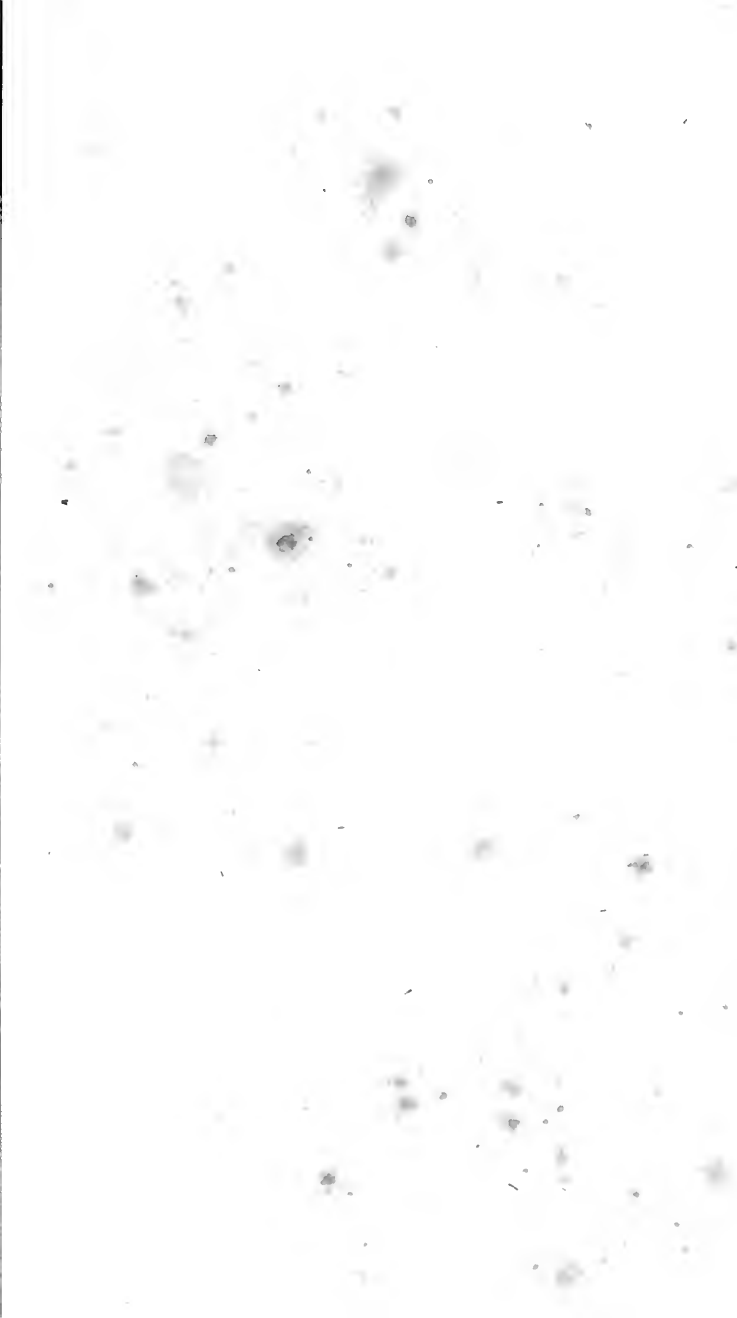




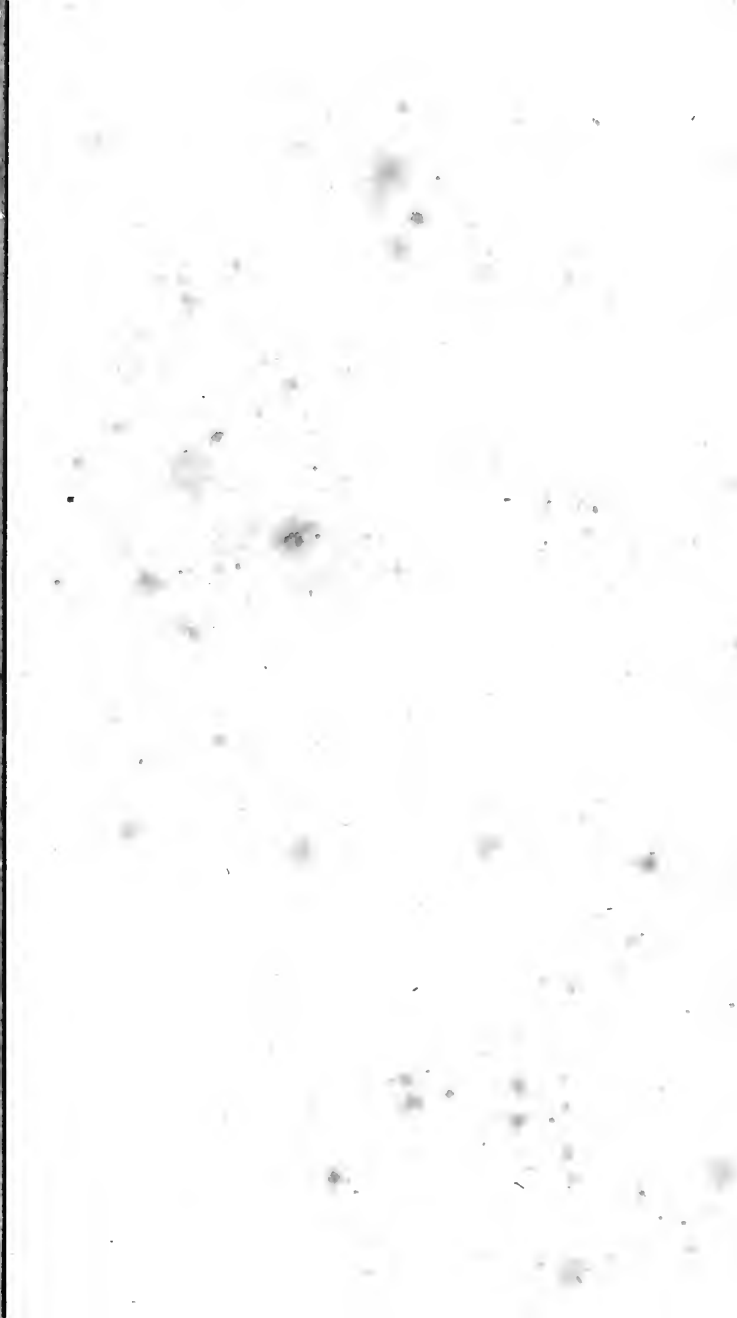


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BEAUTIES OF FLETCHER:

BEING

EXTRACTS FROM HIS

CHECKS TO ANTINOMIANISM,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO

REV. MR. SHIRLEY AND MR. HILL.

BY REV. T. SPICER, A. M.

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BEAUTIES OF FLETCHER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Vindication of Mr. Wesley's last Minutes, or, "Checks to Antinomianism," by the celebrated Mr. Fletcher, of Madely, Eng., has been very justly regarded by the Methodist societies, both in Europe and America, as one of the most excellent works of the kind that has ever been published in the English language.

This work was first published in London, A. D. 1788, in six duodecimo volumes, and it has passed through four editions in America. It has had a very extensive circulation in this country, and has been read with great pleasure and profit. Many have thereby been led from the mazes of a speculative and vain philosophy, and the intricacies of Calvinian subtleties, to a clear and satisfactory view of the plan of salvation as exhibited in the Holy Scriptures. And not a few, who, by means of Calvinism, had renounced the Bible and become *skeptical*, have, by reading these "Checks," been brought to see a beauty and harmony in the doctrines contained in this sacred volume, and have acknowledged its truth. It is a fact too well known to be denied, that many who have known no other way to understand the Scriptures than as Calvinism teaches,

have seen in Calvinian predestination, election, and reprobation, so many things repugnant to reason and common sense, that they have chosen, rather than believe such doctrines, to renounce the book which they had been taught to believe contained them. Not a few of these have been induced to read these Checks, which exhibit a different view of the *divine government*, and of the *plan of salvation*, from that which is exhibited in Calvinism, and have thereby been led to embrace Christianity again, as a system the most lovely and interesting of all the exhibitions of the divine Being.

“What is truth?” This is a very interesting question: there are, however, many persons in the world like Pilate, who make this important inquiry, but have not sufficient *patience* to wait for an answer. If a book be large, or if a work consist of several volumes, they cannot endure the thought of perusing the *whole* in order to ascertain what is truth. This is the case of many who are not accustomed to close thinking or extensive reading. These must be accommodated with a treatise that is brief and directly to the point, or their attention is not gained, nor can we win their assent to truth.

In the works of Mr. Fletcher there are many matters contained which may be considered rather of a local character than of general interest. At the time when they were written they were, doubtless, considered very interesting to all concerned, but at this distance of time

and place, few of his readers would feel much interest in them. A kind of abridgment, which shall contain a sketch or outline of these matters, and also present an epitome of the work, will interest, and greatly profit, a very numerous class of readers.

Again, many readers there are who feel a repugnance to every thing in the form of *controversy*, and so great is their aversion that they cannot be persuaded to read any work like this of Mr. Fletcher's; they would, at least, affect to regard it as a *quarrel* among ministers about religion. In order that such may embrace the truth, it must be presented in a form which to them may seem less exceptionable than it usually is in works on controversy.

The above considerations have induced the compiler of these extracts to undertake the present work. In his estimation, no man has more closely studied the Holy Scriptures in connection with their bearing on these points of doctrine than Mr. Fletcher.

In making these extracts, I have selected such articles as are deemed most interesting to the greater part of inquirers after truth at the present day. In some instances I have gathered the writer's remarks on one subject from different volumes, and I have united them in one chapter. And in many cases I have made distinct chapters under appropriate heads, when they did not so exist before. My principal object in the selection and in the arrangement which I have introduced, has

been to present the reader a very distinct view of the most important parts of these controversial writings, consisting of *essays* and *arguments*, proofs and illustrations of divine truth. Here the inquirer after truth will find objections answered, difficulties removed, and explanations of many difficult passages of Holy Scripture.

On the whole, I cannot but hope that the reader will receive great benefit from a careful perusal of the work which is here presented to him.

BEAUTIES OF FLETCHER.

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AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH GAVE RISE TO, AND WERE
CONNECTED WITH, THIS CONTROVERSY.

IN the latter part of the year 1739, several persons, who were deeply awakened to see their need of salvation, came to the Rev. John Wesley in London, desiring that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day in which they might all come together, which from thenceforth they did every week. Such inquirers becoming quite numerous, he formed them into classes, and gave them such advice from time to time as he judged most needful for them. Similar classes or societies were soon formed in various parts of England, voluntarily putting themselves under the pastoral care of Mr. Wesley; and from among them the Lord soon raised up individuals to assist Mr. Wesley in this great work. Several of these he licensed as preachers, and they became his regular *helpers* in promoting this blessed revival of pure religion throughout Great Britain. These preachers used to meet Mr. Wesley in *conference* once a year, and sometimes oftener, to confer on the most suitable means to promote this great work which God had commenced; and to receive from Mr. Wesley their appointments to their respective fields of labour.

In the year 1770 their conference was held in the city of London; and from the Minutes of their conversation the following extracts were published:—

“Take heed to your doctrine.”

“We said in 1744, ‘We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.’ Wherein?”

“1. With regard to *man’s faithfulness*. Our Lord himself taught to use the expression, and we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert on his authority, that if a man is not *faithful in the unrighteous mammon*, God will not *give him the true riches*.

“2. With regard to *working for life*, this also our Lord has expressly commanded us. *Labour, ἐργαζέσθε*, literally, *work, for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life*. And, in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

“3. We have received it as a maxim, that ‘a man is to do nothing *in order to* justification;’—nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should *cease from evil, and learn to do well*. Whoever repents, should do *works meet for repentance*. And if this is not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?”

“Review the whole affair.

“1. Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

“2. But who among those who never heard of Christ? He that feareth God and worketh righteousness according to the light he has.

“3. Is this the same with, ‘He that is sincere?’ Nearly, if not quite.

“ 4. Is not this salvation by works? Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*.

“ 5. What, then, have we been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid, *about words*.

“ 6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded *according to our works*, yea, *because of our works*. How does this differ from, *for the sake of our works*? And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*?—As our works *deserve*? Can you split this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

“ 7. The grand objections to one of the preceding propositions are drawn from matter of fact. God does, in fact, justify those who, by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule? It is a doubt, God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is no proof: for we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every thing.

“ 8. Does not talking of a justified or sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, *according to our works*,—according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour.”

The publication of the above extracts from the Minutes gave great offence to the enemies of Mr. Wesley, and also to several clergymen. Among these was the Honourable and Reverend Walter Shirley. This gentleman addressed a printed circular to several persons,

both clergy and laity, inviting them to meet at Bristol at the time of Mr. Wesley's next conference, which was to be held at that place, and to go in a body to said conference and *insist* on a *formal recantation* of the said Minutes; and in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their protest against them. This circular denounced these Minutes as injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, and as dreadful *heresy*.

Mr. Shirley desired those gentlemen whose convenience it might not suit to be present, to transmit their sentiments on the subject to such person as they should think proper to produce them. One of these circulars was sent to Rev. Mr. Fletcher, vicar of Madely, one of the most holy and devoted men in the nation. By means of this circular his attention was turned to these obnoxious Minutes; and on carefully comparing the doctrines which they contained with the Holy Scriptures, and the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England, he could not discover that "*dreadful heresy*" mentioned by Mr. Shirley; nor could he perceive any thing in them injurious to the "*fundamental principles*" of Christianity. Instead, therefore, of uniting with Mr. Shirley and "other Christian friends, clergy and laity, as well of the dissenters as of the established Church," as had been proposed, he addressed a series of letters to Mr. Shirley, to be laid before the "principal persons, both clergy and laity," whom he had invited from all parts of England and Wales.

In these letters Mr. Fletcher undertakes three things, viz.—

I. To give a general view of the doctrines which Mr. Wesley believed and preached :

II. An account of the commendable design of the Minutes: and,

III. A vindication of the propositions which they contain.

In giving a general view of Mr. Wesley's doctrines, he remarks, that he had frequently heard Mr. Wesley preach in his chapels, and sometimes in his own church; that he had familiarly conversed with him, often corresponded with him, and had perused his numerous works in verse and prose, and knew that he had, for these sixteen years past, steadily maintained the fall of man in Adam, and his utter inability to recover himself; that the deepest expressions that ever struck his ears on the melancholy subject of natural depravity and helplessness, are those which dropped from Mr. Wesley; and that Mr. Wesley was in the habit of pointing out Christ as the only way of salvation, and faith as the only way of receiving him, and the benefits of his righteousness and meritorious death.

Mr. Fletcher remarks, that the next fundamental doctrine of Christianity is that of *holiness of heart and life*; and insists that no one could accuse Mr. Wesley of leaning to the Antinomian delusion, which makes void the law through a speculative and barren *faith*. On this subject he shows wherein Mr. Wesley agrees with the Holy Scriptures. He shows also that Mr. Wesley holds the doctrine of general redemption in a Scriptural manner: and that in these views he perfectly agrees with the doctrine of the established Church, which declares that Christ redeemed *all* mankind, and that he *made upon the cross a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world*. And that Mr. Wesley, in his

preaching, never loses sight of these two gospel axioms, viz., that all our *salvation is of God in Christ*, and therefore of *grace*,—all opportunities, invitations, inclinations, and power to believe, being bestowed upon us by mere grace. And that *all our damnation is of ourselves*, by our obstinate unbelief, and our avoidable unfaithfulness, or incorrigible impenitence.

After having distinctly stated the doctrines to which Mr. Wesley had subscribed as a minister of the Church of England, and which he was in the constant habit of promulgating both in public and private, Mr. Fletcher proceeds to show the commendable design of the Minutes, and to vindicate the propositions which they contain.

Respecting the Minutes, Mr. Fletcher remarks, that such was the force of prejudice and attachments to particular modes of expression, that at first they appeared to him very unguarded, if not altogether erroneous; but when the din of severe epithets bestowed upon them by some of his warm friends was out of his ears—when he had prayed to the Father of lights for meekness of wisdom, and had given place to calm reflection—he saw them in quite a different light. When he considered the circumstances in which Mr. Wesley and the preachers in connection with him were placed, he could not help seeing that it was necessary to guard them and their hearers against Antinomian principles and practices, which spread like wildfire in some of his societies. There were many who spoke in the most glorious manner of Christ and their interest in his complete salvation, and at the same time were living in the grossest immoralities, or indulging the most unchristian tempers.

Under these circumstances Mr. Wesley cries out, "*Take heed to your doctrine.*" As if he had said, "Avoid all extremes: while, on the one hand, you keep clear from Pharisaic delusion that slights Christ, see that, on the other hand, you do not run into the Antinomian error, which, under pretence of exalting Christ, speaks contemptibly of obedience, and makes 'void the law' through a faith which does not 'work by love.'"

Mr. Fletcher clearly shows that it was Mr. Wesley's design, in these Minutes, to guard his preachers, and the numerous societies under his care, against "*leaning too much to Calvinism*" on the one hand, and too much to Pharisaism on the other: and for this purpose advises them to "review the whole affair." In doing this he establishes four things, viz.: that those only who are under the gospel dispensation are accepted of God, who now believe in Christ with a loving, obedient heart—that among those who never heard of Christ, they that fear God and work righteousness according to the light they have are also accepted and saved—that this salvation is not by the *merit* of works, but by works only as a condition—and that in these points of doctrine Mr. Wesley is perfectly consistent with himself.

The Vindication of these *Minutes* consisted of *five* letters, addressed, as we have said, to the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Shirley. Whether they exerted any influence on Mr. Shirley and his friends in relation to their conduct at the meeting of Mr. Wesley's next conference, we cannot say; but it is certainly due to Mr. Shirley to say, that on that occasion his conduct was much like a minister of the Prince of peace. At the conference there were such explanations made as to prevent any

“formal protest,” or insisting on a “formal recantation” of the Minutes.

Mr. Fletcher was prevailed on to furnish a copy of these letters for publication. To their publication Mr. Shirley was quite opposed: and by some of his friends it was represented as an act of injustice, inasmuch as Mr. Shirley's subsequent conduct was so highly creditable to him in the matter above alluded to. Mr. Fletcher addressed a letter to Mr. Shirley, in which he acknowledged his pleasure at the results of the conference, and expressed his willingness that the publication of his letters should be suppressed; but remarked that, whether his letters were suppressed or not, he thought the doctrines contained in the Minutes *must* be vindicated—that Mr. Wesley owed it to the Church, to all real Protestants, to all his societies, and to his own aspersed character. Indeed, such was the *modesty* of Mr. Fletcher, and such his *love of peace*, that he wrote to the gentleman concerned in the publication of his letters, that if he would stop it, he would take the whole expense of the publication on himself, though it should oblige him to sell his last shirt to defray it. But Mr. Fletcher's friends, and the friends of those doctrines they so ably vindicated, prized these letters too highly to allow them to be suppressed. They were well aware that these letters would be eminently useful in stemming the tide of error, and in establishing the truth.

In reply to these letters Mr. Shirley published a “Narrative.” This gave occasion to Mr. Fletcher once more to take up his pen. He published a “Second Check to Antinomianism,” in three letters, addressed to the honourable and reverend author of the “Narrative.” He makes no complaint of any severity used in the

“Narrative,” but acknowledges that, considering the sharpness of his fifth letter, the “Narrative” was kinder than he had reason to expect. But he complained that the author had wronged Mr. Wesley and the fifty-three preachers united with him in conference, by insinuating, if not directly asserting, that they had given up the doctrine of justification by works in the day of judgment. Mr. Fletcher insists on it, that so many judicious and good men could never so betray the cause of practical religion as tamely to renounce a truth of so great importance. After showing distinctly what is meant by those who hold to justification by works in the day of judgment, viz., by works as an *evidence*, he proceeds to maintain this doctrine by a great variety of passages found in the sayings of our Lord and other inspired teachers. His arguments are classed under five distinct heads; and he notices and answers no less than ten objections which are usually raised against this doctrine.

It appears that Mr. Shirley had, some time before, published a volume of sermons, from which Mr. Fletcher had made large quotations in support of the doctrines contained in the *Minutes*. Mr. Shirley, in order to get rid of the arguments drawn from this source, had, in the “Narrative,” made a public recantation of the sermons. In Mr. Fletcher’s second letter of this new series, he expostulates with him for renouncing so many truths as were contained in those sermons. He compares Mr. Shirley with the Dutch, in their last efforts to balance the victory and secure the field. When they were pressed by the French, rather than yield, they break their *dikes*, let in the sea upon themselves, and lay all their fine gardens and rich pastures under

water. Mr. Fletcher expresses great regret that Mr. Shirley had not been as prudent as they, who, before laying their country waste, saved all their valuable goods which they could. He also notices a number of mis-statements made in the "Narrative" by this honourable and reverend gentleman in reference to the "Vindication." He closes this letter by assuring Mr. Shirley of his dislike to controversy. "I no more like it," says he, "than I do applying a caustic on the back of my friends; it is disagreeable to me, and painful to them; nevertheless it must be done when their health and mine is at stake."

To this SECOND CHECK Mr. Shirley made no reply; but Richard Hill, Esq., seconded the opposition which Mr. Shirley had raised against Mr. Wesley's Minutes. This gentleman appears to have possessed talents equal to Mr. Shirley, but he did not possess as amiable a disposition. He published five letters, addressed to Mr. Fletcher, entitled, "PIETAS OXIENSIS, or, *Oxford Piety.*" To these Mr. Fletcher replied in a letter addressed to the honourable author. As these letters were written from a concern for "*mourning backsliders,*" so the answer originated from a fear lest Dr. Crisp's balm should be applied to such instead of the *balm of Gilead.*

Mr. Hill does Mr. Wesley the justice to acknowledge that "man's faithfulness" is an expression which may be used in a sober gospel sense; and Mr. Fletcher shows that this is the sense in which Mr. Wesley and all sober men wish to use it. Mr. Hill not only attacks Mr. Wesley's Minutes, but also the Vindication: it therefore became necessary for Mr. Fletcher to defend the Vindication. To the numerous objections brought

by Mr. Hill against the doctrines here vindicated, and the many arguments he had introduced in favour of the peculiar dogmas of Calvinism, Mr. Fletcher answers in a very masterly manner. He follows Mr. Hill through all his refined subtleties of reasoning and sarcastic sneers with which his letters abound, in a manner which does great credit to his head and his heart.

In reply to this letter of Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hill published six letters addressed to Mr. Fletcher. These letters gave occasion to Mr. Fletcher's **THIRD CHECK** to Antinomianism. He compares these letters to a storm of hail pouring down from the lowering sky, ushered by some harmless flashes of lightning, and accompanied by the rumbling of distant thunder.

About the same time Mr. Rowland Hill, fellow of Clare-Hall, Cambridge, came to the aid of his honourable brother. He published a "Review of Mr. Fletcher's Vindication," in what he called "Friendly Remarks." To these gentlemen Mr. Fletcher addressed thirteen letters, entitled **LOGICA GENEVENSIENSIS**, i. e., *Geneva Logic*, or **FOURTH CHECK** to Antinomianism.

To this Fourth Check, Mr. Richard Hill, Esq., replied in a work entitled "**THE FINISHING STROKE.**" In this he attempts to screen his mistakes, by presenting a wrong view of the controversy, and endeavours to show that his scheme differs from Antinomianism. About the same time, Rev. Mr. Berriage published a work designed to attack *sincere obedience*, and justification by works and not by faith only. These publications gave rise to the **FIFTH CHECK** to Antinomianism, a work equal in character to either of the preceding which had dropped from the pen of Mr. Fletcher.

Although Mr. Hill had given the "finishing stroke,"

as he supposed, to the doctrines of Arminianism and its vindicator, he found his antagonist yet in the field, having so skilfully warded off the "stroke," that the doctrines of Arminianism were gaining ground in public opinion. He therefore thought proper to take up his pen once more, and addressed three letters to Mr. Fletcher, to which was appended a creed for Arminians and Perfectionists, which he introduces in these words: "The following confession of faith, however shocking, not to say blasphemous, it may appear to the humble Christian, must inevitably be adopted by every Arminian and Perfectionist whatsoever." This fictitious creed, consisting of *ten articles*, received an answer from Mr. Fletcher, in which he showed that neither of these articles need to be believed by Mr. Wesley, Mr. Sellon, or himself, whose initials the writer had subjoined, nor by any others who believed in the doctrines of the *Minutes*, or their Vindication. To this fictitious creed he opposes a genuine creed for those who believed that Christ tasted death for every man. And this creed he supports by the Holy Scripture.

It seemed to be the design of Mr. Fletcher's opponents to fasten *consequences* on the doctrines contained in the Vindication which are calculated to undermine the doctrines of the Bible. They insist that Arminianism leads to Pharisaism. To this charge, on which they so constantly insisted, Mr. Fletcher published a work entitled, "An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism." This consisted of an historical essay on the danger of parting faith and works,—a Scriptural essay on the astonishing rewardableness of works according to the covenant of grace,—a rational vindication of the doctrine of salvation by faith,—and a

dedicatory epistle to the right honourable, the Countess of Huntingdon.

After the publication of the *Equal Check*, Mr. Hill found it necessary to give a "Second Finishing Stroke," to which he appends "reasons for declining any farther controversy respecting Mr. Wesley's principles." He quits the field like a brave Parthian. He shoots his own arrows as he retires, and borrows those of two gentlemen whom he calls, "a very eminent minister of the Church of England," and "a lay gentleman of great learning and abilities." In this work he does little else than repeat the same things he had said in his former work. He treats Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Olivers with great contempt. He notifies Mr. Fletcher, that he would not in future look into any of his books if he should write a thousand. And as to Mr. Thomas Olivers, who certainly was a writer of no mean talents, "I shall not," says he, "take the least notice of him, or read a line of his composition, any more than if I were travelling on the road, I should stop to lash, or even order my footman to lash, every impertinent little quadruped in a village that should come out and bark at me." This specimen will serve to show the spirit of some of Mr. Fletcher's opponents.

In reply to this Second Finishing Stroke, and the letters accompanying it, Mr. Fletcher wrote his *ZELOTES* and *HONESTUS* reconciled, or the second part to an *Equal Check* to Pharisaism and Antinomianism, being the first part of the *Scripture Scales*. This is a most admirable work, well calculated to throw light on the plan of salvation, and to assist in understanding many dark and difficult passages of Holy Scripture. His scales are well calculated to weigh the gold of gospel

truth. In them he balances a multitude of opposite scriptures, and thereby unites FREE GRACE *in God*, and FREE WILL in man.

After this reply, Mr. Hill was as good as his word, for it appears that he published nothing more on the subject. But he had scarcely quit the field of controversy, when another warrior, clad in armour, thought proper to make his appearance in defence of the peculiarities of Calvinism. This was Rev. Mr. Toplady. He published his "Scheme of Christian Philosophical Necessity, asserted in Opposition to Mr. Wesley's Tracts on that Subject," and his "Vindication of the Decrees." The spirit with which this reverend gentlemen wrote did not reflect much honour on him, either as a Christian or a gentleman.

To this work Mr. Fletcher wrote a reply, in which he shows that Mr. Toplady's scheme represents God as the cause of all sin and damnation. Against this scheme he brings forward *fourteen* arguments; and in a very clear manner he answers the capital objections of the necessitarians to the doctrine of liberty. His answer to Mr. Toplady's "Vindication of the Decrees" will richly repay the reader, if he be an inquirer after truth. He cannot fail to be edified.

This reply to the principal arguments by which the Calvinists and fatalists support the doctrine of "absolute necessity" silenced these reverend and honourable gentleman. It was a "finishing stroke" to them. Mr. Fletcher, however, added to his numerous publications, the "Last Check to Antinomianism." This is "A polemical Essay on the twin Doctrines of Christian Imperfection and a death Purgatory." In this essay he vindicates the doctrine of Christian perfection, or evan-

gical holiness. In his preface he says, "When a late fellow of Clare-Hall, Cambridge, attacked the doctrine of *sincere obedience*, which I defend in the *Checks*, he said with great truth, '*Sincere obedience, as a condition*, will lead you unavoidably up to PERFECT *obedience.*' What he urged as an argument *against* our views of the gospel, is one of the reasons by which we defend them, and perhaps the strongest of all; for our doctrine leads as naturally to holiness and perfect obedience, as that of our opponents does to sin and imperfection."

On 11/15/54, the following memorandum was received from the Office of the Secretary of Defense:

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

DATE: 11/15/54

TO: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

[The remainder of the memorandum text is illegible due to extreme blurriness.]

BEAUTIES OF FLETCHER.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE NECESSITY OF WORKS.

SECTION I.

IS IT NECESSARY THAT ANY THING BE DONE BY MEN IN ORDER TO JUSTIFICATION?

MR. WESLEY said, in the Minutes alluded to, "We have received it as a maxim, that a man is to do nothing 'in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should *cease from evil and learn to do well*. Whoever repents, should *do works meet for repentance*. And if this be not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?"

By *justification* he does not mean that general benevolence of our merciful God, manifested in the atonement; this is certainly previous to any thing we can do to find it. Much less does he mean what Dr. Crisp calls *eternal justification*. But the justification of which he speaks, is either that public and final justification which our Lord mentions in the gospel, when he says, "*By thy words thou shalt be justified*," alluding to the day of judgment: or he means the forgiveness of sin, and the witness of it. This is what Mr. Wesley and St. Paul generally mean by justification.

And now, do not Scripture, common sense, and experience, show that *something must be done in order*

to *attain* and *find*, though not to *merit* and *purchase* this justification?

1. Please to answer the following questions, founded upon the express declarations of God's word. *To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.* Is ordering our conversation aright, doing nothing? *Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* Are repentance and conversion nothing? *Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,—I will justify you.* Is coming doing nothing? *Cease to do evil, learn to do well.* Come now, let us reason together, and though your sins be red as crimson, they shall be white as snow,—you shall be justified. Is ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well, doing nothing? *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Is seeking, calling, forsaking one's way, and returning to the Lord, a mere nothing? *Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* Yea, take the kingdom of heaven by force. Is seeking, asking, knocking, and taking by force, absolutely nothing? When you have answered these questions, I will throw one or two hundred more of the like kind in your way.

Let us now see if reason is not for Mr. Wesley, as well as Scripture. Do you not maintain that *believing* is necessary in order to our justification? If you do, you subscribe to Mr. Wesley's heresy; for *believing* is not only doing *something*, but necessarily supposes a

variety of things. Faith cometh by hearing, and sometimes by reading, which implies attending the ministry of the word, and searching the Scriptures, as the Bereans did. It likewise presupposes at least the attention of the mind, and consent of the heart, to a revealed truth; or the consideration, approbation, and receiving an object proposed to us: nay, it implies renouncing worldly, and seeking divine honour. What a variety of things is therefore implied in *believing*, which we cannot but acknowledge to be previous to justification! Who can then blame Mr. Wesley for saying *something* must be done in order to justification?

Again, if nothing be required of us in order to justification, who can find fault with those that die in a state of condemnation? They were *born in sin, and children of wrath*, and nothing was required of them in order to find favour: it remains, therefore, that they are damned, through an absolute decree, made thousands of years before they had any existence! If some can swallow this camel with the greatest ease, I doubt, sir, it will not go down with *you*, without bearing very hard upon the knowledge you have of the God of love, and the gospel of Jesus.

Once more: Mr. Wesley concludes his proposition with a very pertinent question:—“*When a man that is not justified, does works meet for repentance, what does he do them for?*” Permit me to answer it according to Scripture and common sense. If he do them in order to purchase the divine favour, he is under a self-righteous delusion; but if he do them, as Mr. W. says, *in order to find* what Christ has purchased for him, he acts the part of a wise Protestant.

Should you say that such a penitent does works meet

for repentance from a sense of gratitude for redeeming love, I answer, This is impossible; for that love must be shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given him, in consequence of his justification, before he can act from a sense of that love, and the gratitude which it excites. I hope it is no heresy to maintain that the cause must go before the effect. I conclude, then, that those who have not yet found the pardoning love of God, do works meet for repentance *in order to find it*. They abstain from those outward evils which once they pursued; they do the outward good which the convincing Spirit prompts them to; they use the means of grace, confess their sins, and ask pardon for them; in short, they *seek* the Lord, encouraged by that promise: *They that seek me early shall find me*. And Mr. W. supposes they seek *in order to find*. In the name of candour, where is the harm of that supposition? When the poor woman has *lost her piece of silver*, she *lights a candle*, says our Lord, she *sweeps the house and searches diligently* till she find it. Mr. W. asks, *If she does not do all this in order to find it*, what does she do it for? At this the alarm is taken, and the post carries through various provinces printed letters against old Mordecai, and a synod is called together to protest against the dreadful error.

Having defended Mr. W.'s proposition, from Scripture and from common sense, that whoever desires to find favour with God, must *cease to do evil, and learn to do well*, permit me also to do it from experience. And here I might appeal to the most established persons in Mr. Wesley's societies; but as their testimony may have little weight with you, I waive it, and appeal to all the accounts of *sound* conversions that have been

published since Calvin's days. Show me one, sir, wherein it appears that a mourner in Sion found the above-described justification, without doing some previous *works meet for repentance*. If you cannot produce one such instance, Mr. Wesley's doctrine is supported by the *printed experiences* of all the converted Calvinists, as well as all the believers in his own societies. Nor am I afraid to appeal even to the experiences of all your own friends. If any one of these can say, with a good conscience, that he found the above described justification without first stopping in the career of outward sin, without praying, seeking, and confessing his guilt and misery, I promise to give up the Minutes. But if none can make such a declaration, you must grant, sir, that experience is on Mr. Wesley's side as much as reason and revelation.

SECTION II.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

If we must do something in order to justification, farewell free justification; it is no more of grace but of works, and consequently of debt.

ANSWER. Nothing can be more absurd than to affirm that when something is required to be done in order to receive a favour, the favour loses the name of a free gift, and directly becomes a debt. Long, too long, persons who have more honesty than wisdom, have been frightened from the plain path of duty by a phantom of their own making. O may the snare break at last! And why should it not break *now*? Have not sophisms been wire-drawn, till they break of themselves in the

sight of attentive spectators? I say to two beggars, Hold out your hand; here is an alms for you. The one complies, and the other refuses. Who in the world will dare to say that my charity is no more a *free gift*, because I bestow it only upon the man that held out his hand? Will nothing make it *free* but my wrenching his hand open, or forcing my bounty down his throat? Again: the king says to four rebels, Throw down your arms; surrender, and you shall have a place both in my favour and at court. One of them obeys, and becomes a great man; the others, upon refusal, are caught and hanged. What sophister will face me down, that the pardon and place of the former are not *freely* bestowed upon him, because he did something in order to obtain them?

Once more: the God of providence says, If you plough, sow, harrow, fence, and weed your fields, I will give the increase, and you shall have a crop. Farmers obey; and are they to believe that, because they do so many things toward their harvest, it is not the *free gift* of Heaven? Do not all those who fear God know that their ground, seed, cattle, strength, yea, and their very life, are the gifts of God? Does not this prevent their claiming a crop as a *debt*? and make them confess, that though it was suspended on their ploughing, sowing, harrowing, &c., it is the unmerited bounty of Heaven?

Apply this to the present case, and you will see that our *doing something in order to justification* does not in the least hinder it from being a *free gift*; because, whatever we do in order to it, we do it by the grace of God preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will; all being of free, most absolutely free grace,

through the merits of Christ. And nevertheless, so sure as the farmer, in the appointed ways of Providence, shall have no harvest if he do nothing toward it, a professor in the appointed ways of grace (let him talk of finished salvation all the year round) shall go without justification and salvation, unless he do something toward them. "*He that goeth forth weeping,*" says the psalmist, "*bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him.*" "*Be not deceived,*" says the apostle; "*whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. And he only that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*" David, therefore, and St. Paul, must be proved enemies to free grace before Mr. Wesley can be represented as such, for they both *sowed in tears* before they *reaped in joy*; their doctrine and experience went hand in hand together.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE MERIT OF GOOD WORKS.

SECTION I.

HAVING cautioned against the popish abuse of Wesley's doctrine of the excellence of works, and shown the evangelical use that a real Protestant should make of it, I return to the word "merit, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid." Let a comparison help thee to understand how a believer may use it in a very harmless sense.

The king promises rewards for good pictures to miserable foundlings whom he has charitably brought up, and graciously admitted into his royal academy of

painting. Far from being masters of their art, they can of themselves do nothing but spoil canvass, and waste colours by making monstrous figures: but the king's son, a perfect painter, by his father's leave, guides their hands, and by that means good pictures are produced, though not so excellent as they would have been had not he made them by their stiff and clumsy hands. The king, however, approves of them, and fixes the reward of each picture according to its peculiar *merit*. If you say that the poor foundlings, owing all to his majesty, and the prince's having freely guided their hands, themselves *merited* nothing; because, after all they have done, they are miserable daubers still, and nothing is properly theirs but the imperfections of the pictures, and therefore the king's reward, though it may be of promise, can never be of debt; I grant it, I assert it. But if you say the good pictures have no merit, I beg leave to dissent from thee, and tell thee thou speakest as unadvisedly for the king as Job's friends did for God. For if the pictures have absolutely no *merit*, dost thou not greatly reflect upon the king's taste and wisdom in saying that he *rewards* them? In the name of common sense, what is it he rewards? The *merit*, or *demerit*, of the work?

But this is not all; if the pictures have no *merit*, what hath the king's son been doing? Hath he lost all his trouble in helping the novices to sketch and finish them? Shall we deny the excellence of *his* performance, because *they* were concerned in it? Shall we be guilty of this glaring partiality any longer? No; some Protestants will dare to judge righteous judgment, and acknowledge there is *merit* where Christ *puts* it, and where God *rewards* it; they will *give honour to*

whom honour is due, even to him that worketh all the good in all his creatures.

For my part, I entirely agree with the author of the Minutes, and thank him for daring to break the ice of prejudice and bigotry among us, by restoring *works of righteousness* to their deserved glory, without detracting from the glory of *the Lord our righteousness*. I am as much persuaded that the grace of Christ *merits* in the works of his members, though they themselves merit nothing but hell, as I am persuaded that gold in the ore hath its intrinsic worth, though it is mixed with dust and dross, which are good for nothing.

Mr. Baxter remarks as follows: "The word merit, rightly explained, is not amiss. All the fathers of the primitive church have made use of it without opposition, to my remembrance. It may be used by believers who do not make a cloak for error, by wise men who will not be offended at it, and by those who want to defend the truth, and convey clearer ideas in the explanation of things intricate. There is no word that fully conveys the same idea: that which comes nearest to it is *dignity*, and suspicious persons will not like it much better. We have three words in the New Testament that come very near it, *αξιος*, *μισθος*, and *δικαιος*, and they occur pretty frequently there. We render them *worthy*, *reward*, and *just*; and the abuse which Papists make of them ought not to make us reject their use. The English word *worthy* conveys no other idea than that of the Latin word *meritum*, taken actively; nor has the word *reward* any other signification than the word *meritum*, taken passively; therefore they who can put a candid sense upon the words *worthy* and *reward*, should do the same with regard to the word *merit*."

SECTION II.

CALVINISTIC REASONING RESPECTING REPROBATION
ANSWERED.

“If all have sinned in Adam, and the wages of sin is death, God did the reprobates no wrong when he condemned them to eternal torments, before they knew their right hand from their left; yea, before the foundation of the world.”

ANS. The plausibility of this reasoning, heightened by voluntary humility, has misled thousands of pious souls: God give them understanding to weigh the following reflections!

1. If an unconditional, absolute decree of damnation passed upon the reprobates *before* the foundation of the world, it is absurd to account for the justice of such a decree, by appealing to a sin committed *after* the foundation of the world.

2. If Adam sinned necessarily according to the *secret will* and *purpose* of God, as you intimate in your fourth letter, many do not see how he, much more his posterity, could justly be condemned to eternal torments for doing an iniquity which *God's hand and counsel determined before to be done*.

3. As we sinned only *seminally* in Adam, if God had not intended our redemption, his goodness would have engaged him to destroy us *seminally*, by crushing the capital offender who contained us all; so there would have been a just proportion between the sin and the punishment; for as we sinned in Adam without the least consciousness of guilt, so in him we should have been punished without the least consciousness of

pain. This observation may be illustrated by an example. If I catch a mischievous animal—a viper, for instance—I have undoubtedly a right to kill her, and destroy her dangerous brood, if she is big with young. But if, instead of despatching her as soon as I can, I feed her, on purpose to get many broods from her, and torment to death millions of her offspring, I can hardly pass for the good man who regards the life of a beast. Leaving to you the application of this simile, I ask, Do we honour God when we break the equal beams of his perfections—when we blacken his goodness and mercy, in order to make his *justice* and *greatness* shine with exorbitant lustre? If “a God all mercy is a God unjust,” may we not say, according to the rule of proportion, that “a God all justice is a God unkind,” and can never be he whose mercy is over all his works?

4. But the moment we allow that the blessing of the second Adam is as general as the curse of the first; that God *sets* again *life* and *death* before every individual; and that he mercifully restores to all a capacity of choosing life, yea, and of having it one day more abundantly than Adam himself had before the fall, we see his goodness and justice shine with equal radiance, when he spares guilty Adam to propagate the fallen race, that they may share the blessings of a better covenant. For, according to the Adamic law, *judgment was by one sin to condemnation*; but the *free gift of the gospel is of many offences to justification*. For if, through the offence of one, the 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.

5. Rational and Scriptural as the preceding observa-

tions are, we could spare them, and answer your objection thus: You think God may justly decree that millions of his unborn creatures shall be *vessels of wrath* to all eternity, overflowing with the vengeance due to Adam's preordained sin; but you are not nearer the mark: for, granting that he could do it as a just, good, and merciful God, yet he cannot do it as the God of *faithfulness and truth*. His word and oath are gone forth together; hear both: "*What mean ye that ye use this proverb, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?' As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb. The soul that sinneth [personally] it shall die [eternally;] every one shall die for his own [avoidable] iniquity. Every man that eateth sour grapes,*" when he might have eaten the sweet, "*his teeth shall be justly set on edge.*" When God has thus made oath of his equity and impartiality before mankind, it is rather bold to charge him with contriving Calvin's election, and setting up the Protestant great image, before which a considerable part of the church bows down and worships.

Think not, honoured sir, that I say about *free wrath* what I cannot possibly prove, for you help me yourself to a striking demonstration. I suppose you are still upon your travels. You come to the borders of a great empire, and the first thing that strikes you is a man in an easy carriage going with folded arms to take possession of an immense estate, freely given him by the king of the country. As he flies along, you just make out the motto of the royal chariot, in which he dozes, FREE REWARD. Soon after you meet five of the king's carts, containing twenty wretches loaded with irons: and the

motto of every cart is, FREE PUNISHMENT. You inquire into the meaning of this extraordinary procession, and the sheriff attending the execution answers: "Know, curious stranger, that our monarch is *absolute*, and to show that *sovereignty* is the prerogative of his imperial crown, and that he is no *respector of persons*, he distributes every day *free rewards* and *free punishments* to a certain number of his subjects." "What! without any regard to *merit* or *demerit*, by mere caprice?" "Not altogether so, for he *itches upon the worst of men, and chief of sinners, and upon such to choose*, for the subjects of his rewards. (Elisha Coles, page 62.) And that his punishments may do as much honour to *free sovereign wrath* as his bounty does to *free sovereign grace*, he itches upon those that shall be executed before they are born." "What! have these poor creatures in chains done no harm?" "O yes," says the sheriff, "the king contrived that their parents should let them fall and break their legs, before they had any knowledge; when they came to the years of discretion, he commanded them to run a race with broken legs, and because they cannot do it, I am going to see them quartered. Some of them, besides this, have been obliged to fulfil the king's secret will, and bring about his purposes; and they shall be burned in yonder deep valley, called *Tophet*, for their trouble." You are shocked at the sheriff's account, and begin to expostulate with him against the *freeness* of the *wrath* which burns a man for doing the king's will; but all the answer you can get from him is, that which you give me in your fourth letter, page 23, where, speaking of a poor reprobate, you say, "Such a one is indeed accomplishing" the king's, you say, "God's decree,

but he carries a dreadful mark in his forehead, that such a decree is, that he shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the lord" of the country. You cry out, "God deliver me from the hand of a monarch who *punishes with everlasting destruction* such as accomplish his decree! And while the magistrate intimates that your exclamation is a *dreadful mark*, if not in *your forehead*, at least upon your *tongue*, that you yourself shall be apprehended against the next execution, and made a public instance against the king's free wrath, your blood runs cold, you bid the postillion turn the horses; they gallop for life, and the moment you get out of the dreary land, you bless God for your narrow escape.

May reason and Scripture draw your soul with equal speed from the dismal fields of Cole's sovereignty to the smiling plains of primitive Christianity! Here you have God's *election*, without Calvin's *reprobation*. Here Christ chooses the Jews, without rejecting the Gentiles, and elects Peter, James, and John, to the enjoyment of peculiar privileges, without reprobating Matthew, Thomas, and Simon. Here nobody is damned for not doing impossibilities, or for doing what he could not possibly help. Here all that are saved enjoy rewards through the merits of Christ, according to the degrees of evangelical obedience which the Lord enables, not forces them, to perform. Here *free wrath* never appeared: all our damnation is of ourselves, when we *neglect such great salvation*, by obstinately refusing to *work it out with fear and trembling*. But this is not all: here *free grace* does not rejoice over stocks, but over *men*, who gladly confess that their salvation is all of God, who for Christ's sake rectifies their *free*

agency, helps their infirmities, and *works in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. And from the tenor of the Scripture, as well as from the consent of all nations, and the dictates of conscience, it appears, that part of God's *good pleasure* toward man is, that he shall remain invested with the awful power of choosing life or death, that his will shall never be forced, and consequently, that overbearing, irresistible grace shall be banished to the land of Cole's sovereignty, together with free, absolute, unavoidable wrath.

Now, honoured sir, permit me to ask, Why does this doctrine alarm good men? Why are those divines deemed heretics who dare not divest God of his essential love, Emanuel of his compassionate humanity, and man of his connatural free agency? What are Dominicus and Calvin, when weighed in the balance against Moses and Jesus Christ? Hear the great prophet of the Jews, *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, [heaven and hell,] therefore choose life that ye may live. And he that hath ears, not yet absolutely stopped by prejudice, let him hear what the great prophet of the Christians says upon the important question: I am come that they might have life;—all things are now ready;—I would have gathered you, and ye would not. Because I have called, and ye refused, I will laugh when your destruction cometh. For that they did not choose the fear of the Lord, therefore shall they eat, not the fruit of my decree, or of Adam's sin, but of their own perverse way: they shall be filled with their own doings.*

Our Calvinian brethren assert, that God binds his

free grace, and keeps it from visiting millions of sinners whom they call reprobates. They teach, that man is not in a state of probation, that his lot is absolutely cast, a certain little number of souls being immoveably fixed in God's favour in the midst of all their abominations; and a certain vast number under his eternal wrath, in the midst of their most sincere endeavours to secure his favour. And their teachers maintain that the names of the former were *written in the book of life*, without any respect to foreseen repentance, faith, and obedience; while the names of the latter were put in the book of death (so I call the decree of reprobation) merely for the sin of Adam, without any regard to personal impenitency, unbelief, and disobedience. And this *narrow grace* and *free wrath* they recommend to the world under the engaging name of *free grace*.

SECTION III.

CALVINIAN REPROBATION INCONSISTENT WITH THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

1. What becomes of God's *goodness* if the tokens of it, which he gives to millions, be only intended to enhance their ruin, or cast a deceitful veil over his everlasting wrath? What becomes of his *mercy*, which is *over all his works*, if millions were for ever excluded from the least interest in it by an absolute decree that constitutes them *vessels of wrath from all eternity*? What becomes of his *justice*, if he sentences myriads upon myriads to everlasting fire *because they have not believed on the name of his only begotten Son*, when, if they had believed that he was their Jesus, their Sa-

viour, they would have believed a monstrous lie, and claimed what they have no more right to than I have to the crown of England? What becomes of his *veracity* and the *oath* he swears, that he *willeth not the death of a sinner*, if he never affords most sinners sufficient means of escaping eternal death? If he sends his ambassadors to every creature, declaring that *all things are now ready* for their salvation, when nothing but *tophet is prepared of old*, for the inevitable destruction of a vast majority of them? What becomes of his *holiness*, if, in order to condemn the reprobates with some show of justice, and secure the end of his decree of reprobation, which is, that "millions shall absolutely be damned," he absolutely fixes *the means* of their damnation, that is, their sins and wickedness? What becomes of his *wisdom*, if he seriously expostulates with souls as dead as corpses, and gravely urges to repentance and faith persons that can no more repent and believe than fishes can speak and sing? What becomes of his *long-suffering*, if he waits to have an opportunity of sending the reprobates into a deeper hell, and not to give them a longer time to *save themselves from this perverse generation*? What of his *equity*, if there was mercy for Adam and Eve, who *personally* breaking the hedge of duty, wantonly rushed out of Paradise into this howling wilderness; and yet there is no mercy for millions of their unfortunate children, who are born in a state of sin and misery, without any *personal* choice, and consequently without any *personal* sin? And what becomes of his *omniscience*, if he cannot foreknow future contingencies? If to foretel without a mistake that such a thing shall happen, he must do it himself? Was not Nero as wise in this

respect? Could he not foretel that Phebe should not continue a virgin when he was bent upon ravishing her? That Seneca should not die a natural death, when he had determined to have him murdered? And that Crispus should fall into a pit, if he obliged him to run a race at midnight in a place full of pits? And what old woman in the kingdom cannot precisely foretel that a silly tale shall be told at such an hour, if she is resolved to tell it herself, or at any rate to engage a child to do it for her?

Again, What becomes of *God's loving kindnesses which have been ever of old* toward the children of men? And what of his *impartiality*, if most men, absolutely reprobated for the sin of Adam, are never placed in a state of personal trial and probation? Does not God use them far less kindly than devils, who were tried every one for himself, and remain in their diabolical state, because they brought it upon themselves by a *personal choice*? Astonishing! that the Son of God should have been flesh of the flesh, and bone of the bone of millions of men, whom, upon the Calvinian scheme, he never indulged so far as he did devils! What a hard-hearted relation to myriads of his fellow-men does Calvin represent our Lord? Suppose *Satan* had become our *kinsman* by incarnation, and had by that means got the *right of redemption*; would he not have acted like himself, if he had only left the majority of them in the depth of the fall, but enhanced their misery by the sight of his partiality to the little flock of the elect?

Once more, What becomes of *fair dealing*, if God everywhere represents sin as the dreadful evil which causes damnation, and yet the most horrid sins *work*

for good to some, and, as you intimate, "accomplish their salvation through Christ?" And what of *honesty*, if the God of truth himself promises that *all the families of the earth shall be blessed in Christ*, when he has cursed a vast majority of them with a decree of absolute reprobation, which excludes them from obtaining an interest in him, even from the foundation of the world?

Nay, what becomes of his *sovereignty* itself, if it be torn from the mild and gracious attributes by which it is tempered? If it be held forth in such a light as renders it more terrible to millions than the sovereignty of Nebuchadnezzar, in the plain of Dura, appeared to Daniel's companions, when the *form of his visage was changed against them*, and he decreed that they should be *cast into the burning fiery furnace*; for they might have saved their bodily lives by bowing to the golden image, which was a thing in their power; but poor reprobates can escape at no rate: the horrible decree is gone forth; they must, in spite of their best endeavours, *dwell* body and soul *with everlasting burnings*.

Let none say that we wrong the Calvinian decree of reprobation when we call it a horrible decree, for Calvin himself is honest enough to call it so. "How comes it to pass," says Calvin, "that so many nations, together with their infant children, are, by the fall of Adam, involved in eternal death without remedy, unless it is because God would have it so? *A horrible decree*, I confess! Nevertheless, nobody can deny that God foreknew what would be man's end before he created him, and that he foreknew it because he *had ordered* it by his decree."—*Calv. Inst.*, book iii, ch. xxiii, sec. 7.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

“*What becomes of God’s wisdom, if he gave his Son to die for all mankind, when he foreknew that most men would never be benefited by his death?*”

ANS. 1. God foreknew just the contrary; all men, even those who perish, are benefited by Christ’s death; for all enjoy through him a *day of salvation*, and a thousand blessings, both spiritual and temporal; and if all do not enjoy heaven for ever, they may thank God for his gracious offer, and take the blame upon themselves for their obstinate refusal of it.

2. God, by reinstating all mankind in a state of probation, for ever shuts the mouths of those who choose *death in the error of their ways*, and clears himself of their blood before men and angels. If he cannot eternally benefit unbelievers, he eternally vindicates his own adorable perfections. He can say to the most obstinate of all reprobates, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: in me was thy help; but thou wouldst not come unto me that thou mightest have life.* Thy destruction is not from *my decree*, but *thine own determination*.

CHAPTER III.

AN ANSWER TO SEVERAL CALVINIAN DOGMAS
RESPECTING THE ELECT.

I. “*David, notwithstanding his horrible backslidings, did not lose the character of the man after God’s own heart.*”

You will permit me to believe the contrary:

1. Upon the testimony of the Psalmist himself, who

says, in your favourite Psalm, "*Thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been very wroth with thine anointed; thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground,*" Psalm lxxxix, 38.

2. Where is David called "*the man after God's own heart,*" while he continued an impenitent adulterer? How much more guarded is the Scripture than your letters? "*David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside, save only in the matter of Uriah,*" 1 Kings xv, 5. Here you see the immoral parenthesis of ten months spent in adultery and murder expressly pointed at, and excepted by the Holy Ghost.

3. David himself, far from thinking that sin could never separate between God and a just man who draws back into wickedness, speaks thus in the last charge which he gave to Solomon: "*And thou, Solomon, my son, know the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever,*" 1 Chron. xxviii, 9. Hence it appears that the God of Solomon's father is very different from the picture which Dr. Crisp draws of David's God. The former can be so displeased with an impenitent backslider as to cast him off for ever; while the latter accounts him a pleasant child still.

II. "*As soon shall Satan pluck Christ's crown from his head, as his purchase from his hand.*"

ANS. Here is a great truth making way for a palpable error, and a dreadful insinuation.

1. Let us see the great truth. It is, indeed, most

certain that nobody shall ever be able to pluck Christ's sheep, that is, penitent believers, *who hear his voice and follow him*, (John x, 27,) out of his protecting almighty hand. But if the minds of those penitent believers are *corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*; if they *wax wanton against him, turn after Satan, end in the flesh, and draw back to perdition*; if, *growing fat, and kicking like Jeshurun, they neigh like high fed horses after their neighbours' wives*: we demand proof that they belong to the fold of Christ, and are not rather *goats and wolves in sheep's clothing*, who cannot, without conversion, *enter into the kingdom of heaven*.

2. The *palpable error* is, that none of them for whom Christ died can be cast away and destroyed; that no *virgin's lamp* can go out; no promising harvest be *choked with thorns*; no *branch of Christ cut off* for unfruitfulness; no pardon forfeited, and no *name blotted out of God's book*;—that no *salt* can lose its savour, nobody receive the *grace of God in vain*, bury his talent, neglect such great salvation, trifle away a *day of visitation*, look back after setting his hand to the plough, and grieve the Spirit until he is quenched, and *strives no more*. This error, so conducive to Laodicean ease, is expressly opposed by St. Peter, who informs us that *they deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*. Christ himself, far from desiring to keep his lukewarm purchase *in his hand*, declares that he will *spew them out of his mouth*.

3. A *dreadful insinuation*. While you perpetually try to comfort a few elect, some of whom, for aught you know, comfort themselves already with their neigh-

bours' wives, (like David,) yea, and the wives of their fathers, (like the incestuous Corinthians;) please tell us how we shall comfort millions of reprobates, who, for what you know, try to *save themselves from this adulterous generation?* Do you not hear how Satan, upon a supposition of the truth of your doctrine, triumphs over those unhappy victims of what some call God's sovereignty? While that old murderer shakes his bloody hand over the myriads devoted to endless torments, methinks I hear him say to his fellow-executioners of divine vengeance, "As soon shall Christ's crown be plucked from his head as this his free gift from my hand. Let yonder little flock of the elect commit adultery and incest without any possibility of missing heaven. I object no more. See what crowds of reprobates may pray, and reform, and strive, without any possibility of escaping hell. Let those gay elect shout, *Everlasting love! Eternal justification!* and, *Finished salvation!* I consent! See, ye friends, see the immense prey that awaits us, and roar with me beforehand, *Everlasting wrath! Eternal reprobation!* and, *Finished damnation!*"

III. "*The Lord has promised to make all things work for good to them that love him; and if all things, then their very sins and corruptions are included in the royal promise.*"

ANS. If this is the *love of God* that we keep his *commandments*, how will you prove that David loved God when he left his own wife for that of Uriah? Does not our Lord declare that those who will not *forsake husband, wife, children, and all things, for Christ's sake, are not worthy of him, either as believers*

or lovers? And are those worthy of him who break his commandments, and take their neighbours' wives?

Again; if St. John, speaking of one who does not relieve an indigent brother, asks with indignation, *How dwelleth the love of God in HIM?* may not I, with greater reason, say, "*How dwelt the love of God in DAVID?*" who, far from assisting Uriah, murdered his soul by drunkenness, and his body with the sword! And if David did not love God, how can you believe that a promise made to *those that love God* respected him in this state of impenitency?

2. When *we* extol free grace, and declare that *God's mercy is over ALL his works*, you directly answer, that the word *all* must be taken in a limited sense: but when *you* extol the profitableness of sin, *ALL, in ALL things working for good*, must be taken universally, and include *sin and corruption*, contrary to the context. I say, contrary to the context; for, just before, the apostle declares, "*If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;*" ye shall evidence the truth of Ezekiel's doctrine, "*When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, in his sin that he hath sinned shall he die;*" and at the end of the chapter the things that work for good are enumerated, and they include *all tribulations, and creatures*, but not our own sin, unless you can prove it to be God's creature, and not the devil's production.

3. It is nowhere promised that *sin* shall do us good; on the contrary, God constantly represents it as the greatest evil in the world, the root of all other temporal and eternal evils: and as he makes it the object of his invariable disapprobation, so, till they repent, he levels his severest threatenings at sinners without respect of

persons. But the author of "Pietas Oxoniensis" has made a new discovery. Through the glass of Dr. Crisp he sees that one of the choicest promises in Scripture respects the commission of sin, of theft and incest, adultery and murder! So grossly are threatenings and promises, punishments and rewards, confounded together by this fashionable divinity!

4. I grant that, in some cases, the punishment inflicted upon a sinner has been overruled for good; but what is this to the *sin itself*? Is it reasonable to ascribe to *sin* the good that may spring from the *rod* with which sin is punished? Some robbers have, perhaps, been brought to repentance by the gallows, and others deterred from committing robbery by the terror of their punishment; but by what rule in logic or divinity can we infer from thence, either that any robbers love God, or that all robberies shall work together for their good?

IV. "*How has many a poor soul, who has been faithless through fear of man, even blessed God for Peter's denial!*"

ANS. Surely, sir, you mistake; none but the fiend who desired to have Peter *that he might sift him* could bless God for the apostle's crime; nor could one, on such a horrid account, bless any other god but *the god of this world*. David said, *My eyes run down with water, because men keep not thy law*; but the author of "Pietas Oxoniensis" tells us, that "many a poor soul has blessed God" for the most horrid breaches of his law! Weep no more, perfidious apostle: thou hast *cast the net on the right side of the ship*; thy three *curse*s have procured God multitudes of *blessings*! Surely, sir, you cannot mean this! "Many a poor soul

has blessed God" for *granting a pardon to Peter*, but never for *Peter's denial*. It is extremely dangerous thus to confound a crime with the pardon granted to a penitent criminal.

V. "*A grievous fall serves to make believers know their place.*"

ANS. No, indeed; it serves only to make them *forget* their place: witness David, who, far from *knowing* his place, wickedly took that of Uriah; and Eve, who, by falling into the condemnation of the devil, took her Maker's place, in her imagination; and esteemed herself as wise as God.

VI. "*A grievous fall drives believers nearer to Christ.*"

ANS. Surely you mistake, sir; you mean nearer to the devil; for a fall into pride may drive me nearer Lucifer, a fall into adultery and murder may drive me nearer Belial and Moloch; but not nearer to Jesus Christ.

VII. "*A grievous fall makes them more dependant on Christ for strength.*"

ANS. No such thing. The genuine effect of a fall into sin is to stupify the conscience and harden the heart; witness the state of obstinacy in which God found Adam, and the state of carnal security in which Nathan found David, after their crimes.

VIII. "*It keeps them more watchful for the future.*"

ANS. Just the reverse of this: it prevents their watching for the future. If David had been more watchful

by falling into adultery, would he have fallen into treachery and murder? If Peter had been more watchful by his *first* falling into perjury, would he have fallen *three times* successively?

IX. "*It will cause believers to sympathize with others in like situation.*"

ANS. By no means. A fall into sin will naturally make us desirous of drawing another into our guilty condition. Witness the devil and Eve, Eve and Adam, David and Bathsheba. The royal adulterer was so far from sympathizing with the man who had unkindly taken his neighbour's ewe lamb, that he directly swore, *As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die.*

X. "*It will make them sing louder to the praise of restoring grace throughout all the ages of eternity.*"

ANS. I demand proof of this. I greatly question whether Demas, Alexander the coppersmith, Hymeneus, Philetus, and many of the fallen believers mentioned in the epistles of our Lord to the fallen churches of Asia, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in those of St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude, shall sing restoring grace at all. The apostle, far from representing them as singing *louder*, gives us to understand that many of them shall be *thought worthy of a much sorer punishment* than the sinners consumed by fire from heaven; and that *there remaineth no more sacrifice for their sins*; (a sure proof that Christ's sacrifice availed for them till they *accounted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*;) for, adds the apostle, *The Lord will judge his people*, and, notwithstanding all

that Dr. Crisp says to the contrary, *There remaineth* (for apostates) *a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* *Weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth,* and not "louder songs," await the *unprofitable servant.*

But supposing some are *renewed to repentance,* and *escape out of the snare of the devil;* can you imagine they will be upon the footing of those who, standing *steadfast and immoveable, always abounded in the work of the Lord?* Shall, then, *the labour* of these *be in vain* in the Lord? Are not our works to follow us? Shall the unprofitable servant, if restored, receive a crown of life equal to his who, from the time he enlisted, always *fought the good fight, and kept the faith?* The doctrine you would inculcate bears hard upon the equity of the divine conduct, and strikes a fatal blow at the root of all diligence and faithfulness, so strongly recommended in the oracles of God.

You will be sensible of your error, if you observe that all the fine things which you tell us of *a fall into sin,* belong not to the fall, but to a *happy recovery from it,* and my honoured correspondent is as much mistaken, when he ascribes to *sin* the effects of repentance and faith, as if he ascribed to a frost the effects of a thaw, or to sickness the consequence of a recovery.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF A TWOFOLD JUSTIFICATION.

I SHALL by the following syllogism demonstrate, that justification in the day of our conversion, and justification in the last day, are no more *one single act*, than the day of the sinner's conversion, and that of judgment are one single day.

* Two acts, which differ as to time, place, person, witnesses, and circumstances, cannot be *one single act*; (the one may be done when the other remains undone.) But our first justification at conversion thus differs from our second justification in the great day. Therefore our first and second justification cannot be one single act.

The second proposition, which alone is disputable, may be thus abundantly proved. Our first and second justification differ: 1. With respect to *time*; the time of the one is the *hour of conversion*; and the time of the other, the *day of judgment*. 2. With respect to the *place*; the place of the former is the *earth*; and the place of the latter is the awful spot where the tribunal of Christ shall be erected. 3. With respect to the *witnesses*: the witnesses of the former are the Spirit of God and our own conscience; or to speak in Scripture language, *The Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God*: but the witnesses of the latter will be the countless myriads of men and angels assembled before Christ. 4. With respect to the *Justifier*: in the former justification, *one*

God justifies the circumcision and uncircumcision; and in the latter, one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus, will pronounce the sentence, for the Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son. 5. With respect to the *justified*: in the day of conversion, a *penitent sinner* is justified; in the *day of judgment* a *persevering saint*. 6. With respect to the *article upon which justification will turn*: although the meritorious cause of both our justifications is the same, that is, the blood and righteousness of Christ, yet the instrumental cause is very different, by *faith* we obtain (not purchase) the *first*, and by *works* the *second*. 7. With respect to the *act of the Justifier*: at our conversion God covers and pardons our sins; but in the day of judgment, Christ uncovers and approves our righteousness. And lastly, with regard to *the consequences* of both: at the first justification, we are enlisted by the Friend of sinners to *fight the good fight of faith* in the church militant; and at the second, we are admitted by the righteous Judge to *receive a crown of righteousness*, and *shine like the sun in the church triumphant*.

If righteous Lot had died when he repeated the crimes of drunkenness and incest, his justification would have been turned into condemnation, according to St. Paul's plain rule, *If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision*: for neither the holy God, nor any virtuous man, can possibly justify a sinner upon the evidence of drunkenness and incest.

If Solomon, doting upon heathenish young women, and led astray by them into abominable idolatries, had died before he was brought again to repentance,

he could never have seen the kingdom of God:—he would have perished in his sin: unless Geneva logic can make it appear, in direct opposition to the word of God, that the *impenitent* shall not perish, and that idolaters shall inherit the kingdom of God, Luke xiii, 3; 1 Cor. vi, 9.

3. If the incestuous Corinthian had been cut off while he defiled his father's bed, the justification granted him at his first conversion, far from saving him in the day of judgment, would have aggravated his condemnation, and caused him to be *counted worthy of a much severer punishment* than if he had never *known the way of righteousness*,—never been justified: unless you can prove that Christ would have acquitted him upon the horrid evidence of apostasy and incest, which appears to me as difficult a task as to prove that Christ and Belial are one and the same filthy god.

If David and Bathsheba had been run through by Uriah, as Zimri and Cozbi were by Phineas; and if they had died in their flagrant wickedness; no previous justification, no Calvinian imputation of righteousness, would have secured their justification in the last day. For upon the evidence of adultery and premeditated murder, they would infallibly have been condemned; according to those awful words of our Lord, I come quickly to EVERY MAN (here is no exception for the *pleasant children*) according as *his* work shall be, not according as my work has been: *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may enter in through the gates into the city*; for without are dogs, WHOREMONGERS, and MURDERERS, Rev. xxii, 12, &c.

Should you say, It is provided in the decree of abso-

lute election, that adulterers who once walked with God shall not die till they have repented; 1. I demand proof that there ever was such a decree. In the second Psalm, indeed, I read about God's *decree* respecting Christ and mankind; but it is the very reverse of Calvin's decree, for it implies *general* redemption, and *conditional* election. *I will declare the decree: thou art my son; I will give the HEATHEN for thine inheritance, and the UTMOST parts of the earth for thy possession. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and thou perish from the way.*

2. This evasion is founded upon a most absurd proposition, which sews pillows to the arms of backsliders and apostates, by promising them immortality if they persevere in sin. But setting aside the absurdity of supposing that old Solomon, for example, might have kept himself alive till now by assiduously worshipping Ashtaroth; or, which is the same, that he might have put off death by putting off repentance, because he could not die till he repented, I ask where is this strange doctrine written? Certainly not in the Old Testament; for God asks there with indignation, *When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, SHALL HE LIVE? No; in his sin that he hath sinned SHALL HE DIE,* Ezek. xviii, 24. Much less in the New, where Christ protests that he will spew *lukewarm* believers out of his mouth, and that *every branch in him which bears not fruit shall be taken away or cut off*; an awful threatening this, which was executed even upon one of the twelve apostles; for our Lord himself says, *Those that thou GAVEST me I have kept, and none of THEM is LOST BUT Judas, who fell finally, since he died in the very*

act of self-murder, and is particularly called the son of perdition.

But granting you, that lest Lot, David, and Solomon should be condemned by works in the day of judgment, they were to be immortal till they repented and did their first works ; this very supposition indicates, that till then they were sons of *perdition*, according to that solemn declaration of Truth manifest in the flesh, *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.*

As if you were aware of this difficulty, p. 149, you have recourse to a noted distinction in Geneva logic, by which you hope to secure your favourite doctrine, as well as fond Rachel once secured her favourite teraphim. You say, "that though a sinner," (David for instance, or Solomon,) "be justified in the sight of God by Christ alone, he is declaratively justified by works both here and at the day of judgment."

Now, sir, this necessarily implies, that though David in Uriah's bed, and Solomon at the shrine of Ashtaroth, were justified in the sight of God by Christ's chastity and piety imputed to them ; yet before men, and before the Judge of quick and dead, they are justified by the evidence of their own chastity and piety. This distinction, one of the main supports of Calvinism, is big with absurdities : for if it be just, it follows,

1. That while God says of Solomon, worshipping the goddess of the Zidonians, He is still a true believer, *he is justified from all things* ; Christ says, *By his fruit ye shall know him* ; he is an impenitent, unjustified idolater ; and St. James, siding with his Master, says roundly, that Solomon's *faith*, being now *without works*, is a dead, unjustifying faith, by which, as well as by his bad works, he is condemned already. Now,

sir, it remains that you should give up Antinomian Calvinism, or tell us who is grossly mistaken, God or Christ: for upon your scheme, God says of an impenitent idolater who once believed in him, "He is fully justified by the perfect law of liberty;" and Christ says, "He is fully condemned by the same law!" and reason dictates that both parts of a full contradiction cannot be true.

Do not say, that, upon the Calvinian plan, the Father and the Son never contradict one another in the matter of a sinner's justification, by the imputation of an external righteousness, which constitutes a sinner righteous while he commits all sorts of crimes; and if the Son, on the other hand, condemns a sinner for his *words*, much more for the commission of adultery, idolatry, and murder; their sentence must be as frequently different as a believer acts or speaks contrary to the law of liberty. For Christ being *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, cannot justify, he must condemn *now*, as well as in the day of judgment, every man who *now* acts or speaks wickedly.

Should you attempt to account for the Father's imaginary justification of an impenitent idolater, by bringing in Calvin's decree, and saying that God reckoned Solomon a converted man at the shrine of Ashtaroath, because he had absolutely decreed to give him restoring grace: I reply, supposing such decrees are not imaginary, is it not absurd to say, that God reckons that cold is heat, and confounds January with July, because he has decreed that summer shall follow winter? Therefore, which way soever you turn, absurdities or impieties stare you in the face.

2. The unreasonableness of Calvinism will appear

to you more glaringly still, if you suppose for a moment that David died in Uriah's bed. For then, according to Crisp's justification by imputation of Christ's chastity, he must have gone straight to heaven; and according to our Lord's condemnation, by the evidence of personal adultery, he must have gone straight to hell. Thus by the help of Geneva logic, so sure as the royal adulterer might have died before Nathan stirred him up to repentance, I can demonstrate, that David might have been saved and damned, in heaven and hell at the same time.

3. Your distinction insinuates, that there will be two days of judgment; one to try *secretly before God*, by imputed sin and imputed righteousness; and the other to try us publicly *before men and angels*, by personal sin and personal righteousness—a new doctrine this, which every Christian is bound to reject, not only because the Scripture is silent about it, but because it fixes a shocking duplicity of conduct on God; for it represents him first, as absolutely saving or damning the children of men, according to his own capricious imputation of Christ's righteousness, or Adam's sin; and then as being desirous of making a show of justice *before men and angels*, by pretending to *justify or condemn people according to their works*, when, in fact, he has already justified or condemned them without the least respect to their works; for say Bishop Cowper and Mr. Hill, "In the act of justification, good works have no place:" and indeed how should they, if free grace and free wrath have unalterably cast the lot of all before the foundation of the world!—or in other terms, if *finished* salvation and *finished* damnation have the stamp of God, as well as that of Calvin?

CHAPTER V.

REMARKS ON THE STATE AND CHARACTER OF
JUDAS.

LET us first inquire what *scriptures* were fulfilled by the perdition of Judas. They are either *general* or *particular*: 1. The *general* are such as these; *The turning away of the simple shall slay them*, Prov. i, 32. *When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness*, [and who can be a righteous man without true faith?] *he shall die in his sin*. Again: *When I say to the righteous that HE SHALL SURELY LIVE; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, HE SHALL DIE FOR IT*, Ezek. iii, 20; xxxiii, 13.

2. The *particular* scriptures fulfilled by the destruction of Judas are these: Psalm xli, 9, *Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me*. These words are expressly applied to Judas by our Lord himself, John xiii, 18; and they demonstrate that Judas was not always a cursed hypocrite, unless Zelotes can make it appear that our Lord reposed his *trust* in a hypocrite, whom he had chosen for his *own familiar friend*. Again: *Let his days be few, and let another take his office or bishopric*. These words are quoted from Psalm cix, and particularly applied to Judas by St. Peter, Acts i, 20. Now, to know whether Judas's perdition was absolute, flowing from the unconditional reprobation of God, and not from Judas's foreseen backsliding, we need only compare the two psalms where his

sin and perdition are described. The one informs us that, before he lifted up his heel against Christ, he was *Christ's own familiar friend*, and so sincere that the Searcher of hearts *trusted in him*; and the other psalm describes the cause of Judas's personal reprobation thus: *Let his days be few, and let another take his office, &c.*, BECAUSE THAT [though he once knew how to tread in the steps of his merciful Lord, who honoured him with a share in his *familiar friendship*] HE REMEMBERED NOT to *show mercy, but PERSECUTED the poor, that he might even slay the broken in heart. AS he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: AS he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him: AS he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into his bowels like water,* Psalm cix, 8, 16, &c. Hence it is evident that, if Judas was LOST agreeably to the Scriptural prediction of his PERDITION; and if that very prophecy informs us that *his days were few*, BECAUSE HE remembered not to *show mercy, &c.*, we horribly wrong God when we suppose that this means BECAUSE GOD never remembered to show any mercy to Judas—BECAUSE God was a *graceless God* to Iscariot thousands of years before the infant culprit drew his first breath. Brethren and fathers, as many as are yet concerned for our Creator's honour and our Saviour's reputation, resolutely bear your testimony with David and the Holy Ghost against this doctrine: so shall Zelotes blush to charge still the Father of mercies with the *absolute* reprobation of Judas, not only in opposition to all good nature, truth, and equity, but against as plain a declaration of God as any that can be found in all the Scriptures: *Let his days be few, and let another*

take his office, &c., BECAUSE HE remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor, that he might [betray innocent blood, and] even slay the broken in heart.

To say that God stood in need of Judas's wickedness to deliver his Son to the Jews, is not less absurd than impious. *God has no need of sinful men.* Any boy that had once heard our Lord preach in the temple, and seen him go to the garden of Gethsemane, might have given as proper an information to the high priest, and been as proper a guide to the mob, as Judas; especially as Christ was not less determined to deliver himself than the Jews were to apprehend him. With regard to the notion that Judas was a wicked man—an absolute unbeliever—a cursed hypocrite, when our Lord gave him a place in his familiar friendship and raised him to the dignity of an apostle, is both unscriptural and scandalous: 1. *Unscriptural*; for the Scriptures inform us, that when the Lord *immediately* proceeds to an election of that nature, *he looketh on the heart*, 1 Sam. xvi, 7. Again; when eleven apostles prayed that God would overrule the lot which they were about to cast for a proper person to succeed Judas, they said, *Thou, Lord, knowest the HEARTS OF ALL MEN; show which of these two THOU HAST CHOSEN, that he may take part of the MINISTRY from which Judas, by TRANSGRESSION, fell*, Acts i, 24. Now, as Judas *FELL BY TRANSGRESSION*, he was undoubtedly *raised by righteousness*, unless Zelotes can make it appear that he rose the same way he fell; and that, as he fell by a bribe, so he gave some of our Lord's friends a bribe to get himself nominated to one of the twelve apostolic bishoprics. But even then, how does

this agree with our Lord KNOWING THE HEART and CHOOSING accordingly?

2. This notion is *scandalous*; it sets Christ in the most contemptible light. How will he condemn, in the great day, men of power in the church, who, for by-ends, commit the care of souls to the most wicked men? How will he even find fault with them, if he set them the example himself, in passing by all the *honest* and *good* men in Judea, to go and set the apostolic mitre upon the head of a *thief*—of a *wolf in sheep's clothing*? In the name of wisdom I ask, Could Christ do this, and yet remain the *GOOD Shepherd*? How different is the account that St. Paul gives of his *own* election to the apostleship: "*The glorious gospel of God was committed to my trust,*" says he; "*and I thank Christ, who hath enabled me, FOR THAT HE COUNTED ME FAITHFUL, PUTTING ME into the ministry,*" 1 Tim. i, 11, 12. Now, if we represent Christ as *putting Paul into the ministry*, because he counted him *FAITHFUL*; and Judas, because he counted him *unfaithful*—a thief—a traitor—a cursed hypocrite; do we not make Christ a Proteus? Are his ways equal? Has he not two weights? God, I grant, sets sometimes a wicked king over a wicked people, but it is according to the ordinary course of human affairs, and *in his anger*; to chastise a sinful nation with a royal rod. But what had the *unformed* Christian church done to deserve being scourged with the rod of apostolic wickedness? and what course of human affairs obliged our Lord to fix upon a wicked man in a *new* election to a *new* dignity—and, what is most striking, in an election to which he proceeded without the interposition of any *free agent* but HIMSELF?

O Zelotes, mistake me not; if I plead the cause of Judas's sincerity, when he left all to follow Christ, and when our Lord passed by thousands, *immediately* to choose him for *his own familiar friend in whom he trusted*—for a preacher of his gospel, and an apostle of his church—I do it not so much for Judas's sake as for the honour of Christ, and the comfort of his timorous, doubting followers. Alas! if Christ could show *distinguishing favour* and *familiar friendship* to a man on whom he had absolutely set his black seal of unconditional reprobation—to a man whom, from the beginning of the world, he had, without any provocation, marked for a goat, and for unavoidable damnation: if he could converse, eat, drink, travel, lodge, and pray, for years, with a man to whom he bore from everlasting, and will bear to all eternity, a settled ill-will, an immortal hatred—where is sincerity? where is the Lamb without blemish? the Lamb of God, in whose mouth no guile was ever found? If Christ be such a SLY DAMNER of one of his twelve apostles as the doctrines of grace [so called] represent him to be, who can trust him? What professor, what gospel minister, can assure himself that Christ has not chosen and called him for purposes as sinister as those for which it is supposed that Judas was chosen and called to be Christ's familiar friend? Nay, if Christ, barely on account of Adam's sin, left Judas in the lurch, and even *betrayed* him into a deeper hell by a mock call, may he not have done the same by Zelotes, by me, and by all the professors in the world? O ye "doctrines of grace," if *you are sweet as honey, in the mouth of Zelotes, as soon as I have eaten you, my belly is bitter*; poison corrodes my

vitals; I must either part with you, my reason, or my peace.

To conclude: If God has taken such particular care to clear himself from the charge of ABSOLUTELY appointing Judas to be a *son of perdition*: nay, if Christ himself asserts that the FATHER GAVE HIM Judas, as well as the other apostles: and if the HOLY GHOST declares, *by the mouth of David*, that Judas was once *Christ's familiar friend*, and, as such, honoured with his *trust* and confidence; is it not evident that the doctrine of free wrath, and of any man's (even JUDAS'S) absolute unconditional reprobation, is as gross an imposition upon Bible Christians as it is a foul blot upon all the divine perfections?

I hope nobody will charge me with blasphemy for saying that our Lord called Judas with the same sincerity with which he called his other disciples. Heaven forbid that any Christian should suppose the Lamb of God called Iscariot to get him into the pit of perdition, as the fowler does an unhappy bird which he wants to get into a decoy! Judas readily answered the call, and undoubtedly believed in Christ, as well as the rest of the apostles: for St. John says, "*This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples [of whom Judas was one] believed in him.*" His faith was true, so far as it went; for he was one of the *little flock to whom it was God's good pleasure to give the kingdom*, Luke xii, 32. Our Lord pronounced him blessed with the rest of his disciples, Matt. xiii, 16; and conditionally promised him one of the twelve apostolic crowns in his glory, Matt. xix, 28.

If you say that "he was *always* a traitor and a

hypocrite," you run into endless difficulties ; for, 1. You make Christ countenance, by his example, all bishops who knowingly ordain wicked men ; all patrons who give them livings ; and all kings who prefer ungodly men in the church. 2. You suppose that Christ, who would not receive an occasional testimony from an evil spirit, not only sent a devil to preach and baptize in his name, but, at his return, encouraged him in his horrid dissimulation, by bidding him *rejoice that his name was written in heaven*. 3. You believe that the *faithful and true Witness*, in whose mouth no guile was ever found, gave this absurd, hypocritical charge to a goat, an arch hypocrite, a devil : "*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ; but fear not, the hairs of your head are all numbered. A sparrow shall not fall to the ground without your Father, and ye are of more value than many sparrows. Do not premeditate, it shall be given you what you shall speak ; for it is not you that speak ; but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*"

When our Lord spoke thus to Judas, he was a sheep, i. e., *he heard Christ's voice and followed him*. But, alas ! he was afterward taken by the bright shining of silver and gold, as David was by the striking beauty of Uriah's wife. And when he had admitted the base temptation, our Lord, with the honesty of a master and tenderness of a Saviour, said, "*Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?*" He has let the tempter into his heart. This severe, though indirect reproof, reclaimed Judas for a time ; as a similar rebuke checked Peter on another occasion. Nor was it, probably, till near the end of our Lord's ministry that he began to be *unfaithful in the mammon of unright-*

eousness : and even then, Christ kindly warned, without exposing him.

Some, indeed, think our Lord was partial to Peter ; but I do not see it : for with equal love and faithfulness he warned all his disciples of their approaching fall, and mentioned the peculiar circumstances of Judas's and Peter's apostacy. " Ay, but he prayed for Peter, that his faith might not fail." And is this a proof that he never prayed for Judas ? That he always excepted him when he prayed for his disciples ; and that he would have excepted him, if he had been alive when he interceded for all his murderers ? " However, *he looked at Peter*, to cover him with penitential shame." Nay, he did more than this for Judas ; for he pointed at him, first indirectly, and then directly, to bring him to a sense of his crime. But, supposing our Lord had not at all endeavoured to stop him in his dreadful career, would this have been a proof of his reprobating partiality ? Is it not said, that *the Lord weigheth the spirits* ? As such, did he not see that Judas offended of malicious wickedness and calm deliberation : and that Peter would offend merely through fear and surprise ? Supposing, therefore, he had made a difference between them, would it be right to account for it by Calvinian election and reprobation, when the difference might so naturally be accounted for from the different state of their hearts and nature of their falls ? Was it not highly agreeable to the notions we have of justice, and the declarations we read in the Scriptures, that our Lord should reprobate, or give up Judas, when he saw him immoveably fixed in his apostacy, and found that the last hour of his day of grace was now expired ?

From all these circumstances, I hope I may conclude

that Judas was not always a hypocrite; that he may be properly ranked among apostates, that is, among those who truly fall from God, and therefore were once truly in him; and that our Lord spoke no untruth when he called the Spirit of God the Spirit of Judas's Father, without making any difference between him and the other disciples.

If you ask how he fell? I reply, that overlooking an important part of our Lord's pastoral charge to him, *He that endureth unto the end shall be saved*, he dallied with worldly temptations till the evil spirit, which was gone out of him, entered in again, with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and took possession of his heart, which was once swept from reigning sin, and garnished with the graces which adorn the Christian in his infant state. Thus, like Hymeneus, Philetus, Demas, and other apostates, *by putting away a good conscience, concerning faith he made shipwreck*, and evidenced the truth of God's declaration, "*When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his sin that he hath sinned he shall die.*"

OBJECTION. "*But how could Judas be redeemed by Christ? Was not his soul actually in hell, beyond the reach of redemption, when Christ bled upon the cross?*"

ANSWER. The fallacy of this argument will be sufficiently pointed out by retorting it thus: "How could Christ redeem David? Was not David's soul actually in heaven, beyond the need of redemption, when Christ bled upon the ignominious tree?" The truth is: From

the foundation of the world Christ *intentionally* shed his blood, to procure a *temporary salvation* for all men, and an *eternal salvation for them that obey him*, and *work out their salvation with fear and trembling*. With respect to David and Judas *in the day of their visitation*, through Christ's *intended sacrifice*, they had both an *accepted time*; and while the one, by penitential faith, SECURED *eternal salvation*, the other, by obstinate unbelief, TOTALLY FELL from *initial salvation*, and, by *his own sin*, went to HIS OWN, and not to Adam's *place*.

CHAPTER VI.

FARTHER REMARKS ON THE JUSTIFICATION OF INFANTS.

IN the Third Check, to make my readers sensible that Calvinism has confusion and not Scripture for its foundation, I made a Scriptural distinction between the four degrees that constitute a saint's eternal justification; and each of these degrees I called a *justification*, because I thought I could speak as the oracles of God, without exposing the truth of the gospel to the smiles of Christian wits.

From Rom. v, 18, I proved the justification of infants: "*As by the offence of Adam [says the apostle] judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of Christ, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.*" In support of this justification which comes upon *all men* in their infancy, I now advance the following arguments:

1. The Scripture tells us, that *Christ in all things has the pre-eminence*: but if Adam be a more public person, a more general representative of mankind, than Jesus Christ, it is plain that, in this grand respect, Adam hath the pre-eminence over Christ. Now, as this cannot be, as Christ is at least equal to Adam, it follows that, as Adam brought a general condemnation and a universal seed of death upon all infants, so Christ brings upon them a general justification and a universal seed of life.

2. I never yet saw a Calvinist who denied that Christ died for Adam. Now, if the Redeemer died for our first parent, he undoubtedly expiated the original sin, the first transgression of Adam. And if Adam's original sin was atoned for and forgiven to him, as the Calvinists, I think, generally grant, does it not follow that all infants are by nature children of wrath, yet, through the redemption of Christ, they are in a state of favour or justification? For how could God damn to all eternity any of Adam's children for a sin which Christ expiated?—a sin which was forgiven almost six thousand years ago to Adam, who committed it in person?

3. The force of this observation would strike our Calvinist brethren, if they considered that we were not less in Adam's loins when God gave his Son to Adam in the grand original gospel promise than when Eve prevailed on him to eat the forbidden fruit. As all in him were included in the covenant of perfect obedience *before* the fall, so in him all were likewise interested in the covenant of grace and mercy *after* the fall: and we have full as much reason to believe that some of Adam's children never fell with him from a state of

probation, according to the old covenant, as to suppose that some of them never rose with him to a state of probation upon the terms of the new covenant, which stands upon *better promises*.

Thus, if *all* received an unspeakable injury by being seminally in Adam when he fell, according to the first covenant, we *all* received also an unspeakable blessing by being in his loins when God spiritually raised him up, and placed him upon gospel ground. Nay, the blessing which we have in Christ is far superior to the curse which Adam entailed upon us. We stand our trial upon much more advantageous terms than Adam did in Paradise. For, according to the first covenant, *judgment was by ONE offence to condemnation*. One sin sunk the transgressor. But according to the *free gift*, or second covenant, provision is made in Christ for repenting of, and rising from, *MANY offences unto justification*, Rom. v, 16.

4. Calvinists are now ashamed of consigning infants to the torments of hell; they begin to extend their election to them all. Even the translator of Zanchius believes that all children who die in their infancy are saved.* Now, sir, if all children, or any of them, are saved, they are unconditionally justified, according to our plan; for they cannot be *justified by faith*, according to St. Paul's doctrine, Rom. v, 1: as it is granted that those who are not capable of understanding are not capable of believing. Nor can they be *justified by works*, according to St. James's doctrine, chap. ii, 24: for they are not accountable for their works who do not know good from evil, nor their right hand from their

* If all are saved who die in infancy, and Calvinian election be true, then none but the *elect* die in infancy!

left. Nor can they be *justified by words*, according to our Lord's doctrine, Matt. xii, 37 : because they cannot yet form one articulate sound. It follows, then, that all infants must be damned, or justified without faith, words, or works, according to our first distinction. But as you believe they are saved, the first degree of an adult saint's justification is not less founded upon your own sentiments than upon reason and Scripture.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DOCTRINE OF A BELIEVER'S JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS IS RECONCILED WITH THE DOCTRINE OF A SINNER'S JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE.

HAVING answered the arguments which you have advanced against the doctrine of justification by works in the great day, permit me to consider what may farther be advanced against it.

1. We cry to *sinner*s, "*By grace shall ye be saved, through faith*, in the day of your conversion ;" but to *believers* we say, "*By grace shall ye be saved, through works*, in the day of judgment. Turn, therefore, ye *sinner*s : and, ye *saint*s, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

When the apostle excludes *works* from having any hand in our justification or salvation, it is only when he speaks of the justification of *sinner*s, whether we consider them as infants or adults. For if he excluded works from the justification of *believers*, either in the day of trial or in the day of judgment, he would grossly contradict himself : but now he is quite consistent.

Mr. Wesley and I, through grace, gladly join him and Titus when they say, "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, [either in our infancy or before the day of our conversion,] but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*"

Inquire we now, what are those *works* which St. Paul opposes to *faith* and free *grace*; and I observe,

1. That it is not absolutely every work, or else he would oppose faith to itself; for believing is as much a work of the heart as walking to church is a *work* of the feet.

2. Neither does the apostle oppose to faith *works meet for repentance*; for he strongly recommended them himself, Acts xxvi, 20. Nor the works of upright Gentiles that *fear God, and believe he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him*. If St. Paul represented these works as "*dung and filthy rags,*" he would contradict the angel who said to Cornelius, "*Thy prayers and alms [far from being rejected] are come up for a memorial before God.*"

3. Much less did it ever come into the apostle's mind to oppose *the work of faith and labour of love* to faith and free grace; for they are no more contrary to each other than the stalk and the ear are contrary to the root that bears them. Far from despising these works, see how honourably he speaks of them: "*We give thanks always for you, remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love in our Lord Jesus Christ.—God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour that proceedeth of love.—Always abounding in the work of the Lord.—Charge*

the rich that they be rich in good works, laying up for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

For want of attending to this, some have preposterously opposed the righteousness of faith to personal holiness. The latter they look upon as the righteousness which is of the law, and which the apostle explodes, Phil. iii, 9. Thus they suppose that St. Paul formed the horrid wish of not being found clothed with holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord*; not considering that the pardon of sins and true holiness, the two inseparable fruits of a living faith, constitute the *righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*. A righteousness this that far exceeds the outside *righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees*, with which the apostle had too long been satisfied, and which he so justly despised after his conversion.

But the works which St. Paul excludes are,

1. The works of the ceremonial law of Moses, generally called *the works of the law*. On these works most Jewish converts laid a very great stress; and some of them went so far into this error as to say to their Gentile brethren, "*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*," Acts xv, 1. Hence the apostle wrote, verse 24, "*Certain men, subverting your souls, have troubled you, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and KEEP THE LAW.*" Hence, also, it is said, that when St. Paul shaved, and *was at charges to purify himself* in the temple, he *walked orderly* and *KEPT THE LAW*, Acts xxi, 24.

2. The apostle likewise opposed to faith those hypocritical deeds of the *moral* law, those external works

of partial piety and ostentatious mercy by which proud Pharisees think to atone for their sins and purchase the kingdom of heaven. Such works of unbelief and spiritual pride cannot be too much decried. They do infinite mischief; they draw a veil over our apostacy; they breed self-complacence, generate self-conceit, and feed the opposition of Pharisees against the gospel. Hence their contempt of Christ, their enmity against his people, their ridiculing the atonement, despising others, and boasting of their own goodness. St. Paul was the more zealous in bearing his testimony against these fruits of self-righteousness, as he knew, by fatal experience, that they are the reverse of *fruits meet for repentance*, and of *the righteousness which is of God by faith*; and that they stood yet in the way of the Jews as much as they once did in his own.

3. The apostle excludes all the works of impious moralists, who make no scruple of robbing God because they are just to man; all the works of Antinomian believers, who, like the Galatians, pray to the Lord, and devour their neighbours—or, like the Jews, fast to-day, and to-morrow strike with the fist of wickedness; all the works which are not ultimately referred to the glory of God through Jesus Christ; and all the works whose gracious rewardableness is not acknowledged to flow from the original and proper merit of the Redeemer. Those works the apostle justly discards, as contrary to the doctrine of *grace*, because they do not spring from the *grace* of God, but from the *pride* of man. He explodes them as opposite to the righteousness of faith, because they are not the works of humble faith, but of conceited unbelief; the constant language of faith being, "*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,*

but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and truth's sake."

Let the judicious reader say, if by thus distinguishing between the justification of a *sinner* in the day of conversion and the justification of a *saint* in the great day; and by making a proper difference between the works of an humble believer, which the apostle justly extols, and the works of a proud Pharisee, which he justly decries; we do not perfectly reconcile him to himself, and sufficiently secure the honour of *free grace*?

CHAPTER VIII.

RECONCILING CONCESSIONS RESPECTING ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

SOME readers will probably think that I have made the Calvinists too many concessions in the following pages: but I am persuaded that I have granted them nothing but what they have a Scriptural right to; and God forbid that any Protestant should grant them less!

1. We grant that there is an *election of distinguishing grace*: but we show that this election is not Calvinian election; thousands being partakers of the partial election of *distinguishing grace* who have no share in the *impartial* election of distributive *justice*; two distinct elections these, the confounding of which has laid the foundation of numberless errors. See *Scripture Scales*, sec. xii.

2. We grant the Calvinists that *initial* salvation is merely by a decree of divine grace through Jesus Christ.

But we assert that *eternal* salvation is both by a decree of divine grace and of distributive justice; God rewarding in Christ with an eternal life of glory those believers who, *by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality.*

3. We grant that, although God, as a *judge*, is *no respecter of persons*, yet, as a *benefactor*, he is, and, of consequence, has a right to be, so far a *respecter of persons* as to bestow his favours in various degrees upon his creatures; dealing them to some with a *more sparing* hand than he does to others.

4. We grant that, although God punishes no one with eternal death for *original* and *necessary* sin, yet when sin, which *might have been avoided* by the help of creating or redeeming grace, has been *voluntarily* and *personally* committed, God does punish (and, of consequence, has a right to punish) with eternal death *some* offenders more *quickly* than he does *others*; his showing, in such a case, mercy and justice upon *gospel terms* to whom he pleases, and as soon or late as he pleases, being undoubtedly the privilege of his sovereign goodness or justice—an awful privilege this, which is perfectly agreeable to the evangelical law of liberty, and with which the Calvinists have absurdly built their *twin* doctrines of *finished salvation* and *finished damnation*; not considering that such doctrines stain the first gospel axiom, and totally destroy the second.

The nature of this concession may be illustrated by an example. Two unconverted soldiers march up to the enemy. Both have *avoidably* transgressed the third commandment: the one by calling *fifty* times for his damnation, and the other *five hundred* times.

Now, both have *personally* forfeited their initial salvation, and, continuing impenitent, God, as a righteous avenger of profaneness, may justly suffer the *fifty-pence debtor* to fall in the battle, and be instantly hurried to the damnation he had madly prayed for; and, as a long-suffering, merciful Creator, he may suffer the *five hundred pence debtor*—I mean the soldier who had sinned with a higher hand—to walk out of the field unhurt, and to be spared for years; following him still with new offers of mercy, which the wretch is so happy as to embrace at last. Here is evidently a higher degree of the distinguishing grace which was manifested toward Manasseh, as it has also been to many other grievous sinners. But by this *peculiar* favour God violates no promise, and he acts in perfect consistency with himself: for when two people have *personally* forfeited their eternal salvation by one avoidable sin, of which they do not repent when they might, he does no *injustice* to the fifty-pence debtor when he calls him *first* to an account; and he greatly magnifies his *long-suffering* when he continues to relieve the five hundred pence debtor.

By this *sparing* use of astonishing mercy, God strongly guards the riches of his grace. This *inferior* degree of forbearance makes thoughtful sinners stand in awe; as not knowing but the first sin they shall commit will actually fill up the measure of their iniquities, and provoke the Almighty to swear in his righteous anger, that their day of grace is ended. To justify, therefore, God's conduct toward men in this respect, we need only observe, that if *distinguishing grace* did not make the difference which we grant to the Calvinists, perverse free-will would draw amazing

strength from the unwearied patience of free grace. Suppose, for instance, that God had *ensured* to all men a day of grace of *fourscore* years, would not all sinners think it time enough to repent at the age of threescore years and nineteen? Therefore, through the clouds of darkness which surround us, reason sees far into the propriety with which distinguishing grace dispenses its *superior* blessings. But all the partiality which that grace ever displayed never amounted to one single grain of Calvinian reprobation: because God, as a righteous judge, lets every man have a fair trial for his life. Nor will all the sophisms in the world reconcile the ideas which the Scriptures and rectified reason give us of divine justice, with a doctrine which represents God as condemning to eternal torments a majority of men for the necessary, unavoidable consequences of Adam's sin:—a sin this, which, upon the scheme of absolute predestination of all events, was also made unavoidable and necessary.

5. We grant, that although Christ died to purchase a day of [initial] *salvation* for all men, yet he never died to purchase ETERNAL salvation for any *adults* but *them that believe, obey, and are faithful unto death*; and that, of consequence, the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ is *general* and *unconditional* with respect to INITIAL salvation, but *particular* and *conditional* with respect to ETERNAL salvation; except in the case of infants who die before actual sin. These, and only these, are blessed with *unconditional election* and *finished salvation*, in the Calvinistic sense of these phrases: these are *irresistibly* saved, and eternally admitted into one of the many mansions of our heavenly Father's house. Free grace, to the honour of our Lord's

meritorious infancy, absolutely saves them, without any concurrence of their free will. Nor is it surprising that God should do it *unavoidably*; for as they never were *personally* capable of *working* WITH free grace, *i. e.*, of *working out their salvation*, so they never were in a capacity of working AGAINST free grace, or of *beginning* to work their damnation. Having never committed an act of sin, God can, consistently with the gospel, save them eternally without any act of repentance. In a word, infants having *no unrighteousness* but that of the *first* Adam, reason, as well as Scripture, dictates that they need *no righteousness* but that of the *second* Adam.

6. From the preceding concession it follows, that obedient, persevering believers are God's *elect*, in the particular and full sense of the word; being *elected* to the *reward* of eternal life in glory:—a reward this, from which they who die in a state of apostacy or impenitency have cut themselves off by not making their calling and election sure.

7. We grant that none of *these peculiar elect* shall ever perish, though they would have perished had they not been faithful unto death: and we allow that, with respect to *God's foreknowledge and omniscience*, their number is certain. But we steadily assert that, with regard to the doctrines of general redemption, of God's covenanted mercy, of man's free agency, of divine justice, and of a day in which the Lord shall *judge the world in righteousness*: we steadily assert, I say, with regard to these doctrines, the number of the *peculiar elect* might be greater or less, without the least exertion of *forcible grace* or of *forcible wrath*. For it might be *greater*, if more *wicked and slothful*

servants improved instead of burying their talents: and it might be *less*, if more *good and faithful servants grew faint in their minds*, and *drew back to perdition*, before they had *fought their good fight* out, *kept the faith*, and finished their course.

8. And lastly, we grant that, according to the election of distinguishing grace, which is the basis of the various dispensations of divine grace toward the children of men, Christ died to purchase *more* privileges for the Christian church than for the Jews, *more* for the Jews than for the Gentiles: for it is indubitable that God, as a sovereign Benefactor, may, without a shadow of injustice, dispense his favours, spiritual and temporal, as he pleases: it being enough for the display of his goodness, and for the exciting of our gratitude, 1. That the *least* of his *heathen* servants had received a talent, with means, capacities, and opportunities of improving it, even to everlasting happiness; 2. That God never desires to reap a hundred measures of spiritual wheat, where he only sows a handful of spiritual barley; 3. That the least degree of his improvable goodness is a seed which nothing but our *avoidable* unfaithfulness hinders from bringing forth fruit to eternal life and glory.

By making these guarded concessions, I conceive, we rectify the mistakes of Arminius; we secure the doctrine of grace in all its branches, while Calvinism secures only *irresistible* grace, by which infants and complete idiots are eternally saved; we turn the edge and break the point of all the arguments by which the Calvinian doctrines of grace are defended; and tear in pieces the cloak with which the Antinomians cover their dangerous error.

Had Arminians, and all the ancient and modern Semipelagians, granted to their opponents what we grant to ours, Calvinism would never have risen to its tremendous height. If you try to stop a great river, refusing it liberty to flow in the deep channel which nature has assigned it, you only make it foam, rise, rage, overflow its banks, and carry devastation far and near. The only way to make judicious Calvinists the *impartial remuneration* election, and the general redemption, which the gospel displays, is to allow them, with a good grace, the *partial gratuitous* election, and the particular, which the Scriptures strongly maintain also. See the *Scales*, sec. xi, xii, xiii. For my part, I glory in going as near the Calvinists as I *safely* can. Zelotes is my brother as well as Honestus; and, so long as I do not lose firm footing upon Scripture ground, I gladly stretch my right hand to *him*, and my left hand to his antagonist; endeavouring to help them both out of the opposite ditches, which bound the narrow way where truth takes a solitary walk.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FICTITIOUS AND THE GENUINE CREED.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED,

BEING A CREED FOR ARMINIANS.

Composed by RICHARD HILL, Esq., and published at the end of his "Three Letters written to the Rev. J. FLETCHER, vicar of Madeley."

ARTICLE I.

"I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for the whole human race, and that he had no more love toward those who now are, or hereafter shall be, in glory, than for those who now are, or hereafter shall be, lifting up their eyes in torments; and that the one are no more indebted to his grace than the other."

THE GENUINE CREED,

Being an anti-Calvinian confession of faith, for those who believe that "Christ tasted death for every man;" and that some men, by "denying the Lord that bought them, bring upon themselves swift destruction."

ARTICLE I.

We believe that Jesus Christ died for the whole human race, with an intention, first, to procure absolutely and unconditionally a temporary redemption, or an initial salvation for all men universally: and,

secondly, to procure a particular redemption, or an eternal salvation conditionally for all men, but absolutely for all that die in their infancy, and for all the adult who obey him, and are "faithful unto death."

We believe that, in consequence of the general and temporary redemption procured by Christ for all mankind, every man is unconditionally blessed with a day of grace, which the Scripture calls "the accepted time," and "the day of salvation." During this day, (under various dispensations of grace, and by virtue of various covenants made through Christ, David, Moses, Abraham, Noah, or Adam,) God, for Christ's sake, affords all men proper means, abilities, and opportunities to "work out their own salvation," or to make "their calling and *conditional* election" to the eternal blessings of their respective dispensations "sure;" and as many do it, by keeping "the free gift which is come" unto all men, or by recovering it through faithful obedience to reconverting grace: or, in other terms, as many as know, and perseveringly improve "the day of their visitation," are, in consequence of Christ's particular redemption, entitled to an eternal redemption or salvation: that is, they are eternally redeemed from hell, and eternally saved into different degrees of heavenly glory, according to the different degrees of their faithfulness, and the various dispensations which they are under. While they that bury their talent, and "know not [i. e., squander away] the day of their visitation," forfeit their initial salvation, and secure to themselves God's judicial reprobation, together with all its terrible consequences.

We believe, moreover, that although Christ "tasted death for every man," yet, according to his covenants

of peculiarity or distinguishing grace, he formerly showed more love to the Jews than to the Gentiles, and now shows more favour to the Christians than to the Jews, and to some Christians than to others; bestowing more spiritual blessings upon the Protestants than upon the Papists; more temporal mercies upon the English than upon the Greenlanders, &c. We farther believe that this special favour is not only national, but also, in some cases, personal: thus it seems that God showed more of it to Jacob than to Esau; to Esau than to Shechem; to David and Solomon than to Jonathan and Mephibosheth; to St. Paul than to Apollos; and to Peter, James, and John, than to Judas, Bartholomew, and Matthias. We likewise believe that God (*according to his prescience*) has a regard for the souls who (he foresees) *will* finally yield to his grace, and this regard he has not for the souls who (he foresees) *will* finally harden themselves against his goodness: thus, with respect to divine foreknowledge, we grant that Christ had a respect for fallen Peter which he had not for fallen Judas: for, when they were both lying in the guilt of their crimes, he could not but prefer him who had not yet sinned out his day of grace to him who had: him who had done the Spirit of grace a *partial, temporary* despite, to him who had done that Spirit a *total and final* despite. And, in a word, him who *would* repent to him who absolutely would *not*. However, this peculiar regard for some men, this lengthening or shortening a sinner's day of grace arbitrarily, and this bestowing more talents, i. e., more temporal and spiritual blessings upon one man than upon another, according to the sovereign prerogative which God claims in his covenants of pecu-

liarity ; this peculiar regard for some men, I say, never amounts to a grain of partiality in judgment : much less to a rape committed by overbearing grace, or infrustable wrath, upon the moral agency of two men, (suppose Peter and Judas,) to bring about, in an unavoidable manner, the final *perseverance* of the one, and the final *apostacy* of the other. For had the covetous traitor humbly repented when he could have done it, he yet would have gone to heaven ; and had the lying, perjured apostle put off his repentance as obstinately as Judas did, he would have gone to the place of impenitent apostates : for God having “ put life and death before ” the sons of men ; and having appointed eternal rewards for those who “ finally choose life ” in the rectitude of their conduct, and eternal punishment for those who “ finally choose death in the error of their ways,” he can no more *finally* turn the scale of their will than he can *deny himself*, and turn the solemnity of the great day into the pageantry of a Pharisaic masquerade.

The end of the first article of Mr. Hill's *Fictitious Creed* is not less contrary to all our principles than the middle part. For, according to all our doctrines of grace, persons who are in glory like Peter are infinitely more indebted to Christ's grace than persons who lift up their eyes in torments like Judas. This will appear, if we consider the case of those two apostles. Although they were both equally indebted to Christ for his redeeming love, which put them in a state of initial salvation ; and for his distinguishing favour, which raised them to apostolic honours ; yet upon our scheme Peter is infinitely more beholden to free grace than Judas ; and I prove it thus : Christ, according to his remun-

rative election, which draws after it a particular redemption and eternal salvation ;—Christ, I say, according to that remunerative election, has chosen Peter to the reward of a heavenly throne and a crown of glory. Now this election, in which Judas has no interest, springs from God's free grace, as well as from voluntary perseverance in the free obedience of faith. It was of free grace that God designed to give to all penitent, persevering believers, and of consequence to Peter, a crown of glory in his heavenly kingdom: for he might have given them only the conveniences of life in a cottage on earth: he might have dropped them into their original nothingness, after having blessed them with one single smile of his approbation: nay, he might have demanded their utmost obedience, without promising them the least reward. Therefore Peter and all the saints in glory are indebted to Christ, not only for their rewards of additional grace on earth, but also for *all* their *eternal* salvation, and for *all* the heavenly blessings which flow from their *particular* redemption. Infinitely *gracious* rewards these, which God does not bestow upon Judas, nor upon any of those who die impenitent! Infinitely *glorious* rewards! which nothing but God's free grace in Christ could move his distributive justice to bestow upon persevering believers. Hence it is evident that Mr. Hill has tried to make our fundamental doctrine of *general redemption* appear ridiculous, by absurdly clogging it with an odious consequence, which has no more to do with that comfortable doctrine than we have to do with Mr. Hill's uncomfortable tenet of *absolute reprobation*.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE II.

“I believe that divine grace is indiscriminately given to all men; and that God, foreseeing that by far the greater part of the world will reject his grace, doth nevertheless bestow it upon them, in order to heighten their torments, and to increase their damnation in hell.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE II.

We do not believe that divine grace is *indiscriminately* given to all men. For although we assert that God gives to all at least *one* talent of *true* grace to profit with; yet we acknowledge that he makes as real a difference between *man* and *man*, as between an *angel* and an *archangel*, giving to some men *one* talent, to others *two* talents, and to others *five*, according to the election of *distinguishing* grace, maintained in the Scripture Scales, sec. xii. But the least talent of grace is saving, if free will do not bury it to the last.

And we believe that although God foresaw that in some unhappy period of the world's duration the greater part of adults would reject his grace, he nevertheless bestows it in different measures upon all; but not (as Mr. Hill says) “in order to heighten the torments, and increase the damnation of any in hell.” This is a horrid conceit, which we return to those who insinuate that God gives *common* grace (that is, we apprehend, *unsaving, graceless* grace) to absolute reprobates, i. e., to men for whom (upon Mr. Hill's scheme of absolute reprobation) there never was in God the least

degree of mercy and saving goodness. This shocking consequence, fixed upon us by Mr. Hill, is the genuine offspring of Calvinistic non-election, which supposes that God sends the gospel to myriads of men from whom he absolutely keeps the power of believing it; tantalizing them with offers of free grace here, that he may, *without possibility of escape*, sink them hereafter to the deepest hell,—the hell of the Capernaïtes.

According to the gospel, the reprobation that draws eternal damnation after it springs from our own personal free will doing a final despite to free grace, and not from God's eternal free wrath. And if Mr. Hill ask "why God gives a manifestation of the Spirit of grace to men who (he foresees) will do it a final despite, as well as to those who through that grace will work out their own salvation;" we reply:—

1. For the same reason which made him give *celestial* grace to the angels who became devils by squandering it away; *paradisiacal* grace to our first parents; expostulating, Gentile grace to Cain; Jewish, royal grace to Saul; and Christian, apostolic grace to Judas. If Mr. Hill says he does not understand what that reason is; we answer: By the same reason which induced the master who corrected Mr. Hill for making a bad exercise at Westminster school to give his pupil pen, paper, ink, and proper instruction, before he could reasonably call Mr. Hill to an account for his exercise. And by the same reason which would make all Shropshire cry out against Mr. Hill as against a tyrannical master, suppose he horsewhipped his coachman and postilion for not driving him, if he had taken away from them boots, whips, spurs, harness, coach, and horses; and if he had contrived himself the fall of

their apartment, that all their bones might be put out of joint when the floor gave way under them.

2. If Mr. Hill is not satisfied with these illustrations, we will give him some direct answers. God gives a manifestation of his grace to those who make their reprobation sure by finally resisting his gracious Spirit ; First, Because he will show himself as he is, "gracious and merciful," "true and longsuffering toward all," so long as "the day of their visitation" lasts. Thus he bestows a talent upon all his slothful servants who bury it to the last, because he will display his equity and goodness, although they will display their wickedness and sloth. Secondly, Because he is determined that if those servants will destroy themselves, their blood shall be upon their own heads, according to the well-known scripture: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself. I would, and ye would not." Thirdly, Because God will "judge the world in righteousness," and display his distributive justice in rendering to all according to "their works ;" *deservedly* clothing his finally unfaithful servants with shame, and making the faithful walk with him in white, "because they are [evangelically] worthy." And, to sum up all in one,—because the two gospel axioms are firm as the pillars of heaven and hell ; and God will display their truth before men and angels, and especially before Pharisees and Antinomians. Now, according to the first axiom, there is a Saviour, a measure of saving grace, and a day of initial salvation for all. And, according to the second axiom, there is free will in all, and a day of judgment, with a final salvation or damnation for all, according to their good or bad works, that is, according to their free agency ; the good works of the righteous being the product of

their free, avoidable co-operation with God's grace; and the bad works of the wicked springing from their free, avoidable rebellion against that grace.

Hence it appears that the second article of the *Fictitious Creed* contains, indeed, a "shocking, not to say blasphemous" consequence, but that this consequence is nothing but a sprig of Mr. Hill's supposed "orthodoxy," absurdly grafted upon the supposed "heresy" which St. John and St. Paul maintain in these words: "He [Christ] was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The grace of God which bringeth salvation has appeared unto all men, teaching [not forcing] us to deny ungodliness, &c., and to live soberly," &c., if we are obedient to its teachings.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE III.

"I believe it depends WHOLLY on the will of the creature whether he shall or shall not RECEIVE ANY benefit from divine grace."

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE III.

We believe that the benefits of a temporary redemption, of a day of salvation, and of the "free gift" which "came upon all men" to the justification mentioned Rom. v, 18: we believe, I say, these benefits, far from "depending wholly on the will of the creature," as to the RECEIVING of them, depend no more upon us than our sight and the light of the sun. All those blessings are at first as gratuitously and irresistibly bestowed upon us, for Christ's sake, in our present manner of existence,

as the divine image and favour were at first bestowed upon our first parents in paradise, with this only difference; before the fall their paradisiacal grace came immediately from God our *Creator*; whereas, since the fall, our penitential grace comes immediately and irresistibly from God our *Redeemer*;—I say *irresistibly*, because God does not leave to our option whether we shall receive a talent of *redeeming* grace or not, any more than he left it to Adam's choice whether Adam should receive five talents of *creative* grace or not; although afterward he gives us leave to bury or improve our talent of *redeeming* grace, as he gave leave to Adam to bury or improve his five talents of *creative* grace. Our doctrine of the general redemption and free agency of mankind stands, therefore, upon the same Scriptural and rational ground which bears up Mr. Hill's system of man's creation and moral agency in paradise; it being impossible to make any objection against the personal loss of redeeming grace in Judas, that may not be retorted against the personal loss of creative grace in Adam or Satan.

But, with respect to all the temporal and eternal benefits which God has promised by way of *reward* to his every "good and faithful servant," we believe that they depend upon the concurrence of two causes; the *first* of which is the free grace of God in Jesus Christ; and the *second*, the faithfulness of our assisted and rectified free will, which faithfulness is graciously crowned by God's remunerative justice and evangelical veracity. And, instead of blushing at this doctrine, as if it were "shocking," we glory in it, as being perfectly rational, strictly Scriptural, and equally distant from the two rocks against which Calvinian orthodoxy is dashed

in pieces: I mean, the twin doctrines of wanton free grace and eternal free wrath, according to which God, without any respect to the faith or unbelief, to the good or bad works of free agents, absolutely ordained for some of them the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness, and the unavoidable reward of eternal life by the mean of unavoidable faith; while he absolutely appointed for all the rest the robe of Adam's imputed unrighteousness, and the unavoidable punishment of eternal death by means of necessary, unavoidable unbelief.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE IV.

“ Though the Scripture tells me that the carnal mind is enmity against God, yet I believe that there is something in the heart of every natural man that can nourish and cherish the grace of God; and that the sole reason why this grace is effectual in some and not in others is entirely owing to themselves, and to their own faithfulness or unfaithfulness, and not to the distinguishing love and favour of God.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE IV.

Though the Scriptures tell us “ that the carnal mind is enmity against God,” and that “ the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,” yet we believe that, from the time God initially raised mankind from their fall, and promised them the celestial bruise of the serpent's head, there is a *gracious* free agency in the heart of every man who has not yet sinned away his day of salva-

tion: and that, by means of this *gracious* free agency, all men, during the "accepted time," can concur with, and work under the grace of God, according to the dispensation they belong to. Again: we believe that no child of Adam is a "natural man" in the Calvinian sense of the word, [i. e., absolutely destitute of all saving grace,] except he who has actually sinned away his day of grace. And when we consider a man as absolutely graceless, or as "a child of wrath" in the highest sense of the word, we consider him in fallen Adam, *before* God began to raise mankind by the promise of the woman's seed: or we must consider that man in his own person *after* he has done final despite to the Spirit of that grace which has more or less clearly appeared to all men under various dispensations.

Mr. Hill greatly mistakes if he thinks that, according to our doctrine, God's grace is "effectual in some, and not in others;" for we believe that it is effectual in *all*, though in a different manner. It has its *first* and *most desirable* effect on them that "cherish it" through the above-mentioned gracious free agency. And it has its *second* and *less desirable* effect on those who finally reject the gracious counsel of God toward them: for it reproves their sins; it galls their consciences; it renders them inexcusable; it vindicates God's mercy; it clears his justice; it shows that the Judge of all the earth does no wrong; and it begins in this world the just punishment which righteous vengeance will complete in the next.

The grace of God, therefore, like the gospel that testifies of it, is a *two-edged sword*: it is a savour of life to those who cherish it, and a savour of death to those who resist it. That some cherish it, by its assist-

ance work righteousness to the last, and then receive the reward of the inheritance, is not "entirely owing to themselves and to their own faithfulness," as the *Fictitious Creed* asserts: nor is it "entirely owing to the love and favour of God." This happy event has two causes: the *first* is *free grace*, by the assistance of which the faith and good works of the righteous are begun, continued, and ended: the *second* is *free will* humbly working with free grace, as appears by the numerous scriptures balanced in the Scripture Scales. And that some, on the other hand, resist the grace of God, and are personally given up to a reprobate mind that they might be damned, is not at all owing to God's free wrath, as the scheme of Mr. Hill supposes: nor is it entirely owing to the unfaithfulness and obstinacy of impenitent sinners. This unhappy event has also two causes: the first is man's free will finally refusing to concur with free grace, in working out his own salvation; and the second is just wrath, revenging the despite done to God's free grace by such a final refusal.

With respect to "the distinguishing love and favour" of God our Judge, and his distinguished hatred and ill will, (on which our eternal rewards and punishments unavoidably turn, according to Mr. Hill's twin doctrines of finished salvation and finished damnation,) we dare not admit them into our holy religion. We give to "distinguishing favour" an important place in our creed, as appears from the first article of this; but that favour has nothing to do with God's judicial distribution of rewards or punishments, i. e., with God's appointing of us to eternal life or to eternal death. We believe that it is a most daring attempt of the Antinomians to place

distinguishing favour and distinguishing displeasure upon the judicial throne of God, and in the judgment seat of Christ; no decrees proceeding from thence but such as are dictated by impartial justice putting Christ's evangelical law in execution, and strictly judging (i. e., justifying or condemning, rewarding or punishing) moral agents, according to their works. We should think ourselves guilty of propagating "a shocking, not to say blasphemous" doctrine, if we insinuated, that "distinguishing favour," and not unbribed justice, dictates God's sentence; God himself having enacted, "Cursed be he that perverteth judgment, &c., and all the people shall say, Amen," Deut. xxvii, 19. Nor need I tell Mr. Hill this, who has hinted that God is such a partial Judge;—yea, that he carries partiality to such a height as to say to a man who actually defiles a married woman, and treacherously plots the murder of her injured husband, "Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled; there is no spot in thee: thou art a man after my own heart." If Mr. Hill has forgotten this anecdote, I refer him to the *Five Letters*, the sale of which he does not scruple to advertise again in his *Three Letters*, saying: "I now think it the way of duty to permit—the *Five Letters* to Mr. Fletcher, &c., to be again sold, in order that both friends and enemies may, if possible, be convinced that *I never retracted my sentiments.*" Strange confidence of boasting! *O mores!* What have *morality and godliness* done to Mr. Hill, that he will put them to a perpetual blush, lest his *Venus* (for she no longer deserves the name of *Diana*) should redden one moment?

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE V.

“I believe that God sincerely wishes for the salvation of many who never will be saved; consequently, that it is entirely owing to want of ability in God, that what he so earnestly willeth is not accomplished.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE V.

We believe that God's attributes perfectly harmonize. Accordingly his *goodness* and *mercy* incline him to “wish for the salvation of” all men, upon gracious terms, laid down by his *wisdom* and *veracity*. As a proof of the sincerity of his wish, he swears by himself, that his antecedent will or decree is not “that sinners should die; but that,” by the help of his free grace and the submission of their free will, “they should turn and live.” He does more still: he grants to all men a day of initial salvation, and “all that day long he stretches forth his hands” to them. He reproofs them for their sins: he calls upon them in various ways to repent; and gives them power to do it according to one or another dispensation of his grace; requiring little of those to whom he gives little, and much of those to whom much is given. But it is his *subsequent* decree, dictated chiefly by his *holiness*, *justice*, and *sovereignty*, that, if free agents will none of his reproofs, and finally disregard the offers of his grace, “his Spirit shall not always strive with them.” A day of calamity shall follow the day of their neglected salvation; and justice shall be glorified in their righteous destruction. This is the sad alternative which God has set before

them, if, in opposition to his antecedent will, they (through their free agency) finally choose death, in finally choosing the way that leads to it.

This part of our doctrine may be summed up in three propositions. (1.) God's mercy *absolutely* wills the *initial* salvation of all men by Jesus Christ. (2.) God's goodness, holiness, and faithfulness, *absolutely* will the *eternal* salvation of all those who, by the concurrence of their assisted, unnecessitated free will, with his redeeming grace, are found penitent, obedient believers, at the end of their day of initial salvation. And, (3.) God's justice, sovereignty, and veracity, *absolutely* will the destruction of all that are found impenitent at the close of the day of their gracious visitation, or initial salvation. To see the truth of these three propositions, we need only consider them in the light of these two gospel axioms, and compare them with these declarations of Moses and Jesus Christ: "I set life and death before you; [free agents, who enjoy a day of initial salvation;] choose life," (I offer it you *first*: "choose life," I say,) "that you may live eternally. But if you choose death in the error of your ways," your rejected Saviour will complain, "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not: and now the things that made for your peace are hid from your eyes:" that is, you are given up to judicial blindness, and to all its fearful consequences.

Hence it is evident, that the damnation of those who obstinately live and die in their sins, and whom God was willing to save as free agents upon gospel terms, argues no "want of ability in him" to save them eternally, if he would give up the day of judgment, and

exert his *omnipotence* in opposition to his *wisdom, justice, holiness, and veracity*; or if he would destroy the most wonderful of all his works, which is the free will of moral agents. We never doubted his ability to unman man, and eternally to save all mankind, if he would absolutely do it; it being evident that the Almighty can overpower all his creatures if he should be bent upon it, and drive them from sin to necessitated holiness, and from hell to heaven, far more easily than a shepherd can drive his frightened sheep from the market to the slaughter house. Therefore, the supposition that, upon our principles, "God wants ability to save" whom he absolutely will save, is entirely groundless; every man being actually saved so far as God* absolutely wills: for, *first*, God *absolutely* wills that *all men* should be *unconditionally* saved with *initial* salvation; and *thus all men* are *unconditionally* saved: and, *secondly*, he *absolutely* wills that all men, who are obedient and faithful unto death, should *absolutely* be saved with an eternal salvation: and *thus all men*

* The reader is desired to take particular notice of this observation, because it cuts up by the root Bradwarden's famous argument. "If you allow, (says he,) (1.) That God is able to do a thing, and, (2.) That he is [absolutely] willing to do a thing: then, (3.) I affirm, that the thing will not, cannot go unaccomplished: otherwise God must either lose his power, or change his mind. If the [absolute] will of God could be frustrated and vanquished, its defeat would arise from the created wills either of angels or of men. But could any created will whatever, &c., counteract and baffle the will of God, the will of the creature must be superior either in strength or in wisdom to the will of the Creator; which can by no means be allowed." We fully grant to Mr. Toplady that the argument is "extremely conclusive," provided the two words "absolutely" and "absolute" be taken into it; and therefore, we maintain, as well as he, that man is actually saved, so far as God absolutely wills.

who are obedient and faithful unto death are *actually* saved. They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of Christ's protecting hand. But what has this Scripture doctrine to do with Calvinism? With the necessary, eternal, finished salvation of ALL the disobedient sheep, who turn goats, foxes, lions, and serpents? Who, far from remembering Lot's wife, slily rob their neighbours of their ewe lambs,—their heart's blood,—their reputation?

To conclude: the most that Mr. Hill can justly say against our principles, is: (1.) That, according to the gospel which we preach, *man* is a *free agent*, and God is *wise, holy, true, and just*; as well as *good, loving, patient, and merciful*: and, (2.) That one half of these attributes do not permit him to *necessitate* free agents; that is, to *make them absolutely DO or FOR-BEAR* those actions by which they are to stand or fall *in judgment*. And let men of reason and religion say, if this doctrine be not more *rational* and *Scriptural* than the Calvinian doctrine of *finished salvation*, and of its inseparable counterpart, *finished damnation*.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE VI.

“I believe that the Redeemer not only shed his precious blood, but prayed for the salvation of many souls who are now in hell; consequently, that his blood was shed in vain, and his prayer rejected of his Father, and that therefore he told a great untruth when he said, I know that thou hearest me always.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE VI.

We believe that the Redeemer did not shed his precious blood or pray absolutely in vain for any man: seeing he obtained for all men, in their season, a *day of grace* and *initial salvation*, with a thousand spiritual and temporal blessings. Nor were his prayers for the eternal salvation of those who die impenitent rejected by his Father; for Christ never prayed that they should be eternally saved in impenitency. Before Mr. Hill can reasonably charge us with holding doctrines which imply that Christ told *a gross untruth* when he said, "I know that thou hearest me always," he must prove that Christ ever asked the eternal salvation of some men, whether they repented or not; or that he ever desired his Father to force *to the last* repentance, faith, and obedience, upon any man. If Mr. Hill cannot prove this, how can he make it appear that, according to our doctrines of grace, one of our Lord's prayers was ever rejected? We grant that Christ asked the forgiveness of his murderers, and of those who made sport with his sufferings; but he asked it upon gospel terms, that is, *conditionally*. Nor was his prayer ineffectual; for it obtained for them time to repent, and uncommon helps so to do, with a peculiar readiness in God to pardon them upon their application for pardon; and if, after all, through the power of their free agency, they despised the pardon offered them in the gospel, and repented not, they shall deservedly perish according to Christ's own declaration. He has acted toward them the part of a gracious Saviour: he never engaged himself to act that of a tyrant: I mean, he never sent

either his good Spirit, or the evil spirit of Satan, to bind the wills of men with adamant chains of necessitated righteousness, or of necessitated iniquity, that he might cast some into Abraham's bosom, and others into hell, as Nebuchadnezzar sent the strongest men in his army to bind Daniel's companions, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Once more: we believe that, with respect to the reward of the inheritance, and the doctrine of eternal salvation, Christ's atonement and intercession are like his gospel. Now his gospel is guarded by what one of Mr. Hill's seconds queerly calls "the valiant Sergeant IF," that is, the conditionality of the promises and threatenings which relate to eternal salvation and eternal damnation; and this conditionality is the rampart of the old gospel, and the demolition of the new; strongly guarding the ancient doctrines of free grace, free will, and just wrath, against the novel doctrines of overbearing grace, bound will, and free wrath.

I should not do justice to our cause if I dismissed this article without retorting Mr. Hill's objection. I have shown how unreasonably we are accused of holding doctrines, which, by "unavoidable" consequence, represent Christ as "telling a gross untruth:" and now we desire Mr. Hill, or his seconds, to show how the Son of God could, consistently with truth, profess himself to be the "Saviour of men," the Saviour and "light of the world," and "the drawer of all men unto himself;" if most men have been from all eternity under the fearful curse of Calvinian reprobation. We ask, if the Redeemer would have "told a gross untruth," upon the supposition that Calvinism is true, had he called himself *the reprobater of men; the non-redeemer, the*

damner of the world, and the rejecter of all men from himself; seeing that, according to the doctrines of grace, (so called,) the bulk of mankind were *ever* reprobated, *never* redeemed, *never* initially saved, and *never* drawn to Christ. We beseech candid Protestants to say if the Bible do not clear up all the difficulties with which prejudiced divines have clogged the genuine doctrines of grace, when it testifies that our Redeemer and Saviour has procured a *general* temporary redemption, together with an initial salvation, for all men *universally*; and a *particular* eternal redemption, together with a finished salvation, for "them that obey him, and endure to the end." And we entreat the lovers of the whole truth as it is in Jesus to help us to bring about this Scriptural plan, a reconciliation between those who contend for the doctrines of particular redemption and finished salvation; and those who maintain the doctrines of general redemption and of "a day of salvation" for all mankind.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE VII.

"I believe that God, foreseeing some men's nature will improve the grace which is given them, and that they will repent, believe, and be very good, elects them unto salvation."

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE VII.

We believe that out of mere mercy, and rich free grace in Jesus Christ, without any respect to foreseen repentance, faith, or goodness, God places all men in a state of initial salvation; electing them to that state ac-

ording to the mysterious counsel of his distinguishing love, which places some under the bright and direct beams of gospel truth ; while he suffers others to receive the external light of it only through that variety of clouds which we call Calvinism, Popery, Judaism, and Mohammedanism ;* leaving most in Gentilism, that is, in the dispensation under which Cain, Abel, Abimelech, king of Geſar, and Melchisedec, king of Salem, formerly were.

2. We believe that God, for Christ's sake, peculiarly (although with different degrees of favour) accepts all those who, in all the above-mentioned religions, i. e., "in every nation, fear him and work righteousness." These, when considered as enduring to the end, are his elect, according to the election of remunerative justice. For these he is gone to "prepare the many mansions in his Father's house:" for these he designs the "reward of the inheritance that fadeth not away in heaven." And when he speaks of some men as belonging to this number, it is always with respect to his foreknowledge that they will freely persevere in the obedience of faith ; it being the highest pitch of Antinomian dotage to suppose that God, the true, the wise, the holy, and righteous God, elects men to the reward of persevering

* *Calvinism* is Christianity obscured by mists of Pharisaic election and reprobation, and by a cloud of stoical fatalism. *Popery* is Christianity under a cloud of Pharisaic bigotry, and under thick fogs of heathenish superstition. *Judaism* is Christianity under the veil of Moses. *Mohammedanism* is a jumble of Christianity, Judaism, Gentilism, and imposture. And *Gentilism* is the religion of Cain and Abel ; or, if you please, of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, under a cloud of false and dark tradition. Some call it the *religion of nature* : I have no objection to the name, if they understand by it the religion of our *nature* in its present state of initial recovery, through Christ, from its *total* fall in Adam.

obedience, without taking any notice of persevering obedience in his election.

To sum up all in a few lines: the doctrine of election has *two* branches: according to the *first* branch we are *chosen that we should be holy* and obedient, in proportion to the ordinary or extraordinary helps which divine grace affords us under one or other of its dispensations. This election to holiness has nothing to do with prescience; it depends entirely on free grace and distinguishing favour. According to the *second* branch of the doctrine of election, we are chosen to receive the rewards of perfected holiness and of persevering obedience, in proportion both to the talents which free distinguishing grace has afforded us, and to the manner in which our assisted free will has improved those talents. This remunerative election depends on four things: (1.) On *free grace*, promising for Christ's sake the reward of the inheritance to the persevering obedience of faith. (2.) On *faithful free will*, securing that reward by the assistance of free grace, and by the free obedience of faith. (3.) On *divine faithfulness*, keeping its gospel promise for ever. And, (4.) On *distributive justice*, dispensing the reward according to the law of Christ, and according to every man's work. This election therefore has much to do with divine prescience, as depending in part upon God's knowledge that "some men have improved, or will improve, the grace which is given them, repent, believe, and be good [if not 'very good'] and faithful servants unto the end."

Unprejudiced readers will easily see how much our doctrine of election is preferable to that of our opponents. Ours draws after it only a harmless reprobation from some peculiar favours, and a righteous reprobation

tion from rewards of grace and glory obstinately despised, or wantonly forfeited; but the election of the Calvinists is clogged with the dreadful dogmas of an unscriptural and terrible reprobation, which might be compared to a well-known monster, "*Prima Leo, postrema Draco, media ipsa Chimera.*" Its head is *free wrath*; its body, *unavoidable sin*; and its tail, *finished damnation*. In a word, our *election* recommends God's free, distinguishing grace, without pouring any contempt on the holiness of Christ's precepts, the sanction of his law, the veracity of his threatenings, and the conditionality of his promises. And our *reprobation* displays God's absolute sovereignty, without sullyng his mercy, impeaching his veracity, or disgracing his justice. In a word, *our* election doctrinally guards the throne of sovereign grace, and *our* reprobation that of sovereign justice: but *Calvinian* election and reprobation doctrinally overthrow both these thrones: or if they are left standing, it is to allow free wrath to fill the throne of justice, and unchaste, bloody Diana, to step into the throne of grace, whence she hints to Laodicean believers that they may with advantage commit adultery, murder, and incest; calling as many as take her horrid innuendoes, "My love, my undefiled," &c., and assuring them that they shall never perish, and that all things (the most grievous sins not excepted) shall work for their good.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE VIII.

"I believe that the love and favour of Him, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and

whose gifts and callings are without repentance, may vary, change, and turn every hour, and every moment, according to the behaviour of the creature."

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE VIII.

We believe that God's works were all originally very good, and that God did love or approve of them all as very good in their places. We maintain that some of God's works, such as some angels, and our first parents, by free avoidable disobedience forfeited God's love or approbation. He approved or loved them while they continued righteous; and disapproved or hated them when the bad use which they made of their free will deserved his disapprobation or hatred. Again: we believe that God's *absolute gifts and callings are without repentance*. God never repented that he gave all mankind his paradisiacal favour in Adam, and yet all mankind forfeited it by the fall. God never repented that he called all his servants, and "gave to every one" of them his talents, as he thought fit; and yet, when the "wicked and slothful servant had buried" and forfeited his talent, God said, "Take the talent from him!"

Once more: we believe, that so certain as God is the gracious Creator and the righteous Judge of angels and men, the doctrines of divine grace and divine justice (or the two gospel axioms) are perfectly reconcileable; and that, of consequence, God can justly curse mankind with temporal death, after having blessed them with paradisiacal life; and punish them in hell, after having blessed them a second time with initial salvation during their day of personal probation on earth. To deny this,

is to deny that there are graves on earth, or torments in hell, for any of the children of men.

Nevertheless, we believe that there is no positive change in God. From eternity to eternity he is the same holy and faithful God; therefore he unchangeably "loves righteousness and hates iniquity." Apostasy in men or in angels does not imply any change in him; the change being only in the receptive disposition of his free willing creatures. If I make my eyes so sore that I cannot look with pleasure at the sun, or that its beams, which cheered me yesterday, give me pain to-day; this is no proof that the sun has changed its nature. The law that condemns a murderer absolves me now; but if I stab my neighbour in ten minutes, the same law that now absolves me will in ten minutes condemn me. "Impossible!" says Mr. Hill's scheme: "the law changes not." I grant it; but a free agent may change; and the law of liberty, which is but the transcript of God's eternal nature, is so ordered, that, without changing at all, it nevertheless treats all free agents according to their changes. The changes that God makes in the world do not change him; much less is he changed by the variations of free agents: such variations, indeed, lay rebels and penitents open to a new aspect from the Deity; but that aspect was in the Deity before they laid themselves open to it. Fire, without changing its nature, melts wax and stiffens clay; now, if a rebel's heart absolutely hardens itself, so that it becomes like unyielding clay; or if a penitent's heart humbles itself, so that it becomes like yielding wax, God changes not any more than the fire, when he hardens the stiff rebel by resisting him, and melts the yielding penitent by giving him more grace.

To understand this better, we must remember that God's eternal nature is to "resist the proud, and give grace to the humble;" and that when free grace (which has appeared to all men) assists us, we are as free to choose *humility* and *life* as we are to choose *pride* and *death* when we dally with temptation, or indulge the natural depravity of our own hearts. Hence it follows that the *judicious difference* which God makes when he alternately smiles and frowns, dispenses rewards and punishments, springs not from any alteration in his unchangeable nature, but from a change in the mutable will and behaviour of free agents; a change this, which arises from *their will freely resisting* divine grace, if the alteration be for the worse; and from *their will yielding without necessity* to that grace, if the change be for the better. Nor are we any more ashamed to own man's free agency before a world of fatalists than we are ashamed to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth, and will render to every man according to his works;" that is, according to his free will; works being our own works, only so far as they spring from our own free will. And we think that the opposite doctrine is one of the most absurd errors that ever disgraced Christianity; and one of the most dangerous engines which were ever invented in Babel to sap the walls of Jerusalem;—a dreadful engine this, which, if it rested upon truth, would pour floods of disgrace on all the divine perfections; would upset the tribunal of the Judge of all the earth; and would raise upon the tremendous ruins the throne of the doctrinal idol of the day: I mean the spurious doc-

trine of grace, which I have sometimes called the great Diana of the Calvinists, because, like the great Diana of the Ephesians, it may pass at once for LUNA, or *finished salvation* in heaven, and for HECATE, or *finished damnation* in hell.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE IX.

“I believe that the seed of the word by which God’s children are born again is a *corruptible* seed; and that, so far from enduring *for ever*, (as that mistaken apostle Peter rashly affirms,) it is frequently rooted out of the hearts of those in whom it is sown.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE IX.

We believe that *the word* or *the truth* of God is the divine seed by which sinners are born again when they receive it, that is, when they believe; and this spiritual seed (as that enlightened apostle Peter justly affirms) “endures for ever;”—but not for Antinomian purposes;—not to say to fallen believers, in the very act of adultery or incest, “My love! my undefiled!” No: it “endures for ever,” as a seed of reviving or terrifying truth: it “endures for ever” as a two-edged sword to defend the righteous, or to wound the wicked; to protect obedient believers, or to pierce disobedient and obstinate unbelievers; it “endures for ever” as a sweet “savour of life” to them that receive and keep it; and as a bitter “savour of death” to them that never receive it, and to them that finally cast it away, and never “bring forth fruit to perfection.”

But although the seed of the word can never be lost with respect to both its effects, yet (as we have already observed) it is too frequently lost with regard to its more desirable effect: if Mr. Hill doubts of it, we refer him to the parable of the sower, where our Lord observes that the good seed was thus lost in three sorts of people out of four, merely through the want of co-operation or concurrence on the part of free will, which he calls good or bad ground, soft or "stony ground," &c., according to the good or bad choice it makes, and according to the steadiness or fickleness of that choice. And if Mr. Hill exclaim against the obvious meaning of so well-known a portion of the gospel, the world will easily see that, supposing his doctrine of grace deserves to be called chaste, when it prompts him to vindicate, as openly as he dares, the profitableness of adultery and incest to fallen believers; it by no means merits to be called devout, when it excites him to insinuate that our Lord preached a "shocking, not to say blasphemous doctrine."

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE X.

"I believe that Christ does not always give unto his sheep eternal life; but that they often perish, and are by the power of Satan frequently plucked out of his hand."

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE X.

We believe that Christ's sheep, mentioned in John x, are obedient, persevering believers; that is, as our Lord himself describes them, John x, 4, 5, 27, persons that

“hear [i. e., obey] his voice,” and “whom he knows,” [i. e., approves;] persons that “know [i. e., approve] his voice;” that “know not [i. e., do not approve] the voice of strangers;” and “flee from a stranger,” instead of following him: in a word, persons that actually “follow the good Shepherd” in some of his folds or pastures. In this description of a sheep, every verb is put in the *present* tense, to show us that the word *sheep* denotes a character, or persons actually possessed of such a character. So that the moment the character changes; the moment a man who once left all to follow Christ leaves Christ to “follow a stranger,” he has no more to do with the name and privileges of a sheep than a *deserter* or a *rebel* has to do with the name and privileges of his majesty’s *soldiers* or *subjects*.

According, then, to our doctrine, no “*sheep of Christ*,” that is, no *actual follower* of the Redeemer, perishes. We think it is shocking to say that any of them are plucked out of his hand. On the contrary, we frequently say, with St. Peter, “Who will harm you [much more, who will separate you from the love of Christ] if ye be followers of that which is good?” i. e., if you be sheep: and we insist upon the veracity of our Lord’s promise, “He that endureth unto the end,” in the character of a sheep, i. e., in the way of faith and obedience, “the same shall be [eternally] saved.” And we maintain, that so long as a believer does not make shipwreck of the faith and of a good conscience; so long as he continues a sheep, a harmless follower of the Lamb of God, he can no more perish than God’s everlasting throne can be overturned. But what has this doctrine of our Lord to do with Calvinism?

With regard to the sheep mentioned in Matt. xxv,

33, 34, whom our Lord calls "blessed of his Father," we believe that they represent the multitude of obedient, persevering believers, whom two apostles describe thus: "Blessed are they that do his [God's] commandments, that they may have right [or, if Mr. Hill pleases, *privilege*] to the tree of life, and enter, &c., into the city," Rev. xxii, 14. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation! for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." "And this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," James i, 12; 1 John v, 3. For such *enduring, obedient* believers, a kingdom of glory "is prepared from the foundation of the world:" and to it they are and shall be judicially elected; while the goats, i. e., unbelievers, or disobedient, fallen believers, are and shall be judicially reprobated from it. Hence it is, that when our Lord accounts for his judicial election of the obedient, (whom he parabolically calls sheep,) he does not say, "Inherit the kingdom," &c.; *for I absolutely finished your salvation*: but he says, "Inherit the kingdom, for ye gave me meat," &c.; ye fed the hungry from a right motive; and what you did in that manner, I reward it as if you had done it to myself. In other terms, "Ye heard my voice, and followed me;" in hearing the whispers of my grace, and following the light of your dispensation; and now I own you as my eternally rewardable elect, my *sheep*, which have *followed* me without finally drawing back.

Again: when our Lord gives an account of the judicial reprobation of the finally disobedient, whom he parabolically calls *goats*, he does not say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" for then I absolutely finished

your eternal reprobation. No: this is the counterpart of the gospel of the day. But he says, "Depart, &c.; for ye gave me no meat," by feeding the hungry in your generation, &c.: that is, ye did not believably follow me in following your light and my precepts. Either you never began your course, or you drew back before you had finished it. Either you never voluntarily listed under my banner, or you deserted before you had "fought the good fight" out: either you never believed in me, the light of the world, and your light; or, instead of keeping the faith, you voluntarily, avoidably, unnecessarily, and resolutely made shipwreck of it and of a good conscience: and therefore your damnation is of yourselves. You have *personally* forfeited your conditional election to the rewards of persevering obedience, and *personally* made your conditional reprobation from those rewards sure by your final disobedience.

From these evangelical descriptions of the *sheep* and the *goats*, mentioned in John x, and Matt. xxv, it appears to us indubitable: (1.) That these *sheep* [i. e., obedient, persevering believers] "shall never perish;" although they might have perished, if they had "brought upon themselves swift destruction by denying the Lord that bought them." (2.) That they shall be eternally saved, although they might have missed eternal salvation, if they had finally disregarded our Lord's declaration: "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be [finally] saved." (3.) That the good Shepherd peculiarly laid down his life for the *eternal* redemption of obedient, persevering believers; and that these believers are sometimes eminently called God's *elect*, because they make their *conditional* calling to the rewards of

perseverance sure, by actually persevering in the obedience of faith. (4.) That the peculiarity of the eternal redemption of Christ's persevering followers, far from being connected with the absolute reprobation of the rest of mankind, stands in perfect agreement with the doctrines of a *general, temporary redemption*, and a *general, initial salvation*; and with the doctrines of a *gratuitous election* to the blessings of one or another dispensation of God's saving grace; and of a *conditional election* to the rewards of voluntary, unnecessitated obedience. (5.) That our opponents give the truth as it is in Jesus two desperate stabs, when they secure the *peculiar, eternal redemption* of finally disobedient believers, and comfort mourning backsliders in so unhappy a manner, as to overthrow the *general, temporary redemption* of all mankind, and to encourage or countenance the present disobedience of Laodicean believers. (6.) That the Calvinian doctrines of grace, which do this double mischief under such fair pretences, are, of all the tares which the enemy sows, those which come nearest to the wheat, and of consequence those by which he can best feed his immoral goats, deceive simple souls, set Christ's moral sheep at perpetual variance, turn the fruitful field of the church into a barren field of controversy, and make a Deistical world think that faith is enthusiastical fancy; that orthodoxy is immoral nonsense; and that revelation is nothing but an apple of discord. (7.) And, lastly, that the doctrines of grace which we maintain do equal justice to the divine attributes; defend faith, without wounding obedience; oppose Pharisaism, without recommending Antinomianism; assert the truth of God's promises, without representing his most awful threaten-

ings as words without meaning; reconcile the Scriptures, without wounding conscience and reason; exalt the gracious wonders of the day of atonement, without setting aside the righteous terrors of the great day of retribution; extol our heavenly Priest, without pouring contempt upon our divine Prophet; and celebrate the honours of his cross, without turning his sceptre of righteousness into a Solifidian reed, his royal crown into a crown of thorns, and his *law of liberty* into a *rule of life*, by which his subjects can no more stand or fall in judgment than an Englishman can stand or fall by the *rules of civility* followed at the French court.

To the best of my knowledge, reader, thou hast been led into the depth of our doctrines of grace. I have opened to thee the mysteries of the evangelical system, which Mr. Hill attacks as the heresy of *Arminians*. And now let *impartiality* hand thee up to the judgment seat: let *reason* and *revelation* hold out to thee their consentaneous light: pray that the "Spirit of truth" may help thine infirmities: turn *prejudice* out of the court; and let *candour* pronounce the sentence, and say whether our principles or those of Mr. Hill "inevitably" draw after them "shocking, not to say blasphemous," consequences?

I shall close this answer to the creed which that gentleman has composed for Arminians by an observation which is not entirely foreign to our controversy. In one of the Three Letters which introduce the *Fictitious Creed* Mr. Hill says: "Controversy, I am persuaded, has not done me any good;" and he exhorts me to examine closely whether I cannot make the same confession. I own that it would have done me harm,

if I had blindly contended for my opinions. Nay, if I had shut my eyes against the light of truth; if I had set the plainest scriptures aside, as if they were not worth my notice; if I had overlooked the strongest arguments of my opponents; if I had advanced groundless charges against them; if I had refused to do justice to their good meaning or piety: and, above all, if I had taken my leave of them by injuring their moral character, by publishing over and over again arguments which they had properly answered, without taking the least notice of their answers; if I had made a solemn promise not to read one of their books, though they should publish a thousand volumes; if, continuing to write against them, I had fixed upon them (as "unavoidable" consequences) absurd tenets, which have no more necessary connection with their principles than the doctrine of general redemption has with Calvinian reprobation; if I had done this, I say, controversy would have wounded my conscience or my reason; and, without adding any thing to my light, it would have immoveably fixed me in my prejudices, and perhaps branded me before the world for an *Arminian bigot*. But, as matters are, I hope I may make the following acknowledgment without betraying the impertinence of proud boasting.

Although I have often been sorry that controversy should take up so much of the time which I might, with much satisfaction to myself, have employed in devotional exercises; and although I have lamented, and do still lament, my low attainments in the "meekness of wisdom," which should constantly guide the pen of every controversial writer; yet I rejoice that I have been enabled to persist in my resolution either to wipe off or

to share the reproach of those who have hazarded their reputation in defence of pure and undefiled religion: and, if I am not mistaken, my repeated attempts have been attended with these happy effects. In vindicating the moral doctrines of grace, I hope that, as a man, I have learned to think more closely, and to investigate truth more ardently, than I did before. There are rational powers in the dullest souls, which lie hid as sparks in a flint. Controversial opposition and exertion, like the stroke of the steel, have made me accidentally find out some of these latent sparks of reason, for which I should never have thanked my Maker if I had never discovered them. I have frequently been thankful to find that my horse could travel in bad roads better than I expected; nor do I think that it is a piece of Pharisaism to say, I am thankful to find that my mind can travel with more ease than I thought she could through theological roads, rendered almost impassable by heaps of doctrinal rubbish brought from all parts of Christendom, and by briers of contention which have kept growing for above a thousand years. To return: As a *divine*, I see more clearly the gaps and stiles at which mistaken good men have turned out of the narrow way of truth to the right hand and to the left. As a *Protestant*, I hope I have much more esteem for the Scriptures in general, and in particular for those practical parts of them which the Calvinists had insensibly taught me to overlook or despise: and this increasing esteem is, I trust, accompanied with a deeper conviction of the truth of Christianity, and with a greater readiness to defend the gospel against infidels, Pharisees, and Antinomians. As a *preacher*, I hope I can do more justice to a text, by reconciling it with seemingly

contrary scriptures. As an *anti-Calvinist*, I have learned to do the Calvinists justice in granting that there is an *election of distinguishing grace* for God's peculiar people, and a *particular redemption* for all believers who are faithful unto death; and by that means, as a *controvertist*, I can more easily excuse pious Calvinists, who, through prejudice, mistake *that* Scriptural election for *their* Antinomian election; and who consider *that* particular redemption as the only redemption mentioned in the Scriptures. Nay, I can, without scruple, allow Mr. Hill, that his doctrines of *finished salvation* and *irresistible grace* are TRUE with respect to all those who die in their infancy. As one who is called an *Arminian*, I have found out some flaws in Arminianism, and evidenced my impartiality in pointing them out, as well as the flaws of Calvinism.* As a *witness* for the truth of the gospel, I hope I have learned to bear reproach from all sorts of people with more undaunted courage: and I humbly trust that, were I called to seal with my blood the truth of the doctrines of grace and justice against the Pharisees and the Antinomians, I could (divine grace supporting me to the last) do it more rationally, and of consequence with greater steadiness. Again: as a *follower of Christ*, I hope I have learned to disregard my dearest friends for my heavenly Prophet: or, to speak the language of our Lord, I hope I have learned to "forsake father, mother, and brothers, for Christ's sake and the gospel's." As a *disputant*, I have learned that solid arguments and plain scriptures make no more impression upon bigotry than the charmer's voice does

* See Preface to Fictitious and Genuine Creed, Fletcher's Works, vol. i, p. 395.

upon the deaf adder; and by that mean, I hope, I depend less upon the powers of reason, the letter of the Scripture, and the candour of professors, than I formerly did. As a *believer*, I have been brought to see and feel that the power of the Spirit of truth, which teaches men to be of one heart and of one mind, and makes them think and speak the same, is at a very low ebb in the religious world; and that the prayer which I ought continually to offer is, O Lord, baptize Christians with the Spirit of truth, and the fire of love. Thy kingdom come! Bring thy church out of the wilderness of error and sin into the kingdom of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." As a *member of the Church of England*, I have learned to be pleased with our holy mother for giving us floods of pure morality to wash away the few remaining Calvinian freckles still perceptible upon her face. As a *Christian*, I hope I have learned in some degree to exercise that charity which teaches us boldly to oppose a dangerous error, without ceasing to honour and love its abettors, so far as they resemble our Lord; and teaches us to use an irony with St. Paul and Jesus Christ, not as an enemy uses a dagger, but as a surgeon uses a lancet or a caustic: and, lastly, as a *writer*, I have learned to feel the truth of Solomon's observation: "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh; let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man," and the sum of the anti-Solfidian truth which I endeavour to vindicate.

I do not say that I have learned any of these lessons as I should have done; but I hope I have learned so

much of them as to say that in these respects my controversial toil has not been altogether in vain in the Lord. And now, reader, let me entreat thee to pray that, if I am spared to vindicate more fully what appears to us the *Scriptural doctrine of grace*, I may be so helped by the Father of lights and the God of love, as to speak the *pure truth in perfect love*, and never more drop a needlessly severe expression. Some such have escaped me before I was aware. In endeavouring to render my style nervous, I have sometimes inadvertently rendered it provoking. Instead of saying that the doctrines of grace (so called) represented God as "absolutely graceless" toward myriads of "reprobated culprits," I would now say that, upon the principles of my opponents, God appears "devoid of grace" toward those whom he has absolutely "reprobated" from all eternity. The thought is the same, I grant; but the expressions are less grating and more decent. This propriety of language I labour after, as well as after more meekness of wisdom. The Lord help me and my antagonists to "keep our garments clean!" Controvertists ought to be clothed with an ardent, flaming love for truth, and a candid, humble regard for their neighbours. May no root of prejudice stain that flaming love! no malice rend our seamless garments! and, if they are ever "rolled in blood," may it be only in the blood of our common enemies, destructive error, and the man of sin!

CHAPTER X.

A SCRIPTURAL ESSAY ON THE ASTONISHING REWARDABLENESS OF WORKS ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

SECTION I.

A VARIETY OF PLAIN SCRIPTURES, WHICH SHOW THAT HEAVEN ITSELF IS THE GRACIOUS REWARD OF THE WORKS OF FAITH, AND THAT BELIEVERS MAY LOSE THAT REWARD BY BAD WORKS.

HAVING particularly guarded, in the preceding discourse, the doctrine of salvation by the covenant of grace, and having endeavoured to secure the foundation of the gospel against the unwearied attacks of the Pharisees, I shall now particularly guard the works of the covenant of grace, and by that mean I shall secure the superstructure against the perpetual assaults of the Antinomians; a part of my work this, which is so much the more important, as the use of a strong foundation is only to bear up a useful structure.

None but fools act without motive. To deprive a wise man of every motive to act, is to keep him in total inaction; and to rob him of some grand motive, is considerably to weaken his willingness to act, or his fervour in acting. The burning love of God is undoubtedly the most generous motive to obedience; but alas! thousands of good men, like Cornelius, are yet strangers to that powerful principle shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. In thousands of weak believers love is not yet properly kindled; it is rather a

smoking flax than a blazing fire: in thousands of Laodicean professors it is scarcely lukewarm; and in all apostates it is waxed cold. Therefore, in the sickly state of the church militant, it is as absurd in preachers to urge no motive of good works but grateful love, as it would be in physicians to insist that a good stomach must be the only motive from which their patients ought to take either food or physic.

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

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

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

I readily grant, however, that if we consider ourselves merely as sinners, in the light of the first gospel axiom, and according to the covenant of works, which

we have so frequently broken, heaven is merely the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ: for, according to that covenant, destruction is the wages of all who have committed sin. But if we be converted sinners, or obedient believers, and if we consider ourselves in the light of the second gospel axiom, and according to the covenant of grace, every unprejudiced person, who believes the Bible, must allow that heaven is the gracious reward of our works of faith.

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

Just so eternal salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ; and yet the obtaining of it (on the part of adults) turns entirely upon their works of faith; that is, upon their works as well as upon their faith. Hence the Scripture says indifferently, "He that

believeth is not condemned ;” and, “If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted ?” “All that believe are justified ;” and, “He that worketh righteousness is accepted.” Our Lord, speaking of a weeping penitent, says equally : “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much ;” and, “Thy sins are forgiven ; thy faith hath saved thee.” As for St. Paul, though he always justly excludes the works of unbelief, and merely ceremonial works, yet he so joins faith and the works of faith, as to show us they are equally necessary to eternal salvation. “There is no condemnation,” says he, “to them that are in Christ by faith,” (here is the Pharisee’s portion,) “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Here is the Antinomian’s portion.) Hence it appears, that living faith now and always works righteousness, and that the works of righteousness now* and always accompany faith, so long as it remains living.

“I know this is the doctrine,” says the judicious Mr. Baxter, “that will have the loudest outcries raised against it, and will make some cry out, *Heresy, Popery, Socinianism!* and what not? For my own part, the Searcher of hearts knoweth that not singularity, nor any good will to Popery, provoketh me to entertain it ; but that I have earnestly sought the Lord’s direction upon my knees before I durst adventure on it ; and that I resisted the light of this conclusion as long as I was able.” May this bright testimony make way for an illuminated cloud of prophets and

* I use the word now, to stop up the Antinomian gap which one of my opponents tries to keep open by insinuating, that though a true believer may commit adultery and murder now, yet he will always work righteousness before he die.

apostles! and may the Sun of righteousness, rising behind it, so scatter the shades of error, that we may awake out of our Laodicean sleep, and Antinomian dreams, and see a glorious, unclouded gospel day!

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

1. *To consideration, conversion, and exercising ourselves to godliness.*—"Because he considereth, and turneth away from his transgressions, &c., he shall surely live, he shall not die. When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, &c., he shall save his soul alive. Wherefore turn yourselves and live ye. Exercise thyself unto godliness, for it is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come."

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

3. *To confessing Christ, and calling upon the name of the Lord.*—"With the mouth confession is made to salvation. Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father: but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

4. *To self denial.*—"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go to hell, &c. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, &c., for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now, and in the world to come eternal life. He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it, &c. He that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." And our Lord supposes that by "gaining the world" a man may "lose his own soul:" for, according to the covenant of grace, even reprobates are not totally lost till they make themselves sons of perdition, like Judas, i. e., till they personally and absolutely "lose their own souls" and heaven by their personal and obstinate pursuit of worldly things.

5. *To diligent labour and earnest endeavours.*—"O man of God, lay hold on eternal life. Work out

your own salvation. Labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. In so doing thou shalt save thyself. Narrow is the gate that leads to life. Strive to enter in. The violent press into the kingdom of God, and take it by force."

6. *To keeping the commandments.*—"Blessed are they that do his commandments, &c., that they may enter through the gates into the city, i. e., into heaven. There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that worketh abomination. If thou wilt enter into life,* keep the commandments. Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: [some of whose laws run thus:] Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy. Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God, [and, of course, the heirs of the kingdom.] The King shall say unto them, Come, ye blessed of my Father,* inherit the kingdom prepared for you, for I was hungry and ye gave me meat, &c. Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: but he that does wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, &c., for this ye know, that no whoremonger, &c., hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God. The works of the flesh are mani-

* See the excellent comment of our Church upon these words of our Lord, Fourth Check.

fest, which are these, adultery, &c., of which I tell you [believers] that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

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

8. *To love and charity.*—"Though I have all faith, &c., and have no charity, I am nothing. She [the woman] shall be saved, &c., if they [womankind] continue in faith and charity. Whosoever hateth his brother hath not eternal life. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema. The crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

9. *To a godly walk.*—"There is no condemnation to them, &c., that walk not after the flesh. As many as walk according to this rule, mercy [be, or will be] on them. If we walk in the light, [of good works, Matt. v, 15,] the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Many [fallen believers] walk, &c., enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction."

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

11. *To patient continuance in mortifying the deeds of the body, and in well doing.*—"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap perdition; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap [not if we faint or not, but] if we faint not. He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal. Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting

life." God, at the revelation of his righteous judgment, "will render to every man according to his deeds: eternal life to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory. Anguish upon every soul of man that does evil, &c., but glory to every man that worketh good, &c., for there is no respect of persons with God."

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

I know thy works, &c., so then, "because thou art lukewarm, I will spew thee out of my mouth." "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man [*τις*, any one, and two verses below, any one of you, James ii, 14, 16] say he hath faith, and hath not works," [now?] "Can faith save him, &c.? Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned." [In the original it is the same word which is rendered damned Mark xvi, 16.] "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we [believers] deny him, he will also deny us. Add to your faith virtue, &c., charity, &c. If ye do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord. It had been better for them that have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Saviour, [i. e., for believers,] not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment

delivered unto them. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit my Father taketh away. Abide in me, &c. If a man abide not in me [by keeping my commandments in faith] he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and [he shall share the fate of the branches that have really belonged to the natural vine, and now bear no more fruit] men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." The fig tree in the Lord's moral vineyard is cut down for not bearing fruit. "Him that sinneth I will blot out of my book. Some, having put away a good conscience, concerning faith have made shipwreck. Such as turn back to their own wickedness, the Lord shall lead them forth with the evil doers. Toward thee goodness, if [by continuing in obedience] thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou shalt be cut off."

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

"When a righteous man* doth turn from his right-

* That this is spoken of a truly righteous man, i. e., of a believer, appears from the following reasons: (1.) The righteous here men-

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

tioned is opposed to the wicked mentioned in the context. As surely then as the word wicked means there one really wicked, so does the word righteous mean here one truly righteous. (2.) The righteous man's turning from his righteousness is opposed to the wicked man's turning from his iniquity. If, therefore, the righteous man's righteousness is to be understood of feigned goodness, so the wicked man's iniquity must be understood of feigned iniquity. (3.) The crime of the righteous man here spoken of is turning from his righteousness: but if his righteousness were only a hypocritical righteousness, he would rather deserve to be commended for renouncing it; a wicked, sly Pharisee, being more odious to God than a barefaced sinner, who has honesty enough not to put on the mask of religion. Rev. iii, 15. (4.) Part of this apostate's punishment will consist in not having the righteousness that he has done remembered. But if his righteousness is a false righteousness, or mere hypocrisy, the divine threatening proves a precious promise; for you cannot please a hypocrite better than by assuring him that his hypocrisy shall never be remembered. What a pity is it, that to defend our mistakes we should fix egregious nonsense and gross contradiction upon the only wise God!

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

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

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

All the preceding scriptures are thus summed up by our Lord, Matt. xxv, 46, "These [the persons who have not finally done the works of faith] shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous [those who have done them to the end, at least from the time of their reconversion, if they were backsliders] shall go into eternal life." This doctrine agrees perfectly with the conclusion of the sermon on the mount: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand." Nay, this is Christ's explicit doctrine. No words can be plainer than these: "They that are in their graves shall hear his

voice and come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation," John v, 29. All creeds, therefore, like that of St. Athanasius, and all faith, must end in practice. This is a grand article of what might, with peculiar propriety, be called the catholic faith—the faith that is common to, and essential under all the dispensations of the everlasting gospel, in all countries and ages : "the faith which, except a man believe faithfully," i. e., so as to work righteousness, like the good and faithful servant, "he cannot be saved."

SECTION II.

AN ANSWER TO THE MOST PLAUSIBLE OBJECTIONS OF THE SOLIFIDIANS AGAINST THIS DOCTRINE.

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

I. OBJECTION. "All the scriptures that you have produced are nothing but descriptions of those who shall be saved or damned : you have therefore no ground to infer from such texts, that in the great day our works of faith shall be rewarded with an eternal life of glory, and our bad works punished with eternal death."

ANSWER. Of all the paradoxes advanced by mistaken divines, your assertion is perhaps the greatest. You have no more ground for it than I have for saying that England is a lawless kingdom, and that all the promises of rewards, and threatenings of punishments,

stamped with the authority of the legislative power, are no legal sanctions. If I seriously maintained that the bestowing of public bounties upon the inventors of useful arts; that the discharge of some prisoners, and the condemnation of others, according to the statutes of the realm, are things which take place without any respect to law; that the acts of parliament are mere descriptions of persons, which the government rewards, acquits, or punishes, without any respect to worthiness, innocence, or demerit; and that the judges absolve or condemn criminals merely out of free grace and free wrath; if I maintained a paradox so dishonourable to the government and so contrary to common sense, would you not be astonished? And if I gave the name of Papist to all that did not receive my error as gospel, would you not recommend me to a dose of Dr. Monro's hellebore? And are they much wiser who fix the foul blot upon the divine government, and make the Protestants believe that the sanctions of the King of kings, and the judicial dictates of him who judges the world in righteousness, are not laws and sentences, but representations and descriptions?

A comparison will show the frivolousness of your objection. There is, if I mistake not, a statute that condemns a highwayman to be hanged, and allows a reward of forty pounds to the person that takes him. A counsellor observes that this statute was undoubtedly made to deter people from going upon the highway, and to encourage the taking of robbers. "Not so," says a lawyer from Geneva, "though robbers are hanged according to law, yet the men that take them are not legally rewarded; the sum mentioned in the statute is given them of free, gratuitous, undeserved,

unmerited, distinguishing grace." Nay, says the counsellor, if they do not deserve the forty pounds more than other people, that sum might as well be bestowed upon the highwaymen themselves as upon those who take them at the hazard of their life. "And so it might," says the Geneva lawyer; "for although poor, blind legalists make people believe that the promissory part of the law was made to excite people to exert themselves in the taking of robbers, yet we know better at Geneva; and I inform you that the clause you speak of is only a description of certain men, for whom the government designs the reward of forty pounds gratis." The admirers of Geneva logic clap their hands and cry out, "Well said! down with legality!" but an English jury smiles and cries, "Down with absurdity!" (See *Fletcher's Works*, vol. i, p. 273.)

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

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

“finished salvation,” so called, ended in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

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

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

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

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

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

trine confounds light and darkness, promises and threatenings, the heirs of heaven and those of hell, the seed of the woman and that of the serpent.

6. As to your intimation that holiness is secured by teaching that God's people shall absolutely be made willing to forsake their sins, and to become righteous in the day of God's power, that so they may have a meetness for, as well as a title to heaven; it drags after it this horrid consequence: the devil's people, "in the day of God's power," shall absolutely be made willing to forsake their righteousness, that they may have a meetness for, as well as a title to hell. A bitter reverse this of your "sweet gospel!"

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

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

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

2. Whether our free agency turns the scale for life or death, to all eternity Christ shall have the honour of having died to bestow an initial life of grace even upon those who choose death in the error of their ways, and to have made them gracious and sincere offers of an eternal life of glory. In this sense, then, Christ's work cannot be rendered ineffectual; it being his absolute decree that the word of his grace shall be the savour of life to obedient free agents, and the savour of death to the disobedient. Therefore, if we will not have the eternal benefit of his redeeming work, we cannot take from him the eternal honour of having shed his blood even for those who tread it under foot, and who "bring upon themselves swift destruction by denying the Lord that bought them."

3. Christ is not dishonoured by the doctrine that represents the effect of the greater wheel as being thus in part suspended upon the turning of the less. The light of the sun shines in vain for me if I shut my eyes. Life is a far nobler gift than food. I can give my starving neighbour bread, but I cannot give him life. Nevertheless, the higher wheel stops, if the inferior is quite at a stand: he must die if he has no nourishment. Thus, by God's appointment, the preservation of all the first born of the Israelites in Egypt depended upon the sprinkling of a lamb's blood; the life of all them that were bitten by the fiery serpents was sus-

pended on a look toward the brazen serpent; and that of Rahab and her friends hung, if I may so speak, on a scarlet thread. Now, if God did not dishonour his wisdom when he made the life of so many people to depend upon those seemingly insignificant works; and if he continues to make the life of all mankind depend upon breathing; is it reasonable to say that he is dishonoured by his own doctrine, which suspends our eternal salvation upon the works of faith?

4. Your objection can be retorted. Most Calvinists grant that our justification in the day of conversion depends upon believing. Thus the Rev. Mr. Madan, in his sermon on James ii, 24, (p. 18,) says, "Though the Lord Jesus has merited our justification before God, yet we are not actually justified, till he be received into the heart by faith, and rested on," &c. Therefore, in the day of conversion, that great minister being judge, our justification is suspended on the work which he calls "receiving Christ," or "resting on him." And how much more may our eternal salvation be suspended on faith and works; i. e., on resting upon Christ and working righteousness!

5. This is not all. Both Mr. Madan and Mr. Hill call faith the instrumental CAUSE of our justification, and every body knows that the effect is always suspended on the CAUSE. Now, if so great an effect as a sinner's present justification may be suspended upon the single CAUSE of faith, why may not a believer's eternal justification be suspended upon the double CAUSE of faith and its works? In a word, why must Mr. Wesley be represented as heterodox for insinuating that believing and working instrumentally CAUSE our eternal justification; when Mr. Madan wears the badge of

orthodoxy, although he insinuates that believing instrumentally CAUSES our justification?

If Mr. Madan say that he allows faith to be an instrumental CAUSE, on account of its being the gift of God by which we receive Christ; I answer, that we allow the work of faith to be an instrumental cause, because it springs from the Spirit of Christ, and constitutes our likeness to Christ, and our evangelical righteousness; a righteousness this which Christ came into the world to promote. "For God sending his Son, &c., condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," i. e., who walk in good works. If it is asserted that there can be but one instrumental cause of our salvation, that is, faith; I appeal to reason, which dictates that Christian faith implies a variety of causes, such as preaching Christ, and hearing him preached: for faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. This argument, therefore, carries its own answer along with it.

6. To conclude: Mr. Madan, in the above-quoted sermon, (p. 16,) says with great truth:—"Christ and faith are not one and the same thing; how then can we reconcile the apostle with himself, when he says, in one place, we are justified by Christ; and in another, we are justified by faith? This can only be done by having recourse to the plain distinction which the Scriptures afford us in considering Christ as the meritorious cause, and faith as the instrumental cause, or that by which the meritorious cause is applied unto us, so that we are benefited thereby." Now all our heresy consists in applying Mr. Madan's judicious reasoning to all the scriptures that guard the second gospel axiom, thus:

“How can we reconcile the apostle with himself, when he says, in one place, ‘We are saved by Christ,’ and in other places, ‘We are saved by faith, we are saved by hope. Work out your own salvation. Confession is made to salvation,’ &c., for Christ and faith, Christ and hope, Christ and works, Christ and making confession, are not one and the same thing? This seeming inconsistency in St. Paul’s doctrine vanishes by admitting a plain distinction which the Scriptures afford us: that is, (1.) By considering Christ, from first to last, as the properly meritorious cause of our present and eternal salvation. (2.) By considering faith as the instrumental cause of our salvation from the guilt and pollution of sin on earth. And, (3.) By considering the works of faith not only as the evidencing cause of our justification in the great day, but also as an instrumental cause of our continuing in the life of faith; just as eating, drinking, breathing, and such works, that spring from natural life, are instrumental causes of our continuing in natural life.” Thus faith and its works are two inferior causes, whereby the properly meritorious cause is so completely applied to obedient, persevering believers, that they are now, and for ever shall be benefited by it. As I flatter myself that this sixfold answer satisfies the candid reader, I pass on to another plausible objection.

IV. OBJECTION. “Though you assert that from first to last the works and sufferings of Christ are the grand and properly meritorious cause of our salvation; yet, according to your scheme, man having a life of glory upon his choice, and heaven upon working out his salvation, the honour of free grace is not secured. For, after all, free will and human faithfulness, or un-

faithfulness, turn the scale for eternal salvation or damnation."

ANSWER. 1. In the very nature of things we are free agents, or the wise and righteous God would act inconsistently with his wisdom and equity in dispensing rewards and punishments. If, through "the saving grace of God" which "has appeared to all men," we were not again endued with an awful power to "choose life," and to be faithful, it would be as injudicious to punish or recompense mankind as to whip a dead horse for not moving, condemn fire for burning, or grant water an eternal reward for its fluidity. 2. Were I ashamed of my moral free agency, I should be ashamed of the noble power that distinguishes me from the brute creation. I should be ashamed of the Old Testament, and of Moses, who says, "Behold, I call heaven and earth to record, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life." I should be ashamed of the New Testament, and of Christ, who complains, "You will not come unto me that you might have life," i. e., you will not use the power which my preventing grace has given you, that you might live here a life of faith and holiness, and be hereafter rewarded with a life of happiness and glory. In a word, I should give up the second gospel axiom, and tacitly reproach my Maker, who says, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."

3. To convince you that free agency, and a right use of it, are by no means inconsistent with divine grace and genuine humility, I ask, Did not God endue our first parents with free will? Are not even some

rigid Calvinists ashamed to deny it? If free will in man is a power dishonourable to God, did not our wise Creator mistake when he pronounced man "very good," at the very time man was a free willer? For how could man be very good if he had within him a power that necessarily militates against the honour of God, as the Calvinists insinuate free will does!

4. I go one step farther, and ask, Did God ever endue one child of Adam with power to avoid one sin? If you say no, you contradict the Scriptures, your own conscience, and the consciences of all mankind; you fix the blot of folly on all the judges who have judicially punished malefactors with death; and when you insinuate that the Lawgiver of the universe will send all workers of iniquity personally into hell for not "doing what is lawful and right to save their souls alive," or for not avoiding sin, when he never gave them the least power personally so to do, you pour almost as much contempt upon his perfections as if you hinted that he will one day raise all creeping insects, to judge them according to their steps, and to cast into a place of torment as many as did not move as swiftly as a race-horse.

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

5. Again: as it would be absurd to say that God gave a power to avoid one sin only to one child of

Adam; so it would be impious to suppose God gave him this power that, in case he faithfully used it, he should necessarily boast of it. Pharisaic boasting is, then, by no means the necessary consequence of our moral liberty, or of a proper use of our free will. Thus it appears that your specious objection is founded upon a heap of paradoxes; and that to embrace free grace lest we should not make enough of free grace, and to jump into fatalism lest we should be proud of our free will, is not less absurd than to prostrate ourselves before a traitor lest we should not honour the king, and to run to a house of ill fame lest we should be proud of our chastity.

6. Our doctrine secures the honour of free grace as well as Calvinism. You will be convinced of it if you consider the following articles of our creed with respect to free grace:—(1.) Before the fall, the free grace of our Creator gave us in Adam holiness, happiness, and a power to continue in both. (2.) Since the fall, the free grace of our Redeemer indulges us with a reprieve, an accepted time, a day of visitation and salvation; in a word, with a better covenant, and a “free gift that is come upon all men unto [initial] justification of life,” Rom. v, 18. (3.) That nothing may be wanted on God’s part, the free grace of our Sanctifier excites us to make a proper use of the free gift, part of which is moral liberty. (4.) Thus even our free will to good is all of creating, redeeming, and sanctifying grace. Therefore, with regard to that glorious power, as well as to every other talent, we humbly ask, with St. Paul, “What hast thou, that thou hast not received?” (5.) This is not all: we are commanded to “account the longsuffering of God [a degree of] salvation;” and so

it is: for without forcing, or necessarily inclining our will, God's providential free grace disposes a thousand circumstances in such a manner as to second the calls of the everlasting gospel. The gracious Preserver of men works daily a thousand wonders to keep us out of the grave, and out of hell. A thousand wheels have turned ten thousand times, in and out of the church, to bring us the purest streams of gospel truth. Countless breathings of the Spirit of grace add virtue to those streams; free grace, therefore, not only prevents, but also in numberless ways accompanies, follows, directs, encourages, and assists us in all the works of our salvation.

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

Hence it appears that we go every step of the way with our Calvinist brethren while they exalt Christ and free grace in a rational and Scriptural manner; and that we refuse to follow them only when they set Christ at naught as a prophet, a lawgiver, a judge, and a king, under pretence of extolling him as a priest; or when they put wanton free grace and unrelenting free wrath in the place of the genuine free grace testified of in the Scriptures.

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

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

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

2. If the question, "Who maketh thee to differ?" be asked with respect to the number of our talents, the

* Fletcher's Works, vol. i, p. 479.

proper answer is, "God's distinguishing grace alone maketh us to differ." And that this is the sense which the apostle had in view is evident from the context. He had before reprov'd the Corinthians for "saying every one, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," &c.; and now he adds, "These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos, that ye might learn in us not to think [of gifted, popular men, or of yourselves] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another: for who maketh thee to differ?" Why is thy person graceful? And why art thou naturally an eloquent man, like Apollos, while thy brother's speech is rude, and his bodily presence weak and contemptible, like mine? But,

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

Nay, there is not a promise or a threatening in the Bible that is not a proof of our Lawgiver's want of wisdom, or of our Judge's want of equity, if we are not graciously endued with a capacity to make ourselves differ from the obstinate violators of the law and despisers of the gospel,—that is, if we are not free agents. There is not an exhortation, a warning, nor an entreaty in the sacred pages that is not a demonstration of the penman's folly, or of the freedom of our will. In a word, there is not a sinner justly punished in hell, nor a believer wisely rewarded in heaven, that does not indirectly say to all the world of rationals: "Though the God" of grace draws thee to obedience, yet it is with "the bands of a man." For, after all, he "leaves thee in the hand of thy counsel, to keep the commandments, and perform acceptable obedience if thou wilt. Before man is life and death, and whether him liketh shall be given him," *Ecclus. xv, 14, &c.*

But, although your obedience of faith makes you to differ from your condemned neighbour, you have no reason to reject the first gospel axiom, and to indulge a boasting* contrary to faith and free grace: for your

* There is a twofold glorying: the one Pharisaic and contrary to faith: of this St. Paul speaks, where he says, "Boasting is excluded, &c., by the law of faith," *Rom. iii, 27.* The other evangelical and agreeable to faith, since it is a believer's holy triumph in God, resulting from the testimony of a good conscience. Concerning it the apostle says, "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing [boasting] in himself alone, and not in another," *Gal. vi, 4.* [The word in the original is *καυχῆσθαι* in one passage, and *καυχῆμα* in the other.] These seemingly contrary doctrines are highly consistent; their opposition answering to that of the gospel axioms. The first axiom allows of no glorying but in Christ, who has alone fulfilled the law of works, or the terms of the first covenant: but the second axiom allows obedient believers an humble

Christian faith, which is the root of your obedience, is peculiarly the gift of God; whether you consider it as to its precious seed, ("the word nigh;") as to its glorious object, (Christ and the truth;) as to the means by which that object is revealed, (such as preaching and hearing;) as to the opportunities and faculties of using those means, (such as life, reason, &c. ;) or as to the Spirit of grace, whose assistance in this case is so important that he is called "the Spirit of faith." And yet that Spirit does not act irresistibly; all believers unnecessarily and freely yielding to it, and all unbelievers unnecessarily and freely resisting it. So far only does the matter turn upon free will. Thus it appears, that although the act of faith is ours, we are so much indebted to free grace for it, that believers can no more boast of being their own saviours, because they daily believe and work in order to their final salvation, than they can boast of being their own preservers, because they daily breathe and eat in order to their continued preservation.

On the other hand, although your condemned neighbour's disobedience makes him differ from you, he has

καυχημα, "glorying" or "rejoicing," upon their personally fulfilling the law of faith, or the gracious terms of the second covenant. 2 Cor. i, 12. This rejoicing answers to what St. Paul calls the "witness of our own spirit," or "the testimony of a good conscience;" which, next to the witness of the word and Spirit concerning God's mercy and Christ's blood, is the ground of a Christian's confidence. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, &c., because we keep his commandments," 1 John iii, 21, 22. And yet, astonishing! this blessed rejoicing, so strongly recommended by St. Paul and St. John, who, one would think, knew something of the gospel, is now represented by some modern evangelists as the quintessence of Pharisaism.

no reason to reject the second gospel axiom, and to exculpate himself by charging heaven with capricious partiality and horrid free wrath: because God, whose mercy is over all his works, and who is no respecter of persons, graciously bestowed a talent of free grace upon him as well as upon you, according to one or another of the divine dispensations. For the royal master, mentioned in the gospel, gave a pound to the servant that buried it, as well as to him that gained ten pounds by occupying till his lord came.

“But, upon that footing, what becomes of distinguishing grace?” If by “distinguishing grace” you mean Calvinistic partiality, I answer, It must undoubtedly sink, together with its inseparable partner, unconditional reprobation, into the pit of error, whence they ascended to fill the church with contentions, and the world with infidels. But if you mean *Scriptural distinguishing grace*, that is, the “manifold wisdom of God,” which makes him proceed gradually, and admit a pleasing variety in the works of grace, as well as in the productions of nature;—if you mean his good pleasure to give the heathens one talent, the Jews two, the Papists three, the Protestants four; or if you mean the different methods which he uses to call sinners to repentance, such as his familiar expostulation with Cain: his wonderful warning of Lot’s sons-in-law: his rousing King Saul by the voice of Samuel, and Saul of Tarsus by the voice of Christ: (Samuel and Christ coming, or seeming to come from the invisible world for that awful purpose:) his audibly inviting Judas and the rich ruler to follow him, promising the latter heavenly treasure if he would give his earthly possessions to the poor: his shocking, by preternatural earthquakes,

the consciences of the Philippian jailer and the two malefactors that suffered with him: his awakening Ananias, Sapphira, and thousands more by the wonders of the day of pentecost, when Lydia and others were called only in the common way: if you mean this by "distinguishing grace," we are agreed. For grace displayed in as distinguishing a manner as it was toward Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, greatly illustrates our Lord's doctrine: "Of him to whom little is given, little shall be required; but much shall be required of them that have received much;" the equality of God's way not consisting in giving to all men a like number of talents, any more than making them all archangels; but in treating them all equally, according to the various editions of the everlasting gospel, or law of liberty; and according to the good or bad uses they have made of their talents, whether they had few or many.

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

cure? One of your neighbours has hanged, and another has poisoned himself; so that not hanging yourself, and taking wholesome food, has so far made the difference between you and them: but can you reasonably infer that you do not live by divine bounty, and that I rob the Preserver of men of his glory, when I affirm that you shall surely die if you do not eat, or if you take poison?

Permit me to make you sensible of your mistake by one more illustration. An anticalvinist, who observes that God has suspended many of his blessings upon industry, diligently ploughs, sows, and weeds his field. A fatalist over the way, lest free grace should not have all the glory of his crop, does not turn* one clod, and expects seed to drop from the clouds into furrows made by an invisible plough on a certain day, which he calls "a day of God's power." When harvest comes, the one has a crop of wheat, and the other

* This is not spoken of pious Calvinists; for some of them are remarkably diligent in good works. They are Solifidians by halves;—in principle, but not in practice. Their works outshine their errors. I lay nothing to their charge but inattention, prejudice, and glaring inconsistency. I compare them to diligent, good-natured druggists, who, among many excellent remedies, sell sometimes arsenic. They would not for the world take it themselves, or poison their neighbours; but yet they freely retail it, and in so doing they are inadvertently the cause of much mischief. Mr. Fulsome, for example, could tell which of our gospel ministers taught him that good works are dung, and have nothing to do with eternal salvation. He could inform us who lulled him asleep in his sins with the syren songs of "unconditional election," and "finished salvation, in the full extent of the word;" that is, he could let us know who gave him his killing dose; and numbers of Deists could tell us that a bare taste or smell of Calvinism has made them loathe the genuine doctrines of grace, just as tasting or smelling a tainted partridge has for ever turned some people's stomachs against partridge.

a crop of weeds. Now, although industry alone has made the difference between the two fields, who is most likely to give God the glory of a crop, the Solifidian farmer who reaps thistles; or the laborious husbandman who has joined works to his faith in divine Providence, and joyfully brings his sheaves home, saying, as St. Paul, "By divine bounty I have planted and Apollos has weeded, but God has given the increase, which is all in all?"

SECTION III.

SOME REFLECTIONS UPON THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THOSE WHO SCORN TO WORK WITH AN EYE TO THE REWARD WHICH GOD OFFERS TO EXCITE US TO OBEDIENCE.

FLATTERING myself that the preceding answers have removed the reader's prejudices, or confirmed him in his attachment to genuine free grace, I shall conclude this essay by some reflections upon the pride or prejudices of those who scruple working with an eye to the rewards that God offers with a view to promote the obedience of faith.

"If heaven, (say such mistaken persons,) if the enjoyment of God in glory be the reward of obedience, and if you work with an eye to that reward, you act from self, the basest of all motives. Love, and not self interest, sets us, true believers, upon action. We work *from gratitude* and not for profit; *from life**

* The reader is desired to observe that we recommend working from life and gratitude, as well as our opponents. Life and thankfulness are two important springs of action, which we use as well as they. We maintain, that even those who "have a name to live, and are dead in trespasses and sins," cannot be saved without

and not for life. To do good with an eye to a reward, though that reward should be a crown of life, is to act as a mercenary wretch, and not as a duteous child or a faithful servant."

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

1. This doctrine makes us "wise above what is written." We read that hunger and want of bread brought back the prodigal son. His father knew it, but instead of treating him as a hired servant, he entertained him as a beloved child.

2. It sets aside, at a stroke, a considerable part of the Bible, which consists in threatenings to deter evil workers, and in promises to encourage obedient believers: for if it be base to obey in order to obtain a promised reward, it is baser still to do it in order to avoid a threat-

"strengthening the things that remain and are ready to die;" and that thankfulness for being out of hell, and for having a day of salvation through Christ, should be strongly recommended to the chief of sinners. But thankfulness and life are not *all* the springs necessary, in our imperfect state, to move *all* the wheels of obedience; and we dare no more exclude *the other* springs, because we have these two, than we dare cut off three of our fingers, because we have a little finger and a thumb.

ened punishment. Thus the precious grace of faith, so far as it is exercised about divine promises and threatenings, is indirectly made void.

3. It decries "godly fear," a grand spring of action, and preservative of holiness in all free agents that are in a state of probation; and by this mean it indirectly charges God with want of wisdom, for putting that spring in the breast of innocent man in paradise, and for perpetually working upon it in his word and by his Spirit, which St. Paul calls "the spirit of bondage unto fear;" because it helps us to believe the threatenings denounced against the workers of iniquity, and to fear lest ruin should overtake us if we continue in our sins.

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

killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him?" Does this mean, "Be mercenary: yea, I say unto you, be mercenary?"

4. HOPE has a particular, necessary reference to *promises* and *good things* to come. Excellent things are spoken of that grace. If St. Paul says, "Ye are saved through FAITH," he says, also, "We are saved by HOPE." Hence St. Peter observes, that "exceeding great promises are given to us, that we might be partakers of the divine nature:" and St. John declares, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as God is pure." Now hope never stirs, but in order to obtain good things in view: a motive this which our gospel refiners represent as illiberal and base. Their scheme therefore directly tends to ridicule and suppress the capital, Christian grace, which faith guards on the left hand, and charity on the right.

5. Their errors spring from a false conclusion. Because it is mean to relieve a beggar with an eye to a reward from him, they infer that it is mean to do a good work with an eye to a reward from God; not considering that a beggar promises nothing, and can give nothing valuable; whereas the Parent of good promises and can give "eternal life to them that obey him." Their inference is then just as absurd as the following argument: "I ought not to set my heart upon an earthly, inferior, transitory good; therefore I must not set it upon the chief, heavenly, permanent good. It is foolish to shoot at a wrong mark; therefore I must not shoot at the right: I must not aim at the very mark which God himself has set up for me ultimately to level all my actions at, next to his own glory, viz., the enjoyment of himself, the light of his countenance, the

smiles of his open face, which make the heaven of heavens."

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

7. The error I oppose can be put in a still stronger light. Not to strive to obtain our great reward in full, amounts to saying, "Lord, thou art beneath my aim and pursuits: I can do without thee, or without so much of thee. I will not bestir myself, and do one thing to obtain either the fruition, or a fuller enjoyment of thy adorable self." An illustration or two, short as they fall of the thing illustrated, may help us to see the great impropriety of such conduct. If the king offered to give all officers, who would distinguish themselves in the field, his hand to kiss, and a commission in his guards, that he might have them near his person; would not military gentlemen defeat the intention of this gracious offer, and betray a peculiar degree of indifference for his majesty, if in the day of battle they would not strike one blow more on account of the royal promise?

Again: when David asked, What shall be done to him that killeth the giant? and when he was informed that Saul would give him his daughter in marriage; would the young shepherd have showed his regard for the princess, or respect for the monarch, if he

had said, "I am above minding rewards: what I do, I do freely: I scorn acting from so base a motive as a desire to secure the hand of the princess, and the honour of being the king's son-in-law?" Could any thing have been ruder and more haughty than such a speech? And yet, O see what evangelical refinements have done for us! We, who are infinitely less before God than David was before King Saul;—we, worms of a day, are so blinded by prejudice, as to think it beneath us to mind the offers of the King of kings, or to strive for the rewards of the Lord of lords.

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

8. The Calvinists of the last century, in their lucid intervals, saw the absolute necessity of working for heaven and heavenly rewards. We have a good practical discourse of J. Bunyan upon these words, "So run that you may obtain." The burden of it is, "If you will have a heaven, you must run for it." Whence he calls his sermon, "*The Heavenly Footman*;" and Matthew Mead,* a staunch Calvinist, in his treatise on

* As a proof of his being sound in the doctrines of Calvinistic

The Good of Early Obedience, (p. 429,) says, with great truth, "Maintain a holy, filial fear of God. This is an excellent preservative against apostacy. 'By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil,' says Solomon, and he tells you, 'The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life, whereby men depart from the snares of death;' and backsliding from Christ is one of the great snares of death. Think much of the day of recompense, and of the glorious reward of perseverance in that day: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' It is not those that begin well, but those who end well, that receive the crown. It is not mercenary service to quicken ourselves to obedience by the hope of a recompense. *Omnis amor mercedis non est mercenarius, &c.* David said, 'I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' He encouraged himself to duty by the hope of glory, &c.

grace and confusion, I present the reader with the following passage, taken from the same book, printed in London, 1683, (p. 307 :) "A believer is under the law for conduct, but not for judgment, &c. It is the guide of his path, but not the judge of his state. The believer is bound to obey it, but not to stand or fall by it." That is, in plain English, he should obey it, but his disobedience will never bring him under condemnation, and hinder him to stand in judgment. "It is a rule of life, &c., and therefore it obliges believers as much as others, though upon other motives, &c.: for they are not to expect life or favour from it, nor fear the depth and rigour that comes by it. The law has no power to justify a believer, or condemn him, and therefore can be no rule to try his state by." In flat opposition to the general tenor of the Scriptures, thus summed up by St. John: "In this," namely, committing or not committing sin, "the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." What this author says is true, if it be understood of the Adamic law of innocence; but if it be extended to St. Paul's law of Christ, and to St. James' law of liberty, it is one of the dangerous tenets that support the chair of the Antinomian "man of sin."

Hope of that glorious recompense is of great service to quicken us to perseverance. And to the same end does the apostle urge it: 'Be unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

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

10. In the next chapter the apostle bids us to take Christ himself for our pattern in the very thing which our gospel refiners call mercenary and base: "Looking to Jesus," says he, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The noble reward this, with which his mediatorial obedience was crowned, as appears from these words: "He became obedient unto death; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." If the scheme of those who refine the ancient gospel appears to me in a peculiarly unfavourable light, it is when I see them impose upon the

injudicious admirers of unscriptural humility, and make the simple believe that they do God service when they indirectly represent Christ's obedience unto death as imperfect, and him as mercenary, actuated by a motive unworthy of a child of God. He says, "Every one that is perfect shall be as his master:" but we (such is our consistency!) loudly decry perfection, and yet pretend to a higher degree of it than our Lord and Master; for he was not above "enduring the cross [for the joy of] sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God:" but we are so exquisitely perfect that we will work *gratis*. It is mercenary, it is beneath us to work for glory!

11. I fear this contempt is by some indirectly poured upon the Lord of glory to extol the spurious free grace which is sister to free wrath; and to persuade the simple that "works have nothing to do with our final justification and eternal salvation before God." A dogma this, which is as contrary to reason as it is to Scripture and morality; it being a monstrous imposition upon the credulity of Protestants to assert that works, which God himself will reward with final justification and eternal salvation, have nothing to do with that justification and that salvation before him: just as if the thing rewarded had nothing to do with its reward before the rewarder!

12. The most rigid Calvinists allow that St. Paul is truly evangelical: but which of the sacred writers ever spoke greater things of the rewardableness of works than he? What can be plainer, what stronger than these words, which I must quote till they are minded: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, &c., knowing [i. e., considering] that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. But he that

doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; for there is no respect of persons," Col. iii, 23, &c. Again: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap perdition; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life," Gal. vi, 7, 8.

From those scriptures it is evident that doing good or bad works is like sowing good or bad seed; and that going to heaven or hell is like gathering what we have sown. Now, as it is the *madness* of unbelievers to sow wickedness, and to expect a crop of happiness and glory; so it is the *wisdom* of believers to sow righteousness, expecting to "reap in due time if they faint not." Nor do we act reasonably, if we do not sow more or less with an eye to reaping: for if reaping be quite out of the question with Protestants, they may as wisely sow chaff on a fallow as corn in a ploughed field. Hence I conclude that a believer may obey, and that, if he be judicious, he will obey, looking both to Jesus and to the rewards of obedience; and that the more we can fix the eye of his faith upon his "exceeding great reward, and his great recompense of reward," the more he will "abound in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love."

13. St. Paul's conduct with respect to rewards was perfectly consistent with his doctrine. I have already observed, he wrote to the Corinthians, that he so "ran and so fought as to obtain an incorruptible crown;" and it is well known that in the Olympic games, to which he alludes, all ran or fought with an eye to a prize, a reward, or a crown. But in his Epistle to the Philippians he goes still farther; for he represents his

running for a crown of life, his pressing after rewards of grace and glory, as the whole of his business. His words are remarkable: "This one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And when he had just run his race out, he wrote to Timothy, "I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me [as for a conqueror] a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day"—the great day of retribution. As for St. John, when he was perfected in love, we find him as "mercenary" as St. Paul; for he writes to the elect lady, and to her believing children: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

14. When I read such scriptures, I wonder at those who are so wrapt up in the pernicious notion that we ought not to work* for a life of glory, as to overlook even the "crown of life," with which God will reward those who are "faithful unto death." And I am astonished at the remains of my own unbelief, which prevent my being always ravished with admiration at the thought of the rewards offered to fire my soul into

* Truth is so great that it sometimes prevails over those that are prejudiced against it. I have observed that Dr. Crisp himself, in a happy moment, bore a noble testimony to undefiled religion. Take another instance of it. In the volume of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield's sermons, taken in short hand, and published by Gurney, (p. 119,) that great preacher says: "FIRST we must work FOR spiritual life, AFTERWARD FROM it." And (pages 153, 154) he declares: "There are numbers of poor that are ready to perish; and if you drop something to them in love, God will take care to repay you when you come to judgment." I find but one fault with this doctrine. The

seraphic obedience. An idle country fellow, who runs at the wakes for a wretched prize, labours harder in his sportive race than, I fear, I do yet in some of my prayers and sermons. A sportsman, for the pitiful honour of coming in at the death of a fox, toils more than most professors do in the pursuit of their corruptions. How ought confusion to cover our faces! Let those that refine the gospel glory in their shame. Let each of them say, "I thank thee, O God, that I am not like a Papist, or like that Arminian, who looks at the rewards which thou hast promised. I deny myself, and take up my cross, without thinking of the joy and rewards set before me," &c. For my part, I desire to humble myself before God, for having so long overlooked the "exceeding great reward," and the "crown of life," promised to them that obey him; and my thoughts shall be expressed in such words as these:—

"Gracious Lord, if 'he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall have a prophet's reward;' if 'our light affliction,' when it is patiently endured, 'worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' if thou hast said, 'Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, [from man,] and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest;' if thou animatest those who are persecuted

first of those propositions does not guard free grace so well as Mr. Wesley's Minutes do. We should always intimate that there is no working FOR a life of glory, OR FOR A MORE ABUNDANT LIFE of grace, but FROM an initial life of grace, FREELY given to us in Christ BEFORE any working of our own. This I mention, not to prejudice the reader against Mr. Whitefield, but to show that I am not so prejudiced in favour of works as not to see when even a Whitefield, in an unguarded expression, leans toward them to the disparagement of free grace.

for righteousness' sake, by this promissory exhortation, 'Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven:' nay, if a cup of cold water only, given in thy name, 'shall in no wise lose its reward;' and if the least of thy rewards is a smile of approbation; let me be ready to go round the world, shouldst thou call me to it, that I may obtain such a recompense.

"Since thou hast so closely connected holiness and happiness, my duty and thy favours, 'let no man beguile *me* of *my* reward in a voluntary humility,' nor suffer me to be 'carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men,' and 'cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.' And 'whatsoever my hand findeth to do, help me to do it with all my might;' not only lest I lose my reward, but also lest I have not 'a full reward;' lest I lose a beam of the light of thy countenance, or a degree of that peculiar likeness and nearness to thee with which thou wilt recompense those who excel in virtue. So shall I equally avoid the delusion of the Pharisees, who expect heaven through their faithless works; and the error of Antinomians, who hope to enter into thy glory without the passport of the works of faith.

"And now, Lord, if thy servant has found favour in thy sight, permit him to urge another request; so far as thy wisdom, and the laws by which thy free grace works upon free agents will permit, incline the minds of Papists and Protestants to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. Let not especially this plain testimony, borne to the many great promises which thou hast made, and to the astonishing rewards which thou offerest them that work righteousness, be rejected by my Calvinist brethren. Keep them from fighting against thy good-

ness, and despising their own mercies, under pretence of fighting against 'Arminian errors,' and despising 'Pelagian Checks to the Gospel.' And make them sensible that it is absurd to decry in word the pope's pretensions to infallibility, if, by an obstinate refusal to 'review the whole affair,' and to weigh their supposed orthodoxy in the balances of reason and revelation, they, in fact, pretend to be infallible themselves; and thus, instead of one Catholic pontiff, set up ten thousand Protestant popes.

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

"Above all, Lord, if they cannot defend their mistakes, either by argument or by Scripture quoted ac-

ording to the context and the obvious tenour of thy sacred oracles, give them more wisdom than to expose any longer the Protestant religion, which they think to defend; and more piety than to make the men of the world abhor thy gospel and blaspheme thy name, as free thinkers are daily tempted to do, when they see that those who pretend to 'exalt thee' most are, of all Protestants, the most ready to disarm thy gospel of its sanctions; to turn thy judicial sentences into frivolous descriptions; to overlook the dictates of reason and good nature; and to make the press groan under illogical assertions and personal abuse!

"Let thy servant speak once more: thou knowest, O Lord, that thy power being my helper, I would choose to die rather than wilfully to depreciate that grace, that free grace of thine which has so long kept me out of hell, and daily gives me sweet foretastes of heaven. And now, let not readers of a Pharisaic turn mistake what I have advanced in honour of the works of faith, and by that mean build themselves up in their self-righteous delusion and destructive contempt of thy merits: help them to consider, that if our works are rewardable, it is because thy free gr^{ace} makes them so; thy Father having mercifully accepted our persons for thy sake, thy Holy Spirit having gently helped our infirmities, thy precious blood having fully atoned for our sins and imperfections, thy incessant intercession still keeping the way to the throne of grace open for us and our poor performances. Suffer not one of the sons of virtuous pride, into whose hands these sheets may fall, to forget that thou hast annexed 'the reward of the inheritance' to the assemblage of the works of faith, or to 'patient continuance in well doing,' and not to one

or two splendid works of hypocrisy done just to serve a worldly turn, or to bribe a disturbed, clamorous conscience; and enable them so to feel the need of thy pardon for past transgression, and of thy power for future obedience, that, as the chased hart panteth after the water brooks, so their awakened souls may long after Christ, in whom the penitent find inexhaustible springs of righteousness and strength; and to whom, with thee and thy eternal Spirit, be for ever ascribed praise, honour, and glory, both in heaven and upon earth—*praise* for the wonders of general redemption, and for the innumerable displays of thy free grace unstained by free wrath—*honour* for bestowing the gracious reward of a heavenly salvation upon all believers that make their election sure ‘by patient continuance in well doing’—and *glory* for inflicting the just punishment of infernal damnation upon all that neglect so great salvation, and to the end of the accepted time dare thy vengeance by obstinate continuance in ill doing.”

CHAPTER XI.

AN ESSAY ON TRUTH.

INTRODUCTION.

EXCEEDINGLY sorry should I be if the testimony which I have borne to the necessity of *good* works caused any of my readers to do the worst of *bad* works, that is, to neglect *believing*, and to depend upon some of the external, *faithless* performances which conceited Pharisees call “good works;” and by which they ab-

surdly think to make amends for their sins, to purchase the divine favour, to set aside God's mercy, and to supersede Christ's atoning blood. Therefore, lest some unwary souls, going from one extreme to the other, should so unfortunately avoid Antinomianism as to run upon the rocks which are rendered famous by the destruction of the Pharisees, I shall once more vindicate the fundamental anti-Pharisaic doctrine of salvation by faith: I say *once more*, because I have already done it in my guarded sermon. And to the scriptures, articles, and arguments produced in that piece, I shall now add rational and yet Scriptural observations, which, together with appeals to matter of fact, will, I hope, soften the prejudices of judicious moralists against the doctrine of faith, and reconcile considerate Solifidians to the doctrine of works. In order to this, I design in general to prove that true faith is the only plant which can possibly bear good works; that it loses its operative nature, and dies, when it produces them not; and that it as much surpasses good works in importance as the motion of the heart does all other bodily motions. Inquire we first into the nature and ground of saving faith.

SECTION I.

A PLAIN DEFINITION OF SAVING FAITH, HOW BELIEVING IS THE GIFT OF GOD, AND WHETHER IT IS IN OUR POWER TO BELIEVE.

WHAT is faith? It is *believing heartily*. What is saving faith? I dare not say that it is "believing heartily my sins are forgiven me for Christ's sake;" for if I live in sin, that belief is a destructive conceit, and

not saving faith. Neither dare I say that "saving faith is only a sure trust and confidence that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me ;"* for, if I did, I should damn almost all mankind for four thousand years. Such definitions of saving faith are, I fear, too narrow to be just, and too unguarded to keep out Solifidianism. A comparison may convince my readers of it. If they desired me to define man, and I said, "Man is a rational animal that lived in France in 1774," would they not ask me whether I suppose all the rational animals that lived on this side the English Channel in 1773 were brutes? And if you desired to know what I mean by saving faith, and I replied, It is a supernatural belief that Christ has actually atoned for my sins upon the cross: would you not ask me whether Abraham, the father of the faithful, who would have believed a lie if he had believed this, had only damning faith?

To avoid therefore such mistakes; to contradict no scriptures; to put no black mark of damnation upon any man, that in any nation "fears God and works righteousness;" to leave no room for Solifidianism; and to present the reader with a definition of faith adequate to "the everlasting gospel," I would choose to say, that "justifying or saving faith is believing the saving truth with the heart unto internal, and [as we have opportunity] unto external righteousness, according to our light

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

and dispensation." To St. Paul's words, Rom. x, 10, I add the epithets internal and external, in order to exclude, according to 1 John iii, 7, 8, the filthy imputation under which fallen believers may, if we credit the Antinomians, commit internal and external adultery, mental and bodily murder, without the least reasonable fear of endangering their faith, their interest in God's favour, and their inamissible title to the throne of glory.

But "how is faith the gift of God?" Some persons think that faith is as much out of our power as the lightning that shoots from a distant cloud; they suppose that God drives sinners to the fountain of Christ's blood as irresistibly as the infernal legion drove the herd of swine into the sea of Galilee; and that a man is as passive in the first act of faith as Jonah was in the act of the fish, which cast him upon the shore. Hence the absurd plea of many who lay fast hold on the horns of the devil's altar, unbelief, and cry out, "We can no more believe than we can make a world."

I call this an *absurd* plea for several reasons: (1.) It supposes that when "God commands all men everywhere to repent and to believe the gospel," he commands them to do what is as impossible to them as the making of a new world. (2.) It supposes that the terms of the covenant of grace are much harder than the terms of the covenant of works. For the old covenant required only perfect human obedience: but the new covenant requires of us the work of an almighty God, i. e., believing; a work this which, upon the scheme I oppose, is as impossible to us as the creation of a world, in which we can never have a hand. (3.) It supposes that the promise of salvation being

suspended upon believing, a thing as impracticable to us as the making of a new world, we shall as infallibly be damned if God do not believe for us, as we should be if we were required to make a world on pain of damnation, and God would not make it in our place.

(4.) It supposes that believing is a work which belongs to God alone: for no man in his senses can doubt but creating a world, or its tantamount, believing, is a work which none but God can manage.

(5.) It supposes that (if he, who *believeth not the divine record, makes God a liar, and shall be damned*) whenever unbelievers are called upon to believe, and God refuses them the power to do it, he as much forces them to make him a liar and to be damned, as the king would force me to give him the lie, and to be hanged, if he put me in circumstances where I could have no chance of avoiding that crime and punishment, but by submitting to the alternative of creating a world.

(6.) It supposes that when Christ " marvelled at the unbelief of the Jews," he showed as little wisdom as I should were I to marvel at a man for not creating three worlds as quickly as a believer can say the three creeds.

(7.) That when Christ reproved his disciples for their unbelief he acted more unreasonably than if he had rebuked them for not adding a new star to every constellation in heaven.

(8.) That to exhort people to "continue in the faith," is to exhort them to something as difficult as to continue creating worlds. And, lastly, that when Christ fixes our damnation upon unbelief, (see Mark xvi, 16, and John iii, 18,) he acts far more tyrannically than the king would do if he issued out a proclamation informing all his subjects that whosoever shall not, by such a time, raise a new island within the British seas,

shall be infallibly put to the most painful and lingering death.

Having thus exposed the erroneous sense in which some people suppose that "faith is the gift of God," I beg leave to mention in what sense it appears to me to be so. Believing is the gift of God's grace, as cultivating the root of a rare flower given you, or raising a crop of corn in your field, is the gift of God's providence. Breathing is the gift of the God of grace, as breathing, moving, and eating, are the gifts of the God of nature. He gives me lungs and air that I may breathe: he gives me life and muscles that I may move: he bestows upon me food, and a mouth, that I may eat: and when I have no stomach, he gives me common sense to see I must die, or force myself to take some nourishment or some medicine. But he neither breathes, moves, nor eats for me; nay, when I think proper, I can accelerate my breathing, motion, and eating; and if I please I may even fast, lie down, or hang myself, and by that mean put an end to my eating, moving, and breathing. Once more: faith is the gift of God to believers, as sight is to you. The Parent of good freely gives you the light of the sun, and organs proper to receive it: he places you in a world where that light visits you daily: he apprizes you that sight is conducive to your safety, pleasure, and profit; and every thing around you bids you use your eyes and see: nevertheless, you may not only drop your curtains, and extinguish your candle, but close your eyes also. This is exactly the case with regard to faith. Free grace removes (in part) the total blindness which Adam's fall brought upon us: free grace gently sends us some beams of truth, which is the light of the "Son

of righteousness;" it disposes the eyes of our understanding to see those beams; it excites us various ways to welcome them; it blesses us with many, perhaps with all the means of faith, such as opportunities to hear, read, inquire; and power to consider, assent, consent, resolve, and re-resolve to believe the truth. But, after all, believing is as much our own act as seeing. We may, nay, in general do suspend, or omit the act of faith; especially when that act is not yet become habitual, and when the glaring light that sometimes accompanies the revelation of the truth is abated. Nay, we may imitate Pharaoh, Judas, and all reprobates; we may do by the eye of our faith what some report that Democritus did by his bodily eyes. Being tired of seeing the follies of mankind, to rid himself of that disagreeable sight he put his eyes out. We may be so averse from "the light which enlightens every man that comes into the world;" we may so dread it because our works are evil, as to exemplify, like the Pharisees, such awful declarations as these:—"Their eyes have they closed, lest they should see, &c.: wherefore God gave them up to a reprobate mind," and "they were blinded."

When St. Paul says that Christians "believe according to the working of God's mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead," he chiefly alludes to the resurrection of Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; the former of these wonders being the great ground and object of the Christian faith, and the latter displaying the great privilege of the Christian dispensation. To suppose, therefore, that nobody savingly believes who does not believe according to an actual, overwhelming display of God's almighty power, is as unscriptural as to maintain that

God's people no longer believe than he actually repeats the wonders of Easter day, and of the day of pentecost. Is it not clear that the apostle had no such notions when he wrote to the Corinthians? "I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which you have received; wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory [if ye hold fast, as the original means] what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I declared unto you, &c., that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, and that he rose again, according to the Scriptures, &c., so we preach, and so ye believed." Again: how plain is the account that our Lord and his forerunner give us of faith and unbelief! "Verily we speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. What he [Christ] hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man [comparatively] receiveth his testimony; but he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

Two things have chiefly given room to our mistakes respecting the strange impossibility of believing. The first is our confounding the truths which characterize the several gospel dispensations. We see, for example, that a poor, besotted drunkard, an overreaching, greedy tradesman, a rich, skeptical epicure, and a proud, ambitious courtier, have no more taste for "the gospel of Christ" than a horse and a mule have for the high-seasoned dishes that crown a royal table. An immense gulf is fixed between them and the Christian faith. In their present state they can no more believe "with their heart unto righteousness in Christ," than an unborn infant can become a man without passing through infancy and youth. But, although they cannot yet be-

lieve savingly in Christ, may they not believe in God according to the import of our Lord's words: "Ye believe IN GOD, believe also IN ME?" If the Pharisees could not believe in Christ, it was not because God never gave them a power equal to that which created the world; but because they were practical Atheists, who actually rejected the morning light of the Jewish dispensation, and by that mean absolutely unfitted themselves for the meridian light of the Christian dispensation. This is evident from our Lord's own words: "I know you, that ye have not the love of God [or a regard for God] in you. I come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not, [though ye might do it; for] if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another? &c. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, [and submitted to his dispensation,] ye would have believed me, [and submitted to] my gospel. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

The second cause of our mistake about the impossibility of believing now, is the confounding of faith with its fruits and rewards; which naturally leads us to think that we cannot believe, or that our faith is vain, till those rewards and fruits appear. But is not this being ingenious to make the worst of things? Had Abraham no faith in God's promise till Isaac was born? Was Sarah a damnable unbeliever till she felt the long-expected fruit of her womb stir there? Had the woman of Canaan no faith till our Lord granted her request, and cried out, "O woman, great is thy faith, let it be done unto thee even as thou wilt?" Was the centurion

an infidel till Christ " marvelled at his faith," and declared " he had not found such faith, no, not in Israel ?" Was Peter faithless till his Master said, " Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona," &c. ? Did the weeping penitent begin to believe only when Christ said to her, " Go in peace, thy faith hath saved thee ?" And had the apostles no faith in " the promise of the Father," till their heads were actually crowned with celestial fire ? Should we not distinguish between our sealing the truth of our dispensation with the seal of our faith, according to our present light and ability ; and God's sealing the truth of our faith with the seal of his power, or actually rewarding us by the grant of some eminent and uncommon blessing ? To believe is OUR part ; to make " signs follow them that believe" is GOD's part ; and because we can no more do God's part than we can make a world, is it agreeable either to Scripture or reason to conclude that doing our part is equally difficult ? Can you find one single instance in the Scriptures of a soul willing to believe, and absolutely unable to do it ? From these two scriptures, " Lord, increase our faith ;—Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," can you justly infer that the praying disciples and the distressed father had no power to believe ? Do not their words evidence just the contrary ? That we cannot believe, any more than we can eat, without the help and power of God, is what we are all agreed upon ; but does this in the least prove that the help and power by which we believe is as far out of the reach of willing souls as the help and power to make a world ?

Such scriptures as these : " Unto you it is given to believe : a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above : no man can come unto me except the

Father draw him : every good gift [and of course that of faith] cometh from the Father of lights." Such scriptures, I say, secure, indeed, the honour of free grace, but do not destroy the power of free agency. To us that freely believe in a holy, righteous God, it is given freely to believe in a gracious, bleeding Saviour ; because the sick alone "have need of a physician ;" and none but those who believe in God can see the need of an advocate with him. But ought we from hence to conclude that our unbelieving neighbours are necessarily debarred from "believing in God?" When our Lord said to the unbelieving Jews that they could not believe in him, did he not speak of a moral impotency—an impotency of their own making? I ask it again, If they obstinately resisted the light of their inferior dispensation ; if they were none of Christ's Jewish sheep, how could they be his Christian sheep? If an obstinate boy sets himself against learning the letters, how can he ever learn to read? If a stubborn Jew stiffly opposes the law of Moses, how can he submit to the law of Christ? Is it not strange that some good people should leap into reprobation, rather than admit so obvious a solution of this little difficulty?

From the above-mentioned texts we have, then, no more reason to infer that God forces believers to believe, or that he believes for them, than to conclude that God constrains diligent tradesmen to get money, or gets it for them, because it is said, "We are not sufficient to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God—who gives us all things richly to enjoy. Remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth."

From the whole I conclude, that so long as "the ac-

cepted time" and "the day of salvation" continue, all sinners who have not yet finally hardened themselves may, day and night, (through the help and power of the general light of Christ's "saving grace," mentioned John i, 9, and Tit. ii, 11,) receive some truth belonging to the everlasting gospel; though it should be only this: "There is a God, who will call us to an account for our sins, and who spares us to break them off by repentance." And their cordial believing of this truth would make way for their receiving the higher truths that stand between them and the top of the mysterious ladder of truth. I grant it is impossible they should leap at once to the middle, much less to the highest round of the ladder: but if the foot of it is upon earth, in the very nature of things the lowest step is within their reach, and, by laying hold on it, they may go on "from faith to faith" till they stand firm even in the Christian faith, if distinguishing grace has elected them to hear the Christian gospel. The most sudden conversions imply this gradual transition. As in the very nature of things, when "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip" from the eunuch, and transported him to Azotus, he made Philip's body rapidly measure all the distance between the wilderness of Gaza and Azotus: so, when he helped the Philippian jailer from the gates of hell to the gates of heaven in one night, he made him rapidly pass through the fear of God, the dread of his justice, and the pangs of penitential desires after salvation, before he entered into the joyous rest that remains for those that heartily believe in Christ. Nor is this quick, though gradual transition from midnight darkness to noon-day light an unintelligible mystery, since we are witnesses of a similar event every revolving

day. The vegetable and the animal world help us likewise to understand the nature of sudden conversions. Every philosopher knows that a mushroom passes through almost as many stages of the vegetative life in six hours as an oak does in two hundred years: and those animalculæ that frisk into life in the morning of a summer's day, propagate their species at noon, are old at four o'clock, and dead at six, measure the length of animal life as really as Methusaleh did his millennium.

SECTION II.

SAVING TRUTH IS THE OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH. WHAT TRUTH IS, AND WHAT GREAT THINGS ARE SPOKEN OF IT. OUR SALVATION TURNS UPON IT.

IT appears by the preceding section that saving TRUTH is the ground and object of saving FAITH; but "what is TRUTH?" This is the awful question that Pilate once asked of Him who was best able to answer it. But alas! Pilate was in such haste through the lying fear of man, that he did not stay for an answer. May I venture to give one? TRUTH is spiritual *substance*, and a LIE spiritual *shadow*. TRUTH is spiritual *light*, and a LIE spiritual *darkness*. Truth is the root of all *virtue*, and a lie is the root of all *vice*. Truth is the celestial tincture that makes spirits good, and a lie the infernal tincture that makes them evil. A lie is as nearly related to the devil as infection to one that has the plague, or opacity to the earth; and truth is as nearly related to God as fragrancy to burning incense, and light to the unclouded sun.

According to this definition of truth and error, may

we not give plain and Scriptural answers to some of the deepest questions in the world? What is God? The reverse of "the prince of darkness," and of the "father of lies:" he is "the Father of lights," and "the God of truth:" he "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." What is Christ? He is "the brightness of his Father's glory; a light—a great light to them that dwell in the shadow of death." He is "the truth; the true witness; the truth itself; Emmanuel, God with us, full of grace and truth." What is the Holy Ghost? "The Spirit of truth:" yea, says St. John, "the Spirit is truth," and "leads into all truth." What is Satan? "The spirit of error" that "abode not in the truth; in whom there is no truth," and who "deceives the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth."

Again: what is the gospel? "The word of truth, the word of God, the word of faith, the word of the kingdom, the word of life, and the word of salvation." What are gospel ministers? Men that "bear witness to the truth;" that "rightly divide the word of truth;" that are "fellow helpers to the truth;" that "speak forth the words of truth;" and "are valiant for the truth upon the earth." What is the preaching of the gospel? "The manifestation of the truth." What is it to believe the gospel? It is to "receive the knowledge of the truth;" to "receive the love of the truth;" and to "obey the truth." What is it to mistake the gospel? It is to "err from the truth;" to "turn after fables;" and to "give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." What is the church? "The pillar and ground of truth, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail." What is the first fruit of sincere repentance? "The acknowledging of the truth." What are believers? Persons that are

“chosen to salvation through the [unnecessitated] belief of the truth;” that “are of the truth;” that “know the truth;” that have “the truth in their inward parts;” that have “a good report of the truth; in whom dwells the truth; who have been taught the truth as it is in Jesus; in whom is the truth of Christ; who have purified their souls by obeying the truth;” and “walk in the truth.” What are unstable souls? People “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,” with whom “the truth of the gospel does not continue,” and who are wilfully “bewitched, that they should not obey the truth.” What are obstinate unbelievers? “Men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth; unreasonable men,” that “resist the truth;” that “glory and lie against the truth;” that “walk in darkness, and do not the truth.” What are apostates? Men that “sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth,” and, instead of repenting, “count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing.” What are perfect men in Christ? Men that are “established in the present truth,” i. e., in the truth revealed under the Christian dispensation, and that can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

If all turns thus upon TRUTH, and if truth is at once spiritual light and the object of saving faith, it follows: (1.) That to walk in the truth, to walk in the light, and to walk by faith, are phrases of the same import. (2.) That to be converted is to be “turned from darkness to light,” that is, from the practical belief of a lie to the practical “belief of the truth;” or, as St. Paul expresses it, “from the power of Satan unto God.” And, (3.) That the chief business of the tempter is to

“take the word of truth out of our hearts, lest we should believe and be saved;” or, in other terms, to “blind our minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto us.”

If Jesus Christ is the truth, the light, the life, and the Word that “was in the beginning with God, and was God;” the Word “by which all things were made” and are preserved: if he is “the light that shineth in darkness,” even when the darkness comprehendeth it not: if “he is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” while the day of salvation lasts: if he is the archetype, the eternal, living pattern of all saving truth: if he is the essential, almighty Word, from whom revealed truth and the word of our salvation flow as constantly as light and heat from the sun: do we not slight him, and despise eternal life, when we slight the truth, and despise the Word? And may not the great things spoken of the Word confirm what has been said of the truth, and help us to answer the questions already proposed in a manner equally Scriptural and conclusive?

Not forgetting that there is such a thing as “the word nigh, the word behind” us, the “still small voice,” and “the word of that grace which has appeared unto all men, teaching them to deny worldly lusts, and to live soberly,” &c., I ask, What are evangelists? Men who “bear record of the word of God,” and “bear witness of the light, that all men may believe.” “Sowers, that sow the word of the kingdom: holding forth the word of life.” What are false apostles? Men that “corrupt the word of God,” that “handle the word of God deceitfully,” and “preach another gospel; whose words eat as does a canker.” What are believers?

People that "hear the word of God and keep it;" that are "begotten of God by the word of truth;" that "are born again by the word of God;" that "hear the sayings of Christ, and do them; in whose hearts the word of Christ dwells richly; who receive it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe" it. They are persons that "receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save their souls;" that have "tasted the good word of God," that "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;" that "gladly receive the word; have God's word abiding in them;" are made "clean through the word which Christ speaks" by his ministers, his Scriptures, his Spirit, his works, or his rod; and "in whom the seed of that word produces" thirty fold, sixty fold, or a hundred fold, according to their light, faithfulness, and opportunity.

Again: what are unbelievers? Antinomian hypocrites "that hear the sayings of Christ, and do them not;" or Pharisaic "despisers that stumble at the word, speak against those things which are spoken by" God's messengers; "contradicting and blaspheming;" and who, by "putting the word of God from them, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life." What are martyrs? Witnesses of the truth; "slain for the word of God." And what are apostates? Persons in whom "the word is choked by the cares of this world, or the deceitfulness of riches;" who "fall away when persecution ariseth because of the word; by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of;" and in whom the seed of the word "becometh unfruitful." Thus all turns still upon truth and the word of God.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCRIPTURE SCALES.

SECTION I.

THREE PAIR OF GOSPEL AXIOMS, WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED AS GOLDEN CHAINS, BY WHICH THE SCRIPTURE SCALES HANG ON THEIR BEAM.

I.

I. Every obedient believer's *salvation* is originally of God's free grace.

II. God's *free grace* is always the first cause of what is good.

III. When God's free grace has begun to work moral GOOD, man may faithfully follow him by believing, ceasing to do evil, and working righteousness, according to his light and talent.

Thus is God the WISE *rewarder* of them that diligently seek him, according to these words of the apostle:—"God, at the revelation of his *righteous* judgment, will render to every man according to his deeds; eternal life to

II.

I. Every unbeliever's *damnation* is originally of his own personal free will.

II. Man's free will is always the first cause of what is evil.

III. When man's *free will* has begun to work moral EVIL, God may justly follow him by withdrawing his slighted grace, revealing his deserved wrath, and working *natural* evil.

Thus is God the RIGHT-*eous punisher* of them that obstinately neglect him, according to such scriptures as these:—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Ye say, *The way of the Lord is not equal*: hear now, O ye

I.

II.

them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory. Seeing it is a *righteous* thing with God to *recompense* rest to them who are troubled" for his sake, to give them "a crown of righteousness" as a *righteous* Judge, and to make them "walk with Christ in white, *because* they are *worthy*," (in a gracious and evangelical sense.)

house of Israel, Is not my way equal? I will judge you every one after his way. Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid! How then shall God judge the world? Thou art *righteous*, O Lord, &c., *because* thou hast *judged* thus. Thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are *worthy*," (in a strict and legal sense.)

Hence it appears that God's design in the three grand economies of man's creation, redemption, and sanctification, is to display the riches of his FREE GRACE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE, by showing himself the bounteous *Author of every good gift*, and by *graciously* rewarding the worthy: while he *justly* punishes the unworthy according to their works, agreeably to these awful words of Christ and his prophets: "For judgment I am come into this world. The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the [men who to the last will remain] wicked, for the day of evil. Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness;" and to all the wicked that day will be *evil and terrible*: "For behold, the day cometh," says the Lord, "that shall burn as an oven; and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts. But the righteous shall rejoice

when he seeth the vengeance: so that a man shall say, *Verily there is a REWARD for the righteous! Doubtless there is a God that JUDGETH THE EARTH!*"

Upon this rational and Scriptural plan, may we not solve a difficulty that has perplexed all the philosophers in the world? "How can you," say they, "reasonably account for the *origin of evil* without bearing hard upon God's infinite goodness, power, or knowledge? How can you make appear, not only that a good God *could* create a world, where evil now exists in ten thousand forms; but also, that it was highly expedient he should create such a world rather than any other?"

ANSWER.—When it pleased God to create a world, his wisdom obliged him to create upon the plan that was most worthy of him. Such a plan was undoubtedly that which agreed best with all the divine perfections taken together. Wisdom and power absolutely required that it should be a world of rational, as well as of irrational creatures; of free as well as of necessary agents; such a world displaying far better what St. Paul calls *πολυποικίλος σοφία*, "the multifarious, variegated wisdom of God," as well as his infinite power in making, ruling, and overruling various orders of beings.

It could not be expected that myriads of free agents, who necessarily fell short of absolute perfection, would *all* behave alike. Here God's goodness demanded that those who behaved well should be rewarded; his sovereignty insisted that those who behaved ill should be punished; and his distributive justice and equity required that those who made the best use of their talents should be entitled to the highest rewards; while those who abused divine favours most should have the se-

verest punishments ; mercy reserving to itself the right of raising rewards and of alleviating punishments, in a way suited to the honour of all the other divine attributes.

This being granted, (and I do not see how any man of reason and piety can deny it,) it evidently follows, (1.) That a world, in which various orders of free as well as of necessary agents are admitted, is most perfect. (2.) That this world, having been formed upon such a wise plan, was the most perfect that could possibly be created. (3.) That in the very nature of things, evil *may*, although there is no necessity it *should*, enter into such a world : else it could not be a world of free agents who are candidates for rewards offered by distributive justice. (4.) That the blemishes and disorders of the natural world are only penal consequences of the disobedience of free agents. And (5.) That, from such penal disorders we may indeed conclude that man has abused free will, but not that God deals in free wrath. Only admit, therefore, the free will of rationals, and you cannot, but fall in love with our Creator's plan ; dark and horrid as it appears when it is viewed through the smoked glass of the fatalist, the Manichee, or the rigid predestinarian.

SECTION II.

SETTING FORTH THE GLORY OF FAITH AND THE HONOUR OF WORKS.

FIRST SCALE.

SECOND SCALE.

Whosoever *believeth* on him [Christ] shall not be ashamed, when *I have re-*

I.

be ashamed, Rom. x, 11.

This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on him whom he hath sent, John vi, 29.

Abraham *believed* God, &c., and he was called the *friend* of God, James ii, 23.

To him that worketh not, but *believeth*, &c., his faith is counted for righteousness, Rom. iv, 5.

If ye believe not that I am he, *ye shall die* in your sins, John viii, 24.

Only believe, [I particularly require a strong exertion of thy faith at this time,] Luke viii, 50.

He that *believeth* on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life, John v, 24.

Thy *faith* hath *SAVED* thee, Luke vii, 50.

Through *faith* they wrought righteousness, ob-

II.

spect unto all thy commandments, Psa. cxix, 6.

What does the Lord require of thee, but *to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly* with thy God, Micah vi, 8.

Ye are my *friends*, if ye *do* whatsoever I command you, John xv, 14.

Faith, *if it hath not works*, is dead, being alone, James ii, 17.

Brethren, &c., *if ye live* after the flesh, *ye shall die*, Rom. viii, 13.

The *devils* believe, [therefore *faith* is not sufficient without its *works*,] James ii, 19.

With *the merciful* thou [O God] wilt show thyself merciful: and with the forward thou wilt show thyself unsavoury, 2 Sam. xxii, 26, 27.

We are *SAVED* by *hope*, Rom. viii, 24.

Remembering, &c., your *labour of love*—let pa-

I.

tained promises, &c., Heb. xi, 33.

With *the heart* man believeth to righteousness, Rom. x, 10.

Received ye the Spirit by the *works* of the law, or by the hearing of *faith*? Gal. iii, 2.

Through his name, whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins, Acts x, 43.

If Abraham were *justified* by *WORKS*, he hath whereof to glory, Rom. iv, 2.

Without FAITH it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi, 6.

They that are of *faith* are blessed with faithful Abraham, Gal. iii, 9.

To them that are *unbelieving* is NOTHING PURE, Tit. i, 15.

Believe in the Lord,

II.

tience have her perfect work, 1 Thess. i, 3; James i, 4.

And with *the mouth* confession is made to salvation. (*Ibid.*)

I know thy *works*, that thou art neither cold nor hot, &c., so then, &c., I will spew thee out of my mouth, Rev. iii, 15, 16.

Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. If we *confess* our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us, Luke vi, 37; 1 John i, 9.

Was not Abraham our father *justified by WORKS*? James ii, 21.

O vain man, *faith* without *WORKS* is dead, James ii, 20.

If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the *works* of Abraham, John viii, 39.

Give alms, &c., and behold ALL THINGS are CLEAN unto you, Luke xi, 41.

If thou *doest* well, shalt

I.

&c., so shall you be established, 2 Chron. xx, 20.

To the praise of the glory of *his grace*, &c., he hath made us accepted in the beloved, Eph. i, 6.

I live by FAITH in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. ii, 20.

For me to *live* is CHRIST, Phil. i, 21.

THIS [Christ] is the true God, and *eternal life*, 1 John v, 20.

This is eternal life, to *know* thee, &c., and Jesus Christ, John xvii, 3.

He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life, John iii, 36.

Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by *faith*, but as it were by the works of the law [opposed to Christ;]

II.

not thou be *accepted*? Gen. iv, 7.

In every nation he that *feareth* God, and *worketh* righteousness, is accepted with him, Acts x, 35.

If ye, through the Spirit, MORTIFY the deeds of the body, ye shall *live*, Rom. viii, 13.

KEEP my commandments and *live*, Prov. iv, 4.

His [my Father's] COMMANDMENT is *life everlasting*, John xii, 50.

Though I have *all knowledge*, &c., and have not *charity*, I am nothing, 1 Cor. xiii, 2.

And he that [*απειθει*] *disobeyeth* the Son, shall not see life. (*Ibid.*)

If any man among you, &c., *bridleth* not his tongue, &c., this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God is this: to *visit* the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to *keep*

I.

for they stumbled at that stumbling stone, Rom. ix, 31, 32.

Abraham *believed* God, and it was *imputed* [or counted] to him for righteousness, Rom. iv, 3.

Trust [i. e., believe] ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, Isa. xxvi, 4.

He that *believeth* on him is not condemned, but he that *believeth not* is condemned already, John iii, 18.

Be it known unto you that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that *believe* are JUSTIFIED, Acts xiii, 38, 39.

We have *believed* in Jesus Christ that we might be JUSTIFIED [as sinners] by the *faith* of Christ, Gal. ii, 16.

The balance of the preceding scriptures shows that

II.

himself unspotted from the world, James i, 26, 27.

Phinehas *executed* judgment, and that was *counted* [or imputed] unto him for righteousness for evermore, Psa. cvi, 30, 31.

If I *regard* iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. If our heart condemn us not, then have we *confidence* toward God, Psa. lxvi, 18; 1 John iii, 21.

He that *humbleth* himself shall be exalted, and every one that *exalteth himself* shall be abased, Luke xiv, 11.

The *doers* of the law [of faith] shall be JUSTIFIED,—in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, &c., according to my gospel, Rom. ii, 13, 16.

In the day of judgment—by thy *words* thou shalt be JUSTIFIED, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned, Matt. xii, 36, 37.

FATH, and the works of faith, are equally necessary to the salvation of adults. *Faith*, for their justification as *sinner*s, in the day of CONVERSION; and the *works* of faith, for their justification as *believers*, both in the day of TRIAL and of JUDGMENT. Hence it follows, that when Zelotes preaches *mere Solifidianism*, and when Honestus enforces *mere morality*, they both grossly mangle Bible Christianity, which every real Protestant is bound to defend against all Antinomian and Pharisaic innovators.

SECTION III.

SHOWING WHAT IS GOD'S WORK, AND WHAT IS OUR OWN; HOW CHRIST SAVES US, AND HOW WE WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.

FIRST SCALE.

Containing the weights of
FREE GRACE.

The hour is coming and now is, when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that *hear shall live*, John v, 25.

I *am come*, that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly, John x, 10.

You hath he *quicken*ed, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii, 1.

You being *dead* in your

SECOND SCALE.

Containing the weights of
FREE WILL.

Awake, thou that sleepest, *arise* from the *dead*, and Christ *shall give* thee light, Eph. v, 14.

Except *ye eat* the flesh of the Son of man, &c., ye have no LIFE in you, John vi, 53.

Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have *life*, John v, 40.

Thou hast a name that

I.

sins, &c., hath he quickened together with him, Col. ii, 13.

Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God, John iii, 3.

The wind bloweth *where it listeth*, &c., so is every one that is *born of the Spirit*, John iii, 8.

Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but, &c., *by* the word of God*;

II.

thou livest, and *art dead*, &c. *Strengthen* the things that remain, and are *ready to die*, Rev. iii, 1, 2.

Every one that *loveth*—every one that *does* righteousness, is *born of God*, 1 John iv, 7; ii, 29.

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may *exalt* you. For God *resisteth the proud*, and *giveth grace* to the *humble*, 1 Pet. v, 6, 5.

Wherefore, &c., *lay apart* all filthiness, &c., and *receive,** &c., the in

* How mistaken were the divines that composed the synod of Dort, when, speaking of regeneration, they said, without any distinction, (*Illam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur*.) "God works it in us without us!" Just as if God believed in us without us! Just as if we received the word without our receiving of it! Just as if the sower and the sun produced corn without the field that bears it! What led them into this mistake was, no doubt, a commendable desire to maintain the honour of free grace. However, if by regeneration they meant the *first* communication of that fructifying, "saving grace, which has appeared to all men"—the *first* visit, or the first implanting of "that light of life, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world," they spoke a precious truth: for God bestows this *free gift* upon us, absolutely "without us!" Nor could we ever do what he requires of us in the scale of *free will*, if he had not first given us a talent of grace, and if he did not continually help us to use it aright when we have a good will.

I.

and this is the *word*, which by the gospel is *preached* unto you, 1 Pet. i, 23, 25. *Of his own will* begat he us *with the word* of truth, James i, 18.

II.

grafted word, James i, 19, 21. Whosoever *believeth*, &c., is born of God, [according to his dispensation,] 1 John v, 1. As many as *received* him, to *them* [of his own gracious will] gave he power to *become the sons* of God, even to them that *believe* on his name, John i, 12. For ye are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus. Faith cometh by *hearing*, [which is our work,] Gal. iii, 26; Rom. x, 17. They [the Bereans] *received* the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched* the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so; therefore many of them *believed*; [i. e., received "the ingrafted word," and by that means were "born again" according to the Christian dispensation;] Acts xvii, 11, 12.

Christ our *passover* is *sacrificed* for us, 1 Cor. vi, 7.

Purge out the old leaven [of wickedness] that ye may be a new lump. (*Ibid.*)

I.

The blood of Christ *cleanseth* us from all sin, 1 John i, 7.

By one offering *he hath perfected* for ever [in atoning merits] them that are sanctified, Heb. x, 14.

He by himself purged our sins. Of the people there was *none* with him, Heb. i, 3; Isaiah lxiii, 3. [Here the incommunicable glory of making a proper atonement for sin is secured to our Lord.]

He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix, 26.

Ye are *sanctified, &c.*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. vi, 11.

Surely one shall say, *In* [or *through*] *the Lord* have I *righteousness* and strength, Isa. xlv, 24.

II.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and *purify* your hearts, ye double-minded, James iv, 8.

Let us go on unto *perfection*. This one thing I do, &c. I *press* toward the mark, Heb. vi, 1; Phil. iii, 13.

Ye have purified your souls in *obeying* the truth. Verily I *have cleansed my heart* in vain, and *washed my hands* in innocency. [The word *in vain* refers only to a temptation of David when he "saw the prosperity of the wicked,"] 1 Pet. i, 22; Psa. lxxiii, 13.

Put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes, Isa. i, 16.

If a man *purge himself* from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, *sanctified*, and meet for the Master's use, 2 Tim. ii, 21.

In every nation he that *worketh righteousness* is accepted of Him, Acts x, 35.

I.

I will make mention of *thy righteousness*, even of thine only, &c. My mouth shall show forth *thy righteousness*, and thy salvation all the day, Psa. lxxi, 15, 16.

My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, Isa. li, 5.

I bring near *my righteousness*, it shall not be far off; and *my salvation* shall not tarry, Isa. xlvi, 13.

God sent his Son *Jesus* to bless you, in turning, &c., you from your iniquities, Acts iii, 26.

Him [Christ] hath God exalted to *give repentance* to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*, Acts v, 31.

Be it known unto you, that through this man [Christ] is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*, Acts xxxi, 38.

Not by *works of right-*

II.

Then [when thou dealest thy bread to the hungry, bringest the poor to thy house, &c.,] *then shall thy righteousness* go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward, Isa. lviii, 8.

Whosoever *does not righteousness* is not of God, 1 John iii, 10.

The Lord rewarded me [David] according to *my righteousness*, according to *the cleanness of my hands*, 2 Sam. xxii, 21.

I *thought* on my ways, and *turned my feet* unto thy testimonies. I *made haste*, and *delayed not to keep* thy commandments, Psa. cxix, 59, 60.

Repent ye, therefore, and *be converted*, that your sins may be *blotted out*, Acts iii, 19.

Arise: why tarriest thou? *Wash away thy sins*; calling upon the name of the Lord, Acts xxii, 16.

Except *your righteous-*

I.

eousness which we have done ; but of his mercy he saved us, Tit. iii, 5.

And this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord *our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii, 6.

Them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through *the righteousness of God* and our Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. i, 1.

CHRIST is made unto us of God, &c., *righteousness*, 1 Cor. i, 30.

Even for mine own sake *will I do it*, Isa. xlvi, 11.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but *by the Holy Ghost*—the Spirit of faith, 1 Cor. xii, 3 ; 2 Cor. iv, 13.

I will put my *Spirit* within you, Ezek. xxxvi, 27. I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, Acts ii, 17.

II.

ness exceed the righteousness of the scribes, ye shall *in no case* enter into the kingdom of heaven, Matt. v, 20.

He that *does righteousness is* righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous, 1 John iii, 7.

Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, [the place about to be destroyed,] they should *deliver but their own souls by their righteousness*, Ezek. xiv, 14.

The *righteousness of the righteous* shall be upon him, Ezek. xviii, 20.

I will for this be inquired of, &c., to do it for them, Ezek. xxxvi, 37.

Your heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him—to them that obey him, Luke xi, 13 ; Acts x, 32.

Repent and be baptized, &c., [or stand to your baptismal vow,] and ye shall receive the gift of *the Holy Ghost*, Acts ii, 38.

I.

Hear me, O Lord, that this people may know, &c., that *thou hast turned their heart* back again, 1 Kings xviii, 37.

A *new heart* will I give you, &c. I will *take away* the stony heart, &c., and I will give you a heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi, 26.

The *preparation* of the heart in man is from the Lord. Thou wilt *prepare* their heart, [the heart of the humble,] Prov. xvi, 1; Psa. x, 17.

The Lord will *give* grace and glory, Psalm lxxxiv, 11.

Exceeding great and precious *promises* are given us; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i, 4.

Come, for all things are now *ready*, Luke xiv, 17.

The Lord will wait to be gracious, Isa. xxx, 18.

Be not dismayed, for

II.

Take with you words, and turn to the Lord. *Turn ye* even to me with all *your heart*, Hos. xiv, 2; Joel ii, 12.

Harden not your heart: *rend* your heart: *make you a new heart*, for why will ye die? Psa. xcvi, 8; Joel ii, 13; Ezek. xviii, 31.

Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee, in that, &c., *thou hast prepared thine heart* to seek God, 2 Chron. xix, 3.

No good thing will he withhold from them that *walk* uprightly. (*Ibid.*)

Having therefore *these promises*, let us *cleanse ourselves* from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. vii, 1.

The Lamb's wife hath *made herself ready*. Be ye also *ready*, Rev. xix, 7; Matt. xxiv, 44.

Wait on the Lord, &c.: wait, I say, on the Lord, Psa. xxvii, 14.

David *encouraged him-*

I.

I am *thy God*; I will *strengthen* thee, Isa. xli, 10.

Yea, *I will uphold* thee with the *right hand* of my righteousness, Isa. xli, 10.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I *cleanse* you, Ezek. xxxvi, 25.

I the Lord do *keep* it [the spiritual vineyard] lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day, Isa. xxvii, 3.

I will *give them* a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, Ezek. xi, 20.

II.

self in his God, 1 Sam. xxx, 6. They that *wait* on the Lord shall renew *their strength*, Isa. xl, 31.

Cursed is the man that *maketh flesh his arm*, Jer. xvii, 5. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*, and he will sustain thee, Psa. lv, 22.

Wash ye, make you clean, Isa. i, 16. O Jerusalem, *wash thy heart* from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved, Jer. iv, 14.

Keep thyself pure, 1 Tim. v, 22. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, Prov. iv, 23.

What does the Lord require of *thee* but, &c., to *walk* humbly with thy God? Micah vi, 8. And Enoch* *set himself to walk with God*, Gen. v, 24.

* The word in the original is in the conjugation *Hithpahel*, which signifies *to cause one's self* to do a thing. Our translation does not do it justice. Nor can Zelotes reasonably object to the meaning of the word used by Moses, unless he can prove that Enoch had no

I.

David my servant shall be king over them; and, &c., they shall *walk* in my judgments, Ezekiel xxxvii, 24.

For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus* unto the good works which God [by his word of command, by providential occurrences, and by secret intimations of his will, *προητοιμασε*] hath before prepared, that we should *walk in them*, Eph. ii, 10.

God hath *saved* us, and called us 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 Tim. i, 9.

II.

He that saith he abideth in him, [God manifested in the flesh,] *ought himself also so to walk*, even as he walked, 1 John ii, 6.

And as many as *walk* according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, Gal. vi, 16. That they might *set their hope* in God, &c., and not be as their fathers, a *stubborn* generation, &c., that *set not their heart* aright, &c., and *refused to walk* in his law. But as for me, *I will walk* in mine integrity, Psa. lxxviii, 7, 10; xxvi, 11.

The grace of God, that bringeth *salvation*, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that *we should live* soberly, &c. Give *diligence* to make your CALLING sure. How shall *we* escape if we neglect so

hand, and no foot, in his *walking with God*; and that God dragged him as if he had been a passive cart, or a recoiling cannon. However, I readily grant that Enoch did not *set himself to walk* with God without the help of that "*saving grace* which has appeared to all men," and which so many "*receive in vain.*"

I.

I will give them a heart to *know* me, that I am the Lord, Jer. xxiv, 7.

I will *put my fear* in their hearts, Jer. xxxii, 40.

The Lord thy God will *circumcise thine* heart, Deut. xxx, 6.

I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, Jer. xxxi, 33.

We *love* him, because he first loved us, 1 John iv, 19.

By *grace* ye are SAVED, through *faith*; and that not of yourselves, it is the *gift* of God, Eph. ii, 8. It is of faith, that it might be by grace, Rom. iv, 16.

Not for thy righteous-

II.

great salvation? Titus ii, 11, 12; 2 Pet. i, 10; Heb. ii, 3.

Then shall we *know*, if we follow on to know the Lord, Hos. vi, 3.

They shall not find me, &c., for that they did not *choose the fear of the Lord*, Prov. i, 29.

Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of *your* heart, Deut. x, 16.

Let every man *be swift to hear*, &c. *Receive with meekness* the ingrafted word, which is able to *save* your souls, James i, 19, 21. Thy word *have I hid* in my heart, Psa. cxix, 11.

The Father *loveth* you, because *ye* have believed, John xvi, 27.

Believe, &c., and thou shalt be SAVED, Acts xvi, 31. Receive not the grace of God *in vain*, 2 Cor. vi, 1. *Looking diligently* lest any man fail of [or be wanting to] the *grace* of God, Heb. xii, 15.

Inherit the kingdom,

I.

ness, &c., dost thou go
and *possess their land*,
Deut. ix, 5.

Not of *works*, lest any
man should boast, Eph.
ii, 9.

Thou hast hid those
things from the *wise and
prudent*, [in their own
eyes,] and revealed them
unto *babes*, Luke x, 21.

II.

&c., for I was hungry, and
ye *gave me meat*, &c.,
Matt. xxv, 34.

Charge them, &c., to
do good, &c., that they
may lay hold on eternal
life, 1 Tim. vi, 17, &c.

Who is *wise*, and he
shall understand these
things? *prudent*, and he
shall know them? Hos.
xiv, 9. None of the *wick-
ed* shall understand, but
the *wise* shall understand,
Dan. xii, 10.

If I am not mistaken, the balance of the preceding scriptures shows that Pharisaism and Antinomianism are equally unscriptural; the harmonious opposition of those passages evincing, (1.) That *our* free will is *subordinately* a worker with *God's* free grace in every thing but a *proper atonement* for sin, and *the first implanting* of the light which enlightens every man that comes into the world: such an *atonement* having been fully completed by *Christ's blood*, and such an *implanting* being entirely performed by *his Spirit*. (2.) That *Honestus* is most dreadfully mistaken, when he makes next to nothing of free grace and her works. (3.) That *Zelotes* obtrudes a most dangerous paradox upon the simple, when he preaches *finished salvation* in the *Crispian* sense of the word. And, (4.) That *St. Paul* speaks as the oracles of *God*, when he says,

“God worketh in you, &c., therefore work ye out your own salvation.”

CHAPTER XIII.

A RATIONAL AND SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF ST. PAUL'S MEANING IN THE NINTH CHAPTER OF THE EPIS-TLE TO THE ROMANS.

REASON and conscience should alone, one would think, convince us that St. Paul, in Rom. ix, does not plead for a right in God so to *hate* any of his unformed creatures as to intend, make, and fit them for destruction, merely to show his absolute sovereignty and irresistible power. The apostle knew too well the God of *love* to represent him as a mighty potter, who takes an unaccountable pleasure to form rational vessels, and to endue them with keen sensibility, only to have the glory of absolutely filling them, by the help of Adam, with sin and wickedness on earth, and then with fire and brimstone in hell. This is the conceit of the consistent admirers of unconditional election and rejection, who build it chiefly upon Rom. ix. Should you ask why they fix so dreadful a meaning on that portion of Scripture, I answer, that through inattention and prejudice they overlook the two keys which the apostle gives us to open his meaning, one of which we find in the first three, and the other in the last three verses of that perverted chapter.

In the first three verses St. Paul expresses the “continual sorrow” which he “had in his heart” for the obstinacy of his countrymen, the Jews, who so depended upon their national prerogatives, as Jews; their church privileges,

as children of Abraham; and their Pharisaic righteousness of the law, as observers of the Mosaic ceremonies, that they detested the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Now, if the apostle had believed that God, by a wise decree of preterition, had irreversibly ordained them to eternal death "to illustrate his glory by their damnation," as Calvin says, how ridiculous would it have been in him to sorrow night and day about the execution of God's wise design! If God, from the beginning of the world, had absolutely determined to make the unbelieving Jews personally and absolutely vessels of wrath, to the praise of the glory of his sovereign free wrath, how wicked would it have been in St. Paul to begin the next chapter by saying, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for *unbelieving* Israel, for the *obstinate Jews*, is that they might be saved!" Would he not rather have meekly submitted to the will of God, and said, like Eli, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good?" Did it become him—nay, was it not next to rebellion in him, so passionately to set his heart against a decree made (as we are told) on purpose to display the absoluteness of divine sovereignty? And would not the Jews have retorted his own words! "Who art thou, O vain man, that repliest against God" by wishing night and day the salvation of "vessels of wrath:" of men whom he hath absolutely set apart for destruction?

"But if the apostle did not intend to establish the absolute, personal preterition of the rejected Jews and their fellow reprobates, what could he mean by that mysterious chapter?" I reply: He meant in general to vindicate God's conduct in casting off the Jews, and adopting the Gentiles. This deserves some explana-

tion. When St. Paul insinuated to the Jews that they were rejected as a church and people, and that the uncircumcised Gentiles (even as many as believed on Jesus of Nazareth) were now the chosen nation, "the peculiar people," and church of God, his countrymen were greatly offended: and yet, as "the apostle of the Gentiles," to "provoke the Jews to jealousy," he was obliged peculiarly to enforce this doctrine among them. They generally gave him audience till he touched upon it. But when he "waxed bold," and told them plainly that Christ had bid him "depart from Jerusalem," as from an accursed city; and had "sent him far thence unto the Gentiles," they could contain themselves no longer; and "lifting up their voices, they said, Away with such a fellow from the earth," Acts xiii, 46; xxii, 21.*

When St. Paul wrote to Rome, the metropolis of the *Gentile* world, where there were a great many *Jews*, the Holy Ghost directed him to clear up the question concerning the general election of the Gentiles, and the general rejection of the Jews. And this he did, both for the comfort of the humble, Gentile believers, and for

* It is remarkable that Jewish rage first broke out against our Lord when he touched their great Diana—the doctrine of their absolute election. You think, said he, to be saved, merely because you are Abraham's children, and God's chosen, peculiar people. "But I tell you of a truth," God is not so partial to Israel as you suppose. "Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, but to none of them was Elias sent, but to a *Zidonian* [heathen] widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the days of Elisha, yet none of them was cleansed save Naaman the *Syrian*," Luke iv, 25, &c. The Jews never forgave our Lord that levelling saying. If he narrowly escaped their fury at Nazareth, it was only to meet it increased sevenfold in the *holy city*. So fierce and implacable are the tempers to which some professors work up themselves, by drinking into unscriptural notions of election!

the humiliation of his proud, self-elected countrymen; that, being provoked to jealousy, they, or at least *some* of them, might with the Gentiles make their personal calling and election sure by believing in Christ. As the Jews were generally incensed against him, and he had a most disagreeable truth to write, he dips his pen in the oil of brotherly love, and begins the chapter by a most awful protestation of his tender attachment to them, and sorrowful concern for their salvation, hoping that this would soften them, and reconcile their prejudiced minds. But if he had represented them as absolute reprobates, and vessels of wrath *irreversibly* ordained of God to destruction, he would absurdly have defeated his own design, and exasperated them more than ever against his doctrine and his person. To suppose that he told them with one breath, he wished to be accursed from Christ for them, and with the next breath insinuated that God had absolutely accursed them with unconditional, personal reprobation, is a notion so excessively big with absurdity, that at times Zelotes himself can scarcely swallow it down. Who indeed can believe that St. Paul made himself so ridiculous as to weep tears of the most ardent love over the free wrath of his reprobating Creator? Who can imagine that the pious apostle painted out "the God of all grace," as a God full of immortal hatred to most of his countrymen: while he represented himself as a person continually racked with the tenderest feelings of a matchless affection for them all; thus impiously raising his own reputation, as a *benevolent man*, upon the ruins of the reputation of his *malevolent God*?

Come we now to the middle part of the chapter. St. Paul, having prepared the Jews for the disagreeable

message which he was about to deliver, begins to attack their Pharisaic prejudices concerning their absolute right, as children of Abraham, to be God's church and people, exclusively of the rest of the world, whom they looked upon as reprobated dogs of the Gentiles. To drive the unbelieving Jews out of this sheltering place, he indirectly advances two doctrines: (1.) That God, as the Creator and supreme Benefactor of men, may do what he pleases with his peculiar favours; and that he had now as indubitable a right freely to give five talents of church privileges to the Gentiles, as he had once to bestow three talents of church privileges upon the Jews. And, (2.) That God had as much right to set the seal of his wrath upon them, as upon Pharaoh himself, if they continued to imitate the inflexibility of that proud unbeliever; inexorable unbelief being the sin that *fits* men for destruction, and pulls down the *wrath* of God upon the children of disobedience.

The first of those doctrines he proves by a reasonable appeal to conscience: (1.) Concerning the absurdity of replying against God, i. e., against a being of infinite wisdom, goodness, justice, and power. And (2.) Concerning a right which a potter has of the same "lump of clay" to make one vessel for* *honoura-*

* I have lived these fifteen years in a part of England where a multitude of potters make all manner of iron and earthen vessels. Some of these mechanics are by no means conspicuous for good sense, and others are at times besotted through excessive drinking; but I never yet saw or heard of one so excessively foolish as to make, even in a drunken fit, a vessel on purpose to break it, to show that he had power over the work of his own hands. Such, however, is the folly that Zelotes' scheme imputes to God. Nay, if a potter makes vessels on purpose to break them, he is only a fool; but if he could make sensible vessels like dogs, and formed them on purpose to roast them alive, and that he might show his

ble, and another for comparatively *dishonourable* uses. The argument carries conviction along with it. Were utensils capable of thought, the *basin*, in which our Lord washed his disciples' feet, (a comparatively dishonourable use,) could never reasonably complain that the potter had not made it the *cup* in which Christ consecrated the sacramental wine. By a parity of reason, the king's soldiers and servants cannot justly be dissatisfied because he has not made them all generals and prime ministers. And what reason had the Jews to complain that God put the Gentiles on a level with, or even above them? May he not, without being arraigned at the bar of slothful servants, who have buried their talents, give a peculiar, extraordinary blessing when he pleases, and to whom he pleases? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Shall the foot say, Why am I not the head? and the knee, Why am I not the shoulder? Or, to allude to the parable of the labourers, If God chooses to hire the Gentiles, and send them into his favourite vineyard, blessing them with church privileges as he did the Jews; shall the eye of the Jews "be evil because God is good" to these newly hired labourers?" "May he not do what he pleases with his own?"

To this rational argument St. Paul adds another (*ad hominem*) peculiarly adapted to the Jews, who supposed it a kind of sacrilege to deny that, as children of Abrahamic power, would you not execrate his *cruelty* as much as you would pity his *madness*? But, what would you think of the man if he made *five* or *ten* such vessels for absolute destruction, while he made *one* for absolute salvation, and then assumed the title of *gracious* and *merciful* potter, and called his potting schemes "schemes of grace?"

ham, they were absolutely "the chosen nation," and "the temple of the Lord." To convince them that God was not so partial to the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as they imagined, the apostle reminds them that God had excluded the first-born of those favoured patriarchs from the peculiar blessings which by birth-right belonged to them: doing it sometimes on account of the sin of those first-born, and sometimes previously to any personal demerit of theirs, that he might show that his purpose, according to election to peculiar privileges and church prerogatives, does "not stand of works, but of him that" chooseth, and "calleth" of his sovereign, distinguishing grace. St. Paul confirms this part of his doctrine by the instance of Ishmael and Isaac, who were both sons of Abraham: God having preferred Isaac to Ishmael, because Isaac was the child of his own promise, and of Abraham's faith by Sarah, a free woman, who was a type of grace and the gospel of Christ: whereas Ishmael was only the child of Abraham's natural strength by Agar, an Egyptian bondswoman, who was a type of nature and the Mosaic dispensation.

With peculiar wisdom the apostle dwells upon the still more striking instance of Isaac's sons, Esau and Jacob, who had not only the same godly father, but the same free and pious mother; the younger of whom was nevertheless preferred to the elder without any apparent reason. He leaves the Jews to think how much more this might be the case when there is an apparent cause, as in the case of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, Jacob's three eldest sons, who, through incest, treachery, and murder, forfeited the blessing of the first-born; a blessing this which by that forfeiture devolved on Judah,

Jacob's fourth son, whose tribe became the first and most powerful of all the tribes of Israel, and had of consequence the honour of producing the Messiah, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." St. Paul's argument is masterly, and runs thus:—If God has again and again excluded some of Abraham's posterity from the blessing of the peculiar covenant, which he made with that patriarch concerning the "promised seed;"—if he said, "In Isaac," Jacob, and Judah, "shall thy seed [the Messiah] be called," and not in Ishmael, Esau, and Reuben, the first-born sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; how absurd is it in the Jews to suppose that merely because they are descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they shall absolutely share the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom? If God excluded from the birthright Ishmael the scoffer, Esau the seller of his birthright, and Reuben the defiler of Bilhah, his father's wife, why might not Israel, (his son called out of Egypt,) his first-born among nations, forfeit his birthright through unbelief? And why should not the Gentile world, God's prodigal son, inherit the blessing of the first-born, if they submitted to the obedience of faith, and, with the younger son in the parable, returned from "the far country" to their father's house; while the elder son insolently quarrelled with God, reproached his brother, absolutely refused to come in, and thus made his calling void, and his reprobation sure?

The apostle's argument is like a two-edged sword. With one edge he cuts down the bigotry of the Jews, by the above-mentioned appeals to the history of their forefathers; and with the other edge he strikes at their unbelief, by an appeal to the destruction of Pharaoh; insinuating that God as Maker, Preserver, and Go-

vernor of men, has an undoubted right to fix the *gracious* or *righteous* terms on which he will *finally* bestow salvation, or inflict damnation on his rational creatures.

With the greatest propriety St. Paul brings in Pharaoh, to illustrate the odious nature, fatal consequences, and dreadful punishment of unbelief. No example was better known, or could be more striking to the Jews. They had been taught from their infancy, with how "much long-suffering" God had "endured" that notorious unbeliever; "raising him up," supporting him, and bearing with his insolence day after day, even after he had fitted himself for destruction. They had been informed that the Lord had often reprieved that *father of the faithless*, that, in case he again and again hardened himself, (as Omniscience saw he would do,) he might be again and again scourged, till the madness of his infidelity should drive him into the very jaws of destruction; God having on purpose spared him, yea,* "raised him up" after every plague, that if he refused to yield, he might be made a more conspicuous monument of divine vengeance, and be more gloriously overthrown by matchless power. So should "God's name,"

* Is it not strange that Zelotes should infer, from this expression, that God had *originally* "raised up," that is, created Pharaoh, on purpose to damn him? Is it not evident that Pharaoh justly looked upon every plague as a death? Witness his own words, "Intreat the Lord your God that he may take away from me this death only," Exod. x, 17. And if every plague was a death to Pharaoh, was not every removal of a plague a kind of resurrection, a *raising him up*, together with his kingdom, from a state of destruction, according to these words of the Egyptians, "Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" How reasonable and Scriptural is this sense! How dreadful, I had almost said, how diabolical, is that of Zelotes!

i. e., his adorable perfections and righteous proceedings, "be declared throughout all the earth." And so should unbelief appear to all the world in its own odious and infernal colours.

St. Paul having thus indirectly, and with his usual prudence and brevity, given a double stab to the bigotry of the unbelieving Jews, who fancied themselves unconditionally elected, and whom he had represented as conditionally reprobated; lest they should mistake his meaning as Zelotes does, he concludes the chapter thus: "What shall we say then?" What is the inference which I draw from the preceding arguments? One which is obvious, namely, this: "That the Gentiles, [typified by Jacob the younger brother,] who followed not *professedly* after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the *Christian* righteousness which is of faith. But Israel," or the Jews, who *professedly* "followed after the law of *Mosaic* righteousness, [as the sportsman Esau did after his game,] have not attained to the law of *Mosaic* or *Christian* righteousness:" they are neither justified as Jews, nor sanctified as Christians. "True; and the reason is, because God had absolutely passed them by from all eternity, that he might in time make them vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." So insinuates Zelotes. But happily for the honour of the gospel, St. Paul declares just the reverse. "Wherefore," says he, "did not the reprobated Jews attain to righteousness?" To open the eyes of Zelotes, if any thing will, he answers his own question thus: "Because they sought it not *by faith*, but as it were by the *external* works of the *Mosaic* law" opposed to Christian faith. "For they stumbled at that stumbling stone," Christ, who is "a rock of offence" to un-

believers, and "the rock of ages" to believers. "As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a rock," that some shall, through their obstinate unbelief, make "a rock of offence." And others, through their humble faith, a rocky foundation, according to the decrees of conditional reprobation and election: "He that believeth not shall be damned,—and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix, 1–33; Mark xvi, 16.

That Zelotes should mistake the apostle's meaning, when it is so clearly fixed in the latter part of the chapter, is unaccountable: but that he should support by it his peculiar notion of absolute reprobation is really astonishing. The unbelieving Jews are undoubtedly the persons whom the apostle had *first* in view when he asserted God's right of appointing that obstinate unbelievers shall be "vessels of wrath." But hear what he said of those REPROBATED JEWS to the ELECTED Gentiles, in the very next chapter but one. "I speak to you Gentiles, &c., if *by any means* I may provoke to emulation them that are my flesh [the Jews] and might *save* some of them. If some of the branches [the unbelieving Jews] be broken off, &c., *because of unbelief* they were broken off, and thou [believing Gentile] standest *by faith*. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee, &c. *Continue* in his goodness, *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*," and treated as a vessel of wrath. "And they also, *if they abide not still in unbelief*, shall be grafted in," and treated as vessels of mercy, Rom. xi, 13, &c.

But what need is there of going to Rom. xi, to show the inconsistency of the Calvinistic doctrines of free grace in Christ and free wrath in Adam? of everlast-

ing love to some and everlasting hate to others? Does not Rom. ix itself afford us another powerful antidote? If the elect were from eternity God's *beloved* people, while the non-elect were the devil's people, *hated* of their Maker: and if God's love and hatred are equally unchangeable, whether free agents change from holiness to sin, or from sin to holiness; what shall we make of these words? "I will call them *my people* which *were not* my people; and her beloved which was not beloved. And where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people: there [upon their believing] shall they be called the children of God," Rom. ix, 25, 26. What a golden key is here to open our doctrine of *conditional* election, and to shut Zelotes' doctrine of *absolute* reprobation!

Having thus given a *general* view of what appears to me, from conscience, reason, Scripture, and the context, to be St. Paul's meaning in that deep chapter; I present the reader with a *particular* and Scriptural explanation of some passages in it which do not puzzle Honestus a little, and by which Zelotes supports the doctrines of bound will and free wrath with some plausibility.

I.

It is not [primarily] of him that *willeth*, [in God's way,] nor is it [at all] of him that *willeth*, [in opposition to God's will, as the self-righteous Jews did,] Rom. ix, 16.

II.

Ye *will not* come to me that you might have life, John v, 40. Whosoever will, let him come, Rev. xxii, 17. I have set before you life and death, &c., *choose*, Deut. xxx, 19. I *would*, &c., and ye *would not*, Luke xiii, 34.

I.

It is not [primarily] of him that *runneth*, but* of God that showeth *mercy*, Rom. ix, 16.

[Ελεησω] I will have mercy on whom I will [or rather ελεω, *I should*] have *mercy*, Rom. ix, 15.

[Οικτειρησω] I will have compassion on whom I will

II.

I went, &c., lest by any means I should *run* or had *run in vain*, Gal. ii, 2. So run that [through mercy] you may obtain, 1 Cor. ix, 24.

Whoso forsaketh his sin shall *have mercy*, Prov. xxviii, 13. Let the wicked forsake his way, and, &c., the Lord will have mercy upon him, Isa. lv, 7. He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy, James ii, 13. All the paths of the Lord are mercy to such as keep his covenant, Psalm xxv, 10.

As the heaven is high above the earth; so great

* In familiar and Scripture language the effect is frequently ascribed to the *chief* cause; while, for brevity's sake, *inferior* causes or agents are passed over in silence. Thus David says, "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but vain that build it." St. Paul says, "I laboured, yet *not* I, but the grace of God." And we say, "Admiral Hawke has beat the French fleet." Would it not be absurd in Zelotes to strain these expressions so as to make absolutely nothing of the mason's work in the building of a house; of the apostle's preaching in the conversion of those Gentiles; and of the bravery of the officers and sailors in the victory got over the French by the English admiral? It is, nevertheless, upon such frivolous conclusions as these that Zelotes generally rests the enormous weight of *his* peculiar doctrines.

I.

[or rather οικτειρω, *I should*] have compassion, Romans ix, 15.

II.

is his *mercy toward them that fear him*, Psalm ciii, 11. The things that belong to thy peace are hid from thine eyes, &c., *because thou knewest not* the time of thy visitation, Luke xix, 44. How is it that ye do not discern this time, yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? Luke xii, 56, 57. Hear, O heavens, &c., I have nourished children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, &c., but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. It is a people of *no understanding; therefore* he that formed them will show them *no favour*, Isa. i, 3; xxvii, 11. And God said to Solomon, *Because* thou hast asked for thyself understanding, &c., lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, 1 Kings iii, 11, 12. Because he considereth, &c., he shall not die,—he shall surely live, Ezek. xviii, 28. [Who can help seeing, through this cloud of scriptures, that “God has mercy on whom he should have mercy,” according to his divine attributes; extending initial mercy to all, according to his long-suffering and impartiality; and showing eternal mercy, according to his holiness and truth, to them that use and improve their talent of understanding, so as to love him and keep his commandments?]

I.

The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand

II.

Thus saith the Lord,—Did I plainly appear to the house of thy father, &c., and did I *choose* him out of all the tribes of Israel to

I.

not of works, but of him that calleth [i. e., that God might show, he may and will choose some of Abraham's posterity to some peculiar privileges which he does not confer upon others: and likewise to teach us that grace and the new man mystically typified by Jacob shall have the reward of the inheritance,—a reward this, which fallen nature and the old man, mystically typified by Esau, shall never receive: to teach us this] it was said to Rebecca, The elder shall serve the younger: [in his posterity,* though not in his per-

II.

be my priest, &c. Why *kick ye* at my sacrifice? *Wherefore* the Lord God saith, *I said indeed* that thy house should walk before me for ever. *But now* the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. ii, 27, &c. Again: the Lord said to Samuel, [I have not chosen,] I have refused him, [Eliab,] for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: the Lord *looketh at the heart* [and chooseth in consequence: accordingly, when] “Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before

* Mr. Henry says with great truth, “All this choosing” of Jacob and refusing of Esau “was typical, and intended to shadow forth some other election and rejection.” And although he was a Calvinist, he does, in many respects, justice to St. Paul's meaning. “This difference,” says he, “that was put between Jacob and Esau, he [the apostle] farther illustrates by a quotation from Mal. i, 2, where it is said, not of Jacob and Esau the persons, but the Edomites and Israelites their posterity: ‘Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.’ The people of Israel were taken into the covenant of peculiarity, had the land of Canaan given them, were blessed with the more signal appearances of God for them in special protection, supplies, and deliverances, while the Edomites were rejected, [from the covenant of peculiarity,] had no temple, altars, priests, prophets;

I.

II.

son:] that is, the younger the Lord, Samuel said,
shall have the blessing of *The Lord hath not chosen*

no such particular care of them, &c. Others understand it of the election and rejection of particular persons; some loved and others hated from eternity. But the apostle speaks of Jacob and Esau, not in their own persons, but as ancestors: Jacob the people and Esau the people: nor doth God damn any, or decree so to do, merely because he will do it, without any reason taken from their own deserts, &c. The choosing of Jacob the younger was to intimate that the Jews, though the natural seed of Abraham, and the first-born of the church, should be laid aside: and the Gentiles, who were as the younger brother, should be taken in their stead, and have the birth-right and blessing." He concludes his comment upon the whole chapter by these words, which exactly answer to the double key I have given to the reader: "Upon the whole matter the unbelieving Jews have no reason to quarrel with God for rejecting them: they had a *fair* offer of righteousness, and life, and salvation, made upon gospel terms, which they did not like, and *would not* come up to; and therefore if they perish they may thank themselves. Their blood is upon their own heads."

What precedes is pure truth, and strongly confirms my doctrine. But what follows is pure Calvinism, and shows the inconsistency of the most judicious writers in that scheme. "Were the Jews hardened? It was because it was his own (God's) pleasure to deny them softening grace, &c. Two sorts of vessels God forms out of the great lump of fallen mankind: (1.) 'Vessels of wrath:' vessels filled with wrath, as a vessel of wine is a vessel filled with wine, 'full of the fury of the Lord,' &c. (2.) 'Vessels of mercy,' filled with mercy." And again: "he (the apostle) answers by resolving all into the *divine sovereignty*. We are the thing formed, and he is the former, and it does not become us to challenge or arraign his wisdom in ordering and disposing of us into this or that shape or figure." That is, in plain English, free wrath, or, to speak smoothly as a Calvinist, divine sovereignty may order and dispose us into the shape of vessels of wrath before we have done either good or evil. How could Mr. Henry thus contradict himself, and write for and against truth? Why, he was a *moderate Calvinist*: as *moderate*, he wrote glorious truths; and, as a *Calvinist*, horrid insinuations.

I.

the first-born. And it was accordingly conferred upon Jacob in these words, *Be lord over thy brethren*, Gen. xxvii, 29. To conclude, therefore, from Jacob's superior blessing, that Esau was absolutely cursed and reprobated of God, is as absurd as to suppose that Manasseh, Joseph's eldest son, was also an absolute reprobate, because Ephraim, his younger brother, had Jacob's chief blessing: for the old patriarch refusing to put his right hand upon the head of Manasseh, said, "*Truly his younger brother shall be greater than he*," Gen. xlviii, 19. But would Zealotes himself infer from such words that Manasseh was personally appointed from all eternity to disbelieve and be damned, and Ephraim to believe and be saved; that the purpose of God according to absolute reprobation and election might stand "not of

II.

these, 1 Sam. xvi, 7, 10. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, [David,] because thou [Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee. Once more: the Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou," chap. xiii, 14; xv, 28.

The kingdom of Israel was an unpromised gift to Saul and to David, and yet God's election to and reprobation from that dignity were according to dispositions and works. How much more may this be said of God's election to or reprobation from a crown of glory!—a crown this, which God hath promised by way of reward to them that love him; refusing it by way of punishment to them that hate him; whom he clothes in hell with shame and with a vengeful curse, according to their

I.

works,* but of him that *capriciously and irresistibly* calleth" some to finished salvation in Christ, and others to finished damnation in Adam? That God abhors such a proceeding is evident from the scriptures which fill my left scale, and in particular from the opposite texts.

II.

works and his own declaration which follows:—"Yet saith the [Predestinarian] house of Israel, *The way of the Lord is not equal.* O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you every one according to his ways. Repent and turn, &c., so iniquity shall not be your ruin," Ezek. xviii, 29, &c. "I will do unto

* This phrase, "That the purpose of God according to election might stand *not of works*, but of him that calleth," is to be understood merely of those blessings which *distinguishing* grace bestows upon some men and not upon others, and which do not necessarily affect their eternal salvation or their eternal damnation. In this sense it was that God, for the above-mentioned reasons, preferred Jacob to Esau. In this sense he still prefers a Jew to a Hottentot, and a Christian to a Jew; giving a Christian the Old and New Testament, while the Jew has only the Old, and the Hottentot has neither. Far from denying the reality of this sovereign, distinguishing grace, which is independent on all works, and flows entirely from the superabounding kindness of "him that calleth," I have particularly maintained it.† This is St. Paul's edifying meaning, to which I have not the least objection. But when Zelotes stretches the phrase so far as to make it mean that God *ordains* people to *eternal life* or *eternal death*, "not of works, but of him that" without reason forcibly calleth some to believe and be saved, leaving others *necessarily* to disbelieve and be damned: when Zelotes does this, I say, my reason and conscience are equally frightened, and I beg leave to dissent from him, for the reasons mentioned in this chapter.

† See Fletcher's Works, vol. i, p. 505.

I.

It is written, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*, Rom. ix, 13.

Zelotes, who catches at whatever seems to countenance his doctrine of free wrath, thinks that this scripture demonstrates the electing and reprobating partiality on which his favourite doctrines are founded. To see his mistake, we need only consider that, in the Scripture language, a love of *preference* is emphatically called *love*; and an *inferior* degree of love is comparatively called *hatred*. Pious Jacob was not such a churlish man as positively to hate any body, much less Leah, his cousin

II.

them according to their way; and according to their deserts [*secundum merita*] will I judge them, and they shall know that I am the Lord," Ezek. vii, 27. To these scriptures you may add all the multitude of texts where God declares that he will judge, i. e., justify or condemn, reward or punish, finally elect or finally reprobate men *for, by, according to, or because of*, their works.

God is *love*. God is *loving to every man*, and his tender mercies [in the accepted time] are over *all* his works. Yet the children of thy people say, *The way of the Lord is not equal*: but as for them, their way is not equal, &c., 1 John iv, 8; Psalm cxlv, in the common prayers; Ezek. xxxiii, 17.

and his wife: nevertheless, we read, "The Lord saw that Leah was hated: the Lord hath heard that I was hated: now, therefore, my husband will love me:" i. e., Jacob will prefer me to Rachel, his barren wife, Gen. xxix, 31, 32. Again: Moses makes a law concerning "a man that hath two wives, one beloved and another hated," without intimating that it is wrong in the husband to *hate*, that is, to be *less fond* of one of his wives than of the other, Deut. xxi, 15. Once more: our Lord was not the chaplain of the old murderer, that he should command us positively to hate our fathers, mothers, and wives: for he who thus "hateth another is a murderer." Nevertheless, he not only says, "He that hateth his life [that invaluable gift of God] shall keep it unto life eternal; and he that loveth his life shall lose it:" but he declares, "If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, he cannot be my disciple," Luke xiv, 26. Now, Christ evidently means, that whosoever does not *love* his father, &c., and his own life *less* than him, cannot be his sincere disciple. By a similar idiom it is said, "Esau have I hated:" an expression this, which no more means that God had absolutely rejected Esau, and appointed him to the pit of destruction, than Christ meant that we should absolutely throw away our lives, reject our fathers, wives, and children, and abandon them to destruction.

II.

* Whom *he will* he *hardeneth*, Rom. ix, 18.

I.

The god of this world [not the Almighty] hath

* The reader is desired to take notice, that in this and the following paragraphs, where I produce scriptures expressive of God's *just wrath*, I have shifted the numbers that mark to which axiom the

II.

That is, God judicially gives up to a reprobate mind *whom he will*, not according to Calvinistic caprice, but according to the rectitude of his own nature: and according to this rectitude displayed in the gospel, *he will* give up all those who, by obstinately hardening their hearts to the last, turn *the day of salvation* into a day of final provocation, see Psalm xcv, 8, &c.

He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they *should not see* with their eyes, nor *understand* with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them, John xii, 40.

That is, he hath judicially given them up to their own blindness and

I.

[by their own free consent] *blinded* the minds of them that *believe not*. Now is the day of salvation. Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering? not knowing that the goodness of God *leadeth thee* to repentance? But after thy hardness, and impenitent heart, treasurest up *unto thyself* wrath, 2 Cor. iv, 4; vi, 2; Rom. ii, 4, 5.

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, who says, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart *is waxed gross*; [through their obstinately resisting the light;] and their ears are dull of hearing, and

passage belongs. And this I have done, (1.) Because there is *no free wrath* in God. (2.) Because, when there is wrath in him, man's perverseness is the just cause of it. And, (3.) Because, in point of *evil*, man has the wretched diabolical honour of being *first cause*; and therefore, No. I. is his shameful prerogative, according to the principles laid down in chapter xii, section i.

II.

hardness. They had said so long, *We will not see*, that he said at last in his just anger, *They shall not see*; determined to withdraw the abused, forfeited light of his grace; and so they were blinded.

The Lord [in the above-mentioned sense] *hardened* Pharaoh's heart, [for his unparalleled cruelty to Israel,] Exod. i, 10, 22; vii, 13. See the next note.

heed lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, Heb. iii, 18. Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart [as Pharaoh did] shall fall into mischief, [God will give him up,] Prov. xxviii, 14. They are without excuse: because, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, &c. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, &c. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections, &c. And even *as they did not like* to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, Rom. i, 20, 28.

II.

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why does he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Rom. ix, 19.

I.

their eyes they have closed, lest at any time *they should see* with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them, Matt. xiii, 14, 15.

Pharaoh *hardened* his heart, and hearkened not, Exod. viii, 15. Zedekiah *stiffened* his neck, and *hardened* his heart from turning unto the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi, 13. *Take*

I.

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Gen. xviii, 25. That thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou

II.

The rigid Calvinists triumph greatly in this objection started by St. Paul. They suppose that it can be reasonably levelled at no doctrine but their own, which teaches, that God by *irresistible* decrees has unconditionally ordained some men to eternal life, and others to eternal death; and therefore their doctrine is that of the apostle. To show the absurdity of this conclusion, I need only remind the reader once more, that in this chapter St. Paul establishes two doctrines: (1.) That God may admit whom he will into *the covenant of peculiarity*, out of pure, distinguishing, sovereign grace: and, (2.) That he had an absolute right of *hardening whom he will* upon gospel terms, i. e., of taking the talent of **softening grace* from all

I.

art judged, Psa. li, 4. Com. Prayer.

Who but Zelotes could justify an imaginary being that should, by the channel of irresistible decrees, pour sin and wrath into vessels made on purpose to hold both; and should call himself the God of love, the Holy One of Israel, and a God of judgment? Nay, who would not detest a king, who should absolutely contrive the contracted wickedness and crimes of his subjects, that he might justly sentence them to eternal torments, to show his sovereignty and power?

*Mr. Henry comments thus upon these words: "I will harden his heart," that is, "*withdraw softening grace*," which God undoubtedly did upon just provocation. Whence it follows that, inconsistent Calvinists being judges, Pharaoh himself had once softening grace; it being impossible for God to *withdraw* from Pharaoh's heart what *never was there*. Query. Was this softening grace, which God withdrew from Pharaoh, of the reprobating or of the electing kind?

that imitate the obstinate unbelief of Pharaoh; such inflexible unbelievers being the only people whom God will harden or give up to a reprobate mind. Now in both those respects the objection proposed is pertinent, as the apostle's answers plainly show. With regard to the first doctrine, that is, the doctrine of that *distinguishing* grace which puts more honour upon one vessel than upon another; calling Abraham to be the Lord's "pleasant vessel," while Lot or Moab is only his "wash pot;" the apostle answers: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou who replest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Why am I a "wash pot," and not a "pleasant vessel?" "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" &c. Besides, is it not a blessing to be comparatively a "vessel to dishonour?" Had not Ishmael and Esau a blessing, though it was inferior to that of Isaac and Jacob? Is not a wash pot as good in its place as a drinking cup? Is not a righteous Gentile—a Melchisedec, or a Job, &c., as acceptable to God, according to his dispensation, as a devout Jew and a sincere Christian according to theirs? With respect to the second doctrine, that of hardening obstinate unbelievers, and "making his *wrathful* power known" upon them: after tacitly granting that it is impossible to resist God's absolute will, the apostle intimates in his laconic, and yet comprehensive way of writing, that God has a right to find fault with, and display his wrathful power upon hardened sinners, because "*he hardens*" none but such as have personally made themselves "vessels of wrath," and "fitted *themselves* for destruction" by doing despite to the Spirit of his grace, instead of improving their day of initial salvation: and he insinuates that even then,

God, instead of presently dealing with them according to their deserts, "endures them with much long-suffering," which, according to St. Peter's doctrine, is to be counted a degree of salvation. Therefore in both senses the objection is pertinently proposed, and justly answered by the apostle, without the help of sovereign free wrath and Calvinistic reprobation.

I.

Hath not the *potter* power over the *clay*, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? Rom. ix, 21.

I have observed again and again that the apostle with his two-edged sword defends two doctrines: (1.) The right which God, our sovereign benefactor, has to give five talents, or one talent, to whom he pleases, that is, to admit some people to the covenant of peculiarity, while he leaves others under a more general dispensation of grace and favour. Thus a Jew was once a vessel to honour, a person honoured far above a Gentile, and a Gentile, in comparison to

II.

The vessel that he [the potter] made of *clay*, was *marred* in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter, &c. O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter, says the Lord, &c. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, &c., to destroy; [for its wickedness;] *if* that nation, against whom I have pronounced, *turn* from their evil, *I will repent* of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, &c., to build it, *if it do evil* in my sight, that it *obey not* my voice, then *I will repent* of the good wherewith I

I.

a Jew, might be called "a vessel to dishonour." Moab, to use again the psalmist's expression, was once only God's "wash pot," Psa. lx, 8, while Israel was his "pleasant vessel." But now the case is altered: the Jews are nationally become the "vessel wherein there is no pleasure," and the Gentiles are the "pleasant vessel." And where is the injustice of this proceeding? If a potter may make of the same lump of clay what vessel he pleases, some for the dining room, and others for the meanest apartment, all good and useful in their respective places; why should not God have the same liberty? Why should he not, if he chooses it, place some moral vessels above others, and raise the Gentiles to the honour of being his peculiar people? An unspeakable honour this, which was before granted to the Jews only.

II.

said I would benefit them, Jer. xviii, 4.

When St. Paul wrote Rom. ix, 21, he had probably an eye to the preceding passage of Jeremiah, which is alone sufficient to rectify the mistakes of Zelotes; there being scarce a stronger text to prove that God's decrees respecting our salvation and destruction are conditional. Never did "Sergeant IR" guard the genuine doctrines of grace more valiantly, or give Calvinism a more desperate thrust than he does in the potter's house by the pen of Jeremiah. However, lest that prophet's testimony should not appear sufficiently weighty to Zelotes, I strengthen it by an express declaration of God himself:—

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord; and not that he should return from his ways and live? Yet ye say, *The*

I.

The apostle's second doctrine respects "vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath," which in the present case must be carefully distinguished from the "vessels to honour," or to nobler uses, and "the vessels to dishonour," or to less noble uses: and, if I mistake not, this distinction is one of those things which, as St. Peter observes, are "hard to be understood in Paul's epistles." The importance

II.

way of the Lord is not equal [in point of election to eternal life, and appointment to eternal death.] Hear now, O house of Israel, Is not my way equal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, &c., for his iniquity shall hede. Again: when a wicked man turneth from his wickedness, &c., he shall save his soul alive," Ezek. xviii, 23, &c.

of it appears from this consideration: God may, as a *just and gracious* sovereign, absolutely make a moral vessel for a more or less honourable use, as he pleases; such a preference of one vessel to another being no more inconsistent with divine goodness, than the king's appointing one of his subjects lord of the bed-chamber, and another only groom of the stable, is inconsistent with royal good nature. But this is not the case with respect to "vessels of mercy" and "vessels of wrath." If you insinuate, with Zelotes, that an absolute God, to show his absolute love and wrath, absolutely made some men to fill them *unconditionally and eternally* with love and mercy, and others to fill them unconditionally and eternally with hatred and wrath, by way of reward and punishment, you "change the truth of God into a lie," and serve the great Diana of the Calvinists more than the righteous Judge of all the earth. What-

ever Zelotes may think of it, God never made an adult a vessel of eternal mercy that did not *first* submit to the obedience of faith; nor did he ever absolutely look upon any man as a vessel of wrath, that had not by personal, obstinate unbelief, *first fitted himself for destruction*. Considering then the comparison of the potter as referring in a secondary sense to the "vessels of mercy," and to the "vessels of wrath," it conveys the following rational and Scriptural ideas:—May not God, as the righteous maker of moral vessels, fill with mercy or with wrath whom he will, according to his essential wisdom and rectitude? May he not shed abroad his pardoning mercy and love in the heart of a believing Gentile, as well as in the breast of a believing Jew? And may he not give up to a reprobate mind, yea, fill with the sense of his just wrath a stubborn Jew, a Caiaphas, as well as a refractory Gentile, a Pharaoh? Have not Jews and Gentiles a common original? And may not the Author of their common existence, as their impartial lawgiver, determine to save or damn individuals, upon the gracious and equitable terms of the gospel dispensations? Is he bound absolutely to give all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom to Abraham's posterity, and absolutely to reprobate the rest of the world? Has a Jew more right to "reply against God" than a Gentile? When God propounds his terms of salvation, does it become any man to "say to him that formed him, Why hast thou made me thus" subject to thy government? Why must I submit to thy terms? If God without injustice could appoint that Christ should descend from Isaac, and not from Ishmael; if, before Esau and Jacob had done any good or evil, he could fix that the blood of Jacob, and not that of Esau, should run in

his Son's veins, though Esau was Isaac's child as well as Jacob; how much more may he, without breaking the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, fix that the free-willing believer, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be a "vessel of mercy prepared for glory," chiefly by free grace; and that the free-willing unbeliever shall be a "vessel of wrath, fitted," chiefly by free will, "for *just* destruction?" Is not this doctrine agreeable to our Lord's expostulation, With "the light of life, which lightens every man, you will not come unto me that you might have life—more abundant life—*yea*, life evermore?" Does it not perfectly tally with the great, irrespective decrees of conditional election and reprobation, "He that believeth, and is baptized," that is, he that shows his faith by correspondent works, when his Lord comes to reckon with him, "shall be saved: and he that believeth not," though he were baptized, "shall be damned?" And is it not astonishing, that when St. Paul's meaning in Rom. ix can be so easily opened by the *silver* and *golden* key, which God himself has sent us from heaven, I mean *reason* and *Scripture*, so many pious divines should go to Geneva, and humbly borrow Calvin's *wooden* and *iron* key, I mean his election and reprobation? Two keys these, which are in as great repute among injudicious Protestants, as the keys of his holiness are among simple Papists. Nor do I see what great difference there is between the Romish and the Geneva keys: if the former open and shut a fool's paradise, or a knave's purgatory, do not the latter shut us all up in finished salvation or finished damnation?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ABSURDITY OF SUPPOSING THAT THERE CAN BE ANY FREE WRATH IN A JUST AND GOOD GOD.

I SHALL close the preceding scriptures by some arguments which show the absurdity of supposing that there can be any free wrath in a just and good God. (1.) When Adam, with all his posterity in his loins, came forth out of the hands of his Maker, he was pronounced *very good*, as being "made in the likeness of God," and "after the image of him" who is a perfect compound of every possible perfection. God spake those words *in time*; but if we believe Zelotes, the supposed decree of absolute, personal rejection, was made *before time*; God having fixed, from all eternity, that Esau should be absolutely hated. Now, as Esau stood in and with Adam, before he fell in and with him; and as God could not but consider him as standing and righteous, before he considered him fallen and sinful; it necessarily follows, either that Calvinism is a system of false doctrine; or, that the God of love, holiness, and equity, once hated his righteous creature, once reprobated the innocent, and said, by his decree, "Cain, Esau, Saul, and Judas, are *very good*, for they are seminal parts of Adam my son, whom I pronounce very good, Gen. i, 31. But I actually hate those parts of my unsullied workmanship: without any actual cause, I detest mine own perfect image. Yea, I turn my eyes from their present complete goodness, that I may hate them for their future pre-ordained iniquity." Suppose the God of love had transformed himself into the evil principle of the Manichees, what could he have

done worse than thus to hate with immortal hatred, and absolutely to reprobate his innocent, his pure, his spotless offspring, at the very time in which he pronounced it *very good*? If Zelotes shudders at his own doctrine, and finds himself obliged to grant, that so long, at least, as Adam stood, Cain, Esau, Saul, and Judas stood with him, and in him were actually loved, conditionally chosen, and wonderfully blessed of God in paradise; it follows that the doctrine of God's everlasting hate, and of the eternal, absolute rejection of those whom Zelotes considers as the four great reprobates, is founded on the grossest contradiction imaginable.

2. But Zelotes possibly complains that I am unfair, because I point out the deformity of his "doctrine of grace," without saying one word of its beauty. "Why do you not," says he, "speak of God's absolute, everlasting love to Jacob, as well as of his absolute, everlasting hate to Esau, Pharaoh, and Judas? Is it right to make always the worst of things?" Indeed, Zelotes, if I am not mistaken, your absolute election is full as subversive of Christ's gospel as your absolute reprobation. The Scripture informs us, that when Adam fell he lost the favour, as well as the image of God; and that he became a "vessel of wrath" from head to foot: but if everlasting, changeless love still embraced innumerable parts of his seed, his fall was by no means so grievous and universal as the Scriptures represent it: for "a multitude, which no man can number," ever stood, and shall ever stand on the rock of ages: a rock this which, if we believe Zelotes, is made of unchangeable, absolute, sovereign, everlasting love for the elect, and of unchangeable, absolute, sovereign, everlasting wrath for the reprobates.

3. But this is only part of the mischief that necessarily flows from the fictitious doctrines of grace. They make the cup of trembling, which our Lord drank in Gethsemane, and the sacrifice which he offered on Calvary, in a great degree insignificant. Christ's office as high priest was to sprinkle the burning throne with his precious blood, and to "turn away wrath" by the sacrifice of himself: but if there never was either a burning throne, or any wrath flaming against the elect; if unchangeable love ever embraced them, how greatly is the oblation of Christ's blood depreciated? Might he not almost have saved himself the trouble of coming down from heaven to "turn away a wrath" which never flamed against the elect, and which shall never cease to flame against the reprobates?

4. From God's preaching the gospel to our first parents it appears that they were of the number of the elect, and Zelotes himself is of opinion that they belonged to the little flock. If this was the case, according to the doctrine of free, sovereign, unchangeable, everlasting love to the elect, it necessarily follows, that Adam himself was never a child of wrath. Nor does it require more faith to believe that our first parents were God's pleasant children, when they sated themselves with forbidden fruit, than to believe that David and Bathsheba were persons after God's own heart, when they defiled Uriah's bed. Hence it follows that the doctrine of God's everlasting love, in the Crispian sense of the word, is absolutely false, or that Adam himself was a child of changeless, *everlasting love*, when he made his wife, the serpent, and his own belly, his trinity under the fatal tree: while Cain was a child of *everlasting wrath*, when God said of him, in his

father's loins, that he was *very good*. Thus we still find ourselves at the shrine of the great Diana of the Calvinists, singing the new song of salvation and damnation finished from everlasting to everlasting, according to the doctrine laid down by the Westminster divines in their catechism: "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass."

5. This leads me to a third argument. If God from all eternity did "unchangeably ordain" all events, and, in particular, that the man Christ should absolutely die to save a certain, fixed number of men, who (by the by) never were children of wrath, and therefore never were in the least danger of perishing: if he unalterably appointed that the devil should tempt, and absolutely prevail over a certain fixed number of men who were children of wrath, before temptation and sin made them so: if this is the case, I say, how idle was Christ's redeeming work! How foolish the tempter's restless labour! How absurd Zelotes' preaching! How full of inconsistency his law messages of wrath to the elect, and his gospel messages of free grace to the reprobates! And how true the doctrine, which has lately appeared in print, and sums up the Crispian gospel in these sentences:—Ye, elect, shall be saved, do what ye will; and ye, reprobates, shall be damned, do what ye can; for in the day of his power the Almighty will make you all absolutely willing to go to the place which he has unconditionally ordained you for, be it heaven or hell; God, if we believe the Westminster divines, in their catechism, "having unchangeably foreordained whatever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men." An unscriptural doctrine this, which

charges all sin and damnation upon God, and perfectly agrees with the doctrine of the consistent Calvinists, I mean the doctrine of finished salvation and finished damnation, thus summed up by Bishop Burnet in his exposition of the seventeenth article: "They think, &c., that he," God, "decreed Adam's sin, the lapse of his posterity, and Christ's death, together with the salvation and damnation of such men as should be most for his own glory: that to those that were to be saved he decreed to give such efficacious assistances as should certainly put them in the way of salvation; and to those whom he rejected, he decreed to give such assistances and means only as should render them inexcusable." Just as if those people could ever be *inexcusable* who only do what their almighty Creator has "unchangeably ordained!"

CHAPTER XV.

MR. TOPLADY'S CHRISTIAN AND PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY CONSIDERED.

MR. TOPLADY'S scheme of Christian and philosophical necessity makes God the author of every sin. Says Mr. Toplady, page 12:—

"If we distinguish accurately, this seems to have been the order in which the most judicious of the ancients considered the whole matter:—First, *God*; then his *will*; then *fate*, or the solemn ratification of his *will*, by passing and establishing it into an unchangeable decree; then *creation*; then *necessity*; i. e., such an indissoluble concatenation of secondary causes and effects as has a native tendency to secure

the certainty of all *events, as one wave is impelled by another*; then *providence*; i. e., the omnipresent, omnivigilant, all-directing superintendency of divine wisdom and power, carrying the whole preconcerted scheme into actual execution by the subservient mediation of second causes, which were created for that end."

Upon this Mr. Fletcher observes—I would only ask a few questions: (1.) If all our actions, and consequently all our *sins*, compose the seventh link of the chain;—if the first link is *God*; the second his *will*; the third his *decree*; the fourth the *creation*; the fifth *necessity*; the sixth *providence*; and the seventh *sin*; is it not as easy to trace the pedigree of *sin* through *providence, necessity, creation, God's decree, and God's will*, up to *God* himself, as it is to trace back the genealogy of the prince of Wales from George III., by George II., up to George I.? And upon this plan is it not clear that *sin* is as much the *real offspring of God*, as the prince of Wales is the real offspring of George the First? (2.) If this is the case, is not God the *author of sin* by means of his *will, his decree, his creation, his necessitation, and his providence*? Does it not unavoidably follow that *sin* is the offspring of God's *providence, of God's necessitation, of God's creation, of God's decree, of God's will, of God himself*?

To say that men sin *voluntarily* as well as *necessarily* is only to make a bad matter worse. For if all their sins are *necessarily* brought about by God's *decree*, their *willing* and bad choice are brought about by the *same means*.

Mr. Toplady attempts to support his scheme of *absolute necessity* by taking a philosophical survey

of the soul's dependance on the body, and on the surrounding circumstances. He remarks that "the soul is in a *very extensive degree* passive, as matter is;—the senses are *necessarily* impressed by every object from without; and as *necessarily* commove the fibres of the brain; from which nervous commotion ideas are necessarily communicated to, or excited in, the soul; and by the judgment which the soul necessarily frames of those ideas, the will is *necessarily* inclined to approve or disapprove, to act or not to act."—"The human body is *necessarily* encompassed by a multitude of *other* bodies; which other surrounding bodies, animal, vegetable, &c., so far as we come within their perceivable sphere, *necessarily* impress our nerves with sensations correspondent to the objects themselves. These sensations are necessarily propagated to the soul, which can no more *help* receiving them, and being affected by them, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning."

To this "*philosophical survey*" Mr. Fletcher opposes the following remarks:—

I. This scheme is contrary to *genuine philosophy*, which has always represented the soul as able to resist the strongest impressions of the objects that surround the body.

II. This doctrine unman's man. For reason, or a power morally to regulate the appetite which we gratify by means of our senses, is what chiefly distinguishes us from other animals. Now, if outward objects *necessarily* bias our senses; if our senses *necessarily* bias our judgment; and if our judgment *necessarily* bias our *will* and *practice*; what advantage have we over beasts?

III. It also overthrows *conscience*, and the "light

which enlightens every man." For of what use is *conscience*? Or of what use is the internal light of grace which enlightens conscience within, if man is necessarily determined from without; and if the objects which strike his senses irresistibly turn his judgment and his will, insomuch that he can no more resist their impression "than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning?"

IV. This scheme robs us of the very essence of God's natural image, which consists chiefly in *self-activity* and *self-motion*. For, according to this scheme, we cannot take one step, not even in the common affairs of life, without an irresistible *necessitating* impulse.

V. This scheme of *necessity* charges all sin upon Providence, who, by the surrounding objects which necessarily impress our intellect, causes sin as truly and as irresistibly as a gunner causes the explosion of a loaded cannon by applying a lighted match to the powder. And Eve was unwise when she said, "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat:" for she might have said, "Lord, I have only followed the appointed law of my nature: for providentially coming within sight of the tree of knowledge, I perceived that the fruit was good for food, and pleasant to the eye. It *necessarily* impressed my nerves with correspondent sensations; these sensations were necessarily and instantaneously propagated to my soul; and my soul could no more *help* receiving these forcible impressions, and eating in consequence of them, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning."

VI. It is contrary to Scripture; for if man be *necessarily* affected and irresistibly wrought upon or led by the forcible impressions of external objects, Paul spoke

like a heretical *free willer* when he said, *All things [indifferent] are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any.* How foolish was the saying, if he could no more help being brought under the irresistible power of the objects which surrounded him than a tree can help being struck by lightning!

VII. It is contrary to *common sense*. How can God reasonably set life and death before us, and bid us choose life and shun death, if surrounding objects work upon us as lightning works on a tree?

VIII. It is contrary to the sentiment of all the churches of Christ, for they all reasonably require us to renounce the vain pomps of the world, and the alluring, sinful baits of the flesh. But if these pomps and baits work upon us by means of our senses as *necessarily*, and determine our wills as irresistibly, as lightning shivers a tree, can any thing be more absurd than our baptismal engagements? Might we not as well seriously vow never to be struck with lightning?

IX. It represents the proceedings of the day of judgment as the most unrighteous, cruel, and hypocritical acts that ever disgraced the tribunal of a tyrant. For if God, by eternal, absolute, and necessitating decrees, places the reprobates in the midst of a current of circumstances which carries them along as irresistibly as a rapid river wafts a feather;—if he encompasses them with tempting objects, which strike their souls with ideas that cause sin in their hearts and lives, as inevitably as a stroke of lightning raises splinters in a tree which it shatters;—and if we can *no more help* being determined by these objects, which God's providence has placed around us on purpose to determine

us, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning, it unavoidably follows, that when God will judicially condemn the wicked and send them to hell for their sins, he will act with as much justice as the king would do if he sent to the gallows all his subjects who have had the misfortune of being struck with lightning. Nay, to make the case parallel, we must suppose that the king has the absolute command of the lightning, and had previously struck them with the fiery ball, that he might subsequently condemn them to be hanged for having been struck according to his absolute decree.

X. This *scheme of necessity* places matter and its impressions far above *spirit* and its influence. Every material object around us, by making necessary, irresistible impressions on our minds, necessarily determines our will, and irresistibly impels our actions. According to this system, we cannot resist the influence of matter; but if we believe the Scriptures, we can *resist the Holy Ghost*, and *do despite to the Spirit of grace*. Now, what is this but to represent *matter* as more active, quick, and powerful than *spirit*? yea, than even the *Holy Spirit*?

CHAPTER XVI.

ABSURD CONSEQUENCES ATTACHED TO ERROR.

SECTION I.

SHOWING THAT, UPON THE CALVINIAN SCHEME, IT IS AN INDUBITABLE TRUTH THAT SOME MEN SHALL BE SAVED, DO WHAT THEY WILL, TILL THE EFFICACIOUS DECREE OF CALVINIAN ELECTION NECESSITATES THEM TO REPENT AND BE SAVED; AND THAT OTHERS SHALL BE DAMNED, DO WHAT THEY CAN, TILL THE EFFICACIOUS DECREE OF CALVINIAN REPROBATION NECESSITATES THEM TO SIN AND BE DAMNED.

IF GOD from all eternity absolutely predestinated a fixed number of men, called *the elect*, to eternal life, and absolutely predestinated a fixed number of men, called *the reprobate*, to eternal death, does it not unavoidably follow that "*the elect shall be saved, do what they will;*" and that "*the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can?*" Mr. Wesley thinks that this consequence is true; Mr. Toplady says that it is absolutely false; but I side with Mr. Wesley for the consequence; guarding against cavils by a clause which his love of brevity made him think needless.

An illustration will at once show the justness of this consequence to an unprejudiced reader. Fifty fishes sport in a muddy pond where they have received life. The skilful and almighty owner of the pond has absolutely decreed that *ten* of these fishes, properly marked with a shining mark called *election*, shall absolutely be caught in a certain net, called a *gospel net*, on a certain day, called the *day of his power*, and that they

shall every one be cast into a delightful river, where he has engaged himself, by an eternal covenant of particular redemption, to bring them without fail. The same omnipotent proprietor of the pond has likewise absolutely decreed that all the rest of the fishes, namely, *forty*, which are properly distinguished by a black mark called *reprobation*, shall never be caught in the gospel net; or that, if they are entangled in it at any time, they shall always be drawn out of it, and so shall necessarily continue in the muddy pond till, on a certain day, called *the day of his wrath*, he shall sweep the pond with a certain net called a *LAW net*, catch them all, and cast them into a lake of fire and brimstone, where he has engaged himself, by an everlasting covenant of non-redemption, to bring them all without fail, that they may answer the end of their predestination to death, which is to show the goodness of his law net, and to destroy them for having been bred in the *muddy* pond, and for not having been caught in the gospel net. The owner of the pond is wise as well as powerful. He knows, that absolutely to *secure* the *end* to which his fishes are absolutely predestinated, he must also absolutely *secure* the *means* which conduce to that end: and therefore, that none may escape their happy or unfortunate predestination, he keeps night and day his hold of them all by a strong hook called *necessity*, and by an invisible line called *divine decrees*. By means of this line and hook it happens, that if the fishes that bear the mark of *election* are ever so loth to come into the gospel net, or to stay therein, they are always drawn into it in a day of powerful love; and if the fishes which bear the mark of *reprobation* are for a time ever so desirous to wrap themselves in the gospel

net, they are always drawn out of it in a day of powerful wrath. For though the fishes seem to swim ever so freely, yet their motions are all *absolutely fixed* by the owner of the pond, and determined by means of the above line and hook. If this is the case, says Mr. Wesley, *ten* fishes shall go into the delightful river, *let them do what they will*; let them plunge in the mud of their pond ever so briskly, or leap toward the lake of fire ever so often, while they have any liberty to plunge or to leap. And all the rest of the fishes, *forty* in number, shall go into the lake of fire, *let them do what they can*; let them involve themselves ever so long in the gospel net, and leap ever so often toward the fine river, before they are absolutely necessitated to go through the mud of their own pond into the sulphureous pool. The consequence is undeniable, and I make no doubt that all unprejudiced persons see it as well as myself; as sure as two and two make four, or, if you please, as sure as *ten* and *forty* make fifty, so sure *ten* fishes shall be caught in the gospel net, and *forty* in the law net.

Mr. Toplady denies the consequence, and says—“Can Mr. Wesley produce a single instance of any one man who did all he could to be saved, and yet was lost? If he can, let him tell us who that man was, where he lived, when he died, what he did, and how it came to pass that he laboured in vain; if he cannot, let him either retract his consequences, or continue to be posted as a shameless traducer.”

I answer: 1. To require Mr. Wesley to show a man who did all he could, and yet was lost, is requiring him to prove that Calvinian reprobation is *true!*—a thing this which he can no more do than he can prove that

God is false. Mr. Wesley never said any man was damned after doing his best to be saved; he only says that, *if Calvinism is true*, the reprobates shall all be damned, though they should all do their best to be saved, till the *efficacious* decree of their absolute reprobation necessitates them to draw back and be damned.

2. As Mr. Toplady's bold request may impose upon his inattentive readers, I beg leave to point out its absurdity by a short illustration. Mr. Wesley says, *if there is a mountain of gold*, it is heavier than a handful of feathers; and his consequence passes for true in England: but a gentleman who teaches logic in mystic Geneva thinks that it is absolutely false, and that Mr. Wesley's "*forehead must be petrified, and quite impervious to a blush*," for advancing it. Can Mr. Wesley, says he, show us a mountain of gold which is really heavier than a handful of feathers? If he can, let him tell us what mountain it is, where it lies, in what latitude, how high it is, and who did ever ascend to the top of it. If he cannot, let him either retract his consequences, or continue to be posted as a *shameless traducer*.

SECTION II.

MR. TOPLADY'S INQUIRY ANSWERED.

Mr. Toplady inquires, "Is salvation due to a man that does not perform those *conditions*?" And then he remarks, "If you say yes, you jump hand over head into what you yourself call *Antinomianism*. If you say that salvation is not due to a man unless he *do fulfil the condition*; it will follow that man's own

performances are *meritorious* of salvation, and bring God himself into debt."

To this Mr. Fletcher answers—The flaw of Mr. Toplady's argument will appear in its proper magnitude, if we look at it through the following illustration: A whole regiment is led to the *left* by the colonel, whom the general wanted to turn to the *right*. The colonel, who is *personally* in the fault, is pardoned; and five hundred of the soldiers, who, by the overbearing influence of their colonel's disobedience, were *necessitated* to move to the *left*, are appointed to be hanged for not going to the right. The general sends to Geneva for a *Tertullus*, who vindicates the *justice* of the execution by the following speech: "*Preferment is not due to obedient soldiers, much less to soldiers who have necessarily disobeyed orders; and therefore your gracious general acts consistently with justice in appointing these five hundred soldiers to be hanged, for, as there is no medium between not promoting soldiers and hanging them, he might justly have hanged the whole regiment. He is not bound by any law to give any soldier a captain's commission; and therefore he is perfectly just when he sends these military reprobates to the gallows.*" Some of the auditors clap *Tertullus's* argument: P. O. cries out that it is "*most masterly*:" but a few of the soldiers are not quite satisfied, and begin to question whether the holy service of the *mild Saviour of the world* is not preferable to the Antinomian service of the *absolute reprobater* of countless myriads of unborn infants.

2. The other flaw of Mr. Toplady's dilemma consists in supposing that *gospel worthiness* is incompatible with the gospel: whereas all the doctrines of *justice*,

which make *one half* of the gospel, stand or fall with the doctrine of *evangelical worthiness*. We will shout it on the walls of mystic Geneva: they that follow Christ shall *walk with him in white*, rather than they that follow antichrist; *for they are* [more] *worthy*. *Watch and pray always, that you may be counted worthy to escape, and to stand rewardable before the Son of man*. The doctrine of *Pharisaic merit* we abhor; but the doctrine of *rewardable obedience* we honour, defend, and extol. Believers, let not Mr. Toplady *beguile you of your reward* through voluntary humility; your persevering obedience shall be graciously rewarded by *a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you at that day*; and then *great shall be your reward in heaven*. For Christ himself hath said, *Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*. *I am the author of eternal salvation to them that obey me*. What can be plainer than this gospel? Shall the absurd cries of "Popery!" "merit!" &c., make us ashamed of Christ's disciple; of Christ's words; and of Christ himself? God forbid! Let the *Scriptures*—*let God be true, though Mr. Toplady should be mistaken*.

Mr. Toplady says, page 38: "If he [God] be not obliged, in justice, to save mankind, then neither is he unjust in *passing by* some men: nay, he *might*, had he so pleased, have *passed by* the whole of mankind without electing one individual of the fallen race, and yet have continued holy, *just*, and good."

True; he might have *passed them by*, without fixing any blot upon his justice and goodness, if by passing them by Mr. T. means leaving them in the wretched state of seminal existence, in which state his vindictive

justice found them after Adam's fall. For then, an *unknown punishment, seminally endured*, would have borne just proportion to an *unknown sin, seminally committed*. But if, by *passing some men by*, this gentleman means, as Calvinism does, "absolutely predestinating men to *necessary, remediless sin*, and to unavoidable, eternal damnation:" we deny that God might *justly have passed by the whole of mankind*: we deny that he might *justly have passed by* ONE single man, woman, or child. Nay, we affirm that, if we conceive Satan, or the evil principle of *Manes*, as exerting creative power, we could not conceive him worse employed than in forming an *absolute* reprobate in embryo; that is, a creature unconditionally and absolutely doomed to remediless wickedness and everlasting fire.

As the simple are frequently imposed upon by an artful substituting of the harmless word *passing by* for the terrible word *absolutely reprobating to death*, I beg leave to show, by a simile, the vast difference there is between these two phrases. A king may, without injustice, *pass by* all the beggars in the streets, without giving them any bounty; because, if he does them no good in thus *passing them by*, he does them no harm. But suppose he called two captains of his guards, and said to the *first*, If you see me *pass by* little dirty beggars without giving them an alms, throw them into the mire, or, if their parents, keep them there: then let the *second* captain follow with his men, and take all the dirty beggars who have been thus *passed by*, and throw them, for being dirty, into a furnace hotter than that of Nebuchadnezzar:—suppose, I say, the king *passed* his little indigent subjects *by* in this manner,

would not his decree of *preterition* be a more than diabolical piece of cruelty? I need not inform my judicious readers, that the *passing by* of the king represents Calvinian *passing by*, that is, *absolute reprobation* to death: that the *first* captain, who throws little beggars into the dirt, or keeps them there, represents the *decree of the means*, which *necessitates* the reprobate to *sin*, or to *continue* in sin; and that the *second* captain represents the *decree of the end*, which *necessitates* them to go to everlasting burnings.

CHAPTER XVII.

A RATIONAL ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

WHEN it pleased God to create a world, his WISDOM obliged him to create upon the plan that was most worthy of him. Such a plan was undoubtedly that which agreed best with *all* the divine perfections *taken together*. WISDOM and POWER absolutely required that it should be a world of *rational*, as well as *irrational* creatures; of *free*, as well as of *necessary agents*; such a world displayed far better what St. Paul calls *πολυποικίλος σοφία*, *the multifarious, variegated* WISDOM of God, as well as his infinite POWER in making, ruling, and overruling various orders of beings.

It could not be expected that myriads of *free agents*, who necessarily fell short of absolute perfection, would *all* behave *alike*. Here God's GOODNESS demanded that those who behaved *well* should be *rewarded*; his SOVEREIGNTY insisted, that those who behaved *ill* should be *punished*; and his DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

and EQUITY required, that those who made the best use of their talents should be entitled to the *highest* rewards; while those who abused divine favours *most*, should have the *severest* punishments; MERCY reserving to itself the right of raising rewards, and of alleviating punishments, in a way suited to all the other divine attributes.

This being granted, (and I do not see how any man of reason and piety can deny it,) it evidently follows: 1. That a world in which various orders of *free*, as well as *necessary agents*, are admitted, *is most perfect*. 2. That this world, having been formed upon such a wise plan, was the most perfect that could possibly be created. 3. That, in the very nature of things, *evil may*, although there is no *necessity it should*, enter into such a world; else it could not be a world of *free agents* who are candidates for *distributive-justice*. 4. That the blemishes and disorders of the natural world are only penal consequences of disobedience of *free agents*. 5. That from such penal disorders we may indeed conclude that man has abused *free will*, but not that God deals in *free wrath*. Only admit, therefore, the free will of rationals, and you cannot but fall in love with our Creator's plan, dark and horrid as it appears when it is viewed through the smoked glass of the fatalist, the Manichee, or the rigid predestinarian.

But Mr. Toplady inquires, "How came moral evil to be *permitted*, when it might have been hindered, by a Being of infinite *goodness*, power, and wisdom?"

Answer 1. When God placed man in paradise, far from *permitting* him to sin, he strictly forbade him to do it. Is it right then in Mr. Toplady to call God the

permitter of sin, when the Scriptures represent him as the *forbidder* of it? Nay, is it not very wrong to pour shame upon the holiness of God, and absurdity upon the reason of man, by making a Calvinistic world believe that *forbidding* and *threatening* is one and the same thing with *permitting* and *giving leave*; or, at least, that the difference is so trifling, that *all the sagacity of man will find it difficult, not to say impossible, clearly to point it out?*

2. I pretend to a very little share of *all the sagacity of man*; and yet, without being nonplused at all, I hope to show, by the following illustration, that there is a prodigious difference between *not hindering*, and *design*, in the case of the entering in of sin.

A general wants to try the faithfulness of his soldiers, that he may *reward* those who *will* fight, and *punish* those who *will* go over to the enemy; in order to *display*, before all the army, his love of bravery, his hatred of cowardice, his remunerative goodness, and his impartial justice. To this end he issues out a proclamation, importing that all the volunteers who shall gallantly keep the field in such an important engagement shall be made captains; and all those who shall go over to the enemy shall be shot. I suppose him endued with infinite wisdom, knowledge, and power. By his *omniscience* he sees that some *will* desert; by his *omnipotence* he *could*, indeed, hinder them from doing it; for he *could* chain them all to so many posts stuck in the ground around their colours: but his *infinite wisdom* does not permit him to do it; as it would be a piece of madness in him to defeat, by forcible means, his design of *trying* the courage of his soldiers, in order to *reward* and *punish* them according to their *gallant* or cow-

ardly behaviour in the field. And therefore, though he is persuaded that many will be shot, he puts his proclamation in force, because, upon the whole, it will best answer his wise designs. However, as he does not *desire*, much less *design*, that any of his soldiers should be shot for desertion, he does what his wisdom permits him to do to prevent their going over to the enemy; and yet, for the above-mentioned reason, he does not *absolutely hinder* them from doing it. Now in such a case, who does not see that the difference in not *absolutely hindering* and *designing* is as discernible as the difference between *reason* and *folly*—or between *wisdom* and *wickedness*? By such dangerous insinuations as that which this illustration exposes, the simple are imperceptibly led to confound *Christ* with *Belial*, and to think there is *little difference* between the celestial Parent of *good*, and the Manichean parent of *good* and *evil*;—the *Janus* of the fatalists, who wears two faces, an angel's face and a devil's face; a mongrel, imaginary god this, whose fancied ways are, like his fancied nature, full of *duplicity*.

3. To the preceding illustration I beg leave to add the following argument. No unprejudiced person will, I hope, refuse his assent to the truth of this proposition. A world wherein there are *rational free agents*, like angels and men;—*irrational free agents*, like dogs and horses;—*necessary agents*, like plants and trees;—and dead matter, like stones and clods of earth:—such a world, I say, is as much superior in perfection to a world where there are only *necessary agents* and dead matter, as a place inhabited by *learned men* and *curious beasts* contains more wonders than one which is only stocked with *fine flowers* and *curious stones*.

If this be granted, it necessarily follows that *this* world was perfect, calculated to display His *infinite power* and *manifest wisdom*. Now, in the very nature of things, *rational free agents*, being capable of knowing their Creator, owe to him gratitude and obedience; and to one another, assistance and love; and therefore they are *under a law*, which [as *free agents*] they may *keep* or *break*, as they please.

“But could not God *necessitate free agents* to keep the law they are under?”

Yes, says Calvinism, for he is endued with *infinite power*: but Scripture, good sense, and matter of fact say no: because, although God is endued with *infinite power*, he is also endued with *infinite wisdom*. And it would be as absurd to *create free agents* in order to *necessitate* them, as to *do* a thing in order to *undo* it. Besides, [I repeat it,] God’s *distributive justice* could never be displayed, nor could *free obedience* be paid by rationals, and crowned by the *Rewarder* and *Judge of all the earth*, unless rationals were free-willing creatures; and therefore, the moment you absolutely *necessitate* them, you destroy them as *free agents*, and rob God of two of his most glorious titles—that of *Rewarder* and that of *Judge*. Thus we account for the origin of evil in a Scriptural and rational manner, without the help of fatalism, Manicheism, or Calvinism.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DIFFICULTIES REMOVED.

SECTION I.

REMARKS ON 1 SAMUEL II, 25. THEY [THE SONS OF ELI] HEARKENED NOT TO THE VOICE OF THEIR FATHER, BECAUSE THE LORD WOULD SLAY THEM.

THIS passage is introduced by Mr. Toplady to show that the Lord secures the *end* by securing the *means*. By the decree of the *means* the Lord secured the disobedience of these wicked men, in order to accomplish the decree of the *end*, that is, their absolute destruction.

To this Calvinian insinuation Mr. Fletcher answers :
 1. That the sons of Eli, who had turned the tabernacle into a house of ill fame, and a den of thieves, had *personally* deserved a *judicial* reprobation; God, therefore, could *justly* give them up to a reprobate mind, in consequence of their personal, avoidable, repeated, and aggravated crimes.

2. The word *killing* does not here necessarily imply eternal damnation. The Lord *killed*, by a lion, the man of God from Judah, for having stopped in Bethel : he *killed Nadab* and *Abihu* for offering strange fire : he *killed* the child of David and Bathsheba : he *killed* many of the Corinthians for their irreverent partaking of the Lord's supper : but the *sin unto* [bodily] DEATH is not the sin unto *eternal* death ; for St. Paul informs, that the body is sometimes *given up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord*, 1 Cor. v, 5.

3. The Hebrew particle, כִּי, which is rendered in our translation *because*, means also *therefore*: and so our translators themselves have rendered it after *St. Paul* and the *Septuagint*, *Psa. cxvi, 10.* I believed, כִּי, and therefore will I speak: see *2 Cor. iv, 13.* If they had done their part as well in translating the verse quoted by Mr. Toplady, the doctrine of *free wrath* would have gone propless, and we should have had these edifying words: *They [the sons of Eli] hearkened not to the voice of their father, and therefore the Lord would slay them.* Thus the *voluntary sin* of free agents would be represented as the cause of their *deserved reprobation*; and not their *undeserved reprobation* as the cause of their *necessary sin*.

SECTION II.

EXPLANATION OF ACTS IV, 27, 28.

For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

With respect to this text, if it be rightly translated, it is explained by these words of *St. Peter*, *Acts ii, 23*, which declare that Christ was *delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*:—"delivered" as a ransom for all. If rightly translated—with *Episcopius*, and some other learned critics, I doubt it is not—why should it not be read thus? *For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, (both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of*

Israel, were gathered together,) for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined to be done. By putting the clause *both Herod, &c.*, in a parenthesis, you have this evangelical sense, which gives no handle for the pleaders for sin: *Both Herod and Pilate, &c., were gathered together against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed for to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined to be done.* I prefer this reading to the common for the following reasons: 1. It is perfectly agreeable to the Greek; and the *peculiar* construction of the sentence is expressive of the *peculiar* earnestness with which the apostle prayed. 2. It is attended with no Manichean inconveniency. 3. It is *more* agreeable to the context. For if the Sanhedrim was *gathered by God's direction and decree*, in order to threaten the apostles, with what propriety could they say, [verse 29,] *Now, Lord, behold their threatening?* And, 4. It is strongly supported by verse 30, where Peter [after having observed, verses 27, 28, according to our reading, that God had anointed his holy child Jesus to do all the miracles which he did on earth] prays, that now Christ is gone to heaven, the effects of this powerful anointing may continue, and *signs and wonders may be done by the name of his holy child Jesus.*

This passage then, and all those which Mr. Toplady has produced, or may yet produce, only prove, 1. That God foresees the evil which is in the heart of the wicked, and their future steps in peculiar circumstances, with ten thousand times more clearness and certainty than a good huntsman foresees all the windings, doublings, and shifts of a hunted fox: and that he *overrules their wicked* counsels to the execution of *his own wise and holy* designs, as a good rider overrules the

mad prancings of a vicious horse, to the display of his perfect skill in horsemanship, and to the treading down of the enemy in a day of battle. 2. That God *catches the wise in their own craftiness*; and to punish the wicked, he permits their wicked counsels to be defeated, and their best concerted schemes to prove abortive. 3. That he frequently tries the faith and exercises the patience of good men, by letting loose the wicked upon them, as in the case of Job and Christ. 4. That he often punishes the wickedness of one man by letting loose upon him the wickedness of another man; and that he frequently avenges himself of one wicked nation by letting loose upon it the wickedness of another nation. Thus he let Absalom and Shimei loose upon David. Thus the Lord let loose the Philistines upon disobedient Israel, and the Romans upon the obdurate Jews. 5. That he sometimes lets a wicked man loose upon himself, as in the case of Ahithophel, Nabal, and Judas, who became their own executioners. 6. That when wicked men are going to commit some atrocious wickedness, he sometimes inclines their hearts so to relent that they commit a *less* crime than they intended. For instance: when Joseph's brethren were going to starve him to death, by providential circumstances God inclined their hearts *to spare his life*: thus, instead of starving him, they only sold him into Egypt.

CHAPTER XIX.

A CAUTION AGAINST THE TENET THAT "WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT."

THAT "whatever is, is *right*, or will answer some great end in relation to the whole," says Mr. Toplady, "is a *first principle* of the *Bible* and of sound *reason*."

Whatever the true God works is undoubtedly *right*. But if the Deity *absolutely* works all things in all men, good and bad, it evidently follows, 1. That the two-principled Deity preached by Manes is the true God. 2. That the *bad* principle of this double deity works *wickedness* in the *wicked*, as necessarily as the *good* principle works *righteousness* in the righteous. And, 3. That the original of wickedness being divine, wickedness is as right as the Deity from whom it flows.

Error is never more dangerous than when it looks a little like truth. But when it is imposed upon the simple as a *first principle of the Bible and sound reason*, it makes dreadful work. How conclusively will a rigid predestinarian reason if he says, "Whatever is, is right; and therefore sin is right. Again: it is wrong to hinder what is right: sin is right; and therefore it is wrong to hinder sin. Once more: we ought to do what is right: sin is right; and therefore we ought to commit sin."

Now, in opposition to Mr. Toplady's *first principle*, I assert as a *first principle of reason*, that, though it was right in God not absolutely to hinder sin, yet *sin is always wrong*. "O, but God permitted it, and will get himself glory by displaying his vindictive justice in

punishing it: for '*the ministration of condemnation is glorious.*'" This argument has deluded many a pious Calvinist. To overthrow it, however, I need only observe, that the *ministration of righteousness exceeds in glory* the ministration of condemnation.

In what respect is sin right? Can it be right in respect of God, if it brings him *less* glory than righteousness? Can it be right in respect of *man*, if it bring temporal misery upon *all*, and eternal misery upon *some*? Can it be right in respect of the *Adamic law*, the *law of Moses*, or the *law of Christ*? Certainly no: for sin is equally the transgression of all these laws. "O, but it is right with respect to the evangelical promise." By no means: for the evangelical promise, vulgarly called *the gospel*, testifies of Christ, the destroyer of sin, and offers us a remedy against sin. Now if sin were *right*, the gospel which remedies it, and Christ who destroys it, would be *wrong*. I conclude then, that if sin be right, neither with respect of *God*, nor with respect of *man*; neither with regard to the *law*, nor with regard to the *gospel*; it is *right* in no shape, it is *wrong* in every point of view.

"*But why did God permit it?*" Indeed, he never did properly permit it, unless to forbid in the most solemn manner, and under the severest penalty, is the same thing as to *permit*. But, "Why did not God *absolutely hinder* sin?" I answer, 1. Because his *wisdom* saw that a world where *free agents* and *necessary agents* are mixed, is better [all things considered] than a world stocked with nothing but necessary agents, i. e., creatures *absolutely hindered* from sinning. 2. Because his *distributive justice* could be displayed no other way than by the creation of accountable *free*

agents, made with an eye to a *day of judgment*. 3. Because it would be as absurd to *necessitate free agents*, as to bid *free agents be*, that they *might not be free agents*;—as foolish as to form *accountable creatures*, that they might *not be accountable*. And, 4. Because when God saw that the free agency of his creatures would introduce sin, he determined to overrule it, or remedy it in such a manner as would, upon the whole, render this world, with all the *voluntary evil* and *voluntary good* in it, better than a world of *necessary agents*, where nothing but *necessary good* would have been displayed: an inferior sort of good this, which would no more have admitted of the exercise of God's *political wisdom* and *distributive justice*, than the excellence of precious stones and fine flowers admits of laws, rewards, and punishments.

Should the reader ask how far we may safely go to meet the truth which borders most on Mr. Toplady's false principle, that "*whatever is, is right*?" I answer, 1. We may grant, nay, we ought to assert, that God will get himself glory every way. Evangelical grace and just wrath minister to his praise, though not equally: and therefore God willeth not *primarily* the death of his creatures. Punishment is his *strange work*; and he delighteth *more* in the exercise of his *remunerative* goodness than in the exercise of his *vindictive* justice. 2. Hence it appears, that the wrath of man and the rage of the devil will *turn to God's praise*: but it is only to his *inferior* praise. For though the blessed will sing loud hallelujahs to divine justice when vengeance shall overtake the ungodly; and though the consciences of the ungodly will give God glory, and testify that he is holy in all his works, and righteous in

all his vindictive ways; yet, this glory will be only the glory of the ministration of condemnation:—a dispensation this which is inferior to the dispensation of righteous mercy. Hence it appears, that those who die in their sins would have brought more glory to God by choosing righteousness and life, than they do by choosing death in the error of their ways. But still, this *inferior* praise, arising from the *condemnation* and *punishment* of *ungodly free agents*—this *inferior* praise, I say, mixed with the *superior* praise arising from the *justification* and *rewards* of *godly free agents*, will far exceed the praise which might have accrued to God from the *unavoidable* obedience and absurd rewards of *necessitated* agents—of angels and men absolutely bound to obey by a *necessitating grace*, like that which *rigid* bound-willers preach; were we even to suppose that this forcible grace had Calvinistically caught *all* rational creatures in a net of finished salvation, and had drawn them *all* to heaven as irresistibly as *Simon Peter drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three*. For, before the *Lawgiver and Judge of all the earth*, the unnecessary, voluntary goodness of *one* angel, or *one* man, is more excellent than the *necessary* goodness of a *world* of creatures as unavoidably and passively virtuous as a diamond is unavoidably and passively bright.

With respect to the second part of Mr. Toplady's doctrine, that whatever is, is right, because "*it will answer some great end, &c., in relation to the whole;*" it is nothing but logical paint put on a *false principle* to cover its deformity; for error can imitate Jezebel, who laid natural paint on her withered face to fill up her hideous wrinkles, and impose on the spectators. I

may perhaps prove it by an illustration. I want to demonstrate that cheating, extortion, litigiousness, breaking the peace, robberies, and murders *are all right*; and I do it by asserting "*that they answer some great ends in relation to the whole*"; for they employ the parliament in making laws to prevent, end, or punish them; they afford business to all the judges, magistrates, lawyers, sheriffs, constables, jailers, turnkeys, thief-catchers, and executioners in the kingdom: and when robbers and murderers are hanged, they reflect praise upon the government which extirpates them: they strike terror into the wicked; and their untimely, dreadful end, sets off the happiness of a virtuous course of life, and the bliss which crowns the death of the righteous. Besides, many murderers and robbers have been brought to Christ for pardon and salvation, like the dying thief, who by his robbery had the good luck to meet Christ on the cross: so that his own gallows, as well as our Lord's cross, proved the tree of life to that happy felon." The mischievous absurdity of these pleas for the excellence of wickedness puts me in mind of the arguments by which a greedy publican in my parish once exculpated himself, when I reproved him for encouraging tippling and drunkenness. "The more ale we sell," said he, "the greater is the king's revenue. If it were not for *us* the king could not live; nor could he pay the fleet and army: and if we had neither fleet nor army, we should soon fall into the hands of the French." So *great are the ends* which tippling *answers in its relation to the whole* British empire, if we may believe a tapster, who pleads for drunkenness as plausibly as some good mistaken men do for all manner of wickedness.

From the whole, if I am not mistaken, we may safely conclude that, though all God's works are *right*, yet *sin*, the work of fallen angels and fallen men, is *never right*; and that, though the universe, with all its sinfulness, is better than a *sinless* world *necessitated* to be sinless by the destruction of *free agents*, yet, as there is so much *sin* in the world, through the wrong use which free agents make of their powers, Mr. T. advances an unscriptural and irrational maxim when he says, that *whatever is, is right*. And he imposes upon us an *Antinomian* paradox when he asserts that this dangerous maxim "is a first principle of the Bible and of sound reason." I repeat it: it was *right* in God to create free agents, to put them under a practicable law, and to determine to punish them according to their works, if they wantonly broke that law; but it could never be *right* in free agents to break it, unless God had bound them to do it by making *Calvinian* decrees *necessarily* productive of sin and wickedness. And supposing God had forbid free agents to sin by his law, and had *necessitated* [which is more than to enjoin] them to sin by *Calvinian decrees*; we desire Mr. T. to show how it could have been *right* in God to forbid sin by law, to *necessitate* men to sin by a decree, and to send them to eternal fire for not keeping a law which he had *necessitated* them to break.

CHAPTER XX.

A MIDDLE WAY BETWEEN CALVINIAN PROVIDENCE
AND CHANCE.

MR. TOPLADY, after charging Pelagianism on Mr. Wesley, says, "I defy the Pelagian to strike out a middle way between providence and chance."

This challenge is too important to be disregarded. There are two opposite errors with respect to *providence*. The *first* is that of the Epicurean philosophers, who thought that God does not concern himself about our sins, but leaves us to go on as we please, and as chance directs. The *second* is that of the rigid predestinarians, who imagine that God *absolutely* predestinates sin, and *necessarily* brings it about to accomplish his absolute decrees of eternally saving some men through Christ, and eternally damning all the rest of mankind through Adam. Of these two erroneous sentiments the latter appears to us the worse, seeing it is better to represent God as doing *nothing* than to represent him as doing *wickedness*. The truth lies between these two opinions; God's providence is *peculiarly concerned about sin*, but it does by no means *necessarily bring it about*. By this reasonable doctrine we answer Mr. T.'s challenge, and strike out the middle way between *his* error and that of Epicurus.

If you ask how far God's providence is concerned about sin? we reply, that it is concerned about it four ways: *First*, in *morally* hindering the *internal* commission of it before it is committed; *secondly*, in *providentially* hindering [at times] the *external* commis-

sion of it, when it has been intentionally committed ; *thirdly*, in marking, bounding, and overruling it while it is committed ; and *fourthly*, in bringing about means of properly pardoning or exemplarily punishing it after it has been committed. Dwell we a moment on each of these particulars.

1. Before sin is committed, divine providence is engaged in *morally* hindering the internal commission of it. In order to this, God does two things: First, he *forbids* sin by natural, verbal, or written laws ; and secondly, he keeps up our powers of body and soul ; enduing us with *liberty*, whereby we may abstain, like moral agents, from the commission of sin ; furnishing us besides with a variety of motives and helps to resist every temptation to sin. A great variety this, which includes God's threatenings and promises ; all his exhortations and warnings ; all the checks of our consciences and the strivings of the Holy Spirit ; all the counsels of good men, and the exemplary punishments of the wicked ; together with the tears and blood of Christ, and other peculiar means of grace, which God has appointed to keep Christians from sin, and to strengthen them in the performance of their duty.

2. When sin is committed in the intention, God frequently prevents the *outward* commission, or the full completion of it, by peculiar interpositions of his providence. Thus he hindered the men of Sodom from injuring Lot, by striking them with blindness ; he hindered Pharaoh from enslaving the Israelites, by drowning him in the Red Sea ; he hindered Balaam from cursing Israel, by putting a bridle in his mouth ; he hindered Jeroboam from hurting the prophet who came out of Judah, by drying up his royal hand when he

stretched it forth, saying, "*Lay hold on him;*" he hindered Herod from destroying the holy child Jesus, by warning Joseph to flee into Egypt, &c., &c. The Scriptures and the history of the world are full of accounts of the ordinary and extraordinary interpositions of divine providence, respecting the detection of intended mischief, and the preservation of persons and states, whom the wicked intended to destroy. And to go no farther than England, the providential discovery of the gunpowder plot is as remarkable an instance as any that God keeps a watchful eye upon the counsels of men, and confounds their devices whenever he pleases.

3. During the commission of sin, God's providence is engaged in marking it, in setting bounds to it, or overruling it, in a manner quite contrary to the expectation of sinners. When Joseph's brethren contrived the getting money by selling him into Egypt, God contrived the preservation of Jacob's household. Thus, when Haman contrived a gallows to hang Mordecai, the Lord so overruled this cruel design that Haman was hung on that very gallows. Thus, when Satan wanted to destroy Job, God set bounds to his rage, and bid the fierce accuser spare the good man's life. That envious fiend did his worst to make the patient saint curse God to his face; but the Lord so overruled his malice that it worked for good to Job: for when Job's patience had had its perfect work, all his misfortunes ended in double prosperity, and all his tempestuous tossings raised him to a higher degree of perfection. Thus, again, to preserve the seed of the righteous, God formerly kept a hundred prophets, and seven hundred true Israelites, from the cruelty of Jezebel; and for the sake of the sincere Christians in Judea, he shortened the great

tribulation spoken of Matt. xxiv, 22. When the ungodly are most busy in sinning, the providence of God is most employed in counterworking their sin, in putting bounds to their desperate designs, and in making *a way for the godly to escape out of temptation, that they may be able to bear it: for the rod of the ungodly cometh not [with its full force] into the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hand into iniquity*, through such powerful and lasting temptations as would make it *impossible* for them to stand firm in the way of duty, Psa. cxxv, 3.

4. When sin is actually committed, the providence of God, in conjunction with his mercy and justice, is employed either in using means to bring sinners to repentance, confession, and pardon, or in inflicting upon them such punishments as seem most proper to divine wisdom. To be convinced of it, read the history of man's redemption by Jesus Christ; mark the various steps by which providence brings the guilty to conviction, the penitent to pardon, the finally impenitent to destruction, and all to some degree of punishment. By what an amazing train of providential dispensations were Joseph's brethren, for instance, brought to remember, lament, and smart for their cruel behaviour to him! And how did God, by various afflictions, bring his rebellious people to consider their ways, and to humble themselves before him in the land of their captivity! What an amazing work had divine providence in checking and punishing the sin of Pharaoh in Egypt, that of the Israelites in the wilderness, that of David and his house in Jerusalem, and that of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar in Babylon!

Evangelically and providentially opening the way for

the return of sinners, and repaying obdurate offenders to their faces, make one half of God's work, as he is the gracious and righteous Governor of men. We cannot doubt it, if we take notice of the innumerable means by which *conversions* and *punishments* are brought about. To touch only upon *punishments*: some extend to the sea, others to the land; some spread over particular districts, others over whole kingdoms; some affect a whole family, and others a whole community; some affect the soul, and others the body; some fall only upon one limb, or one of the senses, others upon the whole animal frame and all the senses; some affect our well-being, others our being itself; some are confined to this world, and others extend to a future state; some are of a temporal and others of an eternal nature. Now, since providence, in subservience to divine justice, manages all these punishments and innumerable consequences, how mistaken is Mr. T. when he insinuates that our doctrine supposes God to be an idle spectator while sin is committed.

5. With respect to the gracious tempers of the righteous, we believe that they all flow [though without *Calvinian necessity*] from the *free gift which is come upon all men*, and from the *light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world*. And as to their *good works*, we are so far from excluding divine grace and providence, in order to exalt absolute free will, that we assert, Not one good work would ever be begun, continued, or ended, if divine grace within us, and divine providence without us, did not animate our souls, support our bodies, help our infirmities, and [to use the language of our church] "*prevent, accompany, and follow us*" through the whole. And yet in *all*

moral, and in *many* natural actions, we are as free from the laws of *Calvinian* necessity as from those of the great mogul.

6. With regard to the families and kingdoms of this world, we assert that God's providence either baffles, controls, or sets bounds to the bad designs of the wicked; while it has the principal hand in succeeding the good designs of the righteous, as often as they have any success: for, *except the Lord keep the city*, as well as the watchman, *the watchman waketh but in vain*. And with respect to the course of nature, we believe that it is ordered by his unerring counsel. With a view to maintain order in the universe, his providential *wisdom* made admirable laws of attraction, repulsion, generation, fermentation, vegetation, and dissolution. And his providential *power* and *watchfulness* are, though without either labour or anxiety, continually engaged in conducting all things according to those laws; except when, on proper occasions, he suspends the influence of his own natural decrees; and then fire may cease to burn, iron to sink in water, and hungry lions to devour their helpless prey. Nay, at the beck of Omnipotence, a widow's cruise of oil and barrel of meal shall be filled without the help of the olive-tree, and the formality of a growing harvest; a dry rod shall suddenly blossom, and a green fig-tree shall instantly be dried up; garments in daily use shall not wear out in forty years; a prophet shall live forty days without food; the liquid waves shall afford a solid walk to a believing apostle; a fish shall bring back the piece of money which it had swallowed; and water shall be turned into wine without the gradual process of vegetation.

If Mr. T. do us the justice to weigh these six observations upon the prodigious work which God's *providence* carries on in the moral, spiritual, and natural world, according to our doctrine, we hope he will no more intimate that we *atheistically* deny, or heretically *defame*, that divine attribute.

To conclude: we exactly steer our course between *rigid* free-willers, who suppose they are independent on God's providence, and *rigid* bound-willers, who fancy they do nothing but what fate or God's providence absolutely binds them to do. We equally detest the error of *Epicurus* and that of *Mr. Toplady*. The former taught that God took no notice of sin; the latter says that God, by *efficacious permissions* and *irresistible decrees*, absolutely necessitates men to commit it. But we maintain, that although God never absolutely *necessitated* his creatures to sin, yet his providence is remarkably employed about sin in all the above described ways. And if Mr. Toplady will call us *defamers* of divine providence and *Atheists*, because we dare not represent God, directly or indirectly, as the author of sin, we rejoice in so honourable a reproach; and humbly trust that this, as well as all manner of similar evil, is rashly said of us for *righteousness' sake*.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following extracts are taken from Mr. Fletcher's "Last Check to Antinomianism; a polemical essay on the twin doctrines of Christian imperfection and death purgatory." The compiler finds it exceedingly difficult to make extracts from this volume agreeably to the plan he has proposed, without doing an injury to the writer; on account that the whole essay is so excellent, and each part so connected, the whole must be read in order to understand the subject, or duly appreciate the talents of the author. In this selection he has done the best he could, and can only hope that what he has here presented will serve to show the reader that Mr. Fletcher is an admirable writer on this as well as on the foregoing subjects, and induce him to procure and read the essay in its original form. But especially he hopes to furnish the reader with a condensed view of the arguments by which the doctrine of *holiness* is supported, and the practicability of answering the objections which are usually urged against it. He hopes, also, that such will be the force with which the arguments will strike the reader, that he will be induced to see what is his *duty* and *privilege* as a Christian, and be excited earnestly to seek for the attainment, in his own *personal experience*, of all the *heights* and *depths* of PERFECT LOVE.

T. S.

SECTION I.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION STATED.

WHEN a late fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, attacked the doctrine of sincere obedience which I defend in the Checks, he said with great truth, "*Sincere obedience, as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to PERFECT obedience.*" What he urged as an argument *against* our views of the gospel is one of the reasons by which we defend them, and perhaps the strongest of all: for our doctrine leads as naturally to holiness and perfect obedience, as that of our opponents does to sin and imperfection. If the streams of *Mr. Hill's* doctrine never stop till they have carried men into a sea of *indwelling sin*, where he leaves them to struggle with waves of immorality, or with billows of corruption, all the days of their life; it is evident that our doctrine, which is the very reverse of his, must take us to a sea of indwelling holiness, where we calmly outride all the storms which Satan raised to destroy Job's perfection, and where all our pursuing corruptions are as much destroyed as the Egyptians were in the Red Sea.

Reader, I plead for the most precious liberty in the world—*heart liberty*; for liberty from the most galling of all yokes, the yoke of *heart corruption*. Let not thy prejudice turn a deaf ear to the important plea. If thou candidly, believingly, and practically receive *the truth as it is in Jesus, it shall make thee free, and thou shalt be free indeed.*

Most of the controversies which arise between men who fear God spring from the hurry with which some

men find fault with what they have not yet examined. Why does *Mr. Hill*, at the head of the *Calvinists*, attack the doctrine of Christian perfection which we contend for? Is it because he and they are sworn enemies to righteousness, and zealous protectors of iniquity? Not at all. The grand reason, next to their Calvinian prejudices, is their inattention to the question, and to the arguments by which our sentiments are supported. If producing light is the best method of opposing *darkness*, setting the doctrine of *Christian perfection* in a proper point of view will be the best means of opposing the doctrines of *Christian imperfection* and of a *death purgatory*.

Christian perfection! Why should the harmless phrase offend us? The word *perfection* comes from the Latin *perficio*, to perfect, to finish, to accomplish. We give the name *Christian perfection* to that maturity of grace and holiness which established adult believers attain to under the *Christian* dispensation; and thus we distinguish that maturity of grace both from the *ripeness* of *grace* which belongs to the *Jews below* us, and from the *ripeness* of *glory* which belongs to *departed saints above* us. Hence it appears, that by *Christian perfection* we mean nothing but the *cluster* and *maturity* of the graces which compose the *Christian church militant*.

In other words, *Christian perfection* is a spiritual constellation made up of these gracious stars, *perfect repentance*, *perfect faith*, *perfect humility*, *perfect meekness*, *perfect self-denial*, *perfect resignation*, *perfect hope*, *perfect charity* for our visible enemies as well as for our *earthly* relations; and, above all, *perfect love* for our invisible God, through the explicit

knowledge of our Mediator, Jesus Christ. And as the last star is always accompanied by all the others, as *Jupiter* is by his satellites, we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase *perfect love* instead of the word *perfection*, understanding by it the pure love of God shed abroad in the hearts of established believers.

SECTION II.

IS CHRISTIAN PERFECTION A SINLESS PERFECTION ?

SHOULD Mr. Hill ask if the *Christian perfection* which we contend for is a *sinless* perfection, we reply, *Sin is the transgression of a divine law*, and man may be considered either as being under the *anti-evangelical, Christless, remediless* law of our *Creator*, or as being under the *evangelical, mediatorial, remedying* law of our *Redeemer*; and the question must be answered according to the nature of these two laws.

With respect to the *first*, that is, the *Adamic, Christless* law of innocence and paradisiacal perfection, we utterly renounce the doctrine of *sinless perfection*, for *three* reasons: 1. We are conceived and born in a state of sinful *degeneracy*, whereby that law is already virtually broken; 2. Our mental and bodily powers are so enfeebled that we cannot help actually breaking *that* law in numberless instances, even after our *full* conversion; and, 3. When once we have broken *that* law, it considers us as transgressors for ever: nor can it any more pronounce us *sinless* than the rigorous law which condemns a man to be hanged for murder can absolve

a murderer, let his repentance and faith be ever so *perfect*.

But Christ has so completely fulfilled our Creator's paradisiacal law of innocence, that we shall not be judged by *that* law, but by a law adapted to our present state and circumstances—a milder law, called *the law of Christ*, i. e., the Mediator's law, which is, like himself, *full of evangelical grace and truth*. We are, therefore, *not without law to God*, nor yet under a *Christless* law with Adam, *but under a law to Christ*, that is, under the law of our royal Priest, the evangelical *law of liberty*. A more gracious law this, which allows a sincere repentance, and is fulfilled by loving faith. Now, as we shall be judged by this *law of liberty*, we maintain not only that it *may*, but also that it *must*, be kept; and that it is actually kept by established Christians, according to the last and fullest edition of it, which is that of the New Testament. Nor do we think it "*shocking*" to hear an adult believer say, *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law [of innocence, or the Mosaic law] could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be [evangelically] fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

It is this view of the law under which we are placed that St. James takes when he says, *So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty*, James ii, 12. Now, as a reasonable father never requires of his child who is only ten years old the works of one who is thirty years of age, so our

heavenly Father never expects of us, in our debilitated state, the obedience of immortal Adam in paradise, or the uninterrupted worship of sleepless angels in heaven. We are persuaded, therefore, that for Christ's sake he is pleased with an humble obedience to our *present* light, and a loving exertion of our *present* powers; *accepting* our gospel services *according to what we have, and not according to what we have not*. Nor dare we call that loving exertion of our present power *sin*, lest by so doing we should contradict the Scriptures, confound *sin* and *obedience*, and remove all the landmarks which divide the devil's common from the Lord's vineyard.

Although adult, established believers, or perfect Christians, may admit of many *involuntary* mistakes, errors, and faults, and of many *involuntary* improprieties of speech and behaviour; yet, so long as their *will* is bent on doing God's will—so long as they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit—so long as they *fulfil the law of liberty* by pure love, they do not *sin* according to the gospel: because (evangelically speaking) *sin is the transgression*, and *love is the fulfilling of the law*. Far, then, from thinking that there is the least absurdity in saying daily, *Vouchsafe to keep me this day without sin*, we doubt not but in the believers *who walk in the light as Christ is in the light*, that deep petition is answered; the righteousness of the law, which they are under, is fulfilled; and, of consequence, an evangelically *sinless* perfection is daily experienced. I say *evangelically sinless*, because, without the word evangelically, the phrase *sinless perfection* gives occasion for cavilling to those who seek it, as Mr. Wesley intimates in the following quotation, which is taken

from his *Plain Account* of Christian Perfection:—
 “1. Not only *sin, properly so called*, that is, a *voluntary* transgression of a known law, but *sin, improperly so called*, that is, an *involuntary* transgression of a divine law, known or unknown, needs the atoning blood. 2. I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these *involuntary* transgressions, which I apprehend to be consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. 3. Therefore, *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. 4. I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. 5. Such transgressions you may call *sins*, if you please: I do not.”

SECTION III.

SEVERAL PLAUSIBLE OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN PERFECTION ANSWERED.

“IT will supersede the use of mortification and watchfulness; for if sin be dead, what need have we to mortify it and watch against it?”

This objection has some plausibility; I shall therefore answer it various ways. 1. If Adam, in his state of paradisiacal perfection, needed perfect watchfulness and perfect mortification, how much more do we need them, who find *the tree of knowledge of good and evil* planted, not only in the midst of our gardens, but in the midst of our houses, markets, and churches? 2. When we are delivered from sin, are we delivered from *peccability* and temptation? When the inward man of sin is dead, is the devil dead? Is the cor-

ruption that is in the world destroyed? And have we not still our five senses, and our appetites, *to keep with all diligence*, as well as our hearts, that the tempter may not enter into us, or that we may not enter into his temptations? Lastly, Jesus Christ, as son of Mary, was a *perfect* man. But how was he kept so to the end? Was it not by *keeping his mouth with a bridle while the ungodly were in his sight*, and by guarding all his senses with perfect assiduity, that the wicked one might not touch them to his hurt? And if Christ, our head, kept his human perfection only through *watchfulness* and constant self-denial, is it not absurd to suppose that his perfect members can keep their perfection without treading in his steps?

“Your doctrine of perfection makes it needless for perfect Christians to say the Lord’s prayer, ‘*Forgive us our trespasses.*’”

We answer, 1. Though a perfect Christian does not trespass voluntarily, and break the law of love, yet he daily breaks the law of Adamic perfection, through the imperfection of his bodily and mental powers: and he has frequently a deeper sense of these involuntary trespasses than many weak believers have of their voluntary breaches of the moral law. 2. Although a perfect Christian has a witness that his sins are now forgiven in the court of his conscience, yet *he knows the terrors of the Lord*: he hastens to meet the awful day of God: he waits for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ in the character of a righteous Judge: he keeps an eye to the awful tribunal before which he must soon be *justified or condemned by his words*: he is conscious that his final *justification* is not yet come: and therefore he would think himself a monster of stupidity and

pride, if, with an eye to his absolution in the great day, he scrupled saying, to the end of his life, "Forgive us our trespasses." 3. He is surrounded with sinners who daily *trespass against him*, and whom he is daily bound to *forgive*; and his praying that he may be forgiven now, and in the great day, *as he forgave others*, reminds him that he may forfeit his pardon, and binds him more to the performance of the important duty of forgiving his enemies. And, 4. His charity is so ardent that it melts him, as it were, into the common mass of mankind. Bowing himself, therefore, under the enormous load of all the wilful trespasses which his fellow-mortals, and particularly his relatives and his brethren, daily commit against God, he says, with a fervour that imperfect Christians seldom feel, "*Forgive us our trespasses,*" &c. *We are heartily sorry for our misdoings: [my own and those of my fellow sinners:] the remembrance of them is grievous unto us: the burden of them is intolerable.* Nor do we doubt but when the spirit of mourning leads a numerous assembly into the vale of humiliation, the person who puts the shoulder of faith most readily to the common burden of sin, and heaves the most powerfully in order to roll the enormous load into the Redeemer's grave, is the most perfect penitent—the most exact observer of the apostolic precept, Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; and, of consequence, we do not scruple to say, that such a person is the most *perfect Christian* in the whole assembly.

"Your account of *Christian perfection* represents adult believers as *free from sin*: now *sin* is that which humbles us, and drives us to Christ, and therefore if we

were free from indwelling sin, we should lose a most powerful incentive to humility."

We answer: Sin never humbled any soul. Who has more sin than *Satan*? And who is prouder? Did sin make our first parents humble? If it did not, how do our brethren suppose that its nature is altered for the better? Who was humbler than Christ? But was he indebted to *sin* for his *humility*? Do we not see daily, that the more sinful men are, the prouder they are also? If sin be necessary to make us *humble*, and to keep us near Christ, does it not follow that glorified saints, whom all acknowledge to be sinless, are all proud despisers of Christ? See we not sin enough, when we look ten or twenty years back, to humble us to the dust for ever, if sin can do it? Need we plead for any more of it in our hearts and lives? If the sins of our youth do not humble us, are the sins of our old age likely to do it? Lastly, what is indwelling sin but indwelling pride? At least, is not inbred pride one of the chief ingredients of indwelling sin? And how can pride be productive of humility? Can a serpent beget a dove? And will not men gather grapes from thorns sooner than humility of heart from haughtiness of spirit?

SECTION IV.

THE ABSURDITY OF SAYING THAT ALL OUR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION IS IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

IF by being *perfect* only *in Christ* be meant that we can attain to Christian perfection no other way than by being perfectly grafted *in him, the true vine*, and by deriving, like vigorous branches, the *perfect* sap of his

perfect righteousness to enable us to bring forth fruit unto *perfection*, we are entirely agreed: for we perpetually assert, that nothing but *Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith*, or, which is all one, nothing but *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus can make us free from the law of sin, and perfect us in love*. But as we never advanced that *Christian perfection* is attainable any other way than by a faith that *roots and grounds us in Christ*; we doubt some mystery of iniquity lies hid under the equivocal phrases, "All our perfection is in Christ's person—We are perfect in him, and not in ourselves."

Should those who use them insinuate by such language that we cannot be perfect by an inherent personal conformity to God's holiness, because *Christ is thus perfect for us*; or should they mean that we are *perfect in him* just as country freeholders, entirely strangers to state affairs, are perfect politicians in the knights of the shire who represent them in parliament; as the sick in a hospital are *perfectly* healthy in the physician that gives them his attendance; as the blind man enjoyed *perfect sight* in Christ when he saw walking men like moving trees; as the filthy leper was *perfectly* clean in our Lord before he had felt the power of his gracious words, *I will, be thou clean*; or as hungry Lazarus was *perfectly* fed in the person of the rich man at whose gate he lay starving—should this, I say, be their meaning, we are conscience-bound to oppose it, for the reasons contained in the following queries:—

1. If believers are perfect because Christ is perfect for them, why does the apostle exhort them to go on to perfection?

2. If all our perfection be inherent in Christ, is it not strange that St. Paul should exhort us to *perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, by cleansing ourselves of all filthiness of flesh and spirit*? Did not Christ perfect his own holiness? And will his personal sanctity be imperfect till we have cleaned *ourselves* from all defilement?

3. If Christ be perfect for us, why does St. James say, *Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect*? Is Christ's perfection suspended on the *perfect work* of our patience?

4. Upon the scheme which I oppose, what does St. Peter mean when he says, *After ye have suffered a while, the Lord make you perfect*? What has our *suffering a while* to do with Christ's perfection? Was not Christ made perfect through his own suffering?

5. If believers were perfect in Christ's person, they would all be *equally* perfect. But is this the case? Does not St. John talk of some who were *perfected*, and others who are *not yet made perfect in love*? Besides, the apostle exhorts to be *perfect*, not in Antinomian notions, but *in all the will of God*, and *in every good work*; and common sense dictates that there is some difference between our *good works* and the *person of Christ*.

6. Does not our Lord himself show, that his personal righteousness will by no means be accepted instead of our perfection, where he says, "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit* [or whose fruit never grows to any perfection, see Luke viii, 14] *my Father taketh it away*," far from imputing it to his perfect fruitfulness?

7. In the nature of things, can Christ's perfection

supply the want of that perfection which he calls us to? Is there not a more essential difference between Christ's perfection and that of a believer, than there is between the perfection of a rose and that of the grass of the field? between the perfection of a soaring eagle and that of a creeping insect? If our Lord is the head of the church, and we the members, is it not absurd to suppose that his perfection becomes us in every respect? Were I allowed to carry on a Scriptural metaphor, I would ask, Is not the perfection of the head very different from that of the *hand*? And do we not take advantage of the credulity of the simple when we make them believe that an impenitent adulterer and murderer is perfect in Christ; or, if you please, that a crooked leg and cloven foot are *perfectly* handsome, if they do but somehow belong to a beautiful face?

8. Let us illustrate this a little more. Does not the Redeemer's *personal* perfection consist in being *God* and *man* in one person; in his being *eternally begotten* by the Father as the *Son of God*, and *unbegotten* in time by a father, as the *son of man*; in *having given his life a ransom for all*; in his *having taken it up again*; and his *standing in the midst of the throne, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him*? Consider this, candid believer, and say if any man or angel can decently hope that such an incommunicable perfection can ever fall to his share.

9. As the *Redeemer's* personal perfection cannot suit the *redeemed*, no more can the personal perfection of the *redeemed* be found in the *Redeemer*. A believer's perfection consists in such a degree of *faith* as *works* by perfect *love*. And does not this high degree of faith chiefly imply uninterrupted self-diffidence, self-denial,

self-despair? a heartfelt, ceaseless recourse to the blood, merits, and righteousness of Christ? and a grateful love to him, *because he first loved us*, and fervent charity to all mankind for *his sake*? Three things these which, in the very nature of things, either cannot be in the Saviour at all, or cannot possibly be in him in the same manner in which they must be in believers.

10. Is not the doctrine of our being perfect in Christ's person big with mischief? Does it not open a *refuge of lies* to the loosest ranters in the land? Are there none who say, We are perfect in Christ's person? In him we have perfect chastity and honesty, perfect temperance and meekness; and we should be guilty of Pharisaic insolence if we patched his perfection with filthy rags of our personal holiness? And has not this doctrine a direct tendency to set godliness aside, and to countenance gross Antinomianism?

Lastly. When our Lord preached the doctrine of perfection, did he not do it in such a manner as to demonstrate that our perfection must be *personal*? Did he ever say, *If thou wilt be perfect*, only believe that I am perfect for thee? On the contrary, did he not declare, *If thou wilt be perfect*, *sell what thou hast*, [part with all that stands in thy way,] *and follow me* in the way of perfection? and again, *Do good to them that hate you*, *that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect?* Who can read these words and not see that the perfection which Christ preached is a perfection of holy dispositions, productive of holy actions in all his followers? and that, of consequence, it is a personal perfection, as much *inherent* in us, and yet as much *derived* from him, and *dependant* on him,

as the perfection of our bodily health? the chief difference consisting in this, that the perfection of our health comes to us from God in Christ, as the God of *nature*; whereas our Christian perfection comes to us from God in Christ, as the God of *grace*.

CHAPTER XXII.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION, TAKEN FROM CERTAIN PASSAGES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, ANSWERED.

SECTION I.

EXPOSITION OF 1 KINGS VIII, 46: "IF THEY SIN AGAINST THEE, (FOR THERE IS NO MAN THAT SINNETH NOT,) AND THOU BE ANGRY WITH THEM," &c.

No unprejudiced person who, in reading this passage, takes the parenthesis ("for there is no man that sinneth not") in connection with the context, can, I think, help seeing that the Rev. Mr. Toplady, who, if I remember right, quotes this text against us, mistakes *Solomon* as much as Mr. Hill does *St. John*. The meaning is evidently, there is no man who is not liable to sin, and that a man actually sins when he actually departs from God. Now *peccability*, or a *liableness to sin*, is not *indwelling sin*; for angels, Adam, and Eve, were all *liable to sin*, in their *sinless* state. And that there are some men who do not actually sin, is indubitable: 1. From the hypothetical phrase in the context, *if any man sin*, which shows that their sinning is not unavoidable. 2. From God's *anger* against those that sin, which is immediately mentioned. Hence

it appears that so certain as God is not angry with all his people, some of them do not sin in the sense of the wise man. And, 3. From *Solomon's* intimating that these very men who have sinned, or have actually departed from God, may *bethink themselves, repent, and turn to God with all their heart, and with all their soul*, that is, may attain the dispensation; the two poles not being more opposed to each other than *sinning is to repenting, and departing from God to returning to him with all our heart and with all our soul*. Take, therefore, the whole passage together, and you have a demonstration that *where sin hath abounded, there grace may much more abound*. And what is it but a demonstration that our doctrine is not chimerical? For if *Jews*, [*Solomon* himself being judge,] instead of *sinning* and departing from God, can *repent and turn to him with all their heart*, how much more *Christians*, whose privileges are much greater!

If Mr. Hill will consult the original of this passage, "There is no man, &c.," he will find that the word translated *sinneth* is in the future tense, which is often used for an *indefinite* tense in the *potential* mood, because the Hebrews have no such mood or tense; therefore our translators would only have done justice to the *original*, as well as to the context, if they had rendered the whole clause, *There is no man that may not sin*. instead of, *There is no man that sinneth not*.

SECTION II.

EXPOSITION OF ECCLES. VII, 20: "THERE IS NOT A JUST MAN UPON EARTH THAT DOES GOOD AND SINNETH NOT."

1. WE are not sure that these are to be regarded as the words of Solomon; for he may introduce here the very same man who, four verses before, says, *Be not righteous overmuch, &c.*; and Mr. Toplady may mistake the meaning in one text, as Dr. Trapp has done in the other. But, 2. Supposing *Solomon* speaks, may not he in general assert what St. Paul does, Rom. iii, 23, *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*, the *just* not excepted? Is not this the very sense which *Canne*, Calvinist as he was, gives to the wise man's words when he refers the reader to this assertion of the apostle? And did we ever speak against this true doctrine? 3. If you take the original word *sin* in the lowest sense which it bears; if it mean here what it does Judges xx, 16, namely, *to miss a mark*, we shall not differ; for we maintain that, according to the standard of paradisiacal perfection, *there is not a just man upon earth that does good and misses not* the mark of that perfection, that is, that does not lessen the good he does by some *involuntary*, and therefore (evangelically speaking) sinless defect. 4. It is bold to pretend to overthrow the glorious liberty of God's children, which is asserted in a hundred plain passages of the New Testament, by producing so vague a text as Eccles. vii, 20.

SECTION III.

THE TRUE MEANING OF GAL. V, 17: "THE FLESH LUSTETH AGAINST THE SPIRIT; AND THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH, SO THAT YE CANNOT DO THE THINGS THAT YE WOULD."

1. ST. PAUL wrote these words to the *carnal, fallen* Galatians. To them he said, *So that ye cannot do the things that ye would*: and there was good reason why *they could not do* what they had a weak desire to do. They were bewitched by the flesh, and by carnal teachers, who led them from the power of the Spirit to the weakness of the letter; yea, to the letter of Judaism too. But did he not speak of himself to the Philippians in a very different strain? Did he not declare, *I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me*? And cannot every believer who steadily walks in the Spirit say the same thing? Who does not see the flaw of this argument? The *disobedient, fallen, bewitched* believers of Galatia, of whom St. Paul stood in doubt, could not but fulfil the lusts of the flesh, when they were led by the flesh: *neither hot nor cold*, like the Laodiceans, they could neither be perfect Christians nor perfect worldlings, because they fully sided neither with the Spirit nor with the flesh; or, to use the apostle's words, *they could not do the things that they would*, through the opposition which the flesh made against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; neither of these principles being yet fully victorious in their halting, distracted hearts: therefore this must be also the miserable case of all obedient,

faithful, established believers through all ages, all the world over! What has this Antinomian conclusion to do with the Scriptural premises? When I assert that those who have put out their knees cannot run a race swiftly, do I so much as intimate that no man can be a swift racer?

The sense which is affixed to this text by our opponents is entirely overturned by the context. Read the preceding verse, and you will find a glorious though conditional promise of the liberty which we plead for: *This I say, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the [sinful] lusts of the flesh*; that is, far from harbouring either outward or inward sin, ye shall, with myself, and as many as are perfect, steadily keep your body under, and be in every thing spiritually minded, which is *life and peace*.

2. It appears that the genuine meaning of Gal. v, 17, when considered in the light of the context, is fairly expressed in the following lines: "The flesh and the Spirit are two contrary principles. *They that are in, or walk after, the flesh, cannot please God*. And ye are undoubtedly in the flesh, and walk after the flesh, while *ye bite and devour one another*. *This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit; be led by the Spirit; and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*, as ye now do. *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, and prevails in all carnal people; *and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh* in all spiritual people; and these two, far from nestling together, as Antinomian teachers make you believe, *are contrary to each other*. They are irreconcilable enemies; *so that*, as obedient, spiritual believers, while they are led by the Spirit, *cannot do what they would do* if they were led by the flesh, ye

bewitched, carnal, disobedient Galatians, who are led by the flesh, *cannot do what ye would do* if ye were led by the Spirit, and what ye have still some desire to do, so far as ye have not yet absolutely quenched the Spirit. Would ye then return to your liberty? Return to your duty; change your guide; forsake the carnal mind; let *Christ be formed in you; be led by the Spirit*; so shall ye *fulfil the law of Christ*, and it shall no more condemn you. *For if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the curse of the law: ye are equally free from the bondage of the Mosaic law and from the condemnation of the law of Christ,*" Gal. v, 16, 17, 18.

3. If I am not greatly mistaken, the preceding remarks prove, 1. That when our opponents pretend to demonstrate the *necessary* indwelling of sin in all believers from Gal. v, 17, they wretchedly tear that text from the context, to make it speak a language which St. Paul abhors. 2. That the text, fairly taken together with the context, and the design of the whole epistle, is a proof that obedient, spiritual believers can do what the *bewitched Galatians* could not do.

SECTION IV.

ST. PAUL, WHILE AN APOSTLE, WAS NOT CARNAL AND SOLD UNDER SIN. TRUE MEANING OF ROM. VII, 14.

1. ST. PAUL no more professes himself actually a carnal man in Rom. vii, 14, than he professes himself actually a liar in Rom. iii, 7, where he says, *But if the truth of God has more abounded through my lie,*

why am I yet judged as a sinner? He no more professes himself a man *actually sold under sin*, than St. James and his fellow-believers profess themselves a generation of vipers, and actual cursers of men, when the one wrote, and the others read, *The tongue can no man tame: it is full of deadly poison: therewith curse we men.*

2. When St. Paul reproves the partiality of some of the Corinthians to this or that preacher, he introduces Apollos and himself; though it seems that his reproof was chiefly intended for other preachers, who fomented a party spirit in the corrupted church at Corinth. And then he says, *These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos, for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written.* By the same figure he says of himself, what he might have said of any other man, or of all mankind, *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass.* Thrice in three verses he speaks of *his not having charity*: and suppose he had done it three hundred times, this would no more have proved that he was really *uncharitable*, than his saying, Rom. vii, 14, *I am sold under sin*, proves that he *served the law of sin with his body*, as a slave is forced to serve the master who bought him.

3. It frequently happens also, that by a figure of rhetoric, which is called *hypotyposis*, writers relate things past or things to come in the present tense, that their narration may be more lively, and may make a stronger impression. Thus, Gen. vi, 17, we read, *Behold, I, even I, do bring* [that is, I will bring, one hundred and twenty years hence] *a flood upon the*

earth. Thus also 2 Sam. xxii, 1, 35, 48, When the Lord had delivered David out of the hands of his enemies, and had given him peace in all his borders, he spake the words of this song:—*He teacheth* [i. e., he taught] *my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is* [i. e., was] *broken by mine arms. It is God that avengeth* [i. e., that hath avenged] *me,—and that bringeth* [i. e., hath brought] *me forth from mine enemies.* A thousand such expressions, or this figure continued through a thousand verses, would never prove that King Saul was alive, and that King David was not yet delivered for good out of his bloody hands. Now, if St. Paul, by a similar figure, which he carries throughout part of a chapter, relates his past experience in the present tense; if the Christian apostle, to humble himself, and to make his description more lively, and the opposition between the bondage of sin and Christian liberty more striking; if the apostle, I say, with such a design as this, appears upon the stage of instruction in his old Jewish dress,—a dress this in which he could serve God day and night, and yet, like another Ahab, breathe threatenings and slaughter against God's children; and if in this dress he says, *I am carnal, sold under sin, &c.*; is it not ridiculous to measure his growth as an apostle of Christ by the standard of his stature when he was a Jewish bigot, a fiery zealot, full of good meanings and bad performances?

4. The states of all souls may, in general, be reduced to three:—1. The state of *unawakened* sinners, who quietly sleep in the chains of their sins, and dream of self-righteousness and heaven; 2. *That of awakened*, uneasy, reluctant sinners, who try in vain to break the galling chains of their sins; and 3. *That of delivered*

sinner, or victorious believers, who enjoy the liberty of God's children. This last state is described in Rom. vii, 4, 6. The rest of that chapter is judiciously brought in, to show how the *unawakened* sinner is roused out of his carnal state, and how the *awakened* sinner is driven to Christ for liberty by the lashing and binding commandment. The apostle shows this by observing [ver. 7, &c.] how the law makes a *sinner* [or, if you please, made him] pass from the *unawakened* to the *awakened* state. *I had not known sin*, says he, *but by the law*, &c. When he had described his unawakened state without the law, and began to describe his awakened state under the law, nothing was more natural than to change the time or tense. But having already used the *past tense* in the description of the first, or the unawakened state; and having said, *Without the law sin was dead—I was alive without the law once—Sin revived and I died*, &c., he could no more use that tense when he began to describe the second, or awakened state; he was therefore obliged to use another tense, and none in that case was fitter than the *present*: just as if he had said, When I died to my self-righteous hopes, &c., the language of my heart was, *I am carnal, sold under sin*, &c. It is, therefore, with the utmost rhetorical propriety that the apostle says, *I am*, and not *I was*, carnal, &c.

SECTION V.

PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH EXPLAINED.

“THERE was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted

above measure, 2 Cor. xii, 7. Now what could this *thorn in the flesh* be but a *sinful lust*? And what the *messenger of Satan*, but *pride or immoderate anger*?"

1. You entirely mistake the apostle's meaning. While you try to make him a *moderate imperfectionist*, you make him an *impudent Antinomian*; for, speaking of his *thorn in the flesh*, and of *this messenger*, he calls them his infirmities. Now if his infirmities were *pride*, a *wrathful disposition*, and a *filthy lust*, did he not act the part of a filthy Antinomian when he said that he gloried in them? Would not even Paul's carnal man have blushed to speak thus? Far from glorying in his pride, wrath, or indwelling lust, did he not groan, *O wretched man that I am*?

2. The apostle, still speaking of *his thorn in the flesh*, and of *Satan buffeting* him by proxy, and still calling these trials *his infirmities*, explains himself farther in these words: *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions, &c., for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong.* Those infirmities, that thorn in the flesh, that buffeting of Satan, cannot be indwelling sin, or any out-breaking of it, for the devil himself could do no more than to take pleasure in his wickedness; and in Rom. vii, the carnal penitent himself delights *in the law of God after the inward man*, instead of taking pleasure in his indwelling sin.

3. The *infirmities* in which St. Paul glories and takes pleasure were such as had been given him to keep him humble after his revelations. *There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, &c., 2 Cor. xii, 7.* Those infirmities and that thorn were not then indwelling sin, for indwelling sin was not given him after

his visions, seeing [according to Calvinism] it stuck fast in him long before he went to *Damascus*. It is absurd, therefore, to suppose that *God gave him the thorn* of indwelling sin afterward, or indeed that he gave it to him at all.

4. If Mr. *Hill* wants to know what we understand by St. Paul's *thorn in the flesh*, and by *the messenger of Satan* that buffeted him, we reply, that we understand his bodily infirmities, the great weakness, and the violent headache with which *Tertullian* and *St. Chrysostom* inform us the apostle was afflicted. The same God who said to Satan concerning Job, *Behold he is in thine hand, to touch his bone and his flesh, but save his life*; the same God who permitted that adversary to *bind the daughter of Abraham with a spirit of bodily infirmity for eighteen years*; the same gracious God, I say, permitted Satan to afflict St. Paul's body with uncommon pains; and at times, it seems, with preternatural weakness, which made his appearance and delivery contemptible in the eyes of his adversaries. That this is not a conjecture, grounded upon uncertain tradition, is evident from the apostle's own words two pages before. *His letters, say they, [that buffeted me in the name of Satan,] are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible, 2 Cor. x, 10.* And soon after, describing these emissaries of the devil, he says, *Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: [to oppose me and prejudice you against my ministry:] and no marvel; for Satan himself [who sets them on] is transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi, 13.* But if the *thorn in the flesh* be all one with the buffeting

messenger of Satan, St. Paul's meaning is evidently this: "God, who suffered the Canaanites to be scourges in the sides of the Israelites, and thorns in their eyes, (Josh. xxiii, 13,) has suffered Satan to bruise my heel, while I bruise his head; and that adversary afflicts me thus, by his thorns and pricking briers, that is, by false apostles, who buffet me through malicious misrepresentations, which render me vile in your sight." This sense is strongly countenanced by these words of Ezekiel: *They shall know that I am the Lord, and there shall be no more a pricking brier to the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them.*

SECTION VI.

EXPOSITION OF 1 JOHN I, 8: "IF WE SAY WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US."

1. IN this passage St. John designs to strike a blow at *Pharisaic professors*. There were in his time, as there are in our own, numbers of men who had never been properly convinced of sin, and who boasted, as St. Paul once did, that *touching the righteousness of the law, they were blameless*; they served God; they did their duty; they gave alms; they never did anybody any harm: they thanked God they were not as other men; but especially that they were not like those mourners in Sion, who were, no doubt, very wicked, since they made so much ado about God's mercy, and a powerful application of the Redeemer's cleansing blood. How proper then was it for St. John to inform his readers that these *whole-hearted* Christians, these

perfect Pharisees, were no better than *liars* and *self deceivers*; and that true Christian righteousness is always attended by a genuine conviction of our *native* depravity, and an humble acknowledgment of our *actual* transgressions.

These things being premised, it appears that the text so dear to us, as mistaken by our opponents, has this fair and Scriptural meaning: "*If we* [followers of Him who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance] *say we have no sin*, [no *native* depravity from our first parents, and no *actual* sin, at least no such sin as deserves God's wrath; fancying we need not secure a particular application of Christ's atoning and purifying blood,] *we deceive ourselves, and the truth* [of repentance and faith] *is not in us*.

That these words are levelled at the monstrous error of self-conceited and self-perfected Pharisees, and not at *the glorious liberty of the children of God*, appears to us indubitable from the following reasons:—1. The immediately preceding verse strongly asserts this liberty. 2. The verse immediately following secures it also, and cuts down the doctrine of our opponents; the apostle's meaning being evidently this: "Though I write to you that *if we say* we are originally free from sin, and never did any harm, *we deceive ourselves*; yet mistake me not; I do not mean that we need continue under the guilt, or in the moral infection of any sin, original or actual: for if we penitently and believingly confess both, *he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, whether it be native or self-contracted, internal or external. Therefore if we have attained the glorious liberty of God's children, we need not, through

voluntary humility, say that we do nothing but sin. It will be sufficient, when we are *cleansed from all unrighteousness*, still to be deeply humbled for our present infirmities and for our past sins, confessing both with godly sorrow and filial shame. For if we should say, *We have not sinned*, [note, St. John does not write, *If we should say, We do not sin,*] we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us; common sense dictating, that if *we have not sinned* we speak an untruth when we profess that Christ has *forgiven our sins*. This appears to us the true meaning of John i, 8, when it is fairly considered in the light of the *context*.

If these remarks be just, does it not appear that it is as absurd to stab Christian perfection through the sides of *Job, Isaiah, and Solomon*, as to set *Peter, Paul, James, and John* upon "*cutting it up, root and branch?*"

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONTAINING A VARIETY OF ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THE MISCHIEVOUSNESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN IMPERFECTION.

THE following arguments are intended to prove the MISCHIEVOUSNESS of Mr. Hill's doctrine of Christian imperfection.

I. It strikes at the doctrine of *salvation by faith*. "By grace are ye saved through faith," not only from the guilt and outward acts of sin, but also from its root and secret buds. "Not of * works," says the apostle,

* Here, and in some other places, St. Paul by "works" means only the deeds of a Christless, antimediatorial law, and the obedi-

“lest any man should [Pharisaically] boast;” and may we not add, Not of DEATH, lest he that had the power of death, that is, the devil, should [absurdly] boast? Does not what strikes at the doctrine of faith, and abridges the salvation which we obtain by it, equally strike at Christ’s power and glory? Is it not the business of faith to receive Christ’s saving word, to apprehend the power of his sanctifying Spirit, and to inherit all the great promises by which he saves his penitent, believing people from their sins? Is it not evident that if no believers can be saved from indwelling sin through faith, we must correct the apostle’s doctrine, and say, “By grace are ye saved *from the remains of sin*, through death?” And can unprejudiced Protestants admit so Christ-debasing, death-exalting a tenet, without giving a dangerous blow to the genuine doctrines of the Reformation?

II. It dishonours Christ as *a Prophet*: for, as such, he came to teach us to be now “meek and lowly in heart:” but the imperfect gospel of the day teaches that we must necessarily continue passionate and proud in heart till death; for pride and immoderate anger are, I apprehend, two main branches of indwelling sin. Again: my motto demonstrates that he publicly encephalic to the Jewish covenant, which is frequently called “the law,” in opposition to the Christian covenant, which is commonly called “the gospel,” that is, the gospel of Christ, because Christ’s gospel is the most excellent of all the gospel dispensations. The apostle, therefore, by the expression, “not of works,” does by no means exclude from “final” salvation, the law of faith, and the works done in obedience to that law: for, in the preceding verse, he secures the obedience of faith when he says, “Ye are saved [that is, made partakers of the blessing of the Christian dispensation] by grace through faith.” Here then the word “by grace” secures the first gospel axiom, and the word “through faith” secures the second.

taught the multitudes the doctrine of perfection, and Mr. Hill insinuates that this doctrine is "shocking," not to say "blasphemous."

III. It disgraces Christ as *the Captain of our salvation*: for St. Paul says, that our Captain furnishes us with "weapons mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds, and to the bringing of every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." But our opponents represent the devil's strong hold as absolutely impregnable. No weapons of our warfare can pull down Apollyon's throne. Inbred sin shall maintain its place in man's heart till death strike the victorious blow. Christ may indeed fight against the Jericho within, as "Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon:" but then he must send for death, as Joab sent for David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters: now, therefore, gather the rest of the people together, encamp against the city, and take it, lest I take the city, and it be called after my name," 2 Sam. xii, 27, 28.

IV. It pours contempt upon him as *the Surety of the new covenant*, in which God has engaged himself to deliver obedient believers "from their enemies, that they may serve him without [tormenting] fear, all the days of their lives." For how does he execute his office in this respect, if he never sees that such believers be delivered from their most oppressive and inveterate enemy, indwelling sin? Or if that deliverance take place only at death, how can they, in consequence of their death freedom, "serve God without fear all the days of their lives?"

V. It affronts Christ as a *King*, when it represents the believer's heart, which is Christ's spiritual throne, as being necessarily full of indwelling sin—a spiritual rebel,

who, notwithstanding the joint efforts of Christ and the believer, maintains his power against them both during the term of life. Again : does not a good king deliver his loyal subjects from oppression, and avenge them of a tyrannical adversary, when they cry to him in their distress ? But does our Lord show himself such a king, if he never avenge them, nor turn the usurper, the murderer, sin, out of their breasts ? Once more : if our deliverance from sin depend upon the stroke of death, and not upon a stroke of Christ's grace, might we not call upon *the king of terrors*, as well as upon *the King of saints*, for deliverance from the remains of sin ? But where is the difference between saying, "O death, help us !" and crying, "O Baal, save us ?"

VI. It injures Christ as a *Restorer* of pure, spiritual worship in God's spiritual temple, the heart of man. For it indirectly represents him as a Pharisaic Saviour, who made much ado about driving, with a whip, harmless sheep and oxen out of his Father's material temple ; but who gives full leave to Satan, not only to bring sheep and doves into the believer's heart, but also to harbour and breed there during the term of life the swelling toad, pride ; and the hissing viper, envy ; to say nothing of the greedy dog, avarice, and the filthy swine, impurity ; under pretence of "exercising the patience, and engaging the industry" of the worshippers, if we may believe the Calvin of the day. (See the argument against Christian perfection at the end of this section.)

VII. It insults Christ as a *Priest* ; for our Melchisedec shed his all-cleansing blood upon the cross, and now pours his all-availing prayer before the throne ; asking that, upon evangelical terms, we may now be

“cleansed from all unrighteousness, and perfected in one.” But if we assert that believers, let them be ever so faithful, can never be thus cleansed and perfected in one till death comes to the Saviour’s assistance, do we not place our Lord’s cleansing blood, and powerful intercession, and of consequence his priesthood, in an unscriptural and contemptible light? .

Should Mr. Hill attempt to retort this argument by saying, “that it is our doctrine, not his, which derogates from the honour of Christ’s priesthood, because we should no longer need our High Priest’s blood if we were cleansed from all sin;” I reply:—

(1.) Perfect Christians need as much the virtue of Christ’s blood, to prevent the guilt and pollution of sin from returning, as imperfect Christians want it to drive that guilt and pollution away. It is not enough that the blood of the true paschal Lamb has been sprinkled upon our souls to keep off the destroyer; it must still remain there to hinder his coming back “with seven other spirits more wicked than himself.” (2.) Mr. Hill is in the dark; he calls for a light; and when it is brought, he observes, The darkness of the room is now totally removed. “Is it so, sir?” replies his footman; “then you need these candles no more; if they have totally removed the darkness of your apartment, you have no more need of them.” Mr. Hill smiles at the absurdity of his servant’s argument; and yet it is well if he does not admire the wisdom of my opponent’s objection. (3.) The hearts of perfect Christians are cleansed, and kept clean, by faith; and Christian perfection means the perfection of Christian faith, whose property it is to endear Christ and his blood more and more; nothing then can be less reasonable than to say

that, upon our principles, perfect believers have done with the atoning blood. (4.) Such believers continually overcome the accuser of the brethren through the blood of the Lamb; there is no moment, therefore, in which they can spare it: they are feeble believers who can yet dispense with its constant application; and hence it is that they continue feeble. None make so much use of Christ's blood as perfect Christians. Once it was only their medicine, which they took now and then, when a fit of fear, or a pang of guilt, obliged them to it; but now it is the divine preservative, which keeps off the infection of sin. Now it is the reviving cordial, which they take to prevent their "growing weary, or faint in their minds." Now it is their daily drink; now it is what they sprinkle their every thought, word, and work with. In a word, it is that blood which constantly speaks before God and in their consciences "better things than the blood of Abel," and actually procures for them all the blessings which they enjoy or expect. To say, therefore, that the doctrine of Christian perfection supersedes the need of Christ's blood, is not less absurd than to assert that the perfection of navigation renders the great deep a useless reservoir of water. Lastly: Are not the saints before the throne perfectly sinless? And who are more ready than they to extol the blood and sing the song of the Lamb: "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, be glory," &c.? If an angel preached to them the modern gospel, and desired them to plead for the remains of sin, lest they should lose their peculiar value for the atoning blood; would not they all suspect him to be an angel of darkness, transforming himself into an angel of light? And shall we be the dupes of the tempter, who

deceives good men, that they may deceive us by a similar argument?

VIII. It discredits Christ as *the Fulfiller* of the Father's promise, and as *the Sender* of the indwelling, abiding Comforter, in order that our joy may be full. For the Spirit never takes his constant abode as a Comforter in a heart full of indwelling sin. If he visit such a heart with his consolations, it is only "as a guest that tarrieth but a day." When he enters a soul fraught with inbred corruption, he rather acts as a Re-prover than as a Comforter; throwing down the tables of the spiritual money changers; hindering the vessels, which are not holiness unto the Lord, from being carried through God's spiritual temple, and expelling, according to the degree of our faith, whatsoever would make God's house "a den of thieves."

But, instead of this, Mr. Hill's doctrine considers the heart of a believer as a "den of lions;" and represents Christ's Spirit, not as the destroyer, but as the keeper of the wild beasts, and evil tempers which dwell therein. This I conclude from these words of the Rev. Mr. Toplady:—"They," indwelling sin and unholy tempers, "do not quite expire till the renewed soul is taken up from earth to heaven. In the mean time these heated remains of depravity will, too often, like prisoners in a dungeon, crawl toward the window, though in chains, and show themselves through the grate. Nay, I do not know whether the strivings of inherent corruption for mastery be not, frequently, more violent in a regenerate person than even in one who is dead in trespasses; as wild beasts are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded."—(See *Caveat against Unsound Doctrines*, p. 65.) When I read this gospel, I cannot

but throw in a Caveat against Mr. Toplady's Caveat. For if his be not unsound, every body must allow it to be uncomfortable and unsafe. Who would not think it dreadfully dangerous to dwell with one wild beast that cannot be killed, unless we are first killed ourselves? But how much more dangerous is it to be condemned to dwell for life with a number of them which are not only immortal, so long as we are alive, but "are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded!" The Saviour preached by Mr. Toplady only wounds the Egyptian dragon, the inward Pharaoh, and makes him rage; but our Jesus drowns him in the sea of his own blood, barely by stretching out the rod of his power, when we stretch out to him our arms of faith. Mr. Hill's Redeemer only takes Agag prisoner, as double-minded Saul did; but our Redeemer "hews him in pieces," as upright Samuel. The Christ of the Calvinists says, "Confine the enemy; though he may possibly be fiercer than before;" but ours "thrusts out the enemy before us, and says, Destroy," Deut. xxxiii, 27. O, ye preachers of finished salvation, we leave it to your candour to decide which of these doctrines brings most glory to the saving name of Jesus.

IX. The doctrine of our *necessary* continuance in indwelling sin to our last moments makes us naturally overlook or despise the "exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature," that is, of God's perfect holiness; "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Pet. i, 4; and thus it naturally defeats the full effect of evangelical truths and ministerial labours; an effect this, which is thus described by St. Paul: "teaching every man in all wisdom, that we

may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," that is, perfect according to the richest dispensation of divine grace, which is, "the gospel of Christ Jesus," Col. i, 28. Again: "The Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works," 2 Tim. iii, 16. Now we apprehend that the perfection which thoroughly furnishes believers unto all good works, is a perfection productive of all the "good works" evangelically as well as providentially "prepared that we should walk in them" before death: because, (whatever Mr. Hill may insinuate to the contrary in England, and father Walsh at Paris,) the Scriptures say, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device" in death, that is, "in the grave whither thou goest." For as the tree falls, so it lies: if it falls full of rottenness with a brood of vipers, and a never-dying worm in its hollow centre, it will continue in that very condition; and wo to the man who trusts that the pangs of death will kill the worm, or that a purgative fire will spare the rotten wood and consume the vipers!

X. It defeats in part the end of the gospel precepts, to the fulfilling of which gospel promises are but means. "All the law, the prophets," and the apostolic writings, "hang on these two commandments:—*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, and thy neighbour as thyself," through penitential faith in the light of thy dispensation; that is, in two words, thou shalt be *evangelically perfect*. Now, if we believe that it is absolutely impossible to be thus perfect by keeping these two blessed commandments in faith, we cannot but believe also that God, who requires us to keep them, is defective in *wisdom, equity, and good-*

ness, by requiring us to do what is absolutely impossible; and we represent our Church as a wicked step-mother who betrays her children into the wanton commission of perjury, by requiring of every one of them, in the sacrament of baptism, a most solemn vow, by which they bind themselves, in the presence of God and of the congregation, that "they will keep God's holy will and commandments," that is, that they will keep God's evangelical law, "and walk in the same all the days of their life."

XI. It has a necessary tendency to unnerve our deepest prayers. How can we pray in faith that God would help us to "do his will on earth as it is done in heaven," or that he would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, that we may perfectly love him and worthily magnify his holy name:" how can we, I say, ask this in faith, if we disbelieve the very possibility of having these petitions answered? And what poor encouragement has Epaphras, upon the scheme which we oppose, "always to labour fervently for the Colossians in prayer, that they might stand perfect and complete in the will of God;" or St. Paul to wish that "the very God of peace would sanctify the Thessalonians wholly, and that their whole spirit, and soul, and body, might be preserved blameless," if these requests could not be granted before death, and were unavoidably to be granted to them and to all believers in the article thereof?

XII. It soothes lukewarm, unholy professors, and encourages them to sit quietly under the vine of Sodom, and under their own barren fig-tree: I mean under the baneful influence of their unbelief and indwelling sin; nothing being more pleasing to the carnal mind than this syren song:—"It is absolutely impossible that the

thoughts of your hearts should be cleansed in this life. God himself does not expect that you should be purified from all iniquity on this side the grave. It is proper that sin should dwell in your hearts by unbelief, to endear Christ to you, and so to *work together for your good.*" The preachers of mere morality insinuate that God does not forgive sins before death. This dangerous, uncomfortable doctrine, damps the faith of penitents, who think it absurd to expect *before death* what they are taught they can only receive *at death*. And as it is with the pardon of sins, so it is also with "cleansing from all unrighteousness." The preachers of Christian imperfection tell their hearers that nobody can be cleansed from heart sin *before death*. This new doctrine makes them secretly trust in a death purgatory, and hinders them from pleading in faith the promises of full sanctification before death stares them in the face; while others, like spared Agag, madly venture upon the spear of the king of terrors with their hearts full of indwelling sin. The dead tell no tales now; but it will be well if, in the day of resurrection, those who plead for the *necessary* indwelling of sin during the term of life do not meet in the great day with some deluded souls, who will give them no thanks for betraying them, to their last moments, into the hands of indwelling sin, by insinuating that there can be no deliverance from our evil tempers before we are ready to exchange a death-bed for a coffin.

XIII. It greatly discourages willing Israelites, and weakens the hands of the faithful spies who want to lead feeble believers on, and to take by force the kingdom which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; nothing being more proper to damp

their ardour than such a speech as this:—"You may strive against your corruptions and evil tempers as long as you please: but you shall never get rid of them; the Jericho within is impregnable: it is fenced up to heaven, and garrisoned by the tall, invincible, immortal sons of Anak: so strong are these adversaries, that the twelve apostles, with the help of Christ and the Holy Ghost, could never turn one of them out of his post. Nay, they so buffeted and overpowered St. Paul, the most zealous of the apostles, that they fairly took him prisoner, 'sold him under sin,' and made him groan to the last, 'O wretched, carnal man that I am, who shall deliver me from the law of *my inbred corruptions*, which brings me into captivity to the law of sin? I thank God through *death*. So then with the flesh,' you must, as well as St. Paul, 'serve the law of sin' till you die. Nor need you fret at these tidings; for they are the pure gospel of Christ, the genuine doctrines of free grace and Christian liberty. In Christ you are free, but in yourselves you must continue to serve the law of sin: and indeed why should you not do it, since *the sins of a Christian are for his good*; and *even the dung of a sheep of Christ is of some use*, nay, of the most excellent use, if we believe Mr. Hill; for the most grievous falls—falls into repeated acts of adultery and deliberate murder—serve to make us know our place, to drive us nearer to Christ, and to make us sing louder the praises of restoring grace." Besides, that gentleman represents those who preach deliverance from indwelling sin before we go into a death purgatory as "men of a Pharisaic cast; blind men, who never saw their own hearts; proud men, who oppose the righteousness of God; vain men, who aspire at robbing Christ of the

glory of being *alone without sin*: in short, men who hold doctrines which are shocking, not to say blasphemous."

How would this speech damp our desires after salvation from indwelling sin! How would it make us hug the cursed chains of our inbred corruptions, if the cloven foot of the imperfect, unchaste Diana, which it holds out to public view without gospel sandals, were not sufficient to shock us back from this impure gospel to the pure gospel of Jesus Christ! And yet (if I am not mistaken) this dangerous speech only unfolds the scope of Mr. Hill's "Creed for Perfectionists."

XIV. To conclude. The modish doctrine of Christian imperfection and death purgatory is so contrived, that carnal men will always prefer the purgatory of the Calvinists to that of the Papists. For the Papists prescribe I know not how many cups of divine wrath and dire vengeance, which are to be drunk by the souls of the believers who die *half* purged, or *three-parts* cleansed. These *half*-damned, or a *quarter*-damned creatures, must go through a severe discipline, and fiery salvation, in the very suburbs of hell, before they can be perfectly purified. But our opponents have found out a way to deliver half-hearted believers out of all fear in this respect. Such believers need not "utterly abolish the body of sin" in this world. The inbred man of sin not only *may*, but he *shall*, live as long as we do. You will possibly ask, "What is to become of this sinful guest? Shall he take us to hell, or shall we take him to heaven? If he cannot die in this world, will Christ destroy him in the next?" No: here Christ is almost left out of the question, by those who pretend to be determined to "know nothing but Christ and him cruci-

fied." Our indwelling adversary is not destroyed by the brightness of the Redeemer's spiritual appearing, but by the gloom of the appearance of death. Thus they have found another Jesus; another Saviour from sin. The king of terrors comes to the assistance of Jesus' sanctifying grace, and instantaneously delivers the carnal believer from indwelling pride, unbelief, covetousness, peevishness, uncharitableness, love of the world, and inordinate affection. Thus the clammy sweats, brought on by the greedy monster, kill, it seems, the tree of sin, of which the blood of Christ could only kill the buds! The dying sinner's breath does the capital work of the Spirit of holiness! And by the most astonishing of all miracles, the faint, infectious, last gasp of a sinful believer blows away, in the twinkling of an eye, the great mountain of inward corruption, which all the means of grace, all the faith, prayers, and sacraments of twenty, perhaps of forty years, with all the love in the heart of our Zerubbabel, all the blood in his veins, all the power in his hands, and all the faithfulness in his breast, were never able to remove! If this doctrine be true, how greatly was St. Paul mistaken when he said, "The sting of death is sin, &c. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Christ our Lord!" Should he not have said, *Death is the cure of sin*, instead of saying, "Sin is the sting of death?" And should not his praises flow thus: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through DEATH, our great and only deliverer from our greatest and fiercest enemy, *indwelling sin*?"

THE END.

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