse, and if he suffered from the Hand of God immediately, or if God himself, by positive Acts, put forth upon him, did bruise and put him to Grief, or make his Soul an Offering for Sin, his Sufferings were penal, and, consequently, vicarious. Because no innocent Person can be the Subject of Penalty, for Sins of his own, by Reason he hath committed none; therefore, his penal Sufferings must be the Effect of the Guilt of others, and he must endure those Sufferings, in their Place and Stead. It hath not yet been proved, nor ever will be, that the Sufferings of Christ were not penal, since in Suffering he was made a Curse.

2. He suffered for our Crimes: Says the Prophet: But he was wounded for Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities. And the Apostle asserts, that he died for our Sins, that he was delivered for our Offences: The unbelieving Jews thought he was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, for Guilt of his own: But he was wounded for our Transgressions, etc. This is spoken in Opposition to the false Opinion of the incredulous Jews, who imagined, that he had contracted Guilt, which rendered him worthy of Death, and very clearly suggests, that it was not without a meritorious Cause he so suffered, but that, that Cause were not Sins of his own, but those of others.

3. Our blessed Saviour died for us: God commended his Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us. That is to say, not for our Good only, but in our Room, and so for our Profit, as is clear from the Use of the Preposition, and the Scope of the Place. The Preposition is used to express in the Place or Stead of another. That (uper sou) in thy Stead, and (uper Cristou) in Christ's Stead. The Scope of the Place evidently evinces, that this is the Sense intended. For, the Apostle supposes, that for a good Man some might dare to die {Romans 5:7}. Not hazard Life, to preserve a good Man in imminent Danger, as Mr. Taylor paraphrases the Text; but actually to resign Life for him, or to die in his Stead. A Man may hazard his Life, and yet preserve it. The Apostle designs an actual Resignation of Life, and not Exposing Life to Danger, which may be, and often is done, without Dying. And Christ is said to give his Life (anti pollwn) for many, i.e. in their Stead.

4. The Life of Christ was given as a Ransom, (lutron) a Price of Redemption for many {Matthew 20:28}), which necessarily supposes, that he died in their Stead. For they were obnoxious unto Death, on Account of Guilt, and he gave his Life to redeem them from that Obnoxiousness to Death, and, therefore, his Death was vicarious, or, he died in their Stead.

5. All those Effects are ascribed unto the Death of Christ, which it may be thought to procure for us, as taken in that Point of Light. (1.) Expiation of Sin. (2.) Peace and Reconciliation. (3.) Redemption from the Curse of the Law. (4.) Security from suffering Divine Wrath and Vengeance. There are such Effects as might be expected to arise from his Death, if he died in our Room; and, therefore, there is clear and cogent Reason to conclude, that he not only died for our Good, but in our Stead, considered as Criminals, and for that Reason obnoxious to Death.

6. Our Forgiveness, on the Foundation of Christ's Death, is an Act of Righteousness. God set forth his Son to be a Propitiation, - to declare his Righteousness: Not his saving Grace and Mercy, as Mr. Taylor speaks, f21 but his Holiness and Justice. If God is just in forgiving Sin, his Justice must be satisfied for the Sin pardoned, which it could not be by the Death of Christ, if he died not in our Stead.

7. This Method of Pardon and Salvation became God: It became him, for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings {Hebrews 2:10}. The Condecency of this Procedure respects the Righteousness of God's Nature, and, therefore, Christ's Sufferings must be referred unto Justice, and, consequently, in Suffering, he was our Substitute.

{OF ATONEMENT, OR RECONCILIATION FOR SIN }

MR. Taylor apprehends, that the Sense of Atonement hath not yet been understood. Let us; therefore, see what additional Light he strikes upon this Subject. If he discovers any Thing of Importance relating to this Matter, which we did not discern before, I promise to give him those Praises, which such a Discovery demands.

I. Spiritual Atonement for Sin, as it hath been understood, includes there Things in it: The Expiation of Guilt. Reconciliation, or Peace with God. And the Sinner's Impunity, or Deliverance from an Obnoxiousness to Suffering Punishment, for his Guilt. Our Author's Design, is, if possible to explain away this Notion of Atonement, or Reconciliation for Sin by the Death of Christ. The Reader ought carefully to observe, that the Atonement made by Sacrifices was not followed with real, spiritual Remission of Sin, as the proper Effect of those Sacrifices, by whomsoever they were offered. Sacrifices were not required unto that End, nor was it possible, that such an End could be brought about by them, which is clearly asserted, and abundantly proved in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

II. Mr. Taylor opposes the Opinion of the Substitution of the Sacrifice, in Stead of the Offender, and offers various Reasons against it, which I shall take into Consideration.

1. The Sins for which Sacrifices were generally offered were Sins of Ignorance, and ceremonial Uncleanness, which were not capital by Law. The Victim therefore could not die in the Offender's Stead, when his Offence was not punishable with Death. f22

Answ. 1. According to the moral Law, all and every Sin was punishable with Death: "The Soul that sins shall die. Death, therefore, is the Wages of every Transgression of that Law. 2. As all Men are degenerate and guilty, the moral Law cannot be the Rule of Judgment, as to Life and Death, in human Societies, because there is no Man but hath forfeited his Life, according to that Law. For it allows no Sinner to live. 3. The political Law, given to the Jews, made some Breaches of the moral

Law capital; as Murder, Blasphemy, and Adultery: And other Breaches thereof it did not make capital: As Theft, Uncleaness, in one Instance, and Perjury. And, therefore, some atrocious Crimes did not subject a Man guilty of them to Death, in a political Sense. 4. Sacrifices were not instituted for any Breach of the moral Law, which the political Law made capital. Hence, David, in Relation unto a capital Offence, whereof he had been guilty, says: Thou desirest not Sacrifice, i.e. for this Sin of mine, else would I give it {Psalms 51:16}. But it follows not, that those Sins for which they were instituted, were not capital by the moral Law, or that those Breaches of the moral Law, did not render a Person worthy of, and subject him to Death, according to that Law. Therefore, 5. The Author's Reason, why the Victim could not die in the Offender's Stead, entirely vanishes, viz. that it was offered for Crimes not punishable with Death. 6. The political Law required the Shedding of Blood for Transgressions of the moral Law, which were not capital, in a political Sense; and, if the Sinner willfully neglected to offer Sacrifice for his Offence, he was to die without Remedy. And, therefore, 7. The political Law, or God, as the Governor of that People, accepted of the Death of the Victim, as an Atonement for the Sin of the Offerer of it, and allowed him to live, though by his Crime he had forfeited his Life; and the Death of the Beast offered in Sacrifice was vicarious. 8. This was a lively Type of the Substitution of Christ in our Room, and of his Sufferings and Death in our Stead, to make real spiritual Atonement for our Sins, in order to deliver us from that Curse, whereunto they subjected us. The Socinians, as they are Enemies to the Whole of real Christianity: So (dicam quod fentio) they are the greatest Triflers, where they seem to reason most, in objecting against it.

2. If the Virtue or Efficacy of every particular Sacrifice consisted in Suffering n vicarious Punishment, then, whereas that Punishment was the same in all such Sacrifices, by whomsoever offered, it must have had its Effects in all those Sacrifices; and they must all have been equally acceptable to God, as such. Which is well known to be false. f23

Answ. 1. Who says, that proper Punishment was inflicted on those Sacrifices? 2. Those Sacrifices were offered, that the Offender might not die. 3. The Offering of those Sacrifices, as Mr. Taylor allows, did discharge the Sinner from political Penalties: Let him prove, if he is able, that, that Penalty was not Death. f24 Yet, 4. It is not pretended, that these Sacrificial Services were equally acceptable to God, whether performed in Faith, or not.

3. Indeed, the Victim might, and, I suppose, did, represent the Person who offered it; whatever was done to that, was to be applied to himself. Then, observe, 1. As the Beast was slain, surely, it signified to him, that he deferred to be slain, or to die for his Sin. 2. It was Sin committed, or Guilt already contracted, on Account whereof he offered Sacrifice. To shew him, adds he, the Demerit of Sin in general; how he ought to slay the Brute in himself, and devote his Life and Soul to God, etc. f25 - But this is very remote from the Victim's Suffering, in his Stead, the Death which he deserved to die for his Sins, or Suffering a vicarious Punishment. f26 How does this appear? He gives no Evidence of it. Hereby the Offender was discharged from political Penalties, he grants; and that those Penalties were not Death, he will never prove. - 1. The Death of the Beast was not, properly speaking, Punishment. But, 2. That typically represented the vicarious Punishment, which the Lamb of God was to bear, in order to make real, spiritual Atonement for Sin. With him, vicarious Punishment is a Contradiction in Terms. For as there cannot be a vicarious Guilt, or as no one can be guilty in the Stead of another; so there cannot be a vicarious Punishment, or no one can be punished instead of another. f27

Answ. 1. No one can contract Guilt instead of another. But, 2. One may bear Guilt which is contracted, instead of another. And, 3. Suffer Punishment in the Place of another. Because, says he, Punishment, in its very Nature, connotes Guilt in the subject which bears it. f28

Answ. 1. Guilt is not an inherent Quality, but a Charge of Sin, and an Obnoxiousness to Condemnation on that Account. 2. An innocent Person may come under such a Charge, for it is not a Transfusion of a sinful Action, or of the corrupt Habits of the guilty Person but only an Imputation of his Sin, or Guilt. Thus, 3. He may bear it, though he becomes not the Subject of Sin, as an inherent Quality.

4. He asks a very surprising Question, But is not vicarious Punishment, or the Victim's suffering Death in the Offender's Stead, as an Equivalent to Divine Justice, included in the Notion of Atonement? Answ. No. f29 1. Why is this Query put? Did ever any Person think so? Is it possible that a Man in his Sense can imagine, that the Death of a Brute, is an Equivalent for Sin committed against God? But, 2. This is no Objection unto an Equivalent being required and given, in order to real, spiritual Remission. He seems to proceed as gravely to prove the Negative, as if the Affirmative was believed and professed, whereas, I suppose, it was never dreamt of, by any Man professing Christianity, in the World. But some Men must be allowed solemnly to trifle, when, and where, they find themselves unable to reason. He goes on to say, (1). Atonement was made with the Scape-Goat, though he was not slain. f30

Answ. 1. That belonged unto the Sacrifice, {Leviticus 16:5}. 2. The slain Goat typified the Sufferings of the Lamb of God. 3. The Scape-Goat represented, in the same Manner, the Removal of Guilt, as the Effect, of his Sufferings and Death.

(2). Says he, If the Offender was not able to bring a Lamb, etc. - he was allowed to bring the tenth Part of an Ephah of fine Flour for a Sin- Offering, etc. - Which could never suggest the Idea of vicarious Punishment. f31

Answ. 1. This Exception did not weaken, but strengthen the general Law. 2. Inasmuch as Bread is the Staff of Life, the Burning of the Flour may well be thought to represent to the Offender, that he deserved to die. And, 3. That, in order to real spiritual Remission, a Life must be parted with. Farther, 4. Though this Change was allowed because of the Poverty of the Offender, it follows not that his Thoughts were to be taken off from the Sacrificing of an Animal for his Sin, which, but for his Poverty, he stood obliged unto. 5. Nor did the Shedding Blood, in itself, imply Atonement by vicarious Punishment. For it is never said, that Atonement was made for Sin by, Peace-Offerings, etc. f32

Answ. 1. In legal Sacrifices, proper Punishment was not inflicted. But, 2. Shedding of Blood was fitly typical of taking away Life, in a Way of Punishment for Sin. 3. Though in some Instances Blood might be shed, when Atonement was not made for Sin, it is not to be concluded from thence, that Shedding Blood, in typical Atonement, was not a Type of that vicarious Punishment, which Christ the Anti-type was to bear. 6. - It is the Blood that maketh Atonement for the Soul. But how? By Way of vicarious Punishment? Not a Word of that. f33

Answ. 1. That Atonement was typical only. 2. Proper Punishment was not borne. Yet, 3. It fitly represented Christ's Shedding his Blood, in order to make spiritual Atonement.

III. Mr. Taylor proceeds unto an elaborate, but very trifling Enquiry, into the Sense of Atonement. After a Collection of all the Places in the Old Testament, where the Term expressing Atonement is used, as a Verb and Noun, seemed good to him to employ himself in examining into the Sense of the original Word, (rpk) where it is used without any Relation, unto the Offering of Sacrifices, for Sin. Not to find out Truth, but to amuse and mislead his Reader, and prevent his discerning what Atonement for Sin, by the Death of Christ, includes in it. In this Labour he spends almost twenty Pages, wherein it is entirely needless to follow him. If he had been disposed, as he ought, to have learned what Atonement signifies, or contains in it, he might without any Difficulty. For, 1. The Word, actively used, signifies to appease, pacify, reconcile, or make Reconciliation {Genesis 32:20; Proverbs 16:14}. 2. When used passively, it imports, that a Person is appealed, pacified, or reconciled (Ezekiel 16:63). 3. As a Noun, it is taken for a Price, or Ransom {Job 33:24}. Hence, 4. When Atonement is made by a Price, or Ransom, nothing is to be feared from the Party who was before displeased. And there Things have Place in the Atonement made by Christ for our Sins. (1). Guilt is covered or removed, and taken away out of the Sight of God, as a Judge. (2). The Death of Christ is our (rpk) Atonement, or Ransom, and Price of Redemption, and nothing else. (3) God is pacified towards us, for all that we have gone {Ezekiel 16:63}, in Consequence of his Sufferings and Death. And, therefore, (4). We have no Reason, on this Foundation, to be afraid of his Terrors: For, being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him.

IV. Mr. Taylor makes some Reflections upon his long and impertinent Examination of the Texts, wherein Atonement is mentioned. 1. Forgiveness of Sin is Exemption from Punishment. - A Pardon only in Thought or Word, and which effecteth nothing, as in Effect no Pardon at all. f34 Very well said, this is true, and, therefore, the Death of Christ procured our Exemption from Punishment, or Right to Impunity, and not an Offer of Pardon, for an Offer of Remission is not Pardon. Truth will sometimes out, when Men are very far from an Intention to express it.

2. The Means of making Atonement for Sin are not uniform, etc. f35

Answ. 1. The Blood of Christ is the only Mean, of spiritual Atonement for Sin. 2. Pardon of Sin, in a spiritual Sense, is solely the Effect of his Blood- shedding and Sacrifice. 3. We see the Reason why he asserted above, that Pardon only in Thought or Word, etc. is no Pardon at all; it was to prove, that real, spiritual Atonement for Sin might be, and was made, by other Means than Christ's Blood; because we read of Atonement, without Relation to that as the Mean of it. But, 4. That Atonement was typical and allusive only: That, by the Death of Christ is real, Spiritual, and eternal.

3. The giving an Equivalent to God, is no Ways included in the Nation of Atonement. f36

Answ. 1. Giving an Equivalent is not included in typical and allusive Atonement. I know of none who think it was. 2. If any other Sacrifice than that of Christ had been an Equivalent, his Sacrifice was unnecessary. 3. Though there was not an Equivalent in typical Atonement, it follows not, that an Equivalent was not given to the Law and Justice of God, in real, spiritual Atonement for Sin.

4. The Transferring of Guilt doth not belong to the Sense of Atonement. f37

Answ. As before, 1. Not in Atonement typical and allusive. But, 2. In real, spiritual Atonement it is found, as we have seen. 3. With equal Truth, he might say, that Exemption from suffering eternal Punishment is not included in the Pardon of Sin, by the Death of our Blessed Saviour. In this Branch of his Work, our Author makes a great Shew of Labour and Diligence; but he could not

have acted a more needless and impertinent Part, than he hath done herein; and is as remote from answering the End he had in View, as possibly he could be. For nothing he offers, in the least Degree, affects the Doctrine of real, Spiritual Atonement for Sin, by the Death of Christ, as an Equivalent given to the Law and Justice of God, for our Transgressions.

{OF THE EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S DEATH}

I. CHRIST submitted unto Death, or gave his Life for us: This is my Blood which is shed for many. I am the good Shepherd: The good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep. He loved the Church, and gave himself for it. 2. Our Blessed Saviour died for us, considered as Criminals. God commended his Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us; he that was just, suffered for the unjust. 3. In Dying he was made a Curse for us. Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. And, therefore, 4. His Death was penal, and in our Stead. Mr. Taylor is guilty of two Errors here: 1. He suggests, that Christ only died on our Account, and not in our Place and Stead. 2. He insinuates, that the former of these Scriptures, and others parallel to them, express the Benefit of Atonement, f38 which they do not; but that glorious Mean whereby Atonement was made. Herein he hath acted a Part beneath his Character, as a Scholar; for it is below a Man of Learning to introduce the End of an Action, when the Action is spoken of only.

II. Our Lord suffered for our Sins: Or our Sins were the meritorious Cause of his Death. He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for Iniquities. He died for our Sins according to the Scriptures. He was delivered for our Offences. For the Transgression of my People was he stricken.

1. None can deny that these Modes of Speaking, are capable of this Construction, without the least Force, that our Sins were the procuring Cause of his Death. For, that Thought cannot be expressed more properly by any Phrases, than it is by there. 2. Several Reasons may be offered to confirm this Sense. (1). God made our Sins to meet in him. (2). He took our sin upon him. (3). Bare it as a Burden in his own Body on the Tree. (4). In Dying, he became a Sacrifice for Sin. (5). He was awfully bruised and put to Grief, by positive Acts of God put forth upon him. (6). In no other View can our Pardon be an Act of Righteousness, through his Death. (7). If Sin was not the procuring Cause of his Death, in Dying he could not be made a Curse, which, as has been before observed, he certainly was. (8). Unless this is allowed, we shall never be able to account for the extreme Anguish our Saviour was in, consistent with his Honour.

III. The final Cause of his Death, with Respect to Sin, was the Pardon of it, and that End he obtained by it. This is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins. In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, viz. the Forgiveness of Sins, Having obtained eternal Redemption for us. There was a Fitness in his Death to procure the Remission of our Guilt. Because, 1. His Sufferings were penal; he was made a Curse. 2. His Death had Merit in it equal to the Dignity of his Person, which is infinite. For his Blood is the Blood of God. Pardon includes in it a Non-imputation of Sin, Freedom from Condemnation, and Exemption from suffering Punishment. The Death of Christ gives us a Right to neither of these, in the Opinion of Mr. Taylor; Men have no Title to any saving Benefit, in Virtue of the Sufferings of Christ, as he thinks. They have an Offer of them, and no more, in Consequence of his Death. Right to Pardon they must obtain for themselves, or perish in their Sins. An Offer of Pardon is not Pardon, nor gives Right to

Remission; that must be acquired by the Sinner himself, or else his Sins will never be forgiven. In this Place, Mr. Taylor endeavours to confound the Ideas of Christ's Bearing Sin, and Bearing it away. f39 He shall bear their Iniquities. He bare the Sin of many. Who his own Self bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree. These Scriptures express the Imputation of our Guilt to him, and his Suffering that Penalty which it demerited. And, his Sufferings being satisfactory, he bore our Guilt away. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World. Now, once in the End of the World, hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. These Texts express the proper Effect of the Death of Christ, as it was satisfactory for our Sins, viz. The Bearing away, or Removal of our Guilt. But Mr. Taylor denies, that Christ bore our Sin, or that he bore it away. Obtaining an Offer of Pardon for a Criminal, is not the Removal of his Guilt, he very well knows. Nor is our Lord's Death a Ransom for us, or a Propitiation for our Sins, according to his Opinion. For his Death neither redeemed our Persons from Misery, nor atoned for our Crimes, as he thinks. Neither, does his Death deliver us from Wrath, or the future Punishment of Sin. For that not the least Right unto an Exemption, from suffering Penalty, arises from the Death of Christ to any Sinner in the whole World, is that blessed Doctrine, which he would force upon our Belief.

IV. Mr. Taylor represents the Death of Christ, as the Cause of our Resurrection. f Matthew 1:1-25. Some will be railed from the State of Death, not to enjoy Happiness, but to endure eternal Misery, which is not a Benefit. 2. Our Resurrection, merely, is not an Effect of the Death of Christ. But, 3. Our Resurrection unto Life and a happy Immortality is the proper Fruit thereof. 4. What he advances, in his Note on {Romans 5:20}, is false, relating to our Law, which makes Felony Death, viz. that if a Malefactor, who is executed, should come to Life again, he must suffer again, that is to say, if he was really dead. For, in that Case, the Law would have no Power over him; because he hath already suffered what the Law threatened for his Offence. 4. He hath not proved, nor ever will prove, that, by Death in the Divine Law, is intended Retaining the Body of the Transgressor in the Grave for ever. 5. It is false, that the Saints under the Mosaic Dispensation died under the Curse of the Law; which he asserts they did. f41 6. Christ was not made a Curse by Hanging on the Tree, but in Suffering and Dying; and his Hanging on the Tree is produced as an Evidence of it. 7. Nor will this serve to explain {Daniel 9:24}. For (ϕh) the Transgression, does not mean Adam's first Sin, which is called by the Apostle (paraptwma) Offence; but (ϕp) the Transgression, or the whole Guilt of all those for whom he suffered, {Isaiah 53:8}. 8. It is most false, that all nominal Christians are not under the Law, but under Grace. f42 9. He hath not proved, nor can prove, that Righteousness, in {Romans 3:25}, intends pardoning Mercy. It is the Justice or Holiness of God that is intended. 10. Reconciliation, is Freedom from an Obnoxiousness to Punishment, in the Divine Account, or Peace with God through the Blood of Christ.

V. Another Effect, says he, ascribed to Christ's Sufferings and Death, is our Sanctification, spiritual Healing, or Deliverance from the Power of sin. f43

1. Healing does not mean our Sanctification, in {Isaiah 53:5}, but Freedom from Curse and Wrath. 2. Our Sanctification is a certain Effect of the Death of Christ; but this he allows not. 3. Vain, in {1 Peter 1:18}, intends a sinful Conversation, whether Heathenish or not. In both these Senses, as he delivers us from the Guilt and Tower of Sin, he may be said to purge, wash, and cleanse us from Sin. f44 1. Mr. Taylor believes not, that Christ delivers us from the Guilt of Sin. Nor, 2. From its Power. 3. What he ascribes to our Saviour's Death, he might as well attribute to his Life. For his Birth and Life are as much a Cause of the Removal of our Guilt, and of our Sanctification, as his

Death is, according to the Principles of Mr. Taylor.

VI. The Honours and Happiness, says he, of the future State are another Effect of Christ's Atonement. f45

Answ. 1. It is true, that our eternal Life is a real and certain Effect of the Death of Christ. But, 2. He believes it not. For, 3. He thinks, that Christ's Death procured only an Offer, or conditional Grant of Life: Not a Right unto it; that we are left to obtain for ourselves by our own Works, and, if we do not, we must die eternally.

VII. and Lastly, says he, all the Blessings of the new Covenant are in, or by his Blood. - The Apostle argues at large, that, according to the Divine Constitution, the Death of Christ was necessary to make valid, or to ratify the Covenant of Grace, {Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 10:29; Hebrews 9:15-19}. f46

Answ. 1. The new Covenant is confirmed by the Blood of Christ. 2. All its Blessings are sure unto all the Foederates. 3. They are not all, but some Men only. He adds, so far, and in all these preceding Senses, Christ may be said to have purchased or bought us with his Blood. f47 1. Christ's Death was a Price of Redemption which he gave unto God, as Lawgiver and Judge, for us. 2. Our Persons are his Purchase, {Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20}. 3. It is false, that Righteousness means Salvation, which he says it does, in 1 Corinthians 1:30. 4. He does not believe, that Christ is made Salvation unto us. For, notwithstanding all he hath done and suffered for us, he did not procure Salvation, but only an Offer or conditional Grant, which invests us with no Right at all unto it; we are left to save ourselves by our own Works, and, if we do not, we must eternally perish.

VIII. He tells us, That these Things are abundantly sufficient to satisfy him of the following Particulars: f48

1. That Christ's Blood was shed, etc. for us, on our Account, to free us from some Evil, and to procure us some Benefit. f49

Answ. 1. Christ died in our Place and Stead, as hath been before proved. 2. Let me enquire, what Evil the Death of our Lord frees us from. Does it free us from a Charge of Sin? No. Is our Freedom from Condemnation an Effect of his Death? No. Are we delivered from Divine Wrath and Vengeance, by his Blood-shedding and Sacrifice? No. 3. What Benefit did his Death procure for us? Did he, by Dying for us, obtain Grace to sanctify our Hearts? No such Thing. Did he procure for us Grace to preserve us in the Midst of our numerous Snares and Dangers, in this World, until we arrive unto the heavenly State? No. Did he merit for us eternal Life and Blessedness? No. What was it, then, that he did obtain by offering himself a Sacrifice for us? Nothing at all, but an Offer of Pardon and Life. He hath left us to procure for ourselves a Right to both, and, if we do not, we shall never have a Claim to either.

2. That it was an Offering and Sacrifice presented unto God, and really had its Effects with God, as highly pleasing and grateful to him. f50

Answ. 1. Christ offered himself a Sacrifice for Sin, and, therefore, he bore Sin and suffered Punishment. 2. I would enquire what those Effects are, which the Death of Christ had with God. Does it cause God not to impute Sin to us? No. He holds us guilty still. Does it cause him to deliver

us from Malediction? No. Does it cause him to deliver us from eternal Vengeance? No. Something else must do that, or his fiery Indignation will devour us. These Effects sink into a bare Offer of Pardon, upon the Terms of Repentance and future Obedience. 3. And it was offered unto God for our Sins, in order to their being forgiven by him. - If the Redemption we have, through his Blood, be the Forgiveness of Sins; then it is certain, that the Shedding of his Blood had its Effect with God, as it supplied such a Reason for the Forgiveness of Sins, as the Wisdom and Goodness of God, our Saviour, thought most proper and expedient, and without which he did not think it proper or expedient to forgive them. f51

Answ. 1. He allows not, that Forgiveness of Sin is obtained by the Blood of Christ, though he thus speaks. If Pardon is the proper Effect of Christ's Death, then Right to Remission must result therefrom; but this he will deny. 2. Permit me to ask, Why the Death of Christ is a Reason with God for the Forgiving of Sin? Is it because his Mercy to Sinners is greater, and more illustrious in pardoning them, upon that Condition, previously required of Christ? Not at all. Was his Indignation against Sin, or his vindictive Displeasure with it, manifested in the Affair of Christ's Death? No. For the Holiness and Justice of God had no more Concern in the Business of Christ's Sufferings, than if Sin had never been committed, or were never to be pardoned. God might have pardoned Sin, and saved Sinners, with full as much Honour to himself, without the Death of Christ, as he can with it. But, perhaps, this Mean of Pardon might be proper and expedient, in Relation unto Men, I proceed, therefore, with my Enquiry, and ask, Would it not have been fit and proper to pardon Sin, on the Terms of Repentance and future Obedience, if Christ had not died? Or does the Death of Christ constitute that Fitness? No, by no Means. Does the Death of Christ effect these Terms on which it is proper and expedient to forgive Sin? No more than his Birth or Life, or his making Clay to cure a Man of Blindness with it. Does his Death render these Terms more easy to Men? No more than his Exaltation to Dignity in Heaven. Men might with the same Ease have repented of their Sins, and yielded Obedience unto God, if Christ had not died; for his Death procured no Grace from God to bring them to Repentance, and to influence them unto Obedience, as Mr. Taylor thinks. It is somewhat strange, that Men can possibly be grave, in speaking of the Death of Christ, as a proper and fit Expedient of the Remission of Sin, whose Principles lead them to assert these Things, and that they can expect to be believed, in their Assertions, by any Christian in the World.

4. He offered one Sacrifice for Sins; - nobody can doubt, but the Jewish Sacrifices, in those Cases wherein they were admitted, did obtain the Pardon of Sin in some Degree or other. It must therefore be true, that the Sacrifice of our Lord did obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins, as the Wisdom of God judged it the fittest Method of granting the Remission of them, and that it is with Respect to his Sacrifice that our Sins are forgiven, whenever they are forgiven. f52

1. It was not Pardon in a Spiritual Sense, which the Levitical Sacrifices obtained; it was not possible that they should procure Remission of Sin in that Sense. 2. They did obtain Pardon in a political and typical Sense, which was an Exemption from suffering Penalty, and not an Offer of Remission. 3. The anniversary Sacrifice was typical of Atonement made for all Sin, that is pardoned unto Men. 4. The Blood and Sacrifice of Christ procured not a bare conditional Grant, or Offer of Forgiveness; but a Right to spiritual Remission, or unto an Exemption from deferred Punishment. And, 5. The Virtue and Efficacy of his Death extends unto all the Sins of all the Persons for whom he suffered. The Blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all Sin. 6.

When Mr. Taylor says it is with Respect to his Sacrifice, that our Sins are forgiven, whenever they are forgiven: He means not, that Christ's Death merited our Pardon: Or that any Right to Remission was procured by his Sacrifice: Or that God is in any Sense or Degree more honoured in this Way of Remission, than he would have been without the Offering of that Sacrifice: Or that Christ would have sustained the least Injury, if no Sinner, for whom he died, had ever been pardoned and saved. For, the utmost he was to expect, as a Reward for his dolorous Sufferings, and bloody Death, in Relation to the Pardon of Sin, was a Declaration from God, that he would forgive Men their Sins, in Case they took Care to acquire for themselves a Right to Impunity, by doing what he intended to enjoin upon them, with that View, or unto that End.

5. If God of his own mere Grace had pardoned Sin, says he, without any Respect to the Offering of Christ, there would have been no Occasion at all, that Christ should have offered himself a Sacrifice for the Remission of them. f53

1. If the Death of Christ was not needful, as a Punishment for Sin, it could not be needful as mere Suffering, in order to the Remission of it. If the Righteousness and Justice of God did not require the Death of Christ, as a Penalty due to Sin, which was to be forgiven in Consequence of his Death, it did not require his Death, considered merely as Suffering, to that End. If his Death was needful to our Pardon, it must be, because there is some Fitness in it, why Remission should be extended unto us on that Foundation. Now, there is no Fitness in the mere Sufferings of an innocent Person, however great those Sufferings are, why Criminals should go unpunished. The Decree of the Death of Christ, therefore, must be merely arbitrary, and it is what God might have willed, without the least Intention of pardoning Sin, if it had so pleased him. 2. If there was no Fitness in the Death of our Blessed Saviour to procure Remission of Sin, there could be no Fitness therein to obtain a Declaration or Promise from God, that he would forgive it. This Socinian, nor any other, will ever be able to shew, that there was the least Degree of Fitness in the Death of Christ: to obtain for us either an Offer of Forgiveness, or a Right unto Impunity, upon their Principles. No Fitness can possibly be in it to attain either of these Ends, but considered, and as it really was, penal. 3. It is fit and proper to forgive Offenders, Justice requires it, if an innocent Person is allowed to take their Place, and suffer Penalty in their Stead. And this is the Fact in this Case. 4. If it is said, that this is not to be allowed of; I grant it is not among Men. Neither, 5. Is it allowable for Men to require an innocent Person to suffer any bodily Pains, much less Death, as a Condition of Pardon to the Guilty. 6. If it is said, that God proceeded in this Affair, merely on the Ground of his absolute Dominion and Sovereignty, or without Respect to Justice, then it must be granted, that the Death of our Lord had no Fitness in it to procure either a Declaration and Promise to forgive Sin, on certain Conditions, or Remission itself. God might have willed his Death, if Sin had never entered into the World, and without any Design of pardoning Sin, or of saving one Sinner.

IX. I conclude, therefore, says he, that the Sacrifice of Christ was truly, and properly, in the highest Degree, and far beyond any, other, PIACULAR and EXPIATORY, to make Atonement for, or to take away Sin. Not only to give us an Example; not only to assure us of Remission; or to procure our Lord a Commission to publish the Forgiveness of Sins; Out moreover to obtain that Forgiveness, by doing what God in his Wisdom and Goodness judged fit and expedient to be done, in order to the Forgiveness of Sin; and without which he did not think it fit or expedient to grant the Forgiveness of Sin. f54

Answ. 1. Christ did not bear sin, as he thinks. 2. Nor suffer Punishment. Nor, 3. Make Satisfaction for Sin. And, therefore, (1). He did not bear away Sin, or remove our Guilt. Nor, (2). Obtain the Forgiveness of Sin. Neither, (3). Answer any Demand of the Law and Justice of God for our Sin. Consequently, (4). The Death of Christ was no more than a Condition or Cause, (sine qua non) without which God would not pardon our Crimes, not on Account of any Fitness therein to procure Remission for us; but he willed his Death, unto that End, because it was his Pleasure; and to make a Shew of great Kindness to us, in delivering him up to Death; whereas, in Fact, there was not any at all. For there was, it seems, no Fitness in his Death to bring Glory to him, in pardoning Sin, nor to procure the Benefit of Remission for us. If there was a Fitness in his Death to obtain that great End, Delivering him up to Death for us would justly be considered, as an amazing Act of Kindness, Grace, and Mercy; but, as this is absolutely denied, the Transaction of his Sufferings, was merely arbitrary, and without any Reason, other than the absolute Will of God; without the least Necessity, either in Respect to his own Glory, or our Good and Happiness. And, therefore, this Language is only calculated to deceive and impose upon us, of which the Author cannot be insensible. For which Reason it justly deserves a severe Censure. He presents us with a piacular and expiatory Sacrifice, without Sin being borne, or the least Degree of Penalty suffered by him, who became that Sacrifice; and he pretends, that Atonement is made for our Sins; but the Charge of our Guilt still lies upon us, we are as much as ever obnoxious, before God, to Condemnation, and full as liable to suffer eternal Vengeance, as if that Sacrifice had not been offered, and shall as certainly descend to Hell, if we do not procure for ourselves a Right to Impunity and Life, by our own Works, as if our Saviour had not suffered. The Effect of Christ's Death is only a conditional Grant of Pardon; the Removal of our Guilt, and our Right to Impunity, are the proper Effects of our Repentance and future Obedience. Our Repentance and Reformation are of infinitely greater Value than the Death of Christ, for that only availed to obtain a Declaration, or Promise from God to pardon Sin but they have a Fitness in them to procure Remission itself, according to the Principles of this Author.

{OF THE EFFICACY OF CHRIST'S DEATH} MR. Taylor, in his Ninth Chapter, corrects our Mistakes about the Efficacy of the Death of Christ.

I. The Design of it could not be to make God merciful; or to dispose him to spare and pardon us, when, as some suppose, so great was his Wrath, that, had not Christ interposed, he would have destroyed us. This is directly contrary to the most plain and certain Notions of Divine Goodness, and to the whole Current of Revelation; which always assures us, that the pure Love of God to a sinful World, was the first Mover and original Spring of the Whole of our Redemption by Christ, {John 3:16}. All that Christ did and suffered, was by the Will and Appointment of God: And was conducive to our Redemption, only in Virtue of his Will and Appointment, {Hebrews 10:7; John 5:30; John 6:27-38}. f55

Answ. 1. None suppose, that the Design of the Death of Christ was to make God merciful, or to procure a Disposition and Will in God to shew us Mercy. 2. He does not seem to understand what Divine Anger against Sin and Sinners is; it is not a Passion, but a holy Displeasure with both, necessarily arising from the infinite Purity of his Nature. God can no more suffer Sin to go unpunished, than he can disapprove of and neglect Innocence. As he necessarily loves Holiness, so he necessarily hates Sin, and his Will to punish it is necessary, though free; if it was not, he might decree to permit his Creatures to sin against him eternally, without suffering Punishment. 3.

Infinite Love to poor Sinners provided and gave Christ to be a Saviour to them, as the whole Gospel testifies, with this infinitely wise Purpose, that Divine Resentment against Sin might be fully manifested, as well as the Glory of rich Grace be displayed, in their Remission. God set forth his Son to be a Propitiation, to declare his Righteousness. 4. Those Notions which Men entertain, and please themselves with, of the Exercise of Divine Goodness towards guilty Creatures, without a proper Provision for the Glory of Divine Justice, are mere Dreams, and infinitely dishonourable to God. 5. It is most false, that all that Christ did and suffered was conducive to our Redemption, only in Virtue of God's Will and Appointment. (1). If this is true, then there was no Fitness in the Death of Christ to obtain the Pardon of sin, any more than there is in the Death of a Brute. Then, (2). This was not a wise Constitution. Wisdom would chuse a moral Mean that hath a Fitness in it to attain the End designed. (3). Then God might have willed the Death of Christ without any Intention to pardon Sin and save Sinners. For, if there is no Fitness in his Death to procure Remission, God certainly might have decreed his Death, without appointing it to be so much as a Condition, or Cause, (*sine qua non*) of the remission of our Sins. And who knows but he did? (4). The Scriptures he refers unto, do not in the least suggest this. They express, that what Christ did was the Will of God; but are far from giving any Hint, that the Virtue and Efficacy of what he did, or suffered, is owing unto the Will and Appointment of God. To scruple the Uprightness of the Author in the Interpretation of Scripture, probably, might displease him; but he must excuse me, that being allowed in his Favour, if I shall say, that his Ability for this Service is far below that of a common Reader.

II. Nor can it be true, that by his Sufferings he satisfied Justice, or the Law of God. For it is very certain, and very evident, that Justice and Law can no otherwise be satisfied, than by the just and legal Punishment of the Offender. - Law in its own Nature must always condemn the Criminal; and Justice, acting according to Law, must precisely inflict the Punishment. In the Margin he says, by Justice, in this Case, is not meant Justice, as it is an Attribute in God, or that Branch of his moral Rectitude, which we call Righteousness; but Justice stinted and directed by Law commanding Duty, and denouncing Penalty in Case of Transgression. Here, therefore, Justice and Law come to the same Thing; only Law is the Rule, and Justice is Acting according to, or the Execution of that Rule. f56

Answ. 1. It is the Holiness and Righteousness of God, which wills Good to be done, and Evil to be avoided, and which ordains that Sin shall expose the Creature to, or bring him under an Obnoxiousness unto Penalty. 2. Law is the Expression of the Divine Will in all these Respects, or the Constitution of Divine Righteousness. The Law, therefore, springs from Justice and Holiness: Or, it is Justice, which gives Being to the Law, and not the Law which gives Being to Justice. 3. Is Justice, which is stinted and directed by Law, something in God? If it is, then it must be either a Divine Purpose or Perfection. It cannot be a Purpose or Decree of God, because God must then immutably will the Destruction of a Sinner; neither can it be any Divine Perfection, because, then, God would not be at Liberty to act towards any Criminal, otherwise than the Law directs, and the Salvation of a Sinner must be absolutely impossible. And, therefore, 4. Justice must mean something out of God, and what that is, Mr. Taylor knows not, nor can declare. It is a Non-ens, there can be no such Thing. 5. God necessarily, though freely, wills to punish Sin. 6. It is Matter of Liberty and free Choice with him either to punish Sin in the Offender, or in a Surety, who agrees to bear his Sin and fuller its Demerit. 7. The Infliction of Penalty on the Sinner's Sponsor, is the

Execution of Justice on, or against Sin; and his Sufferings, if they have a Sufficiency of Worth in them, arising from his personal Dignity, are satisfactory both to Law and Justice. And such were the Sufferings of our Saviour, who is God as well as Man. 8. Unless these Things are granted, we must deny that the Rectitude and Righteousness of the Nature of God is exercised and displayed, in punishing Sinners themselves, or in pardoning and saving them by Jesus Christ. There is no Discovery of the Holiness of God, in the most wonderful of all his Works, if Sinners are pardoned and saved, without Regard to Justice and the Law in their Redemption.

III. Nor will the Notion of Christ's Dying in our Stead, Paying an Equivalent, or Suffering a vicarious Punishment, bear the Test of Scripture or Reason. Because this Notion never enters into the Notion of Atonement by Sacrifice. f57

Answ. 1. It is freely granted, that there was no Equivalent in legal Sacrifices. 2. They could not, nor were intended to take away Sin, in a spiritual Sense. 3. The Death of Christ was designed to that great End, and it had a Fitness in it to answer that important and glorious End. 4. The Author with equal Truth might say, that the Notion of Christ's taking away Sin, in a spiritual Sense, will not bear the Test of Scripture; because that Notion never enters into the Notion of Atonement by Sacrifice. As the Death of Christ effected that which legal Sacrifices could not effect: So there was that in his Death, which was not in any or all of them, viz. a Fitness to take away Sin. If we are not to limit our Notions of the Efficacy of the Death of our Saviour, by that Virtue which attended those Sacrifices; neither must we limit our Nations of the Value of his Sufferings, by that Worth which was found in them. In those Sacrifices there was no Fitness to take away Sin: In the Sacrifice of Christ there was such a Fitness. And in them there was not an Equivalent to make Compensation for Guilt; but in the Death of Christ there was an Equivalent, and it was satisfactory to the Justice and Law of God.

2. Law and Justice can never admit of one Man's Dying in the Stead of another, or of his Suffering the Punishment, which in Law and Justice is due to the Offender only. f58

Answ. 1. The Whole is granted, as to Men. But, 2. Surely God may do that which Men may not. He had Power over the innocent Jesus, and might will, that he should bear our Sin, and suffer for it. Christ had Power over himself to put himself in our Place, to take upon him our Guilt, and to consent unto the Suffering Punishment for us. His Father's Will was, that he should, and he voluntarily agreed so to do, and hath received an ample and satisfactory Reward of the Father, for this his Submission unto his holy, sovereign Will. And, therefore, there is no Injustice in this Procedure, Here was no Exercise of unlawful Power in God: No Violence offered to our Saviour, nor was his Consent required unto that, which he had not a proper Right to comply with. For he had Power to lay down his Life, and Power to take it again. Nor is that Reward with-held from him, which it was fit he should receive upon accomplishing the Will of the Father, in this wonderful Affair.

3. Punishment may be considered as just and fitting; but I cannot conceive how it should be a Sacrifice of a Sweet-smelling Savour, {Ephesians 5:2}, pleasing and grateful unto God - much less such unequitable Punishment. f59

Answ. 1. He seems to grant, that Punishment, i.e. for Sin, is just and fitting; but I am apprehensive, that he will not abide by this Grant, in Favour of our Principles; because, it stabs his own to the

Heart. If Punishment for Sin is just and fitting, it becomes God to inflict it, and not suffer Sin to go unpunished. Nor, indeed, can he, for he can no more omit to do that, which is just and fit to be done, than he is able to deny himself. 2. His Want of Capacity to discern the Nature of heavenly Mysteries is not the least Objection to their Truth, though he is, it seems, a Master in Israel. 3. The Sacrifice of Christ was pleasing to God, not considered, merely, as he, in Offering of himself, suffered Penalty; but as he so did, with a holy Submission to his Will, with a View to his Glory, and the Salvation of his People. 4. Because there was that Value in the Sacrifice of Christ, resulting from the infinite Dignity of his Person, as the Father's Equal, which renders it fit to answer all the glorious Ends of his eternal Love, infinite Wisdom, and inflexible Justice, in the Business of our Salvation. 5. This was not unequitable Punishment, for it was on Account of, and for Sin, And God had Power to will, that Christ should bear our Guilt, and undergo those Sufferings which we were liable unto, as Sinners. Christ took our Guilt upon himself, and freely consented to endure those Penalties, which were due unto us.

4. Vicarious Punishment or Suffering, (in which, upon this Scheme the Efficacy of Christ's Death for the Remission of Sin solely consists) gives us too low Ideas of the Sufferings of the Son of God, as it sinks them to the Pain and Sufferings of a Malefactor, the very meanest Idea we can have of them. He suffered, as if he had been the Criminal, the Pain and Punishment, which we, or equivalent to that which we, the real Criminals, should have suffered; or he was executed by the Hand of Justice in our Stead. A Representation quite too low and insipid, for an Affair concerted in the Council of God, and accomplished by his only begotten Son. f60

Answ. 1. As it was in the primitive Age of the Christian Church, so it is now, in Respect to the Doctrine of the Cross. The Reason of which is clear, the deep Things of God are what they always were, and the Nature of Man is still the same; and, therefore, we need not wonder, if we hear some Men pronounce them low, mean, and insipid. I confess, that this is, in my Opinion, a very corroborating Proof of the Divine Verity of our Principles. If heavenly Mysteries retain their own Nature, and Men continue to be what they formerly were, we must expect them to express the same Language, concerning those Mysteries, which others have done before them. 2. Our Blessed Saviour, in himself, was innocent, or holy, harmless, and undefiled, and he was so reputed, or no otherwise considered, as in himself. 3. It was no Dishonour to Christ to bear our Guilt, and suffer that Punishment in our Stead, whereunto we were obnoxious, in Obedience to the Will of the Father; except it may be deemed a mean Thing in Christ to magnify the Divine Law and make it honourable; and to glorify his Father, in all his infinite Perfections, by accomplishing a Design, wherein, above all others, the Glory of his Grace, and Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, and Justice illustriously shines. 4. I am under no Surprize at all at this Author's boldly Asserting, that this was an Affair too low and insipid to be concerted in the Council of God, and accomplished by his only begotten Son. For it is no Wonder to me, that some Sort of Persons dare to affirm, that the Wisdom of God is FOLLY. I wish them to consider, that, if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are LOST: And that those, to whom the Doctrine of the Cross is Foolishness, PERISH.

5. This Notion, as it includes the Imputation of our Sins to Christ, and of his Righteousness, or Fulfilling of the Law, to us, supplies, Consequences very hurtful to Piety and Virtue: And some Christians have actually drawn such Consequences from it. f61

Answ. This is a false Charge, and is mere Calumny. For, 1. The Imputation of our Sins to Christ, in order to his suffering Punishment, that we might be pardoned and saved in a Way becoming all the Perfections of God, shews us clearly the Malignity of Sin, how hateful it is to God, and is a most persuasive Motive to excite us to forsake every Evil. 2. The Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ to us, and our Justification in the Sight of God, by Virtue of it, is a glorious Instance of rich Grace and Mercy, and is a full Evidence that such is the infinite Purity of the Nature of God, that he cannot justify a Sinner, as considered in himself; which influences us to adore his Kindness and Compassion to us in Misery, and to loath ourselves on Account of our Imperfections and Sins. 3. This Doctrine by no Means infers, that we may enjoy future Happiness without present Holiness. A Title to eternal Life renders not a Meetness for it unnecessary. 4. Justification by the Righteousness of Christ dissolves not our Obligation to Duty. For, though we are not under the Law, as a Covenant, to obtain Life by our Obedience to it, yet we are as much as ever, and in its full Extent, under it, in its Precepts. 5. Those Men who approve of Duty, only as the Reward of Life may be expected of God, for their Attendance to it, whatever they think of themselves, I am bold to affirm, have not a Dram of Holiness in them. 6. They are not Christians who turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness: Or who draw Consequences from this Doctrine hurtful to Piety and Virtue, though Mr. Taylor is pleased to call them so. God forbid, that we should ever esteem them Christians, who can dare to sin, that his Grace may abound. Nothing more contrary to Christianity can be conceived, than that dreadful Impiety Isaiah 7:1-25. Some Men, even now, give sad Evidence, what blasphemous Thoughts, concerning the Holiness, Justice, and Grace of God, will spring up in their cursed Minds, when they will justly suffer his dreadful, but righteous Vengeance, for their Crimes. He adds, 6. That the Preposition *uper*, when applied to Christ's Dying for us, doth not signify in the Place or Stead of, I have shewn in my Paraphrase upon the Romans, in the Note upon Chap. {Romans 5:7}. Nor doth the Preposition *anti*, imply that Sense in those Texts, {Matthew 20:28}. *Lutron anti pollwn*, a Ransom for many, {1 Timothy 2:6}. *Antilutron uper pantwn*, a Ransom for all. *Anti*, indeed, doth signify, in the Place or Stead of, in such Phrases as these, Life for Life, Tooth for Tooth, by Way of Retaliation, or just Punishment. But, that it also signifies for, on Account of, for the Sake of, in Favour of, will appear to any one who consults a good Lexicon. [See {Ephesians 5:31; Hebrews 12:2; Matthew 17:27}.] And, therefore, in such Phrases as *luron anti yuchv*, where Redemption or Ransom is spoken of, it may signify, and I conceive doth signify, no more than a Ransom for, or on Account of Life, to preserve it from being destroyed. And in this Sense our Lord may very properly be said to give himself a Ransom for all, i.e. to redeem them from Death, or to atone for those Lives which we had forfeited: Which is the true Sense of the Place. f62

Answ. 1. We allow, that the Preposition (*uper*) for, frequently signifies on Account of, or for the Sake of, or in Behalf of. 2. That it is used to express Substitution, or in Stead of, cannot be denied, and Socinus himself, allows that it is so used. This is its Sense, in these Texts, (*ina uper sou diakonh moi*) that in thy Stead he might minister unto me {Philemon 1:13}. (*Deomeqa uper Cristou*) we pray you in Christ's Stead {2 Corinthians 5:20}. 3. And this must be the Sense of it, in these Words, (*genomenov uper hmwn kataira*) being made a Curse for us {Galatians 3:13}, which cannot be denied, without directly contradicting the Apostle, and saying, Christ was not made a Curse. 4. Our Saviour was made Sin, he died for us, considered as Sinners, and on that Account obnoxious to Death. He died for our Sins. He was delivered for our Offences. His Death is our Ransom or Price of Redemption. And by it he obtained eternal Redemption for us. Which Things fully evince,

that he was our Substitute, and suffered in our Stead. 5. Christ did not hazard, but lay down, or actually resign his Life for us. The Author's Paraphrase and Note, therefore, are a bold Corruption of the Text, as the Reader, if he pleases, may see (Romans 5:7). And with Respect unto the Preposition (anti) for, 1. I grant that, it is sometimes used, when Substitution is not intended, as when it is put to express Opposition. But, 2. He very well knows, that it properly expresses Substitution, and signifies in the Place and Stead of. In this Sense the Septuagint use it a great many Times. f63 3. Christ gave his Life, as a Ransom, or Price of Redemption, unto God, our righteous Judge, for us, and, therefore, he died in our Stead, or suffered in our Place. 4. I dare say, that our Author cannot express Substitution, in Language more proper, than in that which is used in Relation unto the Death of Christ for us. And, therefore, 5. He ought to assign some very cogent Reasons, for his explaining away that Sense, in Respect unto the Affair of Christ's Death. But, as to Reasons for it, he has none, only his Dislike, that God should fix upon such a Method to glorify himself, in the Salvation of Sinners. A Method it is infinitely wise, for herein God displays the immense Riches of his Grace towards our Persons, and his infinite Abhorrence of, and Detestation against our sins. And this is that which such Sort of Men, as our Author is, cannot patiently bear with. If the Almighty will not save Sinners without taking Vengeance on Sin, or without a Regard to the Honour of his Law and Justice; this Sort of Men, will dare to reproach him to his Face, and pronounce his wise Procedures mean, low, insipid, and unworthy, and yet pretend unto great Uprightness and Sincerity at the same Time.

{OF SANCTIFICATION, AS A FRUIT OF CHRIST'S DEATH, ETC.}

MR. Taylor having, as he thinks, entirely demolished the Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin, by the Death of Christ: He proceeds to discourse concerning his Sufferings, as a Mean of our Sanctification, and, in that View, as a Condition, or Reason with God, of our Remission. Wherein, I confers, he is very rhetorical. His Ideas are infinitely below the Sublimity and Grandeur of the Subject, but his Expressions are lofty and very florid. The intelligent Reader will easily perceive this material Difference between the Divine Writers and our Author on this Topic. They convey noble Sentiments, in Language suited to the Nature of the glorious subject; Mr. Taylor presents us with low Thoughts, in a pompous Dress. A few brief Remarks, on this Part of his Performance, will sufficiently discover, that it may justly be said to him, Thou art (*Vox, and praeterea nihil*) Words, and nothing else. I am no Enemy to Rhetoric, nor would I detract from the due Praises of any Excellency, which I am not capable of imitating. But, if Rhetoric is not animated by Logic, or sound Reasoning, and good Sense, as the Soul of it, I esteem it no other than a pretty Jingle, calculated to please less discerning Minds. A glib Tongue and a flowing Pen, not directed by a good Understanding, in my Opinion, are Accomplishment not much to be admired.

I. He speaks of the Dignity of the Person of our Saviour: And says, When I consider, that a Person of so transcendent Eminence and Excellency, who was in the Form of God, and in the highest Degree of Glory and Felicity with the supreme Father; of such Wisdom and Power, that by him he made the Worlds; of such Splendor and Majesty, that he was the Brightness of God's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, etc. f64 But in order to prevent our entertaining an Opinion, infinitely too high, of the personal Dignity of Christ: Or lest we should imagine, that he is the Father's Equal; he attempts to obscure that illustrious Testimony to the important Truth of our Lord's Equality with him: Who, being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God (*Php 2:6*), i.e. as he says, like to God. And in the Margin he observes, that the Phrase, (to

einai isa Qew) to be equal with God, is the same as (ISA QEW), (Isoqeov), (Qeov wv) like God, or as God, and answers to the Hebrew (yjlak) {Zechariah 12:8}. The House of David shall be as God. To which I answer, as a learned Author does, that, with the Greeks, (to einai junctum isa), is most significant. Perfect Equality cannot be more fully expressed, than it is by that Phrase. f65 The Instances, with which he would make it parallel, express Likeness, but this Equality. Mr. Taylor paraphrases: He did not regard the Dignity and Glory, which he had with the Father, as Soldiers do the Spoil and Plunder, which they take by Force, and resolutely hold against all the World. f66

Answ. 1. The Apostle says, Christ did not think, esteem, or account it Spoil. Mr. Taylor says, he did not regard it, that is, he did not forcibly hold it, as Soldiers do their Plunder, between which the Difference is as wide, as it can be. 2. The Apostle, in this Phrase, asserts the Dignity of our Saviour. Mr. Taylor interprets it of his Condescension, which is as directly contrary to the Intention of the sacred Writer, as any Thing can be. In his Notes on {Romans 9:5}, he first observes, that the Power delegated to Christ by the Father, over all Things, is his supreme Godhead. Not content with that depraved Interpretation of the Phrase: Who is over all, God blessed for ever: He ventures at a bold Corruption of the Text. It seems what this Part of Christ's Character, has to do with the Jews, is not to him very clear. Nor, can he conceive, why the Apostle neglected to mention, in this Place, the Jews Relation to God, as their God. How could he overlook the main Article in this List, i.e. of their Privileges? In order to supply this Defect, and to wrest the Words from our Saviour of whom they are spoken, he delivers this Conjecture, that there is a Transposition in the Text, viz. thus, (o wn for wn o) i.e. who is, for whose is, and so he applies the Phrase to the Father: Whose is the God over all. Thus, says he, the grand Privilege will be inserted to Advantage, and stand at the Top of a lofty Climax, rising from the FATHERS, to CHRIST, to GOD. Probably, our Author may be much pleased with this ingenious Conjecture of his; since he fancies, that it throws such admirable Beauty on the Apostle's Discourse. But it falls out very unhappily for him, that this grand Privilege is the first mentioned, the Apostle begins with it in the 4th Verse: To whom pertaineth the Adoption, which is expressive of the Jews Relation unto God. And, Mr. Taylor discerned this, when he wrote his Paraphrase, for in that he thus speaks on the Words: Dignified with the Character of the Sons and First-born of God, {Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:9; Hosea 11:1}. We must, therefore, conclude, that he had forgot his Paraphrase, when he wrote his Notes. If that had occurred to his Thoughts, it would have prevented him assigning this Reason for his bold and daring Corruption of the Text. Again, it is absurd to suppose, that a limited and precarious Being is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image, or Character, of his Person. It would not be so far from Truth to say that a Glow-worm, is the Brightness of the Sun's Splendor, and the Character of his dazzling Rays. I am bold to affirm, that God is not capable of giving Existence to a Creature, unto whom those Things are properly applicable. God is eternal, all-knowing, all-wise, almighty, supremely good, absolutely immutable, etc. No voluntary Production is eternal, unlimited in Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, Power, or immutable, nor can be in its Nature, yea, it may cease to be at all. And such a Being Mr. Taylor thinks Christ is. Besides, Creation is not a Work of almighty Power, if it was effected by the Agency of such a Being as Mr. Taylor imagines our Saviour is. The Fact is undoubtedly this: Either Creation was wrought by the Power and Wisdom which reside in the Father: Or by the Power and Wisdom which reside in Christ: If by that Wisdom and Power which reside in the Father; then the Wisdom and Power, which reside in Christ had no more Efficiency, in the Production of all Things, than the Wisdom and Power of Mr. Taylor had. And, if the Creation was effected by the Wisdom and Power which reside in Christ, that is not a

Work of infinite Wisdom and Omnipotence, but it is the Effect of finite Wisdom and limited Power. The old Philosophers were not greater Fools, who professed themselves to be wise, than those among us are, who reject evangelical Mysteries; for they advance most evident Absurdities. God cannot give a Sufficiency of Wisdom and Power to any Being whatever, to create a World; the Reason is as clear as the Sun. Infinity is not communicable; if it was, God might produce his Equal, which he can no more do, than he can become finite. I am sure, I say nothing here, but what agrees with the peerless and incomprehensible Perfections of my almighty Creator; and I express these Things, with a View to vindicate his Glory, to assert the true Dignity of Christ, and to expose the Stupidity of Arianism, which at this Time is greatly spreading amongst us, with all other detestable Errors. For my Part, I am fully resolved never to own any Person whatever, as my Saviour, who is finite in his Nature, mutable in his Being, precarious, and may cease to be; such a God Mr. Taylor would fain persuade us to believe Christ is. Those may so do, who imagine, that infinite Wisdom, Power, Merit, and Compassion are not Requisites in a Saviour, and who can be content to trust in themselves, and their own Obedience, for Pardon and Acceptation with God in Judgment. From which I pray the good Lord, of his Mercy, eternally to deliver my poor perishing Soul.

II. Mr. Taylor observes, that God's granting Remission of Sin, through the Blood of Christ, is the properest Way to affect our Minds with the Malignity of Sin, and to shew us how odious and detestable all Sin is to God. f67

Answ. 1. He allows not, that God does grant us Remission of Sin, through Christ's Blood, though he thus speaks. For, his Opinion is, that the Death of Christ procured only a Declaration or Promise from God to pardon Sin; and that we must, by our own Works, acquire a Right to Remission. 2. If the malign, odious, and detestable Nature of Sin is seen, in God's requiring the Death of Christ, only as a Condition of giving a Promise to pardon; it is infinitely more discovered, in the Infliction of proper Punishment, for Sin, on Christ in Dying; and, therefore, our Opinion of the penal Nature of his Death, according to his own Reasoning, bids much fairer for Truth, than that which he advances does. If it is an Instance of Divine Wisdom to pardon Sin in such a Way, as the Malignity, odious and detestable Nature of it to God, may be seen: Surely, it is reasonable to conclude, that it is the wisest and fittest Method to dispense Pardon, in such a Way, as most clearly discovers God's Abhorrence of it. Now, whether only Requiring that Christ should die, without enduring Penalty in his Death: Or the Infliction of Punishment on him, in Dying, in order to the Remission of Sin, more fully discovers its Malignity and evil Nature, may, I think, be safely left to the Determination of any unprejudiced Person, who hath the least Discernment in the Things of God.

III. He says, How forcibly, far beyond any abstract Reasonings, do these Considerations, viz. God's delivering up Christ for us all, etc. urge us to love God and our Saviour, to devote our all to his Honour? etc. f68 Still our Opinion hath the Advantage infinitely above his. For, surely, every one must see, that it is a greater Instance of Love to suffer a penal Death, than it is barely to die, or without enduring Divine Punishment in Dying. And, consequently, our Obligations to God and the Redeemer are far greater, on our Principles, than it can be thought they are, upon those of Mr. Taylor: Therefore, that there is, at least, a great Probability of the Truth of our Opinion, and of the Falsehood of his, the Nature of his own Reasoning evinces. But the Reader must observe, That, though he uses swelling Words, he is very low in Sense and Meaning. Some Men have an

admirable Knack of expressing themselves, in a lofty Manner, when they convey exceedingly low Ideas, which I can never prevail with myself to admire, on any Subject. Such a Way of discoursing on this, which is of all other Subjects the most glorious, important, and astonishing, I heartily despise; because it is calculated to deceive, and cause weak People to imagine that a Sense is intended, which is agreeable to its Nature, whereas nothing is more remote from, or contrary to the Design of the Person himself. Nor is Mr. Taylor insensible of this.

IV. It is granted, that Christ was an Example to us in Suffering; but not as he bore Sin, suffered for it, and was made a Curse, to redeem us from the Law's Curse; in neither of these Views, is he proposed to us an Example these Things are peculiar to him, in the Character of the Redeemer of the Church of God. Yet, we freely allow, that, from this glorious Pattern of Meekness, Love, and Zeal for the Honour of God, we may learn Usefulness, f69 Love, f70 Humility, Condescension, f71 Trust in God, f72 Mortification of fleshly Lusts, f73 Patience, Meekness, and Fortitude under Sufferings, f74 Deadness to the World, f75 as Mr. Taylor observes. And I think, that he is not so stupid, as not to discern, that our Opinion furnishes us with these Advantages, in a Degree, at least, equal with his own.

V. Faith in Christ is not, it seems, a Reliance or Dependence on his Blood and Righteousness for Pardon and Acceptance with God; but it is the Attention of our Minds fixed upon him, as our Example, whereby we become like him, in our Temper and Behaviour; and, being so, on that Account, we have a Claim upon God for the Remission of our Sins, and the eternal Salvation of our Souls. This it is to be baptized into Christ's Death. This it is to eat his Flesh and drink his Blood, in the Institution of the Lord's Supper. And this is Approaching to God through Christ's Blood with Boldness. f76 These Things are not true, and I am bold to affirm, that they agree not with the Experience of a single Christian, in the whole World. Indeed, it is not to be expected of Men, after they have destroyed the Fundamentals of Christianity, to give us a true Account of Christian Experience. Mr. Taylor ought not to take it amiss, that I am so very brief in my Remarks here; because, though he throws out a Flood of Words, he expresses very little Matter. Which, I confess, is a Way of Writing not at all grateful to me.

VI. The Death of Christ is the Cause of our Sanctification. (1). Meritoriously: For, 1. His Sufferings and Death were required, by the Divine Father, of him, as a Condition of communicating Grace to us, to sanctify our Hearts and make us meet for Heaven. {Isaiah 53:10.} 2. He, therefore, may claim the Communication of Grace to us, unto that great End, as a Debt due to him {Romans 4:4}, according to the Reasoning of the Apostle, in the Place referred to. (2). Influentially: As his Blood is applied to our Consciences, by the Blessed Spirit, it assures us of the Remission of our Sins, and effects in us an Abhorrence of Evil, and a Desire of perfect Conformity to him, in every Branch of Purity and Holiness. Hence, the Divine Writer to the Hebrews thus prays in their Behalf: Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen {Hebrews 13:20-21}.

APPENDIX

MR. Taylor's Recommending a Pamphlet, intitled, Second Thoughts concerning the Sufferings and Death of Christ, excited in me a Desire to read it. Upon the Perusal of it, I quickly perceived,

what was the Reason of his Recommendation. The Author wholly explains away, and, as he thinks, evinces the Absurdity of the Doctrine of Atonement, by the Blood of Christ, or of Salvation through his Sufferings and Death, as the meritorious Cause of it. My narrow Limits will not allow me to enlarge, in animadverting on this Performance.

I. I would observe that some Principles want Proof, which the Author takes for granted, and upon which the main of his Reasoning is founded, and, therefore, his Superstructure which he hath built upon them, will no more stand than a Castle erected in the Air. They are these.

1. Unblemished and perfect Holiness is not necessary to an Interest in the Approbation and Favour of God: Or, God can account a Person righteous, who is, at least, in some Degree, unrighteous. For, he allows, that no Character in human Life is unmixed or perfect. f77

2. There is a Fitness in Repentance and Reformation to procure the Pardon of Sin: Or to regain an Interest in the Favour and Approbation of God. Although a Man hath been, through the Course of his Life, luxurious, incontinent, perfidious, oppressive, fraudulent, rapacious, cruel, proud, envious, wrathful, malicious, revengeful, or brutal and diabolical in his Disposition and Behaviour; hath neither feared God, nor regarded Men: Such is the intrinsic Value and Worth of Repentance, that it will justly fit him for the Pardon of all his aggravated Guilt, and procure him a Title to Happiness.

3. Repentance is in the Power of every Sinner. Or no Criminal whatever needs Supernatural Strength to bring him to repent of his Sins, and to practise that Virtue, which will recommend him to the Approbation and Favour of his Maker.

4. The Death of Christ is not the Cause of Repentance in any Sinner, and, consequently, it was not at all necessary unto the Being of Repentance.

5. The Justice of God is only Goodness, acting under the Direction of his Wisdom for the Good, f78 i.e. the Happiness, of the Creation, though apostate and corrupt. And, therefore,

6. The End of the Infliction of Punishment must be the Good and Happiness of the guilty Creature. This is a most pleasing Representation of Divine Justice, for this will never leave us without a Ground of Hope of Deliverance from Misery, let our Guilt be ever so heinous and accumulated.

7. Divine Love to Men follows upon their Love to God and Goodness: Or, they become amiable, and then God loves them. f79

8. The Communication of all personal Worth or Merit is impossible. f80 I suppose he means, what Christ did and suffered cannot possibly be imputed to us.

Answ. 1. Personal Worth may intend inherent Powers and Perfections: These always reside in their proper Subject, and cannot be transfused into another. But, 2. If he means the Obedience of Christ: to the Law and Will of God, we allow, that is not communicated, or transfused into us, nor can be. Yet, 3. It is imputed to us, or placed to our Account. This is a Grant of his Righteousness to us. And, 4. God sees that Righteousness to be ours, not inherently, indeed, but by gracious Imputation. 5. Thereupon, he accepts, or justifies us. In no other Sense can it be said, that Righteousness is imputed without Works. The Author hath not given the least Proof of the Truth of these Principles, either from Revelation or Reason; but takes them all for self-evident Principles, which need no other Confirmation, than their own evidencing Light, which he thinks sufficient to

gain the Consent of every one who considers them. But I must crave Leave to with-hold my Assent from them all, until he shall be pleased to offer something for their Proof.

II. I proceed to consider, what the Author asserts and argues for, from these unproved Principles. And,

1. He thinks, That the Justice of God cannot require a Satisfaction for the Sins of sincere Penitents, because sincere Repentance certainly renders them the Objects of Divine Favour and Approbation. This is with him a most insuperable Difficulty. f81

Ans. 1. He supposes, that Repentance might be without a Satisfaction made for Sin. This I deny, and affirm, that Repentance is the Effect of the Satisfaction of Christ, nor can he prove the contrary. 2. Repentance procures not Divine Love, nor does it render a Person a fit Object of a justifying Act of God.

2. Another Difficulty arises from the Representations of that Severity of Justice, which makes an Expiation necessary. - Every sin deserveth God's Wrath and Curse, both in this World and that which is to come. - It is an infinite Evil, and requires Satisfaction of infinite Value; and God cannot pardon any Sin without a Satisfaction. - Such a Severity shocks my Imagination. f82

Ans. 1. Every Sin deserveth God's Wrath and Curse for ever. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them. 2. Sin is an infinite Evil objectively, or as it is committed against an infinite Object. But I expect, that some Sort of Men will soon dare to say, that Sin committed against God, is not attended with greater Demerit, than Sinning against a Creature is. For, though they pretend, that Reason is their Religion, they argue upon religious Principles, as if they had really lost their Reason. 3. There is no Weight at all in his Imagination being shocked. For it is common with some to think, that God is unrighteous who taketh Vengeance, of which Number there is too much Reason to fear, that he is one: I cannot reconcile it to infinite Goodness, says he. f83 And what if he cannot? That is no Objection of the least Importance. Is the Exercise of punitive Justice towards a criminal Creature incompatible with Divine Goodness? By no Means; if it is, punitive Justice cannot be exercised at all, for it is not possible to God to act inconsistently with any of his Perfections. He proceeds to object unto his being brought into that State, wherein he finds himself, if it is so, that every sin deserveth Punishment; and is very severe, if not impious, in the Manner of expressing himself. This one might dread from a malevolent Being. Horrid, indeed! But is not to be expected under the Administration of the original, essential, perfect, and unchangeable Goodness, which gave Birth to the Universe, with an Intention of communicating Happiness to the Creatures in it. And concludes thus: It would have been as fully consistent with the Goodness of my Maker to have made me what I originally am, out of the Earth, as to make me what I am, as a Descendant from Adam. f84 The Apostacy of Adam, therefore, can be no just Reason, why his Descendants should be placed in unhappy Circumstances. Our present Situation is entirely withdrawn from the Bar of Justice, and is wholly referred unto Divine Goodness, which, as it is said, designs nothing but the Happiness of the Creature. Infinite Benevolence, therefore, hath determined to give Existence to innumerable rational Creatures, so situated in Consequence of the Sin of him from whom they spring, in their successive Generations, as is certainly followed with the Depravation of every Individual, who continues in Being so long as to be affected by the evil Temptations, which are inseparable from the present State. This Depravation is the Loss of the true Glory and Felicity of the reasonable

Creature. This, it seems, is owing to infinite Benevolence. Again, for that is not all, by this Depravation, Men are, at least in Danger of being hurried on through the Force of Temptations, which easily work upon depraved Minds, to act a Part which naturally tends to their everlasting Destruction, and actually much the superior Number of Men, perish for ever. And it seems, that it is the Decree of Divine Beneficence to place them in so disadvantageous and exceedingly dangerous a State. Farther, it is the Appointment of the same immense Kindness, that a great Part of the human Species, who are not chargeable with Guilt contracted by another, and have never offended themselves, shall endure Tortures which would pierce a Heart of Stone, and expire in dreadful Agonies. Moreover, it is the Goodness of God which ordained, that so great a Part of Mankind shall be subject to a Train of Miseries in the present State of Things, which the most rigid Virtue cannot possibly defend a Person from, viz. extreme Poverty, Contempt, Oppression, and vile Cruelty. This is that lovely Condition, which the Goodness of the great Creator hath ordained the human Species unto; for Justice, it seems, hath no Concern at all in this Appointment! Prodigious, indeed! One would imagine that Men, who ascribe this Situation to the Goodness of God, cannot, themselves, believe the specious Things, which they express concerning it, nor can possibly have any pleasing Expectations from it, how much soever, to serve a Purpose, they think well to extol and applaud it. But all these Things are act accounted for, by bringing them to the Bar of Divine Justice, unto which alone they can in Reason be referred.

3. A Third Difficulty is, Innocence cannot be punished. Perfect Innocence can know no Pains of Conscience. Perfect Innocence can have no Apprehension of the Wrath and Displeasure of God. f85

Answ. 1. If Men may be allowed to express themselves, in what Way they shall think proper, upon a Subject, they may prove or disprove any Thing, It is not Innocence, nor an innocent Person, as so considered, that is punished. But, 1. An innocent Person may bear the Sins of others, or have their Guilt imputed to him. 2. In Consequence of that, suffer Punishment. 3. He hath no Consciousness of having contracted that Guilt, which is placed to his Account. But, 4. He may have a painful Sensation of the Charge of that Guilt to him. And, 5. Of that Wrath and Displeasure, which the Sin that is imputed to him demerits. 6. A mere Consciousness of having sinned is not Punishment, nor does that enter into the Nature of Punishment. For, (1). That is no other than a natural Act of the Mind, as it is endued with a Power of Recollection. (2). Such a Consciousness will always be in those who are pardoned, except it is supposed, that they will forget that they once were Sinners; which if they do, then the Benefit of Salvation from Sin, and its Consequences, they can have no Remembrance of. Some, indeed, seem to imagine, that thus it shall be with the Saints in Heaven, but without any Foundation: And unto the total and eternal Eclipse of the Glory of the Grace of God, in our Salvation by Jesus Christ.

4. He objects, That the Ends of Government are not answered, but evaded, by the Punishment of Sin in Christ. f86

Answ. 1. It is granted, that this Appointment was of the Father, as he says. 2. That Christ did not procure the Love of the Father to Men. His Sacrifice was the Fruit of Divine Love, and not the Cause of it. In order farther to prove, that the Ends of Government are evaded by this adorable Scheme of Salvation, he, (1) Supposes it was possible, that Christ might not have been willing to die for us. f87 This is a Supposition of what is not to be supposed. For, 1. The Will of the Father

was an Obligation upon Christ in his human Nature, which was that wherein he suffered. 2. As a Divine Person, he assumed that Nature into Union with himself, in order to give it up to Suffering and Death. 3. The Will of Christ's human Nature was wholly under the Direction of the Will of his Divine Nature. 4. He could not but consent unto the Pleasure of the Father, in this Matter; yet his Consent was voluntary, and not forced. (2). He enquires thus: How could his willing Submission to the Father alter the Case, with Respect to the Ends of Government? It will be confessed, that the Father's giving him up, without a willing Compliance, could not have answered these Ends. f88

Answ. 1. If Christ had not consented to take our Guilt upon himself, and to suffer Punishment in our Stead, in his Death, he would not have offered himself a Sacrifice to God, nor would there have been any Thing in his Death pleasing to him, as a Sacrifice for Sin, and, consequently, nothing of a Fitness in it to atone for Sin: And, of Course, no Display of Justice, but a mere arbitrary Act of Violence put forth upon him. 2. How much soever the Author may be pleased with this bold Enquiry, it affects himself as well as us: Since he must grant, that, if Christ had not consented unto his Death, nothing of Wisdom, Goodness, and Mercy towards us had been therein manifested.

5. The Author thinks, That, if this Point is of so much Importance, it should be plain and level to every Capacity, etc. f89

Answ. The deep Things of God are certainly of the greatest Importance; but it don't follow, that, therefore, they are plain and level to any Capacity, especially the Capacities of those, who think, that their Reason is the Standard and Test of Truth. They are the wise and prudent from whom heavenly Mysteries are hid, and to whom they are Folly and Weakness.

6. He enquires, What is the Fruit of the Satisfaction of Christ? Is it an Indemnity to the World? No Man says this. f90

Answ. 1. Christ did not die for the whole human Race. 2. Those who affirm, that he did, deny his proper and full Satisfaction, whereof, as I suppose, the Author, was not ignorant. And, therefore, I cannot but consider his Reasoning here, as an Instance of Unfairness and Disingenuity; and his Insult upon it, is very unworthy of him, who gives full Evidence, that he is no Stranger to the Controversies this Matter. Why, therefore, does he with such an Air of Insult say, Is this an Administration worthy of God? How can Justice have received a full Satisfaction, and yet Satisfaction is to be made again, as if no Satisfaction had been made at all? f91 He very well knows, I am persuaded, that those who maintain the universal Extent of the Death of Christ, do not allow, that his Death was satisfactory to Divine Justice for Sin, though he is pleased thus to express himself. 3. I freely grant, that, if the Death of Christ is of unlimited Extent, his Death was not satisfactory to the Law and Justice of God, for the Sins of any Part of Mankind. If it is once proved, that he died for Men universally, it will never be proved, that he made a proper and full Satisfaction for the Sins of any one Man in the World. And this the Author, in my Opinion, full well knows.

7. He enquires thus: If their Offences have been fully satisfied for, and a Punishment every Way equal to them actually borne, in what Sense can Pardon be said to be free? f92

Answ. 1. As he says, to Sinners it is free. 2. The Scripture, by free Remission, does not mean Pardon, without Satisfaction, but Forgiveness, without any moving Consideration in the sinner

pardoned. 3. It is false which he affirms, that on the Part of the Father, considered as a moral Governor, it can in no Sense be so, i.e. free. For the Father, out of infinite Love to Men, provided and appointed that Sacrifice, by which Satisfaction is made. And, therefore, the Satisfaction his Justice hath received for Sin, is no Objection to the Freeness and Riches of his Grace and Mercy, in pardoning it to the Sinner.

8. After all, could it be proved, that there in any Thing in the Divine Nature, or, in the Thing itself any Expediency amounting to a moral Necessity, which should render it unfit or impossible for God to forgive any, even the least Sin, upon sincere Repentance, without such a Satisfaction, all that hath been said must be given up. But I really despair of seeing that proved. f93

Answ. 1. The Author supposes, that sincere Repentance might be, without this Satisfaction, which is false, for Repentance is a Fruit of Satisfaction by the Death of Christ. 2. He suggests, that Remission follows upon Repentance, which is not true; a Man's Sins, at least, in Order of Nature, are forgiven, before he exercises Repentance. Because God wills not to impute Sin to, a Man, therefore, he gives him Repentance, unto Life. 3. I cannot but apprehend, that he has seen clear Proof given of the Necessity of Satisfaction, though, through Prejudice, he will not allow of it. If I thought him a Person unacquainted with what hath been written, on that important Subject, I would point out to him, where he might meet with full Proof of this Matter; but, as I am persuaded, that he is one, who has been conversant in Writings of that Kind, I think it entirely needless to refer him to any Writer, on that Subject. Let him review and reconsider what he has read, in Relation to that Point, and if he is not apostatized from Truth, through carnal Reason, Pride, Unbelief, and Contempt of heavenly Mysteries, probably, he may discern, what, at present, he professes not to do. If he is such a one, I pray God, to give him Repentance unto the Acknowledging of the Truth.

FOOTNOTES Ft1 (a) Candid Remarks, etc. by Mr. Hampton, Pages 68, 69.

Ft2 Page 54.

Ft3 Pages 67, 68, 79, 80, 82.

Ft4 Mr. Taylor's Key to the Apostolic Writings, Chap. 9, No. 166, and Note.

Ft5 Sponsor Foederis appellatur Jesus, quod nomine Dei nobis sponderit, id est, fidem fecerit, Deum Foederis Promissiones servaturum esse. Non vero quasi pro nobis sponderit Deo, nostrorumve debitorum Solutionem in se receperit. Nec enim nos inimus Christum; sed Deus, cujus nomine Christus ad nos venit, Foedus nobiscum panxit, ejusque Promissiones ratas fore spondit and in se recepit; ideoque nec Sponsor simpliciter, sed Foederis Sponsor nominatur: Spondit autem Christus pro Foederis divini Veritate, non tantum quatenus id firmum ratumque fore Verbis perpetuo testatus est, sed etiam quatenus Muneris sui Fidem maximis rerum ipsarum comprobavit Documentis, tum Vitae Innocentia and Sanctitate, tum Divinis plane, quae patravit, Operibus; tum Mortis adeo truculentae, quam pro Doctrinae suae Veritate subiit, Perpessione. Comment. in Epist. ad Hebraeos, Cap. 7:22.

Ft6 {Isaiah 53:6}. wbA[gp, fall upon him, {2 Samuel 1:15}. So also in {1 Kings 2:29}. And thus, in {Judges 8:21}, fall upon us, wnKA[gp, in other Instances, the Word is used in this Sense.

Ft7 {Isaiah 53:10}. And thou shouldst have brought (μῆα) Guiltiness, or Guilt upon us, {Genesis 26:10}. Fools make a Mock at (μῆα) Sin. {Proverbs 14:9}. Thou knowest my Foolishness, and my

Sins (ytwmçaw) are not hid from thee, {Psalms 69:1-36}:? ft8 Arise, lift, or take up (yaç. 70 labe) the Lad,Genesis 21:18. I will take (aç. 70 lhyomai) the Cup of Salvation,{Psalms 116:13}. Let the Reader consult Trommii Concord, and he will find many Instances, wherein the 70 thus render the original Word. The Apostle uses this Word to express Christ's Assumption of our Nature: But he made himself of no Reputation, taking upon him (labwn) the Form of a Servant, {Php 2:7; Isaiah 53:12}.

Ft9 {Ezekiel 4:4-6}. Scripture-Doctrine of Atonement examined, Pages 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

Ft10 Page 30.

Ft11 {Genesis 47:30; Exodus 10:19; Numbers 16:15}. etc. Page 30, 31.

Ft12 Page 32.

Ft13 {Ephesians 4:8; Psalms 68:18}; µdab twntm tjql < Ft14 Page 33.

Ft15 Pages 33, 34.

Ft16 Page 34.

Ft17 Page 35.

Ft18 Page 96.

Ft19 Page 99.

Ft20 Ibid.

Ft21 See his Paraphrase on Romans 3:25-26.

Ft22 Page 37.

Ft23 Pages 37, 38.

Ft24 Page 73.

Ft25 Page 38.

Ft26 Ibid.

Ft27 Page 38.

Ft28 Ibid.

Ft29 Ibid.

Ft30 Page 38.

Ft31 Page 39.

Ft32 Page 59.

Ft33 Ibid.

Ft34 Page 65.

Ft35 Ibid.
Ft36 Page 66.
Ft37 Ibid.
Ft38 Page 77.
Ft39 Pages 78, 79.
Ft40 Page 82.
Ft41 Page 82, and in his Note on {Romans 5:20}.
Ft42 Ibid.
Ft43 Page 83.
Ft44 Page 84.
Ft45 Pages 84, 85.
Ft46 Page 85.
Ft47 Ibid.
Ft48 Page 86.
Ft49 Page 87.
Ft50 Page 87.
Ft51 Page 87.
Ft52 Pages 87, 88.
Ft53 Page 89.
Ft54 Pages 91, 92.
Ft55 Pages 93, 94.
Ft56 Pages 94, 95.
Ft57 Page 96.
Ft58 Page 96.
Ft59 Page 97.
Ft60 Pages 97, 98.
Ft61 Page 98.
Ft62 Pages 98, 99.

Ft63 The LXX render *tjt* by *anti* in many Places, {Genesis 4:25; Genesis 22:13; Genesis 30:2; Esther 2:4; 2 Samuel 18:33}. etc. Hesiod uses this Preposition in that Sense, when he says, (*Diov anti*) in the Place of Jove. *Twv gar oi efrasathn, ina mh basilhi`da timhn Allov ech, Diov anti Qewn aieigenetawn* *Qeog*, Ver. 892, 893.

Ft64 Page 109.

Ft65 *Graecis Auribus significantissimum est, to einai junctum isa. Integra sane AEqualitas Verbis plenius exprimi non potest. Fortuita Sacra*, page 213.

Ft66 Page 120.

Ft67 Pages 109, 110.

Ft68 Page 113.

Ft69 Page 119.

Ft70 Page 119.

Ft71 Ibid.

Ft72 Page 120.

Ft73 Ibid.

Ft74 Ibid.

Ft75 Page 121.

Ft76 Pages 127, 122, 131, 122, 123, 124, 104, 126.

Ft77 Second Thoughts concerning the Sufferings and Death of Christ, Page 8.

Ft78 Page 15.

Ft79 Pages 9, 10.

Ft80 Page 9.

Ft81 Page 14.

Ft82 Page 15.

Ft83 Page 15.

Ft84 Page 16.

Ft85 Page 17.

Ft86 Page 19.

Ft87 Ibid.

Ft88 Page 19.

Ft89 Page 21.

Ft90 Page 21.

Ft91 Page 22.

Ft92 Page 23.

Ft93 Page 23.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net