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*Bible-Arminianism & Bible-Calvinism:*

3.

A TWO-FOLD

ESSAY,

PART THE FIRST,

DISPLAYING THE DOCTRINES OF

PARTIAL GRACE,

PART THE SECOND,

Those of IMPARTIAL JUSTICE,


By JOHN FLETCHER.



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# 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.* Ex. xxxiii. 19. *Is it not lawful for me, to do what I will with mine own?* Mat. 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 BENEFACITOR] *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,



# 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 foolish 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*  
B 2 glory.

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*.

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

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, 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

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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*; [freely] giving to one FIVE talents, to another TWO, and to another ONE, to everyone 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 from *four* talents the persons, families, churches, and nations, which he elects only to *one* talent.

This

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, Wo to the wicked: it shall be ill with him: for THE REWARD OF HIS HANDS shall be given him.* Is. iii. 10, 11. If Isaiah is accused of having imbibed this anti-solifidian doctrine from legal Ezekiel, I reply, that our Lord himself was 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 every man according as 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 YOU 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, Mat. 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 entrusted them with.

When God commands the 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



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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 book of truth, which flows from the throne of God. St. James points me to the first, *Every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*, James i. 17.—I am indebted for the others to our Lord's forerunner, and to our Lord himself. *John said, A man can receive nothing, except it be GIVEN him FROM HEAVEN.—JESUS answered, Thou couldest have no power at all, &c. except it were GIVEN thee FROM ABOVE.* John iii. 27.—xix. 11.

If the Pelagian error stands it out against these weighty declarations, I shall draw *the sword of the Spirit*, and aim the following strokes at that fashionable and dangerous doctrine.

Why was Adam elected to the enjoyment of human powers? Was it not God's free electing love, which raised him to the sphere of a *rational animal*;—that exalted sphere, from which all other animals are reprobated? Was it not distinguishing favour, which *made him but a little lower than the angels*? Let the *Pelagians* and the *rigid Arminians* tell us, what uncreated Adam did to merit the election, which raised him above the first horse? Or what the first horse had done, to deserve his being everlastingly shut out of heaven, and reprobated from all knowledge of his creator?—Why was the *lark* elected to the blessing of a towering flight, and of sprightly songs, from which the *oyster* is so abundantly reprobated;—the poor oyster, which is shut up between  
two

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 servants who have given *double* diligence to make their gratuitous election sure. Thus he elects to the honor of *being ruler over TEN cities*, the man whose pound *had gained TEN pounds*, rather than the man, whose pound had only gained *five* pounds, and who, by the rule of equitable proportion, is only placed over *five* cities. Luke xix. 15, &c.— And, according to the *reprobation* of justice, in the day of judgment it shall be more intolerable for unbelieving *Chorazin and Bethsaida*, than for *Sodom and Gomorrha*; and for unbelieving *London and Edinburgh*, than for *Chorazin and Bethsaida*; because they bury *more* talents, resist *brighter* light, and sin against *richer* dispensations of divine grace. Mat. x. 15.

With regard to the election and reprobation of justice, *there is* [absolutely] *no respect of persons with God*; and evangelical worthiness, which dares not shew its head before the throne of God's partial grace, may lift it up with humble confidence before the throne of Christ's remunerative justice. Hence it is, that St. Paul, who so strongly asserts in Rom. ix. that, before the throne of partial grace, *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy*, or favour when, and in what degree he pleases; does not scruple to say, when he is going to appear before the mediatorial throne of divine justice, *The time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of [evangelical] righteousness, which the Lord, the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, shall give me at that day:—*  
when

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two shells, without either legs or wings, and so far as we know, equally destitute of ears and eyes?

If a disciple of *Pelagius* thinks, that I demean myself by proposing these questions, to prove the *gratuitous* and *absolute* election and reprobation, which are so conspicuous in the world of nature; I will rise to his sphere, and ask him what he did to deserve the honour of being elected to the superiority of his sex—an honour this, from which his mother was absolutely reprobated: and if he has a rich father, who gave him a liberal education, I should be glad to know, what good works he had done, before he was providentially elected to this blessing, from which the bulk of mankind are so eminently reprobated.

Can we not trace the footsteps of an electing or reprobating providence all the earth over, with respect to persons and places? Why is one man elected to sway a sceptre, 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 sit 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 free-stone, as well as sapphires, amethysts, and pearls? And why  
" should

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when *he shall render eternal life to them, who seek for glory, by patient continuance in well-doing.* 2 Tim. iv. 6, &c. Rom. ii. 7.

The doctrine of *PROPER merit, or merit of CON-DIGNITY*, is unscriptural, irrational, and wild. The bare thought of it could make an *innocent* angel blush before his Creator, and should fill a *reprieved* sinner with the greatest detestation. And yet, the doctrine of *IMPROPER, or EVANGELICAL worthiness* is of so great importance, that if you take it away, you eclipse God's distributive justice; you destroy the law of Christ, and all the conditional promises and threatnings in the bible; you demolish all the doctrines of personal rewards and punishments together with the judgment-seat of Christ; and upon their ruins you raise an antinomian babel, whose dreadful foundation is *finished, or necessary damnation* for the myriads of Calvin's absolute reprobates; while it's 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 insamy 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

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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, shavms and loud cymbals*, when others were appointed to do it only upon an *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 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 abtaining 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,

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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 *chuses 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 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 paradisiacal 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 relieved 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 prayers 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**  
C
excellent

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 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 excusableness 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 their 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

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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 men, they begin to rank among the reprobates of justice, and are involved in their dreadful punishment. Thro' the apostasy 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 THERE 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



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branch of his numerous family? Could he not as well have called to this honour *Abimelech*, king of Gerar, *Melchisedec*, 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 *Ketura*, 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* thro' 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*

† *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 of those, who are afraid of making one part of the scripture contradict the other. Granting that a sinner, 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 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 he pleaseth 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 it godly sincerity, &c. we have had our conversation in the world;*  
 2 Cor

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 sent 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 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 antifolvidian 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 jus-

## 9 BIBLE-CALVINISM.

*For what 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

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 kept—I have kept—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 leaving witnesses together 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-creatures, 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, *Habetis gloriam, sed gloriam in DOMINO*; I answer, that we keep this gospel-precept, when we *principally glory in the Lord himself*, and when we *subordinate* 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

vice, *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 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 of national salvation, or squandered away all the time, which he had allotted them for national repentance. *I brought thee out of U- 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. Mat. xxiii. 32.

To return: God says to Abraham, *I will judge the oppressive nation, whom the Israelites shall serve; and accordingly he judicially reprobates Rabab and the dragon—Egypt and Pharaoh.* But is Rabab 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 setting his seal to the most cruel decrees, and 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

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

apostle says, *He that glorieth, let him glory in THE LORD*, he no more supposes, that it is 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 would 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 shalt 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 some thing 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 was *in the Lord, to 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 he was *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,

Paul sum up in these words: *I will put you in remembrance that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt [thro' 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 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.]* 1 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, altho' they were Canaanites, are elected to partake of a peculiar deliverance, because *she had received the messengers* with hospitable kindness. Jam. ii. 25. On the other hand *Acban*, 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

## 71 BIBLE-CALVINISM.

HIS PART, whether we receive what he offers or not] a FREE GIFT, I say, preceded Abraham's faith. His very belief of my justifying and saving truth proves, that this truth, in which he believed, was *freely* offered and given him, that he might believe in it; yea, *before* he possibly could 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 *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* degree 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 repute it thro' unbelief, or throw it away thro' an obstinate continuance in sin. Abraham therefore, by receiving this *free-gift* of justification thro' 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*

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, where he declares, that, by the conscioufness 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 surprizing 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!

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. Judg. ii. 1, 15. [Here is the reprobation of justice!]

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.

Altho' 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 LOOK-ETH ON THE HEART:—To this man will I look, who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth

at



## 12 BIBLE-CALVINISM.

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 thro' 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 words, *Not the bearers 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,

## BIBLE-ARMINIANISM, 12

at my word. 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7. And 1s. 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 shewed 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 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 cotemporaries. 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-grace* 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 sevenfold punishment to

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the

doctrine Luther sometimes overlooked, altho' 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.* Jam. ii. 21, 24.

But a *sanct*, 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 [together with his justice satisfied by Christ, and his faithfulness in keeping his gospel-promises,] 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 more 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, thro' Christ's merits and satisfaction; or [if you please] thro' his imputed righteousness; or, to speak in St. Paul's language, thro' 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

the man that should slay him.—Wicked *Abab*, 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 Abab 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 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 day 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 beareth 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 HUMBLD HIMSELF GREATLY 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 HUMBLD HIMSELF, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12—23.*

The new testament gives us the same views of God's righteous reprobation. Judas, one of those

ing 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 (3) The gospel-charter, which graciously offers mercy thro' Christ to the chief of sinners, and according to which I am *graciously* endowed 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

“ Whilst Jesus' blood, thro' earth and skies,  
“ Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries,

What thankful believer can help singing?

“ Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,  
“ My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
“ Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,  
“ With joy shall I lift up my head.”

To

\* Some of my readers will possibly 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 Solidian, 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 of one 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, 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

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, Mat. 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 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, that 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*

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 *Iaac* to the covenant of peculiarity, from which *Ismael*, his elder brother, was reprobated :—a *special calling*, which had been fixed upon *before* the birth of *Iaac*, and therefore could no ways be procured by his obedience. In full opposition to *Iaac*'s design, the same *distinguishing* grace called *Jacob* rather than *Eſau*, to inherit the promises of the peculiar covenant made with *Abraham* and *Iaac*. 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, it was said, *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 like Eſau. But his father refused and said*

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 give 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*.

were not worthy, Mat. 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 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 *Melchisedec*, patient *Job*, and his pious friends, for whom *God was intreated*?—What of *Bethuel*, Rebekah's father? What of *Asenath*, 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 *Sbeba*, and the Sidonian widow, who had charity enough to share her last morsel with Elijah, an hungry and desolate stranger? What of grateful *Naaman*, the Syrian, whom the prophet sent away in peace, when he entailed a curse upon *Gebazi*, 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*?



said, *I know it my son. He [Manasses] 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 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.* Ex. 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, Esaias, Esdras, Judas Maccabeus,* 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 incontestable? Whilst *Jacob*, and the Israelites, were [peculiarly] loved; were not

*nasseb*? 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 the 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* 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

## 27 BIBLE-CALVINISM.

not *Esau*, 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*

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 it's 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: *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*  
*be*

*while ago*—in the deepest and most solemn manner, *sitting in sackcloth and 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  
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be bath 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 an 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 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 foreknew, 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

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## 19. BIBLE - CALVINISM.

[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, busy worldings, 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 shown 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 *Quan*, 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 *Belshazzar*, 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 show 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 *Lebbaeus*, than to *Peter*, *James*, and *John*? How soon, how awfully did God destroy *Nadab* and *Abihu*, for offering strange fire?

## BIBLE - ARMINIANISM, 19

[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 fall [the jews elected thro' 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—24.

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 thro' 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 more 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 followers of me:—I so run, &c. lest I myself should be 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



fire? *Korab, Dathan, and Abiram*, for resisting *Moses*?—*Uzza*, 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 *Pharoah*, the idolatry of *Solomon*, the witchcrafts of bloody *Manasses*, and the hypocrisy 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 CHOOSE 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 choose*] 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 *Epbraim*: But chose the tribe of *Judah*, the *mount Zion*, which he loved? Ps. 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 *Parphar* 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

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 enclosed 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 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

snow, which cover *Iceland*; or in the hot climates, where the vertical sun darts his insufferable 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 *Sicily* does; or in heathenish \* superstition, as the large Islands of *Mudagascar* 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?

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\* 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 surprizing 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 mechanicks 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.'

*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. Mat. 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, however, 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 solidian 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

reprobated; most nations in Asia, Africa, and America being indulged with no higher religious advantages, than those, which belong to the religions of Confucius, Mahomer, 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 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 he 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

## BIBLE-ARMINIANISM, 22

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, although 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 their errors, and by God's over-ruling their mistakes. The doctrines of *distributive justice* belong no more to rigid Calvinism, 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

and wonderful things. Deut. vii. 6, &c. Ex. 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 THESE it was shewed, that THOU mightest know  
 [with peculiar certainty] that the Lord he is God?  
 Deut. iv. 7, 32, &c.

Does not the psalmist stir up the Lord's chosen  
 nation to gratitude and praise, by the same motives,  
 of which the anti-Calvinists are ashamed? He swea-  
 eth his word to JACOB, his statutes to ISRAEL. He  
 hath NOT DEALT so with any nation: as for his [per-  
 cularly-covenanted] judgments, they [the heathen]  
 know not them. Praise ye the Lord,—O ye seed  
 of Abraham—ye children of Jacob his chosen. Psalm  
 cxlvii. 19, 20.—cv. 6.

Nay, does not God himself stir up Jerusalem [the  
 holy city become an 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 says the  
 Lord God to 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 co-  
 venanted into a covenant with thee:—I put a beautiful  
 crown upon thy head:—thou didst prosper into a king-  
 dom, 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. Ez. xvi.

37. &c.

lingering persons cleanly enough to wash their hands, although 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 thro' the hands of the prince of Wales, which are as white as snow, and the cleanliness 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 theologians 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 *gratuitous* election of *distinguishing grace*; tho' 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 *Christophas* does in these words. Just so do plous Calvinists preach the election of grace and in the same manner is their preaching overruled to the comfort of some.

But



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 *Bitthynia*, 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 aversion to the truth? And could not God have raised himself a christian church in *Bitthynia*, 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 commonwealth of Israel*, and *strangers to the covenants of promise*, having no hope [founded upon a special 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*

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 to 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 Christi* 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 liberty 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*.

F

To

## 25. BIBLE - CALVINISM.

*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? Mat. 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 4000 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, 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. ii. iii.] 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 purposed 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 show forth the praises of his distinguishing mercy, and glorify him*

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 right, *unnecessitated* choice of offered life (thro' 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, 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 *pre-*

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 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 necessitate 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 make them draw back to perdition, that they may be eternally damned?'—But with 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

*venient 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 twofold 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 it's 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 *pre-venient 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 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*.

In such evangelical strains as these, should christians express before God their peculiar gratefulness 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 an 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 God 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, 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*

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 the tail of the evangelical *chimera*, which Calvin supposed to have sprung from *the Lion of the tribe of Juda*. 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 cloathed 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 errors, which attack her on the right hand and on the left. She has put forth her two arms in this twofold essay; and, if her adversaries do not resist her, as the Jews did Stephen by stopping their ears,

it



*from our sins* [not by the blood of lambs, and heifers, as Aaron washed the jews] *but by his own blood, and bath 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* [distinguishing] *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. iii. 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 *Manasses*? 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 *Manasses*, who filled Jerusalem with blood and witchcraft. *All* fallen churches would

## BIBLE - ARMINIANISM. 28.

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.



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 *impartial*, this *levelling* scheme, God would have been obliged to make all men *kings*, as Manasses;—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 levelling scheme of the 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 error, and to rescue the multitude

itude 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, 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, 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-will*, 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

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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 overdoing 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 chastize 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 *Korab*, and the blossoming, fragrant rod of *Aaron* : between a fire, which gently warms your apartment, and one which rapidly consumes your house :—between the bright morning star, *inferior* in light to the sun, and an 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 frighten'd 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 to 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.

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 on 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 the 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 good use of God's PRIMARY favours, secures to us his righteous punishments, or *gracious rewards*, that is, his SECONDARY 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

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large

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*, *Jonathab*, and *Mephibosheth* are damned, because they were reprobated with respect to the peculiar favours, which God bestowed upon *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *David*, and *Solomon*? Or that *Judas*, *Annianias*, and *Sapphira* are 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, tho' 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-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

were offered.—As for the *court of the gentiles*, tho' 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 thro' 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 that fire. And therefore they were no more absolutely reprobated from all interest in the daily sacrifice, than Caiaphas was absolutely elected to an inamissible 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, 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,



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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.*

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 The RECONCILIATION, &c.
 

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## SECTION VI.

*Inferences from the two-fold Essay.*

**I**F 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 candour.

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*

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*romantic*

*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 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 her seventeenth article evidently countenances our *unconditional election of grace* IN CHRIST, whilst the latter part secures the doctrine of our *conditional election of justice* thro’ 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 *threatnings*.

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,

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 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 the 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 *spared 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 two are 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 *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*, Mat. 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 band 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

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 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 this imaginary law; that is, under this 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, I say, 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*,  
 13 3 and

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 of the Father, of *eternal* redemption on the part of the Son, and of *irreversible* 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 thro' 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 through 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 impor-

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† 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?

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 *Læogiver, 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 scripture-lustre. *Rigid Calvinism* will be lost in *Bible-Arminianism*, 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 honorable 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



destination 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 Noachic and Mosaic dispensations; the first of which is noted for its *darkness*; and the second for its *veil and shadows*.—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 *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

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 a 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.

XI. 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*: That is, “There is a considerable number of Jews, who, like myself, make their gratuitous calling and election to the blessings of christianity sure thro’ faith.” For wherever 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,

name, because it is both *peculiarly gracions*, 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.\*

XII. If the *rigid* Arminians are culpable for being ashamed of God's evangelical partiality, for overlooking his distinguishing love, and for casting a veil over his election of grace; the *rigid* Calvinists are not less blamable 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 election of grace;" and down comes *persecuting* Calvinism.

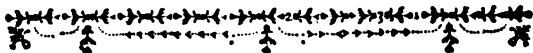
\* My light and theological accuracy, have [I hope] increased since I wrote the *Equal Check*. I did not then *clearly* see that the *election of grace*, of which the apostle speaks in this verse, is our *gratuitous* election to the blessings of *Christianity*, as it is opposed to *Judaism*, and not merely as it is opposed to the *Adamic* *covenants 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*, [that is, 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*.

“ ing 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* Calvin-  
 ism, with all the contentions, which it perpetually  
 begets.

XIII. The rigid Papists, who set up as defenders  
 of the doctrines of *justice*, and yet hold *Papish* *repro-*  
*bation*, are full as inconsistent as the rigid *Calvinists*,  
 who set up as defenders of the *doctrines of GRACE*,  
 and yet hold *Calvinian reprobation*: For *Papish* and  
*Calvinian reprobation* equally confound the gospel-  
 dispensations, and leave divine *justice* and *grace* nei-  
 ther root nor branch, with respect to all those, who  
 die unacquainted with christianity, that is, with res-  
 pect to far the greatest part of mankind.

XIV. To conclude: Milton says somewhere,  
 “ There is a certain *scale of duties*, a certain hierar-  
 “ chy of upper and lower *commands*, which for want  
 “ of studying in right order, all the world is in con-  
 “ fusion.” What that great man said of the *scale of*  
*duties* and *commands*, may with equal propriety be af-  
 firmed of the *scale of evangelical truths*, and the hier-  
 archy 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 christi-  
 ans, and destroying the errors of *levelling* Pelagian-  
 ism, *antinomian* Calvinism, *confused* Arminianism,  
 and *reprobating* Popery, is to restore primitive har-  
 mony and fulness to the partial gospels of the day;  
 which can be done with ease, among candid and ju-  
 dicious enquirers after truth, by placing the doctrine  
 of *the dispensations* in its scripture-light; and by hold-  
 ing forth *the doctrines of grace* and *justice* in all their  
 evangelical brightness. This has been attempted in  
 the twofold essay, from which these inferences are  
 drawn. Whether the well-meant attempt shall be  
 successful with respect to *one*, is a question, which  
*thy* reason and candor, gentle reader, are called upon  
 to decide.

SECT.



## S E C T. VI.

*The Plan of a general reconciliation, and union, between the moderate Calvinists and the candid Arminians.*

**B**Y 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 an 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 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.

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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*,  
I are,

\* *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 look'd into Arminius's works: Nor did I ever read them carefully thro', 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 has spread over it.—And (3) Because it generally supposed that Arminius leaned to the error of Pelagius.

are very near each other, and very near 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 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

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 eclipsed sun.

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. Row. 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 113, 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 more bigot still.'—As Mr. Wesley candidly grants here, that 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, intitled *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 utter strangers to the peculiarities of rigid Calvinism and rigid Arminianism;—if both the Calvinists and the 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 labors for the conversion of sinners, or the edification of saints, and who [the Lord being their helper] are ready to seal the truth  
of

of christianity with their blood ;—if this, 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 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 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, suffireth violence* : it cannot be taken and kept, without great, and constant endeavours. *The violent alone are able to conquer it* ; 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 soldiers 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 it's 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, tho' they should despitefully use you. Bless them, tho' they should curse you: Pray for them, tho' they should persecute you. Wait upon them, and salute them as brethren, tho' they should keep at as great a distance from you, as if you were their enemies:*

enemies: For if ye 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 other? 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 clergymen 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*; 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 labor 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.]

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, Re-  
 ‘ move hindrances out of the way ? Not judge  
 ‘ one another, not envy one another ? Not be dis-  
 ‘ pleased with one another’s gifts or success, even  
 ‘ tho’ greater than our own ? Not wait for one  
 ‘ another’s halting ; much less wish for it, or re-  
 ‘ joice therein ? — Never speak disrespectfully,  
 ‘ slightly, coldly, or unkindly of each other ?  
 ‘ Never repeat each other’s faults, mistakes or in-  
 ‘ firmities ; 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 most 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 greater 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 re-  
 ‘ spectfully, 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 honest 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* particularly to *all protestants*, and *most* particularly to all the protestants of the established church§, with whom I am joined by repeated

§ 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.

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. 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 Moria, or on mount Gerizim: let rigid church-men say, that a parish-church is the only place where divine worship 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**

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 inheriting the seventh beatitude, form themselves into a society of reconcilers, whatever 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.

**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 churchmen or dissenters, by Arminians or Calvinists, they venture their lives to put out the flames: And why should there not be associations of peace-makers, 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 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 manifestos and make them circulate, associate and strengthen their associations, and at last venture their fortunes, reputations, and lives in the execution of their warlike 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



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 their 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, 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 desire 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, ye 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

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 think 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, and 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, or the press, they might with all speed direct streams of living water—floods of truth and kindness, to quench the burning fire of wrath, oppose the waters of strife, and remove what ever 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, and 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 one or two 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 men, burning with the love of God and of their neighbour, be able to do in England? We may judge of it by what twelve fishermen did 1700 years ago. Arise then ye sons of peace, ye sons of God, into whose hands these sheets may

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fall

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 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 reinforce. 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.

SECT.

## SECTION VII.

*Some Directions how to secure the Blessings of Peace and Brotherly Love.*

**D**O all things without disputings, 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 it's 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, that the following are of this 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 graces, so make more room for another. Whilst the philo-

father exalts consideration alone; the Carthusian, repentance; the Solifidian, faith; the Mystic, love; and the Moralift, 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*; altho' in some cases, it may, and should prevent a *close* communion. If our 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

who made much ado about mint, 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 confin'd 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 pharisaic 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 themselves *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 peculiarly 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 would we wonder at such expressions as these:—*My church—my chapel—my party—my congregation—my connexions—my popularity—my hope of being esteem'd 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  
neigh-

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 design'd 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 Sr. 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

\* I humbly hope, that I have followed this part of the direction in my Checks. To the best of my knowledge, I have



And when 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

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 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-A-min.* page 23] 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 tho' 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 were 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, shews to be closely connected with antinomian delations, 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, thro' 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 *finner's* justification. But we disagree with respect to a *believer's* justification. A solifidian supposes, that God will justify *finners* 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 finners—between the righteous and the wicked, does not consist in an external imputation of Christ's merits; but in an inherent participation of Christ's purity. See the note, page 14.

**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 thro' their works. This will be an effectual means of breaking the bars of prejudice, contempt, fear, and hard thinking, which unacquaintedness puts between 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 good will 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 hearkeneth and bears it, and a book of remembrance is written before him for them.—And they shall be mine,* saith,

*saith the Lord of hosts in that day when I make up my ewels.*

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 provocations; 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 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; the 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 lang, 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*  
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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.]* Mat. 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 drop 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

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 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

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, In as much 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.

VIII. 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*  
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*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; we shall seek our own, as the fallen Phillippians; 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.*

SECT.

## 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 yourselves. 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 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 scripture 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  
L 2 religion



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 thro' rudely with an iron pen: And when I put the last hand to complete the likeness, it shall be besmear'd 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 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 anti-christian 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

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 *Sabbaths* with all the emphases, 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 be obliged to say to us one day: *You are of your father the devil, whose works ye do,* when you keep up divisions. The devil, says Archbishop Leighton, being an apostate spirit, revolted and separated from God, doth naturally project and work *division.* This was his first exploit, and is still his grand design and business in the world. He first *divided* our first parents from God, and the next we read of in their first child, was enmity against his brother. The tempter wounded *truth*, in order to destroy *love*: and therefore, he is justly called by our Saviour a LIAR, and a MURDERER *from the beginning.* He murdered our first parents by lying, and made them murderers by drawing them into his uncharitableness. God forbid that we should any longer do the work of the father of lies and murders! Heaven prevent our committing again two so great evils as those of wounding truth, and preventing love!—of wounding truth by attacking the scripture-doctrines of free-grace and free-agency! and of

*preventing love*, by hindering the union of two such large bodies of professors, as the Calvinists and the Arminians! Nor let any lover of peace say, "I will not hinder the reconciliation you speak of;" for it is our bounden duty to *farther* it by a speedy, constant exertion of all our interest with God, and influence with men: otherwise we shall be found *unprofitable, slothful servants*, and shall be judged according to this declaration of our Lord, *He that gathereth not with me scattereth*. For he, who, in so noble a cause as that of truth and love, is *neither cold nor hot*, pulls down upon his own head the curse denounced against the lukewarm Laodiceans.

V. The sin 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-christians, fellow-protestants, and fellow-sufferers [in reputation at least] for maintaining the capital doctrines of salvation by faith in Christ, and of regeneration by the Spirit of God. How absurd is it for persons, who thus share in the reproach, patience and kingdom of Christ, to 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, Mr. Voltaire, has, it is supposed, caused myriads of men to be ashamed of their baptism, and to renounce the profession of christianity. His prophane 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

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 pre-  
 “ tence 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 darestable 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*—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; whisperers, backbiters, spiteful, without understanding, without brotherly affection, implacable;—having a form of godly orthodoxy, but denying the power of peaceable charity?*

VII. Instead

VII. Instead of continuing to give arowed 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 air, whose name is *Abaddon—Apolhon—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 internal 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 protestants, you, British believers, will not agree to *resist the devil, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,*

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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 hath 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 or 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?

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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 center as the solar beams center in the sun.—And will ye reply, “We will not be obedient to thy drawings: We will not be centered in thee with our Calvinian or Arminian brethren. Thy Father may sacrifice thee to *slay the enmity, and so make peace*: and thou mayst lay down thy life to make *reconciliation*; but reconciled to each other we will not be; for the god of discord draws us asunder, 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; sub-

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fill 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 weakness) I write it at the hazard of my life; —*Animanque 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 Gods 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 in itself.* As soon as ye will 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 apostolic, 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 Ez. 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 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, 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 doctrines