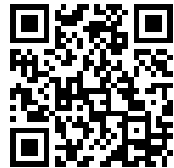

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FREE-WILL *and* MERIT *fairly examined*:

O R,

MEN *not their own* SAVIORS,

The SUBSTANCE of a

S E R M O N,

Preached, in the

PARISH CHURCH

O F

St. ANNE, BLACK-FRIARS, LONDON.

On WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 1774.

By AUGUSTUS TOPLADY,
VICAR of BROAD HEMBURY.

Truly, in vain is Salvation hoped for from the
Hills and from the Multitude of Mountains.
Truly, in the LORD our GOD is the Salva-
tion of Israel. JER. iii. 33.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR J. MATHEWS, NO. 18, IN THE STRAND,
A N D
G. KEITH, GRACECHURCH STREET,
M.DCC.LXXV.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.]

7.

P S A L M CXV. I.

*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
but unto thy Name, give Glory;
for thy Mercy, and for thy Truth's
Sake.*

SOME Expositors have supposed, that this Psalm was pen'd by the Prophet *Daniel*; on Occasion of the miraculous Deliverance of *Sbadrac*, *Mesbac*, and *Abednego*, when they came out, Unhurt, from the burning fiery Furnace, into which they had been thrown by the Command of King *Nebuchadnezzar*.

And, indeed, there are not wanting Passages, in the Psalm itself, which seem to countenance this Conjecture. As where we read, at the 4th Verse (speaking of the Idols of the Heathens, and, perhaps, with particular Reference to that golden Image which *Nebuchadnezzar* commanded to be

worship'd), *their Idols are Silver and Gold, the Work of Mens Hands: they have Mouths, but they speak not; Eyes have they, but they see not.*

I dare say, that, in such an Auditory as this, a Number of ARMINIANS are present. I fear, that all our public Assemblys have too many of 'em. Perhaps, however, even *these* People, Idolaters as they are, may be apt to blame, and, indeed, with Justice, the Absurdity of Those who worship *Idols of Silver and Gold, the Work of Mens Hands*. But let me ask: If it be so very absurd, to worship *the Work of OTHER Mens Hands*; what must it be, to worship *the Works of OUR OWN Hands*? Perhaps, you may say, "God forbid that I should do so." Nevertheless, let me tell you, that *Trust, Confidence, Reliance, and Dependence*, for Salvation; are, all, Acts, and very solemn ones too, of *divine Worship*: and upon whatsoever you DEPEND, whether in whole, or in part, for your Acceptance with God, and for your Justification in his Sight; whatsoever you RELY upon, and TRUST in, for the Attainment of Grace or Glory; if it be any Thing short of God in Christ, you are an IDOLATER, to all Intents and Purposes.

Very different is the Idea, which Scripture gives us, of the ever-blessed God, from that of those *false* gods worship'd by the Heathens; and from that degrading Representation of the *true* God, which Arminianism would palm upon Mankind. *Our God* (says this Psalm, Verse the 3d) *is in the Heavens: he hath done*

done whatsoever be pleased. This is not the * Arminian Idea of God: for our FREE-WILLERS and our CHANCE-

* I was lately introduced to the Acquaintance of a very learned and sensible *Arminian*, whose Political Writings, and whose Social Virtues, entitle him to no small Share of public and domestic Esteem. This worthy Gentleman has Sagacity, to perceive; and Integrity, to acknowledge; the prodigious Lengths, to which the *Free-will* Scheme, if carried as far as it naturally leads, must inevitably push it's Votarys. He *sees* it's Consequences, clearly; he *swallows* them, without Difficulty; and he *avows* them, very honestly.

"God does all He *possibly can*" [these were the Gentleman's own Words, to me, in Conversation] "God does all He *POSSIBLY CAN*, to hinder moral and natural Evil; but He *cannot prevail*. Men will not permit GOD to have his Wish." — *Then*, said I, *the Deity must certainly be a very UNHAPPY Being.* — "Not unhappy in the least," reply'd the ready Philosopher: "God knows, that, in consequence of the *FREE-WILL* with which He has endu'd His rational Creatures, He *Himself must* be disappointed of His Wishes, and defeated of His Ends, and that there's *no Help* for it, unless He had made us mere Machines. He, therefore, *SUBMITS* to *Necessity*; and does not make himself uneasy about it."

See, on what tremendous Shoals, Free-willers, when honest, run themselves aground! Is *their* god the *Bible-God*? certainly not. *Their* god "*submits*" to Difficultys which he "*cannot help*" himself out of, and endeavors to make himself "*easy*," under Millions and Millions of inextricable Embarrassments, uncomfortable Disappointments, and mortifying Defeats. Whereas, concerning the GOD of the BIBLE, it is affirmed, that He *batb DONE*, and will always continue to do, *whatsoever He PLEASETH*.

Observe, Reader, the *Piety*, and the *Consistency*, of the Free-will Scheme. — This said Scheme ascends, on the Ladder of *Blasphemy*, to the Mountain-Top of *Atheism*: and then hurls itself from that Præcipice, into the Gulph of blind, adamantin *Necessity*, in order to prove Mankind *Free-agents*!

My Interview, with the Philosopher abovementioned (whom, by the Way, I most heartily acquit of all *intentional* Atheism, or even Disrespect to the Supreme Being), was season'd with so many curious and uncommon Circumstances of free Debate; that my respectable and invaluable Friend, the Reverend Mr.

Ryland,

CHANCE-MONGERS tell us, that *God does NOT do whatsoever he pleases*; that *there are a great Number of Things, which God WISHES to do, and TUGS and STRIVES to do, and yet CANNOT bring to pass*: they tell us, as one ingeniously expresses it,

“ *That all Mankind be fain wou’d save,*

“ *But longs for what he cannot have.*

“ *Industrious, thus, to sound abroad,*

“ *A disappointed, changing God.”*

How does this comport with that majestic description, *Our God is in the Heavens!* He sits upon the Throne, weighing out, and dispensing, the Fates of Men; holding all Events in his own Hand; and guiding every Link of every Chain of second Causes, from the Beginning to the End of Time. *Our God is in Heaven, possess’d of all Power; and (which is the natural Consequence of That) he hath done whatsoever he pleased*: or, as the Apostle expresses it, (the Words are different, but the Sense is the same) he † *worketh ALL Things after the Counsel of his own Will.*

Therefore it is, that we both labor, and suffer Reproach: even because we say (and the utmost

Ryland, senior, of Northampton (who was present the whole Time), acknowledged, after we had taken our Leave of the worthy Gentleman, that the said philosophic Politician is a very honest, and, consequently, a very unusual, Phenomenon.

† Eph. i. 11.

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we can say upon the Subject, amounts to no more than this; to wit, that) *our God is in Heaven, and has done whatsoever pleased him.* And do according to his own sovereign Pleasure he *will*, to the end of the Chapter; tho' all the Arminians upon Earth were to endeavor to defeat the divine Intention, and to clog the Wheels of divine Government. He, that sits in Heaven, † *laughs them to scorn*: and brings his own Purposes to pass, sometimes, even through the Means of those very Incidents, which evil Men endeavor to throw in his Way, with a mad View to disappoint him of his Purposes. *All things*, saith the Psalmist *serve Thee**: they have, all, a direct Tendency, either effectually or permissively, to carry on his unalterable Designs of Providence and Grace. Observe: *effectively*, or *permissively*. For we never say, nor mean to say, that God is the Worker of Evil: We only maintain, that, for Reasons unknown to us, but well known to God, he is the efficacious *Permitter* (not the § *Agent*, but the *Permitter*) of whatsoever comes to pass. But when we talk of *Good*, we then enlarge the Term; and affirm,

† Psalm ii. 4. * Psalm cxix. 91. Liturgy Version.

§ To say, that the Doctrine of Prædestination makes God the Author and Actuator of Sin, is one of the most *daring*, (and at the same Time) most *irrational* Cavils, that ever dishonor'd Arminianism itself. The State of the Matter stands thus. — Since the Fall of Adam and his Sons (an Event, the divine Motives to the Permission of which, we are not entitled to know), God need only *leave* Men to themselves, by *withholding* the Restraints of Grace and Providence; and Men's corrupt *Free-agency* will, OF ITSELF, carry them, headlong, into all Evil.

with

with the Psalmist, that all *the Help* [i. e. all the good] *that is done upon Earth, God does it himself**.

I remember a saying of the great Monsieur *Du Moulin*, in his admirable Book, entitled, *Anatome Arminianismi*. His Observation is, that *The Wicked, no less than the Elect, accomplish the Wise and Holy and Just Decrees of God: but, says he, with this Difference; God's own People, after they are converted, endeavor to do his Will from a Principle of LOVE: whereas they who are left to the Perverseness of their own Hearts* (which is all the Reprobation we contend for), *who care not for God, nor is God in all their Thoughts; these Persons resemble Men rowing in a Boat, who make toward the very Place, on which they turn their Backs* §. They turn their Backs on the Decree of God; and yet make to that very Point, without knowing it.

One great Contest, between the Religion of *Arminius*, and the Religion of *JESUS CHRIST*, is, Who shall stand entitled to the Praise and Glory of a Sinner's Salvation? Conversion decides this Point at

* Psalm lxxiv. 13.

§ The same great Reasoner observes, that " God over-rules even the *Follies* of Mankind, to the Purposes of His own infinite WISDOM; and makes Use of *wicked Men* themselves, to execute His own RIGHTBOUS Views: just as a Person may draw a *strait Line*, or give a *right Blow*, with a *crooked Stick*."
— *Illi ipsi, qui resistunt Mandato Dei, serviunt ejus Providentiæ: et, remigum instar, eò tendunt, quò obvertunt Terga. Deus, per Insipientiam Hominum, perficit Consilia Sux Sapientiæ. Utitur hominibus injustis, ad exercendam suam Justitiam. Non secus, ac si quis, obtorto Baculo, rectum lætum insigat.*

MOLINÆI *Anat. Arm.* cap. 3. P. 17.—Edit. *Ludg.* 1619.

once :

once: for I think, that, without any Imputation of Uncharitableness, I may venture to say, that every truly awakened Person, at least when he is under the Shine of God's Countenance upon his Soul; will fall down upon his Knees, with this Hymn of Praise ascending from his Heart, *Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but to THY Name, give the Glory: I am saved, not for my Righteousness, but for THY Mercy and THY Truth's Sake.*

And this holds true even as to the Blessings of the Life that now is. *It is God that sets up one, and puts down another* *. Victory, for Instance, when contending Princes wage War, is all of God. *The Race is not to the swift, as swift; nor the Battle to the strong, as such* †. It is the Decree, the Will, the Power, the Providence of God, which effectually, though sometimes invisibly, order and dispose of every Event.

At the famous Battle of *Azincourt*, in France, where, if I mistake not, 80,000 French were totally defeated by about 9,000 English, under the Command of our immortal King *Henry V*; after the great Business of the Day was over, and God had given that renowned Prince the Victory, he ordered the foregoing Psalm (that is, the 114th), and Part of *this* Psalm from whence I have read you the Passage now under Consideration, to be sung in the Field of Battle: by way of acknowledging, that all

* Psalm lxxv. 7. † Eccles. ix. 11.

Success, and all Blessings, of what Kind soever, come down from the Father of Lights. Some of our Historians acquaint us, that, when the triumphant English came to those Words which I have taken for my Text, the whole victorious Army fell down upon their Knees, as one Man, in the Field of Conquest; and shouted, with one Heart, and with one Voice, NOT UNTO US, O LORD, NOT UNTO US, BUT TO THY NAME, GIVE THE GLORY, FOR THY MERCY AND FOR THY TRUTH'S SAKE.

And thus will it be, when God has accomplished the Number of his Elect, and completely gather'd in the Fullness of his redeemed Kingdom. What, do you think, your Song will be, when you come to Heaven? *Blessed be God, that he gave me free Will; and blessed be my own dear self, that I made a good Use of it?* O no, no. Such a Song as that was never heard in Heaven yet, nor ever will, while God is God and Heaven is Heaven. Look into the Book of Revelation, and there you will find the Employ of the Blessed, and the Strains in which they sing. *They cast their Crowns before the Throne, saying, THOU art worthy, for THOU wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy Blood, out of every Kindred and Tongue and People and Nation* ||. There is discriminating Grace for you! *Thou hast redeemed us out of every Kindred, &c.* that is, from * among the rest of Man-

|| Rev. iv. 10.

* Rev. xiv. 4.

kind,

kind. Is not this particular Election, and limited Redemption?

The church below may be liable to err: and if any visible Church upon earth pretends to be infallible, the very pretention itself demonstrates that she is not so. But there is a Church, which I will venture to pronounce INFALLIBLE. And what Church is that? The Church of the Glorified, who shine as Stars at God's right Hand. And, upon the infallible Testimony of that infallible Church; a Testimony, recorded in the infallible Pages of Inspiration; I will venture to assert, that *not ONE GRAIN of ARMINIANISM ever attended a Saint into Heaven.*—If those of God's People, who are in the Bonds of that Iniquity, are not explicitly converted from it, while they live and converse among men; yet do they leave it all behind them, in *Jordan* (i. e. in the River of Death) when they go through. They may be compared to *Paul*, when he went from Jerusalem to Damascus, and the Grace of God struck him down: he *fell*, a FREE-WILLER; but he *rose*, a FREE-GRACER. So, however the Rust of self-righteous Pride (and a cursed Rust it is: may God's Spirit file it off from all our Souls!) however that Rust may adhere to us at present; yet, when we come to stand before the Throne and before the Lamb, it will be all done away, and we shall sing, in one, full, everlasting Chorus, with Elect Angels and Elect Men, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us.*

And why should not we sing that Song *now*? Why should not we endeavor, under the Influence of the Spirit, to anticipate the Language of the Skys, and be as heavenly as we can, before we get to Heaven? Why should we condemn that Song, upon Earth; which we hope forever to sing, before the throne of God above? It is, to me, really astonishing, that Protestants, and Church-of-England Men, considered merely as rational Creatures, and as People of common Sense, who profess to be acquainted with the Scriptures, and to acknowledge the Power of God, should have any Objection to singing this Song, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name, give Glory, for thy Mercy and for thy Truth's Sake.*

Still more wonderful and deplorable it is, that some, who even make Profession of spiritual Religion, and talk of an inward Work of God upon their Hearts; should so far lose Sight of Humility and of Truth, as to dream, either that *their own Arm* HELPED *the Almighty* to save them, or at least that their own Arm was *able to have* HINDERED *him* from saving them. What can reflect deeper Dishonor upon God, than such an Idea? And what can have a directer Tendency to engender and to nourish that *Pride of Heart* which *deceiveth Men*?

It pleased God to deliver me from the *Arminian* Snare, before I was quite eighteen. Antecedently to that Period, there was not (with the lowest Self-abasement

abatement I confess it) a more haughty and violent Free-willer, within the Compass of the four Seas. One Instance, of my warm and bitter Zeal, occurs just now to my Memory. About a Twelvemonth before the divine Goodness gave me Eyes to discern, and an Heart to embrace, the Truth; I was haranguing, one Day, in Company (for I deemed myself able to cope with all the Prædestinarians in the World), on the *Universality of Grace*, and the Powers of *human Free-Agency*. A good old Gentleman (now with God) rose from his Chair, and, coming to mine, held me by one of my Coat-Buttons, while he mildly addressed me to this Effect: *My dear Sir, there are some Marks of Spirituality in your Conversation; though tinged with an unhappy Mixture of Pride and Self-Righteousness. You have been speaking, largely, in Favor of Free-will: but, from Arguments, let us come to Experience. Do let me ask You one Question. How was it with You, when the Lord laid hold on you, in effectual Calling? Had you any Hand in obtaining that Grace? nay, would you not have resisted and baffled it, if God's Spirit had left you in the Hand of your own Counsel?*

I felt the Conclusiveness of these simple, but forcible Interrogations, more strongly than I was then willing to acknowledge. But, blessed be God, I have since been enabled to acknowledge the Freedom and Omnipotence of His Grace, Times without Number; and to sing (what, I trust, will be my ever-

everlasting Song when Time shall be no more), *Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy Name, give all the Glory.*

We never know so much of Heaven in our own Souls, nor stand so high upon the Mount of Communion with God; as when his Spirit, breathing on our Hearts, makes us lie low at the Footstool of sovereign Grace, and inspires us with this Cry, *O God, be mine the comfort of Salvation, but Thine be the entire Praise of it.*

Let us briefly apply the Rule and Compass of God's Word, to the several Parts, of which Salvation is composed; and we shall soon perceive, that the whole Building is made up of GRACE, and of GRACE ALONE. Do you ask, in what Sense I here take the Word *Grace*? I mean, by that important Term, *The voluntary, sovereign, and gratuitous Bounty of God; quite unconditionated by, and quite irrespective of, all and every Shadow of human Worthiness, whether antecedaneous, concomitant, or subsequent.* This is, præcisely, the Scriptural Idea of GRACE: to-wit, that *It* [i. e. Salvation in all it's Branches] *is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, who sheweth Mercy**. And thus it is, that *Grace reigneth, unto the Eternal Life of Sinners, through the Righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord*†.

1. In canvassing this momentous Truth, let us begin where God Himself began: namely, with

* Rom. ix. 16.

† Rom. v. 21.

ELECTION. To whom are we indebted, for that first of all spiritual Blessings? PRIDE says, To *me*. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS says, To *me*. Man's UNCONVERTED WILL says, To *me*. But FAITH joins with God's Word in saying, NOT *unto Us*, O Lord, NOT *unto Us*, but to thy Name, be the whole Glory of thy Electing Love ascribed : Thou didst not chuse us, on Supposition of our first chusing Thee ; but, through the victorious Operation of thy mighty Spirit, we chuse Thee for our Portion and our God, in consequence of Thy having first and freely chosen us to be thy People.

Hear the Testimony of that Apostle, who received the Finishings of his spiritual Education in the Third Heavens. *There is a Remnant*, says he, according to the Election of Grace. And, if by Grace, then is it no more of Works : otherwise, Grace is no more Grace. But if it [i. e. if Election] be of Works, then is it no more Grace : otherwise, Work is no more Work*. Let us sift this Reasoning ; and we shall find it invincible.

There is " a Remnant ", i. e. some of fallen Mankind, who shall be everlastingly saved through Christ. This Remnant is " according to Election " : God's own Will and Choice are the determinate Rule, by which the saved Remnant is measured and number'd. This Election is an Election of " Grace ", or a free, sovereign, and unmerited

* Rom. xi. 5, 6.

Act of God. The Apostle would not leave out the Word *Grace*, lest People should imagine that God elected them on Account of something He saw in them above others. — “ Well, but ” (may some say) “ admitting Election to be by Grace, might “ not our foreseen good Works have a *little Hand* “ in the Matter ? might not God have some *small* “ Regard to our future good Behavior ? ” No, answers the Apostle : none at all. If Election be by “ *Grace*, ” i. e. of mere Mercy, and sovereign Love ; then it is no more of “ *Works* ”, whether directly or indirectly, in whole or in part ; “ *otherwise, Grace is no more Grace* ” : Could any Thing human, though ever so little, be mixed with Grace, as a Motive with God for shewing Favor to Peter (for Instance) above Judas ; Grace would all evaporate, and be annihilated, from that Moment. For, as Austin observes, *Gratia non est gratia, nisi sit omnino gratuita* : Grace ceases to be Grace, unless it be totally and absolutely irrespective of any Thing and of every Thing, whether good or bad, in the Objects of it. So that, as the Apostle adds, was it possible for Election to be “ *of Works* ”, then would it be “ *no more* ” an Act of “ *Grace* ” ; but a Payment, instead of a Gift ; “ otherwise, *Work were no more Work.* ” On one Hand, “ *Work* ” ceases to be considered as influential on Election, if Election is the Daughter of “ *Grace* ” ; and, on the other Hand, “ *Grace* ” has nothing at all to do in Election,

tion, if "*Works*" have any Concern in it. *Grace*, and *Conditionality*, are two incompatible Opposites : the one totally destroys the other ; and they can no more subsist together, than two Particles of Matter can occupy the same individual Portion of Space at the same Point of Time.

Which, therefore, of these contrary Songs, do You sing? (for all the Art and Labor of Mankind, united, can never throw the two Songs into one). Are You for burning Incense to yourselves, saying, *Our Righteousness, and the Might of our own Arm, have gotten us this spiritual Wealth?*—Or, with the Angels and Saints in Light, do You lay down your brightest Honors at the Footstool of God's Throne? with *Not unto Us, O Lord, Not unto Us, but to thy Name give Glory, for thy loving Mercy, and for thy Truth's Sake.*

Certainly, Election is the Act, not of Man, but of God : founded, merely, upon the Sovereign and Gracious Pleasure of his own Will. It is *not of Works, lest any Man should boast* ; but solely of HIM, who has said, *I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful, and I will have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion.* God merits of *us*, not *we* of *Him* : and it was *His* Free-will, not *our's*, which drew the impassable Line between the Elect and the Prætermitted.

2. God's COVENANT LOVE to us in Christ is another Stream, flowing from the Fountain of un-
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mingled Grace. And here, as in the præceding Instance, every truly awakened Person disclaims all Title to Praise; shoves it away from himself, with both Hands; and not only with his Hands, but with his Heart also; while his Lips acknowledge, *Not unto us, O thou Divine and Co-æternal Three, Not unto us, but to Thy Name, give Glory!*

How is it possible, that either God's Purposes, or that his Covenant concerning us, can be, in any respect whatever, suspended on the Will or the Works of Men; seeing, both his Purposes and his Covenant were framed, and fixed, and agreed upon, by the Persons in the Trinity, not only before Men existed, but before Angels themselves were created, or Time itself was born? All was vast Eternity, when Grace was federally given us in Christ e'er the World began*: Well therefore might the Apostle, in the very Text where he makes the above Assertion, observe, that the *Holy Calling*, with which God effectually converts and sanctifys his People, in Time; is bestowed upon us, *not according to our Works, but according to God's own free Purpose* and eternal Destination.

Repentance and Faith, new Obedience and Perseverance, are not *Conditions* of Interest in the Covenant of Grace (for then it would be a Covenant of Works); but *Consequences*, and *Tokens*, of Covenant Interest. For, *the Children being not yet born, neither*

* II Tim. i. 9.

having

having done any good or evil; that the Purpose of God, according to Election (which is the Standard of Covenant-Mercy) might remain § unshaken, it was said unto her, *The elder shall serve the younger: as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated**. Now, whether You consider this Passage as referring to the Posterity of Jacob and Esau, or to Jacob and Esau themselves, or (which is evidently the Apostle's Meaning) as referring to both; the Argument will still come to the same Point at last: namely, that the Divine Counsels and Determinations, in whatever View you take them, are absolutely irrespective of Works, because God's immanent Decrees and Covenant-Transactions took Place, before the Objects of them had done either *Good* or *Evil*. Of Course, all the *Good*, that is wrought in Men, comes from God, as the gracious Effect, not as the Cause, of his Favor; and all the *Evil*, which God permits (such are His Wisdom and His Power!), is subservient to promote, instead of interfering to obstruct, the Accomplishment of His most holy Will. — I mention God's Permission of Evil, only incidentally in this Place: for, properly, it belongs to another Argument. My present Business is, to shew, that the *Good*, and the *Graces*, which God works (not permissively, but effectively) in the Hearts of his Covenant People, are the *Fruit*, not the *Root*, of the Love he bears to them.

§ *μην.*

* Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13.

3. To whom are we indebted, for the ATONEMENT of Christ, and for REDEMPTION through His Blood, even the FORGIVENESS of Sins? Here likewise, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!* It was God, who *found a Ransom* †. It was God, who *provided* his own Justice with a Lamb for a Burnt-offering. It was God, who *accepted* the Atonement at our Surety's Hand, instead of our's. It was God, who *freely imparts* the Blessings of that completely finished Redemption; to the Comfort, and everlasting Restoration, of all those who are enabled to trust and to glory in the Cross of Christ. Against such Persons, Divine Justice has nothing to alledge: And, on them, it has no Penalty to inflict. The Sword of Vengeance, having been already sheathed in the sinless Human Nature of *Jehovah's Equal**; becomes, to them that believe, a Curtana, a Sword of Mercy, a Sword without a Point. Thanks to the reconciling Mercy of God the Father, and to the bleeding Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! Human Free-will and Merit had nothing to do in the Matter, from first to last.

4. As *Pardon* exempts us from Punishment, so JUSTIFICATION (i. e. God's Acceptance of us as perfect Fullfillers of the whole Law) entitles us to the Kingdom of Heaven. The former is God's *παρεσις* ‖, or *passing by* of our Transgressions, so as not to take Notice of 'em; and God's *αφεσις* ‡, or *letting us go* fi-

† Job xxxiii. 24.
‡ Matth. xxvi. 28.

* Zech. xiii. 7. ‖ Rom. iii. 25.

nally

nally unpunished. But JUSTIFICATION (which is the inseparable Concomitant of Forgiveness) is not merely negative, but carries in it more of Positivity, and exalts us to an higher State of Felicity, than mere Pardon (was it possible to be confer'd without Justification) would do. It is God's *δικαιωσις*, or *pronouncing of us positively and actually just*: not only *innocent*, but *righteous* also. St. Bernard, somewhere, preserves this obvious and just Distinction. His Words, I remember, are, that God is *tàm validus ad Justificandum, quàm multus ad ignoscendum*: "No less mighty to justify, than rich in Mercy to forgive."

Now, the great Enquiry is, whether God be indeed entitled to the whole Praise of this unspeakable Gift? Whether we should, as justify'd Persons, sing to the Praise and Glory of *ourselves*; or, to the Praise and Glory of *God* alone?

The Bible will determine this Question, in a Moment: and shew us, that Father, Son, and Spirit, are the sole Authors; and, consequently, should receive the entire Glory; of our *Justification*.

It is God [the Father] *who justifies**: i. e. who accepts of us unto eternal Life; and that *freely, by his Grace* †, through the Redemption which is in Christ, and through *the imputation of Christ's Righteousness, without Works* ‡: i. e. without being

* Rom. viii. 33. † Rom. iii. 24. ‡ Rom. iv. 6.

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moved to it by any Consideration of the good Works, and without being restrain'd from it by any Consideration of the evil Works, wrought by the Person or Persons to whom Christ's Righteousness is imputed, and who are pronounced JUST in consequence of that imputed Righteousness.

Justification is also the Act of God the Son, in concurrence with his Father. St. Paul expressly declares, that he sought *to be justified by CHRIST* §. The second Person in the Divinity joins, as such, in accepting of His People, through that transferred Merit, which, as Man, He wrought for this very End. Now, let me ask you, did you *assist* Christ in paying the Price of your Redemption, and in accomplishing a Series of perfect Obedience for your Justification? If you did, you are entitled to a proportionable Part of the Praise. But, if Christ both obeyed, and dyed, and rose again, *without* your Assistance; it invincibly follows, that you have no Manner of Claim to the least Particle of that Praise, which results from the Benefits acquired and secured by His Obedience, Death, and Resurrection. The *Benefits* themselves are all your own, if He give you Faith to embrace them: but the *Honor*, the *Glory*, and the *Thanks*, you cannot arrogate to yourself, without the utmost Impiety and Sacrilege.

God the Holy Ghost unites in justifying the Redeemed of the Lord. We are, declaratively and

Gal. ii. 17.

eviden-

evidentially, *justified by the Spirit of our God**: whose condescending and endearing Office it is, to *reveal* a broken Savior in the broken Heart of a self-empty'd Sinner, and to *shed abroad* the justifying *Love of God* in the human Soul †. Herein, the adorable Spirit neither *needs*, nor *receives*, any Assistance from the Sinners He visits. His gracious Influence is sovereign, free, and independent. We can no more command, or prohibit, His Agency; than we can command, or forbid, the Shining of the Sun.

The Conclusion, from the whole, is: that *not our Goodness, but God's Mercy; not our Obedience, but Christ's Righteousness; not our Towardliness, but the Holy Spirit's Beneficence;* are to be thank'd, for the whole of our Justification.

And 'tis no easy Lesson, to say, from the Heart, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!* Self-righteousness cleaves to us, as naturally, and as closely, as our Skins: nor can any Power, but that of an Almighty Hand, flay us of it. I remember an Instance, full to the Point; and which I give, on the Authority of a Clergyman, now living, and eminent, above many, for his Labors and Usefulness. This worthy Person assured me, a Year or two since, that he once visited a Criminal, who was under Sentence of Death, for a capital Offence (I think, for Murder) My Friend endeavor'd to set before him the Evil

* I Cor. vi. 11.

† Rom. v. 5.

had

had done; and to convince him, that he was lost and ruined, unless Christ saved him by His Blood, Righteousness, and Grace. “ *I am not much concerned about that,*” answered the self-righteous Malefactor: “ *I have not, to be sure, led so good a Life, as some have; but I am certain, that many have gone to Tyburn, who were much worse Men than myself.*” So, you see, a Murderer may go to the Gallows, trusting in his own Righteousness! And you and I should have gone to Hell, trusting in our own Righteousness; if Christ had not stooped us by the Way.

I dare believe, that the abovemention'd Criminal, had the Subject been started, would also have valued himself upon his *Free-Agency*. *Free-Agency*, 'tis true, he had: and he was left to the Power of it, and ruined himself accordingly. *FREE-WILL* has carry'd many a Man to *Tyburn*, and ('tis to be feared) from *Tyburn* to *Hell*: but it never yet carry'd a single Soul to *Holiness* and *Heaven*. *Ob Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself*; *Free-will* can do THAT for us: *but in Me*, says God, *is thy Help* †. His *Free-Grace* must be our Refuge and our Shelter from our own *Free-will*: or it were good for the best of us that we had never been born §.

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† Hosea xiii. 9.

§ I have heard, or read, concerning that excellent Dignitary of the Church of England, Mr. *John Bradford* (who was also burnt for adhering to her Doctrines), that, one Day, on seeing a Malefactor pass to Execution, he laid his Hand to his Breast, and

In one Word, all the Glory of our Pardon and Justification belongs to the TRINITY, and not to Man. 'Tis one of GOD's Crown-Jewels, unalienable from Himself; and which He will never resign to, nor share with, any other Being. It is impossible, in the very Nature of Things, that He ever should: for, how can any of depraved Mankind be justified by Works (and without being so justified, we can come in for no Part of the Praise); how, I say, can any of us be justified by our own Doings, seeing we are utterly unable even to *think a good THOUGHT* *, till God himself breathes it into our Hearts?

Suffer me to observe one Thing more, under this Article: viz. that, if God's Spirit has stript you of your own Righteousness, He has not stript you in order to leave you naked, but will *cloath you with change of Rayment* †. He will give you a Robe, for and lifted his Eyes to Heaven, saying, "Take away the GRACE of God, and there goes John Bradford."

The great and good St. *Austin*, long before, offered a similar Acknowledgement to God. *Semper Gratia Tua & Misericordia Tua prævenit me:—præcogens etiam ante me laqueos Peccatorum; tollens Occasionem & Causam. Quia, nisi Tu hoc mihi fecisses, OMNIA PECCATA MUNDI FECISSEM. Quoniam scio, Domine, quod nullum Peccatum est, quod unquam fecerat Homo, quod non possit facere alter Homo, si Creator desit, à quo factus est Homo.—Soliloqu. Cap. xv. Sect. 5.*

So likewise thought the Author (whose Name I forget) of that tender and beautiful Line:

Aut sumus, aut fuimus, vel possumus esse, quod hic est.

* II Cor. iii. 5. — In perfect Harmony with this most important Truth, our Church thus addresses the Majesty of Heaven: O God, from whom all holy DESIRES, all good Counsels, and all just Works, do procede. And, again: Grant, that, by Thy Holy Inspiration, we may THINK those Things that be good.—Oh Free-will, Free-will! at how low a Rate wast thou estimated, by the Reformers and the antient Bishops of the Church of England!

† Zech. iii. 4.

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your Rags; the Righteousness of God, for the rotten Righteousness of Man. Rotten indeed we shall find it, if we make it a Pillar of Confidence. I will say of it, as Dr. Young says of the World, "Lean not upon it"; lean not on thy own Righteousness; if leaned upon, " 'Twill pierce thee to the Heart: " at best, a broken Reed; but oft, a Spear. On " its sharp Point, Peace bleeds and Hope expires."

Self-Reliance is the very Bond of Unbelief. 'Tis essential Infidelity, and one of it's most deadly Branches. You are an Infidel, if you trust in your own Righteousness. You a *Christian*? You a *Churchman*? No: you have, in the Sight of God, neither Part nor Lot in the Matter. You are spiritually dead, while you pretend to live. 'Till you are indued with Faith in Christ's Righteousness, your Body (as a great Man expresses it) is no better than " the living Coffin of a dead Soul." A *Christian* is a Believer (not in himself, but) in Christ. And what is the Language of a Believer? *Lord, I am, in myself, a poor, ruined, undone Sinner. Through the Hand of thy good Spirit upon me, I throw myself at the Foot of thy Cross; and look to Thee for Blood to wash me, for Righteousness to justify me, for Grace to make me holy, for Comfort to make me happy, and for Strength to keep me in thy Ways.*

5. For HOLINESS, the inward Principle of good Works; and for GOOD WORKS, themselves, the outward Evidences of inward Holiness; we are obliged

obliged to the alone Grace and Power of God Most High. We do not make him a Debtor to Us, by loving and performing His Commandments; but We become, additionally, Debtors to *Him*, for crowning his other Gifts of Grace, by vouchsafing to *work in us that which is well-pleasing in his Sight* §.

Say not; “ Upon *this* Plan, Sanctification is “ kicked out of Doors, and good Works are turned “ adrift.” Nothing can be more palpable and flagrantly untrue. Newness of Heart and of Life is so essential to, and constitutes so vast a Part of, the Evangelical Scheme of Salvation; that, were it possible for Holiness and it’s moral Fruits to be really struck out of the Account, the Chain would, at once, dissolve, and the whole Fabric become an House of Sand.

The Arminians have, of late, made a huge Cry about “ *Antinomians! Antinomians!*” From the Abundance of EXPERIENCE, the Mouth is apt to speak. The modern † *Arminians* see so much real *Antinomianism* among THEMSELVES, and in THEIR OWN Tents; that Antinomianism is become the prædominant Idea, and the favorite Watch-word,

§ Hebr. xiii. 21.

† Let it be observed, that I do not, here, and in the following Strictures, speak of *all* Arminians, without Exception: but of *such* Arminians, who come within a *certain Denomination*; and who are no less eminent, for their boisterous Brawling about Good Works, than (as I can *prove* from too many Instances which have fallen under my own Notice) for their practical Adoption of bad ones.

of the Party. Because *they* have got the Plague, they think every Body else has. Because the Leprosy is in *their* Walls, they imagine no House is without it. Thus,

*All looks infected, that th' Infected spy,
As all seems yellow, to the jaundic'd Eye.*

'Tis cunning, I must confess, in these People, to raise a Dust, for their own Defence: and, like some Pick-pockets when closely pursued, to aim at slipping the stolen Watch or Handkerchief into the Pocket of an innocent By-stander, that the real Sharper may elude the Rod of Justice. But, unhappily for themselves, the Arminians are not *complete* Masters of this Art. The Dust, they raise, forms too thin a Cloud to conceal them: and their bungling Attempt, to shift off the Charge of Antinomianism upon Others, rivets the Charge but more firmly on themselves it's true Proprietors. The avowed Effrontery, with which they openly trample on a certain Commandment that says, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour*; may stand as a Sample of the little Regard they pay to the other nine. Pretty People these, to look for Justification from the "*Merit*" of their own Works, and to value themselves on their "*perfect Love* to God and Man"!

With regard to Sanctification and Obedience, truly so called; it can *only* flow, and *cannot but* flow, from a NEW Heart: which new Heart is of God's

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own Making, and of God's own Giving. *I will TAKE AWAY the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will GIVE you an Heart of Flesh; a soft, repenting, believing Heart: and I will CAUSE you to walk in my Statutes, and ye SHALL keep my Judgements and do them* *. Now, God accomplishes this Promise, by the effectual Working of his Blessed Spirit: the mystic Fire of whose Agency having melted our Hearts into penitential Faith, He then applies to them the Seal of His own HOLINESS; from which Time, we begin to bear the Image and Superscription of God upon our Tempers, Words, and Actions.

This is our "*Licentious*" Doctrine: namely, a Doctrine which (under the Influence of the Holy Ghost) *conforms the Soul, more and more, to God: carefully referring, at the same Time, all the Praise of this active and passive Conformity, to God Himself, whose Gift it is; singing, with the Saints of old, Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our [good] Works in us* †; and, for all the Works so wrought,—for the *Will* to please thee, for the *Endeavor* to please thee, for the *Ability* to please thee, and for every *Act* whereby we do please thee, — *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name, give Glory.*

And, indeed, was not this the Truth of the Case, i. e. if Conversion and Sanctification and good Works were not God's Gifts, and of His Opera-

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

† Isai. xvi. 12.

tion;

tion; Men would have, not only *some* boast, but *much*, even very much, *to boast of*: for they would be their own Converters, Sanctifiers, and Saviors. Directly contrary to the plain Letter of Scripture, which asks, *Who maketh thee to differ* from others, *and what hast thou, which thou did'st not receive †* from above? Nor less contrary to the scriptural Direction, *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord †*.

6. Once more. Whom are we to thank, for PERSEVERANCE, in Holiness and Good Works, to the End? “Oh,” says an old Pharisee, perhaps, “the Thanks are due to my own Watchfulness, my own Faithfulness, my own Industry, and my own Improvements.” Your supposed Watchfulness answers a very bad Purpose, if you make a Merit of it. The Enemy of Souls cares not the turning of a Straw, whether you perish by open Licentiousness, or by a delusive Confidence in your own imaginary Righteousness. 'Tis all one to him, whether you go to Hell in a black Coat, or a white one. Nay, the whitest you can weave, will be found black, and a mere *San Benito* to equip you for the Flames; if God does not array you in the imputed Righteousness of His Blessed Son.

But, for the present, leaving *Pharisees* and *Legalists* to the Hands of Him who alone is able, and has a Right, to save or to destroy; Let me address myself to the *true Believer* in Christ. You was

† I Cor. iv. 7.

† I Cor. i. 31.

called

called, it may be, ten or twenty Years ago, or longer, to the Knowledge of God: and you still are found, dwelling under the Droppings of the Sanctuary, and walking in Him you have received; following on, to know more of the Lord; sometimes faint, yet always wishing to pursue; tossed, but not lost; occasionally cast down, but not destroyed. How comes all this? How is it, that many flaming Professors, who blazed out, for a while, like Luminarys of the first Lustre, are quenched, extinguish'd, vanished; while *your* smoking Flax, and feeble Spark of Grace, continue to survive, and sometimes afford both Light and Heat? While more than a few, who, perhaps, once seem'd to be rooted as Rocks, and stable as Pillars in the House of God, are become as Water that runneth apace; why are *you* standing, tho', in yourself, as weak, if not weaker than they? — A Child of God can soon answer this Question. And he'll answer it thus: *Having obtained Help of God, I continue to this Day**. Not by my own Might and Power but *by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts †*.

And He, that kept you 'till *this Day*, will keep you *all your Days*. His Spirit, which He freely gives to His People, is a *Well of Water, springing up*, not for a Year, not for a Life-Time, only; but *into everlasting Life* ‖. God's Faithfullness to *You* is the Source of Your Faithfullness to *Him*.

* Acts xxvi. 22. † Zech. iv. 6. ‖ John iv. 14.

Christ prays for You ; and therefore He keeps You watching unto Prayer. He preserves you from Falling ; or, when fallen, He restores your Soul, and leads you forth again in the Path of Righteousness, for His Name's Sake. He has decreed, and covenanted, and promised, and sworn, *to give you a Crown of Life* ; and, in order to that, He has not less solemnly engaged and irrevocably bound Himself, to make you *faithful unto Death*.

“ Well, then”, says an *Arminian*, “ if these Things are so, I am safe at all events. I may fold up my Arms, and e'en lay me down to sleep. Or, if I chuse to rise and be active, I may live just as I list.” *Satan* was the Coiner of this Reasoning : And he offered it, as current and sterling, to the Messiah ; but Christ rejected it as false Money. — *If thou be the Son of God*, said the Enemy ; If thou be indeed that Messiah whom God upholds, and his Elect, in whom his Soul delighteth ; *cast thyself headlong* : 'tis impossible thou shouldst perish, do what thou wilt : no Fall can hurt thee : and thy Father has absolutely promised, that his Angels shall keep thee in all thy Ways ; jump therefore, boldly, from the Battlements, and fear no Evil.

The Devil's Argumentation was equally insolent, and absurd, in every point of View. He reason'd, not like a Serpent in his Wits, but like a Serpent whose *Head was bruised**, and who had no more of

* Gen. iii. 15.

Understanding than of Modesty. Christ silenced this Battery of Straw, with a single Sentence: THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD THY GOD †. So said the Messiah. And so say *We*. And this is Answer enough, to a Cavil, whose palpable Irrationality would cut it's own Throat, without the Help of any Answer at all.

God's Children would be very glad, if they could "live as they *list*." How so? Because it is the Will, the Desire, the Wish, of a renewed Soul in e. of the *new Man*, or the Believer's Regenerate Part; for *old Adam* never was a Saint yet, nor ever will be; 'tis, I say, the Will and the Wish of a renew'd Soul, to please God in all Things, and never to sin, on any Occasion, or in any Degree. This is the State, to which our Pantings aspire; and in which (would the Imperfection of human Nature admit of such Happiness below) we "*list*" to walk. For, every truly regenerated Person can sincerely join the Apostle Paul, in saying, *With my Mind I myself serve the Law of God**, and wish I could keep it better.

God's Preservation is the good Man's Perseverance. *He will keep the Feet of his Saints* †. Arminianism represents God's Spirit, as if He acted like the Guard of a Stage-Coach, who sees the Passengers safe out of Town for a few Miles; and then, making his Bow, turns back, and leaves them to pursue the rest of the Journey by themselves. But

† Math. iv. 6. 7. * Röm. vii. 25. † I Sam. ii. 9.

Divine Grace does not thus deal by God's Travelers. It accompanys them to their Journey's End, and without End. So that the meanest Pilgrim to Sion may shout, with David, in full Certainty of Faith, *Surely, Goodness and Mercy shall follow me ALL MY DAYS, and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord FOREVER**. Therefore, for Preserving Grace, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name give the Glory, for thy loving Mercy, and for thy Truth's Sake.*

7. After God has led his People through the Wilderness of Life, and brought 'em to the Edge of that River which lies between them and the Heavenly Canaan; will he intermit his Care of them, in that Article of deepest Need? No, blessed be his Name. On the contrary, He (always, *safely*; and, generally, *comfortably*) escorts them over to the other Side; to *that good Land which is very far off, to that goodly Mountain, and Lebanon.*

I know, there are some flaming Arminians, who tell us, that "A Man may persevere 'till he comes to dye, and yet perish in almost the very Article of Death:" and they illustrate this wretched, God-dishonoring, and soul-shocking Doctrine, by the simile of "A Ship's foundering in the Harbor's Mouth."

It is very true, that some *wooden* Vessels have so perished. But 'tis no less true, that all God's *chosen* Vessels are infallibly safe from so perishing. For, through His Goodness, every one of them is IN-

* Psalm xxiii.

SURED by Him *whom the Winds and Seas*, both literal and metaphorical, *obey*. And their Insurance runs thus: *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee; and when through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee †*. The Ransomed of the Lord shall return, and *come to Zion, with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads **: so far from foundering within Sight of Land.

Even an earthly Parent is particularly careful and tender of a *dying* Child: and, surely, when God's Children are in that Situation, He will (speaking after the Manner of Men) be *doubly* gracious to His helpless Offspring, who are His by Election, by Adoption, by Covenant, by Redemption, by Regeneration, and by a thousand other indissoluble Tyes.

There are no Marks of Shipwrecks, no Remnants of lost Vessels, floating upon that Sea, which flows between God's Jerusalem below and the Jerusalem which is above. The excellent Dr. *William Gouge* † has an Observation full to the present Point. "If a Man", says he, "were cast into a River, we should look upon him as safe, while he was able to keep his *Head* above Water. The Church, Christ's mystic Body, is cast into the Sea of the World [and, afterwards, into the Sea of Death]; and CHRIST, their *Head*, keeps Himself aloft, even in Heaven. Is there, then, any Fear, or Possibility, of *Drowning* a Member of this Body? If any should be drowned, then either Christ Him-

‡ Isai. xljii. 2. * Isai. xxxv. 10. † Expos. of *Eph.* v.

“ self must be drowned first, or else that Member
 “ must be pulled from Christ: both which are im-
 “ possible. By Virtue, therefore, of this Union,
 “ we see that on Christ’s Safety, *our’s* depends. If
 “ He is safe, so are We. If We perish, so must
 “ He.”

Well, therefore, may Dying Believers sing, *Not unto us, O Lord, but to Thy Name, give Glory! Thy Loving Mercy* carries us, when we cannot go: and, for *thy Trust’s Sake*, Thou wilt save us to the utmost, without the Loss of One.

8. When the emancipated Soul is actually arrived in Glory; what Song will he sing then? The Purport of the Text will still be the Language of the Skies: *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name, give the Praise.*

Whilst we are upon Earth, we have need of that remarkable Caution, which *Moses* gave the Children of *Israel*: *Speak not thou in thine Heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For MY RIGHTEOUSNESS, the Lord hath brought me in to possess this Land. NOT for thy Righteousness, or for the Uprightness of thine Heart, dost thou go to possess this Land. - - - - Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good Land, to possess it, for thy Righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked People.* Now, if the Earthly Canaan, which was only a transitory Inheritance, was unattainable by human Merit; if even Worldly Pos-

|| Deut. ix. 4, &c.

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fections are not given us for *our own Righteousness* Sake; who shall dare to say, that *Heaven* itself is the Purchase of our own Righteousness! If our Works cannot merit even the *vanishing* Conveniences and Supplies of Time; How is it possible, that we should be able to merit the *endless* Riches of Eternity? We shall † need no Cautions against Self-Righteousness, when we get safe to that better Country. The Language of our Hearts, and of our Voices, will be; and Angels will join the concert; and all the Elect, both Angels and Men, will, for ever and ever, strike their Harps to this Key; *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name, give the Glory, for thy Loving Mercy, and for thy Truth's Sake,*

O, may a Sense of that *Loving Mercy* and *Truth* be, warmly and transformingly, experienced in our Hearts! For indeed, my dear Brethren, 'tis *Experience*, or the *felt Power* of God upon the Soul,

† I have been informed, that, when the News of *John Goodwin's* Death was brought to his Uncle, *Dr. Thomas Goodwin*; the latter cry'd out "*Then there's another good Man gone to Heaven*". — "Gone to Heaven, Sir?" answered the Person; "why, your Nephew was an *Arminian*". — The Doctor replied, "*True: he was an Arminian, on Earth; but he is not an Arminian NOW.*"

Whether *John Goodwin* went to Heaven, or not (which is a Question too high for sublunary Decision); certain it is, as I have already observed, that not one Inhabitant of the Cœlestial City ever carry'd a single Particle of *Arminianism* with him into the Gates of that Jerusalem. Of every *Arminian* now living, whose Name is in the Book of Life; it may be truly said, that, if *Grace* do not go so far as to make him a *Calvinist* on Earth, *Glory* (i. e. *Grace* made perfect) will certainly stamp him a *Calvinist*, in the Kingdom of God, at farthest.

which

which makes the Gospel a Savor of Life unto Life. Notwithstanding God's Purpose is stedfast as His Throne; notwithstanding the whole of Christ's Righteousness and Redemption is finished and complete, as a divine and Almighty Agent could make it; notwithstanding I am convinced, that God will always be faithful, to every Soul whom he has called out of Darkness into his marvelous Light; and notwithstanding none can pluck the People of Christ from his Hands; still, I am no less satisfied, that it must be the feeling SENSE of all this, i. e. a PERCEPTION wrought in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost, that will give you and me the *Comfort* of the Father's gracious Decrees, and of the Messiah's finished Work.

I know, 'tis growing very fashionable, to talk against spiritual *Feelings*. But I dare not join the Cry. On the contrary, I adopt the Apostle's Prayer, that our *Love* to God, and the Manifestations of his Love to us, *may abound yet more and more, in Knowledge and in all Feeling**. And it is no enthusiastic Wish, in behalf of you and of myself, that we may be of the Number of those "*godly Persons*", who, as our Church justly expresses it, "*FEEL in themselves the Working of the SPIRIT of Christ, mortifying the Works of the Flesh, and drawing up their*

* Phil. i. 9. — The Word *αισθησις* (render'd *Judgement*, in our English Translation) literally and properly signifies, *Feeling*, or *sensible Perception*. The Apostle wished his Philippians, not only to *love* God, but to *know* that they loved Him, and that He loved them; and to know it *feelingly*.

" *Minds*

“ *Minds to high and heavenly Things †.*” Indeed, the great Business of God’s Spirit is, to *draw up* and to *bring down*. To draw up our Affections to Christ; and to bring down the unsearchable Riches of Grace into our Hearts. The *Knowledge* of which, and earnest *Desire* for it, are all the *Feelings* I plead for. And, for *these* Feelings, I wish ever to plead. Satisfied as I am, that, without some Experience and Enjoyments of them, we cannot be happy, Living or Dying.

Let me ask you, as it were, one by one; has the Holy Spirit began to reveal these deep Things of God in your Soul? If so, give Him the Glory of it. And, as you prize Communion with Him; as you value the Comforts of the Holy Ghost; endeavor to be found in God’s Way, even the High Way of *humble* Faith and *obedient* Love: sitting at the Feet of Christ, and desirous to imbibe those sweet, ravishing, sanctifying Communications of Grace, which are at once an *Earnest* of, and a *Preparation* for, complete Heaven when you come to die. God forbid, that we should ever think lightly of religious FEELINGS! For, if we do not in some Degree *feel* ourselves Sinners, and *feel* that Christ is precious; I doubt, the Spirit of God has never been savingly at Work upon our Souls.

Nay, so far from being at a stand in this, our Desires after the FEELING of *God’s Presence within*, ought to *enlarge* continually, the nearer we draw to the

† Article 17th.

End

End of our earthly Pilgrimage: and resemble the progressive Expansion of a River, which, however narrow and straightened when it first begins to flow, never fails to *widen and increase*, in Proportion as it approaches the Ocean into which it falls.

God give us a gracious Spring-Tide of his Spirit, to replenish our thirsty Channels, to swell our scanty Stream, and to quicken our languid Course! If this is not our Cry; 'tis a Sign, either that the Work of Grace is not yet begun in us; or that it is indeed at low Water, and discolor'd with those Dregs, which tend to dishonor God, to eclipse the Glory of the Gospel, and to spread Clouds and Darknes upon our Souls.

Some Christians are like decayed Mile Stones; which stand, 'tis true, in the right Road, and bear some Traces of the proper impression: but so wretchedly mutilated and defaced, that they, who go by, can hardly read or know what to make of them. May the blessed Spirit of God cause all our Hearts, this Morning, to undergo a fresh Impression; and indulge us with a New Edition of our Evidences for Heaven! O, may showers of Blessing descend upon you, from above! May you see, that *Christ*, and the *Grace* of God-in Him, are all in all! Whilst you are upon Earth, may you ever ascribe the whole Glory to him! And sure I am, that, when you come to Heaven, you will never ascribe it to any other.

F I N I S.