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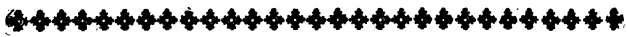


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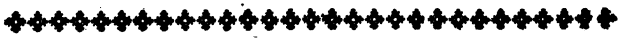
THE FOURTH VOLUME

OF THE

WORKS

OF THE

Rev. JOHN FLETCHER.



The FIRST PART
OF AN
EQUAL CHECK
TO

Pharisaism and Antinomianism ;

CONTAINING

- I. AN HISTORICAL ESSAY on the danger of parting FAITH and WORKS.
- II. SALVATION by the COVENANT of GRACE, A DISCOURSE preached in the parish church of Madeley, April 18, and May 9, 1773.
- III. A SCRIPTURAL ESSAY on the Rewardableness of Works, according to the Covenant of Grace.
- IV. AN ESSAY ON TRUTH, OR, A RATIONAL VINDICATION of the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith.

The armour of righteousness on the right-hand, and on the left.

2 Cor. vi. 7.

By the Author of the CHECKS to ANTINOMIANISM.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed by G. PARAMORE, North-Green, Worship-Street; and
fold by G. WHITFIELD, at the New Chapel, City-Road; and
at the Methodist Preaching-Houses in Town and Country. 1795.

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P R E F A C E.

I. **T**HE first piece of this Check was designed for a preface to the Discourse that follows it; but as it swelled far beyond my intention, I present it to the Reader under the name of *An historical Essay*; which makes way for the tracts that follow.

II. With respect to the *Discourse*, I must mention what engages me to publish it. In 1771 I saw the propositions called *the Minutes*. Their author invited me to “review the whole affair.” I did so; and soon found, that I had “leaned too much towards Calvinism,” which, after a mature consideration, appeared to me exactly to coincide with *speculative* Antinomianism; and the same year I publicly acknowledged my error in these words:

“But whence springs this almost general Antinomianism of our congregations? Shall I conceal the sore because it festers in *my own* breast? Shall I be partial? No: in the name of Him, who is no respecter of persons, I will confess *MY* sin, and that of *many* of my brethren, &c.—Is not the Antinomianism of hearers fomented by that of preachers? Does it not become *us* to take the greatest part of the blame upon *ourselves*, according to the old adage, *Like priest, like people*? Is it surprising that some of *us* should have an Antinomian audience? Do *we* not make or keep it so? When did *we* preach such a *practical* sermon, as that of our Lord on the mount? Or write such *close* letters, as the epistles of St. John?” Second Check, p. 64 and 65, to the end of the paragraph.

When I had thus openly confessed, that I was involved in the guilt of *many of my brethren*, and that I had so leaned towards *speculative*, as not to have made a proper stand against *practical* Antinomianism; who could have thought, that one of my most formidable

opponents

opponents would have attempted to screen his mistake, behind such passages of a manuscript sermon, which I preached twelve years ago; and of which, by some means or other, he has got a copy?

I am very far however from recanting that old discourse. I still think, the doctrine it contains excellent in the main, and very proper to be enforced [tho' in a more guarded manner] in a congregation of hearers violently prejudiced against the first gospel axiom. Therefore, out of regard for the grand, leading truth of Christianity, and in compliance with Mr. Hill's *earnest intreaty*, [Fin. Stroke, p. 45.] I send my sermon into the world, upon the following reasonable conditions: 1. That I shall be allowed to publish it, as I preached it a year ago in my church; namely, with *additions in brackets*, to make it at once a *fuller* check to Pharisaism, and a *finishing* check to Antinomianism: 2. That the largest addition shall be in favour of *free grace*: 3. That no body shall accuse me of *forgery*, for thus adding my present light to that which I had formerly; and for thus bringing out of my little treasure of experience *things new and old*: 4. That the press shall not groan with the charge of *disingenuity*, if I throw into notes some unguarded expressions, which I formerly used without scruple, and which my more enlightened conscience does not suffer me to use at present: 5. That my opponent's call to print my sermon, will procure me the pardon of the public, for presenting them with a plain, *blunt* discourse, composed for an audience chiefly made up of colliers and rustics: and lastly, That as I understand English a little better than I did twelve years ago, I shall be permitted to rectify a few French idioms, which I find in my old manuscript; and to *connect* my thoughts a little more like an Englishman, where I can do it without the least misrepresentation of the sense.

If these conditions appear unreasonable to those, who will have heaven itself without any condition, I abolish the distinction between my old sermon, and the additions that guard or strengthen it; and referring the reader to the title page, I publish my discourse on

Rom. xi. 5, 6. as a *guarded* sermon, delivered in my church on Sunday, April the 18th, &c. 1773, exactly eleven years after I preached upon the same text a sermon useful upon the whole, but in some places unguarded, and deficient with respect to the *variety* of arguments and motives, by which the capital doctrines of *free grace* and *gospel obedience* ought to be enforced.

III. With regard to the SCRIPTURAL ESSAY upon the rewardableness, or evangelical worthiness of works, I shall just observe, that it attacks the grand mistake of the Solifidians, countenanced by three or four words of my old sermon. I pour a flood of scriptures upon it; and after receiving the fire of my objector, I return it in a variety of scriptural and rational answers, about the solidity of which the public must decide.

IV. The ESSAY ON TRUTH will, I hope, reconcile judicious moralists to the doctrine of salvation *by faith*, and considerate Solifidians to the doctrine of salvation *by the works* of faith; reason and scripture concurring to show the constant dependance of works upon faith; and the wonderful agreement of the doctrine of present salvation by TRUE *faith*, with the doctrine of eternal salvation by GOOD *works*.

* I hope, that I do not dissent, in my observations upon *faith*, either from our church, or approved gospel-ministers. In their *highest* definitions of that grace, they consider it *only* according to the fulness of the *Christian* dispensation; but my subject has obliged me to consider it also according to the dispensations of John the Baptist, Moses, and Noah. Believers, under these *inferior* dispensations, have not always *assurance*; nor is the assurance they sometimes have so bright as that of adult Christians, Matt. xi. 11. But undoubtedly assurance is inseparably connected with the faith of the *Christian* dispensation, which was not *fully* opened till Christ opened *his* glorious baptism on the day of pentecost, and till his spiritual kingdom was set up with power in the hearts of his people. No body therefore can truly believe, according to *this* dispensation, without being *immediately* conscious both of the forgiveness of sins, and of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This

is a most important truth, derided indeed by fallen churchmen, and denied by Laodicean dissenters; but of late years gloriously revived by Mr. Wesley and the ministers connected with him:—A truth this, which cannot be too strongly, and yet too warily insisted upon in our lukewarm and speculative age: and as I would not obscure it for the world, I particularly intreat the reader to mind the last *erratum*; without omitting the last but one, which guards the doctrine of *initial* salvation by absolute *free grace*.

* I do not desire to provoke my able opponents; but I must own, I should be glad to reap the benefit of my *Checks*, either by finding an increase of religious sobriety and mutual forbearance among those, who make a peculiar profession of faith in Christ; or by seeing my mistakes [if I am mistaken] brought to light, that I might no longer recommend them as gospel-truths. With this view only, I humbly intreat my brethren and fathers in the church, to point out *by scripture or argument* the doctrinal errors, that may have crept into the *Equal Check*. But if, upon close examination, they should find, that it holds forth the two gospel-axioms in due conjunction, and marks out the *evangelical mean* with strict impartiality; I hope, the moderate and judicious, in the Calvinistic and Anti-calvinistic party, will so far unite upon this plan, as to keep on terms of reciprocal toleration, and brotherly kindness together; rising with redoubled indignation, not one against another, but against those pests of the religious world, *prejudice* and *bigotry*, the genuine parents of implacable fanaticism, and bloody persecution.

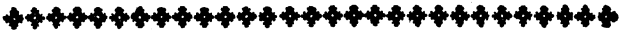
Madeley, May 21, 1774.

N. B. I have considerably shortened the following tracts; and marked the most useful parts of them with

a *.

J. W.

A N



A N

HISTORICAL ESSAY,

Upon the importance and harmony of the two gospel-precepts, **BELIEVE** and **OBEY**; and upon the fatal consequences that flow from parting **FAITH** and **WORKS**.

WHEN the Gospel is considered as opposed to the error of the Pharisees, and that of the Antinomians, it may be summed up in the two following propositions: 1. In the day of conversion, we are saved freely as sinners [i. e. made freely partakers of the privileges that belong to our gospel dispensation in the church militant] thro' the merits of Christ, by a living faith. 2. In the day of judgment we shall be saved freely as saints, [i. e. made freely partakers of the privileges of our gospel dispensation in the church triumphant] thro' the merits of Christ, and by the evidence of evangelical works. Whence it follows: 1. That nothing can absolutely hinder our justification in a gospel-day, but the want of true faith; and 2. That nothing will absolutely hinder our justification in the day of judgment, but the want of good works. If I am not mistaken, all the evangelical doctrine of faith and works turns upon those propositions. They exactly answer to the grand directions of the gospel. Wilt thou enter into Christ's sheepfold? *Believe*.—Wilt thou stay there? *Believe and obey*.—Wilt thou be numbered among his sheep in the great day? *Endure unto the end: continue in well doing*: that is, persevere in faith and obedience.

* To *believe* then and *obey*, or as Solomon expresses it, "To fear God and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man." Therefore a professor of faith without genuine obedience, and a pretender to obedience without genuine faith, equally miss their aim; while

while a friend to faith and works put in their proper place, a possessor of the *faith* which *works* by love, hits the gospel mark, and forruns as to obtain the prize: for the same *true and faithful witness* spoke the two following, and equally express declarations. "He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that *believeth not* the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36. And, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall come forth, they that have *done good*, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have *done evil*, unto the resurrection of condemnation." John v. 29.

* See that sculler upon yonder river. The unwearyed diligence and watchful skill, with which he plies his two oars, points out to us the work and wisdom of an experienced divine. What an even, gentle spring does the mutual effort of his oars give to his boat! Observe him: his right hand never rests, but when the stream carries him too much to the left: he slacks not his left hand, unless he is gone too much to the right; nor has he sooner recovered a just medium, than he uses both oars again with mutual harmony. Suppose that for a constancy he employed but one, no matter which, what would be the consequence? He would only move in a circle; and if neither wind nor tide carried him along, after an hard day's work he would find himself in the very spot, where he began his idle toil.

This illustration needs very little explaining: I shall just observe that the Antinomian is like a sculler, who uses only his right-hand oar; and the Pharisee, like him who plies only the oar in his left hand. One makes an endless bustle about *grace* and *faith*, the other about *charity* and *works*: but both, after all, find themselves exactly in the same place; with this single difference, that one has returned from truth to the right, and the other to the left.

* Not so the judicious, unbiassed preacher, who will safely enter the haven of eternal rest, for which he and his hearers are bound. He makes an equal use of the doctrine of *faith* and that of *works*. If at any time he insists most upon *faith*, it is only when the stream carries

ries his congregation upon the Pharisaic shallows on the left hand: and if he lays a preponderating stress upon *works*, it is only when he sees unwary souls sucked into the Antinomian whirlpool on the right hand. His skill consists in so avoiding one danger as not to run upon the other.

* Nor ought this watchful wisdom to be confined to ministers: for tho' all are not called to direct congregations; yet all moral agents are, and always were, more or less called to direct themselves, that is, to *occupy till* the Lord comes, by making a proper use of their *talents* according to the parable, Mat. xxv. 15, to 31. God gave to angels and man "*remigium alarum*," the two oars, or if you please, the equal wings of faith and obedience; charging them to use these grand powers, according to their original wisdom and enlightened conscience. Or, to speak without metaphor, he created them in such a manner, that they *believed* it their duty, interest, and glory, to *obey* him without reserve; and this *faith* was naturally productive of an universal, delightful, perfect *obedience*. Nor would they ever have been wanting in *practice*, if they had not first wavered in *principle*. But when Lucifer had unaccountably persuaded himself, in part at least, either that rebellion would be advantageous; and when the crafty tempter had made our first parents believe, that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, far from dying they would *be as God* himself; how possible, how easy was it for them to venture upon an act of rebellion!—By rashly playing with the Serpent, and sucking in the venom of his crafty insinuations, they soon gave their *faith* a wilful wound, and their *obedience* naturally died of it; but alas! it did not die unrevenged; for no sooner had *fainting faith* given birth to a *dead work*, than she was destroyed by her furious offspring. Thus *faith* and *obedience*, that couple more lovely than David and his friend, more inseparable than Saul and Jonathan, in their death were not divided. They even met with a common grave, the corrupt atrocious breast of a rebellious angel, or of apostate man.

4 The DANGER of PARTING

Nor does St. James give us a less melancholly account of this fatal event. While faith slumbered "lust conceived, and brought forth sin, and sin finished, brought forth death," the death of faith, and consequently the *moral death* of angelic spirits and human souls, who equally live by faith † during their state of probation. So fell Lucifer from heaven, to rule and rage in the darkness of this world: so fell Adam from paradise, to toil and die in this vale of tears: so fell Judas from an apostolic throne, to hang himself and go to his own place.

Nor can we rise but in a way parallel to that by which they fell. For, as a *disbelief* of our CREATOR, productive of *bad works*, sunk our first-parents: so a *faith* in our REDEEMER, productive of *good works*, must raise their fallen posterity.

* Should you ask, which is most necessary to salvation, *faith* or *works*? I beg leave to propose a similar question. Which is most essential to breathing, *inspiration* or *expiration*? If you reply, that "The moment either is absolutely at an end, so is the other; and therefore both are equally important;" I return exactly the same answer. If *humble faith* receives the breath of spiritual life; *obedient love* gratefully returns it, and makes way for a fresh supply: when it does not, the spirit is *grieved*; and if this want of co-operation is persisted in to the end of *the day of salvation*, the sin unto death is committed, the spirit is *quenched* in his saving operations, the apostate dies the second

† Faith in God as *Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge*, was not less necessary to Lucifer and Adam in order to their standing in a state of innocence, than Faith in God as *Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Rewarder* of them that diligently seek him, is necessary to *sinners*, in order to their recovery from a state of guilt; or to *believers* in order to avoid relapses and final apostasy. Faith therefore, so far as it implies an unshaken confidence in God, and a firm adherence to his will, is as eternal as love and obedience. But when it is considered as "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," which are essential properties of a believer's faith in this present state of things, it is evident that it will necessarily end in *fight*, as soon as the curtain of time is drawn up; and terminate in *enjoyment*, as soon as God's glory appears without a veil.

death, and his corrupt soul is cast into the bottomless pit, as a putrid corpse into the noisome grave.

Again, if faith has the advantage over works by giving them birth, works have the advantage over faith by perfecting it. Seest thou, says St. James, speaking of the Father of the faithful, "how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" And if St. Paul affirms, that *works without faith are dead*, St. James maintains, that *faith without works is dead also*.

Once more, Christ is always the primary, original, properly-meritorious cause of our justification and salvation. To dispute it is to renounce the faith, and to plead for Antichrist. And yet, to deny, under this primary cause, there are secondary, subordinate, instrumental causes of our justification, and consequently of our salvation is to set the Bible aside, and fly in the face of judicious Calvinists, who cannot help maintaining it, both from the pulpit and from the press. Now, if in the day of our conversion *faith is the secondary, subordinate cause of our acceptance as persevering saints*. Let us therefore equally decry dead faith and dead works, equally recommend living faith and its important fruits.

Hitherto I have endeavoured to check the rapid progress of speculative Antinomianism, that perpetually decries works, and centers in the following paragraph, which presents without disguise the doctrine of the absolute, unconditional perseverance of adulterous believers, and incestuous saints.

Saving faith being immortal, cannot only subsist without the help of good works; but no aggravated crimes can give it a finishing stroke. A believer may in cool blood murder a man, after having seduced his wife, without exposing himself to the least real danger of forfeiting either his heavenly inheritance, or the divine favour: because his *salvation*, which is *finished in the full extent of the word*, without any of his good works, cannot possibly be frustrated by any of his evil ones.

It will not be improper now to attempt a check to Pharisaism, which perpetually opposes faith, and whose destructive errors collected in one position may run thus:—If people perform external acts of worship towards God, and of charity towards their neighbour; their principles are good enough: and should they be faulty, these good works will make ample amends for that deficiency. — Upon this common plan of doctrine, if the filthy sepulchre is but white-washed, and the noisome grave adorned with a flowery turf, it little matters what is within, though it be *a dead man's bones*, a dead heart swelled with pride, or *all manner of corruption*.

It is hard to say, who do Christianity most disservice, the Solifidians, who assert that works are nothing *before God*; or the Pharisees, who maintain that certain religious ceremonies, and external duties of morality, are the very soul of religion. O thou true believer, bear thy testimony against both their errors; and equally contend for the tree and the fruit, the faith of St. Paul and the works of St. James; remembering that if ever the gates of hell prevail against thee, it will be by making thee over-value faith and despise good works, or over-rate works and slight *precious faith*.

The world, I grant, is full of Gallios, easy or-busy men, who seldom trouble themselves about faith or works, law or gospel. Their latitudinarian principles perfectly agree with their loose conduct: and if their volatile minds are fixed, it is only by a steady adherence to such commandments as these: “Be not righteous over much:—Get and spend:—Marry or be given in marriage:—Eat and drink:—Lie down to sleep and rise up to play:—Care neither for heaven nor hell:—Mind all of earth but the awful spot allotted thee for a Grave: &c.” However, while they punctually observe this decalogue, their conscience is sometimes awakened to a sense of guilt, commonly called uneasiness, or low spirits: and if they cannot shake it off by new scenes of dissipation, new plunges into sensual gratifications, new schemes

of hurrying business; if a religious concern fastens upon their breasts, the tempter deludes them, by making his false coin pass for the Gold *tried in the Fire*. If his dupes will have Faith, he makes them take up with that of the Antinomians. If they are for works, he recommends to them those of the Self-righteous. And if some seem cut to be brands in the church, fiery, persecuting zealots; though they have not as much faith as Simon Magus, or as many works as the conceited Pharisee; yet they may have as much zeal for the church as he who set out from Jerusalem for Damascus in pursuit of heretics. They may sometimes pursue those, who dissent from them, even unto strange cities.

Has not the world always swarmed with those devotees, who, blindly following after Faith without loving obedience, or after Obedience without loving faith, have made havock of the Church, and driven myriads of worldly men to a settled contempt of godliness: while a few, by equally standing up for true faith and universal obedience, have kept up the honour of religion in the world? Take a general view of the church, and you will see this observation confirmed by a variety of black, bright, and mixt characters.

The first man born of a woman, is a striking picture of perverted mankind. He is at once a sullen Pharisee, and a gross Antinomian: he sacrifices to God, and murders his brother. Abel, the illustrious type of converted sinners, true believers, and acceptably sacrifices, Faith and Works shine in his life with equal lustre; and in his death we see what good men may expect from the impious church and the pious world. Protomartyr for the doctrine of this check, he falls the first victim to Pharisaical pride and Antinomian fury. The sons of God mix with the daughters of men, learn their works, and make shipwreck of the faith. Enoch nevertheless truly believes in God, and humbly walks with him: Faith and Works equally adorn his character. The world is soon full of misbelief, and the earth of violence. Noah how-

ever believes and works; he credits God's word, and builds the ark. This Work "condemns the world, and he becomes heir of the righteousness which is by Faith."

Consider Abraham; see how he believes and works! God speaks, and he leaves his house, his friends, and native country. His faith works by love: he exposes his life to recover his neighbour's property, he readily gives up to Lot his right of choice to prevent a quarrel; he earnestly intercedes for Sodom, he charitably hopes the best of its wicked inhabitants, he gladly entertains strangers, humbly washes their feet, diligently instructs his household, and submissively offers up Isaac his favourite son, the child of his old age, the hope of his family, his own heir, and that of God's promise: by these works his faith is made perfect, and he deserves to be called the Father of the Faithful.

Moses treads in his steps: he believes, quits Pharaoh's court, and suffers affliction with the people of God. Under his conduct the Israelites believe, obey, and cross the Red Sea with an high hand; but soon after they murmur, rebel, and provoke divine vengeance. Thus the destruction, which they had avoided in Goshen through *obedient Faith*, they meet with in the wilderness through *the works of unbelief*. Nature is up in arms to punish their backslidings. The pestilence, the sword, earthquakes, fiery serpents, and fire from heaven, combine to destroy the ungrateful, Antinomian apostates.

In the days of Joshua, that eminent type of Christ, Faith and Works are happily reconciled; and whilst they walk hand in hand, Israel is invincible, the greatest difficulties are surmounted, and the land of promise is conquered, divided and enjoyed.

Under the next Judges, faith and works seldom meet; but as often as they do, a deliverance is wrought in Israel. Working believers carry all before them: They can do all things through the Lord strengthening them: but if they suffer the Antinomian Delilah to cut off their locks, you may apply to them the awful words of David, (spoken to magistrates who forsake
the

the way of righteousness :) " I have said, Ye are God's, and all of you are children of the Most High ; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes ;" like Zimri, or Corah, Dathan, or Abiram.

The character of Samuel, the last of the Judges, is perfect. From the cradle to the grave he believes and works ; he serves God and his generation. His sons, like those of Eli, halt in practice, and their faith is an abomination to God and man. David believes, works, and kills the blaspheming Philistine. He slides into Antinomian faith, wantonly seduces a married woman, and perfidiously kills an honest man. Solomon follows him in the narrow path of working faith, and in the broad way of speculative and practical Antinomianism. The works of the son correspond with those of the father. Happy for him, if the repentance of the idolatrous king, equalled that of his adulterous parent !

In the days of Elijah, the gates of hell seemed to have prevailed against the church. Queen Jezebel had cut off the prophets of the Lord, and appointed 400 chaplains to king Ahab, who shared the dainties of the royal table, and therefore found it easy to demonstrate, that pleading for Baal was orthodoxy, and persecuting honest Naboth as a blasphemer of God and the king, was an instance of true loyalty. But even then all were not lost : Seven thousand men shewed their faith by their works ; they firmly believed in Jehovah, and steadily refused bowing the knee to Baal.

In the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, wickedness, persecution, and imaginary good works, prevailed under a show of zeal for the temple. But even then there was a small remnant of believing and working souls, who set fire to the stubble of wickedness during the pious reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah.

Follow the chosen nation to Babylon. They all profess the faith still : but how few believe and work ! Some do however : and by their work of faith and patience of hope, they quench the violence of the fire, and stop the mouth's of lions ; and what is more extraordinary

traordinary still, they strike with astonishment a fierce tyrant, a Nebuchadnezzar; they fill with wonder a cowardly king, a Darius; and disarming the former of his rage, the latter of his fears, they sweetly force them both to confess the true God among their idolatrous courtiers, and throughout their immense dominions.

In the days of Herod, the double delusion is at the height. John the Baptist boldly bears his testimony against it in the wilderness, and our Lord upon the mount, in the temple, and every where. But alas! what is the consequence? By detecting the Antinomianism of the Pharisees, and the Pharisaism of Antinomians, he makes them desperate. The spirit of Cain rises with tenfold fury against an innocence, far superior to that of Abel. Pharisees and Herodians must glut their malice with his blood. He yields to their rage; and while he *puts away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, he condescends to die a martyr for the right Faith, and the true Works: he seals, as a dying *priest*, the truth of the two gospel axioms, which he had so often sealed as a living *prophet*, and continues to seal as an eternal Melchisedec.

The apostles, by precept and example, powerfully enforce their Lord's doctrine and practice. Their lives are true copies of their exhortations: Their deepest sermons are only exact descriptions of their behaviour. It is hard to say which excite men most to *believe* and *obey*, their seraphic *discourses* or their angelic *conduct*. Their labours are crowned with general success. Judaism and Heathenism fall under the *thunder* of their *words of faith*, and the shining power (might I not say the lightning) of their works of love. Thus the world is turned upside down before faith and works; "the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord;" and earth, cursed as it is, becomes a paradise for obedient believers.

* Hell trembles at the revolution; and before all is lost, Satan hastens to transform himself into an angel of light. In that disguise, he puts his usual stratagem in execution, against the believing, working,
and

and suffering church. He instills speculative faith, pleads for relaxed manners, puts the badge of contempt upon the daily cross, and gets the immense body of the Gnostics and Laodiceans into his snare. Sad and sure is the consequence. The genuine works of faith are neglected: idle works of men's invention are substituted for those of God's commandments. And fallen churches, through the smooth way of Antinomianism, return to the covert way of Pharisaism, or to the broad way of infidelity.

Such was the deplorable condition of the western church when Luther appeared. True faith was dethroned by superstitious fancy; and all the works of the former were well nigh choaked by the thorns that sprang from the latter. The zealous reformer with his sharp scythe cut them down through a considerable part of Germany. His terribly successful weapon, which had already done some execution in the Netherlands, France and Italy, might have reached Rome itself, if the effects of his unguarded preaching had not dreadfully broke out around him in the North.

* There the balance of the evangelical precepts was lost. Solifidians openly prevailed. Our Lord's sermon upon the mount, and St. James's epistle, were either explained away, or wished out of the Bible. The amiable, practical *law of Christ*, was perpetually confounded with the terrible, impracticable *law of innocence*: and the avoidable penalties of the former, were represented as one with the dreadful curse of the latter; or with the abrogated ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation. Then the law was publicly wedded to the devil, and poor Protestant Solifidians were taught to bid equal defiance to both.

The effect soon answered the cause. Lawless believers, known under the name of Anabaptists, arose in Germany. They fancied themselves the elect people of God; they were compleat in Christ: their election was absolutely made sure; all things were theirs; and they went about in religious mobs to deliver people from *legal bondage*, and bring them into *gospel-liberty*; which, in their opinion, was a liberty

to despise all laws divine and human, and to do, every one, what was right in his own eyes. Luther was shocked, and cried out; but the mischief was done, and the Reformation disgraced: nor did he perseveringly apply the proper remedy pointed out in the minutes, salvation not by the merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition.

Nevertheless he was wise enough to give up the root of the mischief, in the articles of religion, presented to the Emperor Charles the Vth at Augsburg, whence they were called the Augsburg-confession. In the XIIth of those articles, which treats of repentance, we find these remarkable words, "We teach touching repentance, that those who have sinned after baptism, may obtain the forgiveness of their sins, *as often as they are converted, &c.*" Again, "We condemn the Anabaptists, who say, that those who have been once justified can no more lose the holy Spirit."

This doctrine clearly opened, and frequently enforced, might have stopped the progress of Antinomianism. But alas! Luther did not often insist upon it, and sometimes he seemed even to contradict it. In the mean time Calvin came up; and though I must do him the justice to acknowledge, that he seldom went the length of modern Calvinists in speculative Antinomianism, yet he made the matter worse, by advancing many propositions about absolute decrees, and the necessary perseverance of backsliding believers.

* This doctrine, which, together with its appendages, so nicely reconciles Baal and free grace; which slyly parts *faith* and *works*, while it decently unites *Christ* and *Belial*, could not but be acceptable to carnal Protestants: and to make it pass with others, it was pompously decorated with the name of *the doctrine of grace*: and *free grace-preachers*, as they called themselves, insinuated that St. James's doctrine of *Faith being dead without works*, was a doctrine of wrath, an uncomfortable doctrine, which none but "proud justiciaries" and rank papists could maintain. Time would fail to mention all the books that were indirectly

indirectly written against it: or to relate all the abuse that was indirectly thrown upon those two propositions of St. Paul, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."

Let it suffice to observe, that by these means the hellish sower of Antinomian tares prevailed. Thousands of good men were carried away by the stream. And, what is more surprising still, not a few of the wise and learned, favoured, embraced, and defended the Antinomian delusion.

* Thus what Lũther's solifidian zeal had begun, and what Calvin's predestinarian mistakes had carried on, was completed by the synod of Dort; and the Antinomianism of many Protestants, was not less confirmed by that assembly of Calvinistic divines, than the pharisaism of many Papists, had been before by the council of Trent.

* It is true, that as some good men in the church of Rome, have boldly withstood pharisaical errors, and openly pleaded for salvation by grace through faith: so some good men in the Protestant churches, have steadily resisted Antinomian delusions, and publicly defended the doctrine of salvation, not by the proper merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition. But alas! as the Popes of Rome crushed, or excommunicated the former, almost as fast as they arose; so have petty Protestant Popes blackened, or silenced the latter. The true Quakers, from their first appearance, made as firm a stand against the Antinomians, as the Waldenses did against the Papists; and it is well known, that the Antinomians, who went from England to America with many pious Puritans, whipt the Quakers, men and women, cut off their ears, made against them a law of banishment upon pain of death, and upon that tyrannical law hanged four of their preachers, three men and one woman† in the last century, for preaching up the Christian perfection of faith and obedience, and so

† Their names were William Leddra, Marmaduke Stephenson, William Robinson, and Mary Dyer.

disturbing the peace of the elect, who were *at ease in Sion*, or rather *in Babel*.

I need not mention the title of *heretic*, with which that learned and good man Arminius is to this day dignified, for having made a firm and noble stand against wanton Free Grace. The banishment or deprivation of Grotius, Episcopius, and other Dutch divines, is no secret. And it is well known that in England, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Sellon, are to this day *an abhorrence to all Antinomian flesh*.

* I am sorry to say, that, all things considered, these good men have been treated with as much severity by Protestant Antinomians, as ever Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin, were by Popish Pharisees: The Antinomian and Pharisaic spirit run as much into one, as the two arms of a river that embraces an island: If they divide for a time, it is only to meet again, and encrease their mutual rapidity. I beg leave to speak my whole mind. It is equally clear from scripture and reason, that we must *believe*, in order to be saved consistently with God's *mercy*; and that we must *obey*, in order to be saved consistently with his *holiness*. These propositions are the immovable basis of the two gospel-axioms. Now if I reject either of them, it little matters which; if I blow my brains out, what signifies it, whether I do it by clapping the mouth of a pistol to my right, or to my left temple?

* Error moves in a circle: extremes meet in one. A warm, Popish Pharisee, and a zealous, Protestant Antinomian, are nearer each other than they imagine. The one will tell you, that by going to mass and confession, he can get a fresh absolution from the priest, for any sin that he shall commit: the other, whose mistake is still more pleasing to flesh and blood, assures you, that he has already got an eternal absolution, so that "under every state and circumstance he can possibly be in, he is justified from all things, his sins are for ever and for ever cancelled!"

But if they differ a little, they have the honour of agreeing in the main point. For, although the one makes

makes a great noise about faith and free grace, and the other about works and true charity, they exactly meet in uncharitableness. The Pharisee in Jerusalem asserts, that "out of the Jewish church there can be no salvation," and his companions in self-election heartily say, Amen! The Pharisee in Rome declares, that "there is no salvation out of the Romish church," and all the Catholic elect set their seal to the decree. And the Antinomian in London, insinuates, if not affirms, that there is no salvation out of the Calvinistic, predestinarian church. Hence, if you oppose his principles in ever so scriptural a manner, he supposes that you are "quite dark," that all your holiness is "self-made," and all your "righteousness a cobweb spun by a poor spider out of its own bowels:" and if he allows you a chance for your salvation, it is only upon a supposition, that you may yet repent of your opposition, and turn Calvinist before you die. But might not an inquisitor be as charitable? Might he not hope that the poor heretic, whom he has condemned to the flames, may yet be saved, if he cordially kisses a crucifix, and says Ave Maria at the stake?

And now, candid reader, look around, and see what these seemingly opposite errors have done for Christ's church. Before the reformation, Christendom was overspread with superstition and fanaticism; and since, with lukewarmness and infidelity. But let us descend to particulars.

What has Pharisaism done for the church of Rome? It has publicly rent from her all the Protestant kingdoms, and secretly turned against her an innumerable multitude of Deists: for while bigots continue ridiculous bigots still; men of wit, headed by ingenious Infidels, continually pour contempt upon Christianity, through the wounds which they give to Popery. They represent Christ's rational and humane religion as one of the worst in the world, unjustly charging it with the persecuting spirit, and horrible massacres of those Catholics so called, who mangling the truth, and running away with one half of Christian divinity,

nity, disgrace the whole by childish fooleries, and worse than barbarian uncharitableness.

And what does Pharisaism for the Protestant churches? So far as it prevails, spreads it not around its fatal leaven, a general indifference about heartfelt religion? Turns it not the lively oracles of God into a dead letter, the sacraments into empty ceremonies, the means of grace into rattles to quiet a guilty conscience, the precious blood of Christ into a common thing, external devotion into a cloak for secret hypocrisy; and some acts of apparent benevolence into the rounds of a ladder, the bottom of which reaches hell, and behold spiritual fiends (all manner of diabolical tempers) are seen continually *ascending and descending on it?*

Does it not incline us to despise those who are eminently pious, as if they were out of their senses; to despair of those who are notoriously wicked, as if they were absolute reprobates; and to prefer a popular imitator of Barabbas, to a meek follower of Jesus? Does it not prompt us to lay an undue stress upon trifles, and to make an endless ado about some frivolous circumstance of external worship, while we pass over judgment, mercy, and the love of God? And by that means, does it not confirm modern Herodians in their Antinomianism, and modern Sadducees in their infidelity? In a word, does it not render the stiff neck stiffer, the blind understanding blinder, the proud spirit more rebellious, more indifferent about mercy, more averse to gospel-grace, readier for all the curses of the law, and riper for all the woes of the gospel?

But let us consider the other extreme. What has Calvinism done for Geneva? Alas! It has, in a great degree, driven it into Arianism, Socinianism, and Infidelity. See the account lately given of it in the *French Encyclopedia; Article Geneva.* "Many of the clergy of Geneva (says judicious Mr. D'Alembert) no longer believe the divinity of Jesus Christ, of which Calvin their leader was a zealous defender, and for which he had Servetus burned, &c.—They believe that there are punishments in another world,

" but

“ but only for a limited time ; thus purgatory, which
 “ was one of the chief causes of the reformation, is
 “ now the only punishment which many Protestants
 “ admit after death. A new proof this, that a man
 “ is a being full of contradictions. To sum up all in
 “ one word, the religion of many pastors at Geneva,
 “ is *perfect Socinianism*.”

What good has Calvinism done in England ? Alas ; very little. When a bow is bent beyond its proper degree of tension, does it not fly back ? When you violently pull a tree towards the west, if it recovers itself, does it not violently fly to the east ? Has not this generally been the case with respect to all the truths of God, which have been forced out of their scriptural place ? Calvinism in the days of Oliver Cromwell, was at the very same height of splendor, which Popery had attained in the days of King Henry the VIIIth, and they share the same downfall. *Mole ruunt sua*. At the reformation the FIRST grand doctrine of Christianity, (*salvation by grace through faith*) which had been forced out of its place, and almost broken by the Papists, fled back upon them with such violence, that it shook the holy See, frightened the Pope, and made some of the richest jewels fall from his triple crown. In like manner the SECOND grand doctrine of Christianity (*salvation not by the merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition*) which had been served by the Antinomians just as the first gospel axiom by the Papists, recovering itself out of their hands, flew back upon them with uncommon violence at King Charles's restoration, by an indirect blow shook two thousand Calvinist-ministers out of their pulpits ; and getting far beyond its scriptural place, began to bear hard upon, and even thrust out the grand doctrine of *salvation by grace*. Thus, the absurdity and mischief of Antinomianism, began to drive again the generality of English Protestants into Pharisaism, Arianism, Socinianism, or open Infidelity ; that is, into the state, in which most of the learned are at Rome and Geneva.

I grant, that near forty years ago some clergymen from the university of Oxford, returned to the principles of the reformation, and zealously contended again for *salvation by grace* and for *universal obedience*. By the divine blessing upon their indefatigable endeavours, *faith* and *works* met again, and for some time walked undisturbed together. A little revolution then took place: *practical Christianity* revived, and leaning upon her fair daughters *Truth* and *Love*, took a solemn walk through the kingdom, and gave a foretaste of heaven to all that cordially entertained her.

She might, by this time, have turned this favourite isle into a land flowing with spiritual milk and honey, if Apollyon disguised in his angelic robes, had not played, and did not continue to play his old game. Nor does he do it in vain. By his insinuations, men of a contrary turn, rise against *Practical Christianity*. Many of the devout call her *Heresy*, and many of the gay name her *ranc* *Enthusiasm*. In the mean time she drops a tear of tender pity, prays for her mistaken persecutors, and quietly retires into the wilderness. *Lean Obedience* is soon driven after her to make more room for speculative *Faith*, who is so highly fed with luscious food and wild honey, that she is quite bloated, and full of humours. Nay, in some she is degenerated into an impatient quarrelsome something, which calls itself *Orthodoxy*, or *the Truth*, and must be treated with the greatest respect; while *Charity*, cold, sickly, and almost starved for want of *work*, is hardly used with common good manners.

* In a word, *Antinomian Christianity* is come, and makes her public entry into the professing church. A foolish virgin, who assumes the name of *Free Grace*, walks before her, and cries, "Bend the knee, bow the heart, and entertain the old, the pure, the only gospel!" An ugly black boy, called *Free Wrath*, bears her enormous train, and with wonderful art hides himself behind it. While thousands are taken with the smiles and cheerfulness of *Wanton Free Grace* [for that is the virgin's right name] and for her sake welcome her painted mother; a grey-headed Seer

passes by, fixes his keen eyes upon the admired Family, sees through their disguise, and warns his friends. This is highly resented, not only by all the lovers of the sprightly, alluring maid, but by some excellent people, who, in the simplicity of their hearts, mistake her for the celestial virgin *Astrea*. Mr. Hill, and Mr. Toplady, two of her champions, fall upon the aged Monitor; and to the great entertainment of the Pharisaic and Antinomian World, do their best to tread down his honour in the dust.

* While they are thus employed, a rough countryman, who had taken the Seer's warning, throws himself full in the way of Antinomian Christianity, tries to stop her in her triumphant march. Wanton Free Grace is a little disconcerted at his rudeness, she reddens, and soon shews herself the true sister of Free Wrath. To be revenged of the clown, she charges him with—guess what—A rape? No, but with being great with the scarlet whore, and concerned with the Romish man of sin! If he is acquitted of these enormities, they say that she is determined to indict him for murder or “forgery;” and if that will not do, for highway robbery, or “execrable Swiss slander.” The mountaineer, who counts not his life dear, stands his ground, and in the scuffle discovers the black boy, lays fast hold of him, and notwithstanding the good words that he gives one moment, and the floods of invectives, which he pours out the next; he drags him out to public view, and appeals to the Christian world. *Et adhuc sub judice lis est.*

But leaving England, the scene of the present controversy; I ask, What does Calvinism at this day for Scotland; were national honours are paid to it, and where for some ages it has passed for the pure gospel? Alas! not much, if we may depend upon the observations of a gentleman of piety and fortune, who went last year with an eminent minister of Christ, to inspect the state of spiritual Christianity in the north, and brought back this melancholy account: “The decay of vital religion is yet more visible in Scotland than in England.”

* Should by this time some of my readers be ready to ask, what Arminianism has done for Holland and England, I reply: If by Arminianism you mean the pure doctrine of Christ, especially the doctrine of our free justification thro' Christ, by the instrumentality of faith in the day of a sinner's conversion, and by the evidence of the works of faith afterwards: if you mean, as I do, a system of evangelical truth, in which the two gospel precepts *believe* and *obey*, are duly balanced, and *faith* and *works* kept in their scriptural place; I answer that, under Christ, it has done all the good which has been done, not only in Holland and England, but in all Christendom.

* Be not then mistaken: When ministers, leaning towards speculative Antinomianism, have done good; it has not been by preaching wanton free grace, and by shackling the free gospel: but by powerfully enforcing the truth as it is in Jesus; by crying aloud, "Believe, thou lost sinner, and be saved by grace:—Obey, thou happy believer, and evidence thy salvation by works:—And whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely; for all things are now ready."—So far as they have started aside from this guarded, and yet encouraging gospel, they have pulled down with one hand what they built with the other; they have tried to make up the Pharisaic, by widening the Antinomian gap; they have departed from what we call Christianity, and what you are at full liberty to call Arminianism, Baxterianism, or Wesleianism.

* To return: I observed just now, that Antinomianism drives us into Pharisaism, Socianism, and Infidelity; but might I not have added Fatalism, the highest degree of fashionable Infidelity? And after all, what is Fatalism, in which the greatest Infidels unanimously shelter themselves in our day? Is it not the beginning or the end of high Calvinism, whose emblematical representation may be a serpent forming a circle while it bites its tail, with this motto, *In sese voluitur error, After a large circuit Error ends where it*

it began? Is high Calvinism the head, is not Fatalism the tail?

For my part, I shall not wonder if some of our high Predestinarians find themselves before they are aware, even at Hobbe's or Voltaire's feet, humbly learning there the horrible lessons of Fatalism. Nay, if I am not mistaken, they perfectly agree with the French philosopher in the capital point. One might think that they have converted him to their orthodoxy, or that he has perverted them to his infidelity. Candid reader, judge of it by the following extract of his lecture on Destiny.

“Homer (says he) is the first writer, in whose works we find the notions of fate. It was then in vogue in his time. Nor was it adopted by the Pharisees, till many years after: for these Pharisees themselves, who were the first men of letters among the Jews, were not very ancient, &c. But philosophers needed neither the help of Homer, nor that of the Pharisees, to persuade themselves, that all things happen by immutable decrees, that *all is fixed, that all is necessary.*” Now for the proof. “Bodies, (adds he) tend to the center, pear-trees can never bear pine-apples, a man cannot have above a certain number of teeth.”—And directly flying from *teeth* to *ideas*, he would have us infer, that we can no more arrange, combine, alter, or dismiss our ideas, than our grinders, and that an adulterer defiles his neighbour's bed as *necessarily* as a pear-tree produces pears.—He even adds, “If thou couldst alter the destiny of a fly, thou shouldst be more powerful than God himself.” See *Dictionnaire Philosophique portatif*, Londres, 1764. Page 163, 164.

This ingenious Infidel is quite as *orthodox* (in the Calvinistic sense of the word) in his article on *Liberty*. “What does then your free will consist in (says he) if it is not in a power to do *willingly* what *absolute necessity* makes you chuse?” Nay, he is so staunch a Predestinarian, so compleat a Fatalist, that he maintains, no one can chuse *even or odd*, without an irresistible order of all-directing fate. And he concludes

by affirming, that all, "*liberty of indifference*," that is, all power to do a thing, or to leave it undone at our option, without the necessitating agency of fate, "*is arrant nonsense*." See the same book, page 243, &c.

* Thus the most subtle, self-righteous Infidel in France, by going full east; and the most rigid, thorough-paced Antinomian in England, by going full west, in the ways of error, meet at last face to face in the Antipodes of truth. O may the shock caused by their unexpected encounter, wake them both out of their fatal dreams, to call upon him, who takes the wise in their own craftiness, imparts true wisdom to the simple, and crowns the humble with grace and glory.

As high Calvinism on the left hand falls in with Fatalism, so on the right hand it runs into the wildest notions of some deluded Mystics, and ranting Perfectionists. Judicious reader, you will be convinced of it by the following propositions, advanced by Molinos †, the father of those Mystics and Perfectionists, who are known abroad under the name of Quietists. These positions, among many others, were condemned by the Pope as "*rash, offensive to pious ears, erroneous, scandalous, &c.*" I extract them from the Bull of his Holiness, given at Rome 1687, and published by the archbishop of Cambray at the end of his book called *Instruction pastorale*, printed at Amsterdam 1698. See page 192, &c.

"*Velle operari active est Deum offendere, qui vult esse solus agens, &c.* To desire to be active and work, is to offend God, who will be the sole agent, &c.— Our natural activity stands in the way of grace, and binds the divine operation and true perfection, *quia Deus vult operari in nobis sine nobis*, because God will work in us without us.— The soul ought not to think upon rewards and punishments.— We must

† He was a pious, but injudicious clergyman of the church of Rome, who, in some of his works, spoiled the doctrine of grace by Calvinistic refinements; and that of *Christian perfection* by Antinomian rant.

leave to God the care of all that concerns us, that he may do in us, without us, his divine will.—He that will be resigned to God's will, must not ask him any thing, because petitions favour of our own will, and therefore are *imperfect* ;” (or, to speak in the Calvinistic way, *sinful*.)

Again, “ God to humble and transform us, permits and wills, that the devil should do violence to the bodies of some perfect souls.” (i. e. *established believers*) “ and should make them commit carnal actions against their will.—God now sanctifies his saints by the ministry of devils, who by causing in their flesh the above-mentioned violent impulses, makes them despise themselves the more, &c.—St. Paul felt such violent impulses in his body : hence he wrote, *The good that I would, I do not ; and the evil which I would not, I do*. These violent impulses are the best means to humble the soul to nothing, and to bring it to true holiness, and the divine union ; there is no other way, *et hæc est via facilior et tutior*, and this is the easier and the safer way.—David, &c. suffered such violent impulses to external impure actions, &c.”

Who does not see here some of the most absurd tenets, or dangerous consequences of Calvinism ! Man is a mere machine in the work of salvation : — The body of holy Paul is sold under sin : — David in Uriah's bed is complete and perfect in Christ : — Actual adultery humbles believers, and is an excellent mean of sanctification, &c.

When we see Antinomianism thus defiling the fonder part of the Romish and Protestant churches : when the god of this world avails himself of these “ Antinomian dotages,” to confirm myriads of stiff Pharisees in their self-righteous delusions ; and when the bulk of men, shocked at the glaring errors of both, run for shelter to Deism, and gross Infidelity ; who would not desire to see the doctrines of *faith* and *works*, *grace* and *obedience* so stated and reconciled, that Men of Reason might no longer be offended at *Christianity* ; nor *men of religion* one at another ?

This

This is again *attempted* in the following discourse, the substance of which was committed to paper many years ago, to convince the Pharisees and Papists of my parish, that there is no salvation by the faithless works of the law, but by a living faith in Jesus Christ. With shame I confess, that I did not *then* see the need of guarding the doctrine of *faith*, against the despisers of *works*. I was chiefly bent upon pulling up the tares of Pharisaism: Those of Antinomianism were not yet sprung up in the field, which I began to cultivate; or my want of experience hindered me from discerning them. But since, what a crop of them have I perceived and bewailed!

* Alas! they have in a great degree ruined the success of my ministry. I have seen numbers of lazy seekers, enjoying the dull pleasure of sloth on the couch of wilful unbelief, under pretence that God was to do all in them without them. I have seen some lie flat in the mire of sin, absurdly boasting that they could not fall; and others make the means of grace, means of idle gossiping or sly courtship. I have seen some turn their religious profession into a way of gratifying covetousness or indolence; and others, their skill in church-music, their knowledge, and their zeal, into various nets to catch esteem, admiration, and praise. Some have I seen making *yesterday's* faith a reason to laugh at the cross *to-day*; and others drawing from their misapprehensions of the atonement, arguments to be less importunate in secret prayer and more conformable to this evil world, than once they were. Nay, I have seen some professing believers backward to do those works of mercy, which I have sometimes found persons, who made no profession of godliness, quite ready to perform. And Oh! tell it in Sion, that watchfulness may not be neglected by believers, that fearfulness may seize upon backsliders, and that trembling may break the bones of hypocrites and apostates; I have seen those, who had equally shined by their gifts and graces, strike the moral world with horror by the grossest Antinomianism;

mianism; and disgrace the doctrine of *salvation thro' faith*, by the deepest plunges into scandalous sin.

Candid Reader, I need say no more, to make thee sensible of the necessity of the *additions* and *notes*, by which I have strengthened and guarded my old discourse, that it might be an **EQUAL CHECK** to *Pharisaism* and *Antinomianism*, an equal prop to *faith* and *works*. If it affords thee any edification, give God the glory, and pray for the despised author. Ask in the words of good Bishop Hopkins, that I may so "BELIEVE, so rest on the merits of Christ, as if I had never wrought any thing; and withal so WORK, as if I were only to be saved by my own merits." And O! ask it again and again, for I find it a *difficult thing*, to give to each of these its due in my practice. It is the very depth and height of Christian Perfection.

END OF THE ESSAY.



Salvation

Salvation by the Covenant of Grace :

A D I S C O U R S E

ON ROMANS xi. 5. 6.

Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election 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 grace ; otherwise work is no more work.

INTRODUCTION and DIVISION.

THE Apostle complains in the preceding chapter, that Israel was blinded, and did not see the way of salvation : “ *I bear them record, says he, Rom. x. 2, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge ; for being ignorant of God’s righteousness, i. e. of God’s way of saving sinners merely through Jesus Christ, and going about to establish their own righteousness, i. e. endeavouring to save themselves by their own good works [so called] they have not submitted to the righteousness of God,*”—to that faith in Christ, which makes sinners righteous before God : “ *for Christ, adds he, is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,*” Rom. x. 4 ; That is, [since the fall] it is the very design of the [Adamic] law, [the law of innocence given to sinless Adam ; yea, and of the Mosaic law, when it is considered as *written in stones*, and decorated with shadows or types of good things to come,] to bring men to believe in Christ for justification and salvation ; as he alone gives that pardon and life, which the law [of innocence]

N. B. The parts of this discourse, which are enclosed in brackets, [] are the additions that guard or strengthen the old sermon which my opponent calls for ; and the parts contained between the two hands, ~~§~~ are the passages, which he has extracted from it, and published at the end of his Finishing Stroke,

shews the want of, [and which the Mosaic law, abstracted from gospel-promises, points unto,] but cannot possibly bestow.

The Apostle resuming the same subject in the chapter out of which the text is taken, comforts himself by considering, that altho' Israel in general was blinded, yet all were not lost. Old Simeon and Anna had seen the Salvation of God, and had departed in peace. Nicodemus, a doctor in Israel, had received the doctrine of the new birth and salvation by faith. Three thousand Jews had been pricked to the heart by penitential sorrow, and filled with peace and joy by believing in Jesus Christ. And even at this present time, says the Apostle, there is a remnant according to the election of grace: That is, There are some, who, [like Nathaniel and Nicodemus] casting away their dependance on their own righteousness, are numbered among the elect, according to that gracious decree of God, "He that believeth shall be saved," &c. Mark xvi. 16.

From thence the Apostle takes occasion to shew, that pardon and salvation are not, in whole or in part, attained by [the covenant of] works, but merely by [the covenant of] grace. *A remnant of those self-righteous Pharisees is saved, [not indeed by their self-righteousness,] but by the covenant of grace, [according to which we must equally part with our self-righteousness and our sins.] And if by [the covenant of] grace, then it is no more [by that] of works, whether of the ceremonial law [of Moses,] or of the moral law [of innocence perverted to Pharisaic purposes;] else [the] grace [of Christ] is no longer grace [bestowed upon a criminal:.] The very nature of [† gospel-] grace is lost. And if it be [by the covenant] of works,*

† I say *gospel-grace*, because it is that which the Apostle means. It may with propriety be distinguished from the *original grace* which Adam had before the fall, and which Deists and Pharisees still suppose themselves possessed of. Some people imagine that if our first parents had well acquitted themselves in the trial of their faithfulness, their reward would not have been *of grace*; they would (strictly speaking) have *merited* heaven. But this is a mistake.

works, then it is no more [by gospel-] grace; else work is no longer [the] work [of a sinless creature,] but the very nature of it is destroyed [according to the first covenant, which requires perfect conformity to the law in the work, and perfect innocence in the worker.]

Having thus opened the context, I proceed to a more particular illustration of the text; and that I may explain it as fully, as the time allotted for this discourse will permit,

FIRST, I shall premise an account of the two covenants: The covenant of *works*, to which the Pharisees of old trusted, and [most of] the Roman Catholics, with too many false Protestants, still trust, in our days:—And the covenant of *grace*, by which alone a remnant was saved in St. Paul's time, and will be saved in all ages.

SECONDLY, I shall prove, that the way of salvation *by faith only*, or, which is the same thing, *by the covenant of grace*, is the *only way* that leads to life, according to the scriptures and the articles of our church, to whose holy doctrine I shall publicly set my seal.

THIRDLY,

take. From the Creator to the creature, all blessings are, and must for ever be of *grace*, of *mere grace*. Gabriel himself enjoys heaven through *free grace*. Unless some gracious promise interposes, God may this instant put an end without injustice, not only to his glory, but to his very existence. Should you ask what difference there is, between *original* and *gospel grace*; I answer, that original, *Adamic grace*, flowed from God, as *Creator* and *Preserver*, to *innocent, happy* creatures. But *gospel grace*, that for which St. Paul so strenuously contends in my text, flows from God, as Redeemer and Comforter, to guilty, wretched mankind: And here let us take notice of the opposition there is, between Pharisaic and Evangelical obedience, between the works of the law and the works of faith. The former are done with a proud conceit of the natural strength, which man lost by the fall; and the latter, with an humble dependance on divine mercy through the Redeemer's merits; and on the supernatural power bestowed upon lost mankind for his sake. When St. Paul decries the works of the law, it is merely to recommend the works of faith: and yet, O the dreadful effects of confusion! Many suppose, that he pours equal contempt upon both.

THIRDLY, I shall endeavour to shew the unreasonableness and injustice of those, who accuse me of "preaching against good works," when I preach salvation thro' the covenant of grace only.

FOURTHLY and lastly, after having informed you, why [even] good works cannot deserve salvation in whole or in part, I shall answer the old objection, "If good works cannot [† properly merit us heaven,] why should we do them? There is no need to trouble ourselves about any."

FIRST

† The following propositions, contain the sum of our doctrine concerning merit,—(1) All *proper* worthiness, merit, or desert of any divine reward, is in Christ, the overflowing fountain of all original excellence.—(2) If any of the living water of that rich spring is received by faith, and flows through the believer's heart and works, it forms *improper* worthiness, or *derived* merit; because, *properly* speaking, it is Christ's merit still.—(3) *Original* merit answers to the *first* gospel axiom, and *derived* worthiness to the *second*.—(4) According to the first covenant we can never merit a reward, because, of ourselves as sinners, we deserve nothing but hell.—But (5) according to the second covenant, by God's gracious appointment and merciful promise, we can, *improperly speaking*, be worthy of heaven, through the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our hearts, and through his righteousness derived to us and to our works by faith.—(6) Hence it is, that God will give some, namely impenitent murderers, blood to drink, *for they are worthy*, they *properly* deserve it; while others, namely, penitent believers, shall walk with Christ in white, *for they are worthy*, they *improperly* merit it. Rev. xvi. 6. and iii. 4.

An illustration taken from a leaden pipe of water may show how it is possible, that *unworthy* man should become *worthy*, thro' the righteousness which Christ supplies believers with. Strictly speaking, water does not belong to a pipe, any more than merit of worthiness to a believer: for a pipe is only a number of *dry* sheets of lead folded together: But if that *dry*, leaden pipe really receives some of the water, which a river supplies; I make myself ridiculous by asserting, that the man who hints, there is water in the pipe, confounds the elements, seeks to dry up the river, and is guilty of a dreadful philosophical heresy.

The word *Merit* is absolutely nothing to Mr. Wesley and me; but the doctrine of faithful obedience in Christ, and of the gracious rewards with which it shall be crowned for his sake, contains all our duty on earth, and draws after it all our bliss in heaven. Therefore, only grant us *truly* the second gospel axiom:—grant

FIRST PART.

I begin by laying before you an account of the two covenants, that God entered into with man. The first was made with Adam, when he was in a state of innocence in paradise. The condition of it, which is impossible to fallen man, was easy before the fall. It runs thus: "Do this and live: The man that does these things, shall live by them," Rom. x. 5. That is, "if thou [who art now a guiltless, holy and perfect creature] yieldest a constant, universal, and perfect obedience to the moral law," now summed up in the ten commandments, "thou shalt be rewarded with glory and heaven. But if thou failest in any one particular, whether it be in thought, word, or deed, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17, for "curfed is every one, that continueth not in ALL things, written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10.

Nor does this covenant make any allowance for deficiencies, or pass by one transgression great or little, without pronouncing the threatened curse; "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," James ii. 10. That is, All the curses denounced against those, who break the covenant of works, hang upon his guilty head.

This first covenant we have all broken in our first parents, for [*in Adam all die*]"—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. We are then all born [*or conceived*] *in sin*; Psalm li. 5; and consequently *we are by nature children*

us, that God has not appointed his creatures to endless *punishments* and heavenly *rewards* out of mere caprice:—grant us, that, while the wicked shall *properly deserve* their *own* (and not Adam's) place in hell, the righteous shall *improperly be worthy to obtain that world*, where they shall be equal to the angels, Luke xx. 35:—grant us that man is in a state of probation, and shall be recompensed for, and according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad:—In a word, grant us the capital doctrine of a day of retribution, in which God shall judge the world in wisdom and righteousness, not in solemn folly or satanical hypocrisy; and we ask no more.—This note is a key to all the doctrines, which we maintain in the Minutes, and explain in the checks.

dren of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. But this is not all: this root of original sin, produces in every man many actual iniquities, whereby, as we imitate Adam's rebellion, so we make the guilt of it our own, and fasten the curse attending that guilt upon our souls, Rom. vii. 24.

Therefore, while we remain in our natural state, [or, to speak more intelligibly, while we continue in sin, guilt, and *total* impenitency; we not only trample the covenant of grace under foot, but] we stand upon the covenant of works; and consequently lie under the dreadful curse, which is already denounced against every transgressor of the law, Gal. 3. 10.

Hence it is that, *by the deeds of the law*, i. e. by the good works commanded in the law [of innocence] or by the ceremonies prescribed in the law of Moses; *shall no flesh living be justified: for as many as are of the works of the law*, [as it stands opposed to the gospel; yea, as many also as rest, like the impenitent Pharisees, in the letter of the Mosaic law,] *are under the curse, the scripture having concluded all under sin*, and consequently under the curse, *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*, [and gladly accept his offers of mercy] Rom. iii. 19, 20.

In this deplorable state of guilt and danger, we remain careless and insensible, ~~we~~ making what we call "*the mercy of God*," a pack-horse [if I may use so coarse an expression] to carry us and our sins to heaven, upon the *filthy rags* of our own [pharisaic] righteousness. ~~we~~ Here we continue, till divine grace awakens us, by the preaching of the gospel, or by some other means. Eph. v. 14. Being then roused to a serious consideration of our fallen state in Adam, and to a sensibility of the curse which we lie under, through our numerous breaches of the [second, as well as of] the first covenant; after many fruitless attempts to remove that curse, by fulfilling the law [of innocence;] after many endeavours to save ourselves by our own works, and righteousness, ~~we~~ we despair at last of getting to heaven, by building a

Babel with the *untempered mortar* of our own [fancied] sincerity, and the bricks of our wretched good works, [or rather of our splendid sins.] And leaving the impassable road of the covenant of works, we begin to seek the way, which God's free mercy has opened for *lost* sinners in Jesus Christ. Acts ii. 37. Phil. iii. 6, &c.

This *new and living way*, is the new covenant, the covenant of grace [in its various editions or dispensations. For, if the Christian edition is called *new* in opposition to the Jewish, all the editions together may well be] called *new*, in opposition to the old covenant. It is also termed *gospel*, that is, *glad tidings*, because [† with different degrees of evidence] it brings

† This, and the preceding clauses are added, to guard the doctrine of the gospel-dispensations, of which I had but very confused views eleven years ago. See third Check, p. 10, &c. Leaning *then* too much towards Calvinism. I fancied, at times at least, that the Gospel was confined within the narrow channel of its last dispensation; which was as absurd as if I had conceited, that the swell of our rivers at high water, is all the ocean. But returning to my Bible, and "reviewing the whole affair," I clearly see, that the Jewish and Christian gospel are not *the everlasting gospel*, but only two of its brightest dispensations. Should the reader ask me what I mean by *the everlasting gospel*, when I consider it in its full latitude: I answer, that I mean with St. Paul, "The riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, leading men to repentance" for Christ's sake, who in all ages is the Saviour of the world.—Yea, and the severe strokes of his gracious providence driving them to it. I dare not insinuate, that Jonah, one of the most successful preachers in the world, was not a *gospel-preacher*, when he stirred up all the people of Nineveh to repentance, by the fear of impending destruction: and that Sr. John the divine, was a stranger to true divinity; when he gave us the following account of the manner, in which a celestial Evangelist preached the everlasting gospel. "I saw another angel having *the everlasting gospel* to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people [Here is free grace!] saying with a loud voice: Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment, (as well as of his mercy,) is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth and the sea, and the fountains of waters."—Here is, if I am not mistaken, the gospel according to which *many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down* at the heavenly feast with the Father of the faithful, when the unloving Pharisees *shall be thrust out*, notwith-

brings comfortable news of free salvation in Christ, to all that see they are undone in themselves.

☞ The second covenant then, or the gospel, is a dispensation of free grace and mercy to poor, lost, helpless sinners, who, seeing and feeling themselves condemned by the law [of innocence,] and utterly unable to obtain justification upon the terms of the FIRST covenant, come to Jesus Christ [*the light of men*, according to the dispensation, which they are under,] to seek in him that righteousness, which they have not in themselves. For the Son of God, being both God and man in one person; and by the invaluable sacrifice of himself upon the cross, having suffered the punishment due to all our breaches of the law, and by his most holy life having answered all the demands of the FIRST covenant, "God can be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus," Rom. iii. 26. ☞ Therefore, if a sinner, *whose mouth is stopped*, and who has nothing to pay, pleads from the heart the atoning blood of Christ [and supposing he never heard that precious name, if according to his light he implores *divine mercy*, for the free exercise of which, Christ's blood has made way] not only God will not *deliver him to the tormentors*, but will *frankly forgive him all*. Luke vii. 41, &c.

☞ Herein then consists the great difference, between the first and the second covenant. Under the *first*, an absolute, unfinning, universal obedience in our own persons is required; and such obedience we,

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notwithstanding their great ado about *absolute election*. This note will probably touch the apple of my reader's eye, if he is a rigid Predestinarian. But if he is offended, I intreat him to consider, whether his love does not bear some resemblance to the charity of those strong Predestinarians of old, those monopolizers of God's election, who despised poor *sinners of the Gentiles*. How violent was their prejudice! They vastly admired our Lord's sermon at Nazareth, till he touched the sore that festered in their strait-laced breast. But no sooner did he insinuate, that their election was not yet made sure, and that the poor Pagan widow of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian, were not absolute reprobates; then "they were filled with wrath and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill that they might cast him down headlong."

[in our fallen state,] can never perform.—Under the second covenant, this obedience [to the law of innocence, paid by, and] in our surety Christ Jesus, when we are united to him by a faith of the operation of God, is accepted instead of our own. ¶ For as our sins were transferred upon the Redeemer's guiltless head, so his merits are brought home to our guilty souls, by the powerful operation of divine grace, thro' faith, and being thus *complete in Christ* † [with regard to the fulfilling of the FIRST covenant,] we can rejoice in God, who has made him unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. [I say, with regard to the fulfilling of the FIRST covenant, to guard against the error of thousands, who vainly imagine that Christ has fulfilled the terms of the *second* covenant for us, and talk of *finished salvation*, just as if our Lord had actually repented of our sins, believed in his own blood, and fulfilled his own evangelical law in our stead; a fatal error this, which makes Christians lawless, represents Christ as the minister of sin, and arms the Antinomian fiend with a dreadful ax, to fell the trees of righteousness, and cut down the very pillars of the house of God.]

From what has been observed it follows, that before any one can believe, in the gospel-sense of the word, he must be *convinced of sin* by the Spirit of God, John xvi. 8. He must feel himself a guilty, lost, and

† If I say that *penitent* believers are *complete* in Christ with respect to the *first* covenant; I do not intimate that *fallen* believers who *crucify the Son of God afresh*, may even commit deliberate murder, and remain *complete in him*, or rather (as the original means) *filled with him*. Far be the horrid insinuation from the heart of a Christian. I readily grant, that true believers are not less dead to the Adamic law of innocence, than to the ceremonial law of Moses; and that with respect to it, they heartily say as David, "Enter not into judgment, with thy servants, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." But mistake me not, I would not insinuate, that they are *lawless*, or only under a *rule of life*, which they may break without endangering their salvation. No; they are under the law of Christ, the law of liberty, the law of the spirit of life, the royal law of gospel holiness; and according to this law, they shall all be rewarded or punished in the day of judgment.

and helpless sinner, unable to recover the favour and image of God by his own strength and righteousness: Acts ii. 27, 28.

This conviction and sense of guilt make the sinner *come weary and heavy laden to Christ*, earnestly claiming the *rest* which he offers to weary souls, Matt. xi. 28. This rest the mourner seeks, with the contrite Publican, in the constant use of all the means of grace; endeavouring to bring forth fruit meet for repentance, till the same spirit that had convinced him of sin, and alarmed his drowsy conscience, convinces him also of righteousness, John xvi. 8. i. e. shews him the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's righteousness, to swallow up his unrighteousness; and the infinite value of Christ's meritorious death, to atone for his unholy life; enabling him to believe with the *heart*, and consequently to *feel* [under the Christian dispensation] that he has an interest in the Redeemer's blood and righteousness; [or, that he is savingly interested in the merit of all that the Son of God suffered, did, and continues to do for us.

This lively faith, this "faith working by love, is that which is imputed for righteousness," Rom. iv. 3. and that whereby a soul is born of God [according to the † Christian dispensation of the gospel.] 1 John v. 1.

By

† The judicious reader will easily perceive, that the additions made to this, and some other paragraphs of my old sermon, are intended to guard the inferior dispensations of the gospel. Are there not degrees of saving faith, inferior to the faith of the Christian gospel? And are not those degrees of faith consistent with the most profound ignorance of the history of our Lord's sufferings, and consequently with any *explicit* knowledge of the atonement? Although mankind in general had some consciousness of guilt, and a confused idea of propitiatory sacrifices; and although all the Jewish sacrifices and prophecies pointed to the great atonement; yet how few, even among the pious Jews had a clear belief that the Messiah would *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself!* How unreasonable is it then to confine the gospel to the explicit knowledge of Christ's atoning sufferings to which both the prophets and apostles were once such strangers! Does not St. Peter intimate that *the prophets searched, to little purpose, what the Spirit signified, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ; since it was*

revealed

By this faith the believer being [strongly] united to Christ, as a member to the body, becomes entitled to [a much larger share in] the benefit of all that our Lord did and suffered; and in consequence of this vital union with him, who is the source of all goodness,

revealed to them, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things, which are now reported in the Christian gospel? 1 Peter i. 11, 12. And how absurd is it to suppose, that nothing is gospel, but a doctrine, which the first preachers of the Christian gospel knew little or nothing of, even while they preached the gospel under our Lord's immediate direction? Did not John the Baptist exceed in evangelical knowledge, *all that were born of woman?* Were the Apostles much inferior to him, when they had been three years in Christ's school? Did not our Lord say to them, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for verily many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that ye hear, and have not heard them?" Again, did he not testify, that in general they had justifying faith, i. e. faith working by love? Did he not say, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."—"The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and believed that I came forth from God?" Nay, did he not send them two and two, to preach the gospel of the day: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand: Repent and believe *the gospel?*" And would he have sent them to preach *a gospel* to which they were utter strangers? But were they not perfectly strangers to what passes now for the *only* gospel? Had they the least idea that their Master's blood was to be shed for them, even after he had said, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins?" When he spoke to them of his sufferings, were not they so far from believing in the atonement which he was about to make, that they were offended at the very idea? Is not this evident, from the words of Peter, their chief speaker, who *began to rebuke him, saying*, "Be it far from thee, Lord: This shall not happen unto thee: i. e. We do not yet see the end of thy blood: Nay, when Christ had actually shed it, and the *atonement* work was *finished*; far from having the least notion about what is called "finished salvation," and "gospel" in our day; did they not suppose that all their hopes were blasted, saying, "We trusted that it had been he, who should have redeemed Israel," Luke xxiv. 21? From these observations may I not conclude; (1) That an explicit knowledge of Christ's passion and atonement, is the prerogative of the *Christian* gospel? And (2) that those who make it essential to the *everlasting* gospel, doom to hell, not only all the righteous Jews, Turks, and Heathens, who may now be alive; but also almost all the believers, who died before our Lord's crucifixion, and some of the disciples themselves after his resurrection?

ness, he derives a [degree of] power till then unknown, to do good works truly so called.

[O thou, that professest the Christian faith,] *shew me thy faith by thy works*: shew me that thou art grafted in Christ [according to the Christian dispensation] by serving God with all thy strength; by doing all the good thou canst to the souls and bodies of men with chearfulness; by suffering wrong and contempt with meekness; by slighting earthly joys, mortifying fleshly lusts, having thy conversation in heaven, and panting every hour after a closer union with Christ, the life of all believers. If thou dost not bring forth these fruits, thou art not a Christian; thou art not *in Christ, a new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. Thou mayest talk of faith, and suppose that thou believest; but give me leave to tell thee, that if thou believest at all, it is with the drunkard's faith, the whoremonger's faith, the devil's faith, James ii. 19.—From such a faith, may God deliver us, and give us, instead of this counterfeit, “the faith once delivered unto the saints, the mystery of faith kept in a pure conscience!” Get it, O sinner, who bearest a Christian name, and Christ and heaven are thine: [but if thou] die without it, [whether it be by continuing in thy present sin and unbelief, or by making shipwreck of the faith,] thou diest the second death; thou sinkest in the bottomless pit for evermore. Mark xvi. 16.

Having thus given you an account of both covenants, and laid before you the *conditions* of each, namely, the *first*, a sinless, uninterrupted obedience to all the commands of the holy, spiritual law of God, performed by ourselves [without the least mediatorial assistance:] and for the *second*, a lively faith in Christ [*the light of the world*, according to the gospel-dispensation we are under;] by which faith the virtue of Christ's active and passive obedience to the law [of innocence] being imputed to us, and applied to our hearts, we are made new creatures, born again, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works, without which there can be no lively faith [under any of the divine dispensations:] and having [by that important distinction

distinction of the two grand covenants] removed a great deal of rubbish out of the way; I hope it will not be difficult to prove, under the

S E C O N D H E A D,

That the way of salvation by such a lively faith only, or, which is the same, by the covenant of grace, is the one way that leads to life, according to the Bible and our articles of religion.

If you ask all the Pharisees, all the self-righteous Heathens, Turks, Jews, and Papists in the world, which is the way of salvation? They will answer, "Through doing good works, and leading a good life:" that is, "Through the covenant of works;" flatly contrary to what I have proved in the first part of this discourse; namely, that by the works of the law, by the first covenant, shall no flesh living be justified, Gal. ii. 16. Or if they have yet some sense of modesty, if they are not quite lost in pride, they will varnish over their ignorance with two or three words about God's mercy. "Why, say they, it is to be hoped, we shall all be saved by endeavouring to lead good lives, and do good works: and if that will not do, God's mercy in Christ will do the rest." Which means neither more nor less than this: "We are still to be saved by the covenant of works, by putting on the robe of our own [Christ-less] righteousness; and if it happen to be too short, or to have some holes, Christ will in mercy tear his spotless robe [of merits,] to patch up and lengthen ours." [And this they say, without the least degree of *genuine* repentance towards God, and *heart-felt* faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.] O how many dream of getting to heaven in this fool's coat! How many, by thus blending the two covenants, which are as incompatible as fire and water, try to make for themselves a third covenant, that never existed but in their proud imagination! In a word, how many are there, who say or think: We must be saved partly by [the covenant of] works, and partly by [the covenant of] grace! Giving the lie to God and

and my text ! Overturning at once the gospel and Protestantism !—No, no : if *a remnant is saved*, it is by the covenant of grace ; and if by grace, then it is no more [by the covenant] of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be [by the covenant] of works, then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work : [for the moment obedience is *the work of faith*, it can no more be opposed to faith and gospel-grace, than the fruit of a tree can be opposed to the tree, and the sap by which it is produced.]

But, *to the law and the testimony!* Do the oracles of God, or the writings of our Reformers, direct us for salvation to the covenant of works, or to a third covenant of works and grace patched up together ? Do they not entirely and invariably point us to the covenant of grace alone ?

Hear first the word of the Lord. “ He that *believeth* on the Son ” [according to the light of the dispensation he is under] “ hath everlasting life : he that *believeth not*, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,” John iii. 36.—When the trembling jailer cries out, “ What must I do to be saved ? ” Paul and Silas answer, “ *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” Acts xvi. 31.—“ God so loved the world, says St. John, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John iii. 16.—“ By *grace*, says St. Paul, ye are saved, through *faith*, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not [by the covenant] of works, [nor yet by the proper merit of any works,] lest any man should boast.” “ For to him that worketh [without applying to the throne of grace, as an hell-deserving sinner] is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt : but to him that worketh not [upon the footing of the first covenant ;] but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly ; his *faith* is counted for righteousness : ” he is saved by *Faith* which is the *Condition* of the covenant of grace, Rom. iv. 4.

Thus speak the scriptures, and, blessed be God ! Thus speak also our liturgy and articles.

In the *absolution* the priest declares, that [in the day of conversion] *God pardoneth and absolveth*, that is, saveth, ¶ not those who [being ashamed to repent, and scorning to believe the gospel, endeavour to] lead a good life to get a pardon [by their own merits:] ¶ but *all those, who truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel*; that is, all those, who, by *true repentance* renounce all dependance upon the covenant of works; and by a *faith unfeigned* fly for refuge only to [God's mercy in] the covenant of grace. Hence it is that in the communion-service, we are commanded to pray, That, "by the merits and death of Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all the whole church, may obtain remission of sins, and all other benefits of his passion."

This holy doctrine is most clearly maintained, and strongly established in the ixth, xth, xiith, and xiiiith Articles of our Religion. And upon these five pillars, it will remain unshaken, as long as the church of England shall stand.

¶ Having thus shewn you, how self-righteous, unawakened sinners dream of salvation, either by the covenant of works, or by a third imaginary covenant, in which two incompatible things [pharisaical] works and [evangelical] grace, merits and mercy are jumbled together; and having proved, that salvation cannot be attained, but under the second covenant, that is, *by faith only*, and not by [the covenant of] works; I beg leave to recapitulate the whole in three articles, which contain the sum of the gospel, and of the doctrine that I have constantly preached among you, and am determined to preach, God being my helper, till my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.

Upon the proofs before advanced, I solemnly declare: 1. That there is no salvation to be attained by [the covenant of] works since the fall. The best man having broken an hundred times the first covenant, deserves an hundred times damnation by his works, and can no more be saved from hell by his obedience to God's law [of innocence] than a thief can be saved from

from the gallows, by the civil law which condemns him to be hanged.

2. [Respecting the primary and properly meritorious cause of our salvation, from first to last] “we are saved, as it written in our eleventh article, only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our works or deservings: and, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort:” yea the only doctrine that can melt down the heart of sinners, and make them constantly zealous of all sorts of good works, [if it is not made to supersede the justification of believers by the evidence of works, both in the day of trial and in the day of judgment,]

3. As all mankind are condemned by the covenant of works, *he that believeth not* [in the light of his dispensation] *being condemned already*: and as by the covenant of grace, there is no salvation to be had but in Christ through faith: so there is no mixing those two covenants without renouncing Christ and his gospel. He that stands with one foot upon the covenant of works, and with the other foot upon the covenant of grace; [he that talks of divine mercy, while his heart continues as regardless of it as if he were sinless;] is in the most imminent danger of eternal ruin. He that says, “I will do first what I can to merit heaven, I will do my best: and Christ, I hope, will do the rest: and God, I trust, will have mercy upon me,” is yet without God, and without Christ in the world: he knows neither the nature of God’s law, nor that of Christ’s gospel.

[This is, my dear hearers, the substance of the *three articles*, which eleven years ago I publicly laid down in this church, as the ground of the doctrine which I had preached, and was determined still to preach among you. And I solemnly declare, that, to this day, I have not seen the least cause to *reject* any one of them as erroneous; though I must confess, that I have found abundant reason particularly to *guard* the second, against the daring attacks, that Antino-

mians in principle, or in practice, make upon St. James's undefiled religion. To return.]

We are undoubtedly obliged to do what we can, and to use the means of grace at all times and in all places; but to rest in those means, to suppose that they will save us, and upon this supposition, to be easy without the experience of [converting] grace in our hearts, is very absurd. It is a mistake as foolish as that of the man, who supposes that his garden will be the more fruitful for pipes, which convey no water; or that his body can be refreshed by empty cups.

The language of a penitent sinner is, "Lord, I pray, and hear, I fast, and receive, I give alms, and keep the sabbath; but after all, I am an unprofitable servant. — [I must work out my own salvation with fear and trembling, and yet] without thee I can do nothing: I cannot change my heart; I cannot root up from my breast the desire of praise, the thirst of pleasure, and the hankering after gold, vanity, beauty, or sensual gratifications which I continually feel: — [Without thee] I cannot force my stubborn heart to repent, believe, and love; to be meek and lowly, calm and devout. Lord deliver me from this body of death; Lord, save or I perish."

Christ will have all the glory or none. We must be wholly saved by him, or lost for ever: [for altho' we must be *co-workers with him*, by walking religiously in good works; and if we are not, we shall have our portion with the *workers of iniquity*; yet it is *he* that *worketh in us*, as in moral agents, *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. It is he that appoints, and blesses all the inferior means of our salvation, therefore all the glory properly belongs to him alone.]

[All our pardons flow down to us, in the streams of his precious blood. All our life, light, and power, are nothing but emanations from him, who is the Fountain of Life, the Sun of Righteousness, the Wisdom and Power of God, and in a word, Jehovah, our Righteousness. All *gracious rewardableness* of
the

the works of faith, all that *aptitude* of our sprinkled obedience unto eternal life, all that *being worthy*, which he himself condescends to speak of, Rev. iii. 4, and Luke xx. 35, spring not only from his gracious appointment, but from his overflowing merits. A comparison will illustrate my meaning.]

[You see the chearful light that flows in upon us through those windows, and renders the glass as bright as the spring day. You know, that this brightness *in* the glass is not *from* the glass, which was totally dark some hours ago; a fit emblem THEN *of the works of darkness*, the works of unbelief: such works being as much devoid of rewardableness, as those panes were of light at midnight. Let us not forget then, that if our works are graciously rewarded, it is only when they are the works of *faith*, whose peculiar property is *freely* to admit the merits of Christ, and the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; just as it is the property of the transparent matter, which composes those windows, *necessarily* to admit the genial warmth and chearful rays of the natural sun.]

[You have seen a glass perfectly reflecting the beauty of a person placed over against it. You have admired the elegant proportion of features, which composed her beauty; but did you ever see any man so void of sense, as to suppose, that the beauty was *originally* in the glass which reflected it; or that the lovely appearance existed without depending on its original; or that it robbed the living beauty of her peculiar glory? And shall any, on the one hand, be so full of voluntary humility, as to maintain, that Christ is dishonoured by the *derived worthiness* of the works of *faith*, whose office it is to receive, embrace, and trust in the Redeemer's *original* and *proper* merit? Shall any, on the other hand, be so full of Pharisaic pride as to fancy, that the distinguished excellence of our good works, if we have any, springs from, or terminates in ourselves? No, my brethren: As rivers flow back to the sea, and lose themselves in that immense reservoir of waters, whence they had their origin;

origin; so let all the "rewardable *condecency*" † of our evangelical obedience flow back to, and lose itself in the boundless, and bottomless ocean of our Lord's *original* and *proper* merits.]

[He, He alone is worthy, — *properly* worthy! Worthy, — *supremely worthy is the Lamb that was slain!* Let us then always say, with the humble men of old, *Our goods are nothing unto thee*, our good works cannot possibly benefit thee. What have we, great God, that we have not received from thy gracious hand? And shall we keep back part of thy incontestable property, and impiously wear thy robes of praise! Far be the spiritual sacrilege from every pious breast! As thine is all the kingdom and power; so thine be all the glory for ever and ever!]

[Keep we then at an awful distance from the gulph, which self-righteous Pharisees set between themselves, and the justifier of those, who like the contrite publican, are sensible of their ungodliness. With indignation rise we against the delusion of the Romanists, who countenance the absurd and impious doctrine of Indulgences, by the worse than Pharisaic doctrine of their works of Supererogation. Let us not only receive, and defend in a scriptural manner, the important articles of our Church, but with undaunted courage before men, and with penitential contrition before God, let us stand to our xivth article, which teaches us, after our Lord, to say before the Throne of inflexible justice, "We are unprofitable servants, even when we have done all that is commanded us." In point of *strict equivalence*, OUR best works of faith, our holiest duties, cannot merit the least reward. But, O! may the humbling truth, keep us for ever in the dust! in point of *strict justice* our every bad work *properly* deserves infernal torments.]

† I need not inform my *judicious* readers, that I use the uncouth, barbarous expression of Dr. Owen, "rewardable *condecency*," to convey the meaning of our Lord, when he graciously speaks of *our meriting* or *being worthy*. If sick persons will not take a draught but out of a certain cup, made in the height of a queer fashion, we must please them for their good.

[Through that dear Redeemer then, we receive all the favours, which the Father of mercies bestows upon us. Are our hearts softened? It is through the influence of his preventing grace. Are our sins blotted out? It is through the sprinkling of his atoning blood. Are our souls renewed? It is by the communication of his powerful righteousness. Are we numbered among God's adopted children, and made partakers of his loving spirit? It is through a faith that receives him as the light of the world, and the life of men.]

[The very graces, which the Spirit works in us; and the fruits of holiness, which those graces produce in our hearts and lives, are accepted only for Christ's sake. It is he, who presents them to God, sprinkled with his precious blood, and perfumed with his meritorious intercession. Nor are the defects of our holiest things, any other way atoned for, than by the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, which he made upon the cross for the sins of the whole world.]

[For Christ's sake, God has annexed certain rewards of grace and glory, to the works of faith, which Christ's spirit excites us to; and, I repeat it, for the sake of Christ only, we receive the rewards promised to humble, evangelical obedience. All Christian believers say, "Not we, but the grace of God in Christ." So far as their tempers and actions have been good, they cry out, "Thou hast wrought all our works in us." They all shout, "Christ FOR us, and Christ IN us, the hope of glory." They all ascribe "Salvation to the Lamb;" and while they cast their crowns of righteousness and glory at his feet, they join in the grand chorus of the Church: "To 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." Thus, all is Christ; nothing without, nothing besides him. In a word, he is to believers, as the Apostle justly call him, ALL IN ALL.]

[Indeed, in maintaining the doctrine of *free grace*, I cannot but go even farther than our mistaken brethren, who suppose themselves the only advocates for it. They must forgive me, if I cannot be of their sentiment, when they insinuate, that they shall *absolutely* and *necessarily* be saved. For as reason dictates, that *absolute necessity* vanishes before *free grace*; so Christ charges his dearest elect to *fear God*, as a righteous judge, who **CAN cast body and soul into hell**; yea, who can do it *justly*. No gracious promise therefore is made them, whose fulfilment in heaven as well as upon earth, is not all of *Grace*, as well as of *Truth*, and all through the merits of Christ.]

[O ye *precious merits* of my Saviour, and thou *free grace* of my God! I, for one, shall want you, as long as the sun or moon endureth. Nay, when those luminaries shall cease to shine, I shall wrap myself in you; my transported soul shall grasp you; my insatiate spirit shall plunge into your unfathomable depths; and while I run the never-ending circle of my blessed existence, my overflowing bliss shall spring from you; my grateful heart shall leap through your impulse, my exulting tongue shall shout your praise, and I shall strike my golden harp to your eternal honour.]

☞ Wo then to those, who teach sinners the double way, the Pharisaic way of salvation, partly by man's merits [according to the first covenant,] and partly by the merits of Jesus Christ [according to the second.] "If we, or an angel from heaven, says St. Paul, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached, namely, that we are saved [i. e. pardoned, and sanctified] by grace, thro' faith, and that not of ourselves, [not without an atoning priest and the *Spirit helping our infirmities*] not [by the covenant] of works: it is the gift of God — let him be accursed," Gal. i. 8.] ☞

[☞ He really denies his Saviour, and tears the seamless robe of Christ's righteousness, who patches it with the rags of his own righteousness. | Or, to speak without metaphor, he denies our Lord's meritorious

torious fulfilling of the law of innocence, he despises the Saviour's compleat observance of the Adamic law of works, who being forgetful of his aggravated guilt, and regardless of his palpable impotence, refuses to submit to the law of faith, and to embrace the covenant of grace with an ardor becoming a poor, self-condemned, lost, and undone sinner. Nay, I go farther still:] he takes away the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, who pretends to mend it by adding thereto the filthy drops of his own [Pharisaic] goodness, [in order to make a more complete satisfaction to divine justice.]

To conclude: By the covenant of works man has all the glory of his own salvation. Faith is made of no effect; Christ is entirely set aside, and works are placed on the Mediator's throne.—According to the imaginary, mixt covenant of salvation by our own good works [so called] mended, with [some unscriptural notions and expressions about] Christ's merits; man has the FIRST share of the glory; Christ has only man's leavings. [The two covenants are confounded] works and faith [or rather, faithless works and faith, graceless works and grace,] contrary to my text, and indeed to common sense, come in together for a part of the honour [as if they were the primary meritorious cause of our salvation: whereas the good works of faith themselves are at best only the secondary, evidencing cause of our *final* salvation.

But by the gospel all is set in a most beautiful order, and exquisite harmony. The merits and sufferings of Christ, the Redeemer of the world, are the only "*meritorious cause*" of our salvation. The glory is entirely ascribed to him; and he alone sits upon the throne as a Saviour; while proud man has his mouth stopped, or opens it only in the dust to extol redeeming love. Faith, whose office it is continually to borrow the merits of Christ, and to receive the quickening power of his spirit: Faith, I say, is the only instrumental cause of our free salvation [in the day of conversion.] It receives Christ and salvation, as the hand of a beggar receives an alms. And as for good.

good works [properly so-called,] so far are they from being left out of the gospel-plan, that they have a MOST EMINENT place in it: ¶ They are the DECLARATIVE CAUSE of our free justification both in the day of trial and in the day of judgment;] A constant, uniform course of all sorts of good works, with an holy and heavenly-minded conversation, being the only evidence of a lively and saving faith, [when it has time to shew itself by external works.]

Thus Christ alone *merits*, faith alone *apprehends*, and good works alone *evidence* salvation: Yea, they are the fruit of salvation [begun;] ¶ for [all works *meet for repentance* spring from the free justification and initial salvation, in which we are put in our infancy; and] the love of God shed abroad in an [established] believer's heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, is salvation itself; this love being the tree on which all good works grow, and making our gracious heaven below, as it will make our glorious heaven above.

T H I R D P A R T.

I proceed to shew the injustice or unreasonableness of those, who accuse me of preaching against good works. For, "*he exclaims against good works—he runs down good works;*" is an objection [which is still at times] urged against my ministry.

Although I confess with sorrow, that some years ago, when I had more zeal than prudence, I dropped among you some unguarded expressions, and did not always clearly distinguish between the "good works," so called, of unhumiliated Pharisees; and the genuine obedience of penitent believers: yet I should wrong the truth, if I did not observe, that, as Antinomians have always loathed the doctrine of a *believer's* justification *by works*; so the Pharisaical world has always abhorred the doctrine of a *sinner's* justification *by faith*. Hence it is that] the above-mentioned aspersions, with abundance of false reports, have been in all ages the lot of those, who have preached the gospel of Christ, that

that is, the glad news of free salvation through faith in his blood.

St. Paul had the same objection continually cast in his face. "Do we then make void the law through faith?" says he in his own defence, Rom. iii. 31: That is, by preaching salvation *through faith* we do hinder people from doing the good works commanded in the law? "God forbid! yea we establish the law;" i. e. Our preaching is so far from superseding good works, that it [inforces them by the greatest variety of motives, and] puts our hearers into [the *best*, not to say] the *only* method of doing them: for it shews them how, being sprinkled from an evil conscience, and having their heart purified by faith, they shall naturally [i. e. spontaneously] produce all sorts of good works, instead of bringing forth a few counterfeit ones.

The apostle answers the same objection, Rom. vi. 1. "Shall we then, who are saved by grace through faith, continue in sin that grace may abound?" Shall we omit doing good works; shall we do evil works, because salvation is not [by the covenant] of works, but [by that] of grace? "God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein!" As if he had said, Is not the faith which we preach, a faith of the operation of God? Is it not a powerful and active principle, that turns the heart from all sin to all righteousness? Is it not a faith, by which we are made new creatures, and overcome the world? 1 John v. 1, 4.

[Suppose the lot of a minister acquainted with the privileges of the Christian dispensation, is cast in a place, where these Pharisaic delusions generally prevail; the first thing he has to do, is undoubtedly to uncover and shake the false foundations, on which his unawakened hearers build their hope. He must show them, that their partial, external, faithless obedience will never profit them. He must decry their imaginary good works, tear their filthy rags of fancied righteousness, sweep away their refuges of lies, and scourge their consciences with the curse of the law,

'till they see their nakedness, feel their guilt, and receive the sentence of death in themselves : Then, and not till then, will they stand on a level with the poor contrite Publican, and

Groan the sinner's only plea,
 " God be merciful to me ! "]

[When a preacher is engaged in that important and thankless business, how natural is it for him, especially if he is yet young and unexperienced, to drop some unguarded expressions against good works; or at least not to make always a proper distinction between the Pharisaical works of unbelief, which Isaiah calls filthy rags, and the works of faith which our Lord calls good works? And how glad are his adversaries, to have such a plausible pretence for throwing an odium upon him, by affirming that he explodes all sorts of works, even those for which our reward will be great in heaven!]

☞ The devil fought against our Reformers with such weapons. All the books that the Papists wrote against them, rang with the charge of their turning good works out of Christianity. ☞ Hear good Bishop Latimer, one of the best livers that ever were: " You will say now, Here is all faith, faith; but we hear nothing of good works: for some carnal people make such carnal objections like themselves," &c. Sermon on twelfth day.

Thus St. Peter, St. Paul, and our Reformers, were accused of despising good works, because they exalted Christ, [and with an holy indignation trampled upon the works of unbelief, which are the foundation of all Pharisaic hopes:] I rejoice to be counted worthy of suffering the same reproach, with such a cloud of faithful witnesses. Nevertheless as the scriptures say, that we must not let the good that is in us be evil spoken of, I shall advance some arguments, which, by God's blessing, will either convince or shame my accusers.

You say, [you, that are set against the doctrine of Salvation by Faith:] " that I preach against good works—that I run down good works, &c." but pray, do

do you know what good works are? I am afraid you do not, or else you would not accuse me so rashly: give me leave therefore to instruct you in this point.

All divines agree, that good works are of three sorts: 1. Works of *piety* towards God; 2. Works of *charity* towards our neighbour; and 3. Works of *self-denial* towards ourselves.

In the first class, which includes Works of Piety, divines rank public prayer in the church, family-prayer in private houses, and [meditation or] private prayer in one's closet: singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs: reading the Bible and other good books: hearing the word preached or expounded: receiving the sacrament: keeping the sabbath-day and festivals holy: confessing Christ before a wicked world: and suffering the loss of one's estate, of one's good name, or life itself, for the gospel's sake.

Now I appeal to every impartial hearer, yea and to thy own conscience, O man, who accusest me of preaching against good works, whether I ever taught directly or indirectly, that we ought not constantly to attend public worship, as well as private worship in our own houses, and to perform secret worship in our closet:—Whether I ever spoke against singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; or against reading the Bible and other good books:—Whether I ever so much as hinted, that we ought not to endeavour so to dispatch our worldly business, as to hear [if possible] the word preached or expounded both on Sundays and working days:—Whether I ever *intimated*, that we can live in the neglect of God's ordinances, and break his sabbaths, without bringing upon ourselves *swift destruction*:—And lastly, Whether at any time I cried down, suffering reproach for Christ, and parting with all things, even life itself, to follow him and his doctrine.

Nay, do not you know in your own breast, that my insisting upon these good works, and encouraging all I can to do them, is what makes me to be despised and rejected by many, and perhaps by yourself? How can you then, without wounding your own conscience,
accuse

accuse me of preaching against good works? Are you not rather the person that speaks against them? Are you not *yourself* one of those who say, that, "For their part they see no need of so many sermons, lectures, and sacraments in the church: no need of so much singing, reading, praying, and godly conversation in private houses: no need of such strictness in keeping the sabbath-day holy, &c."

If you are one of them, you add detraction to infidelity, and bearing false testimony to open profaneness [or Laodicean lukewarmness.] You decry good works yourself by your words, and your example; and when you have done, you lay the sin at my door; you say that I preach against them! O how will you reconcile this conduct, I shall not say to Christianity, but even to Heathen honesty!

In the *second* class of good works, divines place works of charity; and these are of two sorts, such as are done to the *bodies*, and such as are done to the *souls* of men. The former are [for the most part] enumerated by our Lord, Mat. xxv. They consist in giving food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty; in entertaining strangers, easing the oppressed, clothing the naked, attending the sick, visiting the prisoners, [and burying the dead, from scriptural and not from Pharisaical motives.]

Now will any one affirm, that I ever spoke a word against doing any one of these good works?—Against doing them *in a wrong manner*, and *to wrong ends*, I have often spoken; and so have all the preachers, who do not daub the wall with untempered mortar: Christ first, Mat. vi. 2. St. Paul next, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. and our church after them; see the homily on fasting.—But I ask it again, Who ever heard me speak one word *against doing them*? On the contrary, have I not declared again and again, that even "a cup of cold water, given in Christ's name, should in no wise lose its reward;"—should certainly be rewarded with eternal life; [and do not some of you know, that within these two years, I have lost many of my reli-

gious friends, by making a stand for the evangelical *worthiness* of the works of faith ?]

As for works of mercy done to the *souls* of men, such as [giving a Christian education to our children and apprentices,] comforting the afflicted, encouraging the dejected, strengthening the weak, exhorting the careless, succouring the tempted, instructing the ignorant, [sympathizing with mourners] warning the stubborn, reproving sin, stopping immorality, rebuking profaneness, and helping each other in the narrow way; it is known to many, that my name is cast out as evil by sabbath-breakers, swearers, and drunkards, for endeavouring to walk in these good works myself, and to make others walk in them.

And yet *you*, who possibly ridicule all those good works, and dream of being saved without them; *you*, who do perhaps just the reverse of them, strengthening one another's hands in licentiousness and profaneness, in sabbath-breaking, swearing, or scoffing at every thing that looks like seriousness; you *accuse* me of despising or discountenancing good works!—O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon, lest the very Philistines laugh at the glaring inconsistency of your words and conduct.

Good works of the *third* class, relate to keeping under the flesh, and all its sinful appetites. The chief of these works, are a moderate use of meat, drink, and sleep; self-denial, [in apparel, furniture, and equipage;] chastity [in all its branches; subduing our slothful, rebellious flesh by] early rising, abstinence, fasting; [and, in a word, by taking up our daily cross, and following our abstemious, and yet laborious Lord.]

[Permit me to do as St. Paul,—to “speak as it were foolishly in this confidence of boasting.”] Have I not enforced the necessity of these good works both publicly, and from house to house? Have you not sometimes even gone away from this place of worship, secretly displeased at my insisting so much upon them; complaining perhaps, “that I went too far, or that no body could live up to what I preach;” and

making a hundred such remarks, instead of meditating upon these words of our Lord: "With man indeed it is impossible, but with God all things are possible?" And yet you now complain that I do not preach up good works. Pray, my brethren, be consistent; keep to one point, and do not say and unsay: I can no more be too strict, and yet make too little of good works, than I can go east and west at the same time. Only think,—and you will perceive that your very complaints justify me, that your sayings overturn one another, and that your own mouths prove you perverse.

You will probably say, "Have we not heard you affirm more than once, that no body can be saved by his works: yea, that a man may go as constantly to church, as the Pharisee did to the temple, be as virtuous as he was, pay tithes as exactly as he did, and be *darned* after all? Can you deny having preached this doctrine twenty times?"

Deny it!—By no means. It is a doctrine for which, God being my helper, I am ready to go to the stake. It is the very doctrine, that I have established in the former part of this discourse: how then can I deny it?

Here methinks a Pharisee replies in triumph: "Well, then, you plead guilty to the charge: you confess that you have preached twenty times against good works."

[I deny the conclusion.] Have you not understanding enough to see, there is a vast difference between preaching against the *merit* of good works, and preaching against good works themselves? Between saying, that obedience to the king will never get us the crown of Great-Britain, and affirming that we owe the king no obedience? In a word, between saying that good works will never procure us heaven, [as the *primary* and strictly speaking *meritorious* cause of our salvation] and declaring that we ought not to do good works? Surely your rational faculties are not so impaired, but you may perceive, these propositions are by no means of the same import.

If I say, that eating will never make me immortal, that drinking will never turn me into an angel, and that doing my work will never take me to the third heaven; do I so much as hint that eating is useless, drinking of no service, and doing my business unprofitable? O how does prejudice blind even men of reason and religion! How hardly does truth go down with us, when we do not love it! How gladly do we dress it up in a fool's coat, that we may have some pretence to despise and reject it!

If you would speak according to *strict* truth, my brethren, you would not say that I "preach against good works, that I run down good works, &c." which is a mistake, as I shewed just now: but you would say, that I preach *against the merit of good works in point of salvation*: this is very true, so I do, and so I am determined to do, by God's grace, as long as I live. So did Christ and his apostles; so do our articles and homilies; and so the children of God have done in all ages. ¶ Those of the Old Testament [far from mentioning any proper merit of their own, cried out: "Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job xlii. 5.—"Wo is me for I am undone, because I am (by nature, and have been by practice) a man of unclean lips." Isa. vi. 5.] Those of the new, prayed to "be found in Christ, not having their own [Pharisaic] righteousness which is by the law of works, but the [evangelical] righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ," Phil. iii. 9. And those of our church profess, that "They are not worthy to gather the crumbs under the Lord's table, and that they do not come to it, trusting in their own righteousness, (or good works,) but in God's manifold and great mercies through Jesus Christ;" so far are they from thinking, that they [properly] merit salvation [either in whole or in part.] See Com. Service,

¶ Yea, I declare it as *upon the house-top*, of all the false doctrines that ever came out of the pit of hell, none has done such execution for Satan in the church of God [as the Pharisaic conceit that we have, or may have any *proper, original* merit.] Stealing, drunkennes,

drunkenness, and adultery have slain their *thousands*; but this damnable error, which is the very root of unbelief, its *ten thousands*. It blinded the Pharisees, and hardened the Jews against Christ. It plunges into everlasting fire all nominal Christians, who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

Yea, strange, as the assertion may seem to some, this [pernicious error] feeds immorality, and secretly nourishes all manner of vice. The scripture tells us, 1 Cor. vi. 9, that "neither fornicators, nor effeminate, neither thieves, nor covetous, neither drunkards, nor revilers, neither unrighteous nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Now how comes it to pass, that so many, who are guilty of one or another of those abominations, remain as easy as if they were guiltless? Why, this damnable notion, that the merit of their works atones for the guilt of their sins, makes them think, that they shall do well enough in the end. "I get drunk now and then, says one, but I am honest."—"I oppress or cheat my neighbour, says another, but I go to church and sacrament."—"I love money or diversions, says a third, but I bless God, I am neither a thief nor a drunkard,"—"I am passionate and swear sometimes, says a fourth, but my heart is good, and I never keep malice in my breast; besides, I'll repent and mend some time or other before I die."—Now the sum of all those pleas amounts to this: "I do the devil's works, but I do good works too. I am guilty of one piece of wickedness, but not of all: and I hope, that thro' the merit of the good which I do, and of the evil which I have left undone, Christ will have mercy upon me."

Thus all our [Pharisaic] delays of conversion, and all our remorseless going on in sin and wickedness, are founded upon the doctrine of [Pharisaic] merits. Well then may our church call it "*a devilish doctrine, which is mere blasphemy against God's mercy:*" a doctrine, which turns Christ out of his throne [by refusing him the honour of being the meritorious cause of our salvation:] a doctrine which [by crooked ways] leads first to licentiousness, as the conduct of many, who

who cry up the merit of good works [so called] too plainly shews; and next to Pharisaic morality and formality; and from both, except converting grace prevent it, into endless misery; for, *No doubt*, says bishop Latimer in his sermon on the twelfth day, *he that departeth out of this world in that opinion* [or, as he expresses it in the same paragraph, those who “*think to be saved by the law, by the first covenant*”] *shall never come to heaven:*” [For they set their hearts against Christ; and, like the obstinate Pharisees of old, not only mistake the works of unbelief for good works; but give them also the place of the *primary, meritorious cause* of eternal salvation; when, if they were the works of faith, they would only be a *secondary evidencing cause* of it. Now, as such men cannot possibly do this, without the greatest degree of spiritual pride, impenitency, and unbelief; it is plain, that, if they die confirmed in this grand antichristian error, they cannot be saved: for St. Paul informs us that pride is “the condemnation of the devil;” and our Lord declares, that “except we repent we shall all perish, and that he who believeth not shall be damned.”]

FOURTH PART.

It is time to come to the last thing proposed, which was to show, why good works cannot deserve salvation in whole or in part; and to answer the old cavil, “If good works cannot save us, why should we trouble ourselves about them?” [In doing the former, I shall attempt to give *Pharisaism* a finishing stroke: and in doing the latter, I shall endeavour to guard the scriptural doctrine of grace against *Antinomianism*, which prevails almost as much among professed believers, as Pharisaism does among professed Moralists.]

And first, that good works cannot merit salvation in part, much less altogether, I prove by the following arguments.

1. We must be wholly saved by the covenant of *works*, or by the covenant of *grace*; my text shewing most clearly, that a third covenant made up of merits [according

[according to the first,] and divine mercy [according to the second,] is as imaginary a thing in divinity, as a fifth element made up of fire and water would be in natural philosophy.

2. There is less proportion between heavenly glory and our works, than between the sun and a mote that flies in the air: therefore to pretend, that they will avail towards [purchasing or properly meriting] heaven, argues want of common sense as well as want of humility.

3. God has wisely determined to save *proud* man in a way that excludes boasting. "God is just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus." Where is boasting then? says the apostle; It is excluded, answers he: By what covenant? By the covenant of works? No, but by the law of faith, by the covenant of grace, whose condition is faith in Jesus Christ. "Therefore we conclude, says he, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law." Rom. iii. 27, 28. If our good works deserve the least part of our salvation, we may then justly boast that our own arm has got us that part of the victory; and we have reason to glory in ourselves, contrary to the scriptures, which say, that "every mouth must be stopped, that boasting is excluded, and that he who glories, must glory in the Lord."

[As to *self-exaltation*, the mouth of Gabriel is not less shut before the throne, than that of Mary Magdalen. Therefore, if any out of hell glory in themselves, it is only those self-righteous sons of Lucifer and Pride, to whom our Lord says still, "You are of your father the devil, whose works ye do, when ye seek to kill me, and glory in yourselves.]"

4. Our *best* works have such a mixture of imperfection, that they must be atoned for, and made acceptable by Christ's blood; so far are they from atoning for the least sin, [and meriting our acceptance] before God.

5. If ever we did one truly good work, the merit is not ours, but God's, who by his free grace "prevented, accompanied, and followed us," in the performance.

formance. "For it is God, who of his good pleasure worketh in us both to will and to do," Phil. ii. 12. Not I, says the apostle, after mentioning his good works, but the grace of God in me, 1 Cor. xv. 10, compared with James i. 17.

6. We perpetually say at Church: Glory be to the Father, as Creator; and to the Son, as Redeemer; and to the Holy Ghost, as Sanctifier. Christ is then to have all the glory of our redemption: But if our good works come in for any share in the purchase of heaven, we must come in also for some share of the glory of our [redemption.] Thus Christ will no longer be the only Redeemer: we shall be co-redeemers with him, and consequently we shall have a share in the doxology; which is a blasphemous supposition.

7. Our Lord himself decides the question in those remarkable words, ~~✠~~ "When you have done all that is commanded you;" and where is the man that [according to the law of innocence] has done [without interruption] I shall not say all, but the one half of it? say, "We are unprofitable servants. ~~✠~~" Now it is plain, that unprofitable servants do not merit in whole or in part, to sit down at their master's table, and be admitted as children to a share of his estate. Therefore, if God gives heaven to believers, it is entirely owing to his free mercy; [according to the law of faith] through the merits of Jesus Christ, and not at all through the merits of our own works.

8. I shall close these observations by St. Paul's unanswerable argument. "If righteousness comes by the law," if salvation comes by [the covenant of] works, "then Christ died in vain. Gal. ii. 21. Whence it follows that if it comes in part by the works of the law [of innocence,] part of Christ's sufferings were vain; a supposition which ends in the same blasphemy [against the Mediator.]

9. That man might deserve any thing of God, upon the footing of *proper* worthiness, or merit of equivalence, God should stand in need of some thing, which it is in man's power to bestow: but this is absolutely impossible: for God being *self-sufficient* in his infinite

infinite fulness, is far above any want; and man being a dependent creature, every moment supported by his Maker and Preserver, has nothing, and can do nothing, to which God has not a far greater right than man himself. This is what the apostle asserts where he says, "Who has given Him *first*, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"—But much more in this remarkable passage; "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" If thou sayest, The number of my talents and the proper use I have made of them: I ask again, who gave thee those talents? And who super-added grace, wisdom, and an opportunity to improve them?—Here we must all give glory to God, and say with St. James, "Every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."

Upon this consideration the apostle proceeds to check the Christian Pharisee thus; "What hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"—Whence it follows, that though St. Paul himself glories in, and boasts of his disinterestedness, yet he did not glory in that virtue *as if he had not received it*; No: he gave the *original* glory of it to *Him, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things*. The glory of bestowing original gifts upon us belongs then to God alone; and the original glory of the humility with which we receive, and of the faithfulness, with which we use those gifts, belongs also to him alone; although, in the very nature of things, we have such a derived share of that glory, as gives room to the reasonableness of divine rewards. For why should one be rewarded more than another; yea, why should one be rewarded rather than punished, if derived faithfulness does not make him more rewardable?

As the preceding arguments [against the proper merit of works] will, I hope, abundantly satisfy all those who have not entirely cast away the Christian revelation, I pass to the old objection. "If good works cannot [merit us heaven,] or save us, why should we trouble ourselves about them?"

I answer,


I answer, 1. ¶ We are to do good works, to shew our obedience to our heavenly Father. ¶ As a child obeys his parents, not to *purchase* their estate, but because he is their child [and does not chuse to be disinherited;] so believers obey God, not to get heaven for their wages; but, because he is their Father, [and they would not provoke him to disinherit them.†]



2. ¶ We are to abound in all good works, to be justified before men [now, and before the Judge of all the earth in the great day;] and to shew that our faith is saving. St. James strongly insists upon this, chap. ii. 18. ¶ “Shew me thy faith without thy works, says he, and I will shew thee my faith by my works:” That is, Thou sayest, thou hast faith, [because thou wast once justified by faith;] but thou dost not the works of a believer: thou canst follow vanity, and conform to this evil world: thou canst swear or break the sabbath; lie, cheat, or get drunk; rail at thy neighbour, or live in uncleanness: in a word, thou canst do one or another of the devil’s works. Thy works therefore give thee the lie, and shew that thy faith is [now like] the devil’s faith; for if *faith without works is dead*, how doubly dead must faith with *bad* works be! ¶ But *I will shew thee my faith by my works*, adds the apostle, i. e. By constantly abstaining from all evil works, and steadily walking in all sorts of good works, I will make thee confess, that I am really *in Christ a new creature*, and that my faith is living and genuine.

3. Our Saviour told his disciples, that they were to ¶ do good works, not to purchase heaven, but that

† This argument is weak without the additions. Our Lord informs us that when the Father in the gospel says to his fair-spoken child, SON, “Go work to-day in my vineyard,” he answers, “I go Sir, and goes not;” And God himself says, “I have nourished and brought up CHILDREN, but they have rebelled against me.” Wo to the parents, who have such children, and have no power to cut off an entail!

§ If this single clause of my old sermon, stands, so will the Minutes and the Checks. But the whole argument is a mere jest, if a man that wallows in adultery, murder, or incest, may have as true justifying faith, as David had when he killed Goliath.

others might be stirred up to serve God. You then, that have found the way of salvation by Christ, *let your light so shine before men, that even they, who speak evil of the doctrine of faith, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven.*  Matt. v. 16.

4.  We are to do good works out of *gratitude* and *love* to our dear Redeemer, who having [conditionally] purchased heaven for us with his precious blood,  asks the small return of our love and obedience. *If you love me,* says he, *keep my commandments,* John xiv. 15. [This motive is noble, and continues powerful so long as we keep our first love. But alas! it has little force with regard to the myriads, that rather *fear* than love God: And it has lost its force in all those, who *have denied the faith,* or *made shipwreck of it,* or *cast off their first faith,* and consequently their *first love.* The multitude of these, in all ages, has been innumerable. I fear, we might say of justified believers, what our Lord did of the cleansed lepers: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" Alas! like the apostates mentioned by St. Paul, they are turned aside after the flesh, after the world, after fables, after Antinomian dotages, after vain jangling, after Satan himself. 1 Tim. v. 15.]

5. We are to be careful to maintain good works; [not only that we may not lose our confidence in God, 1 John iii. 19, &c. but also] that we may nourish and increase our faith or spiritual life; [or, to use the language of St. James, that faith may work with our works, and that by works our faith may be made perfect.] As a man [in health, who is † threatened by no danger,] does not walk that his walking may pro-

† Formerly I did not consider that as Noah walked into the ark, and Lot out of Sodom, to save their lives; so sinners are called to turn from their iniquity, and do that which is lawful and right to save their *souls alive.* Nor did I observe, that saints are commanded to *walk in good works,* lest the destroyer overtake them, and they become *sons of perdition.* However, in Babel, such capital overlooks did me "*much credit.*"

cure him life [or save his life from destruction:] but that he may preserve his health, and [add to] his activity: So a believer, does not walk in good works to get [an initial life of grace, or a primary title to an] eternal life [of glory:] but to keep up and increase the vigour of his faith, by which he has [already a title to, and the earnest of] eternal life. For as the best health without exercise is soon destroyed, so the strongest faith without works will soon droop and die. Hence it is that St. Paul exhorts us to *hold faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, by refusing to walk in good works, concerning faith have made shipwreck.*]

6. ¶ We are not to do good works to obtain heaven by them [as if they were the *primary, and properly meritorious* cause of our salvation.] This proud, antichristian motive would poison the best doings of the greatest saints, if saints could thus trample upon the blood of their Saviour: Such a wild conceit being only the Pharisee's cleaner way to hell. But we are to do them, because they shall be rewarded in heaven. ¶ To understand this we must remember, that, according to the gospel and our liturgy, God *opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers:* [because *true believers are always true workers; true faith always working by love to God's commandments.* Next to Christ then, to speak the language of some injudicious divines,] Faith alone, when it works by love, takes us to heaven: [Or rather, to avoid an apparent contradiction, Faith and its works are the way to heaven:] But as there are stars of different magnitude in the material heaven, so also in the spiritual. Some who, like St. Paul, have eminently shined by "the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love," shall shine like the brightest stars, [or the sun:] and ¶ others, who, like the dying thief and infants, have had [little or] no time to shew their faith [or holiness] by their works, shall enjoy a less degree of glorious bliss: But all shall ascribe the whole of their salvation only to the mercy of God, the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of his blood and spirit,

spirit, ~~and~~ according to St. John's vision, "I beheld; and lo a great multitude of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, with palms in their hands, cloathed with robes, that they had washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb:" and [while our Lord said to them by his gracious looks, according to the doctrine of secondary, instrumental causes, "Walk with me in white, for you are WORTHY, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you, for I was hungry and ye gave me meat, &c.] they cried [according to the doctrine of primary and properly meritorious causes,] not "Salvation to OUR endeavours and good works;" but "Salvation to OUR God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

* [Thus, by the rules of celestial courtesy, to which our Lord vouchsafes to submit in glory; while the saints *justly* draw a veil over their works of faith, to extol *only* their Saviour's merits; HE, *kindly* passes over his own blood and righteousness, to make mention *only* of their works and obedience. They, setting their seal to the first gospel-axiom, shout with great truth, "*Salvation to God and the Lamb!*" And HE, setting his seal to the second gospel-axiom, replies with great condescension: *Salvation to them that are worthy! Eternal salvation to all that obey me.* Rev. iii. Heb. v. 9.]

* [Therefore, notwithstanding the perpetual assaults of proud Pharisees and Antinomians, the two gospel-axioms stand unshaken upon the two fundamental, inseparable doctrines of faith and works,—of *proper* merit in Christ, and *derived* worthiness in his members. Penitent believers freely receive all from the God of grace and mercy, through Christ; and humble workers freely return all to the God of holiness and glory, through the same adorable Mediator. Thus God has *all the honour of freely bestowing* upon us a crown of righteousness, in a way of judicious mercy and distributive justice; while we, *through grace*, have *all the honour of freely receiving it*, in a way of penitential faith and obedient gratitude. To

him

him therefore, one eternal Jehovah, in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed *all* the merit, honour, praise, and dominion, *worthy* of a God, for ever and ever.]

A P P E N D I X.

SHARP-SIGHTED readers will see by this sermon, that nothing is more difficult than *rightly to divide the Word of God*. The ways of *Truth* and *Error* lie close together, though they never coincide. When some preachers say, that "The road to heaven passes very near the mouth of hell," they do not mean, that the road to heaven and the road to hell are one and the same. If I assert, that the way of *Truth* runs parallel to the ditch of *Error*, I by no means intend to confound them. Let *Error* therefore come, in some things, ever so near *Truth*, yet it can no more be the *Truth*, than a filthy ditch, that runs parallel to a good road, can be the road.

It is often a thing little in appearance, that turns the scale of Truth; nevertheless, the difference between a scale *turned* or *not turned*, is as real as the difference between *right* and *wrong*. I make this observation: 1. To shew that although my opponents come very near me in some things, and I go very near them in others, yet the difference between us is as essential, as the difference between *truth* and *error*; And 2. to remind them and myself, that we ought so much the more to exercise Christian forbearance towards each other, as we find it difficult, whenever we do not stand upon our guard, to do justice to every part of the Truth, without seeming to dissent even from ourselves. However, our short sightedness and twilight knowledge do not alter the nature of things. The truth of the Anti-pharisaic and Anti-Crispian gospel is as immutable as its eternal Author; and whether I have marked out its boundaries with a tolerable degree of justness or not, I must say as the heathen poet:

apostates *it is waxed cold*. Therefore, in the present sickly state of the church militant, it is as absurd in preachers, to urge no motive of good works but love; as it would be in physicians to insist, that a *good stomach* must be the only motive, from which their patients ought to take either food or physic.

Our Lord, far from countenancing our refinements in this respect, perpetually secures the practice of good works by *promising heaven* to all that persevere in doing them; while he deters us from sin, by *threatening destruction* to all that persist in committing it; working thus alternately upon our *hopes and fears*, those powerful springs of action.

The force of this double incentive to practical religion, I greatly weakened, when, being carried away by the stream of Solifidianism, I rashly said in my old sermon, that "good works shall be rewarded in heaven and eternal life, although not with eternal life and heaven." An Antinomian error this, which I publicly renounce, and against which I enter the following protest.

If the oracles of God command us to work FROM an *initial* life of *grace*, FOR an *eternal* life, of *glory*; frequently annexing the promise of heavenly bliss to good works, and threatening all *workers of iniquity* with hell-torments; it follows, that heaven will be the *gracious reward* of good works, and hell the *just wages* of bad ones.

I readily grant however, that, if we consider ourselves merely as *sinners*, in the light of the *first* gospel axiom, and according to the *covenant of works*, which we have so frequently broken; heaven is MERELY the GIFT of God through our Lord Jesus Christ: for, according to *that* covenant, destruction is the wages of all who have committed sin. But, if we are *converted sinners* or obedient *believers*: and if we consider ourselves in the light of the *second* gospel axiom, and according to the Covenant of Grace; every unprejudiced person, who believes the Bible, must allow that heaven is the gracious REWARD of our works of faith.

An illustration may help the reader to see the justness of this distinction:—A charitable nobleman discharges the debts of ten insolvent prisoners, sets them up in great or little farms, according to their respective abilities: and laying down a thousand pounds before them, he says: “I have already done much for you, but I will do more still. I freely give you this purse, to encourage your industry. You shall share this gold among you, if you manage your farms according to my directions: but if you let your fields be over-run with thorns, you shall not only lose the bounty I design for the industrious, but forfeit all my preceding favours.” Now, who does not see, that the thousand pounds thus laid down, are a *free gift* of the nobleman; that nevertheless, upon the performance of the condition he has fixed, they become a *gracious reward* of industry; and that consequently, the obtaining of this reward turns now entirely upon the *works of industry* performed by the farmers.

Just so, eternal salvation is the *free gift* of God thro’ Jesus Christ; and yet the *obtaining* of it (by adults) turns entirely upon their *works of faith*; that is, upon their *works* as well as upon their *faith*. Hence the Scripture says indifferently, “He that believeth is not condemned;” and, “If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?” “All that believe are justified;” and, “He that worketh righteousness is accepted.”—Our Lord, speaking of a weeping penitent, says equally: “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much;” and, “Thy sins are forgiven, thy Faith hath saved thee.” As for St. Paul, tho’ he always justly excludes the works of unbelief, and merely ceremonial works, yet he so joins *faith*, and *works of faith*, as to shew us, that they are equally necessary to eternal salvation: “There is no condemnation, says he, to them that are in Christ” by faith: (Here is the Pharisees portion) “who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit:” (Here is the Antinomian’s portion.) Hence it appears, that living faith, *now* and always, works righteousness; and that

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the works of righteousness *now* and always accompany faith, so long as it remains *living*.

“ I know this is the doctrine, says judicious Mr. Baxter, that will have the loudest outcries raised against it : and will make some cry out, Heresy, Popery, Socinianism ! and what not ? For my own part, the Searcher of hearts knoweth, that not singularity, or any good-will to Popery, provoketh me to entertain it ; but that I have earnestly sought the Lord's direction upon my knees, before I durst adventure on it : and that I resisted the light of this conclusion as long as I was able.” May this bright testimony make way for an illuminated cloud of prophets and apostles ! and may the Sun of Righteousness rising behind it, so scatter the shades of error, that we may awake out of our Antinomian dreams, and see a glorious, unclouded gospel-day !

That in subordination to Christ, our eternal salvation depends upon good works, i. e. upon the works of faith, will appear indubitable to them that believe the Bible, and candidly consider the following Scriptures, in which HEAVEN and eternal life IN GLORY are suspended upon *works*, if they spring from a sincere *belief* in the light of our dispensation : I say, if they spring from true *faith*, it being absolutely impossible for an *Heathen*, and much more for a *Christian*, to work righteousness without *believing* in some degree, “ that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” as well as the punisher of them that presumptuously sin against him : “ For without faith it is impossible to please God ; ” all faithless works springing merely from superstition, like those of Baal's priests, or from hypocrisy like those of the Pharisees. Having thus guarded against the doctrine of FAITH, I produce some of the many Scriptures that directly or indirectly annex the above-mentioned reward to WORKS : And,

1. To *consideration, conversion, and exercising ourselves to godliness*.—“ Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions, &c. he shall surely live, he shall not die.”—“ When the wicked man

man turneth away from his wickedness, &c. he shall save his soul alive."—"Wherefore turn yourselves and live ye."—"Exercise thyself unto godliness, for it is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come."

2. *To doing the will of God.*—"He that does the will of my Father, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—"He that does the will of God, abideth for ever."—"Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister;"—i. e. the same is an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ.

3. *To diligent labour, and earnest endeavours.*—"O man of God, lay hold on eternal life."—"Work out your own salvation."—"Labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life."—"In so doing thou shalt save thyself."—"Narrow is the gate that leads to life.—Strive to enter in.—The violent press into the kingdom of God; and take it by force."

4. *To keeping the commandments.*—"Blessed are they that do his commandments, &c. that they may enter through the gates into the city, i. e. into heaven."—"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—"Thou hast answered right: This do and thou shalt live."—"There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy:" (some of whose laws run thus:) "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.—Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.—Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God," (and, of course, the heirs of the kingdom.) "The king shall say unto them, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you; for I was hungry and ye gave me meat," &c.—"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: But he that does wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons."

5. *To running, fighting, faithfully laying up treasure in heaven, and feeding the flock of God.*—"They who run in a race, run all; but one receiveth the prize: So run that you may obtain. Now they are temperate

temperate in all things to obtain a corruptible crown ; but we, an incorruptible. I therefore so run,—fight,—and bring my body into subjection,” (that I may obtain :) “ lest I myself should be a cast away.” i. e. should not be approved of, should be rejected, and lose my incorruptible crown.—“ Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.”—“ Lay up treasure in heaven.”—“ Make yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”—“ Charge them who are rich, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”—“ Feed the flock of God, &c. being examples to the flock, and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive the crown of glory, that fadeth not away.”

6. *To a godly walk.* “ There is no condemnation to them, &c. that walk not after the flesh.”—“ As many as walk according to this rule, mercy (be, or will be) on them.”—“ The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

7. *To persevering watchfulness, faithfulness, prayer, &c.* “ He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.”—“ Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”—“ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.”—“ To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne.—To him that keepeth my words unto the end, &c. will I give the morning star.”—“ Take heed to yourselves, watch and pray always, that ye may be counted worthy to escape, &c. and to stand before the Son of man.”
In a word,

8. *To patient continuance in mortifying the deeds of the body, and in well doing.* “ If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap perdition : but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting : And let us not be weary in well-doing,

doing, for in due season we shall reap (not, if we faint, but,) if we faint not."—"He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."—"Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—"God, at the revelation of his righteous judgment, will render to every man according to his deeds: eternal life to them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory. Anguish upon every soul of man that does evil, &c. but glory to every man that worketh good, &c. for there is no respect of persons with God."

Is it not astonishing, that, in sight of so many plain scriptures, the Solidians should still ridicule the passport of good works, and give it to the winds as a "paper-kite?" However, if the preceding texts do not appear sufficient, I can send another volley of gospel-truths, to show that the initial salvation of believers themselves may be lost through bad works.

"I know thy works, &c. so then because thou art lukewarm I will spue thee out of my mouth."—"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be damned" (in the original it is the same word, which is rendered damned, Mark xvi. 16.) "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we (believers) deny him, he will also deny us."—"Add to your faith virtue, &c. charity, &c. if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord."—"It had been better for them, that have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Saviour, (i. e. for believers) not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."—"Every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit, is cut down, and cast into the fire.---Every branch IN ME, that beareth not fruit, my Father taketh away.---Abide in me, &c. If a man abide not in me, (by keeping my commandments in faith) he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and (he shall share the fate of the branches that have really belonged to the natural vine, and now bear no more fruit,) men gather them, and cast them

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into the fire, and they are burned."---The fig-tree in the Lord's moral vineyard is cut down, for not bearing fruit.---"Him that sinneth I will blot out of my book. Some having put away a good conscience, concerning faith have made shipwreck."---"Such as turn back to their own wickedness, the Lord shall lead them forth with the evil doers."---"Towards thee, goodness, if (by continuing in obedience) thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou shalt be cut off."

Again, "For the wickedness of their doings, I will drive them out of my house, I will love them no more."---"Some are already turned aside after Satan, ---having damnation because they have cast off their first faith" (the faith that works by love)---the mystery of faith kept in a pure conscience,---the faith unfeigned" [that the apostle couples with] "a good conscience;"---the faith that cries like Rachel, *Give me children, give me good works, or else I die*;---the faith that faints without obedience, and actually dies by bad works. The following scriptures abundantly proving that *faith*, and consequently *the just who live by faith*, can die by bad works.

"When a righteous man † doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, &c. he shall DIE in his

† That this is spoken of a *truly-righteous man*, i. e. of a believer, appears from the following reasons: (1) The righteous here mentioned, is opposed to the *wicked* mentioned in the context: As surely then as the word *wicked* means *there* one *really-wicked*, so does the word *righteous* mean *here* one *truly-righteous*. (2) The righteous man's turning from his righteousness, is opposed to the *wicked man's* turning from his iniquity: If therefore the righteous man's righteousness is to be understood of *feigned* goodness, so the wicked man's iniquity must be understood of *feigned* iniquity. (3) The crime of the righteous man here spoken of, is *turning from his righteousness*; but if his righteousness were only an hypocritical righteousness, he would rather deserve to be commended for renouncing it; a wicked, sly pharisee, being more odious to God than a barefaced sinner, who has honestly enough not to put on the mask of religion, Rev. iii. 15.—(4) Part of this apostate's *punishment* will consist in *NOT* having *the righteousness that he has done remembered*: but if his righteousness is a false righteousness, or meer hypocrisy, the divine *threatening* proves a precious *promise*:
for

his sin, and his righteousness, which he has done, shall not be remembered." Ezek. iii. 20. Again, "When the righteous, &c. does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All his righteousness, that he has done, shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he DIE." Ezek. xviii. 24. Once more: "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression, &c. When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; † if he trust to his righteousness, and commit iniquity he shall die for it." Ezek. xxxiii. 13.

It seems, that God foreseeing the Solifidians would be hard of belief, notwithstanding the great ado they make about faith, condescended to their infirmity, and kindly spoke the same thing over and over; for setting again the broad seal of heaven to the truth that chiefly guards the second gospel-axiom, he says for the fourth time, "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even DIE thereby: But if the wicked turns from his wickedness, and DOTH that which is lawful and right, he shall LIVE thereby." Ezek. xxxiii. 18, 19.

If Ezekiel is not allowed to be a competent judge, let Christ himself be heard: "Then his Lord said unto him: O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, &c. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors." Mat. xviii. 26, &c.

All the preceding scriptures are thus summed up by our Lord, Mat. xxv. 46, "These [the persons who have not finally done the works of faith] shall go into for you cannot please an hypocrite better, than by assuring him, that his hypocrisy shall never be remembered. What a pity is it, that, to defend our mistakes, we should fix egregious nonsense, and gross contradiction upon the only wise God?

† These words are another indubitable proof, that *the righteous* here mentioned is a truly-righteous person; as the holy and true God would never say to a wicked pharisee, that *he shall surely live.*

everlasting punishment ; but the righteous [those who have done them to the end, at least from the time of their re-conversion, if they were backsliders] shall go into eternal life." This doctrine agrees perfectly with the conclusion of the sermon on the Mount : "Who-soever *heareth* these sayings of mine, and *doeth them* ; I will liken him to a *wise* man, who built his house upon a rock ; and every one that *heareth* these sayings of mine, and *doeth them not*, shall be likened unto a *foolish* man, who built his house upon the sand."---
 Nay, this is Christ's explicit doctrine : No words can be plainer than these : "They that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth ; they that have *done good*, unto the resurrection of *life* ; and they that have *done evil*, unto the resurrection of *condemnation*," John v. 29. All creeds therefore, like that of St. Athanasius, and all faith, must end in practice. This is a grand article of what might, with peculiar propriety, be called *the Catholic Faith*,---the faith that is common to, and essential under all the dispensations of the everlasting gospel, in all countries and ages ;---
 "the faith, which except a man believe faithfully," i. e. so as to work righteousness like the good and faithful servant, "he cannot be saved."

SECOND PART.

As some difficulties probably rise in the Reader's mind against the preceding doctrine, it may not be amiss to produce them in the form of Objections, and to answer them more fully than I have yet done.

I. OBJECTION. "You confound our *title* to, with our *meetness* for heaven, two things which we carefully distinguish. Our *title* to heaven being solely what Christ has done and suffered for his people, has nothing to do with either our holiness or good works ; but, our *meetness* for heaven supposes holiness, if not good works. Therefore, God's unconverted sinful people, who have in Christ a complete *title* to heaven by right of "finished salvation," shall all be made *meet* for heaven in the day of his power."

ANS. 1. I understand you, and so does Mr. Fulsome. You insinuate, that till *the day* you speak of comes, unconverted sinners, and backsliders, may indulge themselves like the servant mentioned in the gospel, who said, "My master delayeth his coming, and began to drink with the drunken;" but alas! instead of "a day of power," he saw a day of vengeance, and his "finished salvation" (so called) ended in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

2. Your distinction is contrary to the Scriptures, which represent ALL impenitent workers of iniquity as having a *full title to hell*, according to both law and gospel; so far are the oracles of God from supposing, that some workers of iniquity have a *full title to heaven*, absolutely independent on the obedience of faith.

3. It is contrary to *Reason*; for reason dictates that whosoever has a full *Title* to a *punishment* or to a *reward*, is fully *meet* for it. Where is the difference between saying a murderer is *fully meet for*, or that he *has a full title to* the gallows? If a palace richly furnished was bestowed upon the most righteous man in the kingdom, and you were the person: would it not be absurd to distinguish between your *title to*, and your *meetness for* that RECOMPENCE? Or, if the king, in consequence of a valuable consideration received from the prince, had promised a coronet to every swift runner in England, next to the prince's interposition and his majesty's promise, would not your running well be at once your *title to*, and *meetness for* that honour? And is not this the case, with respect to the incorruptible crowns reserved in heaven for those, who *so run that they may obtain*?

4. Your distinction draws after it the most horrid consequences: for if a *full title* to heaven may be separated from a *meetness* for the *lowest* place in heaven, it necessarily follows, That Solomon had a *full title* to heaven when he worshipped Ashtaroth; and the incestuous Corinthian, when he defiled his father's bed; in flat opposition to the dictates of every man's conscience [if you except Mr. Fulsome and his fraternity.]

ternity.] It follows, that St. Paul told a gross untruth, when he said, "This ye know, that NO idolator, and NO unclean person, hath ANY inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."—In a word, it follows, that believers sanctified with the blood of the covenant, who draw back to perdition, [such as the apostates mentioned, Heb. x. 29.] may have no title to heaven in all their sanctifying faith; while some impenitent murderers, like David and Manasse, have a perfect title to it in all their crimes and unbelief.

5. This is not all: Our Lord's mark, *By their fruit ye shall know them*, is absolutely wrong, if you are right: for your distinction abolishes the grand characteristic of the children of God, and those of the devil, which consists in *not committing* or *committing iniquity*, in *doing* or *not doing* righteousness, according to these plain words of St. John, "He that committeth sin is of the devil,"—"in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever *does not* righteousness, is *not* of God, neither he that loveth not (much less he that murders) his brother," 1 John iii. 8, 10.—Thus the Lord's sacred enclosure is broken down, his sheepfold becomes a fold for goats, a dog-kennel, a swine sty.—Nay, for what you know, all bloody adulterers may be sheep in wolves cloathing; while all those that have escaped the pollution that is in the world, may only be wolves in sheep's cloathing; it mattering not, with regard to the goodness of our title to heaven, whether filthiness to Belial, or holiness to the Lord, be written upon our foreheads. O Sir, how much more dangerous is your scheme, than that of the primitive Babel-builders! They only brought on a confusion of the original language; but your doctrine confounds light and darkness, promises and threatenings, the heirs of heaven and those of hell, the seed of the woman and that of the serpent.

6. As to your intimation, that holiness is secured by teaching, that God's people *shall* absolutely be made willing to forsake their sins, and to become

righteous in the day of God's power, that so they may have a *meetness for*, as well as a *title to* heaven; it drags after it this horrid consequence: The devil's people "in the day of God's power," shall absolutely be made willing to forsake their righteousness, that they may have a *meetness for*, as well as a *title to* hell: a bitter reverse this of your "*sweet Gospel!*"

To conclude: If by your distinction you only want to insinuate, that Christ is the grand, and properly-meritorious procurer of our salvation from first to last: and that the works of faith are only a secondary, instrumental, evidencing cause of our *final* salvation, you mean just as I do. But if you give the world to understand, that election to eternal glory is *unconditional*, or, which comes all to one, that *no sin* can invalidate our title to heaven; from the preceding observations it appears, that you deceive the simple, make Christ the minister of sin, and inadvertently poison the Church with the rankest Antinomianism.

II. OBJ. "You call the *works of Christ* the *primary*, and properly meritorious cause, and *our works of faith* the *secondary* and instrumental cause of our eternal salvation. But according to your doctrine, *our works* should be called the *first* cause, and *Christ's* work the *second*; for you make the final success of *Christ's* work, to depend upon *our* work; which is manifestly setting our performances above those of the Redeemer."

* ANSWER: 1. When a gardener affirms, that he shall have no crop unless he digs and sets his garden, does he manifestly set his work above that of the God of Nature? And when we say, that "we shall not reap *final* salvation, if we do not work out our salvation," do we exalt ourselves above the God of Grace?

2. Whether our free-agency turns the scale for life or death, to all eternity Christ will have the honour of having died to bestow an *initial* life of grace even upon those, who chuse death in the error of their ways, and to have made them gracious and sincere offers of an eternal life of glory. In this sense then,

Christ's work cannot be rendered ineffectual; it being his absolute decree, that the word of his grace shall be the favour of life to obedient free-agents, and the favour of death to the disobedient. Therefore, if we will not have the eternal benefit of his redeeming work, we cannot take from him the eternal honour of having shed his blood even for those, who tread it under foot, and who "bring upon themselves swift *Destruction* by denying the Lord that *bought them*."

* 3. Christ is not dishonoured by the doctrine that represents the effect of the greater wheel, as being thus in part suspended upon the turning of the less. The light of the sun shines in vain for me, if I shut my eyes. Life is a far nobler gift than food; I can give my starving neighbour bread, but I cannot give him life: Nevertheless, the higher wheel stops, if the inferior is quite at a stand; he must die if he has no nourishment. Thus, by God's appointment, the preservation of all the first-born of the Israelites in Egypt, depended upon the sprinkling of a Lamb's blood; the life of all them that were bitten by the fiery serpents, was suspended on a look towards the brazen serpent; and that of Rahab and her friends hung, if I may so speak, on a scarlet thread.---Now, if God did not dishonour his wisdom, when he made the life of so many people to depend upon those seemingly insignificant works; and if he continues to make the life of all mankind depend upon breathing; is it reasonable to say, that he is dishonoured by his own doctrine, which suspends our eternal salvation upon the works of faith?

4. To conclude: Mr. Madan, in the above-quoted sermon, p. 16, says with great truth; "Christ and faith are not one and the same thing; how then can we reconcile the apostle with himself, when he says in one place, *We are justified by Christ*; and in another, we are *justified by faith*? This can only be done by having recourse to the plain distinction, which the scriptures afford us, in considering Christ as the meritorious cause, and faith as the instrumental cause, or that by which the meritorious cause is applied

plied unto us, so that we are benefited thereby." Now all our heresy consists in applying Mr. M's judicious reasoning to all the scriptures, that guard the second gospel axiom, thus: "How can we reconcile the apostle with himself, when he says in one place, We are saved by Christ, and in other places, We are saved by faith, we are saved by hope:— Work out your own salvation:—Confession is made to salvation, &c. For Christ and faith, Christ and hope, Christ and works, Christ and making confession, are not one and the same thing? This seeming inconsistency in St. Paul's doctrine vanishes by admitting a plain distinction, which the scriptures afford us: that is, 1. By considering Christ, from first to last, as the properly-meritorious Cause of our present and eternal salvation: 2. By considering faith as the instrumental Cause of our salvation from the guilt and pollution of sin on earth: And 3. by considering the works of faith, not only as the evidencing Cause of our justification in the great day, but also as an instrumental Cause of our continuing in the life of faith; just as eating, drinking, breathing, and such works, that spring from natural life, are instrumental Causes of our continuing in natural life." Thus faith, and its works, are two inferior Causes, whereby the properly-meritorious Cause is so completely applied to obedient, persevering believers, that they are now, and for ever shall be, benefited by it.

III. OBJ. "Though you assert, that, from first to last, the works and sufferings of Christ are the grand, and properly-meritorious Cause of our salvation; yet, according to your scheme, man having a life of glory upon his choice, and heaven upon working out his salvation, the honour of free grace is not secured. For, after all, free-will and human faithfulness, or unfaithfulness, turn the scale for eternal salvation or damnation.

* ANS. 1. In the very nature of things we are free-agents, or the wise and righteous God would act inconsistently with his wisdom and equity in dispensing rewards and punishments. If, through the saving

grace of God which has appeared to all men, we were not again endued with an awful power to chuse life, and to be faithful, it would be as injudicious to punish or recompense mankind, as to whip a dead horse for not moving, damn fire for burning, or grant water an eternal reward for its fluidity. 2. Were I ashamed of my moral free-agency, I should be ashamed of the noble power that distinguishes me from the brute creation.—I should be ashamed of the Old Testament, and of Moses, who says; “Behold, I call heaven and earth to record, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore *chuse* life.”—I should be ashamed of the New Testament, and of Christ, who complains, “You *will not* come unto me that you might have life,” i. e. You will not use the power, which my preventing grace has given you, that you might live here a life of faith and holiness, and be hereafter *rewarded* with a life of happiness and glory:—In a word, I should give up the second gospel-axiom, and tacitly reproach my Maker, who says; “Why will ye die, O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.”

* 3. To convince you, that *free-agency*, and a right use of it, are by no means inconsistent with divine grace and genuine humility, I ask, Did not God endue our first parents with *free will*? Are not even some rigid Calvinists ashamed to deny it? If free will in man is a power dishonourable to God, did not our wise Creator mistake when he pronounced man very good, at the very time that man was a free-willer? For, how could man be very good, if he had within him a power that necessarily militates against the honour of God, as the Calvinists affirm free-will does?

* 4. I go one step farther and ask, Did God ever endue *one child of Adam* with power to avoid one sin?—If you say, No: you contradict the scriptures, your own conscience, and the consciences of all mankind; you fix the blot of folly on all the judges, who have judicially punished malefactors with death; and, when you insinuate, that the Lawgiver of the universe will

send all workers of iniquity into hell, for not "doing what is lawful and right to save their souls alive;" or for not avoiding sin, when he never gave them the least power personally so to do; you pour almost as much contempt upon his perfections, as if you said, that he will one day raise all creeping insects, to judge them according to their steps, and to cast into a place of torment as many as did not move as swiftly as a race horse!

* If you answer in the affirmative, that God has graciously endued one child of Adam with power to avoid one sin, so far you hold free will, as well as Moses and Jesus Christ. Now if God has bestowed free will upon one child of Adam, with respect to the avoiding of one sin; why not upon two, with respect to the avoiding of two sins? Why not upon all, with respect to the avoiding of all the sins, that are incompatible with the obedience of faith?

5. Again, as it would be absurd to say, that God gave a power to avoid one sin, only to one child of Adam: so it would be impious to suppose, God gave him this power, that, in case he faithfully used it, he should necessarily boast of it. Pharisaic boasting is then by no means the necessary consequence of our moral liberty, or of a proper use of our free-will. Thus it appears, that your specious objection is founded upon an heap of paradoxes; and that to embrace free wrath, lest we should not make enough of free grace, and to jump into fatalism, lest we would be proud of our free-will, is not less absurd than to run to an house of ill fame, lest we should be proud of our chastity.

* 6. Our doctrine secures the honour of free grace as well as Calvinism. You will be convinced of it, if you consider the following articles of our creed with respect to free grace. 1. Before the Fall, the free grace of our Creator gave us in Adam holiness, happiness, and a power to continue in both. 2. Since the Fall, the free grace of our Redeemer indulges us with a reprieve, an accepted time, a day of visitation and salvation; in a word, with a better co-
venant,

venant, and a " free gift, that is come upon all men unto [initial] justification of life, Rom. v. 18. 3. That nothing may be wanting on God's part, the free grace of our Sanctifier excites us to make a proper use of the free gift, part of which is moral liberty. 4. Thus, even our free will to good is all of creating, redeeming; and sanctifying grace: therefore, with regard to that glorious power, as well as to every other talent, we humbly ask with St. Paul, " What hast thou, that thou hast not received?" 5. This is not all: we are commanded to account the long-suffering of God [a degree of] *salvation*; and so it is: for without forcing, or necessarily inclining our will, God's providential free grace disposes a thousand circumstances in such a manner, as to second the calls of the everlasting gospel. The gracious Preserver of men works daily a thousand wonders to keep us out of the grave, and out of hell: a thousand wheels have turned ten thousand times in and out of the church, to bring us the purest streams of gospel truth. Countless breathings of the spirit of grace add virtue to those streams; free grace therefore not only prevents, but also in numberless ways accompanies, follows, directs, encourages, and assists us in all the work of our salvation.

* And yet, while God thus works in us, as the God of all grace, both to will and to do of his good pleasure; that is, while he thus gives us the faculty to will, and the power to do; and while he secretly by his Spirit, and publicly by his ministers and providences, excites us to make a proper use of that faculty and power; yet, as the God of wisdom, holiness, and justice, he leaves the act to our choice; thus treating us as rational creatures, whom he intends wisely to reward or justly to punish *according to their works*, and not according to *his own*.

* Hence it appears, that we go every step of the way with our Calvinist brethren, while they exalt Christ and free grace in a rational and scriptural manner; and that we refuse to follow them only when they set Christ at nought as a Prophet, a Lawgiver, a Judge,

Judge, and a King; under pretence of extolling him as a priest; or when they put wanton free grace, and unrelenting free-wrath, in the place of the genuine free-grace testified of in the scriptures.

IV. OBJ. "One more difficulty remains: if I freely obey the gospel and am saved; and if my neighbour freely disobey it, and is damned, what makes me to differ from him? Is it not my free obedience of faith?"

* ANS. Undoubtedly: and his free disobedience makes him differ from you: or it would be very absurd *judicially*, to acquit and reward you rather than him, according to *your* works. And it would be strange duplicity to condemn and punish *him*, rather than you, in a day of judgment, after the most solemn protestations, that equity and impartiality shall dictate the Judge's sentence.

* As to the difficulty arising from St. Paul's question, 1 Cor. iv. 7. "Who maketh thee to differ? To what I have said about it in the preceding sermon, I add: 1. According to the covenant of works, "all fall short of the glory of God:" and when any one asks, with respect to the law of innocence, "Who makes thee to differ?" The proper answer is, "There is no difference: every mouth must be stopped: all the world is guilty before God:" "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord." But, according to the covenant of grace, he that freely believes and obeys in the strength of free grace, undoubtedly makes himself to differ from him, that by obstinate disobedience does despite to the spirit of grace. If this point is given up, the Diana and the Apollo, or rather the Apollyon of the Antinomians [I mean wanton free-grace and merciless free-wrath] are set up for ever. However,

2. If the question, *Who maketh thee to differ?* Is asked with respect to the *number* of our talents, the proper answer is, "God's distinguishing grace alone maketh us to differ." And that this is the sense, which the apostle had in view, is evident from the context. He had before reprov'd the Corinthians

for *saying every one, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, &c.* and now he adds, "These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos, that ye might learn in us not to think [of gifted, popular men, or of yourselves] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up one against another; for who maketh thee to differ?" Why is thy person graceful? And why art thou naturally an eloquent man like Apollos, whilst thy brother's speech is rude, and his bodily presence weak and contemptible like mine? But,

* 3. If you ask, *Who maketh thee to differ*, with respect to the *improvement or non-improvement* of our gifts and graces? if you enquire, whether God necessitates some to disbelieve, that they may necessarily sin and be damned; while he necessitates others to believe, that they may necessarily work righteousness and be saved; I utterly deny the last assertion; and in this sense St. Paul answers his own misapplied question thus, Be not deceived: what a man (not what God) soweth, that shall he also reap, perdition if he soweth to the flesh, and eternal life if he sowe h to the spirit. Nor am I either afraid or ashamed to second him by saying upon the walls of Jerusalem, that in the last-mentioned sense, We make *ourselves* to differ. And scripture, reason, conscience, the divine perfections, and the trumpet of God, which will soon summon us to judgment, testify, that this reply stands as firm as one half of the Bible, and the second gospel-axiom, on which it is immoveably founded.

* Nay, there is not a promise or a threatening in the Bible, that is not a proof of our Lawgiver's want of wisdom, or of our Judge's want of equity, if we are not graciously endued with a capacity to make ourselves differ from the obstinate violators of the law, and despisers of the gospel;—that is, if we are not free agents. There is not an exhortation, a warning, or an entreaty in the sacred pages, that is not a demonstration of the pen-man's folly, or of the freedom of our will. In a word, there is not a sinner

justly

justly punished in hell, or a believer wisely rewarded in heaven, that does not indirectly say to all the world of rationals: "Though the God of grace draws thee to obedience; yet it is with the bands of a man. For, after all, he leaves thee in the hand of thy counsel, to keep the commandments, and perform acceptable obedience *if thou wilt*. Before man is life and death, and whether him liketh, shall be given him." Eccles. xv. 14, &c.

* But, although your obedience of faith makes you to differ from your condemned neighbour, you have no reason to reject the first gospel-axiom, and to indulge a *boasting* † contrary to faith and free grace: for your Christian-faith, which is the root of your obedience, is peculiarly the Gift of God; whether you consider it as to its precious *Seed* (the word nigh): as to its glorious *Object* (Christ and the truth:); as to the *Means*, by which that object is revealed (such as preaching and hearing:); as to the *Opportunities and Faculties* of using those means (such as life, reason,

† There is a twofold *glorying*; the one Pharisaic and contrary to faith; of this St. Paul speaks, where he says, *BOASTING is excluded, &c. by the law of faith*, Rom, iii. 27. The other, evangelical and agreeable faith; since it is a believer's holy triumph in God, resulting from the testimony of a good conscience. Concerning it the Apostle says, *Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing (BOASTING) in himself alone, and not in another*, Gal. vi. 4. (The word in the original is *Kauchesis* in one passage, and *Kauchema* in the other.) These seemingly contrary doctrines are highly consistent; their opposition answering to that of the gospel-axioms. The first axiom allows of no glorying but in Christ, who has alone fulfilled the *law of works*, or the terms of the *first* covenant: But the second axiom allows obedient believers an humble *Kauchema*, upon their personally fulfilling the *law of faith*, or the gracious terms of the *second* covenant. 2 Cor. i. 12. This *Kauchema* answers to what St. Paul calls the *witness of our own spirit*, or *the testimony of a good conscience*; which, next to the witness of the word and spirit concerning God's mercy and Christ's blood, is the ground of a Christian's confidence. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, &c. because we keep his commandments.* 1 John iii. 21, 22. And yet, astonishing! this blessed *Kauchema*, so strongly recommended by St. Paul and St. John, who, one would think, knew something of the gospel, is now represented by some evangelists, as the quintessence of Pharisaism!

Sec.) or as to the *Spirit of Grace*, whose assistance in this case is so important, that he is called the *Spirit of Faith*.—And yet that spirit does not act irresistibly; all believers freely yielding to it; and all unbelievers freely resisting it; so far only does the matter turn upon free will. Thus it appears, that although the act of faith is ours, we are so much indebted to free grace for it, that believers can no more boast of being their own saviours, because they daily believe and work in order to their final salvation; than they can boast of being their own preservers, because they daily breathe, and eat, in order to their continued preservation.

On the other hand, although your condemned neighbour's disobedience makes him differ from you, he has no reason to reject the second gospel-axiom, and to exculpate himself by charging heaven with capricious partiality and horrid free-wrath; because God, whose mercy is over all his works, and who is no respecter of persons, graciously bestowed a talent of free grace upon him as well as upon you, according to one or another of the divine dispensations: for the royal master, mentioned in the gospel, gave a pound to the servant that buried it, as well as to him that gained ten pounds by occupying till his Lord came.

* “ But, upon that footing, what becomes of *distinguishing Grace* ? ” If by distinguishing grace you mean calvinistic partiality, I answer, It must undoubtedly sink together with its inseparable partner, unconditional reprobation, into the pit of error whence they ascended to fill the church with contentions, and the world with infidels. But if you mean *scriptural* distinguishing grace, that is, the manifold wisdom of God, which makes him proceed gradually, and admit a pleasing variety in the works of grace, as well as in the productions of nature;—if you mean his good pleasure to give the Heathens one talent, the Jews two, the papists three, the protestants four: or if you mean the different methods, which he uses to call sinners to repentance, such as his familiar expostulation with Cain;—his wonderful warning of Lot's sons-in-law;

law ;—his rousing king Saul by the voice of Samuel, and Saul of Tarsus by the voice of Christ ; [Samuel and Christ coming from the invisible world for that awful purpose]—His audibly inviting Judas, and the rich ruler, to follow him, promising the latter heavenly treasure, if he would give his earthly possessions to the poor :—His shocking by preternatural earthquakes the consciences of the Philippian jailor, and the two malefactors that suffered with him. If you mean this, by *distinguishing* grace, we are agreed : for, grace displayed in as distinguishing a manner as it was towards Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, greatly illustrates our Lord's doctrine : " Of him to whom little is given, little shall be required ; but much shall be required of them, that have received much ; " the equality of God's ways not consisting in giving to all men a like number of talents, any more than making them all archangels ; but in treating them equally, according to the various editions of the everlasting gospel, or law of liberty ; and according to the good or bad uses they have made of their talents, whether they had few or many.

* To return to your grand objection : You suppose (and this is probably the ground of your mistake) that when a deliverance, or a divine favour turns upon some thing, which we may do, or leave undone at our option, God is necessarily robbed of his glory. But a few queries will easily convince you of your mistake. When God had been merciful to Lot and his family, not looking back made all the difference between him and his wife ; but does it follow, that he claimed the honour of his narrow escape ? Looking at the brazen type of Christ made some Israelites differ from others, that died of the bite of the fiery serpents ; but is this a sufficient reason to conclude, that the healed men had not sense to distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* causes, and that they ascribed to their looks the glory due to God, for graciously contriving the means of their cure ?—One of your neighbours has hanged, and another has poisoned himself ; so that not hanging yourself, and taking
 wholesome

wholesome food has so far made the difference between you and them: but can you reasonably infer, that you do not live by divine bounty, and that I rob the Preserver of men of his glory, when I affirm, that you shall surely die if you do not eat, or if you take poison?

Permit me to make you sensible of your mistake by one more illustration. An anti-Calvinist, who observes that God has suspended many of his blessings upon industry, diligently ploughs, sows, and weeds his field. A fatalist over the way, lest free grace should not have all the glory of his crop, does not turn † one clod, and expects seed to drop from the clouds into furrows made by an invisible plough on a certain day, which he calls "a day of God's power." When harvest comes, the one has a crop of wheat, and the other a crop of weeds. Now although industry alone has made the difference between the two fields; who is most likely to give God the glory of a crop, the solifidian farmer who reaps thistles? or the laborious husbandman, who has joined works to his faith in divine Providence, and joyfully brings his sheaves home; saying as St. Paul, By divine bounty I have planted, and Apollos has weeded, but God has given the increase, which is all in all?

T H I R D P A R T .

Flattering myself, that the preceding answers have removed the reader's prejudices, or confirmed him in his attachment to genuine free grace, which stands at an equal distance from wantonness and free wrath; I shall conclude this Essay by some reflections upon the pride, or prejudices of those who scruple working with an eye to the rewards, that God offers to promote the obedience of faith.

† This is not spoken of pious Calvinists, for some of them are remarkably diligent in good works. They are *Solifidians* by halves—in principle, but not in practice. Their works outline their errors. I lay nothing to their charge but inattention, prejudice, and glaring inconsistency.

“ If heaven, [say such mistaken persons] ~~is~~ the enjoyment of God in glory, is the reward of obedience ; and if you work with an eye to that reward, you act from self, the basest of all motives. Love, and not self-interest, sets us, true believers, upon action : We work *from gratitude*, † and not for profit ; *from life*, and not for life. To do good with an eye to a reward, though that reward should be a crown of life, is to act as a mercenary wretch, and not as a dutiful child, or a faithful servant.”

The specious error, zealously propagated by Molinos, Madam Guion, and her illustrious convert, archbishop Fenelon [though afterwards renounced by him] put a stop to a great revival of the power of godliness abroad in the last century ; and it has already struck a fatal blow at the late revival in these kingdoms. I reverence and love many that contend for this sentiment ; but, my regard for truth overbalancing my respect for them, I think it my duty to oppose their mistake, as a pernicious refinement of Satan transformed into an angel of light : I therefore attack it by the following arguments.

1. This doctrine sets aside at a stroke a considerable part of the Bible, which consists in *threatnings* to deter evil workers, and in *promises* to encourage obedient believers : For, if it is base to obey, in order to obtain a promised reward, it is baser still to do it in order to avoid a threatened punishment. Thus the precious grace of faith, so far as it is exercised about divine promises and threatenings, is indirectly made void.

2. It decries godly fear, a grand spring of action, and preservative of holiness in all free agents, that

† The reader is desired to observe, that we recommend working *from life* and *gratitude*, as well as our opponents. Life and thankfulness, are *two* important springs of action, which we use as well as they. But thankfulness and life, are not *all* the springs necessary, in our imperfect state, to move *all* the wheels of obedience ; and we dare no more exclude *the other* springs, because we have these two ; than we dare cut off three of our fingers, because we have a little finger and a thumb.

are in a state of probation; and by this means it indirectly charges God with want of wisdom, for putting that spring in the breast of innocent man in paradise, and for perpetually working upon it in his word and by his Spirit, whom St. Paul calls *the spirit of bondage unto fear*; because he helps us to believe the threatenings denounced against the workers of iniquity, and to fear lest ruin should overtake us, if we continue in our sins.

If ever there was a visible Church without spot and wrinkle, it was when "the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul." The worldly-mindedness of Ananias and Sapphira was the first blemish of the Christian, as Achan's covetousness had been of the Jewish Church on this side Jordan. God made an example of them as he had done of Achan, and St. Luke observes, that upon it, *Great fear* came upon *all the church*; even such fear as kept them from *falling after the same example of unbelief*. Now were all the primitive Christians mean-spirited people, because they were filled with great fear of being punished as the first backsliders if they apostatized? Is it a reproach to righteous Noah, that "Being moved with *fear* he prepared an ark for the *saving* of his house?" And did our Lord legalize the gospel, when "he began to say to his disciples first of all, &c. I say unto you, *my Friends*, be not afraid of them that kill the body, &c. but *fear* him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto *you*, fear him?"—Does this mean: Be mercenary: Yea, I say unto *you*, be mercenary?

3. *Hope* has a particular reference to the *Promises*, and *good things* to come. Excellent things are spoken of that grace: If St. Paul says, Ye are saved thro' *Faith*, he says also, We are saved by *Hope*. Hence St. Peter observes, that "exceeding great *promises* are given unto us, that we might be partakers of the divine nature;" And St. John declares, "Every man that hath this *hope* in him, purifieth himself even as God is pure." Now hope never stirs, but in order to obtain good things in view: a motive this, which

our gospel-refiners represent as illiberal and base. Their scheme therefore, directly tends to ridicule and suppress the capital, Christian grace, which Faith guards on the left hand, and Charity on the right.

4. God says to Abraham, and in him to all believers, "I am thy exceeding great *Reward*:" Hence it follows, that the higher we rise in holiness and obedience, the nearer we shall be admitted to the eternal throne; and the fuller enjoyment we shall have of our God and Saviour, our *Reward* and Rewarder. Therefore, to overlook divine rewards, is to overlook God himself, who is our great *Reward*; and to slight the life to come, of which godliness has the *Promise*.

5. This error, I suppose, may be put in a still stronger light. Not to strive to obtain our great reward in full, amounts to saying: "Lord, thou art beneath my aim and pursuit: I can do without thee; or without so much of thee. I will not bestir myself, and do one thing to obtain either the fruition, or a fuller enjoyment of thy adorable self."

* *Wo to him that striveth in generosity with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive thus with the potsherd of the earth; but let not the clay say to him that fashioneth it, "What doest thou, when thou stirrest me up to good works by the promise of thy rewards? Surely, Lord, thou forgettest, that the nobleness of my mind, and my doctrine of finished salvation, make me above running for a reward, though it should be a life of glory, and Thyself. Whatever I do at thy command, I am determined not to demean myself; I will do it as Araunah, like a king." What depths of Antinomian pride may be hid under the covering of our voluntary humility!*

6. The Calvinists of the last century, in their lucid intervals, saw the absolute necessity of working for heaven and heavenly rewards. We have a good, practical discourse of John Bunyan upon these words, "So run that you may obtain." The burden of it is, "If you will have heaven, you must run for it." Whence he calls his sermon, "*The heavenly footman.*"

And

And Matthew Mead, a staunch Calvinist, in his treatise on *The good of early obedience*, p. 429, says with great truth: "Maintain an holy, filial fear of God: This is an excellent preservative against apostacy. *By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil*, says Solomon; and he tells you, "The fear of the Lord is the fountain of *life*, whereby men depart from the snares of *death*;" and backsliding from Christ is one of the great snares of death. Think much of the day of recompence, and of the glorious reward of perseverance in that day: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." It is not those that begin well, but those who end well, that receive the crown. It is not mercenary service to quicken ourselves to the obedience by the hope of a recompence. *Omnis amor mercedis non est mercenarius*, &c. David said, "I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments." He encouraged himself to duty by the hope of glory, &c. Hope of that glorious recompence is of great service to quicken us to perseverance. And to the same end does the apostle urge it: "Be unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

7. When voluntary humility has made us wise above what is written by the apostles, and by our forefathers, it will make us look down with contempt from the top of our fancied orthodoxy, upon the motives, by which the prophets took up their cross, to serve God and their generation. When St. Paul enumerates the works of Moses, he traces them back to their noble principle, faith working by a well-ordered self-love [a love this, which is inseparable from the love of God and man; the law of liberty binding us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and God *above* ourselves] "He chose, says the apostle, to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin," &c. But why? Because he was above looking at the prize? Just the reverse: because he had respect to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi, 26.

8. In the next chapter, the apostle bids us take Christ himself for our pattern in the very thing, which our gospel-refiners call mercenary: "Looking to Jesus, says he, who, *for the joy* that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God?" the noble reward this, with which his mediatorial obedience was crowned, as appears from these words, "He became *obedient* unto death; *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him." If the scheme of those who refine the ancient gospel appears to me in a peculiarly-unfavourable light, it is when I see them impose upon the injudicious admirers of unscriptural humility, and make the simple believe, that they do God service when they indirectly represent Christ's obedience unto death as imperfect, and him as mercenary, actuated by a motive unworthy of a child of God. He says, "Every one that is *perfect*, shall be as his master:" but we [such is our consistency!] loudly decry perfection, and yet pretend to an higher degree of it than our Lord and Master: For he was not above enduring the cross, *for the joy* of sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God: but we are so exquisitely perfect, that we will work gratis. It is mercenary, it is beneath us to work for glory!

9. St. Paul's conduct with respect to rewards, was perfectly consistent with his doctrine. I have already observed, he wrote to the Corinthians, that he "foran and so fought, as to obtain an incorruptible crown;" and it is well known, that in the Olympic games, to which he alludes, all ran or fought with an eye to a prize, a reward, or a crown. But in his epistle to the Philippians, he goes still farther; for he represents his running for a crown of life, his pressing after rewards of grace and glory, as the whole of his business, His words are remarkable: "This *one* thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and *reaching forth* unto those things which are before, I *press* towards the mark, *for the prize* of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And when he had just

just run his race out; he wrote to Timothy, "I have finished my course: henceforth there is laid up for me, (as for a conqueror,) a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day," the great day of retribution. As for St. John, when he was perfected in love, we find him as "mercenary" as St. Paul; for he writes to the elect Lady, and to her believing children; "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

10. When I read such scriptures, I wonder at those, who are so wrapt up in the pernicious notion, that we ought not to work for a life of glory; as to overlook even the *crown of life*, with which God will reward those who are *faithful unto death*. And I am astonished at the remains of my own unbelief, which prevent my being always ravished with admiration at the thought of the rewards offered to fire my soul into seraphic obedience. An idle country-fellow, who runs at the wake for a wretched prize, labours harder in his sportive race than, I fear, I do yet in some of my prayers and sermons. A sportsman, for the pitiful honour of coming in at the death of a fox, toils more than most professors do in the pursuit of their corruptions. How ought confusion to cover our faces! Let those that refine the gospel, glory in their shame: let each of them say, "I thank thee, O God, that I am not like a Papist, or like that Arminian, who looks at the rewards which thou hast promised; I deny myself, and take up my cross, without thinking of the joy and rewards set before me, &c." For my part, I desire to humble myself before God, for having so long overlooked the *exceeding great reward*, and the *crown of life*, promised to them that obey him: and my thoughts shall be expressed in such words as these.

"Gracious Lord, if he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall have a prophet's reward: if our light affliction, when it is patiently endured, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: if thou hast said, Do good and lend, hoping for

for nothing again [from man,] and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest: if thou animatest those, who are persecuted for righteousness sake, by this promissory exhortation, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven:" Nay, if a cup of cold water only, given in thy name, shall in *no wise* lose its reward; and if the least of thy rewards is a smile of approbation; let me be ready to go round the world, shouldst thou call me to it, that I may obtain such a recompence."

"Since thou hast so closely connected holiness and happiness, my duty and thy favours; let no man beguile me of my reward by a voluntary humility. And whatsoever my hand findeth to do, help me to do it with my might; not only lest I lose my reward, but lest I have not a full reward; lest I lose a beam of the light of thy countenance, or a degree of that peculiar likeness and nearness to thee, with which thou wilt recompence those, who excel in virtue. So shall I equally avoid the delusion of the Pharisees, who expect heaven thro' their faithless works; and the error of the Antinomians, who hope to enter into thy glory without the passport of the works of faith."

"And now, O Lord, if thy servant has found favour in thy sight, permit him to urge another request; so far as thy wisdom, and the laws, by which thy free grace works upon free agents, will permit; incline the minds of Papists and Protestants to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. Let not especially this plain testimony borne to the many great promises which thou hast made, and to the astonishing *rewards* which thou offerest them that work righteousness, be rejected by my Calvinist brethren. Keep them from fighting against thy goodness, and despising their own mercies, under pretence of fighting against "*Arminian Errors*," and despising "*Pelagian Checks to the Gospel*." And make them sensible, that it is absurd, to decry in word the Pope's pretensions to infallibility, if by an obstinate refusal to "review the whole affair," and to weigh their supposed orthodoxy in the balances of reason

reason and revelation, they in fact pretend to be infallible themselves; and thus, instead of one Catholic Pontiff, set up ten thousand Protestant Popes."

"Thou knowest, Lord, that many of them love thee; and that, though they disgrace thy gospel by their doctrinal peculiarities, they adorn it by their godly conversation. O endue them with more love to their remonstrant brethren! Give them and me that charity which beaveth not itself unseemly, which rejoiceth not in a favourite error, but rejoiceth in the truth, even when it is advanced by our opponents. Thou seest, that if they decry true holiness and good works as "dung and dross," it is chiefly for fear thy glory should be obscured by our obedience. Error transformed into an angel of light has deceived them, and they think to do thee service by propagating the deception. O gracious God, pardon them this wrong. They do it ignorantly in unbelief; therefore seal not up their mistake with the seal of thy wrath: Let them yet know the truth, and let the truth enlarge their hearts, and make them free from the notion, that thou art not loving to every man during the day of salvation; and that there is neither mercy nor Saviour for most of their neighbours, even during the accepted time."

"Above all, Lord, if they cannot defend their mistakes, either by argument or scripture; give them more wisdom, than to expose any longer the protestant religion, which they think to defend; and more piety, than to make the men of the world abhor thy gospel, and blaspheme thy name, as free-thinkers are daily tempted to do, when they see, that those, who pretend to "exalt thee" most, are of all Protestants the most ready to disarm thy gospel of its sanctions; to turn thy judicial sentences into frivolous prescriptions; to overlook the dictates of reason, and good nature; and to make the press groan under illogical assertions, and personal abuse!"

"Let thy servant speak once more: Thou knowest, O Lord; that thy power being my helper, I would chuse to die rather than wilfully to depreciate that
 grace,

grace, that free grace of thine, which has so long kept me out of hell, and daily gives me sweet foretastes of heaven. And now, Lord, let not readers of a Phari-
 faic turn, mistake what I have advanced in honour of the *works of faith*, and by that means build themselves up in their self-righteous delusion, and destructive contempt of thy merits: Help them to consider, that if our works are rewardable, it is because thy free grace makes them so; thy Father having mercifully accepted our persons for thy sake, thy holy spirit having gently helped our infirmities, thy precious blood having fully atoned for our sins and imperfections, thy incessant intercession still keeping the way to the throne of grace open for us, and our poor performances. Suffer not one of the sons of virtuous pride, into whose hands these sheets may fall, to forget that thou hast annexed the reward of the inheritance to the assemblage of the works of faith, or to patient continuance in well doing, and not to one or two splendid works, done just to serve a wordly turn, or to bribe a clamorous conscience: And enable them so to feel the need of thy pardon for past transgressions, and of thy power for future obedience, that, as the chased hart panteth after the water brooks, so their awakened souls may long after Christ, in whom the penitent find inexhaustible springs of righteousness and strength; and to whom, with thee, and thy eternal Spirit, be for ever ascribed praise, honour, and glory both in heaven and upon earth;—*praise*, for the wonders of general redemption, and for the innumerable displays of thy Free-grace unstained by Free-wrath;—*honour*, for bestowing the gracious reward of an heavenly salvation upon all believers, that make their election sure by patient continuance in *well-doing*—and *glory* for inflicting just punishment upon all that neglect so great salvation, and to the end of the accepted time daring thy vengeance by obstinate continuance in *ill-doing*.”

END OF THE SCRIPTURAL ESSAY.

A P P E N D I X.

Madeley, March 11, 1774.

YESTERDAY a friend lent me Mr. Baxter's *Confession of Faith*, printed in London 1655. The third part of this valuable book extends through above 140 large pages, and the title of that long section runs thus: *The testimony of reformed divines ascribing as much to WORKS as I: and many of them delivering the same doctrine.* He produces a hundred witnesses, some of whom are collective bodies, such as the Assembly-Divines, the compilers of the Homilies of the Church of England, and even the Synod of Dort. As the Antinomian spirit which flamed against Baxter's works in the last century, will probably sparkle against the preceding Essay, I beg leave to shelter behind that great man, and a few of his numerous quotations. I shall cite only Baxter's page, to which I refer those who desire to see the original of his Latin quotations, together with the books, chapters, and pages of the various authors.

Page 322, he quotes the following words from Bishop Davenant, "As no man *receiveth* that general justification which discharges from the guilt of all *foregoing* sins, but on the concurrence of repentance, faith, a purpose of a new life, and other actions of the same kind; so no man *retaineth* a state free from guilt in respect of *following* sins, but by means of the same actions of believing in God, calling on God, mortifying the flesh, daily repenting and sorrowing for sins daily committed. The reason why all these are required on our part, is this: Because these cannot be still absent, but their opposites will be present, which are contrary to the nature of a justified man.—As therefore to the conservation of natural life it is necessarily required, that a man carefully avoid fire, water, precipices, poisons, and other things destructive to the health of the body; so to the conserving of spiri-
tual

tual life, it is necessarily required that a man avoid incredulity, impenitency, and other things that are destructive and contrary to the salvation of souls; which cannot be avoided unless the opposite and contrary actions be exercised. And these actions do not conserve the life of grace properly and of themselves, by touching the very effect of conservation, but improperly and by accident, by excluding and removing the cause of destruction."

Page 324, Baxter produces these words of the same pious bishop, "We do therefore fight against, not the bare name of *merit*, in a harmless sense frequently used of old by the fathers, but the proud and false opinion of merit of *condignity*, brought lately by the Papists into the church of God."

And again, page 325, "The works of the regenerate have an ordination to the rewards of this life and that to come. 1. Because God hath freely promised (according to the good pleasure of his will) the rewards of this life and that to come, to the good works of the faithful and regenerate, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Gal. vi. 8. Mat. xx. 8."

Page 328, he quotes the following passage from Dr. Twiss, "It lieth on all elect to seek salvation, not only by faith, but by works also, in that without doubt salvation is to be given by way of reward, whereby God will reward not only our faith, but also all our good works."

Page 330 and 331, he quotes Melancthon thus, "New obedience is necessary by necessity of order of the cause and effect, also by necessity of duty or command, also by necessity of retaining faith, and avoiding punishments temporal and eternal."—"Cordatus stirreth up against me the city, and also the neighbour countries, and also the court itself, because in explaining the controversy of justification, I said, that new obedience is necessary to salvation."

Page 360, 361, he quotes these words of Zanchius: "Works are necessary: 1. To justify our faith [*coram Deo*] before God, &c. 2. They are necessary to the obtaining eternal life, &c. They are necessary

to inherit justification as CAUSES, &c. 4. They are profitable to conserve and increase faith: also to PROMERIT of God and obtain many good things, both spiritual and corporal, both in this life and in another." The words of Zanchius are, "*Opera utilia sunt, &c. ad multa bona tum spiritualia tum corporalia, tum in hac vita tum in alia a Deo PROMERENDA et obtinenda.*" Zanch. Tom. 8, p. 787. loc: de just. fidei. How much more tenderly did Mr. Wesley speak of merit than the orthodox Zanchius, whom Mr. Toplady has lately rendered famous among us! I hope, that if this gentleman ever opens his favourite book to the above-quoted page, he will drop his prejudices, and confess that his dear Zanchius himself nobly contends for the "Wesleian heresy."

Page 462, Baxter concludes his book by praying for those, who had misrepresented him to the world, and obliged him to spend so much time in vindicating his doctrine. I most heartily join him in the last paragraph of his prayer, in which I beg the reader would join us both. "The Lord illuminate and send forth some messenger, that may acquaint the churches with that *true, middle, reconciling method of theological verities, which must be the means of healing our divisions.* Let men be raised of greater sufficiency for this work, and of such blessed accomplishments as shall be fit to cope with the power of prejudice; and let the fury of blind contradiction be so calmed, that TRUTH may have opportunity to do its work."

End of the APPENDIX to the SCRIPTURAL ESSAY.



A N

E S S A Y O N T R U T H ;

B E I N G A

R A T I O N A L V I N D I C A T I O N

O f t h e D O C T R I N E o f *Salvation by Faith.*

EXCEEDINGLY sorry should I be, if the testimony which I have borne to the necessity of good works, caused any of my readers to do the worst of bad works, that is, to neglect believing, and to depend upon some of the external, faithless performances, which conceited pharisees call "good works;" and by which they absurdly think to make amends for their sins, to purchase the divine favour, to set aside God's mercy, and to supersede Christ's atoning blood. Therefore, lest some unwary souls, going from one extreme to the other, should so unfortunately avoid antinomianism, as to run upon the rocks, which are rendered famous by the destruction of the pharisees, I shall once more vindicate the fundamental, anti-pharisaic doctrine of *salvation by faith*: I say *once more*, because I have already done it in my guarded sermon: and to the Scriptures, Articles, and Arguments produced in that piece, I shall now add rational, and yet scriptural observations, which, together with appeals to matter of fact, will, I hope, soften the prejudices of judicious moralists against the doctrine of faith, and reconcile considerate Solifidians to the doctrine of works. In order to this, I design in general to prove that true faith is the only plant, which can possibly bear good works: That it loses its operative nature, and dies when it produces them not: And that it as much surpasses good works in importance, as the motion of the heart does all other bodily motions. Enquire we first into the nature and ground of saving faith.

SECTION I.

A plain Definition of SAVING FAITH, how believing is the Gift of GOD, and whether it is in our power to believe.

WHAT is *Faith*? It is *believing heartily*.— What is *saving* faith? I dare not say, that it is “only believing confidently, my sins are forgiven me for Christ’s sake,” for, if I live in sin, that belief is a *destructive* conceit, and not saving faith. Neither dare I say, that “saving faith is only a sure trust and confidence, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me * :” For if I did, I should damn almost all mankind for 4000 years.

To avoid putting on the black mark of DAMNATION upon any man, that in any nation fears God and works righteousness; I would chuse to say, that “saving faith is *believing* the saving truth *with the heart unto* internal, and (as we have opportunity) *unto external righteousness*, according to our light and dispensation.” To St. Paul’s words, Rom. x. 10. I add the epithets *internal* and *external*. in order to exclude according to 1 John iii. 7, 8, the filthy imputation under which fallen believers may, if we credit the Antinomians, commit internal and external adultery, mental and bodily murder, without the least fear of endangering their interest in God’s favour, and their inadmissible title to a throne of glory.

But, “How is faith the gift of God?”—Some persons think, that faith is as much out of our power, as the lightning that shoots from a distant cloud; they suppose that God drives sinners to the fountain of Christ’s blood, as irresistibly as the infernal Legion drove the herd of swine into the sea of Galilee; and

* When the Church of England, and Mr. Wesley, give us particular definitions of faith, it is plain, that they consider it according to the *Christian* dispensation; the privileges of which must be principally insisted upon among Christians; and that our church and Mr. Wesley guard faith against Antinomianism, is evident from their maintaining, as well as St. Paul, that by bad works we lose a good conscience, and *make shipwreck of the faith*.

that a man is as passive in the first act of faith, as Jonah was in the act of the fish, which cast him upon the shore. Hence, the plea of many, who lay fast-hold on the horns of the Devil's altar, UNBELIEF, and cry out, "We can no more believe, than we can make a world."

But this is an *absurd* plea for several reasons: 1. It supposes, that when *God commands all men every where to repent, and to believe the gospel*, he commands them to do what is as impossible to them as the making of a new world.—2. It supposes, that the terms of the covenant of *grace* are much harder than the terms of works. For the old covenant required only perfect human obedience: but the new covenant requires of *us* the work of an Almighty God, i. e. *believing*; a work this, which upon the scheme I oppose, is as impossible to *us* as the creation of the world.—3. It supposes, that the promise of salvation being suspended upon *believing*, a thing as impracticable to us as the making of a new world, we shall as infallibly be damned, if God does not believe in, or for us, as we should be, if we were to make a world on pain of damnation.—4. It supposes, that believing is a work, which belongs to God alone: for no man in his senses can doubt but *creating a world*, or its tantamount, *believing*, is a work which none but God can manage.

5. It supposes, that when Christ *marvelled at the unbelief* of the Jews, he shewed as little wisdom as I should, were I to marvel at a man for not creating three worlds as quickly as a believer can say three creeds.—And lastly, that when Christ fixes our damnation upon *unbelief* (see Mark xvi. 16, and John iii, 18.) he acts far more tyrannically than the king would do, if he issued out a proclamation informing all his subjects, that whosoever shall not, by such a time, raise a new Island within the British seas, shall be infallibly put to the most painful death.

Having thus exposed the erroneous sense, in which some people suppose, that *faith is the gift of God*; I beg leave to mention in what sense it appears to me to

be so.—*Believing* is the gift of the God of GRACE, as *breathing, moving, and eating*, are the gifts of the God of NATURE. He gives me lungs and air, that I may breathe; he gives me life and muscles, that I may move; he bestows upon me food and a mouth, that I may eat; and when I have no stomach, he gives me common sense to see, I must die or force myself to take some nourishment or some medicine: but he neither *breathes, moves, nor eats* for me; nay, when I think proper, I can accelerate my breathing, motion, and eating: and if I please I may even *fast, lie down, or hang myself*, and by that means put an end to my *eating, moving, and breathing*. Again, *Faith* is the gift of God to believers, as *sight* is to you. The Parent of good freely gives you the light of the sun, and organs proper to receive it: He places you in a world, where that light visits you daily: He apprizes you, that sight is conducive to your safety, pleasure, and profit: and every thing around you bids you use your eyes and see: nevertheless, you may not only drop your curtains, and extinguish your candle, but close your eyes also. This is exactly the case with regard to faith. Free grace removes (in part) the total blindness which Adam's fall brought upon us: Free grace gently sends us some beams of truth, which is the light of *the Sun of Righteousness*; it disposes the eyes of our understanding to see those beams; it excites us various ways to welcome them; it blesses us with many, perhaps with all the means of faith, such as opportunities to hear, read, enquire; and power to consider, assent, consent, resolve, and re-resolve to believe the truth. But, after all, *believing* is as much our own act as *seeing*: We may, in general, do, suspend, or omit the act of faith; especially when that act is not yet become *habitual*, and when the glaring light that *sometimes* accompanies the revelation of the truth is abated. Nay, we may imitate Pharaoh, Judas, and all reprobates: We may be so averse from *the light, which enlightens every man that comes into the world*, we may so dread it because our works are evil, as to exemplify, like the Pharisees, such aw-

ful declarations as these: "Their eyes have they closed, lest they should see, &c.—Wherefore God gave them up to a reprobate mind, and they were blinded."

Two things have chiefly given room to our mistakes, respecting the *strange impossibility* of believing, the *first* is our confounding the truths, which characterize the several gospel-dispensations. We see, for example, that a poor befotted drunkard, an over-reaching, greedy tradesman, a rich sceptical epicure, and a proud ambitious courtier, have no more taste for the *gospel of Christ*, than a horse and a mule have for the high-seasoned dishes that crown a royal table. An immense gulph is fixed between them, and the *Christian* faith. In their present state they can no more believe *in Christ*, than an unborn infant can become a man without passing through infancy and youth. But, altho' they cannot yet believe *in Christ*, may they not believe *in God* according to the import of our Lord's words, *Ye believe IN GOD, believe also IN ME?* If the *Pharisees* COULD NOT believe IN CHRIST, it was not because God never gave them a power equal to that which created the world; but because they were practical Atheists, who actually rejected the *morning light* of the *Jewish* dispensation, and by that means absolutely unfitted themselves for the *meridian light* of the *Christian* dispensation.

The *second* cause of our mistake about the impossibility of *believing now*, is the confounding weak with strong faith. But had Abraham no faith in God's promise, till Isaac was born? Was Sarah a damnable unbeliever, till she felt the long-expected fruit of her womb stir there? Had the woman of Canaan no faith, till our Lord granted her request, and cried out, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt?" Was the Centurion an Infidel, till Christ *marvelled at his faith*, and declared, *he had not found such faith, no not in Israel?* And had the Apostles no faith in the *promise of the Father*, till their heads were crowned with celestial fire? Can you from Genesis to Revelation find one single instance

of a soul willing to believe, and absolutely unable to do it? From these two Scriptures, "Lord, increase our faith:"—"Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," can you justly infer, that the praying disciples, and the distressed father, had no power to believe? Do not their words evidence just the contrary? That we cannot believe, any more than we can eat, without the help of God, is what we are all agreed upon; but does this, in the least prove, that the help by which we believe, is as far out of the reach of willing souls, as the power to make a world?

Such Scriptures as these, "unto you it is given to believe."—"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."—"No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him."—"Every good gift, (and of course that of faith) cometh from the Father of lights."—Such scriptures, I say, secure indeed the honour of free grace, but do not destroy the power of free agency. To us that freely *believe* in a holy, righteous God, *it is given* freely to believe in a gracious bleeding Saviour; because *the sick* alone have need of a physician; and none but those who believe in God, can see the need of an **ADVOCATE** with him: but ought we from thence to conclude, that our unbelieving neighbours are necessarily debarred from *believing* in God? When our Lord said to the unbelieving Jews, that they **COULD NOT** believe in him, did he not speak of an impotency of their own making? I ask it again, if they obstinately resisted the light of their inferior dispensation; if they were none of Christ's *Jewish* sheep, how could they be his *Christian* sheep? If an obstinate boy sets himself against learning the letters, how can he ever learn to read? If a stubborn Jew stiffly opposes *the law of Moses*, how can he submit to *the law of Christ*? Is it not strange that some good people should leap into reprobation, rather than to admit so obvious a solution of this little difficulty!

From the above-mentioned texts we have then no more reason to infer, that God forces believers to believe, or that he believes for them, than to conclude that

that God constrains diligent tradesmen to get money, or gets it for them, because it is said, "We are not sufficient to THINK ANY thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God,—who GIVES US ALL things richly to enjoy."—"Remember the Lord thy God, for it is HE that GIVETH THEE power to get wealth."

From the whole I conclude, that, so long as the *accepted time*, and the *day of salvation* continue, all sinners who have not yet finally hardened themselves, may day and night (through the help and power of the general light of Christ's *saving grace*, mentioned John i. 9, and Tit. ii. 11.) receive *some* truth belonging to the *everlasting gospel*; (see note 8, p. 39) though it should be only this: "There is a God, who will call us to an account for our sins, and who spares us that we may break them off by repentance." And their cordial believing of this truth, will make way for their receiving the higher truths, that stand between them and the top of the mysterious ladder of truth. I grant, it is impossible they should leap at once to the middle, much less to the highest round of that ladder; but if the foot of it is upon earth, in the very nature of things, the lowest step is within their reach, and by laying hold of it, they may go on from *faith to faith*, till they stand firm even in the *Christian faith*; if distinguishing grace has elected them to hear the *Christian gospel*.

S E C T I O N II.

Truth cordially embraced by Faith, saves under every dispensation of divine Grace, though in different degrees. A short view of the truths that characterize the four grand Dispensations of the everlasting Gospel.

FAITH is more or less operative according to the *quality* of the truths which it embraces. This observation recommends itself to reason: For, as some wines are more generous, and some remedies more powerful; so some truths are more more reviving
and

and sanctifying than others. But every evangelical truth, being a beam of the *Sun of Righteousness risen upon us with healing in his wings*, is of a SAVING nature; "the SAVING grace of God, which has appeared unto all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness, &c. and to live soberly, &c." Thus I am saved from ATHEISM, by heartily believing, *there is a God, who will judge the world*:—From PHARISAISM, by firmly believing, that I am a miserable sinner, and that *without Christ I can do nothing*:—From SADDUCEISM, by truly believing, that *the SPIRIT ITSELF helpeth my infirmities*:—From ANTINOMIANISM, by cordially believing, that *God is not a respecter of persons but a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, and a punisher of all that presumptuously break his commandments:—And from DESPAIR, by steadily believing, that *God is love, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world to save that which was lost*, and that I *have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*.

Hence it appears: 1. That every religious truth suitable to our present circumstances (when it is kindly presented by free grace, and affectionately embraced by prevented free-will) instantly forms, according to its degree, the saving, *operative* faith, that converts, transforms, and renews the soul. And, 2. That this faith is more or less operative according to the *quality* of the truth presented to us: according to the *power*, with which the Spirit of grace impresses it upon our hearts; and according to the *earnestness*, with which we receive, espouse, and welcome it to our inmost souls.

When God fixed *the bounds of the habitation of mankind*, he placed some nations in warm climates and fruitful countries, where the juice of the grape is plentiful. And to others he assigned a barren, rocky soil, covered with snow half the year: water is their cordial, nor have they any more idea of their want of wine, than St. Peter had of his want of the blood of Christ, when he made the noble confession upon which the Christian Church is founded. Oh, say a Predestinarian geographer, the God of Providence has absolutely

lutely reprobated those "poor creatures." Not so, replies an unprejudiced philosopher; they may be as healthy and as happy over their cup of cold water, as some of our men of fortune are over their bottles of claret and madeira. And some of those "poor creatures," as you call them, may come from the east and from the west, to drink the wine of the kingdom of God with Abraham, when the children of the kingdom shall be thrust out.

What I have said of water and wine, may illustrate what the scriptures say of the truths peculiar to the gospel dispensations. God forbid, that an *antichristian* zeal for the *Christian* gospel, should make me drive into the burning lake *Christ's sheep*, which are *big with young*: I mean the sincere worshippers, that wait like pious Melchizedec, devout Lydia, and charitable Cornelius, for brighter displays of gospel-grace: for, there are faithful souls, that follow their light under every dispensation, concerning whom our Lord kindly said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this [Jewish and Christian] fold. Them also I must bring into marvellous light, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." Those feeble sheep, and tender lambs I must take into my bosom; and to give them their portion of meat in due season, I venture upon the following remark.

If free-will prevented by free-grace, *ardently* receives the truths of the *Christian* Gospel, *Christian* Faith is conceived. If the heart fervently embraces the truths of the *Jewish* or *Gentile*-gospel; [those which are peculiar to the *Christian* gospel remaining as yet veiled] the *faith* of a *Jew*, or of a *Heathen* is begotten. Nevertheless if this faith, let it be ever so assaulted by doubts, works by love, it is saving in its degree.

I say *in its degree*; for as there are in the earth various rich tinctures, some of which form diamonds; while others form only rubies, emeralds, or agates; so there are in the universal church of Christ, various tinctures of gospel-truth, which form various orders of spiritual jewels, as appears from such scriptures as these.

these. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—"For in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him," according to the dispensation he is under, and the progress he has made in practical religion.

This gospel, for example, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, that they should seek the Lord (as the gracious Author of their being.) and love one another as brothers."—This everlasting gospel, I say, has in all countries *leavened* the hearts of pious Heathens. This doctrine, "Messiah will come to point out clearly the way of salvation," added to the gospel of the Gentiles, has tintured with superior goodness the hearts of believing Jews. This truth, "Messiah is come in the flesh," superadded to the Jewish gospel, has enlarged the heart of all the disciples of John, or the *babes in Christ*. And these Truths, "Christ died for my sins, and rose again for my justification: He is ascended up on high: He has received the gift of the Spirit for men;—for me. I believe on him by the power of that Spirit. He dwells in my heart by faith. He is in me the hope of glory. The promise of the Father is fulfilled: The kingdom of God, [righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost] is come with power:—"—These richer Truths, I say, superadded to those, which are essential to the inferior dispensations, tincture the hearts of all *adult Christians*, and make them more or less intimately one with Christ, according to the degree of their Faith, and the influences of his Spirit.

S E C T I O N III.

Saving FAITH is more particularly described by its rise and operations; and distinguished from the faith of trembling Devils, immoral Antinomians, Penitents sold under sin, and modish Professors, who believe without Frame and Feeling.

IF we assent to a religious truth, merely because we cannot resist its evidence;—if we hate it, wanting to shake it off, wishing it were a lie, and fretting because we cannot make it so; we have the faith of devils: for *devils believe and tremble*; the force of the awful truths, which they cannot deny, giving them a foretaste of infernal torments.

The faith of immoral professors is not much better than the faith of Satan. Two or three comparisons may help us to understand this *mystery of iniquity*. When a person visits you, you may either receive him with cold civility, as a stranger; or embrace him with warm affection, as a friend. From secret motives you may even shew a peculiar regard to a man, whom you secretly despise or detest. He has a good voice, you love music, and he ministers to your amusement: perhaps you want him to cloke the sin of your Bathsheba; perhaps you are a party man; he is a proper tool for you; and therefore you make much of him. But while your regard for him springs merely from such external circumstances, can it ever be sincere? Equally ungenerous is the regard that Gallio and Fulsome have for the truth. Gallio holds fast the doctrine of general redemption, because he fondly supposes, that he has only to avoid robbery and murder to go to heaven: Fulsome extols “everlasting love,”—but it is because he thinks, that it gives him the liberty of loving the world, without the least danger of losing God’s eternal favour. He embraces “justification by faith alone;” but it is because he confounds *the works of faith* and *the works of the law*, and vainly hopes to be finally justified without either. He shouts, “free grace” for ever, because it ensures, as he thinks, his eternal salvation, whatever length he may go in sin. I question if an Indian warrior is sonder of the scalp of an Englishman, than Gallio is of the doctrine of “God’s mercy,” separated from God’s holiness and justice; or Fulsome, of the doctrine of “Christ’s merits,” torn away from the evangelical worthiness of sincere obedience.

The soaring faith of an immoral Antinomian is inferior to the abortive faith of an imperfect penitent; whom St. Paul describes in his own person, Rom vii. We approve the revealed will of God, and "delight in his law after the inward man;" But we cannot yet give up our bosom-sin; carnal reason and the flesh prevail still against the spirit, though not without a struggle; unbelief and abortive faith (if I may use the expression) wrestling in our distracted breasts, make us complain, "The good that I would do, (if it cost me nothing,) I do not: but the evil I would not, that I do." Thus *with his mind*, his rational powers, the carnal penitent *serves the law of God*, by good, tho' ineffectual resolutions; but *with his flesh*, his carnal appetites, he *serves the law of sin*, by bad, though lamented performances.

Faith does not struggle into birth without her coeval child and constant partner, *Hope*. When Faith fails, Despair groans, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" But when faith revives, hope lifts up her head, and cries, "I thank God, there is deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus we go on falling and rising, dying and reviving, till we are quite tired of the sins, which hinder us from welcoming the saving faith with a more cordial embrace; and when we do this, our faith is unfeigned; the Lord sets to it the broad seal of his power; it proves victorious; we enter into gospel-liberty, and instead of the old note, *Who shall deliver me?* We sing, *Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law of sin*, as well as from the curse of the law of innocence, and of the ceremonial law. "There is no condemnation to them that believe, and *walk not after the flesh*, but after the spirit."

The manner, in which this deliverance is generally wrought, may be more particularly described thus. Free grace, at sundry times, and in divers manners, speaks to our consciences; recommending and enforcing the word nigh, the commandment that is everlasting life. If it is the day of provocation, we unnecessarily begin to make excuse: We *cannot* come

to the marriage feast: We are either too good, too bad, or too busy to entertain the truth; and we say as civilly as Felix, Go thy way for this time, when I shall be fitter, or when I shall have a more convenient season, I will call for thee. Perhaps we perversely harden our hearts, contradicting, or blaspheming. But if our free-willing soul knows the time of her visitation; humbly bowing at the word of the Lord, and saying as the Virgin Mary, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy WORD:" I am a lost sinner, but there is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared; then the Seed of the kingdom, the word of God, is received in an honest and good heart; for nothing is wanting to render the heart initially good and honest, but the sincere submission of our free will to that free grace, which courts us and says, "Behold! I stand at the door of every heart and knock: If ANY MAN hear my voice and open, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me;" he shall taste how good the Lord is, he shall taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

Thus opens the kingdom of God in the believing soul: Thus is Christ, the Truth and the Life, formed in the heart by faith: Thus grace begins to reign through Righteousness unto eternal Life by Jesus Christ.

I call that Faith *saving* and OPERATIVE, because, so long as it lives, it *saves*; and so long as it saves, it WORKS *righteousness*;—it WORKS by a righteous *fear* of the evil denounced against sin; by a righteous opposition to every known sin; by a righteous *hope* of the good promised to obedience; and by a righteous *love* of God. Therefore, when living faith ceases to work, it dies away, as the heart that ceases to beat;—it goes out, as a candle that ceases to shine.

"But, upon this footing, what becomes of the modish doctrine of a faith without frame and feeling?" If the ministers, who recommend such a faith, mean, that we must set our heart, as a seal, to the gospel truths adapted to our present state, and stamp them

them with all our might; not considering whether our *fallen* nature and *carnal* reason relish them, they maintain a great truth, which cannot be too much urged upon tempted, and despairing souls. But if they mean, that we must believe ourselves unconditionally elected to glory, be the *frame* of our minds ever so carnal, and the *feelings* of our hearts ever so worldly, they destroy the health of the daughter of God's people, with as rank poison as ever grew in spiritual Egypt. I am no judge of what passes in the breast of those gentlemen; but, for my part, I never *FEEL* *faith* more strongly at work, than when I wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with the banded powers of darkness.

* None but a dead man is quite destitute of "frame and feeling:" It is not a *real* flame that neither warms in winter, nor shines in the dark. The moment a light is not, in its degree, able to triumph over darkness, and even to turn it into light, it ceases to be a *true* light. You may see in Windsor-Castle a candle most exquisitely painted; it *shines* as steadfastly as Mr. Fulsome *believes*. Was the coloured canvas as loquacious as that Antinomian Hero, it might say, "I shine without feeling;" but even then, Mr. Fulsome's faith would have the pre-eminence; for, if we credit him, it shines without either "frame or feeling." How absurd is Solifidianism! How dangerous! If any man can shew me a true light, that *actually* emits no beams, I will repent of the ridicule I cast upon the dotages which make way for a "justifying faith" that works by adultery and murder; an ill-smelling candle this, which burns in the breasts of apostates, to the honour of him, that kindled it at the fire of tophet;—an infernal candle, sending forth darkness instead of light, and so far benighting the good men who follow it, that they look upon it as the inextinguishable *candle of the Lord*, and upon "sincere obedience" as a "jack o'lanthorn."

SECTION IV.

The REASONABLENESS of the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith is farther evinced by a variety of Arguments.—How much we are indebted to the Solidians, for having firmly stood up in defence of FAITH: How dearly they have made us pay for that service, when they have so enforced our xith Article, which guards salvation by faith, as to make void the xiiith, which guards morality.—And why the overpowering splendor of TRUTH is qualified by some shades.

SHOULD some readers still think, that it is unreasonable to dwell *first* upon Faith, and to insist *more* upon it than upon the other works and graces, which adorn the life and character of a Christian; to remove their scruples, and to vindicate more fully the fundamental doctrine of Salvation by Faith, I present them with the following Remarks.

1. If true *Faith* is the root that produces hope, love, and sincere obedience, is it not reasonable *principally* to urge the necessity of *believing aright*? The end of all preaching is undoubtedly to plant the tree of evangelical obedience; and how can that tree be planted, but by its *root*? Was a gardener ever charged with unreasonableness, for not setting a tree by the branches?

2. If *faith working by love* is the *heart* of true religion, should we not bestow our chief attention and care upon it? Suppose you were a physician, and attended a patient who had an imposthume in his stomach and another on his hand; would you do honour to your skill, if overlooking the internal mischief, you confined your attention to the external ulcer?

If the Scripture declares four times, that *the just shall LIVE by his FAITH*, a declaration this, which St. Paul confirms by his own experience, when he says, *I LIVE by FAITH*; is it not evident, that when we practically reject the doctrine of *Faith*, we reject *Life*, together with all the blessings which are brought

to

to light by the gospel; a gospel *disbelieved* being undoubtedly a gospel REJECTED.

4. If Abraham, by "not staggering at the promise of God through *unbelief*, and by being strong in *faith*, gave glory to God, and did set his seal that God is true:"—If you cannot honour a superior more, than by receiving his every word with respectful confidence, and by moving at his every beck with obedient alacrity:—And if *faith* thus honours God, why should you refuse it the first place among the graces, which support and adorn the church *militant*? Especially since the Lord declares, that "the *pure in heart* shall see God," and that our "*hearts are purified by faith*?"—And since the Scriptures testify, that "without *holiness*, no man shall see the Lord," and that we "are *sanctified through faith* that is in him?"

5. All fulness dwells in God: Creatures abstracted from the divine plenitude are mere emptiness. Rational creatures, in their most perfect state, are only *moral vessels* filled with the grace of God, and reflecting the light of divine truth. Now if we can be saved any other way but *by grace, through obedient faith*, i. e. by freely *receiving* the grace and light of God, through the practical belief of the truth proposed to us:—If we are in any degree saved by our proper merit through *faithless* works; we may indulge Pharisaic boasting. But, God does not so give his glory to sinful worms: Therefore such a *boasting is excluded by the law of faith*; and the apostle wisely observes, that salvation is of *Faith*, that it might be by *Grace*; the justifying *faith* of sinners always implying a cordial acknowledgment of their *sin* and *misery*, and a hearty recourse to the tender mercy of our God whereby the day-spring from on high has visited us more or less clearly, according to the dispensation we are under.*

6. The

* To establish the doctrine of the gospel-dispensations, to shew that saving truth, in its various manifestations is the object of saving faith, I need only prove, that a man, in order to his salvation, is bound to believe at one time, what he was not bound to believe

6. The manner in which *faith* and its works *exclude boasting*, may be illustrated by a comparison. A beggar lies dying at your door, you offer him a cordial, he takes it, revives, and works.—A deserter is going to be shot, you bring him a pardon from the king, if he will receive it with grateful humility; he does so, joins his regiment, and fights with such courage that he is promoted. Now in these cases it is evident, that *Pharisaic boasting* is excluded. If the beggar lives ever so long, and works ever so hard;—if the deserter fights ever so manfully, and is raised ever so high; yet, they can never say, that *their doings* have procured them the life, which they enjoy; for, before they did such works, that life was graciously given, or restored to them, upon the easy terms of confidently taking a remedy, and humbly accepting a pardon offered. The application is easy: By our fallen nature we are conceived in sin, and children of wrath: God freely gives us the light of life in Jesus Christ; faith freely and humbly receives it, and works by it; the believer therefore, can never be so unrea-

at another. Take one instance out of many. If St. Peter had died just after he had been pronounced *blest*, for acknowledging that our Lord was *the Son of God*, he could not have been *curst* with a “*Depart from me,*” &c. he would have been *savd*: and in that case, he would have obtained salvation without believing one tittle about our Lord’s *resurrection*; and nevertheless St. Paul, a few years after, justly represented that article as essential to the *salvation* of those, to whom it was revealed: *IF thou shalt BELIEVE with thy heart, that God hath RAISED the Lord Jesus from the dead, thou shalt be SAVED*, Rom. x. 9.—Few people, I think, can read the Acts of the Apostles, without seeing, that the numerous conversions wrought by St. Peter’s preaching, were wrought by the force of this truth, “*God hath raised up that Jesus, whom you have crucified:*” A victorious *truth* this, which would have been a gross *untruth* three months before the day of Pentecost. Nay, what is at one time an article of *saving faith*, may at another time become an article of the most confirmed unbelief: Thus, the expectation of the Messiah, which was a capital article of the faith of the ancient Israelites, is now the buttress of the Babel of modern Jews. The property of faith is then to make our hearts bow to the truth, as it is manifested to us; it being evident, that God never blamed the children of men, for not believing what was never revealed to them.

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sonable, and ungrateful, as to suppose, that his working merited him the Light of Life, by which he began to work righteousness: So long as he deserves the name of a believer, he knows, he feels, that his faith is in the FIRST place a *mere receiver*. "What hast thou, that thou hast not received," roars like thunder in the ears of a *lively* faith, and like lightning strikes dead the *Pharisaic* boaster.

7. I say, that faith is in the *first* place a *mere receiver*: this deserves attention. If we consider faith as a conduit-pipe, which at one end receives the power of God, and at the other end refunds that living stream to water the garden of the Lord; we may with propriety compare that mother-grace to the pipe of a watering-pot, which at the internal, unseen opening, receives the water that is in the pot; and at the external, visible perforations, returns it, and forms artificial showers over the drooping plants. According to the doctrine of the Solifidians, faith does nothing but receive the grace of God through Christ; and according to the doctrine of the Moralists, faith is a mere *bestower*: But according to the Gospel of Christ, which embraces and connects the two extremes, Faith is *first* an humble, passive *receiver*, and *then* a cheerful active *bestower*: It receives grace and truth, and returns love and good works. In that respect it resembles the heart, which continually receives the blood from the veins, and returns it into the arteries. If the heart ceases either to *receive* or to *return* the blood, (no matter which) its motion and our animal life are soon at an end: And if faith ceases either to receive grace, or to return good works, its motion and its life soon terminate in spiritual death, according to the doctrine of St. James. If the Solifidians and Moralists candidly looked at faith in this rational and scriptural light, they would soon embrace the whole Gospel, and one another. By considering *faith* as a RECEIVER, [according to the first gospel axiom] Honestus would avoid the *Pharisaic* extreme; and by viewing it as a BESTOWER, [according to the second gospel-axiom] Zelotes would avoid the Antinomian delusion;

delusion; and both would jointly recommend the humble, cheerful, consistent *passiveness* and *activity* of Bible-believers.

Lastly: If our first parents fell by BELIEVING the gross *lies* told them by the serpent; is God unreasonable to raise us by making us BELIEVE the great *truths* peculiar to our dispensation, that the divine *leaven of sincerity and truth* may counter-work, and at last expel the satanic *leaven of malice and wickedness*? Who ever thought it absurd in a Physician to proportion the remedy to the disease; the antidote to the poison? And why should even the incarnation of the Son of God, appear a means too wonderful for an end so important? Why should it be thought incredible, that the Son of God, who, as our Creator, is far more nearly related to us than our natural parents, should have graciously stooped as low as the *human* nature to redeem us; when Satan wantonly stooped as low as the *bestly* nature to tempt us? On the contrary, is it not absurd to suppose, that hellish, wanton malice has done more to destroy, than heavenly, creating love to save the children of men? For my part, the more I compare the genuine gospel with the nature of things, the more I admire their harmony: Wondering equally at the prejudices of those hasty professors, who pour perpetual contempt upon reason, to keep *their* irrational opinions in countenance; and at the unreasonableness of those pretended votaries of reason, who suppose, that the doctrine of salvation by faith is incompatible with good sense.

“ But (says an objector) if unfeigned faith instrumentally turns us from the power of Satan to God; why have you published tracts against the Solifidians whose favourite doctrine is, *Believe:—He that believeth hath everlasting life?* ”

ANS. By the preceding pages it is evident, that we do not differ from the Solifidians when they preach *Salvation by Faith* in a rational and scriptural manner. So long as they do this, we wish them good luck in the name of the Lord. Nay, I publicly return them my sincere thanks for the bold stand they have made for
faith,

faith, when the floods of Pharisaic ungodliness lifted up their voice against that mother-grace, and threatened to destroy her with all her offspring. But alas! how dear have they made us pay for that service, when they have asserted, that true faith is inadmissible, that it can live in a heart totally depraved, that a man's faith can be good when his actions are bad, detestable, diabolical: In a word, that true Christians may go any length in sin, may plunge into adultery, murder, or incest, and even proceed to the open worship of devils, like Solomon, without losing their title to a throne of glory, and their justifying, sanctifying, saving faith!

This they have done, in flat opposition to our Lord's doctrine: "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit: for every tree is known by its own fruit," Luke vi. 43.—And this some of them seem determined to do, to the stumbling of the judicious, the deceiving of the simple, and the hardening of infidels; notwithstanding our xiith Article, which strongly guards the doctrine of faith against the Solifidian error.—"Good works [says our Church in that truly Anticalvinistic Article,] do [at this present time,] spring out *necessarily* of a true and lively Faith: [and consequently bad works, out of a false and dead faith,] in, so much that by them a *lively* [and by bad works a *dead*] faith may be as evidently known, as a tree is discerned by the fruit."

But, in the mean time, how do they evade the force of that Article? Why thus, David bears this year the fruit of adultery, hypocrisy, treachery, and murder, before all his kingdom: last year he bore the fruit of chastity, sincerity, truth, and brotherly-love. However, according to the Crispian doctrine, David must be a *tree* of righteousness now, as much as when he bore the fruits of righteousness. If this is not the case, Mr. Fulsome's gospel will be false: Now this must not be. *That* gospel must stand.—"But if it stands, our xiith Article falls to the ground."—Oh! we can prop it up by saying that though a child of
God,

God, a tree of righteousness, may now produce adultery, &c. &c. &c. yet he will certainly produce good fruit again *by and by*. To this salvo I answer, that the Article has only two grand designs; the one, inseparably to connect a *lively* faith and *good* works; and the other, to indicate the manner in which I may know whether I have a *lively* or a *dead* faith. Now if I may have a *lively* faith while I commit adultery, &c. &c. &c. it evidently follows: 1. That the *necessary* connexion between a *lively* faith and *good* works is totally lost: 2. That *adultery* and *murder* may denote a *lively* faith as well as *purity* and *love*: —And 3. That our xiith Article has not even the worth of a nose of wax, and may be burned with St. James's Epistle, as an Article "of straw." And yet these gentlemen are the persons, that represent themselves as the only *fair* subscribers to our Articles, and charge us with *perjuration* for taking the xviiith Article in connexion with the viith, the xiith, the xvith, and the xxxist, as well as with the latter part of that Article itself, which demand that the election it speaks of, be understood of *conditional* election!

To return: Should the reader object, that "If God had suspended our salvation upon our practical *belief of the Truth*, he would have put so conspicuous a badge upon the saving Truth peculiar to each Dispensation, that no body could have mistaken it for error, enthusiasm, priest-craft, or nonsense:" I answer:

1. God having decreed to prove the loyalty and moral sagacity of his rational creatures, could not but place them in such circumstances, that they might have an opportunity of exerting themselves. If hares were chained at the doors of dog-kennels, what sagacity could hounds manifest above mastiffs? And if the deepest truths always lay within the reach of the most befotted souls, what advantage would candid diligent enquirers have over those, who wrap their minds in the veil of prejudice, and stupidly compose themselves to sleep in the arms of ignorance and sloth?

2. God

2. God will *reward* us according to our works of faith; but if the truth were attended with an *irresistible* energy, if it shone *always* upon our minds as transcendently bright, as the dazzling sun does sometimes upon our faces, would God display his wisdom in *rewarding* us for confessing it? Did he, did any man in his senses ever offer to reward us for believing, that a bright luminary rules the day, when its meridian glory overpowers our sight?

From the preceding answers I conclude, that God, who makes the golden light of the sun, and the silver light of the moon to succeed each other, and who wisely tempers the blaze of a summer's day, by the mildness of the starry night, with equal wisdom qualifies the blaze of the day of *truth* by the mild obscurity of a night of *probation*; not only that the *flaming* truth may be more delightful at its *return*, but also, that there may be room left for a *gentle trial* of our faith, and for the *reasonable rewardableness* of our works of faith.

S E C T I O N V.

I N F E R E N C E S.

1. **I**F FAITH is so closely connected with TRUTH; *present salvation* with *faith*; and *eternal salvation* with the *works of faith*; how injudicious are those gentlemen, who assert, that *principles* are nothing; and that it little matters what doctrines we hold, provided our actions are good! Alas! if our leading principles are wrong, how can our actions be right? If we are men of *no* principles, or of *bad* principles, and do seemingly good actions; do we not do them from *bad, pharisaical* motives? Even when such actions appear good to man, who judges according to appearance; are they not evil before the Searcher of hearts? Are they not *detestable* before the Examiner of principles? Undoubtedly,—if they are *pharisaical*: *hypocrisy* being the most odious sort of iniquity, in the sight of him, who *requires truth in the inward parts*.

2. If

2. If there are various forms in the School of Truth, how unreasonable is it to say, that none have any acquaintance with her, but such as are in one of the highest forms! And if the Temple of Truth has various divisions to which we advance, as we go on *from faith to faith*; how cruel is it to consign over to damnation the sincere souls, who have yet got no farther than the porch!

3. If there are as many sorts of religious truths, as there are of nourishing food; how irrational is it to despise those truths which the apostle compares to *milk*, merely because they are not the truths, which he calls *strong meat*! On the other hand, if we cannot yet receive those strong truths, how rash are we if we represent them as chaff or poison? And what mischief is done in the Church of Christ, by those who deal in palpable absurdities, and in errors demonstrated to be of a stupifying or intoxicating nature; especially if they retail such errors to an injudicious, credulous populace, under the name of *rich honey* and *gospel-marrow*!

4. When we have once admitted, that "There is a holy God, who makes a difference between the just and the unjust;" can we, without renouncing that truth, turn Antinomians, and think that a man, who defiles his neighbour's wife, can actually be *a man after God's own heart*? And when we have been taught our second gracious lesson; namely, that "We are miserable sinners;" can we, without renouncing this principle, suppose that we can be saved any other way but by the covenant of grace and mercy? Away then, for ever away with *Antinomian* and *Pharisaic* delusions, which are built upon the ruins of these two capital Truths, *God is holy, and Man is sinful*!

S E C T I O N VI.

AN ADDRESS TO BAPTIZED HEATHENS.

HERE I would take leave of my Readers; but they have a *Conscience*, as well as *Reason*; and therefore I beg leave to address the former of those powers,

powers, as bluntly as I have done the latter; diversifying my expostulations, according to the different cases of the persons, into whose hands Providence may direct these sheets.

I. If you do not make the bulk of my readers, I fear you make the bulk of the nation, O ye that regard pleasure, profit, and honour, more than justice, mercy, and the fear of God:—Ye, who try to persuade yourselves, that religion is nothing but a compound of superstition, enthusiasm, and priest-craft:—Ye, who can violate the laws of temperance or honesty without any painful remorse; breaking through promises, oaths, and matrimonial or sacramental engagements, as if there were no future state, no supreme Judge, no day of retribution, no divine law enacting, that “whosoever loveth or maketh a lie, shall be cast into the lake of fire; and that the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget God:”—YE are the persons, that I beg leave to call **BAPTIZED HEATHENS**: Baptismal water was applied to your bodies, as a figure of the grace which purifies believing souls. Ye received, and continue to bear a Christian Name, that binds upon you the strongest obligations you can possibly be under, to partake of Christ’s holiness, and to lead a sober, Christian life: But how opposite is your conduct to that of Christ? Alas! conscientious *Heathens* would disown you; and shall *God* own you? Shall the Searcher of hearts forgive your *immorality*, in consideration of your *hypocrisy*? Will you live and die with such a *lie in your right hand*, and upon your forehead? God forbid!—If you have not sold yourselves to the father of deceits for ever; pay yet some attention to *natural, moral, and evangelical* truths: They recommend themselves to your senses, your reason, and your conscience.

1. Regard *natural* Truths, Earthly joys vanish like dreams. Life flies like an arrow, your friends or neighbours are daily seized by sickness, and dragged into eternity. Death comes to terminate your delusions, and set his black seal upon your false lips, your wan-

ton eyes, your rapacious hands, your luxurious palate, your sinful, treacherous breast. Ere long the king of terrors will screw you down in his hard couch, a Coffin: he will convey you away in his black carriage, a Hearse: he will confine you to his loathsome dungeon, a Grave; and there he will keep you in chains of darkness and corruption, till the trumpet of God summon you to Judgment.

2. And say not that the doctrine of a Day of Judgment is a fable. If you do, I appeal to moral Truths. Is there not an essential difference between truth and falsehood, between mercy and cruelty, between honesty and villainy? Have you, with all the pains you have taken, been able to erase from your breast the law of truth and mercy, which the righteous God has deeply engraven there? Is there not something within you, that, bad as you are, forbids you to wish your father dead, that you may have his estate; and your wife poisoned, that you may marry another? If you say, that these are only prejudices of education; I ask, How came these prejudices to be universal? Why are they *the same*, even where the methods of education are most *contrary*? Why do they reign in the very countries, where there are neither Magistrates nor Priests; and where of course Politics and Priestcraft never bore the sway? If your conscience would condemn you for the above-mentioned crimes; how much more will God do it, who is the Author and Judge of your Conscience? Does not your good sense tell you, that, so sure as the wonderful machine of this world did not make, and does not preserve itself, there is a God, who made and preserves it? and that this God is possessed of ten thousand times more truth, equity, impartiality, justice, and power, than all the *righteous* rulers in the world. And, to say nothing of the checks and forebodings of your guilty conscience; does not your reason discover, that as certain as this great God is possessed of infinite wisdom, power, and justice, and has given us a moral law, he will call us to an account for our breaches of

it;

it; and that as he does not in general do it in this world, he will infallibly do it in a future state?

3. If reason and conscience thus lead you to religion, regard *religious* truths: They are supported by so great a variety of well-attested facts, by such clouds of witnesses, by so many astonishing miracles, and accomplished prophecies;—they so perfectly agree with the glory of our Creator, the interests of mankind, the laws of our nature, and the native desires we have for immortality;—they so exactly coincide with our present, as well as future happiness; that you cannot expose your unreasonableness more, than by rejecting them.

What *reasonable* objection can ye make to these scriptural directions? “Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Speak the *Truth* in *Love*. Return to the Lord. Call upon his Name.” Say, “Grant to us in this world the knowledge of thy TRUTH, and in the world to come life everlasting.” Confess yourselves sinners, great sinners: Spread this melancholy truth before the throne of divine mercy;—spread it with tears of undissembled repentance. “Except you repent, you shall all perish: But, if you sow in tears, you shall reap in joy.”

And suppose not, that I want to drive you to despair. On the contrary, I declare, that dangerous as your case is, it is not desperate. The Gospel offers you a remedy. You have dealt with lying shadows, but you may yet embrace the eternal substance. You have wounded the Truth; but Christ, from whom you have the name of *Christian*;—Christ, who says, “I am the Truth,” has been wounded for you. You have crucified revealed truth, and the Prince of Life has been crucified in your place. I point you to his cross, and declare, in the name of unprejudiced reason, that few histories are supported by such a variety of indisputable evidences, as the wonders that redeeming Love wrought on Calvary for you.

Let not the scandalous falls of apostates, and the bad lives of nominal Christians frighten you from the gospel. Immoral and unloving men, high as their pretensions

pretensions to faith may be, are no more Christians than you. Suffer not the disputes of professors to keep you in infidelity; for they prove the truth, and not the falsehood of Christianity; being expressly foretold. Nor stupidly wonder that the Serpent should most spitefully bruise the heel of the truth that most powerfully bruises his head. Above all, be candid; be inquisitive; apply to the *Father of Lights* for direction; and his invisible hand will conduct you over every rock of offence, and lead you to the sure foundation, *the Rock of ages, the TRUTH as it is in Jesus.*

How near is that *Truth* to you! It always embraces mercy, and mercy now embraces you. Oh! the length and breadth, the depth and height of redeeming mercy! It spares you to believe;—to repent;—to live. The arms of divine Patience still encircle your guilty soul, and bear up your mortal body above the grave. Crying as your sins are, the cries of your Saviour's blood are yet heard above them. Provoking as your unbelief is, it has not yet provoked God to set upon you the seal of absolute reprobation. Unspotted Holiness, glorious Majesty, flaming Power, thundering Justice, weeping Mercy, bleeding Love;—all the divine Attributes join yet in a concert of grace and truth. You are the object of it; and the burden of their terrifying, melting accents is, "Turn ye, turn ye: Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Why should iniquity be your ruin? Turn! for I have redeemed you. Turn! and the second death shall have no power over you. Turn! and you shall have a crown of life."

Thus, my dear fellow-sinners, and far more earnestly than I can describe, Mercy and Truth exert themselves in your behalf; waiting only for your consent; to diffuse their divine perfumes thro' your converted souls. This is the day of God's Power,—your gospel-day:—This is a day of Salvation, a day of the spiritual jubilee, a day of the year of release: Know it: improve it. Break your bonds: claim your liberty: change your service: scorn to be the devil's drudges:

drudges: become the servants of the Most High. The Father of the prodigal son runs to meet, to forgive, to welcome, to embrace you: And to raise your doubting hearts, he bids me impress these gracious promises upon your yielding breasts. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and does that which is lawful and right (and what is more lawful and right for sinners, than to repent, believe, and obey the gospel) he shall save his soul alive."— "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

S E C T I O N VII.

An ADDRESS to CHRISTIANIZED JEWS.

AND ye, Christianized Jews, will ye still be offended at our *sincerely* preaching *free grace* to all our fellow-gentiles? Will ye still stop your ears and cry out, "The children of Abraham, the temple of the Lord are we?" Or, in other terms, We are the little flock *necessarily* contradistinguished from the immense herd of *absolute* reprobates? Will ye still assert, "** Reprobos ideo in hanc pravitatem addictos, quia justo et inscrutabili Dei judicio suscitati sunt ad gloriam ejus sua damnatione illustrandum: **" "*That the reprobates are devoted to wickedness, because through the just and unsearchable judgment of God, they were raised up to illustrate his glory by their damnation?*"—Will ye still add? "** Quos vero damnationi addicit, his justo quidem et irreprehensibili, sed incomprehensibili ejus judicio, vitæ aditum præcludi: **" "*That by God's just and irreprehensible, though incomprehensible judgment, the way to life is blocked up for those, whom he has devoted to damnation?*"—Will ye never blush to assert? "** Quos ergo Deus præterit, reprobat: neque alia causa, nisi quod hæreditate, quam filiis suis prædes-*

* These three quotations are taken from *Calvin's Institutes, Third Book. Chap. 24. Sec. 14.—Chap. 21. Sec. 7.—Chap. 23. Secq 1.*

“*tinat, illos vult excludere.*” : “*Therefore those whom God passes by, he reprobates; for NO other reason but this; He WILL exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates for his sons?*”—Will ye still call “blind,” all who think, that God is *sincerely* loving to every man, without *any* exception in the day of salvation? Will ye still monopolize the Light that enlightens every man, who comes into the world? Will ye still sound the bottomless abyfs of divine Mercy with your short line, and judge of the Almighty’s enlarged heart by the narrowness of your own? O learn to know the God of Love, the God of Truth better. “He is not willing that *ANY* should perish, but that *ALL* should come to repentance.” “He commands *ALL* men every where to repent: And he bids us account his long-suffering, salvation; assuring us, that the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, leadeth to repentance even those wretches, who, after their hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and of his righteous judgment.”

* If you will not credit God’s *Word*, pay at least some regard to his *OATH*. “*As I LIVE*, says he, *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live.*”—Just as if he said; “By myself I swear, that I have absolutely reprobated no man. If any perish, their destruction is of themselves, and not of merciless decrees rashly imputed to my sovereignty. Free-agency in man, and not free-wrath in me, sinks those, who make their conditional rejection and reprobation sure, by their *unnecessary* unbelief, and *avoidable* impenitency.—Far from delighting *absolutely* in the reprobation of any one sinner, I solemnly protest, that I would *offer violence* to the *liberty* of the most obstinate, and *force* them all into heaven by the exertion of my omnipotence, if my truth as a Lawgiver, my justice as a Judge, my veracity as the Inspirer of my Prophets, my wisdom as a Rewarder, and my equity as a Punisher, did not absolutely forbid it.”

Come then, my prepossessed brethren, shew yourselves the children of Abraham; return to the God of your Father,—the God by whom ALL the families of the earth are BLESSED in the Seed of Abraham. Think not that the Lord is only jealous of his supreme dominion; nor make him merciless towards countless myriads of reprobated infants, to extol the grim Sovereignty which your imagination has set up.

“Set not at odds Heaven’s jarring attributes:

“Nor, with one excellence, another wound.”

Allow God to be—“All o’er, consummate, absolute, full & orb’d, in his whole round of rays complete,” *merciful* in the day of salvation, and *just* in the day of judgment, to every individual of the human race. What can you possibly object to a doctrine so rational, so scriptural, so worthy of God?

If you complain that we make the way to heaven too broad, I ask, Ought we not to represent it as broad as the Scriptures make it? Do we make it *wider* than St. Peter did, when truth and love made him divest himself of his Jewish prejudices, and cry out with pleasing amaze: “Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him?” Or do we make it *narrower* than St. Paul, when he wrote, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: No adulterer, &c. hath *any* inheritance in the kingdom of God?”

For your own credit do not ask, “If all men may be saved thro’ Christ, by following the light of the gospel-dispensation, which they are under, what advantage hath the Christian? and what profit is there of baptism and Christianity?” If you make such an objection, you show yourselves to be *christianized Jews* indeed. The apostle has just said, *If the uncircumcision* i. e. if uncircumcised Heathens [like Melchisedec or Job, Cornelius or the Canaanitish woman] *keep the righteousness of the law* according to their light, *shall not their uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?* that is, shall they not be saved as well as if they were circumcised Jews? St. Paul saw, that

the partial heart of the Jews would take fright at his doctrine; and would start an objection capable of demolishing, if possible, the impartiality of God, and the freeness of the everlasting gospel. He therefore produces this formidable objection thus: If the Gentiles may be saved by following their light, *what advantage hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?* Rom. iii. 1. The answer which he gives, stops the mouth of all Jews, whether they live in London, Rome, or Jerusalem: The Jews, says he, [and much more the Christians] "have much advantage every way, chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." The Heathens have only the light of God's works, the light of God's providence, the light of reason, the light of conscience, and the light of that saving grace, which has appeared to all men, teaching them to live soberly, righteously, and godly, and reproving them when they do not. But the Jews over and above this *five-fold* light, have the light of the Old Testament; and Christians the light of the New.

Come then, my prejudiced brethren, let St. Paul's answer satisfy you. Get from under your parched gourd of reprobation: Let not your eye be evil, because God is good; nor fret, like Jonah, because the Father of Mercies extends his compassion, even to all the humbled Heathens in the great city of Nineveh. As the elect of God put on bowels of mercy, and shew yourselves the genuine children of him, who is loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all his works: So shall your mistakes no longer straiten your minds, sour your tempers, and shut your hearts against your "non-elected" neighbours.

And supposing you are of the happy few, in whose souls the impartial grace of God over-rules the ordinary consequences of your partial doctrines:—Supposing you are *loving to every man*, and have more bowels of mercy than the God whom you extol:—Supposing you are *true to all men*, and surpass in *sincerity*, the God whom you recommend, who calls all men every where to repent, and all the day long stretches out his hands

hands in token of his compassionate love to people on whom he absolutely fixed his immortal hatred before the foundation of the world: Supposing, I say, you have the happiness of being so much better than your principles, so much hotter than the God of your *opinions*. [Note; I say not *the God of your salvation*]—Then renounce those *opinions*, and you will no longer countenance Antinomianism, deceive the simple, contradict yourselves, shock moralists, and render Christianity contemptible in the eyes of all, that confound it with your doctrine of *forcible* grace to hundreds, and of *forcible* wrath to thousands.

* Should you countenance your *Jewish* notions by saying, “We are *Christians*: we have nothing to do with the Heathens:” I answer: 1. You have far too much to do with them, when, by the doctrine which you so zealously inculcate, you send them, one and all, to the pit: unless they are brought under the Christian dispensation. 2. You renounce the Church of England, if you disregard them: for on Good-Friday [the day on which Christ tasted death for every man] she enjoins us to pray thus for them: “O merciful God, who hatest *nothing* that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a *finner*, but rather that he should be converted and live, have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heretics.” 3. You indirectly sacrifice the feelings of humanity, and the honour of God’s perfections, to your unscriptural doctrine, when you embrace the horrid idea of the ensured damnation of the Heathens, for the injudicious pleasure of saying, “Why me! Why me!” and of teaching the poor creatures, while they sink into the bottomless pit, to say, “Why me! Why me!”—A dreadful *Why me* this, which is not less offensive to God’s justice, impartiality, goodness and

* Should the persons, whom I now address, say, that I falsify my subscriptions to the 18th Article of our Church, by asserting that even the Heathens, who fear God and work righteousness by the general light of Christ’s Grace, are accepted through Christ’s unknown merits; I refer them to the 57th and 58th pages of the Vindication of Mr. Wesley’s Minutes, where that objection is answered.

truth; than *YOUR Why me* is to his wisdom, equity, veracity and holiness. 4. If Cain was culpable for intimating, that he had nothing to do with his brother, when he had just knocked him on the head; are they praise-worthy, who enjoy with peculiar delight, and recommend with uncommon glee, "doctrines of grace" [so called] which absolutely fix the unavoidable damnation of perhaps as many millions of their unborn fellow-creatures, as Abel had hairs upon his head? And do they mend the matter, when, to vindicate their severe opinions, they calmly wipe their mouth, and say, "We have nothing to do with the Heathens?" That is, in plain English, "Our orthodoxy demands that they should inevitably perish, if they do not explicitly believe in Christ crucified, of whom they never heard: Nor do we care what becomes of them. Let them sink, provided our doctrines stand."

O my dear brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you, though your's is straitened towards the Heathens. Suffer the word of expostulation one moment more. Do not you detest the character of a stiff Pharisee? I know you do in the circumcised progeny: And why should you admire it in the baptized race? I am persuaded, that you abhor the damnatory bull of those self-elected men of old, who from the height of their orthodoxy, looked down upon their neighbours, and said, "*This people who knoweth not*" [what we call] "*the law, are cursed.*" And will you exemplify their uncharitable positiveness by indirectly saying, *This people*, these myriads of men, *who know not* [what we call] *The Gospel, are cursed?* Will ye turn christianized Pharisees, to countenance abandoned Antinomians?—No: the spark of candour in your breast is stirred, and almost sets fire to your prejudices. You are staggered, you are ready to yield to the force of Truth; some of you would do it even now, if you were not afraid, that our doctrine of *free grace* obscures the *Christian* dispensation, and encourages the pernicious delusions of *Antichristian Moralists*

Moralists. To convince you, that your fear is groundless, permit me to expostulate with them before you.

S E C T I O N VIII.

AN ADDRESS TO ANTICHRISTIAN MORALISTS.

MMORAL MEN, who ridicule the *Christian* faith; you suppose, that your honesty counterbalances your sins, which by a soft name you call *foibles*; and for which you hope, God will never punish you with hell-torments. I do not desire to make the worst of things. I wish, you were as good as you fancy yourselves to be. I wish, you may have been as exact in all the branches of your duty as you pretend. I would rejoice if the law of respectful obedience to your superiors, of courteous love to your equals, and of brotherly-kindness to your inferiors, had always been fulfilled in your words and actions, in your looks and tempers. I am ready to congratulate you, if in all cases ye have done to your *fellow-creatures*, exactly as ye would be done by. But permit me to ask: If you have *fellow-creatures*, have you not a Creator? And if you have a Creator, do not reason, and conscience, command you to render to him warm gratitude, cheerful praise, humble adoration, and constant obedience. But have ye done this one year, one month, one day, ONE HOUR in ALL your life?

Altho' ye are so ready to make us understand, that ye are not as other men, adulterers, unjust, uncharitable, hypocrites, are ye entirely satisfied with your own goodness? Nay, if ever you looked into the perfect law of liberty, and searched your breasts with the candle of the Lord, can you say, before the omniscient Searcher of hearts and spirits, that there is one of the commandments which you never broke in its spiritual meaning?

If upon second thoughts ye cannot acquit yourselves: and if God's dignity as a Creator, his veracity as a Lawgiver, his wisdom as a Governor, his justice as a Judge, his holiness as a GOD, forbid him to hold the guilty guiltless; or to forgive them in a manner
incon-

inconsistent with any one of his infinite perfections: Are ye wise to despise an Advocate with him,—a divine Prophet,—an atoning Mediator? Is it prudent in you to run from the City of Refuge, to which you should fly with unabated swiftness? Do ye act a reasonable part, when ye shelter under the dispensation of the Heathens, from the blessings that pursue, and from the light that surrounds you in this Christian land? If I may allude to the mysterious divisions of Solomon's Temple; will ye obstinately remain in the Court of the Gentiles when you are graciously invited to enter into the Holy Place, with sincere Jews; yea, into the Holy of Holies, with true Christians? Think ye that, because righteous Heathens are saved without the explicit knowledge of Christ, ye may be saved upon their plan? If ye do, may the following remarks help you to see the unreasonableness of this conclusion!

1. Not to repeat the hints already given to *baptized Heathens*; I ask, Is not a grain of sincere love to Truth, the very beginning of a sincere conversion? Is that man a *sincere* lover of light, who runs away from the light of the sun and moon, under pretence that he has the light of a star? Do those people *sincerely* love money, who when they are presented with *gold* and *silver*, throw it back in the face of their benefactor, because they have some *brass*? And is that moralist a *sincere* lover of truth, who contemptuously rejects the silver truths of the Jewish dispensation, and the *golden* truths of the Christian Gospel, under pretence that he is an adept in the religion of nature, and has, what I beg leave to call the brass of Heathenism?

2. Ye talk much of the *religion of nature*: But should ye not distinguish between the religion *natural* to man in his *unfallen* state, and that which is *natural* to him in his fallen condition? Is not the regimen, which is *natural* to the healthy, *unnatural* and frequently destructive to the sick? If upright, innocent man needed not a spiritual physician, does it follow that depraved, guilty man, can do without one? Does

not Heathenism allow the fall and degeneracy of man? Have not some of the wisest Pagans seen, tho' darkly, the need of a mediator, and of a propitiatory sacrifice? Do ye think it prudent, so to depend upon your *own righteousness*, as to trample under foot the Jewish and Christian revelation, together with the discoveries of confederate Heathens? Does your wisdom shew itself to advantage, when it thus makes you sink below Heathenism itself?

3. No adult Heathen was ever saved without the repentance of the contrite publican. "I am a guilty, helpless sinner, totally undone, if the mercy of Him that made me, does not extend itself to me. Great Author of my existence, pity, pardon, and save me, for thy mercy's sake." Now, if ye were brought to this genuine repentance, would ye despise the light of revelation, that recommends it, and leads on to farther attainments? Think ye, that those who sincerely rejoice in the dawn of day, will readily decry morning light? Is it not therefore, much to be feared, that Pharisaism and impenitency, stand in your way to Christianity, more than respect for reason and truth? Nay, does not reason bid you assent to well-attested matter of fact? And are not the Jewish and Christian Revelations so inseparably connected with notorious events, that it is less absurd to doubt the exploits of Alexander and Cæsar, than to disbelieve the miracles of Moses and Jesus Christ?

4. The Heathens, who were saved without the explicit knowledge of Christ, far from *despising* it, as you do, *implicitly* desired it; and those, that were blessed with a ray of it, rejoiced in it like Abraham. That precious knowledge is offered to you; and, shocking to say! you reject it! you make sport with it! you pass jests upon it! you call it imposture! enthusiasm!—Oh! how much more tolerable will it be for pharisaic Heathens; yea for Chorazin and Bethsaida in the Day of Judgment, than for you, if you die under so fatal an error! And how can ye flatter yourselves, that because righteous Heathens, who have but *one* talent, shall be saved in the *faithful* improve-

ment of it; you, who have *five*, shall be saved, tho' you bury *four* of them?

"Oh! but I, for one, improve the *fifth*: I am *moral*."—God forbid, I should discountenance *morality*! I value it next to piety: nay, *true* morality is the second branch of true piety. Nevertheless, this you must permit me to say, Your morality hath either pride, impenitency, and hypocrisy at the bottom, or humility, sincerity, and truth. If it is the former, your morality, like Jonah's gourd, has a worm at its root. When the sun of temptation shall shine warmly upon you, or when death shall lay his cold hand upon you, your morality will wither, and afford you neither safety nor comfort: But, if it has sincerity and truth at the bottom; and if you are faithful; your little light will increase, the clouds raised by your prejudices will break, and you shall see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, because, like Saul of Tarsus, you do not oppose the truth maliciously, but ignorantly in unbelief. And Oh! may these pages convey to you the accents of that Truth which shall make you free! And may the gracious voice, which formerly thundered in the ears of the great Jewish moralist, the fierce opposer of the Christian gospel, Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?—May that voice, I say, whisper to each of you, "Honestus! Honestus! why neglectest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:—Jesus, who yet act a Mediator's part, between my righteous Father and thy self-righteous soul. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks of my truth, and the stings of thy conscience.—I am a Sun of righteousness and truth: Wrap thyself in unbelief no more; let the beams of my grace penetrate thy frozen breast. Nor force me, by an obstinate and final denial of me before men, to fulfil upon thee the most terrible of all my threatenings by denying thee also before my Father and his angels; for, if YE, to whom my gospel is fully preached, believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

SECTION IX.

AN ADDRESS TO A PENITENT MOURNER.

THOU deniest that loving Redeemer no longer, O thou poor MOURNING PENITENT, who art ready to sink under the burden of thy sins, and longest to find rest for thy dying soul. The Lord, who pronounces thee *blessed*, says, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my mourning people.—By whom shall I comfort thee?—Oh! that it were by me! Oh! that I were so happy as to administer one drop of gospel-cordial to thy fainting spirit! Thou hast received the wounding truths of the gospel; why shouldest thou reject the healing ones? Thou hast eaten the bitter herbs of repentance: yea, thou preferrest them to all the sweets of sin: Why then, Oh! why should thy heart rise against the flesh and blood of the true paschal Lamb? Why shouldest thou starve, when all things are NOW ready? Why shouldest thou not believe the whole truth, as well as one part of it? Will the word of God's grace be more true ten years hence, than it is now? Is not Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? If thy dull believing in God has already saved thee from thy vain conversation, and thy outward sins; how much more will a cheerful believing in the Lord Jesus, save thee into Christian righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!*

Do not begin to make *excuse* and say, "I must not believe the joyous truths of the gospel, till they are *first* powerfully applied to my soul." It is right, very right for thee, for all, never to rest short of such an application. But how art thou to wait for it? In the way of duty? Or out of it? Surely in the way of duty. And is it not thy duty, no longer to *make God a liar*? Is it not thy bounden duty, as it is thy glorious privilege, to *set thy seal*, as thou canst, to the word of God's *grace*, as well as to the declaration of his *justice*? Does he not charge thee to believe [tho' it should be *in hope against hope*] the reviving record, *which he has given of his Son*? Is not *this* the record:

“That God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son?”—That “to as many as receive him,”—that is, “to as many as believe on his name, he gives power to become the sons of God?”—That “God commendeth his love towards us, in that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”—That “he was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification?”—And that he even now “maketh intercession for us;” bearing us out of hell in the arms of his mercy; and drawing all men to him who justifieth the ungodly, that renounce their ungodliness as thou hast done, and *believe in Jesus*, as I want thee to do?

If it is a *saying worthy of all men to be received*, that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save even the chief of sinners*, upon gospel terms; he undoubtedly came to save me and thee. Do not thou then foolishly excommunicate thyself from redeeming love. Away with thy unchristian, discouraging notions about absolute reprobation, præterition, non-election, &c. &c. Doubt not but thou art *conditionally* elected, that is, *chosen IN CHRIST* to eternal salvation; yea, peculiarly chosen of God *explicitly to believe in that Just One*, who gave himself a ransom for all, and by his one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the *whole world*.—Believe then thy *election, and that of God*.—As certain as Christ hung upon the cross, flesh of thy flesh and bone of thy bone, thou art *chosen to eternal salvation THRO’ sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*. Wilt thou then be powerfully saved here, and eternally saved hereafter? Only make thy calling and election sure, *through sanctification of the Spirit*; and make sanctification of the Spirit sure, *through belief of the Truth*.

Believe, as well as thou canst, this comfortable, this sanctifying truth, “God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Be not afraid to conclude, upon the divine record, that

God loves thee, that Christ gave himself for THEE, and that the Holy Ghost will gloriously witness the Saviour's love to thy soul. And calmly, yet earnestly wait for a divine token, and an abiding sense of this love upon thy heart.

But, I repeat it, wait in faith;—wait, believing the truth:—wait, doing *thy work*; and Christ will surely finish *his own*: He will save thee to the uttermost, from sin and hell, into holiness and heaven. Remember, that as he once bled for thee, so he now worketh in thee both to will and to do.—Up, then, and be doing. *Work out* thy own salvation with fear and trembling. Thou canst never do God's part, and he will never do *thine*: Do not expect it; nor let the song of "finished salvation," make thee conclude, that thou hast nothing to do.

To eat or drink spiritually, and to believe or receive the truth, are gospel-terms of the same import. Come then, leave all thy excuses to those, who have learned the lessons of voluntary, tiresome humility. If the king offered thee a present, would it not be impertinent to make him stretch out his hand for an hour, under pretence that thou art not yet worthy of his bounty? And thinkest thou, that a similar conduct is not highly provoking to the King of Kings? Does he not complain, "I called and ye refused: I stand at the door and knock: I am, wet with the dew of the night: All the day long have I stretched my hands to a gainfaying and disobedient people?" Come then, know thy place: Know thy God: Send thy absurd ceremoniousness back to Geneva: Crucify thy guilty fears on Calvary: and make the best of thy way to Sion, "the mountain where God has made unto all people a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines well refined."

There is room, says the Lord: bind their souls with all the cords of divine and brotherly love; draw them with the bands of a man, with arguments, threatenings, promises, expostulations, *compel them to come in*. There is balm enough in Gilead, bread enough in my house, love enough in my heart, blood enough in the fountain

fountain that my Son has opened for sin, grace enough in the river that flows from my throne, truth enough in the gospel of my grace, to nourish, delight, and transport, a world of prodigal sons and daughters. And is there not enough for thee, who fearest God? for thee, to whom the word of this Christian, this great salvation is sent? Did not Christ himself break the bread of consolation for thee, when he said, "Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you?" Did he not offer thee the cup of salvation, when he added, "This is the New Testament in my blood; drink ye ALL of it," and carry it into all nations; preach it, offer it to every creature. I bring thee this bread; it came down from heaven to give life to the world: it was surely consecrated in Gethsemane, and broken on Calvary for THEE, man, for THEE, woman, and for THY salvation. Oh! if the fragments of perishing barley-bread were so to be gathered, that none of them might be lost; with what thankfulness shouldst thou receive the morsel, which I set before thee! With what hunger after righteousness shouldst thou feast upon it! How shouldst thou try to relish every crumb, every particle of gospel-truth, of the meat that endureth to everlasting life; of the word of the Lord, that abideth for ever.

Wonder at our Lord's condescension. Lest thou shouldst think, that the word of his servants is insignificant, when it is the word of truth: he *prays* particularly for them, that shall believe on him thro' their word; and he asks, How is it that ye do not discern this time of love? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right and makes for your peace?

"O ye, that have no money, come, buy and eat, wine and milk; yea, eat and drink abundantly, O beloved, without money and without price. Hearken diligently unto me: eat ye that which is good; and let your soul delight itself in fatness," in the richest gospel-truths. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the bread and water of Life freely. Thus the water and the blood, the Spirit and the Word sweetly agree to invite thee, to chide thy delays, to bid thee

come

come and welcome to Christ, and to all the *unsearchable riches* of his grace.

If thou refuseth this drop of gospel-cordial, this crumb of the bread of life; or if, after a faint attempt to take it, thou sinkest back into thy stupid unbelief, I beg leave to enquire into the reason. 1. Is it the hour and the power of darkness? Is thy mind so confused, and thy heart so distracted, that in this moment thou canst neither consider nor welcome the truth? In this case, wait groaning! If thou canst not wait in hope, believing against hope, endeavour at least not to yield to despair. This storm will soon blow over: the time of refreshing will come, and the Lord, who permits thee to have fellowship with him in Gethsemane, will soon enable thee to triumph with him upon the mount.

2. Hast thou little or no appetite for the truth? In this case, I fear, thou still feedest upon husks and ashes, which spoil thy spiritual digestion; and I advise thee to exercise repentance; remembering that to be carnally minded is death, and that the promise is not made to the slothful; but to them, who thro' faith and patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory; to them who, in taking up their cross, and denying themselves, inherit the gospel-promises.

3. Hast thou made an absurd covenant with unbelief, as Thomas? Art thou determined not to credit God's record, unless he comes down to thy terms? Dost thou still confound faith with its fruits, and God's work with thine own?—If this is thy case, how justly may the Lord suffer thee to go on, not only for a week, as the obstinate apostle did; but for years! And after all, when thou hast long dishonoured God, and tormented thyself by thy wilful unbelief, thou wilt be glad to do upon a death-bed, what I want thee to do now. Being thus surrounded by threatening billows, driven from thy carnal moorings, and tossed into true wisdom, thou wilt without ceremony, venture upon the merits and blood of thy Saviour, and strive to enter by wrestling faith, and agonizing prayer, into righteousness, peace, and joy in the

Holy Ghost. Happy would it be for thee in the mean time, if thou wert not wiser in thy own conceit than seven men that can render a reason: if thou wert not obstinately bent upon nursing thy curse; if thou didst confer with flesh and blood no more; and if, regarding the gospel-passport more than solidian embargoes, and the word of God more than the dispiriting speeches of faint-hearted spies, thou becamest one of the *Babes*, to whom it is our heavenly Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom; one of the *violent* who take it by force. Thou wouldst soon find, that these two dispositions are as compatible as the two gospel-axioms: and *receiving the end of thy faith*, thou wouldst soon, perhaps to-day, taste the powers of the world to come.

S E C T I O N X.

AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS.

YE taste those powers, happy believers, who see that God is Love; boundless, free, redeeming, pardoning, comforting, sanctifying love in Jesus Christ. The more you believe it, the more you feel it. Do then always the work of faith, and you shall always abound in the patience of hope, and in the labour of love. You have believed the truth, and it has made you free: Worship the God of Truth: Triumph in Christ, the living Truth: And be duly baptized with the Spirit of Truth: Beware of Enthusiasm; speak the words of soberness and Truth: God is not the author of nonsense.

Sail with all possible care thro' the straits of Pharisaism and Antinomianism. Many, by deviating from the word, have made shipwreck of the faith. While some rest in high, Pharisaic forms; others catch at empty solidian shadows; or slide into the peculiarities of a censorious mysticism, harden themselves against the gentleness of Christ, and oppose a *part* of the truth as it is in Jesus: Embrace ye the *whole*: Be valiant for the *whole*: Recommend the *whole*: But, above all, bring forth the fruits of the *whole*.

Be steady : Many who believed once, as firmly as ye do, that Christ was a sacrifice for sin, consider him now only as a martyr for the truth. And some, who were fully persuaded, that God is loving to every man while the day of salvation lasts, now can *bear*, yea perhaps *delight* to hear it affirmed, that he is merciless to myriads of his unborn creatures. Be not thus carried about by a blast of vain doctrine, in opposition to the full tide of scripture and reason. Honour all men, and give double honour to those to whom it is due ; but be not moved from your stedfastness, either by names, or numbers. To judge of truth by popularity, is absurd. Warm men, who can work upon the passions of the populace, will always be popular ; go not then by that deceitful rule. When truth is at stake, mind popular applause as little as a syren's song ; and regard a Bonner's rack as little as a Nebuchadnezzar's dulcimer. Be cast into the furnace of persecution with two companions, rather than bow with *thousands* to the most shining, most celebrated, and the richest image of error. If your companions forsake you, do not forsake the truth, turn not your back upon her, when she wants you most ! Run not away from her colours, when the enemy pours in like a flood. If she is driven out of the professing church, follow her to the wilderness,—and, if need be, to the den of lions. There the God of Daniel will be with you : And thence he will bring you out : For God will stand by the truth, and she will prevail at last. *Buy her* therefore, at any rate : *buy her*, tho' you should give your last mite of wealth, and your last scrap of reputation for her : *and sell her not*, tho' you should gain the whole world by the unhappy bargain.

These things, O men of God, have I written unto you concerning them that, by fair shows of voluntary humility, seduce you into Pharisaism or Antinomianism : You will often be obliged to part with *peace*, in order to maintain *truth* ; but you need never part with *love*. Be you herein followers of Christ and St. Paul. You know that the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Devil himself, would gladly have made

peace with those two Champions of the truth, upon the scandalous terms of betraying and giving her up. But St. Paul had not so learned Christ, and our Lord himself scorned to deny the Truth, and to worship the father of lies. See how calmly, how lovingly, how resolutely they fight this good, this bloody fight of faith. They meet bonds and prisons, the bloody sword and the ignominious cross. And how many stand by them in their extremity? Have ye forgot the amazing number? "They ALL forsook him and fled:"— "ALL men forsook me; I pray God it may not be laid to their charge." And, astonishing! Judas, Peter, and Demas led the van.—O Jesus, stand by our weakness, and we will stand by thy truth. Thou sayest, *will ye also go away?* And to *whom should we go,* gracious Lord; *hast thou not the words of everlasting life?* Art thou not *the light of the world and the life of men?* Our light, and our life? Could all the *stars* in thy church, supply the want of thy light to our souls? No, Lord: Be then our sun and shield for ever. Visit the earth again, thou uncreated Sun of Righteousness: Hasten thy second advent: Thy kingdom come! Shine without a cloud! Scatter the last remains of error's night! Kindle our minds into pure truth! our hearts into perfect love! our tongues into ardent praise! our lives into flaming obedience!

Bold may we wax, exceeding bold,

No more to Error's ways conform;

Nor shrink thy hardest Truths to' unfold,

But more than meet the gathering storm.

Adverse to earth's erroneous throng,

May each now turn his fearless face;

Stand as an iron pillar strong,

And steadfast as a wall of brass.

Give us thy might, thou God of power,

Then let, or men, or fiends assail:

Strong in thy strength, we'll stand a tower,

Impregnable to earth or hell.

AN APPENDIX.

ANSWERING some OBJECTIONS.

TO plead for *Error* in an *Essay on Truth*, would be preposterous. If I have done it, it has been inadvertently; and I shall be thankful to any of my readers, who will be at the trouble to set me right. But I once more beg forward disputants, not to produce assertions and invectives, instead of arguments; and not to wire-draw the controversy by still urging objections, which I have already answered; unless they shew, that such answers are insufficient; that my arguments are inconclusive; and the scriptures I quote, misapplied. Four of those objections however, deserve a more full answer.

I. Should it be said, "I puzzle people by asserting that there can be any other saving faith but the *Christian* faith; and any other *object* of saving faith, but *Christ crucified*:" I reply, that, though *Christ crucified* is the capital object of *my* faith, I dare not admit the *contracted* notions, that the Solifidians have of faith: because, if I did, I should subscribe to the *necessary* damnation of three parts of my fellow-sinners out of four; and reject *Christ's* word, under pretence of exalting his person: Take a few more instances of it.

Did not our Lord himself say to his disciples, "Have faith in *God*;" distinguishing *that* faith, from faith in himself, as mediator, John xvii. 3. Does not St. Paul declare, that, as "believing *God*, was imputed to Abraham for righteousness; so it all be imputed to us, if we believe on *Him*, that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead?" And can we read Heb. xi. without seeing, that the faith there described, is more general than the faith which characterizes the *Christian* dispensation? By what art can we make appear, that *Christ crucified* was the object of those believers, of whom the apostle says, "By faith Noah moved

moved with fear, built an ark :—By faith Isaac blessed Jacob *and Esau* [the supposed reprobate] concerning things to come :—By faith Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph :—By faith Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones :—By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies? If you say with respect to Rahab, that Joshua sent the spies, whom she entertained, and that they informed her, that Joshua was a type of Christ crucified: will you not render your “orthodoxy” as ridiculous, as if you rested it upon the frivolous difference there is between *if* and *if*? Mr. Berridge, cannot show, that the apostle ever distinguished between a Jewish *if*, and a Christian *if*; but I can quote chapter and verse, when I assert, that he clearly distinguishes between Jewish and Christian faith. For, not to transcribe Heb. viii. and x; does he not say, Gal. iii. 23, *Before faith* [i. e. before Christian faith] came, we were kept under the law, i. e. under the Jewish dispensation, and the obscurer faith peculiar to it: Nor was this a damnable state, for St. Paul begins the next chapter by telling us, that The *heir*, as long as he is a *child*, differeth nothing from a *servant*, though he be *Lord of all*; but is under tutors, and governors, till the time appointed of the Father; Even so we, when we were children [when we were under the Jewish dispensation] were in bondage under the elements of this world. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we [children differing nothing from servants] might receive the adoption of sons,” i. e. the privileges of sons that are of age, and are no longer under tutors and governors. “For after that (Christian) *faith* is come, we are no longer under a school-master, for we are all the [emancipated] children of God by *faith in Christ Jesus* :” Gal. iii. 25, 26. Is it not evident from the comparing of these passages, that the faith of Jews constituted them children of God, but such children as in general *differed nothing from servants*; such children as were in a state of nonage

and bondage; whereas *Christian* faith [emphatically called *faith*] by its superior privileges introduces true Christians into the glorious liberty of the adult sons of God?

The difference between the privileges of the Jewish, and those of the Christian faith and dispensation, is still more clearly described, 2 Cor. iii. There, the Christian dispensation [called *the ministration of the Spirit*, because *the promise of the Spirit* is its great privilege, see John vii. 39.] is opposed to the Jewish dispensation, which the apostle calls the *ministration of condemnation*, because it appointed no particular sacrifices for penitents guilty of adultery, idolatry, murder, blasphemy, &c. and absolutely doomed them to die. This severe dispensation, says St. Paul, was glorious, though it is done away: much more that which remaineth [the Christian dispensation] exceedeth in glory.—Again, Moses put a typical veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end, and until this day the veil remaineth untaken away, &c. But we (Christians) all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. What a privilege! And how many *nominal* Christians live below it; yea, below the privileges of the very Heathens!

This however is the *one faith* of true Christians, who have *the same spirit of faith*: It is *one*, in its great object, *God manifest in the flesh*;—*one*, in its great promise, *the promise of the Father*, or *the kingdom in the Holy Ghost*;—*one*, in its new commandment, brotherly, universal love, that *perfects* believers *in one*, and makes them partakers of *so great salvation*. This is the faith, which St. Paul calls *the faith of God's elect*, i. e. the faith of Christians, who are *chosen* above Jewish believers, to *see the glory of the Lord with open face*, when Jewish believers see it only *darkly through a veil*: This very faith he calls, immediately after, the faith *common* to all Christians, *To Titus, my own son after the common faith*, Tit. i. 1, 4. With an eye to *this faith* he likewise names Ti-

mothy, his *own son in the FAITH*,—*which is in Christ Jesus*: A faith this, whereby Timothy, who was a Jewish believer from a child, was *made partaker of Christ, the great* [i. e. the Christian] *salvation*. A faith, which St. Peter calls *like precious faith*; and St. Jude, a *most holy faith*; indirectly comparing it to the *most holy place* in the temple. A faith, which Christ calls *MY faith*, Rev. ii. 13, and *faith that is in ME*, Acts xxvi. 18. A faith this, far superior to the faith of the *noble Jewish believers in Berea*; who so candidly searched the Scriptures, when they had heard St. Paul preach;—and very far exceeding the candid disposition of those sincere Heathens at Corinth, concerning whom our Lord said to St. Paul,* *I have much people in this city*. If the reader divests himself of prejudices, I hope, that, instead of calling the doctrine of the gospel dispensations, and the degrees of faith belonging to them, a “*novel chimera*,” he will embrace it as a truth which leads to a thousand others.

II. Some of my opponents, who find it easier to pass a jest than to answer an argument, will probably think, that to beat me, and the doctrine of the dispensations out of the field of truth, they need only laugh at my “*inventing*” different sorts of faith “*by the dozen*.”

To nip this witicism in the bud, I declare *once more*: That I make no more difference between the faith of a righteous Heathen, and the faith of a Father in Christ; than I do between day-break, and the meridian light:—That the light of a sincere Jew, is as

* I prefer this sense to that of the Calvinists, not only because unconditional election to eternal glory appears to me an unscriptural doctrine; but because the apostle, having named the sins, in which all wicked Heathens lived, says to the Corinthians, Not such were you ALL, “*but such were some of you*,” intimating that others were of those righteous people, concerning whom our Lord speaks when he says, “*Enquire, who is worthy*.” Let it be observed however, that we do not rest our doctrine of free grace, upon this or upon any one scripture brought in by the bye, and rather by way of illustration than of proof. We have passages enough that are full to the point.

much one with the light of a sincere Christian; as the light of the sun in a cold, cloudy day, in March, is one with the light of the sun in a fine day in May : —And that the difference between the saving faith peculiar to the sincere disciples of Noah, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, consists in a variety of *degrees*, and not in a diversity of species; saving faith under all the dispensations agreeing in the following essentials: 1. It is begotten by the revelation of some saving truth presented by free grace, impressed by the Spirit, and received by the believer's prevented free agency: 2. It has the same original cause in all, that is, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ: 3. It *actually* saves all, tho' in various degrees: 4. It sets all upon *working righteousness, some bearing fruit thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold*: And lastly, through Christ it will bring all that do not make shipwreck of it, to one or another of the many mansions which our Lord is gone to prepare in heaven for his *believing obedient people*, i. e. for those who get clear of practical *pharisaism* and *antinomianism*.

III. Should it be objected, that "The doctrine of *this* Essay confounds faith and works:" To what I have said on this head I add; Augustine, the favourite father of the Solifidians, wrote a Treatise (*De fide et operibus*) upon faith and works, in the 21st chapter of which, he has these words: "By believing in God with a right faith, by worshipping and knowing him we are so far benefited (*ut et bene vivendi ob illo sit nobis auxilium, et si peccaverimus ab illo indulgentiam MEREAMUR*) as to obtain from him help to live well, and to get of him" (for I must not literally translate the heretical word *mereamur*) "a pardon, if we have sinned." And chap. 28. he adds "*Inseparabilis est bona vita a fide quæ per dilectionem operatur: imo vero ea ipsa est bona vita*. A good life is inseparable from the faith, which works by love; nay, that faith itself is a good life." Had I spoken so unguardedly, there would be just room for raising the objection which I prevent: But I have carefully distinguished between faith and works; representing faith as the

beating

beating of the heart, and works as the pulses caused thereby; and holding forth faith as the *root*, and works as the *fruit* of evangelical obedience.

IV. "By granting, that people, who are under dispensations inferior to Christianity in its state of perfection, may have a degree of saving faith, although they have not yet the luminous faith of Christian believers; you damp the exertion of seekers; and invite them to settle, as most dissenters do, in a lukewarm, Laodicean state, short of the inward kingdom of God, which consists not only in *righteousness*, but in *peace and joy by the Holy Ghost*."

If this objection could not be answered, I would burn my Essay; for I had much rather, it should feed my fire, than the Laodicean spirit, which is already so predominant in the church: But, that this new difficulty is by no means unanswerable, will appear, I hope, by the following observations.

1. Mr. Baxter, by a variety of strong arguments, shows, that to represent assurance, or the kingdom of God in the Holy Ghost, as essential to all true faith; and promiscuously to shut up in a state of damnation, all those, to whom that kingdom is not yet *come with power*, is both cruel and unscriptural. *Confession of Faith*, from p. 189 to 214.

2. Ought we to keep from those, who sincerely seek the kingdom of God, the comfort that the gospel allows them? Are not they that seek the Lord, commanded to *rejoice*? And how can they do it if the wrath of God abideth on them, as it certainly does on *all absolute* unbelievers? Did not our Lord and St. Peter speak in a more evangelical strain, when they said to sincere seekers, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." of grace, as well as that of glory.—"The promise [of the kingdom in the Holy Ghost] is unto you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call to believe explicitly in Jesus Christ?"

3. When.

3. When Joshua urged the Israelites to cross Jordan, would he have done right, if he had made them believe, that they were still in Egypt, and had not yet taken one true step towards Canaan? Did he not encourage them to go up, and to possess the good land by the very consideration, which my objector supposes would have made them sit down in the wilderness? Nay, did not those, who had already taken possession of the kingdoms of Og and Sihon, on the other side Jordan, cross that river first, and nobly lead the van, when their brethren went on from conquering to conquer? And why should not spiritual Israelites, who turn their back upon spiritual Egypt, and seek the kingdom of God, be led on *from faith to faith*, in the same comfortable manner?

4. It is trifling to say, "*Dead Dissenters, and the formal Scotch Clergy, preach up a faith short of Christian assurance, and therefore such a faith is a dangerous chimera;*" for if they preach it in an unguarded manner, to set aside, and not to illustrate the doctrine of Christian faith, they do the devil's work, and not the work of evangelists; what wonder is it then, that such preaching should lull their congregations asleep?—Again, if we ought not to give up the doctrine of *sincere obedience and good works*, though our opponents cry out perpetually, "It is the doctrine of all the carnal clergy in the kingdom:"—And if it is our duty to maintain the doctrine of the Trinity, though Dr. Priestley and all the Unitarians say with great truth, that "It is the doctrine of the superstitious Papists;" how absurd is it to urge, that our doctrine concerning a faith inferior to the faith of assurance, is false, merely because this doctrine is held by all the *sleepy Dissenters*? Might we not, at this rate, be also ashamed of the doctrine of the Divine Unity, which the Jews, and even the Turks hold as well as we?

* 5. Are there not many pious and judicious ministers, in the churches of England and Scotland, as well as among the Dissenters, who dare not countenance the present revival of the power of godliness, chiefly

chiefly because they hear us sometimes unguardedly assert, that none have any faith, but such as have the faith of assurance; and that the wrath of God actually abides on all those, who have not that faith? If we warily allowed the faith of the inferior dispensations, which such divines clearly see in the Scriptures, and feel in themselves; would not their prejudices be softened, and their minds prepared to receive what we advance in defence of the faith of assurance?

* 6. If it is urged, that the Spirit of God witnesses to all sincere seekers of the kingdom of God, that they are in a damnable state, till they feel the pardoning "love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them;" I demand proof: I deny the fact, and assert, that the divine Spirit can no more witness to an *accepted*, mourning Cornelius, that he is *not accepted* in any sense, than it can witness to a palpable contradiction. The truth is, our unbelieving fears and awakened hearts are very prone to surmise the worst, and we are very apt to take their surmisings for divine impressions, even when we bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. I doubt not but St. Paul himself, in his agony of penitential grief, when he spent three days and three nights in fasting and prayer, had many such gloomy despairing thoughts; but they were certainly lying thoughts, as well as those, which David wisely checks in some of his Psalms. Who will dare to say, that Ananias found the apostle in a damnable state, tho' he found him without the sense of sin forgiven, as appears from the direction which he gave him, "Arise, why tarriest thou? Wash away thy sins, calling upon, (and consequently *believing*) in the name of the Lord?"

7. The objection which I answer, may with equal propriety be urged against St. Peter's doctrine. Acts ii. 5, and x. 7, we read of *DEVOUT men out of every nation under heaven*, and of a *DEVOUT soldier that waited continually on Cornelius, who himself feared God, worked righteousness, and was accepted,—with all his house.* By Acts xi. 9, 14, it evidently appears, though

though Cornelius *was cleansed by God himself*, yet he must *send for Peter*, who was to *tell him words whereby he and all his house SHOULD BE SAVED*, i. e. should become partakers of the GREAT *salvation* revealed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. But altho' St. Peter began his discourse by acknowledging, that his pious hearers *were accepted with God*, none of the congregation said; Well, if *we are accepted*, we are already in a state of salvation, and therefore we need not hear words, whereby we shall be saved. On the contrary, they all *believed* the word of *this* fuller salvation; for "the Holy Ghost fell on *all* them, that heard the word;" and St. Paul informs us, that we "receive the Spirit by the hearing of *Faith*." Compare Acts x. 44, with Gal. ii. 3, and John vii. 39. It is plain, from this account, that no preaching was ever attended with a more *universal* blessing, and that no discourse was ever more instrumental in conveying to all, the power of the faith of assurance, than that very sermon, which the apostle began by intimating, that his hearers were already *accepted*, according to an inferior dispensation. Hence it is evident, that the doctrine we maintain, if it is properly guarded, far from having a *necessary* tendency to lull people asleep, is admirably calculated to excite every penitent to faith, prayer, the improvement of their talent, and the perfecting of holiness.

* 8. May we not sufficiently guard the *Christian* dispensation, by constantly affirming: 1. That all *Christian* believers *have now the witness in themselves*. 2. That those, who have it not, either never had *Christian* faith, which is emphatically called *faith* in the gospel, that they know only the baptism of John; or, that with the unsettled Galatians, they are actually *fallen from grace*, i. e. from the *Christian* dispensation; and now live *under the law*, i. e. in the darkness of the Jewish dispensation: supposing they are not quite departed from God by indulging known sin. 3. That if they do not press after the faith of assurance, they are in the utmost danger of losing their talent of grace; like the young man, whom Jesus loved,
and

and who nevertheless went away sorrowful, when he was unwilling to give up all, and follow Jesus without reserve; or like those thousands of Israelites *whom the Lord SAVED OUT OF the land of Egypt, and whom he afterwards destroyed, when they believed not the word by which they were to be saved into the land of promise?*

* 9. Not to mention all the arguments, by which the zealous Puritans defended the doctrine of assurance in the last century, and those by which the Methodists prove its *necessity* in our days; is not the first argument used in my Address to the Antichristian Moralist, sufficient to enforce the absolute necessity of rising to higher dispensations, when God calls us to it? If queen Vasthi lost her crown, for *refusing to come to the royal banquet, at the king's commandment*:—If those, who *begged to be excused*, when they were invited to the gospel-feast, were at last dreadfully punished:—If St. Paul says to loitering believers, who are backward to go on to perfection, “How shall we escape if we neglect so *great* salvation, which at *first* began to be spoken by the Lord:”—Nay, if Christ himself threatens to spue lukewarm, slothful Laodiceans out of his mouth; do we want even *terrifying* arguments to lash the consciences of those, who, hoping they are perfectly safe in their *low* attainments, despise *higher* dispensations, and *bury their talent* of grace, till it is taken from them, and given to those who improve their own? To conclude,

* 10. You are afraid, that the doctrine of this Essay will make “*Seekers*” rest in Laodicean lukewarmness; but, permit me to observe, that the *Seekers* you speak of, are either froward hypocrites, or sincere penitents:—If they are *froward hypocrites*, preaching to them the Faith of assurance will never make them either humble or sincere. On the contrary, they will probably catch at an *election*, and then at an *assurance* of their own making; and so they will think they have the faith, for which you contend, when in fact they have only the name and notion of it. The religious world swarms with instances of this kind.

kind.—If, on the other hand, the *Seekers* for whom you seem concerned, are *sincere penitents*; far from being hurt, they will be greatly benefited by our doctrine: For it will at once keep them from chiling, despairing fears; and from false, Crispian comforts; the two opposite extremes, into which upright, unwary mourners are apt to run. Thus our doctrine, instead of being dangerous to sincere seekers, will prove a scriptural clue, in following which they will happily avoid the gloomy haunts of *pharisaic* despair, and the enchanted ground of *antinomian* presumption.

S E C O N D A P P E N D I X.

Containing, 1. Arguments to prove, that all Men universally, in the Day of their Visitation, have **SOME** gracious Power to believe **SOME** saving Truth. And, 2. an Answer to Objections.

BEING conscious that I cannot be too careful and guarded, in writing upon so important and delicate a subject, I once more attempt to explain, strengthen, and guard the Doctrine that it contains.

I. I have said that *Faith* (considered in general) is *believing heartily*; I add, *and sometimes it may signify a power to believe heartily*. For as God gives to all the Heathens in the day of their visitation, a *power to believe heartily* that *God is*, &c. indulging them with gracious calls and opportunities to use that power; we may say, that he gives them *the faith* of their dispensation. Nevertheless, all the Heathens have not that faith: For many obstinately bury their talen, till at last it is taken from them.

As this doctrine of *faith* entirely subverts the doctrine of *finished damnation*, which is so closely connected with the doctrines of *absolute election*, and *finished salvation*; I beg leave to add the following arguments to those which I have produced, to prove, that faith is not the work of God in the sense of our adversaries, and that in the day of salvation, through “the free gift which is come upon all men,” we
have

have all some gracious power to believe some saving Truth.

* 1. If faith is the work of God in the same sense in which the creation is his performance, when Christ *marvelled at the Centurion's faith*, he marvelled that God should be able to do what he pleases, or that a man should do what he could no more help doing, than he could hinder the world from existing: That is, he marvelled at what was not at all marvellous; and he might as well have wondered that a ton should outweigh an ounce.

2. When God invites EVERY creature in all the world to believe, (Mark xvi. 15,) if he denies MOST of them power so to do, he insults over their wretched impotence, and acts a part which can hardly be reconciled with sincerity. What would the world think of the king, if he perpetually invited all the Irish Poor over to England to partake of his royal charity, and took care that most of them should never meet with any vessels to bring them over, but such as would be sure to founder in the passage.

* 3. When our Lord endeavoured to shame the pharisees for their unbelief, he said, "John came to you, and ye believed him not, but the publicans and harlots believed him: And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe." But if faith is the work of God in the sense of our adversaries, was it any shame to the Pharisees, that God would not do his own work? Had they any more reason to blush at it, than we have to redden, because God does not give us wings and fins, as he does to birds and fishes?

* 4. To suppose that Christ assiduously preached the gospel to the inhabitants of Capernaum, whilst all the time he withheld from them power to believe it, and that afterwards he appointed them a more intolerable damnation for not believing:—To suppose this, I say, is to cast the most horrible reflection upon the Lamb of God. But if it is allowed, that those obstinate unbelievers will justly be sent into a more dreadful hell, for having buried to the end their talent of power

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to believe in their *stronger* light; is it not reasonable to suppose, that those, who shall go to a *less* intolerable hell, will also be sent there, for having finally refused to use their talent of power to believe in their *weaker* light?

* 5. Although Christ positively says, that men shall be damned for their unbelief: (see John iii. 18. Mark xvi. 16.) yet some of our adversaries deny it; being deservedly ashamed of representing our Lord as damning myriads of men, for not doing what is absolutely impossible. Hence they tell us, that reprobates shall be damned only for their sins. But this contrivance does not mend the matter: For bad works, or sins, *necessarily* flow from unbelief. Now, unbelief being nothing but the absence of faith; God, by absolutely withholding all saving faith, *necessarily* causes all unbelief; and unbelief, by *necessarily* causing all sin, *necessarily* causes also damnation. For he that absolutely withholds all light, *necessarily* causes all darkness, and, of course, all the works of darkness. Thus "*the doctrines of grace*" (so called) that seem to rear their *graceful* head to heaven, end in the *graceless* venomous tail of *finished damnation*. "*Definit in piscem mulier formosa superne.*"

* 6. The design of the Gospel, with regard to God, is evidently to *extol his grace* and *clear his justice*: Now, if an absolute decree of preterition, or limited redemption, hinders a vast majority of mankind from believing to salvation, both those ends of the gospel are entirely defeated in all that perish: For God, by passing by the reprobated culprits, thousands of years before they were born, and by withholding every dram of *saving grace* from them, shews himself a *merciless* Creator to them all. Nor does this opinion less horribly impeach God's *justice* than his *grace*; for it represents him as judicially sentencing men to eternal torments, merely for the sin of a man whom most of them never heard of; or, which is all one, for the *necessary, unavoidable, pre-ordained* consequences of that sin.

* 7. St.

* 7. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, takes particular care to clear God's justice with respect to the condemnation of the wicked, *that every mouth may be stopped*;—and *that they may be without excuse*. But the scheme which I oppose, instead of leaving men *without excuse, opens their mouths*, and fills them with the best *apology* in the world, "*Absolute necessity and complete impossibility*, caused by another before we were born:" An apology this, which no candid person can ever object to.

* 8. Agreeably to St. Paul's doctrine, our Lord observes, that the man sentenced to be cast into outer darkness for *not having on a wedding garment was speechless*. But if the Crispian doctrines of grace are true, might not that man, with the greatest propriety, have said to the master of the feast, while the executioners *bound him hand and foot*, "To all eternity I shall impeach thy justice, O thou partial judge: Thou appointest me the hell of hypocrites, merely because *I have not on a wedding garment*, which thou hast from all eternity purposely kept from me, under the strong lock and key of thy irreversible decrees: Is this the manner in which thou *judgest the world in righteousness*?"

* 9. If salvation depends upon Faith, and if God never gives reprobates power to *believe in the light that enlightens every man*, and a sufficiency of means so to do; it follows, that he never gives them any *personal* ability to escape damnation; but only to secure and increase their damnation; and thus he deals far harder with them than he did with devils. For Satan and his angels were all *personally* put in a state of initial salvation, and endued with a *personal* ability to do that, on which their eternal salvation depended. To suppose, therefore, that a majority of the children of Adam, who are born sinful, without any *personal* fault of their own, and who can say to the *incarnate* Son of God, Thou art flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone;—to suppose, I say, that a vast majority of these favoured creatures have far less favour shewn them than Beelzebub himself had, is so *graceless, so unevangelical* a doctrine, that one might
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be tempted to think, it is *ironically* called "*the doctrine of grace*;" and to suspect, that its defenders are stiled "*evangelical ministers*" by way of *burlesque*.

* From the preceding arguments I conclude, that when it is said in the scriptures, people **COULD NOT believe**, this is to be understood, either of persons, whose day of grace was over, and who of course were *justly given up to a reprobate mind*, as the men mentioned, Rom. i. 21, 28: Or of persons, who by not using their one talent of power to believe the obvious truths belonging to a lower dispensation, absolutely incapacitated themselves to believe the deep truths belonging to Christianity.

II. Altho' I flatter myself, that the preceding arguments guard the doctrine of *free-grace* against the attacks of those who contend for *free-wrath*; I dare not yet conclude. Still fearful lest some difficulty unremoved, should prejudice the candid reader against the truth, I beg leave to answer three more plausible objections to the doctrine of this Essay.

OBJ. V. "If *faith is the gift of the God of GRACE* to us, as *fight is the gift of the God of NATURE*, does it not follow, that as we may see when we will, so we may believe in Christ,—believe the forgiveness of our sins; and, by that means, fill ourselves with Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost when we have a mind? But is not this contrary to experience? Do not the best Christians remember a time, when they could no more believe than they could make a world, though they prayed for faith with all the ardor they were capable of?"

ANS. 1. You still seem to take it for granted, that there is no true faith, but an explicit *Faith IN CHRIST*: And no explicit faith in Christ, but the *faith of full assurance*. But I hope, that I have already proved the contrary. There are two extremes in the doctrine of faith, which should be carefully avoided by every Christian: The one is that of the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, who thinks, that an adul-

terous murderer may have true, saving faith, in the height of his complicated crimes: And the other is that of Mr. Jonathan Ketlow, who asserts, there is no saving faith but that which has actually cleansed us from all inbred sin, and opened a present heaven in our breast. The path of truth lies between the opposite mistakes of those two good men; and that path I endeavour to point out.

As on the one hand, it never came into my mind that an impenitent murderer can have even the saving faith of a Heathen: So on the other hand, it never entered my thoughts, that a penitent can believe with the faith of full assurance when he will: For this faith depends not only upon our general belief of the truth revealed to us, but also upon a peculiar *operation of God, or revelation of his powerful arm.* It is always attended with a "manifestation of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirit, that we are the children of God:" And such a manifestation, God in general grants to none but them, that groan deeply under "the spirit of bondage unto fear," as Paul did while he remained blind at Damascus;—or them that are peculiarly faithful to the grace of their inferior dispensation, and pray as earnestly for *power from on high*, as the apostles did after our Lord's ascension.

Therefore, from my asserting, that "So long as the day of salvation continues, all sinners, who have not yet finally hardened themselves, may day or night [through the help and power of the general light of Christ's *grace*, mentioned John i. 9, and Tit. ii. 11.] receive *some* truth belonging to the everlasting gospel," which takes in the dispensation OF THE HEATHENS; from my asserting this, I say, you have no reason to infer, that I maintain, any man may day or night believe the forgiveness of his sins, and the deep truths of *the gospel of CHRIST*; especially since I mention immediately what truth it is, which all may believe, if they improve their talent, namely this: "There is a God, who will call us to

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“ an account for our sins, and who spares us that we may break them off by repentance.”

2. It would be absurd to suppose, that you can believe with the *luminous faith of assurance*, when God is casting your soul into the dark prison of your own guilt, to bring down your pharisaic looks, and make you feel the chains of your sins. But even then, may you not “ *believe that God is* ” just, holy, and patient? May you not acknowledge, that you deserve your spiritual imprisonment far more than Joseph’s brethren deserved to be put all together into ward for three days, by their loving, forgiving brother? May you not believe that, altho’ heaviness may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning? And when you have humbly groaned with David, “ I am so fast in prison that I cannot get forth ; ” may you not pray in faith, “ Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name : Let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice : Give me the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness : ” Convince me as powerfully of righteousness, as thou hast of sin : And let thy Spirit, which now acts upon me as a spirit of bondage unto fear, act as a spirit of adoption, and liberty ; of righteousness, peace, and joy ?—May you not even add, “ O God, *I believe thy promise concerning the coming of the Comforter ; help thou my unbelief*, and grant me such a faith as thou wilt vouchsafe to *seal with that holy Spirit of Promise*. Thou shakest before me the rod of infernal vengeance ; I deserve it a thousand times ; but, O Father of mercies, O *my Father*, if for the sake of thine only begotten Son, thou wilt yet permit such a wretch as I am to call thee *Father*, give me the Spirit of Adoption, and witness to my spirit, that I am a child of thine. But if thou wilt still hide thy face from me, never suffer me to entertain one dishonourable thought of thee ; never let me think thee a Moloch. Though thy justice slay me, let me still trust in thee, and believe, that for Christ’s sake thy mercy will revive my soul ? ” Is it scriptural to rank among absolute unbelievers, a penitent who thus humbly waits for the faith of full assurance,—the faith.

of Christianity? If our Lord pronounces such mourners *blessed*, does it become us to pronounce them *accursed*? But I return to your objection.

* 3. The latter part of it confirms, instead of overturning my doctrine; it being evident, that if the persons you speak of, prayed with ardor for the *faith* of assurance, they had already some degree of faith; for praying is calling upon the Lord, and St. Paul speaks the words of soberness, where he says, "How shall they call upon him, in whom they have not *believed*?"

4. I am so far from thinking, our power to believe is *absolute*, that I have asserted, "*it is impossible*" heartily to believe the truths, which do not suit our present state:—And I have observed, that we savingly believe the "truth suitable to our present circumstance, when it is kindly presented by *free grace*, and affectionately embraced by *prevented free-will*;" adding, that when we believe, our "faith is more or less operative," not only "according to the *earnestness* with which we," (i. e. our *prevented free-will*) "welcome the truth to our inmost souls;" but also, "according to the *power* with which the Spirit of grace impresses it upon our hearts."—Nay, I have ascribed so much to the power of free grace, by which saving faith is "*instantaneously formed*," as to allow that sometimes (as at St. Paul's conversion) this power for a while bears all down before it. This was my meaning, when I said, p. 104. "We may *in general* suspend the act of faith, *especially* when the glaring light" (i. e. the luminous power) "that sometimes accompanies the revelation of truth, is abated." Consider the force of the words, "*in general*," and, "*especially*:" Advert to the exceptions for which they make room; and you will see, I allow that free-grace, AT TIMES, acts with *almost* as much *irresistibility*, as some *moderate* bound-willers contend for.

* 5. With respect to my comparison between our power to *believe*, and our power to *see*, far from showing that all men may, at any time, believe the gospel OF CHRIST, it intimates, nay, it proves the very reverse.

reverse. Can you see *when* you will, and *what* you will? Can you see in a dark night without a light? Can you see in a bright day, when a thick veil covers your face? Can you see if you place an opaque body full in your light? Can you see what is out of the reach of your eyes? Can you see the rising sun, when you look full west, or the stars when you pore upon a dunghill? Can you see when you obstinately shut your eyes? Or when you have let a wicked man put them out, lest you should not live in idleness? Apply to faith these queries about *sight*; recollect the preceding observation; and you will perceive: 1. That our power to believe is various ways *circumscribed*; it being impossible, that he who has but one talent, perhaps unimproved, should carry on as extensive a trade as the man who diligently improves his five or ten talents: 2. That nevertheless, supposing we have still a ray of the light of truth, and have not yet been given up to judicial blindness, or to final hardness, we may, day and night (if we do not still bury our talent) believe, by the above-mentioned helps, *some obvious* truth belonging to the lowest dispensation of divine grace, and begin to follow our Lord's direction; "While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light:" And 3. That if we oppose this doctrine, we begin to sneak after our Calvinist brethren into Crispianity, and are just ready to bow at the shrine of *the great Diana* of the day; and to kiss her iron-clay feet, *Finished salvation and Finished damnation.*

OBJ. VI. "Your doctrine concerning the school of faith, and its several forms;—concerning the temple of faith and its *partitions*, is entirely founded upon the doctrine of the *dispensations* of divine grace; a doctrine this, which many people will rank with what they call, "*The novel chimeras of your Checks.*"

I have proved what I have advanced concerning the dispensations, by arguments founded upon Scripture, reason, and conscience. However, that the idea of

novelty

novelty may not stand in the way of any of my readers, out of fifty authors whom I might quote in support of this important doctrine, I shall produce only two, a calvinist and an anti-calvinist; not doubting but their consentaneous testimony will sufficiently break the force of your objection. The first is the Rev. Mr. Green, late curate of Thurnscoe in Yorkshire, and once an assistant to Mr. Whitefield. In his book, called *Grace and Truth vindicated*, p. 116, you will find the following just remarks:

“ It appears to me from *scripture*, as well as *experience*, that there are divers dispensations, but the same spirit: *The kingdom of heaven consists of various degrees, and different mansions.* This is true, whether by the kingdom of heaven we understand the outward professors of religion and their privileges, the inward kingdom of grace, or the kingdom of glory: (in all which senses the words in scripture are frequently used.)—As face answers to face in a glass, so do these respectively answer each other. Thus the outward privileges of religion from Adam to Moses were *least*; from Moses to Christ *greater*, and from Christ to the restitution of all things, *greatest*.—Again, to be a spiritual or *enlightened* HEATHEN, as Socrates, Plato, or Cornelius before he heard Peter, is one degree or dispensation of grace. To be a spiritual or *enlightened* JEW; and with Peter and the other disciples before the day of pentecost, to believe and acknowledge, that Jesus is the Messiah, tho’ not *spiritually* come, is a greater. But to be a *spiritual* CHRISTIAN, to have Christ, the exalted God-man revealed in us from heaven, and to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the day of the redemption of this vile body, is the last and most perfect dispensation of grace. He that is feeble here, shall be as David, and he that is strong, &c. shall be, &c. as the angel of the Lord, &c. For it may be observed, that every dispensation admits of a growth therein; and moreover, that each of them is in some sort and degree, experienced by a spiritual Christian, &c.”

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My second witness is the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley, who even in his first Sermon on *Salvation by Faith*, preached near forty years ago, clearly distinguishes Christian faith properly so called, or *faith in Christ glorified*, not only from the faith of a Heathen, but also from the faith of initial Christianity, i. e. "the faith which the apostles had while our Lord was upon earth."

"And first," says he, "it" [the faith that saves us into the great salvation described in the second part of the sermon] "is not barely the faith of a Heathen. Now God requires of a Heathen to believe, "That God is, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, &c. by glorifying him as God," &c. and by a careful practice of moral virtue, &c. A Greek or Roman, therefore, yea, a Scythian or Indian, was without excuse, if he did not believe thus much; the Being and Attributes of God, a future state of reward and punishment, &c. For this is barely *the faith of a Heathen*."—Soon after he adds, "And herein does it" [this faith in Christ glorified] "differ from that faith, which the apostles themselves had while our Lord was upon earth, that it acknowledges the necessity and merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection."

The doctrine of *Christian Perfection* is entirely founded on the privileges of the *Christian dispensation* in its fulness: privileges these, which far exceed those of the Jewish œconomy, and the baptism of John. Accordingly, Mr. Wesley in his sermon on *Christian Perfection*, makes the following just and scriptural distinction between those dispensations: "It may be granted, 1. That David, in the general course of his life, was one of the holiest men among the Jews. And, 2. That the holiest men among the Jews, did sometimes commit sin. But if you would hence infer, that all Christians do, and must commit sin, as long as they live: this consequence we utterly deny. It will never follow from those premisses. Those who argue thus, seem never to have considered that declaration of our Lord, Mat. xi. 11, "Verily I say unto you,

you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." I fear indeed, there are some, who have imagined *the kingdom of heaven* here, to mean the kingdom of glory: As if the Son of God had just discovered to us, that the least glorified saint in heaven is greater than any man upon earth! To mention this is sufficiently to refute it. There can therefore no doubt be made, but *the kingdom of heaven*; here (as in the following verse, where it is said to be *taken by force*) or *the kingdom of God*, as St. Luke expresses it, is the kingdom of God on earth, whereunto all true believers in Christ, all real Christians, belong. In these words then, our Lord declares two things. 1. That before his coming in the flesh, among all the children of men, there had not been one greater than John the Baptist: Whence it evidently follows, that neither Abraham, David, nor any Jew was greater than John. 2. That he who is least in the kingdom of God (in that kingdom, which he came to set up on earth, and which the violent now began to *take by force*) is greater than he. Not a greater prophet (as some have interpreted the word) for, this is palpably false in fact: But greater in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we cannot measure the privileges of real Christians; by those formerly given to the Jews. *Their ministration* (or dispensation) we allow *was glorious*; but *ours exceeds it in glory*. So that whosoever would bring down the Christian dispensation to the Jewish standard, &c. doth *greatly err, neither knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*—From these excellent quotations, therefore, it appears, that you do me an honour altogether undeserved, if you suppose, that I first set forth the doctrine of the dispensations.

OBJ. VII. "I cannot help thinking, that the doctrine of a faith proper to all those dispensations, is above the capacity of *plain Christians*, and should never be mentioned, lest it should puzzle, instead of edifying the church."

If

If your fears are well grounded, even the Apostle's Creed is above the capacity of plain Christians : For that creed, the simplest of all those which the primitive Church has handed down to us, evidently distinguishes three degrees of faith : 1. *Faith in God the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth*, which is the faith of the Heathens : 2. *Faith in the Messiah, or in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord* ; which is the faith of pious Jews, of John's disciples ; and of imperfect Christians, who, like the apostles before the day of pentecost, are yet strangers to the great

* I beg the reader would not mistake me. When I say that pious Jews, and our Lord's disciples before the day of Pentecost, were strangers to the great out-pouring of the Spirit, I do not mean that they were strangers to his directing, sanctifying, and enlivening influences, according to their dispensation. For David had prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me : " John the Baptist had been visited by his exhilarating power, even in his mother's womb : Our Lord had "breathed upon his disciples, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; " and had imparted to them a *Spirit of grace and supplication*, to help them to wait in faith and unceasing prayer, " till they were endued with power from on high : " Besides, they had called him *Lord* in truth ; and no man can do this, but by the *Spirit of faith*, which helps our unbelief and infirmities under all the divine dispensations. Nevertheless they were not fully baptized. The Comforter, that visited them, did not properly dwell in them. Altho' they had already wrought miracles by his power, the *Promise of the Father* was not yet fulfilled to them. They had not yet been made perfect in one, by the assimilating operation of the heavenly fire. They would have been puzzled by such questions as these : " Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? " Acts xix. 2. — " Is he fallen upon you ? " Acts x. 44. — " Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you ? " — Is the Fountain springing up into everlasting life open in your breast ? " John iv. 14. — " After that ye believed, were ye sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise ? " Eph. i. 13. — That *Spirit*, which forms those *rivers of living water*, that flow out of the belly, the inmost soul of believers ? — That *Spirit* which was not given before Christ was glorified ? John vii. 39. — That *Comforter*, which it is more expedient for us to receive, than even to have Christ's bodily presence, and constant instructions ? John xvi. 7. — If these, and the like questions would have perplexed the apostles before Christ had opened his spiritual baptism, and set up his kingdom with power in their hearts ; we ought not to be surprised, that professors, who know only the baptism of John, should

great out-pouring of the Spirit: And 3. *Faith in the Holy Ghost*,—Faith in the operation of God, by which Christians believe *according to the working of God's Almighty power*, and are *filled with righteousness, peace, and joy, in THUS believing*.

That the distinction of the three degrees of saving faith omitted in the Athanasian Creed, but expressed in the Apostle's Creed, and in the Nicene Creed;—That this distinction, I say, is neither chimerical nor enthusiastical, may be proved by a variety of arguments, two or three of which, I hope, will not intrude too long upon the Reader's patience.

1. The first is taken from the doctrine expressly laid down in the New Testament. To what I have said on this head, I add here what Christ said to his disciples, "Ye believe in GOD, believe also in ME." Here the most prejudiced may see, that faith in the FATHER is clearly contradistinguished from faith in the SON. As for faith in the HOLY GHOST, see in what manner our blessed Lord sowed the seeds of it in the hearts of his disciples. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, he shall testify of me.—It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart I will send him unto you.—Behold I send the Promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Nor was this great promise made to the apostles alone; for, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If *any man* [not if an apostle] thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water..

should ingenuously confess, they never heard there was a Holy Ghost (to be received) since they believed, Acts xix. 2. Nor should we wonder if devout Jews, and easy Laodiceans did even *mock and say*, you would have us to be filled with NEW wine; but we are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. The water of our old cistern is preferable to the *new wine* of your enthusiastical doctrine, and our baptismal ponds to your baptismal flames.

But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; [his dispensation, which is the highest of all, was not yet opened] because that Jesus was not yet glorified." And the opening of this dispensation in our hearts requires on our part, not only faith in Christ, but a peculiar faith in "the Promise of the Father;" a faith this, which has the *Holy Ghost* for its great object.

2. My second argument is taken from the *experiences* of those, who, by the Holy Spirit were made partakers of Christ glorified, either on the day of Pentecost, or after it; and could feelingly confess, Christ dying *for us*, and Christ living *in us*, the *hope of glory*. Acts ii. 5, we read of *devout men out of every nation under heaven*, who were come to worship at Jerusalem. But how could they have been *devout men*, if they had not *believed in God*? What could have brought them from the ends of the earth to keep a feast to the Lord; if they had been mere atheists? And yet it is evident, that through prejudice many of them rejected our Lord; putting him to open shame, and a bloody death: But when Peter preached Christ on the day of Pentecost, they at first believed on him with a true, tho' not with a luminous faith. This appears from the anguish, which they felt upon being charged with having *slain the Prince of life*. No man in his senses can be *pricked to the heart* merely for having had a hand in the just punishment of an impostor, and a blasphemer, who *makes himself equal with God*. If, therefore, keen remorse pierced the hearts of those penitent Jews, it is evident, that they looked no more upon Christ as an *impostor*, but already believed in him as the *true Messiah*.

No sooner had they thus passed from faith in the Father, to an explicit faith in the Son, but they cried out, "What shall we do?" And Peter directed them to make by baptism an open, solemn profession of their faith in Christ, and to believe the great promise concerning the Holy Spirit. "The promise is unto you, (said he :) Be baptized, *every one of you*, in the name

of

of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and ye [every one of you] shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And upon their *gladly receiving the word*; i. e. upon their heartily believing the promise relating to pardon and to the Comforter; and, no doubt, upon their fervently praying, that it might be fulfilled in them; *they were filled with the Spirit*: all their hearts overflowed with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

St. Peter speaking (Acts xi.) of a similar out-pouring of the Spirit, says, "The Holy Ghost fell on them [Gentiles] as on us [Jews] at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water [them that entered his dispensation] but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," when you shall enter the full dispensation of my Spirit:—"God (adds Peter) gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ."—And "when the apostles heard these things, they glorified God; [not indeed by shouting, "Then hath God given the Gentiles power to speak Arabic:" but by] saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," according to the fulness of the Christian dispensation.

That this dispensation of the Holy Spirit, this coming of Christ's spiritual kingdom with power, is attended with an uncommon degree of sanctifying grace, is acknowledged by all: And that the gift of tongues, &c. which at first on *some* occasions, and in *some* persons, accompanied the baptism of the Spirit, for a sign to bigoted Jews, or to stupid Heathens:—that such a gift, I say, was a *temporary appendage*, and by no means an *essential part* of Christ's spiritual baptism, is evident from the merely spiritual effect, which the receiving of the Holy Ghost had upon the penitent Jews, who, being *born of the Spirit*, pressed after the apostles into the kingdom of God on the day of Pentecost.

"Even in the infancy of the church, (says an eminent divine) God divided those (*miraculous*) gifts with a sparing hand. *Were all even then prophets? Were all*

all workers of miracles? Had all the gifts of healing? Did all speak with tongues? No, in no-wise. Perhaps not one in a thousand. Probably none but the teachers of the church, and only some of them. It was therefore for a more excellent purpose than this, that *they* [the brethren and apostles] *were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. It was to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all ages) *the mind which was in Christ*, those holy fruits of the Spirit, which whosoever has not, is none of his; to fill them with *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.*"

* It is very remarkable, that altho' 3000 converts received the gift of the Holy Ghost on the memorable day, in which Christ opened the dispensation of his Spirit, no mention is made of so much as *one* of them working a *single* miracle, or speaking with *one* new tongue. But the greatest and most beneficial of miracles was wrought upon them all: For, "all that believed, (says St. Luke) were together; continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, breaking bread from house to house, eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people," by their humble, affectionate, angelical behaviour. Or, as the same historian expresses it, Acts iv. 32, "The multitude of them that believed"—spoke Greek and Latin!—No, but—"were of *one* heart, and of *one* soul: neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: But they had all things common:" Having been made perfect in one, agreeably to our Lord's deep prayer, recorded by St. John: "Neither pray I for these [my disciples] alone, but for *them* also, who shall believe on me thro' their word, That they may be *one*:—I in them [by my Spirit] and thou in me, that they may be made *perfect in one.*"

END OF THE ESSAY ON TRUTH.

any apology therefore, I shall lay before the reader a plain account of the primitive catholic Gospel and its various Dispensations

The Gospel, in general, is a divine system of truth, which (with various degrees of evidence) points out to sinners the way of eternal salvation, agreeable to the mercy and justice of a holy God: And therefore the Gospel in general, is an assemblage of holy doctrines of Grace, and gracious doctrines of Justice. This is the idea which our Lord himself gives us of it, in Mark xvi. 16. For though he speaks there of the peculiar gospel-dispensation, which he opened, his words may, in some sense be applied to every gospel-dispensation. *Preach the gospel;—He that believeth [in the light of his dispensation, supposing he does it with the heart unto righteousness] shall be saved, according to the privileges of his dispensation: Here you have a holy doctrine of Grace: But he that believeth not shall be damned: Here you have a gracious doctrine of Justice.* For (supposing a man has a gracious capacity to believe in the light of his dispensation) there is no Antinomian grace in the Promise, and no free-wrath in the Threatening, which compose what our Lord calls the Gospel: But the conditional Promise exhibits a righteous doctrine of Grace, and the conditional Threatening displays a gracious doctrine of Justice.

The gospel, in general, branches itself out into four capital dispensations, the last of which is most eminently called The Gospel, because it includes and perfects all the preceding displays of God's grace and justice towards man. Take we a view of these four Dispensations, beginning at the lowest, viz. Gentilism.

I. Gentilism (which is frequently called natural religion, and might with propriety be called the gospel of the Gentiles;) Gentilism, I say, is a dispensation of Grace and Justice, which St. Peter preaches and describes in these words: "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness [according to his light] is accepted of him:." These words contain a holy doctrine of Grace, which is inseparably con-

connected

needed with this holy doctrine of Justice: "In every nation he that feareth *not* God, and worketh *not* righteousness [according to his light] is *not* accepted of him."

II. Judaism, which is frequently called the Mosaic Dispensation, or the Law, that is (according to the first meaning of the Hebrew word *תורה*, *the doctrine, or the instruction*) and which might with propriety be called the Jewish gospel;—Judaism, I say, is that particular display of the doctrines of Grace and Justice, which was chiefly calculated for the meridian of Canaan, and is contained in the Old Testament; but especially in the five Books of Moses. The prophet Samuel sums it all up in these words, "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart [according to the law, i. e. the doctrine of Moses] for consider how great things he hath done for you [his peculiar people:] But if ye shall still do wickedly ye shall be consumed," 1 Sam. xii. 24. In this gospel-dispensation also the doctrine of Grace goes hand in hand with the doctrine of Justice. Every book in the Old Testament confirms the truth of this assertion.

III. The Gospel of John the Baptist, which is commonly called the baptism of John, in connection with the gospel, or baptism, which the apostles preached, before Christ opened the glorious baptism of his own Spirit on the day of Pentecost; this gospel-dispensation, I say, is the Jewish gospel improved into infant Christianity. Or, if you please, it is Christianity falling short of that indwelling power from on high, which is called *The kingdom of God come with power*. This gospel is chiefly found in the four gospels. It clearly points out the person of Christ, gives us his history, holds forth his mediatorial law; and, leading on to the perfection of Christianity, displays with increasing light; 1. The doctrines of Grace, which kindly call the chief of sinners to eternal salvation thro' the practicable means of repentance, faith, and obedience: And, 2. The doctrines of Justice, which

which awfully threaten sinners with destruction, if they finally neglect to repent, believe, and obey.

The capital difference between this gospel-dispensation, and the Jewish gospel, consists in this: The Jewish gospel holds forth Christ about to come in types and prophecies; but this gospel displays the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies, and without a typical veil points out Christ already come. Again: The political part of the Jewish gospel admits of some temporary indulgences, with respect to divorce, the plurality of wives, &c. which indulgences are repealed in the Christian institution, where morality is carried to the greatest height, and enforced by the strongest motives. But, on the other hand, the ceremonial part of the gospel of Christ, grants us many indulgences with respect to sabbaths, festivals, washings, meats, places of worship, &c. For it binds upon us only the two unbloody, significant rites, which the Scriptures call Baptism and the Lord's-Supper; freeing us from shedding human blood in circumcision, and the blood of beasts in daily sacrifices: An important freedom this, which St. Paul calls *The [ceremonial] liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, and for which he so strenuously contends against the judaizing preachers, who would bring his Galatian converts under the bloody yoke of circumcision, and Jewish bondage.

IV: The [perfect] gospel of Christ, is frequently called The Gospel, only, on account of its fulness, and because it contains whatever is excellent in the above-described gospel-dispensations. We may truly say, therefore, that perfect Christianity, or the complete gospel of Christ, is gentilism, judaism, and the baptism of John, arrived at their full maturity. This perfected gospel, is found, then, initially in the four Books, which bear the name of Gospel, and perfectly in the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles: The difference between this perfected gospel, and the gospel which was preached before the day of Pentecost, consists in this capital article: Before that day, our Lord, and his forerunner John the Baptist, fore-

told, that Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost; and Christ promised the indwelling Spirit. He said, *He dwelleth with you, and shall [then] be in you.*—*Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* But the full gospel of Christ takes in the full dispensation of Christ's Spirit, as well as the full history of Christ's life, death, and resurrection; comprehending the glad news of the descent of the Holy Spirit, as well as the joyful tidings of the ascension of the Son: And therefore, its distinguishing character is thus laid down by St. Peter, "Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. The promise is unto you [that repent and believe.] We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God [since the day of Pentecost] hath given to them, that obey him:" For before Christ's ascension, the Evangelists could say, "The Holy Ghost is not yet given [in its christian fulness] because Christ is not yet glorified," Compare Acts ii. 33, &c. with Acts v. 32, and John vii. 39.

This gospel is the richest display of divine Grace and justice, which takes place among men in the present state of things. For Christ's sake the Holy Spirit is given as an indwelling, sanctifying Comforter. Here is the brightest doctrine of Grace! He is thus given to them that obey: and, of consequence, he is refused to the disobedient. Here is the highest doctrine of Justice, so far as the purpose of God, according to the elections of grace and justice, actually takes place in this life, before the second coming of Christ. These two last clauses are of peculiar importance.

1. I say in this life, because, after death, two great dispensations, of grace and justice, will yet take place, with respect to every man: The one in the day of death, when Christ will say to each of us, *Thou shalt be with me in paradise*, or, *Thou shalt go to thy own place*: And the other, in the day of judgment, when our Lord will add, *Come, ye blessed*, or, *Go, ye cursed*. Then shall the gospel-mystery of God, which equally

displays the doctrines of Grace and of Justice, be fully accomplished.

2. I have added the clause, *before the second coming of Christ*, because in the Psalms, Prophets, A&Ts, Epistles, and especially in the Revelation, we have a variety of promises, that, *in the day of his displaying power, Christ will come in his glory, to judge among the heathen, to wound even kings in the day of his wrath, to root up the wicked, to fill the places with their dead bodies, to smite in sunder Antichrist, and the heads over divers countries, and to lift up his triumphant head on this very earth, where he once bowed his wounded head, and gave up the ghost.* Compare Psalm cx. with Acts i. 11.—2 Theff. i. 10.—Rev. xix. &c. In that great day, another gospel-dispensation shall take place. We have it now in prophecy, as the Jews had the gospel of Christ's first Advent; But when Christ shall *come to destroy the wicked, to be [actually] glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;—in that day*, ministers of the gospel shall no more prophecy, but, speaking a plain, historical truth, they shall lift up their voices as “the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings, saying, Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth;—the marriage of the Lamb is come;—his wife [the church of the first-born] has made herself ready:—Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection;—he reigns with Christ a thousand years.—Blessed are the meek, for they do inherit the earth.—The times of refreshing are come, and he has sent Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you; whom the heaven did receive [till this solemn season; but now are come] the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets, since the world began,” Rev. xix. 20. Mat. v. 5. Acts iii. 19, &c. May the Lord hasten this gospel-dispensation! And, till it take place, may the *Spirit and the Bride say, Come!*

This being premised, it will not be difficult to give the reader a just idea of the grand controversy, which has torn the churches of Christ, from the days of Au-

gustine and Pelagius, and which has lately been revived among us on the following occasion.

In the year 1770, Mr. Wesley, in the Minutes of a Conference which he held with the Preachers in his connection, advanced some propositions, the manifest tendency of which is to assert, that the doctrines of Justice are an essential part of the gospel; and that, when we have been afraid to preach them, as well as the doctrines of Grace, we have been partial dispensers of the truth, and have leaned too much towards Calvinism: that is, towards a system of doctrine, which in a great degree, explains away the doctrines of Justice, to make more room for the doctrines of Grace.

Some good people, who imagined that the doctrines of impartial Justice have little or nothing to do with the gospel, were not only highly displeased with Mr. Wesley's propositions, but greatly alarmed at the word Merit, which is warily used in one of them, to intimate that the doctrines of Justice and the Day of Judgment must fall to the ground, if every kind of merit or desert is banished from the gospel; Justice being a virtue which, from an impartial tribunal, *renders to every man according to his works*, that is, according to his worthiness or unworthiness, or, as some express it, according to his merit or demerit.

A regard for the doctrines of Justice, and a fear lest Antinomian doctrines of grace, and dreadful doctrines of free-will, should be still entertained by my friends, as the genuine doctrines of grace, engaged me to vindicate those obnoxious propositions, or rather the doctrines of Justice held forth therein. And this, I hope, I have done, in a series of Checks to Antinomianism, —or of tracts against an unscriptural doctrine of grace, —a doctrine of Grace, torn from the scripture-doctrine of Justice. In order to rescue the doctrines of Justice, I have endeavoured to prove, that no man is born an absolute reprobate in Calvin's sense of the word; that God is loving to every man, for Christ's sake; and that of consequence, there is a gospel-dispensation for every man, though it should be only that
which

which is called Gentilism. I have shewn the cruelty of those opinions, which directly or indirectly doom to eternal perdition all the Heathens, who never read the Law of Moses, or heard the Gospel of Christ. I have evinced, by a variety of arguments, that nothing can be more unscriptural than to represent the law of Moses [i. e. the Jewish gospel] as a graceless doctrine of justice; and the law of Christ [or the Christian gospel] as a lawless doctrine of grace. By this means I have defended, so far as lay in me, both the Jewish doctrines of Grace, and the Christian doctrines of Justice. And by demonstrating, that the scripture-doctrines of Grace are inseparably connected with the scripture doctrines of Justice, I flatter myself to have opened the way for the re-union of the two partial gospels of the day; the capital error of which consists either in excluding the doctrines of Grace from the doctrines of Justice, which is the error of all rigid free-willers; or in excluding the doctrines of Justice from the doctrines of Grace, which is the mistake of all rigid bound-willers.

“What,” (says one of these partial defenders of the doctrines of Grace) “will you still persist to legalize the gospel? Do you not know, that the word Gospel, in the original, means good news, or a good message, and therefore must denote doctrines of Grace, abstracted from all severity of what you call the doctrines of Justice?”—To this plausible objection, which has deluded thousands of simple souls, I answer,

1. A royal proclamation may be called a good proclamation, tho' it does not turn the kings subjects into lawless favourites, and the laws of the realm into rules of life, as insignificant in judgment as rules of grammar. And the statutes of parliament may be good statutes, though they may secure the righteous punishments of offenders, as well as the gracious privileges of loyal subjects. 2. If the hand of God is a good hand when it resists the proud, as well as when it gives grace to the humble; and if his arm was a merciful arm, when it overthrew [daring] Pharaoh,

and

and his host in the Red Sea, as well as when it made [obedient] Israel to pass through the midst of it; (see Psal. 136.) why cannot a message from God which requires practicable obedience, and is enforced by promises of gracious rewards in case of compliance, and by threatenings of righteous punishments in case of non-compliance;—why cannot, I say, such a message be called a good message, or gospel? 3. Why should not a revelation from God be a good revelation, or a gospel, when it displays the severity of his justice towards those who reject his gracious offers; as well as the tenderness of his compassion towards those who accept them; especially if we consider, that the first intention of the denunciations of his vindictive justice, is to excite the godly fear, which endears offers of mercy to sinners, and is in them the beginning of wisdom? 4. If, in the Old Testament, the sweetest and most joyful messages of God's grace are called Law; and if, in the New Testament, the most terrible denunciations of indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are called Gospel; nothing in the world can be more unscriptural and absurd, than the Antinomian Babel erected by some zealous Evangelists, who teach, that the Law of God is nothing but the doctrine of merciless justice; and that the Gospel of Christ is nothing but the doctrine of lawless grace?

That the word Law in the Old Testament, frequently means the sweetest gospel-promises, I prove, First, from these sayings of David, "The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver, Ps. cxix. 72.—He hath remembered his [gospel] covenant for ever,—which covenant he hath made with Abraham, and his oath to Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob, for a law," Ps. cv. 8, &c. Here the gospel-covenant made with the three chosen Patriarchs is called a Law. Hence it is, that when Isaiah speaks of the brightest display of gospel grace at the time that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, he says, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law," Isa. ii. 2. 3.—

Agreeably to this view of things we read in Nehemiah, "All the people gathered themselves together as one man, and spake to Ezra to bring the Law of Moses:—That the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the Law:—That the Levites did read in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense:—And that All the people went their way, &c. to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared to them:—And there was very great gladness:—The joy of the Lord being their strength." Neh. viii. 3, 8, 10, 17. Now, if the Law, which was read and explained to them, contained only the impracticable sanctions of a merciless thundering justice; were not all the people out of their senses, when they went their way with great gladness after hearing the Law expounded?

The New Testament confirms this account of the doctrines of Grace and Justice, and of the words Law and Gospel. When our Lord (who undoubtedly knew the exact meaning of the word Gospel) sent his Disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, he charged them to declare, that *He who believeth not shall be damned*, as well as that *He who believeth shall be saved*, Mark xvi. 16. Whence it evidently appears, that our Lord meant by the Gospel, the severe doctrines of Justice, as well as the comfortable doctrines of Grace.

St. Paul gives us exactly the same idea of the gospel. In the Epistle to the Romans, where he contends most for the gratuitous election of distinguishing love, he exhortates with those who "despise the riches of God's goodness, and treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds;—eternal life to them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory;—but indignation and wrath to them, that obey not the gospel." If you ask St. Paul, when God will thus display his merciful *goodness*, and tremendous *justice*, he directly answers; "When God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel;"

that is, according to the promises and threatenings : —the doctrines of Grace and the doctrines of Justice, which compose the gospel I preach, Rom. ii. —16.

Hence it is, that the apostle calls the Mosaic Dispensation, sometimes, *the law*, and sometimes *the gospel*, while he stiles the Christian dispensation, sometimes, *the law of Christ*, and sometimes, *the gospel of Christ*.

That St. Paul indifferently calls the Mosaic dispensation *law* and *gospel*, is evident from the following texts : “ Every man that is circumcised is a debtor to the whole law,” Gal. v. 3. Here the word *law* undoubtedly means the *Mosaic dispensation*. Again, “ To us was the gospel preached, as well as to them” [the Israelites who perished in the wilderness for not believing Moses] Heb. iv. 2. Whence it follows, that *to them*, [the Israelites who perished] *the gospel* [i. e. the doctrine of grace and justice] *was preached, as well as unto us*, Christians, who are saved by obedient faith. Once more : That which Moses preached to them, was a doctrine of *grace* and of *justice*, is evident from this consideration ; Had the Mosaic gospel been a doctrine of mere *justice*, it could not have been a gospel like our *gracious* gospel : and had it been a mere doctrine of *grace*, the apostle could never have excited us not to neglect our *Christian* gospel, and *great* salvation, by pointing out to us the fearful destruction of the Israelites, who neglected their Jewish gospel and salvation ; lest any [Christian] fall after the same example of unbelief, Heb. iv. 11.

With respect to the *Christian* dispensation, the Apostle calls it sometimes *the law* : “ The doers of the law [i. e. of the *preceptive* part of the gospel] shall be justified,—when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel, Rom. ii. 13, 16. compared with Mat. xii. 36, 37.—Sometimes he calls it *the law of Christ* : “ Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,” Gal. vi. 2. Sometimes *the laws of God* : *I will write my laws* [i. e. my evangelical precepts and promises] *in their hearts*, Heb. viii. 10.

16. Sometimes *The law of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 2. and sometimes *The gospel of Christ*, Rom. i. 16. Hence it is, that, to be a christian believer, in St. Paul's language, is *to be under the law of Christ*, 1 Cor. ix. 21.—As for St. James, he never calls the Christian dispensation *gospel*; but he simply calls it, either *the law*, Jam. iv. 11, 12.—ii. 10: *The law of liberty*, Jam. ii. 12:—Or, *The perfect law of liberty*, Jam. i. 25. St. John uses the same language in his epistles, where he never mentions the word *gospel*, and where speaking of the sins of christian believers, he says, that *sin is the transgression of the law*; whence it follows, that the *sin of Christians*, is the transgression of the *law of Christ*, or of the holy doctrines of justice preached by Jesus-Christ. To deny it would be asserting we *cannot sin*: For St. Paul informs us, that the Mosaic law is *done away*, 2 Cor. iii. 11. Now, if no christian is under the law of Moses, and if Christ never grafted the moral part of the Mosaic law into the christian dispensation; or, in other terms, if Christ's gospel is a lawless institution, it necessarily follows that no christian can sin: For *Sin is not imputed* or charged [that is, There is no sin] *where there is no law*, Rom. v. 13. Hence it is, that antinomian doctrines of grace represent fallen, adulterous, bloody believers, as *spotless*, or *sinless* before God, in all their sins. Such is the necessary consequence of a lawless gospel armed with pointless rules of life! Such the dreadful tendency of *doctrines of grace torn away from the doctrines of justice!*

S E C T I O N II.

Remarks on the two Gospel-axioms, or capital truths, upon which the doctrines of Grace and Justice are founded. Augustine himself once granted both those truths. Rigid Arminians indirectly deny the one, and rigid Calvinists the other. How the partial defenders of the doctrines of Justice and Grace try to save appearances, with respect to the part of the truth, which they indirectly oppose.

SO noble and solid a superstructure as the Gospel, [i. e. the scripture-doctrines of *grace and justice*] undoubtedly stands upon a noble and sure foundation. Accordingly we find, that the primitive gospel rests on two principles, the one theological and the other moral. These two principles, or, if you please, these two pillars of gospel-truth, may for distinction's sake, be called *Gospel-axioms*: at least I beg leave to call them so. Nor will the candid reader deny my request, if he considers the following definitions.

1. An *Axiom*, is a self-evident truth, which at once recommends itself to the understanding, or to the conscience of every unprejudiced man. Thus, *two and two make four*, is an axiom in every counting-house. And that *The absolute necessity of all human actions is incompatible with a moral law and a day of Judgment*, is an axiom in every unprejudiced mind.

2. The *two gospel-axioms* are the two principles, or capital self-evident truths, on which the primitive gospel, (that is, the scripture-doctrine of *grace and justice*) is founded.

3. The *first gospel-axiom* bears up the holy doctrines of *grace*, and (when it is cordially received) is equally destructive of proud pharisaism and the unholy doctrines of lawless grace. This axiom is the following self-evident truth, which recommends itself to the mind and conscience of every candid bible-christian. "Our first talent or degree of salvation, is merely of God's free-grace in Christ, without any work or endeavour of our own: and our eternal salvation is originally, capitally,* and finally,† of God's free-grace

* A Solitudian would say *entirely*, and by this means he would leave no room for the *second* gospel-axiom, for the rewardableness of the works of faith, and for the doctrines of remunerative justice. But by saying *capitally*, we avoid this three-fold mistake, we secure the honour of *holy Free-grace*, and shut the door against its counterfeit.

† By adding *finally*, we shew that the *top-stone*, as well as the *foundation-stone* of our eternal salvation, is to be brought with shouting *Grace! Grace unto it*; because, if God had honoured his obedient

“ grace in Christ ; through our not neglecting that
 “ first talent or degree of salvation.”—I say, *through
 our not neglecting*, &c. to secure the connexion of the
 two gospel-axioms, and to leave scripture-room for the
 doctrines of remunerative *justice*.

4. The *second gospel axiom* bears up the *doctrines
 of justice*, and extirpates the doctrine of *Free-wrath*.
 It is the following proposition, which, I believe, no
 candid Bible-christian will deny. “ Our eternal dam-
 “ nation is originally † and principally of our own
 “ personal Free-will, through an obstinate, and final
 “ neglect of the first talent, or degree of salvation.”

These two gospel-axioms may be thus expressed :
 1. *Our salvation is of God* : or, *There is free-grace
 in God*, which, through Christ, freely places all men
 in a state of temporary redemption, justification, or
 obedient saints with a sight of his heavenly glory for half an hour,
 and then suffered them to fall gently asleep in the bosom of obli-
 vion, or to slide into a state of personal non-existence, he would
 have demonstrated his remunerative justice, and amply rewarded
 their best services. Hence it appears, that God’s giving *eternal*
 rewards of glory for a few temporary services, done by his own
 grace, is such an instance of *free-grace*, as nothing but *eternal*
 shouts of *Grace! Grace!* can sufficiently acknowledge. We desire
 our mistaken brethren to consider this remark ; otherwise they will
 wrong the Truth and us, by continuing to say, that *our* doctrines
 of grace, allow indeed *Free-grace* to lay the *foundation*, but that
 they reserve to the works of our rectified *Free-will* the honour of
 bringing the top-stone of our *eternal* salvation with saying *Works!
 Works!* unto it ; a Pharisaic doctrine this, which we abhor ;
 loudly asserting that, although our free, unnecessitated obedience
 of faith intervenes, yet God in Christ is the *Omega*, as well as
 the *Alpha*,—the *end*, as well as the *beginning* of our *eternal* sal-
 vation.

† I add the word *originally*, to cut off the *self-excusing* opinion
 of those men, who charge their *eternal* damnation upon an abso-
 lute decree of reprobation, or upon Adam’s first transgression.—As
 for the word *principally*, it secures the part in the damnation of
 the *wicked*, which the Scriptures ascribe to the *righteous* God ; it
 being certain, 1. That God judicially hardens his slothful and un-
 profitable servants, by taking from them, at the end of their day
 of grace, the talent of softening grace, which they have obstinately
 buried : And, 2. That he judicially reprobates, or damns them,
 by pronouncing this awful sentence, *Depart, ye cursed, &c.* A
 flame of vindictive justice belongs to the gospel of Christ, Heb.
 xli. 29. but not a single spark of *Free-wrath*.

salvation, according to the various gospel-dispensations; and crowns those who are faithful unto death with an eternal redemption, justification, or salvation.—2. *Our damnation is of ourselves*: or, *There is free-will in man*, by which he may, through the grace freely imparted to him in the day of *temporary* salvation, work out his own *eternal* salvation; or he may, (through the natural power which angels had to sin in heaven, and our first parents in paradise) chuse to sin away the day of temporary salvation. And by thus working out his damnation he may provoke *Just-wrath* (which is the same as *despised Free grace*) to punish him with eternal destruction.

These two truths, or axioms, might be made still plainer, thus: 1. Our gracious and just God, in a day of salvation begun, sets life or death before us:—2. As free-willing, assisted creatures, we may, during that day, chuse which we please: We may stretch out our hand to the water or to the fire.—Or thus: 1. There is holy, righteous, and partial free-grace in God: 2. There is free-will in redeemed, assisted man, whereby he is capable of obeying or disobeying God's holy, righteous, and partial Free-grace.—For convenience's sake, these axioms may be shortened thus: 1. The doctrine of holy Free-grace and partial mercy in God, is true: 2. The doctrine of rectified, assisted Free-will in man, and of impartial justice in God, is true also.

This lovely pair of evangelical propositions, appears to me so essential to the fulness and harmony of the gospel, that I doubt not but if Pelagius and Augustine themselves were alive, neither of them would dare *directly* to rise against it. Time, or envy, has destroyed the works of Pelagius, the great assertor of *free-will* and the doctrines of *justice*; we cannot therefore support the doctrines of free-grace by *his* concessions: but we have the writings of Augustine, the great defender of God's distinguishing love, and the doctrine of free-grace: and yet, partial as he was to *these* doctrines, in a happy moment, he boldly stood up for free-will and the doctrines of justice. This appears from the ju-

dicious and candid questions, which he proposes in one of his epistles: [Si non est gratia Dei, quomodo salvat mundum? Si non est liberum arbitrium, quomodo judicat mundum?] “If there be not free grace in God, how does he [graciously] save the world? If there be not free-will [in men] how does he [righteously] judge the world?”

To conclude: Whoever holds forth these two Bible-axioms, [There is free-grace in God, whence man's salvation graciously flows in various degrees;] and; [There is free-will in every man, whence the damnation of all that perish justly proceeds:—]—Whoever, I say, consistently holds forth these two self-evident propositions, is, in my humble judgment, a gospel-minister who rightly divides the word of truth. He is a friend to both the doctrines of partial grace and impartial justice, of mercy and obedience, of faith and good works: In short, he preaches the primitive Gospel, reunites the two opposite Gospels of the day, and equally obviates the errors of Honestus and Zelotes, who stand up for the modern Gospels.

If you ask what those errors are, I answer, Honestus the Pelagian or rigid Arminian, seldom preaches *Free-grace*, and never dwells upon the notorious partiality and absolute sovereignty, with which God at first distributes the various talents of his grace: and, when he preaches *Free-will*, he seldom preaches *free-will initially rectified and continually assisted by free-grace*: rarely, if ever, deeply humbling his hearers by displaying the *total* helplessness of *un-rectified*, and *un-assisted* Free-will: And thus he veils the delightful doctrine of God's *Free-grace*, clouds the *evangelical* doctrine of man's *Free-will*, and inadvertently opens the door to self-conceited pharisaism. On the other hand, Zelotes, the Solifidian, or rigid Calvinist, seldom or never preaches *rectified, assisted Free-will*; he harps only on the doctrine of *absolute necessity*: And when he preaches *Free-grace*, he too often preaches: 1. A *cruel* free-grace, which turning itself into *free-wrath*, with respect to the majority of mankind, absolutely passes them by, and consigns them over to everlasting

lasting, infallible damnation, by means of necessary, fore-ordained sin. And, 2. An unscriptural Free-grace, which turning itself into *lawless fondness*, with respect to a number of favourite souls, *absolutely* ensures to them eternal redemption, complete justification, and finished salvation, be they ever so unfaithful.

By this means Zelotes spoils the doctrine of free-grace, undesignedly injures the doctrine of holiness, and utterly destroys the doctrine of justice. For when he denies that the greatest part of mankind have any interest in God's redeeming love; when he intimates, that the doctrines of an absolute necessitating election to eternal life, and of an absolute necessitating rejection from eternal life, are true; and that God's reprobates are not less necessitated to sin to the end and be damned, than God's elect are to obey to the end and be saved; does he not pour contempt upon the throne of divine *justice*? Does he not make the supreme Judge, who fills that throne, appear as unwise when he distributes heavenly rewards, as cruel, when he inflicts infernal punishments?

Honestus and Zelotes will probably think, that I misrepresent them. Honestus will say, that he cordially believes God is full of *free-grace* for all men, and that he only thinks it would be *unjust* in God to be *partial* in the distribution of his *free-grace*. But when Honestus reasons thus, does he not confound grace and justice? Does he not sap the foundation of the throne of *grace*, under pretence of establishing the throne of *justice*? If God cannot do what he pleases with his *grace*, and if *justice* always binds him in the distribution of his favours, does not his grace deserve the name of *impartial justice*, far better than the appellation of *free-grace*?

As Honestus tries to save appearances with regard to the doctrines of *grace*, so does Zelotes, with regard to the doctrines of *justice*. "The gospel I preach," says he, "is highly consistent with the doctrines of *justice*; I indeed intimate, that the elect are *necessitated* to believe and be eternally saved; and the reprobates,"

to sin on and be lost: But both this salvation of the elect, and damnation of the reprobates, perfectly agree with divine equity. For Christ, by his obedience unto death, *merited* the eternal salvation of all that shall be saved: And Adam, by his first act of disobedience, *deserved* the absolute reprobation of all that shall be damned. Our doctrines of grace are therefore highly consistent with the doctrines of *justice.*" This argument appears unanswerable to Zelotes; but I confess it does not satisfy me. For if the doctrine of *absolute necessity* is thus foisted into the gospel, and if Christ makes his elect people absolutely, and unavoidably willing to obey and go to heaven; whilst Adam makes his reprobate people absolutely and unavoidably willing to sin on and go to hell; I should be glad to know, how the elect can be *wisely judged* according to, and rewarded for, *their* faith and good works; and how the reprobates can be *justly sentenced* according to, and punished for, *their* unbelief and bad works? I repeat it, the doctrine of an *absolute predestination* to life or death eternal, which is one and the same with the doctrine of an *absolute necessity* to believe or disbelieve, to obey or disobey to the last; —such a doctrine, I say, is totally subversive of the doctrines of *justice.* For reason deposes, that it is *absurd* to give to *necessary agents* a law, or rule of life, armed with promises of rewards, and threatenings of punishments; And conscience declares, that it is *unjust* and *cruel* to inflict fearful, eternal punishments upon beings, that have only moved or acted by *absolute necessity*; whether such beings are running streams, aspiring flames, falling stones, turning wheels, madmen, bound-thinkers, bound-willers, or bound-agents; supposing such bound-thinkers, bound-willers, and bound-agents, did think, will, and act, as *unavoidably* as the wind raises a storm, and as *necessarily* as a fired cannon pours forth flames and destruction. Absolute necessity and a righteous judgment are absolutely incompatible. We must renounce the mistakes of *rigid Calvinists*, or give up the doctrines of *justice.*

SECTION III.

By whom chiefly the Gospel-axioms were systematically parted; and under what pretences, prejudiced, good men, tore asunder the Doctrines of Grace and Justice; and rent the one primitive, catholic Gospel, into the two partial gospels of the day.

FROM the preceding Section it appears, that, to preach the gospel in its primitive purity, is so to hold forth and balance the two gospel-axioms, as to allow both *the doctrines of grace, and the doctrines of justice*, the place which is assigned them in the Word of God: It is so to preach *holy Free-grace, and rectified, assisted Free-will*, as equally to grind Pharisaism and Antinomianism [*the graceless and the lawless gospel*] between these two evangelical mill-stones. And thus the gospel was, in general, preached by good men for above three hundred years after Christ's ascension. If ever the tempter put successfully in practice his two capital maxims, *Confound and destroy,—Divide and conquer*, it was in the fourth century, when he helped Pelagius and Augustine, two warm disputants, openly to *confound* what should have been properly distinguished, and systematically to *divide*, what should have been religiously joined; by which means they broke the balance of the doctrines of Grace and Justice. Nor did they do it out of malice; but through an immoderate regard for *one part* of the gospel: An injudicious regard this, which was naturally productive of a proportionable disregard for *the other part* of God's Word.

Pelagius (we are told by Augustine) preached *Free-will*; but confounding *natural Free-will* with *Free-grace, rectified and assisted by grace*, he made too much of *natural free-will*, and too little of God's *Free-grace*. The *left leg* of his gospel-system grew gigantic, whilst the *right leg* shrunk almost to nothing. And commencing a rigid *Free-willer*, he insisted upon the *sufficiency* of our natural powers, and dwelt on

the *second* gospel-axiom, and the doctrines of Justice, in so partial a manner, that he almost eclipsed the *first* gospel-axiom, and the doctrines of Grace.

Augustine, his co-temporary, under pretence of mending the matter, was guilty of an error exactly contrary. He so puffed up the *right* leg of his gospel-system, as to make it monstrous; while the *left* grew as slender and insignificant as a rotten stick. To bring this unhappy change about, in his controversial heats he confounded lawful, righteous free-grace, with lawless, unscriptural, over-bearing free-grace; and to make room for this latter, *imaginary* sort of grace, he sometimes turned *free-will* out of its place, to give that place to *necessity*. Thus he commenced a rigid Bound-willer. The irresistible free-grace, which he preached, bound the elect by the chains of an unconditional election to life, absolutely *necessitating* them to repent, believe, and be eternally saved: whilst the irresistible free-wrath, which secretly advanced behind that over-bearing grace, bound the non-elect in chains of absolute reprobation, and *necessitated* them to sin on, and be unavoidably damned. By this means, new, unholy doctrines of *grace* and *wrath*, jostled the holy ancient doctrines of *grace* and *justice* out of their place. The two gospel-axioms did no longer agree: but the first axiom, becoming like Leviathan, swallowed up the second. For the moment irresistible, lawless free-grace, and despotic, cruel free-wrath mount the throne, what room is there for *holy, righteous* free-grace? What room for free-will? What room for the doctrines of Justice? What room for the primitive Gospel? Absolutely none; unless it be a *narrow* room indeed, artfully contrived under a heap of Augustinian contradictions, and Calvinian inconsistencies.

From this short account of Pelagianism and Augustinism, it is evident, that heated Pelagius (if the account given us be true) gave a desperate thrust to the *right* side of primitive Christianity; and that heated Augustine, in his hurry to defend her, aimed a well-meant blow at Pelagius, but by over-doing it, and

missing

missing his mark, wounded the *left* side of the heavenly woman, who from that time has lain bleeding between these two rash antagonists. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water," says the wise Man. These *waters of strife*, which Pelagius and Augustine let in upon the Church, by breaking the flood-gates of Gospel-truth, soon overflowed the Christian world, and at times, like the waters of the overflowing Nile, have almost been turned into blood. When streams of self-justifying, rigid, Pelagian, free-will, have met with streams of self-electing, lawless, Augustinian free-grace; the strife has been loud and terrible. They have foamed out their own shame, and frightened thousands of travellers to Sion out of the noisy ways of a *corrupted* gospel, into the more quiet paths of infidelity.

For above a thousand years, these *waters of strife* have spread devastation through the Christian world; I had almost said also through the Mahometan world: for Mahomet, who collected the filth of corrupt Christianity, derived these errors into his system of religion: Omar and Hali, at least, two of his relations and successors, became the leaders of two sects, which divide the Mahometan world. Omar, whom the Turks follow, stood up for bound-will, necessity, and a species of absolute, Augustinian Predestination, and Hali, whom the Persians revere, embraced rigid free-will, and Pelagian free agency. But the worst is, that these muddy waters have flowed, through the dirty channel of the Romish church, into all the Protestant churches, and have at times deluged them; turning, wherever they came, brotherly love into fierce contention. For breaking the evangelical balance of the gospel axioms is as naturally productive of polemical debates in the church, as breaking the parliamentary balance between the king and the people is of contention and civil wars in the state. How this plague first infected protestantism, will be seen in the next section.

SECTION IV.

Luther and Calvin did not restore the Balance of the Gospel-axioms. That honour was reserved for Cranmer, the English Reformer, who modelled the Church of England very nearly according to the primitive Gospel.—How soon the Augustinian doctrines of lawless grace preponderated.—How the Pelagian doctrine of unassisted Free-will now preponderates.

WHEN the first Reformers shook off the yoke of papistical trumperies, they fought gallantly for many glorious truths. But it is to be wished, that, whilst they warmly contended for the simple, scriptural dress of the primitive gospel, they had not forgotten to fight for some of its very vitals, I mean the doctrines of *holy Free-grace*, and *rectified, assisted Free-will*. They did much good in many respects; so much indeed, that no grateful Protestant can find fault with them without reluctance. But, after all, they did not restore the balance of the doctrines of Grace and Justice. Luther, the German Reformer, being a monk of the order of Augustine, entered upon the Reformation full of prejudices in favour of Augustine's solifidian mistakes. And he was so busy in opposing the Pope of Rome, his indulgencies, Latin masses, and other monastic fooleries, that he did not find time to oppose the Augustinian fooleries of fatalism, Manichean necessity, lawless grace, and free-wrath. On the contrary, in one of his heats, he broke the left scale of the gospel-balances, denied there was any such thing as *Free-will*; and by that means gave a most destructive blow to the doctrines of Justice: A rash deed, for which Erasmus, the Dutch Reformer, openly reproved him, but with too much of the Pelagian spirit.

Calvin, the French Reformer [who, after he had left his native country, taught Divinity in the Academy of Geneva] far from getting light and learning moderation, by the controversy of Luther and Erasmus, rushed with

all the impetuosity of his ardent spirit into the error of heated Augustine; and so zealously maintained it, that from that time it has been called Calvinism.

If Calvin did not grow wiser by the dispute of Luther and Erasmus, Melancthon, another German Reformer did; and our great English Reformer Cranmer, who in wisdom, candor, and moderation, far exceeded the generality of the Reformers on the Continent, closely imitated his excellent example. Nay, to the honour of this favoured Island, and of perfect Protestantism, in a happy moment he found the exact balance of the Gospel-axioms. Read, admire, and obey his Anti-Augustinian, Anti-Pelagian, and Apostolic Proclamation. "*All men* be also to be admonished, and chiefly Preachers, that, in this high matter, they, looking on both sides [i. e. looking both to the doctrines of Grace, and the doctrines of Justice] so temper and moderate themselves, that neither they so preach the *grace of God* [with heated Augustine] that they take away thereby *free-will*; nor on the other side, so extol *free-will* [with heated Pelagius] that injury be done to the *Grace of God*." *Erud. of a Christian Man, Section on Free-will*, which was added by Cranmer. Here you see the balance of the doctrines of Grace and Justice, which Augustine and Pelagius had broken, and which Luther and Calvin had ground to dust in some of their over-doing moments;—you see, I say, that important balance perfectly restored by the English Reformer. With this short, valuable quotation, as with a shield of impenetrable brass, *all men* and chiefly Preachers, may quench all the fiery darts cast at the primitive gospel by the Preachers of the partial gospels of the day; I mean the abettors of the Augustinian, or of the Pelagian error.

Mankind is prone to run into extremes. The world is full of men, who always overdo or underdo. Few people ever find the line of moderation, the golden mean; and of those who do, few stay long upon it. One blast or another of vain doctrine, soon drives them East or West from the Meridian of pure Truth. How happy would it have been for the Church of
England,

England, if her first members had steadily followed the light, which our great Reformer carried before them. But alas, not a few of them had more zeal than moderation. Cranmer could not make all his fellow-reformers to see with his eyes. In the time of their popish superstition many of them had imbibed the errors of Augustine, whom the Church of Rome reveres as the greatest of the Fathers, and the holiest of the ancient Saints: These good men finding that his doctrine was countenanced by Luther, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Bucer, and others, whom they looked upon as oracles, soon relapsed into the Augustinian doctrines of lawless grace, from which some of them had never been quite disentangled. Even during Cranmer's confinement, (but much more after his martyrdom) they began to renounce the doctrines of Justice, which were only indirectly secured in the 17th Article of our Church; warmly contending for the doctrines of necessitating grace, which are always destructive of the doctrines of *Justice*. Thus, while some of them erected the canopy of a lawless, solifidian free-grace, over some men elected according to Calvin's notions of an absolute election to eternal life; others cast the sable net of *free-wrath* over the rest of mankind; imagining that from all eternity most men were absolutely predestinated to eternal death, according to the Calvinian doctrine of absolute, unconditional reprobation. Thus the balance of the gospel-axioms which Cranmer [considering the times] had maintained to admiration, was again broken. Rigid Calvinism got the ascendancy; the doctrines of Justice were publicly decried as popery and heresy, almost all England over. All the reprobates were exculpated; by the doctrine of necessity, their unavoidable continuance in sin, and their damnation, were openly charged upon God and Adam. Decrees of absolute predestination to necessary holiness and eternal salvation, and statutes of absolute appointment to necessary sin and eternal damnation, began currently to pass for gospel. And doctrines of Justice were swept away, as if they had been poisonous *cobwebs spun by popish spiders*. Hence

it is, that Mr. Toplady, describing the triumphs of rigid Calvinism in the days of Queen Elizabeth, says in his letter to Dr. Nowel, p. 45, that "Those who held this opinion of God's not being any cause of sin and damnation, were at that time mightily cried out against, by the main body of our reformed church, as *Fautors of false religion*,"—and, "That to be called a *free-will man*, was looked upon as a *shameful reproach*, and *opprobrious infamy*; yea, and that a person so termed was deemed *heretical*."—A proof of this, that Dr. Peter Heylin speaks the truth when he says, "It was safer for any man in those times, to have been looked upon as a *heathen* or *publican*, than an *anti-calvinist*."

Should the judicious reader ask how it happened, that the doctrines of unscriptural grace, and free-wrath, and necessity, were so soon substituted for the doctrines of genuine Free-grace, and rectified, assisted Free-will, which Cranmer had so evangelically maintained; I answer, that, altho' Thomas Aquinas and Scotus, the leading divines of the Church of Rome, through their great veneration for Augustine, leaned too much towards the lawless, wrathful doctrines of grace; yet Luther, Calvin, and Zuinglius, leaned still more towards that extreme. This was soon discovered by some of the popish Doctors: and as they knew not how to make a proper stand against the genuine doctrines of the Reformation, they were glad to find a good opportunity of opposing the Reformers, by opposing the Augustinian mistakes which Luther and Calvin carried to the height. Accordingly, leaving the extreme of Augustine, to which they had chiefly leaned before, many of the popish divines began to lean towards the extreme of Pelagius, and commenced rigid and partial defenders of the doctrines of *justice*, which the German, French, and Swiss reformers had indirectly destroyed, by overturning the doctrine of *free-will*, which is inseparably connected with the doctrine of a day of *just* Judgment. Hence it is, that, at the Council of Trent, which the Pope had called to stop the progress of the Reformation, the Papists

took openly the part of the *second* gospel-axiom; and in the spirit of contradiction began warmly to oppose Augustine's mistakes, which the first Jesuits had warmly embraced; Bellarmine himself not excepted. Party spirit soon blew up the partial zeal of the contending divines. Protestant bigotry ran against Popish bigotry; and the effect of the shock was a driving of each other still farther from the line of Scripture-moderation. Thus many Papists, especially those who wrote against the Calvinian Protestants, became the partial supporters of the doctrines of Justice, while their opponents shewed themselves the partial vindicators of the doctrines of Grace. Hence it is, that, in the popish countries, those who stood up for faith, and distinguishing *free-grace*, began to be called Heretics, Lutherans, and Solifidians; whilst, in the protestant countries, those who had the courage to maintain the doctrines of *justice*, good works, and un-necessitated obedience, were branded as Papists, Merit-mongers, and Heretics.

Things continued in this unhappy state, till oppressed Truth made new efforts to shake off the yokes put upon her. For the scales, which hold the weights of the sanctuary, [the two gospel-axioms] hover and shift, till they have attained their equilibrium; just as the disturbed needle of a compass quivers and moves, till it has recovered its proper situation, and points again due North. This new shifting happened in the last century, when Arminius, a protestant divine, endeavoured to rescue the doctrines of *justice*, which were openly trampled under foot by most protestants; and when Jansenius, a popish bishop, attempted to exalt the doctrines of *distinguishing grace*, which most divines of the church of Rome had of late left to the protestants. Thus Jansenius, over-doing after Augustine, brought the doctrines of unscriptural grace and free-wrath with a full tide into the church of Rome; while Arminius, (or, at least, some of his followers) drove them with all his might out of the protestant churches.

Many countries were in a general ferment on this occasion. A great number of Protestant Divines assembled at Dort in Holland, confirmed Calvin's indirect opposition to the doctrines of Justice, and condemned Arminius after his death; for, during his life, none dared to attack him: such was the reputation he had, even through Holland, both for learning and exemplary piety! On the other hand, the Pope, with his conclave, imitating the partiality of the synod of Dort, *injudiciously* condemned Jansenius and his Calvinism, and by this means did an injury to the doctrines of grace, which Jansenius warmly contended for. But truth shall stand, be it ever so much opposed by either partial protestants or partial papists. Therefore, notwithstanding the decisions of the popish conclave, Jansenism and the doctrines of *Grace* continued to leaven the church of Rome: Whilst, notwithstanding the decisions of the protestant synod, Arminianism, and the doctrines of *Justice*, continued to spread through the Protestant churches.

Archbishop Laud, in the days of King James and Charles the first, caused in the gospel-scales the turn, which then began to take place in our church, in favour of the doctrines of Justice. He was the chief instrument, which, like Moses's rod, began to part the boisterous sea of rigid Calvinism. He received his light from Arminius; but it was corrupted with a mixture of Pelagian darkness. He aimed rather at putting down absolute *reprobation* and lawless grace, than at clearing up the scripture doctrine of a partial *Election*, doing justice to the doctrines of *Grace*, and reconciling the contending parties, by reconciling the two gospel-axioms. Hence it is, that passing beyond the scripture-meridian, he led most of the English clergy from one extreme to the other. For now it is to be feared, that the generality of them are gone as far West, as they were before East, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The *first* gospel-axiom formerly preponderated; and now the *second* goes swiftly down. *Free-will* is, in general, cried up in opposition to *Free-grace*, as excessively and Pelagianistically (if I

may use the expression) as in the beginning of the last century, Free-grace was unreasonably and Calvinistically set up in opposition to *Free-will*. I say, in general, because, although most of our pulpits are filled with preachers, who Pelagianize as well as Honestus, there are still a few divines, who like Zelotes, strongly run into the Calvinian extreme.

But however, sooner or later, judicious, moderate men will convince the christian world, that the gospel equally comprizes the doctrines of *grace* and of *justice*; and that it consists of *promises* to be believed, and *precepts* to be observed; *gracious* promises and *holy* precepts, which are armed with the sanction of proper rewards or punishments, and are as incompatible with Pelagian self-sufficiency, as with the Calvinian doctrines of lawless grace and free-wrath. And as soon as this is clearly and practically understood by Christians, primitive unity and harmony will be restored to the partial gospels of the day.

S E C T I O N V.

What the two modern Gospels are.—Their dreadful consequences.—Arminius tried to find the way of Truth between these two Gospels, but perhaps missed it a little.—The rectifying of his mistakes lately attempted.

BY the two modern Gospels, I mean Pelagianism, or rigid Arminianism, and the doctrine of absolute necessity, or rigid Calvinism. The former is a gospel, which so exalts the doctrines of *justice*, as to obscure the doctrines of *partial grace*:—A gospel, which so holds forth the *second* gospel-axiom, as to hide the glory of the first, either in whole or in part. Rigid Calvinism, on the other hand, is a gospel, which so extols the doctrines of distinguishing grace, as to eclipse the doctrines of *justice*:—a gospel which so holds forth the *first* gospel-axiom, as to hide the glory of the *second*, in whole or in part. The fault of these two systems of doctrine consists in parting, or in not properly balancing the doctrines of Grace and Justice.

The confusion which this error has occasioned in the churches of Christ for above a thousand years, should (one would think) have opened the eyes of all over-doing, and under-doing divines, and make them look out for a safe passage between the Pelagian and the Calvinian rocks. That any *good* men should continue, unconcernedly, to run the bark of their orthodoxy against those fatal rocks of error, is really astonishing; especially if we consider, that nobody can look into ecclesiastical history, without seeing the marks of the numerous wrecks of truth and love, which they have caused. Wide however, as the empire of prejudice is, Candor is not yet turned out of the world. In all the churches of Christ there are men, who will yet hear scripture and reason. But many of them, through a variety of avocations, thro' an indolence of disposition, or through despair of finding the exact truth, tamely submit to what appears to them a remediless evil. They are sorry that Christians should be so divided: But not seeing any prospect of ending our deplorable divisions, they quietly walk in Pelagian or Calvinian ways, without seeking the unbeaten path of truth, which exactly lies between those two frequented roads. One of the reasons why they take up so readily with the Pelagian or Calvinian system, is their not considering the dreadful evils which flow from each, some of which I shall set before the reader. I have already observed, that the error of Pelagius (if Augustine and his votaries do not wrong him) consists in exalting *free-will* and *human powers*,* so as to leave little or no room for the exertion of *free-grace* and *divine power*: And that on the other hand, the error of Augustine and Calvin consists in so exalting irresistible *free-grace openly*, and irresistible *free-wrath secretly*, that there is no reasonable room left for the exertion of faithful or unfaithful *free-will*, or indeed for any *free-will* at all. Now in the very nature of things, these two opposite extremes lead to the most dangerous errors. I begin with enumerating those which belong to the Pelagian extreme.

Reason and experience shew, that, when the Pelagian error rises to its height, it leads men into *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, *Deism*, and, sometimes into *avowed Fatalism*, or *Popish Pharisaism*.

1. By *Arianism* I mean the doctrine of *Arius*, a Divine of Alexandria, who lived about the time of Pelagius, and not only insinuated, that man was not so fallen as to need an omnipotent Redeemer, whose name is *GOD with us*; but openly taught, that Christ was *only* an exalted, super-angelical *Creature*.

2. *Socinianism* is the error of *Socinus*, a learned, moral man, who lived since the Reformation, and had such high notions of man's free-will and powers, that he thought man could save himself even without the help of a *Super-Angelical Redeemer*. And accordingly he asserted, that Christ was a *mere Man*, like Moses and Elias, and that his blood had no more power to atone for sin, than that of Abel or St. Paul.

3. *Deism* is the error of those, who carry matters still higher, and think that man is so perfectly able by the exertions of his own free-will and natural powers, to recommend himself to the mercy of the Supreme Being, that he needs *no Redeemer at all*. Hence it is, that altho' the Deists still believe in *God* (and on that account call themselves *Theists* or *Deists*) they make no more of Christ and the Bible, than of the Pope and his mass-book, and look upon the doctrines of the *Incarnation* and the *Trinity*, as wild and idolatrous conceits.

4. *Avowed Fatalism*, is the error of those who believe, that *whatever is, is right*: and that all things happen [and, of consequence, that all sins are committed] of *Fatal absolute necessity*. This is an error into which *immoral Deists* are very apt to run: For, when they feel guilt upon their consciences, as they have no idea of a Mediator to take it away, they wish that their bad actions had been *necessary*, that is, absolutely brought on by the stars, or caused by God's decrees, which would fully exculpate them. And as this doctrine eases their guilty consciences, they first desire

desire that it might be true, and by little and little, persuaded themselves that it is so, and publicly maintain their error. Hence it is that immoral Deists, such as Voltaire and many of his followers, are avowed Fatalists.

5. *Jewish Pharisaism* is the error of those, who are such strangers to the doctrines of grace, as to think they have no need of the rich mercy which God extends to poor publicans. Fancying themselves righteous, they thank God for their supposed goodness, when they should smite upon their breast on account of their real depravity. *Popish Pharisaism* is an error still more capital. Those who are deep in it, not only take little notice of the doctrines of grace, but carry their ideas of the doctrines of justice to such unscriptural and absurd lengths, as to imagine that their penances can make a proper atonement for their sins: That God is, strictly speaking, their debtor on account of their good works, and that they cannot only merit the reward of eternal life for themselves by their good deeds, but deserve it also for others by their *works of supererogation*, and through their *superabundant obedience and goodness*; a conceit so detestable, that, one would think, it needs only be mentioned, to be fully exploded, and perfectly abhorred.

Dreadful as are these consequences of *Pelagianism* carried to its height, the consequences of *Augustinism* or *Calvinism* carried also to its height, are not at all better. For, the demolition of *free-will*, and the setting up of *irresistible, electing Free-grace*, and *absolute*, reprobating free-wrath, lead to *Antinomianism*, *Manicheism*, *disguised Fatalism*, *widely reprobating bigotry*, and *self-electing presumption*, or *self-reprobating despair*. The four first of these errors need explanation.

I. *Antinomianism* is the error of such *rigid Calvinists* as exalt *Free-grace* in an injudicious manner, and make so little account of *Free-will*, and its startings aside out of the way of duty, as to represent sin at times, like a mere bugbear, which can no more hurt

the believer who now commits it, than scare-crows can hurt those who set them up. They assert, that if a sinner has once believed, he is not only safe, but eternally and completely justified from all *future*, as well as past iniquities. The Pope's indulgencies are nothing to those, which these mistaken evangelists preach. I have heard a Bishop of Rome, who extended his popish indulgences, pardons, and justifications, to any crime which the indulged man might commit within ten years after the date: But these preach *finished salvation* in the full extent of the word, without any of our own works, and by that means they extend their protestant indulgences to all eternity,—to all believers in general,—and to every crime, which each of them might chuse to commit. In a word, they preach the inadmissible, complete justification of all fallen believers, who add murder to adultery, and a hypocritical shew of godliness to incest. Antinomianism, after all, is nothing but *rigid Calvinism* dragged to open light by plain spoken Preachers, who think that truth can bear the light, and that no honest man should be ashamed of his religion.

II. *Manicheism* is the capital error of *Manes*, a Persian, who attempting to mend the gospel of Christ, demolished free-will, made man a passive tool, and taught, that there are two principles in the Godhead, the one *good*, from which flows all the *good*, and the other *bad*, from which flows all the *evil* in the world. Augustine was once a Manichee, but afterwards he left their sect, and refuted their errors. And yet, astonishing! when he began to lean to the doctrine of absolute predestination, he ran again unawares, into the capital error of Manes. For if all the *good* and *bad* actions of angels, devils, and men, have their source in God's *absolute predestination*, and *necessitating decrees*; it follows, that *vice* absolutely springs from the *predestinating* God, as well as virtue; and, of consequence, that *rigid Calvinism* is a branch of *Manicheism* artfully painted with fair colours borrowed from Christianity.

III. *Disguised Fatalism* is nothing but an *absolute necessity* of doing good or evil, according to the overbearing decrees, or forcible influences of *Manes's* God, who is made up of *free-grace* and of *free-wrath*, that is, of a *good* and *bad* principle. I call this doctrine *disguised Fatalism*: 1. Because it implies the *absolute necessity* of our actions; a necessity this, which the heathens call *fate*: And, 2. Because it is so horrible, that even those who are most in love with it, dare not look at it, without some veil, or *disguise*. As the words *Fatalism*,—*Evil God*,—*Good Devil*, or *Manichean Deity*, are not in the Bible, the Christian Fatalists do what they can to cover their error with decent expressions. The *good principle* of their Deity they accordingly call *Free-grace*, or *everlasting, unchangeable Love*. From this good principle flows their *absolute election*, and *finished salvation*. With respect to the *bad principle*, it is true that they dare not openly call it *free-wrath*, or *everlasting, unchangeable hatred*, as the honest Manichees did; but they give you dreadful hints, that it is a *sovereign* something in the Godhead, which *necessitates* reprobated angels and men to sin:—Something which *ordains* their fall, and *absolutely passes them* by when they are fallen:—Something which marks out unformed, unbegotten victims for the slaughter, and says to them [according to unchangeable decrees productive of absolute necessity], “Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire; for I passed you by: My absolute reprobation eternally secured your sin, and your continuance in sin: And now, my unchangeable, everlasting wrath absolutely secures your eternal damnation. Go, ye absolutely-reprobated wretches,—go, and glorify my free-wrath, which flamed against you, before the foundation of the world. My curses and reprobation are without repentance.”—There is not a grain of equity in all this speech: and yet it agrees as truly with *rigid Calvinism*, as with the above-mentioned branch of *Manicheism*: It falls in as exactly with the necessitating, good-bad principle of *Manes*, as with the necessitating good-bad principle of lawless *free-grace*, and absolute *sovereignty*,

sovereignty,—the softer name, which some gospel Ministers decently give to *free-wrath*.

IV. *Wide-reprobating Bigotry* is the peculiar sin of the men who make so much of the doctrines of *grace*, as to pay little or no attention to the doctrines of impartial *justice*. This detestable sin was so deeply rooted in the breasts of the Jews, that our Lord found himself obliged to work a miracle, that he might not be destroyed by it before the hour was come. Because the Jews were the peculiar, and elected people of God, they uncharitably concluded, that all the heathens, i. e. all the rest of mankind, were absolutely reprobated, or at least that God would shew them no mercy, unless they became profelytes of the gate, and directly or indirectly embraced Judaism. And therefore when Christ told them that many Gentiles would come from the East and West, and sit with Abraham in the kingdom of God, whilst many of the Jews would be cast out; and when he reproved their bigotry by reminding them, that in the days of Elijah, God was more gracious to a heathen widow, than to all the widows that dwelt in Judea; they flew into a rage, and attempted to throw him down from the top of the craggy hill, on which the town of Nazareth was built. It is the same wide-reprobating bigotry, which makes the *rigid* Romanists think, that there is no salvation out of their church. Hence also the *rigid* Calvinists imagine that there is no saving grace, but for those who share in their election of grace. It is impossible to conceive what bad tempers, fierce zeal, and bloody persecutions, this reprobating bigotry has caused in all the churches and nations, where the privileges of electing love have been carried beyond the scripture mark. Let us with candor read the history of the churches and people who have engrossed to themselves all the saving grace of God, and we shall cry out, From such a fierce election, and such reprobating bigotry, Good Lord deliver us!

I make no doubt but this sketch of the dangerous errors, to which *rigid* Pelagianism and *rigid* Calvinism lead unwary Christians, will make the judicious reader

reader afraid of these partial gospels, and will increase his thankfulness to God for the primitive gospel, which, by its doctrines of *grace*, guards us against *rigid* Pelagianism, and by its doctrines of *justice*, arms us against *rigid* Calvinism and its dangerous consequences.

Among the Divines abroad, who have endeavoured to steer their doctrinal course between the Pelagian shelves and the Augustinian rocks, and who have tried to follow the reconciling plan of our great Reformer Cranmer, none is more famous, and none came nearer the truth than Arminius. He was a pious and judicious Dutch Minister, who in the beginning of the last century, taught Divinity in the University of Leiden in Holland. He made some noble efforts to drive Manicheism, and disguised Fatalism, out of the Protestant Church, of which he was a member: And, so far as his light and influence extended [by proving the evangelical union of Redeeming Grace and Free-will] he restored scripture-harmony to the gospel, and carried on the plan of reconciliation, which Cranmer laid down. His sermons, lectures, and orations, made many ashamed of absolute reprobation, and the bad-principled God, who was before quietly worshipped all over Holland. Nevertheless his attempt was partly unsuccessful: For, attacking *free-wrath* [or the *bad principle* of the Manichean God,] without setting *Free-grace* in its full gospel light, and without properly granting the *election* of grace, which St. Paul contends for; he gave the Calvinists just room to complain. They availed themselves so skilfully of his embarrassment about the doctrine of election, and they pleaded so plausibly for the sovereignty of the good-principled God, as to keep their absolute reprobation, and the sovereignty of the *bad-principled* God partly out of sight. In short, implacable *free-wrath* escaped, by means of antinomian *free-grace*. The venomous scorpion concealed itself under the wing of the simple dove; and the double-principled Deity, the sparingly-electing, and widely-reprobating God, was still held forth to injudicious protestants, as the God

of all grace,—the *God of love*,—the *God in whom is no darkness at all*. For, as I have already observed, a number of Divines after the heart of Calvin, assembled at Dort in Holland, and openly condemned there the efforts that Arminius had made to reconcile the doctrines of Justice and the doctrines of Grace: The Clergy who had espoused his sentiments were deprived of their livings; he himself was represented as the author of a *heresy* almost as dangerous as that of Pelagius: And from that time, the rigid Calvinists have considered all those who stand up for the two gospel-axioms with any degree of consistency, as semi-Pelagian, or Arminian heretics.

And if Mr. Bailie is not mistaken, the Calvinists did not complain of Arminius's doctrine without reason; for, altho' he went very far in his discovery of the passage between the Pelagian and Augustinian rocks, yet he did not sail quite through. Election proved a rock, on which his doctrinal bark stuck fast; nor could he ever get entirely clear of that difficulty.

Among our English Divines, several have greatly distinguished themselves, by their improvements upon Arminius's discoveries. Bishop Overal, Bishop Stillingfleet, Bishop Bull, Chillingworth, Baxter, Whitby, and others. But, if I am not mistaken, they have all struck where Arminius did, or on the opposite rock. And thereabout we stuck too, when Mr. Wesley got happily clear of a point of the Calvinian rock, which had retarded our course; and (so far as he appeared to us to be guided by the Father of lights, we began to sail on with him thro' the straits of truth. When we left our moorings, the partial defenders of the doctrines of grace hung out a signal of distress, and cried to us that our doctrinal ark was going to be lost against the same cliff where Pelagius's bark went to pieces. Their shouts have made us wary. The Lord has, we humbly hope, blessed us with an anchor of patient hope, a gale of cheerful love of truth, and a shield of resignation to quench the fiery darts, which some warm men, who defend the barren rock of absolute reprobation,

tion, have thrown at us in our passage. We have founded our way, as we went on; and looking steadily to our theological compass, (the scriptures), to the sun of righteousness, (the Lord Jesus Christ), and to the stars which he holds in his right hand, (the Apostles and true Evangelists), after sailing slowly six years through straits, where strong currents of error and hard gales of prejudice have often retarded our progress; we flatter ourselves, that we have got quite out of those narrow and rocky seas, where most Divines have been stopt for a long succession of ages. If we are not mistaken, the ancient haven of gospel-truth is in sight; and while we enter in, I take a sketch of it, which the reader will see in a plan of *Reconciliation* between the Calvinists and Arminians, which these sheets are designed to introduce.



THE RECONCILIATION:

OR AN EASY METHOD to unite the PROFESSING PEOPLE OF GOD, by placing the Doctrines of Grace and Justice in such a light, as to make the candid ARMINIANS, Bible-CALVINISTS, and the candid CALVINISTS, Bible-ARMINIANS.

Vestra solum legitis; vestra amatis; cæteros, incognita causa, condemnatis.
CIC.

“ Follow peace with all men.—Look not every man on his own things,” [*and favourite doctrines only*]; “ but every man also on the things ” [*and favourite doctrines*]. “ of others.”—“ The wisdom that is from above is peaceable, and without partiality.” Heb. xii. 14, Phil. ii. 4, Jam. iii. 17.

To

TO JAMES IRELAND, Esq;
of BRISLINGTON, near BRISTOL.

Dear Sir,

TO whom could a Plan of Reconciliation between the Calvinists and Arminians, be more properly dedicated than to a Son of peace, whose heart, hand, and house, are open to Calvinists, Arminians, and neutrals? You kindly receive the Divines, who contend for the Doctrines of Grace: and I want words to describe the Christian courtesy, which you shew me, and other ministers who make a stand for the Doctrines of Justice. To you I am indebted for the honour of a friendly interview with the Author of the *Circular Letter*, which I thought myself obliged to oppose. And as you succeeded in that labour of love, it is natural for me to hope, that by your influence, and by the patronage of such candid, generous peace-makers, as the * Gentleman to whom I have often compared you, these reconciling sheets will be perused by some with more attention than if they had no name prefixed to them but that of,

Dear Sir,

Your most obliged, affectionate Friend and Servant,

JOHN FLETCHER.

NEWINGTON, April 16, 1777.

* John Thornton, Esq; a great friend to a catholic gospel.—If clergymen are backward to promote peace, the God of peace may provoke them to jealousy, by raising from among the laity such instruments of reconciliation, as will be a terror to bigotry, and an example of universal love.

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wounds or leannels are the consequences of the general debate. The weak are offended, and the lame turned out of the way; the godly mourn, and the wicked triumph; bad tempers are fomented; the hellish flame of party-zeal is blown up, and the souls of the contenders are pierced through with many sorrows.

This is not all; the spirit of God is grieved, and the conversion of sinners prevented. How universally would the work of reformation have spread, if it had not been hindered by this growing mischief! How many thousands of scorners daily say, Can these devotees expect we should agree with them, when they cannot agree among themselves? And indeed how can we reasonably hope that they should give us the right hand of fellowship, if we cannot give it one another? "By this, (saith our Lord) shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Continual disputes are destructive of love; and the men of the world seeing us cherish such disputes, naturally conclude, that we are not true disciples of Christ, that there are none in the world, that the gospel is only a pious fraud, or a fine legend, and that faith is nothing but fancy, superstition, or enthusiasm.

Nor will such men be prevailed on cordially to believe in Christ, till they see the generality of professors *made perfect in one*, by agreeing in doctrine, and *walking in love*. We may infer this from our Lord's prayer for his church: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me thro' their word: That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe," John xvii. 20, 21. Christ intimates in these words, that the men of the world will never generally embrace the gospel, till the union he prayed for takes place in believers. To keep up divisions therefore, is one of the most effectual methods to hinder the conversion of sinners, and strengthen the unbelief which hardens their hearts.

The destructive nature of this sin, appears from the severity with which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and Galatians, who were divided among themselves. The former, he could not acknowledge as *spiritual men*, but called them *carnal*, and affirmed, that, to their shame, *some of them had not the knowledge of God*. And the latter he considered as persons almost *fallen from Christ*; intimating, that if they continued to *bite each other* (an expression which is beautifully descriptive of the malignity, with which most controvertists speak and write against their antagonists) they would *be consumed one of another*, Gal. v. 15.

In families and civil societies, divisions are truly deplorable: But in the Churches of Christ they are peculiarly pernicious and scandalous.—1. *Pernicious*: To be persuaded of it, we need only consider these awful words of St. James: “If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work,” Jam. iii. 14. &c. 2. *Scandalous*: If Christ be the *Prince of peace*; why should his subjects be sons of contention? If he came to reconcile Jews and Gentiles, by *breaking down the middle wall of partition between them*: If he *made in himself, of twain* (of those two opposed bodies of men, one new man, [i. e. one new body of men, all of one heart and of one soul] if he has *slain the enmity, so making peace*;—if it *pleaseth the Father to reconcile all things unto himself by him*;—and if *in the dispensation of the fulness of times* (the christian dispensation) *he gathers together all things in him*;—if this, I say, is the case; what can be more contrary to the gospel-plan, than the obstinacy, with which some professors refuse to be *gathered together* with their fellow-protestants, under the shadow of their Redeemer’s wings? And what can be more scandalous than for Christ’s followers, yea for the strictest of them, to spend their time in building *middle walls of partition* between themselves and their brethren, or in *daubing over with untempered mortar,*

mortar, the walls which mistaken men have built in former ages?

Many Jews refused to be saved by Christ, because he came to save the Gentiles as well as themselves. And it is to be feared, that some Christians, from a similar motive refuse the divine favour, or the eminent degrees of it, to which they are called in the gospel. Christ says to these bigots, "How often would I have gathered you together, as a hen gathers her (scattered) brood under her wings? But ye would not:" Ye were afraid of your Calvinian or Arminian brethren, and preferred the selfish heat of party-spirit, to the diffusive warmth of divine and brotherly love. I say *divine*, as well as *brotherly* love; for "he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen; how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

My regard for unity revives my drooping spirits, and adds new strength to my wasted body. I stop at the brink of the grave over which I bend: And, as the blood oozing from my decayed lungs, does not permit me vocally to address my contending brethren; by means of my pen I will ask them, if they can properly receive the holy *communion*, whilst they *willfully remain in disunion* with their brethren, from whom controversy has needlessly parted them? For my part, if I felt myself unwilling to be reconciled on scripture-terms, either with my Calvinian or Arminian neighbours, I would no more dare go to the Lord's table, than if I harboured murder in my heart; and this scripture would daily haunt my conscience: "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool," [Thou silly free-willer, Thou foolish bound-willer, Thou heretic!] "shall be in danger of hell-fire. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift before the altar, and there rememberest that thy" [Calvinian or Arminian] "brother hath ought against thee; leave thy gift and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly,"—thy religious as well as thy civil adversary,—him with whom thou differest about the gold.

gold of the word; as well as him with whom thou contendest about the gold of this world.

Not to be reconciled when we properly may, is to *keep up* divisions; and to *keep up* divisions is as bad as to *cause* them. And what a dreadful thing it is to *cause* divisions, appears from St. Paul's charge to the Romans: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them," Rom. xvi. 17. *Avoid them*, for those that have the itch of contention, and the plague of party-spirit, are not only in a dangerous case themselves; but they carry about a mortal infection, which they frequently communicate to others.

Should party-men exclaim against my reconciling Attempt, and say, "That there always were, and always will be divisions among the children of God, and that to aim at a general Reconciliation, is to aim at an absolute impossibility;" I reply,

1. This plea countenances the lusts of the flesh, *Walk in the Spirit*, says St. Paul, *and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*; and among these lusts he immediately numbers *debate, emulations, wrath, contentions, and such like*, observing at the same time, that *the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, gentleness, meekness, &c.* Now, when party-men insinuate, that we can never live in *peace and harmony* with our christian brethren; do they not indirectly teach, that *debate, emulations, contentions, and such like, must* still waste our time, disturb our minds, and impair our love? And is not this an underhand plea for a wretched obligation to neglect *the fruit of the Spirit*, and for an Antinomian necessity to bring forth the *fruit of the flesh*?

2. It militates against St. Paul's conflict for believers: "I would (says he to the Colossians) that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted; being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledg-
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ment of the mystery of God," Col. ii. 1, 2.—It opposes also the end of the Apostle's prayer for the Romans "The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded, &c. that you may with one mind, and one mouth glorify God, &c. Wherefore receive you one another, as Christ also received us," Rom. xv. 5, &c. But what is far worse, it directly contradicts Christ's capital prayer, which I have already quoted. "I pray (says he) that they [believers] may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee: That they also may be one in us:—That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the [unbelieving] world may know that thou hast sent me," John xvii. 20, &c. Now if our Lord asked for an absolute impossibility, when he asked the perfect union of believers in this life; where was his *wisdom*? And if he cannot make us *one* in heart and mind (supposing we are willing to abide by his reconciling word,) where is his power?

3. It strikes at the authority of these evangelical intreaties, exhortations, and commands: "Be of the same mind," Rom. xii. 16.—"I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. i. 10.—"Finally, brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind; live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you," 2 Cor. xiii. 11.—"Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: That—I may hear ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind; striving together for the faith of the gospel.—Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded:—being of one accord, of one mind.—I beseech Eudias and Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord," Phil. i. 27.—ii. 2.—iv. 2.—"Finally be ye all of one mind, &c. Love as brethren, be courteous.—For he that will see good days, &c. let him seek peace [with his enemies, much more with his brethren;] and let him pursue it," 1 Pet. iii. 8, &c.—
" Let

“ Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing,” Phil. iii. 16.—“ With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace. For there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,” Eph. iv. 2, &c. The same Apostle, writing to the divided Corinthians, tries to reconcile them by comparing again the body of believers to the human body, and drawing a suitable inference: “ The body is one (says he) tho’ it hath many members:—that there should be no schism [no division] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another; all suffering when one member suffers, and all rejoicing when one member is honoured,” 1 Cor. xii. 12—26. Hence it follows, that to plead for the continuance of *schisms* or *divisions* in Christ’s mystical *body*, is evidently to plead for a breach of *the bond of peace*, and for the neglect of all the above-mentioned apostolic injunctions.

4. It gives the lie to the following promises of the God of Truth. “ The hatred of Ephraim shall depart, &c. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, neither shall Judah vex Ephraim,” Isa. xi. 13.—“ I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children,” Jer. xxxii. 39.—“ I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them,” Ezek. xi. 19.—“ I will turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent,” &c.—“ Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. Them also, I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd,” John x. 16.

5. It contradicts the following account of God’s faithfulness, in the initial accomplishment of the preceding promises. “ They were all with one accord in one place;—continuing daily with one accord in the temple,” Acts ii. 1. 46.—“ If we walk in the light, &c. we have fellowship one with another. For he
that

that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is in him no occasion of stumbling :” [nothing in his heart will either cause or keep divisions.] 1 John i. 7. —ii. 10.—“ We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth,” 2 Theff. i. 3.—“ By one Spirit all [complete Christians] are baptized into one body, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit— [the Spirit of truth and love, and (unless they leave their first love, as the Corinthians did) they sweetly continue to] keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” 1 Cor. xii. 13.—Eph. iv. 3.—From these accounts of the unity of the primitive Christians before they left their first love, I infer, that unity is attainable, because it was attained. The arm of the Lord is not shortened; *The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him*; and if we be not obstinately bent upon despising the *wisdom from above, which is peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of good fruit, and without partiality*; we shall find that the *fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace*; and we shall evidence that all the sincere followers of Christ can yet *continue stedfastly in the Apostle’s doctrine and fellowship*, instead of perversely continuing in their own mistakes and in the spirit of discord.

Lastly : The objection, I answer, has a tendency to stop the growth of Christ’s mystical body, and opposes God’s grand design in sending the gospel : “ For He gave Apostles, Evangelists, and Pastors, for the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ; till all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ : That we may be no more carried about with every wind of doctrine, &c. but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint

joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love," Eph. iv. 11,—16. No believer can, I think, candidly read these words of the Apostle, without being convinced, that *union* and *growth* are inseparable in the Church of Christ, "from whom all the body, by joints and bands have nourishment [or help] ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God," Col. ii. 19.

From these observations, I hope, it appears, that, whether we consider the earnest entreaties of the apostles;—their conflicts and pious wishes for their converts;—the wisdom of our Lord's address to his Father for the union of believers;—the repeated commands of the gospel to be of *one mind* and *one judgment*;—the promises which God has made to help us to keep those commands;—the divine power by which the primitive believers were actually enabled to keep them, so long as they walked in the Spirit;—or whether we consider the end of evangelical preaching, and the unity and growth of Christ's mystical body; nothing can be more *unscriptural* than to say, that believers can never again be of *one heart* and of *one mind*.

And as this notion is unscriptural, so it is *irrational*; inasmuch as it supposes, that the children of God can never agree to serve him, as the children of the wicked one do to honour their master; for St. John informs us, that *These have one mind to give their power and strength unto the beast*, Rev. xvii. 13. And experience daily teaches, that when the men of the world are embarked in the same scheme, they can perfectly agree in the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, and fame, or in the performance of duty. If ships that sail under the command of the same Admiral, do not give each other a broadside, because they have different Captains, and are employed in different services:—If soldiers, who follow the same General, do not quarrel because they belong to different regiments, because their coats are not turned up alike, or because they do not defend the same fort, fight in the same

wing of the army, hear the same drum, and follow the same pair of colours:—And if the king's faithful servants can unanimously promote his interests, and cheerfully lend each other an helping hand, tho' their departments are as different, as the fleet is different from the army, is it not absurd to suppose, that Christ's *faithful* soldiers and servants, who are the meekest, the humblest, the most disinterested, and most loving of all men, can never be in perfect union, and sweetly agree to promote the interests of their divine Master? I conclude therefore, that the objection which supposes the contrary, is not less contrary to reason than to the word of God.

SECTION II.

Pious moderate Calvinists, and pious moderate Arminians in particular, may be easily reconciled to each other; because the Doctrines of Grace and Justice, about which they divide, are equally scriptural, and each party contends for a capital part of gospel-truth; their grand mistake consisting in a groundless supposition, that the part of the truth they defend, is incompatible with the part which is defended by their brethren.

SOME persons will probably make a more plausible objection than that which is answered in the preceding pages. They will urge, "That truth should never be sacrificed to love and peace; that the Calvinists and Arminians holding doctrines diametrically opposite, one party at least, must be totally in the wrong; and, as the other party ought not to be reconciled to error, the agreement I propose is impossible: It will never take place, unless the Calvinists can be prevailed upon to give up *unconditional Election*, and their favourite doctrines of *partial Grace*; or the Arminians can be persuaded to part with *conditional Election*, and their favourite doctrines of *impartial Justice*; and as this is too great a sacrifice to be expected from either party, it is in vain to attempt bringing about a reconciliation between them."

This objection is weighty: but far from discouraging me, it affords me an opportunity of laying before my readers the ground of the hope I entertain, to reconcile the Calvinists and the Arminians. I should indeed utterly despair of effecting it, were I obliged to prove that either party is entirely in the wrong. But I may without folly expect some success, because my grand design is to demonstrate that both parties have an important truth on their side; both holding opposite doctrines, which are as essential to the fulness of Christ's gospel, as the two eyes, nostrils, and cheeks, which compose our faces, are essential to the completeness of human beauty.

“The language of Scripture seems to favour the one as well as the other,” [says Dr. Watts on a similar occasion:] “But this is the mischief that ariseth between Christians who differ in their sentiments or expressions of things; they imagine that while one is true, the other must needs be false:—And then they brand each other with error and heresy: Whereas, if they would but attend to scripture, that would shew them to be both in the right, by its different explication of their own forms of speaking.—In this way of reconciliation I cannot but hope for some success, because it falls in with the universal fond esteem, that each man has of his own understanding: It proves that two warm disputers may both have truth on their side; Now if ten persons differ in their sentiments, it is much easier to persuade *all* of them that they may be all in the right, than it is to convince *one* that he is in the wrong.”

I shall illustrate this quotation by a remark which occurs in the beginning of my *Scripture Scales*; only taking the liberty of applying to pious Calvinists and pious Arminians, what I said there of pious Solifidians and pious Moralists. “The cause of their misunderstanding is singular. They are good men upon the whole; therefore they can never oppose truth as truth: And, as they are not destitute of charity, they cannot quarrel merely for quarrelling's sake. Whence then spring their continual disputes? Is it not from

inattention

inattention and partiality? They will not look *Truth* full in the face: Determined to stand on one side of her, they seldom see above the half of her beauty. The rigid Calvinists gaze upon her side-face on the right-hand, and the rigid Arminians contemplate it on the left. But her unprejudiced lovers, humbly sitting at her feet, and beholding her in full, admire the exquisite proportion of *all* her features: A peculiar advantage this, which her *partial* admirers can never have in their present unfavourable position."

To be more explicit: A rigid Calvinist has no eyes but for *God's sovereignty, unconditional election, and the doctrines of partial grace*; whilst a rigid Arminian considers nothing but *God's equity, conditional election, and the doctrines of impartial justice*. And therefore, to unite these contending rivals, you need only prevail on the Arminians to bow to God's Sovereignty, to acknowledge an unconditional election, and to receive the doctrines of partial Grace; and as soon as they do this they will be reconciled to Bible-Calvinism, and to all moderate Calvinists. And, on the other hand, if the Calvinists can be convinced that they should bow to God's Equity, acknowledge a conditional election, and receive the doctrines of impartial Justice; they will be reconciled to Bible-Arminianism, and to all moderate Arminians. Should it be said, that it is impossible to convince the Arminians of the truth of an *unconditional election, &c.* and that the Calvinists will never receive the doctrine of a *conditional election, &c.* I answer, that *bigots* of either party will not be convinced, because they all pretend to infallibility, though they do not pretend to wear a triple crown. But the *candid*, on both sides of the question lie open to conviction, and will, I hope, yield to the force of plain Scripture and sound Reason, the two weapons with which I design to attack their prejudices.

But before I open my friendly attack, I beg leave, candid Reader, to show thee the ground, on which I

will erect my scriptural and rational batteries. It is made up of the following reasonable propositions.

1. When good men warmly contend about truth, you may in general be assured, that if truth can be compared to a staff, each party has one end of the staff, and that to have the whole, you need only consistently hold together what they inconsiderately pull asunder.

2. The gospel contains doctrines of *partial grace* and *unconditional election*, as well as doctrines of *impartial grace* and *conditional election*, nor can we embrace the whole truth of the gospel, unless we consistently hold those seemingly contrary doctrines.

3. Those opposite doctrines which *rigid Calvinists* and *Arminians* suppose to be absolutely incompatible, agree as well together as the following pair of propositions: God has a *Throne of Grace* and a *Throne of Justice*; nor is the former throne inconsistent with the latter.—God as the *Creator* and *Governor* of mankind, sustains the double character of *Sovereign Benefactor* and *righteous Judge*: And the first of these characters is perfectly consistent with the second. This is the ground of my reconciling Plan. And this ground is so solid, that I hardly think any unprejudiced person will even enter his protest against it. Were Divines to do it, they would render themselves as ridiculous as a pilot, who should suppose that the head and stern of the vessel he is called to conduct, can never be two essential parts of the same ship.

If Christianity were compared to a ship, the doctrines of *Grace* might be likened to the fore part, and the doctrines of *Justice* to the hinder part of it: This observation brings to my remembrance a quotation from Dr. Doddridge, which will help the reader to understand how it is possible that *an election of grace*, maintained by moderate Calvinists, and *an election of justice* defended by moderate Arminians, may both be true. "I have long observed" (says the judicious doctor) "that Christians of different parties have been eagerly laying hold on *particular Parts* of the system of divine Truths, and have been contending about them as if *each* had been *all*; or as if the separation of

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the members from each other, and from the head, were the preservation of the body instead of its destruction. They have been zealous to espouse the defence, and to maintain the honour and usefulness of each *apart*; whereas their honour as well as usefulness, seems to me to lie much in their *connexion*: And suspicions have often arisen betwixt the respective Defenders of each, which have appeared as unreasonable and absurd, as if all the preparations for securing one part of a ship in a storm, were to be censured as a contrivance to sink the rest." In the name of God, the God of wisdom, truth, and peace, let then the Defenders of the doctrines of Grace cease to fall out with the Defenders of the doctrines of Justice, and let both parties seek the happy *connexion*, which Dr. Doddridge speaks of, and rejoice in that part of the truth peculiarly held by brethren, as well as in that part of the gospel, to which they have hitherto been peculiarly attached.

Many good men, on both sides of the question, have at times pointed out the connexion of the opposite doctrines, which are maintained in these sheets. Mr. Henry, a judicious Calvinist, does it in his notes on the Parable of the Talents, where he contends for the doctrines of partial Grace and impartial Justice, and exalts God both as a sovereign Benefactor, and a righteous Judge. Commenting upon these words, *Take therefore the talent from him* [the slothful servant] he says, "The talents were *first* disposed of by the Master as an *absolute Owner*, [i. e. a sovereign Benefactor, who does what he pleases with his own] but this was now disposed of by him as a *Judge*: He takes it from the unfaithful servant to *punish* him, and gives it to him that was eminently faithful to *reward* him." This is rightly dividing the word of truth, and wisely distinguishing between the Throne of Grace and that of Justice!

Dr. John Heylin, a judicious Arminian, in his discourse on 1 Tim. iv. 10, is as candid as Mr. Henry in the above quoted note; for he stands up for God's Sovereignty and the doctrine of partial Grace, as much

much as Mr. Henry does for God's equity, and the doctrine of impartial Justice. After pointing out in strong terms the error of those who, by setting aside the Doctrines of Justice, "sap * the foundation of all religion, which is the moral character of the Deity," he adds:

"Nor, on the other hand, do † they less offend against the *natural prerogative*, I mean, the *absolute Sovereignty*, of God, who deny him the free exercise of his bounty, as they seem too much inclined to do, who are backward to believe the great disparity among mankind with regard to a future state, which Revelation always supposes.—His mercy is over all his works, but that mercy abounds to some *much more* than to others, according to the inscrutable *counsel of his own will*. Nor is there a shadow of injustice in such *unequal* distribution of his favours. The term *Favours*, implies *freedom* in bestowing them; else they were not favours, but *debts*. The Almighty Maker is master of all his productions. Both *matter and form* are his: All his gift, all his bounty: Nor may the lizard complain of his size because there are crocodiles; nor is the worm injured by the creation of an eagle."

I shall conclude this section by producing the sentiments of two persons, whose authority is infinitely greater than that of Mr. Henry and Dr. Heylyn. Who exceeds St. Paul in orthodoxy? And yet, what Calvinist ever maintained the doctrines of Grace more strongly than he does? "By the Grace of God, (says he) I am what I am," 1. Cor. xv. 10.—"By grace you are saved [i. e. admitted into the high state of Christian salvation] through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God:—[a special gift, which God has kept back from far the greatest part of the world:] not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 8.—"At this time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace," Rom. xi. 5, 6.—"Not by works of right-

* He means the rigid Calvinists.

† He means the rigid Arminians.

teousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us," [or made us partakers of the glorious privileges of Christians, which he has denied to millions of the human race,] Tit. iii. 5.—"He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe;" for he saves Christians with a special salvation, which is called "the great salvation," 1 Tim. iv. 20. Heb. ii. 3. Christ indeed "is not the propitiation for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2. Nevertheless he is especially "our Mediator, our Passover, (or paschal Lamb) and the High Priest of our [Christian] profession, in whom God hath chosen us [Christians] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy" above all people. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to the praise of the glory of his grace;" A high adoption, which is so superior to that, to which the Jews had been predestinated in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, that St. Paul spends part of his Epistle to the Ephesians in asserting the honour of it, and in extolling the glory of the peculiar grace given unto us in Christ. And if you exclaim against this divine partiality, the Apostle silences you by a just appeal to God's sovereignty. See Rom ix. 20.

But was St. Paul Calvinistically partial? Did he so contend for the doctrines of Grace, as to cast a veil over the doctrines of Justice? Stands he not up for the latter, as boldly as he does for the former? What Arminian ever bowed before the Throne of Divine Justice more deeply than he does in the following scriptures? "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love," Heb. vi. 10.—"I have fought the good fight, &c. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day," 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8. These passages strongly support the doctrines of justice, but those which follow may be considered as the very summit of scripture-Arminianism. "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord," Eph. vi. 8.—"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, &c. knowing that of the Lord

Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that does wrong, shall receive [adequate punishment] for the wrong which he hath done," Col. iii. 23, &c.—"We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10.—"In the day of wrath, and revelation of his righteous judgment, God will render to every man according to his deeds; eternal life to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality: But indignation and wrath to them, that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, &c. for [before the throne of justice] there is no respect of persons with God," Rom. ii. 5.

Should it be asked, how these seemingly contrary doctrines of *grace* and *justice* can be reconciled; I reply: They agree as perfectly together as the *first* and *second advent* of our Lord. At his first coming, he sustained the *gracious* character of a *Saviour*; and at his second coming, he will sustain the *righteous* character of a *Judge*. Hear him explaining the mystery, which is hid from the rigid Calvinists and the rigid Arminians. Speaking of his *first* coming he says: *I came not to judge the world, but to save the world*, by procuring for mankind different talents of initial salvation; a less number for the Heathens, more for the Jews, and most for the Christians, who are his most peculiar people;—"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved, John xii. 47. —iii. 17.—The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke xix. 10. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," John xv. 16. Here are doctrines of *grace*! But did our Lord so preach these doctrines as to destroy those of *justice*? Did he so magnify his coming to *save* the world, as to make nothing of his coming to *judge* the world? No:

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hear him speaking of this *second* advent. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another—[them that have done good from them that have done evil] and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 46.—"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be," Rev. xxii. 12.—For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [the Son of man's] voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," John v. 28, 29. Here are doctrines of *justice*! And the man who says, that *such* doctrines are not as scriptural, as the above-mentioned doctrines of *grace*, may as well deny the succession of day and night.

Dr. Watts, in his excellent book entitled *Orthodoxy and Charity united*, gives us a direction which will suitably close the preceding appeal to the Scriptures. "Avoid (says he) the high flights and extremes of zealous party-men, &c. You will tell me perhaps, that scripture itself uses expressions as high upon particular occasions, and as much leaning to extremes as any men of party among us. But remember then, that the Scripture uses such strong and high expressions not on one side *only*, but on *both sides*, and infinite wisdom hath done this more forcibly to impress some present truth or duty: But while it is evident the holy Writers have used high expressions, strong figures of speech, and vehement turns *on both sides*, this sufficiently instructs us that we should be moderate in our censures of either side, and that the calm doctrinal truth, stripped of all rhetoric and figures, lies *nearer to the middle*, or at least, that some of these *appearing extremes*, are more reconcilable than angry men will generally allow. If the Apostle charges the Corinthians, *So run that ye may obtain*, 1 Cor. ix. 24. and tells the Romans, *It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy*, Rom.

Rom. ix. 16. we may plainly infer, that *our running and his mercy,—our diligence and divine grace,* are both necessary to salvation."

From all these Scriptures it evidently follows: 1. That, as God is both a *Benefactor*, and a *Governor*, a *Saviour*, and a *Judge*; he has both a *throne of grace*, and a *throne of justice*:—2. That those believers are highly partial, who worship only before one of the divine thrones, when the sacred oracles so loudly bid us pay our homage before both:—3. That the doctrines of *Grace*, are the statutes and decrees issuing from the *former* throne: and that the doctrines of *Justice*, are the statutes and decrees issuing from the *latter*:—4. That the principal of all the doctrines of *Grace* is, that there is an *election of grace*: And that the principal of all the doctrines of *Justice* is, that there is an *election of justice*:—5. That the *former* of those elections is *unconditional* and *partial*; as depending merely on the good pleasure of our gracious Benefactor and Saviour: and that the *latter* of those elections is *conditional* and *impartial*; as depending merely on the *justice* and *equity* of our righteous Governor and Judge: For justice admits of no partiality, and equity never permits a Ruler to judge any men but such as are free agents, or to sentence any free agent otherwise than according to his own works:—6. That the confounding, or not properly distinguishing those two elections, and the reprobations which they draw after them, has filled the church with confusion, and is the grand cause of the disputes which destroy our peace:—And, (lastly) that to restore peace to the church, these two elections must be fixed upon their proper, scriptural basis, which is attempted in the following section.

S E C T I O N III.

Eight pair of opposite Propositions, on which the opposite doctrines of *Grace* and *Justice* are founded, and which may be considered as the basis of *Bible-Calvinism* and *Bible Arminianism*, and as a double

key to open the mysteries of Election and Reprobation.

Scripture-ground of Calvinism, and the Doctrines of Grace.

PROPOSITION I.

GOD is original, eternal, and unbounded Life, Light, Love, and Purity: And therefore, wherever these blessings are found in any degree, they originally come from Him, the overflowing Fountain of all that is excellent in the natural, moral, and spiritual world.

II. God is an infinitely wise *Benefactor*, full of goodness and *Grace*.

III. It seems highly inconsistent with the *wisdom* of a *Creator* and *Benefactor*, to make all his creatures of the same size and rank, and to deal out his bounties to them in the same measure. To say that he should do it, is as absurd as to affirm, that his goodness requires him to make every insect as big as an elephant, and every spire of grass as tall as an oak.

Scripture-ground of Arminianism, and the Doctrines of Justice.

PROPOSITION I.

THERE is no Death, Darkness, Free-Will, or Sin in God: And therefore, these evils, wherever they are found, originally flow from inferior agents, whose free-will may become the fountain of all evil: For when free-agents chuse first the *evil of sin*, God is obliged in justice to chuse next the *evil of punishment*. Thus *moral evil* draws *natural evil* after it.

II. God is an infinitely wise *Governor*, full of equity and *Justice*.

III. It seems highly inconsistent with the *equity* of a *Governor* and a *Judge*, to decree that millions of rational creatures shall be born in a graceless, sinful, and remediless state; that he may display his righteous sovereignty by passing a sentence of death and eternal torments upon them, for being found in the state of remediless corruption, in which his irresistible decree has placed them.

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IV. For want of considering the preceding self-evident propositions, and their necessary consequences, the heated advocates for the doctrines of *justice* have erred, either by denying, or by not fully granting these two undeniable truths. 1. All good comes originally from God's free-grace, and overflowing fulness. 2. God as a sovereign Benefactor, may do what he pleases with his own. Nor should our eye be evil, because he is good, and displays his *superabounding* goodness towards some men, more than he does towards others.

V. The grand mistake of the *rigid* Arminians consists then in not frankly ascribing to God all the original goodness, and gracious sovereignty, which belong to him as the sovereign Author and first Parent of all Good.

VI. Would you get clear of the error of rigid Arminians; not only ascribe God's grace and goodness;

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IV. For want of considering the preceding self-evident propositions, and their unavoidable consequences, the heated advocates for the doctrines of *grace* have erred, by directly or indirectly maintaining these two capital untruths. 1. Some real evil can originally flow from that part of God's predestination, which is generally called *absolute reprobation*, or *predestination to eternal death*. 2. God, as a Sovereign, may absolutely ordain some of his rational creatures to eternal death, before they have *personally* deserved it: or, which is all one, he may so pass by unborn children as to ensure their continuance in sin, and their everlasting damnation.

V. The grand mistake of the *rigid* Calvinists consists then in indirectly ascribing to God some original evil, and a reprobating Sovereignty, which is irreconcilable with the *goodness* of a Creator, and the *equity* of a Judge.

VI. Would you on the other hand, get clear of the error of rigid Calvinists; not only maintain in general

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ness; insisting that he is the *first cause* and *eternal parent* of all good, natural and spiritual, temporal, and eternal: But boldly stand up also for his free-grace and exuberant goodness; maintaining that he has the most unbounded right to dispense the peculiar bounties of his grace, without any respect to our works. *For the children [Esau and Jacob] not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to [the] election [of superior grace] might stand, not of works, but of him that [arbitrarily chuseth and] calleth; it was said, [not that the one is absolutely ordained to eternal death, and the other absolutely ordained to eternal life; but] the elder shall serve the younger: the younger shall have a superior blessing. And in this respect, it is not at all of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, who most freely and absolutely sheweth mercy, or favour, Rom. ix. 11, 12, 16.—Hence it appears, that to deny a partial election of distinguishing grace,*

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general that God is *just*; but confidently assert, that he utterly disclaims a sovereignty, which dispenses rewards and punishments from a throne of justice, otherwise than according to works: witness his own repeated declarations:—“I said, indeed, that thy house, &c. shou'd walk before me for ever: But now be it far from me: For them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed,” 1 Sam. ii. 30.—Again: “If the wicked man will turn from all his sins, he shall surely live, &c. But when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, &c. in his sin that he hath sinned shall he die. Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal.—O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord. Repent, &c. for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth,” Ezek. xviii. 21, &c. Hence it appears, that with respect to the election and reprobation of *justice,*

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is equally to fly in the face of St. Paul and of Reason.

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justice, God's decrees, so far as they affect our *personal* salvation or damnation, are regulated according to our personal righteousness or sin, that is, according to our works.

VII. When we consider the election of *partial Grace*, and the harmless reprobation that attends it, we may boldly ask with St. Paul: "Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make *one vessel unto [superior] honour, and another unto (comparative) dishonour?" Cannot God ordain, that of two unborn children, the one [as Jacob] shall be appointed to superior blessings,

VII. When we consider the election of *impartial Justice*, and the fearful reprobation that answers to it, we may say with St. Peter, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," 1 Pet. i. 17. "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh right-

* To understand Rom. ix. we must remember, that the Apostle occasionally speaks of the *election and reprobation of justice*; altho' his first design is to establish the *election of grace*, and the harmless *reprobation* which answers to it. When he speaks of Jacob and Esau, he contends for the *election of grace*: and when he brings in Pharaoh and *the vessels of wrath*, who by their obstinate unbelief have provoked vindictive wrath to harden them, or to give them up to the hardness of their hearts, he speaks of the *election of justice*. The passage to which this note refers, is the Apostle's transition from one election to the other, and may be applied to both: I have applied it here to the election of grace. But if you apply it to the *election of justice*, the meaning is: Hath not the Governor and Judge of all the earth, authority over all mankind, as being their Sovereign and Lawgiver? Can he not fix the terms on which he will reward or punish his subjects?—the terms on which he will give them more grace, or take from them the talent of grace which they have buried, and leave them to the rigour of his law?—Can he not appoint, that *obedient believers* shall be saved, or *elect*ed to eternal salvation; and that this mark of judicial reprobation shall be fixed upon all *obstinate unbelievers*, as Pharaoh and his host certainly are?

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sings, and [in this sense] shall be *more loved*; whilst the other [as Esau] shall be deprived of those blessings, and [in this sense] shall be *less loved*, or comparatively *hated*? "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," Rom. ix. 13.—When we speak of the same election, we may say, as the Master of the vineyard did to the envious labourer, *Is thine eye evil, because the Master of the universe is good?* Matt. xx. 15.

VIII. From the preceding propositions it evidently follows, that when God is considered as electing and reprobating the children of men from his throne of *grace*, his election and reprobation are *partial and unconditional*.

Having thus laid down the rational and scriptural ground of *Bible-Calvinism*, which centers in the *partial election of Grace*,—and of *Bible-Arminianism*, which centers in the *impartial election of Justice*; I shall shew the nature, excellence, and agreement of both systems in an Essay, which I trust, will convert judicious Arminians to Scripture-Calvinism, and judicious Calvinists to Scripture-Arminianism.

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righteousness, is accepted of him," Acts x. 34. We may add with Christ, "In the day of judgment, men shall give account of their words. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matt. xii. 36, 37.—And we may humbly expostulate with God, as Abraham did: "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25.

VIII. From the preceding propositions it evidently follows, that when God is considered as electing and reprobating the children of men from his throne of *justice*, his election and reprobation are *impartial and conditional*.

SECTION IV.

Bible-Calvinism and **Bible-Arminianism** are plainly stated and equally vindicated, in a two-fold Essay on the Doctrines of partial Grace and impartial Justice. Those opposite doctrines are shewn to be highly agreeable to Reason and Scripture, and perfectly consistent with each other.

ON the eight pair of balanced propositions, which are produced in the preceding Section, I rest the two balanced Essays which follow. I humbly recommend the *first* to *rigid* Arminians; because it contains a view of *Bible-Calvinism*, of the *doctrines of grace*, and of the *absolute, unconditional and partial election*, to which *they* perpetually object. And I earnestly recommend the *second* Essay to *rigid* Calvinists, because it contains a view of *Bible-Arminianism*, of the *doctrines of justice*, and the *judicial, conditional, and impartial election*, against which *they* are unreasonably prejudiced.

To guide the Reader in the perusal of this two-fold Essay, I have prefixed to every page of the *first part* these words, *Bible-Calvinism*. By this title the *rigid Arminians* are to be guided in reading the vindication of that half of the gospel, which they frequently overlook. And these words, *Bible-Arminianism* are placed at the top of every page of the *second part* of the Essay, in order to direct the *rigid Calvinists* to that half of the gospel, which they generally neglect.

Each part may be read by itself, which will be done without difficulty by attending to the above-mentioned titles or directions at the top of the page. The two parts are placed opposite to each other for the following reasons: 1. To shew their dependance on the opposite Propositions which fill the preceding Section: 2. To give the reader a better opportunity of comparing them, and weighing them in the balances of the Sanctuary: 3. To demonstrate that *Bible-Calvinism*, and *Bible Arminianism*, or (if you please) the *Doc-*
trines

trines of Grace and Justice, form together the *full* gospel of Christ, as the two sides of a face form together a *full* face, or as the two scales which hang opposite to each other, form a pair of scales: 4. To insinuate that the men, who reject either the doctrines of *partial* grace, or those of *impartial* justice, dreadfully mangle the gospel, and [like the false mother, whose wicked pretension was detected by Solomon's wisdom] destroy *the child* they claim and would have cut in two: I mean *Christ* doctrinal,—*the holy child Jesus*, who calls himself *The Truth*. And lastly: To put the Reader into a method of trying doctrines by the two Gospel-axioms; the *first* Essay evidently depending on the *former* of those axioms; and the *second* Essay having a manifest reference to the *latter*.



BIBLE - CALVINISM.

ESSAY THE FIRST.

Displaying the Doctrines of partial Grace,—the capital error of the Pelagians.—and the excellence of Scripture-Calvinism.

THE Doctrines of *partial Grace*, rest on these Scriptures, “ I will be [peculiarly] gracious, to whom I will be [peculiarly] gracious ; and I will show [special] mercy, on whom I will show [special] mercy,” Exod. xxxiii. 19. “ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ? ” Matt. xx. 15.

These precious doctrines subdivide themselves into a *partial Election*, and a *partial Reprobation* ; both flowing from a free, wise, and sovereign *Grace*, which is notoriously *respective* of persons.

The partial election and reprobation of free-grace, is the gracious and wise *choice*, which God [as a sovereign and arbitrary Benefactor] *makes*, or *refuses to make*, of *some* persons, churches, cities, and nations, to bestow upon them, for his own mercy's sake, *more favours* than he does upon *others*.—It is the partiality, with which he imparts his talents of nature, providence, and grace, to his creatures or servants ; giving *five* talents to some, *two* talents to others, and *one* to others ; not only without respect to their works, or acquired worthiness of any sort ; but frequently in opposition to all personal demerit ; witness the thieves between whom our Lord was crucified, who were the *only dying men*, that Providence ever blessed with the invaluable talents, or gracious opportunities of the company and audible prayers of their dying Saviour. From this doctrine of election it follows, that, when God *freely elects* a man to the receiving of *one* talent *only*, he *freely reprobates* him with respect to the receiving of *two*, or *five* talents.



BIBLE-ARMINIANISM.

ESSAY THE SECOND.

Displaying the Doctrines of impartial Justice,—the capital error of the Calvinists,—and the excellence of Scripture-Arminianism.

THE Doctrines of *impartial Justice*, rest on these Scriptures, “ I say unto you, that to every one who hath [to purpose] more shall be given : and from him [the slothful servant] who hath not [to purpose] even that he hath, shall be taken away from him,” Luke xix. 26.—“ Cursed is he that perverteth judgment,” Deut. xxvii. 19.

These awful doctrines subdivide themselves into an *impartial Election*, and an *impartial Reprobation*; both flowing from divine *Justice*, which is always *irrespective* of persons.

The impartial election and reprobation of *Justice*, is the righteous and wise *choice*, which God [as an equitable and unbribed Judge] *makes*, or *refuses to make*, of *some* persons, churches, cities, and nations, judicially to bestow upon them, [for Christ's sake] gracious *rewards*, according to his evangelical promises; or judicially to inflict upon them, [for righteousness' sake] condign punishments, according to his reasonable threatenings : Solemn promises and threatenings these, which St. Paul sums up in these words, “ God, in the revelation of his righteous judgment, will render to every man according to his deeds : To them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, &c. [he will render] eternal life. But to them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [he will render] indignation and wrath : tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew [and Christian] first [as having received more talents than others ;] and also of the gentile [or heathen :] But glory, honour, and peace,

According to *this* election, altho' God never leaves himself without the witness of some favour, by which the basest and vilest of men, who have not yet sinned out their day of salvation, are graciously distinguished from beasts and devils; and altho', by that means, he is really *gracious* to all; yet he is not *equally* gracious: for he gives to some persons, families, churches, and nations, more power and opportunity to do and receive good, more means of grace, yea, more excellent means, more time to use those means, and more energy of the spirit in the use of them, than he gives to other persons, families, churches, and nations. With respect to the *election of grace*, therefore, there is great *partiality* in God, and so far is this partiality from being in any degree caused by any natural or evangelical worth, that it is itself the first cause of all natural excellencies, and evangelical worthiness. Hence it appears, that the doctrine of the Pelagians, (and perhaps of the *rigid* Arminians also] destroys the doctrines of partial grace; the capital error of those, who inconsiderately oppose Calvinism, consisting in denying the gracious, electing, and reprobating *partiality* of God; and in supposing, that the reasons of God's election and reprobation are always taken from ourselves; that God never elected some men in Christ, merely after the counsel of his own [absolute] Will; and that the doctrine of a *gratuitous* election and reprobation, is both unscriptural and horrible.

Having thus stated the doctrine of Grace, and the opposite error of Pelagius, I encounter that famous champion of the rigid Free-willers, not with a sling and a few stones, but with the Bible and some plain quotations from it, which will establish and illustrate the *gratuitous* election and reprobation, into which the doctrine of *partial* grace is subdivided.

I have already observed in the Scripture-Scales, that *the election of* [partial] *grace*, is taught in that part of the Parable of the Talents, where it is said, that the master chose, and "called his own servants, and delivered unto them his [not their] goods; [free-ly]

to every man that worketh good, to the Jew [and Christian] first [as being God's peculiar people,] and also to the heathens. For [with regard to the doctrines of justice] there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without the law, [of a peculiar covenant] shall also perish without the law [of a peculiar covenant:] And as many as have sinned under the law [of a peculiar covenant] shall be judged by the law [of the peculiar covenant they were under, whether it were the law of Moses, or the law of Christ.] For not the hearers—but the doers of the law shall be justified in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel." And lest some should object, that the heathens having neither the law of Moses nor that of Christ, cannot be judged according to their works, the Apostle intimates that they are under the law of the human nature, which law is written upon every man's conscience by a beam of *the true light, that enlightens every man that comes into the world.* "For, when the heathens (says he) which have not the law, do by nature [assisted by the general light above-mentioned] the things contained in the [written] law [of Moses or of Christ,] these having not the [written] law, are a law unto themselves; and shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another," [as a pledge and earnest of the condemnation or justification, which awaits them before the throne of justice,] Rom. ii. 5.—16.

And let none say, that this is St. James's legal doctrine, into which St. Paul had slided unawares, thro' "*the legality* which cleaves to our nature;" for the evangelical Prophet is as deep in it as the herald of free-grace. Hear Isaiah; "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked; it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him," Isa. iii. 10, 11: If Isaiah is accused of having imbibed this anti-solidian doctrine from legal Ezekiel, I reply, that our Lord himself was

ly] giving to one five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his several ability," Matt. xxv. 14, 15. In this free distribution of the master's goods to the servants, we see a striking emblem of God's partiality.

Should a Pelagian deny it, and say, that God does not deal out his talents of grace with Calvinian freeness, but *according to the several abilities of his servants*, I reply, by asking the following questions: 1. How came these servants to *be*? 2. How came they to be *his* servants? And, 3. How came they to have *every one his several ability*? Was this several ability acquired merely by dint of unassisted, personal industry? If you reply in the *affirmative*, you absurdly hold that God casts all his rational creatures in the same mould, that they are all exactly alike both by nature and by grace, and that they alone make themselves *to differ*, as often as there is any difference. If you reply in the *negative*, you give up the ground of Pelagianism, and grant that God, of his rich, undeserved goodness, gives to *every one his several* [primary] *abilities* of nature and grace: And when he does this, what does he do but display a *primary* election and reprobation of grace; seeing he distributes these natural and gracious abilities, in as distinguishing a manner as *five* are distinguished from *one*; arbitrarily reprobating *four* talents from the persons, families, churches; and nations, which he elects to *one* talent.

This scripture, "Learn not to think of men above what is written, that no one of you be puffed up:—For, who maketh thee to differ [with respect to the first number of thy talents?] Which [of them] is it that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 6, 7.—This one scripture, I say, like the stone which sunk into Goliath's forehead, is sufficient, one would think, to bring down the gigantic error of Pelagius. But if that stone is not heavy enough to do the wished for execution, I will chuse two or three more out of the brook of truth, which flows from the Throne of God. St. James

as deep in it, as Ezekiel and St. James, witness his last charge: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his work shall be:—Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may enter into the [heavenly] city [of God:] for without are dogs, &c. [all manner of evil-workers] and whosoever loveth or maketh a lie," Rev. xxii. 12—15. The "few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy," Rev. iii. 4. "Watch ye, &c. that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man," Luke xxi. 36.

The *election* of justice is then nothing but the *impartiality*, with which God makes *choice* of his *good* and *faithful* servants, rather than of his wicked and slothful servants, to bestow upon them the temporal and eternal *rewards* of *goodness* and *faithfulness*, according to their works; when he *cometh and reckoneth with them*, about the talents which his free-grace hath bestowed upon them, Matt. xxv. 19. Nor is the *reprobation* of justice, any thing but the impartiality with which God, as a righteous dispenser of his punishments, reprobates from his rewards of grace and glory, his wicked and unfaithful servants, who do not use, or who vilely abuse the talents, which his free-grace hath intrusted them with.

When God "commands his servants, to whom he hath given his pounds, to be called to him, that he may know how much every man has gained by trading," in order to bestow his evangelical rewards with equity; according to the election of justice, he makes choice of the servants, who have gained something with their pounds, rather than of the servant, who has slothfully laid up his pound in a napkin. And according to the reprobation of justice, he reprobates from all rewards, and appoints to a deserved punishment, the unprofitable and slothful servant, rather than the faithful and diligent servants, who have improved their Lord's gifts. Once more: According to the election of justice, God elects, and calls to a *double* reward, his

Can we not trace the foot-steps of an electing or reprobating Providence all the earth over, with respect to persons and places? Why is one man elected to sway a scepter, when another is only elected to handle an ax, a spade, a file, or a brush? Why were Abraham, Job, and the rich glutton, elected to a plentiful fortune; when poor Lazarus, a notorious reprobate of providence, lay starving at the door of merciless plenty? Why does a noble sot idle away his life in a palace, whilst an industrious, sober mechanic, with all his care, can hardly pay for a mean lodging in a garret? Why is one man elected to enjoy the blessings of the five senses, the advantage of a strong constitution, and the prerogative of beauty; whilst another is born blind, or deaf, sickly, or deformed? What have these poor creatures done to deserve this misfortune? And if God can dispense his *providential* blessings with such apparent partiality, why should it be thought strange, that he should be partial in the distribution of his *spiritual* favours? May not our heavenly Benefactor have daisies and crocus', as well as tulips and roses, in the garden of his church? May he not, in the building of his temple, use plain freestone, as well as sapphires, amethysts, and pearls? And why should we think that it is unjust in God to have moral instruments of a different shape and sound in his grand spiritual concert, when David could (without violation of any right) predestinate some of his musicians to praise God with *trumpets, shawms, and loud cymbals*, when others were appointed to do it only upon a *harp, a lute, or a pipe*?

St. Paul compares believers, who are the members of Christ's mystical body, to the various parts, which compose the human frame; and wisely observes, that tho' our *uncomely parts* [the *feet* for example] are reprobated from the honour put upon the *head*, they are nevertheless all useful in their places. His illustration is striking, and would help Pelagian levellers to see their mistakes, if they would consider it without prejudice. *There are diversities of gifts* [under all the inferior dispensations of God's grace, as well as under

God's distributive justice; you destroy the law of Christ, and all the conditional promises and threatenings in the Bible; you demolish all the doctrines of personal rewards and punishments, together with the judgment-seat of Christ; and upon their ruins raise an Antinomian Babel, whose dreadful foundation is *finished*, or *necessary damnation*, for the myriads of Calvin's absolute reprobates; while its airy top is *finished*, or *necessary salvation*, for all his absolute elect.

Hence it appears, that the mistake of heated Calvin is exactly contrary to that of heated Pelagius. Pelagianism throws down the throne of God's *partial grace*, and rigid Calvinism leaves no foundation for the throne of his *impartial justice*. The former of these modern gospels, shackles God *our Benefactor*; and the latter pours infamy upon God *our Judge*. It fixes upon him the astonishing inconsistency of *finally judging* men according to their works, and yet of *finally justifying* them without any regard to their works; and by this means it indirectly gives the lie to our Lord himself, who says, that "In the Day of Judgment, by thy words thou shalt be justified or condemned."

Having thus described the impartial election and reprobation of Justice, for which the Calvinists substitute a partial election of lawless grace in Christ, and a partial reprobation of free-wrath in Adam; I support the doctrines of Justice by the following appeals to Scripture and Matter of Fact.

Search the Scriptures, for they bear testimony to the equity of God our rewarder and punisher. If he praises, and rewards one man rather than another, this difference flows from the holiness of his nature, which makes his [judicial] *ways equal*. He *loves righteousness and hates iniquity*; and therefore he judicially *refuses the man that is godly*, whilst he judicially reprobates the man that is ungodly. If a veil, as thick as that which is upon the Jews, were not upon us when we read the Scriptures, would we not confess, that God's *judicial reprobation impartially turns upon*

the gospel of Christ, to which the Apostle's simile immediately refers]—"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For the Spirit divides [his gifts of partial grace] to every man severally as he will.—The body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand [or the eye] I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" Is it absolutely reprobated from the bodily system? On the other hand, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the ear? And if the whole were ear, where were the nose? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him," i. e. according to the good pleasure, counsel, and wisdom of his electing or reprobating will.

If the Pelagians will contend for their error on a *religious* ground, I meet them there, and ask, What good thing did Adam to deserve, that God should plant for him the *tree of life in the midst of the garden*, and should lay upon him no other burden for his trial, than abstaining from eating of the fruit of one tree? Would not God have been *gracious*, if he had suspended the judicial reprobation of our first parents, on their refusing to abstain from all food every other day, for a thousand years? Who does not see free-grace in the appointment of so easy a term, by submitting to which he might have made his gratuitous election sure, and secured the remunerative election of justice: Again: When judicial reprobation had overtaken the guilty pair, what did they do to deserve, that the execution of the sentence should not instantly take place in all the fierceness of the threatened curse? And how many good deeds did they muster up, to merit the gospel of redeeming grace—the precious promise that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head?*—*Verily*, says the Apostle, *he* [the Redeemer] *took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of a man, viz. Abraham, and became the son of man, tho' he is the everlasting Father.* Is there no partiality of grace in the mystery of the incarnation? Was it mere equity, which dictated that the Son of God

our not receiving the truth, and not living up to it, that is, upon our *voluntary* unbelief, and the *unnecessitated* disobedience which flows from it?

Does not the experience of all ages confirm this assertion? When *creating* grace had gratuitously elected and called Adam to the enjoyment of a paradisaical kingdom, did not *impartial* and remunerative justice put the stamp of divine approbation upon his faith and obedience, by equitably continuing him in that kingdom, till he sinned? And did not impartial justice seal him with the seal of *reprobation*, when he had sinned? Hear the reprobating decree: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, &c. cursed is the ground for thy sake.—Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden," Gen. iii. 17, 23.

When *redeeming* grace had reprieved him and his posterity, did divine approbation and reprobation calvinistically fasten upon their children? Did not the judicial difference, which God made between Cain and Abel, spring merely from the personal faith of Abel, and the excellence of his sacrifice? Hear Moses and St. Paul: "The Lord had respect to Abel and his offering; but to Cain and his offering he had not respect." For "by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."—Thus the Lord had respect to Cornelius and his charity. "His prayer and alms came up for a memorial before God:" but to the pharisees, their prayers and alms, he had not respect: for, by faith in his light, Cornelius offered more excellent prayers and alms than the pharisees; "By which he [like Abel] obtained witness that he was righteous and accepted; God [by the angel] testifying of his gifts: And, by it, he, being dead, yet speaketh" to all solidians, who would banish the election and reprobation of *justice* out of the world.

Righteous Seth succeeds righteous Abel: his children do the works of God, and are, of consequence, the elect of his justice, as well as of his grace. But, as soon as these pious sons of God begin to draw back, and to follow the worldly ways of the daughters of

should come in the likeness of sinful flesh, to save sinful man; and not in the likeness of sinful spirit, to save fallen angels?

But supposing [not granting] that this partiality in favour of mankind, sprang merely from the peculiar excuseableness of their case; I ask, Why did the sons of Cain deserve to be begotten of a marked murderer, who brought them up as *sons of Belial*; whilst the children of Seth were providentially elected into the family of a pious man, who brought them up as *sons of God*?

But if we will see the election and reprobation of partial grace, together with the glory of distinguishing predestination, shining in the greatest lustre; we must take a view of the covenants of promise, which God made at different times with favoured men, families, churches and nations:—Peculiar covenants, which flowed every one from a peculiar election of grace.

Was it not of free distinguishing grace that God called Abraham, and raised himself a church in a branch of his numerous family? Could he not as well have called to this honour Abimelech, king of Gerar, Melchizedec, king of Salem, or Job, the perfect man in the land of Uz? Or could he not have said to the father of the faithful, Not in Isaac, but in Ishmael, or in the sons of Keturah, thy last wife, shall thy peculiarly covenanted seed be called?

Nay, what did Abraham do to be justified as a sinner? Was he not fully justified in this sense, merely by receiving God's free-gift through faith? The point is important, for it respects not only Abraham's gratuitous justification as a sinner, but also the free justification of every other sinner, who does not spurn the heavenly gift. Dwell we then a moment upon St. Paul's question, concerning Abraham's justification as a sinner. "What shall we say then? If Abraham were justified by works [as a sinner] he hath whereof to glory: * but not before God. For what

says

* With fear of offending any of my brethren, and with trembling, lest I should injure any doctrine of grace, I will venture to propose here a few questions, the decision of which I leave to the candor

men, they began to rank among the reprobates of justice, and are involved in their dreadful punishment. Thro' the apostacy of these sons of God, *the earth was [soon] corrupt before God* : and yet *Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God*. Therefore when a decree of judicial reprobation went forth against the world of the ungodly, a decree of judicial election was made in his favour : " And the Lord said to Noah, Come thou, and all thy house into the ark ; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation," Gen. vii. 1. Ham, the father of Canaan, shared in the election, which saved Noah ; but, by his flagrant violation of the fifth commandment, he soon brought upon himself a judicial reprobation.

A decree of vindictive reprobation passes against Sodom, but the sacred historian who informs us of it, sets his pen like a bar of brass against the Calvinian doctrine of free-wrath : Nay, God himself condescends to speak in our language on that awful occasion. " The Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom is great, I will go down now, and [before I judicially reprobate it] I will see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not I will know," Gen. xviii. 20. So far is the Lord from judicially reprobating his creatures otherwise than according to works, i. e. according to evangelical worthiness or unworthiness !

Agreeably to the same doctrine of justice, God shewed favour to righteous Lot, rather than to the wicked inhabitants of Sodom. For " It came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham," and his cogent plea, [" Wilt thou (reprobate and) destroy the righteous with the wicked ? That be far from thee, to do after this manner ! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?"] And [accordingly] God sends Lot out of the midst of the overthrow."

His wife shared in this election of justice, for the angels *laid hold upon her hand*, and extended to her the same favour which they did to her husband ; but

says the scripture? Abraham believed God, [when God freely called him to receive grace, or more grace] and it was counted to him for righteousness," Rom. iv. 1, &c.

Now

candor of those, who are afraid of making one part of scripture contradict the other. Granting that a *penner*, as such, can never have any thing to *glory* in, unless it be his sin, his shame, and condemnation, I ask, is there not a sense, in which a *believer* may rejoice or *glory* in his works of faith? And may not such a *rejoicing* or *glorying* be truly evangelical? What does St. Paul mean, when he says, "Let every [believing] man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing [or] glorying in himself, and not in another?" Gal. vi. 4.—Did St. John preach self-righteousness, when he wrote, "Hereby [by our loving our neighbour in deed and in truth] we shall assure our hearts before Him, [i. e. before God.] For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things, [that make for our condemnation better than we do.] Beloved, if our heart [or conscience] condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, [i. e. before God.] And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight, 1 John iii. 19, &c.—If all such glorying is pharisaical, who was, to the last, a greater pharisee than the great Apostle, who said, "Our rejoicing [or glorying] is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in godly sincerity, &c. we have had our conversation in the world, 2 Cor. i. 12.—If St. Paul was guilty for *living*, how much more for *dying*, full of *this* glorying? And is it not evident he did, from his own dying speech. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought—I have finished—I have kept—Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.—Does not St. John exhort us to attain the height of the confidence, in which St. Paul died, when he says, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward?" 2 John 8. Does not St. Paul represent spiritual men, as persons, who have *God's Spirit bearing witness with their spirit*, and, [*vice versa*, who have *their spirit*, or *conscience*, bearing witness together with *God's Spirit*] *that they are the children of God?* Rom. viii. 16. And is it right to abolish the office of conscience, by turning out of the world all comfortable consciousness of having done that which is right in the sight of God, and by discarding all tormenting consciousness of having done the contrary; under the frivolous pretence that our Lord, in his parabolical account of the day of judgment, represents the generality of *good* and *wicked* men, as not being yet properly acquainted with this Christian truth; that whatever *good* or *wrong* we do to the least of our fellow-crea-

tures,

as soon as she looked back, and broke the commandment, *Look not behind thee*; she forfeited her election: reprobation laid hold on her, and she became a monument of God's judicial impartiality.

Altho' God's distinguishing *grace* shines in his calling Abraham to be a father of his peculiar people; yet the election of *justice* soon goes hand in hand with the election of *grace*. How striking are these anti-foliosidian passages! "I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham thy father, &c. because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws," Gen. xxvi. 3, 5. Did not God *judicially elect* that faithful Patriarch to the rewards of *grace*, when he said, "By myself have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee; because thou hast obeyed my voice?" Gen. xxii. 16, 18. Do not these scriptures prove, that if Abraham had not made his election of peculiar favour sure, by obeying God's voice, he would have forfeited that election, as well as Saul and Judas?

But, to return to the election of *Justice*; does not this election extend in some degree, even to the children of the godly? When God had said to Abraham, according to the reprobation of inferior *grace*, *Cast out the bond-woman, and her son, Ishmael*, did he not say also, according to the election of *justice*, "For Ishmael I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him,—because he is thy seed?" Gen. xvii. 20. xxi. 13. And is not the decree of this remunerative election openly written by David, where he says, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed?"

A striking instance of the impartial reprobation of *Justice* we have in the Amorites, and Israelites, the two nations, to which God, according to the election of special favour, successively gave the good land of Canaan. God's justice would not absolutely reprobate the Amorites from it, till they had sinned out their day

Now, if Abraham *believed God*, it is evident that God offered himself *first* to Abraham, that Abraham might believe in him. Therefore a *free* election, calling, and *gift* [for an *offer* from God is a *gift on his*

tures, Christ will *reward* or *punish*, As if it were done to himself? Alas! if the generality of Christians do not yet properly know this important truth, which is so clearly revealed to them; is it surprising to hear our Lord intimate, that the Jewish, Mahometan, and Heathen world will wonder, when they shall see themselves *rewarded* or *punished*, according to that deep saying of St. Paul, *The head of every man is Christ*: whence it follows, that whatever good or evil is done to *any man* (but more especially to *any Christian*) is done, in some sense, to a *member of Christ*, and consequently to *Christ* himself?—How deplorable is it, to see good men cover an Antinomian mistake, by an appeal to a portion of scripture, which our Lord spoke to leave Antinomianism no shadow of covering!

Should it be said, that the evangelical glorying, for which I plead after St. Paul, is subversive of his own doctrine, because he says, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord;" I answer, that we keep the gospel-precept, when we *principally* glory in the Lord himself, and when we *subordinately* glory in nothing, but what is agreeable to the Lord's word, and in the manner, and for the ends, which the Lord himself has appointed. When the Apostle says, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," he no more supposes, that it was wrong to glory, as he did, in the testimony of a good conscience, than he supposes, that it is wrong in a woman to be married to a *man*, as well as to *Christ*, because he says, If she marrieth, let her *marry in the Lord*. Such a conclusion will be as absurd, as the following Antinomian inferences, "God will have mercy, and not *sacrifice*, and therefore we must offer him neither the *sacrifice* of our praises, nor that of our persons."—"Christ said to Satan, *The Lord thy God only shall thou serve*; and therefore it is a species of idolatry in domestics to *serve* their masters."—May God hasten the time, when such sophistry shall no more pass for orthodoxy!

Should it be farther objected, that St. Paul says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ!" Gal. vi. 14. I reply, that it is unreasonable not to give evangelical latitude to that expression; because, if it is taken in a literal and narrow sense, it absolutely excludes all glorying in Christ's resurrection, ascension, and intercession; a glorying this, which the Apostle himself indulges in, Rom. viii. 34. However, that he could, in a subordinate sense, *glory* in something besides the *cross* of Christ, appears from his own *glorying* in his labours, sufferings, infirmities, revelations, and converts; as well as in his preaching the gospel in Achaia, without being burthensome to the people. But all this subordinate glorying

day of national salvation, or squandered away all the time, which he had allotted them for national repentance. "I brought thee out of Ur to give thee this land," said God to Abraham, but thy posterity shall not immediately inherit it, "for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full," Gen. xv. 16.—And God was exactly as equitable to the corrupted Israelites, as he had been to the corrupted Canaanites; for he would not drive the Jews out of the land of Canaan, till they were quite ripe for that national reprobation. Hence it is, that our Lord, by nationally *sparing* them, suffered them also to *fill up the measure of their iniquities*, Matt. xxiii. 32.

To return: God says to Abraham, "I will judge the oppressive nation, whom the Israelites shall serve;" and accordingly he judicially reprobates *Rahab and the dragon*, i. e. Egypt and Pharaoh. But is Rahab struck with any plague; is the river turned into blood, before its waters have been mixed with the briny tears, and tinged with the innocent blood of the children of God's people? Is Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea, or hardened, before he has hardened his own heart, by drowning the helpless posterity of Joseph, who had been the deliverer of his kingdom?

Proceed to the book of Numbers, and you see at large the awful account, which St. Jude and St. Paul sums up in these words: "I will put you in remembrance, that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt [through obedient faith] afterward destroyed them that believed not," [unto the end,] Jude 5.—For "our [elect] fathers did all drink of the spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ. But, [because they did not all secure the gracious rewards of justice, notwithstanding their election of grace] with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness," by the plague,—by serpents,—by the destroyer. "Now all these things happened to them, [the elect of distinguishing grace,] and they are written for our admonition," lest we should not make our election of justice sure, by the works of faith; "Wherefore let him

his part, whether we receive what he offers or not ;] a *free gift*, I say, preceded Abraham's faith. His very belief of any justifying and saving truth proves, that this truth, in which he believed, was *freely* offered and given him, that he might believe in it. To deny this, is as absurd as to deny, that God freely gives us *eyes and light before we can see*. Abraham therefore, who was so eminently justified by the works of faith, as an obedient believer, was *initially* accepted or justified, as a *sinner of the gentiles*, by mere grace, and glorying was *in the Lord, through whom* he did and bore all things, and *to whom* he referred all inferior honours. And therefore, when he said, that the righteous Judge would give him a crown of righteousness, for having so run as to obtain it, he, no doubt, designed to cast it at the feet of him, in whose cross he principally gloried, and whose person was his *all in all*.

"But all this glorying was before men, and not before God." So it is said : but I prove the contrary by reason and scripture : 1. *By reason* ; next to the cross of Christ, what St. Paul chiefly *gloried or rejoiced in*, was "the testimony of his conscience," 2 Cor. i. 12. Now I ask, Had the Apostle this *joy and glorying* only when he was in company ? Did he not enjoy it also when he was alone ? If you say, that he had it *only* in company, you represent him as a vile hypocrite, who could change the testimony of his conscience, as easily as he did his coat or company. And if you grant that he had this rejoicing when alone, you give up the point ; for reason tells us, that all the rejoicing and glorying, which an enlightened man has in his own conscience, when he is *alone*, must be *before God* ; because an enlightened conscience is a court, at which none is present but *God*, and where *God always* presides.

2. *By Scripture*. Paul himself exhorts the Thessalonians so to walk as to please God, 1 Thess. iv. 1. Now the joyous testimony of our conscience that we walk so as to please God, must, in the nature of things, be a testimony *before God*.—St. Peter represents our present *salvation* as consisting in "the answer of a good conscience towards God," that is, *before God*, 1 Pet. iii. 21.—And St. John cuts the very root of the objection, when he declares, that, by the consciousness of our love to our neighbour, "we assure our hearts before God, that if our hearts condemn us not, then we have confidence towards God ;" and that if we abide in Christ, by walking as he also walked, "we shall have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming," 1 John ii. 6. 28.—iii. 18, &c. How surprising is it, that an objection, which is so contrary to *reason, scripture*, and the *experience* of the Apostles, should be as confidently produced by Protestants, as if it contained the marrow of the gospel !

that thinketh he [sufficiently] standeth, [by the election of partial grace,] take heed lest he fall" [into sin, which draws after it the reprobation of impartial justice,]. 2 Cor. x. 1, &c.

As a proof, that with respect to the *election of Justice*, God is no respecter of persons, I produce Moses and Aaron, the great prophet and the high-priest of the Jewish dispensation. They are both elected and called to inherit the land of Canaan; but not making this calling and election sure, they are both reprobated with respect to that inheritance. The adult Israelites share their reprobation. Of several hundred thousand, none but Caleb and Joshua, make their election to that favour sure.

Joshua and a new generation of Israelites obey: Jordan is parted: Jericho and her wicked inhabitants are destroyed. But Rahab and her friends, although they were Canaanites, are elected to partake of a peculiar deliverance, because she had received the messengers with hospitable kindness, James ii. 25. On the other hand, Achan, one of those who were interested in the covenant of peculiarity, hides the wedge of gold, and the reprobation which Rahab's hospitality had averted, lights on him for his covetousness. She is blessed as a daughter of Abraham, and he is destroyed as a cursed Canaanite.

After Joshua's death, God's chosen people corrupted themselves: "And the angel of the Lord [the Messiah] came and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land, which I swore to your fathers: and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. [Here is the election of grace!] But ye have not obeyed my voice. Wherefore, I also said, I will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you — They forsook the Lord and served Baal. And the anger of the Lord was hot against them: — whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had sworn unto them," Judges ii. 1. 15. [Here is the reprobation of Justice!]

before he could make his calling and acceptance sure by believing and obeying: for the power to believe and obey, always flows from the *first* degré of our acceptance, or from our free and gratuitous justification *as sinners*;—a *free-gift* this, which *is come upon all men to justification*, Rom. v. 18. tho' alas! most men refuse it thro' unbelief, or throw it away thro' an obstinate continuance in sin. Abraham therefore, by receiving this free gift of justification through faith, was *fully justified as a sinner*, and went on from faith to faith, till by receiving and embracing the *special* grace, which called him to a covenant of peculiarity, *he became the father* of all those, who embrace the *special* callings and promises of God, under the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations of divine grace.

I have said, that through faith Abraham was *fully justified as a sinner*, because our *full* justification *as sinners* implies *two* things: 1. God's freely justifying us, and, 2. Our freely receiving his justifying grace: Just as being *fully knighted* implies two things: 1. The king's condescending to confer the honour of knighthood upon a gentleman: and, 2. That gentleman's submitting to accept of this honour.

To conclude this digression: The *free* and *full* justification of a sinner *by faith alone*, or by a *mere* receiving of the gratuitous, justifying mercy of God, is a most comfortable, reasonable, and scriptural doctrine, which St. Paul strongly maintains, where he says, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5. When Luther therefore held forth this glorious truth, which the church of Rome had so greatly obscured, he did the Work of a Reformer, and of an Apostle. Happy would it have been for the protestant world, if he had *always* done it as St. Paul and St. James; and if adding the doctrines of Justice to the doctrines of Grace, he had as impartially enforced the *judicial* justification of a *believer* by the *works* of faith, as the Apostle does in these

I have already mentioned how Phineas's zeal procured his election to the highest dignity in the church militant, and how Eli's remissness caused his reprobation from that dignity, and entailed degradation and wretchedness upon his family.—As for Saul, *when he was little in his own sight, God [gratuitously] made him the head of the tribes of Israel.* But when he grew proud and disobedient, *God [judicially] rejected [or reprobated] him from being king.* In his days the Kenites were predestinated to be delivered from death, “because they shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt:” whilst the Amalekites, their neighbours, were appointed for utter destruction, because “they laid wait for Israel in the way, when he came up from Egypt,” 1 Sam. xv. 2. 6.

Although the Lord called David, rather than Jonathan, to the crown of Israel, according to the election of *Grace*; he nevertheless preferred David to his brother Eliab, according to the election of *Justice!* “Samuel (says the historian) looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him: but the Lord said, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused [reprobated] him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for the Lord looketh on the heart:”—“To this man will I look, who is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word,” 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7. and Isa. lxvi. 2. And therefore, when Saul was rejected, Samuel said to him, God hath chosen “A man after his own heart;—a neighbour that is better than thou,” 1 Sam. xv. 28.

“Solomon loved the Lord:—and said to him, Thou hast shewn unto my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in uprightness of heart, &c. and now, O Lord, I am but a little child, &c. give therefore thy servant an understanding heart.—And the speech pleased the Lord: and God said to him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and not riches, &c. Lo, I have [elected thee to receive, or I have] given thee a wise and understanding heart; and I have also

given

these words, "Not the hearers of the law [of nature—of Moses—or of Christ] are just before God, but the doers shall be justified,—in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel," Rom. ii. 13. 16.—yea, and *in the day* when God shall try the faith of believers, that he may justly praise or blame them, reward or punish them. And how can he do this justly, without having respect to their own works, that is, to their *tempers, words, and actions*, which are the works of their own *hearts, lips, and hands*? This important doctrine, Luther sometimes overlooked, although St. James strongly guards it by these anti-solifidian words, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, &c? Ye see then how that by works a [believing] man is justified, and not by faith only," James ii. 21,

24.

But a *sinner*, considered as such, can never be justified otherwise than by mere favour. Nor can St. Paul's doctrine be too strongly insisted upon, "To the praise of the glory of God's grace, and to the honour of the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Jesus Christ," Rom. iii. 21, &c. Here we see, that, to the complete justification of a sinner there go three things: 1. *Mercy* or *free-grace* on God's part, which mercy is sometimes called *the righteousness of God*. 2. *Redemption* on the Mediator's part. And, 3. *Faith* on the sinner's part. And if an interest in the *redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, namely in his meritorious incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession, is what is commonly called *Christ's imputed righteousness*, I do not see why any Christian should be offended at that *comprehensive phrase*. In this scriptural sense of it nothing can be so agreeable to the tenor of the gospel than to say, *All have sinned*, and all sinners who are received to divine favour, are *justified freely by God's grace or mercy, through Christ's merits*

given thee, or elected thee to receive] that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour," 1 Kings iii. 3, &c.—Here we see young Solomon, by the power of assisted free-will, trading so wisely with his one talent of initial wisdom, as to increase in wisdom above all his contemporaries. And yet when he was old, and had got ten talents of wisdom, he *hid them*, not indeed *in a napkin*, but in the lap of the strange, idolatrous women, whom he had collected. A demonstration this, that man is endued with freedom of will, and that, as *free-grace* did not *necessitate* Solomon to chuse wisdom in his youth, neither did *free-wrath* necessitate him to chuse folly in his old age.

To return: Divine Mercy gently holds out her scepter to some men, whom the Calvinists generally consider as *absolute* reprobates, whilst divine Justice awfully brandishes her sword against other men, whom the Calvinists consider as *absolute* elect. Take a proof or two of the former part of this proposition.

Cain's countenance falls; anger, the parent of murder, is conceived in his envious heart: but God addresses him with the gentleness of a father, and the mildness of a friend. The wretch, notwithstanding, imbrues his hands in his brother's blood: But the goodness and patience of God endure yet daily, and secure the frightened murderer a long day of grace, by threatening a seven-fold punishment to the man that should slay him.—Wicked Ahab, repents in part, and God in part reverses the decree of his judicial reprobation. "The word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? I will not bring the evil in his days upon his house." What is such a decree as this, but a judicial reprobation, tempered by a judicial election?

Take one or two proofs of the latter part of the proposition. David numbers the people to indulge his vanity, and God gives him the choice of three decrees of reprobation from his *special* favour. He sins in the matter of Uriah. A decree of death goes forth against his child, and of slaughter against his family.—Hezekiah's heart is lifted up: he looks at his

wealth

merits and satisfaction; or, (if you please) *thro' his imputed righteousness*; or, to speak in St. Paul's language, *through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*. For my part, far from finding fault with this comfortable, evangelical doctrine, I solemnly declare, that to all eternity I shall have nothing to plead for my justification as a sinner,—absolutely nothing, but, 1. God's free-grace in giving his only begotten Son *to save sinners, of whom I am chief*: 2. Christ's meritorious life, death, and intercession, which abundantly avail for the chief of sinners, and according to which I am *graciously* endued with a power to forsake sin by *repentance*, and to receive Christ and his salvation by *faith*. And therefore to all eternity I must shout Free Grace! and make my boast of Imputed righteousness!* And indeed,

“ While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries,”

What thankful Believer can help singing,

“ Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, thy glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,
With joy shall I lift up my head?”

To

* Some of my readers will probably ask, why I plead here for the *good sense* of that much-controverted phrase, *The imputed righteousness of Christ*, when, in my Second Check to Antinomianism, I have represented our Lord as highly disapproving in the day of judgment, not only the plea of a *wicked* Arminian, who urges, that “ God is merciful, and that Christ died for all;” but also the plea of a *wicked* solifidian, who begs to be justified merely by *the imputed righteousness of Christ*, without any good works:— I answer; 1. I no more designed to ridicule the above-stated doctrine of *imputed righteousness*, than to expose the doctrine of *God's mercy*, or that of *general redemption*. And I am truly sorry, if by not sufficiently explaining myself, I have given to my readers any just occasion to despise these precious doctrines of grace, or any one of them. 2. I only wanted to guard against the abuse of evangelical principles, and to point out the absurd consequences of the spreading opinion, that “ God will justify us in the great day merely by Christ's imputed righteousness, without the works of faith, or without any regard to personal righteousness and inherent holiness.” This tenet, which is the very soul of speculative

Antinomianism,

wealth with self-complacence, and a decree of poverty and captivity is made against his house.

What were these severe judgments, but the marks and effects of a judicial reprobation from the *peculiar* favour, which God had for these pious kings?

I have observed in the opposite Essay, how partial grace favoured bloody Manasseh, in lengthening out his days of grace: but his election of *grace* did not hinder the election and reprobation of *justice* from having their free course. Take first an account of *this reprobation*. "And the Lord spake, &c. saying, Because Manasseh hath done these Abominations, &c. therefore, behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem, that whosoever heareth it, both his ears shall tingle, &c." Take next an account of Manasseh's *judicial election*. "When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself before the God of his fathers, and prayed to him, and he heard his supplication, [reversed in part the decree of his judicial reprobation] and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.—His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, &c. behold, they are written, &c."—"Amon did evil, as did Manasseh his father,—but humbled not himself, as Manasseh had humbled himself," 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 23.

The New Testament gives us the same views of God's righteous reprobation. Judas, one of those whom the *Father* had given to *Christ*, John xvii. 12.—Judas, whom *Christ* himself had *chosen* or *elected*, John vi. 70.—Judas, for whom he designed one of the *twelve* brightest *thrones* in glory, Matt. xix. 28.—Judas, by *transgression* fell, and was lost, or to speak according to the Hebrew idiom, became a *son of perdition*, Acts i. 25. John xvii. 12. *He loved cursing more than blessing*, and it judicially *entered like oil* into his bones. The decree of reprobation, which had *prophetically* gone forth, according to God's foresight of his crime, now goes forth *judicially*. He is his own executioner, and another fills his vacated throne. Herod does not give glory to God. A decree of reprobation overtakes him, and worms eat him up. Regardless of the

To return : The same grace which called Abraham, rather than Terah his father, or Lot his nephew ;— this same distinguishing grace, I say, chose and called Isaac to the covenant of peculiarity, from which Ishmael, his elder brother was reprobated :—A *special calling*, which had been fixed *before* the birth of Isaac, and therefore could no way be procured by his obedience. In full opposition to Isaac's design, the same *distinguishing* grace called Jacob rather than Esau, to inherit the promises of the peculiar covenant made with Abraham and Isaac. *For the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election [to merely gratuitous favours] might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, [of arbitrary and partial grace] the elder shall serve the younger.*" Nor can it be said, that this partial preferring of Jacob, had its rise in God's foreseeing that Esau would sell his birth-right ; for the above-quoted passage is flatly contrary to this notion : besides, Jacob himself, by divine appointment, transferred to Joseph's youngest son the blessing which naturally belonged to the eldest. " Joseph said to his father, Not so my father : " be not partial to my younger son : " This is the first-born, put thy right-hand upon his head : " he hath not sold his birth-right

Antinomianism, leaves the doctrine of justice neither root nor branch. At this unscriptural notion *only*, I levelled the blow, which has given so much groundless offence to so many persons, whom I honour for their piety, love for the resemblance they bear to the holy Jesus, and commend for their zeal in maintaining the doctrines of *grace*, so far as they do it without injuring the doctrines of *godliness* and *justice*. And I am glad to have this opportunity of explaining myself, and assuring my Calvinist brethren, that I would lose a thousand lives, if I had them, rather than to asperse the Blood and Righteousness of my Saviour, or ridicule the Christian Covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure, and on the gracious terms of which, as well as on *the divine mercy* which fixed them, the infinitely-meritorious obedience, which procured them, and *the atoning blood* which seals them, I entirely rest all my hopes of salvation in time, in the day of judgment, and to all eternity. And that this is Mr. Wesley's sentiment, as well as mine, is evident from his reconciling Sermon on imputed Righteousness.

the starving poor, the rich farmer fills his barns, and the rich glutton his belly, and a decree similar to that which sealed drunken Belshazzar's doom, is made against them. The Jewish builders reject the Corner-stone, and Christ says, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The master of the vineyard comes three years to seek fruit on his fig-tree: but, finding none, he judicially reprobates the barren nuisance at last. And patience, which suspends a year the execution of the sentence, offers to seal herself the decree of reprobation, if the tree continues barren to the end of the year of reprieve. The wicked servant beats his fellow-servants: The foolish virgins provide no supply of oil: The uncharitable goats will not give drink to the thirsty, and therefore they all fall a righteous sacrifice to divine justice. The gospel-feast is provided, and *all things are now ready*. Multitudes of men are *chosen* and *called* to come to the feast, but their frivolous excuses engage the king to reprobate them. Hear the decree of their judicial reprobation taken down by three sacred writers, "I say unto you, none of those men which were bidden [and refused to come in time] shall taste of my supper," Luke xiv. 24.—"The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy," Matt. xxii. 8.—"I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, &c. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest," Heb. iii. 10. These decrees breathe nothing but just wrath, kindled by an obstinate contempt of free-grace. From these, and the like scripture examples, it is evident, that a personal reprobation of *justice*, is an awful and true doctrine; and that a personal, Calvinian reprobation of *free-wrath*, is as unscriptural, as it is cruel and absurd.

Who can read the scriptures without prejudice, and not see, that the election and reprobation of *partial favour*, yield to the election and reprobation of *impartial justice*? Altho' God chose and called Abraham out of distinguishing grace, did he not extend

like Esau. "But his father refused and said, I know it, my son. He [Manasseh] shall be great; but truly his [younger] brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he," Gen. xlviii. 18, 19. A clear proof this, that the reprobation of grace is quite consistent with an election to inferior blessings.

Nor was the calling of Moses less *special* than that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Was it not God's free predestinating grace, which so wonderfully preserved him in his infancy, and so remarkably ordained him in Mount Horeb to be the deliverer of the Israelites, and the visible mediator of the Jewish covenant? Can we help seeing some distinguishing grace in the following declaration? "I will do what thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by thy name:—I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord before thee."

I cannot conceive with what eyes Pelagius could read the Scriptures. For my part, I see a continued vein of distinguishing *favour* running thro' the whole. Does the Lord want a man of peculiar endowments to finish the tabernacle? He says to Moses: "See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God," Exod. xxxi. 2, 3. Does he want a captain for his people, and a man to be Moses's successor? Caleb himself is reprobated from that honour, and the Lord says, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun." The same distinguishing grace manifests itself in the special calling of Barak, Gideon, Sampson, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Elisha, Jehu, Daniel, Cyrus, Nehemiah, Esther, Esdras, Judas Macchabeus, and all the men whom the Lord, by his *special grace*, and power, raised up to instruct, rule, punish, or deliver his people.

I have observed, that, in the very nature of things, a *gratuitous* and *personal* reprobation follows the gratuitous and personal election, which I contend for. Is not this assertion incontestible? Whilst Jacob and the Israelites, *were* [peculiarly] *loved*; were not Esau, and

his mercy far beyond the little circle of that narrow calling and election? Did he set his love upon the Father of the Faithful and his posterity, in such a manner, that there was nothing but *blind* mercy for the favoured seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and nothing but *free-wrath*, and *calvinian* reprobation, for all who were reprobated with respect to that election? What shall we say of conscientious Abimelec, venerable Melchizedec, patient Job, and his pious friends, for whom God was intreated? What of Bethuel, Rebekah's father? What of Arsenath, an Egyptian woman, the wife of Joseph? What of prudent Jethro, and his daughter, the wife of Moses? What of the submissive Gibeonites, whose part God so eminently took, against the children of Israel and the house of Saul? What of loving Ruth, a daughter of Moab? What of the inquisitive queen of Sheba; and the Sidonian widow, who had charity enough to share her last morsel with Elijah, a hungry and desolate stranger? What of grateful Naaman the Syrian, whom the Prophet sent away in peace, when he entailed a curse upon Gehazi, the lying Israelite? What of humbled Nebuchadnezzar, who was restored to his former greatness, in as wonderful a manner as patient Job, and penitent Manasseh? What of the wise Men, who came from the East; and the treasurer of Queen Candace, who came from the South, to worship in Judea? What of the importunate woman of Canaan, the zealous woman of Samaria, and the charitable Samaritan who had compassion on the wounded man, the "poor creature," whom the elect priest had reprobated, and whom the chosen Levite had passed by? Had God absolutely no respect to their repentance, faith, and charity? Was there never a "well done! thou good and faithful servant, for any of them? Shall a *cup of cold water*, given in Christ's name, have its reward; and shall not the *oil and wine* of the non-elect Samaritan, given in the name of Humanity, Divinity, Mercy, Love, Truth, and Righteousness, [six of Christ's sweetest names;] shall not, I say, that *wine and oil* have their reward? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he shut up his *remunerative*

and the Edomites [comparatively] *hated*? When God will shew a *special, distinguishing* favour, can he shew it to *all*? Does not reason dictate, that if he shewed it to *all*, it would cease to be *special* and *distinguishing*? If God had made his covenants of *peculiar*ity with *all* mankind, would they not have ceased to be *peculiar*?

Once more: If God could without impropriety, shew *more* favour to the Jews than to the Gentiles, and to the Christians than to the Jews; I ask, Why cannot he also, without impropriety, shew *more* favour to one Jew, or to one Christian, than he does to another? By what argument can you prove, that it is wrong in God to do *personally*, what it is granted on all sides he does *nationally*? If you can, without injustice, give a crown to an English beggar, while you give only six-pence to a poor Irishman; why may you not give ten shillings to another English beggar, supposing your generosity prompts you to shew *him* that special favour? And may not God, by the rule of proportion, give *you* ten talents of grace to improve, whilst he gives your *Christian* brother only five; as well as he can bestow five talents upon your fellow-Christian, whilst he gives a poor *Mahometan* one talent only?

Can any thing be more glaring than the partiality, which our Lord describes in these words, "Wo unto thee, Chorazin; wo unto thee, Bethsaida: for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes?" Luke x. 13.—Who can read these words with a grain of candid attention, and refuse his assent to the following propositions? 1. God was notoriously partial to Chorazin and Bethsaida; for he granted them *more* means of repentance, and more *powerful* means, and for a longer season, than he did to Tyre and Sidon.—2. If God had been as gracious to the two heathenish cities, as he was to the two Jewish towns, Tyre and Sidon *would have repented,—a great while ago,—in the deepest and most solemn manner, sitting in sackcloth and*

ashes.

kindness in displeasure? Is there nothing but vindictive free-wrath, for all that are not interested in the peculiar covenants of promise made with Abraham, Moses, and the High-priest of our [Christian] profession? And nothing but flaming love for Nadab, Abihu, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, Demas, Hymeneus, Philetus, Alexander, and Diotrephes, who so eminently shared in the Jewish and Christian covenants of peculiarity?

If you say with St. Paul, *All are not [true] Israelites, who are of Israel*, you grant what we contend for: you allow, that all are not the *elect* of God's *impartial justice*, who are the *elect* of his *partial favour*; and that finally the scale will turn for the retribution of eternal life or eternal death, according to the election or reprobation of *impartial justice*; and not according to the election of *partial grace*, and the reprobation of *free-wrath*. Who had ever a larger share in the election of *partial grace* than David? And yet, who ever maintained the election and reprobation of *justice* more strongly than he? Does he not still cry to all the world, from the walls of Jerusalem, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous, [of whatever family, tribe, or religion he be:] doubtless there is a God, that judgeth the earth?" Does not every body know, that to *judge the earth*, is to justify, or condemn, all its inhabitants according to their works? And when God finally justifies or condemns, what does he do but declare, that the godly *are* evangelically *worthy of walking with him in white, and of following him to fountains of living water*; and that the ungodly are every way worthy to *depart with the devil, and follow him into the lake of fire*?

I have observed, that the election of partial grace extends to cities and nations; and so does the reprobation of *impartial justice*. Take one or two remarkable instances of it. According to the election of distinguishing favour, God *chose Jerusalem to put his name there*. But when Jerusalem shewed herself absolutely unworthy of his judicial election, he reprobated her in righteousness. Hear the awful decree:

ashes.—And, 3. The doctrine of *necessity*, or *irresistible grace*, is unscriptural; and the doctrines of *impartial justice* are never overthrown by the doctrines of *partial grace*; for, notwithstanding God's distinguishing favour, which wrought wonders to bring Chorazin and Bethsaida to repentance, they repented not: and our Lord says in the next verse, "But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you," who have resisted such distinguishing grace.

For want of understanding the *partiality* of divine grace, and the nature of the harmless *reprobation*, which flows from this harmless partiality; some of God's *faithful* servants, who have received but *one* or *two* talents, are tempted to think themselves absolute reprobates; as often, at least, as they compare their case with that of their fellow-servants, who have received more talents than they: whilst others who have been indulged with peculiar favours, and have sinned, or idled them away, consider themselves as peculiar favourites of heaven, upon whom God will never pass a sentence of judicial reprobation. Hence arise the despairing fears of some believers, the presumptuous hopes of others, and the spread of the mistaken doctrines of grace. By the same mistake, rash Preachers frequently set up God's peculiar grants to some of his upper servants, as a general standard for all the classes of them, and pass a reprobating sentence upon every one who does not yet come up to this standard; to the great offence of the judicious, to the grief of many sincere souls, whom God would not have thus grieved, and to the countenancing of Calvinian reprobation.

A plain appeal to matter of fact, will throw light upon all the preceding remarks. Are not many true Christians evidently reprobated, with respect to some of the *special* favours, which our Lord conferred on the woman of Samaria, Zaccheus, Levi, (afterwards St. Matthew) and St. Paul? How few have been called in so extraordinary, abrupt, and cogent a manner as they were? Nay, how many strumpets, extortioners,

“ I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons. The houses of Jerusalem shall be defiled as Tophet,” Jer. ix. 11. xix. 13. The mild Jesus, after a last effort to gather her children, as a hen gathers her brood, with a flood of tears, pronounces the final sentence of her judicial reprobation; “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets,—there shall not be left in thee one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The *gratuitous* election, and the *judicial* reprobation of Jerusalem, are typical of the *gratuitous* election of the Israelites, and of their *judicial* reprobation. An account of their *gratuitous* election is set before the reader in the Essay on Scripture-Calvinism. Here follows an account of their righteous reprobation. “ And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe all his commandments, that the Lord will set thee on high;—all these blessings shall overtake thee:—The Lord shall establish thee an holy people to himself, as he hath sworn to thee. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken, &c. that all these curses shall overtake thee, &c. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing,—until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly, because of all the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me,” Deut. xxviii. 1.—20. Again: “ See I have set before thee life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee to love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest live:—But if thine heart turn away, &c. I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish,” Deut. xxx. 15, &c. Here are the decrees of God’s *judicial* election and reprobation. According to *these* decrees, David says to his elect son, “ Solomon, my son, serve the God of thy father, with a willing mind.—If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build him a house, &c.” 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. According to *these* decrees, “ Because of all the provocations, &c. the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have

tioners, busy worldlings, and persecutors in all ages, have been hurried into eternity, without having received the special favours, from which we date the conversion of those four favourites of Free-grace?

Has not God in all ages shewn the *partiality* of his grace, by giving more of it to one man, than to another?—To persecuting Saul, for example, than to thousands of other sincere persecutors, who thought, as well as he, that they *did God service* in dragging his saints to prison and to death? Did not the Lord shew less distinguishing mercy to Zimri and Cosbi, than to David and Bathsheba? Less to Onan, than to the incestuous Corinthian, and the woman caught in adultery?—Less to the forty-two children, who mocked the bald prophet, than to the more guilty sons of Jacob, who went about to kill their pious brother, sold him into Egypt, and covered their cruelty with hypocrisy and lies? Did he not give less time to repent to drunken Belsazzar, than he did to proud Nebuchadnezzar? Did he not hurry Ananias and Sapphira into eternity with a severity, which he did not display towards Cain, Solomon, Peter, and Judas? Did he shew as much long-suffering to Eli and his sons; or to king Saul and his unfortunate family; as he did to David and his ungodly house? Was he as gracious to the man, who gathered sticks on the Sabbath, or to him who conveyed the Babylonish garment into his tent, as he was to Gehazi, and to king Ahab, whom he spared for years after the commission of more atrocious crimes? Did not Christ shew less distinguishing love to Zebedee, than to his sons?—Less to the woman of Canaan, than to Mary Magdalen?—Less to Jude, Bartholomew, and Lebbeus, than to Peter, James, and John? How soon, how awfully did God destroy Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire? Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, for resisting Moses?—Uzzah, for touching the ark? And the prophet of Judah, for eating bread in Bethel; when nevertheless he bore for months or years with the wickedness of Pharaoh, the idolatry of Solomon, the witchcrafts of bloody Manasseh, and the hypocrisy

removed Israel, and I will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the house, of which I said, My name shall be there," 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27.

It is only to defend the election and reprobation of *justice*, that Paul says, *God hath not cast away his* [believing, obedient] *people whom he fore-knew, i. e. fore-approved* [as believing and obedient:] For, as there were *seven thousand* believing and obedient Jews, upon whom impartial justice smiled in the days of Jezebel, under *the Jewish election of partial grace; even so at this present time*, adds the apostle, *there is a remnant* of such Jews under *the Christian election of partial grace*: that is, A number of Jews make their christian election sure, not by the works of the Mosaic law, but by obedient faith in Christ. And even these obedient believers (in conjunction with the converted Gentiles) the Apostle keeps in their duty by threatening them with reprobation of impartial justice. "Because of unbelief, (says he) they, [the unbelieving Jews] were broken off, [i. e. judicially reprobated,] and thou [Christian believer] standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches; [so inflexible is his justice!] take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them that fell, [the Jews, elected through distinguishing grace,] severity: but towards thee, [a Christian, elected by distinguishing favour,] goodness, if thou continue in his goodness, [by continuing in the faith of Christ:] otherwise thou shalt also be cut off, [notwithstanding thy christian election of distinguishing grace.] And they [notwithstanding their present reprobation of justice, which is occasioned by their unbelief,] if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in:" that is, if they make their christian calling and election of grace sure, by the obedience of faith, they shall be numbered among the rewardable elect,—the elect that do not perish,—the elect of *justice*, as well as of *grace*, Rom. xi. 1.—23.

of envious Caiaphas? Is not this *unequal* dealing of divine patience, too glaring to be denied by any unprejudiced person?

Does not this partiality extend itself even to places and cities? Why did God reprobate Jericho, and elect Jerusalem?—"Jerusalem, the city which the Lord did chuse out of all the tribes of Israel to put his name there?" 1 Kings xiv. 21. Do we read less than nineteen times this partial sentence, "*The place which the Lord shall chuse,*" only in the book of Deuteronomy? Could not God have chosen Babylon, Bethlehem, or Bethel, as well as the city of the Jebusites? Why did he make *Mount Zion* his *holy hill*? Why did he *love the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob*? Is there neither election nor reprobation in these words of the Psalmist?—"Moreover he [the Lord] refused [reprobated] the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not [passed by] the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion, which he loved," Psalm lxxviii. 67, 68. Again: Why did the angel, who troubled the pool of Bethesda, pass by all the other pools in Jerusalem? Why did our Lord send the lepers to the pool of Siloam, rather than to any other? And why were Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, reprobated with respect to the power of healing Naaman's leprosy, when Jordan was elected to it? Was it not because God would convince the Syrians of his *partiality* to his peculiar people, and to their country?

But is this partiality confined to Judea and Syria? Or to Egypt and Goshen? May we not see the footsteps of an electing, *partial* Providence in this favoured Island? Why is it a temperate country? Could not God have placed it under the heaps of snow which cover Greenland; or in the hot climates, where the vertical sun darts his unsufferable beams upon barren sands? Could he not have suffered it to be enslaved by the Turks, as the once famous isle of Crete now is? and to lie in popish darkness, as Si-

cily

The Apostle frequently speaks the same anti-calvinian language: Take one or two more instances of it. "The end of those things is death [i. e. final reprobation from life.] But, &c. ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end [of this fruit is a judicial election to] everlasting life: for the wages of sin is death, [i. e. a judicial reprobation from life,] but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ:"—An invaluable gift, which the Redeemer has procured, and which shall be *judicially* bestowed upon obedient, persevering believers, as the king's purses and plates, which are the *mere gifts* of his majesty, are equitably bestowed upon them that so run as to obtain the prize. And therefore, "So run, (says the Apostle) that ye may obtain an incorruptible crown."—Be ye followers of me:—"I so run, &c. lest I myself should be a cast away," according to the reprobation of *justice*, 1 Cor. ix. 24, &c.

The election and reprobation of *partial grace*, depend entirely upon the wisdom and sovereignty of God. The great "Potter hath power over the clay, to make of the same lump vessels to honour, or to [comparative] dishonour," just as he pleases. As a supreme Benefactor, he had a right to raise the Jews above all nations, by calling them at the third hour into his inclosed vineyard. He could without injustice, call the Corinthians at the sixth hour, and the English at the ninth hour. And if he calls the Hottentots at the eleventh hour, they shall be entitled to the blessings of the richest election of grace, (which are represented by the *penny* of the parable,) as much as if they had been called as early as Abraham was; and had borne the burden and heat of the day as long as Paul and Cranmer did. I repeat it, with respect to the privileges of *the covenants of promise* made with the Jews and the Christians, which privileges our Lord sometimes calls his *pence*, and sometimes his *talents*; they are ours as soon as we are called, if we do but answer the call by going into the Lord's vineyard or field. This is what Christ condescends to call *our hire*, for going into his church militant;—*our hire*, bestowed

cily does; or in heathenish * superstition, as the large islands of Madagascar and Borneo do?

Who does not see the partiality of sovereign grace in the sparing of some nations, cities, and churches? Did not God reprobate the disobedient Amalekites sooner than the disobedient Jews? Why are the former utterly destroyed, when the latter are yet so wonderfully preserved? Did not God bear less with Ai, Nineveh, and Carthage, than with London, Paris, and Rome?—Less with the ten tribes, which formed the kingdom of Israel, than with the two tribes, which formed the kingdom of Judah? Why does the Lord bear longer with the church of Rome, than he did with the churches of Laodicea and Constantinople? Is it merely because the church of Rome is less corrupted?—Nay, why does he bear so long with *this present evil World*, when (comparatively speaking) he destroyed the Antediluvian World so soon? And why are the Europeans, in general, elected to the blessings of Christianity, from which the rest of the world is generally reprobated; most nations in Asia, Africa, and America, being indulged with no higher religious advantages, than those, which belong to the religions of Confucius, Mahomet, or uncultivated nature?

If God's partiality in our favour is so glaring, why do not all our gospel-ministers try to affect us with a due sense of it? May I venture to offer a reason of

* Mr. Addison gives us this just view of our gratuitous election in one of the Spectators. I shall transcribe the words of that judicious and pious writer. "The sublimest truths, which among the heathens, only here and there one of brighter parts, and more leisure than ordinary, could attain to, are now grown familiar to the meanest inhabitants of these nations. Whence came this surprising change, that regions formerly inhabited by ignorant and savage people, should now outshine ancient Greece in the most elevated notions of theology and morality? Is it the effect of our own parts and industry? Have our common mechanics more refined understandings than the ancient philosophers? It is owing to the God of truth, who came down from heaven and condescended to be himself our teacher. It is as we are Christians, that we possess more excellent and divine truths than the rest of mankind.

this

sowed according to the election of *prevenient-grace*. But our eternal reward shall be given according to a very different rule, namely according to the election of *impartial justice*. To secure *this* reward, we must not only go into the Lord's field, when we are called; but we must *sow* as we are directed. *Be not deceived*, says the apostle, when he stands up for the doctrines of *justice*; as God does not *necessitate* man by Calvinian decrees of finished reprobation, and then mock him by Arminian offers of salvation: so "he is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also-reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh [naturally and judicially] reap corruption and destruction, [the word has this double meaning in the original.] But he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," both by natural and judicial consequence.—"For the [moral] earth, which bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: [Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom, &c. for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat.] But that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, [reprobated] and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned," according to the fearful sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat, &c." Gal. vi. 7. Heb. vi. 7. Matt. xxv. 34, &c.

Well then might our Lord and St. Paul charge us to *escape* the reprobation, and to *secure* the election of justice. How awful and anti-calvinian are their directions! "Watch and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these [terrible] things, and to stand [rewardable] before the Son of man," Luke xxi. 36,—"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance," Col. iii. 24.

From these, and a multitude of such Scriptures, it appears, that when the rigid Calvinists overlook the *impartial* election and reprobation of *distributive justice*, they betray as much prejudice as the rigid Arminians do, when they deny the *partial* election and reprobation of *distinguishing grace*. There is, how-

this neglect? As the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, by their odious nature, frequently reflect a kind of unjust shame upon a pure marriage-bed, which, according to God's own declaration, is truly honourable; so the wanton election, and horrid reprobation, that form the modern doctrines of grace, have, I fear, poured an undeserved disgrace upon the pure *election*, and the wise *reprobation*, which the scriptures maintain. Hence it is, that even judicious divines avoid touching upon these capital doctrines in public, lest minds defiled with Antinomianism should substitute their own unholy notions of election, for the holy notions which the scriptures convey. This evil shame is a remain of Pelagianism, or of false wisdom. The abuse of God's favours ought not to make us renounce the right use of them. Far then from being wise above what is written, let us with the prophets of old, make a peculiar use of the doctrine of *partial* grace, to stir up ourselves and others to suitable gratitude. How powerful is the following argument of Moses? "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee, to be a special people to himself, above all people, that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord thy God did not set his love upon thee nor chuse thee, because ye were more in number than any people, (for ye were the fewest of all people) but because the Lord loved you, &c.— He had a delight in thy Fathers to love them, and chose their seed after them, even you, above all people, as it is this day, &c. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, who hath done for thee these great and wonderful things," Deut. vii. 6, &c. x. 15, 21.— "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things, which we call upon him for? Ask now of the days that are past;—ask from the one side of heaven to the other, whether there hath been any such thing, as this great thing is. Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard? Or hath God assayed to take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by signs and wonders, &c? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest

ever, some difference between the extensiveness of their errors. If rigid Arminianism rejects the *partial* election and reprobation of *distinguishing grace*, it strenuously maintains the *righteous* election and reprobation of *impartial justice*; and by this means it preserves one half of the doctrines of the Bible in all their purity, namely the doctrines of *justice*. But rigid downright Calvinism equally spoils the doctrines of *grace*, and the doctrines of *justice*: for it turns the holy doctrines of *special grace*, into solifidian doctrines of lawless grace: and with respect to the doctrines of *impartial justice*, it totally demolishes them, by allowing but of *one* eternal, absolute, partial, and personal *election*, which necessarily binds Christ's righteousness and finished salvation upon some men;—and of *one* eternal, absolute, partial, and personal *reprobation*, which necessarily fastens Adam's unrighteousness, with finished damnation upon all the rest of mankind. Now, according to these doctrines of partial grace and free-wrath, it is evident, that *justice* can no more be concerned in justifying or condemning, rewarding or punishing men under such circumstances, than you could be equitably concerned in *crowning* some men *for swimming*, and in *burning* others *for sinking*; supposing you had first bound the elected *swimmers* fast to an immense piece of cork, and tied a huge millstone about the neck of the *sinking* reprobates. Hence it appears, that altho' a Bible-Christian may hold Pelagius's election and reprobation of *justice*, he can neither hold Calvin's one election of *lawless grace*, nor his one reprobation of *free-wrath*.

But, whilst I bear my plain testimony against rigid Calvinism, I beg the reader to make a difference between that system, and the good men who have embraced it. With joy I acknowledge, that many Calvinist-ministers have done much good in their generation. But whatever good they have done, was not done by their errors, but by the gospel-truths, which they inconsistently mixed with these errors, and by God's over-ruling their mistakes. The doctrines of distributive justice belong no more to rigid Calvinism,

mightest know [with peculiar certainty] that the Lord he is God?" Deut. vi. 7, 32, &c.

Does not the Psalmist stir up the Lord's chosen nation to gratitude and praise, by the same motive, of which the anti-Calvinists are ashamed? "He sheweth his word to Jacob, his statutes to Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: as for his [peculiarly-covenanted] judgments, they [the heathen] have not known them. Praise ye the Lord,—O ye seed of Abraham,—ye children of Jacob his chosen," Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.—cv. 6.

Nay, does not God himself stir up Jerusalem [the holy city become a harlot] to repentance and faithfulness, by dwelling upon the greatness of his distinguishing love towards her? How strong is this exhortation! How richly descriptive of God's partiality towards that faithless city! "Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem, Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan. Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.—Thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born; and when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said to thee, Live.—I entered into a covenant with thee:—I put a beautiful crown upon thy head: Thou didst prosper into a kingdom, and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty, for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord," Ezek. xvi. 3, &c. If this could be said to Jewish Jerusalem, how much more to Protestant London?

Should rigid Arminians still assert, that there is absolutely no respect of places and persons with God; I desire the opposers of God's gracious partiality to answer the following questions: Why did not the Spirit suffer Paul to go into Bithynia, when *he assayed* to do it? Why did a vision direct him to go into Macedonia? Does it appear from the cruel reception which he met with at Philippi, that the people of that place were *worthy* of the gospel above all people? Could the people of Babylon have shewed more aver-

than to Nero's private system of policy : but as good magistrates, even under Nero's authority, steadily punished vice, and rewarded virtue ; so good men who have the misfortune to be involved in rigid Calvinism, inconsistently deter men from sin, by preaching the terrors of a sin-avenging God, and by pointing out the rewards of grace and glory, which await the faithful. Add to this, that by still holding out *the law of God* to the unawakened, though that kind of preaching is *absurd* upon their system, yet they do good, because, so far, they preach *the doctrines of justice*. And by preaching "*a rule of life*" to believers, they now and then meet with professors ingenuous enough to follow that *rule*. For, as there are even in Billingsgate persons cleanly enough to wash their hands, altho' their neighbours should constantly assure them, that they can never get one speck of dirt off ;—that the king must do it all away himself, in the day of his power ;—that, in the mean time, his majesty sees no dirt upon their hands, because he looks at them only through the hands of the Prince of Wales, which are as white as snow, and the cleanness of which his majesty is pleased to impute to their dirty hands.—And besides, that dirt will work for their good,—will display the strength of their constitution,—will set off, by and by, the cleansing virtue of soap and water, and will make dirty people sing louder at court, when the king's irresistible power, and their own deadly sweats shall have cleansed their hands :—As there are cleanly persons, I say, who would wash their hands, notwithstanding such dirty hints as these ; so there are some sincere souls, among every denomination of Christians, who hate sin, and depart from it, notwithstanding all that some mistaken theologists may say, to make them continue in sin, that the graces of humility and of faith in the atoning blood, may be abundantly exercised.

Again : The rigid Arminians are greatly deficient in exalting God's *partial grace*, and the rich election which flows to Christian believers from *this* grace. Now when the Calvinists preach to Christians a grati-
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sion to the truth? And could not God have raised himself a Christian Church in Bithynia, as well as in Macedonia, by shaking the foundation of the houses there, in defence of Paul's innocence?

When the Apostle says, "The time of [heathenish] ignorance God winked at, but now [explicitly] commandeth [by his evangelists] all men, every where, to repent," Acts xvii. 30. does he not represent God as being *partial* to all those men, to whom he sends Apostles, or messengers, on purpose to bid them repent? And does not the Lord shew us more *distinguishing* love, than he did to all the nations, which he suffered to walk in their own ways,—without the gospel of Christ, "aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope [founded upon a gospel message,] and no [peculiarly-revealed] God in the world?" Acts xiv. 16. Eph. ii. 12.

Again: When St. Paul observes, that "God spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets; but hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son," Heb. i. 1, 2. is it not evident, that he pleads for the partiality of distinguishing grace; intimating that God has favoured *us* more than he did *the fathers*? And has not our Lord strongly asserted the same thing, where he says, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear: for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them?" Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

Once more: What is the gospel of Christ, from first to last, but a glorious blessing flowing from distinguishing grace;—a blessing from which all mankind were reprobated for four thousand years, and from which the generality of men are to this day cut off by awful, providential decrees? When the Pelagians, and rigid Arminians, therefore, are ashamed to shout the partiality of God's free, distinguishing grace towards us [Christians,] are they not *ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and of the election of peculiar grace,*

itous election of distinguishing grace, though they do not preach it aright, yet they say many things which border upon the truth, and by which God *sometimes* raises the gratitude and comforts of some of his people; over-ruling Calvin's mistakes to their consolation, as he over-ruled to our comfort the high-priest's dreadful sentence, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people." Never did a prophet preach the atonement more clearly than Caiaphas does in these words. Just so do pious Calvinists preach the election of grace, and in the same manner is their preaching over-ruled to the comfort of some.

But alas! if this confused method of preaching election is indirectly helpful to a few, is it not directly pernicious to multitudes, whom it tempts to rise to the presumption "of Mr. Fulsome," or to sink into the despair of Francis Spira? Besides, would not doubting Christians be sufficiently cheered by the scriptural doctrine of our election, as it is held forth in the Essay on Scripture-Calvinism? Are those liquors best, which are made strong and heady by intoxicating, and poisonous ingredients? Cannot the doctrine of our gratuitous election in Christ be comfortable, unless it be adulterated with Antinomianism, Fatalism, Manicheism, and a reprobation, which *necessarily* drags most of our friends and neighbours into the bottomless pit? And might we not so preach our judicial election by Christ, and so point out the greatness of the helps which the gospel affords us to make this election sure, as to excite the careless to diligence, without driving them upon the fatal rocks, by which the Solifidian-Babel is surrounded?

From the preceding remarks it follows, that the error of rigid Calvinists centers in the denial of that evangelical liberty, whereby all men, under various dispensations of grace, may, *without necessity*, chuse life in the day of their initial salvation. And the error of rigid Arminians consists in not paying a cheerful homage to redeeming grace, for all the li-

by which we are raised so far above the dispensations of the Jews and heathens :—A precious and exalted election, or predestination, in which St. Paul, and the primitive Christians could never sufficiently glory, (as appears by Eph. i. 2, 3,) and of which it is almost as wicked to be ashamed, as it is to be ashamed of Christ himself. Nay, to slight our *election of grace*,—our *election in Christ*, is to be ashamed of our evangelical crown, which is more inexcusable, than to blush at our evangelical cross.

Hence it appears, that the genuine tendency of Pelagius's error, towards which *rigid* Arminians lean too much, is to make us [Christians] fight against God's distinguishing love to us ; or, at least, to hide from us " the riches of the [peculiar] grace, wherein God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he proposed in himself, when he predestinated us, according to the counsel of his grace, and the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his [peculiar] grace, wherein he made us accepted in the Beloved [and his dispensation,] that we should be to the praise of his glory : " i. e. that *we* [Christians] should *shew forth the praises* of his distinguishing mercy, and glorify him for bestowing upon *us* those evangelical favours, from which he still reprobates so many myriads of our fellow-creatures.

O Pelagianism, thou wretched, levelling system, how can we, *Christians*, sufficiently detest thee, for thus robbing *us* of the peculiar comforts arising from the election of grace, which so eminently distinguishes us from Jews, Turks, and Heathens ! And how can we sufficiently decry thee, for robbing, by this means, our Sovereign Benefactor of the praise of the glory of his grace ! Were it not for Pelagian unbelief, which makes us regardless of the comforts of our gratuitous *election in Christ*, and for whims of Calvinian reprobation, which damp or destroy these comforts ; all *Christians* would always triumph in Christ ; and, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in the vocation

berty and power which we have to chuse life, and to work righteousness since the Fall. Did the followers of Calvin see the necessary connexion there is, between the *freedom of our will*, and the *distributive justice* of God our *Judge*, they would instantly renounce the errors of *calvinian necessity*, and *rigid bound-will*. And did the rigid followers of Arminius discover the inseparable union there is since the Fall, between our *free-agency to good*, and the *free, redeeming grace* of God our *Saviour*, they would readily give up the errors of pharisaical *self-sufficiency*, and *rigid free-will*.

To avoid equally these two extremes, we need only follow the Scripture-doctrine of *free-will restored* and *assisted by free grace*. According to this doctrine, in order to repent, believe, or obey, we stand in need of a talent of power *to will and to do*. God of his *good pleasure*, gives us this talent for Christ's sake: and our liberty consists in *not* being *necessitated* to make a good or bad use of this talent, to the end of our life. But we must remember, that, as this precious talent comes *entirely* from redeeming grace, so the *right* use of it is *first* of redeeming grace, and *next* of our own *unnecessitated* [though assisted] free-will: Whereas the *wrong* use of it is of our own choice *only*;—an *unnecessitated* choice, which constitutes us legally *punishable*; as our *unnecessitated* choice of offered life, [through God's gracious appointment] constitutes us evangelically *rewardable*.

Hence it follows, that our accepted time, or day of salvation begun, has but one cause, namely the mercy of God in Christ: whereas our continued and eternal salvation has two causes. The *first* of which is a *primary* and *proper* cause, namely, *The mercy of God in Christ*: The *second* is a *secondary* or *improper* cause, or, if you please, a *condition*; namely, *The works of faith*. Nor do some Calvinists scruple, any more than we, to call these works *a cause*, improperly speaking. Only like physicians, who write their prescriptions in Latin, to keep their ignorant patients in the dark, they call it *Causa sine qua non*; that is,

vocation wherewith they are called, they would thank God for his unspeakable gift. They would shout electing love as loudly as Zelotes, but not in the unnatural, unscriptural, barbarous, damnatory sense, in which he does it. They would not say, "*Why me, Lord? Why me?*" Why am I absolutely appointed to *eternal justification*, and *finished salvation*, let me do what I will; till irresistible free-grace necessitates me to leave my sins, and go to heaven; whilst most of my neighbours [poor creatures!] are absolutely appointed to eternal wickedness, and finished damnation, let them do what they *can*; till necessitating free-wrath makes them draw back to perdition, that they may be eternally damned?"---But with what charitable and wondering gratitude, they would cry out, "*Why us, Lord? Why us?*" Why are *we* [Christians] predestinated and elected to the blessings of the *full* gospel of Christ, from which Enoch, the man who walked with thee, — Abraham, the man whom thou calledst thy *friend*, — Moses, the man who talked with thee face to face, — David, the man after thy own heart, — Daniel, the man greatly beloved, — and John the Baptist, the man who excelled all the Jewish Prophets, were every one reprobated?"

In such evangelical strains as these, should Christians express before God their peculiar gratitude, for their peculiar election and calling: and then, running to each other, with hearts and mouths full of evangelical congratulations, they should say, as the Apostle did to Timothy, "God hath saved us [Christians] and called us with a holy [christian] calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us [Christians] in Christ Jesus, before the world began, [when God planned the various dispensations of his grace] but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" [of Christ, a precious, perfect gospel, with which he has blessed us, as well as our neighbours, who are ungrateful enough to put it from them,] 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. In a word,

in plain English, "*A cause*, which, if it be absent, "absolutely hinders an effect from taking place." Thus a mother is not the primary cause of her child's conception, but *causa sine qua non*; that is, such a cause as, if it had been wanting, would have absolutely prevented his being conceived.

If the Calvinists will speak the truth in Latin, I will speak it in plain English. And therefore, standing up still as a witness of the marriage between *prevenient Free-grace*, and *obedient Free-will*, [an evangelical marriage this, which I have proved in the *Scripture-Scales*;] I assert, upon the arguments contained in this two-fold Essay, that our eternal salvation depends, *first*, on *God's free-grace*; and *secondly*, on *our practical submission* to the doctrines of *grace and justice*; or, if you please, on our making our election of *grace and justice* sure by faith and its works.

To be a little more explicit: Our *day of salvation* begun, is *merely of free grace*, and prevents all faith and works; since all saving faith, and all good works, flow from a beginning of free salvation. But this is not the case with our *continued and eternal salvation*: for *this* salvation depends upon the concurrence of two causes; the *first* of which is *prevenient and assisting free grace*, which I beg leave to call the *father-cause*; and the *second* is *submissive and obedient free-will*, which I take the liberty to call the *mother-cause*. And I dare say, that the Pelagians will as soon find on earth an adult man, who came into this world without a *father*,; and that the Calvinists will as soon find one who was born without a *mother*, as they will find an *adult* person in heaven, who came there without the concurrence of *free-grace* and *free-will*, which I beg leave to call the *paternal* and *maternal causes* of our *eternal* salvation. And therefore, whilst the *rigid* Arminians and the *rigid* Calvinists make two partial, solitary, barren gospels, by parting mercy and justice,—*free-grace* and *free-will*; let Bible-christians stand up, in theory and practice, for the one entire gospel of Christ. Let them marry preventing and assisting *Free-grace*, with prevented and assisted *Free-will*: so shall they

word, they should all say to their brethren in *the election of* [Christian] *grace*: “Blessed be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ, in whom, tho’ now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice; receiving the end of your [Christian] faith, even the [Christian] salvation of your souls: of which salvation the Prophets enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the [Christian] grace that should come unto you:---unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us [Christians] they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into,” 1 Pet. i. 8, &c. *Unto him therefore, that so peculiarly loved us, as to elect and call us into his Christian, reformed Church, which he hath purchased with his own blood; [peculiarly redeeming it from Heathenish ignorance, Jewish bondage, and Popish superstition]---*“Unto him, (I say) that thus loved us [reformed Christians] and washed us from our sins [not by the blood of lambs, and heifers, as Aaron washed the Jews, but] by his own blood, and hath made us, [who believe] kings and priests to God and his Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever,” Rev. i. 5, 6. Acts xx. 28.

But while reformed Christians express thus their joy and gratitude, for their *election* to this peculiar salvation; they should not forget to guard this comfortable doctrine, in as anti-solifidian a manner as St. Paul and St. Peter did, when they said to their fellow-elect: “If every transgression and disobedience [against the gospel of Jewish salvation] received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation [as that] which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord” Jesus, and his Apostles!—“Wherefore the rather, brethren---[partakers of the heavenly calling in Christ, who is the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, or dispensation] give diligence to make your [high] calling and [distinguish-

they consistently hold the two gospel-axioms, and evangelically maintain the doctrines of *grace* and *justice*, which are all suspended on the *partial* election and reprobation of distinguishing grace, and on the *impartial* election and reprobation of remunerative justice.

Till we do this, we shall spoil the gospel, by confounding the dispensations of divine grace; we shall grieve those, whom God has not grieved, and comfort those, whom God would not have comforted; we shall involve the truth in clouds of darkness; and availing ourselves of that darkness, we shall separate what God has joined, and join what he has separated; causing the most unnatural divisions and monstrous mixtures, and doing in the *doctrinal* world what the fallen Corinthian did in the *moral*, when he tore his mother from his father's bosom, and made her his own incestuous wife. In a word, we shall tear the impartial election of justice from the partial election of grace; and, according to our Pelagian or Augustinian taste, we shall espouse the one, and fight against the other. If we embrace *only* the election of *impartial justice*, we shall propagate proud, dull, and uncomfortable Pelagianism. And if we embrace *only* the election of *partial grace*, we shall propagate wanton Antinomianism, and wanton cruelty, or absolute election to, and absolute reprobation from, *eternal life*. We shall generate the conceits of *finished salvation* and *finished damnation*, which are the upper and lower parts of the doctrinal Syren, whom Dr. Crisp mistook for the gospel;—the head and tail of the unevangelical *chimera*, which Calvin supposed to have sprung from *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*. But if we *equally* receive the election of grace and that of justice, we shall have the whole truth, as it is in Jesus;—the chaste woman who stands in heaven clothed with the sun, and having the moon, [Pelagian changes, and Calvinian innovations,] under her feet. Nor will candid Christians be offended at her having *two breasts*, to give her children *the sincere milk of the word*; and *two arms*, to defend herself against *Pelagianism* and *Calvinism*, the obstinate

ing] election sure: for, if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" [into the aggravated ruin, which awaits the neglecters of so great salvation.] Heb. ii. 2, 3. iii. 1. 2 Pet. i. 10.

Should a rigid Arminian say, "I cannot reconcile your doctrine of partial grace with divine goodness and equity, and therefore I cannot receive it. Why should not God bear with *all men*, as long as he did with *Manasseh*? With *all nations*, as long as he did with the *Jews*? And with *all churches*, as long as he does with the church of *Rome*?" I answer:

Mercy may lengthen out her cords on *particular* occasions, to display her boundless extent. But if she did so on *all* occasions, she would countenance sin, and pour oil on the fire of wickedness. If God displayed the same goodness and long-suffering towards *all* sinners, churches, and nations; then *all* sinners would be spared, till they had committed as many atrocious crimes as *Manasseh*, who filled Jerusalem with blood and witchcraft. *All* fallen churches would be tolerated, till they had poisoned the gospel-truth with as many errors, as the church of *Rome* imposes upon her votaries. And *all* corrupted nations would not only be preserved, till they had actually *sacrificed their sons and daughters to devils*; but also till they had an opportunity to *kill the Prince of Life*, coming in person to gather them, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. So universal a mercy as this, would be the greatest cruelty to myriads of men, and instead of setting off divine justice, would for a time lay it under a total eclipse.

Besides, according to this *partial*, this *levelling* scheme, God would have been obliged to make all men *kings*, as *Manasseh*;---all churches *christian*, as the church of *Rome*;---and all people his *peculiar people*, as the Jewish nation. But even then, *distinguishing grace* would not have been abolished; unless God had made all men *archangels*, all churches like the *triumphant* church, and all nations like the *glorified* nation which inhabits the heavenly Canaan. So monstrous are the absurdities, which result from the leveling scheme of

obstinate errors, which attack her on the right hand and on the left. She has put forth her two arms in this two-fold Essay; and, if her adversaries do not resist her, as the Jews did Stephen by stopping their ears, it is to be hoped, that some of them will impartially renounce the errors of heated Pelagius and heated Augustine, and will honour Christ both as their *Saviour* and their *Judge*, by equally embracing the doctrines of *Grace*, and the doctrines of *Justice*.

END OF THE SECOND ESSAY.

VOL. IV.

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men, who laugh at the doctrine of the gospel-dispensations; and of those who will not allow divine sovereignty and supreme wisdom, to dispense unmerited favours as they please; and to deal out their talents with a variety, which, upon the whole, answers the most excellent ends; as displaying best the excellency of a government, where Sovereignty, Mercy, and Justice, wisely agree to sway their common sceptre!

Should a Pelagian leveller refuse to yield to these arguments, under pretence that "They lead to the Calvinian doctrines of *lawless* grace, *free-wrath*, and *absolute* reprobation; I answer this capital objection five different ways.

1. The objector is greatly mistaken: For, holding forth the gratuitous reprobation of partial grace, as the Scriptures do, is the only way to open the eyes of candid Calvinists, to keep the simple from drinking into their plausible errors, and to rescue the multitude of passages, on which they found their absolute gratuitous predestination to eternal life and eternal death. I say it again, rigid Calvinism is the child of *confusion*, and lives merely by sucking its mother's corrupted milk. Would you destroy the brat, only kill its mother: destroy *confusion*: *divide the word of God aright*: carry gospel-light into the center of the dark womb, where that monstrous error has been conceived; and lead the rigid predestinarians to the truth,---the delightful truth, whence their error has been derived, by the mistake or sleight of men, and by the cunning craftiness whereby the spirit of error lies in wait to deceive, and you will destroy the *antinomian* election, and the *cruel* reprobation which pass for gospel. In order to this, you strike at those serpents with the swords of your mouths, and cry out, "Absurd!--unscriptural!--horrible!--diabolical!" But, by this means, you will never kill one of them: There is but one method to extirpate them---Hold out the *partial election and reprobation* maintained by the sacred writers. Throw your rod, like Moses, amidst the rods of the Magicians. Let it first become a serpent,

pent, which you can take up with pleasure, and safety: display the true *partiality* of divine grace: openly preach the Scripture *election* of grace; and boldly assert the gratuitous *reprobation* of inferior grace. So shall your harmless serpent swallow up the venomous serpent of your adversaries. The true reprobation shall devour the false. Bigotted Calvinists will be confounded, and hide themselves for fear of the truth: and candid Calvinists will see the finger of God, and acknowledge, that your rod is superior to theirs, and that the harmless reprobation of inferior grace, which we preach, has fairly swallowed up the horrible reprobation of free-wrath, which they contend for.

Be neither ashamed nor afraid of our Serpent,---our *Reprobation*. Like Christ, it has not only the wisdom of the serpent, but also the innocency of the dove. You may handle it without danger: Nay, you may put it into your bosom; and, instead of stinging you with despair, and filling you with chilling horror, it will warm your soul with admiration for the *manifold wisdom*, and *variegated goodness* of God; it will make you sharp-sighted in the truth of the gospel, and in the errors of over-doing evangelists. In the light of this truth you will, every where, see a glorious rainbow, where before you saw nothing but a dark cloud.

When our serpent has had this blessed effect, you may take it out of your bosom for external use, and it will become a rod fit to chastise the errors of Pelagius and Augustine;—of Calvin and Socinus. But use it with such gentleness and candor, that all the spectators may see, you do not deal in free-wrath, and that there is as much difference between the gratuitous reprobation, which Calvin and Zanchius hold forth, and the gratuitous reprobation, which our blessed Lord and St. Paul maintain, as there is between the blasted, dry rod of Korah, and the blossoming, fragrant rod of Aaron:—between the bright morning star, *inferior* in light to the sun, and a horribly glaring comet, which draws its fiery tail over the earth, to smite it with an eternal curse, and to drag with merciless necessity a majority of its frightened inhabitants into everlasting burnings.

2. *Our gratuitous reprobation* is not a reprobation from *all* saving grace, as that of the Calvinists: but only from the *superior* blessings of saving grace. It is therefore as contrary to Calvinian reprobation, as *initial salvation* is contrary to *ensured damnation*. It is perfectly consistent with the *free-gift which is come* [in various degrees] *upon all men to justification*. We steadily assert with Christ and St. Paul, that *the saving grace of God hath appeared unto all men*, and that all the reprobates of superior grace, that is, all who are refused *three, four, or five talents* of grace, receive *two*, or at least *one talent* of true and *saving* grace. There never was a spark of Calvinian free-wrath in God against them. They are all redeemed with a temporal redemption. They have all an accepted time, and a day of initial salvation, with sufficient means and helps to *work out their own* [eternal] *salvation* according to their gospel-dispensation. We grant that God does not bestow upon them so many of his gratuitous favours, as he does upon his peculiar people. But if he gives them less, he requires the less of them; for he is too just to insist upon the improvement of *five talents* from those servants, on whom he has bestowed but *one talent*.

To understand this perfectly, distinguish between the two gospel-axioms, or, (if you please) between the doctrines of Grace and the doctrines of Justice. According to the *former*, God, with a *partial* hand, bestows upon us *primary* and *merely gratuitous* favours. And, according to the *latter*, he with an *impartial* hand, imparts to us *secondary* and *remunerative* favours. God's primary, and merely gratuitous favours depend entirely on his *partial* grace: So far all Christians should agree with Calvin, and hold with him the doctrine of *grace*. But God's secondary, remunerative favours, depending on his rewarding grace, conditional promise, and distributive justice, depend of consequence, in some degree, on *our free-agency*: for our *free-will*, by making a bad or a good use of God's *primary favours*, secures to us his righteous punishments or gracious rewards, that is, his *secondary favours*.

favours. And herein all Christians should agree with Arminius. By thus joining the peculiar excellencies of Calvinism and Arminianism, we embrace the whole gospel, and keep together the doctrines of *grace* and *justice*, which the partial ministers of the two modern gospels rashly tear asunder.

3. Many of the persons, who have been reprobated from superior favours by partial grace, have been eternally saved by improving their *one talent* of inferior favour; whilst some of those, who had a large share in the election of distinguishing grace, are (it is to be feared) condemned for the non-improvement or abuse of the *five talents*, which that grace had richly bestowed upon them. Who, for example, will dare say, that Melchisedec, Esau, Jonathan and Mephihosheth are damned, because they were reprobated with respect to the peculiar favours, which God bestowed upon Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon? Or that Judas, Ananias, and Sapphira were saved, because they were all three *chosen* and *called* to the highest blessings, which *distinguishing* grace ever bestowed upon mortals, —the blessings of the *new* covenant, which is the *best* covenant of peculiarity; and because Judas was even chosen and called to the high dignity of the Apostleship, in this excellent covenant?

4. We all know how fatal Calvinian reprobation must prove to those who are its miserable subjects. A man may be seized by the plague and live. But if that fatal decree, as drawn by some mistaken theologians, seize on ten thousand souls, not one of them can escape: their hopes of salvation are sacrificed for ever. But the gratuitous election and reprobation, which the scripture maintains, are attended with as favourable circumstances, as the elections and reprobations mentioned in the following illustrations.

Whilst the sun is alone elected to gild the day, the moon, though reprobated from that honour, is nevertheless elected to silver the night, in conjunction with stars of different brightness.—The *holy place* of the temple was reprobated, with respect to the glory of the *Holy of holies*: it contained neither the cherubim nor the mercy-

mercy-seat, nor the ark of the covenant; but yet, it was elected to the honour of containing the golden altar, on which the incense was burned.—The *court of the priests* was reprobated from the honour of containing the *golden* altar, but yet it was freely elected to the honour of containing the *brazen* altar, on which the sacrifices were offered.—As for the *court of the Gentiles*, though it was reprobated from all these honourable peculiarities, yet it was elected to the advantage of leading to the brazen altar; and the Gentiles, who worshipped in this court, not only heard at a distance the music of the priests, and discovered the smoke which ascended from the burnt-offerings; but, when they looked through the open gates, they had a *distant* view of the brazen altar, of the fire which descended from heaven upon it, and of the Lamb which was daily consumed in the fire. And therefore, they were no more absolutely reprobated from all interest in the daily sacrifice, than Caiaphas was absolutely elected to an inadmissible interest in the daily oblation, in which his near attendance at the altar, gave him the first right. Once more, the Tribe of Levi was elected to the honour of doing the service of the sanctuary; an honour, from which eleven tribes were reprobated. And, in that chosen tribe, the family of Aaron was elected to the priesthood, and high-priesthood: peculiar dignities, from which the sons of Moses himself were all reprobated. Now, if it would be absurd to deduce calvinian reprobation, and unavoidable damnation, from *these* elections; is it reasonable to deduce them (as the Calvinists do) from a gratuitous election to the distinguishing blessings of the Jewish and Christian Covenant?

5. The difference between the partial reprobation, which the Holy Ghost asserts, and that which Calvin maintains, is so important, that I beg leave to make the reader sensible of it by one more illustration. God's partial reprobation, which flows from his *inferior* favour, and not from *free-wrath*, may be compared: 1. To the king's *refusing* a regiment of foot the advantage of riding on horseback,—A free prerogative,

gative, which he grants to a regiment of dragoons : And, 2. To his *denying* to common soldiers the rank of captains ; and to captains, the rank of colonels. But Calvin's partial reprobation, which flows from free-wrath, and has nothing to do with any degree of saving grace, may be compared to the king's placing a whole regiment of marines in such dreadful circumstances by sea and land, that all the soldiers, and officers, shall be sooner or later *necessitated* to desert, and to have their brains blown out for desertion : a distinguishing severity this, which will set off the distinguishing favour, which his majesty bears to a company of favourite grenadiers, on whom he has absolutely set his everlasting love, and who cannot be shot for desertion, because they are tied to their colours by *necessity*,—an adamant chain, which either keeps them from running away, or irresistibly pulls them back to their colours as often as they desert. Thus all the marines wear the badge of *absolute free-wrath* : not one of them can possibly escape being shot : and all the grenadiers wear the badge of *absolute free-grace* : not one of them can possibly be shot, let them behave in ever so treacherous a manner, for ever so long a time. But alas ! my illustration fails in the main point. When a soldier, who has been *necessitated* to desert, is shot, his punishment is over in a moment ; but when a reprobate, who has been *necessitated* to sin on, is damned, he must go into a fire unquenchable, where the smoke of his torment shall ascend for ever and ever.

By these various answers candid Arminians will, I hope, be convinced, that [altho' Calvinian reprobation is unscriptural, irrational, and cruel,] the *gratuitous* election and reprobation maintained in the preceding pages is truly evangelical, and, of consequence, perfectly consistent with the dictates of sound reason and pure morality.

END OF THE FIRST ESSAY.



The RECONCILIATION, &c.

S E C T I O N V.

INFERENCES from the two-fold Essay.

IF the preceding Essays on *Bible-Calvinism*, and *Bible-Arminianism*, are agreeable to Scripture and Reason, I may sum up their contents in some inferences, the justness of which will, I humbly hope, recommend itself to the reader's good understanding and candor.

I. The doctrine of a *gratuitous, partial, and personal* election and reprobation, is truly scriptural. So far Calvinism is nothing but the gospel. On the other hand, the doctrine of a *judicial, impartial, and conditional* election and reprobation, is perfectly scriptural also: and so far Arminianism is nothing but the gospel. For, as light flows from the sun, so Bible-Calvinism does from the *first* gospel-axiom, [*Our Salvation is of God:*] And as a river flows from its source, so Bible-Arminianism does from the *second* gospel-axiom, [*Our destruction is of ourselves.*] Confounding these two axioms and elections, or denying one of them, has greatly injured the doctrines of grace and justice, darkened all the gospel dispensations, and bred the misunderstandings, which formerly subsisted between the followers of Augustine and those of Pelagius, and now subsist between the Calvinists and the Arminians.

II. It is absurd to ridicule the doctrine of a two-fold *election*, under pretence that it flows from, what some people are pleased to call, "*the flights of my romantic pen;*" since the full tide of Scripture evidently flows in two channels; an *election* of *partial grace*, according to which God grants or denies his primary favours, as a *Sovereign Benefactor*; and an *election* of *impartial justice*, according to which he
 bellows.

bestows rewards, or inflicts punishments as a *Supreme Judge*.

III. Nor does this doctrine deserve to be called *new*, since it is so manifestly found in the *oldest* book in the world. An objection drawn from the seeming novelty of these observations, would be peculiarly unreasonable in the mouth of a member of the Church of England; because she indirectly points out the distinction which I contend for. That our Reformers had some insight into the doctrine of a *partial election* of grace in Christ, and of an *impartial election* of justice thro' Christ, appears, I think, from the standard writings of our Church. The beginning of our 17th Article evidently countenances our *unconditional election of grace in Christ*, whilst the latter part secures the doctrine of our *conditional election of justice through Christ*. Few Calvinists will be so prejudiced as to deny, that our church guards the doctrines, [and consequently the election,] of *justice*, in this important paragraph: "Furthermore we must receive God's promises in such wise as they are generally set forth in holy Scripture." — Now the promises being *generally* set forth in a *conditional* manner in God's Word, it is evident, that our church, in giving us this caution and charge, intends to secure the *conditionality* of the *election of justice*; the *conditionality* of this election being inseparably connected with the *conditionality* of God's *promises*; just as the *conditionality* of the *reprobation of justice*, is inseparably connected with the *conditionality* of God's threatenings.

In conformity to this doctrine our Church assures us, in her Homily on Good Works, that "If he [*the elected thief*] had lived, and not regarded faith and the works thereof, he should have *lost his salvation again*:" Or, which comes to the same thing, he should have *forfeited his election* of partial grace, by losing the election of impartial justice. Our Liturgy speaks the same language, witness that prayer in the office of baptism; "Grant that these children [or persons] now to be baptized, &c. *may ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children, thro'*

Jesus

Jesus Christ our Lord." That is, Grant that these persons, who are now admitted into thy Christian church according to the election of grace in Christ, may so believe and obey, as never to forfeit the privileges of this election, and ever to share in the privileges of thy *faithful* children, who are *elect* in the full sense of the word; the obedient being the only persons who keep their part in the election of grace, and secure a share in the election of justice. Such complete elect are the sheep which hear Christ's voice and follow his steps: None shall pluck them out of his hands. The talent of their election of grace shall never be taken from them: They shall all hear these cheering words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant:" They shall all *enter into the joy of their Lord*, and eternally share in the double privileges of the election of grace and justice.

IV. The gratuitous, partial election and reprobation which the Scriptures maintain, chiefly refer to three grand Covenants, which God has made with man, and to the greater or less blessings which belong to these covenants. The *first* of these covenants takes in *all mankind*; for it was made with sinned Adam after the Fall, and confirmed to preserved Noah after the Flood; and every body knows that Adam and Noah are the two general parents of *all mankind*. The *second* of these covenants was made with Abraham, ratified to Isaac and Jacob, ordained in the hands of Moses, and ordered in all things and peculiarly ensured to David. This covenant takes in the first peculiar People of God, or the Jewish nation; and includes more particularly David and his family, of which the Messiah was to be born. The *third* of these covenants was made with Christ, as the *Captain of our Salvation*, and the *High-Priest of our Profession*, or dispensation; and takes in God's *most peculiar People*, or the *Christian Church*. The first of these three covenants is *general*: The other are two covenants of *peculiarity*; the former of which is frequently called in scripture the *old Covenant*, or the *old Testament*, whilst the latter is spoken of by the name of

the new Covenant, or new Testament. The two first of these covenants were sealed with the blood of sacrificed beasts or circumcised men, but the last was sealed with the blood of the Lamb of God. Hence our Lord termed it, *The new covenant in my Blood*, Luke xxii. 20; calling his blood, *My Blood of the new Testament*, Matt. xxvi. 28. Hence also the Apostle observes, that *Jesus was made a Surety of a better Testament*, and that *he is the Mediator of the new Testament*, which is far superior to that which was ordained by angels in the hand of Moses, the Mediator of the Old Testament. See Heb. vii. 22. ix. 15. xii. 24. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Gal. iii. 19.

V. These three grand Covenants give birth to *Gentilism*, *Judaism*, and *Christianity*;—three divine religions or dispensations of grace; from the confounding of which, partial divines have formed the schemes of religion, which I beg leave to call *rigid Arminianism*, and *rigid Calvinism*.

VI. The error of *rigid Arminians*, with respect to those three grand covenants, consists in not *sufficiently* distinguishing them, and in not maintaining with *sufficient* plainness, that they are all covenants of redeeming grace; that *Judaism* is the *old covenant* of partial, redeeming grace; and that *Christianity* is the *new covenant* of partial, redeeming grace.

VII. The error of *rigid Calvinists* consists in confounding the covenants of *creating* and *redeeming* grace, and in reducing them all to two; the one a covenant of *non-redemption*, which they call *the law*; and the other a covenant of *particular redemption*, which they call *the gospel*. To form the first of these unscriptural covenants, they jumble the *Creator's law* given to *innocent* man in paradise, with the *Redeemer's law* given to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. Nor do they see, that these two laws, or covenants, are as different from each other, as a covenant made with *sinless* man, without a priest, a sacrifice, and a mediator, is different from a covenant made with *sinful* man, and ordained in the hand of a Mediator, with an interceding priest and atoning sacrifices, Gal. iii. 19.

Secondly, they suppose, that all men now born into the world are under the imaginary *law*, that is, under the unscriptural, confused mixture of the Adamic law of innocence, and of the Mosaic law of Sinai:—An error this, which is so much the more glaring, as no man [except Christ] was ever placed under the law or covenant of innocence, since the Lord entered into a *mediatorial* covenant with fallen Adam: And no man has been put under the Law or Covenant of Moses, from the time that covenant has been abolished and done away in Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 14. which happened when Christ said, *It is finished*, and when *the veil of the temple* [a type of the Jewish dispensation] *was rent from top to bottom*.

So capital an error as that of the rigid Calvinists about the *law*, could not but be productive of a similar error about the *gospel*. And therefore when they had formed the merciless covenant which they call *the law*, by confounding the precept and curse of the law of innocence, with the precept and curse of the law of Moses abstracted from all mediatorial promises;—when they had done this, it was natural enough for them to mistake and confound the promises of the three grand covenants, which I have just mentioned: I mean the *one general* covenant of grace, made with Adam and Noah; and the *two particular* covenants of grace, the former of which was ordained in the hands of Moses the servant of God; and the latter in the hands of Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Hence it is, that overlooking the promises of the *general* covenant of grace, and considering only the promises of Judaism and Christianity, which are the two grand covenants of *peculiar* grace, the rigid Calvinists fancy that there is but * *one* covenant of grace;—that this covenant is *particular*;—that it was made with Christ only;—that it was a covenant of *unchangeable* favour on the part

* *Zelotes* will possibly laugh at the insinuation, that there is more than *one* covenant of grace. If he does, I will ask him, if a *covenant of grace* is not the same thing as a *covenant of promise*; and if St. Paul does not expressly mention *The Covenants of Promise*, Eph. ii. 12, and a *better covenant*, which was *established upon better promises*, than the *first* (particular) covenant of promise? Heb. viii. 6, 7.

part of the Father, of *eternal* redemption on the part of the Son, and of *irresistible* sanctification on the part of the Holy Ghost;—that some men, called *the elect*, are absolutely and eternally interested in this covenant;—that other men, called *the reprobates*, are absolutely and everlastingly excluded from it;—that *finished salvation through Christ*, is the unavoidable lot of the fortunate elect, who are supposed to be under the absolute blessing of a lawless gospel;—and that *finished damnation thro' Adam*, is the unavoidable portion of the unfortunate reprobates, who are supposed to be from their mother's womb, under the absolute, irreversible, everlasting curse of a merciless law, and of an absolutely Christless covenant.

VII. We may say to rigid Calvinists, and rigid Arminians, what God said once to the Jewish priests, *Ye have been partial in the law*, Mal. ii. 9. Nor is it possible to reduce their two *partial* systems to the genuine and full standard of the gospel, otherwise than by consistently guarding the Calvinian doctrines of *Grace*, by the Arminian doctrines of *Justice*; and the Arminian doctrines of *Justice* by the Calvinian doctrines of *Grace*: When those two *partial* gospels are joined in a scriptural manner, they do not destroy, but balance and illustrate each other. Take away from them human additions, or supply their deficiencies, and you will restore them to their original importance. They will again form the spiritual weights of the sanctuary, which are kept for public use in the sacred Records, as I humbly hope I have made appear in my *Scripture-Scales*.

VIII. To guard the gospel against the errors of the rigid Calvinists and the rigid Arminians, we need then only shew that God, as *Creator*, *Redeemer*, and *Sanctifier*, has a right to be, and actually is, *partial* in the distribution of *grace*; but that as *Lawgiver*, *Governor*, and *Judge*, he is and ever will be, *impartial* in the distribution of *justice*. Or, which comes to the same thing, we need only restore the doctrine of God's various laws, or covenants of *Grace* to its scriptural lustre. Rigid Calvinism will be lost in Bible-Arminian-

ism, and rigid Arminianism will be lost in Bible-Calvinism, as soon as Protestants will pay a due regard to the following truths. 1. God, for Christ's sake, dissolved [with respect to us] the covenant of paradisaical innocence, when he turned man out of a forfeited Paradise into this cursed world, for having broken that covenant. Then it was that man's Creator first became his *Redeemer*: Then mankind was placed under the *first mediatorial* covenant of promise. Then our Maker gave to Adam, and to all the human species, which was in Adam's loins, a *Saviour*, who is called *the Seed of the Woman,—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, who was to make the *paradisaical* covenant honourable by his *sinless* obedience. 2. Accordingly, "Christ by the grace of God, tasted death for every man;" purchasing for *all men* the privileges of the *general* covenant of grace, which God made with Adam, and ratified to Noah, the second *general* parent of mankind. 3. Christ, according to the *peculiar* predestination and election of God, *peculiarly* tasted death for *the Jews*, his *first* chosen nation and *peculiar* people; purchasing for them all the privileges of the *peculiar* covenant of grace, which the Scriptures call *the old covenant* of peculiarity. 4. That Christ according to the *most peculiar* predestination and election of God, *most peculiarly* tasted death for *the Christians*, his *second* chosen nation and *most peculiar* people; procuring for them the invaluable privileges of his own most precious gospel, *by which he has brought life and immortality to [meridian] light*; and has richly supplied the defects of the *Noahic* and *Mosaic* dispensations; the first of which is noted for its *darkness*, and the second for its *veil* and *shadow*. And lastly, that with respect to these *peculiar* privileges, Christ is said to have *peculiarly* given himself for the [Christian] church, that he might cleanse it with the [baptismal] washing of water by the word, Eph. v. 26; *peculiarly purchasing it by his own blood*, Acts xx. 28; and *delivering it from heathenish darkness*, and Jewish shadows, that it might be *redeemed from all iniquity*, and that his Christian people might be

be a *peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works*, even above the *Jews who fear God*, and the *Gentiles who work righteousness*, Tit. ii. 14.

IX. As soon as we understand the nature of the *covenants of promise*, and the doctrine of the dispensations of divine grace, we have a key to open the mystery of God's gratuitous election and reprobation. We can easily understand, that, when a man is elected *only* to the *general* blessings of Gentilism, he is reprobated from the blessings *peculiar* to Judaism and Christianity. And that when he is elected to the blessings of Christianity, he is elected to inherit the substance of all the covenanted blessings of God; because the highest dispensation takes in the inferior ones, as the authority of a colonel includes that of a lieutenant and a captain; or as meridian light takes in the dawn of day, and the morning-light.

X. Our election from Gentilism or Judaism to the blessings of Christianity, is an *election of peculiar grace*. It is to be hoped, that few Arminians are so unreasonable as to think, that God might not have deprived us of *New Testament*-blessings as he did Moses; and of *Old Testament*-blessings, as he did Noah; leaving us under the general covenant of Gentilism, as he did that patriarch.

XI. When God gratuitously elected and called the Jews to be his *peculiar people*, and *chosen nation*, he reprobated all the other nations, that is, all the Gentiles, from that honour:—An unspeakable honour this, which the Jews thought God had appropriated to them for ever. But when Christ formed his Church, he elected to its privileges the Gentiles as well as the Jews: insomuch that to enter into actual possession of all the blessings of christianity, when a Jew or Gentile is called by the preaching of the gospel of Christ, nothing more is required of him, than to make his free calling and election sure by *the obedience of faith*. That God had a right to extend his election of *peculiar grace* to the *believing* Gentiles, and to reprobate the *unbelieving* Jews, is the point which St. Paul chiefly labours in, Rom. ix. And that the privileges

of this election, which God has extended to the Gentiles, are immensely great, is what the Apostle informs us of, in the three first chapters of his Epistle to the Ephesians.

XII. Our election to Christianity and its peculiar blessings, being *entirely gratuitous*, and preceding every work of christian obedience; nothing can be more absurd and unevangelical, than to rest it upon works of any sort. Hence it is, that when St. Paul, maintains the partial *election of richest grace*, he says, speaking of the Jews, *There is [among them] a remnant according to the election of grace*: i. e. "There is a considerable number of Jews, who, like myself, make their gratuitous calling and election to the blessings of Christianity sure through faith." For whenever there were Jews and Gentiles, the Jews had the honour of the *first* call: So far was God from absolutely reprobating them from his *Christian covenant of promise*! If you ask, why the Apostle calls this election to the blessings of christianity *the election of grace*, I answer, that it *peculiarly* deserves this name, because it is both *peculiarly gracious* and *amazingly gratuitous*. And therefore, adds the Apostle, "If this election is by [mere] grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more [mere] grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of [mere] grace: otherwise work is no more work," Rom. xi. 5, 6.*

XIII. If the rigid Arminians are culpable for being ashamed of God's evangelical partiality, for overlook-

* My Light and theological Accuracy, have, (I hope) increased since I wrote the *Equal Check*. I did not then *clearly* see, that *the election of grace*, of which the Apostle speaks in this verse, is our *gratuitous* election to the blessings of *Christianity*, as it is opposed to *Judaism*, and not merely as it is opposed to the *Adamic covenant of works*. I had not then sufficiently considered these words of St. John: "The law [i. e. the Jewish dispensation] came by Moses, but grace and truth, [i. e. a *more gracious*, and *brighter* dispensation] came by Jesus Christ." Hence it follows, that this expression, *the election of grace*, [when a sacred writer speaks of the Jewish and of the Christian dispensations, which St. Paul does throughout this part of his Epistle to the Romans,] means our *gratuitous election to Christianity*, or to the peculiar blessings of *the gospel of Christ*.

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ing his distinguishing love, and for casting a veil over his election of grace; the rigid Calvinists are no less blameable for turning that holy election into an unscriptural and absolute election, which leaves no room for the propriety of making our election sure, and is attended with an unscriptural and absolute reprobation, as odious as *free-wrath*, and as dreadful as *ensured damnation*.

This merciless and absolute reprobation is the fundamental error of the *rigid* Papists, as well as of the *rigid* Calvinists. Take away this Popish principle, "There is no salvation out of the church: a damning reprobation rests upon all who die out of her pale;" and down comes *persecuting* Popery. There is no pretext left to force Popish errors upon men by fire, faggot, or massacres; and the burning of heretics gives place to the charity, which hopeth all things. Again: Take away this principle of the rigid Calvinists; "There is absolutely no redemption, no salvation, but for a remnant according to the *new* covenant, and the election of God's partial grace; an absolute reprobation, and an unavoidable damnation, rest upon all mankind besides:" Take away, I say, this principle of the rigid Calvinists, and down comes *unscriptural* Calvinism, with all the contentions which it perpetually begets.

XIV. The rigid Papists, who set up as defenders of the doctrines of *justice*, and yet hold *Popish reprobation*, are full as inconsistent as the rigid Calvinists, who set up as defenders of the doctrines of *grace*, and yet hold *Calvinian reprobation*: for *Popish* and *Calvinian reprobation* equally confound the gospel-dispensations, and leave divine *justice* and *grace* neither root nor branch, with respect to all those, who die unacquainted with Christianity, that is, with respect to far the greatest part of mankind.

XV. To conclude: Milton says somewhere, "There is a certain scale of *duties*, a certain hierarchy of upper and lower *commands*, which for want of studying in right order, all the world is in confusion." What that great man said of the *scale* of duties and *commands*,

mands, may with equal propriety be affirmed of the *scale* of evangelical truths, and the hierarchy of upper and lower *gospel-dispensations*. For want of studying them in right order, all the church is in confusion. The most effectual, not to say the *only* way of ending these theological disputes of Christians, and destroying the errors of *levelling* Pelagianism, *antinomian* Calvinism, *confused* Arminianism, and *reprobating* Popery, is to restore primitive harmony and fulness to the partial gospels of the day; which can be done with ease, among candid and judicious enquirers after truth, by placing the doctrine of the *Dispensations* in its scripture-light; and by holding forth the doctrines of *grace* and *justice* in all their evangelical brightness. This has been attempted in the *Two-fold Essay*, from which these inferences are drawn. Whether this well-meaning attempt shall be successful with respect to *one*, is a question, which *thy* reason and candor, gentle Reader, are called upon to decide.

S E C T I O N VI.

The **PLAN** of a general Reconciliation, and Union, between the moderate Calvinists and the candid Arminians.

BY the junction of the doctrines of *grace* and *justice*, which, I hope, is effected in the *Two-fold Essay* on *Bible-Calvinism* and *Bible-Arminianism*, the gospel of Christ recovers its original fulness and glory, and the two gospel-axioms are equally secured. For, on the one hand, the *absolute Sovereignty*, and *partial Goodness* of our *Creator* and *Redeemer*, shine as the meridian blaze of day, without casting the least shade upon his Truth and Equity: You have no election of *free-grace* without a reprobation of *free-wrath*. And, on the other hand, the *impartial justice* of our *Governor* and *Judge*, appears like an unspotted sun, whose brightness is perfectly consistent with the transcendent splendor of *free-grace* and distinguishing love. The

elect

elect receive the reward of the inheritance with feelings of pleasing wonder, and shouts of humble praise. Nor have the reprobates the least ground to say, that the Judge of all the earth does not do right, and that they are lost *merely* because irresistible power *necessitated* them to sin by Adam without remedy, that they might be damned by Christ without possibility of escape. Thus the *gracious* and *righteous* ways of God with man are equally vindicated, and the whole controversy terminates in the following conclusion, which is the ground of the Reconciliation, to which moderate Calvinists and candid Arminians are invited.

Bible-Calvinism, and *Bible-Arminianism*, are two essential, opposite parts of the gospel, which agree as perfectly together, as the two wings of a palace, the opposite ramparts of a regular fortress, and the different views of a fine face, considered by persons who stand, some on the right, and some on the left hand of the beauty, who draws their attention. *Rigid Calvinists** and *rigid Arminians** are both in the wrong; the former, in obscuring the doctrines of *impartial justice*; and the latter, in clouding the doctrines of *partial grace*: But *moderate Calvinists*,* and *candid Arminians*,* are very near each other, and very near the

* *Rigid Calvinists* are persons who hold the Manichean doctrine of absolute necessity, and maintain both an unconditional election of free-grace in Christ, and an unconditional reprobation of free-wrath in Adam. *Moderate Calvinists* are men, who renounce the doctrine of absolute necessity, stand up for the election of free-grace, and are ashamed of the reprobation of free-wrath. *Rigid Arminians* are persons, who will not hear of an unconditional election, make more of free-will than of free-grace, oppose God's gracious sovereignty, deny his partiality, and condemn Calvinism in an unscriptural manner. *Candid Arminians* are people, who mildly contend for the doctrines of Justice, and are willing to hear with candor, what the judicious Calvinists have to say in defence of the doctrines of Grace.

In my preparatory Essay, I have expressed myself as one, who *sometimes* doubts whether Arminius did see the doctrine of election in a clear light. It may be proper to account here for a degree of seeming inconsistency into which this transient doubt has betrayed me. Having been long ill, and at a distance from my books, I have not lately looked into Arminius's works; nor did I ever read them

the truth; the difference there is between them being more owing to confusion, want of proper explanation, and misapprehension of each other's sentiments, than to any real, inimical opposition to the truth, or to one another. And, therefore, they have no more reason to fall out with each other, than masons, who build the opposite wings of the same building; soldiers, who defend the opposite sides of the same fortification; painters, who take different views of the same face; or loyal subjects, who vindicate different, but equally just, claims of their royal master.

Since there is so *immaterial* a difference between the moderate Calvinists, and the candid Arminians; why do they keep at such a distance from each other? Why do they not publicly give one another the right-hand of fellowship, and let all the world know, that

them carefully through, as every one should have done, who *positively* condemns or clears him. And if I have somewhere *positively* said, that he was not clear in the doctrine of *election*, I did it: 1. Because I judged of Arminius's doctrine by that of the Arminians, who seem to me to be in general, (as I have been for years) unacquainted with the distinction between the election of grace and that of justice.—2. Because at the Synod of Dort, the Arminians absolutely refused to debate first the point of *election*, which the Calvinists wanted them to do. Whence I concluded, that Arminius had not placed that point of doctrine in a light strong enough to expel the darkness which rigid Calvinism had spread over it.—And, 3. Because it is generally supposed, that Arminius leaned to the error of Pelagius, who did not do justice to the election of grace. Mr. Bayle, for example, in his life of Arminius says; “Arminius condemned the supralapsarian Beza, and afterwards acknowledged no other election than that which was grounded on the obedience of sinners to the call of God by Jesus Christ.” If this account of Mr. Bayle is just, it is evident, that Arminius, as well as Pelagius, admitted *only* the election of *justice*. However, a candid clergyman, who has read Arminius, assures me, that in some parts of his writings, he does justice to the unconditional election of *grace*. And indeed this election is so conspicuous in the scripture, that it is hard to conceive, it should *never* have been discovered by so judicious a divine as Arminius is said to have been. The difficulty in this matter, is not to meet and salute the truth *now and then*, but to hold her fast, and walk steadily with her, across all the mazes of error. The light of evangelists should not break forth now and then, as a flash of lightning does out of a dark cloud; but it should shine constantly and with increasing lustre; as the light of the unobscured sun,

they are *brethren*, and will henceforth own, love, help, and defend each other as such? That *no essential* difference keeps them asunder, I prove by the following argument.

If candid Arminians will make no material objection to my Essay on Bible-Calvinism; and if judicious Calvinists will not condemn my Essay on Bible-Arminianism as unscriptural; it is evident that the difference between them is *not capital*: and that it arises rather from want of light to see the *whole Truth clearly*, than from an obstinate enmity to any material part of the truth.

Nor is this a sentiment peculiar to myself: I hold it in common with some of the most public defenders of the doctrines of grace and justice. The Arminians will not think that Mr. J. Wesley is partial to the Calvinists: and the professing world is no stranger to Mr. R. Hill's zeal against the Arminians. Nothing can be more opposite than the religious principles of these two gentlemen: nevertheless they both agree to place the doctrines, which distinguish pious Calvinists from pious Arminians, among the *opinions*, which are *not essential* to genuine, vital, practical Christianity. Mr. Wesley in his thirteenth Journal, page 115, says in a letter to a friend, "You have admirably well expressed what I mean by an *opinion*, contradistinguished from an *essential doctrine*. Whatever is compatible with love to Christ, and a work of grace, I term an *opinion*, and certainly the holding *particular election* and *final perseverance* is compatible with these."—What he adds in the next page, is perfectly agreeable to *this* candid concession. "Mr. H— and Mr. N— hold this, and yet I believe these have real christian experience. But if so, this is only an *opinion*: it is not subversive, [here is clear proof to the contrary] of the very foundations of christian experience. It is compatible with love to Christ, and a genuine work of grace: yea, many hold it, at whose feet I desire to be found in the day of the Lord Jesus. If then I oppose this with my whole strength, I am a mere bigot still." As Mr. Wesley candidly grants here, that

persons

persons may hold the Calvinian opinions, which Mr. Hill patronizes, and yet be full of *love to Christ*, and have a genuine *work of grace* on their souls: so Mr. Hill in his late publication, entitled, *A full Answer to the Rev. J. Wesley's Remarks*, page 42, candidly acknowledges, that it is possible to hold Mr. Wesley's Arminian principles, and yet to be *serious, converted, and sound in Christian experience*. His words are: "As for the *serious and converted* part of Mr. Wesley's congregations, as I by no means think it necessary for any to be what are commonly called *Calvinists*, in order that they may be *Christians*, I can most solemnly declare, however they may judge of me, that I love and honour them not a little, as I am satisfied, that many who are muddled in their judgments, are *sound in their experience*." These two quotations do honour to the moderation of the popular preachers, from whose writings they are extracted. May all the pious Arminians and Calvinists abide by their decisions! So shall they find, that nothing parts them but *unessential opinions*; that they are joined by their mutual belief of the *essential doctrines* of the gospel; and therefore, that if they oppose each other with their whole strength, they are "*mere bigots still*."

To conclude this reconciling argument: If there be numbers of holy souls, who are utterly strangers to the peculiarities of rigid Calvinism and rigid Arminianism;—if both the Calvinists and Arminians can produce a cloud of witnesses, that their opinions are consistent with the most genuine piety, and the most extensive usefulness;—if there have been many excellent men, on both sides of the question, who (their opponents being judges) have lived in the work of faith, suffered with the patience of hope, and died in the triumph of love;—and if, at this very day, we can find, among the clergy and laity, Calvinists and Arminians, who adorn their Christian profession by a blameless conduct, and by constant labours for the conversion of sinners, or the edification of saints, and who [the Lord being their helper] are ready to seal the truth of Christianity with their blood;—If this,

I say,

I say, has been, and is still the case; is it not indubitable, that people can be *good Christians*, whether they embrace the opinions of Calvin, or those of Arminius; and by consequence, that neither rigid Calvinism, nor rigid Arminianism, are any *essential* part of Christianity.

And shall we make so much of *non-essentials*, as, on their account, to damp, and perhaps extinguish the flame of *love*, which is the most important of all the *essentials* of Christianity? Alas! what is all faith good for; yea, all faith adorned with the knowledge of all doctrines and mysteries, if it be not attended by charity? It may indeed help us to speak with the tongues of men and angels, to preach like Apostles, and to talk like Seraphs; but, after all, it will leave us mere cyphers, or at best a *sounding brass*, a pompous *nothing*, in the sight of the God of love. And therefore, as we would not keep ourselves out of the kingdom of God, which consists in *love*, *peace*, and *joy*; and as we would not promote the interests of the kingdom of darkness, by carrying the fire of discord in our bosoms, and filling our vessels with the *waters of strife*, which so many foolish virgins prefer to the *oil of gladness*, let us promote *peace* with all our might. Let us remember, that, "In all the churches of the saints, God is the author of peace;" that "his gospel is the gospel of peace;" that "he hath called us to peace;" and that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." Let us "study to be quiet; following peace with all men; and pursuing [especially] those things, which make for peace in the household of faith:" Nor let us turn from the blessed pursuit, till we have attained the blessing offered to peace-makers.

The kingdom of love, peace, and joy, suffereth violence: it cannot be taken and kept, without great and constant endeavours. The violent alone are able to conquer, for it is taken by the force of earnest prayer to God, for his blessing upon our overtures of *peace*; and by the vehemence of importunate requests to our brethren, that they would grant us an interest

in their forgiving love, and admit us, for Christ's sake, to the honour of union, and the pleasure of communion with them. It is an important part of the good fight of faith working by love, to attack the unloving prejudices of our brethren, with a meekness of wisdom, which turneth away wrath; with a patience of hope, which a thousand repulses cannot beat off; with a perseverance of love, which taketh no denial; and with an ardor of love, which floods of contempt cannot abate. May God hasten the time when all the foldiers of Christ shall so learn and practise this part of the Christian exercise, as to overcome the bigotry of their brethren! Nor let us think, that this is impossible: for if the love of Christ has conquered us, why should we despair of its conquering others? And if the unjust judge, who neither feared God, nor regarded man, was nevertheless overcome by the importunity of a poor widow; why should we doubt of overcoming, by the same means, our fellow-Christians, who fear God, rejoice in Christ, regard men, and love their brethren? Let us only convince them by every Christian method, that we are *their* brethren indeed, and we shall find most of them far more ready to return our love, than we have found them ready to return our provocations or indifference.

Should it be asked, What are those Christian methods, by which we could persuade our Calvinian or Arminian brethren, that we are their brethren indeed? I answer, that all these methods center in these few scriptural directions: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." *Love* your opponents, though they should *despitefully use you*. *Bless* them, though they should *curse you*: *pray for them*, though they should *persecute you*. Wait upon them, and *salute them* as brethren, though they should keep at as great a distance from you, as if you were their enemies: "For if you shew love to them who shew love to you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, [who kindly salute you] what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" But treat them as

God treats us: So shall you "be the children of your Father, who is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise, and sendeth his rain upon us all. Be ye therefore perfect, even as he is perfect." No bigot ever observed these gospel-directions. And it is only by observing them, that we can break the bars of party-spirit; and pass from the close confinement of bigotry, into the glorious liberty of brotherly love.

These Scriptures were probably before the eyes of a laborious minister of Christ, when he drew up some years ago, a plan of union among the clergy of the established church, who agree in these essentials: "1. Original sin: 2. Justification by faith: 3. Holiness of heart and life: provided their life be answerable to their doctrines." This plan is as follows. "But what union would you desire among these? Not an union of opinions. They might agree or disagree, touching *absolute decrees* on the one hand, and *perfection* on the other. Not an union in expression. These may still speak of the *imputed righteousness*, and those of the *merits of Christ*. Not an union with regard to outward order. Some may still remain *quite regular*; and some *quite irregular*; and some *partly regular and partly irregular*."—[Not an union of societies. Some, who do not see the need of discipline, may still labour without forming any society at all: Others may have a society, whose members are united by the bands of a *lax* discipline. And others, who have learned by experience that professors can never be kept long together without the help of a *strict* discipline, may strengthen their union with those who are like-minded, by agreeing to observe such rules as appear to them most conducive to the purposes of divine and brotherly love.]—"But these things being as they are, as each is persuaded in his own mind, is it not a most desirable thing, that we should: First, Remove hindrances out of the way? Not judge one another, not envy one another? Not be displeased with one another's gifts or success, even though greater than their own? Not wait for one another's halting; much less wish for it, or rejoice therein? Never speak disrespectfully,

fully, slightly, coldly, or unkindly of each other? Never repeat each other's faults, mistakes or infirmities; much less listen for, and gather them up? Never say or do any thing to hinder each other's usefulness; either directly or indirectly? Is it not a desirable thing, that we should, Secondly, Love as brethren? Think well of, and honour one another? Wish all good, all grace, all gifts, all success, yea rather than our own, to each other? Expect God will answer our wish, rejoice in every appearance thereof, and praise him for it? Readily believe good of each other, as readily as we once believed evil? Speak respectfully, honourably, kindly of each other? Defend each other's character: speak all the good we can of each other: recommend one another, where we have influence: each help the other on in his work, and enlarge his influence by all the means we can?"

I do not see why such a plan might not be, in *some degree*, admitted by all the ministers of the gospel, whether they belong to, or dissent from the establishment. I would extend my brotherly love to *all Christians* in general, but *more* especially to *all protestants*, and *most* particularly to all the protestants of the *established church*,* with whom I am joined by repeated subscriptions to the same articles of religion, by oaths of canonical obedience, by the same religious rites, by the use of the same liturgy, by the same prerogatives, and by the fullest share of civil and religious liberty. But, God forbid, that I should exclude from my brotherly affection, and occasional assistance, any true minister of Christ, because he casts the gospel-net among the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Quakers, or the Baptists! If they will not wish me good luck in the name of the Lord, I will do it to them.

* The plan of a *particular* reconciliation and union between the professors, who receive the XXXIX Articles, will be laid before the public in a separate tract, if the author's days are lengthened a little. The consistency of the moderate Calvinism and Arminianism, contained in those Articles, will form the ground of that plan.

So far as they cordially aim at the conversion of sinners, I will offer them the right hand of fellowship, and communicate with them in spirit. They may excommunicate me, if their prejudices prompt them to it: they may build up a wall of partition between themselves and me; but *in the strength of my God*, whose love is boundless as his immensity, and whose mercy is over all his works, *I will leap over the wall*; being persuaded, that it is only daubed with untempered mortar, and made of Babel-materials. Should not christian meekness, and ardent love, bear down party-spirit and the prejudices of education? The king tolerates and protects us all, the parliament makes laws to ensure toleration and quietness, peace and mutual forbearance: and shall we, who make a *peculiar* profession of the faith which works by love, and binds upon us the new commandment of laying down our lives for the brethren:—shall *we*, I say, be less charitable and more intolerant than our civil governors, who perhaps make no such profession? Let bigotted Jews and ignorant Samaritans dispute, whether God is to be worshipped on Mount Moriah, or on Mount Gerizim: let rigid church-men say, that a parish-church is the only place where divine service ought to be performed, whilst stiff Dissenters suppose, that their Meeting-houses are the only Bethels in the land; but let us, who profess moderation and charity, remember the reconciling words of our Lord, "The hour cometh, and now is, when true worshippers shall worship God (every where) in spirit and in truth: For the Father seeketh such (catholic and spiritual persons) to worship him;" and not such partial and formal devotees, as the Jews and Samaritans were in the days of our Lord.

But to return to our plan of reconciliation: might not some additions be made to Mr. Wesley's draught; for it is from a letter published in his thirteenth Journal that I have extracted the preceding sketch of union? Might not good men and sincere Ministers, who are bent upon the inheriting the seventh benediction, form themselves into a *Society of Reconcilers*, what-

ever be their denomination, and mode of worship? Interest brings daily to the Royal Exchange a multitude of Merchants, ready to deal with men of the most opposite customs, dresses, religions, and countries: And shall not the love of peace, and the pursuit of love, have as great an effect upon the Children of Light, as the love of money, and the pursuit of wealth, have upon the men of the world? There is a Society for promoting religious knowledge among the Poor: some of its members are Church-men, and others Dissenters: some are Calvinists and others Arminians; and yet it flourishes, and the design of it is happily answered. Might not such a society be formed for promoting Peace, and love among professors? Is not charity preferable to knowledge? And if it be well to associate, in order to distribute Bibles and Testaments, which are but the *letter* of the gospel: would it not be better to associate, in order to diffuse peace and love, which are the *spirit* of the gospel? There is another respectable Society for promoting the Christian faith among the Heathen: and why should there not be a society for promoting unanimity and toleration among Christians? Ought not the welfare of our fellow Christians to lie as near our hearts, as that of the heathen? There are in London, and other places, associations for the preventing and extinguishing of fires. As soon as the mischief breaks out, and the alarm is given, the firemen run to their fire-engines; and without considering whether the house on fire be inhabited by Church-men, or Dissenters, by Arminians or Calvinists, they venture their lives to put out the flames: and why should there not be associations of Peacemakers, who, the moment the fire of discord breaks out in any part of our Jerusalem, may be ready to put it out by all the methods which the gospel suggests? Is not the fire of hell, which consumes souls, more to be guarded against, than that fire which can only destroy the body?

Should it be asked what methods could be pursued to extinguish the fire of discord, and kindle that of love: I reply, that we need only be as wise as the children

children of this world. Consider we then how they proceed to gain their *worldly* ends ; and let us go and do as much to gain our *spiritual* ends.

Many gentlemen, some laymen, and others clergymen, some Church-men, and others Dissenters, wanted lately to procure the repeal of our Articles of Religion. Notwithstanding the diversity of their employments, principles, and denominations, they united, wrote circular letters, drew up petitions, and used all their interest with men in power to bring about their design.—Again; some warm men thought it proper to blow up the fire of discontent in the breasts of our American fellow-subjects. How did they go about the dangerous work! With what ardor did they speak and write, preach and print, fast and pray, publish manifestoes and make them circulate, associate and strengthen their associations, and at last venture their fortunes, reputations, and lives in the execution of their important project! Go, ye men of peace, and do at least half as much to carry on your friendly design. Associate, pray, preach, and print for the furtherance of Peace. When ye meet, consult about the means of removing what stands in the way of a fuller agreement in principle and affection, among all those who love Christ in sincerity: and decide if the following queries contain any hint worthy of your attention.

Might not moderate Calvinists send with success circular letters to the rigid Calvinian brethren; and moderate Arminians to their rigid Arminian brethren, to check rashness, and recommend meekness, moderation, and love? Might not the Calvinist ministers, who patronize the doctrines of grace, display also the doctrines of justice, and open their pulpits to those Arminian ministers who do it with caution? And might not the Arminian ministers, who patronize the doctrines of justice, make more of the doctrines of grace, preach as nearly as they can like the judicious Calvinists, admit them into their pulpits, and rejoice at every opportunity of shewing them their esteem and confidence? Might not such moderate Calvinists

and Arminians as live in the same towns, and have from time to time a general sacrament, and invite one another to it, to cement brotherly love by publicly confessing the same Christ, by jointly taking him for their common head, and by acknowledging one another as fellow-members of his mystical body? Might not some of the ministers, on these occasions, preach to edification on such texts as these: "Christ asked them, what was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed, who should be the greatest: and he saith unto them, If any man desireth to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us." "Yea, him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations." "Let us not judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." "Let us follow after those things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another: holding the head, from which all the body having nourishment, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon Aaron's head, and like the dew upon Mount Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Could not the society have corresponding members in various parts of the kingdom, to know where the flame of discord begins to break out, that by means of those mighty engines, the tongue, the pen, the press, they might with all speed direct streams of living water,—floods of truth and kindness, to quench the kindling fire of wrath, oppose the waters of strife, and remove whatever stands in the way of the fire of love? And if this heavenly

fire were once kindled, and began to spread, might it not in a few years, reach all orders of professors in Great Britain, as the contrary fire has reached our brethren on the continent? If we doubt the possibility of it, do we not secretly suppose, that Satan is stronger to promote discord and contention, than Christ is to promote concord and unity? And in this case, where is our faith? And where the *love which thinketh no evil, and hopeth all things?* If a few warm men have kindled on the Continent so great a fire, that neither our fleets nor our armies, neither the British nor the German forces employed in that service, have yet been able to put it out; what will not twenty or thirty, burning with the love of God and of their neighbour, be able to do in England? We may judge of by what twelve fishermen did 1700 years ago. Arise then, ye sons of peace, ye sons of God, into whose hands these sheets may fall. Our Captain is ready to lead you to the conquest of the kingdom of love. Be not discouraged at the smallness of your number, nor at the multitude of the men of war who are ready to oppose you. Jesus is on your side: He is our Gideon. With his mighty cross he has smitten the foundation of the altar of discord: pull it down. Break your narrow pitchers of bigotry. Hold forth your burning lamps: let the light of your love shine without a covering. Ye loving Calvinists, fall upon the necks of your Arminian opponents: and ye loving Arminians, be no more afraid to venture among your Calvinian antagonists. You will not find them cruel Midianites, but loving Christians: methinks that your mingled lights have already chased away the shades of the night of partiality and ignorance. You see you are brethren: you feel it: and ashamed of your former distance, you now think you can never make enough of each other, and testify too much your repentance, for having offended the world by absurd contentions, and vexed each other by *inimical* controversies. The first love of the Christians revives: you are *all of one heart and of*—But I forget myself: I antedate the *time of love*, which I so ardently wish to see:—The Jericho

cho of bigotry, which I desire to compass, is strong : the Babylon of confusion and division, I would fain demolish, is guarded by a numerous garrison, which thousands of good men think it their duty to re-inforce. It may not be improper therefore to make one more attack upon these accursed cities, and to ensure the success of it by proper directions.

S E C T I O N VII.

SOME DIRECTIONS how to secure the Blessings of Peace and Brotherly Love.

“ **D**O all things without disputing, (says St. Paul,) that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke.—Be at peace among yourselves : and if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men :” but especially with your brethren in Christ. Nor quench the spirit, by destroying its most excellent *fruits*, which are *peace and love*. And that we may not be guilty of this crime, the Apostle exhorts us to *avoid contentions*, and assures us, that God will “ render indignation to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth.” It highly concerns us therefore, to enquire how we shall escape the curse denounced against the *contentious*, and *live peaceably* with our fellow-professors. And if we ought to do *all that lieth in us*, in order to obtain and keep the blessing of *peace*, surely we ought to follow such directions as are agreeable to scripture and reason. I humbly hope the following are of that number.

DIRECTION I. LET us endeavour to do justice to every part of the gospel ; carefully avoiding the example of those injudicious and rash men, who make a wide gap in the north-hedge of the Garden of Truth, in order to mend one in the east or south-hedge. Let every evangelical doctrine have its proper place in our creed, that it may have its due effect on our conduct. Consideration, repentance, faith, hope, love and obedience, have each a place on the scale of gospel-truth. Let us not breed quarrels by thrusting away any one of those

those graces, to make more room for another. Whilst the Philosopher exalts consideration alone; the Carthusian, repentance; the Solifidian, faith; the Mystic, love; and the Moralist, obedience: Thou, man of God, embrace them all in their order, nor exalt one to the prejudice of the rest. Tear not Christ's seamless garment, nor divide him against himself. He demands our reverential obedience as our *King*, as much as he requires our humble attention as our *Prophet*, and our full confidence as our *Priest*. It is as unscriptural to magnify one of his offices at the expence of the others, as it would be unconstitutional to honour George III. as king of Ireland, and to insult him as king of England or Scotland. And it is as provoking to the God of truth and order, to see the stewards of his gospel-mysteries make much of the dispensation of the *Son*, whilst they overlook the dispensation of the *Father*, and take little notice of the dispensation of the *Holy Ghost*; as it would be provoking to a parent to see the persons, whom he has entrusted with the care of his three children, make away with the youngest, and starve the eldest, in order to enrich and pamper his second son. Where moderation is wanting, peace cannot subsist: and where partiality prevails, contention will soon make its appearance.

II. LET us always make a proper distinction between *essential* and *circumstantial* differences. The difference there is between the Christians and the Mahometans, is essential: but the difference between us and those, who receive the Scriptures, and believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is in general, about non essentials: and therefore, such a difference ought not to hinder *union*; although in some cases, it may, and should prevent a *close* communion. If we fancy that every diversity of doctrine, discipline, or ceremony, is a sufficient reason to keep our brethren at arm's length from us, we are not so much the followers of the condescending Jesus, as of the stiff and implacable professors, mentioned in the gospel, who made
much

much ado about anise and cummin; but shamefully neglected mercy, forbearance, and love.

III. LET us leave to the Pope, the wild conceit of infallibility; and let us abandon to bigotted Mahometans, the absurd notion, that truth is confined to our own party, that those who do not speak as we do are *blind*, and that orthodoxy and salvation are plants, which will scarcely grow any where but in our own garden. So long as we continue in this error, we are unfit for union with all those, who do not wear the badge of our party. A pharasaic pride taints our tempers, cools our love, and breeds a forbidding reserve, which says to our brethren, *Stand by: I am more orthodox than you.*

IV. LET us be afraid of a sectarian spirit. We may indeed, and we ought to be more familiar with the professors with whom we are more particularly connected; just as soldiers of the same regiment are more familiar with one another, than with those who belong to other regiments. But the moment this particular attachment grows to such a degree, as to make a party in the army of king Jesus, or of king George; it breaks the harmony which ought to subsist between all the parts, and hinders the general service which is expected from the whole body. In what a deplorable condition would be the king's affairs, if each colonel in his army refused to do duty with another colonel: and if instead of mutually supporting one another in a day of battle, each said to the rest: "I will have nothing to do with you and your corps; you may fight yonder by yourselves, if you please; I and my men will keep here by ourselves, doing what seems good in our own eyes: As we expect no assistance from you, so we promise you, that you shall have none from us. And you may think yourselves well off, if we do not join the common enemy, and fire at you; for your regimentals are different from ours, and therefore you are no part of our army." If so absurd a behaviour were excusable, it would be among the wild, cruel men, who compose an army of Tartars or Savages: but it admits of no excuse from men, who call them-

selves

elves *believers*, which is another name for the *followers of Him*, who laid down his life for his enemies, and perpetually exhorts his soldiers to love one another as brethren,—yea, as he has loved us.

Let us then particularly beware of inordinate *self-love*. It is too often the real source of our divisions; when *love to truth* is their pretended cause. If St. Paul could say of fallen believers in his time, *They all seek their own*; how much more can this be said of degenerate believers in our days? Who can tell all the mischief done by this ungenerous and base temper? Who can declare all the mysteries of error and iniquity, which stand upon the despicable foundation of the little words, *I, me, and mine*? Could we see the secret inscriptions, which the searcher of hearts can read upon the first stones of our little Babels, how often should we wonder at such expressions as these:—*My church*;—*my chapel*;—*my party*;—*my congregation*;—*my connections*;—*my popularity*;—*my hope of being esteemed by my partizans*;—*my fear of being suspected by them*;—*my jealousy of those who belong to the opposite party*;—*my system*;—*my favourite opinions*;—*my influence, &c. &c.*? To all those *egotisms* let us constantly oppose these awful words of our Lord, “Except a man deny *himself*, he cannot be my disciple.” Till we cordially oppose our inordinate attachment to our own interest, we *sacrifice to our own net* in our public duties: and even when we *preach Christ*, it is to be feared, that we do it more *out of contention*, than out of a real concern for *his* interest.

What Dr. Watts writes on this subject is striking. “Have we never observed what a mighty prevalence the applause of a party, and the advance of self-interest, have over the hearts and tongues of men, and inflame them with malice against their neighbours? They assault every different opinion with rage and clamour: they rail at the persons of all other parties to ingratiate themselves with their own.—When they put to death [*or bitterly reproach*] the ministers of the gospel, they boast like Jehu when he slew the priests of Baal, *Come and see my zeal for the Lord*: and as he designed hereby

hereby to establish the kingdom in his own hands ; so they to maintain the reputation they have acquired among their own sect. But ah ! How little do they think of the wounds that Jesus the Lord receives, by every bitter reproach they cast on his followers."

V. LET us be afraid of needless singularity. The love of it is very common, and leads some men to the widest extremes. The same spirit which inclines one to wear a hat cock'd in the height of the fashion, and influences another to wear one in full contrariety to the mode ; may put one man upon minding only the *first* gospel-axiom, and the blood of Christ, whilst another man fancies, that it becomes him to mind only the *second* gospel-axiom, and the *law* of Christ. Thus, out of singularity, the former insists upon faith alone, and the latter recommends nothing but morality and works. May we detest a temper, which makes men delight in an unnecessary opposition to each other ! And may we constantly follow the example of St. Paul, whose charitable maxim was, to *please all men to their edification* ! So shall our moderation be known to all men : nor shall we absurdly break the balance of the various truths, which compose the gospel system.

VI. LET us never blame our brethren but with reluctance. And when love to truth, and the interest of religion, constrain us to shew the absurd or dangerous consequences of their mistakes ; let us rather underdo than overdo. Let us never hang *unnecessary** or *false* consequences upon their principles : and when
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* I humbly hope, that I have followed this part of the direction in my Checks. To the best of my knowledge, I have not fixed one consequence upon the principles of my opponents, which does not *fairly* and *necessarily* flow from their doctrine. And I have endeavoured to do justice to their piety, by declaring again and again my full persuasion, that they abhor such consequences. But whether they have done so by my principles, may be seen in my *Genuine Creed*, where I shew, that the absurd and wicked consequences, which my opponents fix upon the doctrine I maintain, have *absolutely nothing* to do with it. I do not however say this to justify myself in all things ; for I do not doubt, but if I had health and

we prove that their doctrine *necessarily* draws absurd and mischievous consequences after it, let us do them the justice to believe, that they do not see the *necessary* connexion of such consequences with their principles. And let us candidly hope that they detest those consequences.

VII. LET us, so far as we can, have a friendly intercourse with some of the best men of the various denominations of Christians around us. And if we have time for much reading, let us peruse their best writings, to be edified by the devotion which breathes through their works. This will be an effectual means of breaking the bars of prejudice, contempt, fear, and hard thoughts, which unacquaintedness puts between

and strength to revise my Checks, I should find some things, which could have been said in a more guarded, humble, serious, and loving manner. And I am sorry, that even in this piece [See *Bible-Armin.* page 252.] an illustration of that stamp should have escaped the corrections of my reconciling pen. I can only say, that I wrote that page some years ago; that though the argument to me seems just, yet I now disapprove the ludicrous, offensive dress in which it appears; and that I would alter it, if the sheet was not printed off. I humbly beg my Calvinist brethren to forgive me this, and the like touches of a pen, which I thought it my duty to keep as sharp as I could, not to wound their persons, but effectually to destroy their mistakes—important mistakes, which the very page I complain of, shew us to be closely connected with antinomian delusions, if it be compared with the unguarded assertions of the rigid Calvinists, whom I have quoted in the *second* and *third Checks to Antinomianism*. But, I repeat it, whilst I oppose the *imaginary* imputation of Christ's righteousness, to an antinomian, who makes Christ the minister of sin; I triumph in the *real* imputation of Christ's righteousness to a penitent sinner, who receives Christ as a Saviour from the pollution, as well as from the guilt of sin: and I declare once more, that as a guilty sinner, I will never urge any plea before God, but that of the publican; namely, the mercy of the Father, through the Son's blood and righteousness. Should the reader ask, "In what then do you differ from a solifidian?" I reply, that I do not differ from a pious solifidian with respect to a *sinner's* justification. But we disagree with respect to a *believer's* justification. A solifidian supposes, that God will justify *sinners* in the great day, whereas our Lord declares that he will then justify none but *saints*, none but the *righteous*; and the difference between saints and sinners,—between the righteous and the wicked, does not consist in an external imputation of Christ's merits; put in an internal participation of Christ's purity.

them and us. Why are savages frightened at the sight of civilized men? Why do they run away from us as if we were wild beasts? It is because they have no connexion with us, are utter strangers to the goodwill we bear them, and fancy we design to do them mischief. Bigots are religious savages. By keeping to themselves, they contract a shyness for their fellow-Christians: they fancy that their brethren are monsters: they ask with Nathanael, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" By and by, they get into the seats of the Pharisees, and peremptorily say, that "Out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet." And it is well if they do not *turn in a rage* from the precious truths delivered by some of the most favoured servants of God; fondly supposing with Naaman, that the Jordan of their brethren is not to be compared with the rivers of their own favourite Damascus; and uncharitably concluding with the Pope, and Mahomet, that all waters are poisonous, except those of their own cistern. The best advice which can be given to these prejudiced people, is that which Philip gave to Nathanael, who fancied that Jesus was not a Prophet; "Come and see." I would say to Calvinian bigots, *Come and see* your Arminian brethren: and to Arminian bigots, *Come and see* pious Calvinists; and you will be ashamed to have so long forfeited the blessing annexed to brotherly communion: for "they that fear the Lord, speak often one to another, and the Lord hearkens and hears it, and a book of remembrance is written before him for them.—And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

VIII. LET our religion influence our hearts as well as our heads. Let us mind the practice as well as the theory of Christianity. The bare knowledge of Christ's doctrine puffeth up, but charity edifieth. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love," and would have us to be loving and *merciful as he is*. He receives us, notwithstanding our manifold weaknesses and provocation; and he says, by his Apostle, "Forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—That ye may with one mind, and

and one mouth glorify God." How far from this religion are those, who, instead of receiving one another, keep at the greatest distance from their brethren, and perhaps pronounce damnation against them; those men who rashly condemn their *weak brother* to *perish*, cannot be close followers of our merciful High-Priest, who died for him, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and has compassion on them that are ignorant and out of the way. "If any man say, I love God,—the love of Christ constraineth me,—and yet hateth his brother, [or shuns a reconciliation with his fellow-servants] he is a liar: for he who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "This commandment have we from Christ, that he who loveth God, love his brother, [yea, his enemy] also." And love is "pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, and full of mercy. It suffereth long, and is kind, it envieth not, it is not puffed up, it does not behave itself unseemly, it seeketh not its own, it beareth all things, it endureth all things, it believeth and hopeth all things;" and it attempteth many things, that Christians may "be made perfect in one," and may "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Where this love is not, the practice of Christianity is absent. We may have the brain of a Christian, but we want his tongue, his hands, and his heart. We may indeed say many sweet things of Christ, but we spoil them all, if we speak bitterly of his members; for he who toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye; and he who wounds *them*, wounds him in the tenderest part. Hence the severity of our Lord's declarations: "Whosoever offendeth one of these little ones, who believe in me, it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."—"And whosoever shall [uncharitably] say to his brother, Thou Fool! shall be in danger of hell-fire," [as well as a murderer.] Matt. xviii. 6.—v. 22. So dreadful is the case of those, who make shipwreck of the faith which works by charity, whilst they contend for real or fancied orthodoxy.

We shall readily set our seals to the justice and propriety of these terrible declarations, if we remember that when Christians offend against the law of kindness, they stab their religion in her very vitals, because Christianity is the religion of Love. From first to last it teaches us love,—free, distinguishing, matchless love. The Father so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son that we might not perish. He freely delivered him up to death for us all, and with him he gives us all things; forgiveness, grace and glory. The Son, who when he was in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with him, influenced by obedient love to the Father, and tender pity towards us, assumed our nature, became a Prophet to teach the religion of love,—a King to enforce the law of love,—a Priest and a victim dying for the breaches of the law of love. He lived to keep and enforce the law of love: he wept, agonized, and sweated blood to shew the force of sympathizing love: he died on the cross to seal with the last dropt of his vital blood the plan of redeeming love. He sunk into the grave, and descended into Hades, to shew the depth of love. He rose again to secure the triumph of love: He ascended into heaven to carry on the schemes of love. From thence he sent, and still sends, upon obedient believers, the Spirit of Burning; baptizing them with the Holy Ghost, and with the fire of love, which many waters cannot quench; and from thence he shall come again, to send the unloving and contentious to their own place, and to crown loving souls with honour, glory and immortality. The office of the Holy Ghost, answers to the part which the Father and the Son bear in our redemption. When we receive him according to the promise of the Father, we receive him as the Spirit of love;—he sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts;—he testifies to us the love of Christ, and his fruit in our hearts and lives, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness. This loving Spirit is so essential to Christianity, that if you ask St. Paul and St. John an account of their religion, the former answers, *The*

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end of Christianity, is charity out of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned: And therefore, if any Christian loveth not the Lord Jesus in his person, and in his mystical members, he is accursed, Maranatha. The Lord cometh to cut in sunder that wicked servant, and to appoint him his portion with hypocrites in outer darkness. As for St. John, he thus describes Christianity, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, every one that loveth is born of God. We love him because he first loved us. And every one that loveth God who begat believers, loveth them also that are begotten of him: and this commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." St. James's testimony to the religion of love, will properly close that of St. Paul and St. John. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons [much more if ye bite and devour your brethren] ye are convinced of the law as transgressors: for whosoever shall keep the whole law [of love] and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all:" He shews himself a bad Christian, a fallen believer. Therefore, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren, nor grudge one against another, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth at the door." And Christ the Judge, confirms thus the testimony of his Apostles, in his awful account of the day of Judgment. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," for ye were kind and loving to me. "The head of every man is Christ," and therefore, "In as much as ye have done it [that is, in as much as ye have been kind and loving] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me:" [ye have been kind and loving to me:] and I will give you the reward of the inheritance. "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed;" for ye were not kind and loving to me: And if they plead not guilty to the charge, he will answer them saying, "Verily I say unto you;

inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me :” that is, Inasmuch as ye were not kind to one of these, ye were not kind and loving to me. “ And these [unloving men] shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous [i. e. the loving and merciful] into life eternal.” How plain is this religion ! and how deplorable is it, that it should be almost lost in clouds of vain notions, wild opinions, unscriptural systems, empty professions, and noisy contentions ! Were professors to embrace this practical Christianity, what a revolution would take place in Christendom ! The accuser of the brethren would fall as lightning from heaven, and genuine orthodoxy would combine with humble charity to make the earth a Paradise again.

IX. Lastly : If we will attain the full power of godliness, and be peaceable as the Prince of Peace, and merciful as our heavenly Father ; let us go on to the perfection and glory of Christianity ; let us enter the full dispensation of the Spirit. Till we live in the pentecostal glory of the Church : till we are baptized with the Holy Ghost : till the Spirit of burning, and the fire of divine love, have melted us down, and we have been truly cast into the softest mould of the gospel : till we can say with St. Paul, “ We have received the Spirit of love, of power, and of a [spiritual] sound mind :” till then we shall be carnal rather than spiritual believers : we shall divide into sects like the Jews, and at best we shall be like the disciples of John, and of Christ, before they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost ; we shall have an envious spirit ; we shall contend about superiority, and be ready to stop those who do good, because they do it not in our way, or because they follow not with us. And supposing we once tasted the first love of the church, and had really the love of God and of our neighbour shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us : yet if this *love is grown cold*, or if we *have left it*, by grieving or quenching the Spirit ; we are fallen from Pentecostal Christianity, and instead of continuing in disinterested fellowship, like the primitive Christians,

tians, we shall *seek our own*, as the fallen Philippians; or we shall divide into parties like those Corinthians to whom St. Paul wrote: "Some of you have not the knowledge of the God of love; I speak this to your shame.—I cannot speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal [believers,] even as to babes in Christ. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as the men of the world?—Examine yourselves therefore, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves:" is Christ in you? Have ye the Spirit of power, or have ye obliged him to withdraw? And are ye shorn of your strength as Sampson was, when the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him? Alas! who can say, how many believers are in this deplorable case without suspecting it? The world knows that they are fallen, but they know it not themselves. They make sport for the Philistines by their idle contentions, and they dream that they are the champions of truth. O may they speedily *awake to righteousness*, and see their need of *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!* And may power from on high rest again upon them! So shall they break the pillars of the temple of discord, rebuild the temple of peace, and be *continually in it, praising and blessing God*, instead of accusing and provoking their brethren.

S E C T I O N VIII.

Farther MOTIVES to a speedy RECONCILIATION :
—An Exhortation to it.

I. " **A**BOVE all things, (says St. Peter,) have fervent charity among ourselves." " Little children, (says St. John,) love one another." Sweet precepts! but how far are we from regarding them, whilst we give to bitter zeal, or to indifference, the place allotted to the communion of saints, and to burning love! Had these apostolic injunctions a due effect upon us, how would the fervent charity, which
victorious

victorious faith kindles, set fire to the chaff of our idle contentions, and make us ashamed of having so departed from the gospel, as to give the world to understand,) if men may judge of our doctrine by our conduct,) that the Scriptures exhorts us to fall out one with another, and to mind charity *less* than every thing; whereas it enjoins us to mind it *above ALL things*, above all honour, pleasure, and profit,—yea, above all knowledge, orthodoxy, and faith.

II. We are commanded to *glorify God with one heart and one mouth*. Our lips should be instruments of praise, ever tuned to celebrate the Prince of peace,—ever ready to invite all around us to the gospel-feast; the feast of divine and brotherly love. To neglect this labour of love is bad; but how much worse is it to be as *sounding brass*, as a *tinkling cymbal*, as an infernal kettle-drum, used by the accuser of the brethren, to call professors from the good fight of faith, to the detestable fight of *needleless* or *abusive* controversy, and perhaps to the bloody work of persecution? Who can describe the injury done to religion by the champions of bigotry! An ingenious writer being one day desired to draw in proper colours, the figure of *Uncharitableness*, the monster which has so narrowed, disgraced, and murdered Christianity; “I will attempt it, (said he) if you will furnish me with a sheet of large paper, and that of the fairest kind, to represent the Christian Church in this world. First, I will pare it round, and reduce it to a very small compass; then with much ink will I stain the whiteness of it, and deform it with many a blot. At the next sitting I will stab it through rudely with an iron pen: and when I put the last hand to complete the likeness, it shall be besmeared with blood.” And shall we lend our common enemy iron pens, or tongues sharpened like the murderer’s sword, that he may continue to wound the members of Christ, and deform the Christian Church?—God forbid! Let as many of us as have turned our pens and tongues into instruments of idle contention, apply them hence.

henceforth to the defence of peace, and brotherly love.

III. If we refuse to do it, we practically renounce our baptism: for in that solemn ordinance, we profess to take God for our common Father, Christ for our common Saviour, and the Spirit for our common Sanctifier. When we receive the Lord's Supper in faith, we solemnly bind this baptismal engagement upon ourselves, and tie faster the knot of brotherly love by which we are joined to *all those who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.* Now can any thing be more antichristian and diabolical, than for persons who constantly *communicate*, to live in discord, and perhaps to insult one another in a manner contrary to the first rules of heathen civility? O ye, who surround our altars, and there "humbly beseech Almighty God, continually to inspire the universal church with the spirit of unity and concord, that all who confess his holy name may live in unity and godly love;" can any thing equal your sacrilegious guilt, if after such a solemn prayer, you not only refuse to live in *unity and godly love* with your pious Calvinian or Arminian brethren, but also breathe *the spirit of discord*, and live in variance and ungodly contentions with them, merely because they do not pronounce *Shibboleth* with all the emphasis, which your party puts upon some favourite words and phrases? If we continue to offer so excellent a prayer, and to indulge so detestable a temper, are we not fit persons to fight under the banner of Judas? Do we not with a kiss betray the Son of man in his members? Do we not go to the Lord's table to say, *Hail, Master!* and to deliver him for less than thirty pieces of silver, for the poor satisfaction of pleasing the bigots of a party, or for the mischievous pleasure of breaking the balance of the gospel-axioms, and rending the doctrines of Grace from those of Justice?

IV. *God is love.* Let us be like our Father who is in heaven. Satan is uncharitableness and variance; detest we his likeness, and let not the faithful and true

witness

witnefs be obliged to fay to us one day; "You are of your father the devil, whose works ye do," when you keep up divifions. The devil, fays Archbishop Leighton, being an apoflate fpirit, revolted and feparated from God, doth naturally project and work *divifion*. This was his firft exploit, and is ftill his grand defign and bufinefs in the world. He firft *divided* our firft Parents from God, and the next we read of in their firft child, was enmity againft his brother. The tempter wounded *truth*, in order to deftroy *love*: and therefore he is juftly called by our Saviour a **LIAR**, and a **MURDERER** *from the beginning*. He murdered our firft parents by lying, and made them murderers by drawing them into his uncharitablenefs. God forbid that we fhould any longer do the work of the father of lies and murderers! Heaven prevent our committing again two fo great evils as thofe of wounding truth, and preventing love!—of *wounding truth*, by attacking the fcripture-doctrines of free-grace and free-agency! and of *preventing love*, by hindering the union of two fuch large bodies of profefors, as the Calvinifts and the Arminians! Nor let any lover of peace fay, "I will *hinder* the reconciliation you fpeak of:" For it is our bounden duty to *further* it by a fpeedy, conftant exertion of all our intereft with God, and influence with men: otherwife we fhall be found *unprofitable, flothful* fervants, and fhall be judged according to this declaration of our Lord, "He that gathereth not with me fcattereth." For he, who, in fo noble a caufe as that of truth and love, is *neither cold nor hot*, pulls down upon his own head the curfe denounced againft the lukewarm Laodiceans.

V. The fin of the want of union with our pious Calvinian or Arminian brethren, is attended with peculiar aggravations. We are not only fellow-creatures, but fellow-subjects, fellow-chriftians, fellow-proteftants, and fellow-fufferers (in reputation at leaft) for maintaining the capital doctrines of falvation by faith in Chrift, and of regeneration by the Spirit of God. How absurd is it for perfons, who thus fhare in the reproach, patience, and kingdom of Chrift, to
 embitter

embitter each other's comforts, and add to the load of contempt, which the men of the world cast upon them? Let Pagans, Mahometans, Jews, Papists, and Deists, do this work. We may reasonably expect it from them. But for such Calvinists and Arminians as the world lumps together under the name of *Methodists*, on account of their peculiar profession of godliness,—for such companions in tribulation, I say, to *bite and devour* each other, is highly unreasonable, and peculiarly scandalous.

VI. The great Apostle of modern infidels, Voltaire, has, it is supposed, caused myriads of men to be ashamed of their baptism, and to renounce the profession of christianity. His profane witticisms have slain their thousands: But the too cogent argument, which he draws from our divisions, has destroyed its myriads. With what exultation does he sing,

Des Chrétiens divisés les infâmes querelles
Ont, au nom du Seigneur, apporté plus de maux,
&c.

“The shameful quarrels of divided Christians, have done more mischief under religious pretences, made more bad blood, and shed more human blood, than all the political contentions, which have laid waste France and Germany, under pretence of maintaining the balance of Europe.” And shall we still make good his argument, by our ridiculous quarrels? Shall we help him to make the world believe, that the gospel is an apple of discord thrown among men, to make them dispute with an acrimony and an obstinacy, which have few precedents among men of the most corrupt and detestable religions in the world? Shall we continue to point the dagger with which that keen author stabs Christianity? Shall we furnish him with new nails to crucify Christ afresh in the sight of all Europe; or shall we continue to clinch those, with which he has already done the direful deed? How will he triumph if he hears, that the men who distinguish themselves by their zeal for the gospel in England, maintain an unabated contest about the doctrines of *grace* and *justice*;

tice;—a contest as absurd as that in which the Whigs and Tories would be involved, if they perpetually debated whether the *house of Lords*, or that of *Commons*, makes up the British Parliament; and whether *England* or *Scotland* forms the Island of *Great Britain*! And with what self-applause will he apply to us what the Apostle says of wicked heathens, and apostate christians? “Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, (the sovereign, righteous God of love and justice;) they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves wise, they became fools; being filled with envy, debate, malignity; whispers, back-biters, spiteful, without understanding, without (brotherly) affection, implacable;” having a form of godly orthodoxy, but denying the power of peaceable charity?

VII. Instead of continuing to give avowed infidels such room to laugh at us and our religion, would it not become us to stop, by a speedy reconciliation, the offence given by our absurd debates? Should we feel less concern for the honour of Christianity, than Sir Robert Walpole did for the honour of the crown. It is reported, that when he stood at the helm of the British empire, he was abused in parliament by some members of the privy-council. Soon after meeting with them in the king’s cabinet, he proceeded to the dispatch of business with his usual freedom, and with a remarkable degree of courtesy towards his enemies. And being asked how he could do so: he replied, “The king’s business requires union. Why should my master’s affairs suffer loss by the private quarrels of his servants?” May the time come, when the ministers of the King of peace, shall have as much regard for his interest, as that minister shewed for the interest of his royal master! Do not circumstances in church and in state, loudly call upon us to unite, in order to make head against the enemy of Christ and our souls?—An enemy terrible as the banded powers of earth and hell, headed by the prince of the
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of the air, whose name is *Abaddon*; *Apollyon*;—*Destroyer*?

VIII. Ye are no strangers to the craft and rage of that powerful adversary, O ye pious Calvinists and godly Arminians: for “ye wrestle not with flesh and blood only, but with the principalities and powers” of the kingdom of darkness! Cease then, cease to spend in wrestling one against another, the precious talents of time, strength, and wisdom, with which the Lord has entrusted you, to resist your infernal antagonist. Let it not be said, that Herod, a Jew, and Pilate, a Heathen, became friends, and united to pursue *the Lamb of God* to death; and that you fellow-protendants, you British believers, will not agree to *resist the devil, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*.

You are astonished when you hear that some obstinate lawyers are so versed in chicanery, as to protract for *years*, law-suits which might be ended in a few days. Your controversy has already lasted for *ages*; and the preceding pages shew, that it might be ended in a few hours: should you then still refuse reasonable terms of accommodation, think, O think of the astonishment of those, who will see you protract the needless contention, and entail the curse of discord upon the next generation.

Our Lord bids us agree quickly with our adversaries; and will ye for ever dispute with your friends? Joseph said to his brethren, “See that ye fall not out by the way;” and so far as we know, his direction was faithfully observed. Christ says to us, *Wear my badge*: “By this shall all men know, that you are my disciples, if ye love one another.” And will ye still fall out in the way to heaven, and exchange the Christian badge of *charity*, for the satanic badge of contention?

Passionate Esau vowed, that he would never be reconciled to his brother. Nevertheless he relented; and as soon as Jacob was in sight, “he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept,” Gen. xxxiii. 4. And shall

it be said, that Esau, the hairy man, the fierce hunter, the savage, who had resolved to imbrue his hands in his own brother's blood, the implacable wretch, whom so many people consider as an *absolute* reprobate;—shall it be said, that Esau was sooner softened than you? He was reconciled to his brother, who had deprived him of Isaac's blessing by a lie; and they lived in peace ever after. And will ye never be reconciled one to another, and live peaceably with your Calvinian and Arminian brethren, who far from having deprived you of any blessing, want you to share the blessing of holding with them the doctrines of grace, or those of justice.

The Prince of life "died, that he might gather together in one the children of God, who are scattered abroad," John xi. 52. And will ye defeat this important end of his death? He "would gather you as a hen gathers her brood under her wings;" and will ye pursue one another as hawks pursue their prey? Or keep at a distance from each other, as lambs do from serpents? Cannot Christ's blood, "by which you are brought nigh to God," bring you nigh to each other? Does it not "speak better things than the blood of Abel?"—Kinder things than your mutual complaints? Does it not whisper peace, mercy, gentleness, and joy? In Christ Jesus neither rigid Calvinism availeth any thing, nor rigid Arminianism, but faith which worketh by love; draw near with *faith* to the Christian altar, which streams with that peace-speaking blood. Behold the bleeding Lamb of God, and become gentle, merciful, and loving.—See the anti-type of the brazen serpent! He hangs on high, and says, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me," and in me they shall centre, as the solar beams centre in the sun.—And will ye reply; "We will not be obedient to thy drawings: we will not be concentered in thee with our Calvinian or Arminian brethren. Thy Father may sacrifice thee to *slay the enmity, and so make peace!* and thou mayest lay down thy life to make *reconciliation*; but reconciled to each other we will not be; for the god of discord draws us

asunder,

afunder, and his infernal drawings we will obey?" If you shudder at the thought of speaking such words, why should you so behave, that whoever sees you, may see, they are the language of your conduct,—a language, which is far more emphatical than that of your lips?

Say then no longer, *Have us excused*; but come to the banqueting house,—the temple of peace, where "the Lord's banner over you will be love," and his mercy will "comfort you on every side. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye the joy (of all who wish Sion's prosperity :) Be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.—He is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ, in whom there is neither Greek nor Jew, neither bond nor free, (neither Calvinist nor Arminian,) but Christ is all in all. My heart is enlarged: for a recompence in the same, be ye also enlarged," and grant me my humble,—perhaps my dying request: reject not my plea for peace. If it be not strong it is earnest; for (considering my bodily weaknesses) I write it at the hazard of my life;—*Animamque in vulnere pono*.

But why should I drop a hint about so insignificant a life, when I can move you to accept of terms of reconciliation by the life and death,—by the resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?—I recall the frivolous hint; and by the unknown agonies of him, whom you love; "who in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him, who was able to save him from death;—by his (second) coming; and by our gathering together unto him, I beseech you, put on as the [protestant] elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: even as Christ loved and forgave you, so also do ye." Instead of absurdly charging one another

with heresy, embrace one another, and triumph together in Christ. Come up out of the wilderness of idle controversy, leaning upon each other as brethren, holy and beloved: and with your joint forces attack your common enemies, Pharisaism, Antinomianism, and infidelity. Bless God, ye Arminians, for raising such men as the *pious* Calvinists, to make a firm stand against pharisaic delusions, and to maintain with you the doctrines of man's fallen state, and of God's partial grace, which the Pelagians attack with all their might. And ye Calvinists, rejoice, that heaven has raised you such allies as the *godly* Arminians, to oppose Manichean delusions, and to contend for the doctrines of holiness and justice, which the Antinomians seem sworn to destroy.

Jerusalem is a city which is at unity with itself. As soon as ye cordially unite, the Protestant-Jerusalem will become a praise in the earth. The moment ye join creeds, hearts, and hands, our reproach is rolled away: the apostacy is ended: the apostolical, pentecostal church returns from her long captivity in mystical Babylon. The *two slaves, Beauty and Bands, become one in the hand* of the great Shepherd, who writes upon it, Bible-Calvinists reconciled to Bible-Arminians. [See Zech. xi, 7. and Ezek. xxxvii. 16, 17.]—Thus united, how happy are ye among yourselves! How formidable to your enemies!—The men of the world are astonished, and say: "Who is she, that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."—Surely it is a church formed upon the model of the primitive church. These people are Christians indeed. See how they *provoke one another to love and to good works!*

Such will be the fruit of your Reconciliation, and such the glory of the *Shulamite*, THE PEACEFUL CHURCH!—But, *before I am aware, my [longing] soul makes me like the chariots of Aminadab*, to go and admire that truly reformed church, whose members are all of one heart and of one soul. O ye pious Calvinists, and godly Arminians, if you desire to see

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her glory, express your wish in Solomon's prophetic words, Cant. vi. 10, 12, 13. "Return, return, O Shulamite: return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies:"—the combined force of the good men, who maintain the doctrines of grace and justice, and who, by their union, they will become strong enough to demolish modern Babel, and to batter down Pharisaism and Antinomianism, the two forts by which it is defended. For Pharisaism will never yield, but to the power of Bible-Calvinism and the doctrine of grace. Nor can Antinomianism be conquered, without the help of Bible-Arminianism and the doctrines of justice. And when Pharisaism and Antinomianism shall be destroyed, the church will be *sanctified, cleansed, and ready to be presented to Christ,—a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.* Then shall we sing with truth, what we sing without propriety:

Love, like death, has *all* destroy'd,
 Render'd all distinctions void:
 Names, and sects, and parties fall,
 Thou, O Christ, art all in all.*

In the mean time, let us rejoice in hope, and sing with the christian poet,

Giver of peace and unity,
 Send down thy mild, pacific dove:
 We all shall then in one agree,
 And breathe the spirit of thy love.

We all shall think and speak the same
 Delightful lesson of thy grace;

* When I hear contending Calvinists and Arminians agree to print and sing this verse, I am tempted to cry to them, *Be at peace among yourselves, or sing at your love-feasts;*

Love has *not* our pride destroy'd,
 Render'd our distinctions void:
 Names, and sects, and parties *rise*:
 Peace retires, and mounts the skies.

THE RECONCILIATION.

One undivided Christ proclaim,
And jointly glory in thy praise.

Regard thine own eternal prayer,
And send a peaceful answer down ;
To us thy Father's Name declare ;
Unite, and perfect us in one.

So shall the world believe and know,
That GOD has sent Thee from above ;
When thou art seen in us below,
And every soul displays thy Love.

THE END OF THE RECONCILIATION.



