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Scrutator to Responfor ;

O R,

An Introduction to a farther Proof,

(If Need be,)

That JESUS CHRIST, the blessed Son of God,
laid down his Life for the Sins of all Mankind.

In Two Letters to RESPONSOR.

With a short Letter to CONSIDERATOR.

If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God.
1 Peter iv. 11.



L E E D S :

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Scrutator to Responfor.

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LETTER I.

To Mr. RESPONFOR.

Dear SIR,

WHEN your's came abroad, I was on a journey; so that I had not the pleasure of seeing it, till it had been a week in the hands of your other readers; and even then, other important business, which required immediate dispatch, laid upon my hands. I could not, therefore, make my acknowledgements so early as I wished. I have since perused your favour. The result of that perusal, I beg your acceptance of, in the following Remarks.

It has long been my anxious wish, that if I should ever be called to walk the thorny path of Controversy, I might be favoured with a companion of good sense and christian candor; and, as I am now stepped into that path, in consequence of the three scandalous Pamphlets of Philaethes, Calvinisticus, and the author of Polyphemus, I trust you will not suspect me of flattery, Sir, if I say, I hope, I am indulged with the rare blessing, I so ardently wished for. If you and I, Sir, are but enabled to exemplify that too-much-neglected rule, "speaking the truth in love," I am persuaded that both we and others shall receive advantage from this friendly debate, even though we should not, after all, have the pleasure of "seeing eye to eye." That blessed day is coming, when the perfect light shall shine, and clouds and mists shall be dispelled for ever. There I hope, thro' infinite mercy, to embrace my good friend, in the arms of that pure, cordial affection, which, alas! our present de-

praved state is—I had almost said, totally unacquainted with.

I firmly believe, with an excellent Divine of the present century *, that “all the heresies which have corrupted and afflicted the church, owe their original to men’s departing from the simplicity of Scripture, and must derive their cure from a return to it.” May you and I, Sir, be happily instrumental, in the hand of our blessed Saviour, to promote this return!

When I first proposed the Query, August 15, 1780, I did not doubt but something could be said on your side of the question; and something which, by the management of an ingenious pen, like yours, might appear plausible too. This is the case on all subjects; otherwise no errors could be propagated. Men would never think to assert that which they have nothing to say in defence of. But without a “thus saith the Lord,” our assertions and inferences will signify very little to one who abides by the “simplicity of Scripture.” I must still say that one single text, if it could be found, which informs us that “Jesus did not die for the sins of all men,” would have much more force with me, than a volume of inferences and dilemmas. It is easy to infer, and to propose dilemmas on any subject, and on any side of a question, when the truth is entirely missed on *both* sides. This is unquestionably evident, in a thousand huge volumes, now extant. And it certainly arises from a disregard to, or neglect of, plain, positive Scripture testimony. “In every sacred truth,” says the amiable Dr. Watts †, “that is revealed to us, a plain evidence that God hath said it, should be a sufficient answer to a thousand objections made against it.”

I ask leave to remark farther, that you have thought proper, at least in part, to change the plan of operation; and instead of producing plain scriptural evidence in favour of the limited *extent* of our blessed Saviour’s death, and abiding by that, which was the task you had undertaken, you have set yourself to oppose the *universal* extent of it; a matter in which you had *now* no concern. The point in question was not whether it be

* The late Dr. Clark, of St. Alban’s.

† Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 254.

true that Christ died for all ; but whether “ the sacred writers maintain that he did not.” This you were engaged to prove ; and it is contrary to the laws of disputation to divert from it. I had not asserted that Christ died for all ; and therefore your opposition to it, at present, is only beating the air. You cannot suppose, Sir, that if the Scriptures do not say Jesus died only for a part of mankind, it is, therefore, necessarily inferred that he died for all ;—or, if they do not say he died for all, it is, therefore, implied that he only died for a part. It might be that the Scriptures do not decide this controversy ; but have left it, as one of the “ secret things that belong unto God.” And our common friend, OBSERVATOR, seems to be of this opinion. For otherwise, how can there be a necessity for “ endless debate” in order to decide it ? Certainly there can be no ground of *endless debate* between two honest men, in determining a plain matter of fact, recorded in a plain book, designed to instruct plain people, in a plain way to heaven ; which is the case now before us. Your not adverting to this, must be a glaring oversight. I avoided every thing that might look like a design to maintain that Jesus died for all, to give you entire liberty to state and defend your position to the best advantage. I hope you will treat me in the same fair manner, when I undertake to prove the contrary. I also hope you will excuse me from taking much notice of your objections to the universality of our Saviour’s death ; especially as the arguments you oppose are not mine ; and you know, Sir, I am not obliged to defend any man’s arguments besides my own.

I now proceed to what you say in answer to mine. I most cordially agree with you, Sir, and I congratulate my poor fellow-sinners upon it, that “ Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost ;” to “ save sinners ;” to “ give his life a ransom for many ;” and “ that he might bring us to God.” But I am not able to prove from hence, that he only died for a part of mankind, because I see nothing in this language that implies it. Most certainly, if a physician comes to a hospital, and invites all the disordered there to be healed by him, and assures them of his sufficiency and readiness to heal them all, it is very just to say, “ he came

to that hospital to heal the sick ;” and it is very right for those who are healed by him, in conformity to the language of believers, who are healed by the stripes of Jesus, to say, “ he came that he might heal us.”—I cannot accede to the inference you would draw from those expressions, my dear Sir, for several reasons,—because I cannot see it implied in the language of these texts,—because I never find it recorded in Scripture, that the cause why men are not saved, is that Jesus did not die for them. Certain it is, that if there be any for whom Christ did not die, his not dying for them is the sole cause why they are not saved ; and yet I never hear it assigned as the cause in Scripture, and therefore I cannot believe it to be so. Consequently, this is a confirming evidence that these Scriptures have no such meaning,—because I am elsewhere positively assured by the blessed God himself, as we shall see hereafter, that Jesus did die for all ;—because I am assured by the same all-wise, infallible Spirit, that though Jesus died for all, yet only they who “ believe in him, shall have everlasting life,” John iii. 16. 18. 36.—because I am informed by the same glorious source of wisdom, that the cause why men are not saved is very different from what this doctrine supposes, namely, because they believe not. John iii. 18.—2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12. These considerations may be enlarged, illustrated, and confirmed, God willing, in the sequel of this debate. At present I only mention them *en passant*.

You roundly assert, but do not prove, that “ reconciliation, justification, sanctification, and eternal glory at last,” are the necessary effects of our Saviour’s death. When you produce your proof of this, we may consider of it.—As to the *end* of God sending his Son to die, it is expressed in John iii. 16, and other places, “ that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.” This end will most certainly be accomplished ; and therefore “ God and Christ cannot be disappointed.” So that your strange inferences, page 9, concerning the “ omniscient Jehovah,” and the “ falsehood of Scripture,” are very improper.—You chuse to call the doctrine you oppose, a “ flesh-pleasing doctrine ;” but if it be the doctrine of Christ, it is no worse for your aspersions ; and if it be not, I am willing to give

give it up. It may, however, be safe to forbear hard names, "lest haply we be found even to fight against God."

I am far from approving the expressions of Arminius, and am not, therefore, accountable for them. Yet I thank you, Sir, for your "godly jealousy" over me, and your kind admonition, lest I should "go too far." Such hints are both necessary and friendly; and to avoid what you caution me against, I determine, thro' grace, to go as far as plain Scripture leads me, and no farther; and I advise you, my good Sir, to do the same.

You next present me with a few arguments of Dr. Owen, an author, whose memory I much venerate; but am satisfied, that if the Scriptures be true, he was mistaken in other points as well as this: As his arguments are not founded on Scripture testimony, I should be excusable in passing them by, because we are now enquiring concerning Scripture evidence respecting matter of fact; yet a word, as we go along, out of reverence to the Doctor, may be proper.

ARG. I. "If the Lord intended that the merits of Christ should be universal." We are not speaking of the "merits of Christ," even suppose we admit that unscriptural ambiguous phrase; we are simply enquiring whether Christ died for the sins of all men, or not. The intention of God, we have mentioned above. "If the Lord intended this, that intention ought to be universally made known." But Dr. Owen's Master knows what ought to be done, better than he. It is too high for mortals to say what God *ought* to do. It is enough that we hear what he has done. We are informed that the gospel has been made universally known, Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 6. 23. If the Lord please to deprive a nation or people of it, for their wickedness, as he sometimes hath done, Amos viii. 11. Matt. xxi. 43. Rev. ii. 5. we are not to say to him, "What dost thou?" But if he assure us that his son died for all men, the obedience of faith is due to that, as well as every other part of divine revelation.

ARG. II. "If Christ died intentionally for all men, he died for them either absolutely, or conditionally," &c. Answer, Intentionally, absolutely, conditionally, and many other *human* phrases, which can have no use,
but

but to confound the minds of the simple, I chuse not to meddle with, lest I “add to his words, and he reprove me, and I be found a liar.” Prov. xxx. 6.

ARG. III. “All men are able to perform the condition of believing, or they are not,” &c. Answer, We are commanded to believe in Jesus, Acts xvi. 31. 1 John iii. 23. and condemned, and damned, if we do not, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 18.—2 Theff. i. 8. ii. 10, 11. Heb. iii. 19. This is plain Scripture truth; he who spoke it, knows man’s ability to believe, but has not so clearly taught either you, or me, or Dr. Owen, to talk about it. Therefore I leave him to decide this controversy at the last day.

Your 11th, 12th, and 13th pages, contain some remarks (I leave it to the ill-natured reader to call them *random* remarks) on the terms *all*, *every*, &c. which terms I had not alledged in the debate; nor should ever think of doing it, in the view in which you oppose them. I cannot, therefore, with any propriety, attend to what you say upon them. These may afterwards come on in due course. I am pleased, my dear Sir, to find you accede to my account of the occasion of our Saviour’s words, John x. 11. But I greatly wonder how you can suppose that, in this view, he meant “fully to describe the persons for whom he gave his life,” p. 14. I confess, I can neither see reason for, nor propriety in, such a description, considering the occasion of the words. In my last to you, I desired to know by what rule of interpretation you so explain this passage. An answer to this would have been a favour; ’till you are pleased to give it, I must believe there is none. You think if a limitation be not intended, the disciples might have objected that “our Lord no more died for them than for others;” and, consequently, it could not have attached their minds to him. I answer, if there be any conformity between the words, and the design, and occasion of them, and if the occasion and design be what you grant, our Lord cou’d not here speak of the distinction between them and others; but of the difference of his disposition from that of the false shepherds or teachers before-mentioned. Nor could this less influence their minds towards him; because neither scripture nor reason teach us *less* to value divine favours,

favours, or *lets* to love him who confers them, because others partake of them as well as ourselves: And therefore the reply you put into the mouths of the disciples, p. 14, would, at once, have expressed their want of gratitude, and want of sense.

The inference you ascribe to me, Sir, p. 15. is not mine, but your own; and, therefore, the *sophism* you justly fix upon it, must revert back to yourself, as your unalienable property. I scorn, I hate sophistry, Sir. I scorn it, for it's meanness; I hate it, for it's baseness. If "there be no limitation expressed," as you confess, in Acts xx. 28. Eph. v. 25. neither I nor you have authority to insert one, lest we "add to his words," who is infinitely wiser than we, and requires us to be content with what he hath spoken, without adding to it, or taking from it. Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 18. 19. But say you, "if persons are described by name or character, to whom certain blessings or privileges do belong, doth not every person understand that they belong to them only, although no exclusive phrase is expressed." I make free to answer, No, Sir; no intelligent person can understand a limitation where no exclusive phrase is used, without a manifest perversion of language, unless that limitation can be proved some other way; otherwise exclusive phrases would be useless, and a great-part of all languages must be thrown away at once. And I am well persuaded that neither "the Scriptures," nor "daily observation," can furnish us with *any* "examples of it." The two instances you adduce, do it not. I believe you will find it difficult to explain Psalm cx. 3, in a manner that does not prove just the contrary to what you bring it for, and to vindicate that exposition from the Scripture. If you make the attempt, Sir, I doubt not, you will find reason to believe that many both have been, are, and will be, made willing, in the day of divine power, besides those here called *thy people*. The 4th verse undoubtedly relates to Christ only; but the evidence of this limitation is derived from other passages, and not from this text.

I think we may now fairly pass on to your remarks on Rev. v. 9. xiv. 3, 4. The leading question between us here is, "Whether Christ dying for men, and redeeming them, be synonymous terms, or inseparable,

or of equal extent." You suppose they are. I suppose the contrary. You demand my proof, p. 17. I very willingly give it you, my good friend. It is this: Whenever the blessed God speaks in his word determinately, of the number of those for whom Christ died, he says, it was for *all*, for the *whole world*, for *every man*, &c. and never, that I know of, makes use of one word which necessarily implies the exception or exclusion of any. 'The same God of Truth expressly tells us, that redemption, through the blood of Christ, is "the forgiveness of sins." And never gives us, that I remember, any other definition of it. Now this forgiveness, or redemption, is expressly restricted or confined to those who believe. And none are ever said to be thus redeemed, in the Scriptures, besides believers; and it is expressly declared, that those who believe not are condemned, and shall be damned. The passages are numerous; and I need not refer you to them.

I have already spoke my sentiments of the notion ascribed to Arminius; and, therefore, may here fairly pass over what you say relative to that, p. 17, 18. together with what you call "the common objections of the Universalists," as these are not *my* objections. Only you seem to lay great stress on one point, which I wonder at, *viz.* that "Christ is the intercessor, or advocate," (which, by the bye, are different terms and offices,) "for all those for whom he died." And you demand of me, "Why do you not maintain that he is really an advocate for all men, as well as a propitiation for their sins?" I answer, my dear Sir, because I find no such thing in Scripture. Nay, it is expressly contrary to Scripture. "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2. But he himself says, "I pray not for the world," John xvii. 9. "He gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 6. "He maketh intercession for them that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 25. and 1 John ii. 1, 2. which, by a surprizing inadvertency, you quote in proof of the contrary. "In 1 John ii. 1." say you, "we find that those for whom he is declared to be an advocate, or intercessor, are expressed in general terms, as well as those for whom he is said, in verse 2, to be a propitiation." Why, my good friend, if language be capable
of

of conveying ideas, you must have made a mistake. Only read the text.—“*We* have an advocate with the Father—He is the propitiation for *our* sins—And not for *ours* only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*.” Is it said he is the advocate for the *whole world*? If not, how could you say “there is as good ground for the one as the other?” You see, there is express Scripture *for* the one, but no Scripture *for* the other.

When you have said a good deal about *conditions* (a word with which I have no concern, because my Bible has none,) you propose a dilemma to me, p. 21, “by which,” you say, “it will be seen whether Christ laid down his life for the sins of all men or not.” No, my good Sir, that must be learnt from the divine testimony, and your dilemma has not a word of that testimony in it, respecting the extent or limits of our Saviour’s death. Dilemmas of this kind can easily be proposed on either side of the subject in great plenty; but I cannot believe they will, at all, contribute to clear up, but to perplex the truth. We are called upon to believe the Word of God, Sir, and not to try who can be most cunning in proposing dilemmas, as if we were left in the darkness of heathenism; or, as if we had part of the divine will revealed to us, and were called to spin the rest out of our own brains. I frankly declare to you and the world, Sir, that though proposing dilemmas is very easy, and I sensibly feel how it gratifies one’s native pride, yet I dare not engage with this kind of weapons, lest I “provoke the Holy One of Israel to anger.” I cannot help regarding it as a piece of profane wanton pride, Sir, to answer the queries and cavils of men, which are not founded upon that testimony, by which I am to believe and act here, and to be judged at the last day. Yet a few words, as we go along, respecting some of the *expressions* which compose your dilemma, may not be quite improper. “He either died,” you say, “for the whole of their sins, or part of them.” But this is quite another question, Sir. We are not now enquiring whether he died for *all sins*, but for the sins *all men*. You speak of “Christ reconciling God to men.” A phrase which the Scripture knows nothing of; but is perfectly abhorrent both to the phrase, and the idea it conveys.—You tell me, “the people whose sins he bears

bears, the Apostle, in Heb. ix. 28. calls many." But I hope you do not suppose that *many* is a word which expresses limitation; because that would be a proper word, you know, if Jesus died for all, and is used concerning the effects of Adam's sin, Rom. v. 15. 19. where I hope and believe yourself would not admit a limitation. You add, "and them that look for him," &c. But the Apostle doth not say he died for them that look for him, Sir; but has evidently marked the distinction between the many for whom he died, and, "them that look for him," by placing the latter under a quite different predicament.

You chuse, p. 22, to controvert my idea of redemption, as "signifying deliverance in general." I recommended many passages to your consideration in proof of it, chiefly from the Old Testament, where, having no respect to the death of Christ, they might be read with impartiality, and therefore most likely to determine the scriptural sense of the word; it being universally granted that the signification of a word, the sense of which is disputed, is generally best learnt by this method. And yet, for this very reason, you dislike my references, because they are Old Testament ones. Will you then, Sir, please to read the following passages of the *New Testament*?—Luke i. 68. ii. 38. xxi. 28. xxiv. 21. Rom. iii. 24. viii. 23. 1 Cor. i. 30. Gal. iii. 13. iv. 4. Eph. i. 7. 14. iv. 30. v. 16. Col. i. 14. iv. 5. Tit. ii. 14. Heb. ix. 12. 15. 1 Pet. i. 18.—I cannot but hope, Sir, that when you have read these passages, you will no longer be "far from thinking that my definition is just."

The Apostle defines Redemption, in one special application of it, in Ephes. i. 7. Col. i. 14. and calls it "forgiveness of sins." To this you tell me, p. 23, "you have no objection." But still you will have it to be "only in a secondary view." Can you then point us to another definition of Redemption by the blood of Christ, which is to be understood in a *primary view*? I cordially agree with you, Sir, that this is "in consequence of our being bought or purchased with the blood of Jesus." But this can be no proof that buying or purchasing is "Redemption, in the proper and strict meaning of the word." Rather, as the Apostle himself informs

informs us, Jesus hereby "obtained redemption for us." Heb. ix. 12. This cannot be, therefore, redemption itself. Propriety of speech will not admit of it. Can it be proper to say, he redeemed us by redeeming us? By redemption, he obtained redemption for us? If not, you must give up the point, and fall in with the Apostle's definition.

I freely grant you, Sir, that the native signification of the Greek word *αγοραζω*, used in Rev. v. 9. and xiv. 3, 4. is to *buy*; but because our translators have rendered that word *redeem*, that is no proof that buy or redeem are synonymous; and, in my opinion, the current language of Scripture makes against it. And the word *απολυτρωσις*, you know, signifies the *price of redemption**. Yet no considerate man will deny that this word will admit of being *translated* deliverance in some places, and is *necessarily* understood so in others. I refer you to the following, where this Greek word is found: Luke ii. 38. xxi. 28. Rom. iii. 24. viii. 23. 1 Cor. i. 30. Ephes. i. 7. 14. iv. 30. Col. i. 14. Heb. ix. 12, 13. And it is so translated in Heb. xi. 35. I do not make these observations to defend our translators, or to deny your sense of the word *αγοραζω*, but to shew how precarious any argument must be that is formed on the native signification of one Greek word, especially when this argument opposes the current language of Scripture. I confess this current language of Scripture was what I chiefly regarded, in my remarks on yours; yet I have the pleasure to find since, that some considerable critics and expositors so explain even these very places in the Revelation, as to confirm the sense I have given of the word *redeem*. Durham, Gomarus, and Cluverus (apud Polum), and the pious and practical Burkitt in particular. I beg leave to observe also, that your exposition of these passages in question, would make this the language of *all the saved*; and you expressly tell us, p. 23, that "Christ died for none but them." But by comparing chap. vii. 9. you will find that the saved are spoken of as a great multitude, which no man could number, added to this hundred and forty-four thousand

* Significat proprie redemptionis pretium. Aret, apud Leigh, in verbum.

here mentioned, and the four beasts, and twenty-four elders, mentioned chap. v. So that those who sung the song here in question, were but a very small part of those who are glorified; and, whatever be the precise meaning of the words, they are applicable even to an innumerable multitude, besides those who here make use of them. And besides, you know, Sir, the same Greek work is found in 2 Pet. ii. 1. and those are said to be *bought*, who deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Now, Sir, after all, I grant freely, that if you give up the point with respect to *redem*, and change the reading here to *buy*, you will have, at first sight, a plausible inference in favour of your sentiment; and I think, incomparably the most plausible of any derived from the Word of God. Yet it is no more than an inference still; and all inferences are so precarious, that I should be very unwilling to found a doctrine of faith upon them. And if you consider all that is said above, and add, that the book where these words are found, is confessedly very mysterious,—that these words were spoken on a very peculiar occasion,—and that, in order to come at your inference, you are obliged to change the translation; you will certainly observe, that your inference almost dwindles into nothing. I need not propose the dilemmas or difficulties in form, Sir, your good sense will point them out, and your candor will give them their due weight.

Lastly, You handsomely remark on my first Query, and with all your good nature, and opinion of my good sense, you can hardly acquit me of calculating it to “ensnare some unthinking person or other to acknowledge some human writer as the author of the doctrine of Christ not laying down his life for the sins of all mankind.” I never wished to ensnare, Sir; and therefore I twice declared both to you and the public, that I could not find the doctrine in my Bible. And I now declare it a third time. I am persuaded a human writer was the author of it, and not a very ancient one neither. But the laws of disputation oblige no man to prove a negative. The Bible is open; the writings of all ages are open. If any of the sacred writers, or any ancient ecclesiastical writer, have asserted it, let any
man

man shew the *place* where it is asserted, and I give up the point. I did not assert that "Christ died for all men," Sir, and therefore could not expect, as you would insinuate, that any body "would take it for granted upon my own mere assertion." I avoided this, that the ground might be clear for you to have every advantage you could wish. I desire no fairer treatment from you, and I hope for the same, when, in answer to your demand, or challenge, if you please, I attempt, through divine assistance, to demonstrate the truth of this glorious doctrine. I intend my next to be an introduction to this proof. May the Spirit of Truth be your and my director in this important undertaking! I am, my dear SIR,

Your's, with cordial esteem and affection,

SCRUTATOR.

L E T T E R II.

To Mr. R E S P O N S O R.

Dear SIR,

I Know the power of prejudice, and the strength of party fetters, by painful experience. The only request I here make is, that you would divest yourself of these as much as possible. And let us both endeavour to follow the Divine direction, "to the law and to the testimony." I cannot but indulge the pleasing hope that, by this method, we shall, in due time, be more of the same mind than we appear to be at present; especially respecting that most awfully glorious subject, the extent of our blessed Saviour's death. I now sit down, in the name, the strength, and the fear of God, to lay before you a little of that Scripture evidence, by which I am fully persuaded that "Jesus Christ laid down his life for the sins of all mankind." I own this doctrine appears to me like a golden thread interwoven throughout a great part of the Scripture; and therefore, I find myself rather at a loss where to begin my proof. I will,

however, venture to begin with that well-known passage, 1 John ii. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The matter in debate, you know, Sir, depends entirely, or chiefly, on the signification of two or three words in this text,—*ours*, and the *whole world*.

There are two very different expositions given of these few words. It appears to me proper and fair to state them here, as we shall hereby; I think, be able to prosecute and discuss the subject in debate, with more advantage to ourselves and our readers. One is, I think, truly and properly expressed in this manner: "He is the propitiation for our sins, who are Jewish believers, or, who are of Jewish extract, and have already believed; and not for ours only, but also, for the sins of all others who do, or shall hereafter, believe in him, even Gentiles, as well as Jews: or, in a word, for the whole world of the elect." The other is, "He is the propitiation for our sins, who now believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of all mankind besides." I state it thus, in order that every thing may be clear and easy, and that we may not misrepresent each other. You know the former of these is the common exposition on that side which I, at present, venture to oppose. If your sense of the text be any way peculiar, and different from it, I here promise, that, when you honour me with another epistle, and give me your's, I will lay this aside, and take up your's instead of it.

I adopt the other exposition, that is, "He is the propitiation for our sins, who now believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of all mankind besides." The reasons I give *for* this interpretation of the text, and *against* the other, are such as follow:

1. The epistle is a *general* one. 'This is allowed on both sides. "The persons," says Dr. Guyse, "to whom this epistle was wrote, were not any particular church, but all Christians in general, of that age, perhaps principally Jews, but inclusive of Gentiles, with a view to all succeeding generations; on which account it is called a general epistle." Preface to this epistle.—It must, therefore, be granted, that he is here addressing

addressing believers in general, both Jews and Gentiles. For to whom soever the epistle is addressed, it is evident he includes them all, in the extensive words *any man*, ver. 1. "If any man sin," &c.

2. When he says *we* have an advocate, and he is the propitiation for *our* sins, ver. 1, 2. it is most manifest that in these words *we* and *our*, he means to include all those he intends by the extensive words *any man*. Otherwise he would not only deviate from his usual manner of address, and from the usual manner of all the Apostles; but his expressions would not answer his design, which is to encourage and comfort their minds under a sense of sin, by reminding them of their interest in Jesus Christ, as an *advocate* and a *propitiation*. For they could not be comforted by this, unless *every one* of them, under a sense of sin, could plead their interest in Jesus Christ. Consequently the pronouns, *we* and *our*, must include all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles; for to say, if *any man* sin, *we Jews* have an advocate with the Father, can never be reconciled to propriety of expression,—and instead of answering, it would counteract his great design, by dispiriting, rather than comforting the dejected Gentiles; not to mention the absurdity of supposing this distinction and limitation, when it is undeniable that the Apostle has not given us the least intimation of it.

3. If the words *we* and *our* in 1 John ii. 1, 2. be not extended to all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, there is no proof from Scripture, that believing Gentiles are interested in our Saviour's advocateship; and yet believing Gentiles are, and have been, taught to consider themselves thus interested in all ages since. Now this is quite without foundation, unless it can be proved from this passage; for his advocateship is not spoken of elsewhere in all the Bible. We are told, indeed, Heb. vii. 25. that "he ever liveth to make intercession for them." But this is no proof that he is their advocate. For, though you speak of these offices, p. 19. as if they were the same, yet, upon reconsideration, you will undoubtedly find that both word and office are very different. If, therefore, we restrain the terms *we* and *our*, to believing Jews, we, at one stroke, destroy all the comfort which we ourselves, and almost all believers now in the world, can take from the ad-

vocateship of our blessed Redeemer. But I believe you, Sir, cannot bear the thought of this; and, therefore, you must extend the words *we* and *our* to all believing Jews and Gentiles, in the apostolic, and in all succeeding age.

4. The language and doctrine of the epistle in general, is most clearly addressed to the believing Gentiles, as well as the Jews. It evidently suits the one as well as the other; and both have considered it as suitable to their circumstances, and have applied it to themselves, and been so *taught* to apply it, by ministers of all parties and opinions, in all ages, since the time when it was written. And it would be an irreparable loss to the churches if it were not so applied; it is so applied in the present age; and the verses in question are so applied, as well as the rest, without any restraint whatsoever; and there is not an expression in these verses, nor in the whole epistle, that forbids such an extensive application. Nor can there be any other just reason assigned for confining the pronouns, *us*, *we*, and *our*, to the Jews, either in this verse, or any other of the epistle.—The words are true of the believing Gentiles, as well as the Jews. They both have “an *advocate* with the Father.” This restrained sense of the pronouns would no better answer the Apostle’s design, which was to comfort the afflicted conscience under a sense of sin. The consideration of having “an advocate with the Father,” would be equally cheering to the afflicted conscience of a Gentile, as to that of a Jew. The words express the only remedy for either; and a sufficient remedy for both. It is therefore amazingly strange to me, that any sincere man, in the use of his reason, and under the influence of Divine Grace, should attempt to restrain the former verse now before us to the believing Jews; and if not, the latter verse cannot be restrained. I earnestly wish, Sir, that you would deliberate on these things with the feelings and the candor of a man,—of a christian,—of yourself.

5. A sense of sin contracted, is the most distressing, afflicting, and pitiable condition, that mortals are attended with on earth. This sensation demands our commiseration above all others. And I suppose you will grant, Sir, that this Apostle does not confine these pronouns, *we* and *our*, to the Jewish believers, in any other

other part of this epistle. Now I ask, Would it not have been (admit the expression) a cruel impropriety to have made such a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, in this most tender of all concerns, when the one, as well as the other, needed the most tender compassion, and the most healing cordial?

6. It is undeniable, that the Apostle applies these pronouns, *us*, *we*, and *our*, to both Jews and Gentiles, throughout the whole epistle; and we all so understand, and apply, and improve his language among all parties. Now it is never fair, nor consistent with any good rules of interpretation, to apply the words of an author in a sense different from that in which he constantly uses the same words throughout the same work, unless he himself informs us that he uses the words differently in that place. Without adverting to this, we may render any author unintelligible. And we have no information of any such different use of the words in question, in the place before us; and, therefore, I can scarce think it less than an insult upon the Sacred Writer, to suppose that he here means to confine these pronouns to the believing Jews.

From these considerations, Sir, I confess it appears to me one of the plainest things imaginable, that when the Apostle John says, "*We* have an advocate with the Father; and he is the propitiation for *our* sins," he includes all believers, both Jews and Gentiles; and I must believe that these words would never have been otherwise applied or understood, had it not been to serve a party scheme, which is generally the cause of Scripture being perverted.

If the meaning of the former part of the verse be settled, I believe we shall be at no great loss to understand the latter. If the former include believers in general, believers of all ages and nations, as it is evident from the foregoing remarks it must do, it will be very natural to understand the *latter part* as extending to "all mankind besides;" even suppose nothing more could be said in favour of this interpretation. But that much more may be said in favour of it, will appear by observing,

7. That it is a necessary rule of interpretation, and therefore universally approved, to take an expression in the common obvious sense, unless something in the context, in the nature of things, or in some other part of Scripture,

Scripture, forbid it. Now, I appeal to all mankind, whether every honest, plain, unprejudiced reader, unacquainted with controversial niceties and party refinements, would not most naturally understand the words *whole world*, as denoting "all mankind," except those distinguished by the word *our* in the foregoing part of the verse. And if so, then this is the natural sense of the words, according to the common use of language, and the common sense of mankind. And there is nothing in the context, nor in all the epistle, that forbids us thus to understand it. But this sense is favoured and confirmed by the distinction in the very text itself, and by the use of the pronouns, *us* and *our*, throughout the whole epistle, as we have seen above. There is nothing in the nature of the thing, so far as we can see, that forbids it. All mankind are partakers of the same human nature which Jesus took upon himself. All mankind are involved in guilt, by breach of the same law. The blood of Christ is confessedly of sufficient virtue and efficacy to make atonement for all men; and God could, if he pleased, have given his Son to die for all men, as will be allowed on all hands; and his goodness is not so contracted as to forbid it, for "God is love," chap. iv. 16. "He is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works," Ps. cxlv. 9. Nor is there a single clause in the whole Bible contradicted by this extensive sense of the words; for a text cannot be produced in which we are informed that Christ did not die for all men; or in which a limitation of his death is plainly expressed.

8. There is not another passage in the whole Bible in which it can reasonably be pretended the words *whole world* signify "the elect, or all who do and shall believe." Therefore this sense of the words is entirely arbitrary, and not favoured by any other passage, where the same words are used. I think the phrase *whole world*, or *all the world*, is not found in any place in the Bible, except in this text, and the following places: Job xxxiv. 13. Matt. xvi. 26. xxiv. 14. Mark xiv. 9. xvi. 15. Luke ii. 1. Acts xi. 28. Rom. i. 8. iii. 19. Col. i. 6. 1 John v. 19. Rev. iii. 10. xii. 9. xiii. 3. xvi. 14. You will easily observe, Sir, that several of these passages intend the material world, or the globe on which we live, with the possessions and enjoyments of it, rather than

than the inhabitants of it. In several others, a part of the habitable globe is intended; and that intention is both evident by the context, and by the different Greek word which the sacred writer makes use of, *οικουμένη*, not *νομος*, the word used in the text before us. Such are Matt. xxiv, 14. Luke ii. 1. Acts xi. 28. Rev. iii. 10. xvi. 14. In one of them, we have *γη*, the earth, as Rev. xiii. 3. And you are sensible the rest (except chap. v. 19. of which below,) are little or nothing to the purpose before us. So that to understand the *whole world* of such as do, or shall believe, is without any authority or countenance from the scriptural use of the word elsewhere.

It is universally considered, as a good and safe rule of interpretation, to consult, on any difficult or disputed expression, the same author in whom that expression is found in the other places, where he uses the same, or similar phrases, on the same or similar constructions, and makes the same or the like distinctions, as in that place where the controverted expression is found. If an author be a good one, this rule is infallible; and if the similar passages be pretty numerous, it cannot fail of being successful. Now we are happy here, Sir, in both these respects. The author writes by divine inspiration, in a style confessedly plain and simple. Similar phrases and distinctions with that in the text before us are not a few, even in this same divine, plain, simple author; and the same phrase and the same distinction in one place, where the meaning can admit of no fair dispute. Notwithstanding the small compass of my reading, I am strongly inclined to believe that there is not an author extant in whom a passage can be found, attended with the like circumstances, the meaning of which admits of any difficulty. Nay, I am much persuaded there is not a single passage in any approved author, sacred or profane, ancient or modern, of which an approved interpretation is given from like circumstances, but that interpretation will confirm the explication I here defend of the passage before us. The places where this divine writer uses the expressions *us* and *the world*, *you* and *the-world*, *we* and *the-world*, &c. are so numerous, that it would be tedious to quote them; and to one acquainted with the Scriptures, it is unnecessary.

But now, Sir, is there a single instance of such distinction, in all this Apostle's writings, where the words *us, ours, or you, &c.* mean the believing Jews, and the *world, the elect, or believing Gentiles, or believing Jews and Gentiles?* Nay, is there an instance of this distinction where it is not readily allowed on all hands, and extremely evident, that the divine writer must be understood in the sense I here defend? What then can excuse us, my dear Sir, in wrenching so glorious a passage from its native obvious meaning, to force one upon it, not authorized, yourself being judge, by one single passage of the like construction in the whole Bible; and quite inconsistent with the phraseology of the same holy writer, in almost innumerable passages? I add, once more, in this same plain short epistle, we have the *very same* phrase, and the *same* distinction; and I believe you yourself will grant it has the very same signification which I here contend for. It is chap. v. 19. I scarcely think remarks upon it necessary. You know it cannot fairly be denied that *we* in this passage, intends those that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; and is applicable to all believers, in all ages; and that the whole world intends all mankind besides, who are in a state of carnality, and spiritual death. Now, my good friend, how ridiculous it must be to suppose, that a sacred author, in one short letter, peculiarly plain and simple, should use the same phrases twice, in a sense as different from each other, as light is different from darkness, without giving the slightest reason for so doing; or the slightest intimation that he designs such a difference! I am persuaded, if any human writer had expressed himself in the manner this Apostle must be supposed to do, when all the above circumstances are considered, by those I now venture to oppose, he would have been hissed out of society with universal contempt.

It appears to me, Sir, that the glorious truth I here wish to defend, has the same clear and full evidence, from a great number of other passages, which, in my humble opinion, are whipped into froth, or trampled in the mire, when explained and applied in any other point of view. These, however, will probably be reserved till you honour me with another favour. I fore-

see what is likely to be the consequence of this freedom. But whatever be the consequence, he must be obeyed who says, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." It is a pearl of infinite value; and the least quantity of it deserves to be purchased, if possible, with all the wealth in the universe. That you and I may value it as we ought, and live and die in the firm belief, and happy possession of it; and, at last, meet in that blessed world where perfect and unmixed truth shall fill our minds, and surround us for ever, is the ardent wish, and pleasing hope, of, dear SIR,

Your's, with cordial affection,

July 16, 1781.

SCRUTATOR.

To Mr. CONSIDERATOR.

SIR,

WHEN I had nearly prepared my letters to RESPONDER for the press, your's was brought to my hand; and I do assure you, it gave me no little concern to find that one of my fellow-creatures should have so little regard to his reputation, his time, his conscience, and his Bible, as to be capable of taking so much pains to make himself perfectly contemptible. I would not willingly expose you more than may be for your real advantage, and shall therefore avoid making any remarks on your pamphlet. Instead of this, I beg your acceptance of the following advice, *viz.* As you are evidently unqualified for polemic writing, I advise you to lay aside the thoughts of it, and to desire your friends no more to abuse you and your cause by putting you upon it. Instead of it, employ your time in reading the plain, practical parts of Scripture with simplicity, and prayer for divine illumination; and reduce what you read to those practical purposes which it is designed and calculated to subserve. Should you never be able to defend the truth by the arts of controversy, as it is probable you never will, you may hereby be prepared, under the blessing of God, to honour it by a holy conversation.

versation. This is more noble, and will prove much more profitable. That you may, by these methods, be brought to a better temper, and a better judgment, and that you may at last, through the blood of the Lamb, be brought to the regions of everlasting truth and felicity, is the prayer of

Your sincere Well-wisher,

SCRUTATOR.

F I N I S.



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