

The Sermons of John Brine

by John Brine

Volume 2

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*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed
because of the truth*

— Psalm 60:4

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SERMON 18

MOTIVES TO LOVE AND UNITY AMONG CALVINISTS, WHO DIFFER IN SOME POINTS

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTOPHILUS, PHILALETES,
AND PHILAGATHUS.

*Wherein is contained an ANSWER to Mr. ALVEREY JACKSON'S
Question Answered,*

Whether saving Faith in CHRIST is a Duty required by the moral
Law, of all those who live under the Gospel Revelation?

CHRISTOPHILUS and *Philaletes* were excellent Persons, firmly attached to the Christian Religion, and, many Years, intimate Friendship subsisted between them. But they had different Apprehensions, in some Particulars, about which they several Times conversed. And, as in this imperfect State, the best of Men may not think alike, in all Respects, thro' a Variety of Causes, Prejudice and undue Resentment sometimes get Possession in their Minds, both against Opinions, which they think are not true, and those who hold them.

It seems, this was the Fact, in the two worthy Persons above-mentioned: For, that Amity and Friendship entirely ceased, which they had a long Time cultivated to mutual Advantage; and Displeasure filled the Breast of each.

Philagathus, receiving Information of it, was much affected with Grief, on Account thereof. He, therefore, formed a Resolution to make a particular Enquiry, concerning their Differences in Opinion, and, if possible, to bring, them unto a Reconciliation. That he might execute this generous and laudable Design, he gave each a kind Invitation to his House, which was gratefully accepted by both. They came at the Time he desired. He quickly acquainted them with the Information he had received, with the Grief it occasioned him, and with his good Intention, in desiring the Favour of their Company; and expressed his Hope, that Christian Friendship might be renewed, and continue to subsist between them, notwithstanding a small Difference, in their Apprehensions, about some particular Points of Doctrine.

He thought it very proper solemnly to address God, upon this important Occasion, for the Aid and Instruction of the holy Spirit, wherein they both agreed with him. He desired *Christophilus* to

pray, which he did, with that Reverence, Humility, and Fervency, as greatly affected both himself and *Philalethes*. He requested the Favour of *Philalethes* to succeed him in that good Work; he readily consented; and, therein, he discovered such an Acquaintance with, and Savour of evangelical Truths, as much delighted not only himself, but *Christophilus* also. *Philagathus* closed this Service with a very suitable and pathetic Request to Heaven, for a Blessing upon the Conversation designed.

And, then, addressing himself to them, he said, My dear Brethren in Christ, (for such I acknowledge you both to be) it was with very great Grief I heard, that, that Friendship, which subsisted between you many Years, is now broke, and a mutual Animosity succeeds it in your Breasts, on Account only, I am persuaded, of some lesser Differences, in your Conceptions, wherein none of the Essentials of Christianity are affected, on which Side soever the Mistake may be. ***My Desire, therefore, is, that you would be pleased to permit me to mention the peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel, and that you will express your Assent, or Dissent, as you approve, or disapprove, of those Principles.*** Both agreed to this Proposal. Whereupon he thus said:

I. I will begin with the Foundation of our Recovery and Happiness, *viz.* Election. God chose a certain Number of Men to Salvation. This Act was eternal, and it is the mere Effect of sovereign Favour, without any Motive to the divine Will, in the Persons who are the Objects of this Choice. Farther, it is irrevocable; and it ascertains the Sanctification, in Time, of all those who are included in this Decree, and their complete Happiness and Felicity hereafter.

II. *Adam* was constituted the Representative of all his natural Descendants; they were included with him in the Covenant of Works, and, therefore, his Act of Disobedience was imputed to them; in and with him they came under the Condemnation of the Law, and from him they derive moral Depravity and Corruption. So that all Men naturally are Subjects of Darkness, Obstinacy, and Rebellion against God; are averse to Good, and inclined to Evil.

III. A Covenant of Peace was entered into, between the divine Persons; wherein, full and effectual Provision is made for the Salvation of all the Elect, in such a Way, as exalts the Glory of all the infinite Perfections of God. In this Covenant Christ engaged to do and suffer, what Law and Justice required, in order to the Salvation of the Elect, *viz.* to obey the Law, which he punctually did; his Obedience is accepted for, and imputed to them, and that is the sole Matter of their Justification, before God. He, also, voluntarily became obliged to offer himself a Sacrifice for their Sins, to redeem

them from Curse and Wrath. Agreeably to this Obligation, which he took upon him, he bore their Sins, was made a Curse, endured the vindictive Displeasure of God, suffered and died, in their Room and Stead. His Sufferings and Death were satisfactory to the Law and Justice of God, for their whole Guilt; from hence, in Equity, results a Right to Pardon and Impunity, unto every one of them. And this Redemption is proper and peculiar to the Elect of God, or it is not of larger Extent.

IV. Regeneration and Sanctification are the proper Work of God, in the Souls of Men. Regeneration is absolutely necessary, none can be fared without it. Men are passive in it, and the human Will is not a concurring Cause, with the Grace of God, in its Production. God operates effectually herein, and is not, nor can be frustrated of his End in his gracious Influences on the Souls of his People. The regenerate Principle consents unto the Law, that it is good, delights in, and serves it. So that true Faith in Christ is productive of holy Obedience, and *worketh by Love*.

V. Those who are effectually called, according to God's Purpose, in the Decree of Election, shall certainly persevere unto the End, and be eternally saved, notwithstanding the Treachery of their own Hearts, the Temptations of Satan, and the numerous Snares to which they are exposed in this World.

Christophilus. I cannot but express my Belief and great Approbation of the Doctrines, which you, *Philagathus*, have mentioned. *Philalethes.* I declare myself no less satisfied of the Truth and Importance of those Principles; and hope, that I shall always most religiously regard them, as Doctrines calculated to promote the Glory of God, in the certain and complete Salvation of his Chosen.

Philagathus. Since you both are firmly persuaded of the Truth of the several Articles, which I have briefly mentioned, I cannot think it is possible, that either of you can embrace any Opinion which affects the *Essentials* of Christianity, what Difference soever may be in your Apprehensions, or in the Mode of your expressing yourselves, in Relation to those Points; and, therefore, surely, Friendship may be revived and continue to subsist between you, notwithstanding some *lesser* Differences, in your Conceptions, and Mode of Language.

Christophilus. I must be obliged to acquaint you, that *Philalethes* gives into some over nice and subtle Speculations, relating to the Doctrine of Election. He will needs have it, that God chose his People, considered as unfallen, or in the pure Mass, and that he decreed to permit the Fall, with a View to illustrate the Glory of his free Grace and Mercy, in the Salvation of the Elect, thro' the Mediation of Christ. This Notion of his he hath advanced in Public,

which, in my humble Opinion, could not edify common Hearers; for which Reason, I took the Liberty to remonstrate against: it, whereby I incurred his Displeasure, not a little, it seems.

Philalethes. This is the Fact, I acknowledge it.

Philagathus. Good, wise, and very learned Men have had different Apprehensions of this Matter; but, as to the Substance of the Doctrine of Election, they were fully agreed. The Difference of Rating this Doctrine, as above the Consideration of the Fall, or under it, is only *in Apice logico*, in a logical Point; it respects the Order, not the Cause of the Decree; Divines, who differ in this, are agreed that sovereign Favour is the Cause thereof. And, as to the Edification of common Hearers, I am of Opinion, that this Sentiment may be represented in such a plain and easy Light, as to answer that important End. If, indeed, *Philalethes* is not capable of representing it in a Manner intelligible to common Capacities, he would act more wisely to decline the Advancement of it. Which, it must be confessed, is not the Talent of every one, who may discern the Truth in his Mind. There is certainly no Cause why the *Supralapsarian* and *Sublapsarian* should differ with one another; they are agreed in the substance of the Doctrine of Election, and, therefore, ought to bear with one another in the different Manner of Rating it. Divines who lived in the former Century wisely did so.

Christophilus. I have another Thing to object to *Philalethes*.

Philagathus. What is that?

Christophilus. He affirms, that the Elect are united to Christ before Faith.

Philalethes. That is my Opinion. In the Act of Election, God considered its Objects in Christ, for he chose them in him. And, Grace was given them in Christ, before the World began. Besides, he represented the Elect of God, in his Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection; and he now represents his People, in his Session at the right Hand of God; hence they are said to *fit together in heavenly Places in Christ*. As *Adam* was constituted a representative Head to all his Seed, and they were considered in him: So *Christ*, in the Covenant of Grace, was constituted a representative Head to the Elect, and they were, from everlasting, considered in him.

Philagathus. I cannot perceive any Error in this. *We were chosen in Christ, as a Head*, says *Zanchy*. The same Author observes, *because Christ our Head is risen, and sits in heavenly Places; therefore we are held and accounted of the Father to be raised, and sitting and living in Heaven. God's Choice did completely terminate itself on him (Christ) and us, us with him, and yet us in him; he having the*

Priority to be constituted a common Person and Root to us, for that is the Relation wherein we stand unto him, and in that Relation we were first chosen. Thus Dr. Goodwin. Christophilus, I am also somewhat dissatisfied with Philalethes, because he maintains, that Adoption precedes Faith.

Philalethes. I apprehend that to be a Truth. Predestination to the Adoption of Children was an eternal Act of the divine Will, wherein God willed to be a Father to us, and that we should be Sons unto him, which made us such. For the Will of God to be a Father to us, and that we shall be Sons to him, constitutes our filial Relation unto him. Besides, all those who are the Subjects of Redemption by Christ, were considered therein as Sons and Children of God. *It became him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect thro' Sufferings.* In divine Repute, all were Sons for whom Christ died. Again, the holy Spirit is sent into our Hearts, because we are Sons; and, therefore, our filial Relation to God, is not *subsequent* upon, but *precedaneous* to the Mission of the Spirit, to regenerate and sanctify us: *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts.* Regeneration is not Adoption, nor is the latter founded in the former, tho' they are sometimes not distinguished, but confounded; they are, I think, very distinct Blessings. If Adoption be understood of the Participation of those Honours, Privileges, and Blessings, unto which we have a Right as Sons, that is, at, upon, or after Regeneration, and doth not precede it. Thus it is sometimes taken, as in these Words: *Waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.*

Philagathus. This hath been the Opinion of eminent Divines. *God putteth us into Christ, he chuseth us to be in him, to be married to him, and he hath betrothed us to him from everlasting; (for Jesus Christ then betrothed himself unto us, when in Election he undertook for us with the Father) and so we became Sons-in-Law to God. — I am in this of learned Mr. Forb's Mind: That Adoption, as primitively it was in Predestination be flowed upon us, was not founded upon Redemption, or Christ's Obedience; but on Christ's being personally God's natural Son.* Dr. Goodwin. Christophilus. *Another Thing in Philalethes is displeasing to me.*

Philagathus. What is it?

Christophilus. He embraces the Antinomian Error of Justification before Faith.

Philalethes. That is my Sentiment; and, if it is a Mistake, I think it is *abusively* called an *Antinomian, Error.* Justification, properly speaking, as it seems to me, is an immanent Act in God, *viz.* the Act

of his Will not to impute Sin to his Elect, but to impute to them the Righteousness of Christ; wherefore, in his Mind, they are discharged of Guilt, and reputed righteous. Now, as this is not a transient, but an immanent Act, it requires not so much as the present Existence of the Object, much less the Being of Faith in the Object justified. God's Purpose to lay their Sins on Christ necessarily supposes, that it was his Intention not to impute them unto their Persons: And his Decree, that Christ should come under their Obligation to the Law, that he might obey it for them, as necessarily supposes a Will in God to impute his Obedience to them, which is their Justification in the divine Mind. Yet, I deny not Justification, when it is understood of the *declared manifest* State of this, or that *particular* Person, to be by Faith, and do not think that it is *previous* to Regeneration.

Philagathus. I am not able to discern the least Mistake in this Account of Justification. Permit me to recite what some *eminent and learned Divines* have said upon the Subject. *Justification is understood either actively in Respect of God, who justifies, or passively in Respect of Man, who is justified. Justification active Signifies the Absolution of God, whereby he absolveth a guilty Man from Guilt, on Account of the Satisfaction of Christ, and reputeth him just for the Sake of his Righteousness imputed. From hence, first, it is evident, that this differs from passive Justification, because it is done by one undivided Act: But passive, which consists in the Application of the Righteousness of Christ, is not; for, as often as we sin, we should apply to us the Righteousness of Christ. Hence, in the Lord's Prayer, we are commanded to pray daily that God would remit to us our Sins. Secondly, active precedeth Faith, passive followeth, as that which is thro' Faith. For, thro' Faith, we receive Remission of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are sanctified. And, that active precedes Faith, may be proved. 1. Because every Object is prior to its Act, for this depends on that. 2. Because by the Act of believing, as **Pareus** teaches on Justification, Remission of Sins is not effected, but received. 3. Because, thro' the Satisfaction of Christ, we not only obtain Justification, but also Faith itself, and Repentance, that is, the Circumcision of the Heart: For God hath blessed us with every spiritual Blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3. Yea, before Faith and Repentance, the Satisfaction of Christ is applied to us, as that on Account whereof we obtain effectual Grace to believe in Christ. The same Thing **Daniel Toffanus** teaches, who sometime was a most learned Divine in the Academy of Heidelberg, in an Epistle (a Copy of which Lucius published, Professor at Basil) to Vorstius, whose Words are: You confound, says he to Vorstius, the Acquisition of Justification, and the Blotting out of Sin, which is done by the Blood of Christ, with the Application of it: Wherefore you feign to yourself a*

Contradiction, where there is no Contradiction: All the Elect are justified in Christ, if you respect his Merit, yea before they are born; and so, before we believe, we, are justified and redeemed in Christ; but afterwards he (God) giveth Faith to his Elect, whereby they seek their Righteousness in Christ alone. Thus far Toffanus. Passive Justification is that by which a Person is absolved from Guilt, and reckoned righteous; or rather it is a Reception of Absolution from Guilt, and of the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ. The Sentence of Justification was:

I. *Conceived in the Mind of God, by the Decree of Justifying. Galatians 3:8. The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro' Faith.*

II. *It was pronounced in Christ our Head when he rose from the Dead. 2 Corinthians 5:10. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespasses to them.*

III. *It is virtually pronounced on the first Relation which ariseth out of Faith ingenerated. Romans 8:1. There is therefore no Condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus.*

IV. *It is expressly pronounced by the Spirit of God, witnessing, with our Spirits, our Reconciliation with God. Romans 5:5. The Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the holy Spirit, who is given unto us. In this Witness of the Spirit, Justification itself doth not so properly consist, as the actual Perception of it, before granted, by a reflex Act of Faith. We think, that the Form of active Justification is both a full Remission of Sins, and the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ; nor do we apprehend these Phrases to be the same, or to be confounded. Thus far these learned Professors and Divines, and many other eminent Divines agree with them. Says **Mr. Pemble**, Sanctification and inherent Righteousness goes before our Justification and imputed Righteousness, but with a double Distinction of Justification. 1. In Foro Divino, in God's Sight; and this goeth before all our Sanctification, for, even whilst the Elect are unconverted, they are then actually justified and freed from all Sin by the Death of Christ: And God so esteems them as a free, and, having accepted that Satisfaction, is actually reconciled to them. By this Justification we are freed from the Guilt of our Sins; and, because that is done away, God in due Time proceeds to give us the Grace of Sanctification, to free us from Sin's Corruption still inherent in our Persons. 2. In Foro Conscientiae, in our own Sense; which is but the Revelation of God's former secret Act of accepting Christ's Righteousness to our Justification. The Manifestation of which, to our Hearts and Confidences, is the only Ground of our Peace and Comfort: And it follows our Sanctification, upon and*

after the Infusion of saving Faith, the only Instrument of this our Justification. This Distinction is needful to be observed, as giving Light to many Things. — 'Tis vain to think with the Arminians that Christ's Merits have made God only placabilem, not placatum, procured a Freedom that God may be reconciled, if he will and other Things concur, but not an actual Reconciliation. A silly Shift devised to uphold the Liberty of Man's Will, and the Universality of Grace. No, 'tis otherwise; the Ransom demanded is paid and accepted, full Satisfaction to the divine Justice is given and taken, all the Sins of the Elect are actually pardoned, God's Wrath for them suffered and overcome, he rests contented and appealed, the Debt-book is crossed, and the Hand-writing cancelled. This grand Transaction between God and the Mediator Christ Jesus was concluded upon and dispatched in Heaven long before we had any Being, either in Nature or Grace; yet the Benefit of it was ours, and belonged to us at that Time, tho' we never knew so much, till after that by Faith did apprehend it. As, in the like Case, Lands may be purchased, the Writings confirmed, the Estate conveyed and settled upon an Infant, tho' it know nothing of all, till it come to Age, and find by Experience the present Commodity of that which was provided for him long ago. And the Reason of all this, is, it is not our Faith that works God's Reconciliation with us, but Christ believed on by our Faith. Now his Merits are not therefore accepted of God, because we do believe, but because they of themselves are of such Worth and sufficiency, as do deserve his most favourable Acceptance of them for us. Mr. Crandon, speaking of the Non-Imputation of Sin, and of the Imputation of Righteousness to the Elect, say: To what Time shall we reduce this Imputation to find its Original, if not to Eternity? When began God to reckon and account us righteous in Christ, or not to impute Sin to us, if he did not actually do it in himself before Time from Eternity? The Reader, if he pleases, may consult him; he copiously treats on this Subject, with great Judgment and Strength of Reasoning.

The late **Dr. Ridgley** hath these Words: When we speak of God's being reconciled to his Elect, according to the Tenor of his secret Will, before they believe, that is in Effect to say, that Justification, as it is an immanent Act in God, is antecedent to Faith, which is a certain Truth, inasmuch as Faith is a Fruit and Consequence thereof. — There are some, adds he, who not only speak of Justification before Faith, but from Eternity; and consider it as an immanent Act in God, in the same Sense as Election is said to be. I will not deny eternal Justification, provided it be considered as contain'd in God's secret Will, and not made the Rule, by which we are to determine ourselves to be in a justified State, and as such to have a Right and Title to eternal Life, before it is revealed, or

apprehended by Faith. Christophilus. I am surprised to find so many *able and learned Divines* do maintain Justification before Faith, and agree that it is an immanent Act in God. There is no *material* Difference between the Opinion of *Philalethes*, and their Judgment, in this Point.

Philagathus. Why are you surprised?

Christophilus. Because, I have often heard that Notion spoken of with great Contempt by good Men, and have heard the Persons, who embrace it, represented in a very despicable Light, as Men of *very little* Consideration or Worth.

Philagathus. I believe you. But this was not the Case, in the last Century, says **Mr. Crandon:***The very Flower of all our Protestant Writers have asserted it in such Numbers as would fill up a Page to name them. Neither know I any one Writer, which (having not Occasion to manifest himself of the same Judgement) hath ever expressed himself to dissent from it, 'till Dr. Downham excepted against Master Pemble for delivering it, and that upon a strange Ground, that declared great Inadvertency in the Reading of the Dr. viz. that he believeth no Man had so written before Mr. Pemble. I think you pronounced it an Antinomian Error, did you not?*

Christophilus. I did, and esteemed it such.

Philagathus. Mr. Candon observes, that Mr. *Baxter* reproached it in the same Manner: *This, says he, I take to be the Sum of the Doctrine which Mr. Baxter asperseth with Antinomianism, which I believe no other, Papist, or Arminian, had done before him.* I shall say no more to wipe away that Reproach cast on the Opinion, than Mr. *Crandon* did in Answer to the same Aspersion of Mr. *Baxter's*, viz. *As well and properly might he have termed it Mahometanism; for as agreeable is it with the Principles of this, as of that.* *Christophilus.* I cannot but inform you, *Philagathus*, that *Philalethes* denies it to be the immediate Duty of unregenerate Men, who hear the Gospel, to believe in Christ, with special, or saving Faith.

Philalethes, I must confess, that I have not as yet met with clear and convincing Proof of that Point, nor with satisfactory Answers given to those Objections, which occasion my Scruples about it. ***Some Months since, a Friend of Christophilus's published a Pamphlet on that Subject, wherein he advances his Reasons for the Affirmative,*** and attempts to answer one Objection to his Opinion. In this Piece, he hath been pleased to treat me with great Contempt, and more than insinuates, that there are no Consequences, so *bad and vile*, but what do unavoidably follow, not granting the Truth of that for which he contends. I have carefully considered what he

urges to support his Assertion; but my Doubts are not removed, nor in the least Degree abated, by any Thing he offers to Consideration. His Manner of handling the Subject is such, that if I had not other Reasons, than what arise from the Performance itself, I should not be at all inclined to bestow any Animadversions upon it: But, as I have Reasons for it of another Kind, which with me are not of little Moment,

I shall attend unto the small Labour of a thorough Examination of his 'Answer' to the Question propounded, viz. Whether saving Faith in Christ is a Duty required by the moral Law, of all those who live under the Gospel Revelation? I think it not improper to acquaint you, Philagathus, that I am persuaded, if the Desire of the Author had been complied withal, respecting the Revisal of his Manuscript, and if the Publication of it had been thought expedient, by those, under whose Correction, he wished it to pass, much less Room would have been left for displeasing Remarks upon it. My Authority is unquestionable, for what I now say. But my Business is to consider it, just as the Editor thought it fit, to make its Appearance in the World. And I will begin with observing some Mistakes and Inconsistencies, which are in it.

First, The Author apprehends, that there is no Difference between the Principle of Grace in Believers, and that holy Principle of Life which we had in Adam The Image of God, wherein Man was created, consisted in a perfect Knowledge of God, and of his Duty according to the Nature of the Covenant, under which he then was, in a holy Affection to God, and in a habitual Disposition to Obedience. These Things ought constantly to be maintained again, the Socinians, who deny original Righteousness, to the Disparagement of human Nature, in its primitive State, and unto the Dishonour of God our Creator. For, to imagine, that God gave Existence to a reasonable Creature destitute of Principles, suited to enable it to walk before, and with him, in all holy Obedience unto his Will, is to cast impious Reproach on his Wisdom, Goodness, and Holiness. Nevertheless, there is a great Difference, between that Life which we had in Adam, and that which we now have. The gracious Principle in Believers, springs from the Fountain of eternal Love, in the Heart of God towards them, as the God of all Grace. But the Life we had in Adam did not. Our spiritual Life is derived from Christ, and by him it is maintained, and influenced in all its Acts, which the living holy Principle in Adam was not. Again, the regenerate Principle is a Disposition to Acts towards God, agreeable to the Nature of the new Revelation, which he hath given of himself in the Covenant of Grace. But the holy Principle in Adam was n Disposition unto, and exerted itself, in Acts of God, suitable to that

Revelation, which the Covenant of Works gave of him. As the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace differ in Nature: So our Life unto God is of a different Kind, according to the Difference and distinct Nature of the two Covenants: Says Dr. Owen: *For neither would the Life of Adam be sufficient for us, to live unto God according to the Terms of the new Covenant; nor is the Life of Grace we now enjoy, suited to the Covenant, wherein, Adam, stood before God. Wherefore some Differences there between them, the principal whereof may be reduced into two Heads.*

1. *The Principle of this Life was wholly and entirely in Man himself. It was the Effect of another Cause, of that which was without him; namely, the Good Will and Power of God; but it was left to grow on no other Root, but what was in Man himself, It was wholly implanted in his Nature, and therein did its Springs lie. Actual Excitations, by Influence of Power from God, it should have had. For, no Principle of Operation can subsist in an Independence on God, nor itself unto Operation without his Concurrence. But, in the Life, whereunto we are renewed by Jesus Christ, the Fountain and Principle of it is not in ourselves but in him, as one common Head unto all that are made Partakers of him. He is our Life, Colossians 1:3 and our Life (as to the Spring and Fountain of it) is hid with him in God. For he quickeneth us by his Spirit, Romans 8:10. And our spiritual Life, as in us, consists in the vital Actings of this his Spirit in us, for, without him, we can do nothing, John 15:3. By Virtue hereof, we walk in Newness of Life, Romans 6:4. We live therefore hereby, yet not so much we, as Christ liveth in us, Galatians 2:20.*

2. *There is a Difference between these Lives with Respect unto the Object of their vital Acts. For the Life, which we now lead by the Faith of the Son of God, hath sundry Objects of its Acting, which the other had not. For whereas all the Actings of our Faith and Love, that is, all our Obedience doth respect the Revelation that God makes of himself, and his Will unto us. There are now new Revelations of God in Christ, and, consequently, new Duties of Obedience required of us, as will afterwards appear. And other such Differences there are between them. The Life which we had in Adam, and that which we are renewed unto in Christ Jesus, are so far of the same Nature and Kind, as our Apostle manifests in sundry Places, Ephesians 4:23, 24; Colossians 3:10, as that they serve to the same End and Purpose. From hence he proceeds to observe, That, with respect to the Life we bare in Christ, unregenerate Men never had it, neither de Facto, nor de Jure, in any State or Condition. Wherefore, with respect hereunto, they are dead only negatively; they have it not; but, with respect unto the Life we had in Adam, they are dead privatively, they have lost that Power of living unto*

God which they had. Thus far he. Our spiritual Life, therefore, is not that Principle of Life, which we had in *Adam* restored to us, but another Principle, which we had not in him, either *in Fact*, or *in Right*.

The Author assigns two Reasons to prove, that these Principles are the same. 1. The Use of the Terms *renewed*, and *renewing*, in Respect to the Work of Grace, in the Souls of Believers, *Ephesians* 3:23, 24; *Colossians* 3:10; *Titus* 3:5. *Renovation*, says he, *is not the making, producing, or bringing into Existence, a Thing that never was in Being before: But it is a new Framing of that which hath once existed; but hath been spoiled and defaced.* But, 1. This gracious Work is the Renovation of the Mind, and not of a Principle which was in the Mind, antecedent to it, and the Restoration of that Principle to its primitive Beauty, it having been defaced. 2. The Soul may be said to be renewed, with strict Propriety, by the Implantation of a new Principle of Life in it, when dead, even though that Principle differs from that living Principle, by Reason of the Absence of which, it was really dead. The Soul is renewed unto Life; but that Life is of a higher and nobler Kind, than that which Man originally possessed. 3. There is a Revival of the Principle of Grace in Believers, which is meant by *Renewing*, in *Ephesians* 3:23 and *Colossians* 3:10. 2. The second Reason he calls a *cogent and demonstrative Argument*; it is this: *It is not possible in the Nature of the Thing, that there should be two specifically different Images of the moral Perfections of God impressed upon a reasonable Creature, any more than that there are two Gods possessed of two different Kinds of moral Perfections.* If by a specific Difference be intended, that the one is holy, and the other not so, it is Blasphemously absurd to admit the Thought. But, 2. If by it is meant, that it is impossible, that a reasonable Creature should bear a more glorious Image of God, to qualify it for, and dispose it unto *higher* Acts of Obedience, than that which *Adam* bore, it must: be a Mistake, unless we will affirm, that the second *Adam* did not excel the first, as he was in his human Nature the Image of the invisible God, and that he was not called and disposed unto a *higher* Obedience than the first *Adam* was. Which is what, I hope this good Man will not care to assert. And it is into the Image of the second *Adam*, and not into the Image of the first *Adam*, that the Saints are *changed, from Glory to Glory, by beholding the Glory of the Lord, with open Face.*

That an innocent Creature, that *Adam*, particularly, while innocent, was capable of receiving a Revelation of new Truths from God: That he was under an indispensable Obligation to believe the Truth of what God did, or might reveal unto him: And that an innocent

Creature is capable of discerning not only the Truth of the Evangelical Revelation; but the Wisdom, Goodness, Grace, and Mercy of God, therein discovered, are all freely granted. For, the holy Angels adore and bless God upon a Discernment of Gospel-Mysteries: They are *all Attention* unto them, and, with intense Desire and the highest Delight, they constantly contemplate on them. *The Grace of God, the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory following thereupon*, are the Matter of their delightful Study, and of their holy Adoration, and will be so for evermore. But to say, that an innocent Creature could believe in Christ, on a Supposition of his being revealed to him in the Character of a Saviour, is to speak *palpable* Contradictions. And, therefore, the Author is grossly mistaken, in thinking that *Adam*, in a State of Innocency, would have been obliged unto, and could have believed in Christ, even upon the Supposition of a Revelation being given to him of Christ in the Character of a Saviour. Man must be, and must know himself to be lost, before he can believe in Christ to *the Saving of his Soul*.

Secondly, Another Mistake of the Author's is, he imagines, that the *Life, which the Covenant of Works promises, is the same with that promised in the Covenant of Grace*. It is granted, that they are the same in Duration, both are eternal. They consist in Likeness to God: In the Enjoyment of him, and Communion with him. And, yet, they differ very much: In the former, Divine Benevolence to the innocent Creature is apprehended: A Sense of Divine Approbation of the innocent Creature is enjoyed: Therein the Glory of God, as Creator, Preserver, and Upholder of all Things is seen and adored: The guiltless Creature, hath a Persuasion of the endless Fruition of God, the Origin of Blessedness, and, therefore, this is a happy and glorious State. But the State of Bliss, promised in the Covenant of Grace, *as much exceeds it in Glory, as the Ministration of the Spirit exceeds in Glory, the Ministration of Death*, which is not to be conceived in Thought, much less can Language express that vast Difference.

This Subject is so *grand, sublime, glorious, and attractive*, that with *peculiar* Pleasure I could dwell and enlarge upon it in my Meditations; but my narrow Limits will not allow of such Enlargement. I can only give you brief Hints for your further Consideration, and may the good Lord, by his Spirit, guide your Thoughts, and assist you to fix your Meditations on this most delightful and ravishing Theme. In the heavenly State, God is known, in the endearing Character of *the God of all Grace*. The *exceeding Riches of his Kindness towards us, in Christ Jesus*, are clearly, steadily, and without any Interruption, viewed by the Blessed for evermore. The eternal Son of God, as *incarnate*, God

and Man in one Person, is always beheld, and the Divine Perfections through him. He is with inconceivable Delight, perpetually viewed as the Head and Husband of the Church, and each perfectly happy Member of him enjoys a constant transporting Sense of the Assertion of his Heart, which is suitable to the near Relation, wherein he stands, unto the Church, which is his *Body and Fulness*. They will all know the *Satisfaction, Delight, and Complacency* he takes, in their Blessedness, who once were the *Travail of his Soul*. The Saints will in Heaven be perfectly acquainted with the Dignity and Glory to which they are advanced, in being made Sons unto God, by Adoption. They shall for ever see Christ, as their Surety to God for them, and herein will open to View all the glorious Mysteries of Redemption, by his Sufferings and Death. And will contemplate on all the infinitely holy Properties of God, as they are displayed, in that stupendous Affair. Moreover, their Communion, with Father, Son, and Spirit, will be most near, and without the least Interruption. This is Heaven indeed. And such a State of Bliss and Glory it is, as the Covenant of Works neither knows, nor makes the least Discovery of. Says Dr. *Owen, the whole of what was intrusted with Adam comes exceedingly short of what God hath now prepared, as the Inheritance of the Church. There is Grace in it, and Glory added unto it, which Adam neither had, nor could have Right unto*. Now, though *Adam* had not that Principle of Life, which is in Believers, which capacitates them to live unto God according to the Covenant of Grace: He had a Principle of Life in him, suited unto the Nature of the Covenant of Works. That Principle he lost and we all suffer a Privation of it, and so are *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, or are *alienated from the Life of God*. And, though the first Covenant did not promise to him the Enjoyment of God in a Mediator, yet it promised unto him the Enjoyment of God, as Creator; by his Sin he lost his Title to that Happiness, and became obnoxious unto eternal Death, or an everlasting Separation from God. And, therefore, it is true, that the Law promises Life eternal, on Condition of Obedience, though not the same with that promised in the Covenant of Grace, Right unto which could not result from Obedience yielded to the Covenant of Works. It is also Truth, and not an *idle Dream*, that we are naturally dead, for we have lost that Life we had in *Adam*. Again, eternal Death in Hell is not a *Fiction*, but an *awful Reality*, threatened for Sin in the first Covenant. One would imagine, that this Writer was not thoroughly awake, and, therefore speaks, as here he does, *That Death in Sin is a Dream, and eternal Death in Hell a Fiction, if Adam had not the same Life in Possession, as Believers now have, and if he had not the Life in Promise, which they have in Right, and shall eternally enjoy. Thirdly, The Author observes, That those who appear most warm against Faith in Christ being a Duty,*

do yet own and acknowledge that Faith to be the Duty of all Men to whom the Gospel is preached, which the Scripture declares is a saving Faith. These Persons, then, are a Parcel of extremely weak and silly Creatures, who thus contradict themselves. But the Contradiction will be found in Mr. Jackson, not in them. What is that Faith which they maintain, is the Duty of unconverted Sinners? It is a Belief of the Truth of the Report of the Gospel concerning *Jesus Christ*, in his Person, Offices, and Benefits. This he asserts to be saving Faith, than which there is nothing more false. *Thus the Devils believe: Thus Simon Magus believed;* and such a Faith as this is a Man may carry to Hell along with him. It is merely a rational Act excited in the Mind by rational Evident. This is not a Sinner's fleeing to, receiving of, and resting on the Lord *Jesus Christ alone for Salvation, which, Mr. Jackson has before observed, is true saving Faith*, in perfect Contradiction to what he here affirms. So that this Argument to prove his Point is absolutely and entirely lost. It was no Instance of Kindness in the Editor to permit such an Error and Self-Contradiction, as this is, to see the Light. Friendship would have made Use of the Sponge, and wiped it out.

Fourthly, Another Mistake the Author is guilty of: viz. That regenerate, as well as unregenerate Persons, are under the Covenant of Works: The Subject of the moral Law is a reasonable Creature, considered as such; and it knows no Difference of Elect, or Non-elect, Regenerate, or Unregenerate, etc. Since Unbelievers, as well as Believers, are by him spoken of, he must mean the moral Law (under which both are, as he affirms) in the Form of Covenant, and not consider it, as a Rule of Conduct only, and, therefore, Believers, if this is true, lie under the Curse of the Covenant of Works. But I will not press hard on this Mistake, for believe, it was mere inadvertency in him. This, I also think, the Editor should have corrected.

I will now consider his Arguments, to prove, that special Faith in Christ is the immediate Duty of all who hear the Gospel. In Number his general Arguments are eight, and, therefore, if they are forcible, the Point is abundantly confirmed: But, as to the first, he seems to be convinced, that it hath very little, if any Weight at all in it. And the second cannot justly be thought, to have more than the first. The fifth is already fully answered, and proved to be a gross Mistake, and a Self-contradiction. The sixth is entirely impertinent. The seventh seems to be advanced only for the Sake of saying something, for no Man can possibly think it of any Force at all. The eighth is no other than an Objection to his Opinion, which he endeavours to prove absurd, and utterly destructive of all true Religion. The third and fourth coincide, or the fourth is nothing

more, than a Conclusion arising from a Supposition of the Truth of the third, and, therefore, no great Skill in Disputation is discovered, in making that an Argument distinct from the third. So that, if his third Argument proves insufficient to bear the Weight of his Cause, it is likely to sink. However, there may be Reasons for taking some Notice of each Argument, and, therefore, I will not decline it.

First, Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ hath eternal Salvation inseparably affixed to it, by the Word and Promise of the faithful God, with which it is infallibly connected. This is readily granted, and thankfully embraced, as a precious Truth: It receives Confirmation from the whole Gospel: And cannot be denied, without dreadfully corrupting, at least, if not overthrowing the *Christian Scheme*. For he that believes shall be saved. But what Degree of Proof does this afford, that *special, supernatural Faith* is the immediate Duty of every one who hears the Gospel preached? Not the least. Whereof the Author seems to be fully conscious, and, therefore, argues not at all from it, to establish what he had in View; but observes, what was not pertinent to be observed, under this Argument, *viz.* that those who obey not the Gospel, and receive not Christ, but oppose and reject him, sin, and perish. Which properly belongs to his second Argument. And that is this:

Secondly, It is equally clear, and as certainly declared in the Oracles of Truth, that the contrary to this Faith, even not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, is assigned as the Cause of Men's Condemnation, and stands reprov'd in the Word of God, as a damning Sin, which it could not possibly do, if Faith in Christ was not a Duty required by the Law. 1. This Argument ought to be considered in a Light directly opposite to the former, as expressing the contrary State of Unbelievers to that of Believers, according to the Gospel-declaration: *He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.* But, 2. As it is not inferrible from that Declaration, that the Faith of Believers is the procuring Cause of their Salvation: So it is not to be inferred from thence, that the Want of that *special Faith* in Unbelievers is the procuring Cause of their Damnation. That Declaration contains in it the different descriptive Characters, of those who are saved, and of those who are damned; but it assigns not special Faith to be the procuring Cause of the Salvation of the former; nor the Want of it to be a procuring Cause of the Damnation of the latter. 3. Unbelief is *negative* and *positive*. 1. *Negative*; as such it is two- fold: (1.) The Want of Faith in Christ for Salvation, or of an *Affiance and Trust* in him to be saved by him. (2.) The Want of a Belief of, and *reverential* Regard to the Gospel. The *former* is not required by the Covenant of Works, and, therefore, the Want thereof brings not Men under its Curse: The

latter is required in the Covenant of Works, and, consequently, the Want of that in Men is their Sin, and it renders them obnoxious to its dreadful Curse. It is *positive*: This is an Opposition to, and Rejection of God's appointed Way of Salvation, by *Jesus Christ*, as *unfit*, yea, as *Folly*. And this is in the Heart of every unregenerate Man, even though he may give an Assent to the Truth of the Gospel. And for this he stands righteously condemned by the first Covenant. For that Covenant requires Men, not only to believe those Truths, which God reveals; but also, that they are worthy of himself, or becoming his Goodness, Holiness, and Wisdom. It is not the Want of *special* Faith in Christ, but the Want of a reverential Regard to the Gospel, and a *positive* Act of rejecting it as *Folly*, which involves Men in Guilt, and demerits Punishment, according to the Constitution of God, in the Law. If Men are eternally damned for Want of special Faith in Christ, they will suffer endless Torments, for Want of a Principle of Life, that they never had in any State, either in Fact, or in Right. Which to imagine, I must confess, is an Idea so severe, that I think, it cannot be reconciled, either to divine Goodness, or unto divine Justice. But there are sufficient Reasons for Men's Condemnation, without allowing this to be the Cause thereof, *viz.* original Guilt: By *the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation*: Again, the Want of perfect Obedience to the Law: Human Nature was furnished with Ability to yield such Obedience, and the Loss of that Power is the Consequence of Sin, and, therefore, it is just still to require it, and to punish Men for the Want thereof, which, I suppose, this Writer will acknowledge, though, in order to press me with a Difficulty, he expresses himself in such a Manner, as is not to the Advantage of the Doctrine of original Sin. That I do not impute to his Disbelief of that Doctrine, but unto *Unskillfulness*, for the Management of the Business, which he took in Hand. Besides, Men's Opposition to God's appointed Way of Salvation is another just Cause of Condemnation, of which every unregenerate Person is guilty. So that my Opinion leaves all the *Fuel to feed the Flames of Hell*, this Author can possibly desire, though he seems to be greatly afraid, that *they will be extinguished*, if it is admitted. But this Fear is entirely *causeless*. And, inasmuch as Men are capable of suffering Punishment for Sin, it is just with God to inflict Penalty upon them, though they cannot make Satisfaction for their Crimes, by all the Sufferings, which they are able to endure. Nor does my Opinion suppose the contrary. And I cannot but say, that the Author's *Unfitness* for the Talk, he imposed upon himself, in no small Degree, appears, in suggesting that it doth. The Equity of the Infliction of Punishment arises from Sin's Demerit, and, therefore, it is just to inflict it, though the Sinner is not able to make Satisfaction, by suffering Penalty. It is exceedingly weak, in our Author, to object

Man's Incapacity to make Satisfaction for Sin, by suffering Penalty, unto the Justice of the Infliction of Punishment, which he does. It is a full Evidence, that he did not understand the Business wherein he was engaged, that he suggests my Opinion supposes it. How could the Editor suffer such Weakness to come forth into the World? Surely, he understood better; if not, the good Man's Performance had very *ill Hap*, in being referred unto his Correction. 4. The Author, in order to prove the Justice of punishing Gospel-Sinners, (as he speaks) *arminianizes*, for, he insinuates, that God hath promised to unregenerate Men, that he will give his holy Spirit unto them, if they ask it, and that *the Faith of the Report of the Gospel, that is an Assent to it, is abundantly sufficient to enable and encourage them to call on the Name of the Lord, or to pray for Faith*. Which are *gross Mistakes*. God hath made no Promise of bestowing spiritual Blessings on unregenerate Men, upon their Performance of any religious Services.

Duties, not discharged in a spiritual Manner, are unacceptable to God, *for without Faith it is impossible to please him*, and no Promise of the Communication of Grace is made to them, or unto Performing them. And such are all the Duties of unregenerate Men. Besides, if Promises of Grace, and of Heaven itself, were made to the Unregenerate, on Condition they would humbly, and in earnest ask for both, at the Hand of God: Such is the cursed Opposition in their Hearts unto God, and all spiritual Good, that nothing could *drive, draw, or encourage* them to petition in earnest, for either. I can dare to affirm, that, if an Offer were to be made to a Sinner of enjoying Heaven, after his suffering Punishment for his Sins, a Million of Years, that Offer he would not accept. A Release from Hell is eligible, but the Enjoyment of Heaven is not desirable to a depraved Mind. For, Enmity neither can, nor will desire the Enjoyment of an Object, against which it is Enmity. Lust, or evil Concupiscence, is in a rational Nature; but itself is *unreasonable and outrageous too*: Hence it is represented as *Madness, or irrational Fury*. What good Men say sometimes, in expostulating with Sinners, upon this Subject, contradicts their own Experience; if they duly attended to that, they would never suggest, that any Considerations whatever, are sufficient to excite and encourage corrupt Nature to desire Holiness, Communion with God, and the Enjoyment of him. If that is possible, then, the *Flesh* may be prevailed upon to cease *Lusting against the Spirit*, and to unite with it, in its spiritual Actings. But alas! the *Coldness, Formality, and Wanderings* of Mind, in Prayer to God, *even in the best*, are a *sad Evidence* of the Mistake of all such Suggestions. If good Men were more cautious to express themselves, agreeably to what they discern in themselves, we should have fewer of such Kind of Addresses to

Sinners, than we have, through a Want of that Caution. I know not any Thing, wherein the *genuine* Acting of the gracious Principle in Believers, more clearly discovers itself, than in Desires of Holiness, of Communion with God, and after the Fruition of him, through *Jesus Christ*, If the *carnal* Mind may be wrought up hereunto, by any Sort of Motives and Considerations, I am sure it will be impossible to distinguish between Regeneracy, and Unregeneracy. It is no more possible, by any Means whatever, to cause the *Flesh* to chuse, adhere unto, and delight in God, than it is to draw the *Spirit* into *hostile* Acts against him. The Reason is clear; no Principle of Operation can ever be prevailed with, to act contrary to its Nature. And, therefore, no unsanctified Heart, will ever pray to God for Grace and Holiness. This is Men's *dreadful* Sin, and it justly exposes them unto *direful* Vengeance.

But in his third Argument lies almost the entire Strength of his Cause, which, therefore shall be thoroughly weighed, and, whatever, properly belongs unto it, in the whole Performance, shall not be paired over, without Notice. It is this:

Thirdly, The holy Scripture declares, that Faith in Christ is a commanded Duty; and proves, that it is a Work, which, God, by the moral Law, requires of all Men, to whom the Gospel is preached. That we may proceed clearly, in our Enquiries, into what we have now before us, I would observe, that the moral Law is to be considered, either *as a Covenant of Works*, or, *merely, as a Law and Rule of Conduct*: This twofold Consideration of the Law is absolutely necessary. For, without it, we must grant, that Believers, are under the Covenant of Works, or deny, that they are under the Law. Whereas, neither may be allowed. *They are not under the Law*, as a Covenant, *but under Grace*; nevertheless, *they are not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ*. Now the Question is plainly this: Whether Faith in Christ for Salvation is required by the Law as a Covenant? The Answer must be, I think, in the Negative; my Reasons for it are these: 1. *The Law is not of Faith*: It doth not present the Object of Faith, that all will allow. Nor doth it direct to the Act of Faith in Christ, as a Saviour. The Law, as a Covenant, requires Obedience, in order to Acceptance, and receiving the promised Reward. *Do and live* is the Language of it, but not *believe and be saved*: Yea, it is so far from requiring Faith in Christ for Salvation, that it allows not the Subject of it to hope for Deliverance from Misery. That Constitution is nothing but Death to the Sinner: *The Soul that sins shall die*. How, therefore, can it require Faith in Christ in order to Salvation? The Grace of the Gospel, by its Revelation, makes no Change in the legal Constitution; that is the

same it was before the Discovery of Salvation in the Gospel, and so it will eternally remain.

But this is no Bar to the Hope of a regenerate Man: For, 2. A Believer is *dead to the Law, as a Covenant*: He is brought from under its Power; and therefore, in acting Faith on Christ, he yields not Obedience to the *first Covenant*, which he must be supposed to do, if that Covenant required it. *No Actings of Grace, which the new Covenant gives, are Obedience to the Commands of the old Covenant*. 3. The Law is *dead to a Believer*. Now, that which is dead to him can't reasonably be thought to give him Direction about, and oblige him unto, the Actings of a Principle, in Consequence whereof its Death to him follows. The Exercise of Faith in Christ, therefore, *is not Obedience to the Covenant of Works*. 4. Until a Man, *thro' the Law, is dead to the Law*, he hath *no Warrant* to receive Christ as a Saviour, or to hope for Salvation through him. Conviction of Sin, a Sense of Misery, as justly deserved, and despairing of Relief from the Law and Works of it, in Order of Nature, at least, precede the first: Act of Faith on Christ for Salvation. The Act is of that Kind as necessarily supposes it. And as, in the Nature of the Thing, such an Act cannot be put forth, previous unto the Relinquishment of all Hope of Life by the Law, there is not any Thing, in the whole Gospel, which directs and encourages Men to exert such an Act, without the Supposition of that Conviction wrought in them; which Conviction is the Effect of Regeneration; and, therefore, a Man is not under the first Covenant, even when he puts forth the first: Act of Faith on Christ.

Now, tho' *special, supernatural* Faith is not required by the Covenant of Works, it requires a Belief of the Truth of every Revelation, which God, at any Time, shall be pleased to make of his Will to his Creature, Man, who is the Subject of that Covenant. 1. The first Covenant most certainly obliges Man to believe that is true, which God expresses. 2. The Christian Revelation hath such *evident and indelible* Characters of its divine Original, or that it really is a Revelation from God, as are abundantly sufficient to satisfy any rational, *unprejudiced* Enquirer. 3. That Covenant obliges Man to conclude upon the Wisdom and Holiness of all God's Designs and Acts about and towards his Creatures, both in a Way of Justice and Mercy. 4. The Mysteries of Redemption by Christ are expressed in Language, which is not above the Capacities of Men; and, therefore, they are able to perceive the Truth of those Mysteries, though they are not capable of understanding the *real* Nature of them, without an additional supernatural Revelation, or Illumination of the Mind, is graciously vouchsafed to them. Hence it follows, 5. Contempt cast upon the Gospel, or a Disapprobation and Rejection of the wise and

gracious Method of Salvation by Christ, involves Men in Guilt, and justly subjects them to Punishment. And, especially, 6. If they, thro' Prejudice and Pride, throw off all Regard to Christian Doctrines, after a Conviction of their Truth, or being the Matter of divine Revelation. Many *awful* Instances of this Kind our *perilous Times* furnish us with. The *first Covenant* requires of Men a Belief of, and *reverential* Regard to, *the Doctrine of the new Covenant*, tho' it doth not oblige them unto acting Faith on Christ for Salvation. Every Man, who despises the Grace of the *second Covenant*, by so doing brings himself under the dreadful Curse of the *first*. This is what an holy innocent Creature would never do; but, upon the Revelation of it, he would give Credit to, and *reverentially* regard it. Thus do the holy Angels, as I before observed. And it is thro' *Ignorance, Pride, and corrupt Prejudices*, that Men disbelieve, and reject it as *Folly*, unto their *just* Condemnation, But thus far of the *Law*, as a Covenant, and of the Obligation it says Men under to believe, and not reject, the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Again, the moral Law is to be considered as a Law *merely*, or Rule of Action; as such, regenerate Persons are under it, and by its Authority they are obliged unto all the Actings of the regenerate Principle, in Faith, Repentance, Love, and evangelical Obedience. For, 1. The *new Man*, or the Believer, as a *new Creature*, is under the Command of the Law, to *love God*, and to *love his Neighbour*; and, consequently, he stands obliged unto all those Acts, by Vertue of that Command, unto which that new Principle in him is suited. 2. As by a *new Revelation*, both external and internal, *new Objects* of Love, Adoration, and Delight, are presented to his View, those Acts are the Matter of his Duty. Yea, 3. All the Actings of this Principle, in the future State of Glory, will be due unto God, by Vertue of the moral Law, which is no other than his *Will, that his Creature, Man, should yield Obedience unto him in every State, suitable to those Principles wherewith he furnishes him, and unto those Discoveries of himself, which he graciously affords him*. I am so far from thinking, that Believers are not, in this State, under the moral Law, or that their Acts of Faith, Repentance, Love, and filial Fear of God, are not Obedience to it in the present State, that I am most firmly persuaded, that they will be under that Law *in Heaven*, and that all their holy Acts of Love, Adoration, and Delight, in that *blissful State*, will be Obedience due to their heavenly Father, by Vertue thereof.

Mr. *Jackson* proposes two Things in this third Argument: 1. *To prove that special Faith is required of unregenerate Men*. 2. *That it is the moral Law which requires that Faith*.

1. For the Proof of the former, he produces several Scriptures: These Words of our Lord; *This is the Work of God, that ye believe in*

him whom he hath sent: Which Words contain a Declaration, that Believing in Christ for Salvation is necessary to the Enjoyment of eternal Life, and that Faith in him is an Act acceptable and pleasing to God; but afford no Proof, that it is required of Men in a State of Unregeneracy. To declare to unregenerate Persons the Necessity of Faith in order to Salvation, which is what our blessed Lord here does, falls very far short of asserting it to be their present Duty *According to the Commandment of the everlasting God, the Gospel is made known to all Nations*: That Commandment refers to the Publication of the Gospel among all Nations, and not unto *the Obedience of Faith*: And it is a Discovery of Inattention in Mr. Jackson, that he did not observe it. It is positive Unbelief, or an Opposition to, and Rejection of, the Gospel, as *Foolishness*, that is intended in *Romans 10:16*; *1 Peter 4:17*; *2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8, 9*, which is highly criminal, and will be awfully punished by God. But what Proof arises from hence, that *special, saving* Faith is the Duty of unregenerate Men? Not the least.

2. He attempts to prove, that *special* Faith is a Duty required by the Covenant of Works: He means by the moral Law that Covenant, because he speaks of Unbelievers being under it, as I have before observed. I deny, that the Covenant of Works requires Believing in Christ for Salvation of any Man in the World, for the Reasons above-mentioned: And it is with some Degree of *Boldness*, that I shall insist upon this. That which requires Working for Life, as the Covenant of Works does, cannot injoin Believing unto Salvation and Life. It is wholly inconsistent with the Nature of that Covenant. But he thinks, if this Faith is not commanded by the moral Law, if it is required at all, then it must be by the Gospel, and so we shall make a Law of that. We are in no Danger of this, tho' the good Man seems to be greatly afraid of it: For, tho' we deny, that *special Faith* is required of any by the moral Law, considered as a Covenant of Works, we grant, that it requires it, considered as a Law merely, or Rule of Action, of all who are under it, and there are regenerate Persons. All others are under it, as a Covenant, and in that Form it requires it not. But I proceed to consider what the Author calls a fourth Argument:

Fourthly, For any Man to affirm, that this Faith in Christ is not required by the moral Law, is no less than in Effect to oppose and contradict the express Word of God, spoken unto us by Jesus Christ himself; by his beloved Disciple John, and by the great Apostle Paul. This is not a new Argument; it is not distinct from, but the same with the Third, or at least a Conclusion arising from it, as every one will see.

The Words of the Apostle *John*, which he produces, are these: *And this is his Commandment that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*. It is granted, that God requires regenerate Persons to act Faith on Christ: for Salvation; none deny it. The Author's Reasoning must be this: God requires those who are born again to exercise *special* Faith in Christ, therefore, he commands unregenerate Men who hear of him to act *saving* Faith in him: Or, his Reasoning must stand thus: We who are Believers, and not under the Law, as a Covenant of Works, but as a Rule of Conduct, are required to receive Christ for Salvation, therefore, Unbelievers, who are under the Law, as a Covenant. are commanded to believe in Christ to the Salvation of the Soul. The bare mention of which, I suppose, will be acknowledged a sufficient Refutation of it. The Words of the Apostle *Paul*, which are brought to prove the Point, are these: *Now the End of the Commandment is Charity out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned* (1 Timothy 1:5). If by the Commandment is intended the *Ministration of the Gospel*, as it is in 1 Timothy 6:14, then the Gospel, and not the Law, is that whereof the Apostle speaks: But I will not now insist upon that Sense, tho' something might be offered from the Context in Favour of it, because I will cut off all Cause of a Charge of *Evasion*. Be it so then, that the Commandment means the Law, it must not be understood as a Covenant of Works, as Unbelievers are under it; but as a Rule of Action, in which Sense Believers are under it: For, as a Covenant of Works, it knows nothing at all of a pure and sanctified Heart by the Grace of God, nor of a good, that is, a Conscience purged from Sin by the Blood of Christ, nor of unfeigned Faith in Christ for Salvation; there Things are not the End of the Law, as a Covenant of Works; but perpetual Purity of Mind and constant perfect Obedience in Life, unto all its Precepts. They are the End of it, as a Law merely, or Rule of Action unto the Saints, in which Sense only they are under it, and not as a Covenant. Nor do the Words of our Lord afford any Proof of this Matter: *And have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith* (Matthew 23:23). *Trust* in God, as the Upholder and Preferrer of his Creatures, and as a bountiful Benefactor to them, and *Credit* to his Word, or a Belief of the Truth, Importance, Wisdom, and Holiness of whatever he reveals, is that Faith, which the Covenant of Works requires; but not Faith in Christ for Salvation. For, *the Law is not of Faith*, in that Sense. *Obey, and live, are the Command, and the Promise of that Covenant: Not believe, and be saved*. The Consequences, which the Author draws from the Denial of special Faith in Christ for Salvation being a Duty contained in, or required by the Covenant of Works, are *merely imaginary*. No Liberty is hereby given to Men to transgress the righteous Precepts of the first

Covenant. *They may not plunder their Neighbour, and fall to Cutting of Throats, because special Faith in Christ, is not their Duty.* What the Author expresses of this Kind in several Places, is nothing but *Rant, not Reasoning.* And it is an *extremely unkind,* and also a *most false Insinuation of his, that I think Believers are freed from the Obligation of the moral Law.* Freed from it, as a Covenant, they are; if not, they are under its Curse. But, there is no one Principle, that I more firmly believe, than I do this, that Believers are *now,* and eternally will be under the moral Law, as a Rule of Action; nor shall I ever think otherwise, unless, I should happen to fall into such a *wretched Infatuation,* as to imagine, *that there is no God, and that Believers are not Creatures.* This leads me to his sixth Argument.

Sixthly, Such a Faith and Repentance, Love, and Fear of God, as are no Duties required by the Law of God, can have no Concern at all in the Holiness and Happiness of Men.1. The Covenant of Works now requires of its subjects, and it required of *Adam,* Faith, but not Faith in Christ for Salvation; Love to God as supremely good and the Origin of Blessedness, but not, as *the God of all Grace,* for that Covenant makes no such Discovery of him. A Fear, or Reverence of God, as a Being possessed of all possible and infinite Perfections; but not a Fear of him, *as a Sin-pardoning God through a Mediator,* for he had no Revelation of him, as such. And in these Things his Holiness very much consisted. Repentance was not required of him in a State of Integrity, for that necessarily supposes Guilt, in the Creature of whom it is required. And, therefore, there is a Faith, a Love to God, and a Fear of him, which bear no Relation to the Evangelical Scheme of Salvation by *Jesus Christ,* wherein the Holiness and Happiness of Man have a Concern. And, there are Duties required of all Men. 2. The Covenant of Works, by Implication, requires Repentance: And to repent and turn to God is the Duty of all Men; it would have been so, if no Provision had been made for the Salvation of one Individual of Mankind. Yea, it is the Duty of the *Devil, of all the Devils in Hell,* to repent and turn unto God, by Obedience, though they never will. 3. I most freely allow, that Faith in Christ for Salvation, Evangelical Repentance, Love to God in a Mediator, and a holy Reverence of him, as a new Covenant-God, are Duties of the moral Law, though not, as it is in the Form of a Covenant; but as a Rule of Conduct to Believers, who are under it as a Law, but are not under it as a Covenant; in that Sense the Law is *dead* to them, they are *dead* to it, and none of the Actings of the gracious Principle in them is Obedience to the Covenant of Works.

I am fully of Opinion with Dr. *Owen,* who says: *There are some Graces, some Duties belonging unto Evangelical Holiness, which*

the Law knows nothing of: Such are the Mortification of Sin, godly Sorrow, daily Cleansing of our Hearts and Minds; not to mention the more sublime and spiritual Acts of Communion with God by Christ, with all that Faith and Love, which is required towards him. For although these Things may be contained in the Law radically, as it requires universal Obedience unto God, yet they are not so formally. And it is not used as the Means to beget Faith and Holiness in us: This is the Effect of the Gospel only. An Answer is before given unto what he offers under this Argument, to prove, that the holy Principle in Adam, and the gracious Principle in Believers, are the same; and also unto what he advances to prove, that the Life promised in the Covenant of Works is the very same with that Life, which is provided and promised in the *new* Covenant; this Argument may therefore be dismissed. Proceed we now unto the Seventh:

Seventhly, It is no where declared, affirmed, nor taught in the Word of God, that Faith in Christ is not a Duty; or that it is not the Duty of those to whom he is made known to believe in Christ. I have never yet found the Place where it is written, it is not the Duty of those who have a Bible to believe in Christ. Doth not the Author know, that he who affirms is to prove, and, that, if Proof cannot be given of what is affirmed, it is reasonable and just to embrace the Negative? This Argument seems to be formed merely to add to the Number of his Arguments, and for the Sake of laying something, whether to Purpose, or to no Purpose. What if a Papist should ask him, if he hath any where read in the Scripture, that *Bells are not to be baptized?* I believe he could not point out the Place where it is so written. Would he, for that Reason, grant to the Papist, that the Baptizing of Bells is lawful? I am persuaded he would not. I am not a little surprized, that the Editor suffered such Impertinency, to be exposed to public View. In the Revisal of any Piece for Publication, Amendment of Style, and the Correction of *Peccadilloes*, in Language, are of small Importance, unto expunging what the Public will deem impertinent to the Case argued. Indeed I must confess, that, if, this Method had been taken with this Piece, very little would have been left for the World to see. But my Suprize is much heightened, by what is advanced to prove the Absurdity of an Objection unto his Opinion, *viz.* this,

Eighthly, The only Argument produced to prove, that Faith in Christ is not a Duty, (he means the Duty of unregenerate Men) is both unscriptural and utterly destructive of all true Religion. Both natural and revealed. This Objection, then, is a *Blow at the Root*, and, if you will believe him, there are no Principles *so bad*, nor any Practices *so vile*, but what may be defended eternally by it. Doubtless, your Curiosity is much excited to know, what this

Objection can be, which is calculated to serve every *impious* Purpose.

The Objection, as he states it, is: *Adam had not Faith in Christ, nor was obliged to have it before the Fall; and neither did nor could lose it, either for himself, or for his Offspring, and, therefore, none of his fallen Posterity are obliged to believe in Christ.* I do not know, that any one Person in the World ever objected thus, unto its being the Duty of unregenerate Men to act Faith on Christ for Salvation.

The Objection, in Fact, is this: The holy Principle connatural to *Adam*, and, concreated with him, was not suited to live unto God through a Mediator; that kind of Life was above the Extent of his Powers, though perfect; and, therefore, as he in a State of Integrity had not a Capacity of living unto God, agreeably to the Nature of the *new* Covenant, it is apprehended, that his Posterity, while under the *first* Covenant, are not commanded to live unto God after that Sort, or, in other Words, to live by Faith on God, through a Mediator. Capable he was of receiving a Revelation from God of other Truths, than what are contained in the *first* Covenant, if it had been the Pleasure of God to make such a Revelation unto him. He was able to give an Assent, to the Truth, of what God should please to reveal to him, and had a Capacity of reverentially regarding Truths divinely revealed to him, though not included in that Covenant, wherein he was to walk with, and live unto God. And I would observe,

1. He did not become incapable of receiving a Revelation of *new* Truths from God, nor of yielding an Assent unto them, nor could he, without he lost his Reason and became a *Brute*. And, therefore, *Heresy*, and *Deism*, are not at all countenanced by this Objection, much less will it clear all the *Deists* and *Infidels* in the World of all Sin, and secure them from Punishment, which the Author, says it will. I am amazed, and cannot Possibly conjecture, for what Reason, the Editor suffered such Stuff as this is to come abroad into the World. Surely, the End could not be, that the Writer might be exposed to Contempt.

2. Nor, does this Objection give the least Support to *Arminianism*, though *Arminius* was convinced of its Truth. For, if *pure* Nature was not furnished with a Power of believing in Christ, much less is *corrupted* Nature.

All the Use that *Arminius* could make of it, was only to urge it as a Difficulty upon those *Calvinists*, who maintain, that Faith in Christ is required of all Men, upon Pain of eternal Damnation, who hear the Gospel. Many of them in order to get clear of this Difficulty, endeavoured to prove, that *Adam* had a Power of believing in him. And, that, therefore, this Faith may justly be required of Men,

because the Loss of Power for that Act is the Consequence of Sin. If Proof could be given, that *Adam* had such Power, their Reasoning is most certainly right. But the Truth is, this is a Difficulty, that is *insuperable*, upon the Scheme of *Arminius*, though he did not discern it. For, if that holy Principle of Operation, which *Adam* had, was not sufficient for, nor suited unto the Act of Faith on Christ, as a Saviour, it undeniably follows, that, without Existence is given unto a Principle of Operation, which in its Nature is fitted and disposed unto that Act, in the Hearts of Men, they neither can, nor ever will believe to the Saving of the Soul. *All kind of Assistances whatsoever will eternally, be insufficient for producing an Act, in any Subject, who hath not a Principle of Operation, in its Nature agreeable to the Act.* And, consequently, if this Opinion is true, the whole Scheme of *Arminianism* must fall to the Ground. Sometimes, Men of great Abilities, designing to clog an adversary with a Difficulty, advance that, which embarrasses themselves, as much, or more, than it does those whom they oppose. Whereof this is an Instance. I should not desire any greater Advantage against *Arminianism* to be granted, than this is, that, *Adam*, in his innocent State had not Power to believe in Christ, as a Saviour; that is to say, that he had not a Principle of Operation, in its Nature suited to that Act. For, that being allowed, it follows by necessary Consequence, that, unless such a Principle is created and infused into the Minds of Men, the Act of Faith in Christ will be impossible to them, whatever Helps, Impulses, and Excitations they may receive. And, therefore, the Opinion of conditional Election, conditional Redemption, of Free-will in Man to Good, *etc.* must unavoidably sink. In a Word, by this one Thing being granted, with much Ease the whole *Arminian* Scheme may be demolished.

3. Nor, is any Encouragement given to *Antinomian* Principles and Practices, by the Opinion, that *Adam* in a State of Integrity, had not a Power, of living unto God, according to the *new* Covenant. Ability he had of living unto God according to the *first* Covenant, and it is the Duty of his Descendants, who remain under that Covenant, so to live unto him.

4. Neither, Is God, by it, *precluded* from demanding Satisfaction for the Breach of the Law. For, though human Nature, is incapable of making Satisfaction for Sin, by Suffering, capable it is of Suffering, and it is just with God to make it suffer, and that for ever; because no Satisfaction arises to Law and Justice, by all the Sufferings it is able to endure. And such Obedience is still due from Men, as the Law requires, because, though they have not Power to yield it, that Power was lost in Consequence of Sin, on the Part of Man.

5. And, therefore, The Undertaking, Obedience, Sacrifice, and Satisfaction of Christ for us, is not *totally subverted for ever*, by this Opinion, which our Writer says it is. It does not deny, that Obedience is due from us to the holy Law of God; it does not suppose, that we are unable to suffer Punishment, though we cannot satisfy the Law, by what we suffer; and, consequently, for any Thing, that, this Opinion implies, God might require, as he graciously has required, Obedience of Christ as our Surety, and his Offering himself a Sacrifice to atone for our Guilt, with a View to our Justification. But I am ashamed to dwell upon the Refutation of such *senseless* Stuff as this is. I think it exceeds, in *Impertinence* and *Extravagance*, any Thing, that I ever read, in the Course of my Life, to this Time. Surely, the Author, could not hope to be believed, when he says: *It Justifies the Principles and Practice of the Deist, Socinian, Arminian, Antinomian, and Libertine, and saves us the Labour of disputing any longer, whether it is our Duty to believe in Christ; for it leaves us no Christ to believe in, nor any Thing for which to believe in him.* What can be said of this? But that the Author *is transported* through Heat, and a much mistaken Conception of Things, *quite beyond his Reason.*

I shall not trespass any farther on your Patience, in animadverting on this Piece; I suppose it wholly needless to add any Thing more, by Way of Answer unto what is advanced by that Author. ***It will be very agreeable to me, if Christophilus pleases, that you, Philagathus, should now offer, to*** our Consideration, what you apprehend may heal the Breach between us, and be a lasting Foundation of our mutual Friendship.

Christophilus. I am not less inclined to give Attention to you, *Philagathus*, with the same View.

Philagathus. ***I shall most gladly attend unto this Service;*** and, if I may be instrumental to bring you, my dear Brethren, unto a Reconciliation, it will give me a much greater Degree of Pleasure, than I can express. ***Some Motives unto Love and Unity between you I beg Leave to mention.***

I. *You both hold the Head, or are agreed in every fundamental Point.* I must tell you, *Philalethes*, that *Christophilus* resolves the *Whole* of Salvation into the *free, sovereign* Love and Mercy of God. He believes Election to be an Act of *sovereign* Mercy in God, and that all Holiness, in the Persons chosen, is the *Result*, and not the *Cause*, of that Decree, He is persuaded, that the Covenant of Grace, from everlasting, was made with Christ, as the *Head of the Elect*, and with them *in him, as his Seed*: That, therefore, they then stood *related* to him, in Vertue of that *federal* Transaction; and speaks of

this, as a *Fountain* and *fundamental* Union between Christ and the Elect. He denies, the *universal* Extent of Christ's Death, affirms that to be a *pestilent Heresy*, and maintains, the Reality and Persecution of Satisfaction for the Sins of all the Elect, by the Sacrifice of Christ: That Right to Forgiveness is the *proper, and immediate* Effect of his Death, tho' that Right is not *actionable* by the Persons for whom it is obtained, until they believe. He says, that there is no such *Placability*, or Reconcilableness, in God, as the Effect of Christ's Death, which some speak of: That this *Placability is neither in the Covenant of Works, nor in the Covenant of Grace; that is, that truly it is not at all*. But Peace with God is made, and that Reconciliation itself is effected, by the Sacrifice of Christ. He *strenuously* insists upon it, that the Righteousness of Christ is the *sole* Matter of our Justification before God; and denies, that there is a Free-Will in Men, naturally, to Good; and, therefore, is firmly of Opinion, that the Grace of God alone can purify their Hearts, and make them *meet* for Heaven; that it is certainly *effectual* unto that important End in all the Elect, and that this good Work will be *performed in them all until the Day of Christ*, and, consequently, their Salvation is not *precarious, but sure and certain*. Now, *Philalethes*, since *Christophilus* is fully persuaded of the Truth of these Things, you cannot have just Reason to charge him with any Mistakes, which affect the *Essentials* of Christianity, tho' his Apprehensions are different from yours, respecting some Points, which have been before mentioned; and, therefore, it is your indispensable Duty to esteem and love him, as a Brother in Christ.

I pray you, *Christophilus*, permit me to observe some Things to you concerning *Philalethes*. He believes, that the Elect of God are under the Covenant of Works, *until they are regenerated*, and stand *condemned* by it, notwithstanding their *federal* Union with Christ, and the *secret* Acceptation of their Persons with God, through him, the *Beloved*. That they are not, *as to themselves* in a *Manifest* State of Justification, nor can *know and plead* their Right, to Pardon, Impunity, and Life. This Right *actually subsists*; but by them, it is not *actionable*, even in the Opinion of *Philalethes*, and, consequently, no Countenance is by him given unto *carnal Confidence and Presumption* in Men. He believes, as firmly as you do, the *absolute* Necessity of Regeneration and Sanctification, or that, *without Holiness, no Man shall see the Lord*. And, he is fully persuaded, that the moral Law continues in the whole of its Force. That unregenerate Men are under it, as a Covenant, and, by it, are obliged unto all that Obedience, which, as a Covenant, it requires: That the Regenerate are under it, as a Law, or a *binding* Rule of Conduct, and that the Compass of their Duty is not *lessened*, but, on the contrary, *greatly enlarged*, by that *new* Revelation of God, which

the *new* Covenant gives. And, therefore, when you pronounce him an *Antinomian*, you abuse him. Besides, he neglects not to *preach the Law*, he explains its Precepts, vindicates the Equity of its Curse, treats of the Nature of the Punishment, it threatens for Sin, and demonstrates the Justice of that Constitution. Nay, he affirms, that *none can well understand the Grace of the Gospel, without an Acquaintance with the true Nature of, the Doctrine, of the Covenant of Works*. What Reason, therefore, can you possibly have to treat him unkindly? I am free to tell you plainly, that it is your Duty to cherish Affection for him, as a Brother, in the Lord. For, wherein, his Sentiments differ from yours, no *Fundamental* Principle, I am certain, is in the least affected. And, though, he differs from you, in thinking, that *special* Faith in Christ is not a Duty enjoined by the Covenant of Works: He believes the *Necessity* of that Faith in order to Salvation, and agrees with you fully, in respect to the *Author, Object, Nature, Fruits, and Effects of it*. So that, there is no just Cause of *ill* Resentment against him, on that Account, or indeed on any other.

II. *If you, Christophilus, think of gaining the Esteem of such who are somewhat inclined to Baxterianism, or Arminianism, by censuring Philalethes, for what you account Peculiarities in him, you will find yourself mistaken.* For, provided you continue to insist upon it, which I believe you will, that the *Infusion* of a gracious Principle, into the Hearts of Men, is *Pre-requisite* unto gracious Acts; and that Right to Pardon and Life is the *immediate* Effect of Christ's Death, with respect to all those for whom he died; how, much, soever, they may *flatter* you, for condemning the *Peculiarities* of *Philalethes*, I know, that you will never find them your *heartly* Friends. The Difference between you and them is *fundamental*, but the Difference between you and *Philalethes* is not so. No *essential* Point is affected, if he is mistaken, wherein he differs from you.

III. Let me intreat you both to consider how numerous they are already, who oppose those important Principles, wherein you are agreed, and that the Number of such is every Day increasing. **If that Consideration hath** its proper Weight with you, I think, that you cannot long keep at a *disrespectful* Distance from one another. Those *bold* Attacks, which are made upon Principles, that you both esteem *fundamental*, should cause you *heartily* to unite in their Defence, while you agree to differ in *lesser* Matters.

IV. *Take into your most serious Consideration, from what Spring of Action, your mutual Animosity arises.* It is not the *Spirit*, or the gracious Principle in you, but the *Flesh*, and, therefore, you ought to

be *ashamed* of it, and *humbled* for it before God, as a great Offence unto him, who is a God of Love, and Peace.

V. Are you not Subjects of the same Grace? Objects of the same Love? Children of the same Divine Father? Members of the same spiritual Head? And are you not embarked in the same Cause? Do you not both aim to advance the Glory of the Grace of God, as the *entire* Cause of Salvation? Are you not both concerned to promote the Interest of Holiness, to the *Praise, and Glory of God*, by *Jesus Christ*? What a *Shame* then is it, for you, who agree in these important Views, to *cherish Wrath* in your breasts, one against another, because of some lesser Differences, in your Apprehensions, wherein, no one *fundamental* Principle is affected? Surely, you may allow one another Liberty of Thought, and Freedom of *modest* Expression, upon those subjects, about which, your Conceptions are not exactly alike. Be *scrupulously* cautious, in what Manner you express yourselves. My Meaning is, be sure to use *sound Speech that cannot be condemned*. If I may be permitted to say it without Offence, you have both been *too much wanting*, in this very necessary Caution, and have made Use of such Phrases, as are at least *capable* of an *ill* Construction, and which may be taken in a *bad* Sense, though, your Meaning hath been *good, and wholesome*. Not only take Care, that your Thoughts be *just*, but also to express them in such Language, as will need no Explication *to qualify* it. And I beseech you, forbear charging one another with *dangerous* Consequences, which you neither allow, nor do *naturally* arise from your differing Sentiments. In Disputes, this sometimes is done, unto a great Discovery of the *Weakness* of the Head, or *Badness* of the Heart, of the *heated* Disputant. And, the Effect, thereof, cannot be good. I am sorry, that I have Reason to say it, *neither* of you are fully clear in this Matter. And, lastly, **For I must conclude, well consider how excellent, and beautiful, Unity among Christians is.** It is *ornamental* to their Profession, *pleasing* unto God, and greatly *advantageous* to themselves. If you fail not of your Duty, in this Thing, I am persuaded, that, your *mutual* Anger will *subside*, and a lasting Friendship be renewed, between you. I close my *humble* Advice, with the *elegant* Commendation, which the Spirit of God, gives of Peace and Concord among the Saints: *Behold how good and how pleasant, it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments. As the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the Blessing, even Life for evermore (Psalm 133).*

SERMON 19

THE PROPER ETERNITY OF THE DIVINE DECREES, AND OF THE MEDIATORIAL OFFICE, OF JESUS CHRIST: ASSERTED AND PROVED

IN A DISCOURSE DELIVERED, IN A MONTHLY-EXERCISE
OF PRAYER WITH A SERMON, ON THE 19TH OF
SEPTEMBER, 1754

Published at the Request of the Ministers and others

PREFACE

IN composing this Discourse, I had no Thoughts of its Appearance in the World. But as the Publication of it, was desired, by such unto whom I pay no small Deference, I have ventured to expose it to public View, although, I am apprehensive, that it may be displeasing unto some; because I have herein, taken the Liberty to animadvert upon an Absurdity advanced by a learned Author, concerning the divine Decrees: viz. That they are not properly Eternal; but later than the Existence of God, and had Beginning. We all profess to believe that we are fallible, and may err, and yet, it is very common with Men, to treat those with Disdain, who think that they are wrong in any Point, and attempt to rectify their Mistakes. Their Friends also, sometimes, very much ill-resent such Freedom. And, this is one of the numerous Ways wherein the Pride and Naughtiness of the Heart discovers itself. However, I am not unprepared for bearing Censure, in the Defence of that, which appears to me, is Divine Truth. I am only sorry that it hath not a better Advocate, when I am engaged in its Vindication. If what is presented to the Reader, shall be of the least Service, either in guarding him against, or convincing him of the mistaken Conceptions about the Decrees of God, the Person of Christ, and of his Constitution unto the mediatorial Office, so far my Ends will be answered. And, I am not altogether without Hope, that this short Discourse, may in some Measure, be conducive unto those Ends, under the divine Blessing: Unto which I would solemnly recommend it.

PROVERBS 8:22, 23

“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his Way, before his Works of old. I was set up, from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was.”

THESE are the Words of Wisdom, which speaks throughout the Chapter. Different Apprehensions have been entertained concerning

this divine Speaker, viz. What, or who is meant by Wisdom. I think there are clear Reasons to conclude, that by Wisdom, a Person, or intelligent Agent is intended: For, Wisdom all along speaks under personal Characters, and various personal Acts are attributed unto this Speaker. As searching, or finding out. *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, and find out Knowledge of witty Inventions*. Also Acts of Love and Affection: *I love them that love me*. And Acts of Joy and Delight: *Then was I by him, as one brought up with him, I was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him: Rejoicing in the habitable Parts of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men*. All which are personal Acts, and, therefore, this divine Speaker, is a Person, or an understanding Agent; and the Things which are predicated of this Speaker, are so *grand* and *sublime*, that they cannot be applicable to any other Person than CHRIST, who is the *Wisdom*, as well as the *Power of God*.

Understanding the Words of our blessed Redeemer, without commenting upon what precedes, I shall immediately proceed to the Explication of them.

And it will be proper to shew, what is designed by the Way of the Lord; what the Beginning of his way imports; what is implied in the Act of possessing Christ; what Works of God are intended, before which he possessed our Saviour, and why they are said to be of old; what the letting up of Wisdom designs: when this was done, *from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was*.

I. *I would shew what is designed by the Way of the Lord.* The Way of God sometimes intends his wise and holy Dispensations towards the World, and towards his Church in Providence, which are the Accomplishment of his Decrees concerning both, with respect unto their temporal Estate. This is a Sense wherein it is frequently to be understood: And his Way is to be taken for his gracious Purposes and Counsels, which were formed in his infinite and eternal Mind, concerning Christ, and his Church. I apprehend this Sense is designed by it in these Words: *For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts (Isaiah 55:8, 9)*.

It is of pardoning Grace and Mercy, that the Lord there speaks: *For he will abundantly pardon*. We are too apt to limit the *Holy One of Israel*, in his Acts of pardoning Kindness and Mercy. And it is his Intention, in these Words to assure us, that his Purposes of Grace, Mercy, and Pardon, infinitely exceeds those Conceptions which we are apt to entertain thereof. I apprehend, that in this Sense, the divine Way is to be understood, in the Text: Or, that God's Thoughts and

Purposes of Love, and Grace concerning Christ and his Members are meant by his Way. Further I am to shew,

II. *What the Beginning of his Way imports.* If we understand it of Duration: That must either commence, or not commence, have Limit, or not have Limit. The Term beginning is put for Duration, which had not Commencement, in these Words; *God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth.* This divine Act of Election was eternal: *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World.* From the Beginning, and before the Foundation of the World mean the same. And, there never was an Instant, wherein the Church was not the Object of a gracious Choice unto Salvation, or the Enjoyment of eternal Life.

A learned Writer hath been pleased to distinguish upon Eternity, *a Parte ante*, or that Duration, which was before the Existence of the World, or Things created, and speaks of a *first*, and *an after Date* therein. The *first Date* respects, he says, *God's Existence*, which was eternal, and had no Beginning: The *after Date* refers unto his Decrees, or Acts within himself relating unto Christ and the Church, which he affirms had *Beginning*: He sums up what he had before more largely, expressed, and pleaded for, in this Assertion, *viz. God himself was before the Conceptions and Thoughts which he entertained of his Works: Before, besure in Order of Nature; but how long before, the Thing neither speaks nor the Word declares.* Let us press this Grape a little, that we may be able to form a Judgment of the Nature of its Juice. The plain Import of this Assertion is, God was before he had infinite Thought and Consciousness; but how long before, is impossible to be known, because neither the Thing speaks, nor the Word declares it. This is a *very unsafe, a very offensive, and a most absurd Way of speaking.* If God ever was without infinite Thought and Consciousness, he was not, he then could not be God. For, a Being without Thought and Consciousness can't be God. To be quite free with you upon this Subject. The Assertion is so *extremely absurd, that it excites my Astonishment.* The Divine Decrees are of the same Date with the Existence of God. His Being is not of one Date, and his Purposes of another, a later Date. Besides, to suppose, that there was an *everlasting*, or a Duration, before the Existence of a Creature, that really had a Beginning, or Commencement, is to imagine, that there was a Duration, which was neither *eternal*, nor *temporary*; but *something between both*, which is an highly *absurd* Imagination. Duration is, either immeasurable and without any Limit: Or, it is measurable and hath a Limit. If Duration past is immeasurable, it is eternal, and could not have any Beginning. If it is measurable, it is not eternal, but temporary, and

must have had Commencement. *There can be no Medium between Eternity and Time.* A Duration which begins, is measurable and limited, whether it is measured and divided into the Parts whereof it consists, or not, by the Motion of Body, or otherwise. Measurable and limited it is, and there must be some *Instant* at which we must necessarily stop, when we contemplate a past Duration, which had Beginning. If, therefore, the Divine Decrees are *later* than the Existence of God, or had Beginning, they must, as to Duration, have been infinitely short of the Existence of God. So that, according to the Doctrine contained in this *most absurd* Assertion, there must have been an infinite Duration, wherein, God was without any Conceptions and Thoughts of his Works: That is to say, without infinite Thought and Consciousness; and, therefore, for an infinite Duration, he was not God. For, if his Conceptions and Thoughts really had Beginning, they must begin after himself had existed, in a Duration infinite: Because such a Duration must have been before a measurable Duration could begin, and, consequently, though God, in his Existence is eternal, his Love to Christ, and the Church, and his Decrees about them, are not eternal; but only temporary. Which is no more true, than it is, that the Almighty Creator, once, was not God.

A certain Writer pours Contempt upon some, whose Works have praised, and will long praise them, in the Gates of the Church, that have endeavoured, to prove Christ's eternal Existence, or proper Deity from this Place. His contemptuous Words concerning them, are these: *I wonder not, that Arianism prevails as it doth, amongst us, at this Day, when such poor, blind, ignorant Wretches, undertake to defend the Doctrine of the Redeemer's Godhead; for sure I am, that going to the 8th of the Proverbs to prove it, is for ever to give up the Cause into the Hands of the Arrians.* This contemptuous Language the Author prevailed with himself to use, concerning some worthy Persons, as any perhaps, the Church of God was blessed with in the former Century.

His great Confidence and Contempt will not deter me from asserting, that in this *Chapter*, clear Proof is given, in Abundance, and above all Exception, unto the important Doctrine of the eternal Existence, and proper Deity of our precious Redeemer. I shall proceed so far, as to say, that, if that Doctrine is not capable of Proof, from this Context; Proof of it cannot be brought from any Part whatever, of sacred Writ. The Terms and Phrases, used therein, expressing the Eternity of his Existence, are so *full, strong, and explicite*, that none more so can be produced. But this Writer was led into a Mistake, by what the *learned* Author, I before referred unto, had advanced, concerning the Import of the Term everlasting as it is

used, in relation to God's Decrees, and Acts within himself, as some other Persons have also been, which is not a little to be lamented.

Upon the Whole, if Beginning is understood of Duration, Eternity must be intended: Or that immeasurable Duration, which was before the Creation of the World, and had no Commencement. But, it may be observed, that in the Original, it is not, in the Beginning, as we translate; but *the Lord possessed me, the Beginning of his Way*: And the *original* Word signifies the First, or Chief. By which two Things are suggested.

1. That Christ is the First and Chief, in the Decrees of God, as they are all calculated for his Glory, above Angels and Men. The supreme End of God in his Purposes and Operations, is the Glory of his own infinite Perfections, Wisdom, Power, Goodness, *etc.* For he made, and decreed to make all Things *for himself*. His next, subordinate End, which he eternally had in View, was the Glory of Christ, in the Character of Mediator, as an Effect of his infinite Love unto his Person. Hence the Apostle speaking of Christ in his mediatorial Capacity, or of his Person, as constituted of the divine and human Natures, says: *All Things were created by him and for him*. They were made by him, as an efficient Cause, and they were also made for him, as a final Cause.

Again, **2.** When it is said, that Christ is the First, or Chief of God's Ways, it implies, that there is a more glorious Display of his Perfections in him, than in any of, or all his other Works taken together. All Divine Works are excellent and worthy of their infinitely good and great Author. The Works of Creation point out unto us the infinite Wisdom, unlimited Power, and Benevolence of the Creator. *For the invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead*. But, there is a far more illustrious and superior Display of the Wisdom, Goodness, Holiness, Truth, and Justice of God, in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and in the *amazing* Designs, which are thereby accomplished. And, therefore, with great Propriety, he may be said, as Mediator, to be the Chief of his Ways. I proceed to shew,

III. What is implied in the Act of possessing Christ. The *original* Word signifies to have or possess by Price, or by Labour, and sometimes by Birth. In this Sense *Eve* uses it. When she had conceived and bore *Cain*, she said: *I have gotten* (the same Word) *a Man from the Lord*. In this Sense it may be understood here, for there is not that wanting in the Context, which gives Countenance unto it. Wisdom, or Christ, says of himself, *Before the Mountains were settled, before the Hills was I brought forth*. The latter Writer,

unto whom I before referred, on the Subject of the Filiation of Christ, hath these remarkable Words: *I am positive, that Christ as the eternal God (i.e. as a Divine Person) was never begotten, since it is impossible for me to conceive the begetter and the begotten to be of equal Date.* Why is he so confident that Christ, as a Divine Person, was never begotten? He was so, because he was not able to conceive how he could be of the same Date with him, by whom he was begotten. Shall we *poor Worms*, whose Understandings are finite and limited, take upon us, boldly to pronounce, that, that cannot be in Deity, which we are unable to form adequate Ideas of, or explain how it is? We must forget our own Nature, and the Nature of God also, if we do. We must forget our own Nature, that it is limited and finite, and for that Reason, incapable of comprehending that which is infinite. And, we must forget the Nature of God, *viz.* that it is infinite, and therefore, unto us incomprehensible. That, therefore, may be in Deity, which we are sure cannot be in finite and limited Beings. And, that which involves a Contradiction, in Beings finite and limited, may not, in that Being, which is infinite. For Instance, in the human Nature, it implies a manifest Contradiction to conceive, that he who is begotten, is of the same Date with him that begot him. But, it by no Means follows, that it is a Contradiction to conceive, that a Divine Person, who is begotten, is of the same Date with the Divine Begetter. This Writer, notwithstanding his Confidence in this Matter, might have been asked, as puzzling Questions concerning Eternity, as any he could propose relating unto this *mysterious* Subject. But, I suppose, he would scarcely have denied, that there is a Duration, which had not Beginning, and which will never end, though he might have found it impossible for him to resolve some difficult Questions concerning it. It is beyond Contradiction, that Christ is the Son of God. He is his Son, therefore, either in a *proper* Sense, or only in an *improper* and *metaphorical* one. That he is the Son of God, in a proper Sense, may be concluded from his asserting, that God was his own Father: *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work:* The Jews inferred, and very rightly, from this Assertion, and not from his affirming himself to be the *Messiah*, that he *made himself equal with God.* Therefore, the Jews fought the more to kill him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his (ἰδίον , own, or proper) Father, making himself equal with God (John 5:17, 18). He is so a Son, as to be of the same Nature with God, whose Son he is. For which Reason, he is called God's own, or *proper* Son. *God spared not his own,* or *proper Son.* God can't be his *proper* Father, if he begat him not; nor can he be God's *proper* Son, unless he was begotten of him. But he is God's *begotten*, and his *only begotten Son: God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son.*

Some have thought, and some do think, that Christ is called the Son of God, because he is invested with Office. But, that is to confound the very different Characters, of a Son and a Servant, and it necessarily makes them the same. As invested with the Office of Mediator, he is God's Servant: *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold.* Now if it is true, that he is God's Son, as invested with the mediatorial Office, he is no otherwise a Son, than as he is a Servant, and these very different Characters, of Son and Servant, can contain and convey no different, but in all Respects, the same Idea, which there is no Reason to think. Besides, Christ was a Son antecedent unto his Investiture with the mediatorial Office, which he could not possibly be, if his being in that Office was the *formal Reason*, or Cause of his Sonship. That he was a Son before his Investiture with Office, is, I think, abundantly clear from these Words of the inspired Writer: *For the Law maketh Men High Priests which have Infirmity; but the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* If Christ bears the Character of Son, on account of his being the High Priest, or Mediator of the Church, he could not be a Son, before his Investiture with that Office; but it is most clear that he was: *For the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, or constituteth the Son.* What doth it make or constitute him? It made or constituted him High Priest, or Mediator: And, therefore, he was a Son before he was made High Priest, or Mediator. This is so *clear and illustrious* a Testimony unto the Truth of the Sonship of Christ, as a Divine Person, that I am persuaded, it will be impossible for the Wit of Man, by any *Arts*, or *Shifts*, to cloud it, and enervate its Force. Farther, Christ as a Son; was not under Obligation to obey and suffer. This is clearly suggested in these Words: *Though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience by the Things that he suffered.* The Opinion of his being a Son, as invested with Office, must: compel us to conclude this to be the Sense of those Words: Though he was a Son, and as such under Obligation to obey and suffer, yet learned he Obedience, by the Things that he suffered. But who can think this to be the Import of the Divine Writer? Surely none. As Mediator, he was under Obligation to obey and suffer: As a Son, he was not, and therefore, his mediatorial Office is not intended by his Sonship; but his filial Relation unto God, as a Divine Person.

Again, the Father possessed him of all those Treasures of Grace and Glory, which he intended the Church should receive here, and enjoy hereafter. And there is that in the Context, which favours this Sense also: *That I may cause them that love me to inherit Substance, and I will fill their Treasures.* Christ is capable of making good this Promise: For, *it hath pleased the Father that in him all Fulness should dwell. He blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly*

Places in Christ. And that Grace, according unto which we are saved and called, was given us in Christ: *Who hath saved us and called us, with an holy Calling, not according to our Works; but according to his own Purpose and Grace which was given us in Christ before the World began.* All those precious Benefits, which the Church of God partakes of, in this World, and all that Bliss and Glory, which she will possess in the heavenly State, were deposited, and laid up for her in the Hands of her ever-blessed and glorious Head. In whole Keeping they are eternally secure. Farther,

IV. God possessed Christ before his Works of old.

1. The Works which are intended, are the Works of Creation; of this I think there can be no Doubt: Because Wisdom, immediately after the Text, proceeds to give an elegant Description of the Creation: *When there were no Depths, I was brought forth: When there were no Fountains abounding with Water: Before the Mountains were settled, before the Hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the Fields, nor the highest Part of the Dust of the World. When he prepared the Heavens, I was there: When he set a Compass upon the Face of the Depth. When he established the Clouds above: When he strengthened the Fountains of the Deep: When he gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment: When he appointed the Foundations of the Earth.* There are the wonderful Works designed, wherein Divine Wisdom and Power are manifested. Creation is proper to God. Omnipotence only could give Existence unto Body, out of non-existing Matter: Which it did. For, *Things which are seen, were not made of Things which do appear.* And infinite Wisdom and Power alone could form the beautiful Fabrick of the Universe, out of that *rude Mass* of Matter, unto which Existence was first given: *The Earth was without Form, and void: And Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep.* Creation therefore, is a Work Divine, and peculiar to God. And he challenges it, as his own. *Lift up your Eyes on high, and behold who hath created these Things, that bringeth out their Host by Number; he calleth them all by their Names, by the Greatness of his Might, for that he is strong in Power, not one faileth (Isaiah 40:26).*

2. These Works were wrought *of old.* Many Ages had then run out since the Creation of the World, and, therefore, they are said to be of old. And as Things created invariably keep those Laws, thro' all the successive Ages of Time, unto which they were subjected, in their Creation, it is an Evidence, that they were formed by infinite Wisdom, and are preserved and upheld in that beautiful Order, wherein they were at first fixed by immense Power. And,

3. Christ was possessed of the Father before a creating Act was put forth: Or before Being was given to any Creature, and, consequently, in Eternity: Or in that infinite, immeasurable Duration, which was before Time commenced. The Beginning of God's Way, therefore, cannot possibly mean a finite and limited Duration. If proper Eternity is not expressed by these Phrases, it will be impossible to produce any from Scripture, which express it. But the next general thing in the Text demands my Attention.

V. *Christ was set up:* *I was set up* . The original Word, (שָׁחַ) signifies *pouring forth*, or *anointing*, and as Oil was poured forth upon a Person who was invested with Office: Or, as a Person was anointed with Oil, when appointed unto Office, Christ's Appointment unto and Investiture with the mediatorial Office, is intended by this Phrase. The latter Writer, some of whose Words I took notice of before, entertaining the Notion of the Pre-existence of the Soul of Christ, labours to prove it from this Place. He objects unto the Application of the Phrase to Christ, as a divine Person, in this very *nonsensical* Manner. *Now, this cannot have the least Relation to his Godhead, because we cannot say, that was poured out.* No, nor can we say, that his Soul was poured out, when he was anointed unto Office. The Person anointed to Office is not poured out, but Oil is poured forth upon him, or he is anointed therewith. He adds: *These Words may likewise denote his Unction; and so it may be read, I was anointed from Everlasting. In this Sense it cannot be applied to his Divinity.* The Phrase being understood in its true Sense, it will quickly appear, that it may be very well applied to the Person of Christ, as designed unto a Union with the human Nature. For, it intends Designation to Office. And the divine Person of Christ, as he was to become incarnate, was invested with the mediatorial Office: Which was done in the everlasting Covenant, that was entered into by the Divine Persons. Of that Covenant, and the Parties therein contracting, he speaks thus: *I am not writing about the Counsels and Purposes, of God in himself, but of his covenanting and contracting with a Person to fulfill and execute these Counsels and Purposes, and of the Person's Willingness, that was covenanted and contracted with to undertake such a Work. — I freely confers, that the Platform of Salvation was laid in the eternal Mind; and that the whole Scheme of our Happiness was drawn in Eternity, infinitely beyond all Date; but yet the Contract between the Father and Christ was not so, unless the Man Christ be infinitely Eternal, (it is absurd to think that Eternity is finite) or else an infinite Being must contract with himself.* This is the Sum of what this *goodly* Author, had to object to the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace, and unto its being an Agreement between the divine Persons.

The Whole of this Discourse will be removed out of the Way without the least Difficulty.

For, tho' the divine Being did not contract with itself, the divine Persons, existing distinctly in the divine Essence, entered into Covenant with each other.

As the eternal *Three*, Father, Son, and Spirit, are personally distinct, tho' *essentially* one, they *each* act *distinctly*, in the divine Essence: Or the divine Wisdom and Will, which are essentially the same, act *distinctly* in each divine Person, by reason of their *distinct* personal Subsistence in the divine Nature.

Thus the divine Wisdom and Will, acting *distinctly* in the *distinct* Person of the Father, designed and resolved upon the Incarnation of the Son, and his accomplishing our Redemption, in our Nature, as personally united unto himself, by doing and suffering all that Law and Justice required, unto that important End. And this was the Father's Proposal unto the Son, to undertake that great and arduous Work. And thus also,

The divine Wisdom and Will, acting *distinctly* in the Person of the Son, who subsists *distinctly* from the Father in the divine Essence, approved of this Design, or concurred with the Father therein; which Approbation and Concurrence, was the Son's Engagement to fulfil the Will and Counsel of the Father, relating unto that wonderful Affair, and it brought him under an Obligation, to do and suffer in our Nature, when taken into personal Union with himself, the Whole of what Law and Justice required, in order to our Salvation.

Again, the divine Wisdom and Will acting *distinctly* in the ever-blessed Spirit, who is a Person *distinct* from the Father and the Son, he approved of the gracious Design, of the Salvation of the Elect: And, as the divine Wisdom and Will, in the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son, willed that he should glorify Christ, and sanctify the Church; he agreed, and consented unto the Will of the Father, and the Will of the Son. Thus he took upon himself the Work and Office of glorifying Christ, and sanctifying the Church, which is that Part that he bears in the Oeconomy of our Salvation. And, therefore, as the Son became obliged unto the Father, as he was to be incarnate, to redeem his People and Members: So the holy Spirit became obliged unto both the Father and the Son to glorify Christ and sanctify the Church.

And, I humbly apprehend, that it is with *especial* Relation unto this, that the Holy Spirit is so frequently stiled the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of his Son, or of Christ; That for this Reason also, he is said to be sent both by the Father and the Son. By his Engagement he came

under Obligation, both unto the Father and the Son, to perform his Part, in the Business of our Salvation. And, this is the Foundation of his Mission by the Father, and of his Mission by the Son. Right arises from hence, unto both to send him: And, accordingly, he is sent by both. He comes at the Pleasure of the Father: *Whom the Father will send in my Name. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts.* He likewise comes at the Will of the Son: *If I depart I will send him unto you,* says Christ, concerning the holy Spirit, under the Character of *Comforter.*

These *distinct* and *mutual* Actings of the divine Persons, between themselves, are the Covenant of Grace, wherein the Method of our Salvation was fixed, and that gracious Design effectually secured.

And, therefore, this Author hath only discovered his *Weakness*, in saying, that the *Contract between the Father and Christ was not infinitely beyond all Date, unless the Man Christ be infinitely Eternal,* (as he *nonsensically* speaks, for there is no *finite Eternity*) *or else an infinite Being must contract with himself.* The infinite, distinct Persons, in Deity, contracted, or entered into mutual Engagements between themselves, in this federal Transaction. This was not the Contract of the divine Nature with itself; but it was the Contract of the divine Father, the eternal Son, and the blessed Spirit, who are *personally distinct*, tho' *essentially one.* Nor, can the *distinct* Actings of the divine Wisdom and Will, which are *essentially* the same, be denied, without the Denial of the *distinct* Personality of the Father, Son and Spirit. If they are *distinct* Persons, without all question they act *distinctly*: Or the divine Wisdom and Will act *distinctly*, in each of the eternal *Three*, Father, Son, and the holy Spirit.

Besides, to imagine, with this Author, that the human Soul of Christ existed when the Covenant of Grace was entered into, and that it was a contracting Party, in that Covenant, absolutely destroys the Eternity of it, which he is obliged to grant. Hence it undeniably follows, that *once* there was no Covenant of Grace: *Once* Christ was not the Mediator and Head of the Church. It was in that Covenant, that he was constituted such: If therefore, that Covenant *once* was not, it must be allowed that *once* Christ was not the Mediator and Head of the Elect of God: And, consequently, *once, his Delights were not with the Sons of Men.* This is that *Blessed Divinity*, which this Writer recommends unto the Embrace of Christians: But it ought to be eternally abhorred, as that which saps the very Foundation of all their Faith and Hope.

Farther, the Notion of the Pre-existence of the Soul of Christ, or of its existing before the Creation of the World, is repugnant to

Scripture. That Opinion is as certainly false, as it is true, that *in the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*. If there was before Creation a limited Duration, that Duration must have had Commencement, and was measurable, tho' not measured and divided into its Parts, by any regular Motion of Body, as I have before observed. And, that *Instant*, at which we must necessarily stop, in our Conceptions concerning it, *was the Beginning*, and not that *Instant*, wherein God's Act of Creation was put forth, And, therefore, if this Notion is true, what *Moses* affirms must be false, and God did not in the Beginning create the Heavens and the Earth, but after the Beginning; and how long after, it seems, is not knowable, perhaps Millions of Ages. Into such Absurdities will some Men run, in order to support their *Misconceptions* of Things, or a *darling* Opinion, which they have happened to embrace.

Once more, for I have not yet done with this *vain* Conceit. To suppose, as this Writer does, that the Soul of Christ was a contracting Party in the Covenant of Grace, and not his divine Person, is to detract from his Glory as a divine Person, and is advancing his human Soul unto such Dignity, as is by no Means its Due. May the good Lord eternally preserve me, from lessening the Glory of a precious Jesus, in his human Nature, which ought ever to be dear to my Soul! I humbly hope, that I shall never express any thing, detracting from his Honour, in his human Nature. My Heart can't possibly bear the *killing* Thought: And, yet, with *Intrepidity* I say, that it was a Glory *peculiar to Christ*, in his divine Person, to contract with the other divine Persons, the Father and the Holy Spirit, and that it was an Honour infinitely too great for the human Soul of Christ, to become a contracting Party in the Covenant of Grace. The Parties contracting were *equal*, as it was *condecant and fit*, that so they should be,

Indeed, the Will of Christ as Man, upon his subsisting, in his human Nature, freely and fully consented, unto all the Articles, agreed on in the Covenant, relating unto both his Obedience and Sufferings: But it was his Engagement, as a divine Person, which brought his human Nature under Obligation to obey and suffer, as it hath its Subsistence therein. And it was fit, that the infinitely superior constituent Part of Christ, in his complex Character, should undertake for his inferior constituent Part, as Mediator. So that it was not necessary, that his human Nature should subsist, in either part of it, his Soul no more than his Body, at his undertaking the Work of Redemption, in the Covenant of Grace.

In the setting up of Christ, or his Designation unto the mediatorial Office, various Particulars may be observed. As,

1. The divine Father purposed and proposed to him, that in *the Fulness of Time* he should assume our Nature, into Union with himself. The divine Wisdom and Will, acting distinctly in the Person of the Father, as is above explained, moved this to him. This was a *Foreordination* of him to become Man, *before the Foundation of the World*.

2. Christ consented unto this Design, and Proposal of the Father: Or the divine Wisdom and Will, acting *distinctly* in the Person of the Son, as is before expressed, he approved of this Design and Proposal of the Father, and the Concurrence of the divine Will, in his Person, was his Engagement, to take our Nature into a personal Union with himself, at the Time appointed. His Language in this Transaction was: *Lo I come*. Hence,

3. Tho' the human Nature of Christ did not then subsist, he was considered, as God-Man, by the divine Persons. Not that the divine Understanding, in either of the divine Persons, accounted him to have Subsistence then, as Man; for that he had not; and, therefore, it was not possible, that the divine Understanding could conceive him to be then existent, in his human Nature; but he was had in Repute, by the divine Persons, as God-Man, by reason of his certain future Incarnation, which was then resolved upon, between themselves. And in this Character, the Covenant of Grace was made with him. I would observe,

4. The Work assigned unto him, as incarnate; or what was required of him, as his Person is constituted of the divine and human Natures, in order to the Salvation of his Body, the Church. And,

(1) It was required of him to come under the Command of the Covenant of Works. That Covenant, without a *special* Appointment, could have had no Concern with, or Power over him, either in its Precepts, or Threatenings, not only because he was not represented by *Adam*, with whom that Covenant was made, nor a natural Descendant of his: But also, because his human Nature, as united unto his divine Person, is raised above the State and Condition of a mere Creature: And, therefore, it was a gracious Act of Condescension, in his divine Person, to consent, that, that constituent Part of himself, as Mediator, should come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works: *Being sound in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself; in becoming obedient unto Death*. Again,

(2) Another Thing required of him, was to suffer and die for his People, to make Atonement for their Sins: *When thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin; he shall see his Seed*. This Article his divine Person also agreed unto. And the Consent of his divine Will brought his human Nature, under Obligation to submit to Death:

Ought not Christ to have suffered these Things? It was an Act of infinite Compassion in Christ to poor Sinners, to content, to give up his human Nature, to the most dolorous Sufferings, and unto the most Ignominious, and also an accursed Death, to redeem them from justly deserved Destruction.

(3) The human Nature of Christ being united unto his divine Person, these two Things follow upon it.

[1] As Man he was at the Disposal of his divine Will. As God, or a divine Person, he had absolute Power over his human Nature, which was a constituent Part of himself, as Mediator, and, therefore, he had full and proper Right, to covenant and agree, that his human Nature should both obey and die, in Obedience unto the Will of the Father. For, that Nature was his *own* in a *peculiar* Sense, and it was fit, that it should be absolutely at the Disposal of his divine Will. His Assumption of it into Union with himself was with a View, that it might so be. And our blessed Lord clearly expresses the Right of his divine Person to dispose of his human Nature, according unto his own absolute Pleasure, in these Words: *No man taketh my Life from me; I lay it down of myself; I have Power to take it again. This Commandment have I received of my Father.* The Glory of Christ as Man is unequalled, in Consequence, of his personal, Union with the eternal Son of God: But this Union is so far from raising his human Nature, above an absolute Subjection unto his divine Will, that it necessarily infers it: Or the absolute Subjection of his human Will, unto his divine Will, necessarily follows upon it. His Engagement, therefore, as a divine Person, in the everlasting Covenant, brought an Obligation upon him, as Man, to do and suffer all, that was included in that federal Engagement of his, tho' his human Nature was not then existent.

[2] When the blessed Jesus had Subsistence as Man, his human Will, which is absolutely distinct from his Will, as God, was wholly under the Direction and Influence of his divine Will. And it was fit, that it should so be, for it would have been the highest Incongruity, if the human Will of Christ had not been under the determining Influence of the Will of his divine Person. Hence it was impossible, that the Will of Christ, as Man, should in any Instance, or at any Time, clash with his divine Will. And it is hence also, that the holy moral Operations of the human Nature of Christ, are to be esteemed the Acts of his Person, as Mediator, and that they become infinitely *meritorious*: Because they are the Adds of his Person, who is God as well as Man, tho' the human Nature only, is the immediate Subject from which they spring; therefore, infinite Merit attends them.

5. The Father gave the Elect to Christ, *as his Jewels*, or his own *peculiar* People: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*. He was constituted a Head to them, and they became his Members. And he came under Obligation to preserve them safe, and to conduct them to that State of Dignity and Happiness, which the Father, as the Effect of his infinite Love, designed them, unto the Enjoyment of. For which reason our blessed Lord says: *This is the Father's Will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up, at the last Day*.

6. A glorious Reward was promised unto him, for the important Services, which he undertook to perform. All the Glory that he possesses, as Mediator, was then granted to him, on Condition of his Obedience, Sufferings and Death. And, therefore, he speaks of his having this Glory before the World was: *With the Glory which I had with thee before the World was*. He had it, in Promise and Grant, when he engaged to fulfil the Father's Pleasure, concerning the Redemption of his People.

Thus, I think it appears very clearly, that Christ the eternal Son of God, as he was to become Incarnate, entered into Covenant with the Father, and undertook to accomplish the Whole of his Will, relating to the Recovery of those unto whom he was appointed a Head, in such a Way, as magnifies the Law, and is becoming all the divine Perfections: And, that all that Glory, which he hath Possession of, was given to him by Promise, in the Character of Mediator, tho' neither constituent Part of his human Nature, his Soul, or his Body, then subsisted.

VI. And lastly: The Constitution of Christ Mediator, was from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was.

These Phrases express either a measurable Duration, or an immeasurable one. It is I think allowed by all, that a Duration is intended, which was before the Existence of the World. That Duration either had Beginning, or it had not. If it commenced, and had Beginning, it was properly *Time*, and *not Eternity*. Time and Eternity differ, as *finite* and *infinite* differ. Time is finite, and Eternity is infinite. And it is impossible, that there should be a Medium between Eternity and Time: As there cannot be a Mean between infinite, and finite. Whatever is, must be either infinite or finite, unlimited, or limited. And, consequently, this Duration, if it began, it was Time, it could not be Eternity: It was measurable, and certainly had a Limit, at which we must necessarily stop, in our Conceptions about it; if not, it was Eternity: Or a Duration infinite. To say, that it was not measured by the regular Motion of Body, as Time with us, is measured by the Course of the Sun, will not prove it immeasurable,

nor can that be intended; because then it must be granted, that it was Eternity, which it is not allowed to be, by those unto whom I have Reference; but it is said to be an AFTERDATE of Eternity, by the *learned* Author before mentioned, which had Beginning, or Commencement, which if it had, it was *properly Time*, and it must differ from Eternity, as that which is finite differs, from that which is infinite. And what is to be proved by all this? No other Thing, than, that God's Decrees are *later* than his Existence, and how much later he could not determine, because *neither the Thing speaks, nor the Word declares it*. The Being of God was eternal, or had no Beginning; but all his Decrees, if this is true, were *temporary*, or had Beginning. And therefore, for an infinite Duration, which must have been, before this *After Date*, or *Beginning*, could take Place; God was without any Conceptions and Thoughts of his Works. That is to say, *once God had no Love to Christ as Mediator, nor Conceptions concerning him: Once he had no Love to the Church, nor Thoughts about her: Once he was without infinite Thought and Consciousness, and consequently he once was not God*. For, a Being without infinite Thought and Consciousness can't be God. As I have before said.

The other Writer mentioned above, in order to support his Notion of the Existence of the Soul of Christ before the Creation of the World, interprets these Phrases, in the same Manner; in this, copying after that *learned* Author, as some others also do, to defend a Notion which is *absolutely useless*, that hath not the least Connection with, Dependence upon, nor is inferrible from any Branch whatever, of evangelical Truth. But is wholly dissonant to the Scripture, and everts the eternal Covenant of Grace, wherein the Salvation of God's Elect was everlastingly provided for and secur'd.

If there was a Duration before the Production of the World, which had Commencement, why may there not be a Duration, after the Dissolution of it, which will have an End? And if the former is called everlasting, tho' it had Beginning, why may not the latter be so called, tho' it should have an End? As some imagine it will; but both *are foolish Dreams and alike untrue*.

Farther, if this Liberty may be taken in interpreting the Scripture, I am sure, it will be impossible to prove from thence, the Eternity of God himself; for his eternal Existence is not expressed in stronger Language, than is used about his Decrees, and the Designation of Christ unto the mediatorial Office, in respect to that Duration, wherein the divine Decrees were formed, and Christ was *set up*, or constituted Mediator. And such Liberty can be taken, only to maintain that which is directly absurd, and repugnant unto some of the most glorious Truths of the Gospel, *viz.* Christ's eternal Relation to the Church of God, and his eternal Engagements in her Favour, in

the Covenant of Grace. These Phrases, *from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was*, so fully express Eternity, or that immeasurable Duration which was before Creation, that I much scruple whether any, which do more strongly express it in Scripture, can be produced. *So operose was Solomon, in setting forth the Eternity of Wisdom, lest it should be thought that he spake of created Wisdom*, as the learned *Gerjerus* observes. When God represents unto us his eternal Existence, it is thus: *Yea, before the Day was, I am he (Isaiah 43:13)*. And when he asserts the Eternity of his Decrees, it is thus: *Calling the Generations, (גֵּרָאִים) from or before the Beginning (Isaiah 41:4)*. And the plain Sense of the Phrases here used, is, Duration before the Commencement of Time, or the Existence of any Thing created. Christ was set up *before the World or Time, before the Beginning, and before the Earth existed*. I humbly hope that the *proper Eternity* of the divine Decrees, and the *proper Eternity* of the mediatorial Office of Christ, are established beyond sober and modest Objection; which were the important Ends that I had in View, in this Discourse. ***I shall close it with making three Observations.***

First Observation. *The Evangelical Scheme is wholly new.* It is a System of Truths, which Reason in its higher Perfection, could not possibly have acquired any Knowledge of. There are three Principles, from which we derive all our Ideas, *viz.* Sensation, Reflection and Abstraction; by neither of which we could ever have obtained, the least Acquaintance with the *deep Things of God*. And this is, I humbly apprehend, the Meaning of the Apostle in these Words: *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him*. The Eye hath seen much, and the Ear hath heard much: A very considerable Part of our Ideas, are gained by Sight and Hearing; which includes in it, the whole of the Instruction that we receive from others, relating to the Nature of Things. But it was not possible that by these Means we should ever have discovered any Evangelical Truths: Sensation could not enable us to make such important Discoveries; neither could Reflection on those Ideas gained by Sensation, help us in this Matter: Nor could Abstraction, which is a Separation of our Ideas; by which Act of the Mind a new Kind of Ideas are obtained, which are purely intellectual, assist us in this Thing. The Reason hereof is clear. The Truths of the Gospel have neither Connection with, nor Dependence upon, any Branch of Truth, which a finite Understanding is capable of discovering.

If we had a complete Knowledge of the *first* Covenant, in the whole Compass of its Principles, Precepts, Promises and Threatenings, we then should be absolutely unable to make the least Discovery of the

Doctrine of the second Covenant; for that is entirely new, and altogether distinct in its Nature, from the first Covenant. And it being so, none of its Truths come within the Verge, even of unimpaired and perfect Reason; which fully proves the absolute Impossibility, of the human Mind gaining the Knowledge of its Truths, by any Acts it is able to put forth. Angels themselves could never have known any Thing at all of Evangelical Mysteries, without *supernatural* Revelation. Truths they are, which were *hid in God, who created all Things by Jesus Christ*.

To imagine, as some have imagined, that the second Covenant is founded on Truths contained in the first; or upon those natural Notions, which we have as Men, of the moral Perfections of God; is effectually to destroy both Covenants: For, that Imagination, is inconsistent with the Nature of the Covenant of Works, and with the Nature of the Covenant of Grace. The mediatorial Scheme, hath no Relation unto, nor Agreement, in its Nature with the Doctrine of the first Covenant; tho' it is calculated to secure the highest Honour to it, by the Obedience and Death of Christ.

Second Observation. Hence we learn what will be the noble Employ of the Saints in the heavenly State: viz. The Contemplation and Adoration of the Divine Perfections, as displayed in the astonishing Affair of their Recovery and Salvation. Some seem to please themselves with the Thoughts of this, that in Heaven they shall become perfect Philosophers, and have a more extensive Knowledge of Things created, than *Adam* had in Paradise: That they shall be able to unravel Nature in her secret Causes, numerous Operations, and multiplied various Effects. I can find nothing in Scripture, which favours this tickling Imagination: This I know, that the Souls of the Saints, will be eternally entertained, with what is infinitely more *noble, sublime and grand*, than any Thing which Nature can possibly suggest to the Mind. I am clearly of the Opinion of an eminent Divine in this Matter, who speaks thus: *Is it not much to be lamented that many Christians content themselves with a very superficial Knowledge of those Things? (i.e. Gospel Truths) How are the Studies, the Abilities, the Time and Diligence of many excellent Persons, engaged in, and laid out about the Works of Nature, and the Effects Divine Wisdom and Power in them, by whom any Endeavour to enquire into this glorious Mystery (of Christ's Person) is neglected, if not despised! Alas, the Light of Divine Wisdom, in the greatest Works of Nature, holds not the Proportion of the meanest Star unto the Sun in its full Strength; unto that Glory of it which shines in this Mystery of God manifested in the Flesh, and the Work accomplished thereby. A little Time shall put an End unto the Subject of their Enquiries, with all the Concernment of God and*

Man in them for evermore. This alone is that which fills up Eternity, and which altho' it be now, with some as nothing, yet will shortly be All. The constant Contemplation on these glorious and sublime Mysteries, fills the Minds of the Blessed with the higher Complacency and Delight, and will maintain in them a holy Adoration of God unto Eternity.

Third Observation. *If we approve of these Things, and they are delightful unto us, as the Glory of God shines forth in them; it is an Evidence in itself, whether we allow it or not in our own Favour, that we are the happy Subjects of a gracious Illumination from God. For, such is the Nature of these Heavenly Mysteries, that the carnal Mind hath not, nor can have any Pleasure in them. That receives them not, they are Foolishness unto it, whatever is pretended to the contrary; it cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. And, therefore, if the Things themselves are agreeable to us, if they are our chief Joy, and that State is most desirable to us; wherein we shall perfectly know them, and be for ever conversant about them, we are certainly meet for the Enjoyment of it.*

Our present Satisfaction and Complacency in these sublime Truths, as they are glorifying unto God in all his infinite Perfections, is a full Evidence of our future Happiness in the Contemplation of them, in the World of Light and Glory above. For, our Approbation of Heavenly Things is a clear Proof, That *God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory, in the Face (or Person) of Jesus Christ.*

SERMON 20

A VINDICATION OF DIVINE JUSTICE, IN THE INFLECTION OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN

CONTAINING AN ANSWER TO AN ANONYMOUS PAMPHLET, INTITLED, '*THE SCRIPTURE-ACCOUNT OF A FUTURE STATE CONSIDERED.*'

AN *anonymous* Pamphlet hath been published lately, which bears the Title of, *The Scripture-Account of the future State considered.* It is a Matter of very small Concern to me, for what Reasons the Author chose to lie concealed, nor shall I make any Enquiry of him, concerning the Causes of that Concealment; but, *As I apprehend various Notions are advanced by the author, which are both unphilosophical and unscriptural, I shall take the Liberty to examine, and endeavour to refute them.*

I cannot but object to his Philosophy, in Relation to the cogitative Part of Man. The human Soul thinks, compares its Ideas, assents and dissents, wills, nills, loves; and, on the contrary, it hates, or it takes Delight in some Objects, and hath an Aversion to others: No Man can doubt of such Acts in himself, who reflects upon what passes in his own Mind. And the Soul doth not think, because it wills so to do; for if Thought followed upon Volition, we might cease to think at all, whenever we please; but that is absolutely out of our Power. We are no more able to forbear thinking, than we can prevent, pleasing, or painful Sensations in us, by the impressions which different Objects make upon our various Senses. Thought and Consciousness, therefore:, seem to be essential to the Soul, and inseparable from it.

That Matter cannot think, reason, and draw Conclusions, seems to me very evident: These are such Acts as can't reasonably be apprehended to spring, either from the Solidity, Qualities, different Composition, or various Motions of Body.

All Matter, however *tenuous* or *subtle* we imagine it to be, must certainly have solid Extension; because, if it hath not, it differs not at all from Space: But that, I suppose, none will allow is true; and, consequently, the subtlest Matter must have solid Extension, and that which hath solid Extension is divisible, and may be separated. Hence it will necessarily follow, that, if Matter is endowed with a cogitative Faculty, or Power of Thinking, there may be an Inch, a Foot, or an Ell of Consciousness, which it is absurd to imagine. Body, be it great or small, *gross* or *subtle*, and Thought, are as

different and distinct as any two Things can be. Consciousness, therefore, cannot be a Property of Matter. If Thought belongs to any Portion of Matter, what Reason can be assigned, why it should not be attributed to every Particle, which composes that thinking, solid Extension? And, if it may, then Consciousness will be capable of being divided into as many Parts as that thinking, solid Extension consists of, however numerous they are. If Cogitation belongs not to every Particle of that solid Extension, how can it be a Property of the whole? Doth the Contact or Union of its Parts render it cogitative? Can Consciousness result from the Union of the Parts of unthinking, solid Extension? How is that possible?

Besides, many of our abstract Ideas are purely intellectual; and, therefore, there is clear Reason to conclude, that the human Soul, which is a thinking Substance, is *immaterial, indiscernible*, and consequently *immortal*; that in its Nature it is distinct from the Body, is able to exist without it, will be active, or not cease to think in its separate State.

As the Soul is *immaterial*, in a *philosophical* Sense, it is not in *any Place*; it fills up no Part of Space; is not near to one Body, and distant from another, which is in a different Part of Space. Nor is it capable of *local* Motion, for that is a Removal out of one Part of *Space*, into another Part thereof. The Soul not being solid Extension, it takes up no Part of Space at all, and, therefore, *properly speaking*, it is not *any where*. It is, or exists, but it does not exist in *Place*; it is not *any where*, and can move *no where*.

This Writer, very unphilosophically, speaks of the Soul's sleeping, or ceasing to think, upon its Separation from the Body, and of its removing from one Place to another; neither of which can be proved, until it is demonstrated that the human Soul is Matter, or solid Extension. Body, if it is, it must be in some Place, i.e. in some Part of Space; but Spirit, by Reason it is not solid Extension, it is not in any Part of Space at all, and, consequently, local Motion agrees not with the Nature of Spirit.

He also speaks of the *Organs of the Soul, and of their being folded up and unfit for Action, for some Time after Death, and of their unfolding after a while, whereupon it begins again to think*. Is the human Mind an *Embryo*? Are its Parts closed or folded up at Death? If so, in what Womb does it receive fit Matter to increase it, or to cause its various Parts to unfold, or open and expand? This is very *strange* Philosophy! Our Author seems to dream while he is awake and writes, whether he does or not when he is asleep. But, be it just as he *fancifully* imagines, until he can prove, that Matter may be endowed with a Power of Thinking, he cannot prove that the Soul

will ever think and become conscious of its Acts. He will find it *very difficult* to demonstrate, that Thought and Consciousness can arise from the Solidity, different Qualities, Composition, or various Motions of Matter.

The Author supposes, that the Soul will awake out of its Slumber, or State of Inactivity, *with the same moral Temper and Disposition it had before Death*. This Supposition seems to me as hard to be explained and proved possible, as any Thing he advances is. How can the Soul, when it awakes out of its Sleep, recover its former Consciousness? Can those new Ideas, which in this Case it will acquire, enable it to recollect its former Ideas, which must have been obliterated and entirely lost: in its State of Stupidity? Let our Author shew the Possibility of this, if he is able. Much less can the Soul awake with the same dispositions, or Habits, whereof it was the Subject before its sinking into this State of Slumber, and Inactivity. It is unreasonable to imagine, that Dispositions either to Good or Evil remain in the Soul, if all Consciousness is utterly lost; and therefore, tho' the Soul should be rouzed out of its Slumber, upon its awaking, it can have disposition neither to Good nor Evil, unless it is given to it, or wrought in it by God; and, if he gives the waking Soul its Disposition, it cannot be to Evil, it must necessarily be an Inclination to Good.

And he conceits, that the Soul is united to some *Vehicle*, whereby it is affected, and by the Help of which it frames its Ideas. Some *learned Men* have thought this is probable; but, so far as I can perceive, they have not been able to explain how that *Vehicle* can assist the Soul to think. However that be, since he imagines that the human Mind sleeps upon Death, notwithstanding its Union with that *Vehicle* remains, he will not be able to explain how, at any Time, it can awake and begin to think again, by the Help of it. If the Mind, upon its Separation from the Body, becomes incapable of being affected by its *Vehicle*, how can it begin again to exert, itself in Thought and Consciousness, by the Means of it? If the Soul sleeps therein for a *single Moment*, it may continue in that Slumber *to Eternity*; nay, it will, unless an Act of Omnipotence Is put forth, to raise it out of that State of Stupidity into which it is supposed to be sunk.

This Doctrine, of the Soul's sleeping at Death, receives no Countenance *from* sound Philosophy, or right Reason. Let us now consider what the Author alledges from Scripture to support it. What he brings from thence, *for* the Proof of this Doctrine, will admit of quick and very easy Dispatch. It is only this: *That Lazarus, and Jairus's Daughter, and the Widow's Son of Nain, who were raised from the Dead, gave no Account of the separate State.*

Lazarus and *Jairus's* Daughter are said to *sleep*, by which is meant, that they were *really dead*. Death is compared to *Sleep*, because there is some Similitude between that and Death. The entire Silence of these Persons, who were raised to Life, about the separate State, gives not the least Degree of Countenance to the Doctrine of the Soul's sleeping, or ceasing to think at Death; for it is the Will of God, that we should wholly collect our Notions of the future, or separate State, from that Account which he hath been pleased to give us thereof, in his sacred Word. All our Faith concerning it must rest upon, and be resolved into, Divine Testimony. Again, those Instances of Resurrection from the Dead, were intended to a very different Purpose from that of giving us Information about the separate State, and are Exceptions unto the fixed Constitution of God, concerning Mankind, in general; and, therefore, nothing can reasonably be argued about this Matter from those Instances. Farther, was it not possible with God to prevent *Lazarus, etc.* converting with other separate Spirits, that they might not obtain from them any Acquaintance with the Nature of their State and Employ? And might not God forbear to communicate to them, any Knowledge of the State of separate Spirits, who are to remain in that State of Separation from their Bodies, until the Morning of the Resurrection? Why might he not, if these Things are possible? And who will, who can say, that they are impossible? Then they could not know any Thing more of the State of such separate Spirits than if they had not died. And yet there is no Necessity to suppose a Suspension of Acts, in those separated Minds; for they might be active, or converse in and with themselves, during their Separation from their Bodies; or their rational Powers might be exerted, tho' their Knowledge was not enlarged, either by Converse with separate Spirits, or an Emanation of Light from God, while they were separate from their Bodies. Hath not the Mind of a Man a large Stock of Ideas treasured up in it? And, if it is separated from the Body, can it not exercise itself in recollecting of, and reasoning upon those Ideas wherewith it is furnished, tho' no new Discoveries are made unto it? We can do this while in the Body; and for what Reason should we think, that we could not do it if our Souls were separated from our Bodies?

It is far from being unreasonable to suppose, that a separate Mind hath such a Capacity; On the contrary, it is highly unreasonable to think that it hath not; which clearly appears from these Instances of Resurrection from the Dead: For if, when their Souls were separated from their Bodies, they lost all Thought and Consciousness, upon the Re-union of their Souls and Bodies, they must have been no other than *great Babies*, and as incapable of Conversation as they were at the Time of their Birth. It is a clear Case, that they had not

lost that Stock of Ideas which they had acquired before their Death; because, as soon as they were restored to Life, they were as able to converse with their Friends, as they were before they died; which must have been absolutely impossible, if they had lost all Consciousness by the Separation of their Souls from their Bodies. These Instances, therefore, are so far from proving what they are produced for, viz. that at Death Men become *stupid* and *thoughtless*, that, on the contrary, they clearly prove, that the human Mind loses not its Stock of Ideas by its Separation from the Body, which it must necessarily do if it becomes *stupid*, or *inactive* and *thoughtless*.

The Author proceeds to treat of Hades, or of the State of the Dead before the Resurrection. The Hebrew Word (לִשְׁמֵרֵי), and the Greek Word (Αδης), whereby the separate State is expressed, have different Significations: 1. The Grave is sometimes meant; (1 Kings 2:6) 2. Hell, or the State, of the Damned; (Luke 16:23) 3. Extreme Sorrow and Anguish of Mind; (Psalm 18:6) 4. The lowest State of Abasement in this World; (Isaiah 14:15) The first Respects good and bad, for the Grave is the House appointed for all living; (Job 30:23) the second and third, the bad only. He fancies, that an interior Sun and an interior Earth are enclosed, by this Globe which we inhabit, which is nothing but an Arch or Shell: That this interior Earth does not revolve upon its own Axis, and therefore one Half of it enjoys perpetual Day and an eternal Spring, and the other is in perpetual Darkness. That the Patriarchs had the Knowledge of this by Revelation, and the Antients derived it from them by Tradition, which gave Occasion to those Descriptions that they have given of Elysium and Tartarus. A strange Chimera! Such Philosophy as this is was never taught the Sons of Men by the Author of Nature, that an eternal Spring would be maintained in the Earth by the Sun perpetually shining on it. That would make it become a *dry Heath*, thro' the intense Heat which must be communicated to it by the constant and uninterrupted Emission of the Sun's Rays. As one half of this Earth must be frozen and locked up by Extremity of Cold, the other half must be scorched and rendered barren by the Intenseness of Heat in it. The Recession and Intermission of the Sun's Rays are necessary unto the Fertility of the Earth. How is it possible that an invariable Degree of Heat can maintain a continual Spring? The Author's *philosophical* Principles are as *unreasonable* as his Notions of Divinity.

Thus he divides *Hades* into two Regions, *Paradise* and *Tartarus*: The former he supposes is the Residence of good, and the latter of evil Spirits; that good Souls are under milder, and bad under severer Discipline; that the former may be perfected in Virtue, and the latter may be reclaimed from Vice, and so at length be admitted to Heaven.

The intermediate State between Death and the Resurrection, therefore, is a State of farther Trial of the Wicked, and, if they prove not *incorrigible*, they shall be happy. In such a State he thinks the *Devils also are*; and, if they are not *irreclaimably* bad, they shall enjoy Happiness. According to this Account of *Hades*, both the Godly and Ungodly are in it, for it includes *Paradise* and *Tartarus*; or *Heaven* and *Hell*. But this is a Mistake, for (Αδης) *Hades* is never put for *Heaven*, or the State of the Blessed; *Hell*, indeed, or the State of the Damned, is designed by it. Thus, of the *rich Man*, it is said, (εν τῷ Αδῆ, not εν τῷΑδῆ, as the Author hath it), *in Hell he lift up his Eyes*.

Heaven may be considered as a State of Happiness, without including the Idea of Place in it. Into this State the Souls of the Saints immediately enter at Death: And it may be considered, not only as a blessed State, but, as inclusive of Place, where *Enoch*, *Elias*, and *Christ*, in his human Nature, now are, and all the Saints shall be, for evermore. *Hell*, also, may be considered as a State of Misery, without including the Idea of Place in it; into this State the Ungodly immediately enter at Death: And it may be considered, not only as a miserable State, but, as inclusive of Place, wherein the Ungodly will suffer Punishment both in Soul and Body. The Souls of departed Saints are now in *Heaven*, as a State; and the departed Spirits of the Wicked are now in *Hell*, as a State; but the Souls of neither, properly speaking, are in Place; for, to exist in Place, or in some Part of Space, is proper to Body, and it cannot, with Propriety, be said of Spirits, which are not solid Extension.

If this *interior* Earth is the Habitation of good and bad Souls, and the good dwell in the light Part, and the bad in the dark Part of it, as the Author supposes, then both are in the *Abyss*, for *Paradise* as well as *Tartarus* must be meant by the *Abyss*; and the Apostle *Paul*, who says of himself that he was in *Paradise*, must have descended into that *Abyss*; and, therefore, he doth not speak properly when he says that he was *caught up*; he should rather have said, that he was *thrust down* into *Parade*, or the *third Heaven*. *Paradise*, or the *third Heaven*, is the Place where the human Nature of *Christ* is, and will be until his *second Coming*. His Disciples saw him *go up* or *ascend* into *Heaven*; but, if *Parade*, or the *third Heaven*, is this *interior* Earth, they must have seen him *descend*, and not *ascend*. And *Stephen*, who saw him *standing at the right Hand of God*, if *Paradise* is this *interior* Earth, must have seen the Earth, on which he stood, open, instead of seeing the Heavens above him open, in order unto his beholding of *Christ* in his exalted State; the *Chasm* thro' which he beheld *Christ* must have been in this Earth which we inhabit, and not in *Heaven* that is far above us; and, instead of

looking up, he must have looked down into that *Abyss* which our Earth incloses. But it is a Shame to dwell upon the Refutation of this *idle and senseless Fiction*. The main Point in View to be proved is this, That *the Souls of bad Men are in a State of Probation after Death, and not in a State of Punishment*. That which is offered for Proof hereof is very little, and of no Force at all: Because *the Devils*, as yet, are not *tormented in that Degree* which they will hereafter be, and are not in the View of Angels and Men adjudged to *infernal Torments*, which they will be at the grand *Assize*, it is concluded, that they are not in a State of *absolute Misery and Torment*, and, therefore, it seems reasonable to think, that *the Souls of wicked Men are not*. Devils now suffer Punishment, for God *s pares them not*. And, because departed Spirits are *reserved to be punished*, therefore they are upon Terms of Peace with God, their righteous Judge, and do not at present suffer *Punishment*, only some *medicinal Afflictions*, in order to their Amendment and Happiness in the Issue, if they are reclaimed by those

Afflictions, which they suffer in *Hades*. This is very *extraordinary Reasoning*; it is such as scarcely deserves *any Notice*. Both Devils, and the Souls of the Ungodly, in the intermediate State, suffer proper Penalty, tho' they are not publicly sentenced to Hell, as they will be at the Day of Judgment.

But what may seem of more Weight is this: Says the Author, *the Benevolence of our Lord led him to visit Tartarus, and he preached to the Spirits in Prison*. But this was at the Time of their Existence in this World, and it is not meant of his going to *Tartarus*, and preaching to them there; Reference is plainly had to the Days of *Noah*. ***Having finished his Account of Hades, he next treats of the Resurrection and general Judgment.*** There is but little that I shall take Notice of here. He grants the Resurrection of the Wicked, as well as the Resurrection of the Righteous, which the *Socinians* delay; but is mistaken, in thinking, that the Resurrection both of the Just and Unjust, is treated of by the Apostle, in 1 Corinthians 15, as every intelligent Reader will quickly discover, by a careful View of the Context: It is of the Resurrection of the Saints only, that the inspired Writer discourses in that Place; and, therefore, nothing is from thence to be collected to prove, that the Bodies of the Wicked, after the Resurrection, will be *mortal*, or of a *periling* Nature; which is what he at least would insinuate from some Part of that divine Discourse. If Proof is to be deduced from thence, of the Mortality of the Body, when raised from the Dead, it must refer unto the Bodies of the Saints, and not the Bodies of the Impenitent, for nothing is spoken concerning them throughout the Place. He comments thus: *Of the Wicked it is only said, as the first Man was of the Earth,*

earthy, such are they that are earthy; they are as the first Man was, whole Image they bear, living Souls, in Bodies which are of the Earth, earthy; natural Bodies, which may corrupt and perish. I am persuaded, that the Reader will think this Person is a *miserable* Interpreter of Scripture. He observes not what is the Scope of the Apostle, *viz.* to prove that there is a *natural*, and that there is a *spiritual* Body, nor that the Body is *natural* before its Resurrection, but *spiritual* when raised from the Dead; which are the two Things that the Apostle designs to prove; which is as evident, as that it is Light at *Mid-Day*. And, therefore, by the natural, or earthy Body, is not meant the Body, when raised from the Dead, but the Body in its present State, which stands in Need of Food to nourish and sustain it; the Observation of which alone is sufficient to discover, what an *egregious Trifler*, this Writer is in the Interpretation of Scripture. My present Haste, will not allow me to enlarge on this so illustrious a Testimony unto the important Truth, of the exalted State of the Saints, in their Bodies, upon their Resurrection from the Dead. All I shall observe is this, that the Bodies of the Saints, which, before their Resurrection, were natural and earthy, when raised from the Dead, shall be *spiritual* and *glorious, like unto Christ's glorified Body*; for, *as they have bore the Image of the Earthy, they shall then bear the Image of the Heavenly.*

Our Author having advanced so far on his Subject, as the general Resurrection and Judgment, It might have been expected, that he would now treat of the Sentence of the infinitely great Judge, whereby the different States of Men will be determined; but he in a great Measure waves this, only using some general Expressions in Relation to this Point; whereas, the *opposite* States of the Righteous and the Unrighteous are not represented by them; because He had it in Design, to raise Mist before his Reader, that he might prevent his discerning, that the State of the Wicked is, in Fact, the Opposite of the State of the Godly.

And, therefore, Before he proceeds to treat of the State of Punishment, and of the State of Blessedness, after Judgment, he spends no less than nine Pages in an elaborate Consideration of the Terms and Phrases, *for ever, for ever* and *ever, everlasting, perpetual, or eternal*; and, because he finds, that, sometimes, they express a measurable Duration of a longer or shorter Continuance, he would have his Reader conclude, that these Terms and Phrases are not properly expressive of *Eternity, or endless Duration.*

There is not the least Necessity, that I should imitate his *prolix* Discourse on this Matter; what he offers will admit of a *short* and

speedy Answer. The Hebrew Word (עולם), and the Greek Word (Αἰών), properly signify *perpetual Duration*, or *Eternity*.

It will be sufficient to shew the Reader very briefly, the different Senses wherein these Terms are used, in order to render his *Parade absolutely useless*, unto that Design which he hath in View. And the Term Everlasting, sometimes, means *absolute Eternity*, or Duration, which is without Beginning and without End: *From everlasting (מעולם) to Everlasting (עד-עולם) thou art God (Psalm 90:2)*. Sometimes it designs a measurable Duration, of a longer or shorter Continuance. Thus the long Duration of the Hills is expressed by it; and for the precious Things of the lasting Hills (Deuteronomy 33:16). So the Years of Jubilee are intended by it: *And he shall serve him for ever; (Exodus 21:6) i.e. until the Year of Jubilee*, when all Hebrew Servants were to be discharged from a State of Servitude. And the Term of Life is intended by it: *So shall I keep thy Law continually; for ever and ever, (לעולם ועד)*; (Psalm 119:44) *i.e. thro' the whole of my Life*. Again, it is used *metonymically*, and the Period of the present State of Things is designed, or the End of the World, as our Translators very properly have rendered the Phrase; *and of the End of the World (και της συντελειας του Αιωνος)* (Matthew 24:3). It is the Cessation of the present State of Things that is meant in those Words, and not the End of that measurable Duration, wherein the World exists, as this *Trifler* would have it, tho' that Duration will end with the Dissolution of the World. And the Things of Time and Sense are also intended by it; *for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved (τον νυν Αιωνα) this present World (2 Timothy 4:10)*. The Apostle plainly means, Things which exist in Time, or measurable Duration, and not that Duration itself Farther, Everlasting expresses an immeasurable Duration, which hath no End, tho' it had Beginning: This is called *Eternity restrict*, and differs from *Eternity absolute*, which is proper to God. This *Eternity restrict*, is proper to the human Nature of Christ, to Angels, and unto Men, who will exist for ever, tho' once they were not: Their Existence began, but will never end. Our blessed Saviour's endless State of Dignity and Glory, is thus expressed by himself; *And behold I live (εις τους Αιωνας των Αιωνων) for evermore (Revelation 1:18)*. And the endless State of the Blessedness of his People, is thus represented by him; *He that believeth in me (ου μη αποθανη εις τον Αιωνα) shall never die (John 11:26)*. He will give to them (Ζωνη αιωνιου) *eternal Life (John 1:28)*. Likewise the endless Duration of the Punishment of the Ungodly, is in the same Manner

represented; *And the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up*, (εἰς Αἰῶνας Αἰῶνων) *for ever and ever* (Revelation 14:11).

The Author denies, that these Terms and Phrases, properly mean an endless Duration. *None of these Words*, says he, *in their natural Import, do signify an absolute Eternity, in the metaphysical Sense of that Word, unless when applied unto God, and then the Nature of the Object gives a Sense to the Words, whereof they are otherwise incapable.* Why does he speak of Eternity *absolute*? It is Eternity *restrict*, that is the Subject of Enquiry, and not Eternity *absolute*, which is proper to God. We are not such *Blunderers* in *Metaphysics*, as to plead for the *absolute* Eternity, of either Angels, or Men, or even of the human Nature of our blessed Redeemer. We know, that they *once* were not, and do not need the Instruction of this Person, or the Instruction of any, who are of his *corrupt* Principles, to inform us, that the human Nature of Christ, and the Existence of Angels and Man, had Beginning. We are fully sensible, that it is *peculiar* to God, to be without Beginning.

The Author hath betrayed either Ignorance, or, what is much worse, a Want of Regard to Truth and Ingenuity, in this Assertion. If he really thinks, that (עולם in the *Hebrew* Language) Everlasting, does not properly signify an immeasurable Duration; and, that (Αἰὼν αἰώνιος in the *Greek* Language) Everlasting and perpetual, do not properly signify an unlimited Duration, it must be owing unto Unacquaintedness with those Languages. The very Reverie of what he asserts, is the Truth. The *natural* Import of these Terms, is Duration *infinite*, or Eternity; and, when they are to be understood differently, the Reason is, the Nature of the Subject requires that limited Sense. I challenge him to produce a *Greek* Word, which more properly signifies Eternity, than this Word (Αἰὼν) does. If he knew not the natural Import of these Words, why does he so boldly assert concerning their proper Signification? If he did know, then he was highly disingenuous in asserting this. The Assertion must proceed either from Ignorance or Disingenuity, and a Want of Regard to Truth.

Nothing is proved by that large Apparatus of Texts, with his Version, which fill up nine Pages, but this, that the Terms for ever, everlasting, *etc.* are used to express a measurable Duration, which every one knows; not that they do not properly signify Eternity, nor is he able to give Proof thereof. I am so well satisfied of his utter Incapacity to give such Proof, that I dare promise to become his Proselyte, on Condition of his proving it; which is what I would not be for the whole World. The Amount of his Reasoning can be only this: I have proved by various Instances, that the divine Writers, by

these Terms and Phrases, sometimes, express a measurable Duration of a longer or shorter Continuance; and, therefore, they do not properly import unlimited Duration, or Eternity. Thus another might say, that the *Latin Adverb (aeternum)* always, or for ever, does not properly mean endless Duration, but a Duration which hath an End, because sometimes it is used in such a limited Sense. I would ask this Person, whether he thinks, that the Terms, everlasting, eternal, for ever, *etc.* in our own Language, properly mean an endless Duration? And there is Reason for my putting this Question to him, for we sometimes use these Terms in a different Sense; as, when we say of a spruce Gentleman, he is an *eternal Beau*, and of a Man who delights in walking, he is an *eternal Walker*. He instances our using these Words to express Duration which hath End; as when we say, *such a Person is gone to live in such a Place for always; or such Things are everlasting, or will wear and last for ever;* will he affirm, because we thus use these Terms, that they do not, in their natural Import, signify an endless Duration? Should he assert this, he would justly expose himself to *Hissing*. It is probable, that some may think, he deserves no better Treatment, for affirming, that these *Greek Words, (ΑΙΩΝ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΣ)* in their natural Import, do not signify Eternity, or endless Duration.

I acknowledge, if he could produce an Instance of the inspired Writers using these Words, to express a measurable Duration, after the Dissolution of the World, or the Close of Time, wherein it exists, it would be every considerable Difficulty upon us, and it might greatly tend to shock our Faith, concerning the endless Bliss of the Saints; and also it might be thought to give Countenance unto the Author's Opinion, that a Period will be put unto the Punishment of the Wicked; but this I am sure he cannot do. Let him do this, and I will immediately embrace his Opinion; tho' that would not prove, that the natural Import of those Phrases is a measurable Duration. What hath he proved by his *prolix* Parade? Nothing, but this; that these Words certainly express a limited Duration, of a longer or shorter Continuance, before the End of this World: And, therefore, he begs the Favour of his Reader, to allow, without the least Proof of it, that such a limited Duration is really meant by these Phrases, after the End of the World. What trifling is this? in a Word, he is a *pitiful Beggar*, and is absolutely unable to bring the least Degree of Proof, for what he is extremely desirous his Reader should believe the Truth of.

He closes his *learned* Discourse on this Subject thus: *And the State of the Righteous and the Wicked, when described under these Words, (for ever, etc.) can in no wise be proved without End, since every Age has an End, and every Aera or Period of Time, however long,*

has still a Conclusion. But we find that Immortality is promised to the Righteous, and it is said of them, that they shall not die any more; so that the Duration of their Existence no ways depends on these Words, eternal and everlasting, but is built on plain and express Promises. This is admirable indeed. Who knows not that Time will certainly have an End? But hath he proved that Time is meant by the Greek Words (Αἰών and αἰώνιος) when used about the Existence of Men in the future State? No; nor is it in his Power to prove it, I am bold to affirm. As I have above observed, the Greek Word (Αἰών) properly signifies perpetual Existence, and it imports endless Duration. It is (χρονος απειρος) infinite Duration. If he requires more Proof of it than is already given, I will promise to oblige him with it; but if he is wise, he will excuse me herein. I demand of him to shew how the Promise, that the Righteous *shall not die any more*, proves their endless Existence? May they not be annihilated? Annihilation is not Death; and, therefore, tho' that Promise secures them from suffering Death again, it doth not ascertain their perpetual Existence. But the gracious Promises made unto them of the Enjoyment of everlasting Life, must clearly evince the endless Duration of their Existence, notwithstanding this Author's *feeble* Attempt to prove the contrary. If these Promises do not prove the eternal Existence of the Saints, I am sure it will be impossible to give Proof of the eternal Existence of our blessed Saviour, as Man, for that is not capable of other and more evident Proof. If his Reasoning is right, we know not, nor can know, whether our precious Redeemer, and the whole Church of God, may not some Time or other be annihilated, or sink into nothing. This is a Consequence so *exceedingly horrid*, that it may well make one *shudder* to mention it; but it is natural and unforced. By that Medium, wherewith he can prove, that Christ will exist for ever, in his human Nature, we shall be able to prove the endless Existence of his *Body*, the Church.

The Author having, as he imagines, proved, that the Terms and Phrases, *for ever, for ever and ever*, etc, do not properly signify endless Duration, ***He advances to treat of the State of Punishment after the general Judgment; and he allows, that God may inflict Punishment for Vice, but observes, that the proper Ends of Punishment, are reclaiming the Offender, and deterring others from Vice: That Penalty ought to be proportioned to the Crime for which it is inflicted: What crime will be punished more than others: That Sin doth not deserve infinite Punishment, because Virtue deserves not infinite Reward: And, that divine Punishment will certainly have an End. I shall briefly consider each of these Particulars ideas.***

I will begin with what he says are the proper Ends of Punishment, viz. reclaiming the Criminal, and for the deterring others. With Respect to the first End, human Laws, in many Instances, are not calculated to serve that End. I cannot be persuaded to think, that our Law hangs a Man, or takes off his Head, to make him better; nor ought any Law to adjudge a Person to Death, (*in Terrorem*) for a Terror to others, if his Crime *deserves not* capital Punishment. That is unjust in itself, and what is so, cannot be sanctified by the End, which may be pretended, or really designed, in the Infliction of such unequal Punishment. But, surely, he was asleep, and knew not what he wrote here; for tho' he says, that the End of all Punishment is, either to reclaim and reform the Criminal, or to deter others from offending, yet he insists upon it, that God designs, in the Infliction of Punishment, after Judgment, to destroy the very Being of the Wicked, and that *all Vice and Misery will be exiled the World*. So that God cannot possibly intend the Amendment of any, whom he will then punish, nor can he design to deter others from Vice, for all the Sons of Vice will cease to be, according to his Opinion; and, therefore, neither of these Ends can have Place, in the Punishment of the Impenitent, after the general Judgment. It is surprising, that this Person should so far forget himself, as to affirm, that these two Things are the *End of all Punishment*; when it was his Design to prove, that such is the Nature of divine Punishment, after Judgment, that it is not possible, that either one, or the other, can be intended therein. God, in the Infliction of penalty, acts agreeably to the infinite Rectitude of his own Nature. He shews his *necessary*, tho' voluntary Hatred of Sin. That is his End, and not reclaiming the Offender. Besides, Punishment will never alter the Disposition of the sinful Creature; that will continue the very same, whether he is punished more or less. Let this be disproved, if it can be done, by producing an Instance of a sinful Creature, whose Mind hath been changed, thro' the Influence of Punishment inflicted, from a Love to Sin, unto a holy Delight in God, and his Duty.

It is certain, that Equity will always proportion Punishment, to the Crimes for which it is inflicted, but who shall be Judge of the Demerit of Sin against God? Shall the guilty Creature, who, thro' Self-Love and Tenderness for itself, as well as other Causes, may form a wrong Judgment in this Point? Or shall God, who cannot but do the Thing *that is right*? Surely, it is most fit to refer the Determination of this Matter unto Infinite Wisdom and Justice, which, we are sure, will determine equitably, in this and all other Things.

That there will be Degrees in divine Punishment, I suppose all will grant, as Men are more or less guilty, in the Sight of God. But who

is most fit to determine concerning the Guilt of the sinful Creature, as to its Nature, Weight, and Aggravations, God or Man? Certainly, he who *searches the Heart and tries the Reins*; and he only is capable of determining who are most guilty; and, therefore, none but he can appoint, what Punishment it is fit to inflict on the criminal Creature. But Men are so *daringly, insolent*, as to assume the *Prerogative*, of their infinitely great Judge, and imagine themselves fit to determine, in their own Cause, as Transgression of the divine Law.

What the Author objects unto the infinite Evil and Demerit of Sin, is trifling, or false. He argues thus: *In whatever Manner Sin or Vice be estimated, it must be finite, because it is the Production or Act of a finite Kind, of finite Principles and Passions.* Very well: Who ever said, that Sin, or a sinful Act, is infinite? No Mortal, I am persuaded. That which is infinite cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being. We know this, full as well as this Writer does. But, with his Leave, or without it, we must distinguish between the Act of Sin, and the Demerit of that Act. Tho' all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, yet there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, because it is committed against all possible and infinite Good. Its Demerit arises from the Object against whom it is committed; and, therefore, as the divine Object against whom all Sin is directed, is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite: If it is not, then there is not, there cannot be greater Evil and Demerit, in an Act of Sin against God, than attend an Act of Sin against a Creature. Why do not such Persons, as our Author, speak out plainly what they mean, and tell us *roundly*, that there is no greater Evil in sinning against God, than there is in sinning against a *poor Mortal* like ourselves? This is what he intends, it certainly is what he designs, tho' it was too *impious* a Thing for him, directly and explicitly, to assert. If this is not his Meaning, he says nothing which is to his Purpose; (or, if he allows, that there is greater Evil in Sin against God, than there is in Sin against a Creature, that Reason, which obliges him to grant, that it is, in any Degree, a greater Evil to offend against God, will compel him to yield, that it is infinitely greater, *viz.* the infinite Majesty of the Divine Being.

His other Objection unto the infinite Demerit of Sin, is absolutely false. *And it should be remembered, that if our Vices were deserving of infinite Punishment, our Virtues would, by the very same Rule, be deserving of an infinite Reward.* This Man, at present, is upon high Terms with his Maker, and hath the *Front* to insist on it, that his Virtues merit as *great a Reward* from him, as his Sins deserve Punishment at his Hand. Let him see to it, how he will be able to maintain his Plea, at the awful Tribunal of God, before which he

must shortly appear. Demerit attends Sin, but even *perfect* Virtue is not *meritorious*. We do but our Duty, in yielding Obedience to divine Precepts; it is a Debt we owe to our Maker, and no Desert of a Reward from him, can arise from the Performance of our Duty. *The Spring of Merit principally, is performing a Work not due, and which another hath not a Right to require of us; for, he that doth that unto which he is perfectly obliged, only fulfils his Obligation, and hath nothing redundant, from which Merit can arise. — From whence it is manifest, that no Merit with God, can accrue to any Mortal, even tho' he should exactly, and as he ought, obey and fulfil the divine Law.* So says the learned Puffendorf. The Civil Law would have furnished this Writer with a better Notion of Merit, than he appears to have; but, perhaps, that is not much the Matter of his Study, his Head being filled with Laws of another Kind. Tho' there is Demerit in Sin, there is not Merit in Virtue; and, therefore, his Reasoning, that if Vice is infinite in Demerit, Virtue must also be infinite in Merit, is most unreasonable and false.

In order to prove, that the Punishment of the Wicked will have an End, he observes, that God will not retain his Anger for ever: That, his tender Mercies are over all his Works: That, as the Father of Mercies, he will have Compassion of the Workmanship of his Hands: Altho' he hath before told us, that God will determine the Measure of our Misery, in

exact Proportion to our moral Tempers and Conduct; that is to say, he will punish us as far as our Crimes deserve. How, therefore, does he exercise Mercy towards us? It is not an Act of Mercy to cease to punish, when a Criminal hath suffered as much as his sins deserve, but an Act of Justice: Besides, these Acts of Chiding, relate unto the Correction of the Righteous, and not the Punishment of the Ungodly.

By the *second Death*, he would have us understand Annihilation. For Proof of it, he observes, that the Wicked shall be *burnt up, as Tares, Chaff, and Stubble*. That is a *metaphorical* Representation of their Pain and Misery, but it imports not the Destruction of their Being. Fire does not destroy the Being of any Body; it separates its Parts, and alters its Form, but it still exists. And the Destruction of the Wicked, is not the Loss of Existence, but of Well-being, and suffering Torture, which is compared to that painful Sensation, which Fire causes in our Bodies.

And his Observation, that the *Greek Word* (απολλομι) signifies, *to kill, to put to Death, to break to Pieces, to corrupt*, by which the Punishment of the Ungodly is expressed, is not of the least Service to his Cause, for Annihilation is not implied in either of these

Senses. The Loss of Happiness, and enduring Torment, are designed, but Loss of Existence, is not meant.

His next Attempt is to answer what may be objected to his Opinion from several Scriptures: *And those, that have done Evil shall go away* (εις Κολασιν αιωνιον) to lasting Punishment; our *Translation has it*, into everlasting Punishment; but the Righteous (εις Σωην αιωνιον) to lasting Life, Why is it wrote (Σωην?) it should be (Ζωην.) This might be the Printer's Mistake, but I think it runs thro' the Performance. Our Translation is *just*; for the Word (αιωνιος) properly means *everlasting*, or *endless Duration*; nor will he ever prove the contrary: Neither will the Punishment of the Ungodly *end* in Death or Destruction, *i.e.* Annihilation, as he affirms, without the least Proof. Let him prove, that they will be sentenced unto *Annihilation*, and I will yield the Point; but this he *cannot do*, These Words are a clear Proof, that the State of the Ungodly, and the State of the Godly, are *directly opposite*, and will be of the *same* Duration. The Godly will enjoy *eternal Life*, and the Ungodly will suffer *eternal* Death, and the Duration of the Existence of both will be *endless*; otherwise

their States will not be opposite, which the Words clearly evince they will be. Besides, the Death and Destruction of the Wicked plainly mean *Tortures*, which they will *feel*, as the Life of the Righteous designs *Pleasures*, which they will enjoy; and, therefore, Annihilation cannot be intended, by the Death and Destruction of the Wicked. They are dead and destroyed, they *existing at the same Time*, and, consequently, they are not *annihilated*, by that Death and Destruction which they will suffer. By the *Life* of the Godly. is not meant their *Existence*, tho' that is necessarily included; and by the *Death* of the Ungodly is not meant their *Non-existence*, or ceasing to be, but the *direct Opposite* of the Life of the Godly, which is *suffering Misery*.

The second Scripture which he endeavours to reconcile with his Opinion is: *Where their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched*. The Sense of these Words is, as he pleads; *the Sufferings of the Wicked will be of the same Duration, as their Existence*. But, when they shall cease to exist, can their Worm survive, and their Fire not be quenched? He very well knows the Impossibility hereof, and says, that *all Vice and Misery will be exiled the Worlds*. Will not the Worm of the Wicked then be dead? He is sensible it will. And will not their Fire be then quenched? He cannot but think it will. So that this is not to interpret, but *flatly* to contradict Scripture. That which he offers to defend himself in thus contradicting the express Assertion of our Saviour, is extremely weak and foolish, and also

manifestly false: It is this; *If the Punishment of the Wicked be as durable as their Beings, it will be and appear to them everlasting, tho' at last extinguished in Death, i.e. Annihilation. The Misery of the finally Impenitent being lasting, as their future Duration is to them, in the common Acceptation of the Word everlasting, because they will not survive their Misery; so that, in the most literal Sense, their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched.* How can it be everlasting, if it hath End, which it must, if they cease to exist? Can it appear to them everlasting? If it does, it must be before they are annihilated, for it is impossible it can appear such to them, when they are not; nor can it appear to them everlasting while they exist, for they must know, that they have not reached an *endless* Duration. This Testimony, therefore, remains in full Force, against the Doctrine which he advances; and, I dare say, it will never be in his Power, to *blunt this two-edged Sword*, which *mortally* wounds the Cause he is engaged in the Defence of.

The third Text which he attempts an Answer unto, is: The Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up (εἰς Αἰῶνας Αἰῶνων) for ever and ever. This Phrase is properly expressive of endless Duration, and many Instances may be produced, wherein Duration without End, is designed by it. Our Saviour says of himself, *And behold I live for evermore, or for ever and ever* (Revelation 1:18). The Duration of Christ and the Church will be the same, and the Duration of the Wicked will be the same with the Duration of Christ and the Church. We shall be able to prove the endless Duration of the Ungodly, by the *same Medium*, that he can prove the endless Duration of Christ, as Man, and of his *Body*, the Church. He says, *doubtless this Punishment, both as to Measure and Duration, will be such as the holy Angels and the Lamb approve; for we are told, that it will be inflicted in their Presence.* Without all Question: Neither the holy Angels, nor the Lamb, will disapprove of Punishment being continued so long on Men, as they shall retain an implacable Hatred of God and all Good, tho' this Man may; and such Hatred will possess their Minds for evermore. He adds: *But how long the Period of their Sufferings may be, none can say; only the Subjects of it being mortal and perishing, we cannot suppose it will be endless, for then they must be deathless, and so incapable of a second Death and utter Destruction, which the Scriptures declare will be their*

End. He hath not proved, nor can prove, that the Death and Destruction of the Wicked, means Annihilation. *Positive* Sufferings, when and while they exist are intended, and they are dead and destroyed, they frill existing, and, therefore, Annihilation is not designed by the *second Death*. It is contrary to common Sense, to think, that their Annihilation would be unto them a Punishment; that

which puts an End to suffering Punishment, cannot be Punishment; and, therefore, if they will be annihilated, in their Annihilation they will not suffer Penalty. If Annihilation is a Punishment, it must be so to the Creature, while it exists, or when it is not. It can't be a Punishment endured by the Creature, while it exists, for it is not annihilated while it exists, and that which is not, cannot suffer Punishment.

He says, *the common received Notion of the endless Duration of Sinners in a State of Torment, for the Sins of this short Life, appears to me, not only wholly unscriptural, but likewise highly absurd, and contradicts all our best and primary Notions of Deity, as a Being of infinite Justice and Benignity.* If it appears to him unscriptural, it is the Doctrine of the Scripture, nor will he ever prove the Contrary. The Demerit of sinful Actions, arises from their Nature, and not from the Length or Shortness of the Time, wherein they are perpetrated. If I were to kill a Man, in an *Instant*, which I might do, by shooting him thro' the Head, should I not demerit capital Punishment, for that wicked Action, tho' it was done in a Moment? And, the Desert of Sin against God, springs from its Nature, and not from the Length of Time, which is taken up in sinning. That is *infinitely* evil, in its Nature, which is a direct Opposition to *infinite* Good; such is all Sin, and, therefore, the Demerit of Sin must be *infinite*, and it justly exposes the Creature unto Punishment, which is *infinite*, in its Duration. Besides, Men will not only be punished for sinful Actions, but also for their wicked Disposition. The Ungodly are *Enmity* against God. Tho' they tremble at his Wrath, they have no Desire after, nor Relish for the Joys, which spring from a Sense of his Love, nor ever will have; and, therefore, it is fit, and agreeable to divine Justice, to take *eternal* Vengeance on Creatures, who will *eternally* slight divine Goodness. Accordingly, of the Wicked it is expressly declared: That, *he who made them, Will have no Mercy on them; and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour* (Isaiah 27:11).

His Account of the heavenly State is *carnal*. Heaven, in his Opinion, is an *earthly* Paradise, *spontaneously bringing forth Fruits*, for the Entertainment and Delight of its Inhabitants. If he should come there, therefore, there will be no Need for him to drudge at the *Dung-Cart* or the *Plough*; without Toil and Labour he will be supplied with *elegant* Food, and *cheering* Drink. This is that Heaven, which our Author is, I suppose, in Expectation of enjoying, after the Resurrection; but this is not that Heaven, which *real* Christians have in View. It is an Account of the heavenly State, which is much more agreeable to the *Alcoran*, than the *Bible*. A *Turk* it may in *some* Measure please, but a Christian, I am sure, is in

Hope, of an Arrival unto a State of Bliss, which infinitely exceeds this, in the Purity of its Pleasures, and the Sublimity of its Glories.

This Performance, taken together, is nothing, but mere Scepticism.

What is proved therein? Nothing, except this one Thing, viz. that *the Salvation of no Mortal is possible*. Perhaps, my Reader may be surprized at this, but it is a Fact; for, he grants, that *unblemished Holiness* is necessary, in order to an Admission into Heaven: That *there is scarce a Person to be found, whose Sanctification is finished in this Life*: That, whenever Men shall awake out of the Sleep of Death and Inactivity, they will awake with just the same *moral Tempers and Dispositions*, whereof they were the Subjects before their Death: And, after all, he knows not whether they will awake out of this State of Inactivity, before the Resurrection; for he says: *If the intermediate State between Death and the Resurrection, should prove a State of Sleep and Inaction*. It is plain, therefore, he knows not but it may. Then all will arise imperfect, and unfit for Heaven; and such will all the *living Saints* be, when Christ shall come to Judgment, And he asserts, that we *have no Ground from Reason or Experience to imagine, that Men are made holy in an Instant, by a Kind of Metamorphosis*. Now, if we compare these Things together, we must allow, that, if he hath proved any Thing, it is this, that the Salvation of *no Man* is possible; so that but few, surely, will think, he deserves Thanks for his Labour.

SERMON 21

A CHARGE OF PUBLISHING A PALPABLE FALSITY EXHIBITED AGAINST, AND FULLY PROVED UPON, THE AUTHORS OF *THE MONTHLY REVIEW*,

In a Letter to those Gentlemen: Wherein is contained

A DEFENCE OF 'THE VINDICATION OF DIVINE JUSTICE, IN THE INFLICTION OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN',

In ANSWER to

An anonymous Pamphlet, intituled,

'The Scripture-Account of a Future State considered'

GENTLEMAN,

If this Address is *displeasing* to you, I apprehend, that I am not to be blamed; because you have given *just* Occasion unto me of a warmer Resentment, than I shall take the Liberty to shew, by imputing to me a Notion, which is most *ridiculous* and *absurd*; viz. That *there are Degrees of Infinity*.

As I knew that such a *monstrous* Absurdity never entered into my Mind; and not being sensible, that I had said any Thing, which could justly cause you to suspect my entertaining such a Supposition, I took the Freedom to charge you with the Guilt of a *palpable Falsity*: From which Charge you endeavour, in an Appeal to the Public, to clear yourselves. *In order that the Public, unto whom your Appeal is made, may form a true Judgment in this Cause between you and me, I will lay before them the following facts*: The Ground of your Charge: The Form of your Charge: My Call upon you to vindicate yourselves; or, rather, the Charge, which I exhibited against you, of publishing a *Palpable Falsity*: And your Defence, or Vindication of yourselves from the Guilt of such an *atrocious* Crime.

The Ground of your Charge is, what I offer to prove, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, by Way of Answer unto that, which the Author of the *Scripture-Account* advanced against it; speaks thus:

“In whatever Manner Sin or Vice be estimated, it must be finite, because it is the Production or Act of a finite Kind, of finite Principles and Passions.”

My Answer unto which, is this: *Very well: Whoever said, that Sin, or a sinful Act, is infinite? No Mortal, I am persuaded. That which is*

*infinite cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being. We know this, full as well as this Writer does. But, with his Leave, or without it, we must distinguish between the Act of Sin, and the Demerit of that Act. Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, yet there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, because it is committed against all possible and infinite Good. Its Demerit arises from the Object, against whom it is committed; and, therefore, as the Divine Object against whom all Sin is directed is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite: If it as not, then there is not, there cannot be greater Evil and Demerit, in an Act of Sin against God, than attend an Act of Sin against a Creature. Why, do not such Persons, as our Author, speak out plainly what they mean, and tell us roundly, that there is no greater Evil in sinning against God than there is in sinning against a poor Mortal like ourselves? This is what he intends, it certainly is what he designs, though it was too impious a Thing for him, directly and explicitly, to assert. If this is not his Meaning he says nothing which is to his Purpose; for, if he allows, that there is greater Evil in Sin against God, than there is in Sin against a Creature, that Reason, which obliges him to grant, that it is, in any Degree, a greater Evil to offend against God, will compel him to yield, that it is infinitely greater, viz. the infinite Majesty of the Divine Being. **The Form of your Censure, or Charge, was this:***

“This Person would persuade the Public of his Abilities, as a Critic and a Philosopher; Characters to which he may be justly intitled, if wild Conjectures, and dogmatical Affirmation be allowed in the Place of clear Reasoning and solid Judgment; by which alone, the Author of the *Scripture-Account* ought to have been tried, and by which, perhaps, it might be possible to convict that Gentleman of having sacrificed as much to *Imagination*, though not to *Dullness*, as Mr. *Brine*, who supposes, that there *are Degrees of Infinity*, and that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death.”

As I thought myself, in some Measure, injured by this Censure, or Charge of yours, particularly, in this Assertion, that I suppose, that *there are Degrees of Infinity*; which I knew I did not, and also was sure, that I had not expressed a *Tittle*, from which it might be inferred, that I entertained such a ridiculous and absurd Supposition; I apprehended, that I had a Right to wipe off this *false Imputation*; and, therefore, ***I took the Liberty, to exhibit this Charge against you, in some of the public Papers:***

“To the Authors of the *Monthly-Review*. Gentlemen, in your *Review* for *December, 1754*, you mention a small Pamphlet, which I lately published, intitled, *A Vindication of the Justice of God, in the*

Infliction of endless Punishment for Sin; in Answer to the *Scripture-Account of a future State considered*. And you say, that I would persuade the Public of my Abilities, as a Critic and a Philosopher. This I deny; and, unless you know me *better*, than I know myself, you can not prove it. Farther, you represent me as *dogmatical* and *dull*; both which, it is possible, may be true. But what Censure may I not pass upon you, for affirming, that I suppose, that *there are Degrees of Infinity!* This Assertion is a *palpable Falsity*. Such a Supposition I have neither expressed, nor, in the least Degree, suggested. If, therefore, you should be able to defend yourselves from a Charge of *Ill-manners*, which you exhibit against me, I am sure you will not be capable of vindicating your Veracity. I acknowledge that I suppose, (as you say I do) that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death. It is my Opinion, at present, that Annihilation is not Death. If you will be pleased to condescend so far, as to clear up to me my Mistake in this Matter, (if I am mistaken herein) the Favour will be gratefully acknowledged, by, Gentlemen, your humble Servant, *etc.*”

Very soon after this Advertisement of mine, the following Lines were inserted (by your Order, I presume) as News in the Evening Advertiser:

“If Mr. *Brine* will wait till the Publication of the *Review* for the present Month, he may then see, if he pleases, on the *blue Cover* of the said Number, a proper Notice of an Advertisement (wherein he has more than once exposed himself) relating to the JUST Account given, in a late *Review*, of his profound Answer to the *Scripture-Account of a future State considered*, for the *Reviewers* will have no News-Paper Controversy, “with such an Opponent.”

Agreeably to this Piece of News, I find on the blue Cover of the said Number, your Defence, or Vindication of yourselves:

“The Authors of the *Review* have been called upon by ONE Mr. *John Brine*, in an Advertisement inserted in the public Papers, wherein he accuses them of having falsly charged upon him, Notions not entertained by him. In the *Review* for *December*, 1754 Page 477, Mention is made of a Pamphlet, entitled, A Vindication of divine Justice, *etc.* written by Mr. *Brine*, and it is there said, that Mr. *B.* supposes *there are Degrees of Infinity, and that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death*. Mr. *B.* acknowledges, and still avows, this curious Doctrine of Annihilation; but denies his having in the least suggested the above express'd Notion of Infinity. Undoubtedly this Writer best understands his own Meaning, or *Un-meaning*; but whether we have

erred, or not, in the Conclusion we drew from the following Passage, let the Reader determine:

“In Page 28, Mr. B. has these Words: Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, yet there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin, because it is committed against all possible and infinite Good. Its Demerit arises from the Object against whom it is committed; and, therefore, as the Divine Object against whom all Sin is directed, is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite: If it is not, then there is not, there cannot be greater Evil and Demerit in an Act of Sin against God, than attend an Act of Sin against a Creature. — Here we are taught, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit in Sin; and that as the Divine Object against whom all Sin is directed, is infinite, so the Demerit of it must be infinite. Now, will Mr. B. maintain, that all Sins are equal in Demerit, or that one Infinite is greater than another, and that Blasphemy, Idolatry, and Murder, are not more heinous than petty Theft, Drunkenness, Lying, Scandal etc.? The Assertion would shock a rational Christian; and yet this Mr. B. will, we apprehend, be driven to, unless he admits, as a fair Deduction from his Premise, that there are Degrees of Infinity. This absurd Consequence occurred to us, on Perusal of his Pamphlet; and how far we are justifiable, in charging Mr. B. with such a Supposition (for he is not charged with any direct Assertion) let the candid By-stander pronounce: As for our Author, it is probable, as he is a very profound Writer, he will yet have a great deal to urge about, and about this Alternative; he is welcome to say what and how much he pleases; we shall look upon ourselves as unconcerned in the Matter. We have shewn the Ground upon which we first formed our Opinion of his Pamphlet; that Opinion, and its Foundation, are now before the Public; and if, in the Judgment of that Public, we stand acquitted of any Intention to impose upon them, or misrepresent any Author whatever, whose Writings are mentioned in the Review, it will be quite indifferent to us what this Writer may have to say, in the Defence of his own peculiar Notions.”

Having laid before the Reader the true State of this Cause between you and me, *I will now proceed to consider, calmly, that Defence which you make for yourselves, in Answer to the Charge, which I exhibited against you.* In this Defence, you say, *One Mr. John Brine*, by which Phrase, doubtless, you intended to put me in mind of my *Obscurity*; whereof I am not insensible, and did not need this *Memento* of it from you, though, that I confess, you might not know, and, therefore, you did well to give me this Hint, that I might not imagine myself to be much known, and taken Notice of in the World: Yet, I must say, there would have been a greater Propriety in

the Hint, if you had not, more than once, honoured me with the Mention of my Name, on former Occasions; whereby that became as extensively known, as your *Reviews* are spread: I cannot tell whether that is far or not, (nor is it the Matter of my Concern) you best know: However, that is a sufficient Evidence, that I am not *just now dropt out of the Clouds*, and

that your Readers are not Strangers to my Name, nor to that Respect, which you have formerly shewn unto it. But enough of this *trivial Matter*.

Again, *You say*,

“Mr. B. still acknowledges and avows this curious Doctrine of Annihilation.”

The Manner of your expressing yourselves may occasion some less attentive Readers to think, that I suppose Men will be annihilated, and perhaps you are willing they should, although you know, that I utterly deny and disavow the Doctrine of the Annihilation of any of the human Race, and plead for the eternal Existence of both good and bad Men. By this Ambiguity, you cleared yourselves of the Trouble of offering any Thing, to prove the Absurdity of supposing, that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death. This is a considerable Instance of your Prudence.

Truly, it was a *wise* Thing in you to decline attempting, at an Impossibility. And, that this is such, I imagine, you are, by this Time, convinced; and are sensible, that Persons may be annihilated, and yet not suffer Death. When you say, of *Annihilation*, you cannot mean *Annihilation itself*; but must mean, *about*, or *concerning* Annihilation. The Thing *itself* I deny, which you need not be told; but this Doctrine concerning it, I still acknowledge, and avow, viz. *that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death*: For Annihilation is

not Death. Much is not necessary to be said, to evince the Truth thereof. If Death is a Privation of Life, which it hath been thought to be, and a Creature must exist, in suffering that Privation, it is very clear, that Persons may be annihilated, and, at the same Time, not suffer Death. If a Privation of Life takes Place in a Creature, I own, that I think it must be while it exists, because, I cannot comprehend how it should when it is not. Notwithstanding, Gentlemen, the Reproof, which you have given me, for pretending to *philosophize*, I cannot refrain from saying: That it is very *unphilosophical*, to conceive of a Privation, without the Existence of some Subject. And, if a Privation necessarily supposes the Existence of some Subject, is

it not evident, that the Being of a Creature, which suffers Death, must be of somewhat *longer* Duration, than that of its Life? If the Life of *Peter* is of the same Duration, with his Existence, how is it possible, he should suffer Death? He does not, while he is, and when he is not, it is certain, he cannot. In Annihilation, a living Creature, would not suffer a Privation of Life; because, so long as he exists, he lives, and, consequently, his Annihilation can be no other than a Cessation of Life, together with the Cessation of his Being, and in the very same Moment: For, his Existence and Life must be exactly of equal Duration. We cannot for this Reason, suppose him to suffer Death, in his Annihilation, unless we will suppose, there may be a Privation of Life, without the Existence of a Subject, of such Privation. And, therefore, I conclude, the Author of the *Scripture-Account*, etc. was mistaken, in thinking, that Annihilation is Death; particularly, as he stiles it, the *second Death*.

You suggest, 'The Opinion of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, is a peculiar Notion of mine.' For, relating to that Point, you say: "It will be quite indifferent to us what this Writer may have to say, in Defence of his own peculiar Notions." Of which Notions, therefore, you must mean this is one. Pray, Gentlemen, do you speak as you think? Or do you *prevaricate*, in this Case, and take the Liberty to insinuate, that this is my *peculiar* Notion, though you know it not to be so? Perhaps, your Reading may not have been very large, on divine and religious Subjects; yet, I cannot be persuaded, that it hath been so very *scanty*, as to leave you under a Possibility of imagining, that this is a *Peculiarity* of mine. This Doctrine hath been maintained and defended, by all our Protestant Divines, who have opposed the *Popish* Notion of *venial* Sins. It is not necessary to produce many Testimonies hereof; but the Reader, I hope, will excuse my citing a Few. And they shall be such, as are not only full and explicite on this Head; but also from such Writers, as even the *Reviewers themselves*, free as they are in their Censures, upon any who differ from them, may not, it is probable, choose to impute Dullness unto; though, indeed, I pretend not to be certain of their Civility and Respect to the Names following, since they stand directly in their Way.

Bishop *Downname*, speaking of Sins, expresses himself thus:

"None being so small, but that it is of sufficient Weight to press down the Sinner to Hell, being of infinite Guilt, committed against infinite Justice, deserving infinite Punishment, for which the Justice of God cannot be satisfied, but by a Propitiation of infinite Value." Bishop *Davenant* asserts the same:

“God, *says he*, is of infinite Majesty and Goodness: Whoever, therefore dishonours such Majesty, by any Transgression, be it great or small, demerits infinite Punishment.” Bishop *Reynolds* speaks thus:

“This Demerit (*i.e.* of *Sin*) is founded, not only in the Constitution, *etc.* — of God, but in the Nature of his own Holiness and Justice, which in *Sin* is violated, and turned from; and this Guilt is after Sort infinite, because it springeth out of the Aversion from an infinite Good, the Violation of an infinite Holiness and Justice.” Bishop *Hopkins*, his Words are these:

“Every Act of *Sin*, yea the least that we ever committed, is an infinite Debt, and carries in it infinite Guilt, because committed against an infinite Majesty. For, all Offences take their Measures, not only from the Matter of the Act, but from the Person against whom they are committed: As a reviling Word against our Equals, will but bear an Action at Law; but against the *Prince*, it is High- Treason and punishable with Death. So here, the least Offence against the infinite Majesty of God, becomes itself infinite.” Now can you, Gentlemen, persuade yourselves to believe, that these great and excellent Divines, supposed, that *there are Degrees of Infinity*? I will not peremptorily say, that you will be so favourable to their Character, as not to impute such an Absurdity to them; because I know not unto what Extent your Freedom, in Censuring, may be carried, against any, whose Opinions you dislike: Yet, I cannot allow myself to think, that you will be disposed fix such an Odium upon those *venerable* Names; though you have just the same Reason for it, with respect to them, as you had for so doing, with regard to myself.

Doubtless you thought yourselves, at full Liberty, to affirm whatever you pleased, concerning me, provided, the least: Colour of a Foundation might be pretended, for what you should assert, though ever so *ridiculous* and *absurd*; and, therefore, affirmed, that I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity. Being, by me, charged with a *direct* Breach of Truth, in this Assertion: All that you have to offer in your Defence, is only this, you apprehend, that this is a Consequence naturally arising from my Notion of the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in *Sin*. But, good Sirs, are the Consequences which justly follow from Opinions, always seen, by those who hold them? I presume you know they are not. Fair it is, to urge the absurd Consequences of any Doctrine, against it, in order to shew, that it cannot be true: But it is very *unfair* to charge any with supposing the Consequences of a Doctrine, however justly they may follow therefrom, which the Asserters of it do not discern.

Not long since, I took into Consideration, an Assertion of a *learned* and *worthy* Author, from which, a Consequence most absurd, is fairly deducible. I apprehended, that it was lawful for me to observe it, and to caution against assenting to that Assertion; because of the Absurdity, which it cannot be cleared of. But if I had said, that, that Author supposed that Consequence; upon Reflection, I could not have acquitted myself, of having acted an exceedingly *disingenuous* and *unfair* Part. For this Reason, he did not discern the Consequence of his Assertion, and, therefore, could not suppose it, or, which is the same Thing, think that to be a Truth. You it seems, apprehend, that the Doctrine of the infinite Evil and Demerit of Sin, is unavoidably attended with this absurd Consequence, that there are Degrees of Infinity. Well, what if it is, must it necessarily be concluded, that our Protestant Divines saw that Consequence, and supposed it to be a Truth? Will you proceed so far in Censuring, as to affirm that of them? And, if such Writers, as are produced above, did not discern this to be the Consequence of the Doctrine, which they maintained; is it any Wonder, that so *dull* a Person as I am, should not make the Discovery? You cannot think it is. Why then did you charge me with supposing this Consequence? Can you produce any *Expression*, *Phrase*, or so much as a *single* Word, from which it may be inferred, that my Notion of Infinity, is different from your own? You cannot. All that you can pretend unto, is this: That I attribute Infinity unto that which is only finite. The clearest Proof that the Evil and Demerit of Sin, is finite, will be no Proof, that I suppose there are Degrees of Infinity: Or, that I entertain a mistaken Notion of Infinity. Such Proof, indeed, would evince, that I am mistaken in applying Infiniteness unto that, wherein, in Fact, it is not; but nothing more. And that would not, in the least, clear up your Veracity.

I think, I may be allowed to say, that I have given such Evidence, that in my Account, Infinity hath no Limit, and, consequently, that there cannot be Degrees in it, that no Scruple can be made thereof. Have I not said, *that which is infinite cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being. We know this full as well as this Writer does.* If I had conceived, that there are Degrees of Infinity, I must have thought it possible, for that which is infinite to proceed from a finite Being. Yea, if Infinity is really to be found with any Being at all, it must be with some created Being, if there are Degrees in it. Are not these my Words also? *Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings, etc.* Is it not manifest from hence, that my Opinion in, that the highest Degrees rise not up to Infinity? The Thing, is as *clear*, as a Matter can well be rendered by the Force of Language. And when I express the endless Punishment of Sinners, do I not say, *Punishment, which is infinite, in its Duration?* If you really thought, that my Opinion is, that there

Degrees Infinity is limited or, that are Degrees in it, why did you not observe to me, that, according, to my Notion of Infinity, the Punishment of the wicked might be infinite, in its Duration, and yet not be *endless*; because I suppose Infinity to have its Limits. So full and clear Intimation I have given, that I think Infinity is *unbounded*, that it requires a *very large Stretch of Charity*, to conclude, that you did not act directly against the Remonstrance of your own Consciences, in charging me with the Supposition of there being Degrees of Infinity. But I hope you did not do this, under the Influence of this Consideration, that there is not an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. If the Evil of *falsly* accusing, is not infinite, as it is a Sin against God, it is not a *light* Thing, to violate the Divine Precepts, which require us to speak Truth *of*, as well as *unto* our Neighbour. The *candid Bystander*, to whose Sentence you seem willing to submit, it is highly probable, will conclude, that, as you have *falsly* charged me, with entertaining a very absurd Notion, it is but equitable, that you should, in as public a Manner, retract that Charge, as you exhibited it. Why should you not *dare* to be ingenuous, in your Acknowledgment of Guilt, which it is impossible for you to conceal? And, that you cannot cover it over, at any Rate, the Defence you make, is a full Proof of. You have nothing to say in your Vindication, but this, the Consequence, which you infer, occurred to you, on Perusal of my Pamphlet, and, therefore, you asserted, *that*, that Consequence is my Supposition, although you had that in *full View*, which demonstratively proves, that it is no Supposition of *mine*. As you think this to be the Consequence of my Opinion, you might have declared it, and urged it too, as an Objection to the Truth of that Sentiment, without the least Blame from me, had you not affirmed, that I suppose that Consequence, or, which is the same Thing, think that Absurdity to be Truth. For I am heartily willing to allow others the same Liberty, in objecting to my Opinions, as I make free to take, in opposing theirs.

You militate against the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in sin, with a very formidable Dilemma, and enquire thus:

“Now will Mr. *B.* maintain, that all Sins are equal in Demerit, or that one Infinite is greater than another; and that Blasphemy, Idolatry, and Murder, are not more heinous than petty Theft, Drunkenness, Lying, Scandal, *etc.*? The Assertion would shock a rational Christian, and yet this Mr. *B.* will, we apprehend, be driven to, unless he admits, as a fair Deduction from *his Premises*, that *there are Degrees of Infinity.*”

I will not *dissemble*, even in the Defence of what appears to me, a most important Truth. That which is here offered, may seem a

considerable Objection, to the Doctrine under Debate, until it is thoroughly canvassed, and weigh'd in the Balance of right Reason. As to the latter Member of this Dilemma, *viz.* that one Infinite is greater than another, I imagine, that I may soon ease myself of it. For, I never dreamed of an Inequality, in Infinity, or, that one Infinite is greater than another. Nor do I believe you ever thought I did. But, having worked up yourselves unto a great Contempt of me and my Writings, under the Influence of what Considerations, you best know, your Virtue, it seems, was not sufficient to guard you effectually, against a Temptation, to endeavour to render me and them, contemptible in the View of others, even though it was at your own Expence. And, therefore, you took the Liberty to affirm, that which, I think, you must then know to be *false*, for you had before your Eyes, sufficient Evidence thereof, *viz.* That I suppose *there are Degrees of Infinity*. The only Difficulty, wherewith I am pressed, is the former Branch of your Dilemma. And as to that, I do maintain, that all Sins are infinite, (and so equal) in Demerit. But not that all Sins are *equally heinous*: Nor that all Sins will be *equally* punished. The Punishment for all Sins will be infinite, (and so equal) in its Duration. But the Punishment of no Sin will be infinite in Intenseness; for that is absolutely impossible: And, therefore, *more heinous* Sins, will be punished with *greater* Torments, and *less* heinous ones, with *lighter*. I continue to insist upon it, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. When I say, that there is an infinite Evil, in Sin, I do not mean, that the Act of Sin is infinite. Or, that the Privation of moral Rectitude is infinite. Or, that the whole Compound, or Sin considered, in its Concrete, is infinite. If it was, there could be no Disparity in Sins; but every Sin must be equal. I make no Difficulty of granting, that there is a great Difference in sinful Actions, and also in their Aggravations: And shall never shock the *rational* Christian, by suggesting, that all Sins, are equally heinous. I assure you, that you need not entertain the least Jealousy, that I shall ever so do.

Yet, I affirm, that there is in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin, an infinite Evil.

First, Objectively: As God is the Object against whom it is committed, there must be an infinite Evil in it. If the infinitely transcendent Excellencies of the Divine Being, are allowed to come into Consideration, in forming an Estimate, of the Evil, of Sin, I think this cannot well be denied. Indeed, if God is struck out of the Account, whose Law is broken, and whose immense Perfections are dishonoured by Sin, the Infinity of Evil in Sin, cannot be proved. But Things do not seem to be quite come to that Pass yet, as *explicitely* to disallow of taking into Consideration, the Divine

Attributes when we form an Estimate of the Evil, which there is in Sin. Even you, Gentlemen, do not say, that this is not to be allowed; but *artfully* pass it over in Silence, without the least Remark, although you law I argued for the Infinity of Evil in Sin, wholly from this Principle, that it is committed against Infinite Majesty.

And it was better, not to take any Notice of it, than *impiously*, to deny, that Respect is to be had, unto the infinite Perfections of the great Creator, when we form a Judgment of the Evil which there is in Sin, as it hath him for its Object. An *explicite* Denial of it, (to use your own Phrase) would shock a rational Christian. And granting of it, must have involved you in an *inextricable* Difficulty. For, if it is allowed, that the Evil in Sin, takes its Measure from the Nature and Perfections of God, the Infinity of its Evil cannot be denied, without a most manifest Contradiction. And, therefore, your Wisdom is to be applauded, in taking no Notice of an Argument, which really is *unanswerable*; and which, you could not deny, Without fixing *Infamy* upon yourselves; because of the *dreadful Impiety*, that such a Denial evidently carries in it.

Secondly, There is in Sin, *as Sin*, and so in *every Sin*, an infinite Evil *extensively*. My Meaning is this: The Spot and Stain of Sin will continue *for ever*: Or, its Guilt and Pollution will *eternally* remain; unless it is atoned for and pardoned, through the Blood of Christ. If Atonement is not made, and Satisfaction is not given to the violated Law, and offended Justice of God, the Sinner will *always* remain under a Charge of Guilt. Nothing which he can do, not any Thing which he can offer, nor Sufferings which he is able to endure, will ever be sufficient to obtain a Discharge from that Guilt, which he hath contracted. As the sinful Creature is under a Charge of Guilt, this Moment, without Atonement made, and Pardon extended unto him, upon that Foundation, his Guilt will remain upon him, unto a Duration, which is infinite in its Extent. So that, there is in Sin, *as Sin*, and so in *every Sin*, whether *great*; or *small*, an infinite Evil, both *objectively* and *extensively* considered.

Now, such as the Evil in Sin is, it is, surely, reasonable to conclude, that such is its Demerit. The Evil in Sin, *as Sin*, and so in *every Sin*, is infinite, *objectively*, and *extensively*: And, therefore, there is in Sin, *as Sin*, an infinite Demerit. It is no Absurdity to conceive, that the Demerit of Sin is proportionate to the Evil, which there is in Sin. And that, Evil is not infinite, will never be proved, until Proof is given, that the Infinity of the Divine Object, against whom Sin is committed, must not come into Consideration, when we form an Estimate of the Evil, which therein is. And who will dare to engage in such an *impious* Undertaking, I know not. I am willing to hope no Man whatever.

There being in Sin an infinite Evil, and an infinite Demerit, or a Demerit proportionate to its Evil, therefore,

I. The reasonable Creature suffers an *infinite Loss*, in Consequence of Sin, *as Sin*, whether the sinful Action be *more*, or *less* heinous. This Loss is a Want of the Enjoyment of an infinite Good. An infinite Loss would not be the *penal Effect* of Sin, if there was not an infinite Demerit in Sin. It is absurd to suppose, that the *penal Effect* of Sin, in any Sense, is infinite, if the Demerit of it is not infinite. For, in that Case, there would not be a Proportion between Demerit and the Penalty, unto which it relates; but the Disproportion would be such as exceeds *all Degrees*. Wisdom and Justice, most certainly, infinite Wisdom and Justice, will, in all Respects, proportion Punishment, unto the Demerit of Sin: Without great Impiety we cannot think otherwise, And, therefore, if it is to be proved, that it is the Constitution of God, that Sin shall subject the rational Creature, unto the Suffering of an infinite Loss, as a *penal Effect* of Sin, the clearest, the most undeniable Proof, even such as rises up to *evident Demonstration*, will be given, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. And which of these two Things requires Proof? Which of them will be disputed? *viz.* Whether a Want of Communion with God, or of the Enjoyment of him, who is the Origin of all Felicity, be an infinite Loss? Or, whether, it is the Appointment of the most holy, most wise, and most just Creator, that Sin, *as Sin*, and so *every Sin, whether great, or small*, and whether *more*, or less heinous, shall subject reasonable Creatures, unto the Suffering of such an infinite Loss? I think neither can be contested. And until either one, or the other is denied, we may take them both for granted. This is an irrefragable Argument, for the Proof of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin. Such an Argument it is, that all the Skill and Force, of all the *rational* Christians, (as they call themselves) in the World, will never be able to answer. You see, Gentlemen, notwithstanding your Reproof, I remain *dogmatical* still. At which you need not be surprized, because you knew what *Solomon* says: *Though thou shouldest bray a Fool in a Mortar, among Wheat with a Pestil, yet his Foolishness will not depart from him.*

II. This Loss is infinite *extensively*, as the Evil in Sin is, and the Demerit of it too, for that Reason. For, as the Guilt and Pollution of Sin will eternally remain, if not atoned for, and pardoned, so the reasonable Creature will for ever suffer the Loss of the Enjoyment of God, as the *penal Effect* of Sin.

III. The Infinity of the Demerit of Sin, arising from the infinite Evil, which there is in it, as to Punishment of *Sense*, respects the Extent of its Duration; but not its Intenseness and Weight. Punishment for Sin,

in this View, will be infinite in Duration, but finite in Intenseness. It is not to be supposed, that Sin demerits infinite Tortures. For which, three Reasons are assigned, by the most learned, and very accurate *Witsius*.

1. Because such Punishment (*i.e.* which is infinite in Intenseness) is absolutely impossible: For, no Creature is able to endure Tortures, which are infinitely intense.

2. Because it would follow, God could never satisfy his Justice, by the Infliction of condign Punishment on the Ungodly.

3. Because it would follow, that equal Punishment is due to all Sins: Or, that in Fact, all sins are equally punished, which is absurd to suppose, and contrary to *Matthew 11:22.*” From hence, it is evident, that the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin, may be maintained, without the Absurdity of supposing, that *there are Degrees of Infinity*. It is also clear, that this Doctrine may be defended, without supposing, that all Sins are *equally* heinous, and also without supposing, that all Sins are *equally* punished. The Punishment of all Sin is infinite, (and so equal) in its Duration, as I laid in Page 30 of my Pamphlet. But the Intenseness of the Torments inflicted by God, for Sin; for no Sin *whatever*, will be infinite; but they will be *more*, or *less*, intense, as the Sins, for which they are inflicted, are *more*, or *less* heinous, and *more*, or *less* aggravated. And, therefore, there will be Degrees, in Divine Punishment, as Men are *more* or *less* guilty. Which I also observed, in Page 26.

Upon the whole, I think, it is most clear, that your very *formidable* Dilemma, being thoroughly examined, appears to have no Weight or Force at all in it. And it can do no Execution, upon the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, against which it is levelled. It does not in the least affect that Doctrine. Take it in both its Branches, the Distance, between it, and that Doctrine, is as great as the Distance of the *two Poles*, and far greater too. I am not driven by it to suppose, that *there are Degrees of Infinity*. Because I plead not for the Infinity of Evil and Demerit in Sin, from Sin *materially* considered; but: from the Infinity of the Divine Object, against which it is committed. And, in this Consideration of Sin, (*i.e. objectively*) there is no *Difference* in Sins, however great the Difference may be in *Acts of Sin*. Nor am I driven by it, to maintain, that

“Blasphemy, Idolatry, and Murder, are not more heinous than petty Theft, Drunkenness, Lying, Scandal, *etc.*”

Because I have not contended for the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, from its Heinousness; and, therefore, I may, as *I do*, allow, that

Blasphemy, etc. are more heinous, (as you say) than petty Theft, etc. can be supposed to be, perfectly consistent, with my Opinion of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, *as Sin*, and so *in every, sin*, whether *great* or *small*; because I plead, that this Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin, arises from the Infinity of God, the Object against whom it is committed, and not from the Heinousness of the sinful Act. If I had done that, as you say, I must have been driven to assert one of these two Things: *Either, that one Infinite is greater than another*: Or, that *all Sins are greater in Heinousness*. But, as I argue upon quite another Principle, your Dilemma does not come near me. It is as far from me, as the Earth is from Heaven. And I am much secure from being hurt by it, as a Man would be secure from being injured by the Discharge of a Pistol, if he was placed in the highest Heavens.

It is astonishing, that you could prevail with yourselves, to pretend, that you have not misrepresented me to the Public; because you must know, that you were guilty of a Misrepresentation of me, in saying, that I suppose *there are Degrees of Infinity*, except you are exceedingly *dull*, as I am. For, I absolutely denied the Infinity of every Being, and of all Acts, wherein there can be Degrees. Did I not say: *That which is infinite, cannot possibly proceed from a finite Being?* There are my Words also, and you quote them, and thereby prove upon yourselves, that Guilt, which I charge you with: *Though all sinful Actions are finite, and must be so, because they spring from finite Beings*. Is not here a full and absolute Denial of Infinity, wherein there is a Possibility of Degrees? How unaccountable is it, therefore, that you could allow yourselves to assert, that I suppose *there are Degrees of Infinity!* And it is more strange still, that you can now pretend to acquit yourselves of the Guilt, of a Misrepresentation of me unto the Public. This Assertion is as *gross* a Misrepresentation of me, as affirming, that I suppose, that *God is finite in his Being, Powers, and Acts, and his rational Creatures are infinite in their Beings, Powers, and Actions*, would have been. You had as much Ground to assert this of me, as you have to affirm the other. That Assertion implies, that I think Infinity is *limited*; which you could not but know, is *a palpable Falsity*. You were certainly convinced in your Consciences, that I entertain no *mistaken* Notion of Infinity, though you dared to affirm I do. You might, indeed, think, that I attribute Infinity, unto that wherein it is not; and, therefore, mistook in that Respect. But as to Infinity *itself*, you must, undoubtedly, know, that my Apprehension of it is, the very same with your own, and the Apprehensions of all other Men; *viz.* That it is *absolutely without a Limit*. The clearest Proof, that I am mistaken, in thinking, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin, (could such Proof be given) would not in the least prove, that

I suppose, that *there are Degrees of Infinity*. But with respect to the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, I think, I may take Leave to say, that such Evidence and Demonstration of its Truth is given, as will not admit of a *solid* Reply.

As you have *grossly*, misrepresented, me, in *falsly* charging me, with supposing, that *there are Degrees of Infinity*, I have a Right to demand of you a full Retraction of that Charge, I do demand it. And, unless you comply with this Demand, and, in the *very same public* Manner, withdraw your Charge, (in the Body of your Number for the Month of *April*) as you exhibited it, I shall take the Liberty to expose you farther, than I have yet done.

When I consider unto whom I now write, I think, it may not be improper for me to add this: The Punishment of Sins will be *equal*, in its Duration; but *unequal*, in its Intenseness; because I have said, that Punishment for Sin will be *infinite*, and so *equal*: Lest you should tell your Readers, that I suppose an *Equality* and an *Inequality*, in the same Thing, and in the *very same* Respect.

To conclude, if you, on your Part, will be pleased to allow me the Liberty, of defending what appears to me to be true; I assure you, on my Part, you shall always have full Leave to represent me, unto your Readers, as *ostentatious, dogmatical, dull, ill-mannered, very profound, and un-meaning*: But if, in Contradiction to the last Encomium, you shall say my *Un-meaning*, is a *Meaning*, and such a Meaning, as is absurd, which is the Fact here, if it comes within my Notice, you shall not fail of hearing from me. As to every Thing else, I shall be silent, say of me *whatever* you please, that you shall think is agreeable to *Politeness, Civility, and Candour*. For, it is Matter of as *much* Indifference unto me, *what Epithets*, you shall be pleased to honour me with, as it is to you, *what, or how much*, I may have to say, in Defence of the Notions, which I entertain. I think it not amiss to make some Improvement, on the important Subject, of this Letter, in a little *pious Enthusiasm, and Cant*. But, as you are *rational* Christians, such *Stuff* cannot be acceptable to you, and, therefore, I will not presume to offer it to your Consideration: But bid you Adieu, for the present. I am,

Gentlemen,

Your humble Servant, JOHN BRINE

Bridgewater-square, March 31, 1755

Some Improvement of the Doctrine of the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin:

In a few Reflections

I. Our Indignation against Sin, ought to rise up, unto the highest Degree, from the Consideration of the infinite Evil, which there is in Sin, as Sin, and so in every Sin. One of its numerous Ways, whereby, in a Time of Temptation, it surprizes us, into Acts of Folly, is by *hiding* its Vile Nature. This is a Deception extremely dangerous, and without a speedy Interposition of Divine Grace, and Power, in our Favour, to awaken us, unto due Consideration, of the *dreadful* Evil of sinning against God; such woful Effects, may be expected to ensue, as will overwhelm us, in Sorrow, Shame, and Confusion, upon a Reflection. It is to be feared, that not a

Few, can bear Testimony, unto the Truth of this, from their own, *sad* Experience. Men are apt to compare sinful Actions, with one another; and because there is a Difference in them, *materially* considered, some being far more heinous, than others; they think, that without much Danger to themselves, at least, a little Gratification, may be allowed unto the Flesh, in some particular instance, or, to such a Degree, though not in a higher Measure. Hence we are prevailed with, (*i.e.* through Inattention, unto the Evil of Sin, *as Sin*) to think within ourselves of this or that Sin, is it not a little one? There is no great Harm therein, or it is not an *atrocious* Crime; and so Sin obtains a Conquest over our Minds, and we are in the utmost Danger, of contracting such Guilt, as will be just Cause of the *deepest* Resentment against ourselves, so long as Life shall last. The only Way of being secured from Sin's Prevalence, is to have our Souls impressed with a due Sense of its *exceeding Sinfulness*: Without this, Men will *make a Trade* of committing *lesser* Evils, which will most assuredly prove for ever ruinous unto them, if infinite Mercy prevent it not, by a timely Conviction of their Guilt and Misery in Consequence of it. *Slight* Thoughts of the Evil of Sin, wilt certainly be productive of the most pernicious Fruits, in some Way, or other. And, therefore, it is our Wisdom, to take into our most serious and fixed Consideration, what an abominable Thing it is, to sin against infinite Goodness, Holiness, and Justice, even in the *lowest* Instance: For, then, only, we are safe from Sin's Encroachments. And, without this, we shall never exercise that Repentance for Sin, which God *accepts*. Because we shall extenuate our Guilt, and palliate our Offences, if we have not a Sense of Sin's Evil, as it is committed against infinite Goodness, and Majesty. As we value our precious Souls, therefore, let none persuade us to think, that there is not an infinite Evil in Sin, unless they produce such Evidence for it, as will not admit of the least Scruple, concerning its Truth. Such Evidence can be no other than this; *viz.* that God's infinite Perfections are not to be taken into View, when

we form our Judgment of Sin's evil Nature. The Supposition of which, surely; must be shocking, unto every *pious* Mind.

II. *The Infinity of the Demerit of Sin, objectively considered, proves, that we are all, and every one, in a miserable Condition. Men universally are chargeable with Sin. Every Mouth is stopped, and all the World is become guilty before God.* And, none can possibly, by any Means, make a Compensation for their Offences, to the Law and Justice of God. Dost thou, O Sinner! because thou art not so guilty; as some others are, think that it may be in thy Power, to procure thy Pardon, and secure thy Person from suffering Divine Punishment? Thou art dreadfully deceived herein. For, the *least* of thy Transgressions, even in Thought, exposes thee unto the Suffering of an infinite Loss, for evermore. Sin *as Sin*, and so *every Sin*, whether *great, or small*, forfeits a Title, unto the Enjoyment of God, the Origin of Blessedness. And, therefore, no Creature, who is guilty, though but in the *lowest* Degree, hath a Claim upon God, the Fountain of all Goodness, for Communion with him, a Sense of his Favour, and the Enjoyment of him. The *least* Act of Sin, subjects the rational Creature, unto the Suffering of this infinite Loss; because of the infinity of Evil, in Sins, as committed against God. And, as the Guilt of the Sinner, will for ever remain upon him, if not atoned for, and pardoned, on the Foundation of Atonement made. He must eternally suffer that infinite Loss. Never, never, can he be admitted into the Presence of God: *Where is Fulness of Joy*. But must always be separated from him. And though, through the *dreadful* Enmity, which there is in the Heart of a Sinner, against God, he will not desire the Happiness of Communion with him, in his infinitely glorious Perfections; his infinite Indignation, discovered, in his Expulsion from his gracious Presence, will pierce him *through, and through*, and fill his Soul with *agonizing* Tortures. *This! O dreadful! This!* is what we all and every one deserve, let our Guilt be ever so *small*, or how *little soever*, it may be aggravated, in its Circumstances. How stupid, therefore, are our Hearts, which are unaffected with our *deplorable* Condition! Very justly we are compared unto *a Man asleep, upon the Top of a Mast*: Who is every Moment, in Danger of being swallowed up, in the Waves of the Sea; but is insensible of that Danger. And thus it is with sinful Men.

III. *This Doctrine of the Infinity of the Evil and Demerit, in Sin; must surely, convince us, that our Redemption from Sin, and its penal Effects, could not be effected, by a mere Creature.* Infinite Merit can never attend the Obedience, and Sufferings of one, who is not of infinite Dignity, in his Person. Now, if it be a Truth, that there is an infinite Demerit, in Sin; the Sufferings of Christ, great as they were, could not atone for our Guilt, if; he was no other than a

voluntary Production, or a *created* Being; because infinite Merit, had not attended them. And, therefore, those, who *sacrilegiously* rob him of the Glory of his *proper* Divinity; are driven by it, to deny, that there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin. For, if that is allowed, it necessarily follows, that Christ by his Obedience and Sufferings, could not have *obtained eternal Redemption*, for one Individual of the human Race. If Men expect Salvation from Sin, and its penal Effects, by the Acts and Sufferings of a *mere* Creature, it behoves them, to prove the Possibility of it, if they are able; for, otherwise, they must acknowledge, that such high Expectations, which are, indeed, the greatest a Creature can possibly entertain, are without a solid Foundation, and must certainly be disappointed. From hence appears, the evident Necessity, such Men are under, to maintain, that there is not, an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin; who insist upon it, that Christ is not a *Divine* Person, or *truly* God; but a Creature, or, a *voluntary* Production only.

IV. *This important Doctrine lets us see, that we are infinitely indebted, unto the Grace, Kindness, and Mercy of God.* If there is an infinite Evil and Demerit, in Sin, *as Sin, and so in every Sin:* And our sinful Actions are more, than we can possibly number, and in all of which, there is an infinite Evil and Demerit: O what a *Profusion* of Goodness and Grace, is there in our Pardon! Infinite Mercy alone, can be a proper Ground of a Hope of Remission, since the Demerit of every one of our numerous Offences, is infinite, agreeably unto the infinite Evil, which there is in all, and every one of them.

Surely, upon a due Consideration of the Multitude of our Transgressions, in every one of which there is an infinite Evil and Demerit; we must be filled with an Admiration of the *boundless* Exuberancy of the Mercy of God, which is so conspicuous, in the Forgiveness of them. If, we have a suitable Apprehension thereof, in any Degree, we shall not fail of expressing our holy Adoration, of that *immense* Goodness and Mercy, in the devotional Language of the Church: *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the Remnant of his Heritage? He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy.* (Micah 7:18.)

V. *No less adorable, is Divine Wisdom, which contrived the Way of our Remission, than Divine Grace, which resolved upon our Pardon.* Infinite Wisdom only could provide for Sin's Atonement, which is of infinite Demerit, as its Evil is infinite. In that Provision, the *unbounded* Understanding of God, discovers itself, more than in all his other Works; for which Reason, the Scheme of Redemption by Christ, is *emphatically* stilled: *The Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom.* It is what could never have entered into

any created Mind, angelic, or human. But, if the Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, is not true, the evangelical Scheme of Redemption, is not so *mysterious*, as it is

represented to be. Of this, those who deny that Doctrine are fully sensible, and, therefore, do not allow it to be, in the *Depth* of its Wisdom, any more than, in the *Riches* of its Grace, what it really is. To close, if we give up this Doctrine of the Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, I am not able to discern, that we can possibly have any Objection, against joining with the *Socinians*, in a Denial of Christ's Atonement; which is what we can never do, I am lure, if we have any just Sense of God's Rectitude and Holiness.

POSTSCRIPT

To the Authors of the *Monthly-Review*,

GENTLEMEN,

I AM persuaded, that the Public, to whom you appeal, will conclude, that you were guilty, of misrepresenting me, in laying, that I suppose *there are Degrees of Infinity*; when they are informed, that my Words, concerning Infinity are there: *Indeed, we have learned to speak very familiarly of Infinity; but we have not, nor can have an adequate Idea of it. Infiniteness is only knowable unto an Understanding which is infinite. A finite Mind, when it hath stretched its Conceptions as far as it possibly can, it is still in its Ideas infinitely short of comprehending that which is infinite.* Every Person upon reading these Words, must think, either, that your Capacity is *extremely dull*: Or, that you were guilty of a *wilful* Misrepresentation of me, in laying, that I suppose *there are Degrees of Infinity*. My Opinion is, that you had much rather, be charged with *wilfully* publishing a *gross* Falshood, than be thought incapable of discerning, when Infinity, is in a proper Manner spoken of; and, therefore, it is not your Understanding, that I call in Question, but it is a Want of Virtue, *in this Particular*, that I charge you with. For, I would willingly act that Part, in this Affair, which may be least offensive to you. As you have dared, against the Remonstrance of your Consciences, to assert this *gross* Falshood, of me, it may be, that you will not have Ingenuity enough to confers your Guilt, and retract your Charge: But if you do not, in the very same public Manner, as you exhibited that Charge, withdraw it; be assured, that the Consequence of denying this Justice, will be farther exposing yourselves. J.B.

SERMON 22

JOB'S EPITAPH EXPLAINED

A SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF MRS.
ELIZABETH TURNER, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE,
OCTOBER 14, 1755

JOB 19:25, 26, 27

“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. And though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another; though my Reins be consumed within me.”

GOD, who is the sovereign Disposer of all Things, hath been pleased to remove by Death, a very worthy Person, which mournful Dispensation, I am desired to improve, by explaining these Words, amongst you, at this Time.

Every attentive Reader will readily observe, that these are the Words of *Job*. Concerning whom a most honourable Testimony is given by God himself, *viz.* That he had not his Equal in Holiness, on the Earth. Satan dared to accuse him with a Want of Integrity; and desired Leave to afflict him. The Lord complied with his Desire, to try the Faith and exercise the Patience of this most excellent Person. His Children, who were the Delight of his Eyes, and his growing Hopes, were taken from him, in a very affecting and awful Manner. He was stripped of all his Substance, which was great. At once deprived of all his Descendants, and reduced to Penury, from affluent Circumstances. In these melancholy Changes he behaved himself, in a becoming Manner; with great Patience and Resignation, saying, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* Satan, notwithstanding, renews his Charge against him, and impudently tells God, that if he should afflict his Person, he would *curse him to his Face*. God gives Permission to Satan to do this. He goes forth, and *smites Job with sore Boils, from the Sole of his Foot unto his Crown*. So that, as he expresses it, he *escaped with the Skin of his Teeth*. That is to say, his *Gums only* were free from those noisome and painful Ulcers, wherewithal he was smitten. In this *sad* Condition, for some Time, he conducted himself, in a patient and submissive Manner. But at length, thro' Weakness, he became impatient, and uttered rash and unbecoming Speeches, *curst the Day of his Birth*, Those who are most eminent in Holiness, without continual Supplies of Grace, will not be able to bear patiently, long and heavy Afflictions. His Friends,

who came to visit and comfort him, were filled with Astonishment at his deplorable Case, and entertained a mistaken Opinion concerning him; they thought he was a Hypocrite, which must add much Weight to his Affliction.

In his Debates with them, he asserted and bravely defended his Integrity, against their false Charge of Hypocrisy.

After representing, in this Chapter, the Greatness of his Affliction, and the Neglect and Unkindness of his Relations, Friends, Acquaintance, and even of his Servants, under it, in very strong and striking Language, he fixes his Thoughts upon his Dissolution. He wishes not for a *pompous* Funeral; but for a Monument to be erected to his Memory, and desires that the Words of the Text should be the Inscription on it, that so the Remembrance of his Faith might be perpetuated to all succeeding Generations. *O that my Words were now written. O that they were printed in a Book: That they were graven with an Iron Pen, and Lead, in the Rock for ever.* This important and earnest Wish of his is granted, and the Memory of his Faith will not be lost, while the Earth endures. ***In this Inscription, or Epitaph, the following Things are observable:***

I. He asserts his Interest in a living Redeemer. *I know that my Redeemer liveth.*

II. That he should stand at the latter Day upon the Earth.

III. He expresses the Consumption of his mortal Frame.

IV. That in his Flesh he should see God.

V. Describes the Advantage and Nature of that happy Vision.

VI. Suggests, that the entire Consumption of his Body in the Grave was no Objection to it, nor should prevent it.

I. *The holy Man asserts his Interest in a living Redeemer.*

1. Some understand this of God the Father, who delivers his Church and People out of Affliction and Trouble. But it best agrees to Christ, who stood at the latter Day upon the Earth, and obtained eternal Redemption for us by his Sufferings and Death. And, in the most proper Sense, he is our (לנו) Redeemer; for he is that unto us, and hath done that for us, which the Name imports.

(1.) He is our *near Kinsman*, or is nearly allied unto us; as the Person was to be, who acted the Part of a Redeemer under the Levitical Dispensation. *A Brother, an Uncle, or an Uncle's Son*, had the Right of Redemption. Christ was of the same Nature with us: *Forasmuch then as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood,*

Christ also himself likewise took Part of the same. He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. They are of one Nature: And they are not only of the same Nature, but are also of one sovereign and gracious Decree. For, I apprehend, that it is not merely Identity, or Sameness of Nature, that is designed; but near Alliance and Union is intended. Christ the Head, and his People the Members, were included in the same sovereign Purpose. He was fore-ordained, as the First-born, and they were predestinated to be his Junior Brethren. This Divine Decree gave Subsistence unto that near Union and Relation, which there is between him and them. And, therefore, he is not ashamed to call them Brethren. He being our near Kinsman, the Right of Redemption was his.

(2.) He is our *Revenger*. The Person, under the Law, who endeavoured to avenge the Death of a Man slain, on him that flew him, is called the Revenger, as we translate it, or, as some render it, the Redeemer of Blood. (Numbers 35:19, 21.) Our Blessed Lord is our Redeemer in this Strife. For, according unto the first Promise, he hath broke the Head of the grand Adversary of our Souls, Satan, by whom we were involved in Ruin. *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, between thy Seed and her Seed; it shall break thine Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel* Our glorious Revenger hath destroyed him, that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil. And hath *spoiled Principalities and Powers, and made a Shew of them openly*. Hath triumphed over all the *infernal* Spirits, as a complete Victor. He *led Captivity Captive*, and, in Consequence of that, the *Prey is taken from the Mighty, and the lawful Captives are delivered*.

(3.) Christ hath redeemed our Persons from justly-deserved Destruction. Our Apostasy from God, the Depravity of our Nature, and the Guilt which we have contracted, expose us to the Curse of the Law, and the vindictive Displeasure of God. Our Saviour, in the Fulness of Time, was made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law: And, by being made a Curse for us, he redeemed us from the Law's Curse. *In him we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins*. In Vertue of his Death, which was the Price of our Redemption, we are delivered from that Obnoxiousness, which we were under, to suffer Divine Wrath and Vengeance.

(4.) He obtained for us a Right to the heavenly Inheritance. We have forfeited a Title to Life, and cannot claim the Enjoyment of future Blessedness, as our Due, because of our Guilt. That is an Obstacle and Bar to our Happiness. The Blessed Redeemer, by his Sacrifice, removed the Impediments to our Felicity; and by his Subjection to the Law, and Obedience unto all its Precepts, as our Surety, he hath acquired for us a *legal* Title unto eternal Life. The immortal Crown

of Glory, is a *Crown of Righteousness*: And God, in the Character of a *righteous Judge*, will place it on the Heads of the Saints. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that Day; and not to me only, but unto all them also Who love his Appearing.* Grace reigns gloriously unto eternal Life; but its Reign is *through Righteousness, by Jesus Christ our Lord.* For, *being justified freely, we are made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life.* And, therefore, there is an inseparable Connection between Justification and Glorification. *Whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

2. He lives, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* Job doth not say, He shall live, or he hath lived; but in the present Tense, *Liveth.*

(1.) We may observe he existed then. His human Nature at that Time had not Subsistence. He did not exist as Man: But he always existed in his Divine Nature. He was *before the Mountains were settled, etc.* Then was he by the Father, *as one brought up with him.* Christ: the *Word was in the Beginning, i.e.* in the Commencement of Time; and, therefore, his Existence must be prior to Time, and was eternal, or without Beginning. For, if he was when measurable Duration began, his Existence must have been of earlier Date than that Duration, and, consequently, eternal. Because it is absurd to suppose, that there is a limited Date, which is not included in measurable Duration. This glorious Person is *the same Yesterday, and To-day, and for ever.*

(2.) He lives. *In him is Life, and the Life was the Light of Men. Life he hath in himself.* And he is *the Life*, as he is *the Way and the Truth.* *With him is the Fountain of Life.* And natural, spiritual, and eternal Life, is derived from him. We live, as Men, by Vertue of his Almighty Will. He communicates to us, as Christians, a Principle of heavenly Life, and by his gracious Influences, he preserves, and maintains it. And our blissful Life, in the future State, will spring from him.

(3.) Christ lives, and ever will live, as Man: As our Surety he submitted unto Death, in order to redeem and save us. But, being raised from the Dead, he dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion Over him. For in that he died, he died unto Sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Hence he says of himself, *I am he that liveth, and was dead: And behold, I am alive for evermore. And because he lives, we shall live also.*

3. Job knew him to be his living Redeemer. *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* He had an Assurance of an Interest in him. As the Church had, who said, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* Likewise the Apostle, whose Language is this: *He loved me, and gave himself for me.* Some seem to think, that this Assurance is essential to every

Act of Faith: Or, that Faith is never acted without it. I confess, I can't but be of Opinion, that this is a very great Mistake, and that there may be many precious Acts of Faith put forth, wherein this Persuasion of an Interest in him is not enjoyed. This I will say, that every Person who is the happy subject of the Grace of Faith, hath proper Foundation of such a firm Persuasion of a personal Interest in a dear Redeemer, But I cannot be prevailed with to think, that Faith is at no Time acted on Christ, as a Redeemer, with but this Assurance, of an Interest in him, and in There are two Ways whereby this Assurance may be ingenerated in holy Souls.

(1.) By the Witness of the Spirit. *He beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.* This, I apprehend, is an immediate and positive Act of his upon our Minds, powerfully applying some particular Promise, or Promises to us, which are suitable to our Case and present Frame; by which powerful Application, Unbelief is subdued, and we are encouraged to embrace the Promise, and to conclude upon our own Interest, in those precious Benefits, which are therein exhibited to our Faith.

(2.) By a Discernment of that in us, which is the Effect of Divine Favour, and of an Interest in, this living Redeemer. Spiritual Knowledge, holy Desires, and heavenly Affections, are *sure* Evidences of an Interest in the Love of God, and in Christ. He, who is the Subject of Sanctification, may safely conclude, that he is the Object of a Divine Choice to Salvation; *God hath from the Beginning chosen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit.* Those whose Minds are, in any Measure, *spiritualized*, are Members of Christ, as a Head of Life and Influence, and interested in him, as a living Redeemer, though they may often be afraid, they are not; because of the Presence and Power of that contrary Principle of Sin, which they feel very active in them. If we are *called with an holy Calling*, or if Christ is made unto us *Sanctification*, he is also made unto us *Redemption*. Job knew, that *the Root of the Matter was in him*, and, therefore, was sensible of his Interest in a Redeemer.

Hence we may observe, that Faith is not Conjecture, or merely Opinion, it is *Knowledge*. *He hath given us an Understanding, that we might know him that is true.* And this is most excellent Knowledge, nothing is comparable to it. All Things are to be accounted Loss for the *Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.*

II. *The holy Man knew, that his Redeemer would stand at the latter Day upon the Earth.*

This Phrase, the *latter Day*, may be understood of the near closing of the Legal Dispensation, or *Jewish Oeconomy*, and the Introduction of the Evangelical State. The original Word (קָוָה) *stand*, hath various Significations. To rise: To be stable and firm: To rise again: To stand against. I shall consider it in each of these Senses.

1. The Sense may be, he shall rise out of (the Particle עַל often expresses *out of*) the Dust, or Earth. So the learned *Noldius* renders this Phrase. The Incarnation of Christ, or his Assumption of our Nature, is the Matter expressed; if taken in this View. We are called Dust, because that is the Original of our mortal Frame: *Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return. He knoweth our Frame, and remembereth that we are Dust.* Our Redeemer is the Seed of the Woman, for he was *made of a Woman*. Conceived and Born. Thus He, who is the Truth, sprung out of the Earth, according to that Prediction and Promise: *Truth shall spring out of the Earth.* This supernatural Production of the human Nature of our Lord, fitted it for its Union with his Divine Person, and unto that blessed Work, which was therein to be accomplished. He being, in a proper Sense, the Seed of the Woman, his Nature is the same with ours; but absolutely free from that Defilement, which attends us. And, therefore, he is *an High Priest, which becomes us. Holy, harmless, and undefiled.*

2. He stood, and stood firm upon the Earth. Christ *dwelt*, or tabernacled among Men. And was firm, steady, and stable, in the midst of all the Temptations, Oppositions, and cruel Persecutions, which he met with. Hell and Earth, Men and Devils combined against him, and he suffered grievously from both. Under all his Sufferings, he behaved with *amazing Firmness of Mind*. He did *not fail, nor was discouraged. He set his Face like a Flint, and was not at all ashamed.* When he was apprehended, with what Majesty did he conduct himself, laying to the Multitude, who came to take him, *Whom seek ye?* They answer, *Jesus of Nazareth.* He replies, *I am he. If ye seek me, let these go their way.* And, Voluntarily surrenders himself. When he was before the High Priest, what Fortitude and Intrepidity did he discover, though insulted and blasphemed by the insolent and rude Croud that were about him. *He gave his Back to the Smiters, his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair, and hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting.* And when he was in the Presence of *Pilate*, he was no less courageous. Not the least Sign of Fear discovered itself in his Countenance, Language, or Conduct. When he was mocked, derided, and most cruelly treated by the *merciless Soldiers*, he behaved with the same Greatness of Mind. The Ignominy and all the Tortures of the Cross he bore in an

undaunted Manner. Presented himself to Divine Justice a *willing* Victim for our Sins, and endured the terrible Shock of the Wrath of God, without sinking, or fainting under it. At once he shewed himself to be *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the Lamb of God*. The *Courage* of the Lion, and the *Meekness* of the Lamb were united in him, under his most dolorous and unparalleled Sufferings. *He was led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearer is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth. Magnanimity without Haughtiness, Meekness without Meanness and Demission of Spirit,* our Saviour discovered throughout the *astonishing* Tragedy of his Death. *Thus the God shone through the Man:* Or, in other Words, the Divine Powers of the blessed Jesus displayed themselves in supporting his human Nature under all suffered.

3. Our Lord rose again. In this Sense is the Word to be understood sometimes. *Thy dead Men shall live, my dead Body shall they arise,* or rise again (יִקְוּמוּ): *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust, for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and the Earth shall cast out the Dead.* (Isaiah 26:19.) The blessed Jesus *made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death.* But it was *impossible that he should be held of the Bands of Death.* The Divine Father, in the Character of a Judge, inflicted Punishment on him, and in that Character he dispatched from Heaven, a Messenger of Justice, to roll away the Stone from the Door of the Sepulchre, wherein the Lord lay, honourably to set free his imprisoned Body. Thus he was *raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father.* Which is a full Evidence of his Approbation, of what Christ had done and suffered for us.

4. He will stand against the Earth, when he shall appear, the second Time, without Sin unto Salvation. This is his unalterable Resolution. *I will ransom them from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death. O Death, I will be thy Plagues; O Grave, I will be thy, Destruction, Repentance shall be hid from mine Eyes.* Then, *Death will be swallowed up in Victory.* Which holy *Job* had in View, as his following Words evince. Before I enter upon the Explanation of them, it will be proper to answer some Objections, which are raised against their literal Sense.

Which is *Job's* Belief of the Resurrection of his Body, notwithstanding its Consumption in the Grave. *Socinus* denies this Sense, and some who follow him herein object thus:

(1.) *Jewish* Writers, who labour to prove the Resurrection, never produce these Words to confirm it, and, therefore, it seems to them not likely to be the true Sense. I answer, the Sun certainly shines at Noon, though blind Men see it not. This Objection deserves no other

Answer. We know that *Jewish Guides*, in the Time of our Lord's being on the Earth, were *blind*, Leaders of the *Blind*. And I know no Reason we have to think they see, since their Rejection, and *Wrath is come upon that People to the uttermost*.

(2.) How could *Job* know the sublime Mysteries of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the happy Resurrection of the Just? I answer, 1. By a Revelation before given, that *the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head, or destroy the Works of the Devil*. If this Answer satisfies not, I add, 2. He might know these Mysteries by Inspiration. Let me, in my Turn, ask these Objectors, how *Job* could know, that he should be freed from his present Affliction? *His Flesh become fresh as a Child's? The Vigor of his emaciated Body be renewed? His Life prolonged? And his Substance vastly increased?* How could he then know either of these Things? If it is answered by Inspiration, or immediate Revelation. Then I say, might he not become acquainted with the sublime Mysteries mentioned, in the same Manner? Was not he inspired? Surely he was. He was *one of those holy Men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. Why, therefore, should it be thought he knew nothing of Evangelical Mysteries, but what was revealed before his own Time?

(3.) It is said, that a metaphorical Interpretation of the following Phrases agrees with the Context, and Sequel. I answer, it is true, that *Job* did, after this, see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living, in that wonderful Change, which took place in his Circumstances. But, there is not the least Evidence given by him, either before or after the Text, that he had then the Knowledge of that Change, or the least Hope and Expectation of it. Which is the Point to be proved. It is not the Fact, which can support the Objection; but *Job's* Knowledge of that future Fact, only can countenance it. And such Knowledge he had not. Having removed these Objections, I proceed to observe,

III. *Holy Job expresses the Consumption of his mortal Frame.*

After, or beside, *my Skin*; that is to say, this beautiful Covering, which incloses all the Parts and Members of my Body, is to be consumed, and not only so; but after, or beside that, they *destroy this*. The Verb is impersonal, and Destroyers are understood. Our Translation well supplies *Worms*. Concerning which *Job* had before spoke thus: *I will say unto Corruption, Thou art my Father; and to the Worm, Thou art my Mother, and my Sister*. They destroy This. It is an elegant Conciseness in Speech, much like that which the Apostle uses: "*This Corruptible, and This Mortal*; that is, this corruptible, and this mortal Body. It is a demonstrative Mode of speaking. He named, not his Body, scarcely knowing what to call it,

by reason it was so grievously emaciated: But pointing with his Finger to it, and uttering this Phrase, he very emphatically expresses the Consumption of it, when it should be covered, and fed upon by Worms. The original Word signifies to destroy, as Beasts were destroyed in Sacrifice, and as Trees are destroyed by being cut down. And, therefore, holy *Job* speaks not of the present Wasting of his Body, by those noisome Ulcers, wherewith it was then all over covered. But he intends the entire Consumption of his mortal Frame, when committed to the Ground, or lodged in the silent Grave. And it is to me astonishing, that any should raise a Scruple concerning a Point, which is so clearly expressed. Obscurity in the Phase is pretended as the Reason, but that is not the Cause. Indeed, the Phrase is concise, but it is not obscure. The true Reason is, it is a strong Proof, that *Job* must, be acquainted with the happy Resurrection of the Just, which the *Socinians*, and Persons *socinianized*, say was then unknown. This is the true Cause or their disallowing the literal Sense, and contending for a metaphorical one. Not the Obscurity of the Text.

As *Noldius* well argues: *It is a destructive Excision, that is designed, like that of felling Trees, and slaying Beasts. The Socinians, therefore, act vainly, and those who with them, pretend, that this Place does not treat of the Resurrection from the Dead, but only of a temporal Restoration. For, that, after a total Consumption by no means could be expected. Job speaks of Things that he knew: I know, says he. But such was not a temporal Restoration, whereas that is a Benefit of this Life, (which depended on the Condition and Free-will of God) Job could not know, or promise it to himself. Then he had no temporal Hope. Which is what he publishes often. Besides, the Words foregoing, (which intimate this Confession and Triumph of Faith) Signify something greater and more important, than a Hope of a Restoration to the Benefits of this Life.* Reason there is none to think, that *Job*, in these Phrases, designs the Wasting of his Flesh by Affliction, while he was living; but there are solid Reasons, for, interpreting them, of an entire Consumption of his mortal Frame upon his Decease. The Thoughts of which were not terrifying to him, because he had in View a happy Resurrection, as the following Phrase evinces.

IV. *He declares his Faith, that in his Flesh he should see God.*

1. Some understand it, of seeing Christ as cloathed with Flesh, or in human Nature. *The Word was made Flesh.* And, the Divine Glories, of the blessed Jesus will eternally be viewed by the Saints, shining in and through his human Nature, which Prospect will fill them with the highest Delight. And, his Will it is, that *those whom the Father hath given him may be with him where he is, that they may behold*

his Glory. But this is not what *Job* intends by this Phrase, *in my Flesh*. For,

2. He designs Flesh which was *properly his own*, and a constituent Part of himself. His Sense is evidently this: Though, or notwithstanding, the entire Consumption of my mortal Frame by destroying Worms, yet in my Flesh, raised to a *new, immortal, and happy Life*, in a Reunion with my Soul, I shall enjoy a blissful sight of God. *This Corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal shall put on Immortality*. He speaks of that, in this Phrase, which he speaks of in the preceding Phrases; in them, he expresses the destructive Excision of his Body; in this, he declares his Belief of its Restoration to a blessed Life after: Or, notwithstanding that Excision,

3. Job knew that he should *see God*.

(1.) Enjoy a Prospect of the Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, in that gracious and kind Part each acted in his Favour.

[1.] The Father, who, from everlasting, infinitely loved his People, chose them to Salvation, and fixed upon the wise and gracious Method of their Recovery, *Blessed them with all spiritual Blessings in Christ*. Gave his Son to them, and for them, at the Time appointed. On the Foundation of his Fulfilment of the Law for them, he justifies their Persons. Thro' his Death and Sacrifice he pardons their Sins, and delivers them from justly deserved Punishment. He sends his Spirit into their Hearts to regenerate, sanctify, comfort, and preserve them safely to that eternal Glory, unto which he calls them. And all this he doth for them, as the Effect of the Riches of his Kindness, thro' Jesus Christ, without the least Motive and Inducement in them. The View whereof, wilt for ever possess their Souls with Joy inconceivable, and holy Adoration.

[2.] Christ will also be beheld by the Saints; in the Freeness and Intenseness of his Love. Who became a Subject of the Law for their sakes. Fully obeyed it, as their Surety, and thereby *brought in everlasting Righteousness* for them. Laid down his Life, rumored Death in their stead, that he might redeem them to God, and deliver them from Curse, Wrath and Vengeance, in such a Way as comports with Divine Justice, as well as magnifies the Riches of Divine Grace. How great must that Pleasure be, which will arise from a View of the Love, Compassion, and Kindness of a dear Redeemer, and of all the *numerous* Ways wherein he hath made a Discovery thereof?

[3.] The blessed Spirit, in the important Part which he acts in the stupendous Design of our Salvation. He *comes* into the Hearts of

God's People. Quickens them when dead in Sin. Makes them *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. Guides them, comforts, revives, seals and establishes them. Dwells in them, and will *abide with them for ever*, though they often *grieve* him by their provoking Carriage. He maintains the good Work begun in them, and will perfect it. Oh, what Delight will spring from a Prospect of the gracious Actings of Father, Son, and Spirit, in our Favour! No Tongue can express it.

(2.) The Divine Perfections will also be clearly seen by the Saints, as they are displayed, in their Recovery from Ruin, and Advancement to Happiness and Glory. Sovereignty is the Basis whereon it rests, and the absolute Cause into which it must be resolved. For, if any Thing is the mere Effect of the Free-will of God, the Salvation of Sinners most certainly is. The Reason why God saves guilty Creatures is not because it is *fit* they should be saved. If it was so, their Salvation would not be the Effect of his good Pleasure, nor would it be *free* with him to save, or not save them. Because, God is not at Liberty to act, or not act, what it is fit for him to act. True it is, he saves us in a Way that is *fit, condecant, and becoming himself*; nor could he do otherwise: But it is not because it is fit that we should be saved, that God resolved upon our Salvation. This Design is the Result of his sovereign Will, no Perfection of his Nature requiring it. And, therefore, *hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*, or leaves in a State of Impenitence. Again, infinite Wisdom abundantly shines in this Affair; The Means fixed upon to bring about our Salvation are sufficient and effectual, so that the *grand* Design cannot fail of being accomplished. And every noble End respecting God himself, and the Subjects of this Redemption, was had in View, and fully secured. The highest Glory redounds to all the Perfections of the Deity in this Business. Full Provision is made for advancing the Honour of every Divine Attribute. As the Riches of Grace, Kindness and Mercy are gloriously displayed herein; so the Holiness and inflexible Justice of God is vindicated, and illustriously shines through the Whole of this amazing Design. Sinners are freely pardoned, and eternally saved, *to the Praise of the Glory of Divine Grace*. And, infinite Indignation against Sin is manifested, in the Infliction of Punishment on our Redeemer, with Relation unto our Guilt, which was made his by imputation, on the Part of God the Father, and by a voluntary Susception of it on his Part. Mercy and Grace, Holiness and Justice, harmonize, and equally triumph, in our Remission. Eternal Life is a *free Gift of God* to us; but we are furnished with a *legal Right* unto it, through the Obedience of Christ. And, the Evangelical Scheme advances the Honour of the Law infinitely above the Glory, which it could have had by our perfect Obedience to all its holy Precepts,

even unto Eternity. That is *magnified and made honourable* in our overlaying Salvation, through the Righteousness, and Sacrifice of our dear Redeemer. Besides, a *Meetness* is imparted to us, in order to our Enjoyment of future Bliss. None are brought to Heaven without Holiness, to prepare and fit them for that State of Blessedness. And *Pride is hid from Man. All Boasting is excluded* in those, who are saved. Shame and Confusion for their Iniquities, they are obliged to acknowledge is only their Due, in that wise and holy Method, which God hath fixed upon, to bring them unto the Fruition of himself. Farther, all our Enemies are conquered, vanquished, and utterly destroyed, Sin, Satan, Hell, and Death. And, this Victory was obtained for us in our Nature, as taken into Union with the Son of God, whereby it was *fitted* to accomplish all the grand and noble Views, which were intended, and resolved upon in the Divine Counsels, relating to our Redemption. Therein, therefore, *God hath abounded towards us, in all Wisdom and Prudence*. And every other Perfection of the Deity hath an equal Shine in this adorable Design. Truth, Faithfulness, Immutability, and infinite Power. Who, that duly considers these Things, can forbear to express his Wonder, in the admiring Language of the Apostle: *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God: How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* These Things the Saints will for ever be conversant about, and have in full Prospect, when raised from the State of the Dead. O happy Vision! O transporting View! And the Prospect of them hereafter will be *immediate, clear, permanent, uninterrupted, and endless*. This the Faith of holy *Job* was now fixed upon, and, therefore, it is no Wonder, that he was, at this Time, so much elevated, and so earnestly desired, that the Words he expressed might be preferred till Time should be no more. They are truly worthy of perpetual Remembrance, nor shall they be forgot to Eternity.

V. *The holy Man describes the Advantage and Nature of this Vision. Wherein several Particulars are to be observed. He says,*

1. *Whom I shall see for myself.* The Particle (⁂) *for myself*, sometimes denotes personal Benefit and Advantage. The Happiness of the Saints will very much consist in this Vision of God. Hence, our Lord says: *This is Life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* An immediate, clear, and constant View of the Divine Perfections, as exercised and displayed in our Salvation, will certainly produce, and maintain the highest Satisfaction and Delight, in our Minds for evermore. A Sight of infinite Goodness, Grace, Kindness, and Mercy, as acting in perfect Agreement with infinite Holiness and Justice, under the Direction of infinite Wisdom, in the Affair of our Recovery, and Salvation, must

raise in our Souls the greater Pleasure, and a holy Adoration. For, every Thing that is *grand, noble, good, and wise*, is therein contained. And, therefore, complete Felicity: Or, all that our *ennobled and enlarged* Minds can wish for, is comprized in this *beatific* Vision.

(1.) Sometimes this Particle expresses the Presence and Nearness of an Object to a Person. The holy Man knew, that he should see God *near* him. Behold him not as an Object at a Distance, which is the Case with the Saints now; but as *present* with him, or *near* to him. And, therefore, this Sight of God will be *clear and full*. There will be no Need of a Medium, in the future State, to present to our View the Object of our chief Joy. For, there we shall *be with him, and see him, as he is*.

(2.) In some Instances, the Particle seems to have the sense of *before*. And it may well be thought to mean this here: *Whom I shall see before me*. The future View of God, in the heavenly State, as it will be *near*, so it will be *direct*. Christ is represented, as fitting in the Midst of the Throne, and the Church, as standing round about it. Which is a more advantageous Situation, for all the adoring Spectators to enjoy a *direct* Sight of him. And their Views of him, as he is *crowned with Glory and Honour*, will possess them with Joy inconceivable. Their *grateful* Minds will certainly be filled with exquisite Pleasure, at seeing him advanced to such Dignity, who bore the Shame, and endured the Torture, of the Cross, for their sakes.

2. *Mine Eyes shall behold.*

(1.) The Saints will see God with the Eye of their Mind. Their Understanding shall then be wholly freed from Darkness, which now attends it. And they will be rendered capable of seeing, in a perfect Manner, the Glory of God in the Person of Christ. Their Conceptions of heavenly Mysteries will not be *imperfect*, as now they are; but *absolutely* without Defect, and Mixture of Error. Nor, will they be interrupted by any Cause whatever, in their Contemplations on the Display of the Perfections of the Deity, in the stupendous Design of their eternal Redemption. Their Prospects of the *sublime and deep* Things of God, will be then most extensive. For, they shall *see, as they are seen, and know, as they are known*. They will clearly discern the Love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Their Ideas of the Divine Counsels relating to their Salvation, will then be *perfectly just*. And their Apprehensions of the Wisdom and Condecency of the Way of their Recovery, will be *exact, and full*. Then they shall behold, with delightful Amazement, how *Grace reigns through Righteousness unto eternal Life, through Jesus*

Christ our Lord. That Divine Justice equally triumphs, with Divine Grace, in their Pardon, Acceptance, and Glorification, on the Foundation of the Obedience and Sacrifice of the Son of God. Who can determine which they will most admire, when they are brought to Glory, the Grace of God, which is the Cause and Origin of it, or his Wisdom and Justice, which are so illustriously displayed, in their Recovery from Ruin, and Advancement to that State of Dignity, and immortal Bliss? I am persuaded, that no one can.

(2.) They will behold Christ, who is their *Lord, and their God*, with their bodily Eyes. And, there is Reason to think, that holy *Job* designed this, by the Phrase. The Eyes of my Body, which are much impaired, and almost ready to sink in my Head, and are likely to be soon closed, shall hereafter see God, who is my living Redeemer, in that Glory, which he will for ever possess. The bodily Eyes of the Saints, when raised from the Dead, will be rendered capable of steadily looking upon the glorified Body of Christ, *whose Face shines like the Sun in its full Strength*. The dazzling Glories of his human Nature will not then offend, or be too much for their Sight. That will be fitted for beholding those glorious Rays of Light, which, in this mortal State, it can by no means bear. And, in this Vision of the Blessed Jesus, no small Part of our Happiness will consist.

3. Holy *Job* says, *and not another*, or a Stranger, as the Word (רַגִּל) signifies.

(1.) Some understand it of a Hypocrite, who is a Stranger to the Grace of God. And, most certain it is, that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*. This *beatifical* Vision would not be agreeable to an unsanctified Mind, because it is destitute of a Disposition, which is suitable to the Nature of it. The Enjoyment of the heavenly Inheritance is impossible, without a *Meetness* for it. But,

(2.) I think it is best to understand the Phrase of *another* or *strange* Body. The holy Man was persuaded, that the Body, wherein he should see God, would be his *own*, and not *another*. This Sense well agrees with what he has before expressed, and, therefore, it is much preferable to the former. That very same Body, which is now in Union with the Soul, and which, after Death, will be reduced to Dust, shall rise again, and be reunited to the Mind. How great soever, the Difficulties may be, which attend the Resurrection of the same Body, they are not *insuperable*, to infinite Wisdom, and Almighty Power, whereby it is to be effected. *Job* had a firm Persuasion hereof. And, therefore,

VI. He suggests, that his Consumption, in the Grave, was no Objection to it, nor should prevent it: *Though my Reins be consumed within me.* Notwithstanding, the mortal Frame of the Saints shall be consumed, or resolved into Dust, in the silent Grave, it shall be raised again, into an *immortal, spiritual,* and glorious Life, be reunited to their perfected Souls, and they shall in their *entire* Persons, for ever, enjoy a blissful Vision of God; and a dear Redeemer. Some read the Phrase without the Supplement, *though.* And consider it, as a concise, abrupt, and elegant Speech, wherein *Job* expresses his earnest Desire of enjoying the Resurrection State. The Reins, they think, may be understood of the Affections, which is not unfrequent, and by the Consumption of them, they apprehend, that *Job* expresses the Ardency of his Desires after that happy State, which he now had in Prospect, and whereof he so clearly before speaks. If this is the Sense of the Phrase, then *Job's* Design is to acquaint his Friends, that his Desires were *vehement* after the Enjoyment of that consummate Bliss, which would succeed his happy Resurrection from the Dead, This was the Matter of the most earnest Wish of the Apostle *Paul*, who speaks thus: *If by any means I might attain to the Resurrection of the Dead; not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.* He had in View that Perfection, whereof he knew his Soul would be possessed after Death, before the Resurrection, but his Wishes were extended farther, even unto that Glory, which will succeed the happy Resurrection of the Just. And certain it is, that the Views of *Job*, at this Time, were of the same Extent. This Prospect by Faith of future Blessedness, supported him under his extraordinary Afflictions, and was the Foundation of his Triumph, in his present View and Expectation of Death, and of the entire Consumption of his mortal Frame, in the Grave.

Thus I have endeavoured to explain these copious Words, as briefly as I could. ***The principal Design of Funeral Sermons, is not to bestow Encomiums on the Dead. And I confess, that I have not much Inclination to it, nor Satisfaction in it.*** But, with respect to the Worthy Person, on Account of whole Decease, I was at this Time desired to treat on this Subject, I think I may say, without Imputation of flattering her Memory, that *she was prudent, humble, and modest; of a tender and sympathizing Disposition. In Friendship sincere and steady. — That she filled up every Relation, in which Providence placed her, in a becoming Manner. As a Child she was obedient and dutiful: As a Spouse very affectionate, and truly faithful. As a Child she was obedient and dutiful: As a Spouse very affectionate, and truly faithful. As a Mother extremely tender, and solicitously concerned, for the Good of her Children, especially for the Welfare*

of their Souls. And, therefore, she did not fail of giving them pious Instructions, from Time to Time. O that those Instructions may

never be forgot by you; but be deeply impressed upon your Hearts, and be productive of those good Effects, which she intended, and so earnestly desired. In her Youth, she was called by Divine Grace, and made a Profession of her Faith in Christ, and gave up herself, first to the Lord, and then unto his People, according to the Will of God. And walked regularly, in Fellowship, with a Church of Christ. Through bodily Weakness, occasioned, as I suppose, by a nervous Disorder, she was prevented attending on publick Worship, for some Years. In her last Affliction, which was exceedingly great, I am informed, that she was very comfortable, and, as the Time of her Dissolution grew nigh, the Strength of her Faith increased, in Covenant-love, and, therefore, Death was not a Terror to her. Which she expressed in Words to this Purpose: Though this frail Body shudders, through Pain, I am not afraid to die; for I am sure, the Covenant of Grace is sealed to me, and is a sure one. Tho' my Flesh and my Heart fail, God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever. This View of her Interest in the Covenant of Grace, kept her Mind composed, resigned, and even chearful, in the Prospect of approaching Death. Various important Inferences may be drawn from what hath been delivered, on this noble subject. Since we are sinful, mortal, and dying Creatures, surely, we ought to be humble. Art thou a mortal Creature, which must soon turn to Corruption, and mingle with the Dust, and art thou proud? Then I say, thou art a Fool. Thou Beauty, who admirest thyself, on Account of the nice Proportion of thy Parts, the Comeliness of thy Features, and because of thy fine Complexion: Think, O think with thyself, what an horrible Spectacle thou wilt quickly be, when thy Countenance shall be changed, and thou shalt be sent away. Consider, that thou art now the Subject of Lusts, which are infinitely more hateful, than the loathsome Worms, which will prey upon, and consume thy Flesh, in the Grave. Due Thoughts of our Original, Tendency, and End, will pull down our Pride, and abase our haughty Minds. Swelling Looks, proud Language, and a disdainful Behaviour, extremely ill become Creatures, who are destined to Putrefaction, and Rottenness, which is our Case. Again, Christ alone is the Author of our Redemption. He only was equal to it. He freely undertook it, and he hath obtained eternal Redemption for us, by his Sufferings, and Death. And, therefore, our Hope of Pardon, and Deliverance from the Curse of the Law, and the Wrath of God, ought to be fixed on him, and him alone. For, nothing which we can do, nor any Thing which we have, to offer unto God, will ever compensate for our Crimes, expiate our Guilt, and free us from that Condemnation, unto which we are so justly obnoxious, in Consequence of Sin. Farther,

only Views by Faith of the Redemption of Christ, can furnish our Minds with solid Peace, Joy, and Triumph, in the Prospect of approaching Death. For, upon no other Foundation, will sinful Man be able to stand, before God, in Judgment. All other Ways of Relief, will certainly fail us. But on this Ground, our most important Interest is secure. Once more, the Saints will eternally admire, and celebrate the Praises of redeeming Love, in Language like this: *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood. And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God, and his Father; to him be Glory and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*

SERMON 23

SOME MISTAKES IN A BOOK OF MR. JOHNSON'S OF LIVERPOOL,

INTITLED, '*THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT, ETC.*'

NOTED AND RECTIFIED,

I AM sensible that it is a very displeasing Thing, to undertake a Discovery of the Misconceptions of Writer, upon any Subject. And, that there are but Few, who have Temper enough to bear with an Examination of what they publish, without at least some Degree of *undue* Resentment. Notwithstanding, I shall always think myself at full Liberty, to animadvert upon, and point out the Mistakes of any Author, even though he is *my* Friend, provided I am not guilty of Indecency, in my Manner of doing it. And I hope to have such a Guard upon myself, in the following Lines, as not to give Occasion for a *just* Censure of Unfairness and Disingenuity, much less of Rancour and Indecency: And such Freedom I will allow any one to take with me. I have often observed, that our Mistakes, on many Subjects, arise from a *partial* Consideration of the Matter of our Inquiries. For want of examining a Doctrine, in every Point of Light, wherein it is to be viewed, we many Times form very mistaken Conceptions concerning it, and fall into such Notions, relating to the Subject of our Disquisitions, as are, by no means, defensible. *Unless I am greatly deceived, unto this Cause are owing, Most of the Mistakes of Mr. Johnson, in his Treatise, intituled, 'The Faith of God's Elect' Which may, chiefly, be summed up under the following Heads, or Positions:*

- I. That Grace and Glory might have taken place upon God's Elect, on the Ground of Adoption, without the Intervention of Sin, and Salvation from it.
- II. That *Adam* was called *earthy*, in respect to his Mind, as well as his Body: Or that the Apostle called him *earthy*, in Relation to his Person, and Nature.
- III. That Grace in the Hearts of the Saints, is not a new Creature.
- IV. That Faith, though it hath Activity, it is not an Act.
- V. That Faith is not, nor can be a Duty.
- VI. That Faith is not purchased by Christ.
- VII. That Ministers are not commissioned to preach the Law.

VIII. That they are not to admonish Sinners to leave their Sins, and amend their Lives.

I. *Mr. Johnson thinks, that Grace and Glory might have taken place upon God's Elect, on the Ground of Adoption, without the Intervention of Sin, and Salvation from it.* Thus he speaks: *I cannot conceive any Reason, according to the original Constitution of Things, why Grace and Glory might not have taken place upon God's Elect, according to his everlasting Love in Adoption, supposing Sin, or Salvation, has (had) never had a Being.* The Love of God to his People is from everlasting, and never began, as it will be to everlasting, and will never end. It is invariable, there

is no Alteration in it, whatever Changes take place in them. It admits not of Increase, or Decrease. It is not of one Kind now, and of a different Kind hereafter. An Alteration in their State makes no Difference in Divine Love to their Persons. In my humble Opinion, it may be thus defined, *viz. A Will in God, arising from his sovereign and immense Goodness, to do them good, with infinite Delight.* If this is a just Definition of the Love of God to the Persons of his People there can be no proper Reason to take Offence at asserting, that while they are in a State of Unregeneracy, they are interested therein; nor the least Necessity, to distinguish Divine Love, into a Love of *Benevolence*, and a Love of *Delight*. Because, neither the Disposition, nor the Actions, of the Objects beloved, come into Consideration herein, but their Persons only. When they are in a State of Unregeneracy, God approves not of their Disposition, or their Actions, yet he loves their Persons. And when they are regenerated, he approves of their Graces, and delights in their Exercise, and their spiritual Obedience is pleasing to him. But his Love to their Persons doth not consist therein. It is quite distinct therefrom. And well it is for them, that it is. For, if it was not, the Ruin even of the best of them, would be inevitable. This sovereign, eternal, and invariable Love of God to his Elect, is the Origin of all their Felicity.

That the Elect were made the Sons of God in Predestination, is, I think, a certain Truth, and it is excellently explained by Dr. *Goodwin*, on *Ephesians* 1:5. That God may chuse perfect Creatures, unto the everlasting Enjoyment of himself, render them *impeccable*, by Super-creation-Grace, and make an Addition to their Happiness, by farther Discoveries of his Perfections to them, than that which they enjoy in their State by Creation, are Things unquestionable. For, thus it hath been his sovereign Pleasure to proceed towards the holy Angels. But to imagine, that, that Grace might in this World and take place upon the Elect in this World, and that Glory, which they will enjoy, in the next, without the Intervention of Sin, and Salvation

from it, is as great a Mistake, as can be imagined. Nay, the Glory of the Angels themselves had not been what it is, without the intervention of Sin in Men, and Salvation from it. For, herein only is the Lord known, in the endearing Character of the God of ALL GRACE. In this Knowledge will consist the *Summit* of the Happiness, both of Angels and The Church, for evermore. And I am resolved to have no Dispute with Mr. *Johnson*, or any other Man, about Grace, or Glory, whereof the Evangelical Revelation makes no Discovery. Men may, if they chuse it, please themselves with Thoughts of Grace and Glory, that might have taken place on God's Elect, without the Being of Sin and Salvation from it; but, I think, they must be at a Loss, to determine what that Grace and Glory are. This I am sure of, it cannot be the Grace of the Gospel, nor that *eternal Glory*, unto which, God of his infinite Mercy calls his Elect. And, therefore, they shall never be the Matter of my Contest with any Man.

1. Without the Intervention of Sin, Evangelical Grace could not have been exercised towards, nor taken place upon the Elect. The Patience and Forbearance of God towards them while in a State of Rebellion against him, which how great it is, no Tongue can express, nor Mind conceive, had never been, if Sin had not overspread our Nature. The Communication of Holiness to us, had not been an Act of sovereign, and infinite Mercy, if we had not lost our original Purity by Sin, regenerating Grace could not have taken place in the Elect, without their Apostasy from God. If they had not become dead in Sin, the *Riches* of Divine Mercy, manifested in quickening them, would for ever have lain concealed. And, if Sin had not a Being, as an active Principle, in the Hearts of God's Elect, after their Regeneration and Conversion, how could the Kindness and Mercy of God have been exercised towards them, in passing by their numerous Provocations, in healing their Backslidings and in maintaining the good Work in their Souls, in Opposition to their impetuous and raging Lusts? Yea, without the Intervention of Sin, the whole Work of the Blessed Spirit, in enlightening, quickening, comforting, sanctifying, witnessing, and establishing them, had never been, or taken place in their Hearts. Which, next unto that of the Redemption of our Persons, by the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God, demands our Wonder and highest Praises. Besides, if Sin had never been, God had not *commended* his Love to us in the Gift of Christ for us, to redeem us from our Iniquities, and save our Souls from Destruction. The infinite Riches of Grace in pardoning us, would not have been displayed: Nor should we have ever known the Grace of Christ, in the Character of a Redeemer. Who, *though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his Poverty might be made rich*. The noblest Effect of Divine Love, and infinite

Wisdom, without the Intervention of Sin, could never have taken place, *viz.* our Redemption by Christ. Which is *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom, which he ordained, before the World, to our Glory.* Farther, without our Breach of the Covenant of Works, that wise and holy Constitution, could not have had that Honour done unto it, which it hath by our Lord's Subjection to it, and the exact Fulfilment of all its sacred Precepts, in the Character of our Surety. We had never stood before God, our righteous Judge, in a Righteousness of infinite Value and Splendor, as now we do, if we had not been unrighteous in ourselves. What Place would there have been, for the Grace of free Justification, by the Obedience of Christ, if we had retained the Perfection of our Nature, and punctually obeyed the Law, in our own Persons? None at all. Nor could the Bestowment of eternal Life have been an Act of Justice, as well as an Act of Kindness and Grace, on any other Foundation, than that of the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ to us. The Reign of Grace, unto eternal Life, is through Righteousness: Or the Justice of God is as clearly seen, in this Way of our enjoying everlasting Bliss as the exceeding Riches of his Kindness, and in no other could it be so. In a word, this Position entirely evacuates the whole Grace of the Gospel. As to Favour, which Mr. *Johnson* may think might have been extended towards the Elect, without the Entrance of Sin, it could not be that Grace, any Branch of it, whereof the Gospel is so glorious a Discovery. And, it is what God never intended to extend unto them, nor had the least Place in the Divine Counsels. And, therefore, I will not have any Debate with him, or any other Person, about it: But am determin'd to be silent concerning it, as I will be of every other Thing, which is not revealed. Since it is not Evangelical Grace, Mr. *Johnson*, and others with him, may exercise their Thoughts, as much as they please, concerning it, but I will not be so employed.

2. That eternal Glory, unto which God calls his Elect, could not be enjoyed without the Intervention of Sin. The future Felicity of the Saints will very much consist, in the perfect Knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. And, therefore, therein, Respect must be had unto Salvation, from Sin, and its Consequences, which was the important End of Christ's Mission. In the blissful World, we shall have clear Conceptions of the foederal Transactions of the Divine Persons, and of those mutual Obligations, they came under to each other, relating to our Recovery, and Happiness. The Father, required Service of the most important and difficult Nature to be performed by Christ, as our Surety, promised a glorious Reward on that Condition. Christ consented to the Will of the Father, and thus the Obligation was mutual between them. Christ became obliged to fulfill the Father's Will, by his own voluntary Engagement, and the

Father, by his Promise to Christ, brought upon himself an Obligation to bestow the Reward he promised; and, the Blessed Spirit undertook, in this foederal Transaction, to reveal and apply to the Elect, what the Father purposed, and Christ obtained. And, this Agreement on his Part brought an Obligation on him, to come into the Hearts of the Elect, and operate in them, at the Will of the Father, and the Will of the Son. And, thus, as their Engagements were mutual, their Obligations to each other are so. Now, as our Salvation was the *grand* Affair settled and secured, by these federal Transactions, between the Divine Persons, it is most clear, that the Knowledge of this gracious Compact could not be comprized, in the future Glory of the Elect, without the Intervention of Sin. The Being of that is necessarily supposed, in this everlasting Covenant, which the Blood of it, obtains the Remission of, and that is Sin. And, therefore, if distinct, clear, and perfect Conceptions of these mutual Engagements of the Divine Persons; in our Favour, will be a Part of the Glory, which the Saints, will possess, in Heaven. Which surely no Christian will deny; then, it must undeniably be granted, that without the Being of Sin, it was impossible, that this Glory, should ever take place, in God's Elect. Again, the Divine Perfections, without the Intervention of Sin, could not possibly have been displayed, in *such* a Manner, as they are, in our Salvation from it. Divine Sovereignty hath a most illustrious Shine herein. It was the highest Act of Sovereignty to ordain the human Nature, unto a Union with the Divine, in the Person of the Son of God. By Vertue of which Union, Christ, as Man, was invested with a Right to Dignity and Glory, far superior to that which Angels, or Saints, will ever enjoy. Some perhaps will say, this might have been, without a Purpose in God, to permit of the Entrance of Sin. Be it so, that this was possible, yet, it is evident, that such was not the Divine Intention; and, therefore, our Reasoning upon it, I think, to say no more, can answer no important End. But the Subject, which we are upon, will by no means permit our Thoughts to stop here. For, that is heavenly Glory, as it is a Perception of the Display of the Divine Attributes, in the Business of our Salvation, and, consequently, our Ideas must be carried farther. And, therefore, I add, Divine Sovereignty exercised itself, in a very eminent Manner, in determining, that Christ, who was raised above the Condition of a mere Creature, by his personal Union with the Son of God, should come under our Obligation to the Covenant of Works, obey it for us, bear our Guilt, suffer its Curse, and endure the whole Punishment, our Crimes demerited. Thus Sovereignty provided the Victim, by which Divine Justice, was to be satisfied, for our Sins. It was acted upon the greatest Personage, and its Resolutions concerning him, for the full Manifestation of itself, were carried to the utmost Extent.

Christ was the grandest Subject, the sovereign Will of God could form any Purposes about, and his Determinations relating to him, are such, as gave no *Parallel*, nor possibly can have. As our Blessed Lord, the Subject, on whom this Divine Attribute exercised itself, was far superior to all, in Greatness and Dignity; so the Resolution of the *absolute* Will of God, was, to demand *such* Submission from him, as *never* was, nor *ever* will be required of any Creature. Sovereignty first exalts him, as Man, unto the highest Glory, in a personal Union, with the Son of God, and then resolves upon his *deepest* Abasement. It made all Things his in Right: and determined that, for a Season he should not have any Thing in Possession.

Again, Grace, Kindness, and Mercy, have a most illustrious Display, in this whole Business. It was with a direct View to the Salvation and Happiness of Criminals, that Sovereignty in God, formed the Resolutions above-mentioned. The Persons, in whose Favour these Resolutions were taken, had nothing to recommend them to him. No Disposition, whereof he could approve, and were incapable of performing any Actions, acceptable to him. And, therefore, Goodness, Grace, and Mercy, alone gave Rise to those *amazing* Purposes. Whether, the *Freeness*, or the *Abundance* of Divine Grace, in this sovereign Constitution, is most to be admired, perhaps, is not a Point to be determined by any Creature. However, both, I am sure, demand our holy Adoration; and will be the Matter of the highest Joy and Wonder, in the Saints, for evermore.

Besides, the justice of God shines forth, in *full Blaze*, in this sovereign Appointment. Divine indignation against Sin is manifested, in the Perdition of apostate Spirits, and sinful Men. But, in the Debasement of the Son of God, and in the Infliction of Punishment on him for our Crimes, there is a far greater Discovery of the Divine Resentment against Sin, than there is, in that Penalty, which they will suffer unto Eternity. For, both the Dignity of Christ's Person, and the Interest, which he had, in the Love of God, beyond all others, are to be taken into Consideration, as well as the Weight of those Sufferings, which he endured for our Sins; all which taken together, shew the infinite Indignation of God, against moral Evil, unto the utmost. Which was not possible to be done in any other Way.

Moreover, infinite Wisdom is no less conspicuous in this sovereign Appointment. It became God, in pardoning Sin, and saving Sinners, to provide for the Honour of his Law, which is violated, and to secure the Rights of his offended Justice, as well as magnify the Riches of his Mercy. All which are fully and effectually done herein. The Law is *magnified and made honourable*, and the Demands of Justice are answered by the Sufferings and Death of Christ, as our

Surety. And, free, rich Mercy illustriously shines, in the Gift of Christ for us. It cannot be said, that God, in our Salvation, *connives* at Evil, or makes *Allowances* for the moral Imperfections of his Creatures. He pardons their Iniquities indeed, but not without *taking Vengeance on their sinful Inventions*, and that most awfully, in the Person of our Saviour. And, what a wonderful Discovery of Divine Wisdom was there, in ordaining the human Nature unto a personal Union with the Son of God, that it might be his own, in a peculiar Manner? Hence, it was *absolutely* at the Disposal of his Divine Will, and under its Direction in all Things. And, therefore, it was impossible, that his human Will, in any Instance, should act counter to his Divine Will. This, O this, is the deepest of all God's Designs! And all the infinitely holy Properties of his Nature, by this Constitution, shine out in their full Splendor. This is that *manifold Wisdom of God*, which astonishes Angels, and will fill the Church with rapturous Delight, *in the Ages to come*. Now, future Glory will consist, in an immediate, clear, and perfect Vision of the. infinitely glorious Perfections of God, as they are thus displayed, in our Salvation. And, therefore, it must be a great Mistake to think, that Glory, that is to say, *this Glory*, which the Gospel is a Revelation of, might have taken place upon the Elect, if Sin, and Salvation from it, had never had a Being. I say now, as I said before, concerning Grace, if Glory of *another Kind* is meant, than that which the Gospel reveals, I will have no Concern with it, nor any Debate about it, with Mr. *Johnson*, or any other Person. Let it be what it may, I dare say, that it *never* came into the Mind of God, to confer it on his Elect; and, therefore, I think myself fairly excusable, in refusing to attend unto the Consideration of it. I suppose, that Mr. *Johnson* had in his Thoughts, the *supralapsarian* Way of Rating the Doctrine of Election, and for want of considering the whole Decree of Election, as viewed in that Point of Light, he fell into this great Mistake. Notwithstanding, God, in that Decree, considered the Persons, of whom he made Choice, unto the Fruition of himself, as *unfallen*; yet, his End, in that Choice, being the Display of the Riches of his Mercy, his Will to permit the Entrance of Sin, is necessarily supposed therein; because without that, this End designed in their Election could not be accomplished. And, therefore, it is easy to observe, that though, in Election, God might view the Objects of that gracious Decree, as in the *pure Mass*, yet he could not decree to confer that Grace and Glory on them, which the Gospel reveals, without a Will to permit the Being of Sin, and their Ruin, in Consequence thereof.

These *deep* Things of God, I know, in our *sad* Times, are slighted by many Professors, and considered as *speculative* Notions, that are of no Moment at all. Which is not a favourable Symptom of their being

made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. I am certain, that if to Heaven they come, quite other Apprehensions must take place in their Minds. For, without that, it is impossible they should ever unite with the Blessed, in adoring the Perfections of God, as they shine forth in there *sublime*, and *mysterious* Truths, to the holy Wonder, Joy, and Adoration of Angels, and Saints, unto Eternity.

Seeing these Things are the Matter of my present Meditations, I cannot but take Notice of a Conjecture of the *learned* and *ingenious* Mr. Ray, which with great Modesty, indeed, he delivers. But I think it is a very great Mistake. He speaks thus: *And truly, I do not know, but that the Sins of the Blessed may be blotted out, even of their own Memories. — I am inclinable sometimes to imagine, that the Soul of Man can hardly be entirely happy, unless it be as it were dipped in Lethe. For every sinful Action having a natural Turpitude in it, and being dishonourable, how can the Memory and Thought of it, but beget such an ungrateful Passion as Shame, even to Eternity?* I can by no means concur with him in this Thought; because, if we should ever forget that we were Sinners, we could not then retain a Remembrance of our Redemption from our Sins by the Blood of Christ. And, surely, that shall never be the case with the Blessed. If it should, Heaven will not be that, which, holy Souls expect to find it. It is true, that there is a natural Turpitude in Sin, and it is most dishonourable; but the ungrateful Passion of Shame, at the Remembrance of our Sins, will be prevented taking place in our Minds, by that View, which we shall then have, of the Glory, which redounds to God, in the Remission of them, thro' the Blood of his Son. Doubtless, we shall always be fully sensible, that Shame and Confusion were our just Due, and that will excite in us adoring Thoughts of Divine Grace and; Mercy, which, notwithstanding, railed us unto a State of Dignity and Bliss. I am so far from assenting unto this Conjecture, that I am of the same Opinion with Dr. Owen, who says: *Even the very Remembrance of Sin is sweet unto them; when they see God infinitely exalted and admired in the Pardon thereof.* Not Sin in itself no: Nor the Thought of our having committed Sin. God forbid, that any should imagine this. But the Consideration of the Being of Sin, as an Occasion of God's bringing infinite Glory to himself, in the Way of our Salvation from it:

Mr. Johnson rightly observes, that *Sin, in its own Nature, cannot possibly be of any Use to any Being. That it is what God hates; and it is what makes every Creature miserable, where it takes place. And Sin alone makes Salvation needful: Without which no Salvation could have been.* These Things are true. It is certain, that no sinful Act, as such, can be productive of Good. The most precious Benefits

spring from the Crucifixion and Death of Christ. But those Benefits are not Effects arising from the Sin of the *barbarous Jews*, who crucified, and put him to Death. Fruits they are of what Christ suffered; but the sinful Actions of the *Jews*, which they put forth upon him in his Sufferings, had not the least causal Influence in the Production of those Fruits. They are the proper Effects of the *wise*, and *holy* Constitution of God, of the Matter of his Sufferings, and of the infinite Dignity of the Person of the Blessed Sufferer. So that the sinful Actions of his Murderers had no *Efficiency* at all, in the Production of the happy Effects of his Death. They wholly spring from that which he suffered, and not in the least from the criminal Acts of those by whom he did suffer. And though, upon the Commission of Evil, great Humiliation, Self-abasement, and Indignation against Sin, may arise in the Mind of a good Man, as they did in *David*, for Instance; yet, the sinful Act, or Acts committed, have no Efficiency in producing those good Effects. The Grace of God taking Occasion from the Sin committed, to operate on the Mind, in a Way of holy, spiritual, and gracious Conviction, works these desirable Effects. It is not Sin, that humbles the Soul; but Divine Grace, effecting a proper Sense of its evil Nature in the Mind, after the Commission of it, lays the Soul low. We cannot use too great Caution, in the Manner of expressing ourselves on this Subject. Perhaps, some have not been so *wary*, as might be wished, in their Mode of speaking on it; and Expressions may have dropped from them, which are capable of an *ill* Construction, (which ought always to be avoided) though their Meaning was *good* and *sound*. This by the bye. These Things, tho' true, do not at all serve that Purpose, for which Mr. *Johnson* urges them, to prove, that Grace and Glory might have taken place upon the Elect, if Sin had never had a Being. For, what though hath no *causal* Influence into that Grace and Glory, which are conferred on God's Elect, as the Effect of his most *holy*, *wise*, and *gracious* Counsels? it don't therefore follow, that, that Grace, and that Glory, which they do, and shall receive, might have been communicated to them, without the Intervention of Sin. This is so plain a Point, that I will not affront the Understanding of the Reader, by attempting any farther the Proof of it. This I must say upon the Whole, that I do not know, that he could possibly have fallen into a greater Mistake on the Subject, than this Position contains. Of that thus far. I proceed to the next,

II. That Adam was called earthy, in Respect to his Mind, as well as his Body: Or, that the Apostle calls him earthy, in Relation to his Person, and Nature. His Words are these: *But this Holiness wrought in Creation, fulfilled in the earthy Man; and could only be such a Resemblance of, and Nearness to God, as an earthy Nature was capable of.* I think, that by

the Nature of Adam, Mr. Johnson must mean, not his Body, in a distinct Consideration from his intellectual Part; but his Person, as constituted of both. If his Meaning is only this, that Adam is called the earthy Man, with Respect to his Body, in Distinction from his Mind, his Reasoning on the Place loses all its Force. For, his Design is to prove by it, that the Holiness of Adam, was inferior to that of Angels, and Saints. Now, it is possible that a reasonable Soul may be the Subject of the greatest Holiness, in Union with a Body, whose Original is Earth, and which is not yet spiritualized. I am persuaded, that the Holiness of Christ was as great, when he stood crowned with Thorns, as it is, now he fits at the right Hand of God, and is crowned with Glory. He was as holy when he bled, bowed, and died on the Cross, as he is now in the immediate Presence of the Divine Father. He is not more holy, now he is in Heaven, than he was, when he dwelt upon the Earth. The Purity of his Nature was then the very same. But, during that Time, his Body was not Spiritualized. It was then not Spiritual, but natural. This Assertion reflects no Dishonour on the Blessed Jesus. God forbid, that I should ever affirm any Thing, that is dishonourable to him, who is, on all Accounts, most worthy of the highest Praises from Angels, and the Church for evermore. This Subject is of great Importance, and demands our diligent Consideration. It seems to me, that Mr. Johnson hath been too superficial in his Inquiry into it, which occasioned his Mistake upon it. The Scope of the Apostle, in the Place referred unto, is to prove two Things, viz. that there is a natural, and a spiritual Body, contained in this Proposition: *There is a natural Body, and there is a spiritual Body.* The Proof of the former is a Divine Testimony: *And so it is written, The first Man Adam was made a living Soul.* The curious Machine of the Body of Man being formed out of the Earth, the great Creator endowed it with Life and Activity. *He breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life; and the Man became a living Soul.* The Body of Adam, thus formed, and animated with Life, was natural. As it was of the Earth, so its Life was to be maintained by the Fruits of the Earth. The Proof of the latter, is the Apostle's own Assertion concerning Christ, under infallible Direction: *The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.* This is to be understood of the Body of our Blessed Lord; for if it is not, it can be no Proof, that there is a spiritual Body. Besides, as the Apostle speaks of the Body of the first Adam, in the former Phrase, it is reasonable to think, that in this, he speaks of the Body of the last Adam. The Body of the one, and the Body of the other, are the Subject of his Discourse. To prevent a Mistake, in Relation to Christ's Body, or lest it should be thought, that his Body was not natural, but spiritual, in its Production, he subjoins unto this Assertion: *Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards,*

that which is spiritual. And, therefore, the Body of our Saviour was first *natural*, as ours is, and afterwards it was made *spiritual*, as ours shall also be. And the Subject on which the Apostle discourses, determines, when the Body of Christ was made *spiritual*; that is, the Resurrection, and, consequently, Christ's Body, before his Resurrection, was not *spiritual*, but natural. Its Production, indeed, was *supernatural*; but notwithstanding that, as to its Nature, it was the same with ours, though absolutely free from that *ill* Temperament, and those corrupt Qualities, whereof our Bodies are now the Subjects. In order to prove the Propriety of this great Change in the Body of Christ, the Apostle proceeds to observe the vast Difference between him, and the first Man, in Dignity. *The first Man. is of the Earth, earthy: The second Man is the Lord from Heaven.* Our Saviour being truly Divine, who took our Nature into Union with himself, it was fit, when he had finished that Work therein, which he undertook, that his Body should pass under this *amazing* Change in its Resurrection, that so it might be capable of enjoying, in Union with his Soul, that State of Glory, to which, as Man, he was ordained, and unto which his personal Union with the Son of God gave him a proper Right. According to that Scope, which the Apostle hath in View, *viz.* the Glory of the Members of Christ, as well as his personal Glory, upon his Resurrection from the Dead, he farther observes, that: *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.* As we have natural, mortal, and corruptible Bodies, from the first Man, who was of the Earth, earthy; so we shall have *spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible, or heavenly* Bodies, from Christ, who is *heavenly, and a quickening Spirit.* And, therefore, *as we have borne the Image of the earthy, we shall also bear the Image of the heavenly.* As our Bodies are like the Body of the first Man, in Death, and the Grave, by reason of our being Members of him; so our Bodies shall be like to the glorified Body of Christ, because of our Union with him, as a living Head, when they are raised from the Dead.

No Countenance is given, in any Part of the Apostle's Reasoning on this important Subject, unto this Imagination, that *Adam* was *earthy*, in Respect to his Mind, as well as his Body. That Part of him, only, was *earthy, which was of the Earth.* And that was not his intellectual Part, but his Body. And, therefore, it is a great Mistake in Mr. *Johnson* to think, that the first: Man is called *earthy*, in Relation to his Nature, as it consisted of Body and Mind. For that Epithet respects him only in his inferior Part, the Body. Nor is it just, and agreeable to Truth, to conceive, that a reasonable Soul, in Union with a natural Body, is incapable of possessing Holiness, in the highest Degree. Christ was as holy, while his Body was natural, as

he is, now his Body is *spiritual*. Low Thoughts are not to be admitted, concerning the Holiness of the Nature of Man, in Creation. If we *depreciate* our *original Purity*, it must be at the Expence of *infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Holiness*; and, therefore, we ought to be most careful, that we advance, or suggest nothing, which hath the least Tendency to lessen our primitive Perfection. Those who are much acquainted with Theological Debates on the Subject, well know by what Sort of Men this is done, to the Dishonour of their Creator. Let us not give any Advantage unto their *wretched Abominations* herein. But, on the contrary, let us maintain, and defend, the Perfection and Glory of our Nature, in its original State.

I freely grant, that there are various considerable Differences between that holy Principle, which was concreated with *Adam*, and connatural to him, and that Principle of Holiness, which is implanted in the Souls of God's Elect. That was derived from God, as Creator: This springs from him, as the God of all Grace.

That was the Effect of Divine Benevolence to him, as a Creature: This is a Gift of *special and peculiar Favour*, and is by no means due. It was not an Act of the *sovereign Will* of God to create *Adam* holy, the infinite Holiness of his own Nature made it necessary to him, and he could not do otherwise. But to communicate Holiness to an apostate Creature, it is free to the Divine Will, to resolve upon it, or not, just as it seems good to the Lord. For, no Divine Perfection requires, or makes it necessary. That, as to its Conservation, depended on the free Will of *Adam*, without a *determining Influence* upon it by God, in a Way of *peculiar Favour*. This, in Respect to its Preservation, is wholly dependent on a continual and gracious Influx from God, in the Character of *the God of all Grace*. And, therefore, it is impossible, that it should be lost, as our original Holiness was. That holy Principle rendered *Adam* capable of living unto God, and enjoying Communion with him, agreeably to the Nature of the Covenant of Works, under which he was. This gracious Principle fits us for living unto God, and enjoying Communion with him, on the Plan of the Covenant of Grace, wherein all the Divine Perfections have their *brightest Display*. And, therefore, it is a Life more *noble and sublime* in its Nature, than that which *Adam* possessed in his State of Creation. These Differences may all be granted, without degrading, in the least, our original Purity.

III. Mr. Johnson is of Opinion, that Grace in the Hearts of the Saints is not a new Creature. Upon this Subject, he writes in a very *inaccurate, confused, and inconsistent* Manner. Speaking of Grace in the Heart, he says: *If the Principle wrought, did subsist in the Man's self, without immediate Communication from God, it would be the proper Work of the Man to actuate that Principle.* Since he calls

Grace a Principle, one would imagine, that he thinks, that it is an inherent Spring of Action in the Saints; but he does not. For he affirms, that *the spiritual Grace, or Life of Faith, which the Saints enjoy, is not inherent in themselves.* Hath this Principle then no Subject, in which it inheres? Or is it in God? Or in Christ? In one Place, he expresses himself in such an *unguarded* Way, as might induce his Reader to conceive, that he hath such an Apprehension, *strange* as it is. His Words are these: *Nor can this transcendent, glorious Grace come within the Compass of a Duty: But is, from first to last, altogether perfect, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, heavenly, and divine.* This *unaccountable* Assertion needs no Comment, to prove, that he means Grace, which is communicated to us, and not Divine Love, from which it flows: For, none imagine Love in God to be the Creature's Duty. The Origin from which that Grace springs, which the Elect of God receive, is indeed infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; but it is impossible, that, that Grace, which is received by them, should be so. I think it is clear, that Mr. *Johnson* understands by Principle, in this Place, and by Grace in the other, the self-same Thing. Now, that no infinite, eternal Principle can be inherent in us, it is most certain; and, therefore, his Words are sufficient to tempt one to imagine, that he conceives, that this Principle is not in us, though received by us, but in God himself. If it is not, it can't be infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in its Nature; for nothing out of God can possibly be so. We are capable of perceiving which is infinite, *etc.* but it is *impossible*, even to Almighty Power, to work that in us, which is *infinite*.

Though he speaks of Grace in the Soul, as a Principle, yet he does not allow it to be such; but calls it *imaginary*. His Words are these: *For that imaginary Principle itself, must be a distinct Creature. And I know, this is the Way that some Persons speak, of a new Creature in the Man: Instead of speaking in the Scripture Stile: If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature. But if this imaginary Creature be not perfect, it is not the Work of God; and if it be perfect, the Man must have Perfection in himself, and can neither seek, draw, nor receive Grace from Christ: For, that which is full; and that which is full can hold no more.* Why does he first speak of Grace, as a Principle, and afterwards pronounce it *imaginary*? I cannot reconcile these Things. This gracious Principle is indeed *distinct*, though not *Separate* from the Mind, in which it is. It is not the Soul itself; but it is *Spirit*, or a spiritual Nature, in the Soul, which is *born of the Spirit*. It is not the human Mind itself, that is born of the Spirit; but a vital and heavenly Principle, or Spring of holy Operation, in the Mind, from which all spiritual Acts arise. That which is born of the Spirit, was not before its Birth. The Soul, wherein the new Birth is, was before that Birth, and, therefore, that Birth cannot be the Production of the Soul itself;

but it must be the Production of something in the Soul, which was not in it before. And the same holds true, in Relation to this Work, as it is a *new* Creation. That which is created, was not before that Creation of it; the Soul was before this new Creation, and, consequently, it cannot be the Production of the Soul; but it must be the Production of something in the Soul, which was not in it, before that creating Act took place; and, that something is the *new Man*, or *new Creature*. Our being the Subjects of this new Creation, gives us the Denomination of new Creatures. Which Denomination, by no means supposes, that our Minds are produced in this Creation, for they were before; but something is produced in our Minds, by this new Creation, which was not in us until that Time. And this blessed Work is perfect in *its Nature*. No Defect attends it, in *its Kind*; though, it is nor, in its Degrees, what it will be, when it is ripened into Glory.

We are the Subjects of this Divine Work of Regeneration, and *new* Creation, and, therefore, we are very properly said to be born again, and to be *the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*. But, that which is produced in this *new* Birth, and *new* Creation, is not our Mind; but a holy, spiritual Habit, or Principle, from which all Acts of a spiritual Nature take their Rise. The Flesh, which is its contrary, is inherent in us, and this also is an inherent Principle in us. And, as they are opposite in Nature, so there is a Contest between them, and their Opposition is mutual. A Believer hath that in him, which is perfect in *its Nature*, but not in its Degrees. And, therefore, it can't be said, that he hath Perfection in himself, because Perfection not only implies, that which is perfect in its Nature; but also its full Proportion, and a Freedom from that which is contrary to that good and holy Principle. And, consequently, a Saint may derive Grace from Christ, to increase the Vigor of that gracious Principle, which is in him. Lust in the Heart is *equally* evil at all Times, whether its Acts are more, or less vigorous: And so Grace, or the spiritual Principle, is at all Times *equally* holy; but its Actings, as to Strength and Vigor, are variable. Sometimes *more*, and sometimes *less* intense. Surely, an Addition may be made to that, which is not perfect in it Degrees, though it is in its Nature. And Grace in the Saints, tho' it is perfect in the latter Sense, it is not in the former. I confess, that I am ashamed to dwell thus on a Matter, that is so plain, and easy to be understood. I will, therefore, proceed to consider another Mistake of the Author's, which is this:

IV. That Faith, though it hath Activity, it is not an Act. He says, *I know Faith is an active Principle*. Aye, does he know, that Faith is a Principle? Why then does he deny, that it is inherent in the Saints? If it is a Principle, it must be in some Subject, or else it subsists of

itself. If it inheres not in some Subject, and in itself hath proper Existence. And if it is itself a Substance, and hath proper Existence distinct from the Saint, as it must have, if it is not inherent in him: Then it is not the Saint who believes but this Substance, which is distinct from him, and is not inherent in him. This is *amazingly* strange! and is absolutely beyond the Power of my Understanding, to reconcile with Truth, Sense, and Mr. *Johnson* himself. *I am very sensible*, adds he, *there is (are) what may be called Acts of Faith.* But he does not allow those Acts to be properly our Acts. *The Soul ascends towards Christ, not as its own proper Act*, says he. *Believing in, cleaving to, embracing, and resisting (relying) upon Christ for Life and Salvation, are not Acts of the Person in a proper Sense.* He is very *voluble*, and hath a great *Flow* of Words, where his Ideas are not *many*. It is not, therefore, necessary to quote at large, what he expresses. His whole Meaning may be understood without it. What can Faith be? It is not an inherent Principle, nor properly the Act of the Saint, as Mr. *Johnson* thinks. What then can it be? Is it something which hath a distinct Subsistence from a Person, in whom it is? And are its Acts proper to itself, in Distinction from him? So one would imagine, he thinks; but that he speaks of the Soul's *ascending to Christ, etc.* According to that Account, which this Writer gives of Faith, to the best of my Apprehension, it is a *mere Nullity*. Or, if it is any Thing, it is something in a Person, which hath Subsistence of itself, distinct from him, in whom it is, and none of its Acts are the Acts of the Person; but of this *something*, which is supposed to be in him, and yet is distinct from him, in itself, and in whatever it acts. So that, in Consequence of Faith being wrought in a Man, he does not himself think holily, nor will spiritually; but this *something* in him, (if, in Fact, it is any Thing) which Mr. *Johnson* is pleased to call Faith.

That excellent Grace, in my humble Opinion, is not distinguishable from other Graces, except in its Actings. It seems to me, that spiritual Acts of every Kind, spring from one common spiritual Principle of Operation in the Soul, which is called the *new Man*, a *new Heart*, *Spirit*, the *inner Man*, and the *Mind*. Certain it is, that spiritual Acts are various; but, unless I am greatly mistaken, they all proceed from one Principle, which is *Spirit*, as it is *born of the Spirit*. Thus, Faith is Thought of its Object, who is Christ, with Trust in him, or Dependence on him, for Life, and Salvation, under a Conviction of our Misery, and Helplessness, in ourselves. Hope is a Perception of the Excellency of spiritual Blessings, with an humble Expectation of receiving them. Love is Thought, with Approbation, and Liking of its Object. Repentance is Thought, with Contrition, Humiliation for, and a Dislike of Sin. Fear is Thought, with Reverence of the Object, unto which Respect is had. Those different

Acts spring from the self-same Principle in the Soul, and not from so many distinct Graces. Now, if it is true, that Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, and Fear, are only distinguishable, as Acts, and not in their Principle, or Root; then it will follow, that there is no such Thing, as Faith, or Love, or Repentance, or Fear, if they are not *properly* Acts. For, if they are not *properly* Acts, they are not *properly* distinguishable; because, as Acts *only*, they are distinct, their Principle being the same. If Thought, and Volition, are not *properly* mental Acts, it can't be said, that a reasonable Soul ever acts at all: Or, properly speaking, when we think, will, and nill, we are not active, but inactive, if Thinking, Willing, and Nilling, are not Acts. If they are Acts, they must be the Acts of that which thinks, wills, and nills; for they cannot be the Acts of something else, which is distinct and separate from that, wherein are Thought, Volition, and Nilling. And, therefore, if it is the gracious Principle in a Believer, as distinct from his Mind, which thinks holily, and will spiritually, those holy Thoughts and spiritual Volitions are not his; but are proper to something, which, though it is supposed to be in him, is really distinct from him. And with that can be, but a *new Soul*, in whose Actings he hath no Concern, for my Part I am not able to devise. If holy Thoughts and Volitions are properly Actions, and the Actions of our Minds, as sanctified by the Grace of God; then, in thinking, and willing, in a holy Manner, in a proper Sense, we act, or those holy Thoughts, and Volitions are our proper Acts.

Indeed, Actions differ, some are involuntary, as the Action of our Lungs in breathing. The Motion of the Humours of our Bodies in Perspiration, and the Motion of the Blood in Pulsation, or beating of the Pulse, neither of which is under the Direction of our Will, and, therefore, they are called involuntary Motions, or Actions. And, some Actions are under the Direction of our Will, as moving my Fingers to write. The Action of my Fingers, now I am writing, immediately follows an Act of my Will, to move them in such a Manner, as is necessary to form the different Letters, which compose the Words, whereby I express my Meaning. And, my Mind *properly* acts, in direction, as my Fingers move, or act in writing. Therefore, I am *astonished*, that Mr. *Johnson* should argue from the involuntary Motions in our animal Frame, that we are not properly active in Thought, and Volition: Which is what, I think, he must mean, if he hath any Meaning at all. When a Man believes, hopes, loves, repents, and reverences God, he *acts mentally*, in as proper, a Sense, as he does corporeally, when he walks. Walking is the Motion, or Action of his Body, and believing, hoping, loving, repenting, and reverencing God, are the proper Acts of his Mind.

Mr. *Johnson*, unless I mistake him, confounds *actuating* and *acting* Faith. The former is the Work of the Blessed Spirit upon us. For, it is He who actuates, or stirs up that Grace in our Souls by a gracious Influence, The latter, *viz.* the Acting, or Exercise of the Grace of Faith, is *proper* to us. For, the Holy Spirit does not believe; but we ourselves, by Vertue of his Aid. And the Distinction, and Difference of these two Things, is very easy to be conceived of. Mr. *Johnson*, with as much Propriety and Truth, might tell me, that I do not *properly* think, when I really have holy Thoughts, as that Faith is not *properly* my Act, when I believe; because I am actuated in both, by the Spirit of God. He tells us, that he hath no Knowledge, how to go about acting Faith. Does he know how to go about to think, or will? Acting Faith is no other than suitable Thoughts of Christ, and a hearty Choice of him, as God's appointed Way of Salvation. But, perhaps, more than was necessary hath been said on this Subject. I go on to consider his next Mistake,

V. That Faith is not, nor can be a Duty. However strange this may seem, it is a just Deduction from the Premises above-mentioned. For, if Faith is not an Act, it cannot be a Duty. If it is an Act, it certainly is a Duty; except it is a Work of Supererogation, which no Protestant thinks it to be. As it is a Principle, no *Calvinist* asserts, that it is the Duty of Men to acquire it. For, they all maintain that it is infused by the Grace of God, and not acquired. And, therefore, Mr. *Johnson* argues *very impertinently*, in observing, that it is not the Duty of Men to beget, or produce, this holy Principle in themselves. The Author, on whom he animadverts, pleads not for that. The *Socinians*, *Arminians*, and *Baxterians* also, who are consistent with themselves, deny, that the Principle is infused in order to the Act. The late Dr. *Watts*, indeed, allowed of the Infusion of the Principle, in order to the Act; which one Thing *utterly overthrows* that conditional Provision of Salvation, which he supposed is made for the *Non-elect*. Because, if the Infusion of the Principle is necessary, in Order to the Act, none can believe before the Infusion of the Principle. And, if God will not infuse that Principle into the Hearts of the *Non-elect*, it is impossible that they should believe. If he will, then they will certainly believe, and their Salvation cannot, be conditional and uncertain; but it must be absolute and certain. Though, it is not the Duty of Men to acquire the Habit of Faith, or to beget and produce that Principle in their Hearts, from which believing Acts spring; yet it is the Duty or those to believe, or act Faith, in whom the Principle is infused.

It is a *false*, and an *unaccountable* Foundation, on which Mr. *Johnson* argues, that Faith is not, nor can be a Duty, *viz.* *That it is not an Act*. If it is not an Act, it is not distinguishable from Hope,

Love, Repentance, or Reverence of God; for all these Graces resolve themselves into one and the same spiritual Principle: They differ not in their Root, though they differ as Acts. He calls Faith *Enjoyment*, and concludes, that it is not *properly*, an Act, because it is Enjoyment. It is true, that when a Saint believes, he enjoys the Divine Presence and Peace, Consolation and Joy, in his Soul; but that is no Proof at all, that the Mind doth not properly act, in a *fiducial* Application to Christ, as a Saviour, and in the Appropriation of his Benefits to itself in particular. But, surely, enough is said on this Matter. And, therefore, I proceed to consider the next Position:

VI. That Faith is not purchased by Christ. This is a Subject of the greatest Importance. For, the Grace. of God the Design of Christ, in his Obedience and Death, and his Merit in both, are to be taken into Consideration. I hope, that I shall not advance any thing derogatory to the Honour of Free-Grace on one hand, nor extenuate the Merit of a dear Redeemer on the other. Sometimes such Phrases are used, relating to this Matter, as are not strictly defensible, as they may be understood. For Instance, it hath been said, that *Christ, procured the Favour of God to Men*. If the Satisfaction of Justice is intend in the Phrase, it is true; but if the good Will, and Love of God, is designed by it, it is a great Mistake. For, the Death of Christ did not procure Divine Love; but is itself the Fruit thereof. God loved his People, and, therefore, he gave his Son to die for them. For which Reason, it would be better not to use such Kind of Phrases. They may possibly beget a mistaken idea in the Minds of some. I am sensible, that several very *worthy* Persons scruple to use the Terms, *purchase*, and *purchased*, concerning Grace, and Glory; but upon a *mature* Consideration of this Point, I cannot but think, that, without the least Prejudice to the Free-Grace of God, they may be allowed of. And, unless I am mistaken, some who scruple the Use of those Terms, do themselves, in other Modes of speaking, convey the very same Idea, as others, who use these Terms, mean by them. As when they say, that Grace and Glory are communicated to us, through the Righteousness and Blood of Christ: Or, on the Foundation of his Obedience and Death: I am persuaded their Meaning is not, that the Righteousness, and Sacrifice of Christ, are *barely Means* of Conveyance. But, that a *legal* Right to Grace and Glory is obtained for us, by Christ's Obedience and Death. Which, if they do, though they are not free to use the Terms, *purchase*, and *purchased*, they mean that, which others do, who use them, on this Subject. And, therefore, it is not the Thought to which they object; but the Words, whereby it is expressed.

It may be, that some Persons, of *less Accuracy*, have mistaken Conceptions herein; and may think, that because God chose his

People, as *unfallen*, or in the *pure Mass*, and gave Grace, and settled the Inheritance of eternal Glory upon them in Christ, as their Representative; that, therefore, all that Christ did, was to remove an Incumbrance, brought by Sin, upon that Grant of Grace and Glory, in him, as a Head. As an Estate may be settled on a Man; but may afterwards be mortgaged, and, therefore, it cannot be enjoyed by him, before that Incumbrance is removed: So some seem to think, that there was a Grant made unto the Elect; of spiritual and eternal Life; but an incumbrance is brought upon that Grant by Sin, and that the Removal of that Incumbrance, is the Whole of what our Saviour did, by his Obedience, and Death.

This, in my Apprehension, is a great Mistake, and is built upon a *false Hypothesis*, viz. That God not only chose his People in the *pure Mass*, but also made a Grant of Grace unto them, and settled, the heavenly Inheritance upon them in Christ, prior to, and without the Consideration of the Fall, and their Ruin thereby; which ought not by any means to be supposed. For two Reasons, one is, if such a Supposition is true, then God altered his Purpose. He first willed, that the Elect should enjoy Grace and Glory without the Fall, and afterwards determined to permit the Fall, and their Ruin by it. The other is, *that* Grace, and *that* Glory, which the Elect receive from God, necessarily suppose the Entrance, or Intervention of Sin; for neither Grace, nor Glory, could be of *that Kind*, which they are, without Sin took place. This, I think, is most clear, and, consequently, the Grant of that Grace and *that* Glory, could not be prior to, or without the Consideration of the Fall.

If this is the true State of the Matter, as, in my humble Opinion it is; then the Elect were not invested with a Right to *evangelical Grace*, and *eternal Glory*, considered as *unfallen*; but as involved in Misery and Ruin by the Fall. Not that Sin is *any Cause* of *that* Grace, and *that* Glory; but it is the Occasion of Divine Goodness displaying itself, in conferring Grace and Glory of *that Kind* upon the Elect, which are, in a way of sovereign Favour communicated to them. The Fall, therefore, did not bring an Incumbrance on that Grant of Grace unto the Elect, and that Settlement of the heavenly Inheritance upon them in Christ; for it was pre-supposed in that Grant, and Settlement. Perhaps, this Point may be more easily conceived by considering the Covenant of Grace, wherein that Grant, and that Settlement, were made. I will, therefore, briefly state it, so far as I apprehend it may serve to set this Affair in a plain and easy Light.

1. In that Covenant God the Father promised Grace and Glory to Christ, for the Elect; or unto them in him on Condition of his doing and suffering, what he, in the Time appointed, did do, and suffer.

2. Christ, on his Part, in this foederal Transaction, agreed and consented to do and suffer all that the Father required of him to do and suffer, in order to the Salvation of the Elect. Therefore,

3. This Covenant, though, as it respects the Elect, it is absolute and unconditional, yet, as it respects Christ, their Surety therein, it is properly conditional, and not absolute.

4. Christ's Performance of the Conditions required of him, brings an Obligation on the Father to fulfill all those Promises, which he made to him upon those Conditions: Or, Right to a Participation of all the Benefits promised, respecting Christ, himself, as Head, and the Elect, as his Members, whom he represented, arises from his Performance of those Conditions. This Right, as to us, is wholly free, and unacquired; but, as it respects Christ, our Surety, it is Matter of Debt, and it was *properly* acquired by him. I add,

5. The Sufferings and Death of our Saviour properly merit, and justly deserve our Pardon, and Impunity. And his Obedience to the Law for us, deserves all that Grace, which we receive in this World, and all that Glory, which we shall enjoy in the next. So that the Remission of our Sins, on the Foundation of Christ's Atonement, is an Act of Justice, as well as an Act of infinite Mercy and Grace. And thus also, the Communication of Grace, and eternal Glory, to the Elect, on the Ground of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to them, is an Act of Justice. For, it is impossible, that greater Glory should be enjoyed by them, than that infinitely valuable Righteousness *properly* merits, or deserves. A *pecuniary* Price was not indeed paid for our Redemption, and Happiness; but a valuable Consideration, both for our Pardon, and eternal Felicity, was given into the Hand of God, in the Characters of a Law-giver and Judge, by our Blessed Lord. And, therefore, thereby he acquired for us a Right unto both. His everlasting Righteousness gives us a *legal* Title to everlasting Life: As his Death gives us a Claim, on the Foot of Right, unto a Freedom from Condemnation, and eternal Death. Our *perpetual* Justification, by his Obedience, is that Foundation, whereon our endless Bliss securely rests. Some seem to think, that when the Saints are in Heaven, they will be justified in the Sight of God, by their own inherent Perfection, and sinless Obedience to the Divine Will. This, I think, is a Mistake; it supposes, that the Righteousness of Christ will not always be the Matter of our Justification before God; but that our perfectly holy Dispositions, and Acts, in the heavenly State, will then be the Matter of our Justification before him. Thus, I think, it will not be. But that, as we shall come to Heaven, by Virtue of Christ's Righteousness imputed to us; so we shall for ever enjoy that happy State, on the Foundation

of the Imputation of that Righteousness to us. *Grace will reign through this Righteousness unto eternal Life.*

Now, when I consider these Things, I am not able to discover any Inconvenience in the Use of the Terms, *purchase*, and *purchased*, concerning Grace, and Glory. If I understand their Import, as used on this Subject, it is only this: That Christ, by his Obedience and Death, obtained for us, a *Right* to Pardon, and a *legal* Title unto the Participation of Grace here, and eternal Glory hereafter. Not that what he did, and suffered, *caused* a Will in God to pardon us, and to bestow Grace and Glory upon us.

The Thought, however, is true, and, I think, the Terms are not *justly* exceptionable. The Thing itself I shall always contend for, as a most important Truth. And I know, that it detracts not at all from the Free Grace of God. For, that is *absolutely* free to us, which cost our Lord *most dear*. As to the Use, or Disuse of the Terms, let others enjoy their Liberty, as they approve, or disapprove of them. Let but the Thing be maintained, that we have a *legal* Right to Grace and Glory, acquired for us, by what Christ did and suffered, I shall be content.

Mr. *Johnson's* Reason against it is of no Weight, *viz.* *Whatever is obtained by Purchase, is procured by the Purchaser from some Hand distinct from himself: But Faith proceeds from Christ, as its native Original.* Faith, on this Subject, is put for the whole Grace of Regeneration, or the regenerate Principle. It is true, that, that Principle is derived from Christ, as a Head of Life, and Influence: Which, I suppose, is what Mr. *Johnson* means. It is also true, that it was the Pleasure of the Divine Father, that all Fulness of Grace and Glory should dwell in Christ, in order to be communicated, by him, to the Elect, who are his Members. And it is equally true, that neither Grace, nor Glory, were to be conveyed unto me Elect by Christ, unless he made *Reconciliation for iniquity*, and *brought in everlasting Righteousness*. These were the Conditions required of him, in order unto the Communication of that Grace, and that Glory, which were deposited in his Hand: And except *he made his Soul an Offering for Sin*, he was not to *see his Seed* Participants of, either Grace, or Glory. His *Right* to bestow, and the *Right* of the Elect to receive spiritual Blessings from him, did not arise *merely* from the Grant of those Blessings to him for them; but from his Performance of those Conditions, on which that Grant was made. This *Right*, therefore, was his *Acquisition*. And that is all, I think, which is intended by the Terms, *purchase*, and *purchased*, when used concerning Grace and Glory. If any apprehend, that they are capable of an *ill* Construction, they are at Liberty, for me, to refrain from the Use of them. For my own Part, I confess, that I think they are not. This I shall *strenuously* insist upon, that *Right* to Grace and Glory

was *obtained* for the Elect, by the Obedience and Death of Christ. And, that no spiritual Blessing is, or ever will be, communicated to them, otherwise than *through* his Righteousness and Blood, not as *Means of Conveyance*, but as *proper meritorious* Causes. The whole Dispensation of Divine Grace, in the everlasting Covenant, is an *irrefragable* Proof thereof. For, all the Grace of that Covenant, as to its Communication, rests upon, and is secured by Christ's Obedience, and Sacrifice. Nor, is the Freeness of the Grace of God, as the Origin of spiritual Blessings, in the least diminished hereby. Because, it was sovereign Favour, which provided that Righteousness, and that Sacrifice, by which our *Right* to Grace and Glory was obtained, and into which it must be resolved. Those who are much acquainted with the Controversy, relating to the Extent of Christ's Death, well know, that *Calvinistical* Writers have urged, with great Advantage, against the Universality of his Death, his *purchasing Faith* thereby, for all those, on whose Account he died. By which they mean, if I understand them, Christ's obtaining a *Right* to Faith, or the Grace of Regeneration, for all those, on whose Account he shed his Blood, and, consequently, he did not die for Men universally; because some Men never believe. Whereas, all shall believe, for whom a *Right* to Faith was obtained by his Death. This Argument, in Favour of the limited Extent of Christ's Death, hath not yet been, nor ever will be answered, by any *Arminian*, or *Baxterian*. This is a Knot, which they cannot untie, therefore they cut it: And deny, that he *purchased Faith*, or obtained a Right to Faith, by what he did, and suffered. This Argument is *solid*, and I am determined never to give it up. For, I am sure, that it is agreeable unto, and is founded on, the whole Dispensation of the Grace of God in the Gospel. And that it is, what gives unto Christ that Glory, which is his Due, as he is *the Lord of our Righteousness*, and the Author of eternal Redemption.

VII. *Mr. Johnson will not allow, that Ministers are commissioned to preach the Law. Our Commission, says he, is not to preach the Law, but the Gospel.* By preaching the Law, or the Gospel, I understand, treating of the Doctrines which belong to either. Now, if preaching the Law is not supposed, and included in our Commission, we have no Warrant to preach it. And if we do, we therein exceed our Commission. Can this be true? Surely, it is not, since our Blessed Lord himself preached the Law. Is not his Sermon on the Mount principally, or at least in great Part, an Explication of the Law? Does he not, therein, shew its Spirituality and Extent? Does he not vindicate it from the false Glosses, which the *blind Jews* put upon its Precepts? And doth he not assert and maintain its Perpetuity? And demonstrate the Equity and Justice of that Constitution? The Apostle *Paul* followed the Example of his great

Master herein. He largely treats of the Law, explains its Nature, asserts its Authority, as a Covenant, and proves, that all Men are in a miserable Condition; because they are justly obnoxious to the Curse of it. Did he herein exceed his Commission? And act a Part, for which he had no Warrant? Can this be thought, since he acted under infallible Direction? Surely it may not be imagined. He preached the Law, as a Covenant to Sinners, in order to their Conviction; he also preached it to Saints, as it is such, that they might clearly see the Greatness of their Misery in themselves, and be excited to adore Divine Favour, which is manifested in their Salvation by Jesus Christ. Again, he preached the Law, as a Rule of Conduct to Believers, and taught them, that they were not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ. And, does he, not, in all his Epistles, discourse of the various Duties, which are incumbent on the Saints, and exhort them to the Practice of those Duties? I ask Mr. *Johnson*, if this was preaching the Law, or preaching the Gospel? He will scarcely say it was preaching the Gospel therefore he must allow, that it was preaching the Law: Or say, that it was preaching neither Law, nor Gospel; but something distinct from both, and he knows not what. This *unskillful* Way of writing is not likely to be of any Service to Evangelical Truths; but highly prejudicial, let it proceed from what Cause soever. Whether Error in Judgment, or Want of due Attention, and through Inadvertency. I am truly sorry, that I have just Occasion for making so displeasing a Remark. I have apprehended, ever since I entered upon ministerial Service, that I ought to preach the Law, as well as the Gospel, and still am firmly of the same Opinion. As I care not at all; by whomsoever I am accounted an *Antinomian*, for preaching the Free Grace of God, as the sole and entire Cause of Salvation, without Works, as Conditions thereof: So I am wholly unconcerned, who may reckon me a *Legalist*, for preaching the Law unto an evangelical End. I know, that all preaching the Law is *legal* Preaching, *materially* considered; but to preach it to Gospel Ends, as Christ, and his Apostles, preached it, is not *legal* Preaching, in the *ill* Sense of that Term.

VIII. *One would think, that Mr. Johnson's Opinion is, that Ministers are not to admonish Sinners to leave their Sins, and amend their Lives.* For he says: *Admonishing Sinners to reform their Lives, to mend their Ways, to practise Virtue and Religion, etc. would not have the least Tendency, to convince, but to reduce them; by causing them to imagine their Salvation depended (depends) on a moral Reformation.* I acknowledge, that Ministers ought by no means to neglect preaching the Gospel, as he observes. I also grant, that in reproofing Vice, and recommending Virtue, *etc.* due Care should be taken, that no Countenance be given unto these Imaginations, *viz.* that a *supernatural* Work on the Heart is not

necessary, and that Men are to be saved by their own Acts of Obedience. And, it is much to be lamented, that many Preachers only act the Part of moral Philosophers, and not that of Christian Ministers. They flatter Men with Hopes of Happiness, by becoming outwardly virtuous, though Lust reigns within. Which is an open Contradiction to the holy Law of God, and the Gospel of Christ also. But what though admonishing Sinners is done in a wrong Manner by some, it don't therefore follow, that it is wrong *in itself*, and is not to be done at all. Elsewhere he allows, that *Repentance, and a moral Reformation, are required of Men every where, and that they have sufficient Encouragement thereunto*. Why, therefore, may they not be exhorted unto such Repentance and Reformation? Perhaps he will say, they may and ought to be. Why then does he here express himself in such a *loose, and unguarded* Way? Which, I think, is not to be reconciled therewith. And, it may be, that he will say also, that he is not against preaching the Law, though that is not his Commission. Since he says, that *our Work is to strike at the Root: To open the Purity and Perfection, Extent and Intent, Perpetuity and Severity of God's holy Law*. If that is not to preach the Law, I am yet to learn, what preaching the Law is. For my Part, I cannot reconcile these Things. It may be, Mr. Johnson can.

I cannot be persuaded to think, as he does, that it is a *very, easy Thing for a carnal Man, to comply with Admonitions, and practise Duties which are recommended to him*. My Opinion of the Corruption of human Nature, prevents my concurring with him in this Thought. I dare to affirm, notwithstanding all the *fine* Things, which are spoken of our reasonable Nature by many, that it is not a very easy Thing for Men to abstain from Vice, and practise Virtue, by reason of the *Impetuosity, and Violence* of those *raging* Lusts, which are in the Hearts of us all, and every one. To what Purpose is it, for any one or us to dissemble in this Case, since all our Hearts are *open* to God, the Judge of all? I am sure, that such is the *Force, Cunning, Deceit, and Treachery* of Lust in the Souls of Men universally, that were it not for those Restraints, which are laid upon it by God, in the wise and holy Dispensation of his Providence, there would be no Decorum, and Regularity, in the Earth. But the whole World would be a *Hell of Confusion*, if Men were left unto the Conduct and Influence of their own Lusts without Restraint. That Order which subsists amongst us, is not owing to the *Easiness* of abstaining from Vice, and practicing Virtue; but unto the wise Constitution, and Settlement of Things, in such Manner, by the great Governor of all, that various Considerations necessarily present themselves to the Minds of Men, which are a Check upon their *furious* Lusts, and *exorbitant* Passions, whereby they are prevented acting, in Instances innumerable, what Lust aims at, and prompts

them unto. And this calls for Thankfulness, and Adoration, from us. For hereunto we owe our Peace, and Safety, through the whole Course of our Lives.

I agree with him, that the Corruption of Nature, and the Penalty due to Men on Account thereof, ought to be represented to them. And the miserable, helpless, and hopeless Condition of every Sinner, (*i.e.* in himself) should be taught and inculcated. That all the natural Virtues, *etc.* of a fallen Creature have Depravity, Imperfection, and Hypocrisy, *etc.* in them, as he says, it is certain; and not only so, but farther, there is nothing of true Holiness in those Virtues. The Impossibility of Salvation to any Soul, any other Way than by the Son of God alone; in whose Righteousness we are justified, and by whose Grace we are sanctified, are Truths of the greatest Moment, and ought to be much insisted on. Nothing inconsistent therewith should ever drop from the Lips of a Christian Minister. But what are all these Things to the Point in hand? Nothing at all, so far as I can perceive. This is no other than telling me, that, as a Preacher, I ought to have a farther View, than promoting an external Reformation in Men. I grant it; but it don't therefore follow, that I am not to aim at, and endeavour to promote that. In my Opinion, no Person is qualified to be a Christian Minister, who knows not how to reprove Vice, and recommend the Practice of Virtue to Men, without giving them Occasion to think, that no more is necessary to Happiness than an outward Reformation, and that Salvation depends on, and is to be secured by their own Works. One who hath not such Skill, may be a *moral Philosopher*; but a *Christian Divine* he cannot be.

SERMON 24

THE BAPTISTS VINDICATED FROM SOME GROUNDLESS CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST THEM BY MR. *ELTRINGHAM,*

IN A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, **'THE BAPTIST AGAINST THE BAPTIST, etc.'**

*WHEREIN He represents them as Erroneous, Persecuting,
Diabolical, and Guilty of Deism.*

A Great deal hath been said, on the Ordinance of Baptism, by many relating both to the Subjects of it, and the Mode of its Administration. And, therefore, it is not to be thought that much new can be offered, on an Argument, which has been so often canvassed. For which Cause, some may think, that I now engage in a needless Undertaking. But, as I have Reasons for it, which are satisfactory to my own Mind, I shall not make the least Apology, for the following Lines.

The Author of a Pamphlet, lately published, intitled, *The Baptist against the Baptist*, etc. proposes to prove, that the Antipaedo-Baptists imagine, that Believers' Baptism, by Immersion, is a Cause of Justification, before God. — That the Mode of Baptism is not dipping, but sprinkling. — That the Antipaedo-Baptists are *sensual, and have not the Spirit*, because they do not admit unbaptized Persons, into Communion with them. — Lastly, that they are Deists, or guilty of Deism. If they are, woe be unto them, and away with them.

I. He undertakes to prove, that the Antipaedo-Baptists think, that Believers' Baptism is a Cause of their Justification, before God. His Opinion is, that this is Dr. Gill's Sentiment. Strange indeed! Who would have thought it? I am persuaded, that no Man, who is acquainted with his Writings, will ever think so, besides Mr. *Eltringham*. Let us see upon what Ground it is, that he imputes this Notion to him. In an anonymous Letter, which he now acknowledges to be his, he observes that *Dr. Gill* says, *a Man is to be justified, in renouncing Infant-Baptism, because it is a human Invention*; which evidently means, a Man is to be vindicated, in renouncing an Error, when he is convinced of it. If Mr. *Eltringham*, cannot distinguish this, from the Justification of a Man's Person, before God, others can and will. But if this will not serve his Purpose, he hath something more to offer, to support his Charge, *viz.* The Doctor says of Baptism, *it is of Use to lead the Faith of God's*

People to his (Christ's) Blood and Righteousness, for Pardon, and Justification. This, no more than the former, proves what he aims at. I will not multiply Words, on a Matter, which is so plain, that no intelligent and attentive Person can mistake upon it, however this Writer came so grossly to mistake herein. The Spirit leads, or directs the Saints efficiently; Ministers direct them instrumentally; and evangelical Institutions, as Means appointed, by Christ, unto that important End, lead, or direct Believers to look unto his Blood and Righteousness, for Pardon, and Justification. That is the Cause of Justification, to which the Believer looks, not that by which he is directed to the Act of looking, which is most easy to be conceived of. I shall only observe, that Mr. *Eltringham*, through Inadvertency, does *infinite Dishonour* to the Blessed Spirit, in calling him *a Mean in conjunction with the Word*. The Holy Spirit is not a Mean in conjunction with the Word; but an efficient Cause, working by the Word. As the Charge of this Error upon us, is without Foundation, it is needlers to consider the Arguments, which are brought, to confute it. I therefore pass to another very *severe* Charge, which he exhibits against us.

II. *He says, that we are sensual, and have not the Spirit, because we do not admit those who differ from us, in the Point of Baptism, into Communion.* This *extremely harsh* Censure, affects only a Part of the Baptists: For some of them, receive such into Fellowship, who are not of their Sentiments, in this Particular. Mr. *Eltringham* is a Member of such a Congregation of Baptists. And, as to those who are not of this Latitude, if they are mistaken in their Apprehensions, I hope they are not sensual and destitute of the Spirit of God. It is great Uncharitableness, to think, merely on this Account, that they are *Mockers, and such as walk after their own ungodly Lusts*. Persons of that Sort only, the Apostle *Jude* intends. This Writer thinks himself unkindly treated, because he hath been charged with Ignorance, Stupidity, etc. But far greater Severity he uses interpretatively, though not intentionally, towards others, who differ from him. A Man may be weak in his Intellects, and, in the Manner of his Arguing, discover much Ignorance, Stupidity, etc. and yet be a real Christian: But *Mockers, and such as walk after their own ungodly Lusts, who are sensual, and have not the Spirit*, they must be utter Strangers to true Christianity. I cannot allow myself to think, that this was his real Intention; but he applies the Apostle's Words, which are plainly expressive of a State of Unregeneracy, unto regenerate Persons, because he is of Opinion, that they have not the Mind of the Spirit, in that Thing, whereof he treats, which if true, they have the Spirit, though not the Mind of the Spirit, in that particular Point. Perhaps, Mr. *Eltringham* himself may not have the Mind of the Spirit, in every thing, which he holds; but because he is

mistaken, in something, and hath not the Mind of the Spirit in all Things, which he believes, it would be *extremely wrong*, on that Account, to say, that he is sensual, and hath not the Spirit. That would be a *sad* Misapplication of the Apostle's Words; whereof he will do well to think.

He presents us with a View of Mr. *Bunyan's* Reasons against making Baptism, a Term of Communion. It must be allowed, that he was a Person of an *extraordinary* Genius, had a *curious* Invention, *great* Grace, and a *large Stock* of spiritual Experience; all which, his various Works abundantly terrify. But it is no Detraction from his real Worth, to say, that he was not *eminently* qualified for *polemical* Writing. I cannot but confess, that I think, there is no Disagreement, between the strict Baptists, and others, who differ from them, respecting the Subject and Mode of Baptism, in this Matter; for both make Baptism a Term of Communion. In that they are fully agreed. Their Difference lies wholly in this: The Baptists, apprehend, that Infant-Baptism is not agreeable, to the Institution of Christ, and, therefore, is invalid. Other Christians think, that the Baptism of Infants, is Christ's Appointment, and, therefore, valid. The latter may admit such into Communion with them, who have been baptized in their Infancy, consistently, with their Opinion, of the Necessity of Baptism, in order to Church-Communion. But the former cannot, because they esteem Infant-Baptism invalid. And, consequently, they ought not to be censured by their Brethren, who agree with them, that Baptism is necessary in order to Church-Fellowship, for denying Communion to those, who will not submit to Baptism, when adult, because they are of Opinion, that Baptism in Infancy is invalid. Their Brethren would act as they do, if they thought Baptism in Infancy invalid. For what Reason, therefore, they should be represented as uncharitable, *etc.* I cannot apprehend, at least by those, who think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion.

Their Mistake can only be this, even in the Opinion of their Brethren, that Infant-Baptism is invalid, and not that Baptism ought to be a Term of Christian Communion: For that is also their Sentiment. Mr. *Bunyan's* Arguments, if they prove any thing, it is this: That Baptism, infant, or adult, ought not to be made a Term of Communion: Or, that Believers, *as such*, ought to be received by a Christian Church, although they were not baptized, in their Infancy, nor are willing to submit to Baptism, upon their Conversion; which cannot be pleasing, either to Paedo-Baptists, or Antipaedo-Baptists, who think, that Baptism is prerequisite to Christian Communion. If *Saints, as Saints*, are to be received, into, Christian Churches, for which *Mr. Bunyan* pleads, then it is not requisite, in order to their

Admission, that they should have been baptized in their Infancy, or when adult, upon a Profession of their Faith. And, indeed, this is the true State of the Care, relating to Communion, *mixt*, or *strict*, *viz.* Whether Persons for, and against Baptism, infant, and adult, may lawfully unite in Christian Fellowship; and not whether such as are for Baptism, in Infancy, and those, who are for Baptism, upon a Profession of Faith, may incorporate together, as a Church. Those of the Paedo-Baptists, who will deny this, are no more for Communion with *Saints, as Saints*, than the Antipaedo-Baptists are, who cannot admit such into their Communion, that have had no other than infant Baptism, because they think that invalid. That Person who will not join in Christian Communion, with a Believer, who hath not been baptized at all, may pretend, that he is for: having Fellowship with *Saints, as Saints*; but his Practice contradicts that Pretence, for he requires something more than true Grace, in order to it, *viz.* Baptism, either infant, or adult.

A due Consideration of these Things, will be sufficient, to prevent an angry Resentment, in unprejudiced Minds, against the Baptists, who cannot join in Christian Communion, with Persons, who have had only infant Baptism, which in their Account is invalid. This Matter hath been improved very much, by many, to their Disadvantage. On account hereof they have been represented, as *narrow, straight-laced*, and *uncharitable*, and as thinking themselves more holy than other Christians: With what Justice it is not difficult to determine. Those, who thus censure them, think, as they do, that Baptism is necessary to Christian Communion, and, therefore, they cannot justly blame them for that. If they are blameable at all, it is for this, *viz.* thinking that Infant-Baptism is invalid: And as to that, they apprehend, that they are very excusable, because Infant-Baptism, in their Opinion, is destitute of scriptural Proof, and is no Institution of Christ.

If our Author hath been *uncivilly* treated, by some of the Baptists, he is, at least, equally severe, in censuring them: For he says, they are *persecuting* and *devilish*. And he supposes them to be inconsistent, because some of them think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and others of them think differently, and, therefore, admit such into Communion with them, who have not submitted to Baptism, upon a Profession of Faith. Herein they are not inconsistent, as Baptists, for they are agreed fully, respecting both the Mode, and Subject of Baptism. Their Difference lies altogether in this: Some of them think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and others of them think it ought not. How this Difference proves, that they are inconsistent, as Baptists, it is beyond the Power of my Understanding, to conceive.

Inconsistency may, I think, be justly objected to those of the Paedo-Baptists, who suppose, that Baptism is an initiating Ordinance, into a visible congregational Church, and, yet, do not admit many, who are by Baptism initiated, into the Church, unto a Participation of its Privileges, as a Church. In what Manner such can clear themselves of Inconsistency, who say, that Infants are initiated into the Church, by Baptism, and yet deny them a Participation of the Privileges, wherewith the Church is invested, into which they are initiated, I cannot tell, If they shall say, that they are not qualified, to partake of those Privileges; I would ask, Why then are they initiated into the Church? Can it be the Mind of Christ, that such should be initiated into his Church, who are unfit to partake of those Privileges, which he hath granted unto the Church? This seems to me wholly improbable. I think this is such a Difficulty, as can no other Way be solved, than by denying, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation, into the Church: And, yet, I am persuaded, that very few, if any, of the Paedo-Baptists, will deny this. Let it be proved to the *strict* Baptists, that Baptism is not an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, and I dare say, that they will quickly prevent all Occasion of those severe Censures, which are passed upon them, by admitting those to Communion, who are not of their Sentiments, in the Point of Baptism. And this may be expected to be done, by the Paedo-Baptists, for their own Sakes; because they do not allow a large Number of such to partake of Church-Privilege, who, they think, are regularly baptized. How that can be reconciled, with their initiating them into the Church, by Baptism, for my Part, I cannot conceive. The *strict* Baptists are uniform, in their Sentiments, and Practice: For, as they think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and that it is an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, they admit all who are initiated into the Church, unto a Participation of its Privileges. But the Paedo-Baptists, though, they think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and that it is an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, yet they do not admit a Multitude, of those, who by Baptism are initiated into the Church, unto a Participation or its Privileges. This is a Fact too notorious to be denied. They initiate Infants, into the Church, by Baptism, and when they have so done, will not allow them to partake of any Church-Privilege. What Uniformity, therefore, is there, in their Sentiments, and Practice? None, as I think, in this Particular.

III. He charges us with the dreadful Guilt of Deism , because we say, that Infant-Baptism, or sprinkling Infants, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is a human Invention. In his Account this is Deism, because he thinks, that the Infants of the Levites were to be sprinkled, by vertue of a Divine Command. I should not use more than two or three Words, on this

Subject, were it not, that I am willing to convince him, of the great Impropriety of his Reasoning on it, if that is possible. We grant, that a Command was given, to sprinkle some of the Levites, with the Water of Purification, but we deny, that they were to be sprinkled in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is essential to Christian Baptism: Neither dipping into, nor sprinkling with Water, without that, is Christian Baptism. And, therefore, we do not deny Revealed Religion, when we affirm, that baptizing Infants is a human Invention: For, that Sprinkling was not Christian Baptism; even on this Supposition, that sprinkling is the proper Mode of the Administration, of that Ordinance; for, the *Form* of Christian Baptism was wanting therein; which *Form*, as I have before said, is *essential* to it. Nor is *Immersion*, into Water, or *sprinkling* with it, Christian Baptism, without that *Form*, viz.

The solemn Pronunciation of the Names of the Divine Persons, in the Administration of it. Besides, Mr. *Eltringham* should have considered, that this was only a Command to sprinkle the Males of the Levites, and not the *Females*: And, therefore, he hath no Command to sprinkle, or baptize female Infants, unless he can produce some other. This is none, Why, then, does he plead for the Sprinkling of female Infants? He tells us, that we *fulfil Unrighteousness, or Sin, in dipping Persons*, when we baptize them, because we have no Command for so doing; and that we act as *Nadab* and *Abihu* did, in offering *strange Fire* to the Lord. Now let him, either produce a Command for sprinkling female Infants, or acknowledge, that he is guilty of that *dreadful Sin*, which he charges us with, and acts just as *Nadab* and *Abihu* acted, when he sprinkles female Infants. I am sure, that the Males of the Levites only, were commanded to be sprinkled. He will do well, when he engages in Controversy again, to reason with more Caution, Perhaps he may, upon a close Review of what he hath wrote, be convinced, that Controversy is more entangling than he once apprehended it to be. Farther, I *flatly* deny, that a Command was given to sprinkle the male Infants of the Levites. God required them, *from a Month old and upward*, to be numbered, with the Adult, even *all the Males* (Numbers 3:15.); and their Number was *twenty and two Thousand, and Threescore and Thirteen* (Numbers 3:43.). Another Command was given to number the male Levites, *from thirty Years old and upward, even unto fifty*, who were to be Assistants to the Priests, in the Service of the Tabernacle: Their Number was *eight Thousand five Hundred and Fourscore* (Numbers 4:47, 48.). This Number, and this Number only, and not the twenty and two Thousand, etc. wherein the male Infants were included, were to be sprinkled with the Water of Purification, by which, and other Rites, they were cleansed, and devoted to sacred Service, as Assistants unto the

Priests. Infants of a Month old, and upward, would have been *but very feeble* Assistants to the Priests, in the Discharge of their Work. The Command to sprinkle the Levites, respected only such of them as were *thirty Years old and upward*, not the male Infants of that Tribe (Numbers 8:22.).

Notwithstanding it was more than a Year, since this Writer, in his anonymous Letter, published this great Mistake, he had not discovered it, when he published this Pamphlet, which is an Evidence, that he had not read the Writings of *Moses*, with that Care and Attention which he ought, though he professes to have, and I believe he hath, a great Veneration for them; for, of his real Piety I have no Doubt. Upon the whole, I think, that we may be fairly acquitted of the Guilt of Deism, or of denying Revealed Religion, though we continue to insist upon it, that Infant-sprinkling is a human Invention, unless Mr. *Eltringham* can produce some other Command to defend that Practice; for, here is no such Command, I am confident. It is very kind in him to express a Desire, that we may be convinced, and repent of that dreadful Sin, which he imputes to us, *without going to Hell*. But I must tell him, that we have no Hope of Repentance there, for, we do not take *Hell* to be *Purgatory*. Whether one, who writes in this Manner, is qualified to engage in Controversy, I will not say, but refer it to the Determination of the Reader.

IV. *This Author asserts, that we are under the Sinai Covenant. If any, says he, should ask me, if we be now under the same Covenant that was delivered or manifested at Horeb? I answer, yes, the very identical Covenant, only differently administered* . I imagine but very few, if any, will assent to this. It is, so far as I know, universally agreed, among Christians, that, that Covenant, is become *rid*, and *vanished*: And, I am sure, if they are mistaken, in this Matter, the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, hath led them into this Mistake, by an express Assertion of it. In my Opinion, a thorough Consideration, of the Nature of that Covenant, may be of *singular* Use to clear up some Points, in Divinity, as well as, serve to let the Subject we are upon, in a proper Light; and, therefore, I will endeavour to explain it, in as full and perspicuous a Manner, as my narrow Limits will allow. And,

1. The whole Body of the *Jews* were taken into that Covenant, regenerate, and unregenerate, even all that were redeemed out of *Egypt*, and the Seed of both, without the least Distinction, or Difference: *I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage* (Exodus 20:1.). The Lord declares himself to be a God to all the *Israelites*, who were the Subjects of this temporal Redemption, to the *graceless* of them, as

well as to those, who were *gracious* among them. This Covenant was made with *the Captains of their Tribes, their Elders, and Officers, even all the Men of Israel, their little ones, their Wives, the Stranger that was in their Camp*, etc. and with their *Posterity*, who were not *present*, as well as with themselves, who were *present* (Deuteronomy 29:10, 11, 12, 13, 14.). It is most clear, therefore, that the unregenerate Part of the *Jews*, were taken into this Covenant, no less than the regenerate among them, and the *Seed of both*. The *Elect*, by virtue of this Declaration, and Covenant, could not claim a further Interest in God, or a Right to superior Advantages, either for *themselves*, or their *Seed*, than the *Non-Elect* might claim for *themselves*, and their *Seed*, by virtue thereof.

2. The Lord, acting in the Character of God to them, required such Obedience from them, as his infinite Perfections, and their absolute Dependence on him, as his Creatures, made it necessary for them to yield unto his holy Will. And, therefore,

3. He published, in their Hearing, the Covenant of *Works*, with very *awful and tremendous* Signs of his infinite Majesty, which struck them with *Amazement and Terror*: Whereupon the People *removed and stood afar off, and said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die* (Exodus 20:18, 19.).

4. God took upon himself, the Person, or Character of a King and Ruler over them, as a Nation: And, therefore, their political State is rightly called a *Theocracy*. And the Laws, which he gave them, were most excellent; calculated to promote his Glory, and their Good, as a Nation. They are usually distinguished into three Sorts, *viz. moral, political, and ceremonial*.

(1.) *Moral* The Laws of this Sort, were summarily comprehended, in the Command to love God, and in the Command to love their Neighbour: Hence our Lord says, *On these two Commandments, hang all the Law, and the Prophets* (Matthew 22:40.): And for this Reason, the Apostle says, that *Love is the Fulfilling of the Law* (Romans 13:10.). By the Publication of this Law, the People were taught, that *perfect Love* to God, and their Neighbour, and those Acts of reverential Obedience, which flow from Love to the Lord, and those Acts of Benevolence, as well as of Justice, which spring from Love to our Neighbour, that their Relation to God and one another, rendered *meet and fit*.

(2.) An excellent System of *political* Laws were given to them, according to which, *every Transgression and Disobedience, received a just Recompence of Reward* (Hebrews 2:2.): But it is to be observed, that a Breach of the moral Law, as it respects the Heart,

did not subject them to Penalty, *as Members of the State*: If that had been the Case, not a Man amongst them, would have enjoyed Life; for, every Individual of them was guilty, and worthy of Death, in that View. Besides, their Judges and Rulers, to whom the Execution of the penal Laws were referred, could not take Cognizance of *internal* Acts; only *external* Acts could fall under their Notice. The Lord, therefore, in governing them, as a *State*, took upon himself, and acted in the Person and Character, of an *external* Ruler: *And*, in the Exercise of Rule over them, as a *Body politic*, he proceeded towards them, as an *external* Governor, and not as the *Heart-searching God*. Hence all their penal Laws, respected *outward*, and not *internal* Acts. Some Breaches of the moral Law, were made capital, and subjected the Offender to Death: As *Idolatry*, *Blasphemy*, *Murder*, etc. Some very *atrocious* Crimes, were not capital: As *Perjury*, and *Uncleanness*, in one Instance. Every Transgression of the moral Law, both *internal* and *external*, subjected them to Death, before God, *as the Judge of all*; but not as an *external* Ruler of that People, as a *State*, and *Body politic*. This Distinction is necessary to be observed, in order to have a clear, and consistent idea, of the *Jewish* Oeconomy.

(3.) A large Body of *ritual* Laws were prescribed, which respected Worship, in great Part: 1. Those Rites were *carnal Ordinances*: The Matter of them was *Flesh*, *viz.* Beasts offered in Sacrifice; and they had no farther Efficacy, than *sanctifying to the purifying of the Flesh*: None of them could *purge their Consciences from dead Works*. 2. *Carnal, unregenerate* Persons, were let apart to officiate in Divine Service. Perfection of *bodily Parts*, and *Freedom from any outward Blemish*, were required, as Qualifications, in their Priests; but *Holiness of Heart* was not (Leviticus 21:17, 18, 19, 20, 21.). Such who were absolutely destitute of true Grace, might lawfully act in that *sacred* Office, and perform all the Parts of religious Service, for the People. And what they did agreeable to Divine Appointment, as to the *Matter* of it, was approved of, by God, in that Character, wherein he appointed those Services, *viz.* that of an *external* Ruler, though not as the *Heart-searching God*, and *Judge of all*. Faith was then necessary, as it is now; unto the Acceptation of religious Services, with the Lord, in that Character: But it was not, in the *former* Character; or in that of an *external* Governor to that People. 3. *Carnal, graceless* Persons were admitted to engage in all Acts of religious Worship, which were required by the *levitical* Law: And their Compliance with; and Practice of, what was commanded, respecting Worship, by the Law of *Moses*, was accepted with God, in the Person, and Character, of an *external* Governor, though their Acts of Worship did not proceed from *spiritual Purity*, and *Holiness of Heart*: Yet they were not approved, by him, in the Character of

the *Judge of all, and the Heart-searching God*; because not performed, in Faith, and from a Principle of Love. *Gracious Persons* did not enjoy any *external distinguishing Privileges*, from *graceless* ones, under the *mosaic Oeconomy*. The unholy among them had the very same Right, unto all external Privileges, as the most holy Persons had.

5. Temporal Blessings *only*, were promised, in this Covenant. None of its Promises rise higher, than this World. Nothing *greater*, and *more noble*, the *Jews* could claim, by virtue of this Covenant, than a safe and peaceable Enjoyment of the good Land (Exodus 20:12.). Neither *Grace*, in this World, nor *Glory and eternal Life*, in the next, were promised therein. Spiritual Pardon, Peace, Adoption, Justification, Regeneration, Grace, and the Perseverance In endless Fruition of God, as the God of all Grace, were not promised in this Covenant. In a Word, *no one Blessing, which springs from electing Love, and which properly belongs to the Covenant of Grace*, was contained, in any of the Promises of the *Sinai-Covenant*. It was made by God, with that People, in the Person, and Character, of an *external Governor*, and, therein, he granted unto them, *only external Privileges and Favours*. *No one Benefit of a spiritual Kind, on the Foundation of that Covenant, could any of that People expect to receive from him*.

6. *Temporal Punishments only* were threatened, and inflicted, for the Breaches of this Covenant. By the Publication of the Moral Law, the *Jews* were taught, that God required *perfect Purity of Heart*, and that all Acts of Sin, as well *internal* as *external*, rendered them worthy of Death, in his Sight, *as the judge of all*. But this Law, was not the Foundation, on which he entered into this Covenant with them, and according to which he proceeded towards them, in the Person, and Character, of an *external Governor*, to them, as a Body politic. If he had so done, they must have been all cut off to a Man; for, every Individual of them was guilty of transgressing that Law, in *Thought, Word, or Deed*, and that *continually*. As he entered into this Covenant with them, in the Character of an *external Governor*, he did not threaten them, therein, with Penalty for the *internal* Actings of Lust but only for the Eruptions of it, in *outward* Acts of Sin: And. that Punishment which he did threaten, was not *eternal*, but *temporary* and *corporal*, or *civil*, viz. *The Sword, Famine, the Pestilence, and Captivity*, as a Nation (Deuteronomy 29.).

7. This Covenant was to remain in Force, *throughout their Generations*; or, so long as they were continued a State, or Body politic; which they were to be until *Shiloh* came, and their Rejection of him. Then, and not till then, their State was to be shaken all to

Pieces, both ecclesiastic and civil: And this Covenant, made with them, as a Nation, was then to be *antiquated*, and *vanish*. This leads me to observe,

8. With respect to its Duration until that Time, it is to be considered, as a *Covenant of Promise*: For, not all the *Idolatry*, *Impiety*, and *Corruption*, which took Place among that *perverse* and *obstinate* People, from Time to Time, could make this Covenant *null*; because its Duration, until the Appearance of the Messiah, among them, relied on, and was secured by, an *absolute* Promise, made to *Abraham*, their Father, that, *in his Seed, all the Families of the Earth should be blessed* which promised *Seed* was *Christ*, as the Apostle tells us expressly (Galatians 3:16.). And, therefore, in the midst of all those desolating Judgments, which were brought, on that People, for their *Idolatry*, *Impiety*, and *Profaneness*, the Lord declared, that he would not *cast them off*, nor *make a full End of them* (Jeremiah 31:37, Chap. 4:27.), or suffer their ecclesiastical and political State to sink. But when the Messiah was come, and they had rejected him, it was foretold, that the Lord would shake the *Earth*, and the *Heaven* (Haggai 2:6. Hebrews 12:26.) of this People, *i.e.* their *political* and also their *ecclesiastical* State, wherein their *chief Glory*, above other Nations, consisted, and whereupon they much valued themselves.

9. The *Covenant of Circumcision made with, or given to Abraham*, was a Prelude to, and the Foundation of, this *Sinai-Covenant*. And they agree in several Particulars:

(1.) All the natural Posterity of *Abraham*, were included, in that Covenant, whether *Elect* or *Non-Elect*, *godly*, or *ungodly*, without any *Distinction*, or *Difference.*, and not only, while they were in a State of *Infancy*, but when they became *adult*. Thus, all the *Israelites* were taken into this Covenant, as well the *ungodly* as the *pious* among them, and they continued therein through Life, though they perished, in their Sins, at Death.

(2.) The Possession of the Land of *Canaan* was promised, in both Covenants (Genesis 17:8. Exodus 20:12.).

(3.) Circumcision was an outward Sign, of an Interest in each, and a visible Token of a Right to the Enjoyment of the good Land Hence those *Jews*, who were born in the Wilderness, whole Circumcision had been neglected, were ordered to be circumcised, before they took Possession of that Land (Joshua 5.).

(4.) Their Duration was of the Same Extent: Each was to continue in Force, *throughout their Generations* (Exodus 40:15. Genesis 17:8, 12.). So long, and no longer, than they subsisted, as a Body politic,

in the Enjoyment of the Land of *Canaan*, were there Covenants to last.

Some useful Observations may be drawn from this brief Account of the *Sinai-Covenant*, as the Covenant of Circumcision made with *Abraham* was a Prelude to it, and the Foundation of it.

1. The Church under the *mosaic* Dispensation was *national*.

2. *Regenerate* Persons, and their *Seed*, did not enjoy any *external* Privileges, under that Oeconomy, unto Which *unregenerate* Persons, and their *Seed*, had not, with them, an *equal Right*, by vertue of this Covenant.

3. It was not an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, with *Abraham*, which gave his *Seed* a Right to Circumcision: For,

(1.) *Ishmael* was circumcised, who was not, with him, included in the Covenant or Grace.

(2.) *Esau* was circumcised, although it was declared, before his Birth, that he was not interested in the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace.

(3.) None of his Posterity might be circumcised, until they were eight Days old. If with him they were included in the Covenant of Grace, and *that* was the Foundation of their Right to Circumcision, it would have been lawful to circumcise them before. This Right arose from a positive Command, in an external Covenant, and not from an Interest with *Abraham*, in the Covenant of Grace.

(4.) Circumcision being deferred unto *adult* Age, did not deprive his Posterity of their Right to it, though it was a sinful Neglect of their Parents (Joshua 5.). Now, it can't be thought, surely, that the Body of the *Israelites*, who were born in the Wilderness, and had arrived to *adult* Age, and who were in a State of Unregeneracy, were, with him, included in the Covenant of Grace: Yet, they all had, even then, a Right to Circumcision, and accordingly were circumcised.

(5.) His *Bond-Slaves*, and every Male born in his House, though not of his *Seed*, were to be circumcised, who cannot be justly thought to have, with him, an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, and, consequently, their Right to Circumcision, did not arise from an Interest in that Covenant: Wherefore, the Covenant of Circumcision, was not the Covenant of Grace; but it was the Foundation, of that Covenant, which God entered into, with the *Jews*, as a Nation, at Mount *Sinai*, wherein no one Blessing, which is proper to the Covenant of Grace, was promised.

4. The *Sinai-Covenant* was both *conditional* and *absolute*, though not in the same Respect. *External Obedience* to its Laws, was required of the *Jews*, as a Condition of the safe and peaceable Enjoyment of the good Land (Exodus 20:12.): But the Duration of their political and ecclesiastical State, until the Appearance of the Messiah, amongst them, and their Rejection of him, was *absolutely* promised (Genesis 49:10.). And it is to be observed, that the Promise of the Messiah, did not properly belong to this Covenant, but the Continuance of their civil and ecclesiastical State, until his coming was absolutely promised therein (Nehemiah 1:9; Deuteronomy 30:4.). And for this Reason, notwithstanding all their dreadful Impiety, and Wickedness, they were continued a Body politic, and in the Enjoyment of the good Land, until that Time. Thus, this Covenant endured throughout their Generations (Leviticus 7:36.).

5. By this Covenant that Nation was separated, from all other People, in the Earth, unto the Worship of God, according to his own Appointment, as to the Mode of it. On this Account they are called a *holy People*, even the whole Body of them. And, because their Descendants were taken into this Covenant, and thus separated to the Lord, from others, of the human Race, in their successive Generations, they are claimed by him, as his own, being born unto him, and are called a *holy Seed*, even though their Parents were *ungodly*, and of profligate Lives (Ezekiel 16:20; Ezra 9:2.).

6. *External Obedience*, without Holiness of Heart, gave them the Denomination of *just* and *righteous*, before God, as an *external Governor*, and entitled them to his Favour and Protection, in that Relation and Character, though not as the Judge of all (Deuteronomy 6:25.).

7. An Interest in the Covenant of Grace, was not the Foundation, whereon any, under the *mosaic* Dispensation, had a Right to those *external Privileges*, which were then granted to the Church. The Right of the godly to those Privileges, was founded on this national Covenant, by vertue whereof, the ungodly among them had the very same Right to all *external Privileges*; which they could not have had, if that Right afore from an Interest in the Covenant of Grace.

8. Many were saved, under that Covenant; but none were saved by vertue of it: For, eternal Salvation was not contained in it, nor promised to any by it.

9. This Covenant, in my humble Opinion, is *improperly* called a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace; because it contained none of its Promises, nor did it exhibit any of its Blessings, except in *Figure*, and by way of *typical* Representation only; which, I think, is not a sufficient Foundation for calling it a Dispensation of the Covenant

of Grace. *The Law*, or this whole Covenant, taken together, *had only a Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Image of the Things* (Hebrews 10:1).

10. The Blindness of the *Jews* was exceedingly great, who expected Salvation, by virtue of this Covenant. This was their *fatal* Mistake, and that Ground, on which they rejected the Messiah, unto their utter Ruin, as a Nation, and Body politic.

11. The Deists are *very stupid*, in denying, that Moses, and the Prophets, were inspired of God, who predicted, agreeably to the Nature of this Covenant, what would be the State of the *Jews*, for so many Ages, and the dreadful Catastrophe, of that People, when it should cease, upon the Rejection of the Messiah. I fear not to say, that Man is a *Fool*, and to be despised, let him be who he will, that is capable, of calling in question, the Divine Authority, of the Writings of the Old Testament.

12. The *Arminians*, and *Baxterians*, act *impertinently*, in pleading, for the Conditionality of Salvation, or Justification, by our own Obedience; — for the Power of Free-Will, to chuse what is spiritually good; — and for a *final* Defection from Faith, from those Addresses of the Prophets, to the People of the *Jews*, which are founded on, and are adapted wholly to the Nature of this Covenant, made with them, as a Nation; for, no Respect was had therein, unto eternal Salvation.

13. This Covenant is antiquated, and vanished. Those Generations, are long since gone, with whom it was to continue in force. It entirely ceased with the Jewish, ecclesiastical and political State. There is, therefore, a Change, of the Times, Place, and Mode of religious Worship, and of the Persons, who are to officiate in Divine Service, for the Edification of the Church. The *Jews*, now, have no Ground to claim the Favour and Protection of God, on the Foundation of this Covenant: It is, absolutely, at an End: Nor are they a People separated to God, from others, as their Ancestors were, by vertue of it, though they still remain distinct from others, to answer those holy and wise Designs, which are had in view, in another and *better* Covenant, respecting them, *i.e.* the Elect among them, in the Time appointed of God. And, therefore, it is a Proof of the wretched Blindness of that People, to address the Lord, in their Devotions, as *their* God, and the God of their Fathers, than which, nothing is more frequent with them. Nor is the Cessation of this Covenant, any Reflection on the Wisdom of God, as Mr. *Eltringham* seems to think it is, for his holy Ends, in that Covenant, were fully answered, before the Antiquation of it: And what Mr. *Eltringham* can mean by asserting, that we are under this *very identical*

Covenant, I am not able to conceive, unless his Design is to introduce the whole *Jewish* Oeconomy, and to subject us unto that *servile* State, which is entirely inconsistent with Gospel-Liberty.

Lastly, The Argument for Infant-Baptism, drawn from the Right of Infants to Circumcision, even on this Supposition, that Baptism succeeds Circumcision, is invalid. Be it so, *that*, that is true, (this is a Point I will not now contest) yet, Is no Proof at all, that Infants have a Right to Baptism. That is taken for granted, in the Argument, which is not proved, but begged, *viz.* that there is an *external* Covenant, under the present Dispensation, as there was under the former, in which Children, with their Parents, are included, that gives them a Right to Baptism, at least. This, as yet, is only begged, not proved. Let Proof be given of it, and we will instantly yield the Cause to our good Brethren, who differ from us. It was not an Interest in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, which gave the Infants of the *Jews* a Right to Circumcision, but their Interest in an *external* Covenant. And, therefore, if there is not, under this Dispensation, an *external* Covenant, unto which Baptism belongs, and into which Children, with their Parents, are taken, that cannot be a *solid* Proof of their Right to Baptism, even though it should be granted, that Baptism came in the Room of Circumcision. That the Right of *Abraham's* Seed to Circumcision, did not arise from an Interest with him, in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, it is most clear: For, *Ishmael* was not included with him therein; nor was *Esau*; yet, both had a Right to Circumcision: And all the Posterity of *Jacob* had a Right thereunto, even though the greater Part of them were not interested in that *internal* Covenant. Besides, all the *Israelites*, even in *adult* Age, had a Right to Circumcision, though destitute of the Grace of the *internal* Covenant, and never partook of it. Hence, those who were born in the Wilderness, and were not circumcised in their Infancy, they were circumcised in *adult* Age. The *graceless* among them had the very same Right to it as the *gracious* Part of them had (Joshua 5.): And, therefore, it could not be an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, which was the Foundation of that Right: Nor, could the Covenant of Circumcision be the Covenant of Grace. I suppose, that it will be granted, that all who were circumcised were within the Covenant of Circumcision. Many *ungodly* Persons, in *adult* Age, were circumcised, who it cannot be thought were under the Covenant of Grace, and, consequently, the Covenant of Circumcision was not the Covenant of Grace, but *another* and *distinct* Covenant from that: A Covenant *external*, and not *internal*, as that Covenant is. According to the Reasoning of our Brethren, on this Subject, if a Parent is converted, when he hath several Children, I will suppose two, one thirteen Days old, and another thirteen Years old, both have an equal Right to

Baptism with himself. *Ishmael*, who was thirteen Years of Age, was taken with *Abraham*, his Father, into the Covenant of Circumcision, and was circumcised, as well as himself. And, therefore, if Children, with their Parents, are taken into the Covenant of Grace, and for that Reason have a Right to Baptism, then, as *Abraham's* Seed were, with him, taken into the Covenant of Circumcision, and *Ishmael* was circumcised, for that Reason, who was thirteen Years old, in the Care supposed, a Child of a believing Parent, who is thirteen Years old, hath the very same Right to Baptism, as his Child hath, who is but thirteen Days old.

Let me further suppose, a Baptist, who hath several Children, to be convinced of his reputed Mistake, that his Seed have not a Right, with him, to Baptism; in that Case, according to the Arguing of our Brethren, a Child of his, who is twenty Years of Age, hath the same Right to Baptism as his Child hath, who is not more than a Week old: For, the Command in the Covenant of Circumcision, though it required Infants, eight Days old, to be circumcised, yet it did not limit Circumcision to Infancy; if it had, *Ishmael* would not have been circumcised, nor would those *Israelites* have been circumcised, who were born in the Wilderness, whole Circumcision, in their Infancy, was neglected, by their Parents. If the Covenant of Circumcision is to be the Rule of forming a Judgment, who have a Right to Baptism, then not only Infants, but such who are past the State of Infancy, have a Right to Baptism, although they have not a Divine Faith. But what Need was there for me to say this? Our Brethren, themselves, do not think, that the Covenant of Circumcision is to be such a Rule, though they argue for Infant-Baptism, from it: For they, at least many of them, require more than an *external* Profession of Christianity, in the Parents of those Children, whom they admit to Baptism, wherein they certainly depart from that, which is the Ground of their Plea, for their Practice; because the Covenant of Circumcision, required nothing more, than an *outward* Profession of *Judaism*, in the Parents of those Children, who were admitted to Circumcision. That which will defend them, in refusing to baptize the Children, of such Parents, who only make an *outward* Profession of Christianity, so far, at least, as Infant-Baptism is pleaded for, from the Covenant of Circumcision, will also defend us, in refuting Baptism, to the Infants of *real* Believers. For, nothing can defend their Practice, but a Denial, that the Covenant of Circumcision is to be a Rule to us, in forming a Judgment, who are the proper Subjects of Baptism; which Denial would effectually defend us, and condemn their own Practice, at least, the Practice of many of them; even of all such who refuse to baptize the Infants of *nominal* Christians. The Argument for Infant-Baptism, drawn from the Right of Infants to

Circumcision, either proves, that the Infants of all who *barely* believe the Truth of the Christian Religion, have a Right to Baptism, or it cannot prove that the Infants of *godly* Parents have a Right to it; which, I think, is not allowed by our Brethren, in general. In a Word, if there is not an *external* Covenant, that is *distinct* from the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, unto which Christian Baptism belongs, the Right of Infants to Baptism can never be proved, from their supposed Interest, with their Parents, in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace; because an Interest in that *internal* Covenant, is not the Ground of that Right. The Right of Believers themselves to Baptism, does not arise from their Interest in the Covenant of Grace, but from a *positive Command* of Christ, who is the Head of the Church. The *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, never did give any Persons a Right to *external* Privileges, of a religious Nature. The Foundation of that Right always was, and ever must be, a *positive Command* of God, or an *external* Covenant, wherein those Privileges are granted. And, consequently, though we should allow, to our Brethren, that the Infant-Seed of Believers are interested in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, their Right to Baptism cannot be proved, without a *positive Command*, or an *external* Covenant, now subsisting, wherein that Right is conveyed, both to themselves and their Infant-Seed. When such a Command for Infant- Baptism is produced, or Proof given of an *external* Covenant subsisting, wherein a Right to Baptism is conveyed unto Infants, I will immediately become a Proselyte, to our Brethren, in this Matter. But I must beg their Excuse, in not granting, that their Argument, for Infant-Baptism, taken from a Covenant, which long since ceased, is *solid*, and *just*. I will not, upon this Occasion, dispute about the Interest of their Infant-Seed, in the Covenant of Grace; because, they may be interested therein, and yet have no Right to Baptism: For, that Right arises not from an Interest in the Covenant of Grace. This is what I shall insist on, until clear Proof is given of the Contrary, which hath not yet been given, and, I think, never will be. If they can maintain the Stability of the Covenant of Grace, consistently with their Opinion of the Interest of their Infant-Seed, therein, they may quietly enjoy that Opinion, without the least Prejudice to that for which I contend, or the least Advantage to the Cause of Infant-Baptism, for which they are Advocates. Their Business, on this Subject, is to do two Things:

One is to prove, that an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, is the Foundation of a Right to Baptism: The other is to demonstrate, that the Infant-Seed of Believers, are interested therein. Until they give a Proof of the *former*, on this Occasion, I will have no Contention concerning the *latter*. Nor is there any Reason why I should: For, if

the *former* cannot be proved, it is needless, as to this Thing, to dispute about the *latter*.

V. *The Author puts in a short Plea for Infants. So much for the Ceremony, says he; now for the Substance (he means the Subject) of Baptism: Let me put in a Plea for my dear Brethren Infants; it is Ezekiel 36:25. Then*

will I sprinkle clean water upon you. He grants this is to be understood of the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit; and says, *the Sanctifying of the Spirit, and this one Baptism, are one and the same Thing*. This is very extraordinary Reasoning, if it may be called Reasoning. His Meaning is, the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit is the Ordinance of Baptism. And, *as Infants are capable of being sanctified, by, the Spirit, they are to be baptized*: For the Proof of which he refers us to Numbers 8:7. As to that, it hath been before proved, that Infants were not included, and that *adult* Persons only were commanded to be sprinkled. He hath not yet produced a Command to sprinkle Infants, under the *Law*, or under the *Gospel*: And I think, that he will never be able to produce such a Command, either in the *Old* or *New* Testament. This Plea, for his dear Brethren, Infants, as it is short, so it is *invalid*, and absolutely groundless. On this Occasion, I will consider the Arguments, which are urged, by some others, in favour of Infant-Baptism, particularly by Dr. *Ridgley*, whom I cannot mention, without paying Respect and Honour to his Memory, having had the Advantage and Pleasure of his *improving* Conversation, as well as of his *solid* Labours, from the Pulpit, and the Press, though I cannot but differ from him, in this, and in some other Points also. And,

1. The Doctor observes, that *Baptism is an Ordinance of Dedication; That Parents may devote their Children to God in Baptism, provided they can do it by Faith.*

Ans. I freely grant, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Dedication: And also, that it is the Duty of Parents, to devote, or dedicate, their Children to God. Nor is it to be questioned, whether pious Parents devote them to the Lord, or not for, doubtless they do, by solemn and earnest Prayer, in their Behalf; even such godly Parents, as dare not dedicate them, in Baptism, because, they think, that they have no Warrant for that. As *Hannah* lent, or gave up, her little Son *Samuel* to the Lord, for ever, wherein, it may be, there was something *extraordinary*, and which cannot be supposed to be in *common* Cases, because *Samuel* was to be engaged in *ministerial* Service, whereon her Faith was acted, under Divine Direction: Yet, I say, as she gave him up to the Lord, to be his for ever, so godly Parents give up their Children to God, in solemn Prayer, and desire nothing, so

much, as that they may partake of Grace, by which they may fear and serve him, in this World, and be fitted for the Enjoyment of him, in the next. And this is their indispensable Duty. But I deny, that they may lawfully dedicate their Children in Baptism, for this plain Reason; Baptism is a Branch of instituted Worship, and not included in the Duty of the Dedication of ourselves, or ours, to the Lord: But this Manner of Dedication is of positive Appointment, and, therefore, the Divine Command, respecting this Manner of Dedication, is to determine us, who are to be dedicated, after this Sort; and by that Command only are we to be determined, in this Matter; because it is not inferrible, from the Duty of Dedication, in general, but is founded on a positive Injunction. And, since God hath no where commanded Parents, in this Manner, to dedicate their Children to him, in so doing they act without his Authority, which they ought not to do, in any Instance. Whatever Degree of Faith and Hope, a believing Parent, may have of the Salvation of his Child, which he dedicates to God, that does not make it lawful for him to dedicate it, in Baptism, because that is a Branch of instituted Worship, and, therefore, it ought not to be performed, upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, whereby this Branch of Christian Worship is instituted, which Infants are not. Let it once be proved, that they are, and this Dispute will be at an End. The Duty of Believers to devote themselves to God in Baptism, does not arise from their being Subjects of true Grace, but from a Divine Command, in that Manner to dedicate themselves to him: For, without a Command, requiring it of them, it would be an Act of Will-Worship in them. And, as they have no Command to dedicate their Children to God, in Baptism, their Dedication of them, in this Manner, or in this solemn Act of instituted Worship, is absolutely without Divine Authority, and unlawful. How much soever, therefore, their Faith and Hope may be acted, respecting the Salvation of the Child, who is dedicated to God, Faith cannot be acted, relating to the Manner of its Dedication, in Baptism, because it is done without any Warrant from God. No uncommanded Act of Worship can be performed in Faith, nor be a Branch of the Obedience of Faith. Such is the Baptizing of Infants.

2. The learned Man says, *The Right of the Infant-Seed of Believers to Baptism, may be farther proved, from their being capable of the Privileges signified therein.*

Ans. I freely grant, that they are so: And the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers are also capable thereof; if not, they cannot be saved: Which is what, I hope, none will think is true. This Argument, therefore, as much favours the Baptism of the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers, as the Infant-Seed of Believers. The Infant-Seed of

both, are capable of having regenerating Grace, and of being discharged of the Guilt of original Sin, which are those Privileges the Doctor mentions. None will deny, that Infants are capable of those Privileges, who think them capable of Salvation. But I absolutely deny, that this Capacity gives them a Right to Baptism, for this clear Reason; Baptism is a solemn Act of instituted Worship, and, therefore, it is not to be performed upon any Subject, who is not included in that Command, by which this Act of religious Worship is instituted. Until, therefore, Proof is given, that Infants are included in that Command, whereby Christian Baptism is enjoined, which is not yet done, I shall strenuously insist on it, that baptizing them is an Act of Will-Worship, or not commanded by God. The Right of Believers themselves to worship God, in a Submission to Baptism, does not arise from their Faith, but from his Command, which requires this solemn Act, or Mode of Worship, from them. It is certain, that Baptism is a Privilege; but that is not the only Idea we are to have of it, nor, indeed, is it the first and chief: It is an Act of solemn Worship; which latter Idea seems not to be regarded, as it ought to be, in those Debates which are had about a Right to it, as it is a Privilege. This is wholly neglected, by the learned Man, in his Discourse upon it; which is a very great Defect. We ought first to consider it as an Act of Worship, and enquire upon whom God requires this Act of Worship to be performed; for, that is the only true Way of determining who they are that have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege. Those, and only those, have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom God hath commanded it to be performed, as an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am sure, either of Unbelievers, or Believers! but Believers only. All those Arguments brought to prove the Right of Persons to Baptism, as a Privilege, which are irrespective of it, as it is an Act of solemn Worship, must be inconclusive; because, none can have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege, but those on whom God requires it to be performed, as an Act of Worship. And, of this Nature are all the Arguments, which the learned Man produces, to prove the Right of Infants to it, as it is a Privilege. He does not consider it at all, as it is an Act of Worship. Nor is this great Neglect in him to be wondered at; for, if he had done that, it would have effectually enervated the Force of his Arguments to prove the Right of Infants to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, unless he could have proved, that God requires it to be performed upon them, as it is an Act of Worship. He adds,

3. *It appears, that the Infant-Seed of Believers are to be consecrated, or devoted to God, in Baptism, because they are included in the Covenant wherein God has promised, that he will be a God to his People, and to their Seed; who are, upon this Account, stiled holy .* By this Covenant, he understands the Covenant of

Circumcision, made with, or given to *Abraham*, and refers to it. I admire the great Caution, which he uses, in his Mode of speaking, on this Subject, that he might not give any Advantage to those, who advance Doctrine which is inconsistent with the Stability of the Covenant of Grace. The Doctor does not say, as some have said, that this Covenant was the Covenant of Grace; nor, that the Seed of Believers, are, with them, included in the Covenant of Grace. All he pleads for, is an *external Covenant-Relation*; not a Title to the saving Blessings of the Covenant of Grace; which external Covenant-Relation, and a Right to external Privileges, on that Foundation, were true, of all the Descendants of *Abraham*, in the Line of *Jacob*, Elect and Non-Elect, and that not only while they were in a State of Infancy, but when they arrived to *adult* Age; yea, through their whole Lives, though they never partook of any Blessing, which is promised in the Covenant of Grace. And, this external Covenant-Relation gave them the Denomination of *holy*, when they were *adult*, although they were absolutely destitute of *internal spiritual Purity* (Ezra 9:2.). This Argument, therefore, no more proves the Right of the Infant-Seed of Believers, to Baptism, than it proves the Right of the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers, to that Ordinance; for, the Seed of both had the Honour of standing in this external Covenant-Relation, and had. the very same Right unto all external Privileges; on that Foundation. Let it once be proved, that there is now an external Covenant subsisting, which gives a Right to the Seed of Believers unto the external Privileges, which are granted to the New Testament-Church, as there was an external Covenant, which gave the *Jews*, in common, a Right to external Privileges, and we will make no further Opposition on this Head. The Doctor argues, that *the Children of Believers are called holy*, 1 Corinthians 7:14. and by that, he thinks, is meant, that *they are included in the external Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace*: Upon which I observe,

(1.) Here is nothing *peculiar* to the Infant-Seed, or that belongs to the Children of Believers, while they are Infants, and which may not be said of them when they are past their Infant-State: And, therefore, they are not *unclean*; in the Apostle's Sense, when they are *adult*, even though they remain in an unregenerate State. And, consequently,

(2.) If this *Holiness*, which stands opposed to *Uncleanness*, gives the Children of Believers a Right to Baptism, it is as lawful to baptize them, when they are part the Age of Infancy, on that Foundation, as it is while they are in their Infant-State.

(3.) The Children of *nominal* Christians are included in (or are under, which, I think, is the same) the external Dispensation of the

Covenant of Grace, yet, our Brethren will not allow, that they have a Right to Baptism.

(4.) The Sanctification of the unbelieving Husband, and of the unbelieving Wife, is to be understood in a *civil*, and not in a *religious* Sense.

(5.) The Apostle does not say, that the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the Faith of the believing Wife, or on account of her Faith, but barely this; that he is sanctified by his believing Wife, without assigning her Faith as the Cause of that Sanctification.

(6.) The Holiness of the Children is not inferred from the Faith of the believing Parent, but from the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent, by the believing one. *And*, therefore,

(7.) The *Holiness* of the Children is not to be understood in a higher Sense than the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent is, from which that Holiness is inferred. The *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent does not mean a Right to evangelical Privileges, in consequence of the Faith of the believing Parent; nor does the *Holiness* of the Children intend a Right to those Privileges, in consequence of the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent, by the believing one. This *Sanctification*, and this *Holiness*, are to be taken in a *civil*, not in a *religious* sense. This, I think, will clearly appear, if the Design of the Apostle is duely considered: For,

(8.) That is to prove, that the believing Wife ought not to depart from her unbelieving Husband, and that the believing Husband ought not to put away his unbelieving Wife; because Faith, neither, in one, nor in the other, dissolves their conjugal Relation, or renders it unlawful for them to cohabit together, in the matrimonial State; which was the Point that the *Corinthians* wanted Information about. They scrupled the Lawfulness of a Believer cohabiting with an Unbeliever, in a married State, and were inclined to think, that a believing Wife might depart from her unbelieving Husband, and that a believing Husband might put away his unbelieving Wife. To rectify this Mistake, the Apostle very *appositely* observes, that the unbelieving Husband is *sanctified* by the believing Wife, and that the unbelieving Wife is *sanctified* by the believing Husband; whereby is meant, that which united them together, as Husband and Wife, and rendered it lawful for them to dwell together, as such; which was not Faith, but the Act of taking the Man for a Husband, and the Act of taking the Woman for a Wife. Now, as this Scruple wholly respected the believing Wife, and the believing Husband, it was *strictly* proper to observe the Act of the believing Party, rather than the Act of the unbelieving Party, by which the Marriage-Relation was constituted;

and to show, that Faith did not free the believing Party from that Obligation, which arose from her own, or his own voluntary Act, previous unto it. As a Servant is not freed from his Obligation to his Master by becoming Believer; so Wife, or a Husband, is not freed from that Obligation, by becoming a Believer, she is under, as a Wife, or he is under, as a Husband; and, therefore, it is not lawful for the believing Wife to depart from her unbelieving Husband, nor for the believing Husband to put away his unbelieving Wife. This is plainly the Apostle's Sense; and he enforces it, by observing, *Else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy*: That is to say, they are not *spurious*, but *legitimate*; because your Marriage-Relation still continues, and it is lawful for you to cohabit together, as Wife and Husband, and as Husband and Wife, notwithstanding one of you remain in a State of Unbelief.

(9.) Whatever may be understood, by that Holiness, which the Apostle attributes to Children, it cannot give them a Right to Baptism, if they are not such Subjects as Christ requires that solemn Act of Worship to be performed upon; which Infants are not, I am sure. None but those can have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom he requires it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship. And, therefore, since he hath not commanded that Ordinance to be performed upon them, as it is an Act of Worship, they cannot justly be supposed to have a Right unto it, as it is a Privilege. As the Command given to baptize, limits the Administration of that Ordinance to Ministers, so it confines it to such, who are described in the Commission, to baptize, which Dr. *Ridgley* grants are *Believers only*, or such *as are taught*: For, the Reason of both is the same. None may lawfully baptize, but Ministers, because the Command to administer Baptism is given to them, and to them only; and none but such as are taught may lawfully be baptized, because their Commission to perform this solemn Act of Christian Worship, only authorises them to perform it upon those who are first taught. If the Commission does not confine Baptism, to that Sort of Persons, who are mentioned therein, how can it limit the Administration of it to Ministers? Why may not a *Midwife*, in a Case of Necessity, baptize a Child? for which the Papists plead. Mr. *Eltringham*, indeed, hath a very *uncommon* Way of reasoning, which, if allowed, will prove, that every Man, and every Woman, may both preach and baptize. It is this: *All Duty belongs to the Law: All Men are under the Law: Therefore, what is the Duty of one, is the Duty of all*. Women, as well as Men, are under the Law, and, therefore, it is the Duty of Women, to preach and baptize, as much as it is the Duty of Men. This is a *notable* Argument, in favour of Women's Preaching; for which the *Quakers*, if they are not ashamed of it, may do well to give him their Thanks.

4. The learned Doctor argues for the Right of Infants to Baptism, from its being an *initiating Ordinance, as Circumcision was, under the legal Dispensation: And, that as Infants were devoted to God, by Circumcision, then, so they are, now, to be devoted to him, by Baptism.*

Ans. 1. This Argument proves too much, if it proves any thing, viz. That the Infants of *nominal* Christians have the same Right to Baptism as the Infants of *real* Believers have, which he would not allow a His Caution here also is remarkable; for, though he speaks of Baptism as an initiating Ordinance, yet, he does not say, into what Infants are initiated by it: Whether it is the Covenant of Grace, or the Church. The former, indeed, he could not say, because he had before pleaded for their Right to Baptism, from their being included in the Covenant, wherein God has promised to be a God to his People, and to their Seed: Nor even there does he assert, *that*, that Covenant is the Covenant of Grace; so very great was his Caution, lest he should give any Advantage to those, who advance Doctrines, which are incontinent with the Stability of the Covenant of Grace. And, by declining to say, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation into the Church, he was not obliged to acquaint us, whether Infants are initiated into a *national*, or *congregational* Church. The New Testament-Church, he well knew, is not *national*: And, he did not care to say, that Infants are, by Baptism, initiated into a *congregational* Church, I suppose, because he could not allow, that they have a Right to those Privileges, which Christ hath granted to such a Church: And, therefore, he *barely* speaks of Baptism, as an initiating Ordinance, without letting us know into what Infants are initiated by it. 3. If Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation into the Christian Church, as Circumcision was into the *Jewish* Church, and Baptism succeeds Circumcision, as it was such, then Infants ought not to be baptized, because they are not fit Materials for a Christian Church, nor have any Right to those Privileges, which Christ hath granted to it, for Edification, and spiritual Improvement. 4. Without Circumcision, none might lawfully join with the *Jewish* Church, in any external Acts of Worship. *Circumcision in the Flesh*, though *not of the Heart*, was required, in order to that (Ezekiel 44:7, 9.): But Baptism is not required, in order to enjoy the Advantages of attending on that Worship, which is performed in the New Testament-Church; if it was, the Children of Unbelievers, not being baptized, could not be allowed that Advantage; which is what, I think our Brethren will not agree to. 5. The Infants of ungodly Parents were initiated into the *Jewish* Church, by Circumcision; why therefore, may they not be initiated into the Christian Church, by Baptism, if that succeeds Circumcision as an Ordinance of Initiation? 6. Christian Baptism is a very *solemn* Act of Worship,

which Circumcision was *not*; and, therefore, though it should be granted, that it succeeds Circumcision, as an *initiating* Ordinance, it will by no means follow, that Infants have a Right to Baptism, because they had a Right to Circumcision; for this clear Reason: No Act of religious Worship may be performed, upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, by which that Act of Worship is instituted. Infants are not included in the Commission, which Christ gave his Disciples, to baptize; and, consequently, it is not lawful to perform that Act of religious Worship on them. I am determined not to take any Advantage of our Brethren; but will allow them their Reasoning, as far as can fairly be expected, which I may do, without the least Prejudice to the Cause, wherein I am engaged, if they cannot prove, that Infants are included in the Command, by which Baptism was instituted, they will never be able to prove, that they have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege: For, those only have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom Christ hath commanded it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am sure; but only such as are *taught*. Thus much in answer to those Arguments, which Dr. *Ridgley* brings to prove, that the Baptism of Infants is lawful. I hope they may be allowed to be sufficient and full.

5. I will now consider another Argument for Infant-Baptism, which a learned Man thinks, is by *far the most solid*. It is this, as he states it: *All the Infants of all Believers, during Infancy, are in a relative State of Grace, in their Parents, by a certain special Oeconomy, or Appointment, of God. By the State of Grace, I understand, says he, a Right unto the Benefits of Grace and Glory, and, therefore, unto Remission of Sins, Sanctification, and Glorification, or eternal Life: Yet he apprehends, that they do not actually partake of these benefits, while they are in this relative State, but upon its being changed into an absolute State; which Change is either by Death, or the Use of Reason. Those whom Death removes in this relative State of Grace, they must all necessarily pass into an absolute State of Grace. Hence, as many Infants of Believers as die in Infancy, none excepted, are blessed with Grace and Glory, and so are saved, the relative State of Grace being graciously changed into an immortal and absolute one.* Of this Opinion was the late learned Dr. *Watts*, which he delivers in his *Ruin and Recovery*. In my Answer to that Book, I did not take it into Consideration, because I thought it not a proper Place: But, as I have Reason to think, that this Sentiment obtains, and this Occasion offers for an Examination of it, I will now attend unto the Consideration thereof. *Venema* observes, that *when Children come to the Use of Reason, the Relation to God by their Parents ceases, and they no longer enjoy a Right to the Benefits of Grace and Glory, on that Foundation, by which they*

enjoyed it through their Infant-State. A new Dispensation of Grace takes Place with the Adult, which, under the Condition of Faith and Repentance, conveys, not only a Right, but also the Benefits themselves: Wherefore, Infants who after embrace Christ with a sincere Affection, are brought into an absolute State of Grace: On the Contrary those whose Minds are alienated from Christ, stand in a State of Wrath. This Hypothesis cannot be true, because it is inconsistent with various Doctrines of the Gospel.

(1.) It necessarily supposes, that Divine Love is mutable. All such, who have a Right to the Blessings of Grace and Glory, are Objects of the Love of God, for that Right springs from thence, as the original Cause of it: And, therefore, the Loss of that Right infers a Change in Divine Love, from which it flows, as the Origin of it.

(2.) If this Hypothesis is true, then some must be supposed to have a Right to saving Benefits, whom God never intended to save, or whom he did not chuse to Salvation. Right to Salvation cannot be of larger Extent, than the Decree of Salvation is; for, to what Purpose are any invested with a Right to Salvation, who are not included in the Decree of Salvation? Can such be thought to have a Right to Salvation, whole Salvation is not designed by God? Besides, none are inverted with a Right to Salvation, in the Persons of others, (of Parents, for Instance, which the learned Man supposes,) but in their own Persons; as none were chosen to it, in the Persons of others, but in their own.

(3.) None have a Right to Salvation, but those who are the Sons of God: *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ.* The Relation of Sons to God cannot cease: If, therefore, all the Infants of Believers are the Children of God, they will always be so, and cannot be deprived of that Right to Happiness, which belongs to them, as such; which effectually overthrows this Hypothesis.

(4.) Right to Salvation is founded in Justification, by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness: *Being justified by his Grace, we are made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life.* Now, if it is true, that all the Infants of Believers have a Right to Life, they are all justified by Christ's Righteousness, and shall certainly be all glorified, even those who arrive unto adult Age, except some of them, may be justified by Christ's Righteousness, while in their Infant-State, and cease to be so, or lose their Interest, in his Righteousness, when they are adult, which cannot be.

(5.) Christ obtained, by his Death, a Right to Faith, for all those on whose Account he laid down his Life; and, therefore, if he died for all the Infants of Believers, which the learned Man supposes he did,

then they shall all be blessed with Faith, and, consequently, none of them, when they become adult, can perish. Indeed, he says, *Christ did not so much obtain Faith for Men, as Grace and Glory, for them who believe.* But that is a false Principle, which he begs, in order to support his Hypothesis. I think it needless, to offer more Particulars, to evert this Opinion; those mentioned are sufficient to that Purpose. The learned Man endeavours to prove his Hypothesis, from the Words of our *Lord*, concerning Children, who were presented to him, and blessed by him; of whom he said thus: *For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Three Things he observes:

- (1.) That *they were young Infants.*
- (2.) That *they were brought to Christ by their Parents, who believed, etc.*
- (3.) That *for this Reason Christ admitted them to him, and in this Relation declared them Heirs of his Benediction, and of the Kingdom of God.*

I allow, that these Children were Infants: But it is not said, that they were brought to Christ by their Parents: Nor is any Respect had unto those, who presented them to our Saviour, whether they were their Parents, or others; nor to their Faith, whoever they were: And, therefore, the Hypothesis receives no Support at all, from hence. He apprehends, that 1 Corinthians 7:14. fully proves it: His Discourse on this Place is very prolix: After rejecting various Interpretations given of the Text, by *Erasmus Schmidius, Chrysostom, Elsner, Lightfoot, Knatchbul, Hammond, and Dodwell, etc.* he proceeds to deliver his own Sense concerning it; and, in order to that, observes, that the *Scruple which was railed concerning Believers, joined in Marriage before Conversion, lay in this; Whether, if a Husband or Wife, should continue in Heathenism and Idolatry, the Believer might abide in the matrimonial State, entered into, or contracted before Faith, and the Holiness of Marriage be preserved? In the Opinion of the Ancients, the conjugal Relation had a spiritual Respect to Christ, which represented the Union of Christ with the Saints, and raised up a Seed to Christ. If now either of the married Parties was an Alien from the Faith, that seemed to destroy the Holiness of Marriage, and the mystical Relation to it. The Apostle, answering to this Scruple of Conscience, affirms, that Infidelity of the other married Party did not binder, but that the Marriage might be holy; for here the Unbeliever is not at all reckoned by Christ, but he asserts, that he is in this Matter esteemed in the believing Party; so that the Marriage, notwithstanding the Impurity of the one married Party, will still remain, and be approved of by Christ.* In this Observation some Things are supposed, which are not proved,

and may not be granted: 1. That the Marriage-Relation, itself, is not a Representation of the Union of Christ with the Saints; or, that it may not be considered, as an *Emblem* of it, unless either the Husband, or the Wife, is a Believer; which is not true: For, the Apostle speaks of the Marriage-Relation, in itself, as such an *Emblem*, without any Respect to Faith, in the Husband, or the Wife. 2. That Faith constitutes the Marriage-Relation *holy*. This is a Mistake: Marriage, indeed, is *honourable*, as it is appointed of God, and is subservient to the Accomplishment of his wife and holy Designs; but Faith, in the Parties married, makes not the Relation *holy*. Farther, 3. It is supposed, that the *Corinthians* thought, that Children born of Parents, who were both Believers, were holy, and a Seed raised up to Christ; but the Children, born of Parents, one whereof was an Unbeliever, were not so; and, therefore, they scrupled the Lawfulness of a believing Wife, to cohabit with an unbelieving Husband, and the Lawfulness of a believing Husband, to cohabit with an unbelieving Wife: Of the Truth of which there is not the least Appearance, in the whole Context. Indeed, they scrupled the Lawfulness of a Believer's cohabiting with an Unbeliever, not for the Reason here assigned, but because it seemed to them unfit, that a Christian, and a *Heathen*, should dwell together, as Man and Wife; and, therefore, they thought it might be lawful for a believing Wife, to depart from her unbelieving Husband, and for a believing Husband to put away his unbelieving Wife; which it could not be, unless Faith dissolves the Marriage-Relation, and frees the Subject of it, from that *civil* Obligation he is under, arising from his own voluntary Act; but that it doth not: And, therefore, the Apostle *pertinently* observes, that the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, *etc.* which Sanctification must be understood in a *civil* Sense, because it is assigned, as a Reason, and Proof, of the Continuance of the Obligation, on the believing Party, whether Wife, or Husband, still to dwell with the unbelieving one; and, consequently, the Sanctification of the unbelieving Party, arises not from the Faith of the believing one, but from that which makes it unlawful, for the believing one, to depart from, or put away the Unbeliever; which can be no other, than the Act of taking the Man for a Husband, and the Woman for a Wife. As this Doubt of the *Corinthians* wholly respected the believing Party, whether Wife, or Husband, it was *strictly* proper, to observe the Act of that Party, rather than the Act of the other Party, whereby she, or he, became obliged unto the unbelieving Party. The Matter under Consideration, was not the Lawfulness, or Unlawfulness, of those Parties marrying; for, there could be no question of its Lawfulness, they both being, at the Time of Marriage, in a State of Infidelity: But the Point to be determined was this; Whether it was lawful for a Believer to

continue in the State of Matrimony with an Unbeliever? And the Apostle deter.-mines it is; because the unbelieving Party was *sanctified* by the believing one. That, therefore, in the believing Party, which sanctified the unbelieving one, made it not only lawful for, but also binding on the believing Party, to abide in the married State, with the unbelieving one; which could not be Faith; it must be the voluntary Act of that Party, in the Contraction of Marriage, and nothing else: For which Reason, the Apostle does not say, that, by the Faith of the believing Wife, the unbelieving Husband is sanctified, etc. but *barely* this; the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, etc. without assigning Faith, as the Cause of that Sanctification; nor is that deducible from the Words. That, and that only, is the Cause of this Sanctification, which makes it lawful for a Believer, to continue in the married State, with an Unbeliever; and that cannot possibly be Faith; it must be that which constituted the Marriage-Relation, on her, or his Part, *viz.* her, or his, voluntary Act, in contracting Marriage. Wherefore, it is clear, that this *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Party, is not to be understood in a *religious*, but in a *civil* Sense: And the *Holiness* of the Children, which is inferred from the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent, is not to be understood *in a religious*, but in a *civil* Sense likewise. The *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent, gives no Right to *religious* Privileges, and the *Holiness* of the Children does not entitle to such Privileges. Most evident, I think it is, that this Hypothesis, receives not the *least* Proof from any Part of the Apostle's Reasoning, in this Place. The learned Man begs, and takes for granted, what he ought to have proved, and then interprets the Text, in such a Way, as might serve to countenance his Opinion. But, if this Hypothesis was true, it would not prove the Right of Infants to Baptism, though he says, it is, *by far the most solid Foundation of Infant-Baptism*; for two Reasons: One is, this Holiness is not predicated of the Children of a believing Parent, *as Infants*, in Distinction from her, or his Descendants, who are past the State of Infancy. It is spoken of, and attributed to them, as her, or his Descendants, whether Infants, or not: And, this Holiness is not lost when they become *adult*, nor are they then *unclean*, in the Apostle's Sense, though they remain in an unregenerate State. He takes it for granted, that the Apostle speaks of Infant-Seed, in Distinction from Adult, of which there is not the least Intimation, in the whole Context: So that, *Holiness* must mean *Legitimacy*; for in no other Sense can it be said, that an *adult* Child of a Believer is *holy*, who remains unregenerate: And, this *Holiness* is attributed to the Children of a believing Parent, without any Respect to their Age, whether *infant*, or *adult*. The other Reason is, if this *Holiness* is to be understood in a *religious* Sense, Baptism being a solemn Act of

instituted Worship, it is not lawful to perform it upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, by which it is instituted, (as I have before said,) which Infants are not: And, consequently, this *Holiness* can be no Proof of their Right to Baptism, even though it should be allowed, that it is to be taken in a *religious* Sense. None can have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, but those, on whom Christ hath commanded it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am certain.

Having answered the Arguments advanced by our Brethren, for Infant- Baptism, I will now briefly state our Objections, against it.

Object. 1. There is no Command for, nor any Precedent of Infant-Baptism, in the New Testament. I cannot but think, that this is a very strong Objection; because, as no Mode of Worship is lawful to be practised, which is not commanded, or recommended to us by the Example of Persons, acting under Divine Direction; so no Act of religious Worship, may lawfully be performed upon any Subject, without Authority for it, from God, either by his Command, requiring it, or, by the Example of some Person, acting under his Direction, therein, from whence it may be concluded, that it is agreeable to the Divine Will: Neither of which, in this Case, is pretended, except by some *less skilful* Advocates, who argue, that *whole Households* were baptized, wherein, they seem desirous to have it sup-posed, that there were Infants, without any Evidence of it. They are willing to beg, what they cannot prove: But this Cause is of too great Importance, to allow of such Liberality to them. Dr. *Ridgley*, in answering to this Objection, observes, that *consequential* Proof is sufficient. This is a *tacit* Acknowledgment, that *direct* and *express* Proof cannot be given: And, as to his consequential Proofs, they have been before considered, and found *invalid*. I freely grant, that consequential Proof of Doctrines is sufficient; because they are capable of such Proof: For, as there is a Connection between Principles, and one is inferrible from another, express Proof being given of any Principle, wherewith another is connected, and from which it is justly inferrible, that Proof is direct and explicit, respecting the Truth of the former Principle, and it is a consequential Proof of the Truth of the latter, which is a Deduction from the former. But I cannot allow, that the Mode and Subject of instituted Worship, are capable of consequential Proof, because they are not inferrible from any thing, but that Command, by which the Act of Worship is instituted, or they are not deducible, from any Principle whatever, but are wholly of Divine Appointment, if legal; and, therefore, they will not admit of consequential Proof. The Proof of the Legality of the Mode and Subject of instituted Worship, must be *direct* and *express*, or it is none. He farther observes, that *Baptism*

was in use with the Jews, and that they baptized Children with their Parents, who became Proselytes; and, therefore, there was no Need for Christ to give particular Direction to his Disciples, to baptize Infants, because they would conclude upon that, from the Custom of the Jews, who baptized the Children of such as became Proselytes. It does not appear, by any thing expressed, either in the Old or New Testament, that this was the Practice of the *Jews*, before, or in our Saviour's Time; and, therefore, I confers, that I am not very forward, to give Credit to the Testimony of *Jewish* Rabbies, concerning the Antiquity of that Custom. Nor can I think, that a Command given to the *Israelites*, to wash their Cloaths, was an Order to wash their Bodies, which *Jewish* Masters say it was. Besides, if this was Fact, and the Disciples of our Lord did conclude

upon the Right of Infants to Baptism, from thence, it is reasonable to think, that they would have given some Intimation of it, either in Words, or by their Practice; whereas they have not. There is not the least Ground for a Pretence, that they had any such Apprehension. Our Brethren, therefore, upon being asked, Who hath required the Baptism of Infants, at your Hands? will never be able to answer, that Christ, by whom this *solemn* Act of Worship was instituted, requires it of them.

Object. 2. Several Things in the Commission, by which Ministers are authorized to baptize, evince, that Infant-Baptism is unlawful: *Go ye therefore, teach all Nations, baptizing them, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.*

(1.) Teaching ought to precede Baptism; and being taught is required, as a Qualification for Baptism, than which nothing can be more evident: For, Christ's Command to baptize, only respects them who are taught; not any, or all, in all Nations, but those, and only those, in all Nations, who are instructed. And, therefore, Infants not being capable of Instruction, they are not capable Subjects of Baptism, nor can be qualified, as Christ requires those should be, whom, it is his Pleasure, that his Ministers should baptize. And, this Instruction must be effectual for ingenerating Faith, which appears, not only from the Sense of the Word, in the New Testament (Acts 14:21.), but also from what *Mark* expresses, in his shorter Account of the Commission; *He that believeth and is baptized.* Hence, it is most clear, that Christ intends such Instruction, as is productive of an Act of Faith; which entirely everts that Sense, which some have given, of the Command to teach, *viz. Disciple, by baptizing*, without Instruction first given; and, which Dr. *Ridgley* acknowledges, is not defensible.

(2.) The Form of Baptism will not allow us to think, that Infants are the proper Subjects of it. That Form is the Pronunciation of the Names of the Divine Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; without which, neither dipping into, nor-sprinkling with Water, is Christian Baptism. This, therefore, is as solemn an Act of Worship, as was ever instituted by God. Now, that only can be a sufficient Authority for a Minister's performing this Act of Worship, which gives him express Direction, on whom to perform it: And, since Infants are not included, in that Direction, but such only who are *taught*, performing this *solemn* Act of Worship (than which none is more so) on them, cannot be lawful. Besides, it is reasonable to conclude, that it is the Will of God, that both the Parties, who are concerned in this Act of Worship, should be capable of adoring him, therein; not only the Administrator of the Ordinance, but also the Subject on whom it is administered; which Infants are not. That Proof, I am sure, ought to be *very clear* and *strong*, which may justly demand our Assent to this; that it is the Will of God, that *any such* shall be Parties concerned in his Worship, who have not the Use of Reason.

(3.) Christ requires his Ministers to teach those, whom they have baptized, to *observe all Things whatsoever he hath commanded them*: And, therefore, if they baptize any, who are incapable of receiving such Instruction, and of yielding Obedience to Christ's Commands, therein, they act without his Authority: Consequently, Infant-Baptism is unlawful.

(4.) Our blessed Lord promises his Presence: *Lo, I am with you always, even to the End of the World*. This gracious Promise is intended, not for the Encouragement of Ministers only, who administer the Ordinance of Baptism, but also for the Encouragement of those, on whom it is administered: And, therefore, Christ designed this Institution, for the *present spiritual Advantage* and *Edification* of those, on whom it is his Will that it should be administered; of which, I suppose, none will say, that Infants are capable. His gracious End in its Institution, cannot possibly be answered, in them. It will be impossible to prove, that it is the Will of Christ, that Infants should be baptized, without denying, that he intended that Institution for the *present Edification* of those on whom it is administered: And, such a Denial would come with a *very ill Grace*, from any one, who professes Faith in that precious Promise, which is here expressed, for the Encouragement of both the Administrator of Baptism, and of the Persons who are baptized. Upon the whole, I think, that it may be fairly concluded, from the Commission, that the Baptism of Infants never came into the Mind of Christ.

Object. 3. The Baptism of Infants is not lawful, because it cannot be the Answer of a good Conscience. This Objection is drawn from what the Apostle *Peter* says of Baptism; whole Words are there: *The like Figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience) by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 3:21.). I suppose, it will be allowed, that in this Place, either the Baptism of the Spirit, or the Ordinance of Water-Baptism, is intended. Let us enquire which. The Baptism of the Spirit means, either his sanctifying Operations, or the extraordinary Effusion of his Gifts, upon the Apostles. There is Reason to think, that *John* designs the latter, when he says of Christ, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire*; because, he speaks of it, as a Thing *future*, and not *present*, the *Holy Spirit not being yet given*, in that extraordinary Way. Now, if the Baptism of the Spirit is to be understood of that, it cannot be designed in this Place, because this is a Privilege common to the Subjects of Salvation; whereas, that is not: *And*, if the Baptism of the Spirit designs his sanctifying Operations, it cannot be meant here; for, his Work of Grace upon the Heart, is not a *Figure*, which this Baptism is; nor, was it needful to say of that, *not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, i.e.* external Defilement, since that Work is not outward, but inward, and the Heart is the Subject of it. The Apostle means a Baptism which is *external*; and asserts, that its outward Effect, *viz.* cleansing from *external* Defilement, is not what he hath in view, but the *Answer of a good Conscience*, therein, which is *internal*, and properly opposed unto, the cleansing from outward Defilement, or putting away the Filth of the Flesh: *And*, therefore, it is not the Baptism of the Spirit, taken in either Sense, that is designed, but the Ordinance of Baptism. I have another Reason to offer, for not understanding it of the Baptism of the Spirit; which is this: Infants cannot be the Subjects of it; for, there cannot be the Answer of a good, or bad Conscience, in them, because they have not the Use of Reason. This Answer respects not the Principle of Grace, but the Acts of it. Infants are capable Subjects of a Principle of Grace, but not of gracious Acts. Such this Answer of a good Conscience is. If, therefore, it is allowed, that Infants are capable Subjects of the Baptism of the Spirit, that cannot be here meant, because they are incapable of the Answer of a good Conscience. I may be censured, as *cruel* to Infants, because I think they ought not to be baptized; but I would not, for the World, give into any Opinion, that supposes them incapable of Salvation, which they must be, if they are incapable of the Baptism of the Spirit, as it is taken for his sanctifying Work on the Heart, and if that Work necessarily includes in it, or is the Answer of a good Conscience. Wherefore, it seems most clear to me, that it is the Ordinance of

Baptism, which is here meant, and not the Baptism of the Spirit. Baptism is said to be the Answer of a good Conscience, because Enquiry is, or ought to be made of every Candidate for it, concerning his Faith in Christ; as *Philip* examined the *Eunuch*, concerning his Faith, when he proposed to be baptized by him, saying, *Here is Water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip* answers him, *If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayest: Wherein this Question is implied; Dost thou believe with all thine Heart? Unto which he replies, I believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God* (Acts 8:36, 37.). This was the Answer of a good Conscience; whereupon *Philip* baptized him. Since the Apostle plainly supposes such an Answer, in Baptism, it may fairly be concluded, that he was unacquainted with the Baptism of any, who were naturally incapable of giving such an Answer. The Baptism of Infants was not practised in his Time, so far as he knew, nor ought it to have been since, because it is impossible it should be the Answer of a good Conscience, which he asserts Baptism is.

Object. 4. Infant-Baptism is not lawful, because Baptism is a Branch of Righteousness, which the People of God ought to fulfil. This is evident, from the Words of our Lord to *John*, concerning it; *Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us, to fulfil all Righteousness* (Matthew 3:15.): Wherein it is plainly supposed, that, not only the Person, who administers Baptism, fulfils Righteousness, but also the Party, on whom it is administered, fulfils it. And, therefore, such as are naturally incapable thereof, which all will allow, that Infants are, cannot be the *legal* Subjects of Baptism. And, those Parents who offer their Infants to Baptism, and, when they are grown up, endeavour to make them believe, that it is not necessary they should be baptized, upon their Conversion, do what in them lies, to hinder their Children fulfilling a Branch of Righteousness, which God most certainly requires them to fulfil, as Followers of the Blessed Jesus; whereof our good Brethren, who differ from us, in this Point, would do well seriously to consider. How they will be able to defend themselves, in this Matter, I cannot tell. If the Opinion of the Right of Infants to Baptism, were to obtain *universally*, there would be but a very inconsiderable Number of Persons left, in a Christian Nation, from whom this Branch of Righteousness could be expected to be fulfilled. Christ, in that Care, would *scarcely* have *any Followers*, in this Act of holy Obedience; which ought to be well weighed by our Brethren, for it is a Matter of great Importance. They only plead for the Right of the Infants of Believers to Baptism; and, therefore, one would think, that they should conclude, that it is the Duty of the Children of Unbelievers to be baptized, when they believe, although they may know, that they were baptized in their Infancy; but, if I am not mistaken, very few, if

any of them, put them upon a Submission to Baptism, when they are converted, thinking their former Baptism sufficient, though, according to the Principles from which they argue, they then had no Right unto it. Thus they endeavour, as much as they can, to prevent Christians yielding Obedience to the Will of God, in this Branch of Righteousness, which all his People ought to fulfil, after the Example of Christ, upon an Apprehension, that Infants have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege; not considering, that none can have a Right unto it, as it is a Privilege, who are *naturally* incapable of submitting to it, as it is a Branch of Righteousness, which God expects his People to fulfil.

VI. Mr. Eltringham undertakes to prove, that the Mode of Baptism, is not dipping, but sprinkling. In his Letter, he says, the Word *baptizo* may signify to dip, or wash all over, for any thing I know to the contrary; and adds, but that it signifies to dip in Water always, is a most glaring Absurdity. When it is used to express the Action of dipping into some other Liquid; dipping in Water is not there meant; I suppose, that none will think it is. But his Meaning, I imagine, is this, *viz.* That it does not always signify dipping, when it is used to express the Action of making a Person, or Thing, wet, with Water. Our Brethren do not deny, that the Word ($\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$) baptize, properly, and primarily, signifies to *immerse, plunge, or dip*, though they say it also signifies to wash, where dipping cannot be intended: But then, as learned *Stockius* observes, the Word is not used, in its proper, but in a *tropical* Sense. I am determined, in this Matter, to ask no more, than must be granted, for the Cause I am to defend, does not at all oblige me to it. Be it so, therefore, that the Word does not always signify to dip, but some-times to *sprinkle, or pour*; What is proved by it? Not that Baptism ought to be administered by sprinkling, or pouring of Water, on a Person. The utmost which can be pretended from hence is, that Baptism may be administered, either by dipping, or sprinkling, as the Administrator and the Subject shall chuse, because it cannot certainly be determined, in what Manner it is the Will of Christ it should be performed, by reason of the Ambiguity of the Word. It must, therefore, be allowed, that, at least, it favours us *Dippers*, as much as it does *Sprinklers*. Is it reasonable to think, that this is the real Fact? Can it be thought, that Christ hath left us to perform this solemn Act of. Worship, in what Manner we ourselves shall like best, without any plain Direction, respecting the Mode of that Act of Worship? We cannot think so, without charging upon him, a Want of Uniformity, as the Institutor of New Testament-Worship. In all other Instances, he hath given us plain Directions, respecting the Mode of Worship, either immediately, or by his Apostles, in Words, or by their Practice,

under his Direction: And, I cannot be persuaded to think, that, in this Particular, he hath not acted like himself; which he hath not, if there is that Ambiguity, in this Affair, that is pretended, and it is lawful for us to administer Baptism, either by dipping, or sprinkling, as we please. Let us, therefore, *impartially, and seriously enquire*, whether there is not some Medium, by which we may arrive at a Certainty, concerning the Mind of Christ, in this *momentous* Affair? And,

1. I cannot but be of Opinion, that the Import of the Word (βαπτίζω) baptize, notwithstanding it is said to be *ambiguous*, is sufficient to that Purpose. It is a Rule with Divines, that Words ought to be taken, in their *proper*, and *primary* Sense, though they are sometimes used in a different one, except there are some Circumstances in the Text, which will not admit of that Sense. This is a good Rule: And, I am sure, a Departure from it would be attended with very dangerous Consequences, on some of the *most important* Doctrines of the Gospel; which those must know, who are at all acquainted with *Socinian* Controversies. If this Rule may be allowed to hold good, in other Points, why should it not be allowed in this? If it may, then we need not look any further, than the Commission, to adjust the Matter under Consideration; because, our Brethren grant, that the Word, *properly*, and *primarily*, signifies to *immerse*, *dip*, or *plunge*, though, they say, it is sometimes used to express sprinkling, or pouring. And, since there are no Circumstances, in the Text, which will not admit of the Word being taken in its *proper*, and *primary* Sense, it is reasonable to interpret the Commission, as a Command, to administer Baptism, by *dipping*. Wherefore, *dipping*, in Baptism, is commanded, and is not an Act of Will- Worship, which Mr. *Eltringham* affirms it is.

2. We may next consider the Circumstances of, and the Places wherein, the Baptism of the primitive Christians was performed, in order to settle this Matter. Our Brethren, here also endeavour, rather, to puzzle the Cause, than to discover Truth, by criticizing on the *Greek* Prepositions, (εν, απο, εις; in, out of, and into,) which are used, on this Subject: Yet, I doubt not, but to oblige them to acknowledge, that our Translators have rendered them very rightly, or compel them to confess, that it is not to be proved, that Christ was baptized, in or with Water, or, that his Apostles ever practised Water-Baptism. Perhaps, the Reader may be somewhat startled at this, and be afraid, that Countenance will be given to *Quakerism* by it. I must say, that I delight not to act this Part, on the sacred Scriptures, nor would I by any means do it, but to confirm Truth, and to shew our Brethren the Tendency of their Criticisms, on *Greek* Prepositions. I allow, that εν does not always signify in, but sometimes *near to*; that απο signifies *from*, as well as *out of*; and, that εις means *to*, as well

as *into*. This is granting as much as can be desired. Now let us see what Use can be made hereof, on this Subject. To begin with the first Preposition; it is said, *And were baptized of him*, (*εν τῷ Ιορδανῇ*) *near to Jordan* (Matthew 3:6.). Who can say with what they were baptized, (the Text does not inform us,) if the Preposition is to be rendered *near to*, instead of *in*? Thus also, we shall not be able to determine with what our Blessed Lord was baptized, if the second Preposition must be translated *from*, as it is used, on the Subject of his Baptism. When he was baptized, he *straightway came up* (*απο του Υδατος*) *from the Water*, or *up the rising Ground* (Matthew 3:16.); as Dr. *Guysel* says. *John* might baptize Christ with *Wine*, or *Oil*, for ought the Text expresses, if He was not in the Water before, and in order to his Baptism, and so came up out of it when he was baptized. Likewise, the third Preposition, which is used concerning the Baptism of the *Eunuch*, will be attended with the same Obscurity, and we shall be left at an Uncertainty, with what *Philip* baptized him, if the Phrase (*εις Υδωρ*) is rendered *to the Water*, instead of *into the Water*. Our Brethren, in thus criticizing upon, or *playing* with these Prepositions, make not the least Advance towards the Discovery of Truth. If this is of Service to any thing at all, it is *Quakerism*. The whole Amount of their Endeavour, on this Subject, is, rendering it *uncertain* what the Mode of Baptism is, and what *Liquid*, whether *Water*, *Wine*, or *Oil*, was used, by the Apostles of Christ, in the Administration of that Ordinance; for which, the Papists may think themselves obliged unto them; because it is said, that they sometimes baptize the Children of great Persons with *Wine*: And who can say, that *John* did not baptize Christ with *Wine*? Or, who can prove, that the *Eunuch* was baptized with *Water*, if he did not go down into the Water, in order to his Baptism, and come up out of it, when he was baptized. If he, with *Philip*, only went to the Side of the Water, before his Baptism, and, after it, came from the Side of the Water, how can it certainly be concluded, that he was baptized with *Water*? For both might be done, and, yet, he not be baptized with *Water*. Indeed, it may be argued, that *Philip* had recommended the Baptism of *Water* to him, and also informed him, that it was usual to administer Baptism, in Places where a considerable Quantity of *Water* was; because he says, upon coming *unto a certain Water*, *See, here is Water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* But that will not prove the Certainty of his being baptized, with *Water*, if he did not go down into it, in order to his Baptism; because the Account of his Baptism no further proves the Use of *Water*, therein, than it expresses his going to, or into the *Water*, in order to be baptized, and his coming up from it, or out of it, after the Administration of the Ordinance upon him. Going to the Side of the *Water*, in order to be baptized, and coming from it, when he was

baptized, is not a certain Proof, that Water was used in his Baptism: But, if he went down *into* the Water, with an Intention to be baptized, and, accordingly, was baptized, *in* the Water, and if he came *up out of* the Water, after being baptized in it, no Doubt can be admitted, concerning the Use of Water in his Baptism; because, it is unreasonable to suppose, that he went *down into* the Water, to be baptized with *any other Liquid*: Nor could going to the Side of the Water be necessary, in order to be sprinkled; for, doubtless, his Attendants were able to supply *Philip* with a sufficient Quantity of that Water, for sprinkling him, if they had any Vessels with them, in travelling; which is not to be doubted of. He, therefore, certainly went *down into* the Water, as the *Greek Phrase* (εις το Υδωρ) properly imports, and came *up out of* the Water, as the original Phrase (εκ του Υδατος) properly signifies. Dr. *Doddridge* says, *Considering how frequently Bathing was used, in those hot Countries, it is not to be wondered, that Baptism was generally administered by Immersion, though I see no Proof, that it was essential to the Institution. It would be very unnatural to suppose, that they went down to the Water, merely that Philip might take up a little Water in his Hand to pour on the Eunuch. A Person of his Dignity had, no doubt, many vessels, in his Baggage, on such a journey through so desert a Country; a Precaution absolutely necessary for Travellers, in those Parts, and never omitted by them. See Dr. Show's Travels, Pref p. 4.* It seems the Doctor thought, that Baptism may be administered, either by *dipping*, or by *sprinkling*. A credible Person, now living, informed me, that when he applied to the Doctor for Communion, he acquainted him, that he apprehended it was his Duty to be baptized, by *Immersion*; to which he answered, that he had no Objection to it, and, that he could freely do it for him, only he thought it might not be well taken by his Friends, whose Mind, and Practice, were different. But, surely, the Mode of so *solemn* an Act of Worship, is not left *undetermined* by Christ; which it most certainly is, if the Reasoning and Criticisms of our Brethren are just; nor can it be certainly proved, that the Apostles used Water in Baptism. All they do, and attempt to do, in this Matter, is to reduce us unto an Uncertainty, respecting the Mode of Baptism, and what Liquid was used in the Administration of it, whether *Water, or something else*. They prove nothing; nor is their Manner of arguing calculated to prove any thing; which sufficiently discovers the great Impropriety of It. The Circumstances of Baptism, as administered by *John*, and by the Apostles of Christ, and the Places wherein it was administered by them, will not allow us to think, that they administered it by *sprinkling*. *John* baptized the *Jews* in the River *Jordan* (Matthew 3:6.): But *Dr. Guyse* thinks, that he *could not baptize, by Immersion, the prodigious Multitudes who came to him.*

A large Number, indeed, being excited by Curiosity came to hear him; but that vast Multitudes were baptized by him does not appear. If such prodigious Multitudes were baptized by him, as the Doctor supposes, what became of them? Were they Believers? If Believers, where were they when Christ was risen? We have no Account of such a *prodigious* Number of Disciples after Christ's Resurrection: And yet, doubtless, some were converted by his Ministry, and the Ministry of his Apostles, and of the seventy-two Disciples. Therefore, there is no Necessity for supposing, that *they flood in Ranks, near to, or just within the Edge of the Water*, and of *John's* passing along before them, and casting Water upon their *Heads, or Faces*, with his Hands, or some *proper Instrument*, which the Doctor imagines he did, not to *John's* Honour, nor to that of the Ordinance, which certainly requires far greater Solemnity, than such a Manner of Administration would admit of; for, Baptism is a very *solemn* Act of Worship, and ought not to be administered in such a *huddling* Way. Besides, those whom he baptized made *Confession of their Sins*; How, therefore, could *John* baptize *many, Thousands in a Day*? which the Doctor supposes he might: If he did, there was but *little Solemnity, in their Confessions*, and in his Manner of baptizing them, after they had confessed their Sins.

3. Christ calls his Sufferings a Baptism. *I have*, says our Lord, *a Baptism to be baptized with* (Luke 12:50.); whereby his dolourous Sufferings are intended. Now, the Administration of Baptism, by *sprinkling*, or *pouring a little Water* on the Face, cannot be thought a *fit Emblem* of his *overwhelming* Sorrows; but Baptism by *Immersion* may justly be accounted such. And, therefore, we have solid Reason to conclude, that *dipping into Water*, and *not sprinkling* with Water, is that Mode of Baptism, which Christ instituted.

4. Baptism is a Representation of the *Burial* and *Resurrection* of Christ: *Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, through the Faith of the Operation of God*. I suppose it will be granted, that Baptism here means, the Baptism of Water, or the Baptism of the Spirit. The latter cannot be meant, if it be understood of the *extraordinary* Effusion of the Spirit, because this is *common* to all Believers, but that is *not*: Nor can it be meant of the Communication of the Spirit, in Regeneration, because it is *through Faith*; for Faith follows upon that, and is not acted in it. And, therefore, Water-Baptism is intended; which, when it is administered, by *Immersion*, is a proper Representation of Christ's *Burial* and *Resurrection*, as Bishop *Davenant* observes, with whole Words I shall conclude: *This Burial of the Body of Sins, or of the Old Man, is represented in Baptism, when he who is to be baptized is put into Water, as the Resurrection is when he is brought out of it*;

for, in the ancient Church, they not only wetted, but plunged those in Water, whom they baptized.

SERMON 25

DILIGENCE IN STUDY RECOMMENDED TO MINISTERS.

IN A SERMON, PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE
REVEREND MR. RICHARD RIST,

IN HARLOW, ESSEX. DECEMBER 15, 1756.

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1 TIMOTHY 4:15, 16

“Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine, continue in them, in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

IT being allotted to me, to address you my honoured and beloved Brother, on this very solemn Occasion of your Investiture with the Office of a Pastor, or Overseer, to this Church of Christ. I shall do it, in an Attempt to explain the, Words, which I have now read.

The Apostle, before the Text, gives to *Timothy* various important Exhortations, and Directions, relating unto his ministerial Function: Which I shall not take into particular Consideration; but ***I will immediately apply myself, to the Explication of the several Branches of the Text, in that Order, wherein they stand.***

I. *The Apostle exhorts Timothy to serious and close Meditation, Meditate on these things.* Diligent study is the indispensable Duty of a Minister of the Gospel. That, my Brother give me Leave, to recommend, and stir you up unto, as what is absolutely necessary, for the proper Discharge of those Services, which belong to your Station in the Church. Without a due Attention to it, your Discourses will be *crude* and *indigested*, and, therefore, not well suited to the great End, of improving the Saints, in Christian Knowledge and Experience. The Subjects of your assiduous Meditations must especially be, the holy Scriptures, and the glorious Truths, which they contain. The Word of God ought to be carefully and diligently read, and meditated upon by all; but Ministers, in an *especial* Manner, are obliged unto a diligent Perusal of it. *Give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine.* Read the Writings of good Men, wherewith, in the kind Providence of God, the Church is blessed, which under a divine Influence will be helpful and instructive to you; but above all, *search the Scriptures, which are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction*

in Righteousness, that you may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished to all good Works.

You must carefully consider the several Parts of sacred Writ, and *compare spiritual Things with spiritual*, whereby, through the gracious Assistance of the holy Spirit, you will gain a clear and comprehensive View of the Harmony of the Whole, and a full convincing Evidence of its divine Authority.

Be diligent in enquiring into the proper Meaning of every Text, which you shall at any Time undertake to explain and treat upon. Content not yourself, as some Preachers do, with expressing what is true, though it be not the *genuine* Sense of the Words, which are the Subject of their Discourses. Labour to find out the *real* Import of that Portion of the good Word of God, which you make Choice of, for the Subject of your Sermons. And, also see to it, that you produce proper and pertinent Testimonies, for the Confirmation and Illustration of those Truths, which you apprehend are contained in your Text.* Some Preachers seem to be at very little Pains, in either Respect, now mentioned, and, therefore, their Performances, are far from being judicious.

And it is very requisite, that you should meditate much on the Doctrines which are contained in the holy Scriptures. If you do not, you cannot reasonably hope to discern their admirable Variety, adorable Depth, strict Connection, mutual Dependence, and beautiful Harmony, nor, in what Respects, some evangelical Truths, agree with others, and wherein they differ. This is your proper Business, as a Minister, and it is that painful Labour, which claims your constant Attendance. For,

II. *You are required, to give yourself to them. Or, as the Words may be read: Be thou in them* (εν τούτοις ισθι). Your Heart ought to be fixed on them, and your Thoughts exercised about them, *most intently*, and *generally* also. Not *occasionally* and *cursorily*; but *constantly*, and *closely*. This is the noblest Employ, wherein our intellectual Powers can possibly be engaged.

And it justly demands the Whole of your Time. Do not think it is sufficient, if you now and then devote a few Hours unto this sacred and important Labour, in order to prepare for your Services, in the Pulpit. But fill up your Time with Contemplations on the glorious Truths of the Gospel, even when you are not soon to be engaged in the Work of Preaching. Ministers are not, without Necessity, to be *entangled with secular Affairs*, to their Interruption in an Attendance unto what is of far greater Moment. And, therefore, it is the Ordination of Christ, that those, *who preach the Gospel, should live*

the Gospel. The End of this Appointment is not, that they may be slothful, and waste their precious Moments in doing Nothing, or worse than Nothing. It is that they may be devoted entirely, unto that honourable Service, to which he has called them, with a gracious View, to the Instruction and Edification of the Church.

My honoured Brother, do not loiter away the Beginning of the Week in trifling Recreations, or in needless and unprofitable Visits, and think it is enough, at the latter End of it, to prepare for your public Services. Begin to study on the *Monday*, and continue to do so throughout the Week.

Some Persons in this sacred Function, of an extraordinary Genius, and who have had a Taste for polite Learning, it is to be feared have been under a Temptation, to neglect their more necessary and important Studies, unto their own Prejudice, and the Disadvantage of the Church, by the alluring Pleasures which their ingenious Minds have found in Studies of another Nature. Not that I think it is unlawful or unprofitable, for a Minister, somewhat to gratify his Inclination in that Way. But as Ministers are not to be entangled in the Affairs of the World, unto their Hinderance in a necessary Study of divine Things: So they ought not to spend too much of their Time in the Study of the liberal Arts. For, they are called chiefly to attend to what is far more noble, sublime, and important. Except, nay Brother, you thus devote yourself, unto these divine Studies, you cannot justly expect to improve in an Acquaintance with evangelical Truths, which ought to be your Desire and Aim. As it follows,

III. *That thy Profiting may appear to all. Endeavour to give convincing Evidence to all Sorts of Persons, of your Growth and Proficiency in divine Knowledge.* To the Friends, and also unto the Adversaries of Truth. In the Church of God there are different Classes of Christians, viz. *Fathers,*

young Men, and Children. Such who are *Fathers*, are said to *have known him, that is, from the Beginning.* Their Judgment and Experience are much advanced, and, therefore, unless you treat of *the deep Things of God*, and in a judicious Manner, your Profiting will not appear to them. Discourses which are crude, and indigested, though the Matter of them may be true, can never gain their Approbation. Others of less Understanding, in spiritual Things, may approve thereof, but they cannot. For, they expect spiritual Demonstration of spiritual Things. Bare Assertions of evangelical Doctrines, without a clear stating of them, and offering pertinent Testimonies for their Proof and Illustration, will not be pleasing to them. *Injudicious* Preaching cannot be acceptable to *judicious* Hearers. It is true, that the Number of such Hearers is very small;

but that is not a just Reason, why we should content ourselves with treating of the sublime Truths of the Gospel, in a *superficial*, and unworkman-like Manner. Let it be your Desire, and laudable Ambition, to give Satisfaction in the Course of your Ministry, unto the most improved, in Christian Knowledge and Experience, by the Depth, Solidity, Pertinence, and Clearness of your Composures, on those important and glorious Truths, which you are commissioned to preach. Good Judgment, much Care and Diligence, you will find necessary unto this End, and, therefore, be not remiss and negligent; but be painful and laborious in Study.

Again, your Proficiency should appear to *young Men*. That is to Christians, who *are strong, and have overcome the wicked one*. You must in order to this, consider well, the Nature, and Variety of Satan's Temptations, upon different Occasions, and under different Circumstances. What numerous Wiles and Stratagems he makes use of to stir up Lust, to entice to Evil, and to interrupt the Exercise of Grace, unto the great Perplexity, and Grief of the Soul. And you must shew how the gracious Principle opposes and resists this Adversary, by the Guidance and Influence of the Holy Spirit. What are the Reliefs he administers, in Seasons of Temptation, to the Joy of the Soul, and the Increase of the spiritual Part. You will find, that this Branch of your Work, requires a careful Review of those Temptations, which you, yourself, have been attended withal, and the Workings of your Mind, under them: As well as a just Observation of the Experience of other Christians.

Farther, you must also aim that your Profiting may appear to *Children*. Christ hath *Babes* in His Family and *Lambs* in His Fold. It is your Duty to feed and nourish them, as well as more knowing and experienced Christians. Then you will *give a Portion of Meat to every one in due Season*. A Minister should descend to the Experience of the *weakest* Saint in flaming his Discourses, that he may comfort, and bring him forward, in heavenly knowledge. This requires much *Tenderness, Care and spiritual Skill*. Without a proper Consideration, of, what are the genuine Actings of Grace, under Convictions of Sin, and the Temptations, which usually attend the Soul, upon a Sense of Guilt, being impressed on the Mind, together, with those Fears, which are often, thereby produced, you will not be well qualified to assist and comfort the weak Saints, in their distressing Perplexities, concerning their Pardon and Salvation, about which, this Class of Christians, are often Times, very solicitous. Be careful, in treating on Faith, that you do not stumble these *Weaklings*, in Christ's Family, by the Manner of your expressing yourself. Consider that Faith in all, is not *strong*, that in some it is *weak*. Its Nature, and the Kind of its Actings, are the same

in all, and it respects always the same Objects, and is productive of the same Fruits; but it does not act with equal Vigor in all, nor in the same Person at different Times.

Once more, let your Proficiency be manifest unto the Adversaries of Truth. Ministers *are set for the Defense of the Gospel*. And, therefore, they should endeavour to obviate those Objections, which are raised against it, by erroneous Persons, and to confirm its glorious Truths, with clear and solid Arguments, drawn from the Word of God that the *Mouths of Gainsayers may be stopped*. Some are Enemies to Revelation itself, and employ all their Wit to banter and run it down. There *Infidels* we must labour to silence, by shewing, that, what they object to the Holy Scriptures, *is fallacious, groundless, or absurd*, and, therefore, by no Means conclusive. And, we should labour to prove, that our Belief of Divine Revelation, is built upon *rational* and just Evidence, which is not attended with any Difficulty; For, that Evidence is as clear, as the Sun, in itself, though not discerned, perhaps, by some, through a Want of due Attention to it, or by the powerful Influence, *of unreasonable and strong Prejudices*, which they have contracted. Thus, my Brother, your Aim and your Endeavour ought to be, to give Proof to all Sorts of Persons, that you are a *good* Proficient in Divine Knowledge. May the Lord assist you, conscientiously to use those Means, which he hath appointed to that End; and may his Blessing be upon you therein!

And this your Proficiency should be *in all Things* (*εν παντι*), in every Branch of your Work, as a Minister. And, therefore, it is necessary, that you should thoroughly study every Doctrine, *legal* and *evangelical* All Cautions, Exhortations, Precepts, Reproofs, and comforting Promises, that you may be *apt to teach*, and that you may be *a Son of Thunder*, to the stupid and careless, *and a Son of Consolation*, unto the Mourners in Zion.

IV. Take Heed to thyself. This Branch of Advice respects you as a Man, a Christian, and a Minister. You should take Heed to yourself, as a Man. Though Ministers are called to Self-denial, that they may serve the Church of Christ, and preach His Gospel, it is lawful for them, prudently to consult their own Welfare, and the Good of their Families, that they may be supplied, with the Necessaries of Life. And this is a Duty incumbent on them, in common with other Men. Take a prudent Care of your Health, to preserve it, that you may continue capable of attending to those laborious Services, which belong to your Station, in the Church. It is of greater Importance to take Heed to yourself, as a Christian Be careful of your *spiritual Welfare*. While you aim at the Edification of

others, neglect not your own, if you do, it will be attended with sorrowful Effects. For, *Leanness* of Soul will be the Consequence of such Neglect. Consider this *awful* Truth, that you may profit others, and not yourself, by your ministerial Services. Spiritual Advantage can no otherwise accrue to our Souls, by the Doctrines we preach, than in *mixing Faith* with them. And, therefore, it is very necessary, that we should design acting our Graces, in the Exercise of our Gifts Without that, though our Abilities may be improved, our renewed Part, will decline in its Vigor — Grace will not *thrive* in our Hearts, unless it is *frequently* acted on those precious Truths, which we are commissioned to preach. Remember, my Brother, that in this Sense, you must be mindful of your *own Vineyard*. *You can't be too much so*. It is a melancholy Thing to feed others, and *starve* our own Souls, through Negligence in this Matter, which, perhaps, may have been too much the Care, at least, *with some of us*. May the good Lord convince us of, and humble us for our Sin, and Folly herein! It is not enough, to please, and even to do Good to others, by our ministerial Labours, if we ourselves receive no spiritual Benefit by them. We ought to observe with what Frame of Mind, we study and preach. Whether we think and speak of the great Things of God, with that holy Reverence, which they justly demand. They are adorable in their Nature, and, therefore, we ought to contemplate on, and express them with great Seriousness and Awe. Evangelical Mysteries should be studied, and treated of in the most reverential Manner, because of the Divine Glory which there is in them, above all other Subjects whatsoever. A due Consideration thereof, will tend to engenerate and promote in you, a becoming Frame of Soul, when you are conversant about them, in your Study, and in the Pulpit.

Again, take Heed to yourself, as a Minister. Neglect not; but *stir up the Gift*, that is in you. Be diligent in the Use of all those Means, which God hath appointed, for the Cultivation, and Improvement of it. If you are not, how can you hope for its Increase, or even for the Continuance of it, with you, in any tolerable Degree? If we are negligent and slothful, we can't reasonably, have any Expectation of increasing our Furniture, for the Service and Benefit of the Church. And be cautious how you conduct yourself, in Conversation, and in those Visits, which you pay your Friends. Christians are of very different Tempers, and sometimes it falls out that they have different Interests, and are at Variance. And, therefore, great Prudence, is necessary in converting with them, in such a Circumstance. Without it, you may do much Injury. Let *the Wisdom of the Serpent*, and *the Innocency of the Dove*, be united, in whatever you express, on such Occasions. Sometimes, Silence may be best. Very often, a *silent Tongue*, is an Evidence of a wise Head. I lay it again, very often, a *silent Tongue* is an Evidence of a *wise Head*, in a Minister, whose

Office leads him to converse with Christians, among whom, through one Cause or another, Differences arise in this State of Imperfection. If you cannot heal Breaches, be sure not to *widen* them, through a Want of Caution, in what you at any Time, say, to either of the Parties, at Difference.

V. *You must, my Brother, take heed to thy Doctrine. Consider well and examine, what you deliver in the Name of God, to his People.* See to it that those Principles, which you advance and inculcate, agree with the Holy Scriptures. Permit me to mention five *infallible* Rules, whereby all Doctrines, may be tried, and their Truth, or Falsehood, determined, viz. *Doctrines which are calculated, to promote the Glory of Divine Grace: Which exclude Boasting in the Creature: Which are a Foundation of Strong Consolation, in the Saints: Which are according to Godliness: And which are consistent.* I call them *infallible* Rules, because they are *most plainly scriptural*.

1. The first Rule, whereby, I would advise you to try Doctrines, is this: If they are *calculated to promote the Glory of Divine Grace*. By Grace, I do not mean the Benevolence and Bounty of God, as the Creator, and Upholder of all Things, which are of universal Extent. *God is good to all, and His tender Mercies are over all His Works.* Wherein, He acts according to that infinite Goodness, which is natural to Him. Some seem to have no other Conception of Divine Favour, which is the Cause of Salvation, than that it is, this universal Good Will of God, as Creator, whereof all Creatures, are the Objects in their Creation-State, which is as great a Mistake, as can be, on this momentous Subject. Divine Love, which is the Origin of our Salvation, is the sovereign Pleasure and Good Will of God. There is a *Fitness* in the Exercise of Goodness towards all Creatures, as they were formed by their Almighty Creator; but God does not provide for the Recovery of guilty Creatures, because it is fit, in *itself*, that He should so do: Or, because it is agreeable to Goodness, as it is *natural* to Him. If this was the Fact, then God would not be at Liberty to save, or not save Sinners; but making Provision for their salvation, would be *necessary* to Deity. For, all Acts of Goodness, as it is *natural* to God, are *necessary*, and *not free* Acts of His Will, though His Will acts *freely*, in determining to put forth such Acts of Goodness. Divine Grace to which our Salvation is owing, is absolutely free Favour, which acts without any Inducement, or Motive, in its Objects. If we consider the Temper and Conduct of the Subjects of Salvation, *naturally*, we must be convinced of the Truth of this, I think. *Are they not under the Dominion of Sin? Is not that the governing Principle in them? Are not their carnal Minds Enmity against God? Are not their Minds alienated from the Life of God?*

And as to their Conduct: *Have they not their Conversation, according to the Lusts of the Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh, and of the Mind? Are they not foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice, and Envy, hateful, and hating one another?* What can there be, in such, to invite the merciful and kind Regard of God to them? Men in order to disprove, the *absolute* Freedom of Divine Favour, in the Affair of our Salvation, are obliged, to rise up in *flat* Contradiction, to this *displeasing* Representation, of the Disposition of our Minds, and of our Conduct, in our natural State. And to maintain, that in Fact, we are not so corrupt, in our Hearts, nor so criminal in our Behaviour, as the Scripture represents us. *By Grace we are saved* (Ephesians 2:8.). *The Kindness and Love of God our Saviour towards Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done; but of His Mercy hath He saved us* (Titus 3:5.). *It is of Faith, that it might be by Grace* (Romans 4:16.). Our Salvation is *entirely*, and *absolutely* of the Grace of God, without any Works of ours. The Admission of them, as concurring Causes, with the Grace of God, destroys its true Nature. For, *if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace* (Romans 11:6.). The Design of God, in our Recovery, is to magnify the Riches of His Grace: My Brother, try all Doctrines by this Rule, it is an infallible one. And, therefore, you may be assured, that whatever Principle, is not calculated to promote the Glory of Divine Grace, it cannot be true, by whom soever it is embraced or advanced. Let it, therefore, never have Place in your Preaching.

2. The second Rule for your Tryal of Doctrines, is this: They must be such, as exclude Boasting. *Where is Boasting then? It is excluded? By what Law, of Works? Nay, but by the Law of Faith* (Romans 3:27.). *Not of Works left any Man should boast* (Ephesians 2:9.). Boasting is *absolute*, or *comparative*. *Absolute* Boasting, is this: A Man's affirming, or insisting on it, that he has in the Course of his Life, performed the Whole of his Duty, and in such a Manner, as the Law requires, and, that, therefore, he has a Right to Life, according to that Law, which is the Rule of Action to him. This *Kind* of Boasting cannot have Place, in any, who acknowledge, that they are Sinners, and stand in Need of Salvation. And, therefore, it is not that which the Apostle contends, is not to be admitted, in the Affair of Salvation.

Comparative Boasting *only* can be intended, which is this: An Opinion, that by a proper and wise Improvement of those Means, which are afforded us, to that End, we have secured to ourselves Life and Happiness, which some others, have foolishly neglected to do, and, therefore, perish. In the apprehension of many, the Fact *stands* thus, with Men, in the Business of Salvation. God is pleased

in infinite Benevolence and Goodness, to make Proposals of Pardon and Peace to them, and affords them, such Helps and Advantages, as are sufficient, if they are not wanting to themselves, to enable them to obtain these Blessings. Some act the *wise*, and others the *foolish* Part, in the Enjoyment of those Helps and Advantages, and, therefore, the Event is different, according to their different Behaviour, in the same advantageous Circumstances. For Instance, *Peter* and *Judas*, through Divine Clemency and Mercy, are favoured with Overtures of Pardon and Salvation, and both have Assistances of the same Kind, to facilitate obtaining those Blessings, yea, which are sufficient to that End, if wisely improved by both. *Peter* he is so prudent, as to consult his own Welfare, and makes the best Use of those Helps, and Advantages, and, thereby, obtains the great Blessings, which God, in his infinite Mercy offers, and promises to bestow, upon such a wise and prudent Behaviour. On the Contrary, *Judas* he is foolishly regardless of his eternal Peace, and neglects to improve those Aids and Assistances, which God mercifully grants him, whereby, he also might obtain Life and Happiness, and, therefore, he misses of the Blessings, which are offered and promised, to be given, upon a different Behaviour. Now, if this is the true State of the Case, *Peter* hath proper Ground for a *comparative* Boasting, or the same Reason, for paying himself a Compliment, and applauding his own Wisdom, as *Judas* hath for Censuring himself and condemning his own Folly. Because, each had the *same gracious* Tenders, and the *same Kind Helps*, and, therefore, the Welfare of *Peter* is owing to his own Wisdom and Care, as the Destruction of *Judas* is the Effect of his own Folly, or Neglect. For, *Peter* was not determined, by Divine Influence, to act, as he has done; but his Determination, to act the wise Part, he hath acted, followed, upon a *rational* Consideration of the *Fitness* and *Wisdom* of so acting. And it was possible, for *Judas*, to have determined, to act in the very same Manner, and, thereby, to have obtained the very same Benefits, as *Peter* hath acquired a Right unto. This is that *Boasting*, which is excluded in our Salvation, and, which it is impossible, that any should have Foundation for. Because, the *Whole* of our Holiness, in *Principle*, and *Acts* is from God, as the efficient Cause thereof. And if he intends to save you, he will certainly bring you to this humble and grateful Acknowledgement, that you *are nothing*, and that it is: *By His Grace, you are what you are*. Allow me, my Brother, to press it upon you, to try your Doctrine by this Rule, which is so plainly laid down in Scripture, and be lure to reject every Principle which agrees not with it.

3. The third Rule for your Tryal of Doctrines is: *If they are a proper Foundation, for strong Consolation in the Saints*. It is the Will of God, that Believers should enjoy such *Consolation* (Hebrews 6:18.).

And, therefore, Sentiments which are not suited to produce and maintain it in them, cannot be true, by whom soever they are embraced, and propagated. Their Peace and Comfort, spring from, and are founded on the Security of their most important Interest, viz. The eternal Salvation of their Souls. If that is save and secure, their Joy will be full; but if it is a Matter, uncertain and precarious, *in itself* because it is not *effectually* provided for by God: They will fall into Dejection and inexpressible Perplexity. Nothing can more make the *Hearts of the righteous sad, whom the Lord would not have made sad*, than a Supposition, that their everlasting Welfare is doubtful, *in itself*. Which it must necessarily be, at least, if the Pardon of their Sins, if the Justification of their Persons, and if their Perseverance, in Faith, and Holiness, depend on their own *fickle and corrupt* Will, without a *determining Influence*, upon it by Divine Grace. Others, who are unacquainted with the *Plague of their Hearts*, may think it is a sufficient Ground of Peace, to have Offers of Pardon and Salvation, with Aids afforded, to facilitate obtaining a Right to them. But such, who are convinced of their *Impotency*, and the *Naughtiness* of their Hearts, can hear of Nothing more *dismal*, than this: That their future Happiness depends upon, the free Actings of their own Will, without being determined in its Volitions, by the good Spirit of God. Because they know, that their Determination, to chuse what is spiritually Good, is *only and entirely* the Effect of the Grace of God. I may proceed much farther, and affirm, that if it is Fact, *that final* Salvation, is dependent on the Will of the Saints, without an effectual Influence upon it, by Divine Grace, their future Blessedness, is a Thing impossible, and that they certainly know, it must be. Because, they are sensible, that all Acts of Holiness in them, are the *pure* Effects, of an efficacious Operation, of God upon them; Who *worketh in them, both to will, and to do, of His good Pleasure*. And therefore, my Brother, fail not to examine your Doctrine, by this Rule; you may be assured, that no Principle, which is not calculated, to administer *strong* Consolation, to regenerate Persons, can be true; however plausible, at first View, it may seem.

4. The fourth Rule for the Tryal of Doctrines is: *Whether they are according to Godliness?* No Principle can come from God, which gives Countenance to Sin. Or, which supposes, that a *lower* Degree of Obedience, is required of us now, because, of our Incapacity, to yield a perfect and sinless Obedience, through that Depravity, which attends us. To accommodate the Law, to our present Weakness, in its Precepts, is, as I remember, that excellent Divine Dr. *Owen*, somewhere says, speaking in Relation to some other Things, *the worst Kind of Antinomianism*. And to affirm, that we are not under the Law, as a Rule of Action is down-right *Libertinism*. That, necessarily implies, that no Acts are unlawful, or sinful. For, *where*

no Law is, there is no Transgression. We are not freed from the Law, as a Rule of Conduct, nor is any Abatement made, in its preceptive Part. Neither, does the Divine Law-giver make any Allowances, for our Defects, or Imperfections, and what are sometimes called, our *unallowed*, and *involuntary* Sins, and justify our Persons, on the Ground of a *partial* Obedience, to His just and holy Law. My Brother, you ought strictly to examine your Doctrine, by this Rule, and not advance any Principle, which is inconsistent with the Purity, Perfection, and extensive Commands of the Law. For, God cannot abate of the Strictness of his Precepts, in order to save Sinners, nor justify their Persons, without a Righteousness, that is fully answerable to them, in their utmost Extent. As you are not to corrupt evangelical Truths; so you must maintain the Doctrine of the Law, in its Purity, and full Compass. If you fail of doing that, you will not *approve yourself to God, as a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed*, nor, *rightly divide the Word of Truth.* **

5. The last Rule, whereby you should try your Doctrine is: *If it be consistent — Truth is one and uniform.* Contradictory Principles, cannot possibly be Truths. One, or other of such Principles, must certainly be false. There is no Inconsistency in the Gospel. It is all of a Piece. Your *Word*, or your Preaching, let it not be *yea* and *nay*; but *yea, yea.* *If the Trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the Battle?* Works and Grace, as Causes of Salvation, are *Opposites.* And, therefore, do not attribute it *partly* to Works, and *partly* to Grace; nor ascribe it, sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other. There have been many, and I fear there are still too many inconsistent Preachers. Sometimes the doctrinal, and applicatory Part of a Sermon, *clash* and *disagree*, either through the *mistaken* Conceptions of the Preacher, relating to some Points, or for *Want* of a due Consideration, in what Manner to express himself, so as that his Discourse, may in all Parts of it be uniform, and consistent. The former, is the Effect of a wrong Judgment, the latter is a Discovery of a Neglect to *compare spiritual Things, with spiritual.* Let it be your Care, that neither may be found in you.

These Rules are most plainly scriptural, and, therefore, infallible. No Doctrine, which eclipses the Glory of Divine Grace: Which excludes not Boasting: Which is not a proper Ground of *strong* Consolation, in the Saints: Which is not according to Godliness: Which is inconsistent, or agrees not with the Analogy of Faith, can be true. My Brother, carefully examine every Sentiment, by those plain and easy Rules. You may be certain, that those Principles, are Divine Truths, which agree with them, and, that those which do not, are Errors, let who will embrace, and defend them. If Men would but try their Notions, by those Rules, and be determined, in their

Opinions, by them, which we all ought to be, they could never *pester* the Church with pernicious Doctrines, which many have done, to the Dishonour of God, and the inexpressible Grief of pious Souls. I hope, that you will never be guilty of acting such a Part, through Inattention to this necessary Duty. Which, I beg Leave, most earnestly to recommend, and press upon you. By no Means fail of closely attending to it. And never be ashamed of, nor afraid to preach Doctrines, which are capable of being proved true, by those Divine Rules; though many may object to them: The Gospel always had, and we must expect it will have, numerous Opposers: So long as the human Mind remains *carnal* For, that will eternally esteem the Things of the Spirit of God *Foolishness*, and such, as ought to be rejected, by *every wise Man*.

VI. *Continue in them. It is the Duty of a Minister to abide, in the Ministry, into which he is put by Jesus Christ.* No lucrative Views, or temporal Advantages, ought to induce him, to desert that most important Service.

Nor should Discouragements, which he may meet with, therein, cause him to quit it. Neither, should he think of discontinuing, in that Station, unto which he is called, by the Head of the Church, because of those Oppositions, which the Enemies of the Gospel, make against. him, in his Work. He ought to *endure Hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ*. No Man can justify himself, in leaving a Service, unto which, he hath Reason to think, that he was called of God, either for Profit, or on Account of Difficulties, which arise to him, in his Attendance unto it. Having *put his Hand to the Plough, no enticing Allurements, or formidable Oppositions, should prevail with him to look back*. And, my Brother, as you are to abide in this honourable Vocation, so, you must continue, conscientiously, and diligently, to attend unto the Duties of it. You must not grow weary of a *painful and close Study* of the Holy Scriptures, and the Doctrines, therein, contained, although it is a *Weariness to the Flesh*, and it may impair your natural Strength. Pray, that you may be enabled, by Divine Grace, to persevere, in the Practice of those Duties, which are en-joined on you, in your ministerial Character. That you may meditate in a proper Manner, on the Things of God. That you may give yourself wholly to them. That your Heart may be fixed on them, and your Joy and Delight be in them. That you may be influenced to take Heed to yourself, as a Christian, and as a Minister. That you may be assisted, to take Heed to your Doctrine, and strictly try it, by those infallible Rules, which I have mentioned, and which are so plainly Scriptural. To this End, that your Proficiency, in the Knowledge of sacred Things, may appear to all Sorts of Persons, both to the Friends, and Adversaries of Truth. And

also, in every Article of the Christian Faith. Unless you so do, you can't reasonably hope, to be a *Workman, that needeth not to be ashamed*. Nor expect, that happy Effect to follow, which is proposed to our Consideration, as Ministers, in order to quicken us unto Diligence and Care, in our important Work. That is,

VII. *In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them, that hear thee. A very animating Consideration indeed!* What, that is more important, and striking can be urged, to engage us to Diligence, Care, and Perseverance in our Work, as Ministers? Our own spiritual Welfare, and that of others, who attend on our Ministry, under the Blessing of God, it seems, will be promoted, thereby. Your due Attendance to the several Branches of Advice, given in the Text, will be conducive, to the Preservation of yourself, and your Hearers, from embracing Principles, which are dishonourable to God, destructive of the Consolation of the Saints, and are likely to have an ill Influence, on the Morals of Men. *And*, therefore, be diligent, in your Studies, in order to increase your Acquaintance, with those Doctrines which it is your Duty to preach, unto Ends so salutary and important. We cannot be engaged in a more noble Service, than the Propagation of evangelical Truths, the Establishment of the Faith, of the Saints, and the Promoting of Holiness, in them. Shall we then think any Labour too great, to answer Purposes, of such vast Moment? Surely we cannot.

Besides, as the Gospel is *the Power of God to the Salvation of them that believe*, and, that *Faith cometh by Hearing*, wherewith, Salvation, is inseparably connected: No Consideration, more weighty, can be thought of, to excite us, unto Care and Assiduity, in our ministerial Function. Let us never grow weary of *intense* Study, and *laborious* Preaching, since it is the Pleasure of God, thereby, *to save them, who believe*. If we have a due Concern for the Glory of God, and the Good of immortal Souls, nothing can give us such Satisfaction and Pleasure, as being instrumental, in the eternal Salvation of any of those, for whom, the Son of God, graciously condescended, to obey, suffer, and die on the Cross. This is a Consideration of the *most animating* Nature, to stir us up to use Diligence in our *Work*. If we act under its Influence, we shall not *faint*, and *grow weary*, of the *most painful Labour*.

Thus, my honoured, and beloved Brother, I have attempted, briefly, to explain, the several Branches of Advice, given to you, in there Words. May the Lord assist you to practice, the important Duties, therein, recommended! And, my Desire is, that you, and this Church, many Years hence, may have Occasion, to look back, on the Solemnities of this Day, with the highest Satisfaction, and Thankfulness.

FOOTNOTES

* That which I here intend might be illustrated by the divine Reasoning of the inspired Writer to the *Hebrews* in various Instances. How clear and full are the Proofs which he produces, to evince the Dignity of the Person of Christ, as inclusive of both his Natures, divine and human, in the first Chapter of that most admirable Epistle? In what a convincing Manner does he prove, that Christ is a Priest, and a Priest not after the Order of *Aaron*; but of another, quite distinct from? And with what Perspicuity does he prove, that the *Sinai-Covenant* was to wax old and vanish away? Also, that Christ is the Mediator of another, and better Covenant? And that, therefore, *the Sinai-Covenant* was not intended, *really*, but only, *typically*, to take away Sin? And, consequently, that the Pardon of Sin, and Salvation from it, could not be expected, by the Observance of any, or all the Rites, which were instituted, in that Covenant. There and other Instances, in that Epistle, are most excellent Directions, how we are to demonstrate and confirm evangelical Truths. When I consider the Scope of the divine Writer therein, and the Manner of his treating on the many important Subjects, upon which he discourses, I cannot but think it is exceedingly strange, that any should object to an argumentative Way of Preaching in order to confirm the Truths of the Gospel. Some so do, it may be, out of Supineness, and Indifferency about sacred Truths; and others, perhaps, from a Consciousness, that they are not furnished with proper Talents, for such a *demonstrative* Way, of Preaching.

** Some, of late, affirm, that there is no Holiness in Believers. Or, that they are not *new Creatures*. That they have no other Holiness, than what is in Christ. Light they have, by which, they see spiritual Things; but Purity they have none. The Medium, whereby, those Persons endeavour to prove their Assertions, is this, that we all have Sin, and commit Evil, which no holy Man, will deny, concerning himself. Every one who is godly, knows he hath Sin in him, as well as Holiness, that evil Acts, as well as good ones proceed from him. By the like Medium, it might be equally proved, that Believers have no Sin. For, it is as just to conclude, that they have no Sin, because they have Holiness, as it is to conclude, that they have not Holiness, because they have Sin. And, that they do not commit Evil, because they perform Good. This is not a Doctrine according to Godliness. It is calculated to persuade us, that we may *see the Lord, without Holiness*. Than which there is *Nothing, more false*. The Faith which they speak and boast of, is not worth a *Fig*. It does not *work by Love*. It is *dead*, being *without Works*. And, it is a dreadful Delusion, to imagine, that Salvation is connected with it. If we have not

spiritual Purity, we have not spiritual Light, nor any Discernment of the true Nature of spiritual Things. *Light without Holiness is nothing worth.*

SERMON 26

THE DOCTRINES OF THE IMPUTATION OF SIN TO CHRIST, AND THE IMPUTATION OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO HIS PEOPLE: CLEARLY STATED, EXPLAINED, AND IMPROVED

IN A SERMON PREACHED TO THE SOCIETY, WHO SUPPORT
THE WEDNESDAY EVENING- LECTURE,

IN GREAT-EAST-CHEAP. DECEMBER 29TH, 1756.

Published at their Request.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

“For He hath made Him to be Sin for us; who knew no Sin: That we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.”

IN Consequence of our Apostacy from God, the Depravation of our Nature, thereupon, and of that personal Guilt, which we have contracted: We cannot, according to the Tenor of the Law, be admitted to Fellowship with our Maker either here, or hereafter, without Satisfaction for our Violation of it, as through the Corruption of our Nature we desire it not. Of which important Doctrine the Apostle treats, in some of the preceding Verses. *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing their Trespases to them, and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation, or, the Gospel of Peace, which Christ gave Commission to his Apostles and Ministers to preach. In the Words of my Text, we are informed, how this Reconciliation was effected and brought about. I suppose, that every intelligent Reader will easily observe, that they consist of three distinct Branches — Christ knew no Sin — He hath made Him to be Sin for us — That we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.* I shall consider the Words in the Order I have now mentioned them.

I. Christ knew no Sin. Sometimes, Sin is put for our natural Depravity. Thus it is to be understood, in several Verses of the seventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*: *But Sin, that it might appear Sin, working Death in me, by that which is good, that Sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful* (Romans 7:13.). *Now then it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me* (ver, 17.). The Apostle means the same Thing, by Sin, by *Evil*, by *the Law of Sin*, and by *the Flesh*. viz. That corrupt Fountain, Principle, or Spring of Action, from which all our criminal Acts proceed. Again, Sin designs illegal Acts: *Whosoever committeth Sin, transgresseth also the Law; for Sin is the Transgression of the Law*

(1 John 4:4.). In this Definition of Sin criminal Actions are intended. Christ knew no Sin, in either Sense mentioned, neither as a Principle, nor Act. Knowledge, sometimes means Approbation: *The Lord knoweth the Way of the Righteous*. The Import of which is, he approves thereof. In this Sense the Blessed Jesus knew no Sin. It was the Object of his utmost and invariable Detestation. *He loved Righteousness, and hated Wickedness* (Psalm 45:7.). And, by Knowledge, Experience is meant. Thus I think we are to understand it, in these Words: *For I know, that in me, (that is, in my Flesh) dwelleth no good thing* (Romans 7:18.). The Apostle expresses his Experience by the Phrase *I know*, in this Part of the Verse, as he does by the Phrase *I find*, in the following Branch of it. The Holy Jesus knew no Sin, in this Sense. He had not the least Experience of Evil in him, For, *He was harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners* (Hebrews 7:26.). *A Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot* (1 Peter 1:19.). No moral Taint or Imperfection attended him: And his Conduct was absolutely perfect. *He did no Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth* (Chap. 11:21.).

I would offer to Consideration three Particulars, to shew, that it was impossible, that Christ should know Sin, in either Sense now mentioned.

1. His miraculous Conception in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin. Christ not being conceived in a natural, but supernatural Manner, he did not partake of our natural Corruption. It was impossible he should, because he was the supernatural Production of the holy Spirit. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee: Therefore also, that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee* (Luke 1:35.). This was an absolutely new Thing, the like was never before, nor ever will be. *Behold a new Thing do I create, a woman shall compass a Man, i.e. a male Child by Conception, through the Agency of the divine Spirit. To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given*. This was plainly a *new Creation*. The human Nature of our Lord being produced by the Exertion of the Power of the Spirit of God, no moral Taint or Impunity could attend it. For, the holy Spirit could not give Subsistence unto as unholy Nature.

2. The human Nature of Christ was replete with all the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit. *The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him* (Isaiah 61:1.). And the Father *gave not the Spirit by measure unto him*. The Super- addition of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit unto the Purity of Christ's Nature, rendered it impossible that he should know sin. He having all the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit in their utmost Plenitude and Perfection, superadded unto the Purity of his Nature, nothing of Evil could possibly take Place in him: Such as

the holy Spirit formed him, in the Virgin's Womb, such he infallibly preferred him, by his continual Presence with him, in the Fulness of all his Gifts and Graces.

3. The human nature of Christ hath its Subsistence in his Divine Person. That Individuum of our Nature which was miraculously produced by the Power of the Holy Ghost, the Son of God took into a personal Union with himself. He assumed it to be his *own* in a *peculiar* Manner, that it might be at his Disposal, and always under the Direction of his divine Will. The human Will, and the divine Will of our Saviour are, and eternally will be distinct; but his Will as Man is in absolute Subjection to, and in all Instances, acts under the Direction of his divine Will. And, therefore, it is not possible that he should ever know Sin. Moral evil can never take place in a Nature which is ineffably united with the Person of the Son of God.

There Things clearly evince the Falsehood of the *Abomination* of the *Socinians*, who *impiously* imagine, that Christ might have sinned, and, consequently, that the Design of our Salvation by him might have been entirely ruined. Than which, nothing more false and dishonourable to God, can depraved Reason devise. We grant, that the Will of the most holy Creature, is in itself mutable, and, therefore, if left unto itself, it may make an unfit and unwise Choice: But, since the human Nature of Christ is the Workmanship of the Holy Spirit, and is replenished with all his supernatural Gifts and Graces, and also is in Union with the eternal Son of God, and, therefore, his human Will acts in all Things under the Direction of his divine Will; it is absolutely impossible that his human Will, at any Time, or in any Instance, should make an unfit and unwise Choice. The supernatural production of our Lord, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, is a clear Proof of the Purity of his Nature, in his Formation. And the superaddition of his Gifts and Graces, and the Subsistence of that holy Nature, in the Person of the Son of God, certainly raise it above a Possibility of Defilement and unfit Acting, for evermore.

I would make two Observations on these Particulars, before I proceed farther.

(1) *Adam* was not a Head to Christ. Our blessed Lord was not a Member of him, included in him, nor represented by him, in his public Capacity. He was the Representative of all his natural Descendants; but his Headship was not, nor could be of larger Extent; the holy Jesus not being so, he did represent him. The *first* Man could not be a Head to *the second Man, who is the Lord from Heaven*. It would be the highest Incongruity imaginable to conceive, that *Adam* was a Head to one who is so much his Superior in all

Respects In Gifts, Graces, and in Nearness of Union with God. It was not possible that he, who is personally united with the eternal Son of God, should be a Member of, and be represented by *Adam*. And, therefore, our Lord had no Concern in his Guilt, as a Member of his. Which is the Case of all his natural Descendants. Original Guilt becomes theirs, in Consequence of their Relation to *Adam*, as a Representative to them. For which Reason it is imputed to them, It is not the divine Act of the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin that makes it ours; but because it is ours, in Consequence of our Relation to him as a Head, therefore it is imputed to us.

(2) Christ was not, nor could become Subject of the natural Consequence of *Adam's* first Sin By which Consequence, I understand, the Depravation of our Nature. That immediately followed, in *Adam*, as the natural Effect of his Transgression. And, it takes Place in us, because his Act of Offence was ours, tho' not committed by us; but by him; as our Representative. That Act of Sin being legally ours, we share with him, in the natural Consequence of it: Or, we derive Depravity from him, on Account of becoming guilty with him. This sad Effect does not follow upon the Imputation of his Sin, as the Cause thereof; but It follows upon his Sin being *legally*, ours, he acting therein, as our Representative Head, and no otherwise. Now Christ not being concerned in original Guilt, by Virtue of Union with him, as a Head, the natural Consequence of that Guilt could not take Place in him, as it does in us, by Reason it is ours, as we are Members of him. Thus the holy Jesus was separate from Sinners, and it was not possible, that he should participate with them, in that which is the natural Consequence of Sin, *viz.* Moral Defilement and Impurity. Unless the human Nature of our blessed Lord had been thus *infallibly* preserved from all moral Evil, both in Principle and Act, our whole Salvation would have been uncertain and precarious. For, if the holy Jesus had been under a Possibility of Defilement, and of acting illegally, in any Instance, the Design of our Salvation by him might possibly have been defeated, to the eternal Reproach of the Perfections of God, and the everlasting Ruin of the Church. The Thought of which must surely be shocking to every pious Mind! That which Christ knew not, nor could know, he was made.

II. *He hath made him to be Sin for us.* There are three Things to be considered in this important Subject: *Whose Act this was* — *The Act itself* — And, *on whose Account, or, for whom* Christ was made Sin: *For us.*

1. This was not the Act of any Creature, angelic or human: but the Act of the divine Father. *We pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be Sin for us.* i.e. He to

whom the Apostle prays the *Corinthians* to be reconciled, made him to be Sin for us. It would have been daring and impious Insolence, in any Creature, to will that the Son of God should be made Sin. God only had a Right to resolve upon it. and he alone could place it to his Account. This was the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom, and the Determination of his *sovereign* Pleasure, In forming the Plan of our Reconciliation; he willed not to impute our Trespasses to us, and decreed to impute them unto Christ, in order to his making Atonement for them. And according unto this his sovereign Decree: *He laid on him, or made to meet in him, the Iniquities of us all.* The Foundation of this Procedure was it federal Agreement between the Father and Christ. Which is clearly expressed in a blessed divine Context by the inspired Writer to the *Hebrews*: *Wherefore, when he cometh into the World, he saith, Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not; but a Body hast thou prepared me. In Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices for Sin thou hadst no Pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and Offering, and burnt Offerings, and Offerings for Sin, thou wouldst not, neither hadst Pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law: Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy Will O God; he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are Sanctified, through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.* (Hebrews 10:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.)

In these Words it evidently appears, that it was the Will of the Father, that Christ should become an Offering for Sin; unto which he freely and fully consented. This Paction, or federal Agreement, was the Ground on which the Father made him to be Sin for us. And, therefore, wonderful as it is, there is not the least Injustice therein.

The divine Decree, to impute Sin to Christ, was an Act of *absolute* Sovereignty, and afore from the *mere* Pleasure of God, with a View to the Glory of his Perfections, in our Remission and Salvation. But the Act *itself*, of imputing our Guilt to him, hath for its Foundation, the free and full Consent of Christ to bear it, in compliance with the Will of the Father that he should. So that the Charge of our Crimes to him, comports with Justice, and no Injury was done to Christ in that Act. The Sovereignty of the Decree of the Imputation of Sin to him is a most clear Proof that God only could make him to be Sin for us. For, if it had been possible to any created Mind, to have devised this Method of the Expiation of Sin, which it was not, no Creature could have been inverted with a Right to will and move for the Imputation of it unto the innocent Jesus. As the Contrivance of this *adorable* Transaction was proper to infinite Wisdom: So it was *peculiar* to divine Sovereignty to resolve upon it. This Act,

therefore, of making Christ to be Sin for us, was God's own, and not the Act of any Creature whatsoever.

2. The Act of making him to be Sin: Or how he was made Sin for us, is to be considered. I would do this negatively, and positively.

(1.) Negatively. It was not *inherently*: That was absolutely impossible. For, that would have been contrary to the infinite Purity of God, and ruinous to his Design of our Salvation by Christ. Besides, as has been before shewn, the miraculous Conception of our Lord, and the Super-addition of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit unto the Purity of his Nature, and the Subsistence of his human Nature, in his divine Person, rendered it impossible that any moral Taint, or Impurity, should ever take Place in him. This Act, therefore, of making him to be Sin, effected no internal Change in him. His Nature remained pure and spotless notwithstanding. And all his Actions corresponded with the sinless Perfection of his Nature.

(2.) I am to shew in a positive Sense, how Christ was made Sin. And He was made Sin in the same manner, as we are made the Righteousness of God in Him. Which is *imputatively*. *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works*. Imputation is, *reckoning accounting or placing to Account, and esteeming thereupon*. The Act of Imputation, therefore, whether, of Sin, or Righteousness, makes no internal Change in the Object of the Act. For it is not a transient Act; but it is an inward Act of the Mind, which cannot produce a physical Change, in the Object upon whom it passes. And, consequently, the Imputation of Sin to Christ, was not, nor could be productive of any internal Change in him. Notwithstanding the placing to his Account, in the divine Mind, our Guilt, or criminal Actions, he remained, innocent, pure, and spotless in himself. This one thing being duly attended unto, will enable us to answer various of the trifling Objections, which are raised against the Doctrine of the Imputation of our Sins to him, beyond any solid Reply. Some have objected, that if Sin itself was imputed to Christ, he must have been defiled by it. But that is a great Mistake: For Sin, *as imputed*, defiles not. If it did, the Imputation of it, would be impossible with God, not only with respect to Christ; but also, Sinners themselves; because infinite Purity, cannot put forth any Act which would render the Object of that Act morally impure. If the Imputation of Sin to the guilty Creature does not pollute him, which is a certain Truth: How should the Imputation of it to the Holy Jesus, defile him? Imputation is not *Transfusion*. In the latter a Person becomes the Subject of that which is transfused. But in the former, no one becomes the Subject of that which is imputed, by *the Act of Imputation*. And therefore, though the Transfusion of Sin, if that

could be, which it cannot, would necessarily defile: The Imputation of it, does not pollute the Object of that Act. And, consequently, the Imputation of Sin to the Blessed Jesus did not, nor could pollute his holy Nature.

This Doctrine contains no false, or mistaken Idea in it, on the Part of the Father, who imputed Sin to Christ; nor on the Part of Christ, to whom it was imputed. Not on the Part of the Father; for, he did not consider our criminal Actions, which he placed to the Account of Christ, as his Acts, or perpetrated by him; but as our Acts, or committed by us: So that his Judgment in this Affair was according to Truth and Fact. Nor, does this Doctrine on the Part of Christ, include any mistaken Conception in it: For, it does not suppose, that he had any Consciousness of the Perpetration of those criminal Actions, which were imputed to him: Or, that under the Charge of them to him, he considered and esteemed them Acts, which he himself had committed. Wherefore, this Doctrine is attended with no dangerous Consequence, relating to Christ, nor is any Thing contrary to Truth, supposed therein, respecting Sin, which he was made for us.

Besides, if Guilt was not charged on Christ, his Sufferings could not be of a penal nature. For, Penalty, is suffering under a Charge of Offence, and without a just Imputation of Guilt, Punishment cannot, in Equity be inflicted, on any Subject. It is a most unrighteous thing to punish any one considered, as innocent. And, therefore, if it was not possible with God, to impute Sin to the innocent Jesus, neither could he inflict Punishment on him. And, if Christ did not endure *proper* Punishment, his Sufferings were not, nor could be satisfactory to the Law, and Justice of God for our Sins. And it is in vain to hope for Salvation, through his Sufferings and Death. Of such Necessity and Importance, is the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ

3. He was made Sin for us. Not for all the Individuals of Mankind. The latter Branch of the Text interprets this. Christ was made Sin for those, and only those, who are made the Righteousness of God in him.

Now as Men *universally* are not made the Righteousness of God in Christ: So he was not made Sin for Men *universally*, The Extent of these two Things is exactly the same. Such, who remain dead in Sin, and go out of this World under the Dominion and Power of it, surely none can think are made the Righteousness of God in Christ; and there is no Reason to conceive, that he was made Sin for any of them. He bore the Guilt of no others than those to whom he is a Head, who are his Body, and for whom he became a Surety. For, that

was the Foundation on which Sin was imputed to him: And, therefore, the Sins of such Persons only were imputed to him, who are related to him as Members. They are *the Church which he loved, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing* (Ephesians 5:27.). The End of his being made Sin for us, was,

III. That we might be made the Righteousness of God in him. The Things to be considered in this Branch of my Subject are the following: Righteousness — That this is the Righteousness of God — How we are made the Righteousness of God — And our being made the Righteousness of God in Christ.

1. I would shew what Righteousness is. And it consists of two distinct Branches.

(1.) Purity of Nature. The Lord *requires Truth in the inward Part*. The Law extends to the Mind. All its Dispositions and Acts must be perfectly holy.

The eternal Rule of Righteousness allows of no internal Impurity, any more than it does of external unholy Acts. All vain Imaginations, all disorderly Thoughts, all irregular Desires and all evil Tendencies, in the Affections, are condemned by it. Righteousness, therefore, includes in it Holiness of Heart, and such Holiness as is answerable to the Requirement of the Law, *viz.* absolutely perfect and sinless.

(2.) Obedience to all the Precepts of the Law, in Conduct, is the other Branch of Righteousness. If any Act is done which the Law prohibits, or if any Defect and Imperfection attends those Actions, which it prescribes, Righteousness is wanting. For, if there is not a complete Conformity to the *Law*, in Heart and Life, or in all Acts, internal and external, both with Respect to the Matter and Manner of those Acts, the Lawgiver must necessarily, if his Judgment is according to Truth, esteem that Obedience imperfect, and not answerable to the Rule of Action. And, therefore, not such as will justify in his Sight. The Holiness of Christ's Nature, and his sinless Obedience in Life, are the two essential Branches of that Righteousness which is required in the Law: And both are equally necessary unto our being constituted righteous in him; who is *the Lord our Righteousness*.

2. That Righteousness, which we are made, is the Righteousness of God.

(1.) This may be understood of God the Father. For, this Righteousness is the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom. How guilty Men should be just with God, no created Understanding could

determine. None but God. himself could resolve how this should be. And it is the Effect of his sovereign Goodwill and Pleasure Christ's Headship to us: Our Relation to him as Members: His Subjection to the Covenant of Works on our Account, are Effects of the Love of God to us, and the Result of his gracious Decree, concerning us. Besides, the Father accepts of this Righteousness for us, and graciously imputes it unto us. And, therefore, this Righteousness is his free Gift. For which Reason it is called *the Gift of Righteousness*.

(2.) Christ, whole this Righteousness is, he as truly and properly God. He is *the mighty God* (Isaiah 9:6.). *Over all, God blessed for ever* (Romans 9:5.). *In the Form of God, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God* (Philippians 2:6.). He who is our Righteousness, is Jehovah. This is therefore the Righteousness of a divine Person; but not his *divine* Righteousness. The human Nature of Christ is the immediate Subject of it. For, it is the Holiness and Obedience of that Nature, unto the Law, under which, as Man, he was made. As his human Nature hath its Subsistence in his divine Person; it is the Righteousness of God, as his Blood is the Blood of God. The Dignity of his Person is the Ground and Measure of the Merit and Value of both; his Person is infinite in Dignity, and that gives infinite Worth and Merit to his Obedience. And, therefore, it is properly deferring of all that Grace and Glory, which are and will be communicated to the Elect of God, even unto Eternity. And it is thro' this Righteousness that Grace will reign unto eternal Life. This is the Righteousness of the Mediator; but it is not his mediatorial Righteousness. For, that comprises the full Execution and faithful Discharge of the whole Will of God in his mediatorial Capacity, which is of far longer Extent than the Requirements of the Covenant of Works from us. This is that perfect Holiness and sinless Obedience, which that Covenant demands of us. Hence it is evident that though this Righteousness is included in his mediatorial Righteousness, yet it is not that Righteousness itself. These Things clear the Doctrine of the imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, from several Objections which are brought against it.

3. The Act of making us Righteousness, is to be considered. This is not *inherently*, but *imputatively*. *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works* (Romans 4:5.). It is not the Transfusion of Christ's Righteousness into us For that is impossible. We do not become the Subjects of it. As he did not become the Subject of Sin, by being made Sin for us: So we do not become the Subjects of Righteousness, by being made the Righteousness of God in him. Sin which Christ was made was not inherent in him: And Righteousness which we are made, is not inherent in us. Sin is ours subjectively, and not Christ's. And

Righteousness is his subjectively, and not ours. The Imputation of Sin to him, effected no internal Change in him: Nor does the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, produce any internal Change in us. A due Consideration of the Nature of the Act of Imputation, will enable us to see this clearly. Imputation is an internal Act of the Mind, whether it be of Sin or Righteousness, and, therefore, it cannot be productive of any inherent Change in the Object upon whom it passes. As Christ was not made sinful, by the Imputation of our Sins to him: So we are not made holy, or internally righteous, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. For, as the Imputation of Sin to him did not defile him: So the Imputation of Righteousness to us does not sanctify us. The Reason of which is clear, Imputation is not a Transfusion of that which is imputed, whether it be Sin or Righteousness; but it is reckoning, accounting, or placing to Account, and esteeming thereupon, as was before observed. The Object of this Act, therefore, must still be inherently the same as before, notwithstanding that Act passing on him, because it is not a transient; but an internal Act, which cannot produce a physical Change, in its Object. It is certainly true, that as God makes Christ Righteousness to us: So he also makes him Sanctification unto us; but not in the same Way. He makes him Righteousness to us, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to our Persons: He makes him Sanctification to us, by a Conveyance of Grace from him, into our Souls. So that his Grace, which is conveyed into our Hearts from him, becomes ours subjectively; but his Righteousness, which is imputed to us, does not so become ours. It is still in him, as its proper Subject, and not in us. And in the divine Imputation of this Righteousness to us, it Is not supposed, that God accounts it our personal Righteousness, or wrought out by us; but it is freely granted, and constantly asserted, that he esteems it, as it really is Christ's Righteousness, or wrought out by him: Nor, is It thought, that God considers this Righteousness as ours subjectively, or inherent in us; but that he reckons it to be the Righteousness of Christ subjectively, as it truly is. He accounts it ours, no otherwise than by free Gift, and gracious Imputation. And, therefore, this Doctrine contains in It nothing absurd, or any false and mistaken Conception, concerning God, Christ, or us.

4. It is in Christ that we are made the Righteousness of God:

(1.) We are in Christ: Or a Union between him and us subsists. The Act of Election terminated on our Persons in him. For we were chosen in him. In that gracious Decree, God willed him to be a Head to the Church, and appointed the Church to be his Body: Which Act of the divine Will, constituted a real Union between Christ, and the Church. And, the everlasting Covenant was made with him,

considered as the Church's Head, which the *Assembly of Divines* well express: *The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ, as Head, and with the Elect in him, as his Seed.* And, therefore, all the Blessings promised and granted, in that Covenant, were given to us in him. *We were blessed with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3.). And that Grace according to which, we are rived and called with an holy Calling, *was given us in Christ, before the World began* (2 Timothy 1:9.). Which necessarily supposes the Subsistence of a real Union between Christ, as Head, and us, as Members of him.

(2.) This foederal, or as some have called it, this *Fountain-Union*, is the Foundation of the Imputation of our Guilt to Christ and of the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. Because, we are *mystically* one with him, our Sin was imputed to him, and for that Reason, his Righteousness is imputed to us. Because, we were foederally, *in the first Adam*, as a Head to us, therefore, is his Act of Disobedience, charged on us: *And*, because we were foederally in the *second Adam*, as a Head to us, therefore, is his Obedience placed to our Account. And as we were in *Adam prior* to the Imputation of his Offence to us: So we were in Christ *prior* to the Imputation of his Righteousness to us. I lament, I greatly lament, that some even among ourselves, seem to suppose, (though I think they have no ill-meaning) that the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, is prior to any real Union with him, which Is a great Mistake. They do this left they should give Countenance, to what has been called *Antinomianism*, viz. *Union with Christ from Everlasting*. But the Truth is, a Denial of this everlasting foederal Union, between Christ and his People, leaves no Ground for the Imputation of their Sins to him, nor, the Imputation of his Righteousness to them. The divine Decree to impute our Sins to Christ, and to impute his Righteousness to us, was an Act of *mere* Sovereignty; but the Acts of the Imputation of our Sin to him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, proceed on a fit and just Ground, which God in infinite Wisdom, fixed on, and that is a mystical Union between him and us, whereby it became proper and condecant, that he should bear our Guilt, and that his Obedience should be reckoned, or imputed to us. So that, the Act of Imputation, in neither Instance, is to be considered, as *merely* sovereign; but as righteous and just. And, therefore, a *real Union* between Christ and us must have subsisted, antecedent to the Imputation of our Sin to him, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to us.

Three Observations will close this Discourse.

Observ. 1. *We ought to adore the Wisdom, Purity, Sovereignty, and Grace of God, which are herein discovered.* What a Display of

divine Wisdom is there in these Things! They are the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery: His hidden Wisdom. That Mystery which was hid in God.* No created Mind, how *capacious soever* could possibly have resolved how our Guilt might be expiated, fully atoned for, and our Persons constituted righteous: The Law *magnified*, and every divine Perfection shine forth, in its brighter Lustre, in our certain and complete Salvation. Upon a due Consideration of the Constitution of Christ's Person: The transferring of our Guilt to him: His Subjection to the Covenant of Works: His Obedience to it, and the infinite Merit of his Obedience, arising from the infinite Dignity of his Person, and that just Ground, whereon, his Obedience becomes ours, and, therefore, is imputed to us: Surely, we can't but say as the Apostle does, in a Way of holy Adoration: *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his Judgements, and his Ways past finding out* Again, the Purity of God is clearly seen herein. Sin is not connived at, or spared: Nor, are any Allowances made for our moral Imperfections and Defects, in the Way of our Pardon and Salvation. Neither are our Persons justified, without a Righteousness perfectly commensurate to the extensive Requirements of the Law. And all spiritual Blessings are communicated to us on such a Foundation as is honourable to divine Justice, as well as it is to the Praise of the Glory of divine Grace. The infinite Holiness of God hath not, in any Thing, nor can have so illustrious a Shine, as it hath in making Christ to be sin for us, and in making us the Righteousness of God in him.

Besides, the Sovereignty of God most manifestly appears in this whole Procedure. The supernatural Conception of Christ as Man, that he might not have any evil Taint, was the sovereign Appointment of God. The Ordination of his human Nature, unto a Subsistence in his divine Person, was a sovereign Decree. Yea, it was one of the highest Acts of Sovereignty that God ever did, or will put forth. The Decree, that the holy Spirit, in all his supernatural Gifts and Graces should reside in the human Nature of Christ, was a sovereign one. The Determination, that a Nature so dignified, and raised above the Condition of a mere Creature, by an ineffable Union with the eternal Son of God, should bear Sin, and become subject to the Covenant of Works, on our Account, was entirely owing to the sovereign Pleasure of God. And it was divine Sovereignty which fixed on the Persons whose Guilt he should bear, and for whom he should obey the Law. Than which, nothing can be more evident. For, both are the Effects of absolute Pleasure. And, therefore, it was free with God, to resolve on whose Account he should be made Sin: And to whom he should be made Righteousness. There are such Acts of Favour, as none have a Right

to claim, and, consequently, God was at full Liberty to determine by a sovereign Act of his Will, whose Guilt he should bear, and who should be made righteous in him. Thus divine Sovereignty is the Basis of both these Things; thereupon they entirely rest, and into it they must be absolutely resolved, as the original Cause thereof.

Farther, the Grace of God shines most gloriously in these Things. Infinite Love to our Persons is discovered in the Transfer of our Guilt from us, and in the Imputation of it to Christ, in order to his suffering the Penalty it demerits, that we might be pardoned and laved. That Redemption which we have through him, the Forgiveness of Sins, is according to the Riches of divine Grace. And the Decree, that he should come under the Covenant of Works, on our Account, and obey it for us, that we might be constituted righteous: justified in the Sight of God, and *be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life*, is an amazing Purpose of Kindness and Mercy.

Observ. 2. *These important Truths are a most solid Ground of strong Consolation.* It is the Will of God, that the Heirs of Promise, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before them, might enjoy such Consolation. Sin, in its Guilt, being transferred from us, and imputed to Christ, and atoned for by him, is a firm Foundation of spiritual Peace and Joy. *We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. by whom we have now received the Atonement* (Romans 5:10.). Permit me to say it, (I shall express no ill Meaning) let not the Saints be afraid of Sin, *in its Guilt*. I do not say, fear not to commit Sin, no, God forbid, that they ought to fear above all Things. But fear not Sin *in the Guilt of it*. They sometimes have very terrifying Apprehensions, under a Sense of Guilt contracted, and are afraid to hope for Pardon, on Account of the heinous Nature, and the Aggravations of their Guilt. But they have no just Reason for it. Because Christ hath *finished their Transgression, and made an End of their Sin*, as to its Guilt. And, therefore, they have no Cause to fear it, in its Guilt, Christ having put it away by the Sacrifice of himself. We ought eternally to fear Sin, in the *Love, Prevalence and Power* of it, for, therein, it will certainly be ruinous for evermore. But Terrors of Conscience, occasioned by the Guilt of Sin, in those who are freed from the *Dominion and Power* of it, are groundless, because that is fully expiated, by the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God, who was made Sin. Again, Believers being made the Righteousness of God in Christ, they have just Cause of Triumph. And may say with holy Exultation: *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again* (Romans 8:34, 35.). Whole Resurrection is a full Proof of their

Justification. For, *He was delivered for their Offences: And raised again for their Justification* (Romans 4:25.). The Righteousness, which they are made, is an everlasting one, and everlasting Salvation is inseparably connected with it. Their joyful language, even under the deeper Sense of their Guilt, Imperfections and Unworthiness, in themselves, should be this: *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God, because he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation, and covered me with the Robe of Righteousness.* (Isaiah 61:10.).

Observ. 3. *These are Doctrines according to Godliness.* It is a very gross Mistake to imagine, that these Principles are calculated to encourage Negligence, Sloth, or Evil. On the contrary, they are calculated to promote an Abhorrence of Sin, and a cordial Approbation of Righteousness, and true Holiness. What stronger Motive to forsake Sin can be thought of than Christ's bearing it, and his suffering the Penalty which it demerits? Wherein, divine Indignation against our Crimes was discovered to the *utmost*. And as his being made Righteousness to us, does not *dissolve* our Obligation to Obedience: So it is a most powerful Incitement unto it, in a Way of Gratitude for that eminent Favour. That our corrupt Nature may abuse these, and other evangelical Truths, is granted. As it may also abuse the Law. For, *Sin will take Occasion by the Commandment to work in us all Manner of Concupiscence.* But the Law is not *culpable*, and *blame-worthy*, on that Account. And the same evil Principle may abuse the Gospel, and turn the Doctrine of the Grace of God, into *Lasciviousness*. But the Gospel is not *culpable*, nor ought any *Blame* to be charged on it, for that Reason. Our Opinion of the Nature and Tendency of Doctrines, is not by any Means to be formed from that Use, which our depraved Minds are inclined to make thereof. If that may be allowed, we shall be led to entertain *unworthy* Conceptions of *legal* as well as of evangelical Truths. For, there is nothing, which the Flesh in us, will not pervert and abuse, unto the Gratification of its cursed Desires. If we have a *real* Acquaintance with the Nature of these most *precious* Truths, and act under their *genuine* Influence, we *shall deny all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and shall live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present World* (Titus 2:12.).

SERMON 27

THE GOSPEL NOT ABSURD, NOT CONTRARY TO JUSTICE, NOR LICENTIOUS

A SERMON PREACHED APRIL THE 13TH, 1757, IN GREAT EAST-CHEAP:

To the SOCIETY who support, the Wednesday Evening-Lecture in that Place. Published at the Request of several of the SUBSCRIBERS, who heard it.

2 TIMOTHY 2:25

“In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging the Truth.”

THE Apostle in the Context gives Directions to *Titus*, how to discharge that important Service, unto which he was called, in the Church. Exhorts him to *avoid foolish and unlearned questions*, because *they gender Strifes*. And *the Servant of the Lord must not strive: But be gentle to all Men, apt to teach, i.e.* disposed to it, and in some good Measure qualified for it; *patient*, not provoked to Wrath, or undue Resentment, by the Opposition, which some may make unto the Gospel.

I apprehend that intelligent Readers will easily discern, that there are four Things, in general, observable in the Text; vi.z That some oppose the Gospel — That Instruction is to be given to them — That this Instruction must be given in Meekness. — That the End to be proposed thereto is, their Repentance, and Acknowledgment of the Truth.

I. Some, yea, many oppose the Gospel. A great Number objected to it, in the Time of the Apostles, have in succeeding Ages, now do, and we must expect a continued Opposition unto it, from carnal Men. For, unto them it is *Foolishness*, and, therefore, they think it is their Wisdom to reject it. They charge it with *Absurdity*; reproach it, as *Inconsistent with Justice, and Licentious*. There are very heavy Charges indeed, and if they can be supported, are sufficient to sink its Credit with all wise and virtuous Persons.

1. A Charge of *Absurdity* is brought against it. I confess, that some do advance absurd Notions, and call them evangelical Truths. One Instance whereof permit me to give, *viz.* The Pre-existence of the human Soul of Christ, and that the Covenant of Grace was made therewith. Some think that Existence was given to the intellectual

Part of his human Nature, before all Worlds. Now either that Duration, wherein his Soul existed before the Creation, had Commencement, or it had not. If it had not, then his Soul is properly eternal; and it cannot be a voluntary Production. For, that which always was, cannot be the Production of any Cause whatsoever. Because, that which is produced, once was not. If that Duration had Commencement, as it must, most certainly; if his Soul was created, then there are two limited Durations; one wherein the Soul of Christ existed, before the Creation; and another, which began with the Creation. For, according to the Language of the Scripture, *In the Beginning God created the Heavens, and the Earth*: which cannot possibly mean the Commencement of a Duration, which was long, very long before it. And, therefore, this necessarily supposes, that there are two Beginnings, in finite and limited Duration. For, that Duration, wherein it is thought, the Soul of Christ existed before the Creation, even to the End of the World, is finite and limited; it had a Beginning, and it will have an End. Time is the whole of measurable and limited Duration: And it must include in it all Duration which hath a Limit. And, therefore, as measurable Duration cannot have two Ends; so it cannot have two Beginnings. This Notion therefore, of the Pre-existence of the Soul of Christ, must be false, if it is true, that God created the Heavens, and the Earth, in the Beginning. For it is most clearly absurd to imagine, that limited Duration had two Beginnings.

Farther, It seems exceedingly strange to me, that any should think that the Covenant of Grace was made with the human Soul of Christ. His human Nature was contracted for, in that Covenant, by his divine Person, as a constituent Part of Himself, in the Character of Mediator; but it was not a contracting Party therein. To conceive it was, is to raise it unto a Dignity, which is infinitely above its Due. Nor could it possibly be such, because the foederal Transactions of the divine Persons were not external Acts, which they mull have been, if the Covenant of Grace yeas made with the Soul of Christ. They were internal Acts of the Deity, and not external, The Covenant of Grace is the distinct Actings of the divine Wisdom and Will, which are one essentially, in the distinct divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, respecting the Salvation of the Elect. And, consequently, they were not external Acts, but internal: wherefore that Covenant could not be made with the Soul of Christ. Besides, if his Soul existed when that Covenant was entered into, it is not an eternal Covenant. This Consequence is granted; and the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace is denied, by the Advocates for this Opinion. They therefore, mutt also allow, that once there was no Covenant of Grace: That once Christ was not Mediator: That once He was not a Head: That once He had no Body or Members: That once He was

not a Surety for the Church: That once the Elect were not given to Him by the Father: That once they were not blessed with all spiritual Blessings in Him: Or, that once, that Grace was not given to them in Him, according to which they are saved and called, with an holy Calling. All there are unavoidable Consequences of that Opinion. It is astonishing to me, that any should esteem that an evangelical Truth, which undeniably everts the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace, which this most evidently does, as the Embracers of it, are free to grant. That very elegant and glorious Context, which you have, in *Proverbs*, Chap. 8. from Verse 21 to the 31st inclusive, (*Proverbs 8:21-31.*) hath been abused and perverted to give Countenance unto it; which the Reader may see vindicated in my Sermon *On the proper Eternity of the Divine Decrees*. The *Arians*, who would be thought Men of superior Sense and Wisdom, are guilty of the same Absurdity. They suppose, that the Body of Christ was animated by a Spirit, which was created long before all Worlds; and that, that Spirit was concerned in the Creation of all other Beings. Now if that Duration, wherein that Spirit existed, before the Creation of the World, was immeasurable, it must be Eternity. If measurable, then it is included in Time, for Time is the Whole of measurable Duration; and, consequently, Time must have had two Beginnings; one when this Spirit was created; and another when the World was created; that is, if *Moses speaks Truth*, who says: *In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*. But this by the Bye. *

The Opposers of the Gospel charge various Doctrines of it with *Absurdity*.

(1.) The Doctrine of the Trinity. It supposes, say they, *that there are three Gods*.

Answ. This is a Mistake. For the divine Essence is one; though there are three divine Persons subsisting therein. They object to this Answer thus: *A distinct Person is a distinct Essence*. Unto which it may be replied; Every finite created Person is so; but it doth not follow, that a distinct divine Person is a distinct Being. God may be one *essentially*, and three *personally*, for ought we know or can know. Our Reason cannot prove that it is impossible, that three intelligent Agents should subsist in the divine Essence. It can most clearly prove the Unity of the divine Essence; but we have not, nor can have such a Knowledge of that Essence, as to demonstrate, that there cannot three subsist therein, who act with Wisdom, Will, and Approbation: And, therefore, are three Persons; for not to insist on a critical Definition of a Person, I understand, and mean thereby an intelligent Agent. This Doctrine contradicts not the Unity of the Deity, and therefore it is not absurd.

(2.) The precious Doctrine of proper Atonement for Sin by the Death of Christ, is also said to be Absurd: *The Guilt of one cannot become another's.*

Ans. Not by Contraction; but it may be by Imputation, but there is a proper Ground for it, which there is in this Case; *viz.* Christ's Suretyship for us. His undertaking to expiate our Guilt, is a just and fit Foundation for the Charge of it to Him. Again, it is objected, that *the Sufferings of one who is innocent, cannot satisfy for the Crimes of a guilty Person.* To which it may be replied, Christ was innocent in Himself; but our Crimes being imputed to Him, He did not suffer, considered as innocent; but as guilty, by the Imputation of our Guilt to Him. And, therefore, His Sufferings were of a penal Nature, and by Reason of the Dignity of His Person, they were satisfactory for that Guilt, in Relation unto which those Sufferings were inflicted on Him.

(3.) The important Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, is like-wise pronounced Absurd. *The Righteousness of one, it is said, cannot become the Righteousness of another.*

Ans. It cannot inherently: Or the obediential Acts of one cannot become the personal Actions of another. But the Obedience of one may become another's by Imputation, if there is a fit Ground for it; which there is in this Affair; *viz.* our Union with Christ, and His being made under the Law for us.

(4.) The glorious Truth of efficacious and irresistible Grace is also affirmed to be *Absurd.* It is vehemently urged, that it deprives the human Will of its *Freedom* in acting. If this can be proved, I grant it is an absurd Principle. But Proof cannot be given thereof. *Ist.* A holy spiritual Principle is infused, or created in the Mind, in which the Will neither concurs, nor opposes: Or, it neither wills, nor nills, in that Infusion and Creation. The Mind, in *this supernatural* Work upon it, is *entirely passive*, or it acts not at all therein, either in a Way of Concurrence or Opposition. Now, the Freedom of the Mind's Agency cannot be affected in a Work upon it, wherein it is not, nor can be active, either in a Way of Concurrence, or Opposition; which is the Fact in this Matter. It is granted, I think, even by all who differ from us in this Point, that Men may, with Helps afforded to them, acquire holy Habits. I ask, therefore, if it is impossible with God, to create such Habits, in the human Mind? If it is, then, Men are able to do more for themselves, than God can do for them. To imagine this, seems to me *a real and great Absurdity.* Divine Promises, most certainly, do not exceed the Extent of divine Power. God promises to *take away the Heart of Stone, out of our Flesh: And to give us an Heart of Flesh. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit*

will I put within you., is His gracious Language in the new Covenant. Which Promises very clearly express the Infusion, or Creation of a holy Principle, or Spring of Action, in our Souls. What His Goodness promises, His Power can effect and, therefore, He is able, to imprinciple our Minds, with a holy Disposition. And, this Infusion of Holiness, cannot infringe the Liberty of our Will; the Reason whereof, is most clear, our Will is not active therein. For, the Will acts not, either in a Way of Volition, or Nilling, in that Work upon us. And its Freedom cannot be affected, in that wherein, neither its Consent, nor its Refusal, do, or can take Place.

2dly. Grace excites that holy Principle into Action, wherein the Will acts freely, as it is the Subject of that Principle, or Disposition to Holiness. No *unnatural* Force, or Violence is offered to the Will, in moving it to act, agreeably unto its own Disposition. And as our Minds are sanctified by divine Grace, there is an habitual Disposition, or Inclination, in our Will, unto that which is Good. As there is, in the Flesh, an habitual Inclination to what is Evil. We act freely both in our good, and evil Volitions: For, the Will's Choice of contrary Objects is voluntary, because there are in it, two contrary Springs of Action. One is Good, and the other is Evil. And, therefore, its Freedom in neither is infringed in the least Degree. If we maintained, that the Will, is determined, by a divine Influence upon it, to chuse what is Good, without a Disposition, or Inclination in it, unto Holiness, it might be said, that we prejudice its natural Liberty; but as we do not, nor suppose it, there is not the least Ground for this Charge of Absurdity, against our Opinion of the Efficacy, and Irresistibility of the Grace of God, in our Regeneration, and Sanctification.

2. Many object, that the evangelical Scheme is *Inconsistent with Justice.*

Particularly, Christ's suffering Penalty, in the Stead of Sinners. I Answer,

(1.) He covenanted to suffer for them. It was proposed to Him, by the divine Father, to lay down His Life, for His People, unto which Proposal He agreed.

(2.) He had Power over His Life, and He might enter into Agreement to resign it, for perishing Sinners. He had *Power to lay it down, and Power to take it again.* For, He was Lord of it. Which is what no Man is. And, therefore, none may agree to suffer Death, for a capital Offender. Nor is any Man Lord of his Members, any more than of his Life. And, therefore, it is not lawful for any one to agree to suffer Mutilation, the Loss of an Eye, or a Hand, for another, who by his Crime, hath rendered himself worthy of such Punishment. Nor,

would it be just, in a civil Governor, to accept of the Engagement of an innocent Person, to suffer bodily Pains and Penalties for a Delinquent. Because, no Man is Lord of himself, or hath a Right to dispose of his Life, or his Limbs, as he pleases. A Man may not injure himself, in his Person, nor hath a Power of investing others with a legal Right, of doing him, a personal Injury. But all Things, are otherwise with God, and Christ, our Saviour, or else we are inevitably undone for ever-more.

(3.) His human Will was wholly in it. No Violence was offered to Christ, our Saviour, by God our Judge, in His Sufferings and Death. He was not reluctant, but absolutely submissive to the Pleasure, and Appointment, of God, in all He suffered. His Language was this: Not my, Will; but thine *be done*. And, *shall I not drink the Cup, which my Father, giveth me to drink?* Since our blessed Lord, had a Right to dispose of His Life, and He freely resigned it, in Obedience to the Will of His Father, there was nothing contrary to Justice, in that *amazing* Transaction.

(4.) The Sufferings of Christ were not of long Continuance. If they had been perpetuated, and He had not seen an End of them, it might be objected, that infinite Wisdom, and Justice, could never ordain, that this Holy ONE, should always remain in a suffering State, for guilty Men; because, in that Case, it would have been impossible for Him, ever to receive from God, a Reward for His *unparalleled* Submission, unto His sovereign Will. But as He was conducted through, and a Period was put to His Sufferings, such a glorious Reward might be given unto Him, as it became God to bestow, and is fully satisfactory to Him, in its Enjoyment. Which is the real Fact. For,

(5.) Our Redeemer is amply rewarded for His Sufferings, and Death. On Account of His Obedience to the divine Will, in submitting to suffer the ignominious, painful, and *accursed* Death of the Cross: God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name, which is above every Name: That at the Name of Jesus, every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth: And that every Tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. He hath done, does, and will eternally see of the Travail of His Soul, unto His entire Satisfaction, and Joy. And, therefore, there is nothing inconsistent with Justice, in this Procedure. That was not required of Christ, which was not in his Right to give. His Life was His own: He was Lord of it. And the Will of that Nature, wherein He suffered and died, voluntarily submitted to Suffering and Death. He is delivered from a State of Suffering, and is crowned with Glory and Honour, as a Reward for

His Obedience to the Will of God, in this Affair. This Cause will triumph over all the groundless Cavils of Objectors. A clear

Stating, and proper Explication of it, will enable us, to answer the

Objections, which are brought against it, in such a Manner, as not to admit of a solid Reply.

3. Many affirm, that the evangelical Scheme is *Licentious*.

(1.) The Doctrine of the superabounding Grace of God. It is said, *that it encourages Men to continue in Sin.*

Ans. Divine Grace saves the chief of Sinners; but it saves no Man *in his Sins*, or *without Holiness*. And, therefore, such as are destitute of Holiness, have no Ground to conclude, that they are Subjects of Salvation. Consequently, this Doctrine gives no Encouragement, unto a Continuance an Sin. But we need not wonder, that such a Charge is brought against it, for it was in the Time of the Apostles. And it is not strange, that the same Doctrine, is now loaded with the same Reproach by the same Sort of Persons. *And not rather as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm, that we say: Let us do Evil that Good may come.* The Apostle passes a severe, but just Sentence, against there Objectors: *Whose Damnation is just* (Romans 3:8.). Who thus impiously dare to slander the Doctrine of the Grace of God.

(2.) The Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, is also charged in the same Manner. It is said, *that it renders our Obedience needless.*

Ans. 1st. It dissolves not our Obligation to Obedience. That remains in full Force, and it eternally will. For, it is not possible, that should cease. And, therefore, 2d. Obedience is necessary in Point of Duty, though not for the Justification of our Persons, before God. 3d. Our free Justification by Christ's Righteousness, is a powerful Motive, unto holy Obedience, in a Way of Gratitude, for so eminent a Favour, graciously bestowed on us.

(3.) The Doctrine of final Perseverance is likewise so charged. The Opposers of it say, *What need of Watchfulness, Caution, and Diligence, is there, if Perseverance is rendered certain by the Grace of God?* Many have much displayed their Rhetoric, in haranguing on this Doctrine, in order to expose it.

Ans. 1st. It is not Perseverance in Sin, but in Holiness, which is pleaded for, as secured, by divine Grace. 2d. Though true Believers shall not finally perish, they may *lose their Comforts, Suffer the Hidings of God's Face, and break their Bones*. And, he who trembles not, at the serious Thoughts of these Things, is *no*

Christian I am sure. 3d. He who can be negligent, careless, and loose in his Walk and Conversation, *upon this Principle*, I say, *upon this Principle*, sins in such a Manner, as *apostate Spirits*, cannot do; for they have not an Opportunity of sinning, after this dreadful Rate. I will be no Advocate for such an *incarnate Devil*; he is not travelling to Heaven; but posting down to Hell: And if he shall remain such in his Disposition, and Conduct, *there let him perish for ever, without the least Pity from God, or any who love him, Angels, or Saints.*

II. Instruction must be given to such, as oppose themselves: Or, *think the contrary*, (antidiatiqemuouv) to the Gospel of Christ, in its several Branches.

1. Respecting the Doctrine of the Trinity.

(1.) It is to be observed, that there is a *Plurality*, in Deity; clear Evidence is given of this, in these Words: *Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness* (Genesis 1:26.). *Us*, and *our*, properly imply a Plurality, and, therefore, more than one Agent, was concerned, in the Creation of Man. Hence, we read of our Makers, in the plural Number. *Where is God (עֵשִׂי) my Makers* (Job 35:10.)? *Let Israel rejoice (בְּעֵשִׂי) in his Makers* (<19E902>Psalm 149:2.). *Remember (Æyarzb) thy Creators* (Ecclesiastes 12:1.). *For thy (עֵשִׂי) Makers* (Isaiah 54:5.). It is reasonable to conclude, that Man was not formed by *single* Agent; but that more than one acted in his Formation. We do not infer from hence, that there are *many* in Deity, as *Enjedinus*, a *Socinian* Writer very perversely suggests. All which is pleaded for, from these Testimonies, is this: That there must be a *Plurality*, in Deity, because these Modes of Speaking, manifestly suppose it. We do not pretend, that the Number of divine Agents, can be by them determined. But clear it is, that more than a single Agent is designed in them. We learn from other Scriptures what that Number is.

(2.) Divine Agents are *not fewer, nor more than three*. God the Father. Concerning whole Deity, and Almighty Agency there is no Dispute. Christ, who bears the Characters of Son, and the Word. He is another divine Agent. And by him were all Things created. *All Things were made by Him, and without Him, was not any Thing made, that was made.* He *afro upholds all Things, by the Word of His Power*. The Holy Spirit likewise, is a Divine Agent. And, is the Author of Works, which can only be effected, by immense Wisdom and Power. He was an Agent in the first: Creation. For, *He moved upon the Face of the Waters*, therein. And, He is the efficient Cause of the new Creation. Those who are born again, are born of the Spirit. There three, the Father, the Son, and the Blessed Spirit, are

jointly proposed, as Objects of Christian Worship. Christians are to be baptized, *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. They are truly *distinct*, the Father, is not the Son, nor the Son, the Father, neither is the Blessed Spirit, either, the Father, or the Son; but another distinct from them both. Yet there Divine Three are *One, There are Three, that bare Record in Heaven, she Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, these, Three are ONE* (1 John 5:7.). They are *three personally*, and *one essentially*. In which Sense only, they can be three distinct Divine Agents, and the joint Objects of the Worship of the Church, which they will eternally be.

2. The Doctrine of Election, is another important Truth, concerning which, Instruction ought to be given. As the Word imports, that is, a Choice of some, from among others. And most evident it is, that God did chuse a certain Number of the human Race. *According as He hath chosen us in Him* (Ephesians 1:4.). *Hath from the Beginning chosen you* (2 Thessalonians 2:13.). This Act of God was eternal, before the Foundation of the World. A *Purpose* which was, in the Divine Mind, *before the World began* (2 Timothy 1:9.). And, it was a sovereign gracious Decree. It is an *Election of Grace* (Romans 11:5.). The Objects of it were not considered, in that Divine Act, possessed of such Qualities, as recommended them to the Favour of God, before others. For, all that Holiness, whereof they become subjects, springs from their Election, and therefore, it could not be a Motive to that Choice. *God chose us that we might be*, and not, because he foresaw, that *we would be holy* (Ephesians 1:4.). This Choice is *unto Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit* (2 Thessalonians 2:13.). Consequently our Sanctification, is an Effect of that gracious Decree. And, as Glorification follows upon Sanctification, that Salvation which we were chosen to, must be eternal Glory, *unto which we are called, by the God of all Grace*, according unto his *Purpose in Election* (1 Peter 5:10; 2 Timothy 1:9.). This Decree is unalterable, it is that *Foundation, which standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them, that are His* (1 Timothy 2:19.). And, therefore, all the Elect, shall certainly be Partakers of Holiness, in this World, as a Meetness, for the everlasting Enjoyment of God, in the next. Unto both which, He eternally designed them, in this His Sovereign, and gracious Decree.

3. The Covenant of Grace is a glorious Subject, about which Instruction should be given. That there is a Covenant, wherein, Provision is made for the Salvation of the Church, it is most dear. This was the Support of *David*, and the Ground of his Triumph, under his Troubles, and in the Prospect of his Dissolution. *Although my House be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant; This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire*,

though he make it not to grow (2 Samuel 23:5.). The Parties, who contracted, therein, were the Divine Persons, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christ was constituted Mediator, in that Compact. And, in that Capacity, the Father required Him to do and suffer all that was necessary unto the Salvation of the Church, in a Consistency with the Honour of the *Law*, and the Glory of the Divine Perfections. Christ, on his Part, consented to the Will and Requirement of the Father. On Account of this His free Engagement, He is called the *Surety of this better Testament*, or Covenant. And this His Undertaking, brought upon Him an Obligation, to perform the Father's Will; who promised Him, on that Condition, that he should *see His Seed*, *i.e.* view them in such a State of Blessedness, as would be fully to the Satisfaction, and Joy of his Soul. And, therefore, all the precious Benefits, of Pardon, Peace, Justification, Grace, and eternal Glory, are comprised therein. Christ having punctually performed all he undertook to do and suffer, an Obligation on the Father, arises from thence, to fulfil those Promises made to Him, respecting His Seed, for whom, he became a Surety. And, on that Ground, He hath a Right to expect and demand, the Bestowment of Grace and Glory, in their Behalf. The Holy Spirit, concurred with the Father, and Christ in this Design, and agreed, in this foederal Transaction, to glorify our Blessed Lord, and sanctify His Church, or *mystical Body*. By these foederal Acts of the Divine Persons, the compleat and everlasting Salvation, of all the Elect, is *effectually* secured, and rendered *certain*. This Agreement is very rightly called a Covenant of *Grace*. Because, *free Favour* gave Rise to it, and all, or every Kind of Grace is promised therein. This is a very, *noble, grand, and sublime* Subject, and, therefore, it is most worthy of our diligent Consideration. For, there is therein, an unequalled Display of the Glory of the Divine Persons, and of all the infinitely glorious Properties of the Divine Nature. And, therefore, we cannot be better employed, than in serious and fixed Meditations on it, and in giving clear and convincing Instruction concerning it.

4. Redemption and Peace by the Blood of Christ, we must explain and give Instruction about. The Demerit of Sin, is to be treated of and maintained. We must shew, that it subjects Men to the Curse of the Law, and the awful Displeasure of God. And it is necessary to prove, that we are all guilty, before God, our righteous Judge; and, therefore, are obnoxious to the Law's Curse, and the dreadful Vengeance, of the Divine Lawgiver. That, without Satisfaction made for our Crimes, it is impossible, we should ever be admitted to Fellowship with our Maker. And, that it is absolutely out of our Power to redeem our Souls, and make our Peace with God, by any Thing, we have to offer, or can perform. We must assert, inculcate, and clearly explain, that *eternal Redemption*, which Christ *obtained*,

and that *Peace*, which He made, by the *Blood of His Cry*. Our Saviour was made of a Woman, and made under the Law, to redeem us, who were under the Law. And, He suffered its Curse, whereby our Redemption from it, was effected. This Redemption is the *Forgiveness of Sins*. Not a Proposal of Pardon, upon our Performance of certain Conditions; but *Remission of Sin itself*. Whereof, the Nature of the Thing, is a clear Evidence. For, our Guilt being charged on Him, and He suffering the Penalty, which it demerited, and his Sufferings being such in Value, as Law and Justice required, by Reason of the infinite Dignity of the Blessed Sufferer: It must be *real Pardon*, and not an Offer of it, which was by His Sufferings obtained. Reconciliation for our Iniquity is made, by the *Messiah being cut off, not for Himself*; but on our Account. There is, therefore, no *Condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died*. And therefore, *we being justified, i.e. acquitted and discharged of our Guilt, by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him*. Such are the Evidences, in Favour of this most glorious and precious Truth, of our eternal Redemption, by the Death of the Son of *God*, that it will never be possible, for the *depraved Wit* of Men, to obscure them, by their most *sophistical* Cavils, and Objections. We shall certainly be able to triumph over them all, in *strictly* attending unto, and *properly* arguing upon, those clear and shining Evidences of it.

5. It is requisite to give Instruction, concerning the important Doctrine of Justification. The Guiltiness of Men, before God, is to be asserted and proved. *What Things, soever the Law saith, it saith to them, who are under the Law; that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty, before God* (Romans 3:19.). And the Impossibility of a guilty Creature, being justified in the Sight of God, as considered in himself, is to be demonstrated, from the Perfection, and unalterable Nature of the Law, and the infinite Purity of the Divine Lawgiver; with whom it is not possible, to account a Man righteous, who hath not a Righteousness, which Is answerable to the Requirements, of the Law, which is the Rule of Action to him. One *Kind* of Righteousness is not required of us, in Point of Duty, and *another* accepted, by our Maker, as the Matter of our Justification before Him. We are *justified freely*, or without any Works of our own. Christ is made of God, *Righteousness unto us*. And, we are *made Righteous by his Obedience* (Romans 5:19.). So that *Righteousness, without Works, is imputed to us* (Romans 6:6.). That is to say, without our *personal* Acts of Obedience. For, that is the *only* Sense, wherein it can with Propriety, and Truth, be said, that Righteousness without Works, is imputed unto us. The Meaning of the Apostle cannot be, that Righteousness, does not consist of Works, or Acts of Obedience, for, that it most certainly does. But his

Design is to prove, that, that Righteousness, whereby, we are justified, before God, does not consist of, but is without any of our personal Acts of Obedience. And, therefore, it must be the Obedience of another, *viz.* of Christ who is *the Lord our Righteousness*. And *in Him are we justified* (Isaiah 45:25.). This is that solid Foundation, whereon, we may now *glory*, and upon which, we shall be admitted unto the Enjoyment of future Glory and Blessedness. For, *Grace will reign, through Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 5:21.).

6. The Doctrine of Regeneration and Sanctification, must be stated, explained, and defended. We ought to shew the Necessity of Regeneration. That without it, Men cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. *Holiness* is our *Meetness* for the heavenly State. And, *without it no Man shall see the Lord*. The efficient Cause thereof is God, without the Concurrence of our Will therein. For, as Christians, we are born, *not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man; but of God* (John 1:13.). *We make not ourselves to differ, neither have we any Thing, which we did not receive; and, therefore, we should not glory, as if we did not receive it*. The impulsive Cause, is, the *abundant Mercy, and great Love of God to our Persons* (1 Peter 1:3, Ephesians 2:4.). It is the pure Effect of his good Pleasure, and is absolutely without any moving Consideration, in us. Of which, the Nature of the Work itself, is a most clear Proof. For, it is the Implantation, Infusion, or Creation of a holy Principle, in our Souls, and from that Principle, all Acts of holy Obedience spring, both internal, and external. Consequently, previous unto the Production of that Principle, no Acts of Faith, Hope, Love, evangelical Repentance, and holy Obedience, could possibly arise in our Minds, or be performed by us. The Grace of Regeneration, therefore, must be freely given, or without any the least Motive in us, to induce God to communicate it unto us.

Farther, it is God, who maintains, and carries on this good Work in us. For *it is God, that worketh in us both to will and to do, of His good Pleasure* (Philippians 2:13.). So that, the Whole of our Holiness, or Sanctification, is from Him, in a Way of Efficiency. *We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good Works* (Ephesians 2:10.). As no good Thing, dwells in our Flesh, or corrupt Nature, no good Acts, can be educed out of it. Holy Actions, cannot arise from that, which lusteth against *the Spirit*, or the regenerate Principle, which is called *Spirit*, because *it is born of the Spirit*, and its Nature is spiritual. The Grace of Regeneration, therefore, is not bestowed on us, because we were Subjects of a Fitness to receive it actively. Nor, can we, by our natural Ability, increase that Holiness, which in Regeneration is wrought in our Hearts. As the Beginning,

so the Progress and Advancement of our Sanctification, are entirely of God, efficiently.

7. The final Perseverance of the Saints, is a Doctrine, which we must maintain, and give Instruction about. By that, is intended, the Security of Believers from Falling *totally* and *finally*. The Grounds of that Security, are many. The unalterable Love of God. The Immutability of the Divine Counsel concerning their Salvation. The Expiation of their Guilt by Christ's Death. The Justification of their Persons, through His Righteousness, by which, they *are made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life*. Their Union with Him, as a Head of Life, and Influence. The Dwelling of the Holy Spirit in them, as a Sanctifier, and Comforter. The Intercession of Christ for them. The Will of the Divine Father, that he should rarely keep, and conduct them to Glory. There are some of the *numerous solid* Grounds of their Security, and they are such as cannot fail. And, therefore, their Faith shall *not fail*. Grace in them shall never become *extinct*. It is in them, *a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life*. God, and Christ are united, in the gracious Design of their final, full, and certain Felicity. And, if the Grace, Power, and Care of both, are sufficient to uphold and defend them, they shall never miscarry and be lost. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of my Hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no Man is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand* (John 10:27, 28.).

8. The Doctrine of eternal Life is to be explained, and inculcated. We must give Instruction about the Origin of future Blessedness. Which is the *good Pleasure of God* (Luke 12:32.). It is to us an *absolute free Gift*. And yet, we have a *legal Title* to it, which is our Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, imputed to us. For, thereby, we are *made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life*. And therefore, Justification, and Glorification are inseparably connected. *Whom He justified, them He also glorified*. On this Foundation, the Law is *magnified*, and the Glory of Divine Justice shines forth, in our everlasting Bliss, to the Amazement of Angels, and the Joy of the Church for evermore.

Again, we ought to shew, that Grace imparted to us from Christ, is our *Meetness* for the Enjoyment of future Glory. None but those, who derive Holiness, and Grace from Him, are *fit for*, and *capable* of enjoying Heaven. And, we must shew the Nature of it. That it is the Fruition of God, as *the God of all Grace* (1 Peter 5:10.). The Saints, therefore, will for ever be conversant about, the sovereign, free, and infinite Love of God. The glorious Designs of Divine Love. And the

distinct Actings of it, in the distinct Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And, about the adorable Discovery of all the infinitely glorious Properties, of the Divine Nature, in their Salvation. There are some of those important Principles, which we ought, as Ministers, to give Instruction concerning, unto them, who *oppose themselves*, or *think contrary* to us, on those Points of Doctrine.

III. *Instruction must be given, 'in Meekness.'* This does not, it cannot mean, that evangelical Doctrines are to be treated of, in a *cold* and *indifferent* Manner, as if they were speculative Points, and of *small Importance*. For, they are of the *greatest Moment*. The Glory of God, the Comfort, Peace, Joy, and everlasting Salvation of the Saints, are most nearly interested therein, and promoted by them. Nor, is it to be thought, that we must speak of these Principles, in a *doubtful* Way; as if full Evidence of their Truth *was wanting*. They are to be *constantly affirmed*, as certain and undoubted Truths, and with a full Persuasion of their Verity, upon a serious and diligent Consideration, of those clear and cogent Proofs, which we have thereof, in the Holy Scriptures. Coldness and Hesitation, in Relation to evangelical Doctrines, may cause Men to think, that they are, either *trivial* or *doubtful*, and, therefore, it is no great Matter, whether they are embraced, or rejected. It is to be feared, that *the supine* and *lukewarm* Manner, wherein, some Preachers, have treated of evangelical Doctrines, hath occasioned many to entertain an Opinion, that they are of *very little Moment*.

They ought to be expressed, with *Boldness*: And contended for, with *Earnestness*. Also, *in Meekness*, towards such, who *oppose themselves*.

1. With Humility and Tenderness. We should consider, that we are naturally, subjects of the same Darkness, and Aversion to spiritual Things, from whence their Opposition to the Gospel springs. Which Consideration will engage us, to give them Instruction, in a *Spirit of Meekness*, and with Tenderness towards their Persons. But,

2. Some we ought to *rebuke sharply*, (*apostomwv*) *severely, cuttingly, that they may be found in the Faith* (Titus 1:3.). Their Impertinence in arguing, is to be taken Notice of, and exposed, with *Smartness*, in defending the Principles, which they oppose.

IV. *The End we are to propose is their, 'Repentance, and Acknowledgment of the Truth.'*

1. Repentance of their Errors. Which are owing to the Carnality and Pride of their Hearts. They imagine, that their Reason, is first to be consulted, about the Nature of religious Principles, and as that determines, concerning them, so they frame their Belief. And, not

according to scriptural Evidence, even on such Subjects, as are *peculiar* to Revelation. *Than which there is Nothing more absurd.*

2. Repentance is a Divine Gift (Acts 5:31.). And, as we know not, but God may graciously bestow it, we should continue to give Instruction, unto there Opposers.

3. An Acknowledgment of the Truth will follow. The Gospel, in general, which is *the Word of Truth*. Or some particular Doctrines of it. We ought to be ready to *give an Answer to every Man that asketh us a Reason of the Hope, that is in us, with Meekness and Fear* (1 Peter 3:15.). *As we believe with our Heart unto Righteousness: So with our Mouth,* we are, *to make Confession unto Salvation* (Romans 10:10.). To the Divine Father, the Eternal Son, and the Holy Spirit, *be equal,* and the *highest Praises,* ascribed, now, and for evermore. *Amen.*

FOOTNOTES

* I know, some vainly conceit, that there was an Everlasting, before the World began, which had Commencement: As others foolishly dream, that there will be an Everlasting, after the End of the World. which will have a Period put unto it. Both have an Hypothesis to serve, which cannot be maintained without the Grant thereof. But the Truth of neither, I dare affirm, will ever be proved by any Man whatsoever. He who denies, that Punishment for Sin will be endless, may as soon prove, that there will be an Everlasting, when this World shall cease to be, that will have an End: As he will be able to prove, that there was an Everlasting, before the Creation, which had a Beginning, who thinks, that the Soul of Christ existed before the World began.

SERMON 28

ANIMADVERSIONS UPON, 'THE LETTERS ON THERON AND ASPASIO', ADDRESSED TO THAT INGENIOUS AUTHOR.

Christo, sive Christi Verbis credere, idem significet, atque, illi obedire. — Christo autem, sine ejus Verbis non credere, idem fit, atque, illi non obedire. Socin. de Jesu Christo Servatore. Pars Quarta, Cap. XI.

It is Time that I should now, in my Turn, contend for ACTS OF FAITH PROPERLY SO CALLED; I mean, THOSE WORKS, which Jesus Christ in His new Commandment enjoins all who believe in Him for Righteousness, and by which He would have them known to one another, and to all Men, for his Disciples. Letters on Theron, etc. p. 406.

A Book, consisting of two Volumes, intitled, *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, hath lately appeared in the World, which is written in a Manner very extraordinary. Such is its Obscurity, that some have said, that, upon reading the whole Performance, they were not able to collect a single Idea from it. Many *Calvinists*, it seems, tho' they do not relish every thing, which is advanced in this Work, yet, they greatly admire it, are much struck with many thoughts it contains, and apprehend, that this Writer favours most of their Sentiments. I confess, that my Opinion is wholly different from theirs, and that The *Arminians* have much more Right to the Honour of claiming him, as a Patron of their Cause; which I will attempt to make appear, in the following Sections.

Sect. 1. The Gospel is called a Mystery. *We speak the Wisdom of God, in a Mystery.* It bears this Name, because it was undiscoverable by Reason, and, consequently, could never have been known, without supernatural Revelation. But this is not the only Reason, why the Evangelical Scheme is so called, there is another Reason for it; which is, its Doctrines far exceed our Comprehension. And, therefore, though the Revelation of it, in all its Branches, is most clear and full, so that we cannot have any just Cause to doubt of its Truths, yet, it is Still a *Mystery*. It consists of a Set of Principles, which infinitely surpass the most extensive Ideas of any created Understanding. Hence, it is the Object of the holy Adoration of Angels and Saints, and will so be, for evermore. This Writer is much offended, with the Use of the Epithet *Incomprehensible*, in relation to Christian Doctrines. He speaks thus: *Nothing can be more foolish or absurd than to join the Epithets of incomprehensible, obscure, or unintelligible, to a Mystery after it is declared.* To say, that a Thing is hid, or secret, after it is declared, is indeed foolish and absurd; but

to affirm, that a Truth is incomprehensible, whose Nature is infinitely above a finite Capacity, is not so, how clearly soever that Truth may be revealed.

And such is the Nature of Evangelical Truths, wherefore, they are rightly termed Mysteries, notwithstanding the dear Revelation of them. Why does this Author connect together the Epithets, incomprehensible, obscure, or unintelligible? Are they Terms synonymous? Is he so weak a Man, as to think, that they mean the *same*? I am persuaded, that he is not. I cannot but consider this as an Instance of Unfairness, and Disingenuity in him. He knows, that infinite Duration is a Truth incomprehensible, but I think he cannot account it obscure, or unintelligible. It may easily be proved against any Man breathing, that without we allow some incomprehensible Truths, we can have no Religion at all; for, the Whole of Religion is founded on *Mysteries*; or Truths, whereof no Creature whatsoever can frame adequate Ideas.

Sect. 2. The human Mind is possessed of a Capacity to discern some most important Truths, viz. That there is a God. That He is an eternal and self-existent Being. That He is infinite in every Perfection. That all Things are, because He wills their Existence. That He is the Origin of Good and Happiness. And that all intelligent Creatures are under indispensable Obligations to honour and obey Him. This Ability is *innate*, or natural to Men, and is inseparable from our Minds. But I can by no means agree with this Author, in thinking, that we have an actual Perception of the above-mentioned Truths, or of any other, *without Reasoning* That supposes., the Truth of the Doctrine of innate Ideas, in the utmost Sense, that can be imagined, and which is mope apparently false. A Man knows the Truth of the Existence of Deity, upon a Perception of Evidence of that Truth; and, therefore, that Knowledge follows upon Reasoning. It is a Conclusion, which the Mind draws from some Premises, which it hath under its Consideration. It is certain, that the human Mind cannot but discern, that some Things are true, and others false; that some are right, and others wrong; that some are fit to be done, and others unfit, upon Examination. But this is no Proof, that it hath an actual Perception, or Knowledge of any Truth, without Reasoning, which this Author maintains, and calls *Conscience, or right Reason*. This the *Quakers* mean, by *the Light within*. This is that *Light* wherewith *every Man is lighted, that cometh into the World*. Natural it is to Men; but is greatly impaired, an Consequence of Man's Apostacy, and, is *unworthy* of the Name of right Reason, which our Author gives it. In many Things. it is wrong. Right Reason is not wrong, an any Thing, which God, the Fountain of all Reason, intended our intelligent Nature should be conversant about.

Sect. 3. *Language is the Medium whereby Men communicate their Ideas one to another.* By that God conveys to us the Knowledge of His Will. The Mean, therefore, of the Conveyance of the Knowledge of Divine Truths is natural; and, yet, the Scripture is properly called a supernatural Revelation, because the Penmen of it, were divinely directed, in the Use of this natural Mean, of conveying the Knowledge of Truth, and, therefore, they could not err, in their Mode of speaking. Now, as this is a natural Medium of imparting Knowledge, and is not above the Capacities of Men, it Is fitted to gain their Assent unto the Truth of those Doctrines, which by this Medium are proposed to their Consideration. This Assent is the Duty of all Men, who enjoy the written Word. And it is not an Act, that surpasses the natural Power of the human Mind. There is nothing supernatural in it, any more, than there is, in yielding an Assent unto the Truth of the most self- evident Proposition. It does not include a Perception of the Nature of the Things themselves, which are expressed, and unto the Truth of which, this Assent is given. With equal Truth it may be said, that a Man's Belief, that two and three make five, is supernatural, as that a *bare, mere, and simple* Assent, to the Truth of scriptural Propositions is so. For, the latter is no more beyond the Power of Nature than the former. The Cause why Men withhold an Assent from sacred Truths, is not, because they are unable to understand the Medium, which God makes use of to convey to them His Mind and Will; but because they disapprove of what He declares. Hence it is, that so much Art and Violence are used, on scriptural Terms, Phrases, and Expressions, in order to pervert their Sense.

If Men could but prevail with themselves to admit of the genuine Import of the Language of Scripture, our religious Controversies would quickly cease. But through a Dislike to those Doctrines, which must be allowed to be true, if the Language of Scripture is taken in its natural Sense, they will use marvellous Shifts and Evasions to obscure and elude it.

Sect. 4. *Though the human Mind hath a natural Capacity to understand the Meaning of the Language of Scripture,* and is able to perceive the Truth of the Doctrines which are therein expressed, and may therefore, without the least degree of supernatural Aid, believe them, or give a firm Assent unto them, as Principles not to be doubted of: Yet, such Blindness attends it, that it is incapable, without Divine Illumination, of understanding the *real* Nature of those Doctrines, unto the Truth of which it assents.

To perceive the Truth of Christian Doctrines, or of the Things of the Spirit of God, and to know the *Things themselves*, are absolutely

distinct. The former, a natural, unregenerate Man is capable of: The latter, is entirely above his Power. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him: Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Sect. 5. The Doctrine of the Scripture relates either unto the first, or second Covenant. The former is called the *old*, and the latter, the *new* Covenant. The first or old Covenant, is the Law: The second or new Covenant, is the Gospel. The old Covenant is a System of Natural Religion, in its absolute Purity and Perfection. It consists of Precepts, Promises, and Threatnings. It requires perfect Love to God, and our Neighbour, which includes all such Acts of Reverence towards our Maker, as His infinite Perfections require; and all Acts of Justice and Benevolence, towards our Fellow-Creatures. Promises of Life and Happiness are made unto Man, in this Covenant, upon a perfect Obedience to its Precepts. And Threatnings of Death and Misery are denounced therein, in case of Sin, or Disobedience. According to this Covenant, therefore, sinful Men can have no Ground to hope for Acceptance with God, or the Enjoyment of Him. Unto Sinners, it is no other than, a *Ministration of Death, and Condemnation.*

The second, or *new* Covenant, is a sovereign, gracious, and full Provision for the complete Salvation of the Church of God, in such a Way as establishes the first Covenant, and effectually secures unto it the highest Glory. Christ was constituted Mediator in this Covenant, and therein He became a Surety to God, in the Characters of a Lawgiver and Judge, for all those Persons, whom it respects. He undertook to do and suffer for them, all that was necessary to be done and suffered, in order to their Pardon and Salvation, consistent with the Honour of the *first* Covenant. The *new* Covenant, therefore, as it regards our Saviour, was *properly conditional*, and He could not claim the Fulfillment of any Promises made therein, to Him, in our Favour, without the Performance of what He engaged to do and suffer for us. As it respects us, it is *absolutely unconditional* Nothing is required of us, as a proper Condition, in order to a Participation of the Blessings, which are therein promised. So that, it is most fitly called, by *Divines*, a Covenant of Grace. It contains in it, Pardon, Peace, Justification, Grace for our Regeneration, Conversion, Sanctification, Preservation, in this State, and it also ensures to us eternal Life in the next.

This Author says, that he has *no Concern with the Distinction betwixt these Covenants, upon which our Systems are formed* This is certainly true; for, the Doctrine which he advances agrees to neither. It is contrary to Natural and Revealed Religion: Or, it suits not with

the first Covenant, which is Natural Religion in its absolute Purity; nor with the second Covenant, which, in Sum, is Revealed Religion. Like many other erroneous Persons, he disapproves of Systems, I suppose, from a Consciousness, in himself, that his Principles do not consist with any System of Divinity. However that be, in Fact, they do not. In the Covenant, which was made with the People of *Israel*, at Mount *Sinai*, there Was a Repetition of the Covenant of Works, and ritual and political Laws were added Unto that. Wherefore, the Covenant, Which was made with that People, included Laws moral, ceremonial, and political, The Observance of all which, God required of them. But not with a View, that they might, thereby, obtain spiritual and eternal Blessings: For, they were not promised therein. All Blessings of a spiritual Nature, were granted in another Covenant distinct from that, and which was *confirmed of God, in Christ, four hundred and thirty Years*, before the Levitical Institution. For which Reason, among many others, I humbly conceive, that the Covenant made with the People of *Israel*, at Mount *Sinai*, was not a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, although the ceremonial Part of it had a typical Relation to the spiritual Benefits, which the *better Promises* of that Covenant express.

Sect. 6. One grand Article agreed on, and settled in the Covenant of Grace, was Atonement for Sin, and the Remission of it, to the Guilty, in Consequence of that Atonement. Jesus Christ is the Party, in this Covenant, of whom making Atonement was required, and that important Work, He undertook therein. The Father's Will that He should, and His Compliance therewith, are both expressed in these Words: *Lo! I come to do thy Will, O my God.* The Father transferred Our sins from us, and placed them to the Account of Christ. *He made Him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin.* And Christ took Our Guilt upon Himself, or freely consented to bear, it for us, that we might be legally acquitted. Upon the Imputation of our Crimes to Him, He became subject to that Curse, which they demerited, And, accordingly, in His Sufferings, He was *made a Curse for us.* The whole Penalty which we were obnoxious unto, in Consequence of Sin, He endured. For, the Law's Curse, which He was made, includes it all. The Blessed Jesus, therefore, in His Sufferings Was our Substitute; and, by reason of the infinite Dignity of His Person, His Sufferings are of infinite Value, and satisfactory, to the Law and Justice of God, for our whole Guilt. Remission of Sin, on this Foundation, is an Act of Justice, as Well as an Act of Grace: *Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.*

Sect. 7. The Doctrine of our Justification before God is of the greatest Importance. For, if we are not justified, we shall not be glorified. As we are all guilty, and imperfect in our Obedience, God cannot account us innocent; for that is contrary to Truth and Fact, which with Him is absolutely impossible. In Justification Respect is had to the Law, which is the Rule prescribed for our Conduct, and our Conformity or Inconformity to that Rule. If we are conformable to the Law, we shall be accounted innocent, or righteous; but if we are not, we must be accounted innocent, or unrighteous. Now, *as every Mouth is stopped, and all the World, i.e. Men universally, are become guilty before God; no Man, whatever, can be esteemed just by the Divine Lawgiver, on the Foundation of his own Temper, and Actions. A Person of an unmixed Character is not to be found upon the Earth. All that can be said to the Advantage of the Best of human Race is this, that they are less guilty than others, whose Crimes are more, and whose Defects are greater: Not that they are innocent. And to say, that God may esteem a Man innocent and innocent, or unrighteous and righteous, on the same. Ground, Is an impious Absurdity. For, that necessarily supposes, that the infinite Understanding of God, may pass a false and contradictory Judgment on human Actions. And, therefore, at is most evident, that no Man can be justified, in the Sight of God, by his own Works: Because every Man is guilty of committing Sin, in some Instances, and is not perfect, in any Act of Obedience, which he performs. In the Gospel, we have a gracious, and clear Revelation of a Righteousness, which is absolutely perfect, and of infinite Value, viz. Christ's Righteousness. He condescended to come under the Obligation of the Law, or Covenant of Works, for our Sakes. Not upon His own Account, that by yielding Obedience to it, He might acquire a Right for Himself to Glory. That would have been incompatible with the Dignity of His Person, who is God, as well as Man; and, therefore, He hath a Right to Glory and Blessedness, on an infinitely higher Ground than that, which the Covenant of Works requires of us. As He came under the Law, on Our Account, to redeem us from it, He was perfectly conformable to it, in His Heart and Conduct. His Obedience is such, in Worth, as His Person is in Dignity, viz. immense. This Righteousness, He brought in for us; and God graciously imputes it unto us, whereby we are made righteous, and become, in Consequence thereof, *Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.**

This Writer affects to be thought, a strenuous Advocate for the Doctrines of Atonement by Christ's Death, and of imputed Righteousness. And, by his uncommon Manner of treating on those Points, he hath been by many, it seems, as grossly mistaken,

perhaps, as ever any Author was. Not a Few have apprehended, that he thinks, that the Death of Christ is *a real* procuring Cause of the Pardon of Sin, and that His Righteousness is the *Matter* of a Sinner's Justification before God; whereas, in Truth, he no more believes either the one, or the other, than a Christian believes the *Alcoran*. It may be some of his Admirers will very highly relent this Assertion; but I have no Scruple Concerning its Proof, which I Will immediately give.

Sect. 8. *He speaks thus: I am far from thinking, that any honest, or sincere Attempt to please God, ever failed of Success. Yea, I am ready to shew, that all Objections and Impediments have been, by a particular Divine Edict for that Purpose, removed and dispensed with in Favour of all, who are sincerely well disposed, whenever they shall be found. This Edict he produces, and argues upon, afterwards, I apprehend, it would be no great Difficulty to prove, that the Scripture itself will warrant any Man to hope for Acceptance with God, by his own Righteousness, who is influenced by all those good Dispositions toward the Law, which Aspasio considers as Requisites for coming to Christ. He who can say, I feel an Aversion to Sin, and prize the holy Law above all Things: The prevailing Bias of my Affections is to the Divine Law, and the habitual Breathing of my Soul after a Conformity to its Precepts, is, I think, in a fair Way to fulfill the Law, so as to live by his own Obedience, according to what is said, Ezekiel 33:14-19. If the Wicked turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right — he shall surely live — he shall not die — none of his Sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him: He hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live — he shall live thereby. Thus the Dispositions made necessary for our obtaining Life by Christ, are sufficient to make us live without Him, and to supersede the Necessity of any Christ, or Atonement at all. — He adds, They (the Jews) thought, to what Purpose shall we reform, or hearken to the Prophet's Warning, to turn from our evil Way, while our former Transgressions still stand upon Record against us? Let us do ever so well for the Time to come, we must be treated as Criminals for what is past?*

God removes the Ground of this Complaint, He assures every Man, who shall sincerely repent, or turn from his evil Way, and do that which is lawful and right, that he shall, be happy, and no Mention made of his former Faults. All this He confirms by His Oath, that there might be no remaining Doubt, or Hesitation, in the Minds of Men, ABOUT THEIR ACCEPTANCE with Him, as soon As THEY REFORMED. — He subjoins:

If nothing but Equity had appeared in the Divine Character, nothing but Misery could have been looked for by the Guilty. To Men who are dissatisfied with His Way, as unequal, God proposes to deal with them according to any Rule of Equity insisted on among them: Ye say, the Way of the Lord is not equal. O ye House of Israel, I will judge every one of you after his Ways. So likewise it appears from the New Testament, that every one who is found guilty at last, shall be condemned out of his own Mouth, or for walking unsuitably to his own Maxim.

The Field then is left fair and open for every one who wills, to run. Every Let or Hindrance, every Objection that the reasoning Faculty of Man can frame, is entirely removed. — Let all the well-disposed, all the Friends of Virtue, avail themselves of the free Declaration; God Himself hath set His Oath to it, that every one who turns from Evil to do Good shall be happy. Elsewhere he says Perhaps it will be inquired, Are no Rules to be observed, no Means to be used, no Works to be exerted by the human Mind or Body, in order to Justification? The Answer is ready: Yes, very many. And they maybe thus shortly summed up: Be perfect, keep the Commandments, and thou shalt live. — The Obligation of the Law is eternal, so can never be loosed. No Man can be assured that his Sins are forgiven him, but in as far as he is freed from the Service of Sin, and led to work Righteousness. For we must still maintain, that the Favour of God can only be enjoyed, in (he means by, or, for) studying to do those Things, which are well-pleasing in His sight.

Sect. 9. *The Author allows of no other Incapacity in us to comply with Prescriptions of Duty, than an Aversion to it; or Readiness in us to do Evil, than what arises from our Love to it. As for those who are sincerely well inclined, I have no Doubt but they will do that which is lawful and right; even as I make no Question but those who are averse to Sin, will avoid it: For I have no Notion, either from Scripture or Experience, of any Impotency in Man to do Good, but what arises from his Aversion to it; or Readiness in him to do Evil, but what arises from his Love to it. I will freely grant him, that no greater Impotency attends Man, to act in a holy Manner, than attends one who is naturally dead to actuate the several Members of the Body, or perform vital Acts. We cannot act spiritually, as we are dead, or destitute of a Principle of spiritual Life. And we will not,*

or are disinclined to what is spiritual, as our Minds are depraved and corrupt. Both are equally true of unregenerate Men. No Man is sincerely well disposed until he is born again; or, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.

Sect. 10. *He says: It does not signify much, by what Name we call the Mean of Escape, whether we call it the Law or the Gospel; for the great Concern we have with either of them, is to obtain a Righteousness, or Title to Life. I apprehend, that the great Difficulty is over, when a Man — has got his Aversion to Righteousness overcome, and pointed the other Way, toward Sin. — It is common to both, (the Law and the Gospel) that they convey Happiness, or afford Hope to the well disposed. And the Exercise of the Candidates must be much the time, with respect to either; that is, to endeavour to attain a Sense of former Deficiencies, with a proper Value and Esteem for the Mean of Escape; or, in other Words, to attain to the Hatred of Sin, and the Love of righteousness.*

Why should we seek to repress any Man's Impetuosity to fulfill the Law, who already knows the Reason and Matter of his Duty, and is already acquainted with the Nature and Duties of the Law? Why should we retard his Course, by entangling him in a Labyrinth about the Use of Means, seeing he may die before he has learned to use them aright, and so never reach his desired End. Methinks it would be much better to direct him to study Ezekiel, Chap. 33, where he will find that all well-disposed Persons have as much Security for their Happiness, as the Oath of God can give. As for the Gospel, it was only intended to relieve those ill-disposed People, who despair of ever doing any thing to render them acceptable to God, by any Assistance whatsoever. It was never intended to be an Auxiliary to those good People, who are desirous to give acceptable Obedience to the Divine Law. All such, where-ever they are, shall undoubtedly be happy, WITHOUT HAVING ANY OCCASION TO TROUBLE THEIR HEADS ABOUT THE GOSPEL. The Gospel is only a gracious Provision, made, by the supreme Royal Prerogative, for the Guilty and the Desperate. Jesus Christ came only to bring Relief to the Vicious and the Ungodly, without infringing the Privileges of the Righteous in the least. The Gospel was never intended to improve the Righteous, and elevate them to a higher Condition, but to relieve the Wretched. The Author wonders what Business Aspasio had to urge upon Theron, the imputed Righteousness, who had little or no Occasion for it. And says, Methinks he acts below the Dignity of the sacred Theme. In his Opinion, therefore, a Man, upon becoming obedient to the Law, may very well part with the Righteousness of Christ, because, then, he has little or no Occasion for it. And, that it is sinking the Dignity of the sacred Theme. to insist upon it, that the Righteousness of Christ is necessary to the Justification of a Man, Who is holy, or righteously disposed; although that Righteousness only, is commensurate to the Law, as a complete Rule of Action, and his own is far, very far short of being so. Every one who unfeignedly

esteems the Divine Law, is awakened into habitual and lively Desires after its Purity, and is willing to receive Life in the Way appointed therein, shall assuredly find it to be, a never-failing Spring of Consolation. The Law, then, can give Life unto a Sinner, upon his yielding Obedience to its Precepts; and he has no Occasion to concern himself about the Gospel, in order to his future Blessedness. Let that be true, or false, rightly understood, or mistaken, it is of no Importance.

Sect. II. *Though the Author thinks, that Persons of righteous Dispositions may discard the Gospel, in the Business of Justification, or of obtaining Life; yet, it is of Use to relieve the Worthless, Wretched, and Desperate, or such who have been profligately wicked; and, therefore, a Belief of it, or an Assent unto its Truth, is needful for them: Which Agent, in his Opinion, is that Faith, which accompanies Salvation. Because, he takes that for granted, or begs it, which will never be proved, viz. That, no Man assents to the Truth of the Gospel, without he approves of, and loves it. Men, as well as Devils, may believe that the Gospel is true, and yet, not like it, any more than they. Nothing in *Aspasio*, he thinks, deserves greater Censure, than his denying, that any Manner of Advantage arises to us from a bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel.*

This Assent or Persuasion is no other than a natural Act: It is not above the Power of any Man, who understands common Language. He says, *we are to consider Faith as a Principle of Life and Action.* If so, it is more than a mere Assent, simple Belief, or a bare Persuasion. For, an Act is not a Principle of Life and Action. It is very great Inaccuracy to call it so. Notwithstanding, he asserts, that Faith is a *mere Assent* to, or a *bare Persuasion* of, the Truth of the Gospel, in Opposition to those, whom he is pleased to call *popular Preachers*; yet, he maintains, that Love accompanies that Assent. Faith, therefore, must be more than a simple Belief of the Truth of the Gospel; an Approbation of it, or Love unto it, is included therein. The great Difference between him, and those whom he opposes, is this: He supposes that Love to Evangelical Truths attends a simple Belief of them, which is no other than a natural Act of the human Mind, produced by a natural Medium. And they think, that a living Faith is *supernatural*, as a Principle, and in all its Acts; and that a real Approbation of spiritual Things, cannot be in a Mind destitute of such a Principle. This is that, which exasperates and enrages him unto an excessive Degree, and causes him to cast about *Fury and Virulence*, in a Manner, scarcely to be paralleled, in any Author, as I think. *Love*, he says, *is the Activity of that Life which a Man obtains by Faith.* If Faith is a Principle of Life and Action, how is Life

obtained by it? Is not this the same, as to say, the Act of a vital Principle obtains that Principle? The proper Acts of Faith, in his Opinion, are Acts of Obedience, or the Performance of those Works which Jesus Christ enjoins on all who believe. Which are there, *Love, Repentance, Self-denial, and working of Righteousness*. Upon these Acts being put forth by a Man, he *enjoys the Holy Spirit, as the Comforter, and is filled with Consolation*, which arises from a pleasing Consciousness, of his being obedient to the Commands of Christ: Or, of *his being freed from the Service of Sin, and led to work Righteousness*. For, that Is the Foundation on which, his Assurance of the Pardon of his Sins, is to be founded, and also his Hope of Blessedness, must be built on that Ground: For, on that *the Assurance of Hope rests*, as this Author teaches us.

I know not but he may be much mistaken by some, on this Subject. Possibly, they may think, that he is not a Friend to Morality; because he inveighs vehemently against what he calls *popular Holiness*, and sneers not a little at *Heart-work*. As it consists in *Illumination, Conviction, spiritual Sorrow for Sin, and Affiance, or Trust in Christ for Salvation*. But he is not an Enemy to Morality. The Cause of his keen Resentment against those whom he calls *popular Preachers* is this, they do not allow, that Morality is Evangelical Holiness; or, that a Change for the better, in the Morals of a Man, upon a simple Belief of the Truth of the Gospel, is that Holiness which is requisite to future Blessedness. It is this, that raises his Indignation to its *prodigious Height*.

Sect. 12. The Principles of this Author are plainly these: That *the Law under which Man was, in his Creation-State, is dispensed with by the supreme royal Prerogative of God, in our Favour, as we are guilty and sinful. — That, another Law is enacted, or a Divine Edict is published, by obeying which Sinners may obtain Righteousness, or Life. — That, well-disposed, virtuous Persons, have no Occasion to concern, or trouble themselves about the Gospel Atonement, imputed Righteousness, and all other Evangelical Doctrines, with respect to them, are needlers, and were never intended for their Relief. — That, such who have been immoral and vicious in their Lives, upon becoming virtuous, and righteously disposed, have no farther Occasion for the Gospel: For, the Divine Edict, whereby the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with, will be a never-failing Spring of Consolation to them — That, Faith in Christ is not a Dependence on Him, or Trust in Him, for Salvation; but a bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel, though he thinks, that Love to it attends that Persuasion. That, the Atonement of Christ secures not the Pardon of Sin to any Man. — That, on the Ground of Justice, Men may expect to be justified at the*

Bar of God, by their own Obedience to the sovereign Edict, which He hath condescended to publish, by His supreme royal Prerogative, for that Purpose. Now, is it not *amazing*, that any Calvinist should conceive, that this Author is a Favourer of his Sentiments, since, the Principles which he advances, are diametrically opposite to them?

Perhaps, some will say to me, Surely you mistake him? Does he not contend, that no Qualifications whatever, in us, are necessary, in order to our Acceptance with God, and highly commend *Aspasio* for excluding all Sorts of our own Works, in our Justification, in *a most excellent* Passage, which he cites from the *Dialogues*? I answer, he does; and that *golden* Passage I most heartily approve of. It is this: *Both Grace and Faith stand in direct Opposition to Works; all Works whatever. Whether they be Works of the Law, or Works of the Gospel; Exercises of the Heart, or Actions of the Life, done while we remain unregenerate, or when we become regenerate, they are all, and every of them, equally set aside in this great Affair. That the Bill of Exclusion is thus extensive, or rather quite unlimited, appears from the Reason assigned; left any Man should boast That all Pretence of glorying may be cut off from fallen Creatures. That the whole Honour of obtaining Salvation may be appropriated to Him, who hid not His Face from Shame and Spitting. — And is He not worthy, unspeakably worthy, to receive this unrivalled Honour, as a Recompence for His unparalleled Humiliation?* Our Author's Admirers will, it may be, infer from his applauding of this Passage, that he cannot possibly think, that our own Works are the Matter of our Justification, or the Cause of our Acceptance with God, and the Ground of our Title to Life and future Blessedness. So *Aspasio* means; but this Author is as distant from such a Meaning, as Earth is from Heaven: And his good Friends the *Arminians*, and *modern Socinians*, can help him to get clear of Self-contradiction, in denying, that any Requisites in us are necessary to Reconciliation, Acceptance with God, and Justification; and in affirming, that our Obedience is the true Cause of our *real* Pardon, Justification, and Title unto Life. You will say, how can they do this for him? I answer thus: They say, there is *first* Reconciliation; this was obtained by the Death of Christ, nothing in us is required to that; but it includes not *real* or *actual* Pardon of Sin: It is a sovereign gracious Edict, by which Men may be assured of Pardon, if they reform and become obedient to the Law, and continue to be so. *And*, there is a *first* Justification, and a *final* Justification. In the former, God is so well pleased with the Obedience of His Son, that He declares Himself ready to accept and justify Men, notwithstanding, all their former Miscarriages, upon their Reformation and future Obedience, which is a very great Act of His Grace and Favour. This is what our Author intends by a Sinner's Acceptance with God, without Works of his

own. In *final* Justification, or Justification at the Bar of God hereafter, Respect will be had unto those good Works, which we now perform, as the Ground, or Cause thereof. So that, as this Author says, *Justice, as well as Grace, will appear in the last Judgment; then due Regard will be had to every Man's Works. But in the Justification of SINNERS, God has no Respect to any Man as better than another.* Divine Favour, or Grace, will appear therein, because it is by a sovereign, gracious Edict, that it is appointed, that our imperfect Works shall be accepted unto our Justification, and Right to Blessedness: Justice will also appear therein; because in justifying the Righteous, on the Foundation of their own Works, God will act agreeably to that sovereign Edict, by which it is appointed, that their Obedience shall be accepted to that great End, which the essential Righteousness of his own Nature will oblige Him to make good. *Calvinists* maintain, that *Justice, as well as Grace, will appear, in the Justification of Believers, at the Bar of God. Not on the Ground of their own Works: This they will eternally deny; but on the Foundation of the Righteousness of Christ Grace provides for them that Righteousness, by which they are constituted Just; and it is an Act of Justice to justify them, upon their being made the Righteousness of God in Christ, or righteous by the Imputation of His Righteousness unto them. For, God is just in justifying of those who believe in Jesus. Having stated and summed up the Principles of this Writer, I will briefly attempt to refute them.*

Sect. 13. *He grants, that Man, upon his Apostasy, could not work out a justifying Righteousness, according to the Law under which he was, in*

his State of Integrity; but insists upon it, that, *that Law is dispensed with in our Favour, as we are guilty and sinful, by a particular Divine Edict for that Purpose.* Most evident it is, that, that Law requires us to love God *with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength.* That Love to our Maker comprises, or consists in an Adoration of His infinite Perfections; a Delight in Him, as He is a Being of immense Goodness; a Reverence of Him, as He is infinitely holy, and powerful; and an entire, absolute Subjection to His Will and Authority in all Things. The Reason and Ground whereon this Love is required of the intelligent Creature Man, is the *Nature* of God, or His infinitely glorious Attributes, unless, therefore, a Change takes place in the *Nature* of God, the Reason of His requiring perfect, supreme Love to Himself will eternally remain; and, if that Reason continues, He cannot dispense with that Requirement, without acting contrary to His own infinite Understanding, which, with Him, is absolutely impossible. Hence it is clear, that it is an *impious Absurdity* to imagine, that God hath

dispensed With His Command given to Man, wherein He requires perfect and supreme Love to Himself, and those Acts of holy Adoration, Delight, Reverence, and Subjection to His Will, as such Love includes. Farther, if Divine Precepts are now less extensive, than they once were, let us be plainly told, how far the Abatement is carried. What Degrees of Imperfection, in our Love to God, and Obedience to His Will, are allowed of, in our Favour, as Creatures depraved and sinful. As the Law requires perfect Love to our Creator, so it requires perfect Love to our Neighbour; which Love is a friendly, benevolent Disposition. *It works no Ill* to its Object; but is kind, good, sympathetic, and compassionate in all its Acts. The Reason of requiring such Love to our Neighbour, is the infinite Goodness of the Nature of God, which can never dispense with that Requirement. The Law, therefore, as requiring perfect Love to God, and perfect Love to our Fellow-Creatures, remains, and will everlastingly remain in full Force, without the least Abatement.

The Law, as a Ground of the Divine Procedure, in the Justification, or Condemnation of Man, is a Covenant wherein Life is promised to perfect Obedience, and Death is threatened in Care of Disobedience. Believers are not under it, as such; but as it is a Law *simply*, or a *binding* Rule of Action *only*. And, therefore, they are not under its Curse, being redeemed therefrom by the Death of Christ: Yet, their Sins are not less *displeasing to God, than those of other Men*: Nor do they *less demerit the Curse of the Divine Law, and the Wrath to come*. Neither does the *popular Doctrine*, as this Author calls it, suppose the one, or the other. He either understands it not, or wilfully abuses that Doctrine. But it is a precious Truth, that Saints suffer only *fatherly Chastisements*, and not the Law's Curse, and Divine Vengeance, for their Miscarriages. Christ having endured in their Stead, the whole Penalty, which their Sins deserve, and thereby made complete Atonement for them.

Sect. 14. That sovereign Edict, by which the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with, is contained in Ezekiel, Chap. 18, and 33, as this Author asserts. By a very brief Consideration of these Chapters, it will appear, that no such Edict is therein contained.

1. The Complaint made concerning the Divine Procedure, in the Infliction of Punishment for Sin, is not the Complaint of some Individuals only; but it is the Complaint of the Body of the *Jewish People*: It is a public national one.

2. The Matter of this Complaint, was what they suffered, as a Nation, or Body politic, that is to say, *national* Judgments for *national* Sins.

3. No Respect is had, in this Complaint, unto the *Judgment to come*, and a *future State*; it only regards the present Dispensations of God, in His Providence towards them, as a Nation. They had not the least View to God's Treatment of them hereafter; their View was limited to the present State: Or, it was not carried one Jot farther. And, therefore,

4. The Death which they complained of suffering, was not *the second*, or eternal Death, unto which impenitent Sinners wilt be adjudged hereafter; but a *civil Death*, which they now suffered for *public Guilt*, according to that Covenant, which God made with them, as a *Body politic*. Consequently,

5. That Life, which they desired, and which God promised, upon their Reformation, was not eternal Life; but the Opposite of that *civil Death*, whereof they made Complaint, *viz.* a quiet and peaceable Enjoyment of that fruitful Land, which was given to them, and of those temporal Privileges, which were granted unto them therein. I dare be bold to affirm, that this Author will never be able to prove, that the *Jews*, in their Complaint, had Respect to a future State, or that God, in answering that Complaint, had any Regard unto Futurity. He must produce some other Proof, of the Publication of a sovereign Divine Edict, by which the Law, as requiring perfection, is dispensed with, in Favour of sinful Men; for no such Edict is there to be found.

Sect. 15. Our Author's Opinion is, that all well-disposed virtuous Persons have no Occasion to concern, or trouble themselves about the Gospel. 1. There well-disposed Persons are not sinless, or free from Imperfection, either in Heart, or Life. 2. I suppose, it will be thought proper for them to consult that sovereign Divine Edict, by which the Law, as requiring Perfection, is with. How else can they be assured, that their imperfect Obedience will entitle them to future Blessedness? 3. If it is not necessary to concern, or trouble themselves about the Gospel, then that Edict is not the Gospel. This, I think, the Author must be obliged to grant: And indeed the Gospel it is not, nor is it the Holy Law of God. That is no Law of His, which does not require supreme, perfect Love to Himself, and perfect Love to our Neighbour. This Edict is neither the Religion of Jesus, nor the Religion of Nature; but it is a dreadful Corruption of the latter. And nothing *more unworthy* of God can be devised, than the Publication of such an Edict is. For, the Supposition of it, reflects Dishonour on His infinite Perfections. And, therefore, that Supposition ought to be eternally abhorred. For my Part, I detest it with all my Soul. 4. Permit me to ask, why there well-disposed Persons need not concern themselves about the Gospel? Is it because they are secure of

Happiness by this Edict in their Favour? It will be said, they are. And, what then? I imagine our Author will answer, that is enough for them. Having as much Security for their Happiness, as they can reasonably desire, why should they not rest satisfied with that? What is the Gospel to them? That was only intended for the Relief of the *Wretched*, *Worthless*, and *Desperate* among Mankind. It was never designed to be an Auxiliary to them; they may, therefore, well spare themselves the Labour of making any Inquiries into it. Let those *worthless Wretches* employ themselves in the Study of the Gospel, who want it; as for those well-disposed People, they need it not. They may be happy without it. 5. I desire to be informed, for what Reason the holy Angels, who are not the Subjects of Salvation by Jesus Christ, which the Gospel is a Revelation of, are so intent upon the Study of Evangelical Truths? With *a most intense* Desire they look into, and humbly adore those sacred Truths, because of that illustrious Display, which there is of the Sovereignty, Wisdom, Kindness, Grace, Mercy, Truth, Holiness, and Power of God, in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and in the glorious Designs, which are by Him accomplished. But there are Things, it seems, which well-disposed and virtuous Persons have no Occasion to trouble their Heads about. I cannot refrain from expressing great Astonishment, that any Man, who professes to be a Lover of the Gospel, should entertain a favourable Opinion of a Performance, wherein such Slight is cast upon that most precious, and adorable Scheme, which is the only Foundation of our present Hope as Sinners, and will eternally be the Matter of our delightful Contemplation in Heaven, if there we come.

Sect. 16. *The Author thinks, that those who have been immoral and vicious in their Lives, upon becoming virtuous, and righteously disposed, have no farther Occasion for the Gospel; because the Divine Edict, whereby the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with, will be a never-failing Spring of Consolation to them. He maintains, that the Gospel was not intended to improve the Righteous, and elevate them to a higher Condition. There Persons, therefore, now being such, though they were formerly of a very different Character, they have no Need of the Gospel. For, now having that Holiness, which is necessary to Happiness, they may, without any Danger, be turned over from the Gospel to the Law, as it allows of Imperfection, and obtain Life by it: Or obey it, so as to live by that. But,*

1. No such Edict is extant in the sacred Records, however, not the least Proof thereof is yet given by our Author; it is not to be found in those Places, unto which he refers us for it.

2. Such an Edict cannot consist with the infinite Perfections of God. The Reason of His requiring supreme, perfect Love to Himself, is the infinite Excellency of His own Nature; and, therefore, it is no less absurd to suppose, that He may cease to require such Love of His Creatures, than it is to imagine, that He may cease to be God.

3. No *Law was given, which could give Life*, in the Time of the Apostle *Paul* And, I think, that it will never be proved, that such a Law hath been given since. Therefore,

4. The Law cannot be a never-failing Spring of Consolation to any of the Sons of Men. The Gospel only is such a Spring, wherein *the Righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith*. Which Righteousness, is *everlasting*; and with that Righteousness, everlasting Salvation is inseparably connected, and *Divine Grace will reign through it unto eternal Life*.

Sect. 17. *He insists upon it, that Faith is not a Dependence on Christ, or Truth in Him for Salvation; but a bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel;* though he thinks, that *Love to it attends that Persuasion*. On this Subject he expatiates largely, and charges those, whom he calls *popular Preachers*, with many and great Inconsistencies upon this Point; especially, as Assurance is thought to be essential to Faith. My Opinion being different, I shall not undertake to defend it: Nor, do I think myself at all obliged to vindicate any Writers, who through Inadvertency may have, in some Instances, expressed themselves in an inconsistent Manner. It is Truth only, which I shall contend for.

1. *A mere Assent, a simple Belief, or bare Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel*, as I before observed, is a *mere natural Act of the human Mind*, produced by a *natural Mean, viz. common Language*, whereby Divine Truths are expressed. God speaks to us in His Word, and He requires us to believe the Truth of those Doctrines, which He delivers therein. Now, I would ask, whether He speaks intelligibly, or not? If He speaks so as to be understood; or, if His Language is not above the natural Capacity of Man, it is a Medium sufficient to produce in Men, an Assent to the Truths expressed, without the least supernatural Assistance, This Assent, therefore, cannot be that precious *Faith*, which the Apostle says *is obtained by Lot*, (*toiv lacousi*) which this Author would persuade us it is. He might as well say, it is by Lot, that Men obtain a Belief, that two and two make four, as assert, that Men obtain by Lot, a simple Belief of the Truth of the Gospel, if God speaks to us intelligibly in the Scripture. And I suppose none will say, that he speaks *unintelligibly*; because that would be the same, as saying, no End can be answered by His speaking.

2. Love to the Gospel does not, nor can attend a *bare* Persuasion of its Truth. The Author's Supposition, that it may, is absolutely groundless. Love to Evangelical Truths arises from an Acquaintance with their true Nature, or real Excellency, which a natural Man hath not, nor can have. *They are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.*

3. No Acts of spiritual Obedience can spring from a mere Assent to the Truths of the Gospel; because, that is no other than a natural Act: It is not a spiritual Principle of Operation. The Mind, notwithstanding, that Assent, is still *carnal*, and *Enmity against God, it is not subject to His Law, neither indeed can be.*

4. Those Acts of holy Obedience, which the subjects of supernatural Faith yield unto God, are Fruits of that Faith, and accompany it; but they are not that Faith itself: Or, that Faith does not consist in Acts of Obedience, though Acts of Obedience flow from that excellent Grace. But the proper Acts of Faith, in his Account, are no other than *Socinian Obedience*, which may be yielded to the Divine Law, without the Infusion of a holy Principle into the Mind.

5. Faith, considered as an Act, is a Trust in, or Dependence on Christ alone for Salvation, upon a Conviction of our miserable and helpless Condition in ourselves, and a Perception of the Wisdom, Fitness, and Glory of the Method of laving Sinners by Him. Without such a Conviction, no Man will ever believe *to the saving of the Soul*. It is produced by a View of the vast Extent of the Law, a Prospect of our Guilt, an Apprehension of its just Demerit, a Sense of the *Plague of our Hearts*, and a Discernment of the infinite Holiness of God, as appearing in His Law. Thus, *thro' the Law we become dead to the Law, that we may live unto God*, upon another Foundation, which is absolutely distinct from that, *viz.* the Covenant of Grace. Our Author calls this, *the idle Process of a Law-Work*. But, if he is an entire Stranger unto a Work of this Kind upon his Mind, he is destitute of that Faith, which is of *the Operation of God*, and under the Power of Unbelief. Let him think of that Matter, as he pleases. No Man will ever receive Christ, or believe in Him, without such a Conviction. In Virtue of that Light, by which we come to know our Misery, and Helplessness, we see the Necessity of such a Saviour as Christ is, and the Glory which arises to God, in saving us, through the Blood, Righteousness, and Grace of the Blessed Jesus: This makes Him precious to us, and keeps us fixed in a Dependence on Him, for Pardon, Peace, Acceptance with God, Wisdom, Holiness, and spiritual Strength, in all Times of Temptation, and Distress. So that, Faith is a cordial Reception of Christ, as the Way of Salvation appointed by God, and an immoveable Adherence unto Him, as our ALL IN ALL.

Sect. 18. *This Writer's Opinion is, that the Atonement of Christ secures not the Pardon of Sin to any Man.* For, That it cannot do, if

our Acceptance with God, and Justification before Him hereafter, depends upon, and is to be secured by our Obedience to that Edict, whereby the Law, as requiring Perfection, is dispensed with; which he strenuously maintains. Notwithstanding, therefore, all that he hath said on the Doctrine of Atonement, by the Death of Christ, he does not think, that Sin is *really* expiated by His atoneing Sacrifice, nor that Sinners are *actually* redeemed from the Law's Curse, by what He suffered, nor *really* secured from enduring the vindictive Displeasure of God, by all those agonizing Tortures, which He endured for them. Real Atonement consists in these Things, *viz;* a Removal of Guilt — Redemption from the Law's Curse — and, Security from suffering Divine Penalty; or, an *actual* Right to Impunity, unto which the Sinner was obnoxious, on Account of his Offences. And, for my Part, I will never contend with any Man, for Atonement by the Death of the Son of God, if these Things are not allowed to be included therein. Adored be Divine Favour for it! Christ hath *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.* — He hath *redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* — *And, Peace is made by the Blood of His Cross.* When, therefore, *we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the Death of His Son.* Hence it is clear, that our Right to Impunity, springs not from our Acts of Obedience; but results absolutely, and alone, from the infinitely meritorious Sufferings of the Blessed Jesus.

Sect. 19. *He imagines, that on the Ground of Justice, Men may expect to be justified, at the Bar of God, by their own Obedience to the sovereign Edict, which He hath condescended to publish, by His supreme, royal Prerogative, for that Purpose.* 1. If so, then justification hereafter, will not be through the Righteousness of Christ; but by their own Works. In Judgment, a Righteousness will not be imputed to them, for their Justification that is *without Works*; but their own personal Obedience: Or, their own Works will be the Cause and Ground of their future Acceptance with God. And, therefore, 2. Boasting will not be excluded in the next World, if it be in this. The Proof of which, will be attended with no small Difficulty. 3. It is not yet proved, that God hath published such an Edict, and I think it never will be. For, 4. The Reason of God's requiring supreme, perfect Love to Himself, is the infinite Excellency of His Nature, which Reason will eternally continue; and, therefore, His Law, which is founded on that Reason, will for ever remain in full Force, without the least Alteration, or Abatement. 5. It is not possible with God, to esteem a Creature innocent, on the Foundation of his own Temper and Actions, who is not perfectly

conformable to His Law, which requires supreme, perfect Love to Himself; because, that would be passing a Judgment, which is contrary to Truth and Fact. Now, as it is confessedly true, that there is not any Man, in the present State, who perfectly loves God, no Man can be justified, at the Divine Tribunal, by his own Obedience. *Perfect Obedience can never Spring from imperfect Love.* 6. That Obedience, which arises only from a *natural Faith*, hath not any Thing of true Holiness in it, and, therefore, it cannot be acceptable to God. A *mere Assent* to, a *simple Belief*, or *bare Persuasion* of the Truth of the Gospel, is no other than a *natural Faith*, Which is produced, in the human Mind, by a *natural Medium*; and, therefore, no Acts springing from it, are really holy, and spiritual, nor can be pleasing to God. How should they then be the Ground of our future Justification before Him?

Sect. 20. *According to the Principles of this Author, the sincere and humble Christian, when upon the Verge of Eternity, may solace himself thus:* Though it is true, that I have sinned against my Maker, and have always been unable to come up to that Perfection, which His original Law required of Man, He has graciously dispensed with that Law, by a sovereign Edict, in order for my Relief, as a Creature guilty and imperfect; in that Edict, He gave me the strongest Assurance, by His Oath, that if I repented of my past Miscarriages, or turned from my evil Ways, and did that *which is lawful and right*, I should, in so doing, be justified, and *live thereby*. Being deeply struck with this His merciful Condescension, I resolved to forsake Sin, and work Righteousness. This Resolution I have performed, and, therefore, I have now a Claim upon Him, on the Foundation of my own Obedience, for Acceptance with Him, and the Enjoyment of Blessedness from Him. O my Soul, be not then afraid to appear at His Tribunal; for He must justify, He cannot condemn thee, without a Violation of that Oath, which He gave thee, for thy Security.

According to the Principles of most whom he calls *popular Preachers*, one whom he esteems a *hypocritical*, and *boasting Christian*, must, at the Hour of Death, comfort himself thus, and no otherwise:

Though it is true, that my Sins are many, great, and highly aggravated, there is Virtue sufficient in the Blood of Christ to atone for them all. My own Righteousness is very imperfect, and, therefore, it cannot justify me before God. But the Righteousness of Christ is absolutely perfect, and of infinite Value. In that Garment of Salvation, I humbly hope, my Soul is clothed, and constituted righteous; thereon alone I depend for Acceptance with my Supreme

Judge, and as my Title to future Blessedness, without any of my own Works, either in Connection with, or in Subordination to that Righteousness. My Nature, I know, is depraved and vile; and is, therefore, unmeet for, and incapable of the Enjoyment of God; but I hope, that, by His Spirit and Grace, He hath been graciously pleased, without any Concurrence of mine, to implant a Principle of Holiness in me, according to which, I delight in, and serve His Law. And all the Actings of that Principle, in holy Obedience, have been produced by His gracious, and benign Influence. For, as to Holiness, I AM NOTHING. BY THE GRACE OF GOD I AM WHAT I AM: And I shall behold the Top-stone laid, of the amazing Structure of my Salvation, with Joy, at present inconceivable to me; and, I am sure, that I shall eternally cry, GRACE, GRACE UNTO IT.

The *Sneer, Scorn, Contempt, and Virulence*, which run through this Performance, I imagine, will as certainly sink, as a Talent of Lead, will immerge in the Deep, with its own Weight; and, therefore, I think myself excusable, in leaving what he presents his Readers with, of such Sort, to fall without any farther Notice.

SERMON 29

THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE TO HIS PEOPLE, AND THE MERIT OF IT DEMONSTRATED

IN A SERMON, PREACHED TO THE SOCIETY, WHO SUPPORT THE WEDNESDAY EVENING-LECTURE,

IN GREAT - EAST - CHEAP DECEMBER 27, 1758.

Published at their Request.

ROMANS 4:6.

“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works.”

IN my annual Discourse, at this Time, two Years since, I endeavoured to state, explain, and improve the important Doctrines of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People. My Intention in the Choice of these Words, for the Subject of the present Discourse, is to defend the precious Truth of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, or active Obedience; and to prove the Blessedness of those, unto whom it is imputed, or their Title to Felicity, in Consequence thereof.

In my former Discourse, I shewed what Righteousness is, and the Nature of Imputation; and, therefore, it is not necessary to enlarge on either, in this Discourse.

The Place to which the Apostle in the Text refers is Psalm 32:1. 2, *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is covered. Blessed is the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose Spirit there is no Guile.* It is proper to explain the Phrase, *without Works*: Or, in what Sense, that Righteousness, which is imputed, is *without Works*. To say, as some do, that it is without perfect Works; but it consists of good Works, which are done by us, cannot be the Import of the Phrase. For, it cannot with any Propriety and Truth be said, that, our Righteousness, or holy Obedience, is without Works, because it consists of Acts performed by us, which are holy, though not perfectly so. And to affirm, as some others do, that Works wrought before Regeneration, are intended; but not those good Works, which Believers perform, are to be excluded, is liable to the same Objection as the former Sense is. For, it cannot with Truth be said, that the holy Obedience of the Saints, is *without Works*, because it consists of those good Works, unto which they *are created of God in Christ Jesus*. Nor can the Meaning be, *Though*

*Works are not yet present; but a Mind free from Guile. i.e. Sincere in the Study or Desire of Piety, as Grotius will have it. For, though a Course of future Obedience is not included therein, yet, it implies Love to God, Trust in him, and Abhorrence of Sin, and a Desire to obey and honour the Lord, which are holy internal Acts, and are properly denominated good Works. This, therefore, is not a Righteousness without Works, because it consists of internal Acts, which are good and holy, though not inclusive of a Course of Obedience, in our future Conduct. Consequently, this Sense is not to be admitted any more than either of the former. Wherefore, we must conclude, that the true Meaning of the Phrase, without Works, is this, Without any Works of ours, either, before, or after Regeneration. That the Righteousness of another, and not our own is imputed to us for our Justification. The Phrase is not capable of any other Construction. The Righteousness which is imputed, is Christ's. **Two Things, in general, are expressed in the Text,***

I. God imputeth Righteousness, without Works, to some.

II. They are blessed, or have a Right to Happiness, on that Ground.

Before I enter upon the Demonstration of the two grand Points, contained, in my Text, I would advance, some Propositions, relating to both, which I apprehend, will very much conduce unto a right Understanding of them, and enable us to refute some Objections, which are raised against them. Some deny the Imputation of the active Obedience of Christ who allow the Truth of Satisfaction for Sin by his Death. Others, though I hope not many, who grant the Truth of the Imputation of his Righteousness, yet, they deny the real and proper Merit of it.

The Propositions, which I would advance, are the following:

Prop. 1. *Christ's Sufferings, and his Obedience are not the same, but distinct.*

Prop. 2. *Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law is not Righteousness.*

Prop. 3. *Righteousness is a Conformity to the Law, in the Disposition of the Mind, and Acts internal and external, which agree therewith.*

Prop. 4. *Pardon of Sin does not constitute a Delinquent just.*

Prop. 5. *The infinite Dignity of the Person of Christ puts an immense Value, on his Obedience, as it does, on his Death. If he did not merit by his Obedience, he did not merit by his Death. I shall afterwards, some-what enlarge on this Point.*

These Propositions seem to me clear and indisputable. *Now I will endeavour to demonstrate the important Truths expressed in my Text.*

I. God imputeth Righteousness without Works to some.

That is to say, the active Obedience of Christ, without any of their own Works, for their Justification. *I shall propose various Arguments to Consideration, in order to demonstrate this Point.*

Arg. 1. The Gospel reveals a Righteousness for the Justification of Sinners. *For therein is revealed the Righteousness of God, from Faith to Faith* (Romans 1:17.). *But now the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets* (Romans 3:21). That this Righteousness is for the Justification of Sinners, it is most clear, from the Context *Now we know, that what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them, who are under the Law: That every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight: For by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin* (V. 19, 20.). That which cannot possibly be by the Deeds of the Law, certainly is effected, by that Righteousness of God, without the Law, which is manifested; being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. And that is the Justification of Sinners. Now as the Sufferings of Christ, and his Obedience, are not the same; but distinct. According to Proposition the First. And as his Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, was not Righteousness, as the second Proposition expresses. This Righteousness cannot be understood of his Death; but it must intend his Conformity to the Law, in his Disposition and Conduct: Or his active Obedience, according to the third Proposition. And therefore, his active Obedience is imputed to his People, in order to their Justification, in the Sight of God. I will venture to affirm, that this Argument cannot be everted, without proving that Christ's Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, is his Righteousness: Or that his Righteousness, is not revealed in the Gospel, in order to the Justification of Sinners.

Arg. 2. Redemption and Righteousness are not the same, but distinct Benefits. The latter is not included in the former, nor the former in the latter. Redemption is the Remission of our Sins. *In whom we have Redemption, through his Blood the Forgiveness of Sins.* Christ's suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, which is the procuring Cause of Pardon, was not Righteousness. Nor, is a Discharge from Guilt, which is the Effect of Christ's Death, as a meritorious Cause, Righteousness. Now, as neither the Cause of Pardon, nor Pardon itself is Righteousness; that must be a Benefit distinct from Redemption, and not included therein. It would be as

agreeable to Truth, to say, that Christ's Obedience to the Law's Precepts, was suffering its penal Sanction, as it would be, to affirm, that his enduring the Penalty of the Law, was that Obedience, which it required; which I suppose no one will maintain. And therefore, Redemption and Righteousness are Benefits properly distinct, though inseparably connected. And, the Apostle most clearly represents them, as such, in his Enumeration of those Blessings, which Christ is of God made to us, *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption* (1 Corinthians 1:30.). Consequently, they ought not to be blended, or confounded together; but considered, as Things really distinct; which it is most evident they are in their own Nature. For, as Obedience includes not suffering Penalty: So suffering Punishment includes not Righteousness.

Arg. 3. Christ is *made Righteousness unto us*. From what hath been argued above, it is apparent, that in his being made Redemption he is not made Righteousness. For, as the former is not inclusive of the latter. Christ in being made the former, he is not made the latter. He is made the latter unto us, as well as the former. And therefore, his active Obedience, and not his Death, is that which is of God imputed to us, as our justifying Righteousness. If his suffering the penal Sanction of the *Law*, was not Righteousness, it cannot with any Propriety be said, he is made Righteousness to us, by placing his Sufferings and Death to our Account But his Conformity, or Obedience to the *Law*, was his Righteousness, and not his suffering Death; and therefore, he is not made Righteousness to us, by reckoning his Death, or what he suffered, unto us; but by imputing that to us, which was his Righteousness, *viz.* His Obedience to the preceptive Part of the Law As an innocent Person cannot be made Sin, any otherwise than by the Sin of others being charged to him: So, such who are guilty, can no otherwise be made righteous, through, or by another than by the Imputation of his Righteousness to them. Now Non-imputation of Sin is a negative Act, the Imputation of Righteousness is a positive one. And the Act negative, does not include the Act positive. Whence it follows, according to Proposition the Fourth, that the Pardon, or Non-imputation of Sin, does not constitute us Just. For, that negative Act respects Sin only, and not Righteousness, and therefore, it cannot make us righteous. Consequently if Christ, is made Righteousness to us, it must be by the Imputation of his Righteousness, or active Obedience to us, which was the Point to be proved.

Arg. 4. The Apostle opposes Christ's Obedience, and not his Death to the Disobedience of Adam. *But not as the Offence so also is the free Gift. For if through the Offence of one many be dead; much*

more the Grace of God, and the Gift by Grace, which is by one Man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned so is the Gift: For the Judgment was by one to Condemnation: But the free Gift is of many Offences unto Justification. For if by one Man's Offence Death reigned by one: Much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness shall reign in Life by one Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the Offence of one, Judgement came upon all Men to Condemnation: Even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life. For as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners: So by the Obedience of one shall many be made Righteous (Romans 5:15, 16, 17, 18, 19.).

The important Truth, in whole Demonstration I am now engaged, is abundantly established in this Context. The Things which are therein opposed, are Opposites, or direct Contraries. Adam's Offence, and Christ's Death are not Opposites. To be made Sinners, and to be pardoned, are not Opposites. To be obnoxious to Death on Account of Sin, and to be freed from that Obnoxiousness, by Remission, are not Opposites. Besides, Christ's Death, was not his Righteousness, as has been before observed; but his Conformity to the Commands of the Law, was his Righteousness: Or, his active Obedience, and not his Suffering the Penalty of the Law, was his Righteousness. *The free Gift, the Gift by Grace*, is not the Death of Christ; but his Righteousness, or active Obedience. For it is the *Gift of Righteousness*, and it is expressly declared to be his Obedience. The direct Contrary of Adam's Disobedience, which Christ's Sufferings and Death were not. From hence, therefore, it is manifest, that the active Obedience of Christ, is that which the Apostle opposes to Adam's Offence and not his Death. Consequently, his active Obedience is the Cause of our Justification, as Adam's Offence was the Cause of our Condemnation.

Arg. 5. The Apostle desired to have the Righteousness of Christ. *And be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is thro' the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith* ((Philippians 3:9.). The Apostle's own Righteousness, which he renounced, was his Obedience to the Law's Precepts. And, that Righteousness, which he opposes to his own, and desired to have, must be Christ's absolutely perfect Obedience, which he yielded to the Law. As it was Righteousness properly understood, though imperfect which he renounced: So It was Righteousness in a proper Sense, which he was desirous of having, and that must be Christ's Obedience, and not his Death. The Reason is clear, which is this: The Suffering of a penal Death, is no Part of that Righteousness, which is required, in the

Law. If it was, an innocent Creature, could not fulfil the Righteousness of the *Law*, without suffering Death, as a penal Evil. The Supposition whereof, is so apparently absurd, that I conceive, none will admit of it. If, therefore, that Righteousness, which the Apostle desired to have, was the Righteousness of Christ, it must be his active Obedience, and not his Death; because that is no Part of Righteousness required by the Law.

Arg. 6. The Saints are clothed with a Robe of Righteousness, as well as stripped of their filthy Garments. *Take away the filthy Garments from him. And I will clothe thee with change of Raiment* (Zechariah 3:4.). The former, is the Removal of Guilt, or Pardon of Sin. The latter, is another Thing distinct therefrom. It is investing with a Garment, that is pure and spotless. Such the Righteousness of Christ, only is, for Spots and Imperfections, attend the best Obedience, even of those, who are most holy here. This Change of Raiment, therefore, cannot be understood of the personal Obedience of the Saints. But it must be interpreted of the sinless Obedience of Christ. Which is comparable to *fine Linnen, clean and white, and is the Righteousness of Saints* (Revelation 19:8.). Wherein they appear, with Acceptance, before God. This is the solid Ground of their spiritual Joy. and Exultation. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God: For he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation: He hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness* Isaiah 61:10.). The penal Sufferings of Christ, are not a Righteousness, that is most clear; because, suffering Penalty, is no Part of that Righteousness, which is required, in the Law. If, therefore, that Robe of Righteousness, wherewith Believers are covered, is the Righteousness of Christ, and not their own, it must intend his active Obedience to the Law, and not his suffering the Penalty of it. For, that which is not included, in that Righteousness, which the Law requires, cannot be a Robe of Righteousness. Death penal, is no Branch of that Righteousness. It is no other, than the Evil of Suffering, which the Law threatens, for the want of Righteousness. And, therefore, Christ's active Obedience most certainly is, that Robe of Righteousness, where-with, the People of God, are clothed. And, wherein, . they are justified, or accounted righteous, in his Sight.

Arg. 7. Christ came under the Law for our Sakes, in the Character of our Surety; and, therefore, he obeyed it for us, as well as suffered its Curse, on our Accounts. *By so much was Jesus made the Surety of a better Testament* (Hebrews 7:22.). His Sponson, or Undertaking, in the Covenant of Grace, was the Ground of his coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. And. without that, he had never been in Subjection to the first Covenant. *He was made of a*

Woman, and made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law (Galatians 4:4, 5.). By a sovereign Appointment of God, with his own Consent, as our Surety, he was made under the Law, in order to redeem us from it. Now what he acted, in that Character, as well as what he suffered, therein, was for us, and is placed to our Account. Since, therefore, he yielded Obedience to the Law, in the Character of our Surety, as he suffered its Curse, in that Character, his active Obedience, was for us, no less than his Death. And it is placed to our Account, or imputed to us. The Reason is the same, for the Imputation of what he did, as for the Imputation of what he suffered, *viz.* His coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, as our Surety. And, therefore, his fulfilling the Righteousness of the Law, was for us, and is reckoned to us, as his Suffering its penal Sanction was for us, and is reckoned unto us. Consequently, his active Obedience is ours, and was yielded by him for us, with a View to our Justification.

Arg. 8. We are made righteous by the Obedience of Christ. *As by the Disobedience of one many were made Sinners: So by the Obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* The Things spoken of are Opposites, and their Effects are direct Contraries. Now, the Opposite of Disobedience, is not suffering Punishment, or a penal Death. But Obedience to the Commands of the Law is the Opposite of Disobedience. And, therefore, it is not Christ's Sufferings and Death, which the Apostle opposes to Adam's Disobedience; but his active Obedience to the Law's Precepts. The Effect of Adam's Disobedience, is Guiltiness, or we are made Sinners, *i.e.* guilty thereby. And the Effect of Christ's Obedience is the contrary to that of Adam's Disobedience, we are made righteous, or constituted such, by that, and not by what he suffered for us. Hence, we must conclude, that the active Obedience of our Blessed Saviour, is imputed to us, in order to our Justification, before God.

Arg. 9. Lastly, It is evident from the Nature of Things, that Christ's active Obedience, and not his Death, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness. I argue thus: In our Justification, God, either considers us righteous, or not so. The latter is most plainly absurd. For, to justify, is to reckon, or declare a Person righteous; that is to say, not destitute of that Righteousness, which that Law requires, unto which Respect is had, in the Act of Justification. And, therefore, God cannot justify us, without considering us righteous. Now, if God, in our Justification, does consider us righteous: Either we are righteous, or we are not. If in Fact, we are not righteous: Then, God in justifying us, forms not his Judgment concerning us, according to Truth; which, with him, is absolutely impossible. Both these Things, consequently, must be true, *viz.* That God considers us righteous,

and that we are made so. Christ's Suffering the penal Sanction of the Law, was not Righteousness. We cannot be made righteous, by that which is not Righteousness. Nor can God, account us righteous, on the Foundation of that which is not Righteousness. The Death of Christ properly atoned for our Guilt, and procured our Pardon; but it did not, it could not supply our want of Obedience, or Conformity to the Law's Precepts. It is impossible his Death should supply the want of that, which it doth not include; it does not include Righteousness, for which Reason it cannot supply our Want of Righteousness. And, therefore, it is not by his Death, but by his active Obedience, that we are constituted just. Besides, according to Proposition the Fourth, Pardon of Sin does not constitute a Delinquent just. Remission of Sin, or a Discharge from Guilt, is obtained by the Death of Christ; but as Pardon does not include Righteousness, it cannot make us righteous. And, if Pardon does not make us righteous, God cannot esteem us righteous, on the Ground of Pardon. In Justification, he does reckon us righteous. Righteousness, therefore, must be imputed to us. And, as Christ's Death was not Righteousness, it cannot be that Righteousness, which is imputed to us, and, whereby we are made righteous, it undoubtedly, is his active Obedience, or Conformity to the Precepts of the Law. These Arguments, I apprehend, most clearly demonstrate the important Truth, of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, or active Obedience, and the Necessity of it, in order to our justification.

Socinus strenuously contends against this Doctrine, and it is a Point, whereon he hath much laboured. He argues thus: *Making Satisfaction for our Sins, and obeying the Law for us, cannot consist together: One, or the other is vain and unnecessary. Because, Satisfaction, by suffering Punishment, manifestly shews, that he for whom Satisfaction is made, is not reckoned innocent. For where Innocence is, that is no Offence, there is no Punishment. And to satisfy by doing of those Things which another ought to have done, really causes, that he for whom they are done, should be accounted innocent, and be esteemed, never to have committed any Offence. And, that one or the other is vain and unnecessary, this demonstrates: What, if any one is reckoned to have done all those Things which he ought to have done, all his Sins are already blotted out. For how can he be thought to have sinned even in the least, or be accounted guilty, who hath done all Things, which he ought to have done. Likewise, if any one should be reckoned to have suffered the whole Punishment due to his Sins, his Sins truly are blotted out.* *Socinus* believed neither the one, nor the other. This Reasoning of his, may at first View seem plausible. Some who have been most remote from his Opinion, concerning the Doctrine of Satisfaction,

have been so far missed by it, as to conclude, that there is no Necessity of the Imputation of Christ's Obedience, in order to our Justification; that his Sufferings and Death are sufficient to that End. But there is nothing solid in it. Which thus appears: We are under Obligation to obey the Law, as Creatures: And we are under Obligation to suffer its Curse, as Sinners. Adam, in his innocent State, was under the former Obligation only: His Violation of the Law, brought him under the latter Obligation. His coming under the latter, did not dissolve the former Obligation: Or his Sin did not free him from an Obligation to Obedience, that still remained upon him. Now, Christ's satisfying the Law, by obeying its Precepts, only respects us as Creatures, from whom Obedience is due, as a Condition of Life, and not as Sinners; and, therefore, his Obedience, cannot free us from that Obligation, under which we are, as we are guilty. And, his satisfying the Law, by suffering its Penalty, regards us not as Creatures; but as Criminals and therefore, it frees us not from that Obligation, under which we are, as Creatures simply considered, *viz.* Of yielding Obedience to the Law, in order to the Enjoyment of Happiness. Hereby, the Consistency, and the Necessity, of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings for us, are clearly evinced. Our being acquitted of Guilt, by Virtue of his Death, does not suppose, that we have obeyed the Law, or have the Innocency of Righteousness. This only is supposed therein, that we are freed from an Obligation to suffer that Punishment, which is demerited by our Guilt. And our being constituted, and reckoned righteous, by the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, does not suppose, that we have not transgressed the Law, or that God, upon that Imputation of his Righteousness reckons us, not to have sinned. That can be true on no other Principle than this, *viz.* It being the Divine Will to impute the Obedience of Christ to us for our Justification, God is regardless of that Part which we ourselves act; or that he does not take it into his Consideration, which is most: certainly false, as it is most manifestly absurd.

II. *Those to whom the Righteousness of Christ is imputed are blessed, or have a Title to Felicity in Consequence thereof.* That being justified by his Grace, we might be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life (Titus 3:7.). The Reason whereof is: ***The Righteousness, or active Obedience of Christ merits Grace and Glory, or, those Blessings which are bestowed upon us in Time, and which we shall enjoy in Eternity.*** The Terms *Merit, meriting, and merited,* are not expressly mentioned in Scripture. But that is no just Objection against the Use of them. The Term *Incarnation* is not used in Scripture. But what is intended by it, is therein declared, *viz.* That the Son of God was *made Flesh*, made of Woman: He, therefore, was incarnate, or became Man, by the Assumption of

human Nature. The Term *Satisfaction* is not used in Scripture, about the Sufferings and Death of Christ. But the Ideas included therein, are very dearly expressed. And this Phrase, or Expression, the personal Union of the Divine and Human Natures in Christ, is not expressly mentioned in Scripture. But the important Truth, intended, by that Phrase, is therein taught. And other Instances of the like Nature might be produced.

I hope ever to contend for the Merit of our dear Redeemer, in his Obedience, as well as in his Sufferings. If the former was not meritorious, the latter was not. Merit is two-fold. There is Merit of Paction; and there is Merit of Condignity.

First. There is *Merit of Paction* in Christ's Obedience. A Covenant was entered into between God the Father and our blessed Saviour. In that Compact, the Father required him to do and suffer all that was necessary to the Pardon, Justification, and eternal Salvation of his People. Christ on his Part, engaged therein, to perform and endure all that was required of him, as our Surety. And the Father promised to him, on that Condition that he should *see his Seed*. That he should have such a Prospect of them, as would be to his utmost Satisfaction, *i.e.* Pardoned, justified, sanctified, and eternally glorified. In a Word, that he should see them, as happy, as his intense Love to their Persons, causes him, to desire they, may be. And therefore, there is no Blessing which they do, or will receive, that is not comprised in this Promise of the Father. Now, as Christ hath punctually accomplished all that he undertook in this Covenant: Or finished the Whole of that Work; which he gave him to do. From thence arises a Right to him, to claim and demand of the Father, in their Behalf, the Fulfillment of his Promises respecting them. Nor, can the Father, in Justice, fail of performing those Promises. And therefore, it is most clear, that Merit of *Paction*, attends the Obedience and Sufferings of our Redeemer. And this agrees with what the Apostle expresses in these Words: *Now to him that worketh is the Reward, not reckoned of Grace; but of Debt*. In as much as Christ hath worked, there springs from the Work which he hath done, a Right to all the Benefits, promised on that Condition. And that is what we understand by Merit, *ex Pacto*.

In order to disprove what is here pleaded for, it must be shewn, either, that no Promise of eternal Life, was made to Christ, for his People, on Condition, of his Obedience and Death; or, that he did not obey and suffer as he was required.

Second. There is Merit of *Condignity*. That is *real* and *proper*. It is an *intrinsic* Worth and Value, which is intended by it. **I hope to make it evident, that Merit, in this strictly proper Sense, attends**

the Obedience of Christ. And, that, that Merit is infinite, or answerable to the Dignity of his Person. The Requisites of Merit, thus strictly taken, are the following: That the Work done is not due — That it is performed by Power underived — That it is absolutely perfect — That it is proportionate to the Reward — And, that the Reward is due of Justice: or, that it is Justice, which assigns the Reward to the Work done, because of that intrinsic Worth, which therein is.

1. Obedience to the Law was not due from Christ. The Law is here to be considered as a Covenant. Wherein Obedience is prescribed, as a proper Condition of obtaining Life, and not as a Law simply. The Will of God is, and eternally will be a Law, to Angels and Saints. But the Saints are not even now, in Subjection to the Law, as a Covenant. For, they *are not under the Law, but under Grace* (Romans 6:14.). Christ as Man, is and ever will be in Subjection to the Divine Will. But he did not, he could not with Men come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. For, he was not *seminally* in *Adam*, as a *natural Descendant* of his. Nor, was *Adam* a Head and Representative to him. And, therefore, he did not, with Mankind, come within the Compass of the Covenant of Works, which was made with *Adam*, as the Head of all his natural Descendants. Besides, Christ is God, as well as Man, and the Divine Nature, and the human Nature, are united in his Person, as Mediator.

As God, he is *Lord of the Sabbath*, and of the Law itself by which the Observation of it, is enjoined. Now, though his human Nature was the immediate Subject of the Law, and of that Obedience, which he yielded unto it. That Nature being united with his Divine Person: In that Nature his Person, as Mediator, came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, and yielded Obedience unto it. Thus he who was Lord of the Law, and from whom Obedience to it, as such, was not, nor could become due, for our Sakes, came under Subjection to it, and obeyed its Precepts. The Law hath Power over a Man, yea every Man. But it could never have Power over God-Man, without a special Divine Constitution. The Obedience of Christ, therefore, who is God-man, was not due. And this is the first Requisite of *real, proper* Merit.

And it is a solid Answer, unto what *Socinus* objects, against Christ's obeying the Law for us, viz. *That Obedience was due from him; and, therefore, his Obedience could not be for us, nor can be imputed to us.* Here is a Person found, from whom Obedience to the Covenant of Works, could not possibly become due, upon his own Account. That Obedience, therefore, was intended for us, and is graciously imputed unto us.

2. Our blessed Saviour yielded Obedience to the Law, by Power underived. He who yields Obedience to another, by Virtue of Ability received from him, cannot be said, in a strict and proper Sense to merit of him, by the Obedience, which he performs. And, therefore, no Creature can properly merit of God. But Christ obeyed the Law, by a Power resident in his own Person, and which was not derived from another. No, not from the Father, unto whom he yielded Obedience, as a Law-giver and Judge. Not, that his human Nature, was the Subject, of any Power underived. But his Divine Person possesses infinite Power underivative. And his human Nature was supported, both in what he did and suffered for us, by that Power, which he had in himself, as God. Christ, by the infinite Power of his Divine Person, raised himself from the State of the Dead: And by that Power, he, in his human Nature, obeyed the Law, and suffered its Curse. For, it was his Power, as God, which upheld his human Nature, in its Obedience and Sufferings. And, therefore, as this Ability, in his Person, was not communicated to him, by another, in order to capacitate him, to obey and suffer, his Obedience and Sufferings, in the most strict Sense, merit of Him, viz. of God, the Father, as a Law-giver, and Judge, at whose Requirement, he obeyed the Law, and suffered Death: And this is the second Requisite of Merit properly understood. Which it is impossible should attend the Obedience of any mere Creature whatsoever. But it is most unquestionably true of the Obedience of Christ, who is both God and Man. For, the Divine and human Natures, are inestably united in his Person. And his Divine Will, and his human Will, concurred, in the Obedience, which he yielded for us, unto the Covenant of Works. For which Reason that Obedience is to be considered, as the Obedience of his Person, though his human Nature only, was the immediate Subject of it.

3. Our dear Redeemer was perfectly conformable to the Law. In his Nature, he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners. Without Blemish and without Spot.* For, though he partook of Flesh, he was only, *in the Likeness of sinful Flesh.* No moral Taint, or Impurity attended him. He was absolute Purity and Perfection, in his Mind. That supreme Love to God, and that benevolent Disposition towards Men, which the Law requires, possessed the Soul of the blessed Jesus, and wholly influenced him, in all his Actions. So that, his Obedience was answerable in all Respects to the Law, which he undertook to fulfill for us. No Defect, or Imperfection, attended it, either, materially, or circumstantially. It was absolutely compleat, respecting, both its Matter and Manner. For, *He did no Sin: Nor was Guile found in his Mouth. He fulfilled all Righteousness.* And was as holy, in his Heart, and Conduct, as the Law required he should be, under which he was made, on our Account. Christ *always did those*

Things, which please the Father. Infinite Purity itself, can have nothing to object to him, in his Temper, or Behaviour. This is the third Requisite, which is *essentially* necessary unto a *meritorious* Obedience: For, Merit can never attend Obedience, which is not absolutely perfect.

4. The Obedience of Christ is proportionate to the Reward, which is promised. That Reward is the Enjoyment of infinite Good. As Sin demerits the Loss of infinite Good, by Reason of the infinite Evil, that is in Sin, *objectively* considered: So, the Obedience of our Blessed Saviour merits infinite Good, because of its immense value, *subjectively*, considered. There is an Infinity of Evil and Demerit, in Sin, because it is committed against an infinite Object. And there is an infinite Worth, in the Obedience of Christ, because of the Infinity of his Person. Such as the Person of Christ is, in Dignity; such is that Obedience which he yielded to the Law, for us, in its Desert. The former is infinite, and so is the latter. No greater Good is possible to be enjoyed, by a Creature, than the Righteousness of him, who is Jehovah, in the most strict and proper Sense, deserves. If the obediential Acts, of the Son of God, have a Value in them, above the obediential Acts, of a mere Creature, on Account, of the Greatness of his Person, that Value must be infinitely greater, answerable unto the infinite Majesty and Glory of his Person. And, therefore, in his Obedience, there is not only *real*; but also immense Merit, or Desert. And no Good transcending that Merit, can be communicated unto, and be enjoyed, by those, for whom Christ obeyed the Law, and to whole Account his Obedience is placed. The Covenant of Grace contains in it, no Blessing, but what Christ properly merited, by that Obedience which he yielded to the Covenant of Works.

I humbly conceive, that it is the Design of the Apostle, to prove, that the Superiority of Christ, above *Adam*, is the Reason and Ground of the superabundant Merit of his Obedience, which he opposes to Adam's Disobedience. As Death is not merely a Consequence of Sin, but a proper Effect of it, as a procuring Cause: So, Life is not merely a Consequence of Christ's Obedience, but it is the proper Effect thereof, as a meritorious Cause. Every Cause is an Antecedant; but every Antecedant, is not a Cause. And every Effect is a Consequence; but every Consequence is not the Effect of that, which went before it, or upon which it follows. For, one Thing may precede another, and yet not be a Cause of that which succeeds it. And one Thing may follow another, and yet not be the Effect of what went before it.]fit was the Intention of the Apostle, in comparing *Adam's* Disobedience, and Christ's Obedience together, to prove that *Adam's* Disobedience, was a procuring Cause of Death,

it must, I think, be granted, that it is his Design, to prove, that Christ's Obedience is a proper meritorious Cause of Life.

Some Things may here very pertinently be observed, concerning *Adam* and Christ, of whom the Apostle speaks, as two Representatives.

In *Adam* there was a Fitness to be the Representative of all Mankind; because all Men were seminally in him, and were to spring from him. But there was not a Worthiness in him to stand, in that Capacity, by Reason of a Dignity, above Human, in his Person. Again, the Demerit of his Disobedience, did not arise from any Thing, in his Person; but from the Object, against whom he sinned, *viz.* God. That Demerit, therefore, was extrinsecal, or without him, and not intrinsecal, or within himself. Things are quite otherwise with Respect to Christ.

There was not only a Fitness in him to be a Representative to his People, as he is truly Man, perfectly holy, and born for, and given to them. But he being God, as well as Man, he was worthy to be a Head to the whole Number of the Elect.

Again, the Reason, or Ground of the Merit of his Obedience, is the Dignity of his Person. It arises not from the Object to whom he yielded Obedience, which the Demerit of *Adam's* Disobedience did; but from the infinite Greatness of his own Person. The Merit of Christ, therefore, was not extrinsecal, as *Adam's* Demerit was; but intrinsecal, or it arose from what he is in himself, *viz.* God, as well as Man. Infinitely, superior to *Adam*, therefore. Unto which, I apprehend, the Apostle hath Respect in these Words: *Much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by one Jesus Christ.* Two Things are clearly suggested, in the Context, *viz.* That the Obedience of Christ, may fitly stand for many, on Account of the infinite Dignity of his Person, above the Person of *Adam*, and that, for that Reason also, his Obedience, hath an intrinsic Value in it, deferring of eternal Life. This is the fourth Requisite of Merit, strictly understood. That is to say, Merit of *Condignity*.

5. The Reward is due *in Justice*: Or, it is Justice which assigns the Reward to the Obedience of Christ, because of that intrinsic Worth, which is therein. It was an Act of Justice, in God, to appoint that *Adam's* Disobedience, should subject us to Death, because of the infinite Evil thereof, *objectively* considered. And it was, an Act of Justice in him to ordain, that the Obedience of Christ, should entitle us to Life; because of the infinite Worth thereof, *subjectively*, considered. The immortal Crown, of future Glory, is a *Crown of Righteousness*. And the Lord will give it, in the Character of a

righteous Judge. Those, therefore, to whom, the active Obedience of Christ, is imputed, they most certainly, are blessed: Or have a Title to eternal Felicity, in Consequence thereof. For, that Obedience, properly merits everlasting Blessedness.

Perhaps, some weak Minds may object to this, that what is merited, is not freely given. Unto which, I answer thus: No Act of sovereign Grace, prejudices itself, or eclipses its own Glory. Now, Christ's Capacity to merit, by what he did, is founded in sovereign Grace. And it was sovereign Grace, which determined, to whom his Obedience should be imputed, in order to receive the Reward which is thereby merited. And, therefore, *Grace will reign through Righteousness, unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

SERMON 30

THE KNOWLEDGE OF FUTURE GLORY: THE SUPPORT OF THE SAINTS, IN PRESENT TROUBLES

A SERMON, OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REVEREND AND LEARNED MR. CLENDON DAUKES; WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE *DECEMBER THE 12TH.*

Preached at Hemel- Hempstead, December 17, 1758. Published at the Request of the Church.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1

“For we know, that if the earthly House of this our Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.”

MY honoured, and very much esteemed Brother, your worthy Pastor, now deceased, desired me to improve, the mournful Occasion, of his Death, in an Endeavour to explain among you, the Words, which I have read.

The Connection of the Text with what is expressed in the preceding Chapter, is so evident, that it cannot escape the Observation of an attentive Reader. The Apostle mentions the Difficulties, Hardships, and Sufferings, unto which, he, and his Fellow-Labourers were exposed for the Gospel's Sake. And declares, that they did not *faint*, or sink under them. They were not intimidated by the cruel Persecutions, which they suffered. But bore them with Patience, Courage, and Fortitude, being animated, by Prospects of future Blessedness: *For which Cause we faint not; but though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day. For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are temporal; but the Things which are not seen are eternal. Then the Words of my Text are introduced, wherein, are three Things, in general, to be observed,*

I. A present *House*, or *Building*.

II. A future one.

III. The Apostle knew, that there is a future Building, and that he had a Title to it. This was not a Conjecture, or a probable Opinion only. But he had a certain Knowledge, and Persuasion of it.

I. A present House, or Building, is spoken of, For we know that if the earthly House of this our Tabernacle were dissolved. This House is our Body, wherein our Soul subsists and acts, at present. In the Formation whereof, the infinite Wisdom and Power of God are dearly seen. It is admirable for its Beauty, and the important Purposes, unto which it is designed, in subserviency to the Mind, which is united to it. The various Mediums, for Senses are fitly adapted, as the Soul's acquiring a Stock of Ideas, viz. Sight, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Feeling. By the Impressions, which Objects about us make on our Senses, the Soul acquires its Ideas of Things, and becomes acquainted with their Nature, and perceives their Agreement, or Difference. And being endowed with the Faculty of Speech, we are capable of communicating our Ideas, one to another, which is unspeakably to our mutual Advantage and Pleasure, as we are Creatures formed for Converse and Society. Concerning the curious Machine of our Body, we may justly say, that we *are fearfully and wonderfully made*. Three Particulars are expressed of our Body.: It is earthly — It is a Tabernacle — And is to be dissolved.

1. The human Body is *earthly*. This constituent Part of Man was *formed of the Dust of the Ground*. *The first Man was of the Earth, earthy*. Our Original, therefore, was Dust. A very humbling Thought, this. But we too little take it, into Consideration. And are strangely apt to forget from whence we sprung. Besides, the Produce of the Earth is the Matter of the Nutriment and Sustentation of our Body. The admirable Variety of rich and delicate Food, which we eat for our Nourishment, and the Recruit of our continually wasting Spirits and Juices, is no other than what the Earth supplies us with. And without which, we could not long subsist. Again, we must soon be reduced to Dust. We are always tending unto it, and we must quickly be lodged in the Earth, and crumble into Dust.

2. Our Body is called a Tabernacle. which suggests the short Duration of our mortal Frame. Tabernacles, or Tents, are not designed for long Continuance. They are soon pitched, and are soon taken down. They were in Use, therefore, by the Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, who frequently removed from one Place to another. And the People of *Israel*, also used them, in their travelling through the Wilderness. We are in the Body, not as in a Mansion-House, which is erected, for a considerable Duration; but as in a Tabernacle, which must shortly be taken down. Our Life is like a *Vapour*, which suddenly vanishes, and disappears. But alas! we are often forgetful of its Brevity, and therefore, we are either perplexed with anxious Fears, or vainly puffed up, and elated with those Things, which we cannot but know, will not long be Matter,

either of Grief, or of Satisfaction and Joy to us. This is an Instance of the egregious Folly of our depraved Minds.

3. The Body must suffer a Dissolution. By Sin we are subjected to Death. And it is vain to hope for an Exemption from its fatal Stroke. *It is appointed unto Man, once to die.* Which is the Separation of the Soul from the Body. immediately, whereupon, the Body turns to Corruption, its various Members are disunited, it is resolved into its first Original, and we mingle with vile Dust, whereon we now tread. Should not this pull down our Pride, abase our haughty Minds, and make us ashamed of our high Looks? Unto this base Condition we must all be reduced, without Exception. What Madness therefore, is it, in us, to cherish Pride, who must unavoidably sink into the dark Region, of the Grave, and therein moulder to Pieces! This Subject, gloomy as it is, does not terrify the Saints, when they have in View, the heavenly State, which the Apostle had.

II. *There is a future House, or Building.* This some interpret of the Body, when raised from the Dead, as it certainly will be. And the Bodies of Believers will, at their Resurrection, be rendered *immortal, spiritual, and glorious. For this Corruption shall put on Incorruption. And this mortal shall put on Immortality.* The Bodies of Believers are now *sowen in Corruption; Out they shall be raised in Incorruption. They are sowen in Dishonour: They shall be raised in Glory. They are sowen natural Bodies: They shall be raised spiritual Bodies.* Christ will *change their vile Bodies, and fashion them like his glorious Body, according to the working, whereby he is able, even to subdue all Things unto Himself.* Then their Bodies will be fit Receptacles for their perfected Minds.

I apprehend, that the eternal Felicity of the Saints is included, in this future House, or Building; but not to the Exclusion of their Happiness, in the intermediate State, between Death, and their Resurrection. And, therefore, it is best to understand it of that blissful State, into which they immediately enter, upon their Decease, Three Things I would endeavour to prove, *viz.* That the Soul is distinct from the Body That it is capable of existing and acting without it That the Souls of the pious, will be in a happy State, immediately upon Death.

1. The Soul is distinct from the Body. If the Body is a House to the Soul, as the Text represents it, the Soul cannot be the same with the Body; but it must really be distinct from it, tho' in the strictest Union with it. For, it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Soul is not distinguishable from that, wherein it is, as its House, or Tabernacle, and in which, it subsists and acts. Besides, the Body is the present *Home* of the Soul. And the Soul is capable of being *absent* from it,

which it is impossible it should ever be, if it is the same with the Body, and not distinct from it. *We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the Body.* Now that which may be absent from the Body, must be some other Thing than the Body, and not the same with it. If there is nothing subsisting in us, which is distinct from our Body, with no Propriety, it can be said of us, that at Death, we become absent from it. The Soul and the Body therefore, are properly distinguishable, and not the same. I add, there is something in the Saints, which becomes *present* with the Lord, upon their being *absent* from the Body and while they are so. *Willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.* That must be the Soul, in Distinction from the Body, for the Body cannot be absent from itself.

2. The Soul is capable of subsisting and acting without the Body. This receives very dear Proof from what the Apostle *Paul*, expresses concerning himself. Who speaks thus: *I knew a Man in Christ above fourteen Years ago (whether in the Body or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a Man (whether in the Body, or out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable Words, which it is not lawful for a Man to utter.*

From hence, it is most evident, that, in the Opinion of the Apostle, there was something in him distinct from his Body. For, if he had thought, that there was nothing in him, distinct from his Body, he could never say, whether in the Body, or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell. Because, he must necessarily have concluded, that nothing of him could be out of, or separate from his Body. Not having any Thing distinct therefrom. And it is equally manifest, that, in his Opinion, that which is capable of being separate from the Body, is the Subject of Reason and Knowledge. Which must be the Soul, or our reasonable Nature. It is likewise, as clear, that he thought the Soul capable, not only of subsisting without the Body, but also of exerting itself, in Thought, if out of, or separate from the Body. He could not, therefore, have any Notion of the Soul's sleeping, or becoming inactive, and losing its Consciousness, by its Separation from the Body. That is no other than, *a foolish Chimera* of some *Dreamers*; who sleep with their Eyes open. Whereof, they will be convinced, when once their Eyes are closed by Death.

Again, this is fully proved from his Desire, to *depart and be with Christ*, which, he says, *is far better.* For, sinking into a State of Slumber, and Inactivity, he would never have preferred, unto his present Enjoyment of Communion, with a dear Redeemer, which afforded him, a Pleasure, that far over-balanced all his present

Sufferings, great as they were. Besides, the Existence and Activity of the Soul, after Death, is confirmed, by the Declaration, of our Saviour, to the penitent Thief, on the Cross. *I say unto thee, this Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.* Slumbering in the Grave, is not being with Christ in Paradise, surely. The Soul, therefore, does not cease to exist, or act, when the Body is dead. It continues to exist, and retains its Activity, after Death. Once more, *the Spirits of just Men are made perfect:* Who are deceased. If, therefore, Perfection does not consist, in Loss of Consciousness, and in Insensibility, we cannot reasonably think, that the Souls of good Men, become unconscious, upon Death. This leads me to observe,

3. That the Souls of the pious, will be in a happy State, immediately after Death. As they will continue to exist, and remain active, they will certainly be happy. This cannot be doubted of, if Happiness consists, *in being present with the Lord.* *In whole Presence* is fulness of Joy. If Felicity consists *in being with Christ.* If to be *with him, in Paradise,* is Happiness, which, who can scruple? If *to be made perfect,* is to become happy. Which surely none will deny. The Saints, will not only, continue to exist, and remain active, while their Bodies are in the silent Grave; but they will be in a State of consummate Bliss. *Blessed are the Dead, who die in the Lord.* It is this, raises the Minds of sanctified Persons, above the Fear of Death, and even renders it desirable to them.

(1.) The Souls of departed Saints, are absolutely free from Sin. During their Abode in this mortal State, they are Subjects of *Flesh,* as well as *Spirit.* *Evil* is ever *present* with them, as an *active Principle,* opposing the Actings of the spiritual Principle, which is in them. By it, they are indisposed unto, and greatly interrupted, in Duties of the most solemn Nature. It often mars their best Meditations, wherein, they enjoy the highest Satisfaction. Through its Presence and Activity, their Minds, are frequently diverted from attending, in a proper Manner, to the Object of their devotional Acts, even in the solemn Duty of Prayer. All their religious Services are defiled, by this corrupt Fountain and Spring of Action, which is in them. From hence, arise sinful Thoughts, disorderly Desires, and evil Tendencies, in the Affections, even of the *best.* This *Plague of the Heart,* is *the Plague of the Believer's Life.* And it is the continual Occasion of inexpressible Vexation, and Grief, unto every Saint in this World. But immediately upon Death, the Souls of the pious, are freed from all those depraved Habits, which have Being in them here, they are at once delivered from that Law of Sin, which now disturbs, and perplexes, them, above Measure. As the Bodies of the Saints, who shall *remain, and be alive, at the Coming of Christ,* will be, in an instantaneous Manner, *changed,* and freed from those

corrupt Qualities, which attend them, by the Exertion of his Power: So the Soul's of Believers, in an instant Manner, immediately upon Death, are absolutely freed from all those evil Habits, which are now in them, by the Exertion of the Power of Christ. The former will be effected, in a *Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye*. And so is the latter. This Thought, I met with in that excellent Divine, Dr. *Goodwin*, long since. And it hath often afforded me much Pleasure. It may greatly serve to help our Faith, concerning the immediate Expulsion of Sin, out of our Souls, in their Separation, from our Bodies, by Death. This complete Deliverance from Sin, is most desirable to every sanctified Person, and the Hope of it, yields some Relief, to the Saints, while they groan, under the heavy Weight of that *Body of Death*, which depresses them.

(2.) Grace will be perfected. That good Work, which is begun in Believers, is not imperfect, in its Nature; for God cannot be the Author of any Thing, which is imperfect, in its Kind. That gracious Principle, whereof the Saints are the happy Subjects, is a *good*, and a *perfect Gift, which cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights*. But it is not yet complete in its Degrees. And it is at present liable to an Abatement, in the Vigor of its Actings. It suffers a Decline at one Time, or another, in most, if not, in all the Saints for a Season, through various Causes. Faith becomes weak, Hope is shaken, and Love to Christ and heavenly Things, grows Chill. Hereafter, no Imperfection will attend the Saints in their Knowledge, or Love to the infinitely glorious Objects, which they will view, with a Delight not at present to be conceived of by us. In this State, *we know but in Part: When that which is perfect is come, that which, is in Part shall be done away. Here we see thro' a Glass darkly; hereafter, we shall see Face to Face*. And Love will then be raised to its highest Pitch, unto God and a dear Redeemer. Then the gracious Design of God, in the Choice of our Persons, will be fully accomplished, in us. Who chose us, that *we might be holy and without Blame, before him, in Love*. Christ will present us *Faultless, before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy*. On his own Part, on the Part of his Father, unto whom he will present us, and on ours. The Happiness of the future grate, therefore, will be consummate. As we shall have no Sin dwelling in us, which now we have. So, not the least Languor, will ever attend the holy Acting of our perfected Minds. But the Vigor of Grace will eternally be the same, without Abatement, or any Decline.

(3.) The Saints will enjoy most near, uninterrupted, and endless Communion with the Father, Son, and blessed Spirit. Here they enjoy Fellowship, with the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ. The Satisfaction and Pleasure attending which, nothing can possibly

equal. But alas! what Interruptions, do now take Place therein, to the unspeakable Grief of pious Souls, whole chief Joy, consists in Communion with God. In the heavenly State they will have clear Views of the Love of the Divine Father, in its adoreable Properties, Of the Designs and Actings thereof, in their Favour. Even from Everlasting. And of those amazing Acts of Grace and Mercy, which he put forth in Time, in order to bring them unto the Fruition of himself. The Gift of his Son to and for them. And the Gift of his Spirit unto them, to regenerate, sanctify, and safely to conduct them, unto that blissful State, they will constantly contemplate upon, and adore, his sovereign Goodness, which so conspicuously shines forth, therein. And, this Fellowship, with the Father, will never, thro' any Cause whatever, be interrupted, nor shall it ever have an End.

Again, they will enjoy Communion with Christ. His Glory they will have clear, and steady Prospects of. For it is *his Will, that they may be with him, where he is, that they may behold the Glory, which the Father bath given him.* A Sense of his unparalleled Love to them, will perpetually possess their Souls. They will always be employed in contemplating on, those unequalled Acts of Goodness and Compassion, which he exerted, in order to their Pardon, Justification, and eternal Salvation. And no Breach will ever be made upon this Fellowship, with their dear Saviour. Nor shall a Period ever be put unto it. As their Communion with Christ, will be most intimate, it will never be interrupted, nor have an End.

Further, they shall also enjoy Communion with the blessed Spirit, who is the Author of their Regeneration, and Sanctification, and who safely conducts them, through this mortal State. Their Views of that Part, which he bears, in the Oeconomy of their Salvation, will then, be most clear, distinct, and heady. He is the Glorifier of Christ, and the Sanctifier of his Church. He forms us for Heaven: Or works a Meetness in us to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints, in Light. He instructs us in the Knowledge of heavenly Things, as a *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation.* Gives us an Acquaintance with ourselves. Shews us the absolute Necessity of an Interest, in Christ. Discovers to us his Suitableness and Ability, as a Saviour. Encourages us to look to him, and by his Aid, we make Application unto him, to be saved by him. In Temptations, he succours us, in Distress he graciously comforts us. Under Afflictions, he supports us. In Darkness, he enlightens us. Under Deadness, he quickens us. And when we backslide, he mercifully convinces us of our Folly, and restores unto us, those spiritual Consolations, which we were deprived of thereby. In a word, he is efficiently, our Life, Light, Strength, and all our Consolation. In Heaven the Saints will held the most near and intimate Communion with him, in his Love, and in all

his Acts of infinite Compassion, towards them, in their dangerous Passage, through this militant State. Unto whole kind Care, and Protection, we owe our Safety. Now, the Saints in the future State, will constantly enjoy a Sense of his Love to their Persons, which is the Cause of. his beginning carrying on, and perfecting that good Work in them, which is their Meetness, for Heaven. And this their Fellowship, with him, will be endless. This is a most blessed State indeed! All Believers have a present Title to it, and certainly shall be introduced into it. Faith being acted on it, animates them to *fight the good Fight*, and to endure present Afflictions, with Patience, Courage, and Fortitude.

Several Things are predicated concerning this State. It is a *Building of God* — *Not made with Hands* — *Its eternal in the Heavens*,

1. This State is a *Building of God*. The Design, and Erection of it, is wholly his. And it is the Effect of his sovereign and immense Love. And the Contrivance of his infinite Wisdom.

(1.) He removes all Impediments, which lye in the Way of our coming to the Enjoyment thereof. Sin would have proved an eternal Bar to our Happiness, had not God, in infinite Wisdom, and Mercy, provided for its Removal. Blessed be his Name, he hath effectually done this for us. For, *He hath made Christ, to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin. Laid our Iniquities upon him. And he bore them in his own Body on the Tree.* In bearing them, he bore them away. *Once in the End of the World, he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself* The Messiah who was *cut off; but not for himself, finished Transgression, and made an End of Sin. He removed our Transgressions from us, as far as the East is from the West.* So that, this Obstruction to our Happiness, is entirely taken away. Our Guilt being expiated, by the Death of Christ, it can be no Obstacle, to our Fruition of future Felicity. Sin, which is pardoned, cannot hinder our becoming happy. This Impediment is effectually removed, by the Grace of God, through the atoning Blood of his Son. *Which cleanseth from all Sin.* Again, He hath fully provided, for the Satisfaction of his violated Laws, which, without a Satisfaction, would not allow of our Happiness. It was the sovereign Determination of God, that his Son should be made under the Law, suffer its Curse, and thereby redeem us from it. That so, that just Constitution, might not have any Thing to object, unto our Admission, into Heaven, taken from our Breach of its Commands.

Farther, Divine Justice could not permit of the Happiness of guilty Men, without its Demands were answered. Sovereign Grace, and infinite Wisdom have provided for this also, in the Atonement of Christ. By his Sufferings and Death, full Satisfaction is made, to

infinite Justice, which was offended, by our Sins. So that, it can have nothing to object, to our Enjoyment of future Blessedness. But, on this Foundation, the Grace and Justice of God, concur and unite, in raising us unto that State of Dignity and Glory, which we shall possess, in the immediate Presence of God. *Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.* There is a perfect Harmony, between sovereign Goodness, and inflexible Justice, in the Design of bringing us to Heaven, through the Blood and Righteousness of Christ

Once more, effectual Provision is made for the Removal of Sin, out of our Souls. Which is absolutely necessary to the blissful Enjoyment of God. Almighty Grace takes away the Dominion of Sin, by implanting a holy Principle, in the Heart, and it will entirely expel Evil out of the Minds of the Saints, at Death, in order to their Admission into the immediate Presence of their heavenly Father.

(2.) A Right and Title to future Glory is of God. Right to eternal Blessedness, arises from Adoption. For, *if we are Children, then we are Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ.* The Act of God, by which, we were constituted Sons, was sovereign, and it is to *the Praise of the Glory of his Grace.* Again, the Saints have a *legal Title to Heaven, by Virtue of the Righteousness of Christ, which is a Gift, and a Gift by Grace.* And that Righteousness, is *properly deserving of infinite Good, by Reason of the infinite Dignity of the Person of Christ.* As Sin is properly deserving of the Loss of infinite Good, because of the Infinity of the Object, against whom it is committed. *That being justified by his Grace we might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life* (Titus 3:7.). And, therefore *whom God justifies, them he also glorifies.* For Justification, entitles us, unto Glorification. The former Right to the heavenly State, does not supersede the latter, or render it unnecessary. Neither, are they inconsistent. The former Right, is founded, in absolute Sovereignty, without Respect to Justice: The latter, must also be attributed to sovereign Grace, as to the Appointment of Christ's Righteousness to be ours, wherein we are Justified: But Divine Justice assigns the Reward of eternal Life, unto the Obedience of Christ, as what is justly due to it; because of the infinitely intrinsic Value of it, arising from the infinite Greatness of his Person. This is a mighty Support to the Faith of the Saints, and is a precious Ground of *strong Consolation* to them: When they view how sovereign Grace, and infinite Justice, are at once, and equally displayed, in their Title to everlasting Life.

(3.) God in infinite Goodness prepares us for the Enjoyment of future Glory. it is impossible, that an unsanctified Person should possess the Glory of Heaven. *Without Holiness, no Man shall see*

the Lord. A Mind that is *carnal*, is incapable of holding Fellowship with God. Of viewing with the least Satisfaction, the Objects, which are beheld with blissful Adoration, in the heavenly State. Neither, will the Soul, destitute of Holiness, ever be disposed unto that pure Service, wherein, glorified Saints, are perpetually employed. And, therefore, Regeneration, is absolutely necessary for the Fruition of God. And that Preparative for Heaven, he is the Author of. *Giving Thanks alway to the Father, who hath made us meet, to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in our Lord Jesus Christ, who, of his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from the Dead. To an Inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you. This is, his calling us unto his eternal Glory. In the Character of the God of all Grace.*

(4.) He preserves the Saints until their Arrival unto this State of Blessedness. Divine Grace maintains the good Work, which is begun in them. Infinite Wisdom directs them. Immense Mercy shields them. Everlasting Strength sustains them. In all their Exigences they are supplied, out of those inexhaustible Treasures of Grace, which are laid up, for that Purpose, in the Covenant of Grace. Thus, God is their Director, Upholder, liberal Benefactor, and constant Preserver, in this mortal, militant, and dangerous State. *Who are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation. Now unto him, that is able to keep you from falling.* His Love to their Persons, his Purposes about them, and his precious Promises made unto them, may justly beget, and keep up, in their Minds, a firm Persuasion, of a safe Conduct, in all the *Mazes* of Temptations', Distresses, Dangers, and Difficulties, through which they pass, in their travelling towards the heavenly World.

(5.) God is the Fountain and Object of future Glory. He is the Spring, of eternal Life, whereof they will be the happy. Subjects hereafter. For, their *Life is hid with Christ in God.* Their perfect Purity is from him. And his Grace will render them for ever *impeccable*: Or raise them above a Possibility of Sinning for evermore. His infinite Goodness, will be a never- failing Source, of refined, ineffable, and inconceivable Joys, when they shall be admitted into his immediate Presence. *Where is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand, are Pleasures for ever- more.* Thus, God will be the Fountain of future Happiness, subjectively considered. And he will be their Glory, objectively considered. For their future Felicity will consist, in Beholding, in a perfect Manner, the infinitely glorious Perfections of God, as they are displayed, in the Design, and Accomplishment of their Salvation, by the Incarnation, Obedience, Sufferings, and Death of his Son. And, in viewing the

holy Properties of his Nature, as they shine forth, through the Person of Christ. So that, God will eternally be the Happiness of the Saints, *subjectively*, and *objectively* considered. This *Building*, therefore, where into, Believers enter, at Death, is the *Building of God*.

2. It is *not made with Hands*. This negative Phrase, plainly imports, that human Wisdom, Will, and Power, have no causal Influence into it. A created Understanding could never have devised it. The Will of a Creature cannot have any effective Influence into it. Finite Power could not possibly acquire it.

(1.) None could remove the Impediments, which lay in the Way of its Enjoyment. No Creature whatever could atone for our Guilt, and bear it away. That is such a Load, which would have pressed down a mere Creature, into the *lowest Hell*. And no Merit can possibly attend the Sufferings of a mere Creature, how great soever. Guilt, therefore, as to us, must be eternally *inexpiable*. No Criminal can satisfy the Divine Law, which he hath violated, for his Breach thereof. Its Curse, which Sin demerits, is insupportable, in its Weight, by the Transgressor. And no Man is able to answer the Demands of infinite Justice, which is offended by his Sins. *None*, therefore, *can redeem his Soul, and give to God a Ransomed for it*. No Man is able to shake off the Dominion of sin, or free himself from its reigning Power. Nor, can any Saint expel, those corrupt Habits, whereof his Mind is the Subject. Lusts are so deeply rooted in their Hearts, that they cannot possibly eradicate them. The Removal of the Hinderances, and Obstructions, to our future Happiness, is impossible to us all, and every one. Infinite Wisdom, Grace, and Power alone could do this for us. Blessed be God, he hath, and will, fully effect it, in our Favour.

(2.) No Man is able to acquire a Right to future Happiness. In order to that, the Law, must be perfectly obeyed. For, without complete Obedience, unto its righteous Precepts, it will not allow of the Enjoyment of Life. The Want of such Obedience, subjects us, to Condemnation, and Death. As, therefore, we are all depraved, and enfeebled, in our Powers, it is impossible to every Man, to keep the holy Law of God, so as to obtain a Title to Happiness, according to that just Constitution. *The Law is weak, through the Flesh*. And no *Law is given, which can give Life*.

(3.) We cannot prepare ourselves, for the Enjoyment of the heavenly State. Naturally, we are *under the Dominion of Sin*. *Are dead in Trespasses, and Sins*. *Our Minds are alienated from the Life of God*. And, *Enmity itself, against him*, And, therefore, we are absolutely unable to put forth holy Acts, whereby, holy Habits, might be acquired. A real *Preparative*, or *Meetness*, for the Fruition of God, is

internal Holiness, whereof, every Man is naturally destitute. And, not having a Spring of spiritual Action, no spiritual Acts, can be exerted, by us, previous unto the Production of such a Principle in our Hearts, by the Grace of God. Consequently, no Man is able, to prepare himself for the future State of Glory.

(4.) It is not in our Power to preserve ourselves, unto that happy State. We are the Subjects of such Lusts, which would, inevitably ruin us, if left to oppose them, in our own Strength. Satan, the unwearied Enemy of our Souls, we are unable to resist, and overcome, in his ensnaring Temptations, violent Oppositions, and furious Assaults, in ourselves. The World, in its Allurements, Distresses, or in its Enmity against us, would prove our Ruin, by engaging our Affections, by sinking us in Sorrow, or, by raising our Fears, unto an excessive Pitch.

3. This State is *eternal in the Heavens*. The Blessedness and Glory of the Saints, hereafter, will have no End. As, no Change can possibly take Place in it: So, no Period will be put unto it. And, it will be in the Heavens. In the immediate Presence of God. Where Jesus Christ, as Man, will eternally be.

III. *The Apostle knew, that there is a future House, or Building, and that, he had a Title to it.* It was not a Conjecture, or probable Opinion only. But a certain Knowledge, and Persuasion thereof, which he had.

1. He had a certain Knowledge, that there is such a State of Felicity. There are undoubted Evidences of it, in the Christian Revelation. The Divine Promise of eternal Life. The Resurrection of Christ from the Dead: His Entrance into Heaven, as the Fore-runner of his People. And the Promise of his second Appearance; in order to their final and complete Salvation, are incontestable Proofs, of that State of consummate Bliss. *Life and Immortality, are brought to Light, by the Gospel.*

2. The Apostle knew, that he had a Title to the future State of Glory. It was not a Conjecture, or probable Opinion, which he entertained, concerning his Right to Heaven; but he had a certain Knowledge, and Persuasion of it. And common Christians, may also arrive unto such a Knowledge, and Persuasion: By the following Mediums.

(1.) *A Meetness* for its Enjoyment, is a certain Evidence of a Title to it. That *Meetness* is a holy, spiritual Principle in the Soul, which, in its Nature, is suited to heavenly Things. The Understanding discerns their Excellency and Glory. The Will makes Choice of them. And the Affections tend and adhere unto them: Upon this Principle being produced, in the Heart. An Approbation of the heavenly State, is a

sure Evidence of a Right unto it. They are but few, who have a real Liking of Heaven. No Man, who is unmeet for it, in Reality, desires to enjoy it. All those in whom, God works this Meetness for the Fruition of his eternal Glory, have an unalienable Title to it, and shall certainly possess it. For, He hath wrought them for this self same Thing. Better Evidence, of a Right to Heaven, and of the certain Enjoyment of it, need not be desired, than a present Delight in, and a holy Adoration of heavenly Things, is.

(2.) This may be known by the *First Fruits* of it. Which the Graces, Consolations, and Joys of the holy Spirit are. *Not only they, but ourselves also, who have the, First-Fruits of the Spirit; even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body, (Romans 8:23.)* From Fore-Views, and Fore-Tasts, by Faith, of heavenly Objects, and celestial Pleasures, the Saints may safely conclude upon their Title to the future State of Blessedness.

(3.) The *Earnest* of Heaven is a *sure Evidence* of a Right unto it. That *Earnest is the holy Spirit of Promise, by whom Believers are sealed (Ephesians 1:13, 14.)* If *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into our Hearts, to convince us of Sin, our Misery, and Helplessness: And to reveal Christ to us, as a suitable Saviour: And he hath directed us to flee to him for Refuge: If under his gracious Influence, we have ventured upon Christ, for Life and Salvation, and we repose our entire Trust in him, for Pardon, Peace, Acceptance with God, Holiness, and eternal Life. We may from thence, draw this Conclusion, without the least Fear of being mistaken, in this important Matter, that the holy Spirit is in us, as an Earnest of the heavenly Inheritance. And, that we shall most assuredly enjoy it.*

4. By the *Witness* of the Spirit we may obtain this Knowledge and Persuasion. *The Spirit himself beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God (Romans 8:16.)* He doth this, by a powerful Application of Divine Promises, by *shedding abroad the Love of God, into our Hearts, and by enabling us, to discern that good Work, which he hath begun in us, as an Effect of everlasting Love to our Persons, and as the Result of our Ordination to everlasting Life.*

Thus, I have endeavoured, according to the Desire, of my very worthy deceased Brother, to explain to you, the Words, which he chose, for the Subject of his Funeral Discourse. It may now, be expected, that I should give a Character of him. And a beautiful Representation, might have been given of him. But I must inform you, that he laid an Injunction upon me, not to enlarge on his Character. And, that he expressed a Dislike of bestowing

Encomiums, on the Dead. However, a few Words, concerning him, may surely be allowed. He was *meeke, humble*, and modest, perhaps, too modest, wise and learned, Diligent in Study, there is Reason to think, to the Prejudice of his Constitution. He had an enlarged Acquaintance, with the evangelical Scheme, and a spiritual Savour of the Truths of the Gospel. In his last, long Illness, which issued in his Death, he was remarkably favoured, with the gracious Presence of God, and filled with a holy Adoration of sovereign Grace and Mercy. Those glorious Truths, which in the Course of his Ministry, he recommended to you, were the Matter, of his Support, Consolation and unspeakable Joy, in the Views, of his Dissolution.

An Address to his surviving Relations; on this *sad* Occasion, is a Subject, so very *tender*, and *delicate*, that I think, I may be excused, if I decline it. May the Lord sanctify, this mournful Providence, unto them, support them under it, and be their Guide through Life!

One Thing, I must: beg Leave to acquaint you, the Members of this Church, with. It is this, your worthy deceased Pastor, was much concerned for your future Welfare, as a Community. And desired me to recommend it to you, to endeavour, by all possible Means, to cultivate Love, Christian Friendship, and Harmony, among yourselves. Which will be very much conducive to your mutual Advantage. *Study, therefore, the Things, which make for Peace, whereby one may edify another.* May the Lord help you, to deny yourselves, and cordially to unite, in an Endeavour, to promote his Glory, and the Edification of one another! I desire, *to commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance, among them, that are sanctified*

SERMON 31

GRACE, PROVED TO BE AT THE SOVEREIGN DISPOSAL OF GOD

IN A DISCOURSE PREACHED *JULY 19, 1760*, AT THE
REVEREND MR. BURFORD'S MEETING, IN A MONTHLY
EXERCISE OF PRAYER, WITH A SERMON.

Published at the Request of the Church.

DEUTERONOMY 29:4.

“Yet the Lord hath not given you an Heart to perceive, Eyes to see,
and Ears to hear unto this Day.”

MOSES observes to the People of *Israel*, that they had beheld the miraculous Works, which God had wrought, in a way of Vengeance on their Enemies, and in a way of Favour towards them, in order to their Deliverance out of *Egyptian* Bondage. How he had conducted, supplied, and defended them in the Wilderness in a miraculous manner. Though they had seen all those *Signs, and great Miracles, yet the Lord had not given them an Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, and Ears to hear unto this Day.*

In discoursing on the Text, I propose to shew,

I. That these Phrases, *an Heart to perceive, etc.* mean an Ability to discern in a spiritual manner, receive and delight in spiritual Things, because of their Excellency and Glory. And what that Ability is.

II. I would attempt to prove that there is such an Ability in Believers.

III. That it cannot be acquired.

IV. That it is the Gift of God.

V. That he gives it to some and not to others, according to his sovereign Pleasure.

I. *These Phrases, an Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, mean an Ability, in a spiritual manner, to discern, receive, and delight in spiritual Things, because of their Excellency and Glory.* Such a Perception, Embracement of, and Pleasure in heavenly Things, are intended, as issue in the Glory of God, and the Salvation of the Soul. Whereof natural Reason is incapable, how much soever it may be cultivated and improved. This Ability, is not a Capacity to understand the Import of the Language of Scripture, concerning the most mysterious Doctrines which it contains. Such as

the Doctrine of the Trinity; of the Incarnation of Christ; the Union of the Divine and human Natures, in his Person; of Regeneration; and of other sublime Truths.

Nor is it a Power to discern the Dependence, Connection and Harmony, of evangelical Doctrines. Men in common are the Subjects of an Ability for the former, and of a Capacity for the latter; otherwise they could not be required to believe the Verity of those Doctrines, which are supernaturally revealed. The Reason why Men do not believe the Truths of the Gospel, is not the want of an Ability to understand the Language of Scripture, or of a Capacity to discern the Dependence, Connection and Agreement of evangelical Principles: But the Cause thereof is, they disapprove of them, and account them to be the very Reverse of what they are in fact. They are the Wisdom of God; but in the Esteem of natural Men, they are Folly, and therefore, unfit to be believed and embraced. On the contrary, they think they are to be despised and rejected, as irrational and absurd. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, to him they are Foolishness, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* He is a spiritual Man, who judges, or discerns spiritual Things themselves, and consequently, he must be possessed of a spiritual Ability. And that Ability is, a holy supernatural Principle, whereof the whole Soul is the subject, and it is permanent and abiding therein. From that Principle, all holy, spiritual Acts spring.

II. *I would attempt to prove the Being of such a Principle in Believers.* And I shall argue from various Modes of Expression, relating to its Production: And from the Representation given of it, and Acts, which are ascribed unto it.

1. I will argue from various Modes of Expression, relating to its Production.

(1.) It is said to be born, or ingenerated. *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh: That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit* (John 3:6.). *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World* (1 John 5:4.). *Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man; but of God. The Wind bloweth, where it listeth, thou hearest the Sound thereof; but canst not tell from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit* (John 3:3.). No Acts, internal or external, can with any Propriety, be said to be born. But a Principle, which is a Spring of Action, may be said to be born, for it hath proper Subsistence in him, in whom it is produced.

(2.) It is a Vivification, or an Infusion of Life into Men, who are dead in Sin. *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespass*

and Sins (Ephesians 2:1.). Life is a vital Principle. Death is no other than a Privation, or loss of a living Principle. And therefore, quickening us, when dead in Sin, must mean, the Communication of a Principle of Life. And, consequently, there is, in Believers, a vital, holy, and supernatural Principle, from which proceed all their Acts of a holy spiritual Nature.

(3.) This Work is a Creation. *We are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works* (Ver. 10.). By Reason hereof, the Saints are denominated new Creatures: *If any Man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new Creature*. Acts are not created, they flow from that which previously exists. Creation is giving Being to something, which had not Existence before. And, therefore, this must mean the Production of a Principle in the Mind, which it was not the Subject of until this Time. From hence, it is evident, that there is in Believers, a holy supernatural Principle, which is a Spring of holy, spiritual, and supernatural Acts.

(4.) It is giving a new Heart. *A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you* (Ezekiel 36:25). Acts cannot be denominated the Heart; but a Principle may, which is feared in the Heart; and the Heart is properly said to be good, or evil, as that Principle, whereof it is the Subject is good, or evil. The new Heart, which God gives, is certainly holy and good, and that is not Acts; but it is a Principle from which holy Acts take their rise. These Things, I think, very clearly prove the Being of a holy, supernatural Principle in Believers.

2. I will argue from the Representation given of it, and the Acts, which are ascribed unto it.

(1.) It is declared to be Spirit. *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*. They are opposites, and contrary in their Nature. The Flesh is not Acts; but a Spring of Actions, which are evil. And its opposite, the Spirit, is not Acts; but a Spring of Actions, which are holy and spiritual. And, therefore, there is, in the Saints, a holy supernatural Principle.

(2.) It is an *Image*. Actions are not an Image; but a Principle is. This is an *heavenly Image*. *But we all with open Face beholding, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory* (2 Corinthians 3:18.). It is the Image and Likeness of God. *For after God it is created in Righteousness and true Holiness* (Ephesians 4:24.). *After the Image of Him that created him* (Colossians 3:10.). Acts internal, or external, with no Propriety, can be said to be an Image, for they are transient and passing. An Image is not so. Hence we may conclude, that Believers, are the happy

Subjects of a Principle, which is the Image and Likeness of God. And that Principle is holy, spiritual and supernatural.

(3.) It is a new Man, the contrary of the old Man. *And put ye on the new Man. And have put on the new Man.* The old Man is not Acts, either internal or external; but is a corrupt Principle, from which unholy Actions flow: And the new Man, as not Acts, either internal, or external; but a pure Principle, from which arise holy, spiritual Actions. As the former is a Principle, so is the latter, For, they are direct opposites. And therefore, there is in Believers, a holy, supernatural Principle.

(4.) It is called a Law of the Mind, and is the opposite of a Law, which is in the Members. *I see another Law in my Members, warring against the Law of my Mind.* The former Law, is not Acts, neither is the latter Law, Acts. Each is a Principle from which Acts proceed. The Law in the Members, is an evil Principle. The Law of the Mind, is a good Principle. Unholy Actions flow from the former, and holy Actions from the latter. This is, I think, a full Evidence, that there is, in Believers, a holy, supernatural Principle.

(5.) It is represented as a Nature. *That by these ye might be Partakers of the divine Nature* (2 Peter 1:4.). By which must be intended, a holy, heavenly Principle. For, Acts internal, or external, are not a Nature. Spiritual and heavenly Acts, spring from this Nature, whereof the Saints are made Partakers. But that Nature they are not, nor can be. And, therefore, there is, in Believers, a holy, supernatural Principle. For, such that must be, which is denominated, the divine Nature. Acts it cannot be, it, therefore, must be a Principle.

The Truth of this important Point, will farther, appear, by taking into Consideration, those various Acts, which are ascribed unto it. And in general, lusting against the Flesh is attributed unto it. *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh* (Galatians 5:17.). This is very comprehensive. For it comprises all the holy Actings of the Mind, in opposition to the Dictates and Motions of the Flesh. It is highly improper, to ascribe Acts to Acts. For Acts do not flow out of Acts. They spring from a Principle. An evil Principle, if the Acts are evil: A good Principle, if the Acts are good and holy. It cannot reasonably be thought, that the Flesh, is a Principle, from which evil Actions arise, and that the Spirit is not a Principle, from which holy Acts take their Rise in the Saints. If the Flesh is a Principle of Action, so is the Spirit. And therefore, there is, in Believers, a holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle. There are particular Acts ascribed unto it, *viz. Consenting to the Law, that it is good. Delighting in it. And serving of it. I delight in the Law of God,*

after the inner Man (Romans 7.). So then with my Mind, I myself serve the Law of God: But with the Flesh the Law of Sin. And the same Apostle observes, that *the Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith* (Galatians 5:22.); There is, therefore, in Believers, a holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle, from which all the holy and gracious Actings of their Souls do proceed. This Principle, I have said, is permanent and abiding. That it is so, maybe concluded from the End of God, in creating, or infusing of it. That End was the everlasting Enjoyment of himself. *Blessed be the God and Father of Lord Jesus Christ, of his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you* (1 Peter 1:3, 4.). This Work upon Men, is *calling them to his eternal Glory* (1 Peter 5:10.). And the Apostle Paul, speaking of the State of future Blessedness, says, *He that hath wrought us for this self- same Thing is God* (2 Corinthians 5:5.). Since God, in the Creation, or Infusion of this Principle, which is our Meetness to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, really intended that we should enjoy Himself hereafter, it is impossible, that this Principle should ever become extinct. For, in that Care, He would be disappointed of His End, in its Creation, or Infusion. And it is to be observed, that the most vigorous Actings of Grace, in the Saints, expel not the Flesh, and the most violent Actings of the Flesh in them, expel not the Spirit. This is evident in *David* and *Peter*. *David*, in a very extraordinary manner, acted Grace, as we are informed, *2 Samuel 7:18.* to the End of the Chapter. His Soul was full of holy Adoration, steady Faith, and flaming Love, and Affection to God. *Is this the manner of Men? What can thy Servant David say more! Therefore have found in mine Heart to pray this Prayer unto thee.* Did those extraordinary Actings of Grace expel, the Flesh? No such Thing. That kept its Possession in the Soul of this holy Man. And, what is enough to make one tremble, soon after this, he acted the very worst Part, that he ever did act, through the whole Course of his Life: So far was Sin from being expelled out of him. An Account is given of the evil Part he did act, in the eleventh Chapter of the same Book. I need not name it, you well know what it was. On the other Hand, the violent Actings of the Flesh in *Peter*, in the Denial of Christ, with very dreadful Aggravations, did not expel the Spirit. Grace did not become extinct in him. His Faith did not fail thereby. Christ had prayed, that it might not. He turned, and looked upon *Peter*, with a Look of Reproof, and Love, which struck him with Awe, and wrought him up to a high degree of evangelical Repentance, for his great Offence. Hence, I think, it is clear, that as the most eminent Actings of Grace expel not

Sin: So the worst Actings of Sin, expel not Grace. That is a permanent, abiding Principle in the Soul, which nothing can possibly eradicate. The End of God, in its Production, above mentioned, will eternally secure the Continuance of its Being in the Heart, against all Opposition whatsoever.*

III. *This holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle cannot, be acquired.* No holy Acts can be exerted, in a Mind destitute of Holiness. Such as Faith, Repentance, and evangelical Obedience. Hence our Lord says; *No Man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him* (John 6:44.). And the Apostle affirms that *the carnal Mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be* (Romans 8:7.); and *that, without Faith, it is impossible to please God* (Hebrews 11:6). There are many Professors; who cannot bear to hear it asserted, that Men unregenerate, are incapable to act a Part, pleasing and acceptable to God. Let such Persons speak out, and tell us whether it is lawful for us to make use of, and explain these Texts in our Bibles, or not. There is Reason to think, that if the Lord Jesus Christ was now upon Earth, and they were to hear Him express Himself, as He did, in relation to this Subject, they would censure Him for it. Their Censuring of us for asserting this Inability of unregenerate Men, gives us no other Concern, than what arises from this Consideration, that through others, they censure our blessed Lord Himself, and His Apostles, who spake, as they were dictated by the Spirit of Christ. Men cannot be assisted to acquire this Principle of Holiness, and spiritual Life. He who is dead cannot be enabled to put forth vital Acts. And he who is blind, that is to say, is destitute of a visive Faculty, cannot be helped to see. Natural Men are dead, destitute of a Principle of spiritual Life, and of a spiritual visive Faculty, and therefore, they cannot be enabled to act, or to see in a spiritual Manner.

It is unreasonable to think, that the Mind, as carnal, can be influenced unto holy Acts. The Flesh is only and entirely engaged in the Service of Sin. And it perpetually lusteth against the Spirit in Believers. It concurs not with the gracious Principle, in the Saints, in any of its Actings; but ever opposes it. Hence there is a Tincture of Evil in all the holy Actings of their Minds, and in all the Duties which they perform. By reason of the perpetual Presence of Evil in them, they sin in Meditation, Prayer, Reading, Hearing, and in every other religious Exercise. The sad Experience of Believers, is a standing Evidence of the Truth thereof. How then, can it be supposed, that those, who only have Flesh in them, may be excited to exert holy Acts, in order to acquire a holy Principle? If the Flesh in unregenerate Men may be enabled to put forth holy Acts: Surely it may be brought to concur with the Spirit, in its Acts, in the

Regenerate; but that is false, both Scripture, and the Experience of all the Saints testify. And, therefore, it is impossible, that it should be enabled by any Aids whatsoever, to act in a holy, spiritual Manner. And, consequently, no Man, who is in the Flesh, or in an unregenerate State, can be enabled to exert holy Acts, whereby a holy Principle may be acquired. I would speak it with Reverence, and I hope you will hear it with Reverence; *Omnipotence itself cannot cause Enmity to Love.* For, that implies a Contradiction. And as the carnal Mind is Enmity itself against God, it is absolutely impossible to cause it to love Him. In our depraved Nature, there is nothing but a mere passive Capacity to receive a holy, spiritual. Principle from God, in a way of Creation, or Infusion. That is all which we can with Truth, say of ourselves, as we are carnal and corrupt. The Will of the Flesh does not, it cannot co-operate with the Grace of God, in our Regeneration. For, that would be acting contrary to its Nature. And, therefore, it cannot, even by divine Influence, be caused to act spiritually. And, consequently, it is impossible, that Men, who are destitute of a Principle of Holiness, should be enabled to acquire such a Principle. *It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth; but of God that sheweth Mercy.*

IV. *This holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle, is the Gift of God. He is the sole Author, and efficient Cause of it.* Hence the new Birth is always ascribed to Him. The Saints are said to *be born of God. To be born of the Spirit. Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man; but of God. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh:*

That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. God of his abundant Mercy begets us again. Of his own Will begat He us. This Principle is a good, and perfect Gift, which cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights. With respect to Faith, the Apostle asserts negatively, that it is not of ourselves: And he affirms positively, that it is the Gift Of God. *By Grace are we fared through Faith, that not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God.* And declares to the *Ephesians*, that we are, as Saints, the Workmanship of God. *For we are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.* This Principle, therefore, is a divine Gift, and is not acquired, by those in whom it is. It is so the Gift of God, that the Subjects of it had not, nor could have the least causal Influence in its Production. For this Principle, is not only superior unto, and above all that was in them before, in its Nature; but also, it is absolutely contrary to the natural Disposition of their Minds. And, consequently, it must have been produced in them by divine Grace, without any concurrent Act of their Will therein, or in order thereunto. It is unreasonable to suppose, that one contrary, is

capable of exerting Acts, which tend to the Production of another. Is not the Flesh contrary to the Spirit? It is. And is not the Spirit contrary to the Flesh? It is. And they counter-act one another perpetually. And, therefore, this holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle, must be a divine Gift, in the most full, and absolute Sense. It is a new Life in the Soul, which was dead before. And it is as much the Gift of God, as Life is, which is communicated to a Man, who before, was dead naturally. As a Man who is naturally dead, cannot contribute to the Production of Life in himself: So such who are dead in Sin, can contribute nothing to the Production of a vital Principle of Holiness, in themselves. If God doth not graciously give to them such a Principle, they will eternally remain destitute of it: Or continue dead in Trespasses and Sins for evermore. For, as hath been before observed, they cannot possibly be assisted to acquire it. As a Man naturally dead cannot be enabled to acquire Life: So one who is dead in Sin, cannot be assisted to acquire this new, and heavenly Life.

V. The Lord gives this Ability to some, and not to others, according to His sovereign Pleasure.

God is not under Obligation to communicate Holiness to any sinful Creature. He bestows His Grace upon, or withholds it from fallen Creatures, as He Himself is pleased to determine. But the Exercise of His Sovereignty, in dispensing His Grace, Men cannot bear with. If He will give Grace to some, and not to others, they will *impiously* dare to reproach Him to His Face, on Account thereof, But let them know this, that they must one Day be accountable to Him for it. Men allow one another to do what they please with their own. To bestow their Favours on whom they think proper. On this Person, and not on another. Yet they will not allow that Liberty to their Maker. On the contrary, if He bestows what is absolutely His own, on some, and not on others, they will censure Him for it. Which is most unreasonable Impiety in them. If Grace is not God's own, and at His sovereign Disposal, He hath nothing that is so. For, what Claim, can an unholy Creature have upon God to communicate Holiness to him? If you shall say, that it is fit, convenient, and becoming, that God should bestow Grace upon, or communicate Holiness unto a lapsed Creature, I will prove, that He cannot but give Grace to apostate Spirits, and unto Men universally. If you enquire how. I answer thus: God cannot omit doing what is fit, convenient, and becoming, that He should do it. And, therefore, if it is fit, convenient, and becoming, that He should communicate Holiness to a fallen Creature, he cannot but bestow his Grace upon, or communicate Holiness, unto apostate Spirits and Men universally, Without Distinction, or Difference. The Reason is most clear, which

is this: It is not possible with God, ever to omit doing, what it is fit, proper, and becoming, He should do. As it is impossible with Him to do what is improper, unfit, and unbecoming, that He should do it. So, it is impossible with Him not to do what is fit, proper, and becoming, that He should do it. Since, therefore, He does not bestow His Grace upon, or make all His fallen Creatures Partakers of His Holiness; but some only: It is evident, that the Reason why He bestows His Grace upon some, is not because it was fit, convenient, and becoming, that so He should do; but because such was His sovereign Pleasure, concerning them, He was at full Liberty to dispense Grace to *Paul*, and not to *Pharaoh*: To communicate Holiness to *Peter*, and not to *Judas*. Because, the Communication of Holiness unto, or the Bestowment of Grace upon an unholy Creature, is not due from God, by Reason it is fit, that He should bestow it. And, therefore, to make a sinful Creature holy, by a Communication of Grace and Holiness, is a pure sovereign Act of God; if it is not, no divine Act is such. If it is not free with God, to love, do Good unto; and render eternally happy, guilty and sinful Creatures, or the contrary, as He Himself, pleases to determine, in nothing can His Will be at Liberty, in his Resolutions about them. Our blessed Lord resolves this wholly into the sovereign Pleasure of his divine Father, when He addresses Him thus: *Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, I thank Thee, that Thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.*

When spiritual Things are said to be hid from the Wise and Prudent, by God. The Meaning is not, that He took from them their natural Power of Understanding: Nor, that He did not externally reveal those Things unto them. For they had an external Revelation of them, as well as the Babes. But the Meaning is plainly this: He did not give to them, a Capacity to understand those Things, which He did give to Babes, who were much their Inferiors in natural Knowledge, because such was His Pleasure: And no other Cause can be assigned why heavenly Things were concealed from the former, as to their Nature, and made known to the latter but the sovereign Will of God.

I hope It appears, that Believers are the Subjects of a holy, spiritual, and supernatural Principle. — That this Principle cannot be acquired. — That it is the Gift of God; and that he gives it to some, and not to others, according to His sovereign Pleasure. *Some Observations may now be made.*

Observ. 1. Hence we may easily see, that the Irresistibility of divine Grace, is consistent with our natural Freedom, or the natural Liberty of our Will. For,

(1.) The Will is entirely, passive, in the Infusion, or Creation of this Principle. It is not actively concerned therein. The Will holds itself absolutely inactive in the Infusion of this spiritual Principle. It neither chuses, nor refuses: Neither concurs, nor opposes, in this divine Work upon the Soul. The Nature of the Thing is a full Evidence thereof. For it is the Communication of a Principle of Life to the Soul, which is dead in Sin, and, therefore, it is impossible that the Mind should exert any concurrent, or opposing Act therein. The natural Liberty of the Will, therefore, cannot be infringed, in the Infusion of this Principle.

(2.) By the Creation of this Principle in the Heart, the Will is sanctified, and becomes habitually inclined to Holiness, in Consequence of this Work upon the Soul. And, therefore, as there is a Disposition in the Will of Believers to Acts of sin, as it is corrupt: So, there is a Disposition in their Will to Holiness, as it is sanctified by the Infusion of this Principle. And their Choice of Evil is free, and their Choice of Good is voluntary. For, the Will suffers no Violence, in acting agreeably to the Nature of the evil, or good Disposition, whereof it is the Subject. The effectual Influences of divine Grace upon the Will, as sanctified, are no other, than exciting it to such Acts, as It hath an habitual Disposition unto. It is, therefore, absurd to conceive, that those Influences put any Force upon the Will. It is undoubtedly free, in acting agreeably to the Nature of that holy Disposition, whereof it is the Subject, though it is by the Grace of God stirred up, so to act. There Things are observed, by Doctor *Preston*, in a Latin Oration, which he delivered in the University of *Cambridge*. Which Oration, for its *Conciseness, Perspicuity, and nervous Reasoning*, is most worthy to be read.

Observ. 2. These Things will enable us to set the Doctrine of Election, in a very familiar and unexceptionable Light. For, it is no other, than the eternal Purpose of God, to give Grace to some, which no sinful Mortal upon Earth hath a Right to claim of his Maker. Let us consider this Point calmly and seriously. As we are depraved, we are unmeet for, and indisposed unto present Communion with God, and the Enjoyment of Him, hereafter. And we are so far from being worthy of His Favour, that we are justly deferring of His Vengeance. Is He then obliged to give us Grace to fit us for present Communion with Him, and the everlasting Enjoyment of Himself hereafter? Who will dare to say, that God is under such an Obligation, to any guilty Creature? And if He is not, then he may bestow His Grace upon us, or not, as He Himself pleases. And if the actual Bestowment of Grace upon us, is what God may do, or not do. Surely. He was fully at Liberty, to determine, in his everlasting Counsels, on whom He would bestow His Grace, and on whom He would not. Now, as

Election is God's eternal Purpose to communicate Holiness to those, who are the Objects of that Decree, to fit them for Communion with Him here, and for the Enjoyment of Himself hereafter. This His Determination concerning them, was such an Act, as He was not obliged unto, with respect to any sinful Creature. And, therefore, at was absolutely free with Him, to fix on the Particular Persons, unto whom He would communicate His Grace. It is evident, that Election is no other than such a Purpose in the divine Mind. For, our holy Vocation, is according to God's Purpose. *We are saved, and called with an holy Calling, according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us, Christ, before the World began.* If God in Time, may sanctify whom He pleases, by His Spirit, it must have been absolutely free with Him, to chuse whom He would, to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit. As the Lord in Time, may do that in favour of some, which He is not under the least Obligation to do in favour of any: So he might in Eternity, form such a Resolution, and He actually did. Which. Act was the Election of those Persons, unto a Participation of His Holiness here, in order unto the future Enjoyment of Himself.

Observ. 3. Hence we learn, that it is not acting a pharisaical and legal Part, to look into ourselves, for Holiness, in order to our Consolation, and to give Praise to God, for what He has wrought in us. Some censure so doing, as Pharisaism and Legality, under a high Pretence of Zeal, for the Doctrine of imputed Righteousness. As if considering with ourselves, whether we are the Subjects of Sanctification, was inconsistent with a Dependence on the Righteousness of Christ for Justification. If I am not the Subject of Holiness, what Evidence can I possibly have, that I am the Object of Justification? If indeed, we taught Men, that they are to look into themselves for Holiness, in order to encourage them to trust in the Righteousness of Christ for Acceptance, they would be furnished with Matter of just Objection. But no orthodox found Divine, who understands himself, does so teach. The Reason why I depend upon the Righteousness of Christ is, I see the Necessity of an Interest in it, and the Glory of it, and not because I am made holy by the Grace of God. There are Things most clearly distinct, and easily to be distinguished. And yet, there are some it seems, even among ourselves, and who are Masters, in our *Israel*, who cannot, or will not distinguish them. I hope you will excuse my familiar way of speaking; there things are but A, B, C, in, Divinity. Heart-work is become the Subject of Sneer. And, Dr. *Owen*, whole experimental, and practical Writings, will, I am of Opinion, render his Memory precious, as long as spiritual savoury Christians shall subsist, is charged, with having *much self-righteous* Chaff, on Account of them. This is that sad Pass unto which Things are now arrived with

some amongst us. For my Part, I am free to declare to all the World, that as on one Hand, I care not in the least, by whom, I am represented as an *Antinomian*, for preaching the distinguishing Doctrines of the Gospel: So, on the other, I shall never be concerned by whomsoever I am censured, as a Pharisee and Legalist, for recommending, experimental, and practical Religion. *A late learned Writer militates against the Doctrine I have advanced, in a Discourse on the Words of my Text, and objects, as follows,*

Object. 1. *Nothing can be more inconsistent with the perfect Goodness, and Justice of the divine Being. — Is it the Character of infinite Goodness to injoin Men what is above their Abilities, and not to give them proportionable Strength, if their Duty does, in any particular Circumstances, exceed the Measure of their Capacity? Does it become a Being of perfect Justice to punish Men for not doing what is above their Strength, and what he never intended they should do?* **Answ.** Men's Inability for the Performance of their Duty, is the Consequence of Sin. This arguing, therefore, is no other than this: A Master is neither good, nor just, who blames his Servant for not

performing his Duty, when he is incapable of it, though his being so, is the

Effect of a Debauch, or Intemperance. This reasoning, though often used, as below Men of Strife and Learning.

Object. 2. *It is no less disagreeable to the Kindness, which God had shewn this People, and to the whole Course of his Providence towards them, than it is to his own Perfections.*

Answ. Arguing from the Goodness of God, towards that People, in the Course of his Providence, to prove an Intention in Him, to make them holy and eternally happy, is inconclusive and impertinent. And His giving them excellent Laws, is no Proof, that He gave them an Ability to yield spiritual Obedience to His Commands.

Object. 3. *This Sense will not agree with the End of Moses in speaking to them, nor with the other Parts of his Discourse. His Design manifestly was to move them to a serious Consideration of their past Sins, that they might repent of them, and make this Covenant with a hearty Resolution not to rebel against God, as they had often done; but to continue obedient to his Voice, that they might enjoy the promised Land. How could he hope to work them into a godly Sorrow for their past Transgressions, or a firm Resolution of acting better, by affirming, that God had not given them Ability to keep his Commandments? — Besides, this makes Moses contradict himself, for he plainly declares in the next Words,*

that God designed they should know and obey his Will. — That ye might know that I am the Lord your God.

Ans. Spiritual Blessings were not promised in this Covenant. Nor was a spiritual Obedience required of the People therein. No other than temporal Favours were promised, in that Covenant. And no other than an external Obedience was required of the People therein, which they, as Men, without sanctifying Grace, were capable of yielding. And sometimes they did externally obey those Laws, which God gave them, then it went well with them. But when they rebelled, it went ill with them. And a spiritual Knowledge of God is not designed but a natural Knowledge of Him, as Creator, and their Preserver, and a bountiful Benefactor to them, as a Nation. And, therefore, *Moses* is far from contradicting himself, in affirming, that God had not given them an Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, Ears to hear in a spiritual Sense.

The learned Man seems to disapprove of our Translation, and to prefer a different one. The *Septuagint*, and all ancient Translations, the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Junius*, read the Words negatively, as we do. *The Lord hath not given.* He observes, that the *Hebrew* Particle, al is sometimes used in an interrogative Sense, the Prefix h being understood: And, is for reading the Words thus: *And hath not the Lord given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear?* The Meaning of which is, according to the Use of such Interrogations; *and God hath given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, Ears to hear,* even to this Time.

Ans. This Part is often acted by those who differ from us. *Hebrew* Particles, and *Greek* Prepositions, are a large Field. wherein they exercise their critical Skill, in order to pervert the Scripture. It is freely granted, that the *Hebrew* Particle, is sometimes so translated, where the Scope and Subject of the Writer require it. But that is no Proof that it should be thus rendered in these Words. For being negatively taken it supplies no ill Sense: Or which is contrary to other Parts of Scripture and the Analogy of Faith. And, therefore, our Version may justly be allowed.

Allowing our Translation, he says, *It is absurd to suppose he (Moses) means, that God had not given them a Capacity to understand, consider, and obey, his Will, for then he could not have justly blamed them for not doing better; but that they had as little reflected upon the Wonders they had seen; and observed the Precepts given them, as if God had not blessed them with these Faculties, but they were quite blind and deaf.*

Ans. 1. It is absurd to conceive that God may not justly blame Men for not perfectly performing His Will, though to them It is

impossible, through an Inability, which attends them: Because their Incapacity to yield perfect Obedience to God's Commands, is the Effect of Sin. That Incapacity, therefore is no Excuse for their Defects in Obedience.

2. It is a very forced and unnatural Sense, which the learned Man puts upon the Text. *Moses says, The Lord hath not given you an Heart to perceive.* That is to say, according to this Writer: "You have not well used those Powers, wherewith God hath endowed you; but have acted, as if you had them not." What can be more unnatural than this? The Words of *Moses*, express what God had not done; but it seems, they are to be understood of what this People had not done. He speaks of God indeed; but in Fact he hath no Regard to him, he wholly and only respects the People. This is not to interpret, but contradict the Scripture,

He adds: *An Heart to perceive, Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, may denote an understanding Heart, seeing Eyes, and hearing Ears; not a bare Faculty of perceiving, seeing, and hearing; but a good Disposition to understand and obey, acquired by that Faculty.*

Ans. 1. An evil Heart cannot exert good Acts, whereby a good Disposition may be acquired. The Hearts of all Men are naturally evil and *desperately wicked*, how, therefore, is it possible, for them to put forth good Acts, in order to acquire a good Disposition? It is as reasonable to think, that an evil Tree may bear good Fruit: Or a bitter Fountain may send forth sweet Streams, which all know to be impossible.

2. According to what is here said, the meaning of *Moses must be* this, when he *says, the Lord hath not given you, etc.* Ye have not acquired an understanding Heart, seeing Eyes, and hearing Ears. He affirms what God had not done for this People; but he does not mean as he speaks; his Meaning is, what they had not done for themselves. Can greater Violence be offered to Language than this is? God hath not given, *Moses says*; but he means, ye have not acquired; as this Author will have it. *Moses says one Thing but means quite another.* And designs to express what the People had not done, by asserting what God had not done.

Farther, the Author observes that, *Moses says not that God had denied them a Capacity and Means sufficient to understand and do his Will; but that he had not given them an understanding Heart, and an obedient Will, or had not made them wise and good Men.*

Ans. 1. Men destitute of spiritual Wisdom and Goodness, are incapable of understanding and doing the Will of God in an acceptable manner.

2. The Author's Meaning is not, that God makes Men wise and good; but that those, who are wise and good, have made themselves so, by a proper Use of such Means as he afforded them for that Purpose, when they had no spiritual Wisdom, or Goodness, in them. So that it is supposed, or taken for granted, that Men may act wisely, before they have Wisdom, and do that which is good, before they have Goodness in them. Whereupon, and in Consequence of which, they become wise and good. If this is true, then those *who are in the Flesh may please God*.

He proceeds thus: *When it is said, that God had not given these Blessings, this is not to be understood of his Intention, as if he was not willing to give them; but may be understood of the Event only, that he had not actually given them, whatever was the Cause. That is said to be given, which is accepted; and that not to be given, which is refused by him, to whom it was offered. — God was willing to give them true Wisdom, and to have made them virtuous God does not actually bestow these Things, is Men's wilful neglect of Means, and wickedly resisting his Grace.*

Ans. 1. This Discourse supposes, that God was prevented doing what He really intended to *do*, through their Obstinacy and Perverseness. His Will, therefore, was resisted, or overcome, by their stubborn and perverse Will. Which the divine Will never can be in any Instance. For, *who hath resisted His Will?*

2. It is taken for granted, without offering the least Proof, that Men may act wisely, and make Choice of Holiness, before they are wise and holy. Than which, there is nothing more false. Full Proof, I hope, is given thereof, above. Yea, that no Aid whatsoever, can assist the carnal Mind to become subject to the Law of God. And, therefore, no Acts of Holiness can be exerted, by an unregenerate Man.

3. The Will of Man, in Regeneration is wholly passive. It neither wills, nor nills. It neither concurs with divine Grace therein, nor opposes. Nor is it possible that it should. For, no Proposal is made to the Mind, whether it will receive a holy, and gracious Disposition, or not. Such a Disposition, or a Principle of Holiness, is immediately, and imperceptibly created, or infused into the Soul. The Will, therefore, hath not an Opportunity of exerting itself, either in a way of Choice, or Refusal.

4. If that is true, which this Writer pleads for, the Holiness and Happiness of Men, is, at least, as much owing to themselves, as to the Grace of God. For, divine Grace, according, to his Sentiments, cannot be effectual, without the Concurrence of the human Will. And our Holiness and Happiness, must ultimately be resolved, into

our Will, as the Cause thereof, and not the Will of God. And, therefore, boasting, in ourselves, upon this Principle, is not, nor can be excluded. Wherefore, this Doctrine is repugnant to the Scripture, which excludes all boasting in Men. As to Holiness, we are nothing casually; but by the Grace of God, we are what we are. Unto Him, therefore, let us ever ascribe the Glory.

FOOTNOTES

* If any should object to this, and say, an Act of Sin in the Non-elect Angels, expelled out of them that Holiness, which was con-created with them: And an Act of Sin in *Adam* expelled out of him that Holiness, which was con-created with him, why therefore, may it not be concluded, that sinful Actions in a Believer may possibly expel Grace out of his Heart, or cause it to become extinct? I would answer thus: God, in endowing those Angels with Holiness, in their Creation, did not intend, that they should enjoy Himself for ever, by Means thereof. Nor did He design that *Adam* should enjoy Himself for ever, by Means of that Holiness wherewith he endowed him in his Creation. But it is his, Design, that Believers should enjoy Himself for ever, by means of that Holiness, wherewith He endows them in their new Creation. And therefore, though those Angels lost their Holiness and *Adam* also lost his, which was con-created with him, it doth not follow, that Believers may lose those gracious Habits, or that holy Principle, with which they are endowed in their new Creation. Again, the Divine Nature in Believers, never concurs with the Flesh in Acts of Sin; but lusteth against it. And the Prevalence of the Flesh against that Nature, effects no Change in it, for it still remains what it was. And the Continuance of its Being in the Soul depends not upon his Acts; but absolutely on the Will of God, who infused or created it. If indeed, God created this Principle without an Intention, that by means of it, those, in whom it is, should enjoy Himself for ever, it might become extinct. But as He did create it with such an Intention, it cannot. Or, if this Principle itself were to sin, or if the Mind, according to this Principle were to sin, its Nature would thereupon be changed, or it would become extinct; but that it doth not, nor ever will. Hence with respect unto it, the Apostle says: *It is no more I that do it; but sin, that dwelleth* in me. Upon the whole, I think, it may be concluded rarely, that holy Habits created of God, with a Purpose, that by Means thereof, those, in whom they are, may come to the blissful Enjoyment of Himself, can never be lost, through any Cause whatsoever.

SERMON 32

ANCIENT PROPHECY, PROVED TO BE DIVINE

IN A DISCOURSE PREACHED

AT The Rev. Mr. THOMPSON's Meeting-House, in a Monthly EXERCISE of PRAYER, with a SERMON, February the 19th, 1761. Published at the Request of some who heard it.

2 PETER 1:21

“For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man; but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

THE Apostle exhorts us, in the preceding Part of the Context, reverentially to regard the Writings of the Prophets. And in order to enforce his Exhortation, he introduces the Words which I have read. *In treating the Text, I would First, explain the Terms and Phrase used therein, and Then, advance a doctrinal Proposition from them.*

First. Prophecy is the Knowledge and Revelation of Things, not discoverable by natural Light, whether past, present, or future. Things past are Matter of Prophecy. For Instance, the Order of Creation which *Moses* gives, the Account of; that could not possibly be discovered by Reason. The great Creator, in an immediate and supernatural Manner, made known to *Moses* how he proceeded in the Formation of all Things which exist. Present Things also were Matter of Prophecy. Thus *Elisha* by a prophetic Spirit became acquainted with his Servant *Gebazi*, receiving Gifts of *Naaman the Syrian*, 2 Kings 5:26. Future Things likewise are Matter of Prophecy; such as are *contingent* and *free*, especially if they are not only in a general Manner predicted, but with the Circumstances of Persons, Place and Time. By this God proves his Omniscience, and strongly asserts his Divinity, against the feigned Deities of the Gentiles; that He by himself knew future Things, and revealed them to whom he would, Isaiah 41:21-23.

Secondly. Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man. Old Time means the former Ages of the World. Prophecy was ancient, for it commenced very early. It came not by the Will of Man; the human Will had no Influence therein: For no Man was endowed with a Spirit of Prophecy, because he willed so to be: It was entirely of the sovereign Will of GOD that any Man became a Prophet. And it must be observed, that the Prophets had not an habitual Capacity of prophecying or declaring the Will of GOD. It was not by virtue of an infused Habit residing in them, which they could exert at Pleasure.

This is evident an *Moses*, who did not immediately pass Sentence against a Blasphemer; but he was put into Custody. until the Will of GOD was declared concerning him, Leviticus 24:12.

Thirdly. The Prophets, who were holy Men of God, *spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. They were holy Men of God; sanctified by divine Grace, and let apart of GOD unto that sacred Function wherein they ailed, and they enjoyed Nearness to, and Familiarity with Him: They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: Who is the third Person in the adorable Trinity. His Office and Work it is to reveal the Will of GOD unto the Church. The Prophets spake as they were moved by him. He furnished them with the Knowledge of the Matter of their Prophecies: And by a powerful Impulse He excited them to speak in delivering them. For the holy Spirit dictated to them in speaking; or the Prophets expressed the Mind of GOD in Language, which He directed them to use. The Medium by which we communicate Knowledge to one another, in this State, as Speech, wherein we may err: For, our Language is not an infallible Mean of conveying Knowledge. If, therefore, the Prophets had been left to themselves, in the Choice of Words, they might have erred. To suppose which, is to overthrow Inspiration itself, as it is intended for the infallible Instruction of the Church of GOD. This is clear, because a fallible Mean cannot infallibly instruct, or infallibly convey the Knowledge of Truth. The Conceptions of the Prophets were suggested to their Minds in an immediate and supernatural Manner, by the Holy Ghost; and they expressed those Conceptions, under his infallible Guidance and Direction. So that, they were effectually preserved from Error, an Thought, and in Language too. And therefore, their Doctrines are not only of GOD; but the Words in which they expressed those Doctrines are of GOD also. As Saints they were not *impeccable*, but as Prophets they were certainly *infallible*. For, they both thought and spoke under the infallible Direction of the holy Spirit. ***From the Words thus briefly explained, I think this doctrinal Proposition naturally arises, viz. The Writings of the Prophets are an immediate and supernatural Revelation from God.***

It is reasonable to suppose, that GOD is capable of conveying to the human Mind, the Knowledge of Truth, in an immediate and supernatural Manner; and also, that the Mind of Man is capable of receiving the Knowledge of Truth in such a Manner: Because, I apprehend, without the Supposition of both, we must conclude, it is impossible, that the Knowledge of Men, even in the future State, should be carried farther, than their natural Powers can arrive unto. Which surely none will ever imagine. Hath not GOD the same immediate Access to, and Power of acting upon the human Mind, in

its embodied State, as in its separate State? Doubtless he has. And, therefore, he can, while it is united to the Body, enlarge its Knowledge of Truths as far as he pleases, by an immediate and supernatural Manner of acting upon it unto that End. Consequently, Inspiration is not a Thing in the least unreasonable. Our Incapacity to explain it, or declare the Mode of it, is no Objection unto its Possibility. We pretend not to have any Experience thereof; how, therefore, should we be capable of explaining of it, or of declaring its Mode. Reason cannot but conclude upon the Possibility of it, tho' it is unable to describe how GOD acts upon the human Mind therein.

In discoursing on the doctrinal Proposition which I have advanced from the Text, I would,

I. Endeavour to prove, that an immediate and supernatural Revelation was absolutely necessary, to teach Men their Duty, and conduct them to Happiness.

II. Offer some Arguments to evince, that the Writings of the Prophets are such a Revelation.

III. Hint some Things to prove, that we now enjoy their Writings *pure and uncorrupt.*

I. An immediate and supernatural Revelation was absolutely necessary to teach Men their Duty, and conduct them to Happiness.

The Truth whereof, I conceive, the following Arguments will most clearly and solidly prove.

1. We know not how we may worship GOD *acceptably*. By Worship Is understood giving that Glory to GOD which is due from us, on Account of his infinite Perfections, our absolute Dependence on Him, and our numerous Obligations to Him: Reason itself, without the least Hesitation, will at once determine, that it is fit that we should pay religious Honours to our Creator. But in what Way, which will be approved by him it is at a Loss, and cannot resolve. No Man, who thinks, can be without some degree of Consciousness, that he is a Sinner, and unable to perform devotional Acts with that fixed Attention, and absolute Freedom from Vanity in his Thoughts which he ought. How, therefore, his religious Services may be accepted with his Maker, which are not such as they ought to be, he cannot obtain Satisfaction about. Our Religion, is the Religion of Sinners: Therefore very defective and imperfect. Consequently, it is impossible that our Reason should ever discover how our religious Services may be accepted by the infinitely pure and holy Object of our Devotions. I dare venture to affirm, that if all the Deists upon

Earth were to unite in a Consultation on this momentous Subject, they would never be able to prescribe to us such a Mode of Worship, as we may be assured will be pleasing to our Maker. This is a Point of the utmost Importance, and fully proves the absolute Necessity of an immediate and supernatural Revelation from Heaven to instruct us in our Duty, and guide us to Happiness.

2. Another Thing of equal Importance, which we are ignorant of, is, how our depraved Nature may be rectified and cured of that moral Disorder which it is the Subject of That Corruption hath overspread human Nature, is as clear as the Sun: But to what particular Cause it is owing, Reason cannot inform us. The Malady is evident to all who seriously think on the Matter, but none can trace it up to its Origin; nor discover by what Means it may be remedied. If Reason is capable of discovering that GOD only can effect our Cure, which perhaps it may, yet it hath no Way of knowing whether He will or not. For no Man hath a Right to claim this Favour of his Maker, and therefore none can tell, whether he will vouchsafe it to any of the human Race or not. From hence it is evident, that an immediate and supernatural Revelation from GOD was absolutely necessary to instruct and conduct us to Happiness.

3. It is a Point unknown to Reason whether GOD will pardon Sin. As we cannot be without some Consciousness of Guilt, our natural Light discerns that Sin demerits Punishment. Divine Benevolence and Goodness assure the innocent Creature of kind Treatment from its Maker: But that He will act mercifully towards the Guilty, cannot be collected from thence; because, Acts of Mercy and Forgiveness are not *natural* to GOD. They are *free* Acts of his Will, which therefore must be above the Discovery of our Reason. If indeed there was a *Fitness* in Pardon, or if it was fit in itself for GOD to forgive Sin, he could not but forgive it. Remission would then be *necessary* and not *free*. Nor Can we attain unto a Satisfaction, from the Works and Bounties of Providence, that there is a Purpose in GOD to pardon Sin. Deferring the Execution of Punishment is no Evidence of an Intention, in GOD, to remit our Guilt. And permitting Men to possess Abundance of this World, is no Ground for a Conclusion that He is upon Terms of Peace and Reconciliation with them. The grandest Monarch, from his exalted Station and princely Treasures, hath no more Reason to think that GOD will forgive his Sins, than the meanest and most necessitous of his Subjects have to imagine, that He will pardon theirs. *Divine Love or Hatred to the Sons of Men*, cannot be known by what they are intitled unto, or want of the Things of this World. Placability in GOD towards Sinners, cannot with the least Appearance of Truth be inferred from the Dispensations of Providence. The great Governor of the World

often suffers the most abandoned to swim in Plenty, and enjoy Ease; while the less vicious drag through Life in Penury and great Distress. Besides, what pleasing Sense of the divine Favour do the Sons of Men enjoy, in all that glittering Show, with which they glide through the short Time of their Existence here? None at all: Nor are they desirous of that delightful Consciousness. As they have their Portion in this Life, they are content with it, and look not higher. This is a farther Proof of the absolute Necessity of an immediate and supernatural Revelation from GOD.

4. We cannot by any Means assure ourselves, that it is possible with GOD to pardon Sin and save criminal Creatures. Some, perhaps, will say this is proceeding very far indeed: But I hope to make it evident, that it is true. The Reason of the Matter asserted. is clear: Which is this. If Sin is pardoned, and guilty Creatures are saved, it is *fit* that it should be, in such a Way as is glorifying to GOD. It may be, it will be asked, Is not GOD infinitely merciful? I answer, he undoubtedly is. It may be enquired farther, Is it not an Act of Mercy to save a miserable Creature? I reply, It certainly is. May not, therefore, GOD glorify his Mercy in laving Sinners *absolutely* on the Ground of Mercy, or without any Provision for his Honour in other Respects? I answer boldly, No, he cannot: Because, Mercy in Remission only regards the miserable Object, in sparing him, not his Guilt, unto which his Misery is owing. GOD is not merciful to Sin itself, nor can be: That he cannot spare, or suffer to go unpunished. As he cannot act powerfully, in the natural World, without acting wisely therein: So he cannot act mercifully in the moral World, (if I may be allowed the Use of that Phrase) without acting holily therein. Now, the Manifestation of divine Holiness, in relation to Guilt, can only be in the Infliction of deferred Penalty, And it is not possible with GOD to exercise Mercy towards guilty Creatures, and therein neglect to discover his Holiness, or his just and infinite Abhorrence of moral Evil. To pardon Sin, as an absolute Act of Mercy, would be a total Neglect of Holiness, which is no more possible with GOD, than it is to put forth the Acts of Power without Wisdom. As He cannot act powerfully without the Exercise of his infinite Wisdom therein: So He cannot act mercifully, without manifesting his infinite Holiness therein. But to forgive Sin, as an Act of *absolute* Mercy, would not be an Act of Holiness; and therefore no such Act of *absolute* Mercy is possible with GOD. Can finite Wisdom resolve how Holiness, as well as Mercy, may be discovered in the Remission of Sin? No, that is impossible. Holiness is manifested in the Infliction of Punishment for Sin, and Mercy is displayed in the Impunity of a Sinner. It is absolutely beyond the Power of all created Wisdom to determine how both should be; and there' fore our Reason cannot assure us, that the Pardon of Sin, and the Salvation of Sinners, are possible:

And consequently our Reason must conclude, that for ought we know, our Salvation may be a Thing impossible. For we cannot tell how GOD may act holily and mercifully towards guilty Creatures in their Remission and Salvation. I make no Scruple to allow, that Reason of itself is sufficient to acquaint us, in some Degree, with our Guiltiness and Misery: But I *peremptorily* deny, that it is capable of pointing out a Way wherein GOD may save us, consistently with the Honour of his Perfections. And *right Reason* will never imagine that GOD may act otherwise than *becomes himself*, Or unsuitable to any of his Perfections. These Things clearly evince the absolute Necessity of an immediate and supernatural Revelation to instruct us in our Duty, and conduct us to Happiness.

II. I would offer some Arguments to prove, that the Writings of the Prophets are such a Revelation.

It is reasonable to think that the Prophets had a full Persuasion in their Minds, that they were inspired of GOD. For they did not acquire Riches, obtain Ease, and gain the Applause of the World, by acting in the prophetic Character; on the contrary; they were exposed to Poverty, Loss of Liberty, the keen Resentment of a rebellious and wicked People, Unto whom, they delivered their Prophecies, yea even unto Death itself, in Consequence of the Part they acted as Prophets. And, therefore, they must, most deservedly, be esteemed *Fools* or *mad Men*, if they were not fully persuaded in their own Minds, that they had a Commission from GOD to speak and as they did. Would Men in their Senses, without any View of Advantage; but quite the Reverse, pretend to be divinely inspired, unless they really thought themselves so to be? It is most unreasonable to imagine this. I add, the Prophets were holy Men of GOD. They loved Him, revered Him, trusted in Him, sacredly regarded his Honour, were obedient to Him, and enjoyed Intimacy with Him. And therefore, they certainly conceived, that the Matter of their Prophecies was suggested unto them by GOD. For, Men of their Character could not be guilty of *impious Fraud*, or of palming a *Forgery* on the infinite Being, whom they adored. If any shall say, Be it so, that those Men really thought themselves to be inspired, were they above a Possibility of Deception? Might they not be mistaken? What Evidence have we that they were not? In answer, I will say, that We have most clear, and abundant Evidence, that they were not mistaken.

1. The Sublimity and mysterious Nature of the Doctrines, which they delivered, clearly and solidly prove, that they were inspired of GOD. The prophetic Writings contain Principles, which are absolutely above the Discovery of human Reason; and, therefore, those Principles could not possibly be invented by the Prophets.

Their Knowledge of them was not acquired; but it must have been conveyed to their Minds, in an immediate and supernatural Manner. Things they are, *which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, and which have not entered into the Heart of Man*. Yea, they infinitely transcend the Wisdom of Angels. For, they are *the Wisdom of God, in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom, which be ordained before the World, to our Glory*. They are the *manifold Wisdom of God. And the deep Things of God*. The Scheme of the Salvation of Sinners, by the promised Messiah, whereof the Prophets treat, was the Contrivance of infinite Wisdom, and could never have been thought of, by Men, or Angels. The Prophets assert, that the Messiah is *Jehovah, God, the mighty God, and also a Child born, and a Son given*; therefore properly divine, and really human, which is a Mystery, that cannot be comprehended, by any finite Mind, nor could ever have been conceived of, by a created Understanding, how capacious soever. And that this glorious Person should be a Substitute for guilty Men, obey the Law for them, bear their Guilt, and atone for their Crimes, are such Mysteries, as could not have been devised by a Creature, angelic or human. Consequently, the Prophets, who discovered those Mysteries, must have been inspired of GOD. I am sensible, that the Deists assert, that these Doctrines are absurd, and repugnant to Reason, but they have not yet proved them so. And I dare affirm, that they will never be able to give the least Proof thereof. For, they have no Medium, by which such Proof can be given. Because, they are not inconsistent with any Principle of natural Religion. Above it they are; but contrary to it, they are not. This is an *intrinsic demonstrative Proof*, that the holy Prophets were divinely inspired.

2. The perfect Harmony and Agreement, in all the Writings of the Prophets, relating to those sublime and mysterious Doctrines, clearly prove, that they are of divine Original, In nothing do they contradict one another. They correspond, and exactly agree in all Things.. No Contradictions, or jarring Principles, can be produced, in what they spake, and wrote. They are one and uniform, in all they express, upon every Point of Doctrine, whereof they discourse. Now, if we consider, at what distant Times, their Prophecies were delivered, if we consider the large Number of the Prophets, their different Capacities, Advantages and Stations, as Men, under what different Circumstances, and also on what different Occasions, they did write, surely, we must be convinced, that it is no less than *real Miracle*, that a Unity of Sentiments, should run through their Writings: or, which is the same Thing, that they were under unerring Direction in what they wrote. For, without that, human Frailty would most certainly have discovered itself, in some Part or other, on that great Variety of sublime and profound Subjects, whereof they treat. I challenge all the Deists in the World, to try their Skill on this Head.

And if they are able to produce a single Contradiction, upon any Point of Doctrine, in the Writings of the Prophets, I will allow, that with Reason they reject the Bible. But I am firmly persuaded, that by this Concession, I am not in the least Danger of being driven into infidelity. And that this is a Task, which no Deist will dare to undertake. Bold and enterpizing as they are, in their Attacks on the Credit of the sacred Writers. If any one should be hardy enough to attempt the Thing, he would quickly find, that he could not hope to succeed, in that Attempt. The Uniformity of Doctrines, in the Writings of the Prophets, is a pregnant, and irrefragable Proof of their Divinity: or, that those holy Men of GOD, spake and wrote *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*.

3. The numerous Predictions of future Events, which could only be foreknown to GOD, and their exact Accomplishment, that we have in the Writings of the Prophets, undeniably prove, that GOD, in an immediate and supernatural Manner, revealed his Will to them. This is an exceedingly copious Subject, a large Field opens itself to our View. And I might greatly enlarge upon it. For, the prophetic Writings abound with such Predictions. But I shall confine myself, in this Discourse, unto two general Heads of them.

(1.) Those relating to Jesus Christ.

(2.) Those which respect the State of the Jews upon their Rejection of Him, and their Opposition to his Gospel, which was preached to them, after his Ascension to Heaven.

(1.) I would observe some of those Predictions, relating to Jesus Christ, which we have, in the Writings of the Prophets, and the exact Accomplishment of them in Him. His Descent is foretold, not only of which Tribe; but of what particular Family He should be. It was a Matter well known among the Jews, from ancient Prophecy, that the Messiah promised to them, was to spring from *David*. And our Saviour was of the Seed of *David, according to the Flesh*. A clear Prediction was given of the supernatural Conception of Christ. *Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son, and shall call his Name IMMANUEL*. This is a Thing *miraculous*. Which, therefore, could only be foreknown to GOD. For no Creature whatever can possibly tell whether GOD will exert his Power to effect a Miracle, unless He himself makes a Discovery, that such is his Intention, And, therefore, this Prediction of the *miraculous Conception* of Christ, is a clear Proof, that the Prophet was divinely inspired. Our blessed Lord was conceived and born of a Virgin, by the almighty Agency of the Holy Ghost. He was *made of a Woman*, formed or her Substance; so that he was the *Seed of the Woman*, in Distinction from the Man, according to the first Promise which GOD expressed

after *Adam's* Fall. The Place of the Birth of Christ was Matter of Prophecy, which, through a remarkable Dispensation of Providence, was not only accomplished; but the Fact was rendered so notorious, that it could not possibly be denied. Also full Proof was given, that He descended from *David*, whose Son the Messiah was to be. Farther, his Behaviour is described in the Writings of the Prophets, in as exact a Manner as if they had seen and been conversant with Him, in the Course of his Conduct. It was declared concerning Him in Prophecy, that he should *not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Street*; in order to gain public Applause, either by what He spake or wrought. And according to the Prediction of the Prophets, Christ was absolutely free from Ostentation. He made use of no Methods to spread his Fame, and obtain Honour and Praise from Men, in the great Variety of stupendous Works, which he constantly effected, wherever he went. Our Saviour wisely performed many miraculous Works, in a public Manner, with a View to render his divine Mission evident and incontestable. But he wrought none with an Intention to gain worldly Honour and Repute. In no Instance did He court the Applause of Men. His sole Aim was to glorify his Father, and give Proof, that He acted by his Commission. Majesty and Modesty centered and met in Him, and were equally manifest in all that He spake and acted. It was foretold of Him, that He should be *lowly, riding upon an Ass, upon a Colt, the Foal of an ass*. And He was *meek and lowly*, Which he discovered, when He entered in Triumph, into the City of *Jerusalem*, upon so mean a Creature as an Ass, agreeable to the Prophet's Prediction. Now, who but GOD could possibly foreknow these Things? Certainly none. And, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude, that the Prophets who predicted them, were divinely inspired.

Moreover, the Sufferings and Death of Christ, were prophesied of in a most explicit Manner. It is said, that *He gave his Back to the Smiters, his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair, and hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting*. Wherein are expressed the rude and cruel Treatment our Saviour met with, and his Fortitude in bearing it. He was spit upon, smitten in the Face, and scourged. In suffering which Indignities and Cruelties, he conducted himself, in the most meek and patient Manner. Not the least Degree of undue Resentment appeared in Him. When *He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not*. But, as the Prophet predicted, *He was led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so He opened not his Mouth*. His Death not only was foretold; but also the Manner of it, was intimated in Prophecy. *His Hands and his Feet were to be pierced*, and they were so, when

He was nailed to the Cross. That Prediction suggested, that He was to suffer Death, by Crucifixion, and He actually did.

Again, It was prophesied, that the Messiah should be laid in the Grave, and have an honourable Interment. *He made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death.* That Prediction also was exactly accomplished in our blessed Saviour.

I add, his Resurrection from the State of the Dead was Matter of Prophecy. He is prophetically represented, expressing himself thus. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption.* Which was verified in Jesus, Who arose from the Dead on the third Day, after he suffered, as is abundantly verified by numerous credible Witnesses, who could be under no Temptation to affirm a Falshood: And who had sufficient Means of satisfying themselves of the Truth of the Fact. It cannot be denied, that this was an Event *really miraculous.* And, therefore, it could only be fore-known to GOD, consequently, no one could possibly become acquainted with it, before its Accomplishment; but by an immediate and supernatural Revelation from Him.

To which I subjoin, his Ascension to Heaven, and sitting down at the right Hand of GOD, were clearly predicted in the Writings of the Prophets. The Messiah was to *ascend up on high;* and sit at the right Hand of GOD. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right Hand.* This likewise was accomplished in our Saviour. For, He is exalted at the right Hand of the Father, in that Character, *to give Repentance to Israel, and Remission of Sins.* Which wonderful and glorious Event, could not possibly, have been thought of, by any Mortal, without a supernatural Revelation of it from Heaven. Hence, it is evident, that the Writings of the Prophets were divinely inspired.

Once more, the Glory which followed, in the Church, upon the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ to Heaven, was foretold. The wonderful Spread of the Gospel, the Conversion of the Gentiles, and the large Effusion of the Holy Spirit, in his Graces and Gists, were clearly prophetical of. Which are such Events as none but GOD could foreknow. And, therefore, the Prophets who predicted those extraordinary Events were inspired by Him.

(2.) The State of the Jews upon their Rejection of the Messiah, and Opposition to his Gospel, was most clearly prophesied of. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, irrefragably proves two Things, in general, from the Writings of the Prophets, relating to that People. One is this, that the Covenant made with their Fathers, at *Sinai* and *Horeb*, was to be antiquated, *become old,* and *vanish away.* That *their Heaven,* and *their Earth,* i.e. their ecclesiastical and political States, were to be *shaken,* yea *shaken* all to Pieces.

According to ancient Prophecy, *the Scepter was to depart from Judah, and a Lawgiver from between his Feet*; after the Coming of the Messiah. Their civil and ecclesiastical Authority was entirely to sink. And quite a different State of Things was to be introduced upon the Sinking of the *Mosaic Oeconomy*. A different Mode of Worship was to take Place, and different Persons were to officiate therein. The other Point, which that Divine Writer proves, is this: That nothing was to be expected by that incredulous People, *but fiery Indignation, which would devour them*, as a Body politic; and which actually did. The Condition of that People, ever since, to this Time, is a standing undeniable Evidence, that the Writings of the Prophets are of divine Original.

4. The Miracles which were wrought by the Prophets, for the Confirmation of their heavenly Mission, and the Truth of their Prophecies, most clearly and solidly evince, that they were divinely inspired. When I say *Miracles, I understand stupendous Works of such Sort, which are done beside or contrary to the Laws of Nature, and that exceed all the Power of created Causes, performed of God, to gain Credit to his Word*. That Works of such Sort were done, in great Abundance, to obtain Credit unto what the Prophets declared, is not to be denied. Numerous Miracles were wrought by *Moses in Egypt*, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, among the People to whom he was appointed a Leader, for their Deliverance out of Bondage, Safety, Supply and Preservation. And a great Variety, from Time to Time, were effected by succeeding Prophets, unto the like important Ends. And, therefore, omnipotent Power was exerted to prove the Truth of their divine Mission, the Verity of the Doctrines they asserted, and of the Predictions which they delivered. Must we not conclude from hence, that it is most unreasonable Incredulity, to disbelieve the Inspiration of those holy Men? GOD will never exert his Power to confirm Falshood. He can no more do that, than He is capable of affirming what is untrue. Divine Power can only be put forth for the Establishment of Principles, which are divinely true. No false Doctrines can have Attestations in their Favour of that Kind.

The external Evidences of the Inspiration of the Prophets are such, that a Man who takes them into Consideration, must be either a *Knave* or a *Fool*, that refuses to believe it. Some, perhaps, will say this is very *rough and plain*. Be it so. I am free to declare to all the World, that I think, not the least Degree of Compliance is due to a Deist. If we may not be allowed to impute Folly to Infidels, who generally pretend unto a superior Degree of Wisdom, we may take the Liberty to exhibit a Charge of very culpable Partiality against them, for without that, there is no Man of a common Understanding, but must discern, that the Writings of the Prophets were not their

own Invention; but that they were penned under the infallible Direction of GOD. I proceed,

III. To hint some Things, in order to prove, that we now enjoy those sacred Writings pure and uncorrupt.

Some who seem too ready to allow, that Corruptions have taken Place in the Writings of the Prophets, freely grant us this, that those Corruptions are not such as render it uncertain, whether they were inspired of GOD, or not. Their Books, as they now Read, contain such evident Marks in them, of their coming from GOD, that it cannot reasonably be doubted of. That Point is yielded to us. Which is a Matter of very weighty Consideration. If such Corruptions could be proved in the prophetical Writings, as obscure the Evidences of their divine Original, the Deists might triumph over us. But this is not pretended. Take those Writings as they now stand, they will irrefragably prove, of themselves, that they are no human Production. Such Things are found therein, as are absolutely undiscoverable by a finite Mind. Those Things, therefore, must have been revealed, by GOD. I apprehend, that several Things may be proposed to Consideration, which will render it improbable, that those Writings are corrupted or mutilated.

1. The End of GOD in dictating them, both respecting Himself and the Church.

(1.) The End respecting Himself was his own Glory, That we might know Him, love Him, fear Him, and obey Him. In short, that we might understand how to glorify Him as GOD; which Mankind, without a supernatural Revelation, could never do. That is far above the Reach of our impaired Reason. Philosophy is insufficient to instruct us in our Duty to our Maker, or in what Way we may honour Him as we ought.

This End was worthy of GOD, and suitable to his Perfections. For it is fit that He should design his own Glory in all his Works, and in all his Transactions with his reasonable Creatures.

(2.) His End therein with respect to the Church was, not only her Instruction in the Matter of her Duty, but her Consolation, and her safe Guidance unto a state of everlasting Felicity in the Enjoyment of himself. This also is an End becoming the divine Perfections. From hence,

2. A strong Argument may be formed to prove the Purity and perfection of the prophetical writings. For, if these were the Ends of GOD, in granting us such a Revelation of his Will, unless we can suppose that He is become unconcerned about attaining those holy Ends, which He once designed in infinite Wisdom, we cannot

imagine that He will ever suffer his Word to be corrupted or mutilated, whereby He would be frustrated of his Ends, in committing that sacred Depositum unto the Church. Now, such an Imagination would be as gross an Impeachment of his Wisdom, as great a Reflection on his Holiness, as dreadful an Abuse of his Goodness, as is possible to be deviled. Far greater Reverence is due to those sacred Writings than some *bold* Critics have discovered, who allow, that this Fountain of divine Light and Truth is become *foul* and *muddy*, or, in some. Instances, *grossly* corrupt, and have imagined themselves capable of purging it, by their learned Conjectures founded upon Translations, which they conclude, must have been made from *Hebrew* Copies, much differing from those which are now extant*. If this be the Fact, may we not say, how happy was it with the Church formerly, when through the Kindness and Care of GOD she enjoyed the Revelation of his Will, pure, uncorrupt, and entire in all its Parts? But alas! for her, in later Ages GOD hath not manifested the same kind Care of her, nor the same Regard to his own Glory, which He once did, in preferring his Word complete and free from Corruptions; but hath suffered it to be corrupted in a vast Multitude of Places, so that, in a great Variety of Instances, we cannot now determine, with Certainty, whether it is GOD, or Man only, who speaks to us in our Bibles. I very much lament, that any learned Man should advance Positions, relating to the Scripture, which naturally tend to produce Apprehensions in our Minds, that are dishonourable to GOD, and exceedingly dangerous to the Church. That some have so done, it is evident, if I mistake them not. If I do, I crave their Pardon for this Suggestion concerning them.

3. It cannot reasonably be thought, that the Writings of the Prophets were corrupted in the Time of our Saviour's being in the World. He appealed unto those Writings to prove the Truth of the Doctrines which He delivered, concerning GOD and himself, in the Character of the Messiah, without the least Intimation of Errors and Mistakes in them; and, therefore, it is highly improbable that they were then attended with Errors and Mistakes. Much less is It probable, if they had before that Time been wilfully corrupted by the yews, in whole Possession they were, that He would have been silent on that Head. His Zeal for the Honour of his Father, his intense Love to, and tender Care of the Church, would doubtless have caused Him to have detected and condemned their impious Fraud, if they had so done, though but in a single Instance. With what Severity of Language does He reprove the *Jews* for their false Glosses on, and perverse Interpretations of those Writings. And shall we imagine, that He would pass over in Silence the Wickedness and Impiety of their *Jews*, in daring to change the Language of the Prophets, in

order to make them express a Sense, which they never intended? GOD forbid, that any Christian should ever admit such a Thought, to have the least Entertainment in his Mind. In my Apprehension, such a Conceit, though it should regard but one Instance only, reflects such Dishonour on the blessed Jesus, that I would not for the whole World allow of it, without the most demonstrative Proof of its Certainty, let all the learned Men in it say what they please, in order to vindicate themselves, in their *Criticisms*, on the sacred Text.

4. There is clear Reason to conclude, that those Writings have not been corrupted since that Time. Who should corrupt them? If any have so done, they must be either *Jews*, or professed Christians, who had them in their Possession. Now, it ought to be observed, that neither could act such a Part, without an immediate Discovery. *Jews* Could not, without being detected by Christians, if they had been inclined to corrupt them, out of their Hatred to Christianity. But it is doing Wrong to the *Jews* to suggest, that they have ever been inclined to corrupt the prophetic Writings, from their Dislike of Jesus and his Followers. So far have they been from any such Inclination, that they have *been strictly, yea superstitiously* careful to preserve them exactly correct, and free from Alterations. If any professed Christians corrupted them, they must have been either the Orthodox or Heretics. Now, neither the former nor the latter could possibly make Alterations therein to serve a Turn; but they must have exposed themselves to the Censure of the others, for so wicked and fraudulent a Practice, and which would not have been to the Advantage, but the manifest Prejudice of their Cause. Men must be not only *exceedingly wicked*, but also *extremely foolish*, to attempt the Support of any Opinion, by a wilful Corruption of the Scripture, because ever since the Spread of Christianity, that hath been impossible to be done, without a Discovery thereof by others, who espouse not that Opinion, which they would maintain. And, therefore, we may reasonably conclude, that the sacred Writings have not been corrupted, either by *Jews*, or professed Christians of any Party. And, from the Whole, that we now enjoy the Writings of the Prophets *entire, pure and uncorrupt*. Which Writings justly challenge our highest Reverence, as they demand our greatest Gratitude, on Account of their divine Original.

I shall conclude my Discourse with the Words of my Text. *For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man; but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

FOOTNOTES

* Particularly the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. Whose Folly and Boldness have been justly exposed by many learned Men, and the Purity of the *Hebrew* Text excellently defended BUXTORF, GLASSIUS, etc. The late very learned Mr. BEDFORD offers some convincing Reasons to prove, that the Samaritan Copy is of later Date than the Septuagint, and copied from thence, in several Places. He concludes, “that we may as well set up to correct *Greek* Authors by their *Latin* Versions, or *Latin* Authors by their *English* Versions, or the Alcoran of *Mahomet*, by the *Latin* and *French* Translations, as to correct the Text by those. — If a Suggestion, that the *Jews* had corrupted them (the Scriptures of the Old Testament) shall be sufficient to attempt daily Alterations, instead of fixing the Standard, we shall confound it; instead of one Bible, we shall have as many as there are Critics. We shall search after Truth until we have lost it, and play with this sacred Light until we have put it out. And whilst we arraign God’s Providence in suffering such Corruptions to be made, and the World to be imposed on with a Scripture as coming from Him, a great Part whereof was none of his, we too justly provoke Him to enter into Judgment for such unprecedented Impieties, if not to remove his Candlestick out of its Place, and give it to a Nation which will make a better Use of it.” This is wisely and piously, said. CHRONOLOGY, p. 49-52.

SERMON 33

CHRIST, THE OBJECT OF GOD'S ETERNAL DELIGHT: AND THE CHURCH, THE OBJECT OF CHRIST'S EVERLASTING DELIGHT

EXPLAINED AND PROVED IN A SERMON PREACHED NEAR
DEVONSHIRE-SQUARE,

*TO THE SOCIETY, Who SUPPORT the Wednesday - Evening -
Lecture. December 31, 1760. Published at their Request.*

PROVERBS 8:30, 31

“Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; I was daily His Delight, rejoicing always before Him: Rejoicing in the habitable Part of His Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.”

THAT the Divine Speaker, in this Context, is a Person, it is clear from the personal Characters, under which He speaks concerning Himself, and the personal Acts, which He expresses of Himself. And it is equally evident, that this Speaker is Christ, who is the Wisdom as well as the Power of God. For, the Things expressed, are true of Him only.

In the Text, the following Things are to be observed: That Christ existed by God, — as one brought up with Him. — That He was daily his Delight. — That He rejoiced in the habitable Part of his Earth. — And that his Delights were with the Sons of Men.

I. *Christ existed by GOD, Then I was by Him.* When He was present with the Father, appears from the Words immediately preceding the Text. It was when *He*, the Father, gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment: When He appointed the Foundations of the Earth. Christ was by, or, existent with God the Father, when He exerted His Power, in the Creation of the World. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.* And He was present with the Father, as a Co- operator, in Creation. For, *all Things were made by Him, and without Him was not any Thing made, that was made* (John 1:1, 2.). *All Things were created by Him, as an efficient Cause, and for (him Colossians 1:16.) as a final Cause.* The Divine Writer of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* affirms, that *He who built all Things is God* (Hebrews 3:4.).

Christ, therefore, if that Assertion is Truth, must be God, or a divine Person. For, He made all Things. No one Thing was made without Him. As the Word was with God, so, the Word was God. Our Saviour *is God over all, blessed for ever* (Romans 9:4.). He is *the*

true God, and eternal Life (John 5:20.). The Father's Equal. For, *He being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God* (Philippians 1:20.). And He being such, He was a joint-Agent with the Father, in the Work of Creation. He was then by Him, not as an inactive Spectator of what He wrought; but as a Co-operator with Him, in giving Existence unto whatsoever is.

II. Christ was with the Father, as One brought up with Him. Which I apprehend denotes two Things. 1. The Character He bore, or the Capacity wherein He then stood, 2. The Intimacy, and sweet Converse He then had with the Father. I conceive, that this respects Christ in His mediatorial Capacity, or considered as God-man. He was the Object of the Father's Choice, to act in the Office of Mediator between Himself, and the Church. It was his Will, that He should assume our Nature, or become Man. And the Will of Christ concurred with the Will of the Father herein. And, therefore, He *verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World; but was manifest in these last Times* (1 Peter. 1:20.). By Reason whereof, He was considered and held in Repute, as God and Man, from ever-listing, though neither Part of his human Nature then subsisted. Not his Soul, any more than. his Body. For, it was not possible, that either constituent Part of his human Nature should subsist in Eternity, when the Counsel and Covenant of Peace were held and entered into, between the Father and Himself. But that is no Objection, unto His being then, viewed and considered, as God and Man. Because the present Subsistence of his human Nature, was not necessary to such a View and Consideration of Him For, the Father's Appointment, that he should become Man, and his Concurrence, were a sufficient Ground for such a View and Consideration of Him. 2. I apprehend, that this Phrase, *as One brought up with Him, signifies*, that Intimacy and sweet Converse, which He then had with the Father, in his mediatorial Character. He was *in the Bosom of the Father*, and privy to all the gracious and glorious Designs of his everlasting Love, concerning the Elect. *The Father loved the Son, and shewed Him all Things, that Himself doth* (John 5:20.). And Christ in his mediatorial Capacity, it was then agreed on, fixed and fettled, should carry his Purposes of Grace into Execution. Thus he, from everlasting, enjoyed the greatest Intimacy and sweetest Converse with the Father, in his mediatorial Capacity, he being then, by him, *as one brought up with him*, in that Capacity.

III. Christ, in the Character of Mediator, was daily, or Day by Day, as Arias Montanus renders it ($\mu\omega\upsilon\ \mu\omega\upsilon$) *His Delight*. This Phrase does not denote Succession. For, there was not a Succession, in Eternity past. The Import of it is this: That Christ, from everlasting, was *constantly* the Object of the Father's Delight, in his

mediatorial Capacity, or, considered by him as God and Man. Being Man, he was,

1. Capable of obeying. *He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham. For as much as the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself, likewise took part of the same* (Hebrews 2:16.). As Man, He was meet and fit, to become subject to the Covenant of Works. And, he actually came under its Obligation. For, as *he was made of a Woman*, so, also, *he was made under the Law, to redeem his People, who were under the Law* (Galatians 4:4.). And by Reason of the absolute Purity and Perfection of his Nature, he was able to yield Obedience to the Law, in the utmost Extent of its Commands. And, therefore, in his human Nature, he was the Object of the Father's Delight.

2. As Man, he was capable of suffering penal Death, in order to the Redemption of the Church. For,

(1.) As such, he was a fit Subject to bear their Sins, and he really did. *He knew no Sin; but was made Sin for us* (2 Corinthians 5:21.). The Father *laid on him the Iniquities of us all* (Isaiah 53:6.). And *he bore our Sins, in his own Body on the Tree* (Hebrews 9:26.). The Guilt of his People, was charged on him, and he bore it away. For, *he put away their Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself* (1 Peter 1:24.). Which he could not have done, without the Assumption of their Nature, into union with his divine Person.

(2.) He also was capable of bearing the Law's Curse, in his human Nature. As Man, he not only came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, respecting the Obedience which it requires; but also, to suffer the Malediction which it threatens. And in his Sufferings and Death, he was made a Curse. That which we are redeemed from, he was made upon our Account, we are redeemed from the Curse of the Law, and, therefore, he was made a Curse. *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us* (Galatians 3:13.). *And therefore, there is now no Condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh but after the Spirit* (Romans 8:1.).

His human Nature only, was capable of being made a Curse, and, consequently, if he had not been Man, he could not have effected our Redemption from the Curse, of the Covenant of Works, by which we stand condemned, for our Violation of it.

(3.) Christ being Man, he was a fit Subject to bear the vindictive Displeasure of God. And he actually did bear it for us. Wherein are two Things to be observed,

[1.] Dereliction and Withdrawment, as to present Communion, and a delightful Sense of divine Favour, which Christ always enjoyed, until the Time of his Sufferings; but then the Father hid his Face, and withdrew from him, which caused him to utter that fore Complaint, when on the Cross: *My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me* (Psalm 22:1.)

[2.] Suffering divine Wrath and Vengeance. The Father in the Character of a Judge, *bruised and put him to Grief* (Isaiah 53:70.). By positive Acts, which he immediately put forth on his Mind, he impressed a deep Sense of the Guilt, which was imputed to Him, upon his Soul, and produced in him a most painful Sensation of its Demerit. He commanded *the Sword of Justice to awake against and finite him* (Zechariah 13.7.). Thus he *spared him not* (Romans 8:32.); but took full Vengeance on Sin in him: That he might spare, pardon and save his People, without Dishonour to his Law, and eclipsing the Glory of his Holiness and Justice. Not that Christ had the least Consciousness of the Contraction of Guilt, or of his Person being the Object of the Father's Displeasure. Neither of which, was possible. And the Father was never more delighted with Christ, than, when he presented himself a willing Victim, before divine Justice, to make Atonement for our Sins. Now, if Christ had not assumed human Nature, he had not been a meet Subject for Suffering on Account of the Sins of Men. But by the Assumption of our Nature, he became a fit and proper Subject of Suffering for our Offences. And, therefore, in his human Nature, he was the Object of the Father's Delight.

3. Christ being God, as well as Man, and the divine and human Natures, being ineffably united in him, he was capable of meriting, both in what he did and suffered. If he had been Man only, he might have obeyed, and also have suffered, but he could not have merited, either in obeying, or suffering. As the *very learned and accurate* Divine, *Witsius* observes: *A mere Man, might have been upheld by infinite Power, in Obedience and Suffering*. But no proper Merit could possibly attend, either his Obedience, or his Sufferings, how great soever. Infinite Power, resident in the divine Person of Christ, sustained his human Nature, in his Obedience and Sufferings; but the Union of his human Nature, with his divine Person, renders his Obedience, and Sufferings properly meritorious. If he had not been Man, he would not have been a meet Subject to obey the Law on the Account of Men, nor to suffer a penal Death for the Sins of Men. And if had not been God and Man, and both united, he could not have merited, by his Obedience, or Sufferings. For, it is the infinite Dignity of his Person, which gives infinite Worth to his Obedience, and from that arises the immense Value of his Sufferings. Thus the

Constitution of the Person of Christ fits him, for carrying into Execution all the wise and glorious Purposes of the Father, concerning the Objects of his everlasting Love. And, he having such a View of him, in Eternity, his Soul then delighted in him (Isaiah 42:1.). Because the Father, from everlasting, foresaw, how he himself, would be infinitely glorified, and the Church be effectually secured, by the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ, therefore, he, eternally had the highest Complacency and Delight in Him.

IV. *Christ rejoiced always before the Father. Arias Montanus translates it literally, in all Time:* According to the Original (ty[lkb]. Here we must observe, as before, that Time, or Succession, had not Place in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past. We have no Language, by which, Eternity may be properly expressed, nor can have. The Reason whereof, is clear. It surpasses our Comprehension. I apprehend, that the more

seriously, and fixedly, any Man contemplates Eternity, the more evidently he will discern, that it exceeds his most enlarged Ideas. Our Ideas may possibly exceed our Language, but our Language, if we understand it, cannot exceed our Ideas. As our Minds are finite, and limited, it is impossible, that our Conceptions should be extended unto Infinity. And, therefore, none of the Sons of Metaphysics, are able to explain what Eternity is. The Idea which we have of it, as not positive; but negative. It is, we know not what. God, who alone is Eternal, only knows what Eternity is. The Import of the original Phrase, *in all Time*, is, perpetually, without any Interruption, or Intermission. Christ, in the Character of Mediator, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past, constantly rejoiced before the Father. I would shew, in some Particulars, what was the Matter of his Joy: Or, wherein he then did rejoice.

1. The Matter of his Joy, from everlasting, was his human Nature, as fitted to accomplish, in Union with his divine Person, the whole Will of the Father. That Individuum of human Nature, which was ordained unto a personal Union with the eternal Son of God, was meet and fit to be taken by him, into such a Union with himself. The Father *prepared him a Body* (Hebrews 10:5.), a Nature. As Man, he was the curious Workmanship of the Holy Ghost. And, therefore, he was perfectly qualified, for being thus united with his divine Person, not only because he was all Purity and Perfection; as he was the miraculous Production of the blessed Spirit, and, so, *holy, harmless, undefiled, and Separate from Sinners* (Hebrews 7:26.): But also, because, he was replenished with all the supernatural Graces and Gifts of the holy Spirit, in their utmost Perfection and Plenitude. And by the Assumption of that Nature, it became his own, in a peculiar Sense. In Consequence of which, infinite Power, resident in

his divine Person, became engaged, to support, and carry that Nature, through the whole of its Obedience and Sufferings. Hence, it was impossible, that he should *fail*, in either. And, as was before observed, the infinite Dignity of his Person, gave immense Value, to his Obedience and Sufferings. Wherefore, by both, the Will of the Father is accomplished, which he undertook to perform. And the highest Glory redounds to all his glorious Perfections thereby. The Fore-view, and Prospect, which Christ had thereof, in the eternal Counsel and Covenant of Peace, was Matter of infinite Joy to him. The Constitution of his Person, as Mediator, fitting him for carrying into Execution, the wise, holy, and gracious Purposes of the Father, he rejoiced therein, from everlasting. For, he ever *delighted to do his Will* (Psalm 40:8.).

2. The Glory, which he then knew, that he should bring to the Father, by the Accomplishment of his Will, in our Nature, was the Matter of his Joy. The Father is glorified, by the Son, as Mediator, in the highest Manner, in all his infinitely glorious Attributes. In his absolute Sovereignty, boundless Grace, Kindness and Mercy: In his immense Wisdom, infinite Holiness and Justice, in his Power, and in his eternal Truth and Faithfulness. Yea, the Glory of all his Perfections, shines forth most conspicuously in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and in his Performance of the Father's Will, in our Nature: Hence, our Lord speaking to him, expresses himself thus: *I have glorified thee on the Earth; I have finished the Work, which thou gavest me to do* (John 17:4.).

That View, which Christ had thereof, when he undertook to accomplish his Will, in the everlasting Covenant of Grace, was Matter of infinite Joy to him. For, therein, he eternally rejoiced.

3. The Salvation and Happiness of the Church, were the Matter of his Joy. The Glory of the Father, and the Recovery, and eternal Felicity of his People, were *the joy*, that was *fit before him*, which caused him, *to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame* (Hebrews 12:2.); at the Time of his Crucifixion. And he rejoiced in both, when he agreed to make his *Soul an Offering for Sin* (Isaiah 53:10.). Which he did, from everlasting, in that Covenant, whereinto, he entered with the Father, relating to the Salvation of the Elect. That which animated him, in his Sufferings, gave him Joy., when he undertook to suffer and die, which was the Glory of God the Father, and the endless Bliss of those for whom he suffered and died. And, therefore, in Eternity, he always rejoiced before the Father, in the View which he then had of both. The Thoughts which he had before Time, of glorifying his Father, and saving the Objects of his Love, afforded him, without Intermission, infinite Pleasure and Joy.

4. Christ then rejoiced in the Dignity and Glory, which he, himself, was to enjoy, upon finishing that Work, which the Father gave him to do. He prayed for the Possession of it, when he was about to suffer, laying, *Father, glorify thou me with thine own fill, with the Glory, which I had with thee, before the World was* (John 17:5.). As hath been before observed, he existed with the Father, from everlasting, in his mediatorial Capacity, though neither constituent Part of his human Nature, then subsisted. The present Subsistence of either Part of that Nature, was not necessary unto his standing, and being considered, in that Capacity. The Glory for which our Lord prayed, was not that which is essential to his Divine Person; but his mediatorial Glory. Which he had with the Father, before the World was, in Promise and Grant. For, as the Father, in the everlasting Covenant, assigned him Work, he also promised him a Reward. And that *Reward* was ever *with him*, or present to his View, as *his Work* was always *before him*. And he eternally rejoiced in the Prospect which he had, of that immortal Dignity, unto which his human Nature was advanced, when he had completed the Work of Redemption. There Important and glorious Things, were the Matter of the eternal Joy of Christ, existing with the Father, in his mediatorial Capacity. The Meetness of his human Nature, for a Subsistence, in his Divine Person, and his Fitness, by Reason thereof, to accomplish effectually, .the whole Pleasure of the Father, concerning the Objects of his sovereign, eternal, and infinite Love. That Revenue of Honour and Glory, which the Father receives, by the Obedience, Suffering and Death of his human Nature, as subsisting in his Divine Person, The everlasting Security, consummate, and endless Felicity, of all those among the Sons of Men, whom he most intensely loved. And that State of Dignity, and Glory, unto which his human Nature was advanced, when he had finished the Work allotted to him, by the Father, in the Capacity of Mediator. They are the noblest, and most grand Effects of immense Wisdom. And, therefore, fit Matter of the Joy of Christ. There Things are *the Wisdom of God, in a Mystery, the bidden Wisdom, which he ordained, before the World to our Glory* (1 Corinthians 2:7.). Hence, the View, which Christ had of them, in the eternal Counsel of Peace, held between the Father, and Himself, gave him infinite Pleasure *always*, without the least Interruption, or Intermission.

V. Christ rejoiced in the habitable Part of the Father's Earth. The Earth is his. For, he created, and upholds it. He is *the Creator of the Ends* thereof (Isaiah 40:28.), *The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof: The World, and they who dwell therein* (Psalm 24:1.). *Heaven, yea, the Heaven of Heavens, is the Lord's: The Earth he hath given to the Children of Men.* He permits them to possess it,

and the Treasures of it. *The habitable Part of the Earth*, designs those Parts thereof, which are inhabited by the Objects of his peculiar Love. He is an everlasting Father to his People, and most tenderly loves them. He, therefore, rejoiced in those Places, which his Children would reside in, during their mortal State. Christ is the Husband of the Church, and hath the greatest Affection for her. Hence, he rejoiced, in those Spots of Ground which they were to dwell in, until he took her, to his Embraces, in the heavenly Mansions. O what a tender Thought does this Phrase express! The Joy which the Mediator had in this World, in Eternity, arose from this Consideration, that it was to be the Place, wherein, his People were to rife into Existence, and abide, until they were made meet for the everlasting Enjoyment of himself, in another, and infinitely better World than this.

VI. *His Delights were with the Sons of Men.* The radical Letters, in the original Word, are doubled ([ç[ç]), which increase its Signification. Great Delight is meant. Farther, at is in the plural, not the singular Number. So that, according to the Idiom of the original Language, it is to be understood, in the superlative Sense. The highest Delight is intended. Hence we must conclude, that the Love of Christ to his People, was, from everlasting, a Love of Complacency and Delight. And not merely a Love of Benevolence or Pity. Some, perhaps, will say, why is *this Antinomian* Tenet advanced? That Christ delights in his People, before they become Subjects of Holiness, How is that possible? It is not *Antinomianism*; but a glorious, evangelical Truth, which I hope to explain in such a Manner, as to place it above all reasonable Objection. The Persons with whom his Delights were, *are the Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven* (Hebrews 12:23.). Those whom the Father loved, chose, and gave unto Christ, to be saved by him. To whom He was appointed a Head. Who are *his Members, his Body, and Fulness* (Ephesians 1:23.). His Children. Those *many Sons*, whom God designed *to bring to Glory* (Hebrews 2:10.), They are the Persons, with whom the Delights of Christ were, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity part. In order to explain this important Point, I observe, that Christ had, from everlasting, a twofold View of his People.

1. In the Counsel of Peace, which was held between the Father, and Himself, he viewed, and considered his People, as lapsed, depraved, guilty, and therefore, miserable, I suppose, that good Men, who agree not with us, in the Point, which I am about to prove, will grant the Truth of this. Because, the Denial of it, would evert entirely, the precious Doctrine of a Counsel, and Covenant of Peace, being held, and entered into, from everlasting, between God, and Jesus Christ,

wherein, infinitely wise, and effectual Provision, was made, for their Recovery and Salvation, Now, let me ask our good Brethren, whom I much honour and esteem, if Divine Benevolence and Compassion, respected them, as Criminals, and guilty, or, as miserable, in Consequence of their Guilt? Surely, they will not say, that Divine Benevolence, and Compassion, respected them, as Criminals, and guilty, but as miserable, in Consequence of their Guilt.

Human Benevolence, and Pity, to an Offender, do not respect him, as such; but as obnoxious to suffering Penalty, for his Offence. No wise and just Judge will ever bear good Will to, and pity a Malefactor, as so considered; but only as he is subjected to Condemnation, for his Breach of the Law. Much less, is it possible with God, who *is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; to bear good Will unto, or pity Transgressors of his righteous Law, as so considered. Sinners as Sinners, are not Objects of Divine Benevolence and Compassion; but of Divine Disapprobation. Infinite Mercy and Compassion, are extended and exercised towards sinful Men, yet not under the Consideration, of their being Criminals, but under the Consideration of their being miserable, in Consequence of their Crimes. God and Christ, do not pity Sinners, as Sinners; but as they are obnoxious to Misery, on Account of their Sins. We do not say, that Christ delighted in his People, considered, as Sinners. Nor, that he took Pleasure in them, as liable to Misery, in Consequence of their Sins. If we affirmed the one or the other, we might be justly charged with Absurdity. So far are we from asserting either, that we deny, that the People of Christ, are the Objects of his Benevolence and Pity, viewed and considered, by him, as Sinners. And maintain, that his Pity to them, regards them only, under the Consideration of their being miserable, and not of their Guiltiness. Viewed by him, as Guilty, they are not the Objects of his Compassion; but of his Disapprobation. But that is no Objection to the Truth of what, I am now engaged, in the Defence of. If Christ had no other View of his People, in Eternity, than, as guilty and miserable, it must be granted, that they then, could not be the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

For it is not possible, that he should ever take the least Pleasure in them, considered as guilty, and involved in Misery. But, I hope to make it evident, that, from everlasting, he had another and very different View of them. I suppose, that it will be allowed, that a Counsel and Covenant of Peace, were held, and entered into, between the Father and Christ, before the Commencement of Time, wherein, the Salvation of the Church, was fully provided for, and effectually secured. I persuade myself, that our good Brethren, who object to the Doctrine of Christ's everlasting Delight in his People,

will not call the Truth of either into Question. Because, if they are not granted, we must conclude, that God and Christ, in Eternity, did not concern themselves about the Salvation and Happiness of the Church. That Christ was not appointed and constituted Mediator. That no federal Transactions passed between the Father and Christ, before Time, relating to the important Affair of the Redemption of his People. But surely, the precious Doctrine of an everlasting Covenant of Grace, being entered into, by the Father and Jesus Christ, for the Security, final, and endless Happiness of the Church, will not be parted with; out of Opposition to the Sentiment of Christ's delighting in his People, before Time. I apprehend, that an impartial, and candid Consideration, of the federal Transactions, of the Father and Christ, from everlasting, will oblige us to conclude, that it is true, that he then had such a View of his People, as was infinitely pleasing and delightful to him.

2. That the Prospect, which Christ had of his People, in the eternal Counsel, and Covenant of Peace, was a pleasing one to him, will evidently appear, by the Consideration of the following Particulars.

(1.) He therein viewed them, as washed in his Blood, and so clear of all Guilt. The Father, in the everlasting Covenant, required Christ to *lay down his Life* for his People. It was his Will, that he should *make his Soul an Offering*, for their Sins. That he should *shed his Blood*, in order to their Remission. Christ, on his Part, agreed, and became engaged, to suffer and die for them. Hence, he was under Obligation, to submit to Suffering and Death. *Ought not Christ to have suffered those Things?* Upon this Account, his Blood, is called *the Blood of the everlasting Covenant*. *The Church, as washed in his Blood, is without Spot, or wrinkle, or any such Thing*. Since, this was an Article fixed and settled, between the Father, and the great Mediator, in the Covenant of Grace, it is reasonable to conclude, that Christ then had a View of his People, as clear of all Guilt. For, surely, it cannot be a Mistake, to think, that he, from everlasting, fore-saw what would be the issue of his Sufferings and Death, respecting the Persons, for whom, he undertook to suffer and die. And that Fore-view, which he then had of them, doubtless, was infinitely pleasing, and delightful to him. If any will say, that Christ had not, in Eternity, a View of his People, as purged from the Guilt of Sin, in Virtue of his atoning Blood and Sacrifice, I conceive, that they will be obliged to deny, that the Affair of his Death, was an Article agreed on, from everlasting, between the Father, and himself. As freed from the Guilt of Sin, they ever were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

(2.) He delighted in his People, from everlasting, as he beheld them clothed, with the Robe of his Righteousness, and constituted

righteous thereby. The Righteousness of the Saints, whereby they are justified, is compared, on account of its Purity, to fine Linnen, clean and white. *Unto her it was granted, to be arrayed with fine Linnen, clean and white, which is the Righteousness of Saints.* Therefore, as they are invested therewith, they, *are all fair, and without Spot; perfect, through that Comeliness, which is put upon them.* This Righteousness, for its Value, and curious Texture, is comparable to wrought Gold. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her Clothing is of wrought Gold.* Because, of its Splendor, it is comparable to the Sun. The Church, in regard to her Sanctification, is *fair as the Moon*; but in respect to her Justification, she is *clear as the Sun*. Most splendid and glorious. Now Christ, in the Covenant of Peace, undertook to work out, and bring in this *Garment of Salvation, this Robe of Righteousness*, for his People. Having then, a View of them, as *naked*, and destitute of a justifying Righteousness, in themselves. For, Obedience to the Law, was required of him, by the Father, as well as suffering its Curse. And he agreed to fulfil the Father's Will in both. Hence, he not only, was to *make Reconciliation for Iniquity*; but also, to *bring in everlasting righteousness*. His undertaking to do the Latter for his People, as a clear Proof, that they were then, present to his View, in their own *filthy Garments*. And if, from everlasting, he beheld them, as unrighteous in themselves, may we not conclude, that they were present to his View, in Eternity, as clothed with *change of Raiment*, whereby, they are constituted righteous? And if they were so viewed, and considered by him, surely, they were, under that View, and Consideration, the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

(3.) Christ took Pleasure, in his People, from everlasting, as he beheld them beautified with the Graces of the Holy Spirit. The Saints are internally beautiful, as such. They are the happy Subjects of a lovely Image, which is delightful and pleasing to Christ. For, it is the Image of himself. The Graces of Faith, Hope, Love, and a holy Fear of God, are very ornamental to them. On account thereof, they are denominated, *the Excellent in the Earth*, in whom is *all Christ's Delight*. In the eternal Counsel and Covenant of Peace, he had a View of his People as adorned with those Graces. That, therein, he beheld them, as naturally depraved, and destitute of Holiness, will, I suppose, be freely granted. It cannot be denied, if it is allowed, that it was a Point settled, in that Covenant, that he should become Sanctification to his People, by a Communication of Holiness to them, Which cannot surely be called in Question; because, their holy Vocation, or Regeneration, and Sanctification, are according unto Grace, which was *given them, in him, before the World began* (2 Timothy 1:9). And that Grace was given, in the everlasting Covenant, which was entered into, between the Father, and himself,

as the Mediator, and Head of the Church. Is it not evident from hence, that Christ had a twofold View of his People, in the everlasting Covenant, one, as unholy, and the other, as adorned with Grace and Holiness? No Difficulty attends conceiving, that they were present to his View, in Eternity, as sinful. And is it not equally easy, to conceive, that they were then also present to his View, as sanctified? And that as so considered by him, they were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

(4.) Christ had a Prospect of his People, from everlasting, as perfectly holy, and consummately happy. He foresaw them, *in the Beauties of Holiness, from the Womb, before the Morning, i.e. the earliest Part of Time* (<19B003>Psalm 110:3.). The Father blessed them with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places in Christ. According, as he chose them in him, before the Foundation of the World. And, therefore, he then viewed them, as *all glorious within* (Psalm 45:13.). Or as possessed of that spotless Purity, which they will be the happy Subjects of, in the heavenly State, Eternal Life was promised to them, in him, before the Commencement of Time, *In hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie promised before the World began* (Titus 1:2.). As the federal Transactions of the Father, and Christ, respecting the Elect, in Eternity past, provided for their being completely holy, and consummately happy, in Eternity to come: So the View, which Christ had of them, in the immeasurable Duration, of Eternity past, extended itself, unto the immeasurable Duration of Eternity to come. And from everlasting, he foresaw them, as possessed of that spotless Beauty, consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory, which they will be the Subjects of, in the heavenly Mansions, And, therefore, his Delights were then with them. Those eternal Thoughts which Christ had of his People, being with him, in Heaven to behold his Glory, were infinitely pleasing and delightful to him. That he had such Thoughts concerning them, from everlasting, cannot be scrupled, if it be allowed, that their final, and endless Bliss, was then agreed on, in Covenant, between the Father, and himself. Which, I hope, will not be doubted of.

If our Brethren will not deny, that Christ had such a Prospect of his People, from everlasting, in the Counsel, and Covenant of Peace: I would intreat them to consider, whether, it is more proper to say, that he pitied them, as he beheld them washed in his Blood, and so clear of all Guilt. As clothed with his Righteousness, and thereby constituted righteous. As beautified with the Graces of his Spirit. And as possessed of complete Holiness, consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory, for evermore: Or to say, that he delighted in them, as they were so viewed, and considered, by him. I cannot but think, that upon a *candid* and *impartial* Consideration of the Matter,

they will grant, that it is more proper to say, that they were the Objects, of his Complacency and Delight, than of his Benevolence, Compassion or Pity: And if so, why should they object to the Doctrine of Christ's everlasting Delight, in his People, and represent it, in an odious Light. If it can be proved, that Christ had no such Prospect, of his People, in Eternity, I will immediately give up, what I have been pleading for. Because, I am persuaded, that Christ cannot take Pleasure, in his People, otherwise, than, as he views, or considers them washed in his Blood, clothed with his Righteousness, sanctified by his Spirit, as perfectly holy, and, completely happy, in the Enjoyment of himself. All which, were not only decreed concerning them; but federal Transactions passed, between the Father and Christ, in Eternity, relating to those important, and glorious Things. And, consequently, it is to be concluded, that the People of Christ, in the everlasting Covenant, were not only present to his View, as guilty, depraved, condemned, and miserable; but also, as clear of Guilt, constituted righteous, sanctified by his Grace, free from Condemnation, yea, as perfectly holy, and eternally happy, in the Fruition of his Father, and himself. Which View of them gave him infinite Pleasure and Delight: What is there in this, that should occasion us to think, that it is not *a Doctrine, according to Godliness?* Nothing at all. It does not suppose, that Christ delights in his People, considered, as unholy, or unlike to himself. It does not imply, that they may be happy, without being made holy; but the direct Contrary. Are not the Elect, meet and fit Objects of Christ's Delight, as washed in his Blood, clothed with his Righteousness, as *all glorious within*, and completely happy with himself, an the World above? Surely, it will be allowed, that they are. I will not pretend to maintain, that Christ delights in the Persons of his People, *simply* considered. That is to say, considered, neither, as guilty, nor innocent, neither, as unholy, nor holy, neither, as miserable, nor happy. For, I think, it is impossible, that he ever should so consider them. Because it is not possible, that a reasonable Creature should exist, and be neither guilty, nor innocent, neither unholy, nor holy, neither miserable, nor happy.

What I am inclined to maintain, is this only: That the People of Christ, were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight, from everlasting, as he then beheld them, clear of Guilt, constituted righteous, made holy by his Spirit, and completely happy in his glorious Presence. If, in Eternity, he had no such View of them, I will grant, that he could not take Pleasure in them. But that he had such a Prospect of them, in Eternity, I think, the federal Transactions between the Father and himself, most clearly, and .fully

evince. Christ's View of his People, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past, extended itself, unto the immeasurable Duration of Eternity to come. And, therefore, as it is true, that Christ was the Object of the Father's eternal Delight, in the Capacity of Mediator: So it is an evangelical Truth, that the People of Christ, from everlasting, were the Objects of his infinite Complacency and Delight. That is a Doctrine, which I conceive, cannot be disproved, without overthrowing the Eternity of the Covenant of Grace, which is more stable and firm, than Mountains of Brass. I conclude with the Doxology of the Apostle *Jude*: *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and ever, Amen.*

SERMON 34

THE OPPOSITION OF FLESH AND SPIRIT IN BELIEVERS, CONSIDERED

IN A SERMON, PREACHED *FEBRUARY* THE 8TH, 1761.

Published at the Request of some who heard it.

GALATIANS 5:17

“For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the Things that ye would.”

IN this Context the Apostle cautions the Saints to whom he writes, against those Evils, which they ought to a void; and exhorts them to practise those Duties, which were incumbent on them. In the Verse next preceding the Words now read, he says, *If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the Lust of the Flesh*; that is, if ye act under the Direction and Influence of the holy Spirit, ye will not gratify the Desires of the Flesh. *In the Text, the following things are to be considered,*

I. The Flesh and spirit.

II. The Lusting of the Flesh against the Spirit, and the Lusting of the Spirit against the Flesh.

III. The Contrariety of the one to the other.

IV. The Conclusion, or Inference arising from thence, *viz.* Believers *cannot do the Things that they would.*

I. *Let us take into Consideration the Flesh and the Spirit.*

1. The Flesh. Some who approve not of the Representation which the Scripture gives of the Depravity Nature, and which Believers find to be true by Experience, interpret the Flesh of our inferior sensitive Part, in Distinction from our superior intellectual Part. They think, that sensual Appetite is meant by it, and not our reasonable Part. But this Interpretation is not to be admitted, because our whole Nature is the Subject of Corruption and moral Impurity. Not only our inferior, but also our superior Part. Reason in us is depraved, as Appetite in us is vitiated. And such Works are attributed by the Apostle to the Flesh, which evidently respect our intellectual and superior Part, *viz. Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heretics, Envyings.* And therefore the Flesh designs moral Evil, which discovers itself in the Actings of our intellectual, as well as of our sensitive Part. Our

Mind, *i.e.* our reasonable Nature, as *carnal*, is *Enmity against God*, and is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be. The Flesh is a corrupt Principle and Spring of Action, which is seated in all our Powers. In this Sense it is to be understood in these Words of our Lord, *That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh: that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit* (John 3:6.): and this is the Import of it, in what the Apostle expresses concerning himself; *In me, that is in my Flesh, dwelleth no good Thing. So then with the Mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the Flesh the Law of Sin* (Romans 7:18, 25.). From this impure Fountain proceed all the sinful Actings, both of our superior and inferior Part. For our rational, as well as our sensitive Part, is the Subject of it.

2. We are to consider what is meant by the Spirit. Some think that the holy Spirit is intended, who dwells in the Saints. It is certain, that he opposes the Flesh in them. If he is designed, lusting against the Flesh, attributed to him, is to be understood in the same Sense as making Intercession in Believers is, which is ascribed to him: *The Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered. He maketh Intercession for the Saints according to the Will of God* (Romans 8:27, 28.). Making Intercession is not the Act of the Spirit; at is the Act of the Saints under his Influence, as the Spirit of *Grace and Supplications, helping their Infirmities* in Prayer to GOD. And thus lusting against the Flesh, is not the Act of the Person of the Spirit; for it is the proper Act of the Saints, under his gracious and effectual Influence. As the Person of the Spirit does not pray in Believers, but they themselves, pray under his Direction and Guidance; so the Person of the Spirit does not lust against the Flesh in them, but they themselves lust against it under his powerful Excitation. The Act is properly theirs, and not his, otherwise than influentially, as the efficient Cause thereof. I rather think, that Spirit designs a holy Principle of Action in the Saints, which is the proper Opposite of the Flesh in them. As the Flesh undoubtedly means an impure Fountain, from which spring evil Acts, it seems to me best to understand by the Spirit its contrary, in the Saints, which is a pure Fountain of good Acts. It is the Produce of the holy Spirit; *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. The Wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* As it as his Production in the Soul, its Nature must be spiritual, pure, and holy; and such are all the Acts which arise from it;. The Flesh, in Believers, is a Source of evil Actions, and the Spirit in them, is a Spring of good Actions.

II. *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh; the one opposes the other.*

1. The Flesh lusteth against, or opposes, the Spirit, in Thought, Volition, and in the Actings of the Affections towards holy Objects.

(1.) The Flesh opposes the Spirit, in Thought. The Spirit is an habitual Disposition in the Mind of a Believer, to spiritual Thoughts; according to that their Desire is this, *That the Words of their Mouth, and the Meditation of their Heart, may be acceptable in the Sight of the Lord, their Strength. and their Redeemer* (Psalm 19:14.). And sometimes their Meditations on GOD are *sweet*; their Thoughts of him are *precious* to them; they think of his Loving-kindness with Joy and Delight; contemplate its Nature with holy Admiration; view with Wonder and Astonishment the glorious Designs which were eternally formed in the divine Mind, about such unworthy Creatures as they know themselves to be; and the infinitely wise Methods which were fixed on for the Accomplishment of those Designs. The spiritual Part takes a peculiar Pleasure in thinking of JESUS CHRIST; the Constitution of his Person, who is GOD and Man ineffably united; and therefore is fit to act in the Capacity of Mediator between GOD the Father, and the Church. His Love they meditate upon with the highest Satisfaction, in its Freedom, Greatness, and Perpetuity; and they exercise their Thoughts with Joy and Delight on what He hath done and suffered, in order to save them; the Greatness and Variety of the Benefits which they receive from Him, are the Matter of their most pleasing Contemplations, *viz.* Pardon, Peace, Acceptation with GOD, Liberty of Access to Him, and Supplies of Grace to maintain and carry on the good Work which is begun in them. Those Things which engage the constant Attention of holy Angels, and which they *earnestly desire to look into*, the Saints, at some Times, are much conversant about; *The Grace of God, the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory which followed.* And they esteem these Thoughts the best which they ever have, or possibly can have, while they are in this World; and they give it in Charge to their Souls, to be much employed in serious and fixed Meditations on those Things. But, alas! their Thoughts of this kind are very far from being agreeable to the Flesh in them; that is uneasy and restless when the Mind is thus engaged in holy Contemplations. For, as the Spirit in Believers disapproves of vain and unholy Thoughts, so the Flesh in them dislikes holy and spiritual Thoughts, and seeks to eject them out of the Soul; which it too often, effects, by the vain Imagination presenting to View some trifling Object, which through a Want of Caution in the Mind, diverts and turns it off from a continued Attention unto those glorious Things which before it had in Prospect: Thus a melancholy Change takes place in the Frame of

a Believer; his spiritual Meditations are marred, to his Surprize, and before he is aware of it; his holy, spiritual Thoughts are succeeded by carnal and vain Thoughts. Thus the Flesh prevails against the Spirit; and that heavenly Joy which the Soul was filled with, while employed in holy Meditation, now subsides and vanishes for the present; that pleasing Sight which the Saint had of CHRIST, the beloved of his Soul, is gone; Darkness overspreads his Mind, in consequence of which he either censures himself for his Folly, in yielding to the Solicitations of his carnal Part, whereby so sad a Change hath taken Place in the Frame of his Soul, or he sinks into Indifferency through the Prevalence of Corruption, and is in a great Measure insensible of, and unaffected with the Loss he hath sustained; a Train of vain Thoughts croud in and take Possession of the Soul, and prevent the Mind considering duly what a foolish Part it hath acted, to its unspeakable Prejudice; and therefore it falls into a Lethargy, and becomes stupid. It is so busy an acting according to the Dictates of the Flesh, that it is not at Leisure to hearken to the Remonstrances which the Spirit makes against it; they are not heard nor attended to, by reason of that great Advantage which the Flesh hath gained; and thus it may be even with the best.

(2.) The Flesh lusts against, or opposes, Spirit, in Volition. The Will of a Believer, as sanctified, is habitually inclined to Holiness; his Mind discerns that it is most eligible, because of its Excellency, and his Will, upon that Discernment, exerts itself in an actual Choice of it. But this Choice is not made with the whole Will, because it is not wholly sanctified, but in Part only; and therefore the Will, at no Time, and in no Instance, is entirely engaged in a Desire and Pursuit after Holiness. For there is in the Will a fixed Resistance and Opposition unto what is good; Flesh is seated in the Will as well as Spirit, by reason of which the Spirit hath not, nor can have, a complete Command thereof; it is partly under the Direction of the one, and partly under the Direction of the other. The Flesh dislikes and is Enmity against Holiness, and it endeavours to repress and expel holy Desires which arise from the Spirit. It is not only ever present, and so can immediately exert itself in an Opposition to those holy Volitions which spring up in the Will, as it acts under the Direction of the Spirit; but it is present as a *Law*, the Believer *finds a Law, that when he would do Good, Evil is present with him*. It is coercive, and hath a commanding Force, which too often prevails against the Spirit; hence the holy, spiritual Desires of the Believer abate in their Fervency, and sometimes, for the present, are almost quenched in his Soul. When his Will is thus captivated by the Flesh, Desires of a quite different Nature from those which sprung up in it before, arise therein, and it chuses what is vain and foolish, unto the Gratification of the Flesh, which now hath obtained its End, without

which it would not be easy, for it never is, while the Soul acts in a holy and spiritual manner.

The corrupt Part in the Saints fails not to check the Will in the Choice it makes of what is agreeable to the spiritual Part in them, out of that wretched Aversion which it hath to all that is good. It is not only true that the Flesh does not concur with the Spirit in those holy Breathings and Desires which arise from it in the Soul, but it constantly opposes them, and sometimes, with great Violence, and ceases not until it prevails, unto their Expulsion. And innumerable are its Wiles, by which it aims to give a Diversion to the Mind, and draw it off from its Attention to the heavenly Objects about which it is conversant. And if the Flesh prevails upon the Mind to abate of Watchfulness against it, in its Assaults, it will be lure to improve the Advantage it hath gained. Quite different Objects it presents to the Mind, which through its Remissness as to its present Duty, strike it, and possess it of many unprofitable and vain Thoughts. Thus it becomes carnal in its Conceptions; which is followed by carnal Acts in the Will. For Vanity in the Mind, if Entertainment is given to it, will assuredly introduce Carnality in the Will. Spiritual Thoughts are Incentives to spiritual Desires; and carnal Thoughts, if not immediately expelled out of the Mind, will quench heavenly Desires, and give Rise unto such Volitions in the Will, as are agreeable to the Flesh; for the Acts of the Mind, and the Acts of the Will correspond in their Nature, and are of the same kind; if the Mind acts spiritually in its Thoughts, the Will acts spintually in its Volitions; but on the contrary, if the Mind acts vainly in its Thoughts, the Will acts vainly in its Volitions; the Reason of which is, the Acts of our Will follow the Acts of our Mind.

(3.) The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, in the Actings of the Affections towards holy Objects. As the Mind discerns the Excellency and Glory of heavenly Things, and the Will makes Choice of them; so the Affections tend towards them according to the Spirit. For, the Mind is not only enlightened, and the Will sanctified, but also the Affections are spiritualized; in consequence of which, they are elevated above the fading, perishing Things of this World, embrace and adhere to Things which are above, *where Christ sitteth, who is even at the right Hand of God*. Invisible Glories, when beheld by Faith, powerfully attract the Affections, and produce the higher Satisfaction and Pleasure, which sanctified Persons, at any Time, experience. They afford a Joy that is *unspeakable and full of Glory*. Nothing can possibly give that sweet and delightful Entertainment to the Saints, which heavenly and unseen Objects do. Grace refines their Affections, and gives them a Relish for far nobler and purer Joys, than can arise from the most

delectable Things of this World; they are all of them insipid to the spiritual Taste of the Saints; spiritual Things only are suited to the Nature of the Spirit in them. But the Flesh in Believers is so far from having Pleasure in them, that it is wholly averse to them, and its Aim is to draw off the Affections from them; it entirely disrelishes those heavenly Joys which result from Communion with GOD, and Prospects of his Glory in the Person of CHRIST; and it endeavours to deprive the Soul of that spiritual Pleasure it enjoys while it is conversant about divine Things, and too often it so far prevails, as not only to damp its spiritual Joys, but also

to entice the Affections unto an Embrace of carnal Objects, whereby it obtains the End it sought after.

Thus the Flesh lusteth against, or opposes, the Spirit in the Saints; in Thought, Volition, and in the Actings of the Affections towards holy objects.

2. The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in Thought, Volition, and in the Acts of the Affections about carnal and evil Objects.

(1.) The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in Thought. The carnal Part in a Believer is a constant Source of vain Thoughts, according to that *the Imagination of the Thought his Heart is only evil, and that continually*. The Flesh is never quiet and easy but when it is employed in framing vain Imaginations, and therefore a Multitude of unprofitable and sinful Thoughts crowd in upon the Mind. It is *egregious* Folly in us to dissemble in this Matter, for GOD, who searches our Hearts, is perfectly acquainted with all the carnal Conceptions which our sinful Minds form; and if we are awake and capable of reflecting upon our internal Acts, we must be sensible that this is the Facet; and not an Exaggeration of our Vanity and Sinfulness, respecting our Thoughts. The Spirit in the Saints disapproves of, hates, and detests all those Thoughts, which are pleasing to the Flesh in them; it esteems them bold Intruders, and treats them as such; for it is wholly against giving them the least Countenance and Entertainment; that desires their Expulsion; and it endeavours to chase them out of the Mind, as Guests which are most unwelcome and disagreeable unto it; nor can it be easy with their Continuance. But let them be driven out of the Soul ever so often, they will return; because the Flesh, though used with the greatest Severity, and may be compelled to retreat for a short Time, yet it is not put out of Countenance; but with daring Boldness, and great Violence, it quickly re-advances, and assaults the Soul again; the Saints *hate vain Thoughts*, but they cannot possibly get rid of them.

(2.) The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in Volition. The Will, according to the Flesh, is inclined to Evil, and averse to Good; and as it acts under its Direction, it refuses the latter, and chuses the former. The Choice which the Flesh makes is agreeable to its Nature, that is sinful, and such is its Choice; unholy Volitions continually spring up in the Will, even of the most sanctified, by Reason it is the Subject of a carnal and corrupt Principle, which always disposes it to Vanity and Folly; for the Flesh is at all Times engaged *in the Service of the Law of Sin*. The Spirit in the Saints disapproves of that evil Choice, which the Flesh causes the Will to make, and solicits it to retract that Choice, and puts it upon making a quite contrary one. As the Flesh never concurs with the Spirit, but opposes it in the Choice of Holiness, so the Spirit never concurs with the Flesh in the Choice of Sin, but opposes it in that Choice. Hence, the Volitions of a Believer, at no Time, are wholly evil, nor wholly good; because the Will in them acts partly under the Direction of the Flesh, and partly under the Direction of the Spirit; both are active Principles in it, and each hath an Influence upon at; the Flesh moves it to Evil, and the Spirit excites it unto Holiness. Thus the Spirit, in Believers, lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in those evil Volitions which it causes to arise in their Will. Sometimes indeed its Opposition to the Flesh is very strong and powerful, even unto a Predominancy against it; and sometimes its Opposition is feeble, then the Flesh maintains its Ground, increases in its Strength, prevails against the Spirit, and keeps the Will fixed in that sinful Choice which it hath made, and that is followed with sad Effects in the Soul.

(3.) The Spirit lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, in the Actings of the Affections about vain and sinful Objects. The Affections, as carnal, do not in the least Degree tend towards heavenly Things, nor are they pleasing to them; holy Thoughts and spiritual Desires are so far from affording Delight to our corrupt Passions, that they often tumultuously endeavour to stifle such Thoughts and Desires in our Souls; there is nothing so vain, unprofitable, and pernicious, but our depraved Affections will embrace and adhere unto, rather than what is sacred; for all their Joy and Delight are in Vanity and Folly; and our vicious Affections have a strong and powerful Influence on our Mind, and our Will, and prevail so far as to banish, for the present, holy Thoughts and heavenly Desires, unto the Gratification of the Flesh. The Spirit in Believers hath no Pleasure in what is agreeable to the Flesh; it dislikes those carnal Joys which that pursues, and is never easy without; and its Aim is, when the Affections are enticed and drawn away after vain Objects by the Flesh, to recall them wandering, and to direct them towards such Objects as are suitable to its own Nature; for the Spirit enjoys no Satisfaction and Pleasure,

so long as the Flesh is gratified and entertained in its Dalliances with carnal Objects. Spiritual Things only are the Matter of the Saints Delight, so far as their Affections are spiritualized, and therefore it lusteth against, or opposes, the Flesh, when it leeks to entice and entangle the Affections in order to its Entertainment. And thus the Spirit counteracts and opposes the Flesh in Thought, Volition, and in the Actings of the Affections, about, or towards vain and unlawful Objects; which I am persuaded all Believers find to be true by Experience, tho' some may be more observant of it than others are.

I would here make two Observations before I pass on.

Observation 1. A Believer hath two Springs of Action in him, one is Evil, and the other Good; the Flesh is Evil, no good Thing dwells in it, nor can any Thing which is Good be educed out of it; no holy Thoughts, no heavenly Desires, nor spiritual Motions and Tendencies. The Spirt is Good, and is a Spring of holy Thoughts, pure Desires, and spiritual Motions and Tendencies.

Observation 2. The Flesh remains the same after Regeneration as it was before, no Alteration takes Place in its Nature for the better. Sin, which dwells in the Saints, is not less vile and sinful than it heretofore was; the *old Man* is not amended by the Creation of the *new Man*; I hope that none will mistake me on this Subject, I do not say, that the Heart is not made better, for that it certainly is, by the Implantation of a holy Principle in it; but what I say is this, that the Flesh, or in-dwelling Sin, is not made better; its Nature is still what it was, tho' deprived of its Dominion in the Soul; and therefore the Kind of its Actings is the same, notwithstanding the Presence of Grace; consequently the same sinful Thoughts, unholy Desires, and evil Tendencies, may, and too often do spring from it, which did before Regeneration; and this is matter of great Discouragement unto many holy and humble Persons, who upon their Conversion expected to find it much otherwise; and, therefore, are greatly disappointed.

III. *The Contrariety of the one to the other is to be considered.*

1. They are contrary in their Nature. The Flesh is contrary to the Spirit, that is the Consequence of our Apostasy from GOD, it followed upon our Breach of the Law of our Maker, and as it is the Fruit of Sin, it must be absolutely evil in its Nature, no Good can be in it; the Flesh is not only sinful, but there is an *exceeding Sinfulness in it*, and therefore it must be concluded that it is the direct Opposite of the Spirit; for, the Spirit is the Production of the holy Spirit of GOD, He is the efficient Cause thereof, it is born of him, *that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*; in its kind, it is *a good and a perfect Gift, which cometh down from above*, so that it is the very Reverse

of the Flesh. The Difference between the Flesh, and the Spirit is not this, That the Flesh is *less good* than the Spirit, and the Spirit is *less evil* than the Flesh; but this, the former is wholly evil, and the latter is wholly good, and therefore they are contrary the one to the other, as the Apostle asserts and they are altogether so, not partially, there is no Goodness in the Flesh, nor is there the least Evil in the Spirit; the Flesh, in its Nature, is entirely Evil; and the Spirit, in its Nature, is entirely Good.

2. The Flesh and the Spirit are contrary in their Actings. Each acts agreeable to its own Nature; the Flesh being wholly Evil in its Nature, all its Acts are entirely so; not partly Evil and partly Good, but they are altogether evil and sinful: And the Spirit being in Its Nature good and holy, all those Acts which spring from *it*, are spiritual and holy. Not that the Souls of Believers, at any Time, or in any Instance, are wholly Evil or wholly Good in acting, for at is in Part only that they are so. The Reason of which is this, they act partly under the Direction of the Flesh, and partly under the Direction of the Spirit, in whatever they do. These contrary Springs of Action, being always resident in them, they are ever influenced by each; hence their Acts are mixed, partly Evil and partly Good. This is not to be understood that Actions which are materially Evil, have any Degree of Goodness in them; or that Actions which are materially Good, have any Degree of Evil in them; but it is to be taken thus, That the Minds of Believers are not wholly Good in holy Actions, by Reason of the Opposition of the Flesh in them to those Actions; nor are they wholly Evil in sinful Actions, by Reason of that Opposition which the Spirit in them makes to those Actions; as the Flesh and the Spirit are directly contrary in their Nature, they certainly are so in acting; the Flesh concurs not with the Spirit in its Acts, nor does the Spirit concur with the Flesh in its Acts; a Believer, *with his Mind serves the law of God, but with his Flesh he serves the Law of Sin.*

IV. The Conclusion, or Inference arising from thence is this, viz. Believers cannot do the Things that they would.

1. With Respect to Good. The Aim and Desire of a Saint, according to the Spirit, is to be all Conformity to the holy Law of GOD; but the continual Presence of the Flesh renders it impossible, even when that acts most vigorously in him; for the Flesh fails not to lust against, and oppose it. Sometimes a Believer retires, and proposes to exercise himself in Reading, serious Meditation and Prayer, and therein to enjoy delightful Communion with GOD and a dear Redeemer. But, alas! the Flesh in him bestirs itself, and rises up with Violence against the Spirit in this holy Design, which it hath formed in the Mind; whereupon a sad Disappointment ensues, Confusion

and Distraction take place in his Thoughts, his spiritual Desires abate in their Fervency, and his Affections rove, and are ready to embrace any vain Object, which the carnal Imagination presents unto them; whereby he is prevented acting in that holy and spiritual manner which he intended and desired; through the present Prevalency of the Flesh, in him, against the Spirit, he immediately becomes indisposed to those holy Exercises which it was his Intention and Desire to be delightfully employed in; and thus, I am persuaded, it may at some Times be, even with the best, for *the Law of Sin, which is in the Members, and wars against the Law of the Mind*, in some Instances, there is Reason to think, gains Advantage over the spiritual Part, in all the Saints.

2. Believers cannot do that which they would with Regard to Evil. The Flesh in them, being entirely sinful in its Nature, all its Projects and Contrivances are so; it always aims at the utmost Gratification of its corrupt Desires, and is for bringing the whole Soul in Subjection to itself, the Mind, the Will, and the Affections; it endeavours to possess the Mind of vain Thoughts, it solicits the Will to chuse what is unprofitable and evil, and it labours to entice and entangle the Affections, to place and keep them fixed on carnal Objects; and many Times, thro' its Violence, or its Artifice and Cunning, it prevails very far; at which, the Spirit in Believers is alarmed, and rises up in Opposition unto this Prevalency of the Flesh, for that cannot bear with it. The spiritual Part reproves the Mind for its Inattention to the Design of the Flesh, whereby vain Thoughts got Possession of it; the Will for its Carnality, by Means whereof evil Volitions sprung up in it; the Affections for their Folly in wandering at the Instigation of the Flesh; and thus while that is busily employed in acting its vile Part, the Spirit remonstrates against it, checks and controls it, and in a great Measure, for the present, prevents it from making farther Progress in the Soul. And, therefore, as Believers cannot do the Things that they would, according to the Spirit, by Reason of the Opposition of the Flesh; so they cannot do the Things that they would, according to the Flesh, because of the Opposition of the Spirit; and thus it will be With them, so long as they continue in this imperfect State.

I shall close the Discourse with some Observations.

Observation 1. Evil is in the whole Mind, or our whole intellectual Nature is the Subject of Sin. No Faculty in us is free from that moral Contagion, in the Understanding it is Darkness, or an Incapacity to form a true Judgment of spiritual Things; in the Will it is a Disinclination to what is holy, and a constant, fixed Propensity to what is vain and sinful; in the Affections it is a Dislike of what is spiritual, and Pleasure in what is carnal; and thus it is, even in all

regenerate Persons. For Regeneration effects no Change for the better in the Nature of the Flesh, that still remains what it was, only it hath lost its Dominion by the Production of its contrary in the Soul, which reigns in Opposition to it; but that notwithstanding, it is resident as an active Principle in all the Powers of the Mind, and they are under its Influence.

Observation 2. Good is in the whole Heart of a regenerate Person. Every Faculty is the Subject of Grace; there is Light in the Understanding, which is an Ability to discern spiritual Things in their Excellency and Glory; Holiness is seated in the Will, by which it is disposed to avoid Evil, and inclined to the Choice of what is Good; the Affections are spiritualized, in Consequence whereof Sin becomes the Object of their Aversion, and Holiness of their Pleasure and Delight. Thus Evil and Good are in the whole Soul of a regenerate Man.

Observation 3. The Heart of a Believer is not wholly Evil, nor wholly Good, it is each in Part; and therefore he differs from Angels, the Spirits of just Men made perfect, from Devils, and from unregenerate Men. Angels are all Purity and Perfection, absolutely free from Evil, and are indefective in their Acts of Obedience to the divine Will. The Spirits of just Men departed have no Impurity attending them, those corrupt Habits which they were the Subjects of in this State, are entirely eradicated, and they are made perfectly like unto JESUS CHRIST; they are so holy as to be without all Cause of *Blame before God in Love*. Devils are altogether sinful, they have not the least Degree of Holiness in them; and unregenerate Men are Flesh only, they have nothing of Spirituality in them, their Hearts are entirely carnal and sinful. Believers are the Subjects of Flesh and Spirit, of Sin and Holiness, and therefore their Hearts are neither wholly Evil nor wholly Good, but are both in Part, because contrary jarring Springs of Action are feared in their whole Souls, which have a contrary Influence on the Mind, the Will, and the Affections; so that they do not really act under the Direction either of the Flesh or the Spirit, which are in them, but partly under the Direction of the one, and partly under the Direction of the other; consequently they are neither wholly Evil, nor wholly Good, but each in Part, and have such a Combat within themselves, between Flesh and Spirit, as no others have.

Observation 4. There is in Believers a Principle of Holiness, by which I understand a Capacity and Disposition in the Mind of acting in a holy, spiritual manner. In the Understanding it is a spiritual, visive Ability to discern heavenly Things, and therefore it is Light subjective, which enables him, in whom it is, to perceive the true Nature of Light objective, legal, and evangelical. This Principle in

the Will, is a Disposition and Power to chuse what is holy, and to refuse what is evil. In the Affections, it is Spirituality, and a Suitableness to the Nature of divine Things, whereby they are caused to tend towards, and take Pleasure in them. This is what is meant by the *Heart of Flesh*, the Opposite of the *Heart of Stone*; the *new Heart*, the *new Spirit*; the *new Man*, which is the Contrary of the *old Man*; it is *the Law of the Mind*, against which *the Law in the Members wars*; it is the *Mind which serves the Law of God*, the direct Opposite of *the Flesh*, which *serves the Law of Sin*. Hence it is clear, that there are in Believers two contrary Principles, or Springs of Action, one is good, and the other is evil; one is holy, and the other is sinful; and the Acts of the one are contrary to the Acts of the other. With no Propriety can it be said that the evil Principle is Error, or false Doctrine in the Mind, though by Reason of that Principle, the Mind forms an erroneous Judgment concerning Truth. Nor can it with the least Propriety be said, that the good Principle in the Mind is Truth, though by Means of that Principle it discerns Truth, and approves of it. Some of late seem to apprehend, that there is not, in the Souls of Believers, a holy Principle distinct from the Word, that is to say evangelical Truth, but that, if there is what may be called a Principle of Holiness in them, it is the Word, or evangelical Truth itself. This is a fond Imagination, which is fully evinced by several Things, one is this; The Spirit, or Principle of Holiness, in the Saints, is born and ingenerated of the holy Spirit, *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*. Now it is ridiculous to think, that the Word is born of the Spirit of GOD, in the Saints. It was revealed and dictated by him to the Prophets and Apostles, and by him it is opened and applied to the Souls of Believers, for their Instruction and Consolation; but born of him in them it is not, nor can be. Again, the Principle of Holiness in the Saints, is a new Creation, for they are the Workmanship of GOD created in CHRIST JESUS; on which Account they are denominated new Creatures: *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature*. It is a monstrous Figment to imagine, that evangelical Truth is created in the Saints. As was said before, it is revealed and applied to them, but created in them it is not. Farther, the spiritual Principle discerns Truth, but the Truth itself it cannot be; for if so, that which discerns, and that which is discerned, must be the same, which they cannot be. How is it possible, that the Object discerned, should be the same with that which discerns it? Besides, this holy Principle receives *the Things of the Spirit of God*, which Things are evangelical Truths. The Things received, are distinct from that which receives them; and therefore the Word is not that Principle of Holiness which is in Believers, but distinct from it; the Word of Truth is that upon which the spiritual

Principle acts, by which it is nourished, strengthened, and invigorated, and, consequently, at cannot be that Principle itself.

A mere Whiffler in Reasoning hath misrepresented Dr. Owen on this Subject, who expresses himself thus, in treating on the Efficiency of the Word, as the Instrument of GOD, in the Communication of Salvation to us. In the Regeneration and Sanctification of the Elect, the first external Act of this Salvation, this is wrought by the Word, 1 Peter 1:23. We are born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of GOD; wherein not only the Thing itself, of our Regeneration by the Word, but the manner of it also is declared. It is by the Collation of a new spiritual Life upon us, whereof the Word is the Seed. As every Life proceeds from same Seed, that hath in itself virtually the whole Life to be educed from it by natural Ways and Means, so the Word in the Hearts of Men is turned into a vital Principle, that cherished by suitable Means puts forth vital Acts and Operations. By this Means we are born of God, and quickened, who by Nature are Children of Wrath, dead in Trespasses and Sin. So Paul tells the Corinthians, that he had begotten them in Jesus Christ by the Gospel. I confess it doth not do this Work by any Power resident in itself, and always necessarily accompanying its Administration; for then all would be so regenerated unto whom it is preached, and there could be no Neglecters of it. But it is the Instrument of God for this End, and mighty powerful of God it is for the Accomplishment of it. And this gives us our first real Interest in the Salvation it doth declare. Of the same Use and Efficacy is it in the Progress of this Work in our Sanctification, by which we are carried on towards the full Enjoyment of this Salvation. So our Saviour prays for his Disciples, (John 17:19.) Sanctify them by thy Word, as the Means and Instrument of their Sanctification. And he tells his Apostles, that they were clean through the Word that he had spoken unto them, (John 15:3.) for it is the Food and Nourishment whereby the spiritual Principle of Life, which we receive in our Regeneration, is cherished and increased, (1 Peter. 2:2.) and so able to build us up until it give us an Inheritance among them that are sanctified. Upon which Discourse this Whiffler remarks thus; Here we have Dr Owen against Dr Owen, What are we to do in this Care? whiffle after him? no, but reduce him to a mere Neutral,

and allow him no Vote. But how does it appear that the Doctor contradicts himself, which is a Reason why he should be allowed no Vote on this subject? Answer thus: The Doctor elsewhere says, I call this Principle of Holiness an Habit, not as though it were absolutely of the same Kind with acquired Habits, and would in all Things answer unto our Conceptions and Descriptions of them: But we only

call it so, because in its Effects and manner of Operations it agreeth in sundry Things with acquired, intellectual, or moral Habits. But it hath much more Conformity unto a natural, unchangable Instinct, than unto any acquired Habit. Wherefore God chargeth it on Men, that in their Obedience unto him, they did not answer that Instinct which is in other Creatures towards their Lords and Benefactors, (Isaiah 1:3.) and which they cordially observe, (Jeremiah 8:7). But herein GOD teacheth us more than the Beasts of the Earth, and maketh us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven, (Job 35:11.). *This therefore is that which I intend, a Virtue, a Power, a Principle of spiritual Life and Grace, wrought, created, infused into our Souls, and inlaid in all the Faculties of them, constantly abiding and unchangeably residing in them, which is antecedent unto, and the next Cause of all Acts of true Holiness whatever* There is not the least Appearance of Contradiction in what the Doctor advances, for he asserts, in each Place, that there is a vital, spiritual Principle in the Regenerate. So far, therefore, there is no Contradiction, but a perfect Agreement. In the former Place he observes, that the Word, or Gospel, in a Way of Efficiency, begets, or produces that vital, spiritual Principle, not that the Word *materially* is that Principle. He was no such *Blunderer*, to imagine that the Word is that which it effects in Men, he well knew it to be distinct therefrom; and that Efficiency, which he ascribes to his Word, is not the Efficiency of an Agent; but of an Instrument, or Mean, used by GOD in the Regeneration of his People; and in their Sanctification, as the vital, spiritual Principle in them is nourished and increased by it. Affirming that the Word is a Mean, or Instrument, used in producing the vital, spiritual Principle, is so far from supposing that it is that Principle, that it most clearly implies, that it is distinct from it; for no Mean, or Instrument, can possibly be that, which it is the Mean, or Instrument, of effecting. The Doctor, therefore, is not to be reduced to a Neutral on this Subject, and denied the Right of a Vote upon it, which this *Trifler* in Reasoning is desirous of. It is much to be lamented, that any among us should call into Question the important Truth, that there is a Principle of Holiness in Believers; but with Chearfulness we engage in its Defence. May the Lord of his infinite Mercy give us satisfactory Evidence, that we are the happy Subjects of such a Principle! and by his Spirit and Grace increase the Vigour of it in our Souls!

SERMON 35

THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL, CONSIDERED

IN A SERMON PREACHED AT *KETTERING* IN
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, MAY 23, 1762.

1 TIMOTHY 1:11

“According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.”

THE Law, of which the Apostle before speaks, is to be considered as a Prescription of Duty, or as a Covenant having a penal Sanction annexed. As such, it is *not made for the righteous Man*, for him who is made righteous by the Obedience of CHRIST, and is imprincipled with Holiness, and also taught by divine Grace to *live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present World*. Such a Person is not under the Law, as a Covenant, but he is under it as a Prescription of Duty, *being not without Law to God but under the Law to Christ: according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. In the Text three Things are to be observed,*

I. GOD is blessed.

II. The Gospel is His.

III. It is glorious.

I. **GOD is blessed.**

1. He is blessed in himself. GOD is essentially and infinitely happy. His Happiness cannot be increased by the Obedience and Praises of his Creatures, nor can it be diminished by their Disobedience. Eternal, invariable, and immense Delight, the supreme Being hath in his infinitely glorious Perfections, which it is impossible should ever vary, increase, or decline in Glory. He is GOD *All-sufficient. The same from Everlasting to Everlasting, without Variableness and Shadow of Turning*. None can *profit* him, nor can any *injure* him in his essential Glory.

2. GOD is the Fountain of Blessedness to Angels and Saints. The Felicity of an intelligent Creature consists in the Knowledge and Adoration of the Perfections of GOD, in the Enjoyment of a Sense of his Favour, and in a Conformity to his holy Will. The Angels owe their invariable Happiness unto the sovereign and free Favour of GOD towards them; which resolved upon their eternal Fruition of himself: in Consequence of which gracious Decree, they are rendered *impeccable* and immutably happy for evermore. And the Saints are recovered from Ruin, and advanced to a State of

inconceivable Blessedness in his immediate Presence, as the pure Effect of his sovereign Kindness, Grace and Mercy to them. He let them *apart for himself*; therefore, they shall be for ever with him. Perfectly know him, humbly adore him; be like him, and enjoy a ravishing Sense of his Favour unto Eternity. *In his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand are Pleasures forevermore.*

II. The Gospel is His. It is not a human Contrivance, but of divine Original. Which might be evinced by many Considerations. I shall mention two only.

1. The Gospel is a Mystery. It is *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery* (1 Corinthians 2:7.). *A great Mystery* (1 Timothy 3:16.). And there are *Riches of Glory* in that *Mystery*. (Colossians 1:26.). Now no Man can invent a proper Mystery. That is above the Capacity. not only of Men, but of Angels also. It is impossible that any created Mind should coin a Mystery. Absurdities may be invented; but Mysteries cannot, by any created Being whatsoever. Finite Intelligence may discover that there are some mysterious Truths, which respect the Nature of GOD; but such as result from his Will, are absolutely undiscoverable by the Light of Nature. And all evangelical Truths are of that Kind. For the Gospel is a System of Truths which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, and which have not entered into the Heart of Man* (1 Corinthians 2:9.) Hence it is evident, that the Gospel is from Heaven, and not of Men. It could never have been known without supernatural Revelation.

2. No natural Man in the World approves of the Gospel. For *the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

The Prophets and Apostles therefore were not the Inventors of the evangelical Scheme. It is most unreasonable to imagine, that Men in their Wits, would unite In a Design to frame and propagate a Set of Doctrines, which they knew would be displeasing to the whole World; and thereby expose themselves to Ridicule, Contempt, and the Hatred of all Classes of Persons, Rulers and Subjects, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. The Deists are very Fools, if they really think, that the Gospel is the Invention of those who published it to Mankind. For they will never be able to advance any Thing., which may in the least degree render it probable, that the Publishers of the Gospel agreed in palming a Forgery upon Men. If any Number of Persons were to conspire in framing a Set of Doctrines, doubtless they would be such as they thought might meet with Approbation in those to whom they intended to publish them, and not such as they knew would be distasteful to Men universally.

Now, as the Prophets and Apostles were lure that the Doctrines, which they were determined to publish, would not please, but irritate; would not ingratiate them into Favour, but draw upon them the keen Resentment of the Generality of those to whom they recommended those Doctrines; it is Madness to conceit, that they were the Framers of them. This Consideration with the former sufficiently evince, that the Gospel is of GOD, and not of human Invention. Being of GOD, it most justly demands our reverential Regard.

III. It is glorious. I know but little of its Glory.

Something of it will most clearly appear by a just Definition of it. And I think it may be defined thus: *The Gospel is the Revelation of a gracious, holy, righteous, effectual, and wise Provision of Salvation, made by God for some of the human Race.* Because it is the Revelation of a Provision of Salvation, it is called the *Gospel of our Salvation*. That there is a Design in GOD to pardon Sin, and save Sinners, cannot be known but by the Gospel. Nothing in Nature nor in Providence can furnish guilty Men, with a Ground of Hope of being pardoned and saved. Supernatural Revelation only can supply us with a Foundation of Hope, as we are Creatures guilty, sinful, miserable and helpless.

1. It is a gracious Provision which GOD has made for the Salvation of Sinners. Salvation is wholly of Grace. By which is meant not the Benevolence and Goodness of GOD as Creator, who is *good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works*. Salvation springs not from thence Absolutely free and sovereign Favour is intended by Grace, from which the Salvation of Sinners takes its Rise, *By Grace are ye saved. Not of Works, lest any Man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8, 9.).

No Subject of Salvation will have it to say, that it was fit GOD should pardon and save him, because of good Dispositions in him, and obediential Acts performed by him. — Election to Salvation was of the free Favour of GOD. *Even so then, at this present Time also there is a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace.* — *And if it be by Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace; otherwise Work is no more Work* (Romans 11:6, 7.). Grace and Works are Opposites in the Business of Salvation. They cannot be blended together as con-Causes thereof. Nor is it partly of Grace and partly of Works. It is of Grace, unto the utter Exclusion of Works, as a Cause thereof, that none may have Ground for Boasting. The Choice of Men unto Salvation must be an Act of pure Favour, without any Motive, in them; because Faith and all its Fruits, in them are the

Effects of that Choice. For they were *chosen to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth* (2 Thessalonians 2:13.). GOD chose them that *they might be holy* (Ephesians 1:4.), and not because he foresaw they so would be. Holiness therefore, being the Fruit of Election, it could not be a Reason or Motive with GOD to form such a Decree in Favour of its Objects. But it must be an Act of mere Good-will and undeserved Goodness towards them. Again, Remission of Sin is of pure Grace. There is a meritorious Cause of Pardon, *viz.* the Blood of CHRIST. But the Cause of that Cause is the rich Grace of GOD, and therefore, divine Grace is the Origin from which the Pardon of Sin springs. A meritorious Cause in another, detracts not in the least from the Glory of the Grace of GOD, as the Cause of what is merited, by reason, that meritorious Cause is caused by his Grace. *In whom we have Redemption, through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sin, according to the Riches of his Grace* (Ephesians 1:7.). The Grace of the Father, and the Merit of CHRIST'S Blood, both have Place in our Remission; and are perfectly consistent. The Merit of the Blood of CHRIST is founded in the Grace of the Father towards himself, as Man; and towards us, for whom it was shed; and therefore, the Father's Grace is the Origin from which our Pardon springs, though it was properly merited by his Blood. I must say, that I am ashamed to find any think, that Grace in GOD, and proper Merit in CHRIST, are inconsistent; and therefore, take the Liberty to deny the Merit of a dear Redeemer. I cannot refrain from laying, that such are very unskilful in divine Things, at least in this Instance. Besides, the Justification of our Persons is of the Grace of GOD. Infinite Love and immense Wisdom provided the infinitely valuable Righteousness of CHRIST for us, whereby we are constituted righteous. *Being justified by his Grace.* It is of GOD that we are in CHRIST, as a Head, by reason whereof his Obedience to the Law becomes ours of Right, and so it is a Gift by Grace unto us consequently, our Justification through the Righteousness of CHRIST is wholly of divine Grace.

Farther, GOD in infinite Goodness provided for our Regeneration and Sanctification. We are *saved and called with a holy Calling, not according to our Works; but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ, before the World began* (2 Timothy 1:9.). It is of *his abundant Mercy that he begets us again to a lively, Hope* (1 Peter 1:3.). *Having loved us with an everlasting Love, therefore, with Loving-kindness he draws us* (Jeremiah 31:3.). *Our Vivification when dead in Trespasses and Sins is the mere Effect of his rich Mercy and great Love.* (Ephesians 2:4, 5.). He doth not operate upon us to make us holy and *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, because of a Pliableness in our Wills to concur with him in his Operations: For, our *carnal Mind is*

Enmity against God, it is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7.) Wherefore, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, that sheweth Mercy (Romans 9:16.). I add, our Preservation and safe Conduct through this imperfect and militant State, is wholly owing to the Grace of GOD. As he begins the good Work in our Souls, he maintains and carries it on in us, otherwise we could not possibly persevere in Holiness. Such is the Power of Sin in our Hearts, which lusts against, and opposes the spiritual Part. And such are the Craft, Fury and Violence of Satan our unwearied Enemy, also such are the Oppositions we meet with in our Christian Course from the World. It is by divine *Power* the Saints are *kept through Faith unto Salvation*.

Once more: Future Blessedness is the Provision of infinite Love and Grace. The Kingdom of eternal Glory is the *Gift of God's good Pleasure* (Luke 12:32.). It bears the Denomination, of Grace, because it is the Effect thereof. *And hope to the End, for the Grace that shall be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1:13.). A Title to Heaven through the Righteousness of CHRIST is of sovereign Grace, a Meetness for it is the Effect of divine Grace, and our Preservation unto that blissful State, must be attributed wholly to the Grace of GOD.

He calls us unto his eternal Glory, in the Character of the GOD OF ALL GRACE (1 Peter 5:10.), and in that Character, he conducts us to it, and puts us into the actual Possession of it. Eternal Life is a free-Grace Gift to all who enjoy it.

2. It is a holy Provision. The infinite Holiness of GOD shines forth most gloriously in all the Parts of our Salvation.

(1.) In our Pardon. Divine Mercy is manifested in the Remission of Sin. But if GOD's Displeasure against our Sins is not discovered, in order to our Impunity, Pardon cannot be an Act of Holiness. Divine Purity, in relation to moral Evil, is only seen in Resentment and Indignation against it, not in the Act itself of remitting it to the Transgressor. Wherefore, *it became him, for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings* (Hebrews 2:10.). If GOD had pardoned guilty Men, without discovering his Displeasure in this Way against their Crimes, it would have been at the Expense of the Glory of his Holiness. For, pardon of absolute Mercy, is not an Act of Holiness. But to remit Sin, on the Foundation of a Discovery of proper Resentment against it, is both an Act of Mercy and Holiness.

(2.) In the Constitution of our Persons, righteous GOD of his infinite Mercy hath provided for us a Righteousness, which is

commensurate to the Law. CHRIST was made under the Law on our Account, and perfectly obeyed it in all its Precepts. And of the divine Father, we are in *Christ Jesus, in Consequence of which, he is of God made Righteousness to us* (1 Corinthians 1:30.). And therefore, it is agreeable to divine Purity and Holiness to accept of and justify us. But the Act of Justification, without a Righteousness answerable to the Requirements of the Law, would not have been an Act of Holiness; on the contrary, it would have been an unholy Act, and inconsistent with the infinite Purity of GOD.

(3.) The Holiness of GOD is manifested in our Regeneration and Sanctification. Our new Creation is an eminent Display of divine Purity. We are *the Workmanship of Cod, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works* (Ephesians 2:10.). The Communication of Holiness to an Unholy Creature, is an Act of Holiness. And therefore, GOD in making us holy, displays his own Holiness. And as he doth this in order to our future Enjoyment of Himself, it is a full Evidence, that Holiness is necessarily prerequisite to future Happiness: That *without Holiness, no Man shall see the Lord* (Hebrews 12:14.).

(4.) GOD manifests his Holiness in our Preservation to the heavenly State. As the Creation of a Principle of Holiness in us was a holy Act, so all divine Influences upon us to maintain; and increase the Vigour of that Principle, are Acts of Holiness. Spiritual Supplies of Grace, to Uphold and confirm our Souls in the Practice of our Duty, in this militant State, are Effects of rich Grace, and also glorious Displays of the Purity and Holiness of the GOD of all Grace. Who will not fail of giving us more Grace, until we arrive to Glory. He *will give Grace, and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from us* (Psalm 84:11.).

(5.) GOD well eternally manifest his Holiness our Glorification. Divine Purity shines forth in the gracious Decree, concerning our final and complete Happiness, For, in that Decree, GOD determined to make us *meet* for the Enjoyment of himself, by the sanctifying Influences of his Spirit. And our Happiness hereafter will very much consist in the Perfection of our Holiness. GOD chose us, that we might be *holy before himself in Love* as to be *without Blame* (Ephesians 1:4.); that is, all Cause of Censure, and that for ever. Now; divine Holiness is gloriously displayed in making unholy Creatures perfectly holy, and immutably so. As the Impeccability of a Creature is the Effect of sovereign Goodness; so it is an eminent, Display of the infinite Purity of GOD.

3. It is a righteous Provision of Salvation. The Justice of GOD is therein most gloriously manifested.

(1.) Sin is punished. GOD is infinitely merciful to our Persons. He spares us; but not our Sins. Sin he resolved not to spare; but to take full Vengeance, on it. With this View he decreed, that CHRIST should bear our Guilt, and suffer the Penalty it demerited. Unto which the blessed JESUS readily and fully consented. And on that Foundation, the Father *laid on* CHRIST, or made to meet in him, *the Iniquities of us all* (Isaiah 53:6.). *He made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin* (1 Corinthians 5:21.). And CHRIST *bore our Sins, in his own Body, on the Tree* (1 Peter 3:24.).

Our Offences being imputed to him, he thereupon, was made a *Curse* (Galatians 3:13.). And the Father awaked the Sword of Justice against him, and sheathed it in his Bowels. Thus the Father spared him not, but *delivered him up for us all*, though he was *his own Son*, his *only begotten Son* (Romans 8:32.); and was infinitely beloved by him: Yet he would not deal tenderly with him, nor abate any thing of that Penalty, which the Mass of Guilt that was charged on, him did demerit. Thus the *Soul of Christ was made an Offering for Sin* (Isaiah 53:10.). Oh what an amazing Display of divine Justice is in this Transaction! Greater Love to our Persons is not discovered, than Vengeance against our Sins. The infinite Dignity of CHRIST'S Person, put an infinite Value upon what he suffered; but the immense Greatness of his Person did not cause the Father to make any Abatement of that Punishment, which Justice directed to the Infliction of, for the Sins which he bore.

(2.) The Law is magnified. CHRIST, who is GOD and Man united, became subject to it. He was made under the Law, and punctually obeyed all the Precepts of it. He likewise suffered its *Curse* (Galatians 3:23.). An infinite Honour was done to the legal Constitution, by the Obedience and Sufferings of the great Redeemer. And because thereof, the Father is well pleased. *The Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness Sake, he will magnify the Law, and make it honourable* (Isaiah 42:21.). This Provision for the Honour of the Law, is an eminent Branch of the Glory of the Gospel. The evangelical Constitution, far exceeds in Glory the legal; but it is a Scheme calculated to render that Constitution far more glorious, than it could have been without it. The Obedience and Sufferings of the son of GOD, are an infinite Exaltation of the Glory of the divine Law.

(3.) The Justice of GOD is therein exercised, and all its Demands are fully answered. Divine Justice righteously acted its Part, in requiring perfect Obedience of the Sinner's Surety, and *tremendously* in the Infliction of Punishment upon him, in order, to our Pardon, Justification, and eternal Salvation. *GOD set forth his Son to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his*

Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God. To declare, at this Time his Righteousness: that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Romans 3:24-26.) *Rigorous Justice* and boundless *Grace* meet in this adorable *Contrivance*: Our *Pardon* is an *Act of Righteousness*, as, well as an *Act of Mercy*. Our *Justification* is an *Act of Justice*, as well as an *Act of Grace*, through the *Obedience and Sacrifice of CHRIST*.

4. That Provision which GOD hath made for our Salvation, is effectual.

(1.) The Pardon of Sin is certain and sure. CHRIST by his Sufferings and Death *obtained eternal Redemption*. The Benefit itself he obtained, whatever is intended by it, or included in it. Not an Offer, or a Proposal thereof. For, obtaining an Offer, or a Benefit, or a Proposal of Terms, on which a Benefit may be enjoyed, is not obtaining the Thing itself. This is so evident, that it is needless to attempt its Proof. Now Redemption, which CHRIST obtained, is the Remission of Sin *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins* (Ephesians 1:7.). If it is not granted, that Redemption is. the Forgiveness of Sins, I will never contend with any about its Extent, whether it respects all, or some Men only. For it is not a Matter of such Moment, as may justly require Debate, if that is denied, It is of trifling Consideration, whether it is limited, or of universal Extent, if it includes not the Pardon of Sin. Clear, indeed, it is, that if Redemption does include the Pardon of Sin, it cannot be of universal Extent, because Men universally are not pardoned, but some only. Those, therefore, who are of Opinion, that Redemption is unlimited, are Obligated to deny that the Pardon of Sin, or a Right to Impunity, was obtained by the Death of CHRIST.

An Offer of Pardon, or a Proposal of Forgiveness, on certain Terms, was obtained by the Sufferings of CHRIST; but Pardon itself they think was not. A Right to Impunity they will not allow to be the proper Effect of CHRIST'S Death. Whereby they overthrow the Doctrine of his Satisfaction, and consequentially reflect on the Justice of GOD. For they suppose that GOD put his Son to Death for the Crimes of Delinquents, and yet inflicts the Punishment of eternal Death upon, such for whose Offences CHRIST suffered Death as a Penalty, because they do not perform Conditions on which an Offer of Pardon was made to them. It will, I think, be very difficult to reconcile this with divine Justice. Can it consist with Justice to put an innocent Person to Death, as the Substitute of an Offender, and put him to Death also for that Crime, or those Crimes on Account whereof his Substitute suffered Death? Can Justice direct to punish one who is innocent, in the Room and Stead of a guilty Person, and

to inflict Punishment on him likewise for the same Crimes? If it cannot, GOD, who is infinitely just, will not inflict proper, everlasting Punishment on any of those upon whose Account and in whose Stead he most dreadfully punished his own Son, that they might escape with Impunity. The Doctrine of the limited Extent of Redemption is now become very displeasing to many Professors, and therefore it is to be feared that some who believe it, are shy of letting it be known that they do believe it, lest they should give Umbrage to some Persons who cannot bear with an explicit Mention of it, nor with such a Way of stating the momentous Doctrine of Atonement, as necessarily supposes it. Hence too many superficial Discourses are delivered on that important Subject; though we are told that CHRIST, in suffering, was the Substitute of Sinners, and that he suffered Punishment for their Crimes, it cannot be collected from what the Preacher faith, whether he believes, or does not believe, that proper and full Satisfaction was made for Sin by CHRIST'S Death. Why is such Caution used on this weighty Point? I fear it is because the Preacher is unwilling to offend such who espouse the Opinion of the unlimited Extent of CHRIST'S Death, or universal Redemption, which cannot possibly be that Redemption whereof the Gospel is a Discovery: For that Redemption is the Forgiveness of Sins. As therefore the Sins of some Men are not forgiven, Men universally are not the Subjects of that Redemption which the Gospel reveals. Why are we not plainly told, that CHRIST really *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself? that he finished Transgression and end of Sin*, as to its Guilt, by being *cut off but not for himself*; that he made *Reconciliation for Iniquity*; that GOD is *pacified, towards us for all that we have done*; and that *when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son*; that *we are justified by the Blood of Christ, and shall be saved from Wrath through him*; that *he redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us*; that *the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*; that *Peace was made for us by the Blood of his Cross*? And why are we not plainly told that these strong Expressions, concerning the Effects of the Death of CHRIST, cannot *dwindle* into an Offer of Pardon, Or a Proposal of Terms of Peace and Reconciliation, between GOD and our Souls? If the Preacher really believes that JESUS CHRIST made proper and full Atonement for Sin, by his Sufferings and Death, let him tell us so, and that therefore a Right to Impunity is a certain Effect thereof, and wholly arises therefrom, and is not suspended on Conditions to be performed by us. This Doctrine formerly was cordially embraced, and zealously contended for, by reformed Divines, but alas! a very melancholy Change hath taken Place amongst us.

(2.) Effectual Provision is made for the Justification of Sinners before GOD. For in the LORD we have Righteousness. CHRIST is of GOD made unto us Righteousness, as a Benefit distinct from Sanctification. And therefore, Righteousness is not included in Sanctification, nor is Sanctification included in Righteousness. If Righteousness. was included in Sanctification, CHRIST in being made Righteousness to us, he would be made Sanctification to us therein; and if Sanctification was included in Righteousness, in being made Righteousness to us, he would be made Sanctification to us therein. In that Case, Righteousness and Sanctification would not be distinct Benefits, but one and the same; which it is evident they are not, because the Apostle speaks of them as distinct Benefits. Hence also it is clear, that whatever is included in Righteousness is no Part of our Sanctification; and that whatever is included in our Sanctification is no Part of our Righteousness; consequently our Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, enter not into our Righteousness, which CHRIST is of GOD made unto us. Our internal and external Holiness taken together, are not that Righteousness. Nothing whereof we are the Subjects, nor any Thing which we perform, can be that Righteousness, or included in it. Our gracious Dispositions and holy Actions cannot be that Righteousness, if it is a Benefit distinct from Sanctification. The Righteousness of CHRIST is imputed to us in order to our Justification, and Grace is conveyed to us from him in order to our Sanctification. So that CHRIST is made Sanctification to us by a Communication of Grace from him but he is made Righteousness by the Imputation of his Righteousness to our Persons, who is the LORD our Righteousness. And as our Sanctification is not included in, nor any Part of that Righteousness which CHRIST is made of GOD unto us, he is made Righteousness to us in order to our Justification, and not in order to our Sanctification.

Now let us consider whether this Provision of the Obedience or Righteousness of CHRIST, in order to our Justification, is effectual or not. I cannot but apprehend, that it is effectual for the Reasons following.

[1.] CHRIST'S Righteousness is absolutely perfect. He was as holy in his Nature, and as unblemished in his Conduct, as the Law required he should be, under which he was made upon our Account. He *was holy, harmless, and undefiled. A Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot. He did no Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth.* Will not Righteousness, which in all Respects is commensurated to the Law in its Requirements, be effectual of itself unto the Justification of those Persons for whom it was wrought out, and unto whom it is imputed for that End? A complete Righteousness needs not any Thing to be added to it, or connected with it, to answer the important

Purpose of Justification. Let us, therefore, never think of joining our imperfect Righteousness, with the perfect Righteousness of CHRIST, in the Business of our Justification before GOD. Nor imagine that our imperfect Obedience will be available to the Acceptation of our Persons with GOD, because of, or through the perfect Obedience of CHRIST. For, the Perfection of his Obedience adds nothing to the Worth and Value of ours. Its Nature is not changed by the Obedience of CHRIST. And therefore, if GOD can justify us, on the Foundation of our own Obedience, consistent with his Truth, Holiness and Justice, CHRIST'S Obedience to the Law for us was not necessary to our Justification in his Sight.

[2.] The Duration of CHRIST'S Righteousness, is an Evidence of its Sufficiency and Efficacy unto our invariable and endless Justification. That which depends upon, and is in Virtue of a never-ceasing Cause, will for ever continue. The Righteousness of CHRIST, on which our Justification depends, and in Virtue whereof it is, will never alter or cease. And therefore, our Justification must be invariable and endless. For an Effect cannot be variable and uncertain, as to the Continuance of its Existence, which springs from an invariable and perpetual Cause. Such is the Righteousness of CHRIST. It is *everlasting*, can never change, nor possibly cease: Consequently everlasting Justification is effectually secured by it.

[3.] The Value of CHRIST'S Obedience can never be lessened. Its Value is infinite, by Reason of the immense Dignity of his Person. And if it really is infinitely valuable, because he is GOD and Man united, then surely it must be eternally available to our Justification. Can any sober Man think that it became the Wisdom of GOD to provide a Righteousness for us, of inconceivable Worth and Value, in order to our Justification before him, and yet notwithstanding that Provision, our Justification in his Sight is a Matter uncertain and precarious, or that which may be or may not be? Such an Imagination is absurd.

[4.] Eternal Life is through the Righteousness of CHRIST as a meritorious Cause. *Grace reigns through Righteousness unto eternal Life*. The Reign of Death is through Sin, as a procuring Cause; and the Reign of Grace unto eternal Life is through Righteousness, as a procuring Cause. For as the Reign of Sin was unto Death, because it properly demerited it; so the Reign of Grace through Righteousness is unto eternal Life, because that properly merited it. The Apostle, agreeable to the Scope of his Discourse, in the Place, considers Sin as a procuring Cause of Death, and Righteousness as a procuring Cause of eternal Life. The Reign of Grace unto eternal Life cannot be through the Justice or Righteousness of the Nature of GOD, without the Subsistence of a Righteousness properly deserving or

meritorious of eternal Life. And therefore, I cannot but conceive that we are to understand by Righteousness the Obedience of CHRIST, as that through which Grace reigns, unto eternal Life. If any should say, that the Term *Merit* is not extant in Scripture, I would answer, as *Pareus* does. *Although the Word Merit is never extant, because neither the Hebrews nor the Greeks, have any which properly answers to the Term Merit. — Yet the Word Περιποιησεως, Acquisition, comes up to the Sense of Merit; and the Word περιποιησθαι, to acquire, which Scripture*

frequently uses about the Work of Salvation. That which renders the

Obedience of CHRIST meritorious, is the Subsistence of his human Nature in his divine Person. For, as *Witsius* lays, *Whereas this is not the Obedience of a mere Man, but of Christ God-Man, an, infinite Person, itself also is of infinite Dignity or Worth; consequently, hath a just Proportion unto the greatest Glory answerable to it, and so there is Merit in it, which they call Merit of Condignity, such can agree unto no mere Creature* which is a farther Evidence that this Provision for our Justification is effectual. A Righteousness, which is proportionate unto the greatest Glory, will doubtless be for ever available to our Acceptance with GOD

(3.) Effectual Provision is made for our Sanctification. *Grace was given us in Christ before the World began* in order to our holy Vocation. It was the eternal Purpose of GOD to call us with a *holy Calling*. Either he is able to make us holy, or he is not able. If he is not able, then he purposed to do what he could not effect. To suppose which, is an Impeachment of his Wisdom. The Purposes of a wise Agent exceed not his Capacity. And can any Man persuade himself to think that the Designs of GOD, who is infinitely wise, are above his Power? If GOD is able to make us holy, and in Fact he does not, then he must have changed his Purpose if he once designed it. To imagine which necessarily supposes that he is mutable. Hence it is clear, that GOD never intended to regenerate, convert, and sanctify those who are not regenerated, converted, and sanctified. On this important Point we too often hear very superficial Discourses from such, who, if they believe the Efficacy of divine Grace in its Operations on the Souls of Men, are not free it should be known that they do believe it. For it cannot be inferred from What they say, that GOD creates, infuses, or implants a Principle of Holiness in Men, without which no Man whatever can become holy. Operations and Influences on the *carnal Mind*, which is *Enmity again, It God*, will never cause it to love him, nor bring it into *Subjection to the Law*. The Grace of GOD effects not this in the Regenerate, how should it therefore effect this in those who are not

regenerated? I will not say that Sanctification is precarious, a Thing which may be or may not be; but that it is impossible unless a holy Principle is created or infused into the Heart. No Operations, no Influences will ever make us holy, without the Communication of a Principle of Holiness. No Excitations, no Impulses, no Aids will ever cause the *Flesh*, which *serves the Law of Sin, to serve the Law of God*. A Disposition in us to serve the Law is habitual Holiness, and serving of the Law is practical Holiness. The former is produced in us by the Power and Grace of GOD, in an instantaneous Manner, without the Concurrence of our Will or Opposition in it thereunto. Divine Grace influences us unto the latter, upon the Production of the former. And therefore, GOD *works in us not only to will, but also to do, of his good Pleasure*. Consequently he fails not of effecting that in us which he graciously purposes to effect.

(4.) The Perseverance of the Saints is effectually provided for. *They shall be holden up, for God is able to make them stand*. They are in the Hands of CHRIST, *Who is able to keep them from falling*. He is the Fountain of their spiritual Life; and therefore it cannot become extinct. *Because he lives, they shall live also*. Their Life is said to be *hid with Christ in God*; which denotes both its Secrecy and Security. His *Grace is sufficient for them*, and he will not fail to supply them in all their Exigences. He declares, that it is his *Father's Will, that of all which he hath given him, he should lose nothing*. And he certainly will execute the Father's Will in this Matter, if all the Power and Grace which he hath are sufficient to carry it into Execution. Let us heedfully attend to what he saith in relation to this Thing. And he speaks thus: *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them; and they follow me: I give to them eternal Life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father, which gave them or, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand* (John 10:27-29.). These blessed Words afford such clear, full, and strong Evidence in Favour of the Security and Certainty of the final Perseverance of the Saints, as cannot be obscured by all the Wit and Sophistry of those who disbelieve that precious Truth. *Limborch says: The Meaning of the Lord is not, that those who are his Sheep, through their own Fault may not cease to be his Sheep: But that no Man, so long as they are and continue his Sheep, can pluck them out of his Hand, and by Force hinder their Salvations*. That is to say, if thro' their own Fault they do not become Apostates, but by Care and Diligence persevere themselves from Apostasy, and persevere to the End, they shall be safe. What a wretched Perversion of the Text is this? The Love and Care, the Grace and Power of CHRIST and of the Father, will effectually prevent their Apostasy. They remain not in the Hand of CHRIST, because they continue to believe; but because they remain

in his Head, therefore they continue to believe, and certainly shall be saved; not perish, but enjoy eternal Life. This leads me to observe,

(5.) Effectual Provision is made for our future Blessedness. I think it is not necessary to enlarge on this Particular, For if the Truth of the preceding Particulars is established, which I hope it is, the Glorification of Believers cannot be precarious; that which may be or may not be, it is impossible that any Link, in the golden Chain of Salvation, should be broken.

Moreover, *whom God did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, are certain Effects of divine Predestination, through the Grace, Blood and Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST.

5. It is an infinitely wise Provision which GOD hath made for our Salvation. This in some measure appears from what is already said. If it is a Provision *gracious, holy, righteous* and *effectual*, the highest Wisdom illustriously shines forth thereto: And it is a Contrivance most worthy of GOD. But if it is not such, there is no Wisdom in it. If the Grace of GOD is not magnified; if his Holiness is not displayed; if his Justice is not exercised therein, I am sure it is no Projection of his; and if it is not effectual, it cannot have GOD for its Author: Because it is impossible that infinite Wisdom should form a Scheme which is ineffectual. Finite Wisdom may; but infinite Wisdom cannot.

GOD is glorified in the Plan of our Salvation. All the Parts of it spring from divine Sovereignty. Grace and Holiness, Mercy and Justice, have an equal Share of Glory, and perfectly harmonize therein. As rich boundless Grace is conspicuous in that Title, which we have to Glory by Adoption: So Justice is manifested in that Right which we have to eternal Life, through the Righteousness of CHRIST, it being proportionate to the highest Felicity we are capable of enjoying. Right to Heaven by Adoption does not supersede nor render unnecessary, that Right which we have unto it through the Obedience of CHRIST.

SERMON 36

A RIGHT TO ETERNAL GLORY, THROUGH THE MERITORIOUS OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST, PROVED TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE ABSOLUTE FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY OF DIVINE GRACE, AS THE ORIGIN OF IT

IN A SHORT DISCOURSE ON

TITUS 3:7.

THE PREFACE.

THE Publication of the following short Discourse, was occasioned by my treating on the Grace of GOD, and the Merit of the Obedience of CHRIST, in two Sermons, which I very lately preached. In composing the first, nothing was more distant from my Thoughts than exposing to public View the Sentiments and Reasoning therein contained. But as some of my worthy Friends, to whom it was acceptable, in hearing, solicited me to make it public, before the Delivery of the second, I determined comply with their Solicitation. And upon the Delivery of the second, they approved their being connected, unto which I was not disinclined. They are both contracted, as the Reader may judge, by the Brevity of the Discourse. But, I hope, not to the Disadvantage of the Sentiments advanced, or the Arguments used in their Defence.

I am apprehensive, that I shall pass under the Censure of some Persons, because I attribute proper infinite Merit to the Obedience of CHRIST. It hath been blasphemously affirmed, that his Obedience is deserving of NO BENEFIT. Nothing more depreciating can be said of the Obedience of a mere Creature, allowing it to be perfect. The Reason assigned for this daring blasphemous Assertion is, if CHRIST merited Benefits for us, by his Obedience, those Benefits cannot be of free Grace; for what is merited, is not freely given; and, therefore, we must either give up the Doctrine of free Grace, or deny the proper Merit of CHRIST, in Respect to those spiritual Blessings, which are bestowed upon us here and hereafter. If any Man can, and will give Proof, that Grace in GOD towards us, and CHRIST'S meriting for us, are inconsistent, I shall be free to part with the Doctrine of the Merit of our glorious Redeemer, both in his Obedience and Sufferings; because, I am firmly persuaded, that sovereign Grace in GOD, is the Origin of our whole Salvation and Happiness. But I am bold to say, that such Proof will never be given, unless it can be proved, that CHRIST'S Capacity to merit, in what he did and suffered, was not the Effect of the sovereign Grace of the

Father towards himself, as Man, and towards us. It is my sincere Aim to exalt the Glory of the Grace of GOD, and maintain the due Honour of our precious Saviour, as GOD and Man united. I do not detract from the Glory of the Grace of GOD towards CHRIST, as Man, in affirming that his Capacity to merit is the Result of the Grace of the divine Father; nor do I obscure the Glory thereof, by asserting, that sovereign Grace made his meritorious Obedience ours. Surely, this will be granted in my Favour. Nor, is it any Detraction from the Glory of free Grace to assert, that CHRIST merited spiritual and eternal Blessings for us, by his Obedience, because the Merit of it arises from the Constitution of his Person, which is the pure Effect of sovereign Grace towards himself, as Man, and towards us. His Person was constituted, as it is, for our Sakes. The End of the Subsistence of the human Nature of CHRIST, in his divine Person, was our Happiness, in Subordination to the Glory of all the Perfections of GOD.

*And as that was the Contrivance of infinite Wisdom, so it is a most glorious Effect of sovereign Grace towards CHRIST, as Man, and towards us. Therefore, the sovereign Grace of the divine Father is paramount in our Salvation and eternal Felicity, thro' the meritorious Obedience and Sufferings of JESUS CHRIST. Upon this important Subject I will speak what I think. The eternal Weight of Glory does not exceed the Worth, Value and Merit of the Righteousness of the Son of GOD. **And it is extremely weak and injudicious to object, that our future Blessedness is not of free Grace, if it was merited for us, by the Righteousness of CHRIST, because free, sovereign Grace rendered him capable of meriting, and the Gift of his meritorious Righteousness to us is a GIFT BY GRACE.** But, clear and consistent as these Things are, in themselves, I fear, that by and by some will take Offence at our saying, that we have a legal Right and Title to everlasting Life, thro' the Righteousness of CHRIST.*

TITUS 3:7.

“That being justified by His Grace we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.”

IN the Words of the Text, four Things, in general, are to be observed,

- I.** The Benefit of our Justification. *That being justified.*
- II.** The Cause of that Benefit, *viz.* The Grace of GOD. *That being justified by his Grace.*
- III.** The Consequence of our Justification. We are *made Heirs* of Life thereby.

IV. That Life, whereof we are made Heirs, is *eternal*.

I. *The First Thing observable in the Text is the glorious Benefit of our Justification, 'That being justified.'* This consists of two Branches.

First. Acquittance from Guilt.

Secondly. The Constitution of our Persons righteous, and accounting or esteeming us righteous thereupon.

First. Acquittance from Guilt is one Branch of our Justification. By Guilt I understand, Actions which agree not With the Law, that is the Rule of our Conduct. Every Individual of Mankind is chargeable with Sin: *For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of GOD. Now we know, that what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God.* (Romans 3:23.) Our Offences are exceedingly numerous, they are *more than the Hairs of our Heads*, and cannot be numbered by us, No Man is able to reckon up his sinful Thoughts, irregular Desires, and unlawful Delights. And every Breach of the divine Law, renders us worthy of Death. According to the just Constitution of GOD, in the *Law, the Wages of Sin is Death*. Not only temporal, but also eternal, the Opposite of eternal Life.

Hence we must conclude, that our Condition is very deplorable. As guilty we can have no Foundation in ourselves to hope for Acceptance with our Maker, or the Communication of Favours from Him; but on the contrary, we have just Reason to dread his Anger, and expect the Infliction of Punishment, at his Hand. Consequently, without Remission, we must be miserable for ever. Sin unpardoned will eternally deprive us of all Hope of being happy, and subject us to inconceivable and endless Misery. They are the only happy Persons in the World, whole Crimes are remitted to them. No guilty Creature can possibly enjoy Happiness, without a full Discharge of that Guilt, which he hath contracted. And no Sinner can make Compensation for his Offences, nor devise a Method whereby Forgiveness may be obtained.

GOD in infinite Mercy decreed to pardon sin, and in his immense Wisdom, he contrived a Way, wherein we are acquitted of our Guilt, without the least Prejudice to His Law, or Dishonour to his Justice. *He was in CHRIST, reconciling the World to himself, i.e.* drawing the Plan of their Reconciliation, *not imputing their Trespasses unto them.* (2 Corinthians 5:19.) It was his gracious Purpose, that CHRIST should bear our Sins, and suffer that Penalty in our stead, which they demerited. Unto which the Blessed JESUS agreed, in the Council of

Peace, held between the Father and himself. In this Contrivance, GOD *hath abounded towards us in all Wisdom and Prudence.* (Ephesians 1:8.) It is the *Wisdom of GOD, in a Mystery, his hidden Wisdom, which he ordained before the World, to our Glory.* (1 Corinthians 2:7.) For this was a Resolution to commend his Love to our Persons, and fully manifest his just Indignation against our Sins.

CHRIST, Who *knew no Sin, was made Sin for us.* (2 Corinthians 5:21.) The Lord *laid on him, or made to meet in him the Iniquities of us all* (Isaiah 53:6.). *He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree.* Our Guilt was transferred from us, and imputed to him by the Father. And CHRIST voluntarily took it upon himself, or consented to bear it.

The human Will of our Saviour was all Submission to the sovereign Pleasure of the Father, in this wonderful Transaction. He was not in the least Degree reluctant to come under the Charge and Imputation of our Crimes, in order to make Atonement for them.

In Consequence of our Sins being placed to the Account of CHRIST, he sustained such Punishment, which they demerited. *He was made a Curse for us.* (Galatians 3:13.) And *the Sword of divine Justice was awakened, against, and smote him.* (Zechariah 13:7.) His Sufferings and Death, therefore, were properly penal. And by Reason of the infinite Dignity of his Person, real and infinite Merit attended his Sufferings; so that the Law and Justice of GOD are fully satisfied for our whole Guilt.

Hence, *GOD is just in justifying those who believe in JESUS.* (Romans 3:26.) He is not only *faithful*; but also *just to forgive us our sins*, on this Foundation. Justice directs to the Impunity of a Sinner, upon Satisfaction being made for his Offences. *All who believe are justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. The Law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better Hope did.* CHRIST, *by one Offering, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. It was not possible, that the Blood of Bulls, or of Goats should take away Sin. But CHRIST put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. In him we have Redemption thro' his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sin. His Blood cleanseth from all Sins. Our Iniquities are forgiven, and our Sins are covered,* in Virtue thereof.

Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him. (Romans 5:9.) *All Trespasses are forgiven us.* (Colossians 2:13.) *No sin can be laid to our Charge, CHRIST, having loved us, and washed us from our Sins, in his own Blood.* (Revelation 1:6.) Divine Pardon is a Discharge of all Guilt. It includes our Sins before and after Conversion: Sins of Omission and Commission: Sins of Heart and

Life. This Branch of our Justification may be included in the Text. But I humbly apprehend it is not principally intended therein. My Reason for which is, what immediately follows, *viz. we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life*. And, therefore, I conceive, that Branch of Justification is chiefly designed, upon which follows our Right to future Blessedness. Now, Acquittance from Guilt does not give a Sinner a Title to Happiness. It indeed frees him from an Obnoxiousness to suffering Penalty; but a Right to the Enjoyment of Glory cannot result from that.

Secondly. The other Branch of our Justification is, the Constitution of our Persons righteous, and accounting, or esteeming us righteous thereupon. *We are all as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. Defects and Blemishes attend all the Duties which we perform. Our sinful Neglects are many, and in numerous instances our Actions are materially evil. For, *in many Things we offend all. There is not a just Man that liveth and sinneth not*. The divine Lawgiver is of *purser Eyes than to behold Iniquity*. None, therefore, could possibly determine how we may be justified by our Maker; which *job* strongly expresses. *I know it is so of a Truth; but how should Man be just with GOD?* (Job 9:2.) The sacred Gospel clearly resolves this most important Question. By acquainting us with the Imputation of a Righteousness to us, which is without Works. *Blessed is the Man to whom the LORD will impute Righteousness without Works*. (Romans 4:6.) Righteousness consists of Works, which are good, and agree with the Law, that is the Rule of our Duty. And, therefore, the Phrase, without Works, must be understood of our own personal Obedience. For, in no other Sense can it be true, that, that Righteousness, which God imputes to us, is without Works. *In the Lord we have Righteousness*. And CHRIST is of GOD *made unto us Righteousness*. Which is a Benefit distinct from Sanctification: That includes a Principle of Holiness, and holy Actions springing from that Principle. As Righteousness and Sanctification are not the same, but distinct Benefits: CHRIST in being made Righteousness, is not made Sanctification, and in being made Sanctification, he is not made Righteousness. Our Righteousness is in him, as a representative Head, our Sanctification is in him, as a Head of Influence. He is made Righteousness to us by Imputation, he is made Sanctification to us in a Way of Communication. Hence it is evident, that Righteousness designs that which remains in CHRIST subjectively. and which we do not become the Subjects of, or it is not inherently in us. It will eternally abide in CHRIST, as its proper Subject, though it is graciously imputed to us. Consequently, Righteousness means the Holiness of CHRIST'S Nature, and his Obedience to the Law. *By the Disobedience of one, many were made Sinners, and by the*

Obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Romans 5:19.) On Account hereof, our precious Saviour bears the Title of *the Lord our Righteousness.* (Jeremiah 23:6.) In the Lord all the Seed of *Israel* are justified, and shall glory. In these two Things consists our Justification, as we are Sinners: The Non-imputation of Sin, and the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ to us, whereupon GOD esteems us just and. righteous.

II. *The Cause of our Justification is the Grace of God, That being Justified 'by his Grace.'*

1. Grace is Favour which is absolutely free and undeserved. Its objects are not considered as Subjects of any amiable Qualifications moving unto it. The Love of GOD, from which our Salvation springs, has no Cause out of himself. It is his good Pleasure, a kind Act of his sovereign Will towards us. *He hath Mercy, because he will have Mercy; and he hath Compassion, because he will have Compassion.* No other Reason thereof can be assigned. There was no Fitness in us to be beloved of GOD. On the contrary, we were the subjects of such detestable Qualities, as rendered us deserving of his awful Displeasure. And, therefore, his Love to us is justly denominated Grace. It is Kindness and Favour above all Motive, or Inducement, in those, whom it respects. Without Love of that Kind in the Heart of GOD to us, our Recovery from Ruin had been absolutely impossible.

2. The Divine Father, who is the first Person, in the adorable Trinity, is intended. This is clear in the Context. For he is distinguished from the Holy Spirit, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST. *The Kindness and Love of GOD our Saviour towards Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to His Mercy he hath saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing Of the Holy Ghost: Which he shed on us abundantly thro JESUS CHRIST our Saviour.* That Person is designed, who sheds forth the Holy Spirit, and who sheds him forth through CHRIST upon the Saints. And, therefore, neither the Spirit, nor CHRIST, is the Person, concerning whole Grace the Apostle here speaks; but the Divine Father, as distinct and distinguished from them both.

3. Our Justification is founded in, and takes its Rise from the Grace of GOD the Father. His absolutely free and unmerited Love is the Origin of it. That most important Branch of our Salvation, entirely springs from his Sovereign Good-Will and Pleasure. His Will to justify us was not caused by any Thing out of Himself, which is in us, or in our blessed Saviour. His Decree to acquit us of our Guilt, and to constitute us righteous, was an Act of pure Favour, without any external moving Cause. None, I hope, will think, that I detract from the Honour of CHRIST, either in his Obedience, or Sacrifice, by

attributing our Justification to the mere Love, and absolutely free Favour of GOD, as the proper and only Source of it. In Order to clear up, and represent this momentous Point in a plain and easy Light, I would propose to Consideration the following Particulars.

(1.) The Father ordained the human Nature of CHRIST unto a most near and ineffable Union with his Divine Person. *He was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World; but was manifest for us in these last Times* (1 Peter 1:19, 20.). *The Word, which was in the Beginning with GOD, and which was GOD, was made Flesh* (John 1:1, 14.). He became Man, by the Assumption of human Nature, according to the Appointment of the Father. And that Nature, which he assumed hath its Subsistence in his divine Person, and is one with him. This Union of the divine and human Natures, in the Person of the Mediator, is the Mystery and Glory of our holy Religion. *Without Controvert, great is the Mystery of Godliness, GOD manifest in the Flesh* (1 Timothy 3:16.). Herein consists the highest Glory of CHRIST as Man. For, in Consequence of it, he became *Heir of all Things, and by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than the Angels* (Hebrews 1:2.). This made him *rich, tho' for our Sakes he became poor, that thro' his Poverty we might be rich*. This Decree of the Father concerning CHRIST, as Man, was the highest Act of free, sovereign Grace, that he ever did, or will put forth. And evident it is, that Grace lies at the Bottom of our whole Salvation. Yea, that is the whole and entire Foundation thereof.

[1.] This Appointment of the Father was an Act of infinite Love and Grace, with Respect to CHRIST himself, the Object of it. His human Nature being the curious Workmanship of the Spirit, and filled with his supernatural Graces, there was a Meetness in him to be personally united with the eternal Son of GOD; but not a Worthiness and Desert of that Dignity.

And this Meetness in his human Nature, for that Union with the Son of GOD?, was the Effect of mere Favour towards him. Nothing which CHRIST did, nor any Thing which he suffered, in Obedience to the Father's Will, induced him to ordain his human Nature unto that Union; in Consequence whereof, he becomes entitled to such Glory, wherein he cannot possibly have a Rival, or Partner. Our Saviour hath this Glory, by Donation, from the Father, as the Fruit of his eternal Love to him. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me, for [or, because] thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World* (John. 17:24.). Free, absolutely free Love, in the Heart of the Father towards CHRIST, as Man, is that Fountain from which springs his highest Dignity, in his mediatorial Capacity.

Long since, *Austin*, that Champion for the free Grace of GOD, well improved this, as an Argument in Proof, and Confirmation of free Favour, being the Cause of the Blessedness and Glory of the Saints. And indeed, if CHRIST, the Head, possesses his superior, and greatest Glory, as the Effect of divine Grace to him, it is unreasonable to suppose, that his Members do not owe their eternal Felicity, unto the Grace of GOD, as the Origin and Cause thereof. CHRIST, as Man, will for ever adore the Love of the Father to him, which he displayed in the gracious Ordination of his human Nature unto a Union with his divine Person; whereby, he not only became entitled to the greatest Glory, but also fit and capable of acting as a Redeemer to the Church.

[2.] This Purpose of the Father was an Act of infinite Love to us. His End in appointing the human Nature of CHRIST unto a Union with his divine Person, was, that he might be the Saviour of his Body, the Church. Which, without that Union, he could not have been. It is true indeed, that his human Nature, without subsisting in his divine Person, might *have* been upheld by omnipotent Power, in obeying and suffering; but in that Case, his Obedience and Sufferings could not have availed to our Pardon and Acceptance, because the Value of both, arises from his Divinity. What a glorious Instance, therefore, of sovereign Grace was it in GOD towards us, to resolve upon the Union of the Man CHRIST JESUS with his eternal Son, that he might be capable of rescuing us from Ruin, and bringing us to Glory, in a Way, which is infinitely honourable to his own Perfections! May our Souls eternally admire this Grace of the Father! which shines most brightly in this wonderful Design! both with Respect to CHRIST and the Church!

(2.) It was an Act of absolutely free Favour in GOD to decree that CHRIST, as he is both GOD and Man, should be a Representative Head unto us. This was his gracious Determination from everlasting. The Act of eternal Election terminated upon CHRIST and his People. He and they were chosen by the Father in the same Act. According as *He hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World* (Ephesians 1:4.). We, therefore, were in CHRIST from Eternity, in some Sense; for otherwise, it can't be true, that GOD chose us in him. The Father Chose him, as Head, and chose us in him, as his Members. CHRIST is the Father's *Elect* (Isaiah 42:1). In that gracious Purpose he was constituted a Representative Head to all those Persons, whom it respected. And they were therein *blessed with all spiritual Blessings* in him, as such a Head to them. And *they are saved and called with a holy Calling, according to Grace, which was given them in CHRIST before the World began* (2 Timothy 1:9). This Relation subsisting between CHRIST and the Elect, as Head and

Members, is that Foundation on which his Obedience and Sufferings are placed to their Account, in Order to their Acceptance with GOD, and the Remission of all their Sins. They were in CHRIST of the divine Father, by a sovereign Appointment of his in Eternity. And in Consequence of that, CHRIST is of him made unto them *Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption* (1 Corinthians 1:30.). Their Union with him, as a Representative Head to them, therefore, was antecedent unto, and is the Ground on which they partake of all his saving Benefits. Now, what but infinite and sovereign Love in GOD towards them, could be the Cause of his ordaining CHRIST to be such a Head to them, and that they should be his Members? Nothing in them could induce him to form this Design in their Favour. This is an Honour, whereof they were absolutely unworthy. And a Security entirely undeserved. The Grace of the divine Father, therefore, in this Decree and Appointment, is most eminently conspicuous. It is the Result of his absolute Pleasure, without any. external Motive: Consequently, our Justification thro' the Righteousness of CHRIST must be the Effect of his Grace. His Love towards us is the Reason of his making CHRIST Righteousness unto us, in Order to our Justification.

(3.) It was an Act of sovereign Favour towards us, to decree that CHRIST should become a Subject of the *Law*, in Order to obey it, as our Representative. This clearly appears, by considering the Nature of the Law: The Person of *Christ*; and the End of his coming under subjection to it, respecting us.

[1.] The Law, or Covenant of Works, requires Obedience, as a Condition of Life. According to that Constitution, a Right to Happiness results from an universal Observance of its Precepts, and cannot be. had without it. *The Man that doeth then, shall live in them.* Obey, and live; sin; and die, are the Terms of that Covenant: And, therefore, without a punctual and constant Obedience to all its Commands, a Title to the Enjoyment of Good, cannot accrue to the Subjects of it.

[2.] CHRIST is GOD and Man united; and his human Nature by Reason of its Subsistence in his divine Person, had an unalienable Right to Life and Glory, antecedent unto his coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. And his Subjection to that Covenant was not upon his own Account, to acquire a Right to Life for himself. That would have been incompatible with the Dignity of his Person. When he was *found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, in becoming obedient* to the Covenant of Works, which; without a special Appointment of GOD, would have had no Concern with him, who is *the Man GOD's Fellow*. Sovereign Favour raised him above the State of a mere Creature, by a personal Union with

the eternal Son of GOD; and being thus advanced to Dignity, far superior to what Angels or Men can claim, divine Sovereignty resolved upon his Subjection to the Law for our Sakes. Which was such a glorious Instance of Grace in GOD towards us, as demands our highest Praises for evermore. May our Souls live in the Contemplation and Admiration thereof, while we are in this mortal State! How is *the Law magnified, and made honourable*, by CHRIST'S subjection to it, and his perfect Obedience unto all its Commands, who is GOD, as well as Man. The infinite Dignity of his Person reflects infinite Glory upon the Law, in coming under its Obligation. Provision, therefore, was made, in the Covenant of Grace, for the Honour of the Covenant of Works. For it was agreed on, in the Covenant of Grace, between the FATHER and CHRIST, that he should, as our Representative, be made under the Law, and obey it for us. Herein Grace and Holiness shine forth with equal Lustre, Mercy and Justice receive the same Glory, in this wonderful Constitution. *Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other* (Psalm 85:10.), in this Contrivance.

[3.] The important End of CHRIST'S becoming subject to the Law, respecting us, was our Justification. He being our Representative, as he came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, his Obedience to its Precepts is placed to our Account, on that Foundation. What he acted in the Capacity of a Representative Head, it is fit, that it should be put to the Account of those whom he did represent. And without that no wise End could be brought about, by his being constituted such a Head, and yielding Obedience to the Law, in that Capacity. His Righteousness, upon the Foot of Right, becomes theirs, to whom he is such a Head; and their Justification, in Consequence thereof, is an Act of Justice. Sovereign Grace made the Obedience of CHRIST Ours, by appointing him to be our Representative; and divine Justice accepts of and justifies us, thro' that Obedience. *In the Lord we have Righteousness. In the Lord we are justified, and may glory.* Oh what Love, what Wisdom, what Holiness, are herein displayed! This Way of our Justification, which is so honourable to the Law, so glorifying to the Grace of God, and which agrees with his Justice, will eternally fill the Minds of Angels and Saints with holy Wonder and Adoration.

(4.) It is of the Sovereign and distinguishing Grace of GOD, that we are in CHRIST JESUS, as a Representative Head, in Distinction from others. This Honour and Security none could claim. GOD was under no Obligation to form such a Design in Favour of any: it was an Act of undeserved Goodness decree, that CHRIST should be, and act in the Capacity of a Head to some of the Sons of Men, with a View to their Justification and Salvation. And it was absolutely free with

GOD to determine unto what Number of the human Race he should be a Representative Head, in obeying the Law, that his Obedience of Right might become theirs, and in Justice be imputed to them. From hence, it is evident, that it is unwarrantable, yea, blasphemous Boldness, to suggest, that it is dishonourable to the Perfections of Deity to conceive, that, that number is small. For, if GOD was not obliged to make Provision for the Justification and eternal Salvation of any Sinner, the Glory of no divine Attribute can be obscured, by the Smallness of the Number, for whom such Provision is made. It is also exceedingly clear; that GOD acted in a sovereignly gracious Manner, in fixing upon the Individuals of Mankind, to whom CHRIST should be a Head, in Order to their Security and Happiness. His Choice of them from among others unto a Union with CHRIST, as his Members, was an Act of his absolute Pleasure. No Reason can be assigned why *Peter*, rather than *Judas*, should be united unto CHRIST, and be represented by him, in his Obedience to the Law, but the sovereign Will of GOD so determining. Election unto this Dignity was of pure Grace, and without any Inducement in the Persons who are included in that Decree.

III. *The Consequence of our Justification, We are 'made Heirs' of Life thereby. In Order to make this evident, I argue as follows.*

1. Right to Life results from perfect Obedience, according to the legal Constitution. If the Terms of the Covenant of Works are fulfilled, upon which it promises Life, a Right to the Enjoyment of Life must spring from thence. This, I suppose, would not be called into Question, if we ourselves perfectly obeyed the Commands of that Covenant. *The Man that doeth them shall live in them.* Now CHRIST being our Representative, in obeying the Law, his Obedience is to be considered as ours; and, therefore, in Consequence of that, we become entitled to Life, no less than if we had obeyed it in our own Persons. The Grace of GOD makes the Righteousness of CHRIST ours; and, in Virtue thereof, we have a proper Claim to Life, even according to the Covenant of Works. For a Title to Life springs from having such a Righteousness as that Covenant requires, with Respect to the Matter and Extent of it, whether it be wrought out by ourselves, or by another for us, as our Representative, *Adam* being our Representative, in his Disobedience, we came under a Sentence of Death, which was annexed to the Breach of the Covenant of Works. And CHRIST being our Representative, in his Obedience, we have a Title to Life, a Promise of which was annexed in that Covenant, unto a perfect Observance of its Precepts. As our Saviour fulfilled the perceptive Part of the Law for us; in Consequence thereof, we have a proper Claim to Life, according to the Promise in that Constitution.

2. The Reasoning of the Apostle on the Effect of *Adam's* Disobedience, and the Effect of CHRIST'S Obedience, in my humble Opinion, most clearly proves the Truth of the Point for which I plead. The Entrance of Death into the World was by Sin. Not as a Mean of Conveyance, but as a procuring Cause. *Death reigned even over them, that had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression.* And this Reign of Death was thro' his Offence. For, *thro' the Offence of one, many are dead.* His Sin is not a Medium of the Reign of Death. It properly demerits Death: And its Dominion over us is founded in Justice, in Consequence of that Sin being ours. *Adam* sinning, as the Representative Head of Men, they were made Sinners thereby; and, therefore, *Judgment*, according to Equity, came upon them to *Condemnation*. Now, as Death reigns thro' *Adam's* Sin, so *the Grace of GOD reigns unto Life, thro' the Righteousness of CHRIST.* Not as a Mean of the Conveyance of Life, but as a procuring Cause of it. For, *by one Righteousness* (δι' ενος δικαιοματος) is *our Justification of Life.* *Adam's* Offence, according to Justice, subjects to Death; on the contrary, the Righteousness of CHRIST, according to Justice, entitles to Life, If it is the Design of the Apostle in this Context (Romans 5:12.) to prove, that *Adam's* Offence was a procuring Cause of Death, it is reasonable to conclude, that it was his Intention to prove, that the Righteousness of CHRIST is a procuring Cause of Life. To deny that the Righteousness of CHRIST is a procuring Cause of Life, would oblige us to allow of Impropriety in the Apostle's Reasoning. For, if we receive Life, through the Righteousness of Christ, as a Mean by which it is conveyed to us, and not as a procuring Cause, it is not properly compared with *Adam's* Offence, as a procuring Cause of Death.

3. The Hope of eternal Life is called *the Hope of Righteousness.* And the Crown of immortal Glory is a *Crown of Righteousness*, given by the Lord, as a *righteous Judge.* Righteousness, therefore, is the Foundation of a just Claim to eternal Life, and it is agreeable to Justice to bestow it upon those who are made righteous by the Imputation of the Righteousness of CHRIST to them. It is an Act of Justice in the Lord, the righteous Judge, to sentence to eternal Death, on Account of Sin; it also is an Act of Justice in him to confer eternal Life, on Account of Righteousness. Our Right to Glory thro' the Obedience of CHRIST, as a meritorious Cause, is the Contrivance of immense Wisdom, it is the Design of sovereign Grace, and, perfectly corresponds with infinite Justice. What a solid Basis is this for the Faith and Hope of the Saints!

4. To deny that there is proper Merit, or Desert, in CHRIST'S Obedience, is a blasphemous Detraction from the Glory of it. For it

is reducing of it unto a Level with the perfect Obedience of a mere Creature. A proper Desert of the Enjoyment of Good cannot attend the Obedience of the most holy Creature; but the Obedience of CHRIST, by Reason of the infinite Dignity of his Person, hath proper Desert, Merit, and Value in it. If it hath not, there is no Excellency therein, transcending the perfect Obedience of a mere Creature. To suppose which, is as great a Diminution of It as is possible, allowing it to be compleat. For, Nothing more lessening could be thought of his Obedience, if he had been Man only. And, if there is any Desert in his Obedience, because he is GOD, that Desert arising from the Divinity of his Person must be infinite. For my Part, I am free to declare, that there is not any Thing which I have arrived unto a fuller Satisfaction of the Truth of, than the Doctrines of CHRIST'S proper Deity, and the proper infinite Merit of his Obedience and Sufferings. Nor shall I call into Question the Verity of the one, or the other, until I renounce the whole Gospel. This strong Way of speaking arises from such, a Zeal in me for the Honour of a dear Redeemer, which, I trust, will not be found a mistaken one.

Object. 1. It hath been said, *if the Obedience of CHRIST is imputed to us, we are made Meritours thereby.* **I answer.** A Meritor is one who merits; We do not Merit, by having the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST placed to our Account. He merited in yielding Obedience; but with no Propriety can it be said, that we merit, because his meritorious Obedience is imputed to us. Meriting is peculiar to CHRIST, the Person obeying; and, therefore, the Persons for whom he obeyed are not made Meritours, by the Imputation of his Obedience to them. The Imputation of his Obedience to us does not cause us to merit, and we cannot be made Meritours by that which does not cause us to merit. The Imputation of CHRIST'S Obedience does not cause us to merit; and, consequently, we are not made Meritours by the Imputation of his meritorious Righteousness to us. This Objection is of so trifling a Nature, that it is not a little strange, that it should be thought of Weight, by any Person of a tolerable Capacity.

Object. 2. *If CHRIST by his Obedience merited eternal Life for us, or procured thereby a Right to Glory on our Account, then our future, Blessedness is not of the free Grace of GOD; for that which is merited, cannot be of free and undeserved Favour. Merit and Grace are inconsistent.* **I answer.** [1.] If we were caused to merit Glory by the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST, being made ours, this Objection would have Force in it; but as we are not caused to merit Glory by the Imputation of the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST to us, there is not the least Degree of Force in it. For eternal Life and Glory are as absolutely free; in Regard to us, as if no meritorious

Cause thereof subsisted. By the Imputation of the Righteousness of CHRIST to us we do not become the Subjects of it, or It is not inherent in us, in Consequence of that Imputation. And as his Righteousness itself is not inherent in us, so the Merit of his Righteousness is not inherent in us; and, therefore, notwithstanding the Imputation of his meritorious Righteousness to us, we are not made subjectively deserving of eternal Life. As the Righteousness of CHRIST cannot be made ours subjectively, so the Desert of his Righteousness cannot be made subjectively ours. Hence, it is evident, that in our own Persons we remain destitute of a Desert of eternal Life, 'altho' the Righteousness of CHRIST is imputed to us, which is deserving of that Life. And to confer eternal Life, upon us merely on Account of a Righteousness, which is not our own, but another's, is an Act of free Favour towards us, tho' that Righteousness properly merits and deserves it. Since, by the Imputation of that Righteousness, we do not become the Subjects of its Merit, or Desert. [2.] It was sovereign Grace which provided the Righteousness of CHRIST for us, and made it ours. This, I hope, is clearly explained, and solidly proved above. And, therefore, I can't help saying, that the Objection is weak, tho' it may affect some for whom I have a Regard. It is as old, self-evident, and approved Axiom, or Rule, that *the Cause of a Cause, is the Cause of that which is caused*. This is true in Things natural, moral, and spiritual. Now, let us apply it to the Point under Consideration. CHRIST'S Obedience is a meritorious Cause of eternal Life. The Cause of that Cause, is the absolutely free Love and Favour of GOD. (1.) Towards CHRIST. It was an Act of sovereign Love, to ordain his human Nature unto a Union With his divine Person; from which Union springs the whole Merit of his Obedience.

And, therefore, his Capacity to merit, in obeying, was founded in Grace towards himself, as Man. (2.) It was an Act of sovereign Grace to decree, that his meritorious Obedience should be ours. Free, glorious Grace appointed him to be our Representative Head, and us to be his Members. And, consequently, divine Grace is the Origin from which flows that Right to Glory; which we have thro' the Obedience of CHRIST: Free Grace being the Cause of the meritorious Cause of our Right to eternal Glory, it is the Cause of that Right. (3.) The Glory of free Grace is so far from being eclipsed herein, that it appears the more illustrious. For, as *the Gift of Righteousness is a Gift by Grace*, by how much the more deserving that Righteousness is, by so much the more is the Grace of GOD magnified, in the Gift thereof, If the Elect had been brought to Glory, without a Righteousness meritorious of that Glory, the Grace of GOD would not have been so it illustriously displayed, in bringing them unto the Enjoyment of eternal Blessedness. So far is it from

being true, that the Grace of GOD, and the proper Merit of CHRIST, are inconsistent in this wonderful Affair. (4.) As the Pardon of sin was properly merited, by the atoning Sacrifice of CHRIST, and yet, Remission is of free Grace; so, tho' the Obedience of CHRIST properly merited eternal Life, notwithstanding that, it is of free Grace. The Reason of which is the same in both, *viz.* this. Free Grace provided the Sacrifice of CHRIST for us; and, therefore; our Pardon is of Grace, tho' properly merited by his Sacrifice: And free Grace provided the Obedience of CHRIST for us; and, therefore, eternal Life is of Grace, notwithstanding it was properly merited by his Obedience. It is a futile Objection of the *Socinians*, that the Pardon of Sin is not of the Grace of GOD, if CHRIST merited it by his Sufferings and Death, because his Death was the Effect of divine Grace towards us. And it is a very weak Objection of some others, that eternal Glory cannot be of Grace, if CHRIST merited it by his Obedience, because his Obedience was the Effect of divine Grace towards us. It is no Detraction from the Glory of the free Grace of GOD in our Pardon, to assert, that, that Sacrifice which it provided did merit Forgiveness. Nor is it any Diminution of the Glory of the free Grace of GOD, in our everlasting Felicity, to affirm, that, that Obedience, which it provided, did merit endless Happiness for us. In this Doctrine the Glory of the Grace of the divine Father is exalted, and the due Honour of a dear Redeemer is maintained in perfect Agreement the one with the other. Those who deny, that CHRIST merited by his Obedience, cannot attribute any Excellency to it, surpassing the perfect Obedience of a mere Creature and, therefore, thereby they dishonour him infinitely. I do not say designedly, but consequentially, it may be thro' Inattention, or a Want of solid Judgment, in *comparing spiritual Things with spiritual*.

IV. *That Life whereof we are made Heirs is 'eternal.' It is eternal Glory unto which we are called, by the GOD of all Grace* (1 Peter 5:10.) that is designed. The Saints upon Death immediately take Possession of complete Felicity in their Souls. All corrupt Habits are expelled instantaneously, and the Principle of Grace is ripened into Glory. Their Communion with the divine Father, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the Holy Spirit, is most intimate, and uninterrupted. Their Bodies, which now sleep in the Dust, shall be raised from the State of the Dead, and rendered *immortal, spiritual, and glorious*; fit Receptacles for their perfected Minds, and reunited with them and they will be consummately happy for evermore.

1. They will for ever enjoy a perfectly clear Sense of the Love of each divine Person, as displayed in the Design and Accomplishment of their Salvation. Those imperfect Views, which they now have thereof, by Faith, fill them with ineffable Joy. What Delight, what

Adoration will their Souls be possessed of, when their Prospects thereof will be perfectly clear, extensive, and uninterrupted! This is a State of Happiness far transcending what is promised in the Covenant of Works.

2. In Heaven they will behold most clearly the Glory of a dear Redeemer. The Glory of his Person, as GOD and Man united. The Rays of his Divinity shining thro' his human Nature, subsisting in his divine Person. And that Glory which accrues to him from glorifying the Father in the Work of their Redemption. Doubtless they will be filled with inconceivable Pleasure, when they see the blessed *Jesus Crowned with Glory and Honour*, who was *crowned with Thorns*, for their Sakes. This Part of their future Felicity was unknown to the Covenant of Works, and surpasses in Excellency that Life which is promised therein.

3. The Saints, in the heavenly State, will have a clear and constant Sense of their near Union with CHRIST, as he is GOD and Man united. The Union of his human Nature with his divine Person is his highest Glory as Man. And their Union with him, as his Person is so constituted, is the solid Foundation of their eternal Security; and it is their greatest Honour, yea, that is, the Ground or the intimate Communion which they will enjoy with GOD unto Eternity. This Union is represented by that of a Vine and its Branches. By that of the natural Head and its Body. The Elect compose a mystical Body, whereof CHRIST is the Head. And the same Spirit is upon Head and Members: *There is one Body, and there is one Spirit*. By a conjugal Union. The Church is the *Lamb's Wife*. *We are Members of his Body, of his Flesh: and of his Bones*. Oh! What a Dignity is this, to be thus united unto him, who is the Man *GOD's Fellow*. A Sense of it will raise and maintain in the Minds of the blessed holy Admiration to all Eternity. This likewise is a Branch of our endless Felicity, wherewith the Covenant of Works was wholly unacquainted. Hereafter we shall in a perfect Manner discern how all the Perfections of GOD are glorified, in bringing us unto this blissful state, by the Mediation of CHRIST. His Sovereignty, Grace, Kindness, Mercy, Holiness, Justice, Truth, and absolute Immutability. This also was unknown to the Covenant of Works. A Right to Life we have, according to the Promise of that Covenant, on the Foundation of CHRIST'S Obedience to it for us, as our Representative. But it is unto a Life far exceeding in Glory the Life which that Covenant promises. And it is fit and condecant that the Righteousness of CHRIST should entitle us to a Life superior in Excellency and Glory to that Life, which is promised therein. For, tho' the Obedience of CHRIST did not exceed the Commands of that Covenant materially, yet, in Value, Worth, and Dignity, it infinitely exceeds what that Covenant requires, because of

the infinite Greatness of his Person. And, as the Grace of the Father is the Origin, from which the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST springs, in Heaven it will clearly appear, that *he is all in all*. All in CHRIST, the Head, and all in his Members. That his free and sovereign Favour is the Fountain of the highest Glory of CHRIST, and of the everlasting Happiness of the Elect, thro' his meritorious Obedience. For the Merit of it is founded in the Grace of the Father towards CHRIST himself, as Man, and towards them, which also made his Obedience theirs. And, therefore, CHRIST and the Church will for ever unite in Ascriptions of Praise and Glory to the divine Father, as he is ALL IN ALL.

SERMON 37

SIN REIGNS NOT, NOR SHALL REIGN, IN THE SAINTS

A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED AT A MONTHLY EXERCISE OF PRAYER, WITH A SERMON, APRIL THE 201764.

Published at the Request of MINISTERS and GENTLEMEN who heard it.

ROMANS 6:14.

“For Sin shall not have Dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace.”

IT is the evident Design of the Apostle, in this Context, to engage the *Romans* unto a Denial of their corrupt Inclinations, In the preceding Chapter he discourses largely of the superabounding Grace of GOD over the abounding of Sin. In the Beginning of this, he obviates an Objection that some might be disposed to raise, against what he had expressed on that Subject, *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound? God forbid.* And proposes to Consideration the most weighty Arguments to enforce his End in view, *How shall we, that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his Death?*

I am apprehensive that you will easily observe that, ***The Words of the Text consist of three branches,***

- I. An express Assertion concerning Sin, with respect to the believing *Romans*: *For Sin shall not have Dominion over you.*
- II. That they were not under the Law: *For ye are not under the Law.*
- III. That they were under Grace: *But under Grace.* From both which it might justly be inferred, that Sin should not have Dominion over them.

I. I begin with the express Assertion concerning Sin, 'For sin shall not have Dominion over you.' Things we are here to enquire into, namely, What is meant by Sin: And what is the Import of its having Dominion.

1. Let us enquire what is meant by *Sin*. Considered as an Act it is a Violation of the Law. *Whosoever committeth Sin transgresseth also the Law; for Sin is the Transgression of the Law* (1 John 3:4.). Such Actions as correspond not with the Law, which is a Rule of Conduct to us, are Sins. But, I apprehend, that this is not the Meaning of Sin in this Place. For the Attribution of Dominion to Acts is not proper. Sinful Actions follow upon, or result from, the Reign of Sin; but

they do not rule the Subject of them. And, therefore, I think Sin here means a Disposition of Mind which is contrary to the Law, and is a Spring of evil Acts. And it is clear to me, that the Apostle uses the Term Sin in this Sense frequently. Thus he does several Times in this Context, *Let not Sin reign in your mortal Body, that ye should obey it in the Lusts thereof.* With what Propriety can Lusts be attributed to Actions? To an evil Disposition they may, which consists of numerous Lusts, and the Gratification of those Lusts is yielding Obedience to that Disposition: *Neither yield ye your Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness unto Sin.* To yield our Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness, is acting agreeably to that evil Disposition which is in us, called Sin by the Apostle. And in the seventh Chapter he designs by Sin, not criminal Actions, but a corrupt abiding Principle from which they flow: *Sin takes Occasion by the Commandment:* not as an Act, but as a Source of Actions; *Sin dwelt in him.* Actions are transient and passing, but that which the Apostle calls Sin had Residence in him, and therefore by it must be understood an evil Disposition, or corrupt Habits, and not sinful Actions. The same that he names *Flesh*, and *wherein dwelt no good Thing*, and out of which nothing that is good can possibly be educed. From all which it is exceedingly clear, that Sin is to be interpreted of an impure Fountain, from whence spring criminal Acts.

2. I am to *enquire* what is the Import of Sin having *Dominion*. This Assertion, *Sin shall not have Dominion over you*, plainly suggests, that they were Subjects of it, or that it had a Being in them. I know that some have made large Pretensions to extraordinary Holiness, and have boasted of being very nearly, if not wholly free from the Presence and Working of Evil in their Hearts, which is not the Effect of their Eminency in Holiness, but is an Evidence of much Unacquaintedness with themselves. True it is of every Believer, that he is holy and unholy, that he is *Spirit* and also *Flesh*, the Subject of a pure and also of an impure Principle. There are two contrary Springs of Action in him: *If we say that we have no Sin we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us* (John 1:8.). Such as imagine themselves to be very near to Perfection, and can say to others, with an Air of Contempt, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*, give melancholy Evidence not only of the Being, but also of the Power of Sin in them. Those who excel in Holiness, are best acquainted with, and are most humbled under a Sense of the natural Impurity of their Hearts.

The *Dominion* of Sin is its exercising Lordship over the Soul. So the Word used is rendered: *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them* (Luke 22:25. Oi basileiv tw n Eqnwn curieuousin augwn.). The whole Heart is in Subjection to it as a Tyrant when it reigns, the

Soul being destitute of a contrary Principle to oppose it, and prevent its Sway. The Mind is darkened by it, and is incapable of framing proper Conceptions of spiritual Things. Such who are under the reigning Power of Sin, *have their Understandings darkened, their Minds are alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them. They cannot know the Things of the Spirit of God; though they are the highest Wisdom, to them they are Foolishness.* It is also a constant Spring of vain Thoughts: *The Imagination of the Thought of the Heart is evil, only evil, and continually,* when Sin possesses Dominion in a Person. It prevents holy Conceptions, and introduces a Croud of unholy ones perpetually, the Mind being never free from its powerful Influence.

The Will is also determined by Sin in its Acts, when it reigns. This corrupt Principle causes the Will to refuse what is Good, and to make Choice of Evil. There is in it an Aversion to Holiness, and a constant prevailing Inclination to unholy Acts. It is the Subject of a Reluctancy to Obedience, and of a fixed Propensity to Disobedience. This determining Influence of Sin upon the Will, is that Lordship which it exercises as a reigning Principle. If the Will is not in Subjection to Sin, it hath not Dominion. War and captivate it may, but rule it cannot; an habitual Opposition to Sin in the Will, is a full Evidence that it doth not possess a governing Power over the Soul.

Farther, the Affections are carnal, and inordinate. Sin as a reigning Principle causes them to tend, in a strong manner, towards vain Objects, and keeps them fixed thereon. All the Passions are irregular and exorbitant. So that there is no Pleasure taken in what is good, but Vanity and Folly are the pleasing Entertainments which a Man who is under the Dominion of Sin eagerly seeks after, and tires not in the Pursuit of. In these Things consists the Reign of Sin. If it prevents not holy Thoughts springing up in the Mind, nor spiritual Desires in the Will, neither a Tendency towards what is heavenly in the Affections, it hath lost its Dominion, notwithstanding its continued Subsistence in the Soul. If Sin is deprived of its Rule, it will never recover its reigning Power, with what Violence soever it may act its Part. This is the important Truth which the Apostle positively asserts, for the Encouragement of Believers.

II. *The Saints are not 'under the Law.' Here we must consider the Law, who are under it, and its Insufficiency to take away, or subdue the reigning Power of Sin.*

1. Let us consider *the Law.* I shall not take up your Time in shewing that the ceremonial Law is not designed, it being very evident that the moral Law, or Covenant of Works, is here intended; which

consists of Precepts, an important Promise, and a very awful Threatning.

(1.) It consists of Precepts.. And they are comprehended summarily in two general Commands. One is this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength. This is the first and great Commandment.* And the other is like unto it, namely, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* They comprise the Whole of our Duty to GOD and our Neighbour. The former includes in it, a holy Reverence and Adoration of GOD, Dependence on Him, Gratitude to Him, Submission and Obedience to his Will in all Things. The latter is also very comprehensive, *Love worketh no Ill.* We are under Obligation not to injure our Neighbour in his Person, Property, or Character; on the contrary it is our Duty to be strictly equitable and just in all our Actions towards him, and this Command obliges us to perform good and kind Offices, to exercise Benevolence, Sympathy and Compassion, in all our Conduct. These Precepts are worthy of GOD, suitable to his infinite Holiness, Goodness and Wisdom, and a constant punctual Obedience to them in their utmost Extent, is fit and reasonable.

(2.) The Law contains an important Promise in Case of Obedience, namely, the Enjoyment of Life: *The Man that doth them shall live in them.* It is agreeable to the Purity of GOD to approve of Innocence and Obedience, and therefore he will never treat the innocent and obedient Creature with Severity, and consequently such a Creature, according to the legal Constitution, cannot be deprived of the Continuance of that Good which the Promise of Life comprises.

(3.) A very awful Threatning is annexed to the Law, in Case of Disobedience. It hath a penal Sanction, which is Death; *The Soul that sins shall die,* is the Language of it. *The Wages of Sin is Death,* not only corporal, but also eternal, according to the Law. Obey and live, sin and die, are the Terms of the Covenant of Works: which Constitution is just and equal. It is becoming the Goodness of GOD to continue to an innocent obedient Creature the Enjoyment of Life, and it is agreeable to his Justice to punish a guilty disobedient Creature with Death.

2. All who are under the Dominion of Sin, are *under* the Law. Every unregenerate Man is under the Covenant of Works. The Elect, as well as the Non-elect, are under it, without Distinction. For that Covenant was made with *Adam*, as the Head and Representative of all his natural Descendants, and therefore all Men were included in that Covenant. *Whatsoever Things the Law saith, it saith to them*

that are under the Law, that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God. Though Election to Salvation secures unto its Objects a Deliverance from that Covenant, it did not prevent, but necessarily supposes, their coming under this legal Constitution with the other Part of Mankind, from among whom they were chosen. Every Man in whom Sin reigns, is the Subject of the Law, as a Covenant. And it exhibits a Charge of Guilt, and denounces dreadful Menaces against him. Even such as are virtuous and religious in their Deportment, being under the Reign of Sin, they are under the Law in its Charges and Threatnings. The Apostle *Paul*, when unregenerate, was virtuous and religious in his Conduct, and yet he was then under the Law. He behaved himself in such a manner that those who had Opportunity of knowing him best, could not charge him with sinful Neglects nor criminal Acts. For, *as touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, he was blameless.* Notwithstanding that, he was under the Dominion of Sin, and in Subjection to the Law as a Covenant, and condemned by it; as all are in whom Sin rules. But Believers, or such in whom Sin is deprived of its Dominion, they are not under the Law, that is to say, as in the Form of a Covenant, promising Life on Condition of Obedience, and threatening Death on Account of Disobedience. Under it they are as a Law, but not as it hath a penal Sanction annexed to it. They are *dead* to it as such by *the Body of Christ*, and it is *dead* to them. Indeed they *are not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ.* Some perhaps may say, Will not the Law subdue and keep Sin under, as it promises Life unto Obedience, and threatens Death for the Breach of its Precepts? Is not Man a reasonable Creature? and is it not agreeable to Reason to desire the Enjoyment of Good, and to avoid, if possible, the Suffering of Evil? What can be a more powerful Motive to engage unto the Practice of Duty, than the Hope of receiving a Reward is? And what can have a stronger Influence on the Mind to decline the Practice of Sin, than a Dread of its penal Consequences? Why therefore is it assigned as a Reason that Sin should not have Dominion over the *Romans*, Because they were not under the Law? In answer to these Inquiries I proceed to shew,

3. The Insufficiency of the Law to conquer and subdue Sin, as a reigning Principle. It convicts of Sin, and condemns for it. *By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin.* Lust in the Heart becomes known, by this Prohibition in the Law, *Thou shalt not covet.*

It discovers what Actions are good, and what Actions are evil. Besides, the Law condemns all Sin, both in Heart and Life. More than these two Things respecting Sin it cannot do. For to convince and to condemn, is all that the Law is able to perform. It cannot

change the Disposition of the Mind, that remains the same under a legal Conviction, and the most terrifying Apprehensions of that Curse unto which Sin subjects a Man. It is the Nature of Sin *to take Occasion by the Commandment to work all Manner of Concupiscence*. The Promise of Life will not allure or entice unto Obedience, nor will the Threatning of Punishment, deter from Disobedience. The Law may fill the Mind with Consternation and Terror by its Menaces, but it will never amend its Disposition to Evil. Nay, the Execution of Punishment threatened will never produce in the Soul a Liking to Holiness, and a Disinclination to Sin. The Will is in the Interest of Sin, when it reigns; and therefore, there is not in it a Reluctance to Sin as Sin. Could Sin and its Consequences be separated, a Person under its Dominion would make no Difficulty of obeying its Dictates. I am not afraid to say that we are like the Devil, when Sin reigns in us: He *believes and trembles*, but he cannot love. The Penalty he suffers begets not the least Inclination to Holiness, nor Aversion to Sin. We also may believe and tremble, under a Sense of divine Wrath, but we cannot love. Suffering the greatest Penalty, though ever so long continued, will not make us better in the Temper of our Minds.

No Provision is made in the Covenant of Works for taking away the reigning Power of Sin. So long therefore, as a Man is under that Covenant, Sin will retain its Dominion in the Heart. All unregenerate Persons are under the Law, and it is their Duty to live unto GOD according to it. But I am lure, that Faith in CHRIST for Salvation, evangelical Repentance, and Gospel Obedience, are not Duties contained therein. Against which I have known it objected, that if so, then it is the Duty of Sinners to work for Life, which they are naturally inclined to do. This is so weak an Objection that it is strange it should be made by any Man of a tolerable Capacity. It is the Duty of Unbelievers and Believers to work, but it is not the Duty of either to work for Life, or with a View of obtaining Life thereby. *Adam* in his innocent State was allowed to expect the continued Enjoyment of Life by working; but his Breach of the Law cut off all Hope of obtaining Life by future Obedience. Right to Life being once forfeited by Sin, it can never be recovered by the Sinner, even though he should for the future yield a perfect Obedience to the Law. The Covenant of Works allows none that are under it to hope for Life, but upon the Foundation of an uninterrupted Obedience to all the Precepts it contains. And consequently, though the Obligation to work remains on Sinners, it by no means follows, that it is their Duty to work for Life: or with a View to obtain Life, even though they could perfectly obey the Law in all its Commands. A Right to Life being once forfeited by Disobedience, can never be recovered

by the Transgressor; let his future Conduct be ever so regular and exact.

III. *Believers are 'under Grace.' Here I shall endeavour to shew what Grace is: what is meant by being under it: and that Grace will effectually prevent the Dominion of Sin over those who are under it.*

1. I am to shew what *Grace* is. GOD is benevolent and good to all his Creatures, as their Creator, Upholder, and Preserver. *He is good to all, his tender Mercies are over all his Works.* He made them all good and perfect in their Kind; such as it became his infinite Wisdom to make them: and suitably provided for their Sustentation: they all share in his Bounty. But Grace does not design this universal Benevolence and Goodness of GOD, as Creator; though some seem to have no other Notion of it: for a Deliverance from Sin, and the Effects thereof, springs not from that. If it did, every guilty sinful Creature would certainly be saved. No Sinner would ever perish if Salvation from Sin and its penal Consequences, took its Rise from this Benevolence, which is of universal Extent. The obedient Creature may expect from it the Enjoyment of Benefits, because it is agreeable to the Goodness of GOD to bestow Favours upon his Creatures, in Case they do not displease him by Disobedience. But it cannot be a Foundation of Hope to any who have by Sin demerited the Resentment of their Maker. If the essential Goodness of GOD directed him to treat a sinful Creature kindly, the Infliction of Punishment for Sin would be impossible to him. To suppose which is a gross Absurdity. For, if so, GOD could not act differently towards his Creatures, whatever Difference there might be in their Conduct towards him.

Grace designs special and peculiar Goodness, Favour which is absolutely free and sovereign. Divine Love, unto which Salvation from Sin owes its Rise, is without any Motive or Inducement in its Objects. GOD loves not Sinners because it is fit that he should shew Kindness to them, but merely because it is his Pleasure. Grace and Works are incompatible in the Business of Salvation, as the strong and nervous Reasoning of the Apostle most clearly proves. *Even so then, at this present Time, there is a Remnant according to the Election of Grace. And if by Grace, then it is no more of Works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then is it no more Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work* (Romans 11:6, 7.). *By Grace are ye saved, through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God. Not of Works, lest any Man should boast* (Ephesians 2:9.). The Persons beloved of GOD, are not *better than others*. They are Subjects of the same Depravation. No good Disposition is in them, nor is a holy Obedience yielded by them. And therefore, it

cannot reasonably be thought, that divine Favour towards them is occasioned by any amiable Qualities which they possess. Whatever spiritual Excellency is in them, it is the Effect, and not the Cause of the Love of GOD. Consequently, his Favour to them must be sovereign and absolutely free. This is what gives Rise to, and effectually secures our Recovery and Happiness. It is the kind Intention of GOD to at certain eternal Glory to some, which can only be done by divine Grace. And *it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace, to the End the Promise might be sure to all the Seed.* The Promise meant is the Enjoyment of eternal Life, which *God who cannot lie promised before the World began.* And therefore, the everlasting Felicity of those, whom that Promise respects, is not precarious; but is certain and sure, notwithstanding the many and great Difficulties and Obstructions, which lie in the Way of its Accomplishment. For divine Love is infinitely superior to them all.

2. Believers are *under Grace.* When in an unregenerate State, or under the Dominion of Sin, they were Objects of the special and peculiar Love and Favour of GOD. That had not Beginning, as it will never have an End. All the happy Subjects of Salvation were eternally beloved of GOD, than which nothing can be more evident: His Choice of them to Salvation was an Act of sovereign and infinite Love to their Persons; His Ordination and Appointment of CHRIST to be their Mediator and Saviour, was the Effect of his absolutely free Favour and Goodness to them. The Gift of them to CHRIST to be saved by him, was the Result of his special and peculiar Kindness. The Grant of all spiritual Blessings to them in CHRIST, as their federal Head, was an Act of infinite Love. And the Gift of CHRIST for them, in order to their Redemption, sprung from his immense and distinguishing Goodness towards them: And is a high Commendation of his Love towards them, *even while they are yet Sinners.* Divine Love does not begin upon the Dominion of Sin being taken away, but it certainly is antecedent to it; for it is the Cause thereof. *God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins bath quickened us together with Christ* (Ephesians 2:4, 5.). A Cause is prior to its Effect, the great Love of GOD is the Cause of our Quickening when we are dead in Sin, and, therefore, even while we were under the Dominion of it, we were Objects of Divine Love. That Grace, whereof Believers are Subjects, springs from Grace in the Heart of GOD towards them: Consequently, before the Being of Grace in them, they were interested in the Kindness, Grace and Mercy of GOD. From all which it is clear, that the Phrase, under Grace, is not to be understood of an Interest in the Love of GOD: That is evidently supposed; but it is not the Thing intended.

The Import of the Phrase is, being under Grace *influentially*, which all shall be who are Objects of it. The powerful and effectual Influence of Divine Grace is meant. The Grace of GOD operates upon the whole Soul. The Understanding, the Will, and the Affections are under its Influence. And it fails not of effecting what it designs to produce in its Operations. It is impossible it should be frustrated of accomplishing that which it intends, in Favour of those upon whom it works. It enlightens the Mind, sanctifies the Will, and spiritualizes the Affections. If Divine Grace will *work*, nothing shall *let*, or prevent the Production of what it aims to effect. All its Purposes are formed by infinite Wisdom, and, therefore, none of its Intentions exceed the Extent of its Power. Equal it is unto all it undertakes for the Benefit of its Objects, consequently, it cannot be disappointed of attaining the wise and holy Ends it proposes to itself, in any of its Operations on the Souls of Men. The infinitely wise and almighty Agent meets with no Disappointment in the Works of Nature, and shall we imagine it is possible he may, in his Works of Grace? In those Works his highest Glory is peculiarly concerned, and, therefore, at is most unreasonable, to think, that Divine Grace, is ineffectual in any of its benign Influences, on those who are the Objects of it. The Grace of GOD not only resolved to pardon Sin; but also to take away the reigning Power of it in the Heart, and in the Issue to expel it out of the Mind, which is absolutely necessary to complete Happiness. For no intelligent Creature can be perfectly happy, so long as he is the Subject of moral Impurity.

3. The Grace of GOD will effectually prevent the Dominion of Sin over those who are under it.

(1.) Sin dwells in them as an active Principle. Evil is ever present in Believers. Regenerating Grace takes not away the Being of Sin. Nor doth it alter its Nature, it remains what it was, as to its Nature before Regeneration, it is not less vile and abominable. No Change for the better takes Place therein upon the new Birth. And it is active in all the Powers of the Soul, the Mind, the Will, and the Affections. Sometimes it exerts itself with very great Strength and Violence, much to the Vexation, Sorrow and Affrightment of the Saints. It indisposes to Duty, interrupts in it, and prevents, in a great Measure, the spiritual Performance thereof often. Though regenerate Persons are dead to Sin, it is not dead in them. It is not disabled for Action. It can act, and does act constantly in Opposition to the gracious Principle, in the holy Thoughts, heavenly Desires, and spiritual Motions, which spring from that Principle, in the Mind, the Will, and the Affections. So that, a Believer is never wholly pure and holy in the Actings of his Soul. The best of his Duties have an evil

Tincture in them, by Reason of the perpetual Presence of Sin in him. His Meditations, Prayers, and all his other religious Services, even the most spiritual of them, are mixed, partly holy and partly unholy. Unto what Height soever his Hatred of vain Thoughts is raised, in-dwelling Sin will produce them in his Soul, he cannot possibly prevent their Production. And though he abhors corrupt Desires, the Sin which is in him, is able to excite such in his Heart, and frequently does, to his great Sorrow and Grief. And though he detests evil Motions in his Affections, this corrupt Principle hath a Power of acting upon them, and too often ensnares and captivates them, to the Gratification of itself, and his inexpressible Grief.

(2.) The Dominion of Sin is taken away in Believers. Regenerating Grace deprives it of its Rule, though the Being of it is continued in the Soul. The Grace of GOD, in an immediate, instantaneous Manner, produces a holy, spiritual Principle in the Heart, which opposes Sin, by Reason whereof, it cannot exercise that Lordship over the Mind, which before it did. This Principle is a Spring of new Thoughts, new Desires, and new Motions, in the happy Subject of it. In-dwelling Sin now cannot prevent holy Conceptions, in the Understanding, spiritual Desires in the Will, nor heavenly Tendencies in the Affections, which it had a Power of doing, when it possessed Dominion over the Soul. That indeed opposes all the Actings of this new Principle, and lusts against it perpetually; but it is not able to keep the Heart in Subjection to itself. Because that which *is born of the Spirit*, under his gracious Influence, causes the Soul to act in direct Opposition to the *Flesh*. And, therefore, though it wars and sometimes captivates, rule it does not. Evil is the Object of the Hatred and Aversion of the Soul, and Good is the Object of its Approbation and Choice. *It consents to the Law, that it is good. Delights in it, and serves it.* So long as Sin reigns in the Heart, there is no Abhorrence of Sin, as Sin, no Approbation of Holiness, nor Desires after a Conformity to the Law. Reigning Sin totally prevents the Subject of it, *servng* the Law of GOD. Believers, though *with the Flesh they serve the Law of Sin: With the Mind they serve the Law of God.*

(3.) Sin may gain a Prevalency in some particular Acts in the Conduct of a Believer, though it hath lost its Dominion over him. The Reign of Sin doth not consist in its Eruption into external Acts. For a Man who is under its Dominion, may conduct himself in a blameless Manner, an the Course of his Conversation, as the Apostle *Paul* did before his Conversion. A Person may be just, benevolent, compassionate, temperate, and modest in his Behaviour, and deservedly gain the Esteem of those with whom he is conversant, and yet Sin may reign in him. And Sin may in some Instances break

forth into external Acts, in one who is not under its Dominion, through an Interruption in the Exercise of Grace, Want of Watchfulness, the Power of Temptation, and the Treachery of Lust in his Heart. This is so evident, that I think it cannot be scrupled. We have the very same Proof of its Truth, as we have, that real Saints did exist. And, therefore, we must conclude, that the Dominion of Sin doth not consist in its Eruption into external Acts. Indeed when it hath lost its Dominion, it breaks not forth in outward Acts, in the general Course of a Man's Behaviour. But it may in particular Acts, unto the Shame, and deep Sorrow of one who is truly regenerate, and not under its reigning Power. This hath been the Case of some of the most eminent Saints, that ever lived in the World. The Consideration of which should cause us to be humble, and excite us to Prayer and Watchfulness over ourselves, lest Sin, which dwells in us, gain a Prevalency, in its opposite Actings to Grace, and in its Sollicitations to Evil. For, though Faith shall *not fail*, or become extinct, upon the Breaking forth of Sin into external Acts, through the Influence of Temptation, the Effects thereof will be such, as we shall have great Cause to lament all our Days.

(4.) Sin shall never recover Dominion over Believers. They are *ordained to everlasting Life. Are chosen to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit. Are called by the God of all Grace unto his eternal Glory. Are begotten again to an Inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, referred in Heaven for them.* GOD chose them to complete Holiness, in his immediate Presence. Now, if Sin were to recover its Dominion over them, the gracious Intention of GOD concerning them, would be frustrated. His *Counsel would not stand*, nor his *Pleasure be accomplished*. To imagine which, is most unworthy of GOD. For, it is infinitely dishonourable to him, to conceive, that he forms Designs, which are not actually carried into Execution. Created Goodness may be disappointed of effecting all it intends, in Favour of its Objects; but it is impossible, that increated, infinite Goodness, should be prevented of performing in Favour of its Objects, what it designs concerning them, in any Instance, or in the least Degree.

(5.) The Influence of Divine Grace, which took away from Sin its reigning Power, will not suffer it to regain its Dominion. Almighty Power is at the Command of sovereign and infinite Love. That was exerted to produce a holy spiritual Principle in the Souls of Believers, by the Production of which, Sin loft its Rule, though its Being remains in the Heart. And as Omnipotence, at the Motion of infinite Love, put forth itself to infuse, or create a gracious Principle, it will preserve and maintain the Being of that Principle, whereby Sin will be prevented recovering that Command over the Powers of

the Soul, which before it had, with what Violence soever, it may act, under Temptation, For, the Being of Grace in the Heart, is that which frees from the reigning Power of Sin. So long therefore, as its Subsistence is maintained, Sin cannot rule the Mind, though it may war and captivate. Expel the gracious Principle it cannot, by its most violent Opposition to the Actings thereof in the Believer, because there is a continual Influx of Divine Power to uphold and prevent its becoming extinct. As the most vigorous Actings of Grace in the Saints expel not Sin: So the most vigorous Actings of Lust in them, expel not Grace. That gracious Influence which was effectual unto depriving Sin of its Dominion, cannot but be sufficient to prevent it recovering its lost Reign. And that Power which gave Being to Grace in the Heart, must certainly be sufficient to prevent its Extinction. And the Saints *shall kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation*. The Dominion of Sin therefore, is gone for ever in them. *It is absolutely irrecoverable*: Let Lust war as it may, Grace will be Conqueror.

(6.) And lastly, The Operations of Divine Grace upon Believers will never cease. If the GOD of all Grace should withdraw his Influence from the Saints, Sin would again rule in them. Grace in that Case would become extinct. But that he will never do. At the Time of Regeneration, he takes his People under the Conduct of his Grace, and they shall not be removed from under it. So long as he continues to love them, he will not fail to operate on them by his omnipotent Power for their Security. His Love to them is absolutely immutable. He *rests in his Love*. Because he loved them, therefore, he produced a holy Principle in them, whereby they became free from the Dominion of Sin. And they will eternally be under Grace *influentially*, by Reason they are interested in sovereign and infinite Love, which cannot abate nor change. The sensible Influence of Divine Grace, on the Souls of Believers, may be suspended for a Season. And when it is, their Graces are languid, and interrupted in their Exercise, and the carnal Part in them gains Strength. But even then, there is a secret imperceptible Influx of Divine Power, which preserves the Being of the gracious Principle in them, and prevents Sin recovering its Dominion in their Hearts. But a Cessation of the gracious Influence of GOD on the Souls of Believers will never be. As GOD will not cease to love, he will not cease to act in a powerful and effectual Manner, in the Minds of those who are the Objects of his Love. Grace in the Heart of GOD towards Believers will cause him to exert his infinite Power, to perserve the Being of Grace in their Hearts. Once under Grace, and always so. For nothing can possibly remove a Person from under Grace *influentially*, who hath once come under the Influence of it. Sin therefore shall never have Dominion over him.

Thus I have endeavoured briefly to explain my Subject, from which some important Observations may be made.

Observ. I. The Law is to be preached. Some have seemed shy of preaching the Law; but it ought to be done. There is a lawful, and an unlawful Use and Preaching of the Law. *The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully.* It is necessary to explain the legal Constitution, in the Extent and Spirituality of its Precepts. Proof should be given, that the Law respects not only external, but also internal Acts. Our Thoughts, Desires, and the Tendencies of our Affections. That it strictly prohibits all Vanity in the Mind, all Irregularity in the Will, and all Carnality in the Affections. That it requires perfect Purity of Heart, no less than unblemished and uninterrupted Obedience in Life. That the Enjoyment of Life is only to be expected, on the Foundation of an universal Conformity to the preceptive Part of the Law, and that the want of such Conformity renders us worthy of Death. That as it is agreeable to the Goodness of GOD to promise Life, in Care of Obedience, it is becoming his Justice to threaten Disobedience with Death. The Law is to be preached to Sinners, in order to bring them to despair of obtaining Life by their own Works, until which they will not cordially embrace the Doctrine of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST. Unless a Man is convinced, that Happiness is unattainable by the Law, he will not stoop to the Grace of the Gospel. And the Law should be preached to Saints, in order to produce Gratitude in their Minds, for that great Salvation, which the Gospel is a clear Revelation of. In Proportion to that Acquaintance, which we have with the Doctrine of the Law, will the Sense of our Misery be, and by how much the greater that is, by so much the more shall we prize the Gospel.

Observ. 2. The final Perseverance of the Saints is certain. Their Conflicts with Sin which dwells in them are often sharp, and sometimes it gains Predominance in acting against the spiritual Part, but it shall never recover its Dominion. That being irrecoverable, Believers at no Time fall *totally*. A total Fall supposes, the Expulsion of Grace, and Sin's regaining its Reign in the Heart; which shall never be. They may fall *fouly*, to the Dishonour of GOD, the Grieving of the Holy Spirit, and wounding of their own Souls. But the worst of the Saints Falls are not *total*. The Being of Grace continues in their Hearts, and that prevents Sin's Reign over them in its greatest Prevalency, as to some particular Acts. And therefore, there is sufficient Ground for Believers to triumph, even in their sharpest Conflicts with Sin. How violently soever it may exert itself in Opposition to the gracious Principle, it will never be able to recover its lost Dominion. And consequently, the final Perseverance of the Saints, is not what may be, and which may not be, but it is

certain and sure, notwithstanding their numerous Temptations, dangerous Snares, and the treacherous Lusts, which are in them.

Observ. 3. The Doctrine of the Grace of GOD is to be preached, for the Encouragement and Consolation of those who are mourning under a Sense of the Being and Power of Sin in them. They are the only Persons that have a Right to evangelical Consolation. Such who are insensible of their Guiltiness, Pollution and Misery, have no Title to that Consolation, which is provided in the Gospel. The absolute Freedom and Sovereignty of the Love of GOD, ought to be clearly explained, and solidly proved for the Comfort of the Saints, who sometimes mourn greatly under a deep Sense of their Unworthiness. Its Immutability should be demonstrated. And the glorious Designs of Divine Grace concerning Believers, must be unfolded, for the Confirmation of their Faith, and the Help of their Joy. They must be informed, that the Grace of GOD, eternally resolved upon their complete Deliverance from sin, and all its Consequences, and determined to make them perfectly holy and invariably happy for ever. And we must acquaint them that, as in their Regeneration, Grace was effectual to take away the Dominion of Sin in their Hearts, it will certainly be effectual unto the utter Ruin of it in the Issue, which is what they earnestly desire. Then will *the Days of their Mourning be ended*, and their Joys be full and perpetual. Thus we must comfort those who *mourn in Zion, to whom God will appoint, to give unto them the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garments of Praise, for the Spirit of Heaviness.*