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# AN EXPOSITION

OF

THE NINTH CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE  
TO THE ROMANS.

WITH

THE BANNER OF JUSTIFICATION DISPLAYED.

✓  
BY JOHN GOODWIN, M.A.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; AND VICAR  
OF ST. STEPHEN'S, COLEMAN-STREET, LONDON.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

EIPHNOMAXIA :

THE AGREEMENT AND DISTANCE OF BRETHREN.

WITH A PREFACE

BY THOMAS JACKSON,

AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF THE REV. RICHARD WATSON, &c. &c.

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## P R E F A C E.

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JOHN GOODWIN, the learned author of the following tracts, lived in a stirring and eventful age. The principles of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, the subjects and mode of baptism, religious toleration, the decrees of God, and the extent of human redemption, the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, were then subjects of eager controversy; and he took a distinguished part in the discussion of all these interesting topics. As a reasoner, few men have ever excelled him in clearness and strength, and in command of temper. The literary combatants who had the courage to assail him felt the keenness of his weapons, and the power of his arm. He was born in the year 1593; educated at the University of Cambridge; presented to the living of St. Stephen's, Coleman-street, London, in 1633; and died in 1665.

Like the generality of his contemporaries, Mr. Goodwin was trained up in the belief of the doctrine of absolute predestination; and in the early part of his life he regarded this tenet as a truth of holy writ. Wishful to establish his parishioners in the same views, he undertook to deliver a course of lectures in defence of the Genevan theology, in opposition to the doctrine of Arminius, and of his disciples the Dutch Remonstrants. In the prosecution of this task, he advanced a principle which one of his hearers deemed at once Arminian and heretical; and for this misde-

meanour he was publicly censured in one of the pamphlets of the day. By this comparatively trifling incident he was led to a thorough investigation of the Calvinistic and Arminian controversy in all its bearings. The result was, an entire renunciation of his former opinions, and the adoption of the Arminian theory. A few years after he had undergone this revolution of sentiment he published the most elaborate and convincing defence of God's universal love that has ever appeared in the English language. Quaint titles of books were then fashionable; and, regarding the Christian doctrine of redemption by the death of Christ, as having been held in bondage by the arbitrary and unauthorized limitations of men, he denominated his great work, *REDEMPTION REDEEMED*. Its leading design was, to prove that, in the full and proper sense of the expression, Jesus Christ, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." As a metaphysician, a Divine, a biblical critic, and a logician, he put forth his full strength in this very remarkable publication. It displays very extensive reading, and contains passages of uncommon power and eloquence, which are scarcely equalled by any theological writer of that day, and would not even suffer from a comparison with the prose writings of his contemporary Milton. The volume is a thin folio, and bears the date of 1651. The author states that it was to be considered only as the first part of the entire work; and at the end he specifies the sublime and comprehensive questions which he intended to discuss in the further prosecution of his plan. He also adds, "And because, among other scriptures, the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is fre-

quently, and this in very many places and passages of it, brought upon the stage of these controversies and disputes, and more particularly supposed to deliver impregnable grounds for such a personal election and reprobation which we apprehend the Scriptures generally, yea, and this very chapter, as plainly to oppose, as many men do confidently avouch, we therefore intend a particular and entire explication of this chapter by itself. Yea, I am under some present inclination of thoughts, to engage upon this in the first place, and to publish it by itself, before I put hand to the greater work. But in this I shall willingly be determined by the advice of friends."

The "advice" which he sought and obtained appears to have accorded with his own views; and, hence, in the year 1653 the promised Exposition made its appearance. Its character and design are well described in the title. The writer's object is to prove that "the Apostle's scope is to assert and maintain his great doctrine of justification by faith; and that here he discourseth nothing at all concerning any personal election or reprobation of men from eternity." He contends that St. Paul does not mention Isaac and Jacob, as examples of an absolute and unconditional election of individuals to eternal life; but as types of believers in Christ, whether they be Jews or Gentiles by birth, who are the true spiritual seed of Abraham, justified by God's grace, and constituted heirs of a blessed immortality. Esau, he also contends, is not adduced by the Apostle as an absolute reprobate, consigned to perdition by virtue of an everlasting decree totally irrespective of his conduct, but as a type of the unbelieving posterity of

Abraham, who were cast off by God, and appointed to destruction by his just judgment; yet still “endured with much longsuffering,” that they might by repentance and faith flee from the wrath to come. Whatever may be thought of his argumentation, as a whole, every one must approve of the manner in which it is conducted. The author does not treat the writings of St. Paul, as if every verse contained a distinct and independent proposition, like the Proverbs of Solomon, as many theological writers have done; but endeavours to ascertain the scope and bearing of the Apostle’s reasoning, at the same time that he brings a large mass of general biblical learning to bear upon the entire subject. He explains every verse in strict connexion with the context. Mr. Goodwin’s views receive a striking confirmation from the fact, that in the Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul brings Ishmael and Isaac before his readers, not as examples of an absolute election and reprobation, but as types of believers and unbelievers; the spiritual and merely natural descendants from faithful Abraham. (Chap. iv. 22—31.) The conclusion of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans also presents a strong proof that our author had not mistaken its meaning. “What shall we say then?” What is the conclusion to which we are led by the facts and arguments which have just been urged? That some men are appointed to eternal life, and others to eternal death, by an absolute and irrespective decree? No; but “that the GENTILES, which followed not after righteousness, HAVE ATTAINED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, EVEN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH. But 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. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

The justification upon which St. Paul so largely expatiates, and which is obtained by faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ, Mr. Goodwin regarded as a blessing of inestimable value and importance. He considered it as consisting in the full and free forgiveness of all past sin, and attended by the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the Comforter, and the Sanctifier of human nature; so that the person on whom this blessing is conferred is at once possessed of a title to heaven, and a meetness for its holy enjoyments and exercises. He is placed in such a state, that if he hold fast the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end, he shall be for ever saved. This profound Divine was far from considering justification to consist merely in deliverance from the darkness and pollution of Heathenism, and admission into the visible church of Christ, as is taught by Dr. John Taylor, in his "Key to the Apostolic Writings." Taylor, who is eulogised by the late Bishop Watson, explains away nearly all that is vital and saving in Christianity, under the assumed guise of orthodoxy, and with an affectation of the most perfect candour.\* His work is calculated to deceive the very elect.

It will be observed that, in the preface to his

\* Perhaps no author ever succeeded more effectually than Dr. Taylor in concealing from his readers his real temper and character. He appears in his works as one of the most perfect examples of liberality and benevolence; whereas he was one of the most irritable and intolerant

Exposition, Mr. Goodwin speaks of the 'infirmities of age as coming rapidly upon him, and of "the troublesome importunity of some men in another way." He states that, in consequence of these things, "the drawing up of a second part" of his "book of Redemption" was set "back for a time;" and he intimates that it was very doubtful whether he should live to finish it: A foreboding which proved to be too true. The "men" of whom he speaks, whose "importunity" annoyed him, were the Baptists, and the Fifth Monarchy men. The former disturbed the peace of his church, with their peculiar tenets; and the latter, who were fanatical Millenarians, attempted the subversion of all government, both civil and ecclesiastical. Both these classes of men drew him into public controversy.

"The Banner of Justification," which forms the second tract in the volume now before the reader, was published in the year 1659, and shows that, on this great point of Christian theology, the author steadily adhered to those views which the leading Protestant Reformers strenuously advocated. This tract has long been extremely scarce, and the writer of this preface did not even know of its existence when, in the year 1822 he published the *Life* of this very eminent man. It is valuable, as showing how many things, in the divine economy, contribute to invest mankind with the inestimable blessing of just of mortals. Gilbert Wakefield, who belonged to the same school of theology, and knew him well, says, "Even the meekness of Christianity itself is exhibited in his prefaces and occasional addresses to the reader. But he was, in reality, a very peevish and angry disputant in conversation, and dictatorial even to intolerance. So imperfect a judgment may be formed of the mildness or asperity of any author from the correspondent quality of his writings."—WAKEFIELD'S *Life*, Vol. I., pp. 226, 227.

tification to eternal life ; and forms an appropriate supplement to the Exposition, the leading principle of which it more fully developes. That the Protestant Reformers should have maintained the doctrine of justification by faith with zeal and perseverance, is not at all surprising, considering the circumstances under which they were placed. This is a prominent doctrine of Scripture, to which those blessed men made a final appeal on all questions of divinity ; and it is the most powerful engine that was ever employed against Popish error. If penitent sinners may be justified from the guilt of all sin by faith in the atonement of Christ, the pretended sacrifice of the mass, penances, priestly absolution, are of no value, and the fire of purgatory is an idle dream. It was by the faithful inculcation of this master-truth that Popery was first driven from these realms ; and it is only by the same means that its incroachments can be effectually repelled.

Mr. Hickman, against whom the author defends himself in his lively and humorous preface, was a predestinarian Minister ; and Mr. Pierce, who is there mentioned, was an episcopal Divine of great celebrity and influence. He lived at Brington, in Northamptonshire, during the Commonwealth ; but at the Restoration was made Dean of Sarum, and Chaplain to the King. He was a man of extraordinary learning ; assisted Bishop Walton in editing the London Polyglott Bible ; and, with his friend Dr. Lawrence Womack, he defended, with consummate ability and effect, those views concerning predestination and human liberty which Melancthon held in the latter years of his life, and which the English

Reformers adopted from him. Baxter speaks of these two men in a manner which shows that he felt the force of their logic, eloquence, and wit. Womack wrote under the assumed name of Tilenus, junior. No biographical account of these champions of the doctrine of general redemption, as held by the Church of England, has ever yet been attempted. Their personal history stands connected with the fortunes of the Church of which they were ornaments and members.

There is one circumstance mentioned in the preface to the "Banner of Justification," which is worthy of notice. It shows that Mr. Goodwin's writings on the quinquarticular controversy had produced a considerable effect. Speaking of Mr. Hickman, he says, "I know it would be offensive to the gentleman, if I should relate how many letters, and messages otherwise, of thankful acknowledgments of the grace given unto me, for the clearing of those doctrines of election, reprobation, &c., and of Christian encouragements to proceed in my way, &c., I have received, time after time, from several persons of considerable worth for godliness and knowledge, inhabiting in several parts of the nation, some of them Ministers of the Gospel, and others of them students in the University of good standing."

The last tract in the present volume, entitled, "The Agreement and Distance of Brethren," was written by Mr. Goodwin soon after the publication of his "Redemption Redeemed;" and was designed to correct the misstatements which were then extensively circulated respecting the author's creed. He had fully explained and defended himself in that

great work; but as it was not likely that a folio volume of controversial divinity would be generally read by private Christians, in whose estimation he did not wish to suffer, he drew up this concise manual for popular use. It contains a syllabus of the controversy on the five points, and serves as a key to all his other writings on that subject. The generality of polemical writers seem, as if by instinct, to place themselves at the greatest possible distance from their opponents; but Mr. Goodwin appears anxious to come as near to his Calvinian brethren as he could, without violating his conscience. He shows the extent to which he could agree with them in sentiment; he specifies the precise points at issue between them; and gives, in a concise form, some of the principal reasons upon which his dissent was founded. The spirit in which he writes is uniformly kind. To some persons it will appear strange, that the names of several private individuals, members of Mr. Goodwin's church, are affixed to the preface of this tract; but it should be observed that in those times many laymen were profoundly read in Christian theology. Of some of the men whose names here occur an account will be found in Mr. Goodwin's Life, already mentioned; and one of them, William Allen, a wealthy merchant in London, was himself a somewhat voluminous writer on divinity. His works were collected after his death, and published in a folio volume, with a funeral sermon by Bishop Kidder. The learned Prelate acknowledges that many of Mr. Allen's productions would have done honour to a grave and erudite Divine, for the correct knowledge which they

display. They embrace several topics of considerable difficulty; and their practical tendency is uniformly good.

No apology, it is presumed, is requisite for the republication of the tracts now collected, which have long been out of print, and in the hands of very few persons. The Exposition, especially, has of late years been much inquired after, and seldom with success. Many persons, friendly to the doctrinal views which the work advocates, have wished to possess it; and those who adhere to the principles which it opposes cannot justly complain of its appearance in a modern dress, while they themselves continue to reprint and circulate the writings of men who limit the atonement of Christ, and the saving grace of God, in a manner which is conceived to be decidedly unscriptural. These tracts of Mr. Goodwin, which contain an able discussion of some of the most interesting questions in theology, it is hoped, will be of essential service to students and young Ministers, and promote the interests of Christian piety by the encouraging views which they present of the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, and the freeness and fulness of the grace revealed in the Gospel; and by the earnest and forcible manner in which they inculcate a practical compliance with the will of God, in the uninterrupted exercise of a vital and operative faith. To one of his early publications Mr. Goodwin prefixed, as a motto, the impressive lines,—

“Small wires, sometimes, massy weights do carry;  
And on poor Faith hangs great Eternity.”

T. J.

LONDON,  
January 8th, 1835.

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# AN EXPOSITION

OF

## THE NINTH CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS:

WHEREIN,

BY THE TENOR AND CARRIAGE OF THE CONTENTS OF THE SAID CHAPTER,  
FROM FIRST TO LAST, IS PLAINLY SHEWED AND PROVED,  
THAT THE APOSTLE'S SCOPE THEREIN IS TO ASSERT AND MAINTAIN  
HIS GREAT DOCTRINE OF

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH,

AND THAT HERE HE DISCOURSETH NOTHING AT ALL CONCERNING

ANY PERSONAL ELECTION OR REPROBATION OF  
MEN FROM ETERNITY.

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?—Gal. iv. 16.

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.—John vii. 29.

Δυσδηρατος η αληθεια και πανταχοθεν εξιχνευτα.—BASIL. *Mag.*

*Tenuis est mendacium ; perlucet, si diligenter inspexeris.*—SENECA.

*Qui vero me errare existimant, etiam atque etiam diligenter quæ sunt dicta considerent, ne fortassis ipse errent.*—AUG. *De Bono Persever.*



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN FOUK,  
LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON,  
TOGETHER WITH  
HIS WORSHIPFUL BRETHREN, THE ALDER-  
MEN OF THIS CITY.

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RIGHT HONOURABLE AND RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,

By your high approbation of a sermon preached at Paul's, before you, in May last, by one Mr. John Pawson, as the press nameth him, testified by your Order in Court of June the 15th, following, about the printing of the said sermon, I cannot, with the salvage of your honours, but judge that you are masters, at least in your own sense and apprehensions, of those noble controversies now on foot amongst us, concerning election, reprobation, the death of Christ, the grace of God, the perseverance of the saints, &c., being the principal if not the only points discoursed in that sermon. Nor would I willingly but presume that, had you not been very studiously and conscientiously versed in these great questions, you would not so publicly have appeared in the habit of a *facultas theologica*, nor gone so near to the giving a definitive sentence in matters of such profound disputation, as your said Order, printed, even candidly interpreted, amounteth unto.

It is one of the sovereign and high contentments of my soul to understand and find, that Magistrates and Judges of the earth are willing to lift up their hearts to the acquainting of themselves with the counsels and mind of God, and will find time to search thoroughly into those worthy mysteries which the blessed angels, those great princes of heaven, judge it no

ways beneath them, but rather an advance of blessedness unto them, to pry into. When they who are gods by institution shall narrowly and with delight contemplate the real excellency of His glory who is a God by nature, they must needs be transformed into his likeness, and this more and more, according to that most observable passage of the great Apostle: "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) And when the gods on earth shall be changed into the same image with the God of heaven, no doubt blessedness is coming with a high hand upon the world.

But of this I must crave leave to inform your Christian minds, that as a narrow and intense beholding of the face of God in a true glass, and which representeth him uniformly like unto himself, is an unquestionable means of that blessed transformation I speak of; so on the contrary, to feed upon a false or undue representation of him, with a strong conceit that such a representation is according to truth, and that God is really such, as by the false light of this representation he is exhibited and appeareth unto us, is, especially as the misrepresentation may be, of most dangerous consequence, and apt to transform men into the likeness of the devil, or at least to harden and confirm men in such a transformation. The Prophet David personateth God speaking thus to the wicked: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." (Psalm l. 21.) When men are unjust, unmerciful, inordinate lovers of themselves, partial, hollow and loose in their promises, full of dissimulation, or the like, if, under these most hateful and horrid impressions upon their souls, they shall be brought by men of learning, parts, and of supposed godliness, into this hellish paradise, whether it be in expressness of words, or in pregnant and near-hand consequence, it is much the same; the flesh will smell a consequence afar off, that sympathizeth with her, that the like things are found in the glorious God himself, and that he acts and moves in his way as the sons of such abominations are wont to move in their way, this must needs be as oil cast upon the raging flames, a teaching of wickedness to be more confidently wicked, than otherwise, in all likelihood, she durst presume to be. It is like that the Prophets of Jerusalem, in Jeremy's days, built up the inhabitants thereof,

great and small, unto ruin, by such doctrines as these. For the Lord complains of them in these words: "I have seen also in the Prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: They commit adultery;" that is, they adulterate the truth, as Grotius interpreteth; "and walk in lies;" that is, teach the people day after day things which are false.\* "they strengthen also the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness." (Jer. xxiii. 14.) He that shall put it into the heart and conscience of an evil doer, that God is like unto him in the way of his evil doing, makes it next to an impossibility for such a man to relinquish the evil of his way. For who will not with his whole heart and soul desire and delight to walk in such ways, being otherwise pleasing to the flesh, wherein he verily believeth that he shall be like unto God? Now that you may be unjust, unmerciful, cruel, partial, haters without cause of the greatest part under your government, full of dissimulation, indulgers of all manner of sin and wickedness, and yet be like, yea, very like, unto such a God as Mr. Pawson portrayeth out unto you for the true God, the God of your hope and salvation, in his sermon, lately mentioned, although I have demonstratively and with pregnant evidence proved as much already in some of my writings; † yet, if you shall please at any time to lay the command of your honourable Court upon me to perform the same service again with more particular reference to the said sermon, I here engage myself, *testibus celo et terrâ*, before God, angels, and men, God sparing me life and health, to do it.

Besides, evident it is, by what hath been offered by me and others to public consideration, that the entire system or frame of that doctrine wherein Mr. Pawson endeavours to build you up in his sermon is not according unto godliness, but exactly calculated for the meridian of the flesh, having a palpable and broad tendency in it to revive the "old man," where he is a dying, and to render him vigorous and active, without care or fear. Yea, if the god of this world had a mind and opportunity to petition the grandees or pillars of Christian religion, met in an œcumenical council, that they would take some pity on

\* *Vidi horrenda hominum adulterantium veritatem.*

† Redemption Redeemed, pp. 509, 510, 513, 514, &c., 499, 489, 490, 477, &c., 470, 471, &c. Agreement and Distance of Brethren, pp. 8, 9, 25, 17, besides several other places.

him, and establish or allow of some few doctrines amongst them, such as he should nominate unto them, for the relief and support of his tottering and sinking kingdom, the doctrines of this his nomination, to speak that which is very probable, would be those wherewith Mr. Pawson hath prevented him, and laboured in the very fire to plant and propagate in the world.

But whereas he pretends in his dedication unto you, that the doctrines delivered in his sermon, conceived by him, as he saith, and perhaps truly, to be truths, were once and again “delivered to the saints,” and owned through successive generations by the choicest of saints: 1. As to the latter: If he had read my book of Redemption through, at which he nibbles here and there in his sermon, he might have seen the contrary hereunto face to face, here being a cloud of such witnesses as he speaks of, I mean of the choicest saints, drawn together, who plainly and without parable testify that, in their successive and respective generations, not the doctrines which he maintains, but those diametrically opposite thereunto, were the more generally-received divinity and faith of the choicest saints. 2. To the former: If the doctrines he speaks of were once and again “delivered unto the saints,” it is a clear case that they are no Gospel doctrines; for these were but “once delivered unto the saints,” as Jude speaketh.

Men, fathers, and brethren, are you able to endure sound doctrine? I know that you are able; and that you had much rather cut off your right hands, and pluck out your right eyes, and enter into life either maimed, or with one eye, than having two hands, or two eyes, to be “cast into everlasting fire.” The Apostle Peter gives this important *aviso* to the Christians of his times, that many, speaking of such teachers as were like to come amongst them, through covetousness should with feigned words, or rather, *with words formed, or fashioned*,\* for the purpose, make merchandise of them, (2 Peter ii. 3,) that is, make carnal benefit and advantage of them, as merchants do of their merchandise; clearly implying, that such teachers who have any worldly design upon those that hear them have hereby a strong temptation upon them to daub with untempered mortar, and to preach doctrines plausible to the flesh, and consequently destructive to the spirit, and so most dangerously

\* Πλαστοις λογοις.

pernicious to the soul. For though for a Minister of the Gospel to build up men in the false and lying imaginations of their hearts, be none other than the casting of a snare of death and eternal ruin upon them, yet is there scarce any work or service for which they are, more generally, so willing to give large wages as for this. Now give me leave, for your precious souls' sake, freely to tell you, that there is no sort of men under heaven so obnoxious to be merchandised, or sold for carnal advantage by their teachers, as men in places of power and authority, and where silver and gold have their throne, and this in more respects than one.

1. Such men as these, in respect of the many opportunities which they visibly have in their hand to gratify those that love this present world, are, in the eye of such teachers, as the wine, when it giveth its colour, and moveth itself right up in the glass, as Solomon speaketh, is in the eye of him that is inordinately addicted to it. The very sight and beholding of them awakens, yea inflames, the carnal spirits of such men to prepare their nets, and spread them in the way of those, if they can come at it, whom they design for their prey. It was to good purpose observed by the poet,

*Non facilè esuriens positâ retinebere mensâ,  
Et multùm saliens incitat unda sitim.*

That is,

Set meat before an hungry man,  
He hardly will refrain;  
And waters springing pleasantly  
Do thirst inflame amain.

2. The tenets and opinions of great men, in matters of religion, and things appertaining unto God, are commonly the unexamined and presumed notions of the state and times wherein they live; and so are like to be, not of God, but of the world, and to have a face, but no heart or substance of truth in them. For as Christ pronounceth a woe to such persons of whom all men speak well: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you; for so did your fathers to the false prophets;" (Luke vi. 26;) in like manner, and upon the same grounds, it is much to be feared, that a woe belongs unto such doctrines which the generality of a nation shall accept of, can digest, and applaud. In this respect, also, men great in wealth

and power, are very opportune to become a prey and spoil to the covetousness of their teachers, inasmuch as they may accommodate and comport with them in their judgments and consciences, and yet gratify the flesh; which is a service of sovereign acceptation, for the most part, with such men.

3. The great men of the world I speak of, as they value themselves above the ordinary and meaner rank of men, so do they their principles and imaginations also, especially in matters of religion, above the rate at which inferior persons estimate theirs; and, consequently, as, on the one hand, they count it the greater disparagement to have them chastised or put to rebuke by any man, so, on the other hand, they are apt to judge such men worthy a double reward, who shall justify and give testimony unto them. Upon this account, also, such men are in much more danger than others to be bought and sold by such teachers who mind or savour the things of this world, because these teachers, observing this strain or humour in such men, are hereby tempted and provoked to work upon it, which must be by perverting the straight ways and counsels of God in the Gospel, so that they may appear every ways conformed, and no ways cross, to their apprehensions.

4. And lastly, the great danger I speak of threatens the sons of the glory and greatness of this world more than other men at this turn also, because they, partly by reason of their places, and partly of the unruly greatness of their estates, are full of the cares, distractions, business, and employments of the world; and, besides, have the opportunity, of which the flesh makes a necessity, of following and enjoying many pleasures and outward contentments, possibly in themselves not unlawful, which persons of meaner condition have not. Now, what between the one and the other, their time is wholly drunk up; by reason whereof they want leisure, and, so, freedom and composedness of mind and understanding, substantially to examine and try the doctrines of their teachers. This want being understood and resented by them, strengtheneth their hand to be the more venturous and daring in preaching such doctrines unto them, which, as, on the one hand, they know to be pleasing enough to their present judgments and thoughts, so, on the other hand, they are without much fear of being ever detected, or challenged by their great masters, for unsoundness or untruth in them. As for any detection in this kind by meaner men who hear



them, they balance the fear hereof, partly with the knowledge which they have of the inabilities, in conjunction with the carelessness and neglect about matters of this nature, in the greatest part of them; and partly with this apprehension or hope, that, however, the countenance and approbation of the great ones will swallow up the disallowings of a few meaner ones into victory.

These disadvantages, with many others of a like or worse nature, being, as far as is discernible, redeemed by so few of the first-rate persons of the world, (I mean those whom wealth and power make a generation of men by themselves,) the consideration of it fills me, not with admiration of their persons for advantage' sake, but with commiseration to their persons for that danger' sake of perishing eternally, whereunto they are much more exposed than other men. Jerom might have gone lower down, when he professed that he should wonder if any King were ever saved.\* And if the Lord Christ knew such imminency of danger in riches only, as to assert that "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and again, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God;" (Matt. xix. 23, 24;) how threatening above measure must the danger needs be in this kind, when riches and power meet together in conjunction; power having every whit as hard, as malignant, an influence upon soul-interest as wealth or riches themselves!

Do I speak these things unto you, because I love you not, because I honour you not, because I own you not in your capacities of magistracy and civil power? "God knoweth;" yea, God knoweth, that you have not a friend made of flesh and blood more Christianly real or cordial unto you, either in the things of your present honour, in a worthy discharge of your magistratical trust and dignity, or in the things of your future and eternal peace, than I. If God himself, in respect of your office, and as you are governors of the same world in part with him, judgeth it meet to style you gods, (Psalm lxxxii. 6,) far be it from me, and from every other man, either to speak or think of you beneath the honour of so high an appellation, upon the same account. The zeal of my loyalty unto, and

\* *Miror si aliquis Rex salvabitur.*

approbation of, magistracy and government hath been abundantly testified by the frequent contests and liftings up of my pen against all the profanations and pollutions of the glory of them, whether injustice, tyranny, oppression, partiality, pride, unfaithfulness, negligence, &c., in those called unto them; or whether anarchical, disloyal, tumultuous, seditious strains, either in word or deed, in those, a good part of whose calling is obedience and subjection unto them.

I trust your patience hath endured me hitherto without offence. I am not like to speak again unto you, until the heavens be no more. Give me leave, therefore, not so much for the satisfying of mine own mind, as conscience, nor at all to trouble or offend you, but to help you in the great and most important affairs of your souls, to say this one thing further unto you,—that such teachers are never like to be cordial or faithful to the dear interest of your souls, nor to make you great in the saving knowledge of God, who either, on the one hand, cannot willingly bear your frowns, neglects, or contradictions for the truth's sake, or, on the other hand, care not to offend you for a humour's sake, or thing of nought. They are the men for your service in the Gospel who are most solicitous and intent to please you, and, withal, most fearless and regardless of displeasing you, for your good.

If you please to find leisure, diligence, and a judgment unprejudiced, to peruse the ensuing Exposition which I humbly put into your hand, I doubt not but, through His blessing who giveth to every seed its own body, you shall reap from it increase of knowledge and sound understanding in things of highest concernment to you. I call God for a record upon my soul, that I have no design upon you in this dedication, unless it be to make you in all Christian worth and honour as much greater than other men, as you are above the most in wealth and dignity; and to persuade and beseech you, with all affectionateness, with all earnestness of soul and spirit, that, as you desire to be found at the right hand of the great Judge in that his day, so in this your day to remember and consider that magistracy and power of government are no institutions of God, either to fill the purses, or to furnish the tables, or to lift up the minds, or in any kind to gratify the flesh of those in whom they are vested; but rather to serve, to accommodate, and bless the societies and communities of men on earth, unto which they

relate respectively, according to that worthy *item* which the Queen of Sheba gave unto Solomon: "Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee King to do judgment and justice." (1 Kings x. 9.)

The same Lord and mighty God so overshadow you with his power and good Spirit, that the conceptions of your hearts may be holiness unto him, wealth, and peace, and gladness of heart to the inhabitants of this great and famous city, the government whereof is entrusted with you; to yourselves, honour, and safety, and length of days, with the peace and joy of a good conscience on earth, and a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory in the heavens. So prayeth, and is willing yet to pray a greater prayer for you than so, did he know any greater,

Your servant, to be commanded in Christ,

JOHN GOODWIN.

*From my study in Coleman-street,  
February 7th, 1652.*

## TO THE READER.

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GOOD READER,

I. I CANNOT but acknowledge myself a debtor of thine in a far greater sum than here I tender, or, indeed, am likely to be in any capacity to make payment of unto thee, for some years, though God should, against the threatenings of my crazy tabernacle, reprieve me from the grave. I find old age coming upon me like an armed man, attended with his accustomed retinue of infirmities, weaknesses, and disablings from service many ways, as well in the labour and travail of the mind as of the outer man. Besides, the troublesome importunity of some men in another way, of very ill abode to the affairs of Jesus Christ amongst us, hath engaged my thoughts to offer something in public, and this with as much expedition as my slow pace, with other emergent diversions, which are like to prove not a few, will afford, for the healing of it, if God shall graciously please to stand by me in the cure. By reason hereof my intentions, declared for the drawing up of a second part to my book of Redemption, now some while since published, are interloped, and set back for a time; yea, whether God will not, by the hand of death, discharge me from the service before I shall be in a capacity to lift up a hand unto it, is beyond the ken of my understanding. However, He whose interest is a thousand times more concerned in such a service than mine will, I am securely confident, awaken other instruments to the performance of it, though I shall fall asleep.

II. Concerning the Exposition now in thine hand, though it be not yet of age, yet, I suppose, it can and will speak for itself to those who understand the dialect which it speaketh: If not, I shall not be importune, nor rise up early, to commend it. The parcel of Scripture expounded in it, is, doubtless, of a most high and excellent inspiration; as our Saviour's advice also was, upon his commending those who had "made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven." And as he, by subjoining this *epiphonema*, "He that is able to receive it, let

him receive it," plainly signified, as well the paucity of those that were like to embrace and follow that his counsel, on the one hand, as the great and singular benefit whereunto it must needs redound to those who should follow it, on the other hand; in like manner the Apostle Paul, when, by the Holy Ghost, he had indited the contents of this chapter, might well have characterized the genius of it by this or some like eulogium: *Capiat qui potis est capere*. "Let him understand it that can understand it." It is a field wherein there is a treasure of wisdom and knowledge hid; but he must be content to dig deep and hard that desires to find it, yea, and must be provided of such digging instruments, also, which are proper for the work; I mean, of such principles which are of good and pregnant accord with all things delivered and intended by the Apostle in the chapter. Otherwise, the pre-conceptions of his judgment being erroneous, and lying thwart and cross to those notions and truths which are asserted here, must of necessity turn him out of the way of the Apostle's meaning, and occasion him to sit down in his belief quite besides that which is written. Yea, though a man's judgment be comportant enough with the general scope or main conclusion driven at in a discourse, yet if either it wars against any part of the method, or any argument managed in order to the eviction of such a conclusion, or else misapprehends the scope and main conclusion itself, judging it to be one, when as it is another far differing from it, either of these, but especially both of them meeting together, must needs disorder a man's thoughts, and reduce him to an utter incapacity of understanding aright the carriage of particulars in the discourse. Both these disadvantages, in reference to a true understanding of the Apostle in the chapter before us, I clearly find in the greatest part of our modern expositors, yea, and in some of the more ancient also, who have commented upon it.

For,

III. 1. To speak first to the latter, they more generally conceive the Apostle's scope in the body of the chapter, to be an holding forth or asserting of a peremptory clection and reprobation from eternity of a determinate number of men, under a mere personal consideration; whereas, to him that shall narrowly and attentively weigh and consider the tenour and process of the Apostle's discourse from verse 6 to the end, it will be found, as clear as the light at noon-day, that there is *nec vola*

*nec vestigium*, neither little nor much, of any such either election or reprobation in it; but that his express scope and intent is, to vindicate that great doctrine of justification by faith, and this more particularly against two main objections, the one insinuated in verse 6, the other mentioned in verse 14. This I plainly demonstrate in the entrance of my Exposition; and give further light, ever and anon, to the truth of it, upon occasion offered, in the progress thereof.

2. The opinion and sense of the said expositors being, that, if God should elect or choose men, or purpose or decree to elect them, by, or according to, their faith, election should be as much from men themselves, and as little from God, as it would be, in case he should elect, or purpose to elect, them, by, or according to, the merit of their works; whereas, the Apostle clearly supposeth the contrary in this his discourse, as I make evident upon verse 11; evident it is that they lie under the other disadvantage also, lately mentioned, and, by reason of such a notion or principle, cannot possibly fall in or close kindly with him in his sense and meaning along the chapter.

IV. If my brethren of hardest thoughts against me really knew, first, how little pleasure I take in declining them, or their judgment, either in the sense of this chapter, or in any other controversial point in religion; and, secondly, how little offence I take at them, or any of them, simply for their opposition in judgment unto me; I suppose they could not, lightly, be any otherwise affected towards me, notwithstanding my distance in judgment in some things from them, than I am towards them; and, consequently, that they would only pity and pray for me, as a man to whom the light of truth hath only in part as yet shined, and not be continually shooting the "arrows of bitter words," as David calls them, against me, as if I either were a person disaffected unto them, or their interest, or did not desire, *αληθեսειν εν αγαπη*, (Eph. iv. 15,) to follow or speak the truth in love as well as they. However, if I could think that the measure which they mete out unto me in hard sayings, and otherwise, would turn to as good an account unto them in honour and peace at the great day of Jesus Christ, as I am certain they will unto me, I could count the tentation double joy unto me. For the truth is, that my reproaches are my best riches; and my mortality is much more endeared unto me by my sufferings for the truth, than by any thing I have done, or am

in a capacity of doing otherwise, for it. My brethren need not fear that I shall ever reciprocate, either hard sayings or doings with them : Nature itself teacheth me not to reproach my benefactors.

V. I easily apprehend that some will attempt the disparagement of the explication here presented unto thee, by pretending that it Arminianizeth ; and, if so, what, will these men say, is it good for, but, with unsavory salt, to be cast upon the dunghill ? But I suppose the ears of sober Christians have been so long beaten and accustomed to the noise of Arminianism, that by this time it signifieth little or nothing to them, and that they are no more affected with the sound of it, than those that dwell near unto the *catadupes* of *Nilus* are with the hideous noise thereof, who by a continual hearing it are scarce sensible that they do hear it, nor are anyways disturbed or inconvenienced by it. However, we know, notwithstanding that disgraceful demand in the mouth of a true Israelite, “ Can any good come out of Nazareth ? ” that there did come the greatest good that ever the world saw, had, or enjoyed, from thence. If the Exposition doth Arminianize, that is, was first given unto and delivered by Arminius, or any person stiled by men Arminian, I know much more reason why the men should be had in honour for the Exposition’s sake, than why the Exposition should suffer for the men’s sake. That Arminius studied, upon equal terms with the best of his fellows, “ to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, ” is a word sufficiently established in the mouth of more than either two or three witnesses, and these very competent ; and, therefore, according to the law, he ought to be acquitted from any sinister imputation in that kind.

VI. Notwithstanding, unless both the credits and the consciences of those who shall call the Exposition Arminian be relieved by the figure *synecdoche*, which in some cases alloweth men to call the whole by a term appropriate unto a part only, they will both suffer deeply in the adventure. For though there be some strains and turnings here and there which sympathize with the principles of that way, yet the main body and bulk of the Exposition is built upon grounds of common reception amongst all understanding and learned Christians. Arminius himself, as far as I can find, hath not written,

commentary-wise, above the proportion of three or four leaves, at most, in quarto upon the chapter. This piece, though of so narrow a compass, I never read to this day, neither by myself, nor by any other for me; nor do I know any one notion contained in it. I confess, I purposely forbore the reading of it, that I might have wherewith to stop the mouths that were like to be opened against me, as if I had ploughed with Arminius's heifer. The Remonstrants who appeared at the Synod of Dort delivered into this Synod their sense, somewhat largely, touching the middle part of the chapter, beginning with verse 6, and ending with verse 23; but meddled not either with the beginning or the end of it. I confess that at some turns I consulted this piece of a commentary, and sometimes met with such apprehensions which consorted well with my genius, and which contributed somewhat towards the work I had in hand. But he that shall compare the contents of this writing with my Exposition will find very little, comparatively, borrowed from thence; and that which is borrowed, so transformed, and the property of it so altered, by superadded explications, limitations, distinctions, questions, &c., that the natural face of it can hardly be seen or discerned in my glass. Since this writing of the synodical Remonstrants, I have met with nothing from any man of this learning which relateth to the chapter here explained, but only a brief paraphrase with some observations of Simon Episcopius upon this chapter in conjunction with the two next following. But how little communion my Exposition hath with these, whether paraphrase or observations, will readily be found, by him that shall seek to know it, by comparing them. Whether Hugo Grotius will be numbered amongst men of the Arminian persuasion, I know not. However, his commentaries upon the chapter are but brief; nor had I an opportunity to see them, until I had overcome and finished the much greater part of my work, and was passed those quarters of the chapter where the doctrines of a personal election and reprobation from eternity are supposed by many to be lodged. Nor do I yet know what his sense or judgment is touching these passages.

I shall not need to give an account of my method; it is only that which is familiar and common amongst expositors who faithfully endeavour to bring the mind of God into a clear light out of the obscurity of those scriptures which they undertake to expound, partly by a narrow searching into the scope and



context from place to place; partly by a diligent examination of the different senses or significations of words, and choosing that which is most accommodate and proper for the place; partly also by considering the Scripture dialect and phrase; partly again by disencumbering the sense given of such objections and difficulties as seem to lie against it; and lastly, by establishing and avouching the sense given, by showing a perfect harmony between this and other passages of Scripture. "My witness is in heaven, and my record on high," (Job. xvi. 19,) that throughout my Exposition I have not willingly wrested, or adulterously forced, any phrase, word, syllable, or letter; but have, with all simplicity of heart, and as in the sight of God, without turning aside either to the right hand or to the left, followed the most genuine ducture of the context, and scope from place to place, consulting, without partiality, all circumstances which occurred, and which I could think of, in order to a due steerage of my judgment in every thing. The bulkiness of the discourse is not occasioned by any popular enlargements sermon-wise. I only, upon the exposition given of some more nearly-cohering passages, make observation of some brief heads of doctrine from them, respectively, commonly pointing at a scripture, two, or more, comporting with each doctrine; but neither insist upon any proof by way of argument or reason, nor frame or raise any applicatory discourse at all upon them. That which swells the body of the Exposition to that bigness wherein it appears is partly the sublimity or spiritualness of the argument or matter, partly the *δυσνοησια*, the *difficulty* or *obscurity* of the Apostle's method or vein of discourse, in the managing or handling of it; partly, also, the importunity of such mistaken notions and senses of interpretation which have outrun the truth and gotten the start thereof in the reasons, judgments, and understandings of men. Probable it is that the mind of the Holy Ghost in those turnings and passages of the chapter, which are of the most difficult access to the understandings of men in these days, was of a far more easy and ready comprehension to those to whom the epistle was written, and generally to the saints, who were contemporaries with the Apostles; although it be true also which Peter saith, even with reference to the times wherein he spake it, namely, that in the writings of Paul there are *δυσνοητα τινα*, *some things hard to be understood*. Such things are hard to be understood which lie, as it were, far remote, and at a great

distance from the apprehensions and understandings of men, in respect of their present state and condition, as, namely, when they are principled only with such notions and suppositions which either have little or no sympathy or affinity with the said things, or else with any such which are opposite to the truth of them. In both cases, but especially in the latter, as a man must take many steps in the performance of a long journey, so must he proceed by many approaches of argument and discourse, who shall with any likelihood of success endeavour to carry up the judgments and understandings of men to such truths.

Before the Exposition I have prefixed a brief paraphrase of the whole chapter, according to the sense and carriage of the Exposition, that so thou mayest readily, and with a very little reading, understand the management and course of it throughout, and so make some estimate whether it be at any turn wrested or forced, and not very naturally consorting and comporting all along with the context itself. After the Exposition I have subjoined, for thy benefit, with no small pains to myself, four tables; the first containing such particular texts of Scripture occasionally mentioned, with some touch or other of interpretation upon them. The second exhibiteth such general rules for the interpretation of Scripture which are upon occasion delivered in the discourse. The third is a collection of the principal questions and difficulties discussed and resolved herein. The fourth and last directeth unto some other particulars in the Exposition which are not to be found out by the help of any of the other tables. I shall not need to inform thee of the usefulness of these tables, or tell thee that by means of some one or other of them thou mayest very presently find any thing material contained in the whole.

I know no ground (neither shall I build without) why I should expect any better quarter for this piece from men who have adventured so much of their estates in credit in the crazy bottom of a personal reprobation from eternity, as the greatest part of Ministers amongst us have done, than what my book of Redemption, and some other writings relating in argument thereunto, have found. The serpentine hissing of tongues and pens against me is now no strange thing unto me, and so no great trial.

*Cunarum labor est angues superare mearum.*

From my youth up until now I have conflicted the viperous

contradictions of men, the truth having acted me in full opposition to my genius and spirit, by making me, with Jeremy, "a man of contention to the whole earth." (Jer. xv. 10.) But now I can willingly and freely say of the truth, as the Empress of her son, *Occidat, modo imperet*. Let truth handle me as she pleaseth, deprive me of all things, yea, of that very being itself of which I am yet possessed, upon condition that she herself may reign. I have the advantage of old age, and of the sanctuary of the grave near at hand, to despise all enemies and avengers. I know that hard thoughts, and hard sayings, and hard writings, and hard dealings, and frowns, and pourings out of contempt and wrath abide me; "but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 24.) Farewell, good reader, in the Lord; let him have a friend's portion in thy prayers, who is willing to suffer all things for thy sake, that the truth of the Gospel may come with evidence and demonstration of the Spirit unto thee, and remain with thee. If the embracing of the truth before men keeps thee from preferment on earth, it will, most assuredly, recompense thee sevenfold, yea, seventy times sevenfold, in heaven. May the Exposition, in thy hand, through the blessing of Him who giveth the increase upon the plantings and waterings of men, be a strengthener of thy faith, and helper of thy joy.

Thine, devoted to serve thee in the

faith and patience of Jesus Christ,

J. GOODWIN,

*From my study in Swan-Alley, Coleman-Street,  
London, February 14th, 1652.*



A PARAPHRASE

OF

THE NINTH CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE TO  
THE ROMANS,

ACCORDING TO THE TENOR AND SENSE OF THE EXPOSITION FOLLOWING;  
CONTAINING, IN BRIEF, THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE THEREOF.

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- 1 I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience  
also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,  
2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow  
in my heart.

FROM what hath been already delivered by me, in this epistle, concerning justification by faith, and not by the observation of Moses's law, as likewise from what I shall further add in the same argument, I easily foresee that my countrymen the Jews will infer and conclude, that I make of them no better than reprobates, a people cast out of the sight and favour of God, inasmuch as they do not receive this my doctrine. And I am not a little jealous but that they will judge and say that it is of hatred and evil will towards them that I am so zealous in asserting and propagating such a doctrine, inasmuch as they are conscious unto themselves how injuriously they have entreated me, and what great evil they have done unto me. But to prevent, and heal, if it be possible, any such conceit or apprehension in them as this, and to let them know of a certainty that I am as far as the heavens are from the earth from all bitterness of spirit towards them, or any thought or desire of revenge, in one kind or other, upon them, I most solemnly and seriously profess and swear, as in the presence of Jesus Christ my Lord, whose holiness and

power I infinitely reverence and dread, and with the full and clear testimony of my conscience, moved and acted herein by the Holy Ghost, that the sense of their stubbornness and unbelief, whereby they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, and expose themselves to eternal misery and ruin, is as a sword continually passing through my soul, inwardly troubling, afflicting, and tormenting me without ceasing.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh :

And that they may be fully persuaded and satisfied of the reality and truth of this my affection towards them, and that I am a man of no less sorrow and sadness of soul for their misery than I have now expressed, I further, upon the same terms of assurance, declare and profess, that, however my dear Lord and master Christ hath not only vouchsafed unto me the great honour and dignity of being a member of his own mystical body, with other saints, but hath also invested me with the peculiar dignity of an Apostle, and made me his great ambassador unto the world, yet am I not only willing and content for their sakes, and to recover them out of that bitter snare of death, their unbelief, to run all extremities of hazard and danger, and to suffer things very grievous to be endured by men ; but also ardently wish and desire that I could or might purchase or procure this grace for them at the hand of God, though it were by my being made, not only the most vile, abject, and despicable bondslave in the world, and handled accordingly, but even such a person also, who is esteemed or looked upon as the most abhorred and abominated creature in all the world by Christ himself, and which of all others he would never own ; or as a man devoted unto the worst and most ignominious of deaths, and ready to suffer accordingly. And this I can and do the rather wish and desire on their behalf, to save them from the wrath and vengeance which is to come, and never to pass away or end, because they are by nature and communion in the same blood, my brethren and kinsmen, they and I being jointly descended from one and the same great progenitor of our race, Abraham. In this respect I cannot but, with all naturalness of affection and tenderness of bowels, commiserate their most

deplorable and sad condition, and, consequently, offer myself most freely and willingly to suffer the uttermost of what I may suffer, or lawfully wish to suffer, for their redemption from so great misery.

- 4 Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ;
- 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Nor, indeed, should I show that reverence which becometh me to the most signal and worthy dispensations of God himself towards this nation and people, if I should suffer them to perish, in case I had a price in my hand, whatsoever it were, wherewith to relieve them. For, 1. God brought them out of the loins of a most famous and worthy progenitor, whose name, being Jacob, upon a special occasion he exchanged for Israel ; and herewith gave him honour in abundance to boot ; in which honour they also partake with him, being called Israelites, and known by this name in the world. 2. Neither hath he cast honour upon them only in the great Patriarch and father of their nation, and in their acknowledged relation of descent from him ; but also, passing by all other nations in the world, hath adopted them for a peculiar people unto himself ; vouchsafing unto them the favours and privileges of a son, and providing a choice inheritance, even the land of Canaan, a land “flowing with milk and honey,” for them. 3. He hath made them a people yet more glorious in the world, by vouchsafing to dwell visibly, by the angel of his glorious presence, in the midst of them ; in whose forehead he had, as it were, written his own great name, and who, for a long time together, upon all occasions manifested himself unto them by signs and wonders, by dreams and visions of prophecy, and other glorious discoveries of his goodness, mercy, wisdom, and power, from time to time. 4. He yet further vouchsafed to enter into covenant with them, and to engage and oblige them by covenant again unto himself ; yea, and renewed and enlarged this his covenant with them time after

time. 5. Besides all this, he gave them a most excellent law, written with his own finger, and many statutes, in wisdom and righteousness far exceeding all the constitutions and laws of all other nations under heaven; whereby they were taught what was meet and comely for them to do, and how they might keep themselves unspotted, and free from the pollutions of other people. 6. Over and above all these vouchsafements he erected and set up amongst them the true worship of himself, full of majesty, wisdom, and holiness; whereas he suffered all other nations to pollute themselves with their self-devised superstitions and idolatries. 7. That which was a worthy privilege also, unto this nation he made known, by several promises, and these repeated and enlarged from time to time, the great secret of his counsel and purpose concerning the sending of the Messiah into the world. 8. This nation was yet further dignified by that title and claim which they do and may justly make to those worthy patriarchs and fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c., as their ancestors and forefathers, unto whom God promised and sware, after a most solemn manner, that he would be their God, and the God of their seed, for ever. 9. And, lastly, the great and first-born privilege vouchsafed by God unto this nation is, that the great Messiah and Saviour of the world, who had been promised and prefigured of old, and with the expectation of whose coming the world was, as it were, all along kept alive; a person exalted in worth and honour far above all men, Patriarchs, Prophets, and whomsoever, yea, above the angels themselves; a person counting it no robbery to be equal with God, having also, Godlike, the absolute dominion of the world, and over all things in it, vested in him: This person, I say, thus astonishingly great, wonderful, and glorious, accepted that flesh or human nature which he assumed at the hand of this nation and people, and was born of one of their daughters.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh,

these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

But now, when I suppose, or teach that which supposeth, that this so highly dignified a people by God, is rejected and cast off by him, I do not suppose or teach any thing which rendereth God unfaithful in any of those promises made by him unto Abraham and his seed. For when God promised and said that he would be the God of Abraham, and so of Isaac, and of Jacob, and their seed, his meaning was, not to engage himself, according to the terms of this promise, unto all without exception who should descend from their loins by carnal propagation, inasmuch as he plainly declared unto Abraham that he meant to estimate and count that seed of his, to whom he intended the performance of the great promise of being their God, not by the rule of natural propagation, but only by the rule of such a propagation which spiritually resembleth the terms and manner of Isaac's generation and birth, who was conceived and born, not according to the ordinary course of nature, but by means of a promise delivered by God unto Abraham in that behalf, and of the believing of this promise, both by Abraham and Sarah. So that by Abraham's seed, to whom God promised to be and to continue a God for ever, evident it is that only such persons are meant who spiritually or supernaturally are begotten and born; that is, receive a new being and subsisting by virtue of that gracious promise of his wherein he promiseth righteousness, life, and salvation unto all that believe; who also may be called Abraham's children or seed, because they spiritually resemble him in his faith, and in all other holy and gracious dispositions accompanying the same, as natural children commonly resemble the parents of their flesh, both in the outward lineaments of the face, and in the frame and temper of their spirits; it being a frequent metaphor in the Scripture, to call both men and women the children of those whose ways and actions they imitate. (Ezek. xvi. 3; Isaiah lvii. 3; Hosea v. 7; John viii. 37, 39, 44; 1 Peter iii. 6; 1 John iii. 8.) Now, then, inasmuch as nothing can be more evident than that all that carnally descend from Abraham, and so from Isaac and Jacob, are not thus spiritually born, do not depend upon this free promise of



God for their justification, as evident it is that all these may be reprobated and rejected by him without any miscarrying or falling to the ground of that promise by which he engaged himself to be a God unto Abraham and his seed. True it is, that that interpretation of his promise made by God unto Abraham, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called," was somewhat obscure; but God soon after gives further light unto it by another oracle; and, however, expected that they who should come to the hearing or reading of it should search and inquire with all diligence after his mind in it.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children [or rather, nations] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Nor did God signify and declare unto Abraham only, by saying unto him, that in Isaac, not in Ishmael, his seed should be called, who, and what manner of persons they are, and must be, whom he meant by that seed of his, unto which he made that great promise of being a God and great Benefactor for ever; but he further declared his will and pleasure in this behalf unto Rebekah also; and this upon such terms, and under such circumstances, as by which his mind and counsel in the business may be more clearly and perfectly known and understood than by the oracle mentioned and delivered unto Abraham upon the same account. For, whereas it might be pretended or thought that God therefore passed by Ishmael, and made choice of Isaac for Abraham's heir, and, consequently, meant to estimate or count him, and so his posterity, for Abraham's seed, either because Ishmael was the son of a concubine, and she a bond-woman, Isaac the son of a free-woman, and Abraham's principal and most legitimate wife; or else

because Ishmael was a scoffer, and of a more irreligious spirit, whereas Isaac was of a more gracious temper and behaviour; and, consequently, that no such mystery or meaning as I infer from the said oracle (namely, that God, in his promise, should, by Abraham's seed, intend only such who spiritually resemble Isaac in his birth) can reasonably be deduced from it; evident it is, that no such exceptions or pretences as these, to obscure the mind of God concerning Abraham's seed, can have place in that oracle, which, not long after, God himself, likewise, in way of further discovery of his mind about the same business, delivered unto Rebekah, Isaac's wife, being now ready to be delivered of two children, the heads and signifiers of two nations, in these words: "The elder shall serve the younger." For, 1. These two children had one and the same mother, namely, Rebekah, and were likewise begotten by the same father, and he not a bond-man, or person of mean parentage, but a great and worthy Patriarch of the Jewish nation, yea, Abraham's son and heir, Isaac by name. 2. When God declared unto Rebekah his mind concerning these children, in the words mention'd, ("The elder shall serve the younger,") the case between them was not as it was between Ishmael and Isaac, when Ishmael, being a scoffer, was rejected, and Isaac, a well-disposed youth, chosen and accepted; but there was no difference at all in point either of good or evil between them, both being yet unborn, and so neither "having done good or evil." Therefore, that God should now declare that his purpose concerning the state and condition of the one and the other was so far differing, that he intended, contrary to the common rule and practice observed amongst men, to make the elder, or first-born, servant unto the younger, and, consequently, give dominion and lordship unto the younger over the elder, must needs signify and import somewhat that is mysterious, besides and above the letter of the history. And what can this reasonably be, but to declare and make known, that his purpose of choosing, estimating, and accepting for Abraham's seed, and heirs of the world, is unchangeably settled upon the liberty and freedom of his own pleasure and will, and this most justly, inasmuch as he is the free Donor of all privileges and blessings now appertaining to this seed, calling and inviting men to the participation hereof upon such terms as himself pleaseth, and is not regulated or carried on in the respective executions of it, by

the merit of works, or by the observation of Moses's law, as the Jews generally suppose it to be, yea, and that in reason and equity it ought to be, the observation of this law having been prescribed and commanded unto men by himself. And that difference which God declared that he would in time make between Rebekah's two sons, whilst as yet they were unborn, in their respective posterities, namely, that "the elder should serve the younger," the Prophet Malachi, many ages after, affirms to have taken place; and so the divine oracle in that behalf to have been fulfilled in his days, and before in these words, uttered by God himself, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated;" meaning, that he had shown respects of love to Jacob and his posterity, partly in giving unto them the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, promised before unto Abraham and his seed; partly, also, after their removal from it for a season, in restoring them unto, and re-establishing them in, the possession of it; whereas, he had assigned unto Esau, in his posterity, only the rough, craggy, and incult mountains of Idumea for their inheritance, a land no ways to be compared with the land of Canaan; and, besides, had now for their sins laid their cities desolate and waste, with a resolution never to suffer them to be built more. By these differences, put by God between them, the servile condition of the one, and filial or son-like condition of the other, manifestly appeared, and this in perfect consonancy to that divine oracle, which long before, yea, whilst as yet neither of them was a nation or people, yea, before the heads of either nation were born, had pre-declared these things.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Nor doth it follow from that interpretation which I have made of, or from that inference which I have drawn from, the two divine oracles mentioned, the former delivered unto Abraham concerning his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac; the latter, unto Rebekah, concerning her two sons, Esau and Jacob; namely, that not all who are the natural issue and posterity of Abraham, no, nor yet of Jacob, were intended by God, in his great promise made unto Abraham, for his seed, no, nor yet any other of his natural issue, but only those who, after the manner of Isaac, are children of promise, and spiritually begot-

ten of the word of God's grace, which promiseth justification and salvation to those that believe; from hence, I say, it doth not at all follow that God should be unrighteous, or unjust, as, it is like, my countrymen the Jews will pretend. They are apt to think, that, if God should estimate Abraham's seed, and justify men by believing, rejecting from these privileges the strict and zealous observers of his own law, he should be unrighteous and unjust. But I desire they will please to understand, that I am as far from teaching any doctrine whatsoever, whereby God should be rendered unrighteous, as themselves; yea, every such doctrine as this is the abhorring of my soul. But, that there is no reflection in the least of any unrighteousness in God in my doctrine of justification by faith, and not by the works of the law, is evident from the mouth of God himself.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

For, doth he not assume and claim to himself a liberty, or right of power, to justify and save who or what manner of persons himself pleaseth, in saying unto Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy?" &c. Doubtless God claimeth unto himself no liberty or power in one kind or other, but only that which is most equitable, righteous, and just. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth," saith Abraham, "do right?" and, so, speak right? Therefore, if God be at liberty to accept, justify, and save, who and what manner of persons he pleaseth, and, consequently, to reject what manner of persons he pleaseth, he cannot be unrighteous or unjust in showing the "mercy" of justification, and so the grace of salvation, upon those who believe, or in denying these privileges to those that seek after them by the works of the law.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

From hence it clearly followeth, that justification, that is, the law or terms of justification, do not proceed from, are not permitted to be nominated, appointed, or made by men, though never so forward or desirous of being justified, though never so zealous in pursuing justification; but the right of enacting this

law, and of prescribing these terms, unquestionably appertaineth unto God; and this for this reason, and upon this account, namely, because it is and was in his power, whether any person whatsoever of mankind should ever have been justified, or no, by one means or other. For, as he that freely foundeth a hospital or alms-house out of his own proper estate, and endoweth it with revenue and means for the relief of those that are helpless and poor, hath in equity the right and power of making what laws he pleaseth concerning the persons that shall be admitted to partake in the benefit and comfort of either of these houses, as how they shall be qualified in order to their admission, how regulated after their admission, &c.; at least, there is no colour of reason, that the persons themselves, who stand in need of, and accordingly desire, the benefit of such charitable foundations should prescribe laws for their own admission and government; in like manner, God, of his free grace, mercy, and bounty, affording the blessed opportunity of justification unto the sinful and lost world of mankind, hath a most equitable right and power, and claims and exerciseth it accordingly, to nominate, ordain, and appoint what laws, terms, and conditions himself pleaseth and judgeth meet, for all those to be subject unto, who desire part and fellowship in this great and blessed business of justification, before they come to enjoy it. And it is a most preposterous thing to imagine or conceive, that he should suffer or permit men themselves, who are sinful and vile, and stand in the utmost necessity to partake of his bounty in that royal blessing of justification, to make their own terms, how they will be justified.

17 For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

And as there is no "unrighteousness" in God's showing mercy, the mercy of justification, and so of salvation, on whom he pleaseth, and, consequently, not in justifying those who believe, so neither is there any whit more "unrighteousness" in his rejecting, condemning, and destroying whom, or what manner of persons, he pleaseth; and, consequently, not in his

rejecting and destroying impenitent, unbelieving, and obdurate sinners. For himself, as we are informed from the Scriptures, plainly told Pharaoh, by Moses his servant, that whereas, by his frequent rebellions against him, in detaining his people in bondage, contrary to many express orders and commands from him to let them go, and these seconded by many terrible signs and wonders, time after time, he deserved to have been cut off by death, as many of his subjects, partakers in the same rebellions with him, had been, yet he had, upon a special design, respited him from destruction hitherto, namely, that in case he should still stand it out in stubbornness and rebellion against him, and not relent to the dismissal of his people, by all that goodness and patience which had already in part been showed, and should yet further to a degree be showed unto him, he might show the dreadfulness of his power in his destruction, and so cause the knowledge of his great and fearful name to be spread far and near throughout the world. By this admonitory and minatory address unto Pharaoh, God plainly declares that he is at liberty, and hath a right of power, to reject from his grace and favour, and to destroy who, and what kind of persons, he pleaseth; and particularly that that sort or kind of persons whom he is pleased thus to reject and destroy are stubborn and obdurate unbelievers.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Now, then, what from the words lately recited, spoken by God unto Moses, on the one hand, and what from the message now mentioned, sent unto Pharaoh, on the other hand, it clearly followeth, that God hath a liberty, or right of power, which he accordingly exerciseth both ways, as well of showing mercy, justifying, and saving, who, and what manner of persons, he pleaseth, as of rejecting, punishing, and destroying, in like manner, whom he pleaseth; and, consequently, that there is no "unrighteousness" in him, when he doeth either.

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

If things be thus between God, and his creature man, namely, that he hardeneth, punisheth, and rejecteth, whom he pleaseth, and at his will; it may be that some, out of froward-

ness, or ignorance, or both, will demand : “ How cometh it to pass that he so frequently complains of, and reproveth, those whom he hath hardened and rejected, considering that they are in no capacity to reform or amend any thing that is blameworthy either in their hearts or ways, or to recover themselves from under their present misery, inasmuch as that will of his, by which they are hardened or rejected, cannot be resisted, or the effects of it dissolved or disannulled by men ? Are such things meet matter of reproof, which the persons reprovèd are in no condition or possibility to help or amend ? ”

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ?

For answer to this demand, whosoever thou art that makest it, if thou beest but a man, I cannot but demand another thing of thee : Tell me whether it be meet, or indeed tolerable, that thou, being a poor, weak, ignorant, and sinful creature, dwelling in a house of clay, and who must shortly appear before the dreadful tribunal of Jesus Christ, to receive judgment for all thy thoughts, words, and works, shouldest enter a quarrelsome and froward contest against the most glorious, most holy, most righteous, and only wise God, before whom the pillars and powers both of heaven and earth tremble, who is able in the twinkling of an eye to crush and destroy thee, about either the righteousness or wisdom of his ways ? If he doth reprove, complain of, and find fault with those whom he hath hardened or rejected, oughtest not thou to reverence him, and presume both wisdom and righteousness in this his way, although thou, through thy present ignorance and profaneness of heart, art not able to comprehend them ? For, let me yet once more ask thee, is it in the least degree reasonable or comely, that when a workman hath given being to any thing made by him, in such or such a form, that this thing should expostulate with him about the shape or form wherein he hath made it, or complain of him for making it in this form, and not rather in some other ; especially considering that that thing which the workman hath made in one form could not possibly have been made by him in another ; inasmuch as it had been another thing, and not

that which now it is, if it had been made in another form. No more reason is there, nay, much less reason there is, why sinful men who, by sinning against God, have forfeited their very beings a thousand times, should contend with him about his proceedings with them, or about the terms of that being which he, notwithstanding those many forfeitures, is graciously pleased to vouchsafe unto them; especially considering, that God, his infinite wisdom and justice on the one hand, and their folly and sinfulness on the other hand, considered, cannot grant them any being at all upon better terms than that which he now vouchsafed unto them.

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

And let me ask thee, O man, yet once more, the more thoroughly to convince thee of the unreasonableness of thy contest against God about his dealings by thee, having now imbased thyself by sinning, and so art become obnoxious unto his displeasure; let me, I say, ask thee, Dost thou, or any other man of common reason and understanding, deny unto an ordinary potter a lawfulness of power over his clay, the vileness of the material on the one hand, and his civil right and propriety in it on the other hand, considered, as if he might not without the violation of any principle of reason, justice, or equity, of the same parcel or lump of it, make one vessel for services not only necessary but also comely and honourable, another for employments less creditable and seemly?

22 [And] What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory to the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?

And if God shall please, for the manifestation of his most dreadful avenging power upon men prodigiously sinful, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to administer a ground of



knowledge and consideration unto the world, how rich above measure his remunerating grace and bounty is towards those whom, by his long-suffering and gracious applications of himself otherwise, he shall bring to repentance, and so prepare and make them meet beforehand, or before their death, for salvation; if he shall, I say, for these or the like ends, mercifully, and with much long-suffering and patience, entreat obstinate and obdurate sinners who are already, by means of an abundance of guilt contracted by a long-continued course in sinning, sufficiently, or above the ordinary rate even of sinners, fitted for destruction, is he not at liberty, hath he not a lawfulness or right of power, to do it? Hath any man any colour or pretext of reason to blame his dispensations in this kind? For otherwise than by enduring sinful men "with much long-suffering" and patience he hardeneth no man; nor is any man by this means upon any such terms hardened, but that he both might have prevented his hardening by repentance, yea, and all along the course and time of this his hardening have repented, and so have prevented his destruction. Neither is that will of God, by which men are hardened, in any such sense, irresistible; but that, this notwithstanding, had they been studious or careful of the things of their peace, they might not only have escaped all hardening in this kind, but even have recovered themselves also from under their greatest hardening, however true it is that very few do recover themselves in this case. For the will of God concerning the hardening of men, as appears by the manner and method of his hardening, namely, by enduring them "with much long-suffering," is not absolute or peremptory, but conditional, not enforcing, not constraining, not necessitating any man to be or to become hardened, but only upon a supposition of his own voluntary neglect or contempt of the gracious applications made by God unto him. This being the case of men's hardening by God, evident it is, that when he finds fault with those who are hardened, he neither insults over their impotency to help themselves, nor acts contrary to any principle of wisdom, reason, or equity, in such a case. For reproofs are in no case more proper than when men, through their wilful foolishness, have incurred any great inconvenience or danger; and especially, when having power and opportunity in their hand to redeem themselves, they shall, notwithstanding, neglect to do it.

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

Amongst those “vessels of mercy,” which God by his grace bringeth to repentance and holiness, and so prepares and makes meet for the glory of heaven, before he confers the same upon them, whom also he intends to reward most munificently, as he gives both them and all men to understand by his great kindness and patience towards those who most of all provoke him, are we, whom he hath effectually called and prevailed with to believe in Jesus Christ. Nor are we all, whom God hath thus made “vessels of mercy,” the children of Abraham by natural descent and propagation, as the Jews more generally suppose all those must needs be who are in grace and favour with God, but many of us are Gentiles by birth, and upon this account persons on whom they look as men with whom God never meant to have any thing to do in any way of favour or respects of grace.

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.

But what I affirm in this, that many of us who are called into grace and favour with God are Gentiles, is nothing but what is consonant enough with many propheticall predictions, owned by the Jews themselves, and particularly with several passages of the Prophet Hosea; as first, where he exhibiteth God himself speaking to this effect, that when time should be, he would give the honour and happiness of being a people, in special manner related unto him, unto those who before had neither part nor fellowship in such a business. And again, that he would show great love to such a people, on whom he had frowned before with great indignation. And yet once more, that he would so interpose by his grace and power that, in the land of Judea, where, under the seventy years' captivity, the people remaining were, by reason of their poor,

low, and miserable condition, esteemed by the nations round about them as a people deserted and forsaken by their God, they, with their brethren returning from the captivity, and their posterities, should be a nation so prosperous and flourishing, so abundantly blessed by him, that the world should not but acknowledge them for a people highly honoured and respected by God. For though these passages, and others like unto them, do properly, directly, and in their letter, speak of that great and happy change which God, when time was, promised to make in the state and condition of the Jews, when it was very low and, in outward appearance, helpless; yet the nature and spirit of them plainly signify and import that God acteth but like unto himself in former times, and consequently that there is no strangeness or incredibleness in the thing, in case he makes such a wonderful alteration in the spiritual estate of the Gentiles, that, whereas they have been formerly, for many generations, a people in whom he took no delight, nor ever revealed himself unto them after any such manner as he did unto the Jews, yet now he should look graciously upon them, place his holy name amongst them, and take of them a people holy to himself.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: Because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

And in case my countrymen the Jews shall object, that from my doctrine of justification by faith it followeth that far the greatest part of them and their nation, who reject and abhor this doctrine, must be excluded from the love and favour of God, they may please to remember and consider, that neither is this any strange or new thing with God; I mean, to reject and cast out of his sight the main body and bulk of their nation. For even their great and royal Prophet Isaiah spake it aloud,

when time was, in the ears of their forefathers, that though they were a nation numerous and populous above the rate of any other nation under heaven, yet, since they had so highly provoked their God, as generally they had done, he was resolved to make such havoc and desolation of them by their enemies, the Assyrians, that a very small number of them, comparatively, should escape; inasmuch as he was resolved to make thorough and quick work with them, and to declare and make known unto the world the incredible numbers of transgressors and wicked persons amongst them, by a proportionable extent and comprehensiveness of his severe judgments executed upon them; not sparing any, save only those who were righteous amongst them, and, possibly, some few others for their sakes, and to be subservient unto them. Yea, the same Prophet had, in like manner, informed his nation not long before, that, unless God, who hath the sovereign and absolute command of all strengths whatsoever residing in his creatures, had, when the swords of Rezin, King of Syria, and of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, raged against the inhabitants of Judea; and again, when Shalmanezzer made that fearful work we read of, 2 Kings xvii., amongst the ten tribes;—had not, I say, God very graciously and somewhat out of course interposed with his providence and power on their behalf, to save a remnant of them alive, out of whose loins this their nation might again in time spring and recover itself, their desolation had been as absolute and universal as the destruction of those great sinners, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrhah, of whom not so much as a small remnant was suffered to remain.

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

What now may we clearly infer and conclude from all that hath been argued concerning the pre-mentioned oracles; the one delivered by God unto Abraham, namely, that in Isaac his

seed should be called ; the other, unto Rebekah, concerning her two sons, Esau and Jacob, namely, that the elder should serve the younger ; together with the answers given to such objections as we met with in opposition to those arguings ; what, I demand, may we plainly deduce and infer from all this ? Doubtless this, namely, that upon the Gentile world, in several of their members, though they little or not at all minded or looked after any such business, as how or whereby they might be justified before God, yet, notwithstanding this blessedness is come, they are justified in the sight of God with that justification which is obtained by believing in Jesus Christ, inasmuch as they, that is, many of them, as hath been said and is commonly known, have thus believed ; this being the only way or means sanctified and approved by God for the justification of men. And, on the other hand, that the Jews, who most zealously pursued such a way, means, or course, for their justification, whereby they confidently expected to obtain it, yet prospered not in their way, were not justified by the course which they steered in order hereunto.

32 Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone ;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence : And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

If you ask me, “ But why or how it cometh to pass, that the Jews, who were so zealously diligent in the pursuit of a justified estate before God, did, notwithstanding, miscarry, and lose that prize of blessedness for which, with so much earnestness and contention of mind and soul they ran ? ” my answer clearly is, That the true and sole reason of their sad miscarriage in this kind was, because they ran in a by-way of their own, pleasing themselves with a conceit that somewhat like to an observation of Moses’s law would justify them ; so turning aside from the way of believing, which is the only way opened and established by God for the justification of men. But they, miserably blinded and deluded men, were offended at the great humility and abasement of Him who was their Messiah, upon this account disdainng and rejecting him, and obdurately refusing

to believe on him ; concerning whom, notwithstanding, God himself had given them warning of old by one of his greatest Prophets that, in the house and line of David their King, he would raise up and establish with power and authority for ever such a person who, by reason of that poor and mean condition wherein he should appear in the world, would be obnoxious to be despised and rejected by unwary and inconsiderate men to their destruction and ruin ; who, notwithstanding, should be a blessed Author of life, and peace, and glory, unto all those who should receive and acknowledge him by believing on him.

# AN EXPOSITION

OF

## THE NINTH CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

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### CONCERNING THE SCOPE OF THE CHAPTER.

It is a saying, though common, yet of worthy consequence, and this in cases of several imports, “A wise man should still begin at the end.”\* A man of understanding being to write or to speak will first diligently consider what his end is in either, what it is that he proposeth unto himself to obtain by the one or the other, and will accordingly form his discourse in all the parts and carriages of it. By means hereof all uncomely extravagancies and tedious impertinencies of words will be prevented, and only such things delivered which have a close and acceptable proportion unto his end. And, doubtless, he that desires clearly and without mistake to understand the particular passages or sayings in the discourse of a wise and sober man, which in themselves, simply considered, may be somewhat obscure and of a doubtful interpretation, shall put himself into the best posture of advantage for compassing this his end, if he can discover the end of the speaker, and carry along with him the consideration hereof to the said passages. I confess that, in such cases, where the end and main intent of the speaker is otherwise doubtful and hard to be known, it is to be inquired after, and may very possibly be so discovered and found out, in the tenor, strain, and tendency of the passages themselves of the discourse.

There is no one thing of a richer conducement to a true

\* *Sapiens debet incipere a fine.*

understanding of this ninth chapter to the Romans, especially in those passages which are more difficult and obscure, than a clear, steady, and distinct knowledge of the Apostle's scope herein, and what doctrine or conclusion it is which the Holy Ghost seeks to prove, explicate, or establish, throughout this contexture of Scripture. The reason hereof is, because all parts of the discourse must be carried in their respective interpretations, as it were, in a straight line upon that which is the scope and end thereof, so that what sense or meaning of words or phrases, though otherwise consistent enough with the letter, simply considered, yea, or with the truth itself in other points, yet shall be found to stand off from the said scope, and be irrelative to it, may hereby clearly be detected not to be the genuine or true sense or meaning of the Holy Ghost in those words. Therefore, by way of preface to our explication of the chapter itself, we shall inquire a little after the main drift and intent of the Apostle herein; concerning which I find only these two different opinions, in the general, amongst expositors; nor, indeed, do I conceive any place left in reason, or with any colour of reason, for a third, at least, materially differing both from the one and the other.

First. Some conceive that the Apostle, in this chapter, from the rejection of the Jewish nation out of the love and favour of God, (insinuated verses 2, 3,) who had for many ages past been a peculiar and chosen people unto him, together with the calling and assuming the Gentiles in their stead, takes occasion to declare and open unto the world the original fountain or supreme cause hereof, namely, the absolute and eternal purpose and decree of God, according unto which he hath predestinated such and such persons, as it were by name, unto eternal life and glory, and such and such others unto eternal death and misery. From this absolute decree of predestination in God it comes to pass, as they conceive and teach, that some persons, namely, those who are predestinated unto life, have such means of grace vouchsafed unto them by God, by which they are infallibly, and without all possibility of miscarrying, brought to repent and believe; as, on the contrary, that others, namely, who are not predestinated unto life, but unto death and eternal condemnation, must, of necessity, remain in impenitency and unbelief, and consequently be at last rejected by God and perish everlastingly. This is the brief of the account which this opinion



gives of the rejection of the Jews and calling of the Gentiles, namely, the election of the one and reprobation of the other from eternity, and this according to the absolute and mere will and pleasure of God; from which different purpose in God towards the one and the other it comes to pass, saith this opinion, that the one, as, namely, the Gentiles, that is, great numbers of them, are brought to believe, and hereby become the people of God; and the other, namely, the Jews, a small remnant only excepted, remain hardened in unbelief, and so are cast off by God and perish. The discussion of this business, the opinion we speak of supposeth to be the sovereign drift and scope of the Apostle in the present chapter.

The other opinion conceiveth, That the crown which the Apostle runs for in this chapter is partly the preventing, partly the satisfying, of such objections which he knew the Jews either had made, or very probably might make, against that main doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ without the works of the law, which he had argued and asserted hitherto, with some occasional insertions of other matters nearly relating hereunto, and for the obstinate and wilful rejection whereof, being now so plainly and fully preached and opened unto them, he certainly knew that their rejection and casting off by God approached, and was even at the door.

That this, and not the other, is the genuine, proper, and direct scope of the Apostle in the chapter in hand will be sufficiently evidenced by these considerations; especially in conjunction with that natural correspondency and agreement which we shall find in all the principal passages of the chapter therewith, when we come particularly to examine and unfold them.

1. The doctrine of such a predestination as the former opinion notioneth and contendeth for, as the subject-matter of the chapter, hath nothing at all in it to convince the Jews of any rebellion or disobedience against God, in rejecting the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, or in cleaving so pertinaciously as they did to the observation of the law for their justification. For, that some are elected by God, others reprobated, no ways proveth either that they who embrace the doctrine of justification by faith are they that are elected by him or approved of him, nor yet that they who depend upon the law for their justification are those that are reprobated by him, or rebel against him. Now it is as clear as the light of the

sun that Paul, both in this and the two next following chapters, labours mightily to convince the Jews of their obstinacy against God, in rejecting his counsel concerning their justification by faith, and that this obstinacy of theirs was the cause of their casting out of the favour of God, and of the investing of the Gentiles, at this time, with their privileges. Nay,

2. Such a doctrine of election and reprobation, as that specified, is so far from having any thing in it whereby the Jews should be convinced of disobedience against God by rejecting the Gospel, and justification by faith, that of the two it hath rather a tendency of a contrary import, as, namely, to strengthen their hand under this their rejection, and to harden them in their rebellion yet more. For, might not they, upon a very plausible account, argue and conclude that they who continued in the law and ordinances of God, given unto their forefathers, and who sought for righteousness by the observation of them, were the elect of God; and, on the contrary, that himself and such of their nation who apostatized from the religion of their forefathers, and went an whoring after a strange god and a strange law, for thus they interpreted their believing in Jesus Christ and profession of the Gospel, were the persons reprobated by God, and therefore destitute of his grace and Spirit? Doubtless the Apostle who professed, and this with all sacred solemnity, as we shall hear in the opening of the beginning of the chapter, such a transcendancy of love to his brethren, that he could wish to be an anathema from Christ for their sakes, was far from delivering any such doctrine unto them, which, in case they believed it, might, on the one hand, so easily, as we heard, prove a snare unto them and harden them in the contempt of the Gospel, but, on the other hand, could no ways profit or advantage them in their spiritual estate, in case they had received it. For what benefit could it have been to a Jew, refractory against the Gospel, or of what tendency towards his reducement, to be informed that God of his mere pleasure, without any consideration of sin, elected some and reprobated others from eternity? Is there any thing in such a doctrine as this either to mollify his heart, or to over-rule his judgment, towards an embracing of the Gospel? Therefore, certainly the asserting of this doctrine was no part of the Apostle's intention in this chapter. But,

3. For a person who at present is an enemy to the Gospel,

and stands off at a great distance in his judgment from it, to hear it substantially argued and proved unto him, that God himself did preach the Gospel, and that in such passages of providence or revelations and discoveries of himself, which this person himself owneth and acknowledgeth, is a method or means of the greatest efficacy and power that lightly can be imagined, to work a perfect reconciliation between such a man's judgment and the Gospel. Now this is that which we affirm to be the Apostle's scope and intent in the chapter before us; as, namely, to demonstrate to the gainsaying Jews, that that very Gospel or doctrine of justification, which they so deeply abhorred and desperately opposed, was anciently preached unto them in their forefathers by God himself; and this in several passages of those very Scriptures, which themselves granted to be of divine authority, yea, and wherein they hoped, as our Saviour testified of them, to have eternal life. This we shall, God assisting, bring forth into a clear and perfect light in our traverse of the chapter.

4. Evident it is that a great part of the chapter, and particularly that part of it wherein the said doctrine of a personal election and reprobation from eternity is supposed to be handled, is bestowed and spent in giving satisfaction unto two main objections which the Jews had ever and anon in their mouths, as is most like, or, howsoever, were obvious and near at hand for them to take up into their mouths against the Apostle's doctrine of justification by faith. The former of these objections was to this effect: "If your doctrine of justification by faith be true, God and his word must needs be false or untrue; because God hath appointed, not faith in Christ, but the works of the law, to be the condition or means of obtaining justification and adoption; and hath nominated Abraham's seed and posterity for those that are to be his sons and heirs, and not the Gentiles, as your doctrine of justification by faith would imply." This objection of theirs against him and his doctrine he insinuates in a way of anticipation: "Nevertheless it cannot be that the word of God hath taken no effect," or, as our later translation reads it, "Not as though the word of God hath taken no effect;" (verse 6;) as if he had said, Though I teach justification by faith, and deny it to be by the works of the law; yea, though by my doctrine of justification I exclude the greatest part of you Jews, who are Abraham's carnal seed, from

being the sons of God, and entitle the Gentiles to this great and blessed privilege, yet do I not hereby "make the word of God of no effect," as you vainly and untruly charge me to do. This I shall demonstrate from your own Scriptures unto you presently. The other great objection, in the strength whereof the Jews magnified themselves against Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, was this, that such a doctrine makes God to be unrighteous or unjust. This he insinuates, verse 14: "What shall we say then? is there unrighteousness with God?" as if he had said, What! doth any such thing as you pretend follow from that doctrine which I have now, and formerly in this Epistle, asserted concerning justification by faith, and not by the works of the law, namely, that God should be unjust? "God forbid;" meaning, that his doctrine was far from being accessory to any such consequence or conclusion.

These being the two grand objections or absurdities wherewith the Jews burdened Paul's doctrine of justification, and from which he undertakes to vindicate this his doctrine in this chapter, we must needs conceive that his scope and intent was to deliver and insist upon such things which are effectual and proper to dissolve the force and strength of them; unless we shall suppose him to be extravagant and weak in his disputes, even beneath the line of ordinary men. If so, then certainly the asserting of such a doctrine of election and reprobation, which some men would make to be his scope in the chapter, cannot be it. For what though it should be granted, that God from eternity hath peremptorily elected some unto salvation, and consequently unto faith, and hath reprobated others from salvation, and so from faith, doth it at all follow from hence either, 1. That therefore God's word must needs take effect, and that justification by faith is no ways contrary unto his word? Or, 2. That there can be no unrighteousness in God? Who seeth not a palpable incongruity and incoherence between such premises and the conclusions specified, as well the one as the other? Therefore, certainly, the express and clear scope of the Apostle in the chapter under consideration is, to acquit and bring off his doctrine of justification with honour from the two objections mentioned, and not to assert any peremptory election or reprobation of persons from eternity.

5. The Apostle himself, towards the end of the chapter, briefly recollecting the sum and substance of what he had

argued in the former part hereof, in the brief result of it, plainly enough declareth that he had had nothing at all to do with such an election and reprobation of men from eternity as many suppose to be there held forth by him; but that his work and business had been to evince justification by faith, and that it was no ways contrary to the word of God that the Gentiles, believing, should be justified, or that the Jews, seeking to be justified by the law, should be condemned, and cast out of the sight of God. The words we mind are these: "What shall we say, then?" that is, What may we conclude and gather from what hath been lately said, but this, "that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But 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." (Rom. ix. 30—32.) Here is nothing of any affinity with, or relation unto, either an election or reprobation of men from eternity of mere will and pleasure, but a plain and right-down assertion of the justification of those who believe, though Gentiles, and of the non-justification of the Jews because they believed not, but sought justification by the law. Both these are here asserted as the natural and clear products of the preceding disputations. Therefore, the intent of these was, not to establish the doctrine of a peremptory and absolute election and reprobation of men from eternity, but to confirm and vindicate that great doctrine of justification by faith, about which there was so sharp a contest between him and those great adversaries of the Gospel, the Jews, and which he had had in hand from the beginning of the Epistle hitherto.

6. Such an election and reprobation, the explication and asserting whereof many imagine the Apostle setteth up for his scope and drift in this chapter, were never yet, I verily believe, (and this upon grounds to me fully satisfactory, and for which I shall account in due time,) substantially proved, either from this chapter, or any other place or places of Scripture whatsoever; nor yet by any competent or convincing argument otherwise. Now this, I presume, is not passable in any man's understanding, that the Apostle should fall short, or prove defective, in point of real and substantial proof of what he undertakes.

7. And, lastly, that which is as much as all this, if not more,

the words, phrases, and imports of the respective verses and passages of the chapter, do very naturally and kindly fall in with that which we have asserted to be the Apostle's scope here, namely, a further proof or vindication of the doctrine of justification against such objections which either the Jews or others might very probably raise against it; whereas they cannot be drawn to a comport with the doctrine of such an election and reprobation as that which hath been oft mentioned without much unkind and hard usage by straining and wresting. This we shall, God assisting, make good as we pass along in the explication of the chapter, which beginneth as followeth:—

- 1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,
- 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.
- 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh;
- 4 Who are Israelites, to whom, &c.

The chapter may be divided into two parts; the former consisting of the five first verses, the latter of the sixth, seventh, &c., to the end of the chapter. In the first, the Apostle, in a most serious, solemn, and sacred manner, professeth a transcendent ardency of affection towards his countrymen and brethren, the nation of the Jews; together with a reverend and high esteem of them in respect of those worthy privileges, with the investiture whereof they were highly honoured by God himself above all the world. In the second part he stands up to maintain his doctrine of justification formerly delivered against such objections which the Jews judged impregnable, and such whereby the said doctrine was sufficiently evicted of untruth. Of this part of the chapter we shall speak more particularly when we come to it.

Concerning the former, the occasion of that most pathological and solemn profession and protestation made by the Apostle herein of his signal affection to his brethren the Jews, together with so particular and full an acknowledgment of their many and great privileges, may well be conceived to be, either the

consideration of the matter last in hand, in the close of the preceding chapter, or else of the argument that he intended next to enter upon in the subsequent part of the chapter, together with the two chapters next following. If the former consideration ministered the occasion we speak of, it is to be conceived of after this manner. The Apostle, towards the latter end of the former chapter, having spoken very excellent and glorious things concerning the love of God in Christ Jesus towards those that believe, and set forth the great blessedness that accrues unto such persons hereby, on the sudden, and whilst he was yet in the sweetness of his contemplation, he remembers the most deplorable and sad condition of his dear friends and kinsmen the Jews; who, by the stubbornness of their unbelief, cut themselves off from all part and fellowship in so great and blessed a business. Loving them with such an intense and ardent affection as he did, he could not but be very intimosly affected, sorely struck and pierced in his heart and soul, with the consideration of their wilful blindness and rueful folly, whereby they did not only make fast, as it were, with bars of iron, the door that leadeth into all joy and happiness against themselves but also desperately plunged themselves into the bottomless gulf of the wrath and indignation of God. Thus it often cometh to pass, that upon the mention or thought of something greatly desirable, we fall upon the remembrance of our dearest friends, and are either affected with joy for their sakes, as, namely, when we are in hope that they either do partake or are like to partake therein; or otherwise are apt to be troubled for them, as when we either know, or else have cause to fear, that they neither do nor shall partake thereof, but rather are in danger of suffering that evil which is contrary to it.

If the Apostle be conceived in the said proem of the chapter, contained in the five first verses, to mind the argument or subject-matter intended by him to be handled in the sequel of the present chapter, and in the tenth and eleventh chapters next unto it, which I rather incline unto, the relation or connexion between them is this: Doctrines or sayings which are of any disparaging, sad, or threatening import unto those to whom they are spoken or delivered are oftentimes liable to a sinister interpretation, and apt to be construed by them as savouring rather of hatred than any good affection towards them in those by whom they are delivered. Now such was the doctrine, in reference to

the Jews, which the Apostle was now about to deliver unto them. He was to vindicate and assert that great doctrine of the Gospel concerning justification by faith against such arguments and objections as wherein they magnified themselves against it, and by the snare whereof they were desperately hardened in their own sense and opinion of justification by the observance of Moses's law. Upon which stubbornness and obduration, he, according to the express import of the Scriptures, and tenor of his commission in this behalf, plainly informs them of the counsel and purpose of God concerning their abdication and rejection by him, and of the calling and receiving of the Gentiles in their stead. And because such doctrines as these could not but seem "hard sayings" to the Jews, and, consequently, to proceed from a person of an exulcerated or much disaffected spirit towards them, upon which account also they lay under a great disadvantage for believing them, and were the more likely to reject them, therefore the Apostle, if it were possible, and as far as lay in him, seeks, in his entrance upon this doctrine, to possess this people with a confident opinion of the reality and truth, yea, and of a more than ordinary degree of love and dear affection in him towards them, professing that his heart would freely serve him to sacrifice his own dear interest in Christ upon the service of their peace; hereby endeavouring to remove that great stumbling-stone of prejudice out of their way. This briefly for the connexion of the former part of this chapter with the latter, and, consequently, with the general procedure of the Epistle. We come to the words themselves.

*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience, &c.*—  
 "If the iron," saith Solomon, "be blunt, and a man do not whet the edge, he must then put to more strength." (Eccles. x. 10.) Yea, though the iron, that is, the axe, or other cutting instrument, made of iron, be sharp to a good degree, yet, if the material that is to be cut or pierced with it be very hard and resisting, more than an ordinary strength must be put to notwithstanding, to make an incision or penetration. The Apostle, very well knowing and considering how hard and indisposed the hearts of his countrymen the Jews were to take the impression of what he was now about to speak and say unto them, namely, that he "had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart" for that misery which he saw coming like an armed man upon them, and that for the prevention hereof he could be content



to suffer to the greatest extremity ; therefore, to make and, as it were, to force a way for the belief of these things in their hearts, he useth the strongest asseveration that can lightly be made of words, “ I say,” or I speak, “ the truth in Christ,” &c. ; as if he should say, “ Let no man suspect me for a liar or dissembler in what I am about to say, what unlikelihood soever of truth some may apprehend therein ; nor that I speak out of any passionate, sudden, inconsiderate, or unsettled motion of mind or spirit ; for I speak as in the presence of my great Lord and Master Jesus Christ, from whom I expect all things for my peace and well-being, and who, I know, will severely judge me if I speak an untruth, especially when I appeal to him as my witness, and whose presence I reverence more than to utter any thing rashly or unadvisedly before him. Yea, I have the testimony of mine own conscience within me for the truth of what I speak, and this seconded and avouched by the Holy Ghost himself, who saith to my conscience, ‘ Testify, and fear not ; it is a certain truth, and a thing worthy to be believed by men, which in this case thou shalt bear witness unto ; yea, it is nothing but what I myself am the author of, and have given reality and truth of being unto.’ ” *Αληθειαν λεγω* (not *την αληθειαν*) *εν Χριστω* ; that is, *I speak truth*, or, *that which is truth* ; not, *THE truth*, as our English translation reads it. *Η αληθεια*, *THE truth*, is commonly put for the Gospel itself, being the grand emphatical truth of the world. Thus, John viii. 32 : *Και γνωσθε την αληθειαν, και η αληθεια ελευθερωσει υμας* ; *And ye shall know THE TRUTH*, that is, the Gospel, *and THE TRUTH*, namely, being known and believed by you, *shall make you free*. See also John xvii. 17 ; xviii. 37, &c.

*In Christ*—That is, saith Calvin, *secundum Christum*, “ according to Christ ;” meaning, I conceive, “ according to the mind of Christ,” or, “ as Christ would have me speak,” or, “ for the honour and glory of Christ,” or, “ for the advancement of his work and kingdom ;” or, rather, (as is probable from what he had said immediately before,) “ in the presence of Christ.” Or, 2. *Εν Χριστω*, *in Christ*, that is, *through Christ*, as the preposition *εν* very frequently importeth. This construction of the particle *εν* importeth that that motion of heart or soul out of which Paul professeth to speak that truth which presently he expresseth was in a special manner raised or wrought in him by Christ. This exposition is very probable, and is the judgment

of Mr. Bucer upon the place. Some interpret, “in Christ,” *per Christum*, “by Christ;” as if the Apostle’s intent were to appeal unto Christ, the great Judge of heaven and earth, who searcheth the heart and reins, and knoweth perfectly what is in man, for the confirmation of what he saith; by which appeal he makes account that he desireth and engageth Christ to take vengeance on him if he speaks untruth. According to this exposition of the particle *εν*, the Apostle’s expression hath the nature, force, and import of an oath. For he that swears by God calleth him to attest and witness the truth of what is affirmed and sworn by him. And because it is by the light of nature itself judged a high indignity and affront put upon God, and that which will most certainly provoke him to take vengeance in the most severe manner upon him that shall do it, to be cited or called in or upon to bear witness to a falsehood or lie; hence it cometh to pass that, generally, and amongst all sorts of men, “an oath for confirmation,” as the Apostle speaketh, “is the end of all strife;” (Heb. vi. 16;) meaning, that when a person reputed sober and discreet, and so legally capable of taking an oath, hath sworn, and called God to witness that a matter is so or so as he affirmeth, no reasonable man will or can further question or doubt the truth hereof; or, however, judgeth himself in no capacity of receiving any further or better satisfaction. The ground and reason of which confidence or plenariness of satisfaction upon an oath is, that every man is presumed so far to love himself, his own peace and preservation, that he will not, upon any terms whatsoever, provoke God to punish or destroy him at such a rate of provocation which solemn calling upon him to be a witness to a lie importeth. This exposition of the place in hand both Calvin\* and Piscator† assert for legitimate without dispute; and Musculus‡ bends the same way. Nor is there any thing of moment, as far as I apprehend, against it. Whether the Apostle’s intent be to make Christ either the author or avoucher of what he is about

\* *Quia res non indigna erat juramento, contra vero hoc conceptum jam præjudicium, suam alioqui affirmationem vix credibilem fore prospiciebat, jurejurando asseverat se rerum dicere.*—CALVIN *in loc.*

† *Affirmationem sui doloris confirmat jure jurando, &c.*—PISCATOR *in loc.*

‡ *Nec his contentus testes advocat primum Christum; deinde conscientiam suam; tertio, Spiritum Sanctum, quasi metuens ne nudis verbis, est est, non sint credituri, quorum gratia quæ sequuntur dicturus est.*—MUSCULUS *in loc.*

to say amounts much to the same in point of confirmation of truth in it.

If it be demanded, "But why doth the Apostle make his oath of asseveration rather in or by Christ than by God; especially considering the unbelieving Jews, for whose sakes principally he seems to make this high affidavit, did not acknowledge the Divinity of Christ, and so were not like to give any whit the more credit to what was attested by him?" I answer,

1. Though the unbelieving Jews did not themselves own or acknowledge the Godhead of Christ, yet they knew that the Apostle Paul did both own and preach it with a high hand of confidence in the world, yea, and suffered deeply for preaching it. In which respect they had as much reason to believe what he should assert or affirm upon an appeal, by way of oath, unto Christ, as if themselves had acknowledged him in his Godhead, as well as he; yea, or as if he had attested the truth of what he was about to say by God himself.

2. The reason why our Apostle maketh his assertory oath in the name of Christ, rather than God, is probably this; namely, because God, in essence, was at this time, and always had been, generally owned and honoured as God, or for God, in the world, and by the Jews themselves; whereas Christ, especially in respect of his Godhead, was not only as yet a stranger in the world, but rejected and blasphemed in a manner by all; the number of those who did believe in him as God being inconsiderable, in comparison of those who rejected him. Now the Apostle, according to what he saith elsewhere concerning the members of the natural body, that "upon those which we think to be less honourable, we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness, because our comely parts have no need," (1 Cor. xii. 23, 24,) chooseth rather to assert the Godhead of Christ by appealing unto him in his oath of asseveration, than to avouch the honour or being of God, by swearing by him; because God, as we have said, was generally acknowledged in his divine prerogative, by being called upon in oaths for confirmation amongst men; whereas the Godhead of Christ wanted as yet that honour in this kind which was and is due unto it. Christ himself, in the days of his flesh, pleaded for and demanded divine honour for himself of those whom he acknowledged as worthy homagers unto God. "Ye believe in God," saith he to his disciples,

“believe also in me.” (John xiv. 1.) Elsewhere he saith, that God “the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” meaning himself; “that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” (John v. 22, 23.) In like manner the Apostle Paul, joining in design both with God the Father and the Son, may well be conceived to take the opportunity of the case in hand to advance the honour of Christ the Son to an equality with that divine honour which was every where exhibited to God the Father.

3. And lastly: Though it be no ways questionable but that the Apostle had very great respect to the unbelieving Jews in this most solemn and sacred protestation and profession of his most cordial affection towards them, yet, whether he had more or greater respects herein unto these than unto all believers in their succeeding generations respectively, whose spiritual edification and advantage he, doubtless, intended in all his Epistles, and in every part and passage of them all, is a matter I conceive of doubtful disputation. But, because the decision of the case makes little or nothing for the vindication of the sense of the place in hand, we shall not stand to argue it.

*I lie not*—That which he had in the former clause expressed in the affirmative, “I speak the truth in Christ,” in this he emphatically confirmeth in the negative, according to the propriety of the Hebrew tongue, wherein that which is expressed with much earnestness in the speaker, and as matter worthy special observation by the hearer, is wont to be delivered both negatively and affirmatively. Thus God, by his Prophet Isaiah, sometimes said to Hezekiah, “Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.” (Isaiah xxxviii. 1.) The Lord’s intent was, by this tenor of his message, to render it as a matter so much the more considerable by him to whom it was sent. So when David saith, “I shall not die, but live,” (Psalm cxviii. 17,) it argueth that he was full of confidence of truth in what he spake. In like manner, when the Evangelist John describeth the purport of that answer which John the Baptist gave to the Priests and Levites, sent from Jerusalem to ask him who he was, in these words, “And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ,” (John i. 20,) his meaning is, to represent the freedom and ingenuity of spirit in the Baptist as very remarkable, not simply in refusing, but in so propense and affectionate a refusing, to accept of the

honour belonging to the Messiah, when he was, after a sort, tempted with the offer of it. Upon the same account our Apostle being mightily affected himself, and desirous to affect others proportionably, with the consideration of what he was about to say, contenteth not himself with the affirmative avouchment thereof, though with an oath, but adds his negative assertion also of the same, "I lie not." Nor is he satisfied with both these, but draweth out his soul yet further upon the same service, saying,

*My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost*—As if he had said, When I affirm that "I speak the truth in Christ," and that I speak nothing but the truth, and "lie not," I do not speak out of any sudden, flashy, light, passionate, or inconsiderate motion, upon which terms men sometimes speak great words which have no reality, substance, or truth of matter in them; but my conscience is engaged in what I say herein, and "beareth me witness," or, as the original soundeth, "witnesseth together with me," that I speak the real truth, "in," or through, "the Holy Ghost;" that is, either by the information, or rather through the incitation, motion, and suggestion of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost excited and stirred up Paul's conscience, saying, as it were, to it, "Stand by Paul, and witness with him the certainty of the truth of what he is about to speak." According to this sense, the credit and authority of that testimony of Paul's conscience, whereof he speaketh, is resolved into the sovereign veracity, and is raised to the same line of authenticness with the testimony, of the Holy Ghost himself. When God chargeth, directeth, or encourageth a man to speak so, or so, one thing or other, that which is spoken in this kind must be a truth, as well as if he himself had immediately spoken it. For it is altogether as inconsistent with the infinite and untemptable veracity of God to say to a creature, "Speak or witness that which is an untruth," as to speak an untruth himself.

If it be demanded, "How was Paul able, upon sufficient ground, to say and affirm that his conscience was stirred up, strengthened, or encouraged, by the Holy Ghost to witness with him what he asserteth? How was he able to discern an excitement from or by the Holy Ghost in this kind, from an impulse or suggestion from his own spirit?" I answer,

1. Though it may be somewhat difficult for persons of a

lower growth in Christianity, who have not their senses much exercised in discerning good and evil, and withal have only some more faint and soft workings of the Spirit, clearly to discern the motions of the Spirit of God within them, from the movings or workings of their own hearts and spirits; yet is the discovery we speak of no such matter of difficulty unto Christians of a more raised stature and pitch, in whom the Spirit of God much delighteth, and acteth at a higher and more excellent rate. Towards the beginning of a feverish distemper in the body, it may be not so easy to determine whether the working and beating of the pulse be from nature, or from the distemper; but when the distemper hath prevailed to any considerable degree, the dijudication is obvious. Men and women that have suffered and given up themselves, especially for some good space of time, to be "led by the Spirit of God," cannot lightly be so unacquainted with their Leader, as not to be able to know whether it be he that taketh them by the hand, or some other guide; especially if attempting to lead them in ways contrary unto those, wherein they have been familiarly accustomed to be led by the Spirit. Therefore it was no great mastery for Paul, of all the men in the world, to know whether it was the Holy Ghost, or his own spirit, that put him upon that high asseveration, which we have heard, of truth in that saying with which he was now in travail, and of which we shall see him presently delivered.

2. The animations, motions, and encouragements of the Spirit of God in men are, in many cases, I might say in most, and particularly in such as that of the Apostle now under consideration, clearly enough discernible from those which proceed from any other principle or author. There is no other difficulty to distinguish between the motions of the Holy Ghost within us, and the motions of our own spirits, than there is of distinguishing between the lawfulness and expediency, and the unlawfulness or inexpediency, of an action. For whensoever any man is stirred up or moved to do that which is lawful and expedient to be done, there is little question to be made but his excitements in this kind are from the Spirit of God within him. The reason is, because, as the Apostle James informeth us, "every good giving, and every perfect gift, is from above, and from the Father of lights," (James i. 17,) meaning God, who is the Father, that is, the original Author, of whatsoever resem-

bleth light, that is, which is of a truly comforting and directing import unto men ; even as the sun may be called the father of all those rays and beams of light which issue from him on every side. Now an inward motion or incitation unto any action, which is expedient for a man to do, is of a gracious tendency unto him, and, consequently, must needs proceed from “the Father of lights,” and, by an appropriate acting, from the Holy Ghost ; especially that motion, or incitation of mind, by which our Apostle was acted and carried on to deliver and profess that which he was now about to utter, being, in all likelihood, exceeding strong and overbearing upon him, might, without much deliberation, or any narrow disquisition had upon the point, be concluded by him to be the exertion or work of the Holy Ghost in him.

Before we proceed to the second verse, it is worth our labour to take up these corollaries or doctrines, from the words already opened, by the way.

First. That it is not simply lawful, but in some cases expedient and necessary, to assert and confirm by oath the truth of what we speak. Questionless the Apostle did not take the name of Christ in vain, when he interposed it to gain credence to what he had to say. (Gen. xxi. 24 ; Deut. vi. 13 ; Joshua ii. 17, 20 ; Rev. x. 6, &c.)

Secondly. That the promotion of the eternal peace and salvation of men is an undoubted case wherein the interposal of an oath is or may be expedient and necessary for the confirmation of what we speak. The example and practice of the Apostle in the words opened is a sufficient proof and demonstration hereof. (See also Ezra x. 5 ; Rev. x. 6.)

Thirdly. The passage in hand, compared with the general purport of the other writings of this Apostle, wherein he very seldom interposeth with the sacred authority of an oath for the confirmation of any thing which he asserteth, although all that he writeth is written by him in order to the promotion of the salvation of men,—the corollary from hence is, that the use of an oath, even in matters relating to the salvation of the souls of men, is expedient only in some cases, and these of rare occurrence. This is sufficiently evident from hence, namely, that there are so few oaths found in the Scriptures upon such an account.

Fourthly. That one special case, wherein the interposal of an

oath in order to the salvation of men is expedient or necessary, is, when that which is affirmed in this kind is, 1. Of very material and signal consequence in the belief of it to further this salvation; 2. When otherwise, and without the advantage of an oath, there is little or no likelihood that it will be believed by those, the furtherance of whose salvation is desired thereby. Both these considerations are manifest in the case before us. For that which the Apostle here confirmeth by oath is, as appeareth by the two next verses, not only the reality and truth, but the most signal and transcendent height and degree of his affection to the Jews, whose salvation he principally seeketh by the great asseveration here made by him. Now the belief of this, I mean, of his most cordial and sovereign affection towards the Jews, 1. Was of very high concernment unto them, to qualify and dispose them to a willingness and readiness of mind, patiently to hear and bear the doctrine which he was about to deliver unto them, and, consequently, to promote the great interest of their salvation. And, 2. It was a thing not likely to be wrought in them, nor to take their hearts, unless it were by the mediation of an oath. (Heb. vi. 13, 17; Rev. x. 6.)

Fifthly. That a persuasion or belief in those to whom the Gospel is preached, that he who preacheth it is so far from being an enemy unto them, that he loves them, and that most fervently, is a matter highly conducing to the saving of their souls. Were not this so, our Apostle doubtless would never have engaged or appealed unto, 1. The sacred name of Christ; 2. His conscience; 3. The Holy Ghost; to create a belief in the Jews that his love was unparallably great towards them. (Rom. i. 9—11; 2 Cor. vii. 3; xi. 11; Philip. i. 8.)

Sixthly. That such, whether persons or things, which are in themselves worthy, and the knowledge of them much conducing to the peace and comfort of men, but withal are at present less known in and to the world, ought upon all occasions to be asserted and manifested by us, though it be with the silence of others, as well persons as things, as great and worthy as they, in case these be better and more generally known by men. We assigned this for the reason why the Apostle rather expresseth himself thus, "I say the truth in Christ," than, "I say the truth in God," because Christ is eminently worthy and excellent, and the knowledge of him of high concernment unto the world; and yet was, especially in Paul's days, less known or



believed in in the world than God. (1 Cor. xv. 51 ; Rom. xi. 25 ; 1 Cor. xii. 1.)

Seventhly, and lastly. That persons professing Christianity, especially Ministers of the Gospel, ought at all times, and in the constant tenor of their lives and ways, to show such tender, high, and sacred respects unto the name of Christ, and to the Spirit of God within them, yea, and so far to provide for the honour and repute of the goodness of their own consciences, that an appeal unto these for the confirmation of what they shall at any time say or affirm may be authentic, and of authority sufficient in the minds and consciences of men, to gain credit and belief to what they shall affirm upon such terms. If Paul had ordinarily vilified or trampled under foot the name of Christ, or polluted his conscience by unrighteous, unjust, unclean, or unworthy actions, his attestation, either of the one or the other, had been of little value for the confirmation or credit, in point of truth, of what he affirmeth upon such his attestation. (Philip. i. 18, 20, compared with Acts xxiv. 16.)

Verse 2. *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart*—That which the Apostle desired to procure credence and belief unto, by all that solemnity of attestation and appeal, which he had expressed in verse 1, was, that he had *λυπην μεγαλην, και αδιαλειπτον οδυνην εν τη καρδια αυτε*, *great heaviness, or sorrow*, as the word is common translated, and perpetual torment, or pain, which never left him. The word *οδυνη* is derived from *εδω*, which signifieth, *to corrode, eat, fret*. Some refer *λυπη*, here translated *sorrow*, to the mind, making it to be an inward impression of sadness ; and *οδυνη*, *heaviness*, to the body, supposing it properly to signify sharpness of pain herein. Some define *οδυνη* to be *λυπη επιπονος*, that is, *a laborious or painful kind of sorrow*. But this different notion of the words *λυπη* and *οδυνη* hath no place here, because the Apostle plainly professeth that he had *οδυνην εν καρδια αυτε* “in his heart;” only, it is probable, or rather somewhat more, that by *οδυνη*, put in the latter place, he understandeth some such impression which was more affecting and afflicting to his heart and soul, than that which he had signified by the former word *λυπη*. *Αδιαλειπτος* doth not signify *continual*, or *perpetual*, in the strictness of their significations, as, namely, that which is as well without any intermission, as which hath not absolutely and totally ceased to be ; but *continual* in such a

sense, which importeth a frequent recurrency of a thing upon all occasions, and without any considerable or long intermission. In such a sense as this the Apostle useth the adverb, where he exhorteth the Thessalonians to pray *ἀδιαλείπτως*, *continually*, (1 Thess. v. 17,) that is, upon all occasions, and so as not to intermit the duty long together at any time. So, when he giveth thanks unto God that he had *ἀδιαλείπτου μνησιν*, *the mention*, or *a remembrance without ceasing*, as we have it translated, of Timothy in his prayers night and day, (2 Tim. i. 3,) his meaning is not, as if he never ceased, or gave over naming Timothy, whilst he was in praying, but that upon all occasions he remembered him in his prayers early and late, and never forbore the mention of him long together. (See also Rom. i. 9; 1 Thess. i. 3; ii. 13.) According to this sense and interpretation of the word, it is easy to reconcile that assertion of the Apostle concerning himself, where he saith that he was “*alway rejoicing*,” (2 Cor. vi. 10,) with the place in hand, where he saith, in effect, that he was always sorrowing or in heaviness. He may be said to be always rejoicing, who, ever and anon, and without any long intermission, making his recourse in mind and spirit to such objects, whether persons or things, the contemplation whereof worketh effectually upon his passion of joy, and causeth it to abound; as, on the contrary, he may be said to be in continual heaviness, or to be always sorrowing, who, from time to time, without any long intervals of respiration, feedeth upon the thoughts and consideration of such things which, remembered and considered, awaken the natural *παθος* or affection of sorrow within him, and cause this to fill the soul with bitterness. Now a man may have occasions of both kinds with a frequent interchange, (I mean, both of recalling and ruminating matters of a joyful and matters of a sorrowful import,) and may engage or apply himself accordingly: and, consequently, be, in the sense declared, both always sorrowing and always rejoicing. Only this is to be considered about the case in hand, that, though a man hath matters of both the kinds specified relating to him, yet, unless they be conceived and apprehended by him as signally and very considerably such for degree, in either kind respectively, it can hardly be said of him with truth, that he is always sorrowing and always rejoicing. For example: If a man apprehends that he hath very great matter or occasion of sorrowing, but only

some faint or less considerable matter of rejoicing, he will be always sorrowing, but not always rejoicing. So, on the other hand, when a man conceives that he hath many serious and weighty grounds of rejoicing, but none much considerable for sorrowing, he is in a posture of rejoicing continually, but not of sorrowing upon any such terms. For when a man apprehends that he hath any very material and substantial ground of rejoicing, he is so much the more propense and apt to take all occasions, even those that are but slender, light, and very remote, for the reminding of himself of such a ground; and, consequently, must needs very frequently actuate his joy by means hereof. There is the same consideration of him who conceives that he hath a semblable ground or cause of sorrowing; a very small matter, a circumstance of the farthest relation thereunto, will be sufficient to bring to his remembrance the occasion of his sorrowing; and so it cannot lightly be but that he must sorrow continually, in the sense formerly specified. Whereas if a man's occasions, either of sorrowing or of rejoicing, be but faint and ordinary, and no otherwise apprehended by him, he will not readily take any impression from such things coming in his way, which are in themselves apt enough to remember him of such occasions, unless they be very pregnant indeed, and effectual for such a purpose; and, consequently, such a man will neither sorrow nor yet rejoice continually: These affections will be seldom raised or engaged within him, to any considerable degree. But if a man be known to have some high and excellent ground or cause of rejoicing, and withal to be understanding and apprehensive enough of the excellency of it in this kind, and yet shall be found or known to be in continual sorrow or heaviness also, such cause of rejoicing, notwithstanding; it is an unquestionable sign that the cause of this his sorrowing is apprehended by him to be exceeding great, and of a very sad resentment with him; otherwise, the cause of his rejoicing, being great and richly affecting, would leave him little of his heart or of himself to mind the occasion of his sorrowing, this being but little comparatively. Now this was the Apostle's case before us. He had as many and as weighty grounds of rejoicing as any person under heaven; he had as full, as perfect a knowledge of his blessed interest in God, of his justification, adoption, glorification in due time, as he was capable of; he was possessed of as many spiritual and heavenly

privileges as a man yet inhabiting flesh and blood could be. Yet, all this notwithstanding, he most solemnly, as we have heard, and with a sacred asseveration, protesteth that he had "great sorrow, and continual heaviness in his heart." Therefore, how great must he needs apprehend the cause of this his sorrow and heaviness to be! As for those words,

*In my heart*—They import the deepest intimosness and cordialness of that sorrow and heaviness which he professeth. The Scripture frequently expresseth the reality, thoroughness, and deep affectingness of any inward impression, by mentioning the heart as the seat or place of residence thereof. (John xvi. 22; Acts ii. 26, 37; Rom. x. 1, &c.)

But it may be here demanded, "To what purpose the Apostle should make so serious and solemn a profession of the greatness of his sorrow, and the continual heaviness of his heart, without declaring the ground or cause of it? Or of what concernment was it to render the doctrine which he was about to deliver, any whit the more passable, either with the Jews, or any other men, to understand that he was a man of so much sorrow and heaviness?" I answer,

1. True it is, his "sorrow" and "heaviness," had they been greater, if greater they could have been, and more importunately pressing him, than they were, considered simply as such, or as the grounds of them might have been, would have been of little or no value to commend his doctrine, either to one sort of men or other. For, (1.) "Worldly sorrow," as himself elsewhere informeth, "worketh death;" (2 Cor. vii. 10;) and the greater it is, it worketh the faster, and bringeth "death," that is, both temporal and eternal, as is evident by the antithesis, so much the more speedily upon men. Now that which is a proper and direct cause or means of any man's own ruin and destruction cannot reasonably give credit unto any thing he shall say or teach. And, (2.) For "godly sorrow" itself, if it be conceived upon the account of a man's own sins, and in order to his own repentance and salvation only, though it may, the greater it is, render the words of a man so much the more weighty and considerable in some respects, yet it little conduceth to the mollifying or qualifying of such words or doctrines which are like to prove of a hard interpretation and difficult reception with those for whose sakes chiefly they are uttered. But,

2. When "sorrow" and "heaviness" fill a man's heart, for their sakes, to whom he speaketh, as either through a fear or foresight of some great evil or misery that is like to come upon them, the making known of such affections of his towards them must needs be proper, and of a very promising import, to conciliate a benevolous affection in these persons towards the things that are spoken, though otherwise they be of a very sad and distasteful consequence unto them. Now, though our Apostle doth not expressly name or mention the particular ground or cause of that great sorrow and heaviness of heart which here he so solemnly professeth, as we have heard, yet he plainly enough insinuates it in the words immediately following; from whence he leaveth it to be inferred and concluded by themselves; like a prudent orator, who declines, as much as may be, without detriment and disadvantage to the cause he hath in hand, the particular and express mention of what he conceives to be offensive or less pleasing to his auditory.

From this second verse, these three things are observable:—

1. That a stoical apathy, or indolency of heart, is so far from being a virtue, or just matter of commendation unto any man, that the deepest sorrow and heaviness of soul, that is lightly incident to the nature of man, in some cases, and, as occasion may be, well becomes persons of the greatest wisdom, gravity, and worth in every kind. For, doubtless, the Apostle Paul was inferior to no man on the earth, either in wisdom, or in any other endowment worthy praise or honour in men; nor hath any man, I presume, since the days of the writing of this Epistle, stood forth to accuse, censure, or condemn him, for the greatness of that sorrow, or continuedness of that heaviness upon his heart, which here he avoucheth with so high a hand of asseveration, as we have seen lifted up by him. (Rom. xii. 15; 2 Kings viii. 11; xx. 3; xxii. 19; Luke xix. 41, &c.)

2. That greatness of sorrow, and heaviness of heart, continued for the miseries and sad condition of men, whether imminent or incumbent, is an undoubted argument and sign of great love borne towards them. The Apostle presumes that his brethren, the Jews, would interpret his sorrow and heaviness for them as unquestionable arguments of his unfeigned love and affection towards them; otherwise he would not, especially in so serious, solemn, and sacred a manner, as we heard from the preceding verse, have professed them. For it is not imaginable

upon what other account, or for what other end, he should make so high a profession, so deep a protestation, of such passionate impressions in himself. (John xi. 35, 36; 1 Sam. xix. 6; 2 Cor. ii. 4; Isaiah lxvi. 10.)

3. And lastly: That when the occasion or cause of any sorrow or sadness lying upon a man is of any grievous or horrid resentment unto those to whom, or for whose sakes, we speak, it is prudential, as much as may be, to forbear the direct mention or naming of it, and to intimate rather than express it. The Apostle plainly, and with great asseveration, professeth his "continual sorrow," and "great heaviness;" but expresseth not in terms of any such plainness the cause of them, which was, the rejection of his kinsmen the Jews, by God, for their obstinacy in unbelief; but leaveth it to be collected by themselves from what he expresseth to another account in the words immediately following. The reason whereof was, doubtless, this,—that he might not trouble or grieve the minds of the Jews above what he judged necessary for their spiritual accommodation. (2 Sam. xii. 18, 19; John xi. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 13.)

Verses 3, 4. *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites, &c.*—In these words, as the causal particle "for" importeth, he rendereth an account both of the reality and truth of those deep impressions of sorrow and heaviness which he had expressed and so solemnly asserted in the two preceding verses, as we heard, as also of the persons over whom or for whose sakes he travailed with such sorrow and heaviness. These, to touch the latter of these particulars in the first place, he plainly declareth to be the Jews, whom, the better to gain credence from them to that high and mighty assertion which he makes in the words in hand, he calls his "brethren," his "kinsmen according to the flesh, Israelites," enumerating several other most honourable prerogatives appropriate to them, of which we shall hear more particularly anon, whereby they stood as a people signally recommended by God unto the world, for a nation or people highly beloved of him. By this mentioning, partly of his near relation unto them in the flesh, as being descended from the same royal progenitors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with them; partly of those many sacred privileges, by the collation whereof upon them they were sealed by God for a people greatly beloved of him; he seems desirous to insi-

uate, that the greatness of that affection which he professeth towards them, of which presently, is the more rational, and so may the more easily be believed by them. The nearer a person, one or more, are unto us by blood, and withal the more we apprehend or know them to be respected by God, it is so much the more likely that we should be willing to suffer much for their sakes in a case of great exigency, and for the procuring of their peace.

Concerning the other, (the former of the two particulars mentioned,) the Apostle here professing to how deep a degree he could wish or be willing to suffer for the Jews' sake, to redeem them from that most heavy judgment and curse which he evidently saw would shortly come upon them, confirms the reality and truth of that sorrow and heaviness which he had professed, and this according to the extent of that great degree and measure wherein he professed likewise that they lay upon him. For he that findeth himself willing or content to suffer very deeply, and to extremity, to purchase for others an exemption or immunity from suffering, cannot but be filled with sorrow and heaviness for them; yea, and this to a fuller measure and further degree than his own suffering the things which he wisheth to suffer for them would occasion in him, in case he knew certainly that he should indeed suffer them.

But great is the division of thoughts amongst interpreters concerning the Apostle's wish in this place, as in respect of some other circumstances relating to it, so more especially in respect of the subject-matter of it. It would rather, I conceive, be matter of weariness than satisfaction unto the reader to survey all that variety of notions and conceits which might be presented unto him from the writings of expositors upon the place. I shall therefore mention only two or three of them, which I judge to be more worthy consideration, and of some consistency with the truth, declaring and accounting for mine own sense in the close.

1. To pass by the opinion of those as altogether improbable, who conceive that Paul here avoucheth that vehemency of affection which he bare to the Jews and their religion when he so furiously persecuted the Gospel and the professors of it, by means whereof he wished to be accursed or separated from Christ; as also theirs who understand the place as if the Apostle did here profess, or rather, indeed, confess, that since his

conversion unto Christ, namely, whilst he was not yet so well principled or instructed in matters of Christian religion, he did, through an inordinate heat and vehemency of affection, wish to be excluded himself from that salvation which cometh by Christ, upon condition that his brethren the Jews might be saved; I say, to pass by these, and some other as ill-digested interpretations as these, some conceive that the Apostle doth not here express or avouch any constant, settled, or habituated affection, wish, or desire in him, but only such which was transient, arising from an intense contemplation of that most deplorable estate and condition of being rejected by God, which he saw coming apace like an armed man upon the whole nation, in a manner, of his kinsmen the Jews, and continuing only whilst he was taken up in his mind and spirit with the said contemplation. This interpretation supposeth, (at least the authors of it suppose,) that the subject-matter of the Apostle's wish was an absolute, utter, and eternal separation from Christ, and all that blessedness which accrueth unto believers through him. To prove the transientness of the Apostle's affection, out of which he conceiveth the wish here expressed, they insist upon the word *ηυχομεν*, a verb of the preter-imperfect tense, which, say they, signifieth, not that he did now, when or whilst he wrote the passage in hand, wish, but that he had wished, and was wont to wish, namely, when and as oft as he intensely thought upon the sad condition wherein they were now ready to plunge themselves through the obstinacy of their unbelief. Not but that he did as seriously, also, as deeply, as affectionately wish and desire, on the other hand, the glory of God, even in the destruction of this people, upon the supposition of their remaining obdurate in unbelief; namely, when and as oft as he seriously considered that the glory of God could not otherwise be salved or provided for in such a case; and considered, withal, the sovereign necessity that the glory of God be sufficiently provided for in every case whatsoever. This alternation and interchangeableness of contrary affections, as likewise of suitable expressions, and that with reality, yea, and great intenseness in both, upon the contemplation or serious minding of different objects, yea, of one and the same object, materially taken, in different considerations or respects, is not only possible, but in many cases matter of duty unto men, and accordingly enjoined by God in the Scriptures: "Rejoice with them that rejoice," saith our Apostle to



the Romans, "and weep with them that weep." (Rom. xii. 15.) "Wherein ye GREATLY REJOICE," saith Peter unto others, "though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations." (1 Peter i. 6.) The altering and change of Paul's condition by death was unto him, in one consideration, matter of desire; in another, of the contrary. (Philip. i. 23, 24.) The sharp Epistle which he wrote to the Church at Corinth in one respect made him sad or sorrowful, namely, as it occasioned their sorrow; but in another, namely, as it occasioned their repentance of that sin which lay upon them, it was matter of joy to him. (2 Cor. vii. 8, 9.) So that the authors of the interpretation now in hand suppose nothing contrary to the truth in saying that Paul might be so intolerably afflicted in soul for the destruction of the Jews, as his wish for their preservation here importeth, namely, whilst he looked upon it merely as the lamentable condition of a people in many respects most dear to him; and yet might be well enough satisfied with it, when he considered it as the only means for the vindication of the glory of God, in case of their wilful obduration in unbelief.

That the object or subject-matter of Paul's wish in this place, expressed by his being *αναθεμα απο του Χριστου*, *accursed from Christ*, was his eternal separation from Christ, they prove, 1. From the signification of the word *αναθεμα*, especially as it is used elsewhere by this Apostle, as, namely, 1 Cor. xvi. 22; where they say it clearly signifies *perpetually* or *everlastingly accursed*. But this is not so clear as is pretended. 2. From the proportion which, they say, ought in reason to be conceived between that estate of misery whereinto the Jews were in imminent danger of falling, and that estate whereunto Paul professeth himself willing to expose himself for their redemption or preservation. Now the misery which the Apostle apprehended ready to come upon the Jews for their obstinacy in unbelief was not any temporal affliction or misery, nor a temporal or corporal death, but death eternal: Therefore, upon the aforesaid supposition, Paul must be supposed to wish himself eternally accursed from Christ, to exempt them from suffering the same or like condition. But neither is this reason much convincing.

Whereas this interpretation is by some charged with this inconvenience, namely, that it maketh Paul's wish sinful or unlawful, inasmuch as it is repugnant to the love of God or of

Christ in any man to wish himself eternally separated from him upon any terms, or for any creatures' sakes whatsoever; to this the friends of it answer, that what proceedeth from love, at least from such love which God requireth in men, cannot be contrary to the love of God, and so is not sinful upon that account. Now that affection of love in the Apostle, whereof his wish before us is the natural fruit or product, is a love to the souls and salvation of the Jews; which kind of affection is, of all others, an affection pleasing unto God. Besides, to wish or desire a separation from God or Christ out of any hatred, disrespect, or neglect of him, is indeed sinful, and repugnant to that love of God and Christ, which of duty ought to be found in every man. But the Apostle's wish of being separated from Christ was so far from being the fruit of any hatred or neglect of Christ in him, that it proceeded rather from a vehement ardency of love towards him; the Apostle wishing unto himself the greatest evil and misery that he was capable of enduring, (for such was his eternal separation from Christ, and so apprehended by him,) that, or upon condition that, Christ might reap that abundant glory which would accrue to him by the salvation of such great numbers of men as the Jewish nation amounted unto.

This exposition, as it hath been opened, is, for substance, delivered by Mr. Bucer upon the place; and Calvin seems to concur with it. Nor doth it want a fair face of probability; only the reasons which it insisteth upon to prove the matter of Paul's wish to have been his eternal separation from Christ are not, as hath been already touched, effectually concluding. For, 1. It may be doubted whether the word *αναθεμα* signifieth, 1 Cor. xvi. 22, a person eternally accursed; yea, Calvin himself questioneth it upon the place, and seemeth to incline the contrary way.\* 2. If this signification of the word in the place mentioned could be evinced, yet, if it appears to have another signification elsewhere in Scripture, especially in the writings of the same Apostle, and this fairly consistent with the place in hand; that eviction little availeth the said interpretation. Now Calvin himself expressly affirmeth, that which otherwise is manifest enough, that the word *αναθεμα*, used twice together by

\* *Incertum est autem optetne illis exitium coram Deo, an exosos fidelibus imo execrabiles esse velit. Ego simpliciter expono, ac si dictum esset, Pereant et exsuscitantur, &c.*

our Apostle, Gal. i. 8, 9, doth not here signify “reprobate, or damned by God, but that which is to be abhorred, or abominated of us.”\* Neither is it necessary to suppose any such proportion as that intimated between the condition whereunto the Jews were exposed through their wilful blindness and unbelief, and that which the Apostle wisheth that he might undergo for their deliverance from it. Yea, in case it were granted that the Apostle professeth himself willing to be eternally accursed from Christ, yet would not this evince any proportion between the ransom proffered, and the redemption or deliverance for the procuring whereof it is proffered by him. For what proportion is there between the eternal punishment or sufferings of many thousands or millions of men, and the like punishment or sufferings of one man only, being a man but of the same line and level with them? And besides, manifest it is, that the reason and ground of the Apostle’s wish, in the place in hand, was not at all to signify that he was willing or content to give any thing of a valuable consideration, or any thing proportionable, for the redemption of his brethren from that heavy doom which he saw hanging over their heads, but only to express the reality and truth, or at most the heights and depths, the great ardency, of his affection towards them. Now, as our Saviour himself informeth us, “greater love hath no man than this;” that is, a more satisfactory or convincing argument or expression, either of the reality and truth, or of the excellency of degree, of this affection, can no man exhibit or give, “that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John xv. 13.) So that Paul needed to go no further, no deeper, (indeed, could not regularly or lawfully go either further or deeper,) to express either the truth or greatness of his love to his brethren the Jews, than to possess them fully and thoroughly with this, that he was desirous and ready to lay down his life for them, and this upon terms of the greatest ignominy and shame, in case it were possible to make an atonement with God for them hereby. The Apostle John, declaring from God the highest engagement of love wherein any man stands bound even to his Christian brethren themselves, and this upon the account of the highest engagement from God and Christ, expresseth it in these

\* *Quemadmodum ad Gal. i. 8. Evangelii corruptorem pronuncians anathema, non significat reprobatum aut damnatum est a Deo, sed nobis abominandum esse admonet.*—CALVIN. in 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

words : “ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us ; and we ” (that is, *therefore we* ; the connexive particle *και*, *and*, is frequently illative \*) “ ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John iii. 16.) Nor is there any other precept or charge from God to be found in all the Scripture wherein he requireth any greater expression or fruit of love in any man, either to himself or to men, of what relation or capacity soever, than to lay down their lives or die for either. Therefore, if it shall be supposed that Paul was willing, yea, desirous, not only to lay down his life, but his soul also, for his brethren the Jews ; to suffer the loss of the love and presence of God for ever, together with the vengeance of eternal fire, he must be supposed, 1. To have expressed and showed greater love to a small parcel of men, comparatively, than the Lord Christ himself showed to the whole world ; for John, as we heard, represents the love of Christ to men as discernible in the greatest height and excellency of it in none other glass than this, that “ he laid down his life for them.” 2. That he supererogated, and this in a very high degree ; inasmuch as the commandment or law of God requireth no “ greater love,” or fruit of love, from any man, than that “ he layeth down his life for the brethren.” Now for a man to devote himself to everlasting burnings, and this, not for his brethren in the faith, but in the flesh only, and these desperately set and bent in wrath, rage, and malice against him, as the unbelieving Jews generally were against Paul, argues a far greater and higher degree of love, if yet it be love, and not rather some phrenetical distemper, than the sacrificing of a man’s natural life upon the service of his Christian brethren. For, besides all this, it seems repugnant unto, and inconsistent with, the order and law of love and charity, that a man should part, or be willing to part, with his God, or with his *summum bonum*, his “ sovereign good,” and that irrecoverably and for ever, and further to expose himself to the greatest extremity of all endless and remediless torments and misery, upon any account, or for any man’s or men’s sake whatsoever. The law of love is, doubtless, like the rest of the commandments of God ; and these the Apostle informeth us to be “ holy, and just, and good.” (Rom. vii. 12.) “ Good,” that is, as Bucer well expoundeth it, “ profitable and commodious ;” †

\* *Vide Cameron. Myroth., p. 360.*

† *Quod justum et bonum præterea præceptum prædicat, exprimere voluit summam*

paralleling herewith that of our Saviour concerning his doctrine, where he saith, "My yoke is *good*," (for so he translates the original, *χρησος*, which properly signifieth *useful* or *profitable*,) "and my burden light." (Matt. xi. 30.) Consonant whereunto is that also of David, when speaking of the "judgments" or statutes of God he saith, "In keeping of them there is great reward." (Psalm xix. 11.) Assuredly if this were the law or commandment of God, that a man should sacrifice his sovereign and chief good, his hope and portion in God and Christ, devoting himself to endless and caseless torments, upon the service of any man or numbers of men whatsoever, it is impossible to conceive how the observing of this command should be either useful or profitable unto him. And if the action itself, or doing of the thing, be simply, absolutely, and in every respect inconsistent with the benefit, peace, and comfort of him that shall do it, and, consequently, repugnant to the law and commandment of God, it follows, by clear consequence, that for a man to wish, or to be desirous or willing, to do it, must needs be repugnant to the law of God also. For what is not lawful for me to do is not lawful for me to wish, or to be desirous to do. Therefore, Paul's wish of being *αναθεμα απο Χριστου*, *accursed from Christ*, was not a wish or desire of being utterly, absolutely, and eternally separated from him.

Nor, indeed, is such a wish incident to the nature of man, especially where the import and consequence of the thing wished is fully understood and believed; in neither of which can we reasonably suppose our Apostle to have been defective. The reason is, because nothing is *volibile*, competent to become matter of wish or desire to a man, or other reasonable creature, but what hath, in one consideration or other, either the nature and substance, or at least the appearance, of good in it. Now there are but three several kinds of good, in the general,

*Utile, jucundum, majusque ambobus honestum ;*

"that which is profitable, that which is pleasant, and that which is honest, which surpasseth in goodness both the other." Yea, the three may very well be contracted unto two; for that which is honest must needs be profitable, and what is truly profitable

*quæ in lege est æquitatem, utilitatem, et commoditatem. Illud quod et Servator de sua doctrina dixit, Jugum meum bonum est, et onus meum leve.*

must needs be honest. And the heathen orator levies a sore complaint against those who, by a contra-distinction, separated that which is honest from that which is profitable. Now certain it is, that an eternal separation from Christ hath neither substance nor show in it, either of any thing profitable, much less of any thing pleasant, unto any man; nor indeed of any thing honest, as that which is honest is or may be distinguished from that which is profitable. Therefore, questionless, such a separation from Christ as that now argued against was not the Apostle's wish in the scripture in hand.

If it be here demanded, "But why might not Paul look upon it as honest, yea, and in some respect, profitable, to be eternally separated from Christ, supposing that he should purchase or procure the salvation of a whole nation thereby, and this so dearly beloved of him as the Jews were?" to this I answer,

1. That cannot be good or honest which rendereth a man incapable of reward from God for it. "Knowing," saith the Apostle, "that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord;" (Eph. vi. 3;) meaning, in a reward or consideration of good answerable, according to the law of divine bounty, thereunto. Now an eternal separation from Christ rendereth a person utterly incapable of all reward or munificent consideration from God, because it imports such a condition with which nothing that is good or comfortable to a creature is consistent.

2. That which is honest is desirable simply, absolutely, in and for itself: But no separation from Christ is upon such terms desirable; least of all, an eternal separation from him. That which is penal or afflicting, as the cause of suffering it may be, may be honourable. But honesty imports properly the comeliness or worthiness of a moral action.

3. And lastly: That cannot be profitable to a man which excludes all comfort, peace, and ease, and includes nothing but shame, torment, and sorrow. Therefore, doubtless, an eternal separation from Christ can be profitable for no man.

Upon a resentment, I suppose, of that or some such irrationality in the interpretation mentioned, as that now presented, some understand the Apostle's wish conditionally, as if his meaning in the words in hand were this: "I could wish," namely, if it were lawful, and that which could be done, to become "accursed from Christ." This interpretation, though

it doth not suppose an eternal separation from Christ to be the matter of the Apostle's actual wish, at one time or other, or upon one consideration or other, wherein it differs from the former; yet it rendereth it as a thing wishable, or which the Apostle could and would wish, in case the two impediments specified, which render it *de facto* unwishable, were or could be removed out of the way. But neither is this interpretation so satisfying, although it hath many grave and learned friends standing by it. 1. Because here is no mention, no, not the least intimation, of either of those conditions, or of any other like to them, which the said interpretation inserteth; whereas the Apostle, when he mentioneth such conditional wishing or acts of willing, is wont to express the conditions: "I bear you record," saith he to the Galatians, "that, IF IT HAD BEEN POSSIBLE, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me;" (Gal. iv. 15;) meaning, either that if it had been lawful or orderly thus to have mangled or defaced their bodies for any man's sake. Sometimes possible is used for that which is lawful: *Id possumus, quod jure possumus*, or, "if it had been possible," namely, for them to have gratified him or done him any considerable good by such a misfiguring of themselves. 2. The word wherein the Apostle expresseth his wish is a verb of the indicative mood, *ηυχομην*, *I did wish*; that is, by an *enallage* of one tense for another, frequent in Scripture, *I do wish*; not a verb of the potential mood, *ουχοιμην*, *I could or would wish*. Therefore, it seems, his wish, whatsoever it was, was actually conceived and in present being within him. And probably the reason why he expresseth it rather in a verb of the preterimperfect tense than of the present, may be to insinuate, that this wish was not to serve his present occasion, or, through the present heat or high straining of his spirit, to speak some great thing unto them, now first conceived in him, but had been the sober, settled, and standing wish of his soul for some space of time before. 3. And lastly: It is of very dangerous consequence in the interpretation of Scripture, to insert or understand a condition, where a thing is absolutely or positively affirmed, when there is a sense every way agreeable to the words, to the scope of the place, import of the matter in hand, and to the course and current of the Scripture elsewhere, which we shall show presently to be the case in the place in hand, especially when such an insertion or condition is not

justifiable by any other text of Scripture, as I believe there is none that will justify the inserting of the conditions specified in the clause before us.

Thirdly. Some limit the Apostle's expression of being an *αναθεμα*, or *accursed from Christ*, precisely to that which the Schoolmen term *pœna damni*, "the punishment of loss," and do not include in it either any thing sinful or any thing that is matter of any positive or sensible sufferings. According to this notion the matter or substance of Paul's wish, in this place, on the behalf of his brethren the Jews and for their salvation, is only a deprivation or loss of all that positive blessedness, all those great and high enjoyments, which, according to the tenor of the promise of God made unto those that should believe in his Son Jesus Christ, and serve him with that zeal and faithfulness that he had done, he certainly expected from him. That most ardent affection of love which he bare towards these his brethren, and that most transcendent desire of their eternal safety and peace which reigned in his soul, according to the interpretation last mentioned, wrought at so high and strange a rate within him that they made him well contented, yea, put him into a capacity of really wishing and desiring, that they might be procured, though it were with the most invaluable damage and loss that he could possibly sustain, even the loss of that crown of glory, that immortal kingdom, which he was shortly to receive from the hand of his great Lord and Master Christ. This interpretation of the Apostle's wish I could willingly subscribe unto, were there not these three things in the way advising me rather to a demur: 1. Such a strain or degree of love in any man which maketh him not only willing but wishing to part with his portion in Christ, eternal blessedness and glory, for the accommodation and benefit of other men, is greater love than God requireth of any man upon such an account. This we lately showed, arguing against the first of three interpretations mentioned. 2. God requires no greater love of any man than the laying down of his life, and this not for the enemies of God and Christ or his own, but for "the brethren," that is, believers, brethren in Christ, or at least, chiefly for these. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives FOR THE BRETHREN." (1 John iii. 16.) I do not remember any command of God imposed upon the saints to lay



down their lives for wicked, obstinate, and obdurate men, much less to part with their eternal inheritance in the heavens for their sakes. Therefore, if Paul bare any such affection of love towards the Jews, who were indeed his "brethren," as he calls them, "and kinsmen according to the flesh," but otherwise most inveterate enemies unto him, and to the Gospel also, which made him ready, and willing, and, which is somewhat more, wishing, to sacrifice his everlasting inheritance upon their service, this love must needs be a love of supererogation, a love of a far higher strain than God by any law or precept of his requireth of any of his saints. And in case this love were in Paul, and, withal, were a commendable or praiseworthy affection, as they, I presume, suppose it to have been who ascribe it unto him, then must the law of God be adjudged imperfect, as not requiring of men actions or deportments of greatest perfection. 3. And lastly: To me it is matter of doubt, whether it be lawful for any creature to wish himself, upon any account or consideration whatsoever, or out of any affection whatsoever to any creature or creatures whatsoever, into such a condition wherein he must needs be eternally divested of all capacity of loving God or Christ. Therefore,

Fourthly, and lastly: I rather close with the judgment and sense of those who judge the matter and import of the Apostle's wish, in the Scripture now before us, proceeding from his signal affection to his brethren the Jews, and desire of their salvation, to be only this, namely, to be looked upon, and in every respect dealt with in the world, by men as if he were *αναθεμα απο Χριστου*, the only person in the world *accursed by and from Christ*, and abominated by him, and so worthy of all the ignominy, shame, reproach, punishments, tortures, deaths, that could be inflicted by men upon him, and were wont to be inflicted upon such persons who, for some hateful and execrable crime or other, were separated and devoted to utter ruin and destruction, under which devotement they were termed *αναθεματα*. The word is indifferently applied either to persons or things, and in Scripture commonly signifieth such in either kind which are designed and consigned either by God himself, or men, or both, to destruction, in the nature of piacular sacrifices, that is, of such things without the utter and total subversion and abolition whereof by death or destruction, God either really and in truth will not be satisfied nor his wrath appeased towards a place or

people; as, namely, when himself ordereth the death or destruction of the one or the other in order to such an end, or else is supposed by men unsatisfiable, and his wrath unappeasable, otherwise than by the death and ruin either of the one or of the other; as namely, when they ignorantly and superstitiously conceive of the appeasableness or unappeasableness of his wrath, and, consequently, devote either such persons or things to destruction out of an intent and hope to pacify him, the destruction whereof in the mean time rather provoketh him.

Some conceive, and with good probability, that the more usual and proper crime for which men were anathematized, or devoted for piacular sacrifices unto the gods, was sacrilege, that is, a taking away and converting to their own use, *τα αναθεματα*, *such things as were consecrated* in their temples to the honour of their gods. This crime of sacrilege God himself in the Scriptures hinteth for a sin of the deepest abhorreny and detestation amongst the Heathen themselves: "Will a man rob God?" or, as our former translations read it, "Will a man spoil his gods?" "Yet ye have robbed me, in tithes and offerings." (Mal. iii. 8.) Yea, the Apostle himself seemeth to resent it as a sin of a very high provocation in the sight of God, more provoking than idolatry itself: "Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (Rom. ii. 22.) But this by the way.

The Apostle, then, in wishing himself an anathema, or "accursed from Christ," for his brethren's sake, professeth himself content and willing, yea, desirous, to lie under all the ignominy, infamy, and shame, whereunto sacrilegious persons, or men separated and devoted to the worst of ruins or destructions for the most enormous crimes that are, are exposed, yea, and to suffer the death itself of such accursed persons as these, to procure safety and deliverance for them from that most heavy curse of an eternal separation from God, which he certainly knew hung over their heads for their obstinate refusal of the Gospel, and would most assuredly fall upon them if they repented not in time. Hereby he plainly signifieth and declar-eth, that that sorrow and heaviness of soul which was now upon him, out of his sense and consideration of their great misery approaching, was greater and more insupportable to him than any sorrow whatsoever, whereof he was capable upon his own account in matters appertaining to this present world, could have been.

This interpretation is confirmed, 1. By the weakness and great improbability of all other interpretations set up in competition with it, whercof an account hath been given. 2. By that perfect agreeableness which the Apostle's wish, thus understood, hath, with the precepts of God and of the Gospel, concerning love, as hath been likewise showed. 3. By the usual sense and import of the word *αναθεμα*, which seldom or never signifies either person or thing devoted to the deprivation or loss of eternal blessedness, or to such a death or destruction which standeth in suffering "the vengeance of eternal fire;" but most frequently such, both persons and things, which are piacularly separated and devoted to a present visible destruction, as hath also been declared.

Nor do these words, *απο Χριστου*, from Christ, import any such variation from the usual signification of the word *αναθεμα*, as intended by the Apostle, which should make it signify *a person eternally separated or accursed from Christ*; but rather some such thing as this, that whereas he was now, as it were, a bosom friend of his, in the nearest union and conjunction with him, of which flesh and blood was lightly capable, and was upon this account highly honoured by his friends, and by all the churches of Christ throughout the world, he could, nevertheless, be content and wish himself for his brethren's sake in the condition of such a man who is generally looked upon as a person separated and divided to the greatest distance from Christ, and this upon the most justifiable grounds that can be; and, consequently, who lieth under the greatest hatred, detestation, and abhorency of men, and is by all men adjudged worthy to die the worst of deaths. And probable it is that the Apostle doth therefore express the ardency of his affection towards the Jews, by professing himself willing to be *αναθεμα απο Χριστου*, *accursed or separated from Christ* for their sakes, because they generally knew that he placed his greatest felicity and happiness in his relation unto him, and was wont to glory much of him. In this respect wishing to be "separated from Christ," for their good, he expressed the greatest affection towards them that could be.

*For my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites, &c.*—Υπερ των αδελφων μου. The preposition *υπερ*, for, importeth here, as frequently elsewhere, the final cause or end. So that, "for my brethren," is as much as, "for my brethren's sake," or, "for their benefit, peace, and safety." True it

is, that the Apostle doth not here, in this chapter, particularly express either what the cause of that great sorrow and heaviness was, which he had so solemnly professed and expressed, (verses 1, 2,) as we heard, over his brethren, or what evil or misery it was from the suffering whereof he here professeth himself so willing to redeem them, with his own unspeakable loss and sorrow of being "separated from Christ;" yet, by the general carriage and subject-matter of the sequel of the chapter, and especially from chapter xi., it clearly appears to have been that most grievous judgment of being rejected from that special grace and favour of God wherein they had now continued for many generations; by means of which rejection they were like to become the most miserable and accursed nation upon the face of the whole earth, who had, until the falling of this judgment upon them, been the happiest of all people. This judgment he knew hung over their heads, and was ready to be put in execution for their wilful blindness and desperate obstinacy in refusing the glorious Gospel of God sent unto them. He terms them his "brethren," and "kinsmen," to insinuate the reasonableness, and consequently the reality and truth, of that wish for them which he had expressed; it being reasonable, and concurring with the principles and propensions of nature in men, to wish well unto those that are near in blood to them; yea, and to be content to suffer much for them, to relieve them under any sad exigent or danger.

*Brethren*—Though it be a word of a more general signification, and appliable unto all men without exception, yet is it a term of an acceptable and sweetening resentment; and upon this account, probably, used by our Apostle here. That which rendereth it less taking in respect of the generality of it is healed by these restrictive words, immediately following: "My kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites," &c.; whereby he gives them to conceive that he styled them brethren, not because he looked upon them as descended from the same common root of mankind with him, in which sense all men whatsoever were his brethren, as well as they; but because he loved and respected them as the children and posterity of the same worthy progenitor, from whom he also was lineally descended, namely, Jacob, the great Patriarch, who had the honourable name of Israel imposed on him by God himself. This consideration, with those immediately subjoined, the Apostle, I conceive, men-

tioneth to insinuate the cordialness of his affection towards them, as being willing to commend them unto the world by all those royal prerogatives wherewith God had dignified them above all people, and not to detract from them in the least, either through envy or any other distaste or offence that they might suppose he had taken or conceived against them, because of their hatred against him, and violent persecution of that doctrine which he so much magnified and laboured to plant in the world. Those words, *κατα σαρκα*, *according to the flesh*, seem to insinuate, that, notwithstanding his spiritual descent, by regeneration, from Jesus Christ and the Gospel, wherein he most gloried, and wherein they disclaimed all communion and affinity with him, yet he owned, loved, and respected them in that natural band of blood and kindred wherein both he and they were mutually obliged.

- 4 Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ;
- 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

In these two verses he summarily reporteth the signal and high privileges and prerogatives of the Jews above all other nations. The reason why in this place he avoucheth them, and this with so full an enumeration of particulars, hath been already intimated ; namely, that by a plain and express vindication and asserting of all their royalties and glorious privileges unto them, he might withal vindicate the reality and truth of his great love and high respects of them, against all surmises they might possibly have of a contrary spirit in him.

Verse 4. *Who are Israelites*—The name of an Israelite was very honourable, as being derived from Israel, a name of extraordinary grace and dignation imposed by God himself, and this upon a very signal occasion, upon the renowned Patriarch Jacob, (Gen. xxxii. 28,) from whom the Jews are lineally propagated ; and as partakers of their father's honour and dignity in that name of divine imposition are termed Israelites. “ Are they

Hebrews?" saith this Apostle, speaking of some vain-glorious teachers or false apostles, his corrivals, "so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I;" (2 Cor. xi. 22;) meaning, that the persons he speaks of stood upon their pedigree and descent from Israel as matter of honour and repute unto them. Only it is here to be remembered, that in this place he allows the name of Israelites unto the whole nation of the Jews, who were naturally descended from Jacob or Israel, without distinction; whereas afterwards, (verse 6,) he appropriates the name or term Israel only unto such of them who resembled their father Israel in faith, and so were spiritual Israelites, true Israelites, Israelites indeed.

*To whom pertaineth the adoption*—That is, who were the only nation or entire body of people in the world adopted by God into the privileges and respects of a son unto him; according as himself was pleased to honour them once and again by owning them in such a relation. "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh," saith God to Moses, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is MY SON, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let MY SON go, that he may serve me," &c. (Exod. iv. 22, 23.) So our Saviour, in the Gospel, speaking of the Jews, saith, "It is not meet to take THE CHILDREN'S bread, and to cast it to dogs." (Matt. xv. 26. See also Jer. xxxi. 20; Isaiah lxiii. 16; Gal. iv. 1.) It is true, this adoption of the Jews was but a shadow or type of that high and heavenly adoption which appertaineth to believers through Christ, in which respect the Apostle seems to appropriate it to the times of the Gospel; (Gal. iv. 5;) yet was it, simply considered, a prerogative of a very rich and sacred import. Or else the meaning of these words, *ων η υιοθεσια*, *to whom pertaineth the adoption*, may be, that God placed his great and gracious office, as it were, of adoption, which he erected for the benefit of the world, amongst them. So that whosoever of any nation under heaven desired the honour of sonship unto God, or the privilege and repute of such a high relation, he was to seek and obtain it amongst the Jews, namely, by turning proselyte to their religion and worship, and by incorporating himself with them.

*And the glory*—*Ων η δοξα*, whose is, or, to whom pertaineth, *glory*, or, *the glory*. The meaning seems to be, that God, by many visible testimonies of his presence with them, like unto which no nation under heaven besides enjoyed any, had cast a

spirit of glory upon them, and caused their brightness to shine throughout the world. (See Deut. iv. 6—8.) Other nations sat in the dust of the earth, and upon dunghills, whilst they were exalted, by those drawings near of God unto them, upon a throne. And, accordingly, this nation hath still the inheritance of this promise from God pertaining to it, that in the day of the restitution of all things, as Peter speaketh, “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory;” (Isaiah lx. 19;) meaning, that God, by the abundant and most excellent manifestations of his gracious presence with them, would render them a people wonderfully glorious in the sight of the world. Some, by “the glory” in this place, understand the ark of the testimony; upon the taking and carrying away of which by the Philistines, the wife of Phinehas, now at the point of death, said, “THE GLORY is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.” (1 Sam iv. 22.) The authors or abettors of this interpretation have no cause, as far as I understand, to be ashamed of it.

*And the covenants*—Meaning, that God at first made a gracious covenant with this nation in their father Abraham; and because of their frequent transgressions of it, whereby it was disannulled, dissolved, and made void, he was graciously pleased from time to time to re-establish it, and to give new force and validity unto it. In respect of which frequent re-establishment, though the covenant was materially, or in respect of the subject-matter, one and the same, yet, formally, it was many; yea, and in every new establishment of it, there being some alteration, though not in the main substance of the matter, it may upon this account be the better looked upon as multiplied or made many. (See Deut. xxix. 1.) The difference between the “covenants” here, and the “promises,” soon after mentioned, seems to stand in this: The covenants were, as it were, double promises, mutually or reciprocally binding or engaging both parties, according to the terms specified and contained in them. The promises, as to matter of performance, oblige only the one party, namely, the promiser, not him or them to whom they are made; though it is true they may and do, in a way of equity, oblige these also unto thankfulness. And, generally, all promises that are conditional, so far as they are conditional, and the performance of them suspended upon the performance of terms in one kind or other by the promised, have rather the

nature of covenants than of simple or direct promises. And of this kind are most of the promises found in the New Testament, the full and thorough performance of them on God's part being by him, and that in a way of the greatest equity, suspended upon such and such deportments of men.

By the way, when the Apostle appropriates the covenants he speaks of unto the Jews, his intent is, not so, or upon such terms, to appropriate them unto them, as if they had any right or power by virtue of such an appropriation to exclude the rest of the world, yea, or any person or persons whatsoever of any other nation, from part and fellowship with them therein, who should desire it and become worshippers of the same God with them. "The covenants" were theirs, much in such a sense as the Gospel was Paul's, who often calls it his Gospel, or baptism was John the Baptist's. The words or writings wherein these covenants were contained and expressed were delivered or given unto them; yea, their names, as it were, were used by God, and put into the said covenants; not, indeed, as scoffees in trust, properly so called, who are mere trustees, having no right or title themselves to the things wherewith they are intrusted by others; but as a parcel or party of those persons whose benefit was generally and in common intended by God, in and by these covenants; only THEY were selected by God to have the custody or keeping of the writings or letter of the said covenants, the tenor and import whereof equally respected the accommodation and benefit of the whole world with them, and they stood bound to manage their trust in this behalf accordingly. "To them," saith our Apostle, in this Epistle, speaking of the Jews, "were committed," namely, *in trust*, as the word *ἐπιτεθεισάν* signifies, "the oracles of God." Which oracles, or at least a part of them, are elsewhere termed by him, "the rudiments," or "elements," "of the world," (Gal. iv. 9; Col. ii. 8,) because they were intended and given by God for the nurture and training up of the generality of mankind, during the infancy, as it were, or the nonage of it, in the knowledge, love, and service of himself. There is the same consideration of the three privileges following.

*And the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises*—By the "giving of the law," he means chiefly, I suppose, that most glorious and majestic promulgation of the moral law by God himself, whether immediately, or by the mediation of one or more of his great angels, upon mount Horeb; not



excluding the more private delivery of those other laws, ceremonial and judicial, upon the same mount unto Moses, to be by him communicated unto this people, as from God, with this declaration, that by a careful and due observation of them they should be in all respects the happiest nation upon the face of the whole earth. (See Deut. xxviii. 1—15.) Now, how great a prerogative this was to this people to have their laws by which they were to be governed composed and framed, not by men, but by God himself, and by him delivered unto them, ratified and sanctioned by so many glorious and magnificently miraculous solemnities, cannot easily be measured by the line of human understanding.

By *the service of God*, *η λατρευσις*, is meant, not the ceremonial law itself, as some interpret, restraining the former privilege of “giving the law,” to the moral and judicial law only, and to the “giving” of these, but that worship, or those services themselves, which were prescribed in the ceremonial part of the law; meaning, that it was the singular privilege of this nation, that they had the true worship of God, such as was acceptable and well pleasing unto him, amongst them; and that no person of any other nation could have the like but by being a debtor unto them for it. Origen, with some others, restrain the “service of God,” here mentioned, to the priestly function, and the particular executions and employments hereof; an interpretation not improbable.

By “the promises,” I conceive, are chiefly meant, those frequent declarations found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament of the gracious purpose and intention of God to send his Son at the time appointed into the world, to accomplish the great work of the redemption thereof, to repair the many sad and wide breaches which sin had made upon the peace and comforts thereof, and to gird it again with joy and gladness. Though there be many other “promises” extant in those oracles of God which were committed to the Jews, yet these are *promises*, *κατ’ ἐξοχην*; these are the first-born amongst their brethren; and this Apostle, in his writings, very frequently appropriates the general word “promise” and “promises” unto the great and signal “promise” or “promises” we now speak of. (See Rom. xv. 8; Heb. xi. 39, &c.) However, “promises” from God, of what nature or kind soever, being friendly communications of his gracious and secret purposes and

intentions concerning the world and ourselves, cannot but be judged matters of high and singular dignation from God, to what people or persons soever they are peculiarly vouchsafed, and so that no other person or people in the world can come to the knowledge of them but by ploughing, as it were, with their heifer, and drinking of those fountains which have been opened by the hand of Heaven amongst them.

Verse 5. *Whose are the fathers*—That is, whose prerogative also it is to be the children and posterity of most worthy ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c., who were great in the sight of God, and to whom he made many great and precious promises, wherein their children also, and their children's children in their successive generations, were comprehended. However men, degenerating into ways of sin and wickedness, prove a stain and a blot to the honour and memory of their worthy forefathers, and forfeit their right unto and interest in those promises of grace which are made by God unto their fathers; yet to come from the loins of parents singularly interested in the love and favour of God, is, simply and in itself considered, a privilege of a very choice and desirable import. That one only promise of God, wherein he promiseth to show mercy to a thousand generations in those that love him, is a demonstration hereof in abundance. He that hath a fair estate left him by his parents is, by means hereof, in a better condition, as to this present world, further from poverty or want, than he that is left, as we say, to the wide world, and must shift for himself; although it oft cometh to pass, that he that hath such an estate left him, through wasteful and unthrifty courses, comes to beggary; and he that was born to inherit the dust of the earth only is fed plentifully.

*And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*—“Of whom,” that is, not of which fathers, but “of which Israelites,” as the particle *και* clearly intimates, “Christ came,” *το κατα σαρκα*; that is, *in respect of his flesh*, or human nature, which is often in Scripture expressed by the word “flesh.” This restrictive or exegetical clause, *το κατα σαρκα*, *according to the flesh*, plainly supposeth another nature in Christ, according unto which he came not from the Israelites or Jews; which can be none other but the divine nature, or Godhead; which, in the sequel of the verse, as we shall hear presently, is expressly attributed unto

him. The Apostle reserves the mention of Christ's descent from the Jews for the last place in his list or catalogue of their prerogatives; judging it, as it seems, the greatest and most worthy of them all. And if it be a matter of honour and high vouchsafement unto mankind in general, that Christ, the natural Son of God, was pleased to associate himself in communion of the same nature with it; much greater honour it must needs be to that particular family or descent of men which he chose from amongst all others to receive this condescendous investiture of flesh from it. So that Simeon had good ground, in his propheticall gratulation, to style him, "the glory of his people Israel." (Luke ii. 32.) And if the virgin, his mother, had cause to judge that all generations would call her blessed, and that He that is mighty did great things to her, (Luke i. 48, 49,) in casting the relation of a mother to his Son Christ upon her; doubtless the nation of whom both mother and Son descended had cause to judge themselves happy, and to say that God had "done great things" for them also, in taking a mother for his Son from amongst them, hereby making this glorious Son of his bone of their bone and of their flesh, in a more appropriate manner. Whereas this Apostle elsewhere admonisheth the saints, though they had "known Christ after the flesh," yet "that henceforth," namely, being now become new creatures, "they would know him" so "no more," (2 Cor. v. 16,) his intent only is to give them to consider, that to boast of or to think the better of themselves for any carnal relation whatsoever unto men, yea, though unto Christ himself, savoureth more of an unregenerate estate, or at least of weakness in the faith, than of such a change of heart which accompanieth the new birth, especially in the strength and perfection of it; and upon this account admonisheth them to refrain all such, whether words or thoughts. For, though it be a privilege and honour, and these very great in their kind, and within their own sphere, to be of the same line or descent of blood with Christ, or of the same nation with him, yet do they not reach within the vail, nor commend any man unto God upon any other terms, than as the sense and consideration of them are improved and contrived by men, to provoke them to desire and labour for spiritual union and communion with Christ. And, indeed, the benefit and advantage of all external privileges whatsoever consisteth, if not only, yet mainly and

principally, in this; I mean, that they afford opportunities, and impose engagements upon men that have them, to quit themselves more worthily in matters relating unto God than other men. And upon this account I suppose it is that the Apostle concludes elsewhere, that the "advantage" which the Jew had above the Gentile was very "much," and so the "profit" of "circumcision." (Rom. iii. 1, 2.)

*Who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen*—This glorious eulogium of Christ, as, on the one hand, it highly exalts the prerogative of the Jews, namely, as being that people of whom a person so excellent and so transcendently blessed was descended; so, on the other hand, it proportionably aggravates their sin and condemnation in rejecting a person of that infinite worth, notwithstanding his descent from themselves. It is probable that the Apostle gives this so highly honourable a testimony unto Christ, because he was so vilified and abhorred by the Jews; thus not only supplying, as much as might be, that which was more than lacking on their part, but withal making up that great breach which they had made on his name and honour by their unbelief. He is here said to be *επι παντων*, *over all*, whether persons only, or things and persons both. The word indifferently admits either interpretation; yet I find expositors rather inclining to the latter, as being the more comprehensive. Christ is said to be "over all," because, as himself expresseth it, "all power was given unto him," namely, by his Father, "in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) And John Baptist: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand;" (John iii. 35;) meaning, that he hath made him his great Plenipotentiary, to transact, issue, and conclude all things whatsoever relating unto the whole creation, especially angels and men; to settle the affairs of heaven and earth for eternity. He expressly asserteth his Godhead, partly, as was hinted, to commend yet further the prerogative of his brethren the Jews, from whom so great and worthy a person as he that "counteth it no robbery to be equal with God" had, in the human nature assumed by him, chosen to descend; partly, also, to awaken others to the same acknowledgment of him, or at least to inquire after him, until they should come to such a light, by which they might discover him to be indeed God. He addeth these words, *ευλογητος εις της αιωνας*, *blessed for ever*, or, *to be blessed*, that is, that ought to be blessed, *for ever*, to insi-

nuate, that a far differing measure from that which they had measured out unto him hitherto was due unto Christ from them, as from all other men. They had reviled and reproached him, called him accursed, &c. The Apostle here admonisheth them, that he was so far from deserving any such intreatings at their hands as these, that his divine goodness and glory every ways merited the greatest acknowledgments of praise and honour that they or any other creature could tender unto him. He closeth the business in hand with this word, *Amen*; a word commonly used for a serious confirmation of what is said immediately before, together with an approbation thereof; sometimes, also, importing a wish for the performance of it. It is six times used by the Apostle in this Epistle. Our Saviour, in the Gospels, frequently useth it as an adverb of asseveration, or valid assertion, and in the beginning of the sentence: In the Gospel according to John he never useth it but with an ingemination, or second repetition of it; in the other Evangelists, always singly. In all other places of Scripture it is never found used in the beginning of a sentence, but always in the end; and this seems to have been the ordinary construction of it, according to that of this Apostle, where, speaking of a person who understandeth not, he demandeth, “How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at,” that is, after or upon, “thy giving of thanks?” &c. (1 Cor. xiv. 16.) It is once used as an epithet, or descriptive character of Christ himself: “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness,” &c. (Rev. iii. 14.) Ο Αμην, as if he had said,\* “These things saith He who is as true in his sayings as truth itself, whose essential and innate veracity is confirmation in abundance of whatsoever he speaketh.”

From this passage, now last opened, consisting of verses 3—5, let us briefly observe some heads of doctrine, and then go forward with our exposition.

1. Whereas the Apostle's sorrow and heaviness of heart for the sad condition of his brethren the Jews was such, and so great, that, to be delivered from it, and to better his condition in respect of it, he wished to be an anathema, one accursed from Christ; it may be observed, that persons highest in favour

\* *De verbo Amen.* Vide AINSWORTH, in *Num.* v. 22, et SAM. PETIT. *Jur. Lect.*, lib. i., cap. 17.

and acceptation with God, yea, and such whose joy in him is unspeakable and glorious, as this Apostle's doubtless was, may, notwithstanding, have a sword passing through their soul, and no men's sorrows like unto theirs in this present world. (Luke ii. 35 ; 1 Cor. xv. 19 ; 2 Cor. vi. 4—6, &c. ; xi. 23—25, &c.)

2. From verse 3: Whereas the Apostle professeth that he could wish, or did wish, to be accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen, &c. ; it is observable from hence, that great love enableth to great and difficult services and sufferings. (Gen. xxix. 20 ; Cant. viii. 6 ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 16 ; 2 Cor. xii. 15.)

3. Whereas he was ready to be himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, &c. ; it may be observed, that it is the natural genius or property of a truly great and public spirit to sacrifice himself, with all his dearest enjoyments in this present world, upon the service and safety of many. (2 Cor. xii. 15 ; John i. 12 ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.)

4. Whereas it was the spiritual benefit of his brethren, their exemption from under the heavy displeasure of God, for the procuring whereof he wished to be himself accursed from Christ ; the doctrine is, that the spiritual and soul-interest of great numbers and multitudes of men should engage us very deep for the promoting of it. (2 Cor. xii. 15 ; 1 Cor. ix. 19—21, &c. ; John iii. 16.)

5. Whereas they were the Apostle's brethren and kinsmen after the flesh, whose spiritual good he professeth himself so desirous to advance, though with his own utter ruin, and this to be undergone and suffered by him upon the sorest and most grievous terms that lightly could be ; it may be observed, that Christians stand bound in a more peculiar manner before God to endeavour the salvation of their kindred ; to do more, and suffer more, if need be, for their salvation than for other men's ; even as they stand charged, likewise, to provide outward things for those of their own house : So that neither of these engagements does imply any such knowing of men after the flesh which the Apostle (2 Cor. v. 16) representeth as a disparagement unto Christians. (Acts x. 24 ; Gen. xviii. 19 ; Esther viii. 6.)

6. Whereas the Apostle expresseth a great height and depth of affection towards his brethren the Jews, in wishing to be himself accursed from Christ for their sakes, notwithstanding he knew certainly that his offer in this kind would not be taken by God, and that they were not like to taste of that blessing which

he wished he might procure for them by his being accursed; it may be observed, that reality and truth, yea, and great ardency of affection, may be expressed by such offers or professions which are never like to be put in execution, nor to benefit those to whom, or on whose behalf, they are made, by any actual performance. (2 Cor. xii. 15; 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.)

7. Whereas the Apostle, being comparatively innocent, wisheth himself accursed for his brethren, who were offenders; it may be observed, that it is not contrary to the rules of justice or equity that, by the sufferings of an innocent person, innocent I mean comparatively, freely offering himself hereunto, those that are guilty should be discharged from suffering. Otherwise the Apostle's wish in this place would be unlawful, as desiring that which were unrighteous or unequal for God to grant. (Jonah i. 9, compared with verses 12, 15.)

8. Whereas Paul, though conscious to himself of being in many things an offender, as the best of men are, (James iii. 2,) yet wisheth himself accursed for his brethren's sake; that is, in effect, that by his stripes they might be healed; it is observable, that it is of good accord with the righteousness of God to reward, as the prayers, so, and doubtless much more, the regular sufferings, of his saints, with a kind of mediatory honour, and with the exemption of offenders from such punishments as they have deserved. Otherwise, as we argued before, the Apostle's wish before us will be found sinful, as desiring that at the hand of God which would be unrighteous or unjust for him to give or do.

9. Whereas the Apostle's wish, notwithstanding, of being accursed for his brethren's sake, and, notwithstanding God's liberty in respect of his justice, to have accepted him in this his wish, as, namely, by being pacified towards his brethren upon his being made accursed for them, yet God did not accept him in this kind, was not pleased to receive the Jews into his favour, by putting him upon those sufferings which he was so well content to undergo upon that account; it may be observed, that such prayers or desires which are regular and of choice acceptance with God, in a way of approbation, are not yet always accepted by him as to a literal performance or gratification. (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9; Exod. xxxii. 32, 33; 2 Sam. xii. 16th with the 18th.)

10. Whereas the Apostle intending, either only or chiefly,

to commend the reality and truth of his affection to the Jews, declares unto them how great things he could even wish to suffer for their sakes; the observation from hence is, that a readiness to suffer for others is a very convincing argument of soundness and sincerity of affection towards them. (Gal. iv. 15; Col. i. 24; Gal. ii. 20.)

11. Whereas, desirous to express how deeply he could be content to suffer for his brethren's good, he giveth instance in being made an anathema or "accursed from Christ," in the sense declared and asserted; it is observable, that to those who affectionately love the Lord Christ, it is the extremity or height of sufferings to be looked upon as persons hated and abhorred of him. (1 Cor. iv. 9—13; 2 Cor. xiii. 7.)

12. From verses 4 and 5: Whereas the Apostle mentioneth sundry great and excellent prerogatives appertaining unto his brethren the Jews, who, all these notwithstanding, were a people extremely refractory against God; from hence the observation is, that the greatest, and greatest number of outward privileges and vouchsafements from God, may very possibly consist with, yea, and occasion in men, the greater stubbornness and stoutness of heart against God. (Rom. ix. 23—25; Jer. vii. 4, 8—10.)

13. Whereas the Apostle, liberally, and without any extenuation or expression, acknowledgeth all the excellencies or vouchsafements from God appropriate to the nation of the Jews; we may learn, that it is a point of Christian candour and ingenuity freely to own and acknowledge all testimonies of respects from God in our greatest enemies. (Rom. x. 1, 2; Acts xxvi. 27.)

14. Whereas the Apostle, the better to insinuate the cordialness of his affection unto the Jews, gives so free and large a testimony of the great honour which God had put upon them, in many signal prerogatives, above any other, yea, above all, nations; it may be observed, that a free and full acknowledgment of things worthy honour and respects in men is a pregnant argument or sign of good affection towards these men, in those who make this acknowledgment, or at least that they do not hate them. (Rom. x. 1, 2; Gal. iv. 15; Heb. x. 32, 33; Rev. ii. 6.)

15. Whereas the descent of the Jewish nation from the fathers, and so honourable a person as Israel, or their being Israelites, together with the descent of the Lord Christ from



them, are rehearsed by the Holy Ghost amongst the high prerogatives of the Jews; the doctrine is, that as well a worthy ancestry as a worthy posterity are simply and in themselves privileges or matters of honour unto men. (2 Cor. xi. 21, 22; Acts iii. 25; 1 Chron. xvi. 13; Job v. 25; Psalm cxxvii. 4, 5; Luke xi. 27.)

16. Whereas the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, &c., are numbered amongst the great and gracious respects vouchsafed by God, prerogativewise, unto the Jews; it is observable, that a fulness or richness of instituted means for the true knowledge and worship of God is matter of high dignation from God unto men. (Psalm lxxvi. 1, 2; cxlviii. 19, 20; Rom. iii. 1, 2.)

17. And lastly: Whereas the Jews being, more generally, a people rejected by God for their obdurateness in unbelief, had yet far greater means for the true knowledge and worship of God, and, consequently, for salvation, vouchsafed unto them, than other nations; the observation is, that the greatest excellency of means of salvation vouchsafed by God argueth no speciality of intentions in him towards men in the death of Christ. (Matt. xi. 22—24; Isaiah v. 4.)

Verse 6. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel, &c.*—*Ουχ οἰον δε οτι εκπεπτωκεν ο λογος της Θεου*, which some translate thus: *But it is impossible that the word of God should take none effect.* But this is not so proper, because it is not here said *ουχ οἰον τε*, which signifies, *impossible*, but *ουχ οἰον δε*, which properly signifies, *but not such a thing as*. His meaning clearly enough is, and interpreters do not much vary here, that nothing he had now said or implied, concerning the rejection of the greater part of his brethren the Jews from God, drew any such consequence after it as this, that “the word of God,” that is, the promises of God, or covenant of God, namely, given unto and made with Abraham and his seed,\* should miscarry, or had miscarried, or fallen, as it were, to the ground. The ardent affection which he had expressed towards the nation of the Jews in wishing, after such a deliberate and solemn manner as we have heard, to be “accursed from Christ” for them, plainly implied, as was

\* “The word of God” frequently signifieth “the promise of God;” (Psalm lvi. 4; cvi. 24; cxix. 38;) where the former translation readeth “promise,” instead of “word;” to omit many other places.

hinted, that he looked upon them as accursed from God, or as in imminent and present danger of being utterly cast out of his sight, and cut off from his grace and favour; according to what he reasoneth in a like case: "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." (2 Cor. v. 14.) Now upon this insinuation, amounting in substance to as much as a plain assertion, that the Jews were cast off by God from being any longer a people unto him, the Apostle plainly foresaw that the Jews would rise up with such an objection as this: "If God should cast off that people, to whose fathers he had engaged himself by promise, to be a God unto them and their seed for ever, then the word and promise of God should fail or miscarry in point of truth. But the 'word of God' cannot fail or miscarry; ergo." To this argument the Apostle answereth by granting the minor proposition, namely, that "the word of God" cannot miscarry; but denying the consequence in the major, which supposeth that a rejection of the people of the Jews would prove the "word of God" to be dissolved and of "none effect." The reason of this his denial he subjoineth in the words immediately following:—

*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*—As if he had said, There are many lineally, according to the course of nature, descended from the loins of the Patriarch Jacob, surnamed Israel by God, who are not the emphatical or spiritual Israel, or "the Israel of God," as he speaks elsewhere, that is, such Israelites as to whom God made or intended that great promise of being their God for ever, or, which is the same in effect, of giving justification, adoption, and salvation. It is a thing very frequent in the Scripture to use one and the same word in different significations in one and the same sentence, and this with much elegancy and emphatical acuteness; (see Matt. viii. 22; Rom. iii. 21; John xvii. 19, &c.;) as also to term a race or generation of men by the name of some of their progenitors, especially being persons of note and fame in the world. (Deut. xxxii. 9; Gen. xlix. 7; Psalm xiv. 7; lxxxiii. 7, 8, &c.) Moreover, it is not unusual in the Scriptures to appropriate a general or common term, by way of emphasis, or, as is commonly expressed, *κατ' ἐξοχην*, to some special particulars, one or more, contained under that general; yea, and sometimes to bereave such particulars which are less considerable and less perfect of that very name or appellation which agrees to the

general, and to appropriate it, as hath been said, to those particulars which are most considerable in their kind. (See Rom. ii. 28, 29; Gal. iii. 7, 29; John vi. 55, &c.) It is true, this promise was declared and delivered to all the posterity of Israel, as we partly heard from the former verses, without exception, and in a kind of conditional sense was made unto them all, as namely, thus: If they would or should all be children, that is, followers of the faith, righteousness, and holiness of Abraham and Israel, their fathers, as they were the children of their flesh, he would be a God, that is, a glorious and signal Benefactor, unto them all for ever. But in this sense and upon these terms it was made as well unto the Gentiles and the whole world as unto the Jews, though it was not so plainly or immediately communicated or made known unto them as to these. And that it should be made unto the Jews themselves in any sense, or upon any other terms than those expressed, as namely, upon their good behaviour and conformity to their worthy progenitors in faith and holiness, is repugnant to all principles of reason, yea, of common sense itself. For who can imagine or conceive that God, being infinitely just, righteous, and holy, should promise the highest and most sacred enjoyments and rewards which he hath to confer upon the best and holiest of men unto the worst, the most stubborn and disobedient of men, and this whether ever they repent of these abominations or no? If this were so, had not the world cause to demand, "Where is the God of judgment?" (Mal. ii. 17.) Yea, the Jews themselves plainly enough granted this principle for a truth, namely, that all that were carnally descended from Israel were not true Israelites, or "the Israel of God," in that they counted all such of this descent accursed and rejected by God, and upon this account hated and persecuted them, even unto death, who embraced the Apostle's doctrine of justification by faith and turned Christians. From whence it is evident, that the Apostle doth not assert the said principle in opposition to the Jews, but only maketh use of it as far as the import of it will reach in this kind, to dissolve the force of their objection against his doctrine; the tenor of which objection, as hath been already intimated, was this, that the said doctrine, supposing a rejection of a great part of their nation from God, rendered the word and promise of God unto Abraham and his seed "of none effect." Now the Apostle evinceth a nullity in the said objection from

the principle or concession mentioned, thus far, namely, that such a doctrine, which supposeth a rejection of some part of Abraham's carnal posterity by God doth not hereby at all render "the word of God of none effect;" themselves clearly granting this in the said hypothesis. So that the question yet remaining and depending between him and them was this: Who or what sort or kind of Jews they were, and how differing from the rest, whose rejection by God would render such a doctrine which should assert or suppose it so blasphemously erroneous, as to make "the word of God of none effect?" They affirmed them to be such who sought after righteousness by the observation of Moses's law, and rejected his doctrine of justification by faith; he, on the contrary, undertakes to prove, that they were such who sought their justification by faith, and placed no confidence or hope in this kind in the works of the law. He proceeds to the demonstration hereof in the sequel of this chapter, only asserting, the second time, the principle lately mentioned, by the way, in somewhat differing expressions from the former, to make his transition to his intended demonstration the more passable and fair. The matter or substance of the principle we speak of he expresseth in these words:—

Verse 7. *Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children*—Implying, that the great promises made to "Abraham and his seed" did not, according to the intent of God in making them, appertain, either universally or solely, to those who should naturally descend from Abraham, and should be his seed, in this sense, but unto those in whom the Spirit of Abraham's faith should be found, and so should be, by a spiritual kind of propagation or descent, his children. For a man to receive a change or alteration either in the habit or disposition of his mind, or in a course of outward deportments and actions, by means either of counsel or example from another, is a kind of generation whereby he receives a certain being which he had not before. And it is a frequent dialect of Scripture to term men the children of such persons whom they resemble in spirit or practice, especially when this resemblance hath been occasioned or produced either by their persuasions or practices: "Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan: thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite." (Ezek. xvi. 3. See John viii. 38, 39, 41, 44; Acts xiii. 10, &c.) So then this is that

which the Apostle here affirmeth, namely, that when God made the promise of being a God, that is, a great and blessed Benefactor, such as no creature, one or more, could be, unto "Abraham and his seed," or children; by "seed," or "children," he did not mean all those, without exception, who should carnally descend from him, but, as the next words plainly insinuate, such who should resemble him in his faith, as children commonly do the parents of their flesh, both in the lineaments of their natural faces, as likewise in the temper or complexion of their minds. By the way, when the Apostle saith, "For they are not all Israel that are of Israel;" and so again: "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children;" he doth not imply or suppose that the greatest part of them were such, I mean Israel or Abraham's children, in his emphatical sense, because he expresseth himself thus: "They are not all Israel, neither are they all children." Negative or exclusive particles do not always suppose or take for granted whatsoever in the same kind is not particularly denied or excluded; but sometimes simply and precisely deny or exclude without any connotation or implication at all in this kind. As when the Apostle saith, "For all men have not faith," he doth not suppose that most men or the greatest part of men have faith, but simply denieth that all men have faith. But let us make some brief observations from the words lately opened by the way:—

1. From those words, "Not as if the word of God hath taken no effect," so understood as hath been showed, it may be observed, that sometimes such consequences which pretend to a legitimacy of descent from words spoken are yet spurious and illegitimate. (Rom. vi. 1, 2; iii. 5, 31; John xxi. 23, &c.)

2. Upon the same account, only somewhat more particularly, it is observable, that such events now and then come to pass, which seem to contradict the word of God in the Scriptures, and yet really and in truth are far from it. (Rom. xi. 1; John xii. 34.)

3. Whereas the Apostle rejects such a supposition as this, that the "word of God" should be "of none effect," not only or simply as a *non-sequitur*, or that which followeth not upon any thing that he had either said or meant, but as that which is in itself erroneous and dangerous; it is observable, that any

opinion or saying whatsoever, involving in it a non-performance of any promise or word of God, is unsound, and of a dangerous tendency and consequence. (Rom. iii. 3, 4.)

4. From this clause, "For they are not all Israel that are of Israel," as it hath been expounded, it is observable, that though faith and holiness commonly shoot forth in some of the branches of a natural propagation or descent, where there is or hath been a godly ancestry or parentage, yet seldom or never do they appear in all. (Rom. xi. 1, 2, 15, 16.)

5. From the same clause, as supposing that the Jews conceived all, or at least the greatest part of, those to be Israel, the true Israel of God, who were naturally descended from Israel; the observation is, that men frequently stretch the intentions of God, in his collation of outward privileges, beyond the truth. Or thus: Men under the enjoyment of outward privileges are apt to think more highly of themselves than there is cause, and to conceit themselves something when as indeed they are nothing, as this Apostle speaks elsewhere. (Philip. iii. 3; Rom. ii. 3, 13; Jer. vii. 4.)

6. And lastly: From these words, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children," which imply that the Jews, more generally, thus argued and judged; it is observable, that the Scriptures, in respect of the phrase and manner of expression in many things, are so framed and drawn up by God, that by men of carnal minds they may easily be wrested to their destruction. (2 Peter iii. 16; 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.) It followeth,

*But, In Isaac shall thy seed be called*—Meaning, that God himself declared who or what persons of Abraham's natural seed his intent was should be counted for his children, namely, such children that should inherit the promises, as also who should not be counted for such, in these words, spoken by himself unto Abraham: "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Gen. xxi. 12.) It is frequent in Scripture to mention words spoken by a person without mentioning either the person speaking them, or sometimes the person to whom they were spoken. (See Gal. iii. 11, 12; Acts i. 4, &c.) The Apostle here entereth upon his main demonstration, intending to prove, that the rejection of such of Abraham's posterity by God, who, according to his doctrine, either were, or were likely ere long to be, rejected by him, doth in no consideration at all, by no tolerable consequence, make "the word of God of none effect," but rather, as he

speaketh elsewhere, “establish it.” The argument or pro-syllogism by which he proveth this, may be thus formed:—

The rejection of such Jews only, or of such of Abraham’s seed to whom God made no promise, no absolute promise, of being their God, of justifying, blessing, or saving them, cannot make the word or promise of God to Abraham and his seed of no effect.

But such are those Jews, and only such, namely, to whom God hath made no promise, &c., whose rejection is either asserted or supposed by me in my doctrine. Ergo, the rejection of only such as these, maketh not “the word of God of none effect;” and, consequently, neither is my doctrine guilty of such a crime, either for asserting or supposing it. The process of this argument from the first to the last is very pregnant and clear. The major proposition the Apostle taketh for granted, as well he may; and therefore insisteth not upon any proof hereof. The minor is the ball of contention between him and his opposers, the Jews; therefore, for this he runneth, and that by the way of this argument:—

If none of those Jews who, according to my doctrine, are rejected or likely to be rejected by God, have any promise from God that he will be their God, that he will justify, bless, or save them, then cannot the rejection of these make the word or promise of God of none effect.

But true it is, that none of those Jews whose rejection is either affirmed or supposed in my doctrine have any such promise. Ergo.

The consequence in the major of this syllogism also is too pregnant with evidence of truth to be denied. Therefore, the Apostle passeth over this likewise without proof. For the proof of the minor, he, 1. Supposeth that which is plain enough, and which his adversaries knew well enough, namely, that such Jews, or such of Abraham’s seed, who according to his doctrine were spurious, and rejected by God, were only such who rejected Jesus Christ, and peremptorily opposed the doctrine of justification by faith in him. 2. He proveth that such Jews as these had no such promise made or appertaining unto them, as whereby God should stand engaged to be their God, or to own them for such children of Abraham, to whom he ever engaged himself upon such terms. This he undertaketh to demonstrate from two famous oracles uttered by God himself of old; the

one unto Abraham himself in person, (Gen. xxi. 12,) the other unto Rebecca, the wife of Isaac. (Gen. xxv. 23.) To this latter he subjoineth a testimony from one of the Prophets, for a more ample declaration of the mind of God herein, as we shall see when we come to verse 13. By both these oracles, as well jointly as severally, he proveth that the persons, whether Jews, or of any other nation, with whom, under the name of Abraham's seed, God covenanted to be their God, to justify and save them, were not such who should seek to be justified by works, or the law, but by faith. The tenor of the former of these oracles is contained in the words recited.

*But, In Isaac shall thy seed be called*—The occasion of these words, spoken, as hath been said, by God himself unto Abraham, was this: Sarah, taking notice that Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar his servant, proved a scoffer, and misused her son Isaac, made it her earnest request unto Abraham, that, together with his mother, he might be turned out of doors. Abraham, being very much dissatisfied with the motion, and loath to put in execution what Sarah herein desired, received a command from God, however, to hearken unto her, and perform her request; giving him this reason to satisfy him in the business: "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called." As if he should have said, "Let it not be so grievous unto thee to part with thy son Ishmael out of thy house, because I have a mysterious and great design in appointing thy son Isaac to be thine only heir, and cutting off Ishmael from all hopes of being a sharer with him in thine inheritance." This, or some like sense to this, to be the true sense, at least one sense, intended by God in those words, the Apostle himself plainly declares in the words immediately following by way of interpretation.

Verse 8. *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed*—I confess that, without ploughing with the Apostle's heifer in this place, it would have been very hard for a man to have found out that divine riddle in those words which he findeth. But we need not be jealous of his interpretation, knowing from whom he received it. Well, then, saith he, the meaning of God, at least his principal meaning, in those words spoken unto Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," was this, or to signify, teach, and declare this: 1. That the children of the flesh are not the children of God.



2. That the children of the promise are, and shall be, “counted for the seed;” that is, the children of God. For that is to be minded, that the Apostle doth not here give, or intend to give, the grammatical or literal sense of those words, “But in Isaac shall thy seed be called,” but the mystical or typical sense only. And by this interpretation which he gives, he plainly signifieth that the said words were not spoken or meant by God in a literal or grammatical sense, or not in these senses only, but rather in a sense typical, mystical, and allegorical. The type, mystery, or allegory contained in the words of that oracle, he unfoldeth in this eighth verse, as the word *ταυτησι*, *that is*, showeth; being a word familiarly used by this Apostle to give notice of an explication or interpretation ensuing. (Rom. vii. 18; x. 6, 7; Philemon 12, &c.) The mystery, or spiritual secret, typified in the said oracle, the Apostle declareth to be the mind or counsel of God concerning such persons of mankind whom he purposed to own in the relation of children, and to confer the blessing or great inheritance of righteousness and salvation upon; and whom, on the other hand, he purposed to disown and exclude from all part and fellowship in these blessed privileges. Those, in the first place, whom he purposed to disown, and to exclude from the grace and privilege of sons, the Apostle, in his interpretation of the oracle, describes by this character or relation, that they are “children of the flesh:” “They which are children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.” By “children of the flesh,” opposed to “children of the promise,” in the latter part of the verse, he clearly meaneth such persons who seek after and expect spiritual privileges, adoption, justification, salvation, &c., in a fleshly way; that is, by works, or by the observation of the law; as, by “children of the promise,” he must needs mean such who depend upon the gracious and free promise of God for these heavenly accommodations. Elsewhere he useth “flesh” and “works” synonymously, and as mutually exegetical the one of the other: “What shall we say then that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the FLESH, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by WORKS, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.” (Rom. iv. 1, 2.) Evident it is, that by *κατα σαρχα*, *according to the flesh*, in the former verse, and by *εξ εργαων*, *by works*, in the latter verse, he meaneth one and the same thing; and that he doth expound Abraham’s finding somewhat “according to the

flesh, by his being “justified by works.” So, by being “made perfect by the FLESH,” (Gal. iii. 3,) he clearly means a being completely justified by works, as appeareth from verse 2, immediately preceding; as also from verse 5; and, indeed, from the general scope and carriage of the chapter, yea, and of the whole Epistle itself. Again: When he saith thus, “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now;” (Gal. iv. 29;) in these last words, “even so it is now,” his meaning must needs be this: They that are now, in these days, born after the flesh, persecute those that are born after the Spirit. And, by those “now born after the flesh,” he cannot mean, either, 1. Men born according to the course of natural propagation; because those here said to be “born after the Spirit,” were born upon such terms; and so the antithesis which he makes between the one and the other will fall; nor, 2. Can he mean unregenerate men, simply considered, or as such, because these are nowhere expressed or described by a being “born after the flesh,” in the literal signification of the word “flesh;” this being a character or description agreeing as well to persons regenerate as unregenerate; and, besides, such a sense as this is wholly irrelative to the business in hand, which is to prove an opposition, not between an estate of unregeneracy and faith in Christ, but between the works of the law and such a faith in the important business of justification: Therefore, by those “born after the flesh,” he must needs mean such who, as elsewhere he describes them, “are of the works of the law;” (Gal. iii. 10;) that is, have their dependence upon “the works of the law” for their justification; which dependence is, as it were, their spiritual subsistence and being. Yet again: Where he saith, “We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence IN THE FLESH,” (Philip. iii. 3,) by having “no confidence in the flesh,” he means, that they have not the least or lightest dependence upon the works of the law for their justification. The injunctions or performances of the ceremonial law are termed *δικαιωματα σαρκος*, *carnal*, or *fleshly ordinances*. (Heb. ix. 10.) So that by the “children of the flesh,” in the place in hand, it is a clear case that the Apostle meaneth such persons who seek for righteousness in the sight of God by the observation of the law. The metaphorical sense of the word “children,” frequent in like constructions, gives some further light and

strength to this interpretation. They who love the light, and are so much addicted to it, are, in Scripture phrase, called the "children of light;" (Luke xvi. 8; John xii. 36; Eph. v. 8;) and so likewise they that embrace the truth are said to be "of the truth;" (John xviii. 37; 1 John iii. 19;) that is, in effect, children of the truth; as they who depend upon the law for righteousness are said to be "of the law," (Rom. iv. 14,) and "of the works of the law." (Gal. iii. 10.) They that love and give themselves to the study of wisdom are called the children of wisdom; (Matt. xi. 19;) they who love and practise obedience, the children of obedience; (1 Peter i. 14;) they that embrace and depend upon this present world for their comfort and peace, the "children of this world," &c. (Luke xvi. 8.) In like manner and phrase, they who love, embrace, and depend upon the flesh, that is, as hath been said, a carnal and fleshly way, principle, or means for their justification, or upon the merit of their own doings, are termed "children of the flesh."

This, to be the clear sense and import of the clause, is yet more evident from the description of those who are by the Apostle opposed to these "children of the flesh:" These he calls "the children of the promise." Now, that, by "the children of the promise," he means believers, and those who seek after justification by faith, the familiar language of his own pen demonstrates. In one place he affirms, that those that are Christ's, meaning believers in Christ, "are Abraham's seed," and "heirs according to the promise," (Gal. iii. 29,) that is, according to the intent and mind of God in that promise, wherein the inheritance of life and blessedness are promised unto Abraham and his seed. Elsewhere he opposeth the law and the promise: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Gal. iii. 18.) In another place, those that "are of the law," that is, as we formerly expounded the phrase, that seek justification by the works of the law, to those that seek it by the promise: "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect;" (Rom. iv. 14;) meaning, that then they who expect the inheritance by faith, and by the promise, shall be frustrated in such their expectation. Elsewhere he calls believers, "heirs of promise;" (Heb. vi. 17;) and in one place, a passage of much like import with that now before us, he expressly calls those

who believe in Christ, amongst whom he numbereth himself, and this in opposition to those who look for justification by the works of the law, “the children of promise:” “Now we, brethren, according unto Isaac,” or, “as Isaac was,” “are the children of promise.” (Gal. iv. 28.) So that evident it is, that by the “children of the promise,” who, the Apostle saith, God meant should be “counted” for the emphatical “seed” of Abraham, which was to inherit, he meaneth true believers; and, if so, then by the “children of the flesh,” which he opposeth unto these, and which he denieth to be Abraham’s seed, in such a sense, he must needs mean those who “are of the works of the law.”

If it be demanded, “But what was or is there in that saying to Abraham, ‘For in Isaac shall thy seed be called,’ that gives the least overture to such a sense intended by God in them, as the Apostle here mentions; as, namely, that God thereby should teach or insinuate that believers only, and not they who look to be justified by works, should be counted or adjudged by him for that seed, or that kind of seed, of Abraham, whom he would adopt for children, and make heirs? Or what agreement is there between such a text, and such an interpretation?” I answer,

Ishmael, who was, by order from God, put out of doors, was, as the Apostle says elsewhere, “born,” or begotten, “after the flesh;” (Gal. iv. 23, 29;) that is, according to the ordinary course of nature, upon such terms as children commonly are begotten, and born in the world; Hagar, his mother, being a young woman, and in a likely capacity to conceive, and Abraham as yet not so dead in his body, but that he might have children, and this without miracle, or any extraordinary interposure by God, by a wife so capable as Hagar was: \* Whereas Isaac is said to have been “born,” or begotten, *κατα πνευμα*, after, or according to, the Spirit, that is, by a peculiar interposure of the Spirit of God: † 1. In making a promise unto Abraham, that Sarah shall yet have a son by him before she died, notwithstanding the deadness of her womb, and of his body also; in which respect he is said to have been “born,” or

\* *Habet enim ordo naturæ ut ex juvencula possit quis non nimium senex filios procreare.*—ESTIUS in Gal. iv. 23.

† *Eos enim vi naturæ generavit Abraham senex ex Ketura juvencula. Possibile est senem ex juvencula suscipere prolem; ex decrepita, sterili impossibile est naturaliter.*—PARÆUS in *loc.*

begotten, "by promise," (Gal. iv. 23,) whereof our Apostle also remindeth us in the verse immediately following. 2. In strengthening and assisting both Abraham and Sarah to believe this promise. 3. And lastly, in a supernatural collation of strength, upon Abraham to beget, but especially upon Sarah to conceive, a son, according to this their faith in that promise; for of this the Apostle takes special notice elsewhere: "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age," &c. (Heb. xi. 11.) So, then, these two children, in their different and respective manner or terms of conception, do, with a most exquisite aptness and sweetness of resemblance, typify, the one, namely, Ishmael, those that seek after justification by works; the other, Isaac, those that seek it by faith. For they who expect justification by works depend upon themselves and their own natural goodness and strength for the obtaining of it, and so have their spiritual subsistence or being, as it were, in a way of nature; as, on the other hand, they who expect justification by faith receive their spiritual being from the gracious and free promise of God: So that, in these words spoken by God unto Abraham, "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called," under the literal or grammatical sense of them, whatsoever this be, though it be variously formed by interpreters, there was this counsel or purpose of God mystically or allegorically signified, namely, that those who should spiritually resemble Ishmael in his birth, and seek for a subsistence in peace and happiness by the strength of nature, or works of the law, should be excluded from them; but that all those who should spiritually resemble Isaac in his, and receive their spiritual subsistence and being from, and by virtue of, the gracious and free promise of God, should inherit life, and peace, and glory. Some give this sense of these words, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called;" that is, "That seed of thine, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, shall descend from Isaac, not Ishmael." Others, this: "That generation or nation of men, unto whom I intend to perform those gracious promises formerly made unto thee and thy seed, as of giving the land of Canaan, of making a covenant with them, of dwelling amongst them, &c., and, consequently, who shall more particularly be taken notice of in the world, for thy posterity or seed, shall lineally descend from Isaac, and not from Ishmael, whose posterity shall be reckoned

in common with the other nations of the earth." This latter sense is much the better, and bears the allegory more naturally, and with clearness of resemblance. For, God, intending that only those who should naturally descend from Isaac, who was Abraham's son by promise, though not all these neither, as we shall see in the verses following, and hereby themselves also, in a sense, children of promise, should inherit the external privileges and good things promised unto Abraham's seed, hereby might well, as in an allegory or mystery, signify, that only they who should be spiritually born, as Isaac, and Abraham's seed by him, were naturally, should inherit those spiritual and heavenly privileges and good things, whereof those external privileges were manifest shadows and types.

If it be demanded, "But how can Abraham's seed be said to be counted or estimated, in the sense given, in Isaac, and his seed and posterity, when as one part of his seed, namely, Esau, with his race, was no more included, or intended to be included, by God, in those great promises made unto Abraham and his seed, than Ishmael and his race were?" I answer,

1. That God, in restraining his computation of Abraham's seed unto Isaac and his line, did not necessarily enlarge it to the whole extent and compass of this line. From this saying, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called," literally and grammatically only understood, there can no more be inferred but only this,—that that nation or people, to whom he meant to perform those great and precious promises, as concerning the land of Canaan, signal multiplication, &c., made unto him, Abraham, and his seed, should naturally descend from the loins of Isaac; not, that whosoever, or what people soever, should descend from him, should be counted his seed, in such a sense.

2. The reason, probably, why God would not have all that should proceed from Isaac's loins to be counted Abraham's seed, in the sense lately declared, that is, heirs of those temporal promises which were made, and consequently intended to be performed, to his seed, may be to signify and teach, by way of type, that, even from Abraham's spiritual seed themselves, true and sound believers, a carnal generation might and would proceed, persons that should not inherit the spiritual Canaan with their parents. Or rather,

3. And lastly : The reason hereof might be, that God by this means might so much the more effectually declare and show, as

in a redoubled type, chiefly unto the Jews, and then also to the rest of the world, his liberty and resolution to nominate and repute for Abraham's seed, that is, for such as should inherit the celestial Canaan, whom and what manner of persons he pleased; as also to exclude from part and fellowship in this great business whom and what manner of persons he pleased; and, as well in the one, as in the other, as well in his accepting, as excluding, to steer a course contrary to the expectations and thoughts of men. For who would have thought that, having declared his mind and purpose to compute Abraham's seed in and by Isaac, he should not only reject one part, one half, as it were, of Isaac's seed, as, namely, Esau and his race, from this dignity, but even that part of it, unto which, in the judgment of men, it rather seemed of right to appertain, Esau being the elder brother, and Jacob, to whom God adjudged it, the younger? This reason is intimated by the Apostle himself, verse 11, as we shall see when we come thither.

By the way, from what hath been said, it appears that, according to Scripture notion, Abraham may be said to have three, or, indeed, four, several kinds of children, or seeds: First, such as were propagated of him, according to the flesh, but did not so much as inherit the carnal or outward privileges promised to him and his seed. Of this kind were Ishmael, Esau, and all the rest of Abraham's children, Isaac only excepted, with their respective generations and posterities. Secondly, such who not only naturally descended from him, but were intended by God to be made joint heirs of the letter of the great promises made to him and his seed, and yet should not inherit the spiritual or heavenly good things typified in and by these promises. These were such who descended from Abraham, first by the line of Isaac, and then of Jacob also, but yet were no true Israelites, nor children of the faith of their father Abraham. Thirdly, those are, in a more rich and complete sense, Abraham's seed, who, being lineally, according to the course of natural propagation, descended from him, whether by Ishmael, or by Isaac, or by any other of his natural children, were partakers of his faith, as well as of his flesh, and true worshippers of the same God with him. Lastly, those, also, are, in the Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, frequently called Abraham's seed, who believe in God, as Abraham did, whether naturally descended from him or no. These two last-

named kinds, notwithstanding the difference of carnal descent between them, may yet well pass but for one and the same seed ; and so the New Testament speaketh of them. And of this seed the divine oracle before us, “ But in Isaac shall thy seed be called,” principally speaketh.

To prove that God, by declaring unto Abraham, that in Isaac his seed should be called, in those words, “ in Isaac,” only minded Isaac in respect of the manner, means, or terms of his conception and birth, and, consequently, that his meaning was, that they who should spiritually resemble him in these should be “ called,” that is, counted and honoured by him, as Abraham’s seed, κατ’ ἐξοχην, he immediately adds,

Verse 9. *For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son*—To show that Isaac was a son of promise, and so a meet type of those that should be begotten of the gracious promise of the Gospel by faith, he citeth the very words of the promise, or at least the sum and substance of them, by which Isaac was begotten and born. The tenor of the place, or places rather, in Genesis, unto which the Apostle relateth, is this : “ And he,” God, “ said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life ; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.” (Gen. xviii. 10.) And because Sarah, at the first hearing of these words, “ laughed,” as not believing them to be true, herein a type of the great averseness in men to believe the promise of justification by faith, God repeats and re-asserteth them soon after : “ At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” (Gen. xviii. 14.) But before either of these promises, God had said thus to Abraham : “ But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.” (Gen. xvii. 21.) Our Apostle, in the place in hand, takes special notice of that “ set time,” mentioned in the last passage from Moses, in these words : Κατα τον καιρον τετον, that is, *according to this very time* ; as also of the word ελευσομαι, *I will come*, from both the former. These two circumstances, the one of God’s coming, namely, to fulfil his promise in causing Sarah to have, or to bring forth, a son ; the other, of the precise “ set time,” when he would thus come, plainly and pregnantly evince Isaac to have been a son of promise, conceived and born, not upon the mere account of nature, or in the way



of ordinary propagation, but by virtue of that peculiar promise which God interposed, and both Abraham and Sarah believed, in order to his conception and bringing forth.

*At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son—* As if he should have said, Thou mayest certainly know that that son, which Sarah thy wife shall bear unto thee, shall be conceived and born by virtue of my coming unto thee, that is, by my special and gracious interposure in this kind on thy behalf, and not according to the course of common propagation, because she shall bring him forth neither sooner nor later, but at the just precise time which I now declare unto thee. “To come,” in Scripture, frequently signifies, to help, rescue, assist, deliver, &c. *Venire dicitur*, saith Calvin, on Matt. x. 23, *qui rebus desperatis opem fert*. (See Luke xviii. 8; James v. 8; Heb. x. 37; Hosea vi. 3, &c.)

Before we come to take up such doctrinal observations as the verses last opened afford, it is very necessary that we take and give notice, from the premises, that Isaac is not brought upon the theatre of the Apostle’s discourse in this chapter, either as a type, instance, or example, of persons personally or under personal considerations elected by God from eternity, but as a type of that generation of men, how few or how many soever they should be, that shall be justified by God, counted his children, and judged meet to inherit his kingdom. This clearly appeareth from the whole carriage of the context, and from the express tenor and tendency of all that is here alleged or said concerning him. Here is not the softest air or gentlest breathing of any such purpose or decree of God by which Isaac should from eternity be, in a mere personal consideration, peremptorily elected; but the manner of his conception and birth, with the express reasons or causes of both, are narrowly scanned and laid forth by the Apostle as typifying the counsel and purpose of God concerning justification and spiritual sonship, and showing who or what manner of persons they must be who shall receive the grace of justification and adoption from him; namely, such who shall spiritually resemble Isaac in his birth, and be begotten not of the law or the works thereof, but of the gracious and free promise of God and faith therein. Such a notion as this is expressly coherent with the main scope of the Apostle in the Epistle all along, which is to show and prove, in opposition to the Jewish confidence and conceit, that

justification is not to be obtained by the works of the law, but by faith; whereas a discourse concerning such an election and reprobation of persons from eternity, as many expositors fancy in this place, would be altogether eccentric to his business, and neither make for his doctrine or way of justification, nor yet against the doctrine or way of his adversaries the Jews. For were there such a decree of election and reprobation as they contend for granted or supposed in God, yet might the justification of the persons elected be as well by the works of the law as by faith: But that Isaac, in the manner of his birth, signified or typified those that were to be justified by faith, was Austin's notion and sense long ago.\* Nor can it so much as colourably be proved from any thing spoken by the Apostle concerning Isaac in this quarter of his discourse, that he was peremptorily elected unto salvation from eternity; no, nor yet that he was so much as a true believer, though this, I grant, be evident enough from the Scriptures elsewhere. And as Isaac is neither here nor elsewhere held forth as a type or example of persons peremptorily elected unto life from eternity, so neither was Ishmael either type or example of persons peremptorily reprobated from eternity, but only a type of persons seeking justification by the law, whether in time they come to repent of this error and seek it by faith, or no. Yea, I know no expositor, whether ancient or modern, that passeth any definitive sentence of reprobation upon Ishmael; but I know that some of our best modern expositors, as Bucer and Musculus, by name, affirm and teach not only a possibility, but a probability, of Ishmael's salvation.† Yea, Austin himself, amongst the ancient, teacheth once and again that he was not cast out of Abraham's family because he was born of the servant or bondwoman, but because of the injury which he did unto Isaac.‡ Nor doth God's act in

\* *Non autem sufficit quod de libera uxore natus est Isaac, ad significandum populum heredem Novi Testamenti, sed plus hic valet quod secundum promissionem natus est.*—AUG. *Exposit. ad Gal. iv.*

† *De Ismaele et Esau ipsis non est quod pronunciemus eos prorsus a Deo esse rejectos; malo credere utrique pietatem paternam profuisse, ut licet graviter itentidem deliquerint, salutem tamen consecuti sint, donati et ipsi vera fide in misericordiam Domini, &c.*—M. BUCER *ad Rom. ix. 11.* *Ista licet multum prerogativæ haberent, cujus Apostolus (Rom. ix.) meminit, haud impediebant tamen quominus et Ismael signo fœderis obsignandus esset, et ad gratiam unius ac veri Dei pertineret, si fidem Abrahamæ patris sui non abjiceret. Neque adimcbatur Ismaeli spes salutis, quæ in Christo unico Mediatore expectabatur, &c.*—MUSC. *in Gen. xvii. 1.*

‡ AUG. *Exposit. in Joh. Tract. 11.*

choosing Isaac before he was born to make him a son of promise any ways prove his election or choice of him from eternity unto salvation ; but only his designment of him for a type of those whom he intended to justify, or rather for a typical doctor of that method, way, or means, by which his counsel and purpose was to justify the world ; and this not so much, or rather not at all, in his person, or in respect hereof, but of his propagation and the manner and terms hereof, according to what hath been already observed. If the Apostle's scope or intent had been to propose or mention Isaac as a type, instance, or example, of persons under a mere personal consideration, or of the mere will and pleasure of God, elected from eternity, his narrow sifting and searching into the terms and manner of his conception and birth, and so his mentioning the divine oracle concerning God's estimating or computing Abraham's seed by him, had been mere impertinencies, and altogether irrelative to his purpose. Whereas, if we suppose him to be, in this passage, held forth as a type of such persons whom God intends and always intended to justify, all the said particularities will appear like apples of gold with pictures of silver, I mean, of a most pleasant and pertinent accommodation thereunto. The consideration hereof, I presume, it was that so far overruled the judgment of learned J. Cameron, that he granteth that the Apostle hitherto had discoursed the business of justification. And how little reason he had to conceive that here he should lay down this subject, and in the next words fall upon vocation, will sufficiently appear from the words themselves, when we come to them. In the mean time, let us take up some brief observations from the verses last opened by the way, and then advance.

1. From these words, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called," (verse 7,) this doctrine ariseth, in the general, that God teacheth the great mysteries of salvation, not by expressness of words and doctrine only, but by special providences and dispensations also. By causing that part or vein of Abraham's posterity, which was to descend from the loins of Isaac, to be estimated and taken knowledge of in the world for Abraham's seed, namely, by conferring the great things promised unto "Abraham and his seed" upon them, and upon them only, and upon no other part of it, he informed the world, as the Apostle here informeth us, of his great and blessed counsel and purpose

to justify men by faith ; as, on the contrary, by causing Ishmael, with his mother, to be cast out of Abraham's family, he taught the world that they who expected justification and salvation by works should be rejected by him. (1 Cor. x. 11 ; Gal. iv. 23—25, &c.)

2. From the same words, " But in Isaac shall thy seed be called," this also is observable, that God without acceptation of persons may advance one branch or line of the same family above another, not only in outward things, but in spiritual privileges and accommodations also. Ishmael was Abraham's son, as well as Isaac ; yet Isaac and his posterity had a better share of the good things promised unto Abraham and his seed, settled and conferred upon them, than Ishmael and his. Acceptation of persons hath place only in judiciary awards, not in dispensations of grace or bounty. (1 Sam. xvi. 12, compared with verses 7, 8, &c. ; 1 Kings ii. 12, compared with verses 23, 24, &c.)

3. These words, " That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God," (verse 8,) exhibit this doctrine, that God's counsel or purpose concerning the way wherein, or terms upon which, he will justify and adopt men are not suitable to the carnal thoughts or imaginations of men. (Isaiah lv. 8, 9 ; 2 Cor. x. 18 ; Rom. ii. 29.)

4. From the same words this also may be observed: That as contrary as men's thoughts are to the counsel of God, about the great business of justification and adoption, yet very confident men are of their congruity or conformity thereunto. This the Apostle supposeth in opposing this conceit of the Jews, that the " children of the flesh," that is, seekers of justification by the law, must needs be the " children of God." (Gal. v. 7, 8 ; Rom. x. 3 ; John ix. 39, 40.)

5. From these words, " But the children of the promise are counted for the seed," this doctrine putteth forth: Amongst men capable, through years, of believing, those only are the true sons of God, so esteemed by him, and heirs of salvation, who receive their spiritual being from, and are begotten of, the gracious and free promise of the Gospel. (2 Peter i. 4 ; Gal. iii. 16.)

6. From these words, " For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son," (verse 9,) this doctrine showeth itself: God frequently maketh promise of such great things which he graciously intendeth unto men some

time before he actually confers or performs them. (2 Peter iii. 13 ; Rom. i. 2 ; besides other places without number.)

7. And lastly : Upon the latter part of the words, " At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son," the fruit of this doctrine groweth : That by means of a special divine interposure sometimes things are brought to pass above and beyond expectation. " Who would have said unto Abraham," said Sarah herself, " that Sarah should have given children suck ?" (Gen. xxi. 7.) Yet, by God's coming to her, as we have heard, it so came to pass. (Isaiah lxiv 3 ; 1 Sam. i. 19, 20 ; with other places.)

10 And not only this ; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac ;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Having proved, from what had been done in Abraham's family, and had passed between God and him about his son Isaac, that God's pleasure and purpose was to account only those for Abraham's seed, or persons justified and in a capacity of inheriting the true Canaan, who, after the manner of Isaac, should be children of the promise, that is, true believers, in the verses now mentioned he prosecutes the same argument, by insisting upon another special dispensation of God in the family of Isaac, whereby he discovered himself, only with more significance and plainness, to the same purpose. This elliptic clause, *ὡς μόνον δε*, frequent in the writings of this Apostle, here translated, *and not only this*, plainly showeth, 1. That the Apostle continueth and goeth on with the argument or subject of his former discourse ; and, 2. That what he is now about to add unto that lately spoken is of somewhat a more pregnant and considerable import that way. The words, according to the original, only signifying, *but not only*, stand in need of some-

what to be added to them to complete their sense. The substance of what is to be added upon this account is easy enough to be conceived by the exigency of the context, which clearly shows that the Apostle's meaning in them, with that which follows, was this, or to this effect,—that God did not only discover his mind or counsel unto Abraham by saying unto him, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” who or what manner of persons they should be whom he would estimate or call Abraham's seed; but he made a more full and clear discovery of the same counsel of his also, in the family of Isaac, in saying unto Rebecca, when she “had conceived by one,” “the children being not yet born,” “The elder shall serve the younger;” as if he had said, God did not only at first discover unto Abraham, somewhat more darkly and obscurely, who and who only should be reputed his seed, that seed of his whom he intended to make heirs of the world, but soon after he made the same discovery, only more lightsomely and plainly, unto Rebecca also. The knowledge and due consideration hereof will help us to keep a straight course in interpreting and understanding the Apostle's meaning all along the context in hand; wherein otherwise we may soon be bewildered and so entangled that we shall scarce be able to make either head or foot, sap or sense, of any thing delivered herein. And this is that which hath befallen the generality or greatest part of our interpreters in their expositions of the place.

But it may be demanded how it can, from the passage before us and the words hereof, be proved that the Apostle herein intended at all to show or prove who or what manner of persons they are whom God accounteth for Abraham's seed, in the sense declared; and, 2. How such a point or doctrine as this can be conceived to be more emphatically, and with more effectualness of proof, argued and demonstrated in this passage than in the former.

Concerning the former, not to re-mention the argument drawn for the proof of this from the words, “And not only this,” which are clearly connexive of the two passages or contextures of Scripture, this and the former, as was hinted, 1. Evident it is that the two persons here mentioned, Jacob and Esau, are not considered in their mere persons, nor, indeed, so much, if at all, in their persons as in their posterities, or as persons together with their respective posterities constituting two several nations

or bodies politic of men. This is plain from the words in Genesis, the substance whereof the Apostle here expresseth: "And the Lord said unto her," Rebecca, "TWO NATIONS are in thy womb, and two manner of PEOPLE shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one PEOPLE shall be stronger than the other PEOPLE; and the elder" people "shall serve the younger." (Gen. xxv. 23.) And whereas our English translators in the passage of the Apostle before us have, without warrant from the original, inserted the word "children;" "For the CHILDREN being not yet born," &c.; they might, I conceive, as well and with as good, if not better, agreeableness unto the Apostle's mind have supplied the word "nations;" "For the NATIONS not being yet born," &c.

From hence, by the way, it evidently appears that Jacob and Esau are not here propounded, either as types or examples of a mere personal, but of a certain specifical or national, election and reprobation; that is, of men invested with such or such a qualification, whosoever, how many, and how few soever, they shall be found to be. Which typical representation or service doth not necessarily require or suppose either the election unto, or reprobation from, eternal life, either of the persons themselves, Jacob and Esau, nor yet of their posterities, in whom this representation is made. Some of our best expositors, as was formerly in part, and may further be showed in time, plainly grant and affirm that the eternal rejection of Esau from the love and favour of God cannot be evinced from this place. And that very many of Jacob's race were not elected to eternal life, and some of Esau's race not reprobated from this life, are things too evident from the Scriptures to be denied or questioned; nor are they questioned, I presume, or denied by any.

2. As evident it is as the former, that these words, spoken by God under such circumstances as are here specified, "The elder shall serve the younger;" as, likewise, those of the Prophet Malachi, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," are cited by the Apostle to prove, according to their typical signification and import, "that the purpose of God according to election" doth and will "stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;" that is, that the purpose or counsel of God, which answereth or correspondeth with, and which is the ground and cause of, that election which he maketh amongst men, unto the honour and dignity of being reputed Abraham's seed,

in the sense declared,—for there is no ground to imagine that he here speaks of any other election,—might appear to remain unchangeable in him, even the same which he had declared unto Abraham, and in him unto the world, in that oracle delivered unto him, lately mentioned and explained; the tenor or effect of this purpose or election of his being, not to elect or choose to that dignity, upon consideration of men's works, or observations of the law, which unto men seems most reasonable and equitable, but according to his own will and pleasure, as having an unquestionable right to make his terms in this kind what he pleaseth, inasmuch as he is he who "calleth," that is, who freely setteth or holdeth forth the great price of justification, or sonship unto Abraham, inviting the world to contend and run for it. As he that, at his own cost and charges, builds a hospital, alms-house, or the like, ought in all reason and equity to be at liberty to constitute and appoint the laws, terms, qualifications, or conditions, by and according unto which persons shall be admitted to partake of the benefit of either, and not to have terms obtruded or put upon him in this kind by others; and as in the Olympic games of old, he that was the *αγωνοθετης*, that is, the person who, at his proper charge, bestowed and set forth the prize or reward by which men were invited to try masteries in those games, was always allowed to nominate and prescribe the laws or rules by which these exercises were to be performed, and according unto which the prize set forth by himself was to be awarded and given;\* in like manner, saith the Apostle in effect, God freely, of his mere grace and bounty, inviting and calling men to the high prize and privilege of justification, or sonship unto Abraham, and not being necessitated hereunto by any obligation or rule of justice, most reasonable and meet it is, that he should please himself, not men nor angels, in appointing the terms and conditions upon which this blessed investiture should be actually conferred upon men. And what his good will and pleasure is in this kind, I mean concerning the law or terms upon which he will justify men, or own them for Abraham's seed, as, namely, that he will confer these privileges upon men, not for or according

\* The Apostle, in 2 Tim. iv. 5, plainly relateth hereunto, writing thus: "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully;" that is, unless in his striving he submits unto and observes the laws prescribed by the master of the exercise, or of him that bestows the crown.



to their works, or observance of the law, but for and upon their believing, as he had formerly declared in Abraham's family, by saying unto him, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called;" so here he declares it the second time in Isaac's family, by saying unto Rebecca, concerning the two nations which were yet in her womb, "The elder shall serve the younger."

But it may be demanded, how, or upon what account, such a saying as this from God, "The elder shall serve the younger," can import or imply, that God's purpose is to choose or nominate for Abraham's spiritual seed, not by the rule of works or legal observations, but according to his own pleasure, that is, by the rule of faith, as hath been declared; I answer,

1. If we consult the history in Moses, from whence the Apostle cites the words in hand, by "the elder," and "the younger," the two nations or people which were to descend from the two children, Esau and Jacob, are clearly meant, according to the express tenor of the words lately presented: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder" people "shall serve the younger;" (Gen. xxv. 23;) that is, the nation or people that shall descend of the elder brother, Esau, meaning the Edomites or Idumeans, shall be in subjection unto that nation which shall be propagated by the younger brother, Jacob, namely, the Israelites, and shall acknowledge them for their lords. In this sense the said prophetic oracle was historically and literally fulfilled, when the Idumeans, in David's time, were overcome by the Israelites, and made tributaries unto them. (2 Sam. viii. 14; Psalm lx. title; 1 Chron. xviii. 11, 13.) But how the said oracle can be understood to have been verified or fulfilled in the persons of Esau and Jacob, no where appeareth from the Scriptures; but the contrary rather. For although Esau sold his birthright, or right of primogeniture, unto Jacob, by means whereof Jacob might seem to have purchased or obtained a right of power to rule over Esau, according to the law of primogeniture amongst brethren, then in being, at least, among the Jews, yet that he ever exercised any such power over Esau,\* or that Esau ever became

\* *Ipse Esau nunquam fuit sub dominio Jacob; imo Jacob illum vehementer timuisse legitur.*—MUSCULUS in Gen. xxv.

subject unto him, is not only besides, but even contrary to, what we find here written. For we find that Jacob was rather in subjection unto Esau, and was sorely afraid of him and his power; and, first by his messengers, and afterwards by himself, acknowledged him, and this over and over, for his lord, and himself his servant. (Gen. xxxii. 4; xxxiii. 8, 13.)

From hence it appeareth, as clear as the sun at noon-day, that neither Esau nor Jacob is here instanced by the Apostle in any other consideration than only as they were significators of their posterities, respectively, and, consequently, not as instances or examples of any such personal reprobation from eternity as some are pleased to imagine. For certain it is, that, not simply some, but very many, if not far the greatest part, of Jacob's posterity itself were wicked, and reprobated or rejected by God; and not less certain, or not much less certain, but that some of Esau's posterity were partakers of the faith of their father Abraham, and so beloved of God. But,

2. True it is, that, however Esau, in his posterity, was in subjection and under tribute unto Jacob in his for a time, yet, according to the prophetic prediction of their father Isaac unto Esau, "And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck," (Gen. xxvii. 40,) not long after, the Idumeans, Esau's posterity, joining with Nebuchadnezzar in the siege of Jerusalem, here exercised a kind of imperious or lordly cruelty over their brethren, above what the rest of their enemies did, as appears from Psalm cxxxvii. 7; Ezek. xxxv. 5; Obad. 10, &c. Hereby it plainly appeared that they had recovered their liberty, and were now rather lords over, than servants or tributaries under or unto, their brethren the Israelites, Jacob's posterity. The time wherein Esau, in his posterity, remained in subjection unto Jacob in his, appears, by computation from the Books of the Kings, to have been about one hundred and sixty-six years. And as this subjection of Esau unto Jacob, in their respective posterities, was presignified by Jacob's taking hold on his brother Esau's heel, thus supplanting him, as it were, in his birth; so did it continue under the reign of five Kings of Jacob's race, signified, as some conceive, by the five fingers of Jacob's hand, by which he supplanted him. But the consideration hereof doth no ways accommodate the Apostle's scope or intent, in his citation of the divine oracle, "The elder shall serve the

younger ;” which, as himself expresseth it, was to prove, “ that the purpose of God according to election might stand,” or be declared to remain firm and unchangeable ; unless, haply, it be by some such intimation as this,—that when God said to Rebecca, “ The elder shall serve the younger,” his meaning was not, that he should always serve him, and, consequently, that that love wherewith God is said in the verse following to have loved Jacob above Esau, was not any such love out of which he would be supposed to have elected Jacob to eternal glory. For if this saying of God, “ The elder shall serve the younger,” proceeded from such a love as this, it must import, that the estate or condition of lordship, therein asserted unto Jacob, the “ younger,” should be perpetual and without interruption. So that no literal sense whatsoever, as such, will render the said words any ways coherent with the Apostle’s drift or scope of the place, formerly expressed. Therefore, such a sense which will make them comportant herewith must be found out ; which must needs be some such which is commonly termed mystical or allegorical ; yet this such, also, which may clearly appear to have footing and foundation in that which is literal. Therefore,

3. As we had declared before, that God, in Abraham’s two sons, mystically signified in Isaac, born of the free-woman, who or what manner of persons they were who should be the true sons of God, and inherit the adoption, namely, such as should believe ; and again, in the other, Ishmael, born of the bond-woman, who and what manner of persons they were who should be excluded from this dignity, namely, those who should depend upon the law, and the observation thereof, for the obtaining of it ; in like manner, in the two sons of Isaac, he mystically declared the same thing, in effect, the second time. In Jacob, who, by his all-disposing providence, proved the latter born, or the younger, and yet had the dignity and privilege of the first-born conferred upon him, he mystically signified the people of the new or latter testament or covenant, namely, those who should believe, and that these should have the pre-eminency of respects with God ; in Esau, who, by the same providence, became the elder, or first-born, and yet was less respected and regarded by God, and adjudged by him to a servile condition, he likewise signified the people of the old or first covenant of works, that is, those that should expect justification or adoption

by the works of the law, and who, upon this account, should be rejected by God from inheriting the true and heavenly Canaan.

Nor doth that of the same Apostle at all make against this : “ And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” (Gal. iii. 17.) For these words do not prove that the Gospel, or covenant of grace, was before the law, or covenant of works ; but only before that solemn repetition or new delivery of it upon Mount Sinai, when there was a brief transcript of it written and delivered unto Moses in tables of stone by God himself, for such ends and purposes, relating unto the Jews, as the Scripture mentioneth elsewhere. (Rom. v. 20 ; Gal. iii. 19, &c.) And that the law, or covenant of works, was in being, yea, in force, in the world before the giving of it from Mount Sinai, appears from what this Apostle observeth, Rom. v. 13. For, “ until the law,” that is, from the beginning of the world until the giving of the law in words and writing from Mount Sinai, “ sin was in the world ;” and, consequently, the law must of necessity have been here also ; because, as he saith elsewhere, “ Where no law is, there is no transgression :” (Rom. iv. 15 :) And, in the other place, “ But sin is not imputed,” that is, is not charged upon men or punished, “ where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam,” inclusive, “ unto Moses,” &c. And, consequently, there must needs have been a law, without the breach whereof men had not been obnoxious unto death. Yea, not only the moral, properly so called, but even some particulars also of the ceremonial, law itself were practised in the world before the delivering of this law unto Moses upon Mount Sinai, as appears by the offering of sacrifices, many generations before this, and so by circumcision, enjoined unto and practised by Abraham and his seed ; and again, by the marriage of the widow of a kinsman dying without issue, (Gen. xxxviii. 8, 9,) practised also long before the said giving of the law. Yea, the law, or covenant of works, was as ancient as Adam himself ; and it was by the transgression of this law, or covenant, that he involved himself and his whole posterity in the guilt of death. So that it is out of question, that the law, or covenant of works, was the first-born of testaments or covenants made by God with the

creature man; and, upon this account, they who "are of the law," as the Apostle's phrase is, that is, who seek justification by the law, may be very aptly resembled by Esau, who was the elder; as, on the other hand, they who expect justification by the new testament, or covenant of grace, that is, by faith, may as properly and emphatically be typified by Jacob, who was the younger brother.

But some question yet may be, how these words from God, "The elder shall *SERVE* the younger," should mystically import the rejection of the elder people, such who seek justification by the law, from the inheritance of blessing; and the acceptation of the younger, who seek it by faith, hereunto. To this, answer may be, 1. That servitude and subjection import an obnoxiousness to a being separated from or cast out of the house or family, sooner or later, and, consequently, an exclusion from the inheritance, according to that of our Saviour, "And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever." (John viii. 35.) 2. The blessed estate and condition of the saints or children of God is frequently expressed by sovereignty or dominion over the world, and wicked men; and, consequently, the hard condition of these men implied by servility or subjection. "The upright," saith David, "shall have *DOMINION OVER THEM* in the morning." (Psalm xlix. 14.) "And the kingdom and *DOMINION*, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall *SERVE* and obey him." (Dan. vii. 27.) "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron," &c.; (Rev. ii. 26, 27;) to omit other places. So that when God said to Rebecca, concerning the two nations that were in her womb, "The elder shall serve the younger," he mystically signified and declared that his absolute will, purpose, and decree was never to own for sons, nor to admit to the inheritance, the people of the elder covenant, that is, those that should seek justification by the law; but to assign over these for servants or bond-men unto his children, that is, unto those of the latter or younger covenant, who should seek the adoption of sons, and justification by faith, upon whom, likewise, he intended to confer the blessed inheritance of the heavenly Canaan; although, according to the judg-

ment of men, the former may seem more worthy the pre-eminence than the latter, as the first-born more worthy and meet to rule than the younger brethren. Thus God was pleased to declare unto the world, that his "purpose according to election" should stand firm and unchanged; and that he meant not to elect or make choice of those whom he should or would adopt, by the rule of works, or by any rule that men should commend unto him, or desire to impose or obtrude upon him, but only by the rule of his own most gracious and wise pleasure, which he hath declared to be the rule of faith, inasmuch as an equitable right of making his own choice in this kind accrueth unto him, as he is the sole magnificent Founder of the blessed feast of justification, calling and inviting the world from all quarters unto it.

Verse 13. From the premises, the true sense of the words immediately following, cited from the Prophet Malachi, by way of confirmation of what he had now cited from the mouth of God himself, concerning the two brother-nations in Rebecca's womb, the elder and the younger, fully appeareth: "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Mal. i. 2, 3.) These words, "As it is written," in conjunction with the testimony following, import, either that what he had already cited from Moses, as spoken by God concerning the two nations, styled by the names of their respective heads, Jacob and Esau, was but the same in substance with what was spoken many years after by the Prophet Malachi; or else, that what he had cited from Moses, concerning the said nations, was declared by Malachi to have been fulfilled in and before his generation. The difference is not much material; nor do I see any thing but that they may both stand together.

For the testimony itself, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," the captious and unthankful Jews had, in Malachi's days, either openly and in words, or else inwardly and in their hearts, expostulated with God, and demanded of him, upon his profession of love to them, wherein he had loved them, that is, declared any love unto them. "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?" To this the Lord answereth, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build

the desolate places: Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; they shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, 'The border of wickedness, and, 'The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, 'The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.'" (Mal. i. 2—5.)

1. It clearly appears from these passages, that the Prophet doth not speak at all of the person of Esau, and, consequently, neither of the person of Jacob, but of their respective posterities. For it was not Esau in person that said, "We are impoverished," &c., neither were his mountains or heritage laid waste whilst he was alive or in being. Yea, it appears from his history, (Gen. xxxvi.;) not only that he himself prospered greatly on earth whilst he lived, but that his house and posterity were both numerous and prosperous in the world for some descents after him. Besides, these expressions, all importing pluralities, "We are impoverished," "We will return," &c.; "They shall build," &c.; "The people against whom," &c.; prove, with greatest evidence, that it was not Esau in person or in a personal consideration whom God is here said to have hated. Now if the Prophet speaks neither of the person of the one nor of the other, but of their posterities only, certain it is that neither doth the Apostle, in the place before us, speak any otherwise of them, because then he should cite the words of the Prophet impertinently to his cause, and prove nothing at all for his purpose from them.

2. If neither the Prophet nor Apostle speak of the persons of Jacob or Esau, but of their posterities, evident it is, that neither that love of God to Jacob, nor hatred of Esau, mentioned by the one and the other, were such, either love or hatred, by or according unto which the eternal estates of men, either in blessedness or misery, are decreed or determined by God. For certain it is, that however the salvation of Jacob, in person, from other Scriptures and upon other grounds may, with greatest probability, be evinced, yet, as certain it is that all his posterity were not saved. Therefore God speaking thus, Jacob and, or in, his posterity "have I loved," cannot be conceived to speak of such love out of which he had decreed eternally to save him and his posterity. Upon the same account, neither can he be conceived to speak of such an hatred out of which he determines or decrees the everlasting damnation of men, personally considered, when

speaking of Esau, in or with, his posterity, he saith, "But Esau have I hated." For certain it is that all of Esau's race have not been damned; witness that mirror of patience and piety, Job, who, according to Ambrose of old, and the generality of the later writers, was of this race. Beza very expressly affirmeth, that "the true God was both known and holily worshipped amongst those that were of Esau's race, though not by them all, yet by those of them whom God blessed." And, not long after, "I cannot doubt," saith he, "but, notwithstanding that hatred of God against Esau and his posterity universally, but not in every individual person, considered, that Job, and all the Idumeans like to him, although they were not Israelites by kind," or birth, "were, notwithstanding, members of the true church."\* And concerning the person of Esau, authors, both ancient and modern, of best account, judge it above what is written, either in any of the passages now before us, or elsewhere in Scripture, to conclude any thing touching his eternal condition; yea, some strongly incline to judge that he was saved. "As concerning Ishmael and Esau themselves," saith Master Bucer, "there is no ground why we should pronounce them rejected by God. I rather believe that the holiness of their parents was beneficial unto them; so that though they oft sinned, and this in a high degree, yet they obtained salvation, being endued with true faith in the mercy of God."† So that evident it is that this orthodox writer,—for he was never counted other by Protestants,—was so far from conceiving the eternal reprobation of Esau to be held forth in any or in all the Scriptures before us, that he judged there is better ground to think he was saved than that he was rejected by God. Peter Martyr, contemporary with Calvin, as the former also was, though he doth not speak so home in the point as Bucer did, yet, writing upon the place in hand, he arbitrates the case thus: "Some,"

\* *Fuit ergo tum quoque verus Deus inter Esau posteros, si non omnes, at certe quibus Deus benedixit, et agnitus, et sancte adoratus, &c., et paulo post, (de Jobo, ejusque amicis loquens,) et quum præterea iidem cum ipsorum familiis, sicut probabile est, fœderis etiam notam externam, id est, circumcisionem habuerint, ambigere non possum quin, non obstante illo Dei in Esauum et ejus sobolem odio universaliter, non autem in singulis personis, considerato, Jobus et omnes Idumæi, ipsius similes, etsi genere non fuerint Israëlitiæ, tamen vera ecclesiæ membra fuerint.*—BEZA in Job i. 1.

† *De Ismaele et Esau ipsis non est quod pronunciemus eos prorsus a Deo rejectos esse; malo credere utrique pietatem paternam profuisse; ut licet graviter itentidem deliquerint, salutem tamen consecuti sint, donati et ipsi vera fide in misericordiam Domini.*—M. BUCER in locum.



saith he, "in this place with great curiosity inquire touching Ishmael and Esau, whether they be saved or whether they be condemned. And the like some do touching Solomon, Origen, and others such like. But I omit these things, and think of Esau and Ishmael as much only as the holy Scripture hath set forth unto us. And I think that there are no places extant by which we may define any thing touching their salvation."\* And a little after, thus: "But touching both their posterities, I deny not but that some of them might be saved, no less than some of the stock of Jacob might become runagates and obstinate."† In another place he saith, that "Paul, with an excellency of wisdom, transferred," or applied, "unto things that are spiritual, those things foretold concerning Jacob and Esau, both in Genesis and in Malachi, which seem to be but temporal."‡ Therefore, neither was it his sense that either the eternal election of Jacob or reprobation of Esau, nor yet of either of their posterities, can be inferred from either of the Scriptures before us. Tarnovius, another learned Protestant expositor, though of the Lutheran persuasion, in his commentaries upon Mal. i. 5, writeth thus: "When I narrowly and attentively consider the things insisted upon hitherto, together with the Prophet's scope, taking his words also into counsel, I easily come to be of this opinion, that in this place, however, there is nothing said concerning eternal election or reprobation, howsoever they who follow Calvin, with some Papists, would fain hammer out such a business from hence."§ And this opinion of his, concerning the scope and subject-matter of the place, he argues and proves at large in that which follows, affirming, towards the close of this his discourse, that neither doth the Apostle, in the ninth

\* *Quidam hoc loco magna curiositate de Ismaele et Esau inquirent servatine sint an condemnati. Quod idem alii faciunt de Solomone, Origine, et aliis similibus. Verum hæc ego missa facio, et de Esau et Ismaele id solum pronuncio quod nobis scripturæ sacræ tradiderunt. Nulla autem oracula extare puto ex quibus de illorum salute quiequam possimus definire.*

† *De amborum tamen posteritate non negarim aliquos potuisse servari, non minus quam ex stirpe Jacobi aliquos evadere potuisse perfidos et obstinatos.*

‡ *Ita Paulus ea quæ de Jacobo et Esau in Genesi et Malachi prædicta videntur esse temporaria, mira prudentia transtulit ad spiritualia.—P. MART. Loc. Class. 3, c. 1, sect. 1.*

§ *Quæ cum hactenus sunt allata cum aliquanto accuratius perpendimus, et scopum Prophetæ, imo verba ipsa non negligimus, facile descendimus in eam sententiam, in hoc quidem loco de æterna electione aut reprobatione non agi, utut magno conatu illud hinc exculpere velint Calviniani, sicut etiam quidam Pontificii.*

chapter to the Romans, primarily handle either the business of election to eternal life, or of reprobation to eternal destruction ; \* and in the conclusion of all he showeth how Paul applieth the examples of Jacob and Esau to his purpose. Yea, Calvin is not altogether so whole, or so consistent with himself, in the business, as he is generally conceived to be. For, writing upon verse 6 of this chapter, he delivers his sense in these words : “ Inasmuch as God’s will was that, as well Ishmael and Esau should receive the sign and the seal of his covenant, as Isaac and Jacob, it appears from hence that they were not altogether estranged from him.” † But, doubtless, those who are eternally and peremptorily reprobated by God from all possibility of salvation are altogether estranged from him. For how can God lightly be conceived to estrange himself more, or to a further or higher degree, from a creature, than by an irrevocable decree to thrust it so far from himself that it should never come so much as within a possibility of salvation ? And, besides, if God had eternally rejected the two persons we speak of, Ishmael and Esau, from the covenant of grace, and possibility of salvation, and not only so, but had declared also his purpose in this kind, which, according unto those who are contrary-minded in the business in hand, must needs be supposed, at least concerning Esau, it is no ways credible that he would, by a special order and command, enjoin the application or administration of the seal of the covenant of grace unto them. To what purpose, or with what comfort, could Isaac, for example, administer the seal of the covenant of grace, circumcision, unto Esau, his son, in case he had certainly known that he had been everlastingly reprobated by God from the covenant itself ? Therefore, doubtless, Isaac did not understand the oracle given to Rebecca in these words, “ The elder shall serve the younger,” as any ways implying the eternal reprobation of his elder son. The same Calvin, speaking in another place of the words of Malachi,

\* *Præcipue, quia nec in illo capite Apostolus primario agit de electione ad vitam æternam, vel reprobatione ad æternum exitium.—Unde patet de duorum filiorum Isuaci electione, et reprobatione æterna hic apud Prophetam et Mosem non agi, sed de dissimili utriusque posterorum in rebus temporalibus conditione. Paulum autem ut typum allegare hoc modo : Sicut Jacobo jus primogenituræ, terræ fertilitas, et temporalis Messie ex eo prodituri natiuitas, ex gratia contigit ; ita ad cælestis vitæ hereditatem vocatio, sine generis privilegio, aut operum merito, hominibus a Deo indulgetur.*

† *Nam cum Dominus voluerit fœdus suum non minus in Ismaele et Esau, quam in Isaac et Jacob obsignari, apparet non fuisse ab ipso penitus alienos.*

“Jacob have I loved,” acknowledgeth that “they belong to the Patriarch’s whole posterity, which the Prophet opposeth unto the posterity of Esau ;”\* and, consequently, cannot imagine or suppose that they speak of election to salvation, because he could not be ignorant but that many of Jacob’s posterity were rejected by God, and never came to be saved, much less that he should speak particularly of Jacob’s election thereunto. And whereas in the words immediately following he is pleased to add that, notwithstanding the words specified relate unto Jacob’s whole posterity, “yet this hindereth not, but that there MAY be” a specimen, that is, an overture, or “view of election held forth unto us in the person of one man which cannot miscarry,” he plainly discovers a tenderness or doubtfulness in himself to assert it.† Nor, indeed, granting the words in hand to concern Jacob’s whole posterity, can he, with any tolerable congruity unto such a notion, affirm any view or instance of such an election as he speaks of to be here propounded, or “held forth in the person of one man.” For if the election here spoken of relateth and be attributable as well unto many who were not elected to salvation, as unto some who were thus elected, it is a plain case that no instance of such an election as this can be here conceived to be propounded in the person of any man, one or more, inasmuch as the election here mentioned must, of necessity, be conceived to be an election of another kind, and such whereof as well they who were not elected to salvation as they who were, were capable. So that neither is Calvin so thorough-paced in his judgment for a personal election or reprobation, in this place, as some conceit him to be. Nor is Pareus, though much devoted to Calvin’s doctrine, free from all regret about Esau’s reprobation. For having confidently avouched, “that Esau did not only shadow out the reprobation of his posterity, but was himself also a reprobate from the covenant and from salvation ;” presently after, as if he had trod upon a serpent before he was aware, he steps back, affirming only, that it is *nimis probabile*, that is, too probable that he is damned.‡ Against which apprehension of his I shall not at present con-

\* *Quod dicitur, Jacob dilexi, pertinet ad totam sobolem Patriarchæ, quam Propheta illic opponit posteris Esau.*—CALV. *Instit. lib. iii., cap. 21, sect. 7.*

† *Hoc tamen non obstat quominus in persona unius hominis specimen electionis propositum nobis fuerit, quæ, &c.*—CALV. *Instit., lib. iii., cap. 21, sect. 7.*

‡ PAREUS *ad Rom. ix., in Dub. 2, p. 865.*

tend, though many of his equals, as well in learning as piety, are adversaries unto him herein.

Bishop Hooper, a worthy martyr in Queen Mary's days, plainly affirmeth that "Cain was no more excluded, till he excluded himself, than Abel; Saul, than David; Judas, than Peter; Esau, than Jacob. By the Scripture it seemeth that the sentence of God was given to save the one and to damn the other, before the one loved God, or the other hated God. Howbeit, these threatenings of God against Esau, if he had not of his wilful malice excluded himself from the promise of grace, should no more have hindered his salvation than God's threatenings against Nineveh; which, notwithstanding God said should be destroyed within forty days, stood a great time after," &c. And soon after: "That his life and conversation was not as agreeable unto justice and equity as Jacob's, the sentence of God unto Rebecca was not in fault, but his own malice. For there is nothing at all in that place, that Esau was disinherited of eternal life; but that he should be inferior to his brother Jacob in this world: Which prophecy was fulfilled in their posterities, and not the persons themselves. Of this acceptation of the one, and reprobation of the other, concerning the promise of the earth, speaketh Malachi the Prophet," &c.\* Thus far, and much more to the same purpose, the worthy martyr.

Mollerus, another late writer of the reformed religion, and of good esteem, doth not look upon Esau as a reprobate, but as an heir of eternal life. His words upon Mal. i. 2, 3, are to this effect: "Probable arguments may be taken from the book of Genesis, which show that Esau was not so rejected by God, as to be damned, but that he was converted and repented, and became an heir of eternal life. For he was both reconciled unto his brother, and afterwards joined with him in the burial of his father. Neither was he ever an enemy unto his brother, after his reconcilement unto him."† Nor was Æcolampadius, an author of equal respects with the former, any otherwise minded concerning the spiritual estate of Esau; for he also, writing on Mal. i. 2, 3, saith thus: "I dare not for this saying call Esau

\* Bishop HOOPER, in his Preface to his book upon the Commandments.

† *Ex Genesi verisimiles conjecturæ sumi possunt, quæ ostendunt Esau non ita rejectum esse a Deo, ut sit damnatus, sed conversum egisse pœnitentiam, et vitæ æternæ fuetum esse heredem. Nam et reconciliatus est fratri, et postea fuit socius funeris patris; nec post reconciliationem fratri unquam udersatus est.*—MOLLERUS in Mal. i. 2, 3.

a reprobate ; inasmuch as by temporal things in this place rather spiritual things are typified or figured.\*

Estius, though as rigid in the thesis or doctrine of reprobation as Calvin himself, or any of his followers, yet, as touching the hypothesis or particular case of Esau, he judgeth him saved upon these two grounds : 1. That “ at last he relented from that hatred which he had formerly conceived against his brother, and was reconciled to him.” 2. That he “ died in the true religion, wherein he had been trained up by his parents.”†

Amongst the ancient writers, Hierome clearly understands the love and hatred of God here mentioned, 1. To relate only unto temporals, affirming that the Apostle disputes of them mystically in the place in hand. 2. That they respect more the posterities than the persons of Jacob and Esau.‡ Ambrose expressly affirmeth that “ Jacob and Esau were types of two kinds of people, or persons, namely, believers and unbelievers.”§ Augustine, much to the same purpose, saith, that “ Jacob bare the figure of the church, as Esau the figure of the old synagogue,” || meaning the Jews. Nor doth Anselm, in his sense of the business in hand, dissent from the former, making the literal sense of these words, “ The elder shall serve the younger,” to be this : “ The Idumeans, descending from Esau, shall be subject to the people of the Jews ;” and the allegorical or mystical sense, this : “ The people of the Jews, who were God’s first-born, shall serve the Christians who come after them ;”¶ expounding the words

\* *Non ausim ipsum Esau propter hoc dictum dicere reprobum ; quandoquidem hic per temporalia figurantur, &c.*—ŒCOLAMPADIUS in *Mal.* i. 2, 3.

† *Notandum obiter, impertinens esse huic loco, an Esau sit reprobatus, ea reprobatione de qua disputat Apostolus ; atque adeo non videri improbabile, quod post depositum fraternum odium, (de quo *Gen.* xxxiii.,) in religione vera a parentibus accepta defunctus, salutem adeptus sit.*—ESTIUS in *Rom.* ix. 13.

‡ *In Jacob, vos dilexi, in Esau Idumæos odio habui. Quem locum Apostolus Paulus mystica disputatione eventitans, scribit ad Romanos, &c. Et paulo post : Non solum, ait, dilexi Jacob, antequam nasceretur, et odio habui Esau, priusquam ex utero matris funderetur ; sed in posteros eorum amorem meum et odium conservavi ; odium in Esau, cuius montes qui appellantur Scir, redegi in solitudinem, &c.*—HIERONYM. in *Mal.* i. 2, 3, &c.

§ *Isaac in figura salvatoris natus est ; Jacob vero et Esau duorum populorum habent typum, credentium et non credentium, &c.*—AMBROS. ad *Rom.* ix. 8, 9.

|| *Jacob quippe figuram gestat ecclesiæ, sicut Esau veteris synagogæ.*—AUG. in *Enar. Psalm lxxviii.*

¶ *Secundum literam autem Esau, id est, populus Idumæorum, qui de Esau descendit, servivit minori, id est, subditus fuit populo Judæorum. Allegorice vero Esau, id est, populus Judæorum, qui fuit primogenitus, servivit minori ; id est, populo Christianorum qui secutus est.*—ANSELM in *loc.*

of Malachi also, “Jacob have I loved,” &c., in perfect consonancy herunto. Nor to my best remembrance have I ever read or heard that so much as any one of the learned fathers concluded from the passages in hand, either Esau’s reprobation from eternity, or his eternal condemnation in time. And yet more certain I am, that neither could they, nor any other, have any sufficient ground from the said passages, to found such a conclusion upon.

REASONS AGAINST THE REPROBATION OF ESAU FROM ETERNITY.

Because, 1. As hath been oft signified and proved from the express words of the Scripture, Esau is not here mentioned under any personal consideration, but only as the head and significator of his posterity.

2. It is the confession of those that are most opposite in the doctrine of reprobation, and may otherwise be evinced from the Scriptures, that all Esau’s posterity were not reprobated, in such a sense, as neither were all Jacob’s posterity elected.

3. Neither doth that service or subjection unto Jacob, which the divine oracle imposeth upon Esau, any ways import such a reprobation; inasmuch as the servant may be, and oftentimes is, elected; yea, and this sometimes when the master is in an estate of reprobation. (See 1 Peter ii. 18; Philip. iv. 22, &c.)

4. Were it granted that servitude did signify or import such a reprobation as is contended for, yet certain it is, and hath been proved from the Scriptures, that Esau in person never served Jacob.

5. Neither doth that hatred of God against Esau, mentioned by Malachi, import any such reprobation of the person of Esau: (1.) Because it related not unto Esau personally considered, or unto the person of Esau, as appears from what hath been already said; and may appear yet further from that description which the Prophet himself gives of it, in the fruits or effects thereof, as, namely, the laying of his mountains waste, the throwing down when he should build, &c.; in which kind of fruit or effect, it never expressed itself unto or against the person of Esau. (2.) These very effects of it are not the proper effects of such an hatred in God, which argueth, either *à priori* or *à posteriori*, a reprobation of men for eternity; I mean, of all those who taste of such fruits; unless we will say, that when Jerusalem was laid waste by the Chaldeans, and burnt with fire, all the persons that were sufferers in this calamity were reprobated by God from eternity; although in case this could be proved, (the contrary

whereof, nevertheless, is evident from the Scriptures,) yet were it no sufficient proof, that all that either perish by a temporal death, or deeply suffer otherwise, in public desolations, are therefore reprobated by God from eternity, or perish eternally.

6. The drift and scope of the Apostle in the context, formerly declared and asserted, doth no ways require, either a probation or supposition that Esau should be personally reprobated from eternity, but only that in his posterity, and those sad events which, according to the prediction of the divine oracle, were in after-times to befall them, he should be set forth, and prove a significant type of the spiritual and eternal misery of all those that should seek justification by the works of the law, or in a way of their own devising, and not submit unto the counsel, will, and good pleasure of God in this behalf, who hath consecrated the way of faith in his Son Jesus Christ, as the only means whereby justification is to be attained by men.

7. His cordial and perfect reconciliation unto his brother, so fully expressed, as the Scripture recordeth, (Gen. xxxiii.) after that great and deep offence taken at him, upon occasion of his brother's stepping in between him and home, as we use to say, in obtaining their father's blessing, is no light argument or testimony of his own reconciliation with God. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses," saith our Saviour, "your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matt. vi. 14.) And though it should be granted that Jacob had not really trespassed against him, or done him any real injury or wrong, in intercepting his father's blessing; yet, it being such in Esau's apprehension, and the indignation conceived against him for it being as real, serious, and deep, as if it had been a real and high injury indeed, his gentle, sweet, and loving entreating of his brother after it, was every ways equivalent to a real forgiveness, being a true and real reconciliation. Therefore, unless it can be proved, that, after this reconciliation with his brother, Esau returned with the dog unto his vomit, or else continued in some course of impiety inconsistent with salvation formerly practised, there can be no competent ground assigned of his damnation, much less of his personal reprobation from eternity.

8. If Isaac had understood the oracle delivered to his wife Rebecca, "The elder shall serve the younger," as if it had imported that his elder son Esau had been reprobated by God from eternity, it is no ways probable that he could have set his

heart upon him, delight in him, or love him as he did. That terrible wrath of God revealed from heaven against the son in so signal a way and manner could not but wholly quench all joy, pleasure, comfort, or contentment in the parent in relation to such a son. And unless we shall judge Isaac to have been a man extremely sensual, and inordinately given to his appetite, we cannot reasonably conceive that he could take any comfort or contentment in his son, or love him for his venison' sake, which yet the Scripture testifieth of him, (Gen. xxv. 28,) if he had certainly known that God had from eternity irreversibly doomed him to the easeless, endless torments of eternal fire.

9. It is no ways probable, nor like unto one of the ways of the dispensations of God, that he should inform such parents who were righteous and holy, who had found special favour in his sight, whose comforts and peace his heart was set to promote and advance, that he had reprobated from eternity any of their children, and this whilst they were yet unborn. A message of such a sad and horrid import as this coming from the mouth of God immediately to a weak and tender woman, whose hour of travail, and this with two children, was now come, being likewise already sorely troubled and perplexed with the strangeness of her condition, in respect of what she sensibly felt in her womb, could not in all likelihood but have caused an abortion, or preproperous travail, and endangered her life. Therefore, certainly God did not intend to signify unto Rebecca that she was ready to fall in travail of a reprobate, a child which he was peremptorily resolved to destroy with the dreadful vengeance of hell-fire.

10. If God should have signified unto Rebecca, and by her unto Isaac, that their elder son had been reprobated by him from eternity, and, consequently, that there was no hope, no possibility of his repentance or salvation, must not this needs have been a grand discouragement unto them from lifting up so much as a prayer unto God for him, and so from all other endeavours and applications of themselves unto him, in order to his conversion and salvation? And thus God must be supposed to have taught astorgy and unnaturalness unto Isaac and Rebecca, yea, and taken them off from the performance of such duties, to and on the behalf of their child, which he strictly and universally imposeth upon all other parents, without exception, in reference unto their children.

11. It was never known or heard of, that God ever made any



discovery unto the world of any man's final estate, especially on the left hand, before he was born, no, nor yet before the perpetration of some grand and horrid sin.

12. And lastly: There is no end imaginable, worthy the only wise and most gracious God, why or for which he should make known unto the world such a thing concerning Esau, being yet unborn, as that he had reprobated him from eternity. Such a revelation as this cannot well be supposed to be of any use, or spiritual accommodation or edification to the world; but rather of evil tendency, and of a malignant influence upon the mind and hearts of men, as directly occasioning them to judge hardly and most unworthily of God, and to conceive of him as no faithful Creator, as having no care, no love, no bowels or compassions towards the best of the workmanship of his hands,—man; no, not whilst he remains yet pure, and unspotted with sin; not to mention that dragon's tail, I mean, the long bead-roll of enormous notions and conceits which attends the doctrine of personal reprobation from eternity, the account whereof is to be seen elsewhere.\* Whereas, on the other hand, if it be supposed, (as according to the truth and evident scope of the context it ought,) that by what God revealed unto Rebecca, and so unto the world, concerning Esau, being yet unborn, or his posterity in him, he signified and declared unto the world, that they who should not submit unto his counsel and pleasure for their justification, and seek it by faith in Jesus Christ, should be for ever excluded from the heavenly inheritance; such a discovery or revelation from him as this is apparantly of a rich and blessed consequence and import unto men.

To object that Esau is termed a profane person by the Holy Ghost, for selling his birthright for one morsel of meat, and “that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected,” &c., (Heb. xii. 16, 17,) amounts to nothing of value for proof that therefore Esau, before he was born, was discovered by God unto his mother to have been a reprobate from eternity. The utmost that can be conceived to be so much as hinted in this passage is, that being a profane person when he sold his birthright, he was out of the favour of God; and that his rejection by his father Isaac in that ardent and passionate suit which he made unto him for the blessing of the first-born was a presage or item unto him that he would be everlastingly rejected by God, unless he

\* *Ειρηνομαχία*, pages 3—5, &c.

repented of his profaneness, and sought the favour of God by faith in Jesus Christ. That repentance for which he is said to have “found no place, though he sought it carefully with tears,” is not meant of his own repentance, as if he could have found no place for this, “though he sought it carefully with tears,” but of the repentance of his father; the meaning being, that though he most affectionately desired his father to reverse that blessing which he had conferred upon his younger brother, and to settle it upon him, yet he could not prevail with him to do it, or to change his mind in that behalf. “I have eaten of all,” saith Isaac unto Esau, “before thou camest, and have blessed him: yea, and he SHALL be blessed;” (Gen. xxvii. 33;) meaning, that he neither would nor could recal that, which, by the motion of the Spirit of God, was gone out of his lips, in blessing his brother Jacob.

And thus we have proved at large the former of the two particulars which were formerly propounded, namely, that the Apostle in the passage now before us, and in what he discourseth concerning Jacob and Esau, intended to show and prove who and what manner of persons they are whom God accounteth for Abraham’s seed, and persons justified, namely, such who seek their justification by faith and not by the deeds of the law. We proceed to the latter, the tenor whereof was to show how such a doctrine as this can be conceived to be more emphatically, and with greater pregnancy of proof, argued and demonstrated from the present passage concerning Jacob and Esau, than it was in the former concerning Isaac and Ishmael. For this, as we observed, is clearly hinted by the Apostle in these words, *Ου μόνον δε, And not only this.*

For the demonstration of this it is to be considered, that though the Apostle’s former proof of the doctrine we speak of, from the divine oracle delivered unto Abraham, “But in Isaac shall thy seed be called,” was in itself sufficient, yet was it obnoxious to some cavils or exceptions which the Jews, with whom only or chiefly he hath to do in the present debate, were very like to make against it; as namely, that God made choice of Isaac rather than of Ishmael, by whom to estimate and compute Abraham’s seed, not out of an intention, as Paul pretended, to teach or signify unto the world that they who should believe should be reputed by him for Abraham’s seed, but, 1. Because he was born of Sarah, a free-woman, and Abraham’s legitimate

or principal wife; whereas Ishmael was born of Hagar, a concubine and servant or bond-woman. 2. Because Isaac was virtuously and religiously disposed, whereas Ishmael was a scoffer and profane. In both which respects it is no marvel, might the Jews pretend, that Isaac should, by God's appointment, be made Abraham's heir, and so those be reputed his seed that should descend from him: There is nothing of a mystery, nor like unto a mystery, in all this. Now the Apostle, easily apprehending that the Jews would think thus to evade the force of his former proof, drawn from the divine oracle concerning Isaac, in the verses now before us advanceth another, which he knew was both more convincing, and no ways liable to any such exceptions or pretences as the former was; and therefore, in his entrance upon it expresseth himself thus, as we heard, *Ου μόνον δε*, *Not only so*, or, *Not only this*; meaning, that God, indeed, in saying unto Abraham, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called," signified his counsel and good pleasure touching such persons whom he meant to count for Abraham's seed, but yet he signified the same much more plainly and distinctly afterwards, namely, when he said unto Rebecca, concerning the two nations which she had conceived by Isaac only, and who were yet, in their two respective heads, Esau and Jacob, in her womb, and having as yet "done neither good nor evil," God, saith he, said unto their mother Rebecca concerning them, "The elder shall serve the younger."

If it be demanded, "But what is there more in this oracle than in the former, to evince or prove that God's pleasure and purpose is, to account those only for Abraham's seed who shall believe, and not expect justification by the deeds of the law?" I answer,

Those circumstances weighed and considered, which the Apostle here carefully insists upon in relation to the said oracle, render the proof of the said doctrine contained herein much more full and exceptionless than the former. These circumstances are five: 1. That the two children, interpreted nations, were conceived and born of one and the same mother, Rebecca, and begotten by one and the same person or father, namely, Isaac. 2. That he, that one, who was the father of these two children was the father or progenitor of the Jews, a person beloved of God, and partaker of the promise made unto Abraham. 3. As some understand *εξ ενος*, *of* or *by one*, that they

were begotten at one and the same time, or by the same act of generation: Or, however, this appears by their being born together, or so near in time. 4. That God spake, as is expressed, unto Rebecca, concerning them whilst they were yet unborn. 5. And lastly: Whilst they had “done neither good nor evil.”

The first of these circumstances takes off that exception of the Jews against the former argument, namely, that God made the difference mentioned between Ishmael and Isaac because of the difference between their respective mothers, the one being born of a free-woman, the other of a bond-woman. “In the case of Esau and Jacob,” saith the Apostle, “between whom, notwithstanding, God made the like difference, there is no such ground or reason of this difference can be pretended; because these, as they had one and the same mother, Rebecca, so had they one and the same father, Isaac. Therefore, though Ishmael and Isaac were born, the former of a bond-woman, the other of a free, yet this was not the reason why God made that difference between them which hath been signified.”

The second circumstance, namely, that he who was the father of these two children, Isaac, was a great father and Patriarch of the Jewish nation, invested in the same promises with Abraham, takes off such an exception as this, namely, that Isaac might be preferred before Ishmael, for the righteousness’ sake of his father Abraham, falling in conjunction with the condition and piety of his mother, who was both a free-woman, as likewise a person fearing God. “No,” saith the Apostle, “by the voice of the circumstance now under consideration, this could be no reason neither why Isaac was chosen by God, and not Ishmael, for the person by whom God would estimate Abraham’s seed, because Esau and Jacob were born of a worthy father, much gloried in by the nation of the Jews as well as they; and of a mother also equal, both in condition and virtue, unto theirs, and yet God put the like difference between these also; therefore, it was not for the parents’ sake, either one or both, that God made such a difference between them.”

The third circumstance, if admitted, takes off such an exception as this against the former oracle, differencing Ishmael and Esau, as hath been said, and the proof drawn from it, namely, that Abraham might be in a better posture of acceptance with God, more holy, fuller of faith, &c., when he begat Isaac, than he was when Ishmael was begotten; and upon this account it

might be that God was better pleased with the former than with the latter. As the child which David begat, under the guilt of murder and adultery, was, soon after the birth of it, struck by God with death; whereas he took pleasure in Solomon, who was begotten by him of the same mother, in an estate of repentance and reconcilment with God. "Neither," saith the Apostle, "this circumstance allowed, was there any such ground as this of the difference made by God between Ishmael and Isaac, because he made the like difference between Esau and Jacob, who were begotten at one and the same time, and consequently there could be no difference in him that begat them in point of acceptation with God; he was as just, as holy, as faithful, when the one was begotten as when the other."

The fourth circumstance, "when the children," or nations, "were yet unborn," takes off such an exception as this, against the Apostle's argument from the former oracle, namely, that God had had experience of Ishmael and Isaac, and of their different tempers and behaviours for many years before he made that signal difference between them; and, accordingly, finding Ishmael to be of a rough, scoffing, and profane spirit, and Isaac better disposed, this might be a consideration moving him to give order for Ishmael's ejection and Isaac's acceptance; and so no such mystery in this dispensation as he had asserted. "Nay," saith the Apostle, "in this circumstance, the experience which God had of Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, was no ground or motive at all unto him to make the difference mentioned between them; because he made the like difference between Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob, whilst they were yet unborn, and, consequently, before he had or made the least experiment of them."

The fifth and last circumstance, "neither having done good nor evil," may be, I suppose, added for amplifying and clearing of the former; or else, to prevent any such conceit as this, that though the "children were not yet born," yet, in their wrestling or striving together in the womb, the one might do well, or that which was some ways good, and the other that which was in some degree evil. "No," saith the Apostle, "when God signified unto Rebecca, and so by her unto Isaac, and, indeed, unto the world, what difference he meant to make between her two sons, in their posterities respectively, by saying to her, 'The elder shall serve the younger,' he had no respect at all unto any thing

done by either of them, good or evil, neither of them having done either. Therefore, though Ishmael had done evil, when God commanded his removal out of Abraham's house, and Isaac, that which was good, when he was by God's express order established for his heir ; yet, was neither the evil done by the one, nor the good by the other, the reason or ground of this deciding dispensation of God towards them, as appears by a like divine dispensation or decision between Esau and Jacob, of which, neither good nor evil, done by either of them, could be the ground.

If it be demanded, " But though God in choosing Jacob and rejecting Esau, in the sense declared, had no respect unto either good or evil, already acted or done by either of them, yet might he not have respect unto such, both good and evil, which he foreknew they would do afterwards, in this his so different a determination of their outward conditions in the world, yea, and this be supposed here by the Apostle ? " I answer,

No ; because the Apostle expressly affirmeth, that the reason or end why God so determined the respective estates and conditions of the two brethren, or nations, as hath been oft-mentioned, whilst as yet they had " neither done good nor evil," was this, " that the purpose of God according to election might stand," might appear or be declared to stand firm and unchangeable, " not of works, but of him that calleth." Now works, whensoever done, whether sooner or later, before or after, whether seen when already done, or foreseen before done, are of the same consideration in the nature of works ; therefore the Apostle excluding works simply from having any influence upon " the purpose of God according to election," excluded as well those foreseen as those foredone. Besides, affirming God's intent in the said decisive oracle between the two nations to be, " that his purpose according to election might stand, not of works, but OF HIM THAT CALLETH," he plainly showeth that no kind of works, whether known or foreknown, is any bottom, ground, or foundation of that his purpose ; because both kinds of works carry the same or like opposition to the origination or first free conception of this purpose by him who calleth, that is, as hath been said, God himself. And suppose the said purpose had been taken up by, or conceived in, God, by virtue of any respects borne by him unto works foreseen, it had been never the more of or from himself than in case it had been

conceived in him by means of works already done, and so considered by him.

If it be here objected, or demanded, "But is not faith a work? And if the 'purpose of God' we speak of be of faith, is it not as much at least as well of works, and as little of him that calleth, as if it were of works, *sensu Judaico*, in such a sense as the Jews contended for?" I answer,

1. It cannot be denied but that faith, in a sense, or to believe, is a work. "This," saith Christ to the Jews, "is the work of God," that is, the work which God requireth of you in order to your justification, as appeareth from the words immediately preceding, "that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John vi. 29.) But,

2. Faith, in that sense of the word *work*, or *works*, wherein works are so frequently, or rather, indeed, constantly, excluded by this Apostle from justification, and opposed unto faith, can, for this very reason, be no work. And, accordingly, our Apostle opposeth it unto works: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 5.) If it be demanded, "In what sense, then, of the word *work* is it, with *works*, excluded from justification? And in what sense of the said word doth it justify or enter justification?" I answer, (1.) That when the Apostle excludeth works from justification, he doth not mean that evil or sinful works do not justify, or have no part or fellowship in that great business of justification, because it never came into any man's heart to interest these in such a business as justification. Neither, (2.) When he excludeth works from justification, doth he intend to exclude all or every good work, from all, or all manner of interest in or about justification. For then he should exclude faith itself, which, as we heard, is a work, so termed by Christ himself, unto which, notwithstanding, he very frequently, as we know, ascribeth justification. Nay, (3.) There is a justification wherein works will be much interested, and which will not take place without some considerable concurrence of them. This is that sentence of absolution from the guilt of sin, and the punishment due unto it, which shall be awarded on the behalf of all saints in the great day. Of this justification the Apostle speaks: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law SHALL be justified." (Rom. ii. 13. See also Matt. xxv.

34—36, &c. ; and again, Matt. vii. 21—27 ; to omit many other places.) (4.) There is a justification, even in this present life, which is attributable, at least in part, unto works. Of this James speaketh : “ Was not Abraham our father JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar ? ” (James ii. 21.) And again : “ Ye see then how that BY WORKS a man is JUSTIFIED, and not by faith only.” (Verse 24.) This justification, I conceive, imports only the divine approbation of a person, as being just, holy, and good, some ways signified and made known unto the world ; which is never done, but upon some real and worthy testimony hereof exhibited by men themselves. (See 1 John iii. 7.) (5.) Therefore, when the Apostle excludeth works from justification, he excludeth them only under the notion or conceit of merit ; in which sense the Jews urged the necessity of them in that business. This clearly appears from that opposition which the Apostle makes between justification by grace and by works, and sometimes between justification by works and by faith. (Rom. xi. 6 ; iv. 5 ; Gal. ii. 16.) There is no opposition, but a clear consistency, between grace and works, unless by works we understand merit, or such works as either are or pretend to be meritorious. This is evident from the Apostle himself. “ Now to him that worketh is the reward,” or *wages*, *ο μισθος*, “ not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” (Rom. iv. 4.) Therefore, though a man “ worketh,” yet, if his work be inconsiderable in value compared with this “ reward” which is given him, this reward is to be imputed to the grace and mere good-will of him that giveth it, and not unto the work or working of him that receiveth it. Indeed, if that which a man worketh deserveth, in a way of justice or equity, that which is given him in consideration of it, that which he receives in this case is no matter of grace or favour, but due debt. And in this respect he that believeth is, by the Apostle, in the words immediately following, said not to work, meaning, not to do any thing so much as in show meritorious either of justification or salvation. “ But to him that worketh not,” namely, with a conceit of merit, “ but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness ; ” meaning, that God, of his free and mere grace, accepteth such a man’s faith, *vice et loco*, in the place or stead of a perfect and complete observation of the whole law ;\* which,

\* Not as in point of merit, but of justification only.



were it exhibitable and actually exhibited by any man, would be meritorious of his justification. For the reason why the law blesseth no man with justification, but accurseth every man, is, because it is too strict and holy to be completely and in all points performed by men, by reason of that weakness whereunto they are at present subjected by the flesh. "For as many as are of the works of the law," that is, depend upon the works of the law for justification, "are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" (Gal. iii. 10;) clearly implying, that, were men in a capacity of continuing in all things written in the law to do them, they might be justified by works, that is, by the merit of works. For he that only worketh righteousness, never sinning so much as in the least, cannot justly be condemned by God as a sinner, and, consequently, must needs be justified. Therefore, what or how many works soever God should require of men for or in order to their justification, only beneath the complete observation of the law, and they perform them accordingly, their justification upon and with respect unto such a performance would, notwithstanding, be of free grace, and not of works, in the Apostle's sense, because God is a debtor of justification unto no man for any performance of works whatsoever, but only unto the most absolute and district and uninterrupted observation of the whole law. So that, however faith, or believing in Christ, be a work, in the nature of it, yet, wanting merit, it may justify, and this without any breach or entrenchment upon that great maxim or doctrine of our Apostle, namely, that justification is not of works, but of grace. Indeed, if it be supposable that a person may believe with such a conceit of his believing as the Jews, it seems, had of their being circumcised, (Gal. v. 2; Acts xv. 1,) as, namely, that it is meritorious of their justification, it would be somewhat the more questionable, whether believing upon such terms would justify him or no; considering that the reasons why the Jewish observations of the law did not, could not, justify them, was not because they had matter of merit in them,—for if this had been, they would have justified them,—but because they conceited such a thing of them, which occasioned them to stumble at that great stone of offence, Jesus Christ, to reject the merit of that atonement which was made by him. But there neither is, nor, I suppose, ever will be, any occasion

to discuss that question any further; because he that believeth on Christ for justification must needs believe the merit of his death, in order to the procuring thereof at the hand of God; and, consequently, cannot lightly be entangled with a conceit of merit in his own believing.

How Christ alone may be said to justify, and yet faith also be said to justify, is of ready explication. Christ alone justifieth by way of merit, and as he that hath purchased with a valuable price, the laying down of his life, the grace of justification for men: Faith justifieth instrumentally, or subserviently under Christ, namely, as a conditional act required by God of men in order to their actual investiture with that grace or benefit of justification which Christ, by the merit of his death, purchased or procured for them; yet with this reservation or proviso, that the actual communication of the said benefit or grace unto particular persons of years capable of believing should be suspended until it should be desired by them, and sought for by believing. Therefore,

3. And lastly: The premises consulted and considered, it is no matter of any difficult conception to conceive how the "purpose of God according to election," as the Apostle expresseth it, may be said to be, or at least more apparently be, of "him that calleth," namely, God, in case it be supposed to be built upon faith, than it will or can be, if supposed to be built upon works. For, (1.) That is most properly said to be of a person which proceeds freely and voluntarily from him, and whereunto he hath not been drawn, engaged, or any ways necessitated, by any motive or engagement from without. (2.) It hath been lately showed, that works, in the Apostle's sense, that is, works meritorious of justification, being found in men, do impose a necessity, in way of justice, upon God to justify, and, consequently, to elect unto life, all those in whom they shall be found; so that in case God should purpose to elect or justify upon the account of these, this purpose of his must needs be, especially must needs seem to be, of a foreign inspiration, occasioned, if not necessitated, from without, and so not to be of an inward and free conception in and from himself. Whereas, if it shall be supposed that this "purpose of God" to elect and justify is founded and built upon faith, which the Scripture, both here and elsewhere, plainly enough supposeth,\* it must needs be, and so

\* See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 462, 463.

accordingly be apprehended, of himself, that is, freely, voluntarily, and most graciously conceived and taken up by him, inasmuch as there is nothing in faith, no, not so much as in colour or show, to engage or necessitate him thereunto. This our Apostle himself plainly enough insinuateth: "Therefore it is," speaking of justification, "of faith, that it might be by," or of, "grace," (Rom. iv. 16,) that is, voluntary, free, and of mere good pleasure in God; implying, withal, that had it been of works, it would have been, or, however, it would seem to have been, by necessity, or upon such terms which God, his justice considered, could not have refused.

By the way, from what hath been now said, it appears that neither God's election, nor his counsel or "purpose according to election," in the sense given, can with truth be said to be or to proceed, *ex fide previsa*, from faith foreseen in particular persons, either elected, or decreed to be elected; but only from the mere grace or good pleasure of God. For though it be supposed that he purposeth or decreeth to elect, and accordingly actually electeth, all those that shall believe, and none other, yet this at no hand proveth, either that such his purpose, or the execution hereof by him, proceed or spring in their origination or conception from the faith of such persons foreseen, no, nor yet from the foresight of their faith in him, though this be more tolerable than the other; because, as we have heard, there is nothing in the nature of faith, no, nor in God's foresight of faith, in what persons soever, that hath in it any seminal or generative virtue or property of any such purpose or action in God. It is true, the infinite and incomprehensible wisdom of God, which mingleth itself with, and steers all the motions and transactions of, his will, led him unto faith, indefinitely and in the nature of it considered, not as either seen or foreseen in particular subjects, as the most proper and prudential groundwork and foundation, in its kind, and of an external consideration, whereon to fix and build his purpose of election, and accordingly his election itself. But this no more proveth that faith, either foreseen or in what consideration soever, is the cause or productress of God's purpose of election, than the commodiousness either of a good foundation or pleasant situation is the cause or reason of a man's desire or resolution to build a house. I confess there may be that in a commodious foundation or situation, the consideration whereof may occasion or

beget a purpose in a man to build in such or such a place, where these conveniences are to be had, rather than in another place where they are wanting; yea, possibly, unless the desire or purpose of a man to build be very strong and prevalent upon him, the want or non-attainableness of such material conveniences for building may wholly divert him from such an undertaking. In like manner there may be, and questionless is, in faith something particularly considerable, for which the divine understanding judged it more meet than any other thing to pitch upon for the regulation of his "purpose" of or "according to election," and of his election itself accordingly; but this is no argument that therefore faith, or that which is considerable in faith in this kind, was or is the cause of such a purpose in him, simply or indefinitely considered, as if, for example, he were any ways moved, disposed, or inclined by any thing in faith to purpose and decree the justification or election of men, or of any man, so as had it not been for faith, or had not faith mediated the business with him, he would never have purposed or decreed such a thing. For doubtless the love of God to mankind, out of which he decreed the justification, election, and salvation of those that should believe, was a most intimous principle or affection in him, flowing immediately from himself, or the essential goodness of his nature, and not begotten or raised in him by any foreign influence or interposure whatsoever; yea, and, as far as human understanding is able to reach, would have taken place, and been found in him, whether ever there had been any such thing as faith, *in rerum naturá*, or no; and, consequently, he would have decreed the justification, election, and salvation of men, though it should be supposed that they had universally been under an impossibility of believing. So that if faith hath any influence or interest of causality at all in God's decree of election, &c., it is not in respect of the general nature or goodness of this decree, but of the particular form or tenor of it only. Yea, if we state the form or tenor of this decree of election, as the Scripture seems from place to place to state and hold it forth, as, namely, that God, in this decree, speaketh thus, or to like effect, "I will elect," or, "I decree to elect, all those that shall believe,"\* then faith or believing cannot be looked upon as any efficient or productive

\* See the *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, pp. 13, 14, &c.

cause of the said decree, because it doth *ingredi ipsum decretum*, is somewhat of the nature or substance of the decree itself; and so is rather the matter, or part of the matter, thereof than any efficient cause of one kind or other. For this is the condition of the four causes, so called, material, formal, final, and efficient, without the joint concurrence whereof nothing is at any time effected or produced; that the two latter, the final and efficient, are always extrinsical to the effect or thing produced; and the two former, material and formal, always intrinsical, and parts of it. Therefore, if faith or believing be somewhat or any part of the decree we speak of, it cannot be any ways contributing to it in any kind of efficiency whatsoever; and, consequently, could be no motive, much less any engagement, unto God to conceive or make such a decree. But this by the way.

Having thus at large showed and proved that the Apostle's scope in the words before us, was, 1. To show and prove who or what manner of persons they are, or must be, whom God accounteth for "Abraham's seed," in the sense declared, or whom he justifieth; and, 2. To show and prove this with greater pregnancy, evidence, and effectualness of proof here than he had done in the former instance concerning Isaac; we shall now give some brief account of the words themselves, together, by way of paraphrase, taking them as they lie in their construction, and not in the order of their situation in the context, only to render their sense more perspicuous, and so pass forward with some few doctrinal observations taken up from them by the way:—

*And not only this*—That is, God did only declare unto Abraham, somewhat more obscurely, who should be esteemed by him for his spiritual seed, persons justified, and heirs of the world, in saying to him, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." *But when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac*—That is, But did further and more clearly declare his mind and counsel in that behalf unto Rebecca also, having now conceived by one and the same person, and he none other than Isaac, Abraham's son and heir, and great Patriarch of our nation, in which respect you (Jews) may probably think that all those that should be born of her upon such an account should be alike accounted Abraham's seed; and, more especially, that her first-born, by such a father, should be thus esteemed and owned by God; yet God himself declared

the contrary. *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil*—That is, inasmuch as whilst two children, or nations, conceived in her womb, yet remained there, and were unborn, yea, and that which is more, had “done neither good nor evil,” in one kind or degree or other; their striving together in the womb not being morally accountable, nor to be reputed either “good or evil” on either side. *It was said unto her*—That is, unto Rebecca, by God himself. *The elder shall serve the younger*—That is, that nation, which in the head or great parent of it, shall be the first-born, or first come out of thy womb, shall be inferior, tributary, or servant unto that which shall, in like sense and consideration, be born after; or thus, that child which shall be thy first-born shall, namely, in his seed and posterity, be tributary, or servant, unto his younger brother in his. *As it is written*—That is, the truth and substance of which oracle, delivered to Rebecca, was long after mentioned and confirmed by the Prophet Malachi, who exhibiteth God speaking thus: *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*—That is, I have declared, and purpose yet further to declare, myself very loving and respectful unto Jacob’s posterity; \* much above what I have done, or intend to do, to the posterity of Esau, though his brother. For unto Jacob’s posterity have I, in mere grace and favour, given that holy land, flowing with milk and honey, promised long since unto Abraham for an inheritance to be possessed and enjoyed by them; whereas I have allotted unto the Idumeans, Esau’s posterity, only the rough, rocky, and incult mountains of Seir, a place not to be compared with the pleasant and fruitful land of Canaan, and besides, having in a great measure laid waste and desolate the territories of these Idumeans, I am resolved that the breaches hereof shall never be repaired, though they be full of confidence that they shall be able to effect it, and that with advantage. But as for Jacob’s posterity, I intend such further grace and goodness unto them in their land, that I will cause my name to be magnified throughout the world for what I shall

\* To hate, in Scripture dialect, oft imports a lesser degree of love. (Gen. xxix. 31; Deut. xii. 15; Luke xiv. 26; Matt. vi. 24; Judges xiv. 16; John xii. 25; Eph. v. 29.) See Ainsworth on Gen. xxix. 31, and on Deut. xii. 15; Estius upon Rom. ix. 13. So that Daniel Chamier is mistaken, who (*Panstrat.* tom. 3, lib. vii., c. 5, sect. 14) denieth that hatred ever signifieth less love. Nor are the reasons he gives for his opinion so much as probable, and much less concluding.

do for them. Now that which God mystically and mysteriously intended in declaring himself to Rebecca, concerning the difference which he purposed in time to put, or make, between her two sons, in their respective posterities, whilst they were yet unborn, and were equally deserving and equally undeserving, neither of them “having done either good or evil, (though as yet, difference in this kind he had made none,) being the second declaration that he made of his mind and purpose in this behalf, and this not long after the former, was, *That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth*—That is, that God might declare that decree, counsel, or purpose of his to be immovable,—for a second revelation or assertion of the same thing by God imports the establishment or unquestionable certainty of it, (Gen. xli. 32,)—according to the tenor or purport whereof he maketh his election amongst men unto that excellent dignity of being Abraham’s spiritual seed, for of this he treateth all along from verses 6, 7, &c., and, consequently, heirs of the world; and, withal, that this decree or purpose of his, according unto which he thus electeth, might be declared not to have been conceived, purposed, or taken up by him from any consideration of merit or desert by works in men, but freely of and by himself, of his gracious and good pleasure; and that the execution of this his purpose or decree, in the actual election of men to the said dignity of spiritual adoption or sonship unto Abraham, admits of no regulation or confinement by any merit of works in men, but is daily managed and carried on by another rule, freely and voluntarily chosen in this behalf by himself; this rule the Scripture every where proclaiming to be faith, or believing in Jesus Christ. And this liberty, both of purposing to elect, and of electing accordingly, not at the instance of works, or by the exigency thereof, but according to his own mind and pleasure, he claimeth upon a most just, equitable, and reasonable account, as, namely, being He who freely and without any obligation upon him on that behalf calleth and inviteth the world upon the terms, and these very gracious, proposed by himself, unto that high prize of justification or sonship unto Abraham, and herein unto eternal life, or the inheritance of the world. In which respect he hath a most equitable and unquestionable right to nominate and prescribe the terms according unto which this crown or prize shall be awarded and given unto men, as the

*Αγωνοθεται* in the Olympic games had to prescribe laws unto those that should try masteries, and to declare how they were to behave themselves in the respective exercises who should receive the crown or reward, and what miscarriages in men in or about the said exercises should render them uncapable hereof. But of this formerly.

If it be demanded, “But why doth the Apostle here express himself thus, ‘not of works, but of him that calleth,’ making the opposition not between works and faith, as commonly he doth in the business of justification, but between works and the will and pleasure ‘of him that calleth,’ meaning God?” I answer, the reason may be either because the plea of the will and pleasure of God is more authoritative and binding upon the judgments and consciences of the gainsaying Jews than the mere allegation or assertion of faith would be; or else to insinuate that God freely calling and inviting men to the unspeakable grace and benefit of justification, and salvation upon it, hath by reason hereof, as hath been argued in the premises, a most equitable and unquestionable right to make the terms of the one and of the other what himself pleaseth; and, consequently, standeth no ways obliged to accept of their terms who will needs obtrude works, or the merit of works, upon him in this kind. And if God will not suffer men who are obnoxious to his justice, and condemned persons, to prescribe terms unto him for their own justification, and they, upon this account, are found to prescribe nothing but works; it follows, as it were, of course, that faith in his Son Jesus Christ must needs be the terms or law of justification imposed by him, inasmuch as works never met with any competitor in this kind from the hand of any man pretending knowledge of the mind of God in these matters, but faith only.

By the way, from the end and intent of God in saying to Rebecca, under all those circumstances mentioned by the Apostle and by us explained, “The elder shall serve the younger,” being the same in substance with, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,” this end being, as we have heard, to insinuate that God’s purpose, according to which he electeth or adopteth, is fully established and shall stand firm for ever, and be carried on, not by or according to the interest of works, but according to God’s own good pleasure otherwise: From this end, I say, of God in speaking so to Rebecca, it fully appeareth,



over and above all the light formerly given to make the discovery, that it was no part of his intent here to teach either Jacob's peremptory election unto salvation, nor yet Esau's peremptory reprobation from eternity; because, had this been his end, either in whole or in part, in the said oracle, that asserted by the Apostle for his end cannot stand. For had Esau been peremptorily reprobated from eternity, then had he been every whit as incapable of salvation in case or though he had believed, as he could or should have been in case he had sought his justification by works; and if so, God's purpose "according to election" should no more "stand of him that calleth," that is, be established unto men in that way which God himself hath freely chosen, than by works. To say that Esau being so reprobated was in no possibility to believe; besides that, it is in itself an untruth, as is demonstratively and at large proved elsewhere,\* reacheth not the point in question; for "the purpose of God according to election," here described by the Apostle, purporteth, not simply the election of those who shall *de facto* believe, but of all others also in case they should believe. But he that is peremptorily reprobated from eternity is incapable of election, yea, though he should comport with the will and pleasure of him who calleth in believing; in which case "the purpose of God according to election" should not "stand," but fall. But of these things at large elsewhere.†

We shall only take up a few doctrinal observations from the verses lately opened, and so advance in our exposition.

1. Whereas the divine purpose of putting the difference we formerly heard of between Ishmael and Isaac was revealed immediately or originally unto Abraham, and not unto Sarah; but the like purpose concerning Esau and Jacob was thus revealed unto Rebecca, and not unto Isaac; it is observable, that God is sometimes pleased to make the first discovery of things mysterious and secret unto weaker instruments, and otherwise unto those of more strength and honour. (Exod. xv. 20; Judges iv. 4; 2 Kings xxii. 14, 15; Luke ii. 46; Acts xviii. 26; xxi. 9; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, &c.)

2. Whereas the secret of the divine pleasure, as well concerning Ishmael and Isaac, as concerning Esau and Jacob, was first

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 480, 498, 499, &c. *Pagan's Debt and Dowry*, pp. 9, 10, to the end. *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, c. 4, throughout.

† *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 78, 467.

imparted or revealed unto a single person only, the former unto Abraham, the latter unto Rebecca; it may be observed, that matters of general concernment, and the knowledge whereof is necessary for all persons, are usually in their first discovery made known by God but unto some one single person only, or very few. (Exod. iii. 7, 8; Amos iii. 7; Acts x. 40, 41, &c.)

3. Whereas the divine disposition and dispensation in matters of this life were so different, as we have heard, in reference to the two pairs of brethren, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob; it may be observed, that God hath left himself at more liberty to dispose of the temporal estates or conditions of men than of their eternal. Or thus: God hath not declared and so not engaged himself to walk towards men, in matters appertaining to this present life, by any such positive or determinate rule as he hath done in matters relating to their eternal conditions. (Eccles. ix. 1—3, with Mark xvi. 16, &c.)

4. Whereas the Apostle expressly informeth us that the end, purpose, and intent of God in pre-declaring unto Rebecca, under the circumstances mentioned, his will and pleasure concerning the different conditions of her two sons, or rather their respective posterities, as hath been showed, in this present world, and consequently of his actual and providential disposal of these their conditions in time accordingly, was to make known unto the world this most spiritual and mysterious secret, namely, that his “purpose according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,” in the sense given; it is observable, that God hath revealed the great mysteries of salvation unto the world, not only by the words of his mouth, but by the works of his hands, and divers providences. (Gal. iv. 22—24, 30, &c.; John iii. 14.)

5. Whereas the Apostle argueth and proveth God’s counsel and purpose of justifying men by faith and not by works, from such texts and passages of Scripture where the Jews were not able to discover or find any such thing; it is easy to observe, that many truths may be discovered, by persons that are spiritual, of sound principles and raised understandings, in such veins of the Scriptures where they who are carnal and of mistaken or unsound principles, are, or may be, confident that there is no such thing to be found. (Matt. xxii. 23, compared with verses 29, 31, 32, &c.; John v. 45—47; ix. 40.)

6. Whereas God was not satisfied with that one signification

or single intimation given unto Abraham of the ratification of his "purpose according to election," as, namely, that it was founded, not upon works, but upon his own pleasure; but he was pleased to make a second, and this a more full, declaration hereof unto Rebecca; two things are from hence observable: (1.) That the end and counsel of God in those frequent repetitions and re-assertions of the same things in the Scripture, being for the most part matters of greatest weight and consequence, is to give unto men the fuller assurance of their certainty and truth. (Gen. xli. 32; Philip. iii. 1.) (2.) That what God discovereth more sparingly or darkly in one place, especially the matter being of much concernment unto men fully to understand and believe, which is the case before us in the context, commonly he revealeth it more plainly and fully in some other. The Scripture aboundeth with examples in this kind. (See also Hebrews viii. 6; xi. 40.)

7. Whereas God's "purpose according to election," in the sense declared, standeth "not of works, but of him that calleth;" it is not unworthy observation, that God's eternal purposes or decrees concerning the election, justification, and salvation of men, are not always formed or regulated by such rules or principles which are most plausible unto men, but by such which are pleasing unto himself, which commonly are much differing from those approved of men. (Isaiah lv. 8, 9; Rom. x. 2, 3; ii. 28, 29; Luke xvi. 15.)

8. Whereas the Apostle mentioneth God's most gracious and free calling men, namely, to the great blessings of justification, adoption, salvation, &c., as hath been explained, as a reason and ground in equity why he should make the terms and conditions of obtaining these rich prizes what himself pleaseth; it may be observed, that God assumeth or claimeth unto himself no power merely prerogative-wise for over-ruling the eternal estates of men, but only such which most equitably and upon a clear account of reason appertaineth to him. (Ezek. xviii. 25, 26, 29, &c.; Isaiah v. 3, 4; Psalm xcvi. 9; cxlv. 19.)

9. From these words, "The elder shall serve the younger," (verse 12,) mystically understood, as hath been directed in the preceding exposition, two things are observable: (1.) That God judgeth it meet to sacrifice the carnal privileges of some men, though given and avouched for such by himself, upon the spiritual service of many. Out of the dust and ashes of Esau's

prerogative of primogeniture hath sprung a lively confirmation of this blessed truth unto the world, that it is the younger or latter covenant of grace, not the elder of works, by which sinners must be justified. (Gen. xxi. 10, 11 ; xlviii. 14.) (2.) From the tenor of the same divine oracle, so understood and considered, as hath been said, it may be observed further, that those who shall inherit the great dignity and privilege of justification by faith shall be heirs, that is, lords, of the world ; and they who expect justification by the works of the law shall be servants unto them. (Rev. ii. 26, 27 ; Gal. iv. 30 ; Romans iv. 13 ; Psalm xlix. 14.)

10. And lastly : From these words, “ Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,” (verse 13,) understood as they have been explained, it is observable, that, in matters of this present life, God hath left himself at liberty, in some cases, and upon some special occasions, to show more or less love unto men, under a mere personal or genealogical and parentic consideration. (Eccles. vii. 15 ; ix. 11 ; Prov. xxii. 2.)

14 What shall we say then ? Is there unrighteousness with God ? God forbid.

The Apostle having, by the two famous testimonies of the Scriptures and ancient records of the Jews, asserted his doctrine concerning the eternal purpose and decree of God to justify and adopt for children those that should believe, excluding such who depend upon the works of the law for the obtaining of these heavenly privileges ; and, consequently, made it good, that no word or promise of God falls to the ground, by the rejection of the Jews, these generally being none of the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises of life and salvation were intended ; proceeds, in the next place, to demonstrate the righteousness or equity of the said decree of God, and the execution of it in the world, being led hereunto by occasion of some objections, which, it seems, were raised by the Jews in opposition unto both. For they, perceiving how substantially the Apostle had taken off their main objection, wherein they urged a frustration of the word of God, in case they should be rejected, if those Scripture passages which he had alleged upon that account should be let pass with such a sense and construction as he had put upon them ; therefore, to overthrow his interpretation of them, together with that doctrine which he had

built thereupon, they rise up with this objection,—that such a purpose or decree, together with the execution of it, as Paul attributes unto God, namely, to adopt those for sons who should believe, and reject those who should seek to be justified by the works of his own law, would be unjust; and therefore could not with truth be ascribed unto him. This objection he propounds interrogatively in the former part of this fourteenth verse; and begins his answer to it, in the close of it, “God forbid.”

Verse 14. *What shall we say then, &c.*—This is a form of propounding an objection, used by the Apostle elsewhere. (Rom. vi. 1; iv. 1.) And sometimes it seems to import only the awakening of the mind and judgment of him that readeth, to consider what is the natural consequence or result of things formerly argued and concluded; which is a very spiritual and noble exercise and improvement of the rational abilities of the soul; and without which that which is read or heard seldom turns to any great matter of profit or edification. (See verse 30 of this chapter.) Interrogatives are more piercing and quickening than bare assertives. When the Apostle saith, “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?” it is as if he had said, Do you think that any such thing followeth from what hath been said concerning the purpose of God to justify and adopt those who shall believe, and not those who depend upon works for their justification, as that he should be unrighteous or unjust? Nay, “God forbid;” or, Μη γενοιτο, *Let it not be*, or, *Far be it from me*, and from every man, to affirm or teach any thing that should imply any unrighteousness or injustice in God in the least.

Μη αδικια παρα τφ Θεφ: *Is there unrighteousness, or injustice, with God?*—That is, Doth it follow from the premises that God should be unjust? But what is the unrighteousness here spoken of? Or in what sense did the Jews mean that Paul by his doctrine made God unjust? I answer, There are two, or rather three, kinds of injustice: The one consisteth in decreeing; the second, in doing things that are uncomely, or which are contrary to reason and equity; the third, in speaking, promising, or professing that which is not in the heart or in the mind ever to perform. When the Jews pretended that the doctrine of Paul rendered God unrighteous or unjust, they meant, doubtless, in all these respects, or with all these three

kinds of injustice. But that his doctrine was not chargeable with making God unjust with that kind of injustice which consists in simulatory promises or speakings, he had proved already: "Not as if the word of God had taken none effect," &c. (Verses 6, 7, &c.) Therefore, in the passage now before us, the Apostle must needs be conceived to speak of one or both the former kinds of injustice, which, indeed, are, upon the matter, but one and the same. For, to purpose or decree things that are uncomely and contrary unto equity, and to perpetrate and act such things, proceed from one and the same spirit of injustice. So that the import of that objection, which he insinuates, in this fourteenth verse, was levied against his doctrine by the Jews, was, that hereby God was represented both as a decreer and an actor of things which were uncomely, and of no good consistence with principles of reason and equity.

Some conceive that the spring, rise, or occasion of this objection was the Apostle's discourse concerning Jacob and Esau, namely, in that he had affirmed, that whilst they were yet unborn, and had done neither good nor evil, and though they were the children of the same parents on both sides, yet God should decree concerning them, that "the elder" should "serve the younger;" which seems to be a strain of that kind of injustice lately mentioned. But that this was not the occasion of the objection, is evident from hence: 1. Because whatsoever Paul had said concerning Jacob and Esau was expressly contained in the Scriptures; and, consequently, it is no ways likely that the Jews would object any thing against it. 2. That which he had said concerning Jacob and Esau, containing matter of favour and respects from God on Jacob's side, who was their great progenitor, and in whom they much gloried upon that account, if they should have reputed it matter of injustice in God to respect Jacob above Esau, which is the effect of all the Apostle had said concerning them, they should have been like ill birds, defiling, as the saying is, their own nest; nor is it probable in the least that they would impute injustice unto God for dealing so graciously and respectfully as he did by them and their forefathers, above any other nation; or that they were so zealous in the cause of Esau, or the Idumeans, his posterity, and their professed and inveterate enemies, as for their sakes to charge unrighteousness upon God.

Therefore the clear spring of the objection here intimated was, not the text, but the interpretation, or that inference or deduction which Paul drew from the said passages of Scripture for the confirmation of that doctrine of justification by faith, so highly contested against by the Jews. He argued and urged, that God, in saying unto Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and afterwards unto Rebecca, concerning the two nations yet in her womb, "The elder shall serve the younger," intended to declare and signify unto the world, that his purpose and pleasure was, as to elect and accept those for children and justified persons who should depend upon his grace and good pleasure for the obtaining of these blessings, by believing; so to reject those that should seek after them, and expect to attain them, by the works of the law. Such a declaration as this, say the Jews, in the objection before us, could not be intended by God, because it would argue unrighteousness in him, and that which is repugnant to all reason and equity, as, namely, that he should reject and condemn those who are diligent and zealous observers of his own law, the law which himself hath recommended unto them, and imposed on them; and receive into grace and favour such persons who never yielded the like obedience unto him, only because they believe in another, and expect their justification by and from him.

To this objection the Apostle answers, 1. By denying the consequence, in the close of this verse. 2. By subjoining a reason of such his denial. And this, (1.) In respect of those whom God justifieth, or to whom he showeth mercy. (Verses 15, 16.) (2.) In respect of those whom he reprobates or condemns. (Verse 17.) In the former, he vindicates the righteousness of God, in justifying those whom he is pleased to justify; in the latter, he vindicates the same righteousness in reprobating and condemning such who are reprobated and condemned by him.

First. He denieth that any such thing followeth from his doctrine, or interpretation of the Scriptures alleged, as that God should be unrighteous. Yea, he denieth it in that phrase or form of words, *Μη γινωιτο*, *God forbid*, which doth not barely signify or import the untruth of what is denied, but, further, that the untruth hereof is such, that it deserveth even to be abhorred of every man. (See Rom. iii. 4, 6; Gal. ii. 17; to omit other places.)

Secondly. He giveth this account of his denial, as to the first particular objected, namely, that God should be unrighteous, in case he should justify or show mercy to believers.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Verse 15. *For he saith to Moses, I will, &c.*—As if he should have said, My doctrine of justification, by the free grace and pleasure of God through believing, is so far from rendering him unrighteous, that himself plainly expresseth and asserteth the effect and substance of it, in saying thus unto Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” &c. ; meaning, that inasmuch as all men, having sinned, are become miserable, and so absolutely obnoxious unto me, and my pleasure touching their relief, and I am resolved to use my prerogative herein, and to relieve and show mercy unto whom, that is, unto what sort or kind of persons,\* I please, not upon such who shall be obtruded upon me by men, or who shall judge themselves worthy or meet above others to be partakers of my grace and favour in this kind. The repetitions in the words, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,” are very emphatical, and import the highest degree imaginable of a peremptoriness or resolvedness in God to dispense his favour and mercy unto men according to his own mind and pleasure, and not according to the thoughts or prescriptions of men. When the clouds pour out rain in abundance, it is a sign they were full of water. In like manner, when a man utters over and over, reiterates

\* The pronoun relative, *os, qui*, “who” or “whom,” is sometimes used *concrete*, and signifieth not simply or barely the subject to which it relateth, but as so or so qualified. Thus our Apostle: *I know, ω πιστευκα, whom I have believed*; (2 Tim. i. 12;) that is, what manner of God, how gracious, how merciful, how faithful, and powerful, &c., he is whom I have believed, or entrusted myself and soul with. Thus also our Saviour: “I know whom,” that is, what manner of men, “I have chosen,” meaning for disciples. Or rather thus: *Οιδα ος εξελεξαμην*, that is, *I know whom*, that is, what manner of persons they are, *I have chosen*. (John xiii. 18.) Thus also Romans ix. 18: “And whom he will,” that is, what kind of persons he pleaseth, “he hardeneth.”



and repeats, any purpose, intention, or desire in his soul, it argueth a fulness or abundance of that which is thus uttered, and that the heart could not discharge itself of all at once, or by one expression. Now we know who those are on whom God is everlastingly and most unalterably resolved to show mercy, namely, those who believe in his Son Jesus Christ; according to that of this our Apostle elsewhere: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen," &c. (2 Cor. i. 19, 20.) And upon this account the Gospel, which asserteth the will and purpose of God in this kind, is termed by John, "the everlasting Gospel," (Rev. xiv. 6,) that is, a Gospel, the tenor and contents whereof shall never be altered. Here God fully declares who they are on whom he "will have mercy," namely, believers: Neither are all the angels in heaven, nor men upon earth, by all the strength of sollicitation they can use, able to take him off from this his purpose, as either to cause him not to show mercy on those who believe, or to show mercy, I mean, the mercy here spoken of, unto any others. For that is to be considered by the way, that the Apostle clearly speaketh here of that grace or mercy of God which relateth to the salvation of men sinful and miserable. But whereas the Scripture speaks expressly of two sorts, or kinds, or, if you will, degrees, of grace, love, and mercy in God towards men, in reference to their salvation; one which precedes their faith and obedience to the Gospel, and which consists partly in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ for a Saviour unto them, partly in calling them by the Gospel preached in one kind or other unto them, in vouchsafing means and opportunities unto them for repenting and believing, &c.; \* another, which is subsequent to their repentance and believing, and which God showeth and exerciseth towards those who do now truly believe; † the question may be, of which of these two kinds of mercy the Apostle here speaketh, whether of that which is preventing, and which showeth itself in giving Christ for a Saviour, in calling men unto him, &c.; or of that which is subsequent, and which expresseth itself in justification, adoption, &c. I answer, Not of the for-

\* Of this love or mercy, see John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10; Matt. xxii. 3, 4, 9, &c.

† Of this, see Gal. iii. 26; iv. 6; John i. 12, &c.

mer, but of the latter. 1. God makes no such difference or distinction of men in his preventing grace or mercy as the words before us, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," &c., manifestly imply. Christ is said to have "tasted death for every man;" (Heb. ii. 9;) to have "given himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) And, accordingly, God is said to "command all men every where to repent;" (Acts xvii. 30;) and many are said to be "called," who yet are not "chosen." (Matt. xx. 16,.) 2. The whole discourse of the Apostle in the context adjoining, as hath been showed and proved, is not concerning preventing grace or mercy, but subsequent; as, namely, concerning justification, adoption, &c., which do not appertain to preventing grace, but subsequent. 3. And lastly: Evident it is that the Apostle's intent is to declare the Jews to be excluded from that grace and mercy of which he speaks all along, as in telling them that "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed;" (verse 8;) and again, that the elder should serve the younger; that the purpose of God stands "not of works," &c. But certain it is, that these Jews were not excluded from the preventing grace, or love, or mercy of God; for they were called by God by the doctrine and miracles of the Apostles, yea, and by the Lord Christ himself, and this by means so exceedingly efficacious, that our Saviour himself affirmeth that even the men of Tyre and Sidon might or would have been converted by them. (Matt. xi. 21.) Therefore, the "grace" or "mercy" spoken of in the words in hand must needs be the subsequent grace or mercy of God; and if so, it cannot be understood, so neither in the verse following, of any such mercy in God towards men by which men yet unregenerate and in their sins are enabled, much less necessitated, to repent or believe; but, as hath been said, of that grace or mercy which is vouchsafed unto them who do now repent and believe. So that the meaning of the words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," &c., in the Apostle's citation and application of them, is as if God should have said, "I will justify, adopt, save, and glorify persons in what capacity, and under what qualifications soever, I myself please, and will not be ordered or taught by men what I have to do, or what becometh me to do, in this kind."

As the said words were spoken by God unto Moses, (Exodus

xxxiii. 19,) they seem to be of somewhat a different import, yet of affinity enough in the general with the sense now given, and the scope of the Apostle in the present context. And it is the manner of the Evangelists and Apostles, yea, and sometimes of Christ himself, in the New Testament, to cite passages from the Old for the confirmation or proof of what they teach, when there is only an analogy or proportion of sense or matter between the one and the other. The occasion of God's speaking thus unto Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," as appears from the context, was this: Moses, verses 13 and 16, of the said chapter, (Exodus xxxiii.,) had desired of God that he would consider that the Jews were his people, and that he would please to go before them, and lead them in their way, that so it might be known in the world that both he and his people had found grace in his sight. This God promiseth unto him that he will do, notwithstanding their frowardness and stiff-neckedness; and, moreover, signifieth unto Moses, that for himself he had found grace in his sight. Upon this gracious declaration of God unto him, Moses takes the boldness to make a further request unto God, namely, that "he would show him his glory:" (verse 18:) To this request of his also God returns this answer, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee;" giving the reason hereof in the words cited by the Apostle, "And I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," as if he had said, "Let no man stumble or take offence that I should do that in a way of grace and favour for thee, which I neither shall do to any of the people besides, nor ever did to any of thy fathers before thee; not to Abraham, or to Isaac, or to Jacob themselves, nor shall do the like to any man after thee; nor do thou thyself imagine that I am any ways a debtor unto thee of that grace of manifesting my glory thus unto thee which I deny unto others; for I am a debtor unto no man, and will dispense my favours, and so my mercies, unto such persons, and to such only, as I please." This connexive particle, "And;" "And I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy," is sometimes causal, as Calvin well observeth,\* and signifieth, "for," or "because;" sometimes, again, it is adversative, and signifieth, "but," † which signification very well accordeth in the place

\* *Copula enim particulam causalem valet, quod Latinis et Græcis est usitatum.*

—CALVIN. in Col. ii. 5.

† See AINSWORTH, on Gen. ii. 17.

before us; which is accordingly rendered by Junius, and Tremellius, and Piscator. Whereas our Apostle, following the Septuagint, as the Evangelists, Christ himself, and the Apostles more commonly do in their citations from the Old Testament, reads the former clause thus: *Ελεησω ον αν ελεω*, *I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.* Arias Montanus, out of the Hebrew, renders it thus: *Gratiam addam cui gratiam addam*, that is, “I will add grace to whom I will add grace.” Junius thus: *Sed gratiosus ero, cui fuero gratiosus*, that is, “But I will be gracious to whom I shall be gracious.” It is like the LXX. did not accurately distinguish between grace and mercy, and so took the liberty to translate the word, properly signifying the former, by the latter. Though the difference between them be not much material, yet it was more properly matter of grace in God unto Moses than of mercy, to make such a signal discovery unto him of his glory as here he promiseth to do; unless we shall say that Moses was somewhat miserable before this manifestation was made unto him, and relieved by it; both which, haply, in a sense, and this tolerable enough, may be admitted. The same act of God towards men may be, and more generally is, both an act of grace and of mercy, though in different considerations. However, God, in the words before us unto Moses, with an high hand of authority asserteth his absolute liberty to confer both the one and the other on whom himself only pleaseth, saying, not only “I WILL be gracious,” or will add grace, “to whom I will be gracious,” but also, “And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” As for the version of the Septuagint used here or elsewhere by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, though it may be a question whether it be hereby justified or avouched for a true translation, yet is it out of controversy authorized hereby for truth; at least so much of it as is here cited and made canonical and authentic Scripture. Our English translators rendering the latter part of either clause of the verse in the future tense, “On whom I will have mercy;” and so, “On whom I will have compassion,” herein follow Moses rather than Paul, who expresseth both in the present tense. As well the sense as the emphaticness of the assertion is alike preserved in both readings; only, that is to be minded, by the way, that it was no part of the Apostle’s intent, by owning the Septuagint in their exchanging tenses with Moses, to strengthen Calvin’s apprehension, occa-

sioned, as it seems, thereby; his conceit being that the words sound to this effect: "On whom I have once decreed to show mercy, I will never take away my mercy from him, and will follow him with perpetual kindness, to whom I once decreed to be kind."\* Such positions as these are no consecratories to the Apostle's doctrine, the intent whereof, as hath been proved, is only to assert a liberty in God to show mercy, to confer justification, adoption, salvation, &c., upon whom, or what manner of persons, himself pleaseth; not a liberty, much less a purpose, to continue these or any like mercies unto such persons as men shall obtrude upon him, and particularly not unto such unto whom he hath most severely threatened and declared that they shall not be continued. Now many of those whom God decreed, upon their believing, from eternity to justify and adopt, apostatize from, and make shipwreck of, their faith, as the Scripture in many places testifieth; from whom he hath peremptorily threatened to take away the grace of justification which before he had conferred upon them; † therefore the emphatical import of the Apostle's expression, *Ελεησω ου ελεω*, *I will have mercy on whom I have, now, or at present, mercy*, respects the same species, not the same persons of men; being, as if he had said, "To that sort or kind of men to whom now, or at this day, I show mercy, namely, in pardoning their sin and justifying their persons, meaning believers, I will show the like mercy at all times hereafter to the world's end." Or rather thus: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy," that is, "I will not, or, there is no reason that I should, be taken off or put by by men or by angels, from showing the grace or mercy of justification and adoption unto those, that is, that kind of men to whom I at this day show this grace or mercy, and these are such who believe; on these I am ultimately and unremovably resolved to show mercy." According to as well the one exposition as the other, God asserteth his liberty against all opposers and contenders with him, to dispense his high favours where and on whom himself pleaseth.

If it be demanded, "But is this a sufficient argument or plea to vindicate the justice of God in justifying and adopting

\* *Perinde enim sonant verba, acsi dictum esset, cujus semel decrevi miserari ab eo misericordiam nunquam auferam; et perpetua benignitate prosequar eum, cui benignus esse statui?*

† See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 151—153, 277, 278.

those that believe, namely, that himself challengeth or asserteth unto himself a liberty or a resolution thus to do?" I answer, The plea is both sufficient in itself, and also in reference to the Jews, with whom, particularly, the Apostle had here to do.

1. It is sufficient in itself upon this foundation, namely, that God is absolutely righteous and just. If so, then can he not conceive within him an act of will but what is righteous and just, nor claim a liberty in one kind or other but what is just likewise. Not that he makes a thing, an action righteous or just by willing or doing it which is not such in itself, and so would have been, whether he had willed or done it or no, but by willing or doing any thing he fully declares the righteousness, yea, and somewhat more, I mean the meetness or fitness of it to be done, at least at such a time when he doeth it. To say that whatsoever God willeth or doeth is just, is a truth, and well consistent with his glory; but to say concerning things that are in themselves and in their own natures unrighteous or unjust, that in case God should do them he would hereby make them just or righteous, is extremely dishonourable to him, and, as Calvin truly observes, "despoils him of the glory of his justice."\*

2. For the Jews, the said plea was every ways sufficient and convincing unto them, because they acknowledged the perfect righteousness of God, and so could not but subscribe any liberty that God should claim to himself as righteous and just.

I do not observe amongst interpreters any difference made between the two words,  $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omega$ , in the former clause, translated *I will have mercy*, and  $\omicron\iota\kappa\tau\epsilon\iota\rho\omega$ , in the latter, rendered, "*I will have compassion*." They generally take both words as purely synonymous and the self-same in signification, only conceiving that a plurality of words coincident in sense is more emphatical, and importeth a certain vehemency or intenseness of spirit in him that speaketh, about that which he so uttereth; and the truth is, that it is very hard to assign any difference between the two words which will be found any ways pertinent to the Apostle's discourse. The Greek Lexicons commonly expound the one by the other, so leaving us under a presumption that neither of them signify any thing more, nor any thing less, nor any thing

\* *Deum enim qui ex legem facit, maxima cum gloria sua parte spoliat.*—CALVIN'S *Opusc.*, p. 843.

else, than the other. Notwithstanding, if the grammatical propriety of the words were narrowly scanned, the former word, *ελεειν*, would, I conceive, be found to signify the inward passion or affection itself of mercy; and the latter, *οικτειρω*, the outward expression or fruit thereof, in one kind or other. According to this distinction of the words, to which, notwithstanding, I would not have too much ascribed, God, in the words before us, may be thought to make this declaration of himself to the world, namely, that he may of right, and accordingly will, both inwardly in heart and soul, pity and compassionate; and outwardly also, and visibly, express these gracious affections to whomsoever himself pleaseth.

The difference between the two words in the Hebrew, according as they are rendered by Arias Montanus, Junius, and Tremellius, and as our English translators, likewise, in consent with them, read them, is of more easy observation; for here the former clause speaks thus: "And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." And the latter thus: "And will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." To be "gracious," properly imports a propenseness of mind and will to do some signal good without any motive or engagement thereunto from without; especially from the person or persons to whom this good is done or intended. To "show mercy," imports only the relieving of those that are in misery out of a merciful disposition. Grace may as well be showed to him that is not in misery as to him that is, and mercy may be showed to him whom we have some engagement upon us to relieve, as well as to him from whom we are wholly free in this kind; so that the formal and strict significations of the words "grace" and "mercy" are very different. Though acts of grace and acts of mercy are sometimes the same materially, and make, as it were, but one and the same stream or current, yet are they different in their springs or fountains. Therefore, when our Apostle presenteth God as saying unto Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy," he is to be understood of that kind of mercy, together with the fruits or effects of it, which is purely gracious, no ways provoked, assisted, or strengthened by any motive or engagement from those to whom it is showed. From hence it follows that that mercy, the showing of which unto whom he pleaseth is here claimed prerogative-wise by God, is not so much, if at all, provoked, wrought upon, or drawn out, by the misery of those to

whom it is showed, as by the wise, gracious, and good pleasure of God himself; for otherwise, there are many thousands altogether as miserable as those on whom this mercy is showed by him, to whom, notwithstanding, it is not vouchsafed; which is a plain argument that it is not of that kind of mercy, the exercise whereof is drawn out or procured by any thing whatsoever in those to whom it is showed, no, not by their misery itself; but of such a kind which, though it relieveth some of those that are miserable, in which respect it is called mercy, yet it doth it not because they are miserable,—for then it should relieve them all, as hath been said,—but because it pleaseth itself or him in whom it resideth so to do. In this respect it differs very little or nothing at all from grace; so that our Apostle, exchanging Moses's words, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,” into, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” was but his interpreter, and showeth that the grace of which he spake was of that kind of grace which as well disposeth the subject to the gratuitous or undeserved relief of such miserable ones as himself pleaseth, as to the advancement of their comforts or well-being, whose condition is at present prosperous and desirable, as the condition of Moses himself was when God spake the words unto him.

From the testimony now opened, wherein God, as we have heard, asserteth his liberty of showing mercy to whom he pleaseth, the Apostle infers thus:—

Verse 16. *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*—As if he had said, Since it is God that hath and “will have mercy on whom he will have mercy,” that is, as hath been said, will justify, adopt, save, and glorify whom, and what manner of persons himself pleaseth, it plainly follows that justification, with the rest of the blessings attending on it, is not, namely, in respect of the terms, law, or condition of it, of those, that is, by their appointment, or at their will or contrivement, who are the most diligent and zealous observers of the law, much less of any other sort of men, but only of God, that is, by the counsel, will, pleasure, and appointment of God; and this most equitably and upon the best and clearest account of reason, namely, because it is he that showeth mercy, that is, who freely, of his own accord, without any engagement from men, or any other creature, affords unto



men the opportunity and means of justification, and thereby of life, peace, and salvation, and eternal happiness; whereas he was at full liberty whether he would ever have called or admitted any person of mankind whatsoever, being fallen, unto justification, and so unto those other blessings, upon any terms, condition, or conditions whatsoever.

Those words, "it is," are inserted in the translation as necessary to be supplied, being omitted in the original, as easy to be supplied. The like ellipsis we shall have verse 32.

That by "him that willeth," and "him that runneth," here opposed unto "God that showeth mercy," is meant the whole species or kind of such persons who are most zealously intent and bent in their spirits upon the keeping of the law, in order to, or upon hope of, their justification thereby, is, I presume, the sense of most if not all expositors; or, however, is in itself a thing too manifest to be reasonably denied; though I do not conceive only such as these, and no others, to be here meant. The Jews, with whom our Apostle had either only or chiefly to do in the place in hand, as we have been oft informed, were both great willers or desirers of justification, and great runners also, that is, laborious observers of the law, for the obtaining of it. This the Holy Ghost, both in the sequel of this chapter, (verses 31, 32,) and elsewhere in Scripture, plainly signifieth. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness,"—that is, by the figure *hypallage*, the righteousness of the law, if Calvin expoundeth it aright,—"hath not attained the law of righteousness;" that is, hath not found the terms of justification, prescribed, and authorized by God. "Wherefore? Because they sought it," that is, righteousness or justification, "not by faith, but as it were by the works of the the law." But more of these words in their place; at present we only observe from them that the Jews did *διωκειν νομον δικαιοσυνης*, *earnestly pursue a law by which they hoped to be justified*. (See also Rom. x. 2, 3; Acts xv. 1; xxi. 20; and elsewhere.) So that there is little question but that by "him that willeth," and "him that runneth," the Apostle meaneth such persons who were or shall be raised to the greatest height of desire after justification in the sight of God, and consequently after salvation also; and who were and shall be most industrious, likewise, and active in their way for the obtaining of this crown.\* In saying, in the

\* Earnestness and fervour of engagement, in one kind or other, is elsewhere

sense declared, that it is not of these, but of God, &c., he plainly intimateth that such persons as these are more apt and likely than others to obtrude terms of justification upon God, or, which amounteth to the same, to challenge and expect the great privilege or benefit of justification from God upon the account of their zeal and works. They that languish in their spirits, that are chill and cold in respect of any great thoughts or heat of desire after righteousness, and are withal neglective of such ways and works, upon the account whereof they can with some colour or pretext of reason demand or expect the reward of righteousness or justification from God, have no temptation upon them in this kind; I mean, to obtrude the merit of works upon God for a rule or law by which he shall justify men. But great willers and runners are far more liable to have their feet taken in this snare, especially when they are “ignorant of the righteousness of God,” as our Apostle speaks afterwards, and know not that God hath made faith in him through Jesus Christ, the law of justification unto the world.

But, though by “him that willeth,” and “him that runneth,” in the words before us, the Apostle primarily, as hath been hinted, intendeth Jewish justiciaries, and such as trust to the law and their own righteousness therein for justification; yet, that which he here affirmeth of these, namely, that justification is not of them, in the sense declared, “but of God that showeth mercy,” is as true of them who will and run in the right way appointed by God himself for justification, namely, in the way of believing. For neither is justification any whit more of such willers and runners as these than of the others, inasmuch as true believers themselves are at no hand justified by any law or terms prescribed by themselves for their justification; nor would faith or believing itself have justified them any whit more than the law or the works thereof, had it not been sanctified and established for such a purpose by a far greater power and authority than theirs, even by “him that showeth mercy.” For it is the will, purpose, ordinance, or decree of God, not of believers, by the efficacy, force, and power whereof faith in Christ becomes justifying; according to that of our Saviour, “And this is the WILL of him that sent me, that every one which

seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life," and, consequently, be justified in order hereunto. (John vi. 40. See upon the same account John i. 12; John iii. 16, &c.)

From the premises, I presume, it is as clear as the sun that the Apostle, in the words yet before us, doth not speak of that which Divines commonly call preventing grace, nor of any thing precedaneous either to believing or working, and, consequently, neither of election from eternity, nor yet of any grace or power from God whereby to believe or the like, but of that which is subsequent to believing, as Paul affirmed, or to working, as the Jews, namely, justification, adoption, salvation, &c. ; so that his meaning, without dispute, is not either that election "is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," &c., nor that faith or power to believe "is not of him that willeth," &c., but that justification is not of or from either or both of these, "but from God who showeth mercy." It is true, indeed, that neither election, whether from eternity or in time, nor yet faith or power to believe, are any whit more, *sensu orthodoxo, et scripturali*, from "him that willeth," or from "him that runneth," than justification and adoption themselves; that is, as they who are elected, with such an election as the Scripture owneth, be it what it will be, are not the authors, or principal efficient, or meritorious causes, of their election; so neither are they any of these in respect of their faith or power to believe; in this sense neither is election, nor faith, nor grace, "of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God," &c.\* But the series and line of discourse running all along the context evidently showeth that the Apostle here speaketh neither of election, nor of believing, nor of grace to believe, but, as hath been oft said, of justification, adoption, &c.; and besides, nothing can be more evident than that in the words in hand, "So then, it is neither of him that runneth," &c., he concludeth somewhat in opposition to his antagonists the Jews. Now there was no contest at all between them and him, either about election from eternity, or about either a suffi-

\* But though neither election, nor faith, nor power to believe, be either originally or meritoriously of or from those who are elected and do believe; yet, speaking of their election and believing in particular, they are from them subordinately or concurrently, namely, as by the grace of God preventing them, and vouchsafed unto them, they freely and willingly perform and submit unto those conditions or terms, upon the performance whereof, as well believing as election, according to the counsel and decree of God, always follow.

ciency or non-sufficiency of power in men to believe; but the solemn and famous contest between them was about justification, or the ground of claim to the inheritance and peculiar favour of God. Therefore the antecedent to this relative pronoun, "it," expressed in our translation, and understood in the original, "It is not of him," &c., is either justification, adoption, or the like; not election or believing. The like construction is observable elsewhere in this Epistle. "Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace." (Rom. iv. 16.) Here also the words, "it is," are not found in the original, but left to be supplied by him that readeth; and the substantive or antecedent, which, according to grammar exigency, must here sensify or relate unto the pronoun "IT," cannot be either faith, as is evident, because then faith should be said to be of faith; nor election, because election had not been so much as once named or hinted in the procedure of the discourse; nor was there the least occasion of saying here election was not of faith. Therefore the unquestionable antecedent to the pronoun "it," in this place, is justification, or something including or importing it. (See also verse 32 of this chapter.) And thus we see how the Apostle argueth for the vindication of his doctrine concerning justification by faith, so far as it concerns those that are justified and obtain mercy according to it, from the grand imputation wherewith the Jews charged it, namely, of rendering God unrighteous. Before we proceed to his vindication of it from the same imputation in respect of those or of all those who are excluded from mercy or condemned by it, (verses 17, 18,) let us take knowledge of some of the special heads of doctrine contained in the verses last opened.

1. Whereas the Jews, as the Apostle insinuates, (verse 14,) charged his doctrine of justification by faith that it made God unrighteous or unjust, inferring that upon this account it must needs be erroneous and false; it may be observed, that even the greatest and most important truths are sometimes liable to such objections which veil their beauty and worth from the eyes of many intelligent men otherwise. (John i. 46; iii. 4, 9.)

2. From these words, "God forbid," (verse 14,) importing the Apostle's zeal in abhorring every doctrine which either expressly or by consequence chargeth God with unrighteousness; it is further observable, that all such tenets or doctrines

which reflect any matter of unrighteousness or hard dealing upon God ought to be the abhorring of a Christian soul. (Rom. iii. 4, 5.)

3. Whereas God himself saith to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," &c. ; the doctrine is, that God is absolutely and ultimately resolved to follow the counsel of his own will in and about the justification of men, and not to suffer himself to be imposed upon by any creature whatsoever in this behalf. (Eph. i. 11 ; Rom. iii. 22, 24, 25, 28, 30, &c.)

4. Whereas, to vindicate the righteousness of God in justifying those that believe, the Apostle insisteth only upon words spoken by himself, wherein he claims a liberty or right of power to justify whom or what manner of persons he pleaseth ; the observation from hence is, that God is a competent Judge, even in his own case. Or thus : Whatsoever God doeth or is resolved to do, is, both by the one and the other, unquestionably proved to be just. (Rom. iii. 4 ; Gen. xviii. 25.)

5. Whereas the Holy Ghost, according to the precedent exposition of verse 15, expresseth justification by showing or having mercy on men ; it is observable, that no act of grace from God towards his creature man preceding justification, neither election, nor the giving of Christ to die for them, nor the vouchsafement of ability or means for believing, &c., exempteth him from being truly miserable. Hence is it that justification is termed the blessedness or blessed-making of a man. (Rom. iv. 7—9 ; Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.)

6. From the same consideration, namely, that the Holy Ghost expresseth justification by showing mercy ; it is further observable, that justification is an act of mercy or merc grace in God, notwithstanding the performance of that condition by men which God requireth of them in order thereunto. (Rom. iv. 16 ; Titus iii. 5—7 ; Eph. ii. 8.)

7. From these words, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," &c. ; (verse 16 ; ) it is very observable, that men zealously devoted and addicted to any way whatsoever of serving God are apt to think, and this with confidence, that they highly commend themselves unto him thereby, and must needs be approved of him more than others for the same. (John xvi. 2 ; Acts xxvi. 9, 10.)

8. And lastly : From those words, "But of God that showeth mercy," as they have been interpreted, this doctrine ariseth,

that the right of nominating and appointing the law or terms of justification most equitably appertaineth unto God upon this account, namely, because it is of his mere grace and mercy that men, having sinned, are called and admitted unto justification upon any terms whatsoever. (Rom. iii. 21, 22, 30; John vi. 40.)

17 For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, [or, on thee,] and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

The Apostle having from that expression of God unto Moses, lately opened, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” vindicated his doctrine of justification by faith from any repugnancy unto, or inconsistency with, the justice or righteousness of God, wherewith the Jews charged it, (verse 14,) in respect of those that are justified and saved by it, in the words now before us he proceeds unto the like vindication of the same doctrine in respect of those who in the end come to be condemned by it and perish. For if there should be found any thing unrighteous or unjust, either in the justification and salvation of those who are justified and saved according to the tenor and import of such a doctrine, or in the condemnation and reprobation of those who are condemned and perish by it, as well the one as the other, would evince it to be a doctrine inconsistent with the righteousness of God, and, consequently, erroneous and false. Therefore it concerned our Apostle to clear the innocency and righteousness of it, as well in respect of the condemnation of the latter as of the justification of the former. Having performed this, as hath been said, (verses 15, 16,) he comes in this verse 17 to perform the other. The words are somewhat obscure, especially in their relation and accommodation to the Apostle’s purpose, and, accordingly, as it commonly befalls passages of like difficulty, have been troubled with variety of interpretations. We shall, God assisting, for the clearing of all things relating to them, 1. Consider some circumstances under which the words here mentioned, “Even for this same purpose

have I raised thee up," &c., were spoken. 2. We shall open the dialect or phrase here used, and so give the sense and meaning of the words. 3. And lastly: We shall show how the said words and passage accommodate the Apostle in that cause which he is now pleading, and how they prove that there is no unrighteousness in God's reprobating or condemning who or what manner of persons he pleaseth, and, consequently, not in his reprobating or condemning those who shall not believe, his pleasure being to reprobate and condemn these, and all these, and these only.

1. For the first of these there are three circumstances considerable for the better understanding of the words. (1.) The person speaking. (2.) The person spoken unto. (3.) The time when they were spoken.

(1.) The Apostle saying, that "the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh," &c., implicth, that the words were spoken by God himself, who is the Author of the Scripture. Elsewhere, upon the same account, what God speaketh unto men in or by the Scripture, the Scripture itself is said to speak or say; as sometimes, also, what he speaketh by men, the men by whom he speaketh are said to speak it. (See Rom. x. 11; xi. 2; Gal. iii. 8, 22; 1 Tim. v. 18, &c.) Now the place where the Scripture, or God in the Scripture, speaketh the words under consideration is Exodus ix. 16, where we find that Moses was commanded by God to speak, amongst other things, the words specified unto Pharaoh.

(2.) Concerning the person to whom the words were spoken by God, he is expressly said to have been Pharaoh. But because, about these times, the name of Pharaoh was appropriated unto the Kings of Egypt, respectively, in their successions,\* as afterwards the name of Ptolemy, the individual person here meant cannot be known merely by the name attributed unto him. Only, in the negative, certain it is, that this Pharaoh was not he of whom Stephen speaketh, saying, that he "dealt subtilly with their kindred, and evil intreated their fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live:"

\* *Pharao nomen erat Regum apud Egyptios, sicut et apud Romanos Reges Augusti appellantur.*—AMEROS. in locum. Ambrosius annotavit hoc loco, nomen Pharaonis non fuisse proprium, sed potius cognomen omnium Regum Ægypti; illi enim tum omnes dictos fuisse Pharaones, ut postea dicti sunt Ptolomæi; cum Macedones rerum potirentur. Quemadmodum Imperatores Romani dicti sunt Cæsares, aut Augusti.—P. MART. in loc.

And so neither that Pharaoh who lay in wait for the life of Moses, and caused him to flee the country, and to betake himself to the land of Midian for his safety. For it is expressly said, (Exod. ii. 23,) that this Pharaoh was dead before any thing was given in charge by God, either unto Moses or any other person, about the dismissal or deliverance of his people out of Egypt. And probable it is, that the Pharaoh, after whom we are now inquiring, was either the next or next but one in succession unto the former; from the beginning of whose reign, until the reign of our Pharaoh, there passed, as is conceived, the space of about fourscore years.\* It doth not appear that this Pharaoh walked in the steps of his predecessor, in causing the male children of the Israelites to be put to death; but he exercised another kind of cruelty towards them, whereby at once, as he conceived, he consulted both the safety and security of his kingdom, against the strength and power of the people of Israel, which seems to have been the chief design of him that would suffer none of their male children to live, and, likewise, the increasing of his revenues and enriching of himself. This was by grinding their faces, by oppressing them with an intolerable servitude, compelling them by stripes and threatenings unto hard labour, and this with little or no consideration of wages, or otherwise, for their work. This is that Pharaoh who was oft admonished from God by the ministry of Moses and Aaron, who also wrought sundry miracles in his sight, for the confirmation of their embassy, to suffer his people to depart out of his land. Notwithstanding, though he sometimes, upon the incumbency of some of the plagues and judgments inflicted upon his land and people, seemed to relent, and to be willing that the people of God should have liberty to depart, yet, soon after the removing or ceasing of the stroke, became the same man that he was before, and still detained this people in their most miserable bondage and thralldom, contrary to the express order and command of God, sent and signified unto him in that behalf. This is that Pharaoh to whom God said, “For this end have I raised thee up,” &c.

\* *Non rex ille, sub quo Moses natus, nec is, sub quo exierat Ægypto, sed successor eorum secundus vel tertius. Erat enim Moses annorum octoginta antequam in Ægyptum rediit ex Madian.*—LEONARD MARIUS in Exod. ii. 23. *Et revera constat alium fuisse Pharaonem Regem Ægypti, cum Josephus eo descenderet, alium autem istum, de quo nunc agimus, cujus odium et crudelitas erga Hebræos describitur in Exod.*—PET. MART. in locum.



(3.) And lastly : For the time wherein the said words were spoken unto Pharaoh, evident it is, from Exod. ix. 16, that it was after the sixth plague or stroke inflicted upon him and his land, and when another, the seventh, was now at the door, and ready to be inflicted also. A little before the infliction and immission hereof, God dispatcheth an admonitory message unto him by the hand of Moses, wherein he threateneth and declareth that though he had spared his life hitherto, having been as a dead man before him for his high rebellion, yet, unless he shall timely repent, set his people at liberty, and suffer them peaceably to depart, he will draw out his power to a higher degree against him, and punish him yet more severely than he had done hitherto, that so he may make it known unto all the world, he is a God great and terrible above what the world conceived of him before. The substance of this message is contained in the words before us.

2. For the words themselves, the tenor of them, as we have heard, is this : “ Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee,” &c. The Apostle’s preface to them, “ For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,” we have in part opened already, showing, that when he affirmeth that the Scripture spake thus unto Pharaoh, his meaning was, that God spake it, and that the Scripture only relateth or reporteth it as so spoken by him. We have likewise showed who or what that Pharaoh was to whom they were spoken. The ratiocinative or causal particle *γάρ*, *for*, “ For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,” &c., connecteth the words following with those preceding ; yet, haply, not with those immediately preceding, (verse 16,) but rather with those, “ God forbid,” (verse 14,) namely, that any doctrine should be taught by men, or any man, which importeth any “ unrighteousness with God,” although either of these connexions may stand. If we conceive the word to relate to verse 14, the import of the connexion is this : The Apostle having there peremptorily denied that his doctrine of justification by faith any ways inferreth any “ unrighteousness with God,” and having proved this in respect of those that are saved according to the tenor of it, (verses 15—17,) he proceeds to a like vindication of it in respect of those that perish, according to the sense and import of it ; “ For,” saith he, “ the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,” &c. ; as if he had said, There can be no “ unrighteousness with God” in condemning

or destroying those who shall not believe; “for,” or because, “the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,” &c.; meaning, that God’s proceedings in judgment against Pharaoh, a stubborn and impenitent unbeliever, even to destruction, is a clear argument and proof, that he may justly condemn and destroy whom he pleaseth; and that his pleasure in this kind is, to condemn and destroy impenitent unbelievers; otherwise he would not have destroyed Pharaoh upon this account. If we approve of that connexion, which referreth the said particle “for” to the words immediately preceding, “So then it is not of him that willet, but of God that showeth mercy,” (verse 16,) the coherence riseth thus: It is a plain case that the law or terms upon which men are justified and saved are not moulded or framed by, do not proceed from, men, though never so zealously intent and bent upon a course of justification in their own way, but by and from God only, who showeth mercy and freedom of grace unto them in their justification, because “the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,” &c., meaning, that inasmuch as God himself claimeth a liberty or right of condemning whom he pleaseth, as appeareth in his proceedings against Pharaoh, evident it is, that he hath a like right and liberty of justifying whom he pleaseth. For he that hath a right of power to condemn whom he pleaseth must, of necessity, and as it were of course, have a like power to justify or absolve whom he pleaseth. The reader is at liberty to choose which of these coherencies of the words he pleaseth: The words I mean are,

*Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, &c.—* ΟΤΙ ΕΙΣ ΑΥΤΟ ΤΑΥΤΟ ΕΞΗΓΕΙΡΑ ΣΕ, &c., that is, that *for this same thing have I raised thee up, &c.*, meaning, for this end or purpose. The particle “even” appears not in the original. For the regular understanding of this verse concerning Pharaoh, and the Apostle’s drift in it, we shall endeavour these two things: 1. Distinctly to show and declare the end or purpose for which God himself here saith that he raised up Pharaoh. 2. To open the sense and true import of this phrase, ΕΞΗΓΕΙΡΑ ΣΕ, *I have raised thee up.* By a diligent and narrow contemplation of the end for which God is said to have raised up Pharaoh, we shall be the better able to conceive aright of this act of God done by him in order thereunto.

The end for which God raised up Pharaoh is here expressed by this subordination. 1. That he might show his power in

him. 2. That hereby his "name might be declared throughout all the earth." First. Evident it is that the power of God, of which he here speaks, is that punishing or revenging power which soon after he exerted in Pharaoh's destruction. This appears by comparing herewith, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known," &c. (Verse 22.) These two phrases, "showing his wrath," and "making his power known," are mutually exegetical, and the one doth expound the other. So that that power which God did intend to show in or on Pharaoh was the power of his anger, as David calleth it; (Psalm xc. 11;) that is, how strong, and mighty, and terrible above measure he is to punish and take vengeance when he pleaseth, and the nature of the sin and provocation of offenders will bear it.

Whereas he adds this for the reason why he purposed to make his power known on Pharaoh, namely, that his "name might" hereby "be declared throughout all the earth;" he signifieth, that the punishment or judgment which he meant to inflict upon Pharaoh should be most extraordinary and terrible, insomuch that the tidings thereof should make all the world to tremble, and himself known to be a God exceeding terrible in executing vengeance upon impenitent and obdurate sinners, though never so great and mighty on the earth. But although the punishment here denounced against Pharaoh, as intended by God to be inflicted on him and on his people, be, in the letter of the threatening, chiefly meant of those outward plagues which were successively inflicted upon him and the Egyptians, and more especially of that final overthrow wherein both he and a mighty host of his men with him perished in the Red Sea, yet, there is little question to be made but that these temporal and external judgments, not working a sound repentance in those who were summoned to such a repentance by them, were fore-runners of and accompanied with the vengeance of eternal fire. Yet, whether Pharaoh himself, or any of the Egyptians with him, might or did truly repent, in the immediate approaches of death, which is not impossible for any man free from the guilt of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost to do, although I judge them to be exceeding few who do it, since I find it nowhere revealed or determined in the Scripture, neither shall I determine. However, as we reasoned before concerning Esau, that although it be said that God hated him, yet it cannot be

proved from hence, nor from any other Scripture, that therefore he was a reprobate and finally perished ; much less that he was reprobated by God from eternity ; and further, that though he should not be supposed a reprobate in this sense, yet he may, with conveniency enough, be a type of those who are or prove such ; in like manner, we affirm concerning Pharaoh, 1. That it cannot convincingly be proved from the Scriptures that he perished everlastingly, or died under a sentence of reprobation ; much less can it be proved that he was reprobated by God from eternity. 2. That though it should not be supposed that he perished eternally, yet may he in his story properly and commodiously enough be held forth by the Apostle as a type of those who do and will so perish. But this by the way.

It being granted on all hands as a thing unquestionable, that God's end or intent in raising up Pharaoh, (of which phrase afterwards in its place,) was the showing of his power on him, and the glorifying of his great name hereby throughout the world, it is a question of most worthy import, and the resolution of it of absolute necessity, for a clear and thorough understanding of the passage in hand, whether this end and intent of his was precise and absolute, so that nothing that Pharaoh was in any capacity, under any possibility of doing, could possibly have hindered or taken off God from showing his power in him, that is, in his destruction, &c : Or, whether it was conditional only ; conditional, I mean, in this sense, namely, that in case Pharaoh had repented, whilst the patience of God yet waited on him, and had suffered the people of God peaceably to depart out of his land, and not followed after them to bring them back, whether, I say, upon this supposition, God would, notwithstanding, have showed his power in destroying him, as now he did.\*

GOD'S END IN RAISING UP PHARAOH NOT POSITIVE OR  
ABSOLUTE.

The far greatest part of expositors take no knowledge at all of any such question as this occasioned from the place ; but according to the ducture of the common notion of an election of persons under a personal consideration, from eternity, hold on their course of expounding, only attempting and straining,

\* In what sense all the intentions and decrees of God are absolute and unchangeable, is fully cleared, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 65, 209 ; and how they cannot be defeated, p. 215 ; and again, how some of them may, pp. 22, 33, 215.

though in vain, to bring over the words to comport with this notion. For, 1. Here is not the least intimation of any end propounded by God to himself from eternity about Pharaoh, but only in time; and this after his refusal to obey the express command of God for the dismissal of his people, notwithstanding the certainty of this command, as from himself, had been miraculously confirmed unto him by Moses. Nor, 2. Is there the least or lightest hint given, that the end of God here mentioned, in raising up Pharaoh when he did, namely, the showing of his power in him, was upon any such terms proposed or conceived by him, that he meant actually to accomplish or effect it, against all possible interveniencies whatsoever, or particularly whether Pharaoh should have obeyed his command by letting his people go, or no. Nor, 3. Is any thing insinuated, as if Pharaoh had been under an absolute impossibility of yielding this obedience unto that his command. Nor, 4. Doth the context or scope of the Apostle, which, as we have formerly showed, is to vindicate the righteousness of God, in condemning and destroying whom he pleaseth, as, namely, wicked, stubborn, and impenitent unbelievers, require the assertion, intimation, or supposition, of any such thing here, as that Pharaoh should be peremptorily or irreversibly doomed by God from eternity to eternal destruction, the said vindication being sufficiently asserted and made good only by God's claiming a liberty or right of power to destroy Pharaoh, or any other person, in case he shall remain obdurately wicked and unbelieving unto the end. 5. Though I am strong of belief, upon some considerations, that Pharaoh did miscarry and perish, not only temporally, but eternally also; yet can it not be clearly or demonstratively proved from any Scripture, that he did thus miscarry. 6. God himself declares and promiseth, that when he shall threaten wicked men with any judgment, or with death, in case they repent before the stroke cometh, he will repent also, and not bring the judgment threatened upon them. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 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." (Jer. xviii. 7, 8.) And, soon after: "Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and

make your ways and your doings good ;” (verse 11 ;) meaning, that then he would not execute the evil, which he had devised, that is, purposed, intended, and projected, against them. (See also Zech. xii. 1, 2; Amos iv. 12; with many the like.) Now this message of God unto Pharaoh, “For this same purpose have I raised thee up, to show my power in thee,” &c., is minatory or threatening; and so the evil therein threatened preventable by repentance. 7. There is nothing more frequent and usual in the Scriptures than for the Holy Ghost to express such purposes and intentions of God simply, absolutely, and without any specification or mention of a condition, which yet are conditionally to be understood, as the event and issue of things hath in many cases made fully manifest. This message God sent to Nineveh by the Prophet Jonah: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” (Jonah iii. 4.) In this passage God’s intent to destroy Nineveh is positively, and without condition, expressed; yet the event plainly showeth that this intention of his was conditional, and not meant to be put in execution but only in case of their impenitency, upon the denunciation of it unto them. The like is evident in that message to Eli: “Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed,” that is, I really or verily intended, and promised accordingly, “that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me,” namely, in the office and dignity of the priesthood, “for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me,” &c. (1 Sam. ii. 30.)\* And it is matter of ready observation, that the threatenings of God against sinners in every kind are almost every where in Scripture positively and assertively expressed, without mention of any condition, as of faith, repentance, or the like, by which the great evil or misery intended and included in them may be prevented; which conditions, nevertheless, are to be understood; otherwise the mind of God in such threatenings will utterly, and with imminent danger to the precious souls of men, be mistaken. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall

\* *Promissiones et comminationes non semper præcise et κατὰ τὸ ρητὸν, sed sæpe conditionate et hypotheticæ sunt accipiendæ, etiam si verba absolute posita esse videantur.* See more of this, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 209, 210, 217, 222, &c.

inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) The counsel, purpose, and intentions of God for the destruction of all the several kinds of sinners here specified are positively and absolutely, in respect of words, denounced; which yet we all know are conditionally to be understood, and with the reserve or supposal only of final impenitency. Places of like character and phrase, see Eph. v. 6; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36; Matt. v. 19, &c. So that to understand this message of God unto Pharaoh conditionally, "For this same purpose have I raised thee up, to show my power in thee," &c., as, namely, "in case thou shall remain stubborn and impenitent unto the end," is every way consonant to the Scriptures. 8. And lastly: To understand the said message otherwise, and as if God's intent in raising up Pharaoh here mentioned had been peremptory, positive, and absolute, so that, notwithstanding Pharaoh should have behaved himself never so penitently, submissively, and obediently, under or upon this message declared unto him, yet God would have showed his power, as now he did, in destroying him, doth not only oppose the main stream and current of the Scriptures, together with that most gracious manifesto published by God himself unto the world, (Jer. xviii. 7, 8,) lately mentioned, but is repugnant also to that greater and more beloved end of God, here likewise expressed, namely, the declaration of his name throughout all the earth. For, questionless, by this declaration of his name, God doth not simply or only mean a publication or making known of his mighty power, whereby he is able to crush or destroy his creature, but the making known of this power, together with his righteousness or just severity in the exercise of it, for the destruction of all impenitent and stubborn sinners, who will not be reclaimed in due time. Now, in case Pharaoh should have repented, and brought forth fruit worthy repentance, visible to the world, when God had showed his power in destroying him, it would not have been the true name of God, or any name worthy him, that would hereby have been declared throughout the world; because it must needs have signified that as he is dreadfully irresistible in his power, so is he wont to exert and make use of it for the destruction of those who truly repent and submit unto him, in case they have formerly rebelled and been disobedient. Certainly God doth not intend or project, by one means or other, such a representation of himself as this in the world.

If it be objected and said, "But God's intent was, that Pharaoh should not repent, or at least foresaw that he would not repent; and, upon the foundation of this his foresight, resolved peremptorily to show his power in his ruin;" to this I answer,

1. It cannot be proved from any Scripture, that God's intent was, especially from eternity, no, nor yet from the beginning of his treaty with him, that Pharaoh should not repent. Nay,

2. Though it should be granted that God foresaw that Pharaoh would not repent, (albeit in strictness and propriety of speech God doth not foresee any thing, but only seeth and beholdeth all things as present,) yet it must be granted that he foresaw, likewise, that Pharaoh might have repented, if he had pleased. For Pharaoh was under no more, no other, necessity of non-repenting by means of the foresight of God that he would not repent, than he would have been under, in case it could and should be supposed that God had not foreseen it. It is a maxim delivered by Austin long since, and hath been generally received by men of best learning, judgment, and insight into the Scriptures, that "God by his foreknowledge doth not necessitate or constrain the coming to pass of the things foreknown by him." Therefore, it doth not follow from God's foresight of Pharaoh's non-repentance, that his intent was that he should not repent, or that he decreed his non-repentance. In that sense wherein the Scriptures ascribe intentions or desires unto God, he may be said to have intended Pharaoh's repentance, and upon this his preservation, notwithstanding his foreknowledge of his obduration and impenitency. For,

3. The nature and proper tendency of those miracles which God commanded Moses to work in Pharaoh's sight, together with the explication of the end for which God enabled and sent him to work them, which was, that Pharaoh by this means might certainly know that that message or command to suffer the children of Israel to depart out of his land, which was signified unto him by Moses, was from God; the nature, I say, and proper tendency of these being to work Pharaoh to a ready compliance with and obedience unto that command of God, plainly evinceth that God's intent concerning him was that he should have obeyed. For though God sometimes, as David saith, maketh a fruitful land barren, "for the wickedness of them that dwell therein," (Psalm cvii. 34,) yet his primary



intention in planting any man in a fruitful land is not to starve or famish him, or to slay him with hunger. And it is none of the worst sayings of the Synod of Dort, that “the efficacy of the helps or means of grace,” vouchsafed by God unto men, “is to be” measured or “judged of by the nature of the benefit offered, and by the manifest word of God, not by the event or abuse of them.”\*

4. God’s express command imposed upon Pharaoh to let his people go, together with his often threatening him, and this very terribly, in case he should disobey, and not let them go; to which we may add, his constant execution of these threatenings accordingly; these, I say, both *divisim*, and especially *conjunctim*, plainly show that God’s intent concerning Pharaoh was not that he should rebel, much less finally persist in his rebellion, but that he should obey, and let the people go. For doth any man command, and that with all seriousness and gravity, yea, and under severe penalties in case of disobedience, that which he neither intends nor desires should be done? Nay, doth any man that is in earnest command that which is quite contrary to what he intends or desires should be effected? Therefore, certainly, God did not intend Pharaoh’s disobedience or rebellion, but the contrary. Yea, the native and proper tendency of all those applications which God made unto Pharaoh, to prevail with him to suffer his people peaceably to depart out of his land, sufficiently appeareth by those yieldings and relentings of heart which they wrought in him once and again, however he hardened himself again afterwards. (See Exod. viii. 25, 28; ix. 27; x. 16; xii. 31, 32.) These inclinations and willingnesses in Pharaoh to let the people go were the genuine and proper effects of those means which God used to make him willing thereunto, not by fits and starts, but with a composed uniformity and perseverance.

5. He that is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,” which the Apostle Peter expressly affirms of God, (2 Peter iii. 9,) could not be willing, much less intend, that Pharaoh should perish, or persist in impenitency.

6. Disobedience and rebellion against just and righteous

\* *Ex natura beneficii oblatis, et verbo Dei apertissimo judicandum est de illis gratiæ auxiliis, quæ hominibus suppeditantur, non autem ex eventu aut abusu.*—SYN. DORT., part ii., p. 128.

laws are abhorings to the soul of God; and therefore can be no objects of his intentions or decrees. Whoever intended or decreed such a thing which is contrary to what he approveth, taketh pleasure, or delights in? No man ever yet, being in the possession of his senses, though but common and ordinary, intended or decreed his own sorrow, or any thing contrary to what he approveth.\*

But two things, it is like, will be here objected: 1. That God often said that he would “harden Pharaoh’s heart, that he should not let the people go.” (Exod. iv. 21; vii. 3, 13, &c.) If so, did he not intend his hardening, and, consequently, his disobedience and ruin? 2. If God did not intend his disobedience and impenitency, why did he not show him mercy, taking some effectual course to prevent them? First, to the first, I answer,

That when God saith that he will harden Pharaoh’s heart, &c., the meaning is not, either, 1. That by any positive, much less by any forcible or compulsory, action, in one kind or other, he would cause Pharaoh’s heart to become obdurate or hard: This is granted on all hands. Or, 2. That he would withdraw his grace or Spirit from him to such a degree, that by means hereof it should become impossible for him not to be hardened. If this be affirmed, it clearly followeth that until this act of God, whereby Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, he was, by means of the grace and Spirit of God in him, in a sufficient capacity to have repented; otherwise there could be no occasion for God to withdraw his Spirit from him, in order to his obduration or impenitency; nor can such a withdrawing as this be proved from the Scriptures. Or, 3. That he meant to withhold the Spirit of grace from him to any such degree, that he would leave him under an absolute impossibility of repentance. For, besides that such a withholding as this cannot be proved from the Scriptures, nor by any good reason, that persons, even after a long course of disobedience and rebellion against God, are yet in a capacity, or possibility at least, of repenting and submitting unto God,† is fully evident from Ezek. xii. 2, 3, compared, and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16; to omit many other places of like import. So that when God said he would harden Pharaoh’s

\* *In primis nefas est dicere, Deum aliquid nisi bonum prædestinare.*—Aug. *De Prædestinatione Dei*, c. 2. See more of this, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 473.

† See further ground for this, *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, pp. 61—62.

heart, his meaning was not, that he would interpose, either by any such action or non-action, whereby Pharaoh's heart must of necessity be hardened; but either, (1.) That he would proceed or deal after such a manner with him, as, namely, by sparing his person for a long time, by a gracious removing, and taking off, time after time, those several judgments or plagues which he brought upon his land, so giving him respite and ease between plague and plague, and by such gradual withdrawals of his Spirit from him, as by the rule of his proceedings in like cases his sin required, that it was none otherwise like, but that Pharaoh, being a man of a proud, haughty, and profane spirit, would be hardened thereby, and persist in the habitual stubbornness of his heart against God; or else, (2.) That he would take the course specified with him, upon which he certainly knew or foresaw that he would be hardened. Such acts are frequently in Scripture ascribed sometimes unto God, and sometimes unto men; some occasion whereof only they administer, though they act nothing positively or directly, in order to the production of them, no, nor yet intend their production. Thus God is said to have TURNED THE HEART of the Egyptians "to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants," (Psalm cv. 25,) only by those providential acts of his grace towards them immediately preceding: "And he increased his people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies." (Compare herewith Exod. i. 7—10, &c.) It cannot reasonably be imagined, much less substantially proved, that God did multiply and increase his people with an intent hereby to expose them to the hatred of their enemies, or to exasperate the spirits of the Egyptians against them; only, by multiplying them so greatly, he ministered such an occasion unto them, which so wrought upon their evil and corrupt hearts, that it provoked their passion of hatred against them. And when God intended and was about thus to multiply them, he might have said, and this in sufficient propriety of speech, "I will exasperate and provoke the Egyptians against my people," as here he saith, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart," &c. Nor doth it follow, that because God knew or foresaw, though neither knowledge nor foreknowledge are properly or formally in God,\* that such a providence of his would raise up a spirit of envy in

\* See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 29, 30.

the Egyptians against his people, that therefore he intended such a thing; nor did he intend or design the fall of Adam in or by creating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Paradise, with pleasant fruit upon it; although he knew the fall of Adam would be the consequent of it, and occasioned by it. For the intentions, as also the decrees, of God have only that which is good and approved by him for their object, as we lately said, and, consequently, not that which is evil or sinful. Other texts of Scripture, where the subministration only of an occasion upon which any thing is acted by another, entitleth the subministrator in this kind to the said action, though he intends it not, are these, and probably many others: 2 Sam. xvi. 10; Matt. v. 32; John xii. 40; Rom. xiv. 15, 20; 1 Cor. viii. 13; Gen. xlv. 7, 8. So that there is nothing in the first reason drawn from these words of God to Moses, "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart," &c., sufficient to prove that either Pharaoh's hardening, final impenitency, or destruction by it, were intended by God.

Nor is there any whit more, if not much less, in the latter. For though Pharaoh be here brought upon the stage by the Apostle, as an instance or proof of that just power or liberty which God hath, as well to harden whom, or what manner of persons, he pleaseth, as to have mercy on whom he pleaseth, as appears from the next verse, yet neither will this prove that he simply and absolutely intended Pharaoh's hardening, or destruction upon it; but only that he intended to hold such a course of dispensations towards him, which, his voluntary pride, arrogance, ignorance, and contempt of God, considered, was very likely to harden him, yea, and which God knew would actually and *de facto* harden him, and this to destruction, as was lately touched. For the Scripture, speaking of God's intentions, especially those that are primary and antecedent, never makes them concurrent with such events or productions of his providences or dispensations which are accidental and occasional only, but only with those which are natural and proper, and which the said dispensations are of themselves, and when not abused, apt to produce. Thus our Saviour himself speaketh: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 17.) Though a very great part of the world, yea, the far greater part of it, if we speak of men and women actually

capable of believing, will, in respect of the event, be condemned and perish, and this upon the harder terms because of Christ; yet because the gift of Jesus Christ was an apt, proper, and direct means to save the world, and no such means either to condemn or to increase the condemnation of the world, therefore he asserts and appropriates the intentions, the primary intentions, of God in this gift unto the former, and removes them from the latter. And whereas elsewhere he saith, "For judgment," εἰς κρίμα, *unto judgment*, "am I come into this world," &c., (John ix. 39,) he clearly speaketh only of the event and issue of his coming, and that which is accidental thereunto, as Calvin himself, with the generality of interpreters, expoundeth it.\* (See further, upon the like account, John x. 10; Matt. viii. 11; John i. 7, &c.) Now, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart being no natural, proper, or direct effect of God's dispensations in one kind or other towards him, but accidental and occasional only, contrary, indeed, to the native tendency and bent of the said dispensations, caused rather by Pharaoh himself, his voluntary ignorance, pride, covetousness, profaneness, &c., than by any of them, the said dispensations, it cannot, according to Scripture notion concerning God, be resolved into his intentions or will, (primary, I mean, or antecedent,) as the cause thereof; yea, the truth is, the nature and property of the means considered, wherein God applied himself unto Pharaoh, he may be said to have intended his repentance, peace, and safety, yea, and to have gone very far, and to have done in some respect as much or more in order to their procuring of them than he doth for the generality of those who are brought to repentance and salvation by him.

If it be demanded, "But if God did not intend the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, how comes his case to be an argument or proof with our Apostle of that just liberty which God claimeth to harden whom he pleaseth? Can the effecting of any thing accidentally argue a just liberty to effect or do it, in him who upon such terms effecteth it?" to this I answer,

It is true, the doing of a thing casually or accidentally by men doth not argue a liberty or right of power in them to do it. The slaying of a man accidentally is no necessary argument

\* *Quod autem alibi docet Christus, se in judicium venisse, quod vocatur Petra scandali, quod dicitur positus in multorum ruinam, id accidentale est vel (ut ita loquar) adventitium.*—CALVIN. in John iii. 17.

that he that did it hath or had a justness of power, simply and directly, and with the foreknowledge of the event, to do it; although it may very possibly be, that he had a justness of power to do that by which he accidentally slayeth this man. Yea, that which is yet more, supposing that act by which the man is accidentally slain was matter of duty in him that did it, which may very possibly be, and that the event itself, the slaying of the man, had been revealed beforehand by God unto him, he had a justness of power, at least, this foreknowledge of the event notwithstanding, to have done that which he did, and, consequently, by way of event, to slay the man. Now, though nothing can be done by God casually or accidentally, in such a sense of the words wherein they are commonly applied unto men, namely, without a knowledge of the event, yet very many things are done by him casually and accidentally in this sense, namely, as the words signify the doing, effecting, or bringing to pass of such a thing which hath no natural affinity with the means by which it is effected by such an Agent, who, in good propriety of speech, may, notwithstanding, be said to effect it. For otherwise the truth is, that there is no effect or event whatsoever, not that which seems and is most casual and accidental, but which, amongst all the means and causes by which it is produced, taken together, will be found to be produced by some, one or more, which are apt and proper to produce it. But therefore some events are called such, (I mean casual and accidental,) and this properly and truly, because some of the causes which contribute towards their production, and without the contribution whereof it is not like they would have been effected, are in themselves of a contrary tendency, and would not have contributed any thing towards the producing of such effects, but the contrary, had they not fallen in conjunction with, and been overruled by, such other causes, which were natural and proper by the opportunity of this conjunction, to produce them. Thus the destruction of fools is ascribed to their prosperity: "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them;" (Prov. i. 32;) not because prosperity, or the bountifulness of God in the good things of this life unto men, hath, in the nature of it, any such malignant property which is destructive either to the peace, comfort, or lives of men, the natural and proper tendency and ducture of it being to lead men unto God, and so to preserve them from destruction; but because, meeting

with the vanity, weakness, pride, and inconsiderateness of men, it occasioneth strange and fond conceptions of mind and thought in them, which become snares unto them, enticing them into such ways and practices, which prove their ruin in the end. Thus our Apostle, describing the proper genius and work of the *goodness of God*, το χρησον τῆ Θεῃ, towards men, affirms it to be εἰς μετανοίαν αγειν, *to lead them to repentance*, (Rom. ii. 4,) which, nevertheless, as in the words immediately following, he teacheth in effect, meeting with a hard and unrelenting heart, occasioneth men to “treasure up wrath unto themselves against the day of wrath.”

By the way, when Solomon saith, that “the prosperity of fools shall destroy them,” he doth not suppose that these fools would certainly have been blessed or have escaped in case they had not met with prosperity by the way; for certain it is that many perish through foolishness, in an adverse or unprosperous condition. But his meaning is, that when prosperity comes upon such persons who are sinfully foolish and vain, it frequently occasioneth and produceth both their more speedy as likewise their more signal and exemplary ruin. In like manner, when God is said to have hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that is, to have raised him up,—for the Apostle, as we shall hear in due time, signifieth but one and the same action in God by these two expressions,—and upon it to have showed his power in his destruction, it neither, 1. Supposeth that Pharaoh’s heart was not hardened until God hardened it: The contrary hereunto is evident from the story. Nor yet, 2. That Pharaoh’s heart would not have been further hardened, unless God had taken some such course as now he did thus to harden it; for many men’s hearts are and have been hardened to a great degree, without any such interposures of God as those whereby Pharaoh became so fearfully hardened. Nor yet, 3. That Pharaoh would not have perished or been destroyed, unless God had hardened him, as now he did, or showed his power in his destruction, as now likewise he did. All that the said expressions imply, as to such matters as these, are, 1. That God did providentially apply himself unto Pharaoh upon such terms whereby he became hardened to destruction. 2. That had he not been hardened to such a high degree as he was, yet he might have perished, only God could not, according to those principles of wisdom and justice by which he governs the world,

and ordereth the concernments of men, have shown his power with so much observation of dread and terror unto the world in his destruction as now he did. But of this afterwards.

In the mean time, evident it is, from what hath been argued, that Pharaoh's hardening by God, being foreknown, though not intended, by him, is a proper instance and sufficient proof of his just liberty to harden whom he will; only this supposed, which the Jews, with whom especially the Apostle had here to do, granted without scruple, as we all generally do, namely, that God doeth nothing, in one kind or other, at any time, or in reference to any person, but what he hath a just and full liberty to do. How the prescience or foreknowledge of God differs from his intentions, and how comprehensive, in respect of the object, the former is above the latter, hath been argued at large elsewhere.\* So, then, men have no competent ground to judge that God's intent or end in raising up Pharaoh, which is said to be the showing of his power in him, and the glorifying of his name thereby, was positive and absolute, in the sense formerly declared, but conditional only, and intended to be put in execution in case of his perseverance in his former stubbornness, and not otherwise; as, namely, in case he had in time so repented of his rebellion against God, as to suffer his people to depart his land in peace.

If it be yet further objected, that "the express tenor of the words, 'For this very thing,' or *cause*, 'have I raised thee up,' *οπως ενδειξωμαι*, &c., proveth, that the showing of God's power in Pharaoh, that is, in his destruction, was the very particular and precise end, purpose, or intent of God in raising him up;" I answer,

The question is not, whether God's showing of his power, namely, in a most extraordinary and signal manner, in Pharaoh's destruction was the real end and intent of his act in raising him up, but whether this end were so or upon such terms intended by him therein, that he was resolved to proceed to his destruction howsoever; I mean, whether he had repented, or no. The former hath been granted; it is only the latter that is denied; and a sufficient account, we trust, hath been given of this denial.

If it be objected, "But if God's end in raising up Pharaoh was only conditional, in such a sense as you have described, then the ends and intentions of God, it seems, are pendulous;

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, c. 3.



and his attainment or execution of them suspended upon the creature, and the motions of his pleasure and will. And to conceive thus of them is it not highly dishonourable unto God?" To this also I answer,

1. There is a sense, and this most proper, clear, and direct, wherein it is most certainly true that all God's ends and intentions are absolute, peremptory, and fixed; not alterable, or liable to any disappointment, counter-working, or defeature, by any creature or creatures whatsoever. Whatsoever God intendeth or proposeth to himself in the nature of an end, the tenor, manner, and form of his intending or proposing it, rightly understood and considered, he never faileth, under what inter-veniences soever, to obtain; nor is the execution of the one, or bringing to pass of the other, liable to any suspension, diversion, or turning aside, by any creature. As for example: God's intent is, to save all those that shall continue in faith and love unto the end. (Mark xiii. 13.) Let the world stand or fall, let men, angels, and devils interpose, and oppose their utmost, this intention of God shall take place, and be put *toties quoties* in execution: They who shall thus continue unto the end shall be saved. Nor can the execution of such an intention as this be said to be suspended upon the continuance of men in faith and love unto the end, but only upon the power, purpose, and good pleasure of God. For the reason why they who continue in faith and love to the end are saved, is, not because they thus continue, or because they are willing and desirous themselves to be saved; both these might have been, and yet they, the persons, never have been saved; but because the will and good pleasure of God, who is able to save them, is, that so it should be, that is, that such should be saved. Let instance be put in any other intention of God whatsoever; take the intention in the complete, just, and entire notion or tenor of it, as it lieth in the breast of God, and the execution of it will be found impregnable, and independent upon the will or pleasure of what creature soever. Some things, indeed, there are, which are so expressed and represented in the Scriptures, as if they were simply and absolutely the intentions of God, (and may upon this account be called his intentions,) when as they are but parts only of these his intentions, the other parts of them, respectively, being to be supplied and made out from other scriptures.

Thus, the excluding of those who are idolaters, and so of

adulterers, covetous persons, &c., from the kingdom of God, is oft mentioned as the intent or "purpose of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 19—21; Eph. v. 5, 6, &c.) Yet this is but somewhat or a part of his intent or purpose in this kind; his entire or complete purpose or intent about this matter, as other scriptures make manifest above all contradiction, is the exclusion of the persons specified, with the like, from the kingdom of God, in case they remain finally impenitent and unbelieving, and not otherwise. Now this intent and purpose of God are "like the great mountains," in David's rhetoric, "which cannot be removed;" and the execution of them not preventible, by any possible interposure, one or more, of any creature or creatures whatsoever. We gave, not long since, more instances of such partial and incomplete expressions of the intentions of God as this. Of this kind of intention, or expression rather, of the intentions of God, is that under present consideration, where he saith to Pharaoh, "For this very end have I raised thee up, that I may show my power in thee," &c. These words do not contain the whole mind or intent of God concerning Pharaoh, or his destruction, but a part of it only; and in this respect, so far as it is here declared, it might have been prevented by Pharaoh; as the intent of God concerning Nineveh, so far as it was revealed unto and by Jonah, was prevented by the Ninevites. But now take the whole mind, counsel, and intent of God concerning Pharaoh's destruction, and so it was impossible to have been prevented, either by himself or any other. For this it was, that in case Pharaoh should remain obstinate to such a time, under such means as God intended to grant unto him for his repentance, he would then show his power in him; that is, destroy him with a great pomp and terror of destruction. This intent of God concerning Pharaoh's destruction, neither Pharaoh himself, nor all the angels in heaven, nor all the devils in hell, nor all the men on earth, were able to prevent. The like is true concerning the entire counsel or intention of God about the destruction of Nineveh, which was this,—that unless Nineveh should repent within forty days it should be destroyed. This intention of God concerning this city was like God himself, unchangeable by all imaginable ways and means whatsoever.

Now the reason, probably, (to add that briefly by the way,) why God so frequently revealth his intentions, especially con-

cerning the punishing of men, only in part, as hath been observed, mentioning only the punishment, without any overture or promise of exemption upon repentance, may be either, 1. Because the law of exemption from punishment upon repentance is written in the tables of men's hearts by the hand of nature, as is to be seen in the case of Ahab, the Ninevites, and others; who only upon judgments threatened, without any mention or promise of mercy in case of repentance, betook themselves to the sanctuary of repentance, notwithstanding; making no account but that there was pardon and deliverance here, although they had no particular tidings or assurance of them. Or else, 2. The reason may be, because that very dispensation of God towards men, sinful men, I mean, his giving them warning before he smites, and a space or breathing while between the threatening and the execution, being a fruit of his patience, is, constructively, an invitation unto repentance, and, consequently, unto favour, safety, and peace: "The goodness," or patience, "of God," saith our Apostle elsewhere in this Epistle, "leadeth unto repentance;" that is, pregnantly intimates grace and favour from God unto men upon their repentance. Now God delighteth much to deal with his creature man by way of intimations and insinuations, for the better exercise and improvement of those noble faculties of their soul, reason, judgment, conscience, and understanding. Or else, 3. The reason hereof may be, because lawgivers from amongst men are wont frequently in their laws to express only the penalty, in order to restraining the transgression; and to omit the *επιεικεια*, that is, the *favourable* or *indulging* part of the law, leaving this to the breast of the Judge. For God, as from many passages of Scripture might be made manifest, in his treaties and dealings with men, loves to comport with those forms and methods of transactions which are in frequent use amongst men. Or else, 4. And lastly: The reason why God sometimes hides the lightsome and gracious side of his intentions, exposing only the black and dark side unto present view, may be, because, though that which I call the dark side of his intentions may in every case wherein it is expressed be plainly enough gathered and understood from other scriptures, as well as the other, which I call lightsome, yet, men are far more propense and free to inquire and seek out matters relating to their accommodation and ease, than such things which are of a sorrowful and sad resentment

unto them. And in this respect it is not much improbable, but that God many times may bring the evil day near unto men, and bind it fast and close to their consciences, by the band of an actual mention or threatening of it, and yet leave the good day to be looked after and found out by themselves; it being not, in respect of the terms or conditions of it, very far remote from them. But whether any or all these, or some other, be the reasons and grounds of that Scripture disposition or dispensation we speak of, evident it is that such a disposition is found here; and that God oftentimes speaks only of wrath and destruction unto those for whom, notwithstanding, he hath in full purpose grace and peace in case of their repentance.

And thus we clearly and plainly see how and in what sense the intentions of God are all absolute, all inflexible, unchangeable, liable to no disappointment or interruption whatsoever, no ways dependent in their execution upon the wills or actings of any creature or creatures whatsoever; and again, on the other hand, how many of them, notwithstanding, so far as they are expressed or declared upon particular occasions, may be, and frequently are, for ever suspended and prevented in their execution by the interposures of men.

The result of all these latter discussions is this,—that God's intent in raising up Pharaoh, here described to be the "showing of his power in him," &c., was not his whole counsel or intent concerning his destruction, but one part of it only; and that he no otherwise intended his destruction, but upon his final obduration only; yea, and that he as much or as well intended his peace and preservation upon his timely repentance, as his destruction upon his final impenitence. Therefore, Pharaoh is no type, much less any instance or example, of such a reprobation of men from eternity, which some men have dreamed of waking, pretending to gather it where it was never strewed,—I mean, from the Scriptures.

Give me leave briefly to propound and answer one objection more about the business of Pharaoh, hitherto inquired into, and then, for the present, we shall dismiss it; although the truth is, that the heart of the objection hath been, in part, broken already. But because it may, haply, seem a new objection unto some, and to have more strength in it for their purpose than any of the former, let us give it audience. It speaketh thus:—

OBJECTION.—“If God intended as much or as well Pharaoh's

preservation upon his repentance, as his destruction upon his impenitency, and besides, as you have informed us, granted him means more proper to bring him to repentance than to harden him, why should it not rather be said, that God raised him up, that he might show his power in his preservation or exaltation, than in his destruction? especially considering, as you also have taught us, that the intentions of God are to be judged of by the natural and proper tendency of the means granted by him, and not by the event or consequent of them." To this I

ANSWER, 1. The drift of the Apostle in the passage in hand was to vindicate the righteousness of God, not in justifying or rewarding, (this he had done in the two former verses,) but in rejecting, hardening, and destroying, whom or what manner of persons he pleaseth. So that it was altogether impertinent and improper for him to speak any thing here concerning any man's exaltation or rewarding by God.

2. Though those providential means by which God in the event hardened Pharaoh's heart to a far higher degree than it was before, and so prepared and fitted him for destruction, were in themselves simply and in their native tendency considered apt and proper to have wrought his heart to a love and reverence of God and of his commands, and not to a further degree of obstinacy; yet the present temper and frame of Pharaoh's heart, when they came to deal with it, considered, they were much more like to occasion and produce such an effect as they did, namely, a greater measure of obduration than the healing or removal of that which he had already contracted. Now, though the intentions of God, that is, his primary and antecedent intentions, as we lately distinguished and observed, be still presented in the Scriptures as confederate and concurring with the natural and proper, not with the accidental or occasional, effects of the means vouchsafed by him; yet his secondary and subsequent intentions are still concurrent with these.\* "Behold this child is set," saith Simeon, "for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against." (Luke ii. 34.) His being "set for the fall of many" proceeds from the subsequent intention of God, which is, that those who shall reject him, and oppose his doctrine,

\* How this distinction of the intentions or will of God into antecedent and consequent is founded upon the Scriptures, and why the one are called antecedent the other consequent, see *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 448, 489.

shall be detected for hypocrites and unworthy persons, and fall from that high esteem for holiness which before they had amongst men.\* His being “set for the rising of many,” is from and according to the antecedent or primary intentions of God, which are, that they who shall embrace his doctrine, though before they were ignorant and weak, and so in no repute amongst men for any great matters of sanctity, shall thereby be raised to an honourable esteem in their thoughts. (See the like, Johm ix. 39; Rom. xi. 33; Mark xvi. 16; to omit other places.) So, then, there being no occasion why the primary and antecedent intentions of God concerning Pharaoh, which yet are evident enough from the nature and tendency of those applications made by him unto him as we lately argued, should be here mentioned by the Apostle, but a manifest and pregnant occasion why his subsequent intentions that way should be declared, it need be no matter of question unto any man why the one should be done and not the other.

3. And lastly : The intent of the Apostle in the place in hand being, as hath been said, only to assert and prove the just liberty of God to harden and destroy whom he pleaseth, and to insinuate withal what manner of persons they are upon or against whom he is pleased to exercise this liberty, it was simply necessary for him to insist only upon the subsequent intentions of God, and withal only to instance some such wicked, ignorant, and proud person as Pharaoh was, because the primary intentions of God are not set, do not stand, for the hardening or for the destroying of any person of mankind whatsoever, but for the softening and saving of all; and his subsequent intentions themselves are not bent for the hardening of any, nor, consequently, for the destruction of any, but of persons voluntarily ignorant, evil, froward, proud, and either in whole or in part such as Pharaoh was.

Having by a diligent and narrow search clearly discovered and found what God's end, purpose, and intent was in that providential act or dispensation about Pharaoh, here expressed in these words, ἐξηγείρα σε, *I have raised thee up*, namely, to show the power of his wrath in his destruction, and so to make him-

\* *Omnino res ipsa eo nos ducit, ut diligenter distinguamus divina decreta. Nam alia vult Deus προηγουμενος, alie vero επομενος, sive, ut vetustissimi Christianorum loquuntur, εκ παρακολυθησεως, sive εκ περισεως. quod et δευτερος dicunt quidam.*  
—HUGO GROTIUS. in Luc. ii. 34.

self a name great and terrible through the world, in case he repented not in time; let us, with more brevity, now inquire and consider what this word, ἐξήγειρα, *I have raised up*, here imports, and what this act of God was by which he sought to compass that his end. Some, by God's raising up Pharaoh, understand his act of creating him or bringing him into the world; \* others, his providential act in advancing him to the great place and royal dignity of a King. Some understand by it both the said acts in conjunction: Thus Bucer. Others understand God's stirring up or provoking Pharaoh to a greater obdurateness of heart against his people by commanding him so oft as he did to let them go, † according to that of our Apostle, "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence," &c. (Rom. vii. 8.) Lastly, some interpret it to be that act or dispensation of God towards Pharaoh by which he preserved him in life and being after he had made himself a child of death by so many acts of rebellion as he had now committed against him, remaining still obdurate and impenitent notwithstanding. Though the three former interpretations, well understood, contain nothing in them that is unsound, and, the third and last of them only excepted, are of competent accord with the signification of the word here used; yet, circumstances considered, and the words and passage in Moses duly weighed, the exposition last-mentioned will be found most apposite and proper. For,

1. Concerning the clause in Moses, here rendered by the Apostle, εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ ἐξήγειρα σε, *For this very thing have I raised thee up*, the Chaldee paraphrase explains it thus: *Propter hoc sustinui te*, "For this cause have I endured thee," or "patiently borne with thee." This notion of the words well agrees with that phrase of the Apostle, "endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." (Verse 22.) The Septuagint translates it, καὶ ἐνεκα τούτων διετηρήθης ἕως τῆς νῦν, *And for this hast thou been kept or preserved until now*. Augustine: "And for this very thing hast thou been preserved." ‡ Thus also Ambrose reads the words of the Apostle, glossing thus: "He speaketh thus because Pharaoh, being guilty of so many and great evils that he ought not to

\* Vide CALVIN. in locum, et BEZÆ Annotat.

† ANSELM in locum.

‡ Et propter hoc ipsum conservatus es.—AUG. in Exod., qu. 32. Et paulo post: Ad eorum itaque utilitatem Pharaoh servatus est, &c.

live, and a person that would never prove good, lest he should either think that he lived upon the account of his own goodness, or that God whom he often had thought might be deceived was unable to avenge himself on him, hath this message sent unto him by God: ‘For this cause have I saved thee alive,’”\* &c. Junius, in his version revised and amended, translates the words thus: “Therefore have I caused that thou shouldest remain alive.”† Peter Martyr, on the place before us, writeth to this effect: “The Hebrew word here translated by the Apostle is from the verb עמד, which signifies ‘to stand;’ but in the conjugation Hiphil, it signifieth ‘to make to stand,’ or ‘to lift up and establish;’ although many interpret it, ‘to preserve,’ or ‘save alive,’ as if Pharaoh, whilst others fell by death, was preserved alive and remained.”‡ And, to cite no more authors, the sense of the phrase which we have preferred is recommended unto us by Calvin himself, in his commentaries upon Exod. ix. 16. Having briefly mentioned two of the interpretations lately presented by us, “some,” he saith, “conceive that this sentence depends upon the preceding history, and interpret, ‘I have preserved thee, or was willing thou shouldst remain alive.’ For the Hebrew word, which is transitive in Hiphil, comes of עמד, which signifieth ‘to stand.’ Therefore, because God had refrained himself for a time, now he assigns the reason of his forbearance, because had Pharaoh perished and fallen by one light battle, the glory of the conquest had been less famous. In brief, lest Pharaoh should please himself or harden himself with any vain confidence, God denieth that he wanted strength to have destroyed him in a moment, but saith that he deferred his final punishment upon another account, namely, that Pharaoh might learn at leisure that he wrestled in vain with an incomparable power, and that so signal a story might be famous through all generations. But however Paul followeth the Greek interpreter; yet this hindereth not

\* *Hoc enim dicit, quia cum Pharaoh, tantis malis esset reus, ut vivere non deberet nunquam futurus bonus, ne se aut merito vivere, aut Deum, quem sæpe fallendum censebat, ad vindictam dandam impotentem, putaret, audit a Deo, Ad hoc te servavi ut ostendam, &c.*—AMBROS. ad Rom. ix. 17.

† *Propterea feci ut superstes maneres:* In his former it was to the same sense, *ut restares.*

‡ *Verbum Hebraicum, quod hic habetur, est a verbo עמד, id autem significat stare; sed in conjugatione Hiphil, est facere stare, aut erigere et constituere; quamvis multi interpretati sunt, servare, quasi cadentibus et morientibus aliis, Pharaoh conservatus fuerit et manserit.*



but that it may be free for us to embrace this latter sense. For we know that the Apostles were not so strict in reciting words, but had respect rather to the matter or thing itself. Now suppose we confess that the patience of God endured Pharaoh so long, until he should be made a notable and famous document unto all men, what senseless and madmen all those are who make resistance against God; yet this also belongs to the eternal providence of God. ‘For therefore God spared Pharaoh, that he should stand,’ or continue, ‘for a time,’” &c.\*

Besides the consent of so many learned and judicious interpreters, there is this reason to confirm the last recited interpretation, namely, that this message, “For this very cause have I raised thee up,” &c., was not sent by God unto Pharaoh at the beginning of his treaty with him about the dismissal of his people, nor until Pharaoh had multiplied his rebellions against him, now these six several times, and this after so many extraordinary and sore judgments inflicted upon his land, and again graciously removed by God, some of them at his request. If by God’s raising up Pharaoh were meant either his raising up from nothing by creating or giving him being, or his raising up to the power and dignity of a King, the message now under discourse had been much more proper to have been sent to him at first, and before or at the beginning of the said treaty, than after so much rebellious obstinacy discovered, and so many acts of high misdemeanours worthy of death perpetrated by him. But it was Θεοπρεπες, *excellently becoming God*, after so much patience and long-suffering showed unto Pharaoh under such high provocations reiterated one upon another, to admonish him that he had not spared his life all this while intending still to spare it

\* *Alii sententiam hanc putant ex superioribus pendere, ac interpretantur, Conservari te, vel superstitem manere volui; verbum enim Hebraicum, quod transitivum est in Hiphil, deducitur a עמד quod est stare. Quoniam ergo sibi moderatus fuerat Deus, nunc tolerantiae suae causam assignat, quia si uno levi praelio cecidisset Pharaoh, minus celebris fuisset victoriae gloria. In summa, ne sibi blanditias faciat, vel inani fiducia se obdurat Pharaoh, negat Deus sibi ad eum ex templo perdendum vires defuisse, sed ob alium finem distulisse ultimas poenas; quo scilicet lente disceret Pharaoh frustra se luctari cum incomparabili potentia, atque ita omnibus saeculis celebraretur tam insignis historia. Etsi autem Paulus Graecum interpretem sequitur, nihil tamen obstat quo minus liberum sit posteriorem nunc sensum amplecti. Jam ut fateamur Dei patientiam eousque durasse Pharaonem dum omnibus clarum et nobile documentum foret, quam vesani sint atque amentes, quicumque Deo resistunt, hoc etiam ad aeternam Dei providentiam pertinet. Ideo enim pepercit Pharaoni Deus, ut ad tempus staret, &c.—CALVIN, in Exod. ix. 16.*

in case he persisted in his obduracy and rebellion; but, on the contrary, to gain an opportunity thereby for the manifestation of the glorious greatness of his power in his destruction. Such a sense as this, as it incorporates the place in hand with the body of Pharaoh's story, and gives it a pleasant aspect as well upon the precedent as subsequent part thereof; so, also, it perfectly accords with the nature of God, both in respect of his grace and goodness and severity likewise, which are much after the same manner held forth unto the world in many other passages of Scripture, as hath been in part declared formerly.

And for the Apostle's phrase, ἐξήγειρα σε, *I have raised thee up*, this also is well pleased with the said interpretation. For, Pharaoh by rebelling against God time after time, and this after many promises of obedience and loyalty upon God's merciful dealings with him in healing his land at his request, having committed things worthy of death, and consequently being dead, as the saying is, in law, and, according to the sentence thereof, God's clemency towards him in sparing his life might, with sweetness of metaphor and allusion, be termed "a raising him up," as it were, from the dead. In a phrase of somewhat a like resemblance, our Apostle calleth God's forgiving men their sins and trespasses, by means whereof according to the law they were dead, a "quickenings" of them, or, as the word signifies, "a making of them to live." (Eph. ii. 1, 5, compared with Col. ii. 13.) And God, by that gracious act of his in raising up Pharaoh, in the sense declared, and healing his land of the several plagues cleaving unto it, may, in Scripture phrase, be said to have covered his former transgressions. So there is little question but that the sense of the word, ἐξήγειρα, now contended for, is according to the Apostle's mind; and if so, then was not the showing of God's power in Pharaoh's destruction his direct or primary intent in that act of raising him up, and, consequently, his destruction could not absolutely or peremptorily be intended by him, but his secondary and subsequent intent only, inasmuch as the patience or bountifulness of God, according to the proper nature of it, and the primary intentions of God in it, leadeth men not to a continuance in obstinacy and rebellion against him, and so not to destruction, but to repentance, and, consequently, salvation. We shall touch upon a further confirmation of the interpretation now pleaded for when we

come to open the verse next following, and consider the hardening there spoken of. This for the clearing of the sense and meaning of this verse.

There was a third thing propounded, which was, to show how the example of Pharaoh, as it is here briefly exhibited by the Apostle, accommodates his purpose; which, as we have heard, was to vindicate the liberty and justness of power in God to reject and cast off whom or what manner of persons he pleaseth, and consequently the Jews themselves, in case they shall be found such. The verse also immediately following showeth this to be his drift and scope in this place. So then the Apostle's reasoning from the example of Pharaoh, and God's proceedings with him, to evince his conclusion, is apparently this, or to this effect:—If God's will and pleasure was, and this most righteous and just, to threaten Pharaoh, a person obstinate and rebellious, that if he persisted in his disobedience and obstinacy, he would show his power in his destruction, and, he thus persisting, did show it accordingly; then is it lawful and just for him to proceed after the same manner with all others like unto him. But it was the most righteous and just will and pleasure of God thus to proceed with Pharaoh; therefore he may justly proceed after the same manner with all others like unto him, and, consequently, reject and destroy whom he will. The consequence in the major proposition is undeniable; for what is righteous and just for God to do in reference to one man, upon the account of such and such actions and ways, is as righteous and just for him to do by all other men in whom the like actions and ways are to be found. The minor proposition, which only asserteth the righteousness of God's proceedings with Pharaoh, is unquestionable, and needs no proof.

If it be here objected, and said, "But if it be God's will and pleasure to reject, and proceed against to destruction, only such persons as Pharaoh was, that is, persons as deeply and desperately obstinate and rebellious as he, there will be very few, or none, found in the world, who will be rejected or destroyed by him;" to this I answer,

That the Apostle, intending to show and prove, in the example of Pharaoh, who or what manner of persons they are on whom God will exercise his just liberty of rejecting and destroying, doth not suppose nor intend so much as to insinuate that God will exercise this his liberty upon none but those that

shall be gradually like to Pharaoh in sin and wickedness. But his meaning is, in the notable and famous instance of Pharaoh, whose rebellious obstinacy and disobedience are known to all the world, to declare what kind or species of men they are upon whom God will show his liberty and justness of power to reject and destroy. As in the example of Abraham's justification by faith, and acceptation with God, (Rom. iv. 23, 24; Gal. iii. 9,) he did nothing less than intend to show or signify that only persons as great, as strong, in faith as Abraham himself was should be justified; nor any thing more than to teach and declare what kind or manner of persons they are who shall be justified with faithful Abraham, namely, such who shall believe, not with the same degree, but with the same kind, of faith wherewith he believed. And as the Holy Ghost doth not hold forth the example of Abraham, the grand believer of the world, to discourage those from expecting justification or acceptation with God whose faith doth not make her nest among the stars, as his did, but rather to encourage them to such a high-raised faith as this; so neither doth he propound the example of Pharaoh, the first-born son of disobedience and rebellion, to encourage those to expect mercy or salvation from God who shall not rise every way as high in disobedience and rebellion against him as he did; but rather to dissuade and terrify all men from all touch, taste, and tincture of such sins which brought such horrible vengeance and destruction upon a miserable creature. It is of frequent observation in the Scriptures, and sometimes the like is found in other authors, that the heads or principals of any race, family, species, or kind of men, are made the signifiers of the whole species or family. So that the Apostle's intent in bringing the example of Pharaoh, an obstinate and rebellious sinner, upon this stage, was to demonstrate, 1. That God is at liberty to reject and destroy what sort and kind of persons he pleaseth; and, 2. That this his liberty and pleasure determines itself, and pitcheth upon obstinate and rebellious ones, such as the Jews for the generality of them very signally were, as the objects of it. They who tell us that Paul insisteth on the example of Pharaoh as an instance of God's reprobation of men, personally considered, from eternity, destroy the emphatical richness and benefit of his doctrine in the passage, and render this of very little or no effect. It now followeth:—

Verse 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*—The Apostle having, as hath been showed, substantially vindicated the righteousness of God, both in the justification and salvation, as likewise in the rejection and condemnation, of whom he pleaseth, accordingly subjoineth the doctrine or conclusion which he had now won by dint of argument from the Scriptures, in the words before us: “Therefore hath he mercy,” &c. What he meaneth by God’s having or showing mercy on men, as, likewise, from whence he infers this part of his conclusion here asserted, namely, that God hath “mercy on whom he will have mercy,” may easily be understood by a diligent recognition or survey of the premises; and of that part of them more particularly, wherein the mind of the Holy Ghost, in verses 15, 16, was explained. But concerning the other part of his doctrine, here drawn up conclusion-wise, namely, that “whom he,” that is, God, “will he hardeneth,” a double query may be moved: 1. Why he makes mention of such a thing as hardening in this place, having not spoken any thing of it before. 2. From whence he deduceth this part of his conclusion, that God hardeneth whom he will. A good account given of the former will give a good light to the latter.

Therefore, for the clearing of the former of these doubts, this consideration is near at hand, namely, that though the Apostle had not used the word *hardening* before, nor spake any thing of it, formally considered, yet he had spoken of such things under the types of servitude, (verse 12,) and of hatred; (verse 13;) and besides, by his election, (verse 11,) and God’s showing mercy on whom he will, (verses 15, 18,) he had *αντιθετικως*, *by way of opposition*, insinuated such things which are of very near affinity with hardening, as, namely, God’s rejecting or reprobating of men from his mercy, grace, and favour. These are always either accompanied or followed with hardening. And it is a matter of frequent occurrency in the Scriptures to find words, not only of an equipollent, but of a cognate, signification also, and such which import things of a mutual concomitancy, exchanged one with another. Thus our Apostle proveth the justification of the Heathen by faith from this promise of God made unto Abraham, “In thee shall all nations be blessed;” (Gal. iii. 8;) justification and blessedness mutually including or supposing the one the other. (See also

Rom. iv. 5—7, &c.) Thus the same Apostle sometimes useth the word *life* for justification or righteousness. (Gal. iii. 12, 21 ; with many the like.) In like manner, because rejecting, hating, non-showing mercy, &c., by God, are borderers, in signification and import, unto hardening, therefore the Apostle useth them promiscuously.

From hence, as was intimated, it may readily be understood, and so the second question resolved, how and from what premises he inferreth this part of his conclusion, that whom God will he hardeneth. This position being proved, that God showeth mercy on whom he will show mercy, which he had proved by an express from Moses, (verse 15,) it followeth, in a way of clear deduction, that then he hath a just liberty to harden whom he will. For if God be at liberty to show mercy on whom he will, he must needs be at liberty not to show mercy on whom he will, or, which is the same, to refuse to show mercy to whom he will. Now to refuse to show mercy, and to harden, are, with our Apostle, either synonymous, or at least so nearly related, that they are not separated in their subject, and, consequently, the one may be proved from the other.

Notwithstanding, I rather conceive that the Apostle raiseth the inference we speak of from a ground nearer hand, namely, from those words of God to Pharaoh, in the former verse, “I have raised thee up,” in the sense lately declared ; in which clause the manner and method of God’s proceedings in and about the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, at least so far as he acted positively therein, is comprehended. For all that God did towards or about the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart in a positive way was, as hath been formerly observed and made good, by exercising patience, and lenity, and all long-suffering towards him, by inflicting only lesser and lighter judgments upon him, and which did not touch his life ; and by removing even these, also, time after time, upon his request, and promise of dismissing his people. Now this whole tract and course of God’s treating with Pharaoh upon terms of clemency and indulgence is expressed by the Apostle, as by a narrow inquiry we lately discovered, in those words, “I have raised thee up.” So that Paul, having proved from the Scriptures that God hardened Pharaoh, that is, made such providential applications unto Pharaoh, whereby he became hardened, maketh this collection and conclusion from it, that “whom he will he hardeneth.”

But there are two demands which may justly be moved upon occasion of the late premises ; which, being well satisfied, the Apostle's discourse in the passage in hand will be yet more lightsome and pleasant.

1. It may be some man's question, what the Apostle means by hardening, when he saith that God hardeneth whom he will.

2. It may be demanded, how, from God's hardening Pharaoh, it can be concluded that he hardeneth, hath a power or a liberty to harden, and, withal, is wont to act or use this liberty, *toties quoties*, as oft he pleaseth, whom he will ; considering, (1.) That he did not will or intend to harden Pharaoh himself, as was formerly maintained, but only hardened him occasionally or accidentally. (2.) That for his act of hardening Pharaoh it can only be proved, as was before likewise insinuated, that he is at liberty to harden such as Pharaoh was, persons already obstinate and disobedient, not others, and, consequently, as it seems, not whom he will.

For satisfaction to the former of these demands, it is, I presume, every man's supposition and grant, that when God is said to harden whom he will, it is to be understood of hardening in sin, or in ways of sinning. The phrase of "hardening in sin," being metaphorical, the metaphor must be briefly opened, that so the expression may be reduced to that which is proper. Hardness is a quality proper to an elementary body, and gives the denomination unto its subject of being hard. The nature of this quality may be readily apprehended by that common description, in natural philosophy, of the subject affected with it, which is this : *Durum est, quod resistit tactui* ; "That is HARD which resisteth the touch ;" as, on the contrary, that is, *molle*, or "soft," *quod cedit tactui*, "which gives way to the touch." Now as such a body is called hard whose constitution, nature, and temper is such, that it will very hardly, if at all, suffer an impression to be made upon it by any ordinary force, whereby the figure or outward shape of it should suffer an alteration or change ; in like manner the heart of a man, and so the man himself, may be said to be hard, made hard, or hardened in sin, when it is wrought or brought to such a temper and frame, that neither the motions of the Spirit of God, nor exhortations, admonitions, promises, or threatenings from the word of God, nor any providential appearings of God, either

for or against a man, nor any counsel or advice from friends or others, which are the ordinary means whereby sinners are wont to be reclaimed, will alter or change the sinful purposes and inclinations of it, but that it retains and maintains its former disposition of sinning, with the contempt or neglect of all these. In some such consideration as this, Pharaoh's heart is often said in the Scriptures to have been hardened, sometimes, in the first place, by himself, (Exod. v. 2 ; viii. 15,)\* and then by God also. The hardness of Pharaoh's heart either consisted in or discovered itself by that unyieldingness of it, under so many express messages and commands from God, so many miraculous and extraordinarily-terrible judgments inflicted upon his land and people before his eyes, time after time, so many wonderful and extraordinarily-gracious intermixtures of mercy with judgment, in the sudden removal of these judgments upon his request, all of them *divisim*, but especially *conjunctim*, persuading him with a high hand to hearken unto God, and to let the people of Israel go. What God ordinarily doeth in or about the hardening of men, and particularly what he did about the hardening of Pharaoh, hath been in part already, namely, in our explications of the next preceding verse, and shall, himself assisting, be again touched in our answer to the latter demand. As for those transient and short-lived relentings which appeared in Pharaoh upon the incumbency or new execution of some of the said judgments, God may much more properly be said to be Author of these than of any the respective hardenings presently ensuing ; because these relentings were the proper fruits or effects of what he did in a way of judgment ; whereas those hardenings were, as hath been said, but only the occasional or accidental effects of what he did in a way of mercy, either in sparing the person of Pharaoh so long as he did, or in removing the judgments inflicted so soon as he did, upon his request. This for satisfaction to the former of the two demands lately propounded.

To the latter, how or upon what account, from God's hard-

\* As for Exodus vii. 13, where our last translation, without any ground, either from the context, or otherwise, readeth, "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart;" the former translation read it, according to the original, "So Pharaoh's heart was hardened." Mr. Ainsworth translates, "waxed strong;" and some observe that God is not said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart under any of the five first plagues, nor until the sixth and afterwards.



ening Pharaoh, it may be concluded, that he hardeneth whom he will, I answer, The premises of God's hardening Pharaoh brings forth this conclusion, that he hardeneth whom he will by the midwifery or mediation of these three suppositions, all of them plain and unquestionable: 1. That he had a liberty or justness of power to harden Pharaoh as he did, otherwise he would not have hardened him. 2. That he hath a like liberty to harden any other person, one, more, or all that shall be found like unto Pharaoh; for what reason can be imagined that should cause any difference in this kind? 3. And lastly: That his will is to harden only such as Pharaoh was. These particulars being granted, it roundly follows, that if God hardened Pharaoh he may, and consequently doth, harden whom he will. If there be any doubt of truth in any of the said three propositions unto any man, it must be, I conceive, in the third and last only; but the Scriptures being diligently consulted, this will be found as pregnant of truth as either of the other. For these constantly teach, that every breach between God and the creature is still begun on the creature's side; which clearly showeth that God never hardeneth any man, and, consequently, that he willeth not to harden any man, but only such who first voluntarily harden themselves, and are obstinately disobedient, as Pharaoh was: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but THEY have sought out many inventions;" (Eccles. vii. 29;) that is, many crooked and perverse notions and cogitations, which lead them from that rectitude wherein God created them, as Mercer well expoundeth it. "Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin," saith Azariah, the Spirit of God being now upon him; "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but IF YE FORSAKE him, he will forsake you." (2 Chron. xv. 1, 2. See also Joshua vii. 12.) "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given;" "and he shall have abundance," as Matthew hath it, "and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have;" (Luke viii. 18;) that is, which men, upon sufficient ground judged him at present, and before this judgment of God upon him, to have. The verb *δοκεῖν*, commonly translated *to seem*, doth not always import a bare show or appearance of a thing, in opposition to the reality, truth, or certainty of it; but very frequently noteth the manifestation or certain knowledge of a thing, in opposition

to the secrecy, hidness, doubtfulness, or else concealment of it. "For it seemed," εδοξε γαρ, or, IT SEEMED "GOOD TO THE HOLY GHOST, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden," &c. (Acts xv. 28.) The meaning is not as if the non-imposal of any further burden upon the Gentiles barely seemed a thing meet and reasonable unto the Holy Ghost and the Apostles, being in truth and in itself otherwise; but, that the real goodness or meetness of the thing was accordingly apprehended and judged by the Holy Ghost, and by him revealed and made known to the Apostles and elders. (See the like use and import of the word, Mark x. 42; Luke i. 3; xvii. 9; Acts xv. 22, 25; xxv. 27; 1 Corinthians vii. 40; Galatians ii. 9; Heb. iv. 1.) And that, in the text cited, (Luke viii. 18,) it doth not signify a groundless or empty conceit upon a mere show or appearance, but a judgment according to the truth and reality of the thing, is evident from the parallel passages, (Matthew xiii. 12, xxv. 29; Mark iv. 25,) where the person spoken of is plainly and simply said to have that which upon his non-having, meaning, by way of improvement, is threatened to be taken from him. But the clear sense and meaning of these passages I have some while since in preaching discussed and evinced at large, and, God sparing life and health, may in time do the like more publicly. In the mean time, besides the Scriptures already cited to prove that every breach between God and the creature is still begun on the creature's side, these diligently considered are very pregnant. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.) So again: "For this cause," namely, for changing the truth of God into a lie, "God gave them up unto vile affections," &c. And soon after: "And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind," &c. (Rom. i. 28.) It were easy to gather more of these spiritual stones together for the raising of that building yet higher, which is now in hand, the Scripture every where laying at the creature's doors the occasion or cause of any displeasure conceived in the breast of God against it at any time. So that he never hardens any but the disobedient, and those who first provoke him to it by such voluntary neglect, stubbornness, and contempt, as Pharaoh did. The Synod of Dort expresseth itself very orthodoxly in

this point, as indeed it doth, by places, in all the rest of which it took cognizance: "The talent of grace," saith this Synod, "which is once granted by God is taken away from no man, unless through his own default he hath first buried it. (Matt. xxv. 28.) Hence it is that in the Scriptures we are from place to place admonished, that we resist not the Spirit, that we quench not the Spirit, that we receive not the grace of God in vain, that we fall not away from God. (Heb. iii. 7.)" Yea, this "reason is most clearly given why the creature is at any time forsaken by God, namely, because he is first forsaken by it. 'Because I have called, and ye refused, I also will laugh at your calamity, &c.' (Prov. i. 24, 26.) 'You have forsaken the Lord that he might,' or should, 'forsake you.' (2 Chron. xxiv. 20.) But it is nowhere in the Scriptures so much as insinuated in the least, that God is either wont or WILLING to take away from any man the aid of exciting grace, or any other help which he hath once given in order to his conversion, unless the man himself hath first made way for it by his sin. This was the doctrine of the orthodox fathers, who had to do with the Pelagians. Whether Austin or Prosper, the one of them saith: 'It is the will of God that a man should continue in a good frame of will, who also forsakes no man until himself be first forsaken, yea, and oftentimes converteth many of the forsakers themselves.'"\* Thus far the Synod. By the way, is it not the first-born of things that are strange, that so many learned and grave men should speak and write such things as these, and yet deny that God vouchsafeth unto every man a sufficiency of means for salvation? Or, that God beareth in his breast the most doleful and irreconcilable war of a fatal reprobation from eternity against far the greatest part of men, from their first conception

\* *Talentum gratiæ a Deo semel concessum nemini eripitur, nisi qui prius illud suo vitio sepelivit. (Matt. xxv. 28.) Hinc est quod nos in Scripturis passim monemur, ne Spiritui resistamus, ne Spiritum extinguamus, ne gratiam Dei frustra recipiamus, ne deficiamus a Deo. (Heb. iii. 7.) Imo divine derelictionis ea apertissime designatur ratio, quod Deus ab hominibus prius deseratur. Quia vocavi, et renuistis, ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo. (Prov. i. 24.) Dereliquistis Jehovam, ut dereliqueret vos. (2 Chron. xxiv. 20.) At nusquam in Scripturis vel levissime inuitur, Deum solere, aut VELLE unquam absque prævia hominis culpam eripere cuiquam gratia excitantis auxilium, aut ullum subsidium, quod semel contulit ad conversionem hominis ordinatum. Sic docuere Patres orthodoxi, quibus cum Pelagianis negotium fuit. Aug. vel Prosp., ad Artic. fals. ad 7. Dei est voluntas, ut in bona voluntate maneat, qui et priusquam deseratur, neminem deserit, et multos desertores æpe convertit.—Act. Syn. Dord., part. 2, p. 129.*

in the womb? “Doth a fountain,” saith the Apostle James, “send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?” (James iii. 11.) Calvin also hath many passages in his writings very express for the assertion of the same truth; I mean, that God never withdraws that preventing or exciting grace which is given unto every man, from any man until the man himself by voluntariness of sinning provoketh him to it; and, consequently, that he willeth not to harden any man or men, but such only who are like unto Pharaoh. But I consider that multiplicity of quotations from men are not so proper for a commentary. By this time, I presume, it appears to satisfaction, that all the three suppositions mentioned are unquestionably true, and that, upon this account, the Apostle’s inference of God’s hardening whom he will, from his particular act in hardening Pharaoh, is legitimate and clear.

Only, I conceive, there is yet one dark corner in the room we are in, whereinto the light hath not yet shone. This is, “how, from God’s hardening Pharaoh, it can be concluded that he hardeneth whom he will, if it be supposed that he intended not, that is, willed not, no, not the hardening of Pharaoh himself, at least with his antecedent or primary intention or will; nor yet, that he did, in the event, harden him otherwise than accidentally or occasionally; for these things have been argued and asserted in the premises; and, consequently, that Pharaoh, even when God did that by which he became hardened, might have choosed whether he would have been hardened, or no. If this be so, it seems rather to rest in the wills of men who shall be hardened by God, than in the will of God. God shall harden whom men will, not whom himself willeth.” I answer to all this,

1. It hath formerly been said and proved that God never intends or willeth the hardening of any person whatsoever, with his primary or antecedent intention or will, but with his subsequent only; from whence it follows, that when the Apostle, from God’s raising up or hardening Pharaoh, infers that, therefore, whom he will he hardeneth, he speaketh of his secondary or his consequent will only.\* That God willeth the hardening of no man whatsoever, but only with his consequent will, is at large and with a high hand asserted by the Synod of Dort

\* How these two wills in God differ, and why one is termed antecedent, the other consequent, is declared at large, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 448.

itself in the passage lately transcribed from it ; as also where they teach and grant that “ Christ died ANTECEDENTLY for his enemies and unbelievers, but CONSEQUENTLY for believers and his friends only.”\* For if Christ died antecedently, that is, with his antecedent and primary intention, for his enemies and unbelievers, and such who never are saved, it is impossible that with his primary or antecedent intention he should intend to harden them ; because this evidently implieth that he should intend both their salvation and damnation, and this with one and the same kind of intention. As for his friends and believers, God hath no will or intent at all, neither antecedent nor consequent, to harden them. So then this is unquestionably certain, in the first place, our adversaries themselves consenting and asserting with us, that God, with his antecedent will, willeth not the hardening of any man.

2. Although the event or effect itself of Pharaoh’s hardening was, both in respect of the antecedent will or intent of God, as likewise in respect of those providential interposures of his by which it was effected, adventitious, accidental, and occasional only, as hath been said, yet in respect of the consequent intent or will of God, it was direct, proper, and really intended by him. For God’s intent really and absolutely was, that unless Pharaoh should repent and relent in time to a dismissal of his people, by the signal means and motives so graciously vouchsafed unto him to persuade and work him hereunto, he should by degrees be hardened by them to destruction. Even as his full purpose and pleasure now is, that they, who from day to day turn his grace in the Gospel unto wantonness, shall be hardened thereby unto condemnation.

3. Though the consequent will of God was absolute, that Pharaoh, persisting obdurate to such or such a period of time, under so many means used by God himself for his reclaiming, should be finally or in the end hardened unto his own destruction ; yet might Pharaoh, all along the currency of his former obduration, and until he came to be finally hardened, upon which his destruction immediately followed, by relenting and letting the people go, have prevented his final hardening, and,

\* *Cæterum quando dicimus Christum esse mortuum pro credentibus et pro amicis suis, hoc intelligendum est CONSEQUENTER, ita ut denotetur terminus ad quem ; sicut e contrario ANTECEDENTER dicitur mortuus, pro hostibus suis et pro infidelibus ; negative accepto infidelitatis vocabulo.*—*Act. Syn. Dord.*, part. 2, p. 99.

consequently, his destruction. For whilst the goodness of God which, as our Apostle saith, leadeth men to repentance, (Rom. ii. 4,) is continued or vouchsafed unto them, there is no impossibility but that they may be led, I mean, led home, or actually brought, to repentance. The Apostle Peter also informeth us, that God's long-suffering towards men proceedeth from his unwillingness that any man should perish, and desire that all should repent. (2 Peter iii. 9.) It was not indeed in Pharaoh's power or liberty of choice, having first begun to harden himself, whether God should proceed with him, as in the first place he did, and whereby he became further hardened; nor yet, having thus further hardened himself, whether God should proceed with him in the next place, as he did, whereby he became yet hardened more, and so along all the gradations or steps of his hardening; God's deportment of himself towards Pharaoh, upon Pharaoh's deportment towards him, depending only upon his own will, and not at all upon Pharaoh's; but it was in Pharaoh's power, under or upon every precedent act or dispensation of God, whereby he became hardened, or hardened more than before, to have prevented all those that now followed; and, consequently, his final hardening and destruction hereupon. For there is no degree of obduration, on this side the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, but which, as hath been more than once observed in the premises, and is elsewhere more fully proved, both from the Scriptures and by argument,\* admitteth of such a degree of the grace of God, and of his good Spirit in consistency with it, by the stirring up and improvement whereof it is very possible for men to recover out of the snare thereof, and to reduce themselves to a gracious tenderness of soul.

4. From the premises it is not hard to conceive how and in what sense the Apostle's inference, that "God hardeneth whom he will," standeth firm and is most true, notwithstanding it be true also, in its sense, that it rests in the wills of men being always superintended and assisted by the grace of God, whether they will be hardened by him, or no. God hardeneth whom he will, inasmuch as he hardeneth those who first voluntarily harden themselves and are found disobedient, these being they, or all those, whom he willeth to harden. Again: Inasmuch as no man is necessitated or compelled to harden himself, or to reject the motions of the preventing grace

\* *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, pp. 61—64.

of God, but by virtue of this grace, may, if he please, comport with it and approve himself unto God; it is a plain case that every man, before his voluntary hardening of himself, may prevent such his hardening, and, consequently, his being hardened by God. And as God, in saving those who repent and believe, though he saveth no other, yet saveth "whom he will;" in like manner, in hardening those who first harden themselves, though he hardeneth no others, yet hardeneth whom he will. Even as this our Apostle, speaking of the HOLY GHOST and of his gifts, saith, that he distributeth them "to every man severally AS HE WILL;" (1 Cor. xii. 11;) and yet, verse 31 of the same chapter, supposeth that men may have what gifts from him they will by coveting earnestly after them. Otherwise whereunto serveth or tendeth this encouragement or exhortation? So that the liberty vested in men to have what gifts of the Holy Ghost they please or shall covet after doth not at all prejudice the liberty of the Holy Ghost to dispense them to "every man as he will."

If it be yet demanded, "But if God's primary and antecedent intentions concerning Pharaoh and his raising up, in the sense by you assigned, were not his hardening or destruction, but the bringing of him to repentance, and his preservation hereupon from that destruction which now overwhelmed him, as you have affirmed, why did he not vouchsafe unto him means as effectual to bring him to repentance as he doth unto others who are actually brought to repentance by him? Or why did he not rather say and declare beforehand, thus: 'I will give unto Pharaoh an heart of flesh,' rather than, 'I will harden Pharaoh's heart,' which is, in effect, to give him a heart of stone?" to this also I answer,

1. That this question or difficulty should, in due process of method, have been propounded and resolved in our explication of the last preceding verse: But an after memory is better than a perpetual forgetfulness. Therefore,

2. I answer that it nowhere appears but that the means vouchsafed by God unto Pharaoh for his repentance, or whereby he ought to have been brought to repent, were as effectual, though not eventually so successful, as those are whereby persons ordinarily are brought to repentance. The sun may shine every whit as hot upon the clay when it hardeneth it, as it doth upon the wax when it melteth it. The means whereby Chorazin

and Bethsaida were hardened and prepared for a signal destruction would have been successfully effectual for the conversion or repentance of Tyre and Sidon. (Matt. xi. 21.) And in our discussions of the former verse we showed it to be the express doctrine of the Synod of Dort itself, that the efficacy of the "helps or means of grace," vouchsafed by God unto men, "is to be" measured, or "judged of by the nature of the benefit offered, and by the manifest word of God, NOT BY THE EVENT OR ABUSE OF THEM." So that Pharaoh's unrelentingness and impenitency are no arguments at all of any defectiveness or insufficiency in the means afforded him for his repentance. Nay,

3. The benefit or indulgence offered by God unto Pharaoh, time after time, upon condition of his repentance and dismissal of his people, as, namely, his immunity from further plagues or judgments from God, plainly show, according to the doctrine of the Synod of Dort lately recited, that the means vouchsafed unto Pharaoh were effectual and fully sufficient to have wrought him to repentance. The proffer or promise of a benefit by a sober and well-disposed person unto any man, upon the performance of such or such a condition, always supposeth, at least in his apprehension, a sufficiency of power in him to whom such a promise or proffer is made to perform this condition. To promise any thing upon other terms is rather an insultation over the weakness of him to whom the promise is made, than any matter of kindness which the nature of a promise still imports. The promise of a reward of a thousand pounds made unto a cripple or poor man whose legs had been cut off, upon condition he will run twenty miles within an hour's space, were merely to deride such a man in his misery. Therefore certainly Pharaoh, God by many promissory intimations time after time signifying unto him, that upon his repentance and letting his people go, the judgments threatened should not come upon him, is hereby evicted to have had a sufficiency of means or power for the fulfilling of the said condition of repentance and of dismissing the people.

4. Pharaoh, by the means which were vouchsafed unto him, did several times actually and truly repent of his obstinacy, and promised, yea, and gave order for the dismissal and departure of the people. (Exod. x. 16, 17; xii. 31, 32, &c.) Therefore he was, questionless, in a sufficient capacity to have repented



and dismissed the people. That afterwards he repented of this his repentance, and returned to his former obdurateuess, is no argument that his former repentance was not true. Yea, if this repentance had been hollow or counterfeit, his repenting of it had been no sin. And besides, if the tree, as our Saviour saith, be known by the fruit, that repentance of Pharaoh which produced, (1.) Confession of sin, and of this committed both against God and men. (Exod. x. 16 ;) (2.) Application by way of entreaty unto the saints, to pray unto God for him ; (*ibid* ;) (3.) An express order, with encouragement unto Moses and Aaron, to expedite the departure of their people according to the commandment of God, and this in as ample a manner as themselves desired it ; (Exod. xii. 31, 32 ;)—that repentance, I say, which brought forth such fruits as these must needs be conceived to have been a true repentance. And, doubtless, had Pharaoh persisted in this repentance, and not relapsed into his former provocation, which he was no ways necessitated unto, he had escaped that dreadful stroke from heaven which he met with in the Red Sea.

5. No man, I presume, ever yet conceived that Pharaoh died under the guilt of that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost ; if not, then during the whole course of his disobedience against God he was not to any such degree destitute or deprived of the grace or good Spirit of God, but that, by the help and assistance hereof, as was said formerly, he was in a possibility of recovering out of that snare of Satan wherein his foot was taken.\*

6. And lastly : The reason why God did beforehand declare thus : “ I will harden Pharaoh’s heart,” rather than “ I will soften Pharaoh’s heart,” though his antecedent intentions stood for the softening it, might probably be this ; partly because he knew that the hardening of his heart would be the issue and event of those applications he intended to make unto him ; partly, also, because had he told Moses beforehand that he would soften Pharaoh’s heart, and Moses, in the transaction of the business, had found the contrary, it might have proved a grand discouragement unto him. Upon a like account, I suppose, our Saviour (Luke xii. 51) pre-informs his disciples, not of his primary or antecedent intentions of sending forth his Gospel

\* See this proved from the Scripture, *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, pp. 61, 62, &c.

into the world, which were to make peace on earth amongst men, inasmuch as he knew these more generally would not take place; but rather of his consequent, because he foresaw that these would be fulfilled in many places and amongst great numbers of men, and knew, withal, that should his disciples have met with these cross effects or events of the Gospel in the world, and not have been pre-admonished of them accordingly, they might have been much troubled, and fainted under the trial. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division."

If it be yet demanded concerning Pharaoh and God's hardening him, "whether God could not, if he had so pleased, have dealt with Pharaoh after such a manner, what by the inward motions and workings of his Spirit within him, and what by such outward applications of himself unto him, so as by the one and the other, either severally or jointly, to have brought him to repentance, at least, so far as to have let the children of Israel go, and, consequently, to have prevented his destruction; and if God, had he so pleased, might have brought Pharaoh to repentance, and so have prevented his destruction, and yet did neither, how can he be said truly and really to have intended either?" I answer,

1. That the power of God, simply and in itself considered, without that regulation which it admitteth from his wisdom and righteousness in the motions and actings of it, there is little question to be made but that he could have handled Pharaoh upon such terms as to have made him stoop and yield to the departure of the children of Israel. Yea, had God refused to heal his land of any of those plagues which were inflicted on it, and for a time clave unto it, until he had suffered the people quietly to depart, doubtless he would have submitted hereunto, rather than have suffered his kingdom to be destroyed by his obstinacy in such a case. And the text itself of the story taketh notice from place to place, that the removal and taking off of the several judgments from time to time by God was that which occasioned *toties quoties* Pharaoh's re-obduration. (Exod. viii. 15, 32; ix. 12, 34; x. 20.) This clearly implieth that had any of the said judgments been continued in their strength and terror upon this land and people for any considerable space of time, his stiff neck would have bowed, and his stout heart have yielded to the departure of the people. But,

2. If we speak of the power of God as regulated, managed, or acted by the infinite wisdom and understanding of God in conjunction with his righteousness, in which sense the Scriptures constantly speak of it, in matters of divine administrations in the world, so it may be as truly affirmed, on the other hand, that God was not able, or, which is the same, that it was not in the power of God, to work Pharaoh unto repentance, or, consequently, to prevent his destruction. The true meaning and import of such a saying as this is no more but this,—that God is not able to do any thing unwisely or unrighteously ; or, which is the same, which he judgeth repugnant to any principle, either of wisdom or righteousness, for him to do. And such a saying as this is but of the same confederacy, both in reason and truth, with these, and the like, which are every man's sayings, that God cannot lie, cannot deceive, cannot forswear himself, cannot do unjustly, nor any thing whatsoever which includeth either sin or imperfection. Of this regulated power of his, God himself speaketh : “ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it ? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ? ” (Isaiah v. 4.) God, by his power, simply and absolutely considered, could have done a thousand things more to his vineyard, to make it fruitful according to his mind, than now he had done in it or to it ; he could have multiplied both miracles and Prophets without number, above what he yet had done ; yea, and have wrought such signs and wonders in the midst of it, which should, in greatness and majesty of conviction, have exceeded an hundred-fold all those that had been as yet wrought here ; and so, likewise, have raised up and sent Prophets unto them far more excellently qualified and gifted than those who had been now sent unto them. But God, in the words specified, speaks of his regulated power ; that is, of his power as directed and drawn forth into action by his wisdom, in consort with his righteousness : And in respect of this power he demands, “ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it ? ” meaning, that he had turned every stone, attempted every way, method, and means, by which it was any ways honourable and meet for him to endeavour their repentance, and so to preserve them from ruin and destruction. He must have made a breach upon his own principles of wisdom and righteousness, which was impossible for him to do, according to

that of the Apostle, "He cannot deny himself," if he had proceeded any whit further, done any thing more upon that account. This might be illustrated and confirmed from that passage, "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.) These last words, "till there was no remedy," import that the people had proceeded to that height of wickedness, that there was nothing, as it were, left in God to help or heal them; his power had been drawn out to the uttermost of its regular capacity to do them good, and prevent their ruin; but it prevailed not. This, likewise, is plainly implied in that other clause, where he is said to have had compassion on his people. Doubtless, if he had compassion on them, he did not only vouchsafe a bare sufficiency of means unto them, or such, by the highest and utmost improvement whereof they might have been reclaimed from the evil of their ways, and so have been preserved from ruin; but as rich and full a proportion of such means as his utmost estate in power, so considered as hath been declared, could afford. He doth not truly compassionate a person in misery, who doth not afford him the best means he is able, with wisdom and discretion, for his relief, in case he cannot be relieved otherwise. Of this regulated power of God the Evangelist Mark also speaketh, where, speaking of Christ now being in his own country, he saith, "And he COULD there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hand of a few folk, and healed them." (Mark vi. 5.) The expression implieth, not that that arm of omnipotency by which the Lord Christ wrought so many "mighty works" in other places, was either shortened, or any ways weakened or enfeebled, by coming into or remaining in his own country; but only that it admitted such a kind of regulation here by his wisdom, in respect of differing circumstances, which it did not receive in other places; and, consequently, was at liberty to work many mighty works there, which it wanted here. What circumstance it was in particular, according to the exigency whereof the infinite wisdom of Christ regulated and contracted his power to a narrower sphere of action in his own country than it did in other parts, the Evangelist Matthew clearly expresseth, where, speaking of the same

thing, he saith, "And he did not many mighty works there BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF." (Matt. xiii. 58.) Christ judged it not a thing reasonable or meet, and, consequently, it was impossible for him to do it, to multiply miracles or mighty works, where the people generally were either blockish, and set not their hearts or minds upon the interpretation and import of them, or otherwise were of malicious and perverse spirits, drawing only darkness out of light, depraving and blaspheming that glorious power by which they were effected. Of the same regulated power we speak of, the Apostle Paul also spake, when he said to the centurion and soldiers concerning the mariners now about to flee out of the ship, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." (Acts xxvii. 31.) Questionless, the power of God, simply considered, did not stand in need of the help or presence of the mariners to preserve either the ship, or those that were in it, from the danger unto which both were now exposed; but the regulated power of God did. For he had promised unto his beloved servant, Paul, *tanquam munus honorarium*, "as a reward of honour," the lives, not of some, but of ALL, that sailed with him in the ship; (verse 24;) meaning, if they would all agree, and be content to accept of their preservation upon this account, and be directed by Paul in order hereunto, that so the deliverance might be discerned to be given unto them by God for his sake; and therefore did not judge it meet or honourable for him to make good his promise by halves, nor yet contrary to the terms upon which it was made, and according to which the performance of it was intended. Therefore, in case the mariners, who were a part of those with Paul in the ship, should attempt their preservation another way, as, namely, by escaping in their boat, and so, in case they should have been thus preserved, their preservation would not have been ascribed to Paul's interest in God, but to their own wisdom and providence, God declares plainly to the residue of those in the ship, by the mouth of his servant Paul, that, unless they took a course to keep the mariners also in the ship, it would not be in his power to save them; meaning, as hath been said, that it would not be honourable in point of wisdom for him to save them; in which respect he could not do it. That clause, also, speaking of Christ, "Wherefore he is ABLE also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," (Heb. vii. 25,) speaketh, clearly enough, not of the simple or absolute,

but of the regulated, ability or power of Christ to save. For in respect of his power, simply considered, he is able to save even those also to the uttermost, or, for evermore, who do not come unto God by him. And, if so, what great comfort is it for believers themselves, who are they that do "come unto God by him," to hear that he is able to save them upon the same terms! Therefore, doubtless, the Holy Ghost, by the ability or power of Christ to save, in the passage before us, means, not his absolute, but his regulated, power to save; for by this he is able to save those who "come unto God by him," but no others. The power of God is in several other scriptures, besides those mentioned, which would be too long to insist upon particularly, represented unto us under that notion of regulation which we have now opened. (See Gen. xix. 22; Eph. i. 11; 2 Tim. i. 12; ii. 13; Heb. ii. 18; besides others.) And as these texts speak of the power of God as regulated, so that of David, Psalm xcix. 4, speaketh, in part, of the regulation itself: "The King's strength also" (he speaketh of the King "that sitteth between the cherubims," verse 1) "loveth judgment;" meaning, that the omnipotency of God in all the exertions, motions, and actings of it, submitteth itself willingly, and with delight, to a prudent and righteous regulation, which it receiveth from his infinite wisdom and understanding. For, to define, or determine what is judgment, that is, what is just, righteous, and meet to be done, appertaineth to the understanding. And as he that loveth is in a kind of subjection to that, whether person or thing, which he loveth, and receiveth many laws and regulations from it, as, namely, concerning the doing of such and such things which are for the benefit, good, and well-being of it, and, on the other hand, concerning the forbearing of such and such actions, which are contrary thereunto; in like manner, the strength or power of the great King, loving judgment, must of necessity be conceived to be in a kind of subjection unto it, and to accept of such terms of regulation from it, by the observation whereof the said strength or power must necessarily not only act and do all things accommodatious unto it, but refrain also the doing of all such other things which are prejudicial to it, and inconsistent with the interest and honour of it. The substance and import of this late saying of David is contained in that of the Apostle Paul, Eph. i. 11, though the words seem to look another way. For here, speaking of God, he saith, that "he

worketh all things after," or, *according to*, *κατα*, "the COUNSEL of his own will," or, *τῆ θεληματος αυτου*, *the will of himself*, not simply, "according to his will," but, "according to the *counsel* of his will;" according to that regulation which his operative or acting will receiveth from his wisdom or understanding. Now if God, or the power of God, worketh and acteth ALL things, nothing at all excepted, not according to his mere will or pleasure, (which are some men's unhappy expressions, but put to rebuke by the Holy Ghost here,) but "according to the COUNSEL of his will," in the sense declared, it clearly follows, that the omnipotency of God is continually, in all the movings and workings of it, steered and directed, enlarged and contracted, led this way or that way, by the influence or superintendency of his infinite wisdom and understanding. And wheresoever elsewhere any thing is ascribed unto the will of God simply, and without mention of the "counsel" thereof, the sense of the place or phrase is to be reduced unto, and regulated by, the scripture last specified, where he is said to "work ALL THINGS according to the COUNSEL of his own will;" according to that known rule for interpretation of Scripture, namely, that places more particular and full ought to rule the sense of those that are more brief, and, consequently, more obscure. So that the Scripture, speaking of the power of God, in this consideration, may truly and properly enough affirm many things to be impossible to him, which in respect of his power, simply considered, are very possible and easy unto him. There is an eye of, or somewhat in appearance like unto, that regulated power which the Scripture ascribes unto God himself, to be seen in his children also; and this by the same light of the Scriptures by which we come to understand the other. For as the infinite wisdom and understanding of God rendereth many things impossible unto him, which by his absolute power are very possible for him to do; so doth that participation of this wisdom which he vouchsafeth to the "children of light," the saints, contract their power also, according to the exigency of circumstances, and in relation to things lawful and meet for them to do. In which respect evil works and practices of sin, and things unworthy of them, though in respect of those human faculties and abilities vested in them, possible more than enough for them to do, are, notwithstanding, frequently in Scripture asserted as impossibilities unto them. "For we," saith our Apostle, "CAN DO NOTHING against the

truth, but for the truth." (2 Cor. xiii. 8.) Doubtless, he speaks of his regulated power; for, otherwise, by his power, or by his abilities, simply considered, he was as able, yea, more able, in some respects, to act "against the truth," as other men. Thus also the Apostle John: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and HE CANNOT SIN, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.) These last words, "because he is born of God," import, that that power of sinning, (meaning, against light and conscience,) which hath a being in the saints, considered simply as men, is restrained and abolished, as to the acting of such sin, by that divine light and heavenly understanding which is the seed of their regeneration; according to that of James, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth;" that is, by the knowledge and understanding of that glorious and blessed truth, contained and declared in the word, that is, in the Gospel, or in the Scriptures. For no man is begotten "by the word of truth," as by a charm or spell, or any otherwise than by means of the sound knowledge and understanding of it, that is, of the truth asserted in it. Thus Joseph, likewise, being tempted unto sin by his mistress, repelleth the temptation by demanding, "How CAN I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" meaning, that the knowledge which he had of God, and of the horridness of sinning against him, disabled him from the doing of that which in other respects he was as able to do as other men. In respect of this contraction, limitation, and confinement of the power and abilities of the saints unto things lawful, and ways and practices approved of God, they are by our Apostle so frequently said to be "dead unto sin." (Rom. vi. 2, 11; Col. iii. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 11. See also 1 Peter ii. 24.) So that maxim in the civil law, *Id tantum possumus, quod jure possumus*, is, in the literal sense of it, true, both of God and his saints: Neither the one nor the other have power to do any thing, but what their respective understandings inform them to be just, meet, and honourable for them to do. In respect of that regulated power of God which we have clearly evinced from the Scriptures, it is more than probable, that he doeth whatsoever he is able to do for the bringing of all men to repentance, and so for the salvation of the whole world. Therefore,

3. And lastly: To argue the non-intentions of God from his non-assecutions is as impertinent and weak a kind of arguing



as lightly can be. For, as he that offers the full value, and rather with the most, for a commodity, as, suppose a horse, a house, or the like, in case he that is to sell or part with this horse or house shall refuse to let him have either at the price he offereth, cannot reasonably be thought not to have intended, and this very really and seriously, the purchase of either, because, though being a rich man and able, yet he would not come up to the unreasonable demands of the seller, and so to purchase to himself the blot and disparagement of a fool with his money; in like manner, when God proceedeth so far as he judgeth meet and agreeable to true wisdom, in vouchsafing means and opportunities unto men in order to their repentance and salvation, which is the measure that he measureth unto every man, it cannot reasonably be said of him that he doth not or did not really and seriously intend their repentance and salvation, only because he did not that which infallibly, and with certainty of event and success, should cause them to repent and so be saved; which, being rightly interpreted, is nothing less than the doing of that which was impossible for him to do. So, then, it is as clear as the light at noon-day, that God's hardening Pharaoh by such means as he did, and the showing of his power in his destruction hereupon, are no arguments or proof that simply and absolutely he intended either; or that he did not really and truly intend his repentance and preservation by means hereof.

All this while we see how methodically and closely our Apostle keeps to the line of his engagement, which is to argue and illustrate his doctrine of justification by faith; and, particularly in the passages last explained, to vindicate the said doctrine from the pretended crime or imputation of unrighteousness in respect of those who, according to the tenor and effect thereof, are rejected by God and perish. The ground upon which this his vindication standeth is this: God is at liberty, hath a justness of power to reject, reprobate, and destroy whom he will. Those whom he willeth thus to reject, reprobate, and destroy, he hath in the example of Pharaoh, and by his proceedings with him from first to last, declared to be obstinate and impenitent unbelievers. Therefore, the doctrine of justification in the sight of God by faith reflecteth not the least shadow of unrighteousness upon him.

By the way, all that we have reasoned from the Scripture in hand, with many others, concerning Pharaoh and God's coun-

sel and intentions about his raising up, and casting down by destruction, sufficiently evince that the Apostle's intent in his inserting the brief of his story in his present discourse, was to propound him for an instance or example of that sort or kind of men which God by his consequent will is resolved to reject, reprobate, harden, and destroy, namely, such who are finally stubborn, impenitent, and unbelieving. The Apostle in all this plainly enough parallels the case and condition of the stubborn and unbelieving Jews, with whom more particularly he had to do in the present discourse, with the case of Pharaoh, as it is recorded in their own Scriptures.

Let us now, from the two verses last explained, take up some brief observations, and so proceed with our interpretation.

1. Whereas the Apostle (verse 17) expresseth himself thus : "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh," his meaning, as was explained, being, that God himself spake thus unto him ; it is observable, that what the Scriptures speaketh ought to be conceived and understood as spoken by God himself unto the world. (2 Tim. iii. 16 ; 2 Peter i. 16, 21 ; Gal. iii. 22, &c.)

2. Whereas we hear of God's raising up Pharaoh, in the sense declared, for the end here specified, the "showing of his power in him," &c. ; it is most worthy of observation, that where God vouchsafeth the greatest and most signal favours, he always intends the greatest exemplariness of severity in case of disobedience and impenitency. (Amos iii. 2 ; Matt. xi. 23 ; xxiii. 37, 38, &c.)

3. From those words, "And that my name may be declared through all the earth," knowledge may be taken, that, in the most severe punishments and executions done upon wicked men, God's intentions are very gracious to the generality of men surviving and succeeding, namely, in ordering and disposing such executions to the more effectual publication and manifestation of his most worthy and great name amongst them. (Psalm lviii. 10, 11 ; Num. xiv. 21—23 ; Deut. xiii. 9—11.)

4. From this inference of the Apostle, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy," this doctrine springeth, that the gracious will and good pleasure of God, and not the will or apprehension of man, is, and this with greatest reason and equity, the rule according unto which mercy and favour shall be shown unto men. (Eph. i. 11 ; 2 Cor. x. 13 ; John vi. 40, &c.)

5. And lastly : From those words, “ And whom he will he hardeneth ;” this observation in like manner presenteth itself, that the will of God, not the sense, conceit, or will of men, ought to umpire and determine who and what kind of persons are to be and shall be rejected, punished, and reprobated by God. Proceed we now to exposition.

Verse 19. *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*—This particle, “ then,” or, as it is in the original, *therefore*, ερεις ουν, showeth that the objection or demand contained in the rest of the words was occasioned from the last clause or inference of the Apostle in the former verse, “ And whom he will he hardeneth.” This yet further appeareth from that other particle, ετι, *yet*, which will not accommodate the objection in reference to any other clause or passage preceding. So that the Apostle raising and propounding the objection thus : “ Thou wilt say THEN unto me, Why doth he YET find fault,” &c., in more plainness of speech speaketh thus : “ Because I affirm and teach concerning God, that whom he will he hardeneth,” therefore it is like that one or other, not well understanding the sense, or not duly weighing the grounds of such a doctrine, will be ready to object and demand, ‘ Why doth he YET,’ namely, when men are now hardened by him, ‘ find fault?’ ” *reprove*, {or *complain*, as the word μεμφεσθαι signifieth ; meaning of such persons as that they continue wicked, obstinate, disobedient, &c., and will not repent ; taking it for granted, and that not without cause, that God, indeed, is wont to find fault with, to reprove, and complain even of such men whom he hath hardened. The reasonableness or strength of the objection, such as it is, is held forth by the objector in the latter demand, as the ratiocinative particle, “ for,” importeth, “ For who hath resisted his will ?” As if he had said, Men, being hardened by the irresistible will of God, cannot reasonably be complained of or reprovèd by him, either for being or remaining hardened or impenitent. The principle, in reason and common equity, upon which this objection is founded, is this, that men are excusable in whatsoever they are necessitated unto by a power greater than they are able to withstand, and ought not to be reprovèd upon such an account, especially not by him by whose overbearing power they have been necessitated thereunto.

For the phrase, “ Who hath resisted,” it imports, who hath

been able to resist, according to that rule by which the Scripture speaketh many things. "Many times the negation of a power to act is included in and with the negation of the act only."\* Thus God himself speaketh: "And there is none delivereth out of my hand." (Isaiah xliii. 13.) Thus the original hath it, and Junius and Tremellius accordingly render it, and Master Henry Ainsworth also; that is, "None that CAN deliver out of my hand," &c., as our English readeth it. So again: "The land did not bear them," (Gen. xiii. 6,) in the original; that is, "was not able to bear them," as we have it translated. (Compare Matt. xii. 25, with Mark iii. 24, 25; and again, Matt. xvii. 21, with Mark ix. 29.) So that the meaning of the words before us, "Who hath resisted his will?" is, Who hath been, is, or ever shall be, able to resist, that is, to frustrate or to hinder, the coming to pass or being of that which God willeth shall come to pass or be?

By the way, unless by the will of God, in this clause, be meant, that which some call his decreeing will, that is, that will wherewith himself willeth to do a thing, and not his preceptive will, wherewith he only commands something to be done by men, there is no strength, nor colour of strength, or reason in the demand. For, concerning this latter will of God, it may rather be demanded, "Who hath not," at least in many things, "resisted it?" "In many things," saith James, "we offend all," that is, do many things contrary to the preceptive will of God, and so do not suffer many things willed by him, in this sense, to take place. If we understand the clause to speak of the other, the decreeing will of God, the sense of it must be this: "Who ever hath been, is, or will be, able to hinder the coming to pass of that which God hath absolutely and against all possible interveniencies decreed to effect?" According to such a sense as this, the truth is, that the objection hath very little in it in opposition to the Apostle's doctrine of God's hardening whom he will. For when he saith of God, that "whom he will he hardeneth," it neither supposeth, in the first place, his actual hardening of any man, but only his just liberty or power to harden whom he pleaseth: Nor, 2. Doth it suppose any purpose or decree in him to harden any man against all possible interveniencies, or without the doing of that by those

\* *Negatio actus sæpe etiam connotat negationem potentiae.*

who are hardened which they might very possibly have prevented or not have done, as we have formerly proved at large, but at the most, a purpose to harden those who shall first voluntarily harden themselves: Nor, 3. Doth it suppose that they who are actually hardened by God are in no capacity or possibility, by means of that grace of God which is yet vouchsafed unto them, notwithstanding their hardening, of recovering themselves from under it, or of betaking themselves to the altar of repentance. The contrary hereunto hath likewise been clearly evicted by us. Now, then, though the decreeing will of God be, in the sense declared, irresistible, yet if this will be, 1. To harden none but those who voluntarily first harden themselves, and so might have prevented their hardening: And, 2. To leave those whom he doth at any time harden in a capacity of relenting and returning to their former or a greater tenderness, so that if they do it not, it becomes a high aggravation of their former sin; certainly he hath reason in abundance to reprove and complain of those who are at any time hardened by him and so continue. For reproofs are in no case more proper than when men through their wilful foolishness have incurred any great danger and inconvenience; and especially when, having power and opportunity in their hands to redeem themselves, they shall, notwithstanding, neglect to do it. These things considered, it fully appears that there is little or no strength in the objection; and that it savoureth more of a captious humour, or wicked desire to quarrel with the righteous proceedings of God against stubborn and disobedient men, or else to trouble, incumber, and disparage the Apostle's doctrine, than of any true desire to be satisfied in the truth hereof, or of any conscientious scruple in the objector about it; and, upon this account, seemeth rather to be the objection of some perverse-minded Jew than of any other.\* Even as in these days, it is exceedingly to be feared that many raise objections, and some write books against several doctrines, not so much out of any ingenuity or goodness of conscience, as really and upon ground judging the said doctrines to be erroneous and unsound, or out of any Christian desire to be satisfied either touching the truth or untruth of them, as to disfigure their faces

\* An objection, either of a carnal man's ignorance, who doth not apprehend the Apostle's true meaning in this aforesaid will of God, and hardening of man; or of a reprobate's rage, who imputes his perdition unto God, &c.—J. DIODAT. *in locum.*

and heap reproaches upon the heads of these doctrines, lest their beauty and truth should commend them with too high a hand unto the world.

But that the objection yet before us proceeds from a great unworthiness of spirit, either through impudence or ignorance, or both, in the objector, the answer which the Apostle returns to it maketh evident; the tenor of which answer followeth in these words.

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

I scarce know any one passage of the Scripture more impudently handled, and more frequently abused, than this: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" When men, in the great questions of predestination and reprobation, bring forth any text of Scripture, one or more, which, as they conceive and interpret, make for their notion in these points, though the sense which they put upon these scriptures be never so uncouth, horrid, and loudly dissonant from the genuine and true meaning of the Holy Ghost; yet, if any man goeth about to contradict their sense, or, by the clearest evidence of reason, to overthrow their interpretation, they presently fall upon him with the sharp two-edged sword of this apostolical reproof: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" As if Paul had left them his heirs and successors in the infallibility of his Spirit; or, as if all the spots of darkness and ignorance were clean scoured out of the moon of their understandings. Indeed, if men could now give us as good security, that they have the mind of God and of Christ as Paul did that he had them, there were some better colour for the bearing them out in the exercise of such Apostle-like jurisdiction against those who refuse to bow down to their apprehensions. But when men shall call a solid and sober answer to their reasonless and groundless conceits about the meaning of the Scriptures, a replying against God, it savours more of his spirit who was seen falling

like lightning from heaven, than of his who saw him in this his fall. (Luke x. 18.) This only by the way.

The Apostle's answer to the objection or demand propounded consisteth, as Calvin well observeth, of two parts.\* The former is a sharp objurgation or reproof; the latter, a substantial vindication of the righteousness and wisdom of God in those proceedings of his with men, both which the objection seemeth desirous to impeach. Each part of the answer is propounded in one and the same interrogative form and tenor of speech; the former thus: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" The latter: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?" Interrogative expressions argue much seriousness and intenseness of mind in him that speaketh, about the things of which he speaketh; and, withal, are more apt to pierce and awaken the minds and thoughts of those that are spoken unto or hear.

In the objurgation or former part of the answer the Apostle toucheth upon three things, to make the objector sensible either of his ignorance or presumption, or both, in admitting and giving way to such thoughts as those of which the objection is made. 1. He reminds him of his own weak and deplorable condition as being a man, and so "sold under sin" and ignorance: "Nay but, O MAN, who art thou?" 2. He sets before him the consideration of the most transcendent greatness, wisdom, and majesty of Him against whom he contends, and whom he arraigns by such an objection, in the word "God:" "Who art thou that repliest against God?" 3. And lastly: He informs him of the nature or quality of his offence committed in such an objection, against this most glorious and incomprehensible being, God, in that word, *ο ανταποκρινομενος*, *who repliest or takest up a dispute against*, or *who givest thwart or cross answers* unto God. The word will well bear any of these significations; yet I incline rather to that mentioned in the second place. So that this part of the Apostle's answer, being spread more at large, may be conceived to contain some such address from him as this to the objector: "How is it, what strange and unheard-of presumption is it, for such a creature as thou art, being a man,

\* *Hac priore responsione nihil aliud quam improbitatem illius blasphemiae retundit argumento ab hominis conditione sumpto. Alteram mox subjiciet, qua Dei justitiam ab omni criminatione vindicabit.*

dwelling in a house of clay, compassed about with ignorance and darkness, 'sold under sin,' adjudged unto death, guilty of eternal death, shouldest undertake to reprove, censure, judge, and condemn the actions and ways of the most high God, as if they were crooked, defective either in justice, or wisdom, or any other excellency; the actions and ways, I say, of that God who is the sovereign and supreme Ruler of all things, the Lord of life and death, the great Creator, Preserver, Governor of all creatures, before whom those great princes of heaven, the holy angels, cover their faces, and heaven and earth are afraid and tremble; and who, through the riches of his patience hath endured thee in the midst of many great provocations, and all thy sins notwithstanding, hath entreated thee graciously, dealt bountifully with thee, heaped blessings and good things upon thee night and day, in comparison of whom, thou, together with all the nations of the earth, art lighter than vanity, lesser than nothing itself? that such an one as thou art shouldest lift up a thought against such a God as this, or the least of his ways, is such a thing, such a deportment of a creature, at which the sun may be ashamed, and the moon abashed, and the earth removed out of his place."

In the words following, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" the Apostle further amplifies and exaggerates the indignity put upon God by him that should rise up against him with any such demand as, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" meaning, that he that shall thus expostulate with God doth no otherwise, no whit better, than if an earthen pitcher should contend with him that formed it, and demand an account of him why he made it in such or such a shape as now he hath done, and not rather in some other. This comparison sets off the deportment of the objector towards God with a kind of unnatural and prodigious deformity and unworthiness. For what can there lightly be imagined more repugnant to the law of nature or light of reason, than that that which receives the benefit or good of being from another, which, how mean or ordinary soever it be, it could no ways deserve or claim from him that gave it, should, notwithstanding, censure or reprove him because the being which he gave unto it was not better, or some other, than what it is? Have sheep or oxen any cause to find fault with their Creator because he made them such, and not men? or men, that he made them men, and not angels? espe-



cially considering that it was impossible for God to have given any other beings unto them than those which he hath now given them, and by which they are that which they are. God could, indeed, have made other creatures, and, doubtless, better than they, when he made them; but what had this been to them in case they had not been made? It cannot, upon this account, be said, that he had done better for THEM, or given THEM any better being than what they now have; nay, if they had not received those very kinds of beings which now they have, THEY could have had no being at all, but only other creatures should have had beings in their stead.

Nor ought the Apostle's similitude or comparison seem improper to set forth or show the unreasonableness of the objector in the mentioned objection, although the objection doth not speak of the natural form or simple being of man, but only of God's handling of him or dealing by him being now made. Because, 1. Man having sinned and provoked his Maker hath hereby forfeited his very being, nor is in any capacity of claiming, by any right or law of equity from God, any manner of being, in the least degree or in any respect desirable. Therefore, for a man in this lost condition to expostulate with God why he deals by him so or so, why he doth not entreat him more graciously than he doth, is equivalent to an expostulation with him about the terms or manner of his simple being. 2. This expostulation with God about his handling or dealing by his creature man, and particularly in the matter of hardening upon much voluntary provocation preceding, is so much the more unreasonable, because, the wisdom and justice of God considered, it is not meet, and, consequently, not possible, for him to proceed otherwise with him, or to alter his state and condition, until by means of that grace which is still vouchsafed unto him, notwithstanding his present induration, he stir up himself to seek "an heart of flesh," a soft and tender heart, from God.

By the way, there is nothing in this part of the Apostle's answer, no, not in these words, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" which imports any unlawfulness or unmeetness for men with reverence and sobriety to search out as well the righteousness and equity as the wisdom and goodness, as of the counsels, so of the ways and dispensations, of God. Abraham discoursed with God, propounding several questions and receiving answers from him, during the discourse, concerning his righ-

teousness in the destruction of Sodom, in such and such cases. (Gen. xviii.) And Jeremy the Prophet desired leave of God to reason with him about his judgments and the prosperity of wicked men. (Jer. xii. 1.) Job also reasoned many things with God about his righteousness and equity in afflicting him as he did, and yet was blameless. The Prophet David, speaking of the great works of God in his government of the world, saith, that they are "sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." (Psalm cxi. 2.) And, doubtless, he that desires to be praised by men "with understanding," (Psalm xlvi. 7,) and is as well, if not as much, to be praised for his righteousness, for his just and equitable administrations of human affairs in the world, as for any other his attributes and perfections, is well pleased with those who endeavour to make the rough things of his ways smooth; I mean, to reconcile those things in his ways which unto men are apt to seem unequal and hard, with the clear principles of justice and equity, such as are written by himself in the fleshly tables of men's hearts, that so men may praise him for his righteousness "with understanding." Therefore, all that which the words now before us import in this kind, is, that it is intolerable presumption and impiety in men to accuse, quarrel, or arraign the counsels and ways of God for any defect, whether in wisdom or righteousness, when they are plainly declared unto them, and evicted to be his, or when men cannot reasonably doubt or question whether they be his or no. For this was the Apostle's case in reference to that severe objur- gation wherewith he smites the conscience of the objector: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" He had expressly, and above all reasonable contradiction, from Pharaoh's case, evinced the truth of this assertion, that God hardeneth whom he will. It is a far different case when such counsels or ways are obtruded upon us by men, as fallible in their judgments as ourselves, in the name of the counsels and ways of God; and more especially when such counsels or ways are upon these terms obtruded, which have an open eye of unequalness, injustice, and partiality in them; and nothing so much as alleged to cover this great nakedness and shame, but only the prerogative of God to do what he pleaseth, when as the great question is, whether he pleaseth to do any such thing or no, yea, rather, when it is scarce any question at all but that such things are most displeasing unto him.

If it be said, “ But might not he that should make such an objection against the said doctrine of the Apostle as that mentioned, ‘ Why doth he then yet complain ?’ &c., make it out of weakness, in conjunction with a real desire of receiving satisfaction about that which was a real scruple unto him against it, and which is mentioned in the objection ; considering, that a thing may be evidently proved, and to the full satisfaction of some, which, notwithstanding, may remain doubtful unto others ? If this were the case with the objector here, is not the objurgatory part of the Apostle’s answer raised to too high a pin of severity and soreness of reproof ?” I answer,

1. Some account hath been given formerly that the Apostle, by the tenor and purport of the objection, intends to personate, not an humble or conscientious man, modestly and with a spirit of meekness desirous of satisfaction in things wherein he was dark, but of a man impatient of hearing the truth, when the light of it breaks out to the discovery of the nakedness of some or other of his darling notions or conceits, and who is not tender of speaking most unworthily of God to salve the credit of his own opinion, or his inordinate contentment received from it. I here add,

2. That the very form of the objection, as it is here drawn up and exhibited unto us by the Apostle, bewrays rather a confident and insulting spirit in the objector, a spirit that thought itself sufficiently furnished with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, utterly to overthrow the Apostle’s doctrine at once, than a spirit burdened with its own weakness and ignorance, or desirous of help from those that were able to relieve it. Look narrowly in the face of the objection, and you will see haughtiness sitting on the eye-lids of it. “ Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault ? For who hath resisted his will ?” Doth not he that speaketh these things find fault with God himself for finding fault with men, as if God’s act in finding fault were justly taxable, but his own faultless and irreprovable ? Yea, doth he not presume to give a reason whereby, as he conceives, God’s act in finding fault with men is evicted of error and unreasonableness ? What else meaneth this clause subjoined : “ For who hath resisted his will ?” whereas, questionless, the thought of his heart was, that no good reason could be given by any man to evince any thing culpable in his finding fault with God ; because then, it is like, that he would have

refrained such his reproof. So that the highest strain of severity in the Apostle's reproof doth not rise a whit above the line of the demerit of the objection.

3. And lastly : It is not unlikely but that the Apostle in his reproof might and did bear somewhat the harder with his authority upon the objector here, that all others in all succeeding generations might be more effectually admonished both to think and speak reverently and with honour of all the counsels and ways of God, and tremble at all communion or affinity with this objector in his impiety. This for the former part of the Apostle's answer to the objection, (verse 20,) wherein he sharply reproveth the inditer, and so declares the sinfulness of it. The latter part of his answer followeth :—

*Hath not the potter power over the clay? &c.*—The Apostle in this part of his answer further demonstrates the importune unreasonableness of the said objection, giving a clear account how God may harden whom he will, and yet, both justly and with wisdom every ways beseeming him, find fault with or complain of those who are hardened by him, and this notwithstanding any irresistibleness of his will in such cases or sense wherein it is irresistible.

Notice may be taken by the way, that the passage and words now before us are the first-born of that presumed strength which many think they find in this chapter to stand by them in their opinion of an absolute reprobation of men under a mere personal consideration from eternity. But to me it is the first-born of manifest and apparent truths, that there is nothing at all, little or much, contained or intended by the Apostle, in the said passage, of any comport with such a notion or opinion. And I doubt not but by a diligent examination of the words themselves, together with the context round about them, I shall be able to make this clear to any impartial or considering man. But men that are inordinate in their desires after expedition, are never like to understand those things which are most expedient for them to know. It is a common saying, but exceeding true, and most worthy some men's considerations, that *omne compendium, dispendium*, haste hath made the greatest part, if not the whole, of that waste of truth which hath been made in the world. But to the words :—

*Hath not the potter, &c.*—I suppose it is no man's question, whether the Apostle, in these words, had an eye, at least of

allusion, if not of proof and confirmation also, to that passage of the Prophet Jeremy, where, being commanded by God to go down to a potter's house, whilst he stood by, and beheld one vessel miscarrying and marred in this potter's hand, whilst it was in framing, and another presently made of the same matter by him, the word of the Lord came to him in this tenor: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel." (Jer. xviii. 6.) If it be but granted that our Apostle so much as alludeth unto or glanceth at these words spoken by God unto Jeremy, which, I presume, cannot reasonably be denied, nor is denied that I know of by any man, their conceit of the words before us must needs be importune and against reason, who acknowledge no comparison or similitude in them, but affirm and say that by the word "potter" God is properly and directly meant; by "the lump," the earth of which men are formed and made; by "vessels unto honour," those that are ordained unto salvation; by "vessels unto dishonour," those that are appointed unto damnation. The sense of the passage, according to this notion of the words, riseth thus, or to this effect: "Hath not the great Potter, God, such a right of power over that earth of which he intendeth to make and form men, that of the same piece or parcel of it he may lawfully make some for life and glory, others for shame and destruction?" If the words ran thus: "Hath not *OUR*," or, "Hath not *THE, HEAVENLY* Potter power of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" the sense specified might have some competent agreement with the words, although the context ensuing would ill endure it. But now the tenor of them being, as we have heard, "Hath not *ο κεραμεινς, the potter*," that is, any ordinary or common potter, "power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour," that sense doth at no hand accommodate the words themselves.

The greater part of expositors, as Calvin, Beza, &c., acknowledge a comparison in the words *potter, power, clay, lump, vessel, &c.*, in their grammatical, literal, and proper significations. But whereas every comparison consists of two parts, as well of that which is called the *αποδοσις*, that is, the *reddition* or *application*, as of that which is termed *προτασις*, that is, the *fore-part* of it, wherein the case or things resembling are

expressed; the agreement amongst interpreters about this former part of the comparison in hand, which I call the *προτασις*, is not greater than the disagreement concerning the other. The *προτασις*, or *fore-part*, of the comparison is voted on all hands, that inconsiderable paucity resenting the former notion excepted, to be expressed in the words oft mentioned, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Verse 21.) But, touching the other, the *αποδοσις*, or applicatory part of it, who knoweth when brethren will be reconciled? For some conceive that the Apostle, in the comparison, expresseth himself *ανανταποδοτως*, that is, only mentioneth the *προτασις*, or *fore-part*, of the comparison, leaving the latter or applicatory part of it to be supplied out of the former, by the reasons and understandings of men. Others, on the other hand, conceive, and are very confident and assertive herein, that there is a clear and express *αποδοσις*, or *application*, of the comparison, delivered by the Apostle himself, immediately following, in these words: "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," &c. (Verses 22, 23.)

The sense of those whose judgments and consciences have espoused that hard-favoured opinion of a peremptory reprobation of men under a mere personal consideration from eternity, generally stands for the former. These, considering the tenor of the *προτασις*, or *former part* of the comparison, expressed verse 21, upon the account of their own abilities of reason and understanding challenge a right to so much confidence, as to make the *αποδοσις*, or *application*, themselves. Those that are contrary-minded to them in the important doctrine of predestination judge it more safe to steer the other way, and to accept of that reddition or application of the said comparison which the Holy Ghost himself, at least as they conceive, hath drawn up, than to adventure in a business of that most sacred and high consequence upon the strength of their own understandings. Let us give both parties a patient and impartial hearing in these respective causes, the matter between them being of so great moment, beginning with the former.

They who judge the *fore-part* of the comparison, laid down, (verse 21,) a ground sufficient for them, by the light of their own reasons, to build the *application* upon, suppose they quit

themselves worthily, and without danger of mistake, by managing the business after this manner, or to this effect: As the potter hath that power over his clay, that he may of the same lump or part of it make one vessel for an honourable use, another for a dishonourable, as he pleaseth; in like manner, and much more, hath God power of the same mass or lump of matter to make one man for life and glory, another to shame and destruction, as he pleaseth. Though they have no competent ground from the Apostle in the words before us to proceed thus far towards the confirmation of their prementioned notion about predestination, but only some light and washy colour; yet they proceed much further with the same confidence, even beyond all appearance of ground in this kind. For they do not only plead from the words a liberty or right of power in God, of the same lump or mass to create or make one man to salvation, another to damnation, for which there may be some colour in the words, though, indeed, there is nothing more, but likewise further urge the actual exercise or execution of this liberty or power, and this not with limitation neither to the more gracious part, and which best becometh the goodness, and, indeed, all the attributes, of God, I mean, the creation of men unto salvation; but with the extension of it also unto the other part, the creating of men unto condemnation. And certain I am, that the words in hand are so far from contributing any thing material or substantial for the countenance of such an opinion, that they do not so much as mutter or whisper the least iota sounding that way. For who knoweth not but that God hath a liberty or power of doing ten thousand things which he hath no will ever to lift up his hand unto, nor to do any of them?

That which prevailed, in all likelihood, with these men to undertake, with so much confidence, to supply out of the treasury of their own wisdoms and understandings the latter part or application of the said comparison, was partly their preconceived opinion of truth in that doctrine which such a supply maintaineth; (the doctrine, I mean, of an absolute election and reprobation from eternity;) partly the concinn and handsome correspondency, at least in their eye, between the words of the Apostle, wherein the *πρωτασις* of the comparison is expressed, and the reddition or application supplied, by them; partly, also, either their non-advertency or their non-belief of a reddi-

tion made to the said *πρωτασις* of the comparison by the Apostle himself. But that all these, *divisim et conjunctim*, are grounds insufficient to warrant or justify such an undertaking, is not in itself very far from what is sufficiently evident. For,

1. Suppose the said doctrine preconceived, and which receiveth credit from the supply mentioned, were a truth, which yet I must borrow the faith of some of those that are contrary minded unto me to believe, yet doth this not so much as in show justify a supply in this place. An interpretation of a text of Scripture may very possibly be a truth, and yet an erroneous and false interpretation. I may suppose the doctrine of an absolute reprobation to be a truth; and yet not necessarily evincible from these words, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" &c. But I should have been willing here, by the light of an argument or two, to have showed the rottenness and dead men's bones of that opinion, notwithstanding all the painting of it, but that I remember it to be done already elsewhere by the multiplied light of many arguments.\*

2. Neither is the correspondency or agreement between the said *πρωτασις* of the comparison, expressed by the Apostle, as we have heard, and the supplied *ανταποδοσις*, or *application*, mentioned, so harmonious, pleasant, or sweet, as the less considerate ear of many have resented it. Yea, they themselves who are one and all in framing an application in favour of the said doctrine of an absolute election and reprobation, yet are at high contests among themselves about the lump or mass over which the potter is said to have power, &c., as what it should signify, or what would best correspond with it in the reddition or application, as whether men or mankind considered as yet uncreated, or as created; if as created, whether considered as yet standing in their innocency and native integrity, or as fallen and corrupted with sin; if as uncreated, whether considered as intended by God to be created, or only as creable, in case God should please to create them.† If there were nothing else in the way to cancel the authority of the confidence of men in attempting to make applications of Scripture similitudes or comparisons of themselves, and without the guidance of the Holy

\* *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, pp. 6—8, &c. See also *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 512—514, &c., 47, 478, 479.

† See more of these contests amongst the assertors of absolute reprobation, *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, pp. 14, 15.



Ghost, but only such uncertainties and digladiations amongst the attemptors as these, the alone consideration hercof is abundantly sufficient to do it. Nor is it so obvious or easy as many conceive to build such an application upon the Apostle's similitude of a potter and his clay, I mean, with aptness and clearness of sense in all the parts of it, which will much accommodate the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation. If we shall suppose that the Holy Ghost hath made no application himself of the similitude we speak of, the contrary whereunto, notwithstanding, we shall shortly demonstrate; yet may there such an application be made of the words, and this upon better grounds, and with a more particular eye of reference to the passage in Jeremy mentioned, from whence the similitude, as hath been noted, is borrowed, than is found in the common application, which hath no sympathy at all with the said doctrines of election and reprobation from eternity. As for instance: As the "potter" hath "power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour," in like manner, yea, and much more, hath God power, that is, a just and equitable power, and which cannot reasonably offend or trouble any man, over men, who have corrupted and embased themselves by obstinacy, in which respect they may be very well resembled to a lump of clay, to ordain or make some of them, namely, all those who shall repent, vessels of honour and of salvation; others of them, namely, such who, notwithstanding the patience of God towards them, shall yet remain stubborn and impenitent, vessels of wrath, and vessels of dishonour, or condemnation. But this application is, I confess, the same for matter and substance with that subjoined by the Holy Ghost himself. In this application, that which answereth the potter's clay or lump, in the *πρωτασις* of the comparison, is neither man considered as created or as increated, nor yet either as standing or as fallen, nor under any of those other notions mentioned, which may well be compared to those "foolish and unlearned questions" which, as Paul saith, "gender strifes;" (2 Tim. ii. 23;) but man considered as having voluntarily embased and polluted himself with a course of obstinate sinning against God. This notion or interpretation of the potter's clay in the similitude agrees, (1.) With the parallel place in Jeremy, where the house of Israel, which the Lord here saith were in his hand as the clay in the potter's hand, had been, not only actually,

but even obstinately, sinful and rebellious against him for a long time; and, (2.) It agrees, also, with the context and scope of the place, which was to assert and maintain a right of power in God, not to create or make some men with an absolute intent to save them, others with a like intent to destroy them everlastingly, (the Apostle had nothing on foot at present of any communion with such a notion as this,) but to harden whom he will, on the one hand, and to show mercy on whom he will, on the other. Now we have formerly showed and proved, that those whom God willeth to harden are such who first harden themselves by neglecting the blessed guidance of his patience towards them, which leadeth them to repentance; and, on the other hand, that those on whom he willeth to show mercy are such who, having polluted themselves with actual transgressions, accept of his gracious pardon held forth unto them, and flee to the golden altar of repentance. And thus we clearly see there is nothing in the second pretended ground upon which men take courage to frame an application of these words, "Hath not the potter power over the clay," &c., of themselves, that will justify or bear them out herein. The application they make doth but flatter them with a fair face; the heart of it, as we have proved, is not perfect with the words.

3. And lastly: Neither doth the remaining encouragement turn to any better account unto them for their undertaking. For what though they do not apprehend that the Apostle himself hath drawn up the *αποδοσις*, or *application*, of the *πρωτασις* of his comparison, but imagine that he omitted it, with an intent it should be framed and drawn up by them, yet doth it not from hence follow that therefore, indeed, he hath omitted it, or left it for them to supply, no more than it followeth that what men see not is not, or that what one man or some men apprehend not cannot be conceived or understood by others. But this notion of theirs will be put to rebuke upon the best terms, by a diligent examination of the words now following, which, doubtless, hereupon will confess that they were intended by the Apostle for an *αποδοσις*, or *application*, of his preceding similitude, or comparison, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" &c., and so will justify those who are thus minded, and dislike the presumption of the other, who, without cause or necessity, will needs undertake to relieve the Holy Ghost, and

supply his defects, where there is nothing wanting, nor any need of their help. The words are these:—

22 What if God, willing [or *εἰ δὲ θελων ο Θεος, and what, or, but what, if God willing*] to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction :

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory ?

These words, as hath been more than once intimated, contain the Apostle's reddition or application of his foregoing similitude of the potter and his power over the clay, to do so and so with it as we have heard. Now, as the proposition or fore-part of the comparison expressed a double power in the potter over his clay ; one, to make vessels of honour, the other, vessels of dishonour, of the same lump ; so the Apostle's application consists of two parts ; the former speaks of the patience and long-suffering of God towards the vessels of wrath before he destroyeth them, which answers that power which the potter hath to make vessels of dishonour ; the latter expresseth the bountifulness of God towards the vessels of mercy in fitting them for glory, which answers the power of the potter to make vessels unto honour.

By the way, because both the verses are expressed interrogatively, "What if God, willing to show his wrath," &c.; knowledge may be taken, that it is not unusual in the Scriptures to deliver the applicatory part of a comparison or similitude in an interrogative or expostulatory form. "And shall not God," saith our Saviour, in his reddition of the parable or comparison of the unrighteous Judge and the widow, "avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" (Luke xviii. 7.) Where this also may be observed, that the same adversative particle, *δὲ*, frequently used in a copulative sense, is used in a like construction, as it is in the place in hand, *Ο δὲ Θεος ἢ μὴ ποιησει, And, or but, shall not God avenge, &c.* For the interrogative form we speak of in redditions of similitudes, see also Matt. vi. 23 ; Luke xii. 54—56, &c. So that the interrogative character of

speech, wherein the verses before us are delivered, argues nothing at all against their relation to the similitude of the potter, (verse 21,) by way of an *αποδοσις*, or *application*.

As this consideration makes nothing against the said relation of these verses, so there are four others which make with a high hand for it.

First. The particle, *δε*, (*εἰ δε θελων ο θεος*, &c.,) shows some relation at least in these verses unto and dependence upon the precedent verse, which contains the similitude of the potter: Which relation our English translators either overlooked, or knowingly winked at, giving no English consideration at all for the said Greek particle, *δε*. If they had rendered *in* copulatively by the English particle, “and,” as they did in the fore-mentioned parable, *And shall not God avenge his own elect*, &c., (Luke xviii. 7,) *Ο ΔΕ ΘΕΟΣ ο μη ποιησει*, &c., the connexion between the two parts of the parable or similitude here had been above ground in our English translation, as well as it is there. But notice hath been taken elsewhere that translators, where the letter of the original text bears hard upon any beloved notion or opinion of theirs, decline the proper work of translators, and turn interpreters. Knowledge, likewise, hath been given, that the patrons of a reprobation, merely personal, from eternity, cannot brook any such connexion between the two verses in hand, and the immediately preceding similitude of the potter, which should import the former to contain the explication and application of the latter.

Secondly. The grammatical construction and completeness of sense in the verses depend upon some words used in the said similitude, (verse 21,) which must be borrowed from thence to make the sentence and syntaxis here regular. Let the words be diligently re-perused, and there will appear a manifest *ελλειψις*, or *defect of words*, that must be supplied from some place or other where they are to be had. This ellipsis is so notorious and manifest, that I know no expositor but takes notice of it under one term or other. Some call it an *αποσιοπισις*. Calvin terms it, *reticentia*; Estius, the “pendency,” or hanging “of the sentence;” to omit others. Mind we then the words: “What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he

had afore prepared unto glory?" What if God do this and that? Here is no answer to these questions, nor any thing to make such demands savoury to the understanding. But if we borrow these words from verse 21, where the *πρωτασις* of the comparison is, "Hath he not power?" placing them in the end of the said verses, "What if God, willing" to do thus and thus, "hath he not power" to do either or both, this completes the sentence, and renders the sense savoury and congruous. Some of the ancient expositors went higher up, namely, to verse 20, and from thence brought down these words, as they read them, "Who art thou, O man, that canst answer God,"\* to make the sense perfect. But this commodity is further fetched, and doth less service when it comes. So that there is little question but that the Apostle, according to the frequent manner of the Scripture in like cases, left the sense of the two verses in hand unperfect, knowing that there were two words near at hand, even in the same contexture of matter, that would perfect it. And who knoweth whether he did not purposely leave these two verses in a dependence upon that immediately preceding them, that so that relation between them which hath been asserted by us might be the more easily apprehended?

Thirdly. That the Apostle intended these verses for the reddition or application of his similitude of a potter, (verse 21,) is visible by this juncture of light also: 1. There is nothing else delivered by him that can be imagined to be, or to contain, this application. This, I presume, is every man's concession. 2. It is in no degree probable, that, in the midst of a discourse about another subject he should insert a similitude importing, at least in face and appearance, a matter so transcendently weighty and abstruse, as the prerogative or just power of God over his creature, without making some application thereof; or, at least, without giving some light of direction in the context near unto it, for such an application. More generally parables and similitudes in Scripture have their applications expressed and subjoined unto them; and where no such application is particularly expressed, the series of the context round about is full of light to direct to the true and unquestionable application; as is to be seen in some of the parables delivered by our Saviour. (Matt. xiii. 44—46.) So that this parable or similitude of the potter, though it concerns as high, as hidden, as important a matter

\* *O homo, tu quis es qui respondeas Deo?*

as any similitude in all the Scripture besides, and be in itself of as difficult and uncertain an interpretation as any other whatsoever, as appears by the manifold and grand contests, formerly noted, between the most confident interpreters of it by its own light; yet will it be found deprived of that light of interpretation which is common unto them all, unless we suppose the two verses in hand to contain the interpretation and application of it. But,

Fourthly. And lastly: The argument of greatest weight upon my understanding, inclining me to a confidence that the Apostle intended the verses in hand for an explication or application of the said simile of the potter, is the sweet and exact proportion which the substance of matter in these verses holds with the words and carriage of the said simile. This proportion may be conceived after some such manner as this: As the potter hath a just or equitable power over his clay, such as no man is offended at, in respect of the vileness of such matter, to make of the same lump or parcel of it, as some vessels for a more comely and honourable use, so others for an use dishonourable; in like manner, who hath any reason, colour, or pretence of reason, to gainsay the righteousness of such a power, which God claimeth and exerciseth over men who have embased themselves by a long and voluntary course of sinning and rebelling against him, as, namely, to harden and make vessels of wrath, that is, to destroy those who shall despise his patience and long-sufferance, with other means vouchsafed unto them for their reductment and repentance, and this in order to the manifestation of his avenging power; and, on the other hand, to make such persons vessels of mercy, that is, to save and glorify them, upon whom his goodness and patience, with other means of grace attending them, have had such a blessed influence and operation, as to prepare them, that is, by working them to repentance and true holiness, to make them meet for glory; and this for the declaration of the unsearchable riches of his most glorious grace unto the world?

By a diligent examination of particulars in the carriage of these verses, the application now expressed will be more confirmed, and further light given to the Apostle's discourse otherwise. For,

1. From these first words, "What if God, willing to show his wrath," meaning in the great dread and terror of it, as the

next clause interpreteth it, “and to make his POWER,” that is, his vindictive or avenging power, “known,” it fully appeareth that the Apostle doth not treat here of a reprobation of men from eternity, nor yet of reprobates, as simply such, and therefore, neither of all reprobates; unless we shall affirm and say, that there is no difference in the punishment of reprobates, but that God intends to make his revenging power equally known in the destruction of them all, which is expressly contradictious to a great current of scriptures. For, evident it is, from the said words, that only such reprobates are here spoken of, in whose punishment God intends, namely, with his consequential intentions, as hath been formerly argued, not simply a manifestation of his avenging power, but a manifestation of the power, as it were, of this power, or of the most astonishing greatness and dreadfulness of it; a type whereof was exhibited in the temporal destruction of Pharaoh, of which we heard, verse 17, and on which the Apostle keeps an eye all along his discourse hitherto. The observation mentioned might be further asserted from those words, “endured with MUCH long-suffering.” For certain it is that God doth not endure *εν πολλη μακροθυμια*, with MUCH long-suffering, all reprobates whatsoever, at least not in the sense which *εν πολλη μακροθυμια* here importeth, although in the mean time I am far otherwise minded than they who teach it for a doctrine that there are some reprobates, and those not a few neither, towards whom God showeth no patience or long-sufferance at all; imagining that many infants of days, yea, and many immediately from the womb, are sent to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for evermore. Yea, the truth is, their opinion of reprobation duly considered, they do not hold that any reprobate at all is ever endured by God, not only not with MUCH long-suffering, but not so much as with any long-suffering at all. My soul hath once been in the secret of these men; but let it never enter thereinto more.

*Hæc obiter.*

2. From the former observation it evidently followeth, that by “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” cannot be meant persons reprobated by God from eternity, much less the whole number of reprobates, in such a sense, but such persons only who directly and properly are prepared and fitted to destruction only by themselves, as, namely, by despising the grace of God, and sinning against the means of salvation, &c., and not at all

by God, unless accidentally and occasionally only, namely, as he vouchsafeth unto them such means of grace, which, being turned into wantonness, prepare men for destruction, as dryness in wood or stubble prepares and fits it for the fire. And if God did in any such sense prepare or fit these vessels of wrath to destruction, in which he prepares the vessels of mercy for glory, why should the Holy Ghost so expressly ascribe the preparation of these for glory unto God, as he doth in the following verse, "Which HE had afore prepared unto glory," and no ways interests him in the fitting of the other to destruction, but only term them passively and in an indefinite manner, "fitted to destruction?" The signal difference of the expression, doubtless, imports something worthy observation in this kind. Yea,

3. "The vessels of wrath" here spoken of are neither said by God, nor yet by his "enduring them with much long-suffering," to be fitted to destruction, either in one sense or other; but to have been thus fitted, I mean, to destruction, before God is said to "endure them with much long-suffering." For he is expressly said to "have endured," that is, by an enallage of the tense, "to endure," "with much long-suffering," these "vessels of wrath," *κατηρτισμενα εις απωλειαν*, that is, *having been prepared for destruction*, namely, before such his enduring them. Nor, indeed, can God properly be said to endure men with much long-suffering until they have much provoked him; as a man cannot be said to exercise much patience towards a person who hath but lightly offended him. Now much provocation of God is that which prepares or fits a man to destruction. Whilst a man is yet only in preparing and fitting himself to destruction, that is, whilst he holds on in a course of sin, but hath not as yet continued very long in it; however, God may be said to endure him with patience or long-suffering, yet not *εν πολλη μακροθυμια*, *with much long-suffering*. Nor in propriety of Scripture language can a man be said *κατηρτισμενος εις απωλειαν*, *to be perfectly or thoroughly fitted to destruction*, for so the word properly signifieth, until he hath provoked God to more than an ordinary degree.

4. The premises considered, when the Apostle demandeth, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath already prepared," or before fitted, "to destruction," he plainly signifieth, that that power which God claimeth and



exerciseth in hardening whom he will, respecteth not men simply considered, no, nor yet considered simply as sinners, he claimeth no such power over any man in either of these considerations ; but it respecteth only such who are already actually prepared and “ fitted to destruction,” that is, such persons whom he might most justly and equitably destroy, whether he further hardened them, namely, by enduring them with much long-suffering, or no. And that the reason why God endureth such with much long-suffering, and hereby hardeneth them, is not that hereby they might be simply fitted to destruction, or that he may justly and equitably destroy them,—for this he might do without any such hardening,—but that, in case they repent not by the opportunity and means of this his enduring them with long-suffering, he might show the dreadfulness of the power of his avenging wrath in their destruction, that is, that he might destroy them with so much the greater and more formidable destruction. This consideration fully proveth that that power in God over his creature man, which answereth the power of the potter over his clay, in the former verse, at least so far as it respecteth his liberty to make vessels to dishonour, extendeth only to such of these creatures who have so far corrupted and embased themselves by voluntary sinning, that they are already meet to be destroyed, and is not claimed or exercised by him in reference to any others.

If it be objected, that, “ according to this notion of the comparison, God should have no power to make vessels of wrath simply, but all such vessels as these should be made such of and by themselves, and that the power or liberty of God in this kind extendeth only to the making of such persons larger vessels of wrath, who have been made vessels of wrath simply, by themselves ; and doth not such an interpretation of the power of God as this render it unparallable with and altogether unlike unto the power of the potter over his clay ?” To this I answer,

1. The Scripture nowhere affirmeth that God maketh vessels of wrath, but affirmeth many things of an import contrary hereunto. “ Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” (Eccles. vii. 29.) God made man upright, that is, mankind, or all men, as appears by the pronoun of the plural number, “ THEY,” in the latter clause, namely, in Adam ; and, doubtless, they who were made upright by God were not made vessels of wrath, but of

love, goodness, and bounty. Again: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (Ezek. xxxiii. 11; xviii. 32.) Doubtless, if God made vessels of wrath, he would take pleasure in filling them with wrath, that is, in inflicting death and destruction upon them. (See also, upon this account, 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9; 2 Peter iii. 9; besides many other places of like import.) But,

2. There is a consideration or sense, notwithstanding, wherein God may be said to make vessels of wrath, namely, as he is Maker of such a law or decree by which wicked and ungodly men are juridically, or in point of law, constituted and declared vessels of wrath. For though men make themselves vessels of wrath morally, and by way of demerit, yet they do not make themselves such judicially, that is, they do not constitute or make that law by which they come to be proceeded against, and to suffer, as vessels of wrath: This law is enacted and made by God, and executed by him accordingly. When our Apostle saith, that "the strength of sin is the law," (1 Cor. xv. 56,) his meaning is, that sin, simply considered, and as such, (I mean, as it is such or such an act,) hath no force or strength in it to bind men over unto punishment, or to render men liable hereunto; but that which gives such a strength or force as this unto it is the law of God, by which such and such acts which now are sinful are made punishable with death. To the same purpose elsewhere: "Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression;" (Rom. iv. 15;) meaning, that such an act which now is sinful and binding unto punishment, by means of a law prohibiting it, and adjudging it punishable, would not be sinful nor binding unto punishment, in case no such law were in being; which, likewise, is the sense of that other saying, "But sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Rom. v. 13.) Now, then, God, being the Author and Maker of that decree or law by which men are made vessels of wrath juridically, that is, liable to wrath and punishment, he may in this sense and respect be said to make such vessels, according to the notion of the logic maxim, *Quod est causa causæ, est etiam causa causati*; "That which is the cause of the cause is the cause, also, of that which is effected or caused by this cause."

3 And lastly: That liberty or power which is vested in

God of making vessels of wrath, in the sense specified, most properly answereth the power of the potter over his clay, in making what vessels of it he pleaseth unto dishonour, and not such a power as many attribute unto him, namely, of ordaining men, or of purposing to ordain men, to destruction from eternity. For that power, that is, the equitableness of that power, which the potter hath over his clay, to make what vessels of it he pleaseth unto dishonour, accrueth unto him, not simply from hence, that it is his, or his own, but that it is HIS CLAY, that is, a material of that vileness, that, it being his, no man can reasonably be offended with him, in case he makes of it a vessel, one or more, to dishonour. For, questionless, as "it is not meet," no man hath power, that is, a regular or lawful power, "to take the children's bread," that is, such bread which is meet to be given unto children, and fit for their nourishment, "and to cast it to dogs," (Matt. xv. 26,) although this bread be never so much his own, as men count things their own; so neither hath any man any power (I still mean a regular or lawful power) to oppress or debase nature in any kind, as to compel such things to serve more ignoble and base ends, the excellency of whose natural temper, properties, and frame, declares them serviceable and meet for ends more honourable and worthy; although it be very lawful, on the other hand, to advance and gratify nature when we have opportunity or occasion to do it, I mean, by converting the mean, and the vile, and the base, things of nature unto services of a more honest and comely import, as the potter doeth, when of his clay he makes a vessel unto honour. So, then, it is only such a power in God which answereth the power of the potter over his clay whereby he is enabled and at liberty, of such persons that are become vile, and have embased themselves, and made themselves meet for destruction by sinning, to ordain and make vessels of wrath whom he pleaseth, as he doth all those who despise his goodness, and patience, and long-sufferance towards them; and, on the other hand, to make vessels of mercy of whom he pleaseth from amongst this generation of men, as he doth of all those who by his goodness and patience are brought to repentance. And, haply, it may be not unworthy observation, that though goldsmiths, and those who work upon those more costly and choice materials of silver and gold, do take the same liberty over their material which

the potter doth over his clay, I mean, of the same mass or lump of silver, and sometimes of gold, "to make one vessel unto honour, another unto dishonour," yet the Holy Ghost, in this sublime argument concerning the power which God exerciseth over his creature, in making some vessels of wrath, others vessels of mercy, declineth the mention and comparison of their power, or of that power which they exercise in this kind, and borrows his resemblance, as we heard, from the potter, and his power over his clay. The reason whereof, in all probability at least, is this,—because that power which the goldsmith exerciseth over his material in making vessels of dishonour of any part of it is not so clear and free from exception and offence as that which the potter exerciseth over his clay upon the same terms. When the goldsmith makes vessels of dishonour, (I mean, in the Apostle's sense, vessels for less honest and honourable services,) of silver or gold, he doth it to gratify the inordinate lusts of men, the pomp, pride, luxury, and vanity of the rich and great persons of the world; whereas the potter, by making like vessels of his earth or clay, accommodateth himself to the necessities or reasonable conveniencies of men. Besides, such vessels as now we speak of cannot be made of any material more vile, and, in this respect, more suitable to those less honourable services for which they are made, than earth or clay is; in which consideration there is no waste committed upon nature in making them of such a material: In both these respects the potter's making of vessels of dishonour of his clay is far more inoffensive, and less liable to exception and dispute, than the goldsmith's making of the like vessels of dishonour of his silver and gold; and, consequently, is more apt and proper to illustrate and express that power which God claimeth and exerciseth over his creature in making vessels of wrath, of which or whom of them he pleaseth. But they who notion this power in God, as if by it he ordained, appointed, or made vessels of wrath, of such creatures or persons of mankind who were innocent and holy, and this during their innocency and holiness, as all they do who maintain a reprobation of men in a personal consideration from eternity, rather resemble it to the power which the goldsmith, I do not say hath, but which he claimeth and exerciseth, over his silver and gold, in making of them vessels to dishonour, than to the power which the potter claimeth and exerciseth over his clay in like kind; and, consequently,

render it very offensive, and justly questionable unto sober and considerate men. Whereas such an explication and notion of it as that which hath been held forth in a direct and clear conformity unto the potter's power over his clay renders it altogether inoffensive, undisputable, and every ways passable in the judgments and understandings of all considering men. And this, questionless, was the Apostle's intent and meaning in the verses in hand; I mean, to assert such a power in God over his creature, in the making of the same kind or sort of them vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy, as he pleaseth, which should be to all reasonable men every ways inoffensive, and far less questionable than the power of the potter over his clay. This will appear as clear as the sun at noon-day, if we do but consider the tenor and carriage of the three verses, 21—23, together: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" As if he should say, no man questioneth but that he hath. "And what if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?" meaning, "Hath not he power, or rather, hath he not a power, much more reasonable and unquestionable than that of the potter over his clay, to do both these?" So that the Apostle's comparison of the potter is argumentative, and so intended by him, not simply *à simili*, or *ab æquali*, but *à minore ad majus*, that is, not from the bare similitude or resemblance of one thing with another by the way of equality, but from the lesser probability or evidence of truth in the one, to the greater in the other. His argument or reasoning here may be formed thus: "If the potter hath such power over his clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, another to dishonour, the lawfulness or equitableness whereof no reasonable man questioneth; much more unquestionable, and apparently equitable and just, is that power in God which he exerciseth in making vessels of wrath of and destroying those most terribly who shall despise his patience and long-suffering, as, likewise, in making those vessels of mercy, and glorifying them, who, by the like patience and long-suffering towards them, shall be wrought in time to repentance." The like argument *à minore ad majus* is intended

and held forth by our Saviour himself in that parable of his, which we have formerly in another respect, also, compared with that of the Apostle now in hand: "There was in a city a Judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust Judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." (Luke xviii. 2—8.) Our Saviour's scope and drift by this hypotyposis or comparison of the "unjust Judge," who "neither feared God, nor regarded man," &c., was not simply to teach or prove that there is a like ground of hope that God, upon the importunity of his elect by prayer, will avenge them of their enemies and oppressors, with that which the widow had to overcome the unjust Judge, and to prevail with him, by her importunity, to do her justice on her adversary; but to demonstrate a great overplus of hope, or certainty rather, that God, upon the terms mentioned, will avenge and deliver them. "And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry day and night unto him?" &c. As if he should have said, Did the widow, by her importunity, draw water out of the flint, obtain an act of justice contrary to the nature and principles of him from whom she sought it? And is it not a thousand times more worthy hope, yea, and confidence of expectation, that God, who is naturally inclined to acts of grace and mercy, on the one hand, towards those that are oppressed, as, on the other hand, to acts of justice upon oppressors; that he, I say, especially upon importunity of requests and solicitations made unto him by persons so highly respected by him as his "own elect," should in due time appear for their deliverance out of trouble? And thus you see how both comparisons, that of our Saviour now insisted upon, and that of our Apostle in hand, answer one the other in point of argumentation.

If yet it be any man's question or doubt, how or upon what account the power of God to make vessels of wrath, as we have stated and explained it, should be so apparently equitable and

unquestionable, as we have asserted it, above the power of the potter over his clay, to make of what part of the lump he pleaseth vessels unto dishonour, were not the thing evident in itself, upon a little consideration, and so supposed by the Apostle in the context, I should be willing to make a further labour of inquiring into it. But the advantage of unquestionableness in that power of God, which we have ascribed unto him, above the power of the potter over his clay, in the point under consideration, is apparently visible in this. That which gives the potter an equitable power over his clay, to do with it as hath been oft said, that is, to make vessels to dishonour of what parts of it he pleaseth, is partly that civil property or propriety which he hath in it,—it is his own lawful substance, and not another man's; partly, the vile and contemptible nature of it, it is but a piece of earth, the lowest, and most ignoble element of all the rest; yea, a piece of the baser and less considerable part of this element. Now, (1.) The civil right or propriety which the potter hath in his clay is not a sovereign right, but subordinate to the will and pleasure of God, who may at any time, and this without injustice, take away this clay from him, and give it to what other person he pleaseth; yea, and may lawfully impose upon the potter laws and terms for the using and disposing of it, even whilst it is his own, and call him to account, and justly punish him, in case he shall transgress any of them. Therefore, that power which the potter hath over his clay in this respect is not so complete or full, and, consequently, not so clearly equitable, as the power of God is over his creature to dispose of it as he pleaseth, inasmuch as his propriety in it is absolute, sovereign, and every ways independent: Nor is he subject to terms or prescriptions from any other, how to order or dispose of it. (2.) The vileness of the clay, the other thing that gives the potter that power over it, of which we now speak, is not voluntarily contracted by the clay itself, but necessitated upon it by the Author of nature, and him that made it; nor was it at any time in the power of the clay to prevent it. In this respect, also, the power which the potter hath over it to convert it to dishonourable ends and uses is nothing so equitable, at least, not so apparently equitable, as that power, or the exercise of that power, over the creature man, which hath been ascribed unto God; inasmuch as that guilt or embasement by sin in this creature, upon which only, or mainly, the Apostle, in the scripture

before us, foundeth this power, or at least the exercise of it, in God, is altogether voluntary, and might have been prevented by all those who have contracted it. The potter's clay never was in any capacity of making itself a better or less vile material than now it is; but God's clay we speak of had means and opportunities vouchsafed unto it, (1.) Never to have been this clay; and, (2.) After it had made itself this clay, to have altered its property and frame, and to have become a better material before vessels of wrath were actually made of it by God. In this consideration, therefore, the power which the Apostle asserts unto God over his clay is far less disputable, as to the reasonableness or equity of it, than that of the potter over his; it being every man's sense that natural defects are, in equal consideration, far less matter of shame or disparagement than those which are voluntary, and willingly contracted.

By the amount of this discourse it fully appeareth, that that liberty or power in God of making vessels of wrath, which the Apostle any ways supposeth in or ascribes unto him, and which answereth the power of the potter over his clay, to make of it vessels to dishonour, is a liberty or power of decreeing, appointing, and determining by a law, who, or what kind of sinners and transgressors those are, who shall at last be eternally destroyed by him, and so become persons that shall receive and retain the dreadful impressions or effects of his wrath for sin, as vessels properly and literally so called are wont to receive and keep liquors or other things that are put into them; and not a power of making, or of decreeing to make, from eternity, such and such persons of mankind, under a mere personal consideration, for or to eternal destruction. Such a power as this the very nature and essential goodness of God abhors, even as they do a power of lying, deceiving, or oppressing; nor doth the Scripture any where find it in him. This for answer to the objection occasioned by the fourth particular offered to consideration from the words in hand.

5. These words, "endured with much long-suffering," plainly show and teach, that when men are really vessels of wrath, that is, meet to receive in their persons, and there to retain and hold, the wrath of God due unto sin, as a vessel properly so called is to receive such things which are commonly put into it, yea, and are now prepared and fitted to destruction, yet have they the golden sceptre of grace held forth unto them, and are,



through the long-suffering of God, during the continuance hereof, in a blessed capacity of becoming vessels of mercy and of glory. This perfectly accords with that passage of our Apostle in his latter Epistle unto Timothy: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these," that is, shall by repentance cease to be a vessel of wood or earth, and so disnumber himself from the vessels of dishonour, "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use," &c. (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.) For the intent and counsel of God, as hath been more than once observed formerly, and once, at least, if not oftener, proved, in "enduring with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," is not absolutely and peremptorily to show his wrath and make his power known in their destruction, but conditionally only, namely, in case they shall stubbornly persist in their disobedience, until the day of his grace and long-suffering be expired. Nor doth the *μακροθυμία*, or *long-suffering* of God, import only or merely a non-punishment for the time of those to whom it is said to be vouchsafed or shown; nay, possibly it may admit some degree of punishment with it; but, besides a respite from punishment, at least from any extremity of punishment, it still importeth a willingness, yea, and expectation, in God, that such persons should repent, and, consequently, a vouchsafement of means unto them to bring them to repentance. This is evident from the general current of the Scriptures wherever the patience or long-suffering of God are said to be showed unto any; as, on the contrary, where God neither willed nor expected repentance, though he granted a reprieve of punishment for a time, yet is he never said to exercise patience or long-suffering. From that saying of the devils unto Christ, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. viii. 29,) to omit other proofs, it clearly appears that their punishment or torment is respited by God for a time, yea, and so hath been for a very long time, as men count long, even from the time of their fall; that is, from the beginning of the world to this day; yet God is nowhere said to endure them with much long-suffering, to be patient towards them, or the like. The reason is, partly, because his intent and purpose concerning their eternal punishment and torment is absolute and peremptory; partly, also, because he affordeth them

no means, or at least no sufficiency of means, for their recovery. So, likewise, after Saul was rejected by God from being King over Israel, for his disobedience in the business of Amalek, his punishment of being deprived of his kingdom was deferred for a time; yet God is nowhere said to have endured him with much long-suffering, or to have exercised any patience towards him, or the like. Why? Because his purpose and intent concerning his rejection was absolute, and not reversible by any interveniences on Saul's part, or otherwise whatsoever. But, on the other hand, God was willing, yea, had purposed, to destroy the old world for sin within the space of a hundred and twenty years; yet, because this will and purpose of his was like unto that wherewith he purposed to destroy Nineveh within forty days, that is, not absolute, but conditional, yea, and during this space, he vouchsafed unto them sufficient means for their repentance, continuing the ministry of Noah, who was a "Preacher of righteousness" amongst them; his *μακροθυμία*, or *long-suffering* towards them is commended by Peter, and said to have waited or "expected in the days of Noah," meaning, their returning unto God by repentance, as Tremellius, out of the ancient Syriac translation, rendereth and expresseth it.\* Elsewhere the patience and long-suffering of God are held forth unto the world by the Holy Ghost as unquestionable arguments and signs of God's willingness to have men repent and be saved; and, consequently, they must needs be supposed to be accompanied with the vouchsafement of sufficient means for the salvation of those to whom themselves are vouchsafed. (See and consider, upon this account, 2 Peter iii. 9, compared with verse 15; and again, Rom. ii. 3, 4; Isaiah xxx. 18; 1 Tim. i. 16, &c.) So that evident it is, that the vessels of wrath, here said to be endured by God with much long-suffering, were not ordained by him to destruction from eternity, nor yet created by him to destruction; no, nor yet during the course of his long-suffering towards them, though they had, by a long-continued course of sinning, fitted themselves for destruction, yet were they not all this while positively or absolutely ordained by him to destruction; but were graciously entreated by him, and this in order to their repentance and salvation. From whence, likewise, it follows, that that will or willingness, here ascribed unto God,

\* *Quam longanimitas Dei præcipere utarca fieret, propter expectationem conversionis eorum, &c.* DR. AMES, likewise, in his *Analysis*, so understandeth it.

to show his wrath, and make his power known, in their destruction, is but consequential and conditional.

6. The Apostle, in the words now insisted upon, "endured with much long-suffering," seems to give an account of the equitableness of that power which God claimeth and exerciseth in and about the hardening whom he will; as, namely, by showing how or by what means, as, likewise, upon what terms, he doeth it. If he should harden men against their wills, or by any secret and positive action should insensibly work or incline their wills or hearts to a frame of hardness; yea, or should harden them upon any such terms, or after any such manner, that by the same means by which they become hardened they might not as well, yea, and rather, be softened and made penitent; the power which he claims and exerciseth in this kind, I mean, in hardening men, might be of some hard resentment with men, and grate upon their spirits and souls. But now, inasmuch as he hardeneth men, not only with the free consent of their own wills, but even with the precurrency of them in and about the act of hardening; yea, and doeth it by none other means than such which are more apt and proper to soften than to harden, yea, and which would actually soften them, as they do many, and so save them, did they but lay their hearts to them, as they might, as, namely, by enduring them with much long-suffering: "If God," saith our Apostle, in effect, "claimeth no other power of hardening men, but only upon such terms as these, who can, with the least pretence or colour of reason, be offended at it?" To a sober-minded and duly considerate man, it is a matter of more grace that God should afford an opportunity of repentance and salvation unto him, who is already a vessel of wrath, and fitted to destruction, yea, though his voluntary abuse or neglect of this opportunity must needs render his destruction so much the more grievous and intolerable, than it would be to deny him such an opportunity, however by this denial he should cut off from him all occasion, yea, or possibility, of increasing his destruction. So that this power which God claims of hardening whom he will, truly interpreted, and rightly understood, is in itself of no ill abode or portendency unto men, but rather matter of grace, benefit, and accommodation; however, it turns to a most heavy account unto all those on whom it is exercised with the effect of hardening accompanying it.

It may be objected, “But, if the matter be thus, may not God be said to show mercy even on those whom he hardeneth? And, if so, will not the opposition between his showing mercy on whom he will, and his hardening whom he will, (verse 18,) fall to the ground?” I answer,

No; because, though God showeth mercy unto men in that act, or series of actions, whereby eventually he hardeneth them, yet he doth not show them mercy in hardening them, because hereby he prepareth and fitteth them for a more terrible judgment and destruction; which is not an act of mercy, but of justice or judgment; and is a fruit or effect of that judiciary decree of God, wherein he hath enacted or decreed, that whosoever shall abuse or despise his great long-suffering towards them, shall hereby be hardened, in order to their deeper condemnation, and judgment more intolerable. Even as in the Gospel, he vouchsafeth his grace and mercy unto men in that very grace which they do turn into wantonness, although they be hardened hereby, and increase their condemnation.

It may possibly be some man's question, whether God shows mercy unto all those whom he doth not harden; and, more particularly, whether he showeth mercy to the vessels of wrath fitted already to destruction, in destroying them out of hand, without exposing them to the danger of being hardened by him, and so to the suffering of a more grievous destruction: Therefore, I answer,

1. To the former of these questions, that God, doubtless, doth show mercy, at least, comparatively, though not simply or absolutely, unto all those whom he doth not harden. To harden, as was lately said, is an act of judgment; and inasmuch as no man can escape or prevent hardening, but by mercy showed unto him in one kind or other by God, evident it is, that all those who do escape hardening have some degree of mercy or other showed unto them. But if the question be understood of mercy, simply and properly so called, or of such mercy which produceth the actual salvation of men, it is a clear case that such mercy is not showed unto all those who are not hardened by God; otherwise, none should perish, but those who are hardened by him, and, consequently, none but those whom he should endure with much long-suffering; which is manifestly untrue.

2. To the latter question I answer, likewise, that when he doeth present execution by death upon those who are fitted to destruction, he cannot properly be said to show them mercy, because such an act as this is properly, and in the nature of it, an act of justice and judgment. Notwithstanding, if we consider the general state and condition of those who have hardened themselves, and so are fitted to destruction, and how few there are of this generation that are brought to repentance by God's enduring them with much long-suffering, and how many that are hereby hardened to their deeper condemnation, there may seem to be an ingredient of mercy, even in that cup of judgment.

But the first-born difficulty, as far as I understand, about the interpretation given of these words, "endured with much long-suffering," &c., is this,—how God can be said to endure with much long-suffering, in the sense asserted, such persons, and with his primary and antecedent intentions, to intend their repentance and salvation, who he certainly knoweth beforehand will never repent, nor be saved. And so in general, how it can be looked upon or made a matter of any whit more grace, love, or goodness in God to give Christ unto death, or to afford any other means, for the salvation of such men who he foresaw from eternity would be never the better for them, but much the worse, than to have denied them all interest in the death of Christ, and so all other means of salvation. If a father knew certainly beforehand that the gift of such a horse, sum of money, or the like, unto his child, would occasion either his more speedy or sudden death, or bring upon him any other misery or calamity in the world, would it argue any love or kindness in him towards such a child to give him either?

A thorough pursuit of this difficulty will carry us somewhat high; and they who desire to see a clear bottom for a plenary satisfaction to it must prepare to go up unto the mount of God, and there for a season be content narrowly to contemplate somewhat that may be known of him, though at present, I fear, it is not known unto many, and duly considered, I am certain, but by a few. But to the difficulty itself, or question propounded, I answer,

1. When God vouchsafeth unto men things which are in themselves and in their natures good and beneficial, and of worthy concernment unto them, and doth no ways hinder them

from making a proportionable use of them, but doth many ways encourage, persuade, and press them hereunto, there is no reason, nor colour of reason, why he should be thought less gracious or benevolous unto them, only because he knows beforehand they will make a sinful use of them, and destructive to themselves. Or would the same or like vouchsafements from him savour of any whit the more grace, love, or goodness, in case it could or should be supposed that he were ignorant of what men would do with them, whether they would improve them to a happy end for themselves, or no? Or is there any reason why the surpassing excellency of the knowledge of God should be turned to the prejudice or disparagement of his goodness in giving such things unto his creatures, which, were they not monstrously careless and regardless of the things of their own peace, might and would be converted and employed by them accordingly? But,

2. It is much to be considered, that there is not the same consideration of God and of men, in respect of such actions, vouchsafements, or gifts, the issue or consequence whereof, the one and the other, are or may be said to foresee that they will be evil to those who receive them. The difference, with the ground and reason of it, may be thus conceived. In case a man should foresee such an event, in one kind or other, his foresight would be such literally or properly. He should have knowledge of the event, and what this would be, before he had done the action, or given the gift, the event whereof in the receiver he is said to foreknow or foresee; and, consequently, upon his foresight of an ill issue of his gift in the receiver, in case it should be given him, he may, and perhaps in duty ought to, withhold it. But now God, though he be said to foresee the issue or event of any action or gift of his, in all and every the receivers of it, respectively, yet he is not said properly, or as the word sounds in ordinary acception with men, to foresee them, that is, he doth not first or antecedaneously, in respect of time, foresee or see them before the action be done by him, or the gift given, the event or issue whereof he is said to foresee. For as God himself is not measured by time, so neither are his actions. It is a common and generally received notion amongst men learned in the Scriptures, that God willeth nothing in time; but whatsoever he willeth, he willeth in or from eternity. So that whatsoever cometh to pass, or is effected

in time by the efficacy and interposure of the will of God, was, so far as God contributeth towards the production of it by the efficaciousness of his will, done from eternity.\* He doth not will any thing to-day, which he did not will yesterday ; nor any thing yesterday, which he did not will from eternity ; otherwise, he must needs be changeable. There is the same reason and consideration of his knowledge or foreknowledge which there is of his will. As he willeth nothing in time, so neither doth he know, foreknow, or foresee any thing in time ; his foreknowledge of things being nothing really but himself, there being nothing but himself from eternity, it must needs be as ancient as himself, and co-eternal with himself. So, likewise, that act of his, by which he gives or imparts any thing unto men, though the gift itself given by it doth not come to the hands of men, or is not received by them, till such or such a time ; yet the act, I say of God, by which it is given, and comes thus to be received in time by men, was from eternity ; and, consequently, is not capable of being foreseen by him, being as ancient as any foresight or foreknowledge in him. And for the sad consequent or event of any action or gift of God in or to the receiver, one or more, though he may, in a sense, be said to foresee it, because it happeneth in time ; yet, inasmuch as that act passed from him from eternity, and so is and always was irreversible, by which the gift sorting to so sad an event in the receiver was conferred upon him in time, there is no reason, nor colour of reason, why God should be thought to give this gift, being in itself sovereignly good and beneficial to the receiver, out of any whit the less love or grace towards him, only because he may, in the by and unproper sense intimated, be said to have foreseen that it would be abused by him to his harm ; especially considering, (1.) That the receiver of such a gift was no way prejudiced in his liberty of making a blessed use of it by the foreknowledge of God that he would do the contrary, yea, and might have made a blessed use of it, this foreknowledge of God notwithstanding ; and, (2.) That God could not, the regulation of his power by his wisdom considered, do any thing more towards the preventing of the abuse thereof than he did. God foresaw that his people of old would make a sad use of his grace towards them, in sending to them by his messengers and Pro-

\* See more of this, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 48—50, &c.

phets, who effectually admonished and forewarned them of the wrath to come, in case they repented not; yet is this gracious act of sending thus unto them ascribed to his taking compassion on his people.\* From whence the truth of both the particulars mentioned sufficiently appeareth, as, (1.) That God was never the less gracious or compassionate towards his people in sending unto them by his messengers, because he foresaw, in the sense lately signified, that they would abuse this grace of his to their greater misery; and, (2.) That he did all that was in his power to do, (see Isaiah v. 4,) to have prevented this abuse of his grace by them.† For he that hath true compassion on a person, one or more, in misery, is ready to do what he is well able to do for his relief. There is the same consideration of that of our Saviour in Matthew: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matt. xxiii. 37.) Here the Lord Christ professeth the greatest care and tenderness that can well be conceived towards Jerusalem and her children, in his vouchsafements of means of grace and repentance unto them; and, withal, plainly expresseth the sad event of this his care and tenderness in their impenitency, and destruction hereupon; yet, evident it is, and is acknowledged by all, that Christ, as God, did foresee, in such a sense as God is capable of foreseeing, this sad event we speak of in Jerusalem and her children, and that, notwithstanding all the means of grace that should be vouchsafed unto them, yet they would remain rebelliously obdurate to destruction. Therefore, that foreknowledge which God hath, that men will turn his grace into wantonness, and abuse the means of salvation granted unto them, to their greater condemnation, doth no ways argue or prove that his grace, love, or goodness were ever the less towards them in the vouchsafement of them.

If it be demanded, “But was it not in God’s power, and at

\* “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.)

† See more of this, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 428, 429, 473.



the liberty of his will, to have denied means of grace and of salvation unto those who he knew and foresaw would abuse them to their greater condemnation? And, if so, would it not have argued more grace and love in God towards their persons to have denied the said means of salvation unto them than to have given them?" To this I answer, by distinguishing,

1. A thing may be said to be in God's power, or at the liberty of his will, either to do, or not to do, in respect of freedom from or non-obnoxiousness unto any external agent, or any thing without himself, either to constrain him to the doing of it, or to restrain him from the doing of it. And in this sense and consideration, that saying common amongst philosophers and Divines, *Deus est Agens liberrimum*, "God is the most free Agent that is," is most true. For whereas every creature or being besides God is obnoxious unto him and his power, he himself is obnoxious unto none of them, nor unto any power vested in them.

2. A thing may be said, or at least by some conceived, to be in God's power either to do, or not to do, in respect of an opportunity or space of time before him to determine his will, or to resolve either for or against the doing of it. As for example: A father that hath not as yet given such or such a sum of money,—suppose a thousand pounds,—or the like, unto his child, hath yet an opportunity and time to bethink himself, and to consider what he had best do in the case, whether to give or not give it unto him. And in this respect we say, and say truly, that it is in his power, and at the liberty of his will, whether he will give it him, or no. But when once he hath given it unto him, it is not now in his power, whether he will give it, or no, because he hath done it. To apply this distinction to the business in hand: In the former consideration or sense, most true it is that it was in the power of God, and at the liberty of his will, whether he would have vouchsafed any such means of salvation as now he hath done unto those who he knew would abuse them to the increase of their condemnation and eternal misery. But the meaning hereof is no more but this,—that he was not compelled or necessitated by any external force, or by any thing out of himself, to make such a donation of the means we speak of unto such persons. But in the latter consideration it is altogether as true, that it never was in the power of God to deny or withhold the means of salvation

we speak of from the persons whom he knew from eternity would abuse them to their deeper misery and ruin: The reason hereof is, because he never had an opportunity or space of time before him wherein to consult or advise with himself what he should do in this kind, whether he should give, or not give, the means we speak of to such persons. It is repugnant to those two great attributes of his infinite wisdom and actuality, that his will should be at any time undetermined; or that he should ever be under any consultation about his affairs, or about the administration or government of the world. So that whatsoever he acteth or doeth in time in the world, he doeth, not simply according to, but also by the efficacy and virtue of, that model or determination of his will, which was in him from eternity, and never had beginning. And thus you see how, and in what sense, it never was in the power of God to deny means of salvation unto those who he certainly knew would destroy themselves with the greater destruction by occasion of them; and, consequently, that he was never the less loving, gracious, and merciful unto them in the vouchsafement of them, such his knowledge or foreknowledge notwithstanding.

If it be yet objected, that, “according to this doctrine now delivered, God must be conceived to work and do all things which he doeth out of the necessity of his nature, and not out of the liberty, freedom, or goodness of his will: And doth not this render all that God doeth for men, either in order to their present comfort or subsistence in the world, or to their eternal happiness, less acceptable unto them, and less matter of praise and thankfulness from them unto him? For who gives any man thanks for any such good done unto him which he that doeth it hath a necessity laid upon him to do, and could not do otherwise?” To this also I answer,

1. That however nature and will be two things really distinct the one from the other in the creature, yet in God, by reason of the infinite simplicity of his essence or being, they are not so, but one and the same. Therefore it can with no more truth be said that God worketh out of the necessity of his nature, than that he worketh out of the necessity of his will.

2. The will of God being nothing else but God himself, and so essentially good and essentially wise, and upon this account infinitely good and infinitely wise,—for whatsoever is such or such by its essence must needs be infinitely such, as is

demonstrable in the *Metaphysics*, the acts or productions of it, I mean the things externally acted and produced by it, must of necessity answer the nature and essence of it, as far as they are capable of such a correspondency, that is, must needs be actings and productions of the best, as full of goodness, as full of wisdom, as is possible for such things to be. For it is a general and true rule in philosophy, that *modus operandi consequitur modum essendi*, “the manner of the working of a cause always follows, or accords with, the manner of the being of it.” Therefore the will of God being infinitely good and infinitely wise, and both essentially, the products of it must needs answer these properties and perfections as far as they are answerable; I mean, as far as created actings or administrations are capable of such goodness or wisdom. Therefore,

3. If the question be, whether God could not have made things otherwise than now they are made, or govern the world after another manner than now he governeth it, and with different administrations from those now or formerly in being; the answer must be by this or the like distinction: That if we respect the power of God in itself, or God himself as simply omnipotent, so it may be said that he could or might have made things otherwise than now he hath done, and so have governed the world otherwise than now he governeth it. The reason is, because the power of God, simply considered, extendeth itself to the utmost bounds and limits of all things that are possible, that is, which do not imply a contradiction in their natures; as, to make a man without a reasonable soul, to make a wall white without whiteness, &c.; yea, it stretcheth itself to the very confines and borders of impossibilities. In that consideration we now speak of, that is, in respect of the power of God simply considered, he might have made not only another world instead of this, differing from it, and governed it accordingly, but also many other worlds besides this; as it is the opinion of some that he hath done. But, now, if we respect the power of God as in conjunction with his other attributes and perfections, as wisdom, goodness, righteousness, &c., and as regulated in the exertions and actings of it by these, so we say that he could not have made this world which is known unto us, and wherein we live, otherwise than now he hath made it, nor govern it otherwise than now he hath and doth govern it; whatsoever may be thought or conceived concerning his making other worlds, and

his governing them. For though, for argument sake, we should suppose that he hath made other worlds besides this, and that these other worlds, simply considered, are better and more excellent than this, and, in like consideration, better governed than this; yet this doth not prove that therefore he could have made this world otherwise or better than now he hath made it, or govern it otherwise or better than now he governeth it. As though the sun be a more glorious and excellent creature than the moon that now is, yet this doth not prove that God could have made a better moon than this, or this otherwise or better than now he hath made it. In like manner the Mosaical ordinances and dispensations under the law were but “beggarly rudiments,” as the Apostle termeth them, being compared with the dispensations under the Gospel; yet this proveth not that therefore God could have made those Mosaical dispensations better than they were, or that he could have given, all circumstances considered, better in their stead when these were first given, or during the time of their continuance. The reason of what we affirm in all such cases as these is delivered by our Apostle, where, speaking of God, he saith, that he “worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.” (Eph. i. 11.) By the way, the matter of this proposition, God “worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will,” is not, I suppose, *materia contingens*, as logicians speak; that is, the proposition is not so to be understood as if it were a thing contingent and accidental only unto God thus to work; I mean, “according to the counsel of his will,” or that, if he please, he may work otherwise or upon other terms, as, either without counsel, or according to the counsel of any other will besides his own; but that which the said proposition attributeth unto him, namely, to work all things, meaning, which he now worketh, “according to the counsel of his own will,” is only that which is natural, proper, and essential unto him. This only supposed, from the said words I reason thus to the business in hand: If God worketh all things, not simply and absolutely according to his own will, but “according to the counsel of” this his “will,” that is, according to that excellency of wisdom by which his will is acted or steered in all its motions, then could he work nothing otherwise or better, all circumstances considered, than now he worketh and hath wrought all things which are or have been wrought, done, or made by him. The reason of this consequence or illation is evident;

namely, because he that worketh, and this not contingently or accidentally, but necessarily, uniformly, and constantly, according to the most exquisite and absolute wisdom or counsel that is or can be imagined,—for such is the wisdom and counsel of God,—must needs work, whatsoever he worketh, after the best and most perfect manner that is ; and, consequently, is in no capacity of working any thing otherwise or better, all circumstances considered, as it is proper for wisdom or counsel to consider them. And if it shall be said or supposed, that God could have made or governed this present world either better, all circumstances considered, or otherwise, than now he hath made or doth govern it, it must be supposed, withal, that he did not make it, and so that he doth not govern it, according to any such counsel which is infinitely perfect, and which adviseth to that which is simply and absolutely best, all circumstances, I still say, considered, which is expressly contrary to the saying of the Apostle, lately mentioned, that “ he worketh all things according to the counsel of his will ; ” unless we shall suppose that this “ counsel of his will ” is defective or imperfect ; a supposition which, I think, every man’s soul abhorreth. For as counsel, simply considered, supposeth a possibility, at least in the apprehension of him that consulteth, of acting variously ; so perfection of counsel supposeth an advisement or resolution to pitch upon the best way of acting in all this variety.

If it be demanded, “ But might not God have had, or rather had he not, another model of a world in his eye, differing from that according to which he hath now made this world, which yet might have been of equal goodness with this, so that the making of it would every whit have as well become the counsel of his will you speak of, as the making of this world now doth ? And there is the same reason of another government of the world ; and if so, if there were another world before him of equal goodness with this, the making wherof would as well have become his wisdom, or the counsel of his will, as this, then was he not at liberty whether he would have made this or no ? Or, might he not have made that other in the place or stead of this ? ” To this also I answer,

No : Because counsel hath place only, where, in that variety of courses or things that may be taken or done, or are apprehended as feasible, and which may be done in order to a man’s end, it is conceived by him that one thing may be better and

more conducing to his end than another ; but where two or more things that may be done are apprehended to be every ways and in every respect of equal conducement to a man's end, in such a case counsel hath no place. For to what purpose should a man consider or consult, when he certainly knows beforehand that he can be no ways benefited by his consultation, nor inconvenienced by the contrary ? Therefore, certainly, if God "worketh all things according to the counsel of his will," he wrought and made this world according hereunto ; and if so, there could be no model of any other world better than this in his eye, no, nor yet equal unto it, when this was made by him ; because, in the former case, he should have wrought contrary unto counsel in making this world ; in the latter, counsel about making this had been useless and impertinent. But to the main objection or difficulty, I answer,

4. And lastly : Though it be supposed that God, his power, wisdom, and goodness, considered as in conjunction, could work, make, and order things no otherwise than now he hath done or doth ; yet, inasmuch as what he now doeth necessarily, in respect of his essential and native goodness and wisdom, he doeth also most voluntarily and freely, *voluntate concomitante et subsequente*, and with infinite satisfaction and contentment to himself in his way, there is no reason or colour of reason why he should be judged less worthy praise or thanks for what he doeth graciously out of such a necessity. As, for argument and illustration sake, suppose a person were under such a necessity of doing some special courtesy for us which he could not decline or avoid ; yet, if this necessity were no ways burdensome or troublesome to him, but rather matter of contentment and joy ; so that he doeth the kindness for us with as much readiness and willingness of mind, notwithstanding such a necessity of doing it lying upon him, as he could in case no necessity at all engaged him ; in this case we are nevertheless engaged in point of thankfulness unto him that should do us the courtesy, upon the account of that necessity which lay upon him to do it. The reason is, because that freedom and gladness of spirit wherewith he is supposed to act under the said necessity, is an argument that he would have done every whit as much for us, whether he had been necessitated unto it, or no. In like manner, God rejoicing over that necessity of doing good and showing mercy to the world, which is natural and essential to him, and hereby

declaring that he would do the one and show the other, whether his nature did necessitate him unto either or no, that good which he doeth and mercy which he showeth in this kind, have as equitable a claim to the praises and thankful acknowledgments of men who receive them, as they could have had in case he had been antecedaneously, absolutely, and every ways free and at liberty whether he would have done any such good or showed any such mercy unto them, or no. Yea, the nearer any creature, man or angel, attaineth unto a natural necessity of doing good and acting worthily, that is, the more strongly, fervently, and, as it were, triumphantly, inclined they shall be hereunto, the more worthy praise and honour are they to be esteemed; and the fruits also issuing from such triumphant principles of goodness the more to be honoured and thankfully entertained by those who receive them. It is a good piece of discourse, in reference to the business in hand, which I find in Ursine. "He," saith he, "hath not free-will," or, a will free, "who cannot change his counsel, being hindered by an external cause, and in case he be willing," or desirous, "to change it." "Now God changeth not," indeed, "his counsel, nor can change it; yet, not by reason of any impediment or hinderance from an outward cause, nor yet through any defect of nature, or of any faculty, but because he will not, neither can will, the changing of his counsel, by reason of the immutable," or unchangeable, "rectitude of his will, upon which no error, nor any cause whatsoever of a change, can possibly fall."\* From the contents of this passage it plainly appeareth, (1.) That God cannot change the counsel of his will; and, consequently, that he never could change it, inasmuch as he was the same, neither greater nor lesser, nor other, either in power or in will, from eternity, which now he is. (2.) That the reason of this impossibility of change in him is the immutable rectitude of his will; and, consequently, that no other volitions or motions of his will, if any other shall or can be supposed by any to have been possible, could have had the same rectitude with those now exerted and in

\* *Non habet liberam voluntatem is qui consilium mutare non potest, impeditus a causa externa, et si mutare velit Deus autem concilium suum non mutat; nec mutare potest, non propter impedimentum causæ externæ, nec propter naturæ aut facultatis defectum; sed quia non vult, nec velle potest consilii sui mutationem, propter immutabilem rectitudinem voluntatis suæ, in quam neque error, neque ulla mutationis causa potest cadere.*—URSINI *Cut.* p. i., qu. 8, sect. 2.

being. And it is the common doctrine or notion of Divines, that God is under a necessity of immutability, though most free from all necessity of coercion. And God, by doing that good willingly and with delight which that necessity of immutability under which he is necessitated him unto, freeth himself from all that unacceptableness with those to whom this good is done by him, which, otherwise, the notion of a necessity would expose him unto; according to that of Seneca in another case, *Velis id, quod necessitas jubet, et totam vim necessitatis eluseris*, that is, "Be willing with that which necessity commandeth, and by this means you shall elude the whole force," or strength, "of necessity."

And thus we see how it may well stand, that men, in case they could and certainly did foresee that good things given by them would make the receivers miserable, cannot be conceived to give them out of true love to these persons in case they give them upon such terms; and yet, withal, that God may truly be said to give his Son Jesus Christ, and other means of salvation, out of great love to such men, who yet he foresees, after his manner of foreseeing, will abuse all these gifts of his to their greater condemnation.

(3.) And lastly: That God's intentions, even his primary and antecedent intentions, may be real and true, and yet never take place, I mean, the things really intended by him never come to pass, hath been once and again above all reasonable contradiction, evinced by us from the Scriptures.\* So that God may be said truly and really to intend the repentance and salvation of those vessels of wrath which he endureth with much long-suffering; yea, and this antecedently, though they never do repent nor be saved; yea, though he certainly foreknew, according to his way of foreknowing, that they would never do the one or be the other. This for clearing the great difficulty propounded.

If it be yet demanded, before we leave this, (verse 22,) "But what doth the Apostle all this while answer to that branch of the objection cast in his way, (verse 19,) which seems to carry the chief strength of the objection in it, 'Why doth he yet find fault,' or complain? where, or in what clause of his answer, is there any account given of the reasonableness of God's reprov- ing or complaining of those whom he hardeneth? nor doth the

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 22, 35, 215, 434.



Apostle deny the thing ; I mean, but that God is indeed wont to complain of those whom he hardeneth ;” I answer,

That in the very words, lately insisted on, “endured with much long-suffering,” as they have been opened, together with those following, fitted before, namely, by themselves, to destruction, there is a pregnant and satisfactory account given to the said objection demand. For if God, 1. Hardeneth none but only such who first voluntarily harden themselves, and so fit themselves to destruction ; and, 2. “Endures with much long-suffering” those whom he hardeneth, all the while they are in hardening by him, and this long-suffering of his towards them be, as hath been proved, always accompanied with means sufficient to bring them to repentance ; there is as just and reasonable a ground why God should all this while find fault with, blame, and complain of them, as well for their being hardened as that they still continue refractory, obstinate, and impenitent, careless and regardless of the things of their own eternal peace, &c., as well can be imagined. For in what case or condition can men more reasonably be blamed, admonished, or reprovèd, than when they voluntarily expose themselves unto danger by sinning, and when and whilst they continue in ways of sin and wickedness, which lead unto death, when as the paths of life are before them, and they in a capacity of walking in them ? This shall suffice for clearing this verse 22.

Now, though our Apostle stood no further engaged by virtue of the objection levied against him, (verse 19,) but only to vindicate the honour of the justice and wisdom of God in his proceedings about those whom he hardeneth, which he hath substantially done in these two verses 21, 22, yet, having in this his vindication made use of the similitude of a potter, (verse 21,) and therein mentioned a double power, upon the matter, which this potter hath over his clay ; the one, to make vessels of it unto honour, the other, to make vessels to dishonour ; in his rendition of this simile he adds somewhat, likewise, concerning the power of God to make of his clay vessels unto glory, in these words :—

Verse 23. *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory*—In these words the Apostle gives a further reason or account of that gracious dispensation of God towards “the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” in “enduring them with

much long-suffering," (verse 22,) namely, a present discovery, by way of argument or intimation, of his exceeding great bounty towards the "vessels of mercy," namely, such whom he hath before prepared or fitted unto glory. As if he should have said, "God endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, after they have been fitted to destruction," not only for this end, to show the dreadful power of his avenging wrath in the destruction of these persons, in case they repent not, but likewise that he may exhibit a ground of knowledge unto the world, how incomparably rich and wonderful his bounty is towards "the vessels of mercy," that is, such whom, by the gracious operation of his good Spirit, he hath brought to repentance, faith, and holiness, and so prepared or made them meet for glory.

If it be demanded, "But how or by what medium or principle doth God 'make known the riches of his glory towards the vessels of mercy, by enduring the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, with much long-suffering?'" I answer, by the light of this principle, namely, that he, who being regular and uniform in all his ways, as God must needs be presumed to be, shall very graciously, with much patience and goodness, entreat his greatest enemies, those that have very highly offended him, and dealt most unworthily by him, will most certainly express himself, to the height of his power, in all, and all manner of grace, love, bounty, and magnificence, unto those who shall with all faithfulness and obediential respects approve themselves unto him. The riches of God's patience and long-suffering towards the first-born of sinners in this world are demonstratively prophetic of his immense grace and bounty towards the congregation of the first-born,—for so the company of believers are called,—in the world which is to come.

This interpretation of the place I conceive to be much better than that which coupleth this verse with the former, by the tatch of this principle or notion, namely, that God's showing his wrath and making his power known in the destruction of reprobates commends and sets off, upon terms of a far greater acceptance, the riches of his grace and love in the salvation of his elect. For, not to arraign that conceit for error and vanity at the present, I mean, that God, by making so many reprobates, so called, as he hath done, commends his love upon so much the higher terms to his elect, suppose the conceit we speak of were true, yet can it have nothing to do about the exposition of the

place in hand; for it is neither said nor meant that God showeth his wrath and maketh his power known, in the destruction of "the vessels of wrath," that so he may "make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy;" but, that he "endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath," that hereby he may "make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy," &c. So that it is not the hatred but the love which God beareth and showeth unto the reprobates, which the Holy Ghost in this place maketh an argument of that far greater love which he beareth and showeth, or will show, to his elect.

By the way, it may be not unworthy the observing, that the Apostle, for a more ample and full justification of the wisdom of God in finding fault with those whom he hardeneth, which attribute was principally struck at, as was noted by the objection, doth not only show and declare how such a thing may be done by him without the violation of any principle or rule of wisdom, whereof notice hath been taken formerly, but further assigns several ends, and these worthy of him, which he propounds unto self, and compasseth by such a dispensation; as, 1. The showing of his wrath, meaning, in the more signal destruction of those who, being found fault with by him under their hardening, shall, notwithstanding, not repent. 2. The making of his power known, by the same opportunity or means. 3. And lastly: The giving knowledge and information unto the world how transcendently great his grace, love, and bounty are towards those who shall be found obedient unto him. It is a great commendation of wisdom in a man, when his counsels and projections are such that many collateral advantages shall attend either the prosecution or accomplishment of them.

We have showed, in general, the Apostle's argument and scope in the verse before us; let us briefly ponder some of the words and phrases in it more particularly.

*And that he might make known the riches of his glory—* By glory he means that in God which is just matter of honour and glory to him, the knowledge and due consideration whereof renders him glorious, that is, worthy all admiration, adoration, &c., in the eyes of his creature. In this sense his power, in regard of the excellent greatness of it, is oft called his glory. "Said I not unto thee," said the Lord Christ unto Martha, "that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of

God?" (John xi. 40 ;) meaning, that in the raising up of her brother Lazarus from the dead, she should see, as in a glass, the glorious power of God. (See also Rom. vi. 4 ; Eph. iii. 16 ; 2 Thess. i. 9, &c.) In this sense true it is that every divine attribute or perfection may be termed his glory, because there is none of them but rendereth him glorious in the esteem of all those who understand, believe, and consider them. Notwithstanding, if the Scripture language be narrowly observed, we shall, I suppose, very seldom, if at all, find any other divine attribute styled or expressed by the name of the glory of God, but only his power, as hath been showed, and his grace or bounty ; which is imported by it in the place in hand, as it is in several others. (See Rom. v. 2 ; Eph. i. 6, 12, 14 ; Philip. iv. 19, &c.) The reason probably of this appropriation, I mean, of the word "glory" only to the power and grace of God, is this : Because men, for whose sake the Scriptures were written, are more sensible and apprehensive of the fruits and expressions of these two attributes of God, specially in their conjunction, and so in a more ready capacity to glorify God for them, than of any other his attributes. The fruits of the grace or bounty of God, which are administered by his power, are all the sweet and desirable things which are possessed and enjoyed by men in the world, as life, health, peace, liberty, meat, drinks, wealth, &c. Now because men are generally more taken and affected with such things as these, being the proper productions and fruits of his grace and power, acting together, and so are more apt to glorify him for them, than for any the appropriate fruits of any other his attributes, as wisdom, justice, or the like, therefore those attributes of his may, in reference unto men, be in a more peculiar manner termed his glory.

*The riches of his glory*—That is, the great abundance of his grace and bounty. The metaphor of riches is frequently borrowed by this Apostle, to do service in commending and setting forth unto the world the most adorable and unconceivable fullness of the attributes and perfections of God : "The riches of his goodness ;" (Rom. ii. 4 ;) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ;" (Rom. xi. 33 ;) "According to the riches of his grace ;" (Eph. i. 7 ;) "According to the riches of his glory ;" (Eph. iii. 16 ;) to omit other like. So that by "the riches of his glory," in the place in hand, is meant, the transcendently great, inestimable, and most

adorable grace, bounty, and munificence of God, the knowledge and consideration whereof rendereth him exceedingly glorious before his creatures. If, by a metonymy of the cause put for the effect, frequent in Scripture, by the “riches of his glory” or glorious grace, we shall understand the fruits and effects of these “riches of his glory,” namely, the blessed enjoyments, the glorious estate and felicity, of the saints, &c., it will equally accommodate the place and the Apostle’s argument.

*And that he might make known the riches of his glory, &c.*  
 —Και να γνωριση, that is, *that he might exhibit* such an argument or medium by which men may be led to the knowledge of “the riches of his glory,” or, to make an estimate in themselves how abundantly rich in grace and bounty he is towards those that obey him. A thing may be said to be discovered or made known two ways: 1. When it is in itself brought into open view, so that it may be seen immediately and directly, and, as it were, face to face. 2. When something is done, which arguively, and by the help of the rational and discursive faculty in men, evidenceth, or may evidence, to the mind and understanding, either the simple being of another thing, which is yet in itself secret, or else something appertaining to such a being. The riches of God’s glory, understood in the former of the two senses mentioned, are no ways capable of being made known in the former of the two ways of discovery specified; because they are like unto God himself, yea, they are God himself, “whom,” as the Apostle saith, “no man hath seen, neither can see.” (1 Tim. vi. 16.) In the latter of the said two senses they will not, they cannot, be made known, at least not be made fully known, in the former way of discovery, until “this corruptible hath put on incorruption, and this mortal hath put on immortality;” that is, until the saints be actually possessed of and invested with the fulness of their glory. Therefore, the making known of the riches of God’s glory, here meant, must needs be the making of them known in the latter way of making things known, namely, by way of argument and discourse; which, yet, is not so to be understood, neither as if the said “riches of his glory” were generally known unto men, by means of the discovery or making them known which is here attributed unto God. But God is said to make them known, because he hath taken a course, or done that, which is proper and sufficient to bring men to the knowledge of them; according to the frequent

dialect of the Scriptures, wherein God is said to do such and such things, when he doeth that which is proper for him to do in order to the effecting of them, though, through a defect in men not doing that which they ought to do, the thing be never actually done. What there is in that dispensation of God, his “enduring the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, with much long-suffering,” to demonstrate, by way of argument and proof, “the riches of his glory” towards his saints, hath been already argued and declared.

*On the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory*—By “vessels of mercy,” it is out of question that he meaneth such persons who sometimes were miserable by being “dead in trespasses and sins; wherein they walked according to the course of the world,” &c.; (Eph. iii. 1, 2;) but, afterwards, through believing the Gospel, obtain mercy, that great mercy, forgiveness of sins, with the fruits and consequents of it, which is a perfect relief against that misery. So that these “vessels of mercy,” and “the children of the promise,” (verse 8,) are one and the same. They are termed “vessels of mercy,” because, as vessels, properly so called, have a peculiar form given unto them by the artificer who maketh and frameth them, by means whereof they are commodious and fit to receive and hold such things, whether liquid or dry, as are and should be put into them; in like manner the persons here spoken of are therefore termed “vessels of mercy,” inasmuch as when they come under this denomination they are so wrought and framed by the Holy Ghost that they are meet to receive the mercy of God; that is, the fruits and effects of his mercy, as forgiveness of sins, in the first place, and then, in due time and by convenient degrees, all other blessings and good things, until their former misery be perfectly relieved, and their conditions reduced to a complete happiness. Now that spiritual form or frame which maketh men “vessels of mercy,” in the sense declared, is faith and repentance; whereunto when men are wrought and brought by that great and heavenly Artificer, the Holy Ghost, then doth God judge them meet to receive his mercy, his great and rich mercy, which consists in forgiveness of sins, together with all other fruits of his mercy accompanying it. So that men, whilst they yet remain dead in sins and trespasses, are not “vessels of mercy,” in the sense here intended by the Holy Ghost, but rather “vessels of wrath,” although God may and doth oftentimes

“endure them,” as we heard lately, “with much long-suffering;” which is a kind of mercy, yea, and a rich mercy, in the kind of it, and which sometimes turns to a blessed account to them who receive it; new forming them, and of “vessels of wrath” making them “vessels of mercy;” and would do the like by them all, if they had will and wisdom to comport with it for their own peace.

*Which he had afore prepared unto glory*—In these words he more particularly declareth who or what kind of persons he meaneth by those vessels of mercy, towards whom God intendeth to “make known the riches of his glory,” by his “enduring with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” as we formerly heard. These vessels of mercy are those “whom he” προητοιμασε, “afore prepared,” or, *made ready*, or, *fitted*, as the word signifies, “unto glory,” or, *for glory*, εις δοξαν. His meaning clearly is, that those riches of his glory, which he desires to make known by the means specified, are only meant and intended by him to be conferred upon such vessels of mercy, which, by his word and Spirit, and other dispensations relating to them, he hath “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” (Col. i. 12,) as the Apostle speaketh elsewhere. So that this clause, “whom he hath before prepared unto glory,” seems to be characteristic, and distinctive between some vessels of mercy and others; and to import that there either are, or may be, some of these vessels who will never be prepared or fitted by God for glory, but will miscarry by the hands of the potter, like the vessels in Jeremy, (Jer. xviii. 4,) whilst he is working and fashioning them, on whom those riches of his glory will never be conferred. These riches are intended by God for the portion and inheritance only of such vessels of mercy who will hold and abide, without cracking and breaking to pieces, the framing and working under his hand, until he hath finished all things about them requisite to their meetness for glory. For men are not meet, at least ordinarily, and as God counteth meetness, for a translation into celestial glory immediately upon the first of their repenting or believing, although they may now properly enough be termed vessels of mercy; but there are yet many things to be done, yea, and suffered, by them, after their first believing, before God looketh upon them as meet for an actual investiture with glory. “For ye have need of patience,” saith this our Apostle to the Hebrews,

“that, after ye have done the will of God,” namely, by repenting and believing, “ye might receive the promise;” (Heb. x. 36;)\* that is, the great salvation promised unto those who shall continue in faith and love unto the end. And they that look for eternal life from God, “who will render to every man according to his deeds,” must seek for it “by patient continuance in well doing.” (Rom. ii. 6. 7.) So men that are rich in this world, though believers, yet must they do good, yea, “be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;” thus “laying up in store for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life;” (1 Tim. vi. 18, 19;) that is, that they may come to it, and obtain it, as J. Diodate expoundeth it. The Scriptures are very frequent and pregnant in asserting this, that men must do more than simply believe to become meet for glory, or such on whom God is pleased to confer eternal life.

Nor doth it follow from hence, that, in case a person should die the very next moment to that wherein he first believeth, he must then perish, or suffer the loss of eternal life; because, in case a man’s faith be sound, all holy affections and righteous dispositions, and, consequently, a life and conversation fruitful in good works, are virtually and seminally contained in it. Neither will God turn any man’s non-doing of good, through want of opportunity only, which belongs only to himself to give, to any loss or disadvantage unto him. But when men have time and opportunity vouchsafed unto them, if they shall be found negligent and unfaithful in doing those things which God requireth of them, this argueth that their heart is not upright in them, and, consequently, that they are in no capacity of receiving the great recompence of reward from God.

1. Some expositors interpret the word, προητοιμασε, *afore prepared*, as if it signified, *predestinated*, or *pre-ordained*. Though this sense of the word, rightly understood, createth no error or falsehood, inasmuch as God hath predestinated, and this from eternity, all those who shall persevere believing to the end, unto glory, yet doth not such a sense either so grammatically fit the word, or logically, the place. For the verb, ετοιμαζειν, doth not properly, if at all, signify, *to ordain*, *design*, or the like; but *to fit*, or *make ready* for some end, use, or purpose. (See Matt. xxii. 4;

\* *Nunc vero significat antequam nascentur, jam suæ sorti addictos esse.*—CALVIN. in locum.



xxvi. 17, 19; Luke i. 17; ix. 52; xii. 47; 2 Tim. ii. 21; Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 2; to omit many other places.) The compound, *προστοιμαζω*, here used, is indeed once by our English translators rendered, *before ordained*: “Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath *before ordained* that we should walk in them.” (Eph. ii. 10.) But, as if they somewhat doubted or relented of this translation, they give us our choice of another in the margin, offering us here that which they have given us in our present text, *prepared*. And, doubtless, good works cannot, in any tolerable propriety of speech, be said to be predestinated or fore-ordained; but they may, with good propriety, be said to be prepared or made ready by God for believers to walk in, as, namely, by administering so many encouragements as he hath done, and making so many rich and precious promises unto those who shall walk in them, on the one hand; and by prescribing so many directions how they may eschew such snares and temptations which are like to retard and hinder them from so walking, on the other hand. Between, and by means of, these two things, good works may well be said to be prepared, or made ready for, or to be brought near to hand unto, the saints. But this by the way. Again:—

2. For the sense of the place in hand, neither can this be so well accommodated, by interpreting, *προητοιμασε*, *ordained*, *predestinated*, or *designed*, as, *prepared*, *made fit*, or *meet*. For the riches of the glory, or glorious grace, of God, are not displayed or conferred upon men, or the vessels of mercy, simply as, or so much because, they were fore-ordained unto glory from eternity, (suppose this were granted instead of being proved,) but because of their being prepared and fitted by God, in the sense and by the means formerly specified, thereunto. The preposition, *προ*, *before*, *προητοιμασε*, importing a precedency in time, relateth unto the actual collation of the riches of his glory; and importeth, that these riches are not conferred by God upon any vessel of mercy until he hath sanctified and prepared this vessel for the present receiving of them; according to that of our Apostle elsewhere: “That we should be to the praise of his glory;” that is, of his glorious grace, meaning, by our salvation; *τας προηλπικотας εν τω Χριστω*, “*who had first*,” or *before*, “*trusted*,” or *hoped*, “*in Christ*;” (Eph. i. 12;) implying, as it should seem, that the saving of such persons, who should not be first prepared and made meet for such a blessed

condition by believing in Christ, (always speaking in such cases as this of persons of discretion, and capable of believing,) would turn to no account of praise to the glorious grace of God.

Notice was taken in our explication of the former verse, that whereas the Apostle, speaking there of the vessels of wrath, expresseth himself indefinitely, and in a verb of the passive voice, about their preparing to destruction, here, speaking of the preparing of the vessels of mercy for glory, he expressly ascribeth it unto God; the reason of which different expression there passed under consideration likewise.

Before we make further progress in our exposition, let us take up some heads of doctrine which show themselves from the verses last expounded.

1. From those words of the Apostle, "Thou wilt say then unto me," (verse 19,) as they were glossed by us, it is not amiss to observe, that divine truth is frequently so delivered and expressed in the Scriptures, that men, through ignorance or inconsiderateness, may easily judge it objectionable, and oppose it. (See John iii. 3—9; 2 Peter iii. 16; Matt. xxii. 23, compared with verses 31, 32.)

2. From these two interrogations, "Why doth he yet complain? for who hath resisted his will?" this is observable, that weak and less considering persons are apt to think many dispensations of God to be hard or unreasonable upon mistaken grounds. The irresistibleness of God's will, in that sense and in those cases wherein it is irresistible, is no ground at all, as hath been showed, to judge that God dealeth either unjustly or unreasonably in complaining of or reproofing those who are hardened by him. (See Rom. iii. 3, 5; Matt. xxv. 24; Psalm lxxiii. 2, 3, &c., compared with verse 16.)

3. From this clause, "For who hath resisted his will?" it is worth the noting, that some men's, the truth is, many men's, exceptions or objections against the truth spring from an inability to distinguish between the different acceptations of one and the same word or phrase. There had been no place for the objection laid down in this verse against Paul's doctrine, wherein he had taught that God hardeneth whom he will, if the objector had understood, and well considered, that the will of God signifieth sometimes his antecedent will, which is resistible, yea, and is resisted by those that are hardened by him; and some-

times his consequent will, which is irresistible in one sense, and not in another,—of which, some other time. (See John iii. 4; vi. 52, &c.)

4. From these words, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” &c., (verse 20,) the Holy Ghost giveth us to understand and consider, that it is no less than horrid presumption in so weak, sinful, and worthless a creature as man is, to contest with the most high God about the wisdom or righteousness of his ways. (Rom. iii. 5; Ezek. xviii. 19, 25, 29; xxxiii. 17, 20; Isaiah xlv. 9; Job xxxiv. 17—19.)

5. The words following, “Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” are a foundation whereon to build this doctrine: No creature whatsoever hath any reason or ground, nor colour of either, to complain of God touching any thing relating to the creation or native being of it. (Gen. i. 31; Psalm civ. 24.) Or rather this: Men that have made themselves obnoxious unto God, by a long-continued course of sin and disobedience, having hereby forfeited their beings, and all that is desirable therein, have no cause to complain of any proceedings whatsoever in God against them, especially wherein there is but the least touch of grace and mercy. (Rom. iii. 5; 2 Thess. i. 6; Ezra ix. 13; Rom. i. 32; Ezek. xviii. 25, with 26.)

6. From, “Hath not the potter power over the clay,” &c., (verse 21,) this observation offereth itself,—that things which are vile, and of small value or worth, may, without any just offence unto any man, be converted or disposed of to ends and services of a mean nature, as well as unto those of better respect. (Matt. v. 13; John xv. 6; Matt. iii. 10; Joshua ix. 22, 23.)

7. From these words, “What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known,” &c., (verse 22,) is held forth unto us this truth,—that God may, with all good agreement to all principles of justice and equity, punish with the utmost severity such persons whom he hath endured in a course of sinning, with patience, if they repent not. (Matt. xi. 22—24; Rom. ii. 4, 5; Rev. xviii. 2, 3, 7.)

8. From these words, “Vessels of wrath,” as they have been opened, this doctrine showeth itself,—that actual transgression, whilst unrepented of, makes the transgressor capable of receiving, and of keeping or holding for ever, the wrath of God; that

is, of the fruits or effects of this wrath. (Ezek. xviii. 4; Gen. ii. 17; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Rom. i. 32; ii. 8; James i. 15, &c.)

9. From these words, as they were notioned in the exposition given, *κατηρτισμενα εις απωλειαν*, fitted, or rather, *completely* or *perfectly fitted, to destruction*, this is observable,—that long continuance in a course of sin and disobedience, without repentance, maketh men much more capable and worthy of destruction than either a single act or a short practice of sinning doth. (Rom. ii. 4, 5; Psalm vii. 12; Luke xviii. 7, 8.)

10. From this clause, “Endured with much long-suffering,” bearing such a part in the period, as that ascribed to it in the preceding exposition, this is considerable,—that persons completely fitted to destruction by long continuance in sin are or may be, notwithstanding, in a capacity of repentance, whilst God spareth them, and so of being saved. (Ezek. xii. 23; Jer. xxxvi. 3, 7; xxvi. 3, &c.)\*

11. From these words, “On the vessels of mercy,” (verse 23,) understood according to their explication, this beam of truth shineth,—that true repentance investeth men with a comely and meet capacity of receiving that eminent fruit of the mercy of God, the forgiveness of sins. (Mark i. 4; Ezek. xviii. 21, 32; Acts iii. 19.)

12. From those words, “The riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,” &c., this doctrine ariseth,—that the bounty of God towards those who shall be found meet for salvation is exceeding great, above measure magnificent and glorious. (Eph. i. 18—20; Philip. iii. 21; Matt. xiii. 43.)

13. These words, “Which he had afore PREPARED unto glory,” enrich us with this truth,—that the riches of the most magnificent bounty of God shall be the portion of such only who shall be first prepared and made meet by faith and holiness to receive them. (Col. i. 12; Eph. i. 12; Heb. xii. 14; Rev. iii. 4, 5.)

14. Whereas God is here affirmed to prepare men for their glory,—“which HE had afore prepared unto glory,”—the result of doctrine is this,—that the new creation of the saints, and all the spiritual workmanship that is found upon them, is to be ascribed unto God, and to the effectual working of his grace. (Eph. ii. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Philip. ii. 13.)

\* See more of this, *Agreement and Distance of Brethren*, pp. 61—63, &c.

15. Whereas God is here exhibited or presented unto us as desirous or willing to “make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,” &c.; this doctrine lieth large before us,—that God is willing to declare and make known beforehand unto the children of men what great things they may with confidence expect from him to the days of eternity, who shall be found obedient and faithful unto him in the days of their mortality, that so their hand may be the more effectually strengthened to his service. (Rev. ii. 26—28; iii. 4, 5, 12, 21; Luke xx. 35, 36; Matt. xiii. 43.)

Lastly: Whereas God’s making known what the riches of his glory are “on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,” &c., is here insisted on as one end of his “enduring with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” &c., mentioned in the former verse; the blessing of this truth is poured forth unto us,—that the riches of God’s patience and long-suffering, showed on wretched men and high-handed sinners in this world, is a pregnant demonstration of the abundant riches of his grace and bounty on the saints in the world to come. (See Rom. v. 8—10.)

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Verse 24. *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, &c.*—The sense of these words is to be completed by the help of the former verse, where the Apostle, as we have heard, found it amongst the ends proposed or proposeable by God unto himself, in his enduring with much patience “the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” his making known “the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, afore prepared unto glory.” So that now subjoining, “Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only,” &c., his meaning is, that they, whether Jews or

Gentiles,—for the church at Rome, to which he writeth this Epistle, consisteth of both,—whom by his grace he had prevailed with to believe the Gospel, were a part of or were of the number of those “vessels of mercy,” which he had prepared, or was now in preparing, unto glory. The reason why he takes occasion here to give instance in himself, together with the saints in the church at Rome and elsewhere, whether Jews or Gentiles, as being “vessels of mercy” prepared by God unto glory, seems to be, either to prevent or heal the offence which he knew the unbelieving Jews were ready to take, that he, and those that embraced his doctrine, who, according to his own principles, were lately in the same or worse condition with themselves, should, as it were, on the sudden, look upon themselves as the choice and only-beloved people of God, and upon them, as persons rejected and cast off by him. For that which the Apostle here expressly asserteth touching all those who with himself were effectually called by God, as, namely, that they are “vessels of mercy,” prepared by God unto glory, &c., he had insinuated all along his discourse hitherto, and it could not but accordingly be resented by the Jews. Therefore, to satisfy them touching the business, being matter of offence unto them, he, 1. Tells them that God had called them, himself, and those who believed, “Even us, whom he hath called,” &c. 2. He lays before them several passages found in one of their own Prophets, wherein a thing of a like nature, and altogether as strange as this, was predicted, and which long since had been accomplished in and amongst themselves, that is, their forefathers, in these words: “As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.”

For the former, “Even us, whom he hath called,” in the original, *Ους και εκαλεσεν ημας*, that is, word for word, *Whom also he hath called us*. In some Greek copies the pronoun *ημας*, *us*, is wanting; not without some detriment, I conceive, to the Apostle’s mind in the context. Admitting that reading of the words which we have, and which our Greek copies more generally approve, probable it is that they are to be otherwise pointed than our English translators exhibit them unto us; and that after *εκαλεσεν*, *he hath called*, there should be a comma, and so the pronoun *ημας* be construed appositive, as grammarians speak. The words thus ordered, and read, *Whom also he hath*

*called, us*, that is, even *us*, or, namely *us*, as Beza also distinguisheth and supplieth,\* give us the mind of the Apostle to this effect, that those “vessels of mercy” whom he prepareth unto glory, he is wont also to call, that is, so to call them as to prevail with them to hear and to answer this their call by believing, as the word “call” frequently imports, and thus he hath called us who believe, as well of the Jews as the Gentiles, &c. Such appositive constructions as that mentioned are frequent in the Scriptures, and especially in the writings of this Apostle. One instance we have verse 10 of this chapter; another, Rom. v. 15; another, John v. 45; to omit many others. The calling here specified doth not barely signify the act of God in calling or inviting persons unto the fellowship of the Gospel or communion with Jesus Christ, as sometimes the word signifies; (Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 8, 14;) but rather the intended effect of this act of God in calling, that is, his prevailing with men to believe by means of this his calling, which is the much more frequent, and almost the constant, acception of the word with this Apostle. (See Rom. viii. 30; 1 Cor. i. 9; vii. 18, 21, 22, 24; Gal. i. 6, 15; besides many other.) And that, in the place before us, it must be taken in this sense is evident, because it is spoken of or applied unto those whom God hath prepared unto glory. Now that calling of God unto men, which is not answered by men with faith and love in Christ Jesus, is common unto thousands who are in no degree prepared by him unto glory, but are by themselves prepared to destruction, according to that of our Saviour: “Many are called, but few are chosen.” In this sense of the word “called,” the Apostle speaks like unto himself in the former chapter: “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called.” (Verse 30.) Not that predestination of particular persons goeth before their calling, no more than God’s preparing or fitting men unto glory doth; but God is therefore said to call or to have called them whom he did predestinate or hath predestinated, to show that he is not wont to predestinate any person, capable of calling, until he hath called him. For in saying, “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called,” his intent clearly is, to show who those are whom God hath predestinated “to be conformed to the image of his Son.” (Verse 29.) These he notificth by this character or property, namely, that God hath called them.

\* *Quos etiam vocavit, nimirum nos, &c.*

that is, so called them as to cause them to hear and obey his call, as was lately said. Therefore, those who have not this character upon them, that is, are not yet thus called by God, are not predestinated by him to any such conformity. If they were, it could not be truly said that those whom he hath thus predestinated he hath called. But this by the way.

The reason why our Apostle subjoineth God's calling, in the sense declared, of those vessels of mercy whom he prepareth or hath prepared unto glory, seemeth to be to give an account unto the froward and contradicting Jews, why or how he, with the rest, both Jews and Gentiles, who had obeyed their calling from God by the Gospel, became vessels of mercy, and were prepared or in preparing by him unto glory, in opposition to their rejection who had not thus been called by him, but had obstinately and wilfully rejected his call. As if he should have said to these unbelieving Jews, "The reason why we believers, as well Jews as Gentiles, look upon ourselves as vessels of mercy prepared, or in preparing, unto glory, and not upon you, is, because that God, by his gracious calling of us by the Gospel, hath persuaded and prevailed with us to believe in his Son, and to persevere believing until now; whereas you have been and still remain disobedient unto this heavenly calling; and, therefore, having once made yourselves vessels of wrath by sinning, you continue such to this day." The obedience of faith in believers is both here and frequently elsewhere rather ascribed unto the calling of God than to their compliance with the call, though this be as requisite to the production of such an effect as the other, because it is the principal and primary cause and most worthy consideration; whereas the compliance of man with the call of God, though in respect of the blessed consequence which, through the most gracious and bountiful promise of God, depends upon it and accompanieth it, it be very considerable also, yet in itself and in the nature of it, it is of small value, and carrieth nothing of wonder or worthy observation in it.

Ους και εκαλεσεν, *Whom also he hath called, or, Whom he hath even called*—This particle *και*, *also*, or *even*, seems to be emphatical, and to import that the calling of God, here mentioned, is very condescending and full of grace, and not easy to be believed by men by reason of the abundance of grace in it. In such an emphatical sense as this it seems to be used by this our Apostle elsewhere; as, "Who hath also given unto us his



Holy Spirit ;" (1 Thess. iv. 8 ;) as if he should have said, " Who hath given unto us such a gift which we could hardly have expected from him, and greater than which he had none now to give, even his Spirit." (See also Rom. viii. 30, 34.) Some conceive it to be exegetical, and declarative of what went before, and to express the manner or means how God prepares the vessels of mercy unto glory. Haply, it is not of much value to observe in the pronoun *ες*, *whom*, that grammar-figure, according to which there may be an incongruity in the syntaxis of the words, when the sense is congruous and clear. For *ες*, being the masculine gender, relates in construction unto *σκευη*, *vessels*, in the former verse, being the neuter gender. But grammar incongruities are frequent in the Scripture where the sense suffers not by them. An instance we had, (verses 10, 11,) although we took no notice of it.

*Not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*—Seldom is there any thing either denied in the Scriptures, but only that which men, at least some men, are apt to affirm ; nor any thing affirmed, but what some are apt or likely to deny. The reason why the Apostle, in the clause before us, expresseth himself by this distribution, " Not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," is, because he knew the unbelieving Jews were inclined to think, that if any people under heaven were so graciously entreated by God as to be brought over to him in love and service, they must needs be either only or chiefly Jews. Nay, saith the Apostle, God hath now called and brought home to himself for a people as well Gentiles as Jews, without making any difference between them. This for the former particular insisted on by Paul, to qualify or take off the offence which he knew his countrymen the Jews were apt to take at his appropriating unto himself, and those who embraced his doctrine, the dignity of being vessels of mercy, prepared by God unto glory, namely, their being called by him, in the sense oft declared. The latter followeth.

Verse 25. *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people ; and her beloved, which was not beloved*—These are not the precise words that are found in the Prophet ; but our Apostle, according to the manner of the New Testament, and of the Spirit of God uttering himself here, takes liberty, in his citations from the Old Testament, to deliver the sense and substance of matter contained in the passages cited

with what variation of words he pleaseth.\* And it is well observed by some that, for the most part, when the penmen of the New Testament take this liberty, I mean, to vary in words from the penmen of the Old Testament in their quotations from them, it is for the accommodation of the sense, and to afford some addition of light to the places quoted. The truth of this observation might readily be verified in many instances, if need were. However, the difference in words is not much in the testimony before us, though gathered and made up from two several places in the Prophet mentioned, namely, chap. i. 10, and ii. 23. Whereas our Apostle citeth thus: "I will call them my people, which are not my people;" the words in the Prophet are read thus: "And I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people." For these words in our Apostle, "There shall they be called the children of the living God," the Prophet hath, "There it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." The greatest difference between them seems to be about this clause in our Apostle: "And I will call her beloved, which was not beloved;" whereunto there is nothing found correspondent in the Prophet but only this: "And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy;" yet, neither is the difference here very material, only the Apostle's love seems to be somewhat more significant and full than the Prophet's mercy; if yet we suppose the Prophet's רחם, to signify *mercy*, rather than *love*, for expositors more generally make it to signify either the one or the other indifferently; and M. Bucer affirmeth, that it signifieth such an affection or charity which a mother beareth towards her child whom she hath born in her womb.† For love doth with a more manifest and pregnant involution include mercy, than mercy, love. Where we truly love we cannot but show mercy upon occasion; but we may show mercy, especially when extremity is the occasion, where we do not greatly love or affect. And besides, mercy, simply as such, extendeth only unto the relief of those in misery, and this but in part neither, for it must not be simply mercy, but mercy in some eminent

\* *Nihil familiarius Apostolis, quam oracula prophetica, ad sensum potius, quam ad verba allegare, et instituto suo accommodare, quia sunt Scripturæ propheticae divini interpretes.*—PAREUS in *Heb.*, p. 68.

† *De verbo רחם dictum jam paulo ante est, significari eo ejusmodi charitatem, qualem habet mater erga filium suum, quem gestavit in utero suo.*—BUCER in *Rom.* ix. 25.

degree, which will advance a pinary relief and support to him that is in misery. But love, amongst many other worthy properties, which our Apostle discovers in the nature of it, *χρησεται*, that is, as our former translation rendered, is *bountiful*, (1 Cor. xiii. 4,) and, as we know, is not satisfied with a bare relief or comfort of such who are in misery, but is ready to bestir and put forth herself to make them prosperous and happy. So that the Apostle, in the clause in hand, exchanging the Prophet's mercy for his love, quits himself evangelically, and opens the heart of God towards his people further than he, the Prophet, did.

The tenor of the whole citation now before us clearly imports a gracious promise or prediction of a blessed alteration and change intended to be made by God in the present estate and condition of some people or other, one or more; and that whereas their present condition was poor, and low, and despicable, he would so far, and to such a degree, alter the property of it, that it should become prosperous and honourable. The multiplication and variety of expressions in the testimony itself, importing for substance one and the same thing, namely, the intent and purpose of God to do very bountifully by the people spoken of, emphatically imply the fulness of his heart and soul with a purpose and resolution that way; according to that of our Saviour in the Gospel, "Out of the abundance," that is, according to the abundance, "of the heart the mouth speaketh."

But though the sense and import of the testimony be thus far clear, yet is it controversial amongst expositors, of whom, or of what people, God here speaketh, "I will call them my people, which were not my people," &c.; and particularly whether he speaketh these things concerning the Jews only, as, namely, that he would restore them unto his grace and favour, after their great affliction, devastation of their land, captivity, &c., under which they did not look like the people of God, but like a forlorn people, rejected and forsaken by him; and that upon their restoration unto his favour he would make their faces to shine again in the world, and give them countenance from heaven;—or whether he predicteth these things unto or concerning the Gentiles, as if his meaning were, that whereas, at that time when his Prophet thus prophesied, the Gentiles were, in their respective nations, a people estranged from God and the knowledge of his ways, without favour or countenance

from him, without any sign or testimony of his presence with them, &c., yet in time he would show such respect unto them, that they also should become his people, and have as great a presence of his grace amongst them as ever the Jews had formerly. Calvin stands up with much confidence for the former of these interpretations, supposing that he should find no man dissenting from him therein ;\* yet Pareus seems, with as much, or with very little less, confidence, to assert the latter, endeavouring to prove by argument, that the Prophet, in the said passages, intended to predict the calling of the Gentiles.† Though as well the one sense as the other accommodates the Apostle in his present business, as will more appear presently, yet the carriage of all things along the context in Hosea makes very strongly for Calvin's sense, at least thus far, that the re-assuming of the Jewish nation into his grace and favour, after their long exile, as it were, and banishment from hence, was principally intended by God and his Prophet in the passages under question. On the other hand, it is very true, also, that the said oracles, intended, as hath been said, primarily and immediately for the consolation of the Jews, were so indited and drawn up in words by the Spirit of God, that they might accommodate the state and case of the Gentiles also ; yea, and moreover *item* and instruct the Jews, that since the case and condition of the Gentiles, in reference to the love and favour of God, was no worse, no other, than what theirs sometimes had been, they, when time was, having been no more the people of God than the Gentiles now were, they should not be offended or think it strange that God should make a people for himself of the Gentiles also.‡ It is frequent in prophetic predictions of the Old Testament, and as frequently observed by judicious expositors, to be formed in such words and phrases, that they

\* *Sensus est apertus ; nisi quod in accommodando testimonio laboratur ; si quidem Prophetam illic de Israelitis loqui, nullus negaverit.*—CALVIN in Rom. ix. 25.

† *Duobus ex Hosea oraculis probat, vocationem Gentium ad Christum a Deo jam olim pronunciatam esse.*—PAREUS in Rom. ix. 25.

‡ *Oraculum vero de Judæis proprie est, quos Dominus pollicetur se iterum assumpturum, cum rejecisset ob impietatem ipsorum, ne esset populus suus, neve charitate et misericordia fruerentur. Verum quia in oraculo hoc inest, Deum assumere in populum suum, qui non est populus ejus, et dignari charitate, qui sunt ea merito, destituti, monebantur eo Judæi, ut ex impensa sibi misericordia Dei discerent, non esse indignum Deo, eam etiam Gentibus impendere, utcumque fuissent hactenus ea destituti, et a populo ejus alieni.*—BUCER in Rom. ix. 24.

may not only suit and fit those particular cases or events which are principally, directly, and immediately intended and aimed at, in part, by them, but several others also, being of like nature with them, which were to take place in the world afterwards. Nor is it unusual in the New Testament to style many events the fulfillings of such and such predictions or sayings of the Prophets, which did not relate unto them but only in a kind of secondary and collateral way. (See Matt. ii. 15, compared with Hosea xi. 1; Matt. ii. 18, with Jer. xxxi. 15; Matt. iv. 15, with Isaiah ix. 1; Matt. xiii. 35, with Psalm lxxviii. 2; Matt. xiii. 14, with Isaiah vi. 9; John xiii. 18, with Psalm xli. 9; to omit sundry others.) So that although it be granted that the restitution of the Jews unto the favour of God, and their former enjoyments in their own land, after the sad desolations thereof, and their carrying away into Babylon, were directly and immediately intended by the Prophet in those veins of prophecy yet before us; yet may the calling of the Gentiles be conceived to have been overtured likewise therein. The Apostle's intent and drift, in citing the said testimony, was not, I conceive, simply either to prove or declare, either the re-instating of the Jews in the favour of God after that cloud of displeasure we spake of had for a time been spread over them, or the calling of the Gentiles to be a people unto him; but rather, as hath been signified, to show and declare that it is no new or strange thing, or that should offend any man, that such persons who had been formerly, yea, unto the very time wherein the change should be made, alienate from God, and under his displeasure, should be called by him, and this upon such terms as to be prevailed with to hearken unto his call, and so with much love and great respects to be entertained by him as his people. This sufficiently appeareth from the passages cited; so that the Jews could have no reasonable or just cause to stumble at that which the Apostle all along this his discourse had insinuated, and even now more plainly affirmed, namely, that he, with the rest who had obeyed the calling of God in the Gospel by believing, were the people of God, "vessels of mercy prepared unto glory," how far soever they had been estranged from God before. This for the Apostle's latter plea mentioned.

We shall now only open some particular expressions in the quotations before us, and then make forward.

*I will call them MY PEOPLE, which were not my people—*

For God to call any nation or party of men his people imports their dignity and great happiness ; as, on the contrary, for him to disown any people in such a relation implies their contemptibleness and misery. For as earthly Princes and Monarchs, for the support of their state and greatness, seek to have all things, in relation unto them and their service, of the best and most excellent in their kind,—the best servants, the best horses, the best houses, the best dishes, &c. ;\*—so when God appropriates any thing to himself, whether men, nations, or other creatures, it imports some special worth, excellency, and happiness in them. When our Saviour saith, “ God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” (Matt. xxii. 32,) his meaning is, that God is not wont to call himself the God, that is, the Lord or Master, either of things or persons that are “ dead,” that is, that are in a sad, despicable, helpless, or hopeless condition, “ but of the living,” that is, whether things or persons, which are in an honourable and happy condition, or in such a capacity wherein he may, with the honour of his wisdom, justice, and truth, make them great and happy. And it is a frequent observation amongst expositors of Scripture, that things of choicest worth and excellency in their kind are here frequently appropriated unto God, or said to be his. Those “ goodly cedars,” as our English translateth them, (Psalm lxxx. 10,) are, in the original, “ the cedars of God.” So the “ great mountains,” (Psalm xxxvi. 6,) in our English Bibles, are “ the mountains of God,” in the Hebrew. A “ goodly river” is called “ the river of God ;” (Psalm lxxv. 9;) a “ vehement flame,” so translated, (Cant. viii. 6,) the “ flame of God.” And Jewish writers say, that to call a man “ a man of God” is as much as to say, he is an extraordinary man, a man of an excellent spirit, a Prophet, a holy man. So that when God saith that he will call such or such a nation, or company of men, his people, he signifieth their great dignity, honour, and felicity.†

*I will call them my people*—In Scripture phrase, to say that

\* “ Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? he shall stand before Kings ; he shall not stand before mean men.” (Prov. xxii. 29.) “ And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil ? offer it now unto thy governor ; will he be pleased with thee ?” (Mal. i. 8.)

† *Solet Scriptura dicere rem quamquam vel personam, hoc, vel illo, nomine vocatum iri, non quod habitura sit illud nomen, aut tali nomine vulgo appellanda sit, sed quod vere ac plane habitura sit rem tali nomine significatam.*—PERER. in Gen., p. 848.

a thing or person shall be called so or so, or by such or such a name, doth not always import that either the one or the other shall vulgarly be called, or commonly known, by this name ;\* but sometimes, and most frequently, that the thing signified by such a name or word, whether it be matter of privilege or of shame, shall be evidently found in the estate and condition of either. “ This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness ;” that is, he shall be known so to be, namely, the Lord, by whom we shall obtain favour and forgiveness of sins with God. (See also Isaiah vii. 14 ; ix. 6 ; lvi. 7 ; Zech. vi. 12 ; Jer. xx. 3 ; Rev. xix. 13 ; with many other.) And when the Virgin Mary prophesied, “ For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall CALL ME BLESSED,” her meaning was not to oblige either Papists or others to style her, as they commonly do, *Beata Virgo*, “ the Blessed Virgin ;” but that the grace and favour which she received from God, in being chosen from amongst women to be the mother of his Son, the great Messiah and Saviour of the world, was so exceeding great, that she knew it would be reputed a singular happiness unto her amongst Christians in all succeeding generations. So that when God saith, “ I will call them my people,” his meaning is, that he would invest them with such privileges, whether spiritual or temporal, or both, that they should be taken notice of in the world, for a people in special grace and favour with him, or peculiarly related unto him.

So, likewise, whereas it followeth, *And it shall, or will, come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people ; there shall they be called the children of the living God ;*—by, “ Where it was said unto them, Ye are NOT MY PEOPLE,” is meant, that where the inhabitants, by reason of their poor, miserable, and forlorn condition, were looked upon and esteemed by their neighbours and others as a people hated and rejected by God ; “ there shall they be called the CHILDREN of the living God,” that is, their estate and condition shall in time be so wonderfully altered and changed, that this very people, these inhabitants, shall be honoured and admired by

\* *Schema est propheticum, quo, nominis quasi proprii impositione, rei aut personæ de qua agitur, qualitas, aut fatum indicatur.*—MED. Apoc., p. 84. *Dicitur Deus vocare quippiam non inani nomine, sed rei præstatione, dum id facit esse quod nominat ; quomodo frequenter in Prophetis vocare et nominare sumuntur.*—ESTIUS ad Rom. ix. 25.

those who formerly despised them, not simply as the “people of God,” but as “the children of the living God,” that is, as persons whom he that is God indeed, the true God, loves, honours, and embraceth, not only as his friends, but as his sons or children. A man loveth his children with a more genuine, affectionate, and intimate love than his friends, at least than such friends who are not of an extraordinary endearment to him. The Apostle explains the Prophet’s “sons,”—“There shall they be called THE SONS of the living God,”—by his “children:” “They shall be called THE CHILDREN of the living God.” The word “children” is more comprehensive, or at least more explicit and significant in the comprehensiveness of it, and so more evangelical and lightsome in this place, than the word “sons;” for “children” equally respects both sexes, male and female; whereas “sons” properly importeth only the former. It is true, that the Prophet, by his “sons,” synecdochically understandeth daughters also; but his expression was Old-Testament-like, more implicit and involved; whereas our Apostle, being a son of the New Testament, turns the night of the Old Testament into day, and speaketh more plainly.

*The children of the LIVING God*—This epithet, “living,” when applied unto God, is characteristical; and singleth out Him who is God indeed, the “only true God,” from amongst the rabble-rout of those many gods, so called, who are all either dead, as the dumb idols, or dying, as the unclean spirits, or devils, worshipped in them, whose godship was long since waxen old, and ready to vanish away into open shame and torment: Whereas the true God is said to be living, “the living God,” not only, as I with submission conceive, because his Godhead is immortal and imperishable, but also because the glory and greatness of it is still growing and waxing in the minds and understandings of men and angels. But the epithet we speak of, “living,” is, in the place before us, not only characteristical, in the sense declared, but very emphatical also, bearing some such notion or import as this,—that the persons he speaks of should not only or simply be translated and put by him into a happy condition worthy the children of God, but into such a condition, also, which should flourish more and more, in the enjoyment whereof they might be every day more happy and blessed than other.

Concerning the place here spoken of, where they, that is,



men, or the inhabitants, should be “called the children of the living God,” some conceive it to be Chaldea, whither the Jews were carried captive; some, Jerusalem, or Judea, whither they were restored, and where they were built up again into a nation with beauty, strength, and peace. Others, namely, those who conceive the calling of the Gentiles to be here directly intended, suppose it to be meant indefinitely of any place throughout the whole earth, where God, by the Gospel, should gather a people to himself. I incline to the second interpretation, as carrying the sense primarily and directly intended by the Prophet, not excluding the third and last from his intentions, likewise, in a secondary and collateral way, according to what was formerly said.

*And her beloved, who was not beloved*—The literal sense of this clause in the Prophet seems to be this,—that whereas God had commanded him to name his daughter Lo-ruhamah, which signifieth, “not having obtained mercy,” or, “not having been beloved,”—for that the word indifferently admitteth either sense was lately observed,—under which name she was a type and figure of the Jews during their rejection, now he informeth him that he will change her name, and call her “beloved;” under which appellation she was a prophetic type or figure of the restitution of that nation, the Jews, unto the love and favour of God. This is *vox interpretum*, “the joint voice of interpreters;” and they speak nothing but good probability of truth in it. Junius and Tremellius translate the clause, as they find it in the Prophet, *Et miserebor Lo-ruchamæ*, “And I will have mercy upon Lo-ruhamah,” which plainly showeth that they refer it to the Prophet’s daughter, as hath been said. Yet it may, and, I humbly conceive, with as much probability, the common dialect of the Scripture consulted, be understood, properly and directly, of the nation of the Jews, and, by the rule of proportion, or of a secondary import, of any other body of people in the world, which having been formerly, either absolutely or comparatively, neglected by God, should afterwards come to be highly respected and beloved of him. For it is a frequent and well-known metaphor in the Scriptures to compare a state, body, or society of men, whether politic and civil, or sacred and ecclesiastic, unto a woman; and under such a prosopopœa to discourse of them and their affairs. (See Ezek. xvi. 2, 3; xxiii. 2—4, &c.; xiii. 14, &c., 35, 46; Isaiah

liv. 1 ; Rev. xii. 1, &c. ; xvii. 1, 3, &c. ; to omit many others.) So that when God saith, “ I will call her beloved, which was not beloved,” his direct and next-hand meaning may be, that he would receive the nation of the Jews, or a remnant of them again into his favour, and entreat them graciously, after he had cast them out of his sight, and proceeded in judgment against them as his enemies. And his further meaning might be, that he was ready to do the like by any other people, nation, or body of men in any part of the world, when they should hearken unto the voice of his calling, and address themselves unto him as their God. But whether this sense, or the former, both much alike accommodate the Apostle in his purpose, as hath been showed, this being to give the Jews to understand that it was no new or unheard-of thing that God should cast his love upon such persons, and call them his people, who, after the greatest estrangement from him, should return in obedience unto him : “ Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.” What the emphatical repetition of one and the same thing, for substance, three times over importeth, hath been already declared. It followeth :—

- 27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved :
- 28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness : because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.
- 29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Because the Apostle’s doctrine of justification by faith, hitherto maintained and asserted, according to the entertainment which it found in the world, was attended with these two consequents : 1. That, as well Gentiles as Jews became the people of God, namely, by their receiving it ; 2. That the far greater part of the Jews were reprobated or rejected by God upon their refusing it ; both which were hard sayings unto them, and not easy to be digested or believed ; therefore, to take off

or allay the offensiveness of them, he demonstrates from their own Scriptures that neither the one nor the other were of any such import, but, that the like had come to pass, and been accordingly predicted by God before their coming to pass, amongst themselves, and in their own nation. That which answereth the former of the two he proveth to have been predicted by God, which supposeth the accomplishment of it in its time, from several testimonies of the Prophet Hosea, which we have lately opened. That which paralleleth the latter, and is of the same nature and import with it, I mean, that the far greater part of the Jews should be rejected by God, he proveth to have been foreshowed by God from a double testimony of the Prophet Isaiah: The former is found in chap. x. of his prophecy, the latter in the first. For the former:—

“Esaias also crieth concerning” (for so the preposition, *υπερ*, here signifieth, as in many other places) “Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea.” Neither doth our Apostle in this testimony bind himself exactly to the words either of the Greek version, or of the original Hebrew itself; although, in any thing material, he differeth not from either. The particle *δε*, translated *also*, is not copulative or augmentative, but adversative, and signifieth, “but;” and here seemeth to import an opposition between that which went before, concerning God’s calling such his people, and that which now followeth, wherein the Apostle citeth the Prophet Isaiah declaring from the mouth of God, in effect, that those who had been his people, loved and graciously entreated by him, should in great numbers cease to be his people, and be severely handled by him. To affect the more deeply his countrymen the Jews, for whose sake especially he manageth the whole discourse of this chapter, as hath been formerly noted, with the testimony of their great Prophet now before us, he exhibiteth him not simply as saying or speaking the words of it, but as crying, “Esaias also CRIETH concerning Israel;” which importeth either the great sorrow and bitterness of soul wherewith he uttered it, or else the ardent desire he had that it should be earnestly minded and laid to heart by all men, and more especially by the Jews, who were more particularly and nearly concerned in it.\* For the more

\* *Consequitur etiam, clamorem intelligi, non gratulantis, sed dolentis; quomodo frequenter accipitur apud Prophetas. Igitur clamat Esaias, il est, magno doloris*

than ordinary extending of the voice or crying commonly importeth either of the one or the other, or both.

For the testimony itself: "Though," or *if*, εαν, "the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea," &c. The words in the Prophet, as Junius rendereth them, sound thus: "For if thy people Israel shall be as the sand of the sea," &c. Some conceive the words spoken to King Hezekiah, others to Israel itself. They may with as much or more probability, as either, be conceived as directed by God to the Prophet himself, whose people the Jews may be called in such a sense as God had formerly called them Moses's people. (Exod. xxxii. 7.) And, elsewhere, the whole body or nation of them are called the people of each member respectively. (Lev. xix. 16, 18; as in many other places.) Vast multitudes or numbers are frequently expressed by the sand of the sea, and sometimes by the sand on the sea shore. (Gen. xxii. 17; xxxii. 12; to omit several other places.) The particle, εαν, *if*, is not here *dubitantis*, but *rationantis*; not importing it any matter of doubt or question whether "the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea," &c., but supposing and granting this, gives an item that somewhat, notwithstanding, is a truth, which such a supposition seemeth, at least in part, to contradict or render improbable. In such a sense as this, the particle, εαν, *if*, is also used elsewhere. (See 1 Cor. ix. 16; xiv. 16.) That which the Prophet from God here asserteth for truth, notwithstanding the said supposition concerning the vast multitudes of the children of Israel be granted, is this,—that yet "a remnant shall be saved," that is, a remnant "only;" the exclusive particle, "only," is frequently omitted and left to be understood. Whereas Moses twice expresseth himself thus: "And him shalt thou serve," (Deut. vi. 13—20,) speaking of God; our Saviour, explaining him, supplieth the word "only:" "And him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. iv. 10.) So, "Christ sent me not to baptize," (1 Cor. i. 17,) that is, not only, or not so much, to baptize. See also James i. 25: "This man," that is, this man only, "shall be blessed in his deed;" to omit

*affectu loquitur.*—ESTIUS *in locum.* Non, inquit, dicit, sed clamat Esaias; non modo ut presentes Judæos ad attentionem excitet, sed etiam ut Esaiæ jam olim gravem contentionem de hoc cum Judæis fuisse innuat. Nolebant audire hanc doctrinam Judæi; clamabat ergo Esaias, ut audire cogerentur.—PAREUS *in locum.*

other places. "A remnant," that is, a small parcel or proportion of this great multitude. The word is frequently used in this sense in the Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. "Shall be saved," that is, shall be preserved from perishing in that deluge of destruction and desolation which Sennacherib and his host would bring upon the land of Judea; and by betaking themselves for shelter to Jerusalem, as Noah and his family escaped drowning in the deluge of waters, wherein the residue of the world perished, by betaking themselves into the ark. (See Isaiah vii. 17, to the end of the chapter; and again, Isaiah viii. 6—8.) Or if we consult the Prophet from whom our Apostle citeth the testimony in hand, who, instead of "shall be saved," saith, "shall return;" (Isaiah x. 22;) the place seemeth rather to be meant of that great consumption, waste, and spoil, which God threatened to make of the lives of the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, (2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, 17, 20, &c.,) and under the seventy years' captivity; insomuch, that of those vast numbers who went into captivity there were but very few, comparatively, that should return into their own land, or enjoy the benefit of that grace and liberty of re-enjoying their own country, laws, and privileges, which Cyrus, being hereunto moved by God, generally granted unto their nation. This is Calvin's sense in his commentaries upon the place, although the truth is, that the place, notwithstanding those words in Esaias, "shall return," may well be understood of the Assyrian desolation of the ten tribes, more strictly and properly called Israel, a small remnant of which were sent back by the King of Assyria into their own land. (2 Kings xvii. 27.) This was Jerome's opinion of old, and is embraced by some modern interpreters of good note. The reason why so few of this nation should escape or return from their banishment and captivity into their own land follows in these words:—

Verse 28. *For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth*—It is conceived by some judicious interpreters, that the words in our common Greek copies, by passing through either negligent or injudicious hands, have lost their native perspicuity, and are somewhat troubled; who likewise inform us of another reading of them out of an ancient manuscript, much more plain and direct; as, namely, this: *Δογον γαρ συντελων και*

συντεμνων ποιησει Κυριος επι της γης,\* *For the Lord finishing, or perfecting and contracting, or cutting short, the account, will act, or fall to work, on the earth.* Or thus: *For the Lord finishing and cutting short will make the account upon the earth.* The Hebrew, as far as Junius and Tremellius understood it, hath it to this effect: "A precise consummation will be consummate, abounding," or overflowing, "in righteousness. For a consummation, and this precise, will Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, make in the midst of this land,"† or, in this whole land. Jerome translated the words thus: "An abbreviated," or shortened, "consummation shall overflow righteousness. For God, the Lord of Hosts, will make a consummation and abbreviation in the midst of all," or, of the whole land; ‡ Arias Montanus, in his interlineary, thus: "A consummation decided," or cut short, "overflowing righteousness: Because the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, will make a consummation, and" this "decided in the inner" parts "of the whole land;" § Musculus, with a little variation, thus: "There shall be a concise consummation overflowing righteousness: Because the Lord God of Hosts will make a consummation, and this concise, in the midst of all the land;" || Pareus, not differing much from him, thus: "A consummation," or the consummation, "decided," or determined, "shall overflow in," or with, "righteousness: Because Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts will make a consummation, and this decided," determined, or cut short, "in the midst of the earth." ¶¶ The Chaldee paraphrase glosseth the two verses thus: "Because though thy people, the house of

\* *In Paulino enim textu, qualem nunc habemus, satis absurdum est, poni primum, γαρ, deinde, οτι. Omnino hæc lectio interpolata est ex LXX. Vetus autem lectio erat in manuscripto illo quem toties laudo, et sic habet; λογον γαρ συντελων, &c., quæ sufficient, satisque expriment id quod vult Esaias. Ingentem vastitatem terræ Judææ, quæ per excellentiam γη sive οικουµενη, intulerat Senneaheribus. Pauci, qui Hierosolyma se recipere relicti tanquam ex clade superstites, &c.—HUGO GROTIUS in locum.*

† *Consummationem præcisam consummabit exundans justitia. Nam consummationem, et quidem præcisam, Dominus Jehovi exercituum factururus est in universa hac terra.*

‡ *Consummatio abbreviata inundabit justitiam; consummationem enim et abbreviationem Dominus Deus exercituum faciet in medio omnis terræ.*

§ *Consummatio decisa inundans justitiam; quia consummationem et decisam Dominus, Dominus exercituum faciens in interiori universæ terræ.*

|| *Consummatio concisa erit inundans justitiam; quoniam consummationem, eamque concisam, faciet Dominator, &c.*

¶¶ *Consummatio decisa inundabit in justitia; quia consumptionem, et quidem decisam, Dominus, &c.*

Israel, should be much," or many, "as the sand of the sea, great things shall be done to that remnant which hath not sinned, and which hath turned from sin, and they shall prevail, and be led on in righteousness: Because the Lord God of Hosts will make a consummation and consumption in all the wicked of the land."\* The difference between these several translations of the words of the Prophet among themselves, and between any one or all of them, and the words of the Apostle now before us, is not such or so material but that the sense of both contexts sufficiently appears to be, for substance and import of matter, the same; and particularly this or to this effect, namely, that God had in his just judgment determined to show mercy and favour only to a very small remnant of those vast multitudes of the children of Israel, and to restore them (this remnant) to their own land; who, being restored, should walk before him in righteousness and truth; (see Isaiah vi. 13; iv. 2, 3, &c. ; ) and, on the other hand, that he was resolved to suffer the great body and bulk of this people partly to die and be consumed by the sword, partly to be led captive into a strange land and there to undergo all miseries and extremity of condition. Some conceive, with good probability, that the Apostle, twice using the word *λογος*, which signifieth *an account*, rather than "a work," in this short testimony, resembleth God in these his judiciary proceedings against the Jews, to an accountant, who, being to adjust an account of monies received and disbursed, finds only a small matter remaining due.† By this expression in the Prophet, "The concise consummation," is meant, that small remnant which God should consummate, that is, either draw or cast up in a very short sum; or else, "consummate," that is, sanctify, complete, or make perfect, namely, by that signal grace and favour which he intended to show unto them when the residue or generality of their nation should be severely handled by him. Such distinguishing mercies and vouchsafements from God as these have an excellent virtue or property in them to sanctify, that is, to render

\* *Quoniam si fuerint populus tuus domus Israel multus sicut arena maris, illis reliquii, quæ non peccaverunt, et quæ conversæ sunt a peccato, fient magnalia quæ prævalebunt et ducentur in justitia. Quia consummationem et consumptionem Dominus Deus exercituum faciet in omnibus impiis terræ.*

† *Deus enim fecerat quod in rationibus putandis fieri solet, ubi post expunctu ea quibus expensa acceptis æquantur, exigua aliqua summa restat quæ debeat. Similis locutio apud eundem Esaiam, xxviii. 22.—HUGO GROTIUS in Rom. ix. 28.*

men willing and full of resolution to devote themselves unto God and his service, which is their complement or perfection. The “consummation,” put for the consummate ones or persons sanctified, is agreeable to the frequent idiom of the Scriptures, wherein abstracts are used for their concretes, as captivity for captives. (Esther ii. 6; Judges v. 12; Num. xxi. 1; Psalm lxxviii. 18.) So circumcision for persons circumcised. (Gal. ii. 7; Rom. iii. 30; iv. 9.) And uncircumcision for men uncircumcised. (Rom. ii. 26, 27.) So, likewise, poverty for poor men; (2 Kings xxiv. 14;) righteousness, for a company of righteous ones; (2 Cor. v. 21;) thanksgivings,—for so the original hath it,—for thanksgivers. (Neh. xii. 31.) So, also, dreams for dreamers. (Jer. xxvii. 9.) Besides many more. Of this “concise consummation,” the Prophet saith that it shall *inundare justitiam*, or, as Pareus rendereth, *in justitia*, that is, “overflow righteousness,” or “in,” or “with, righteousness.” The meaning is, that they shall be excellently righteous, or abound in righteousness, as it were propagating or spreading of it unto others; as it argues a fountain to be full of water when it overflows. The verb, *inundabit*, in the Latin translations, is used transitively; only Pareus, in his reddition of the words, giveth it its native intransitive construction. It seems to be meant rather of that state and condition wherein this remnant or concise consummation should be found of God, when he should so graciously preserve them, as we have heard, from perishing in the common calamity of their nation, than to be a prediction of their righteousness afterwards. This sense, 1. Better accordeth with the Apostle’s saying, that “He,” God, “shall cut it short in righteousness,” meaning, that he would be very district in the business, and preserve no more, how few soever these should be, than those in whose preservation he should be found to be a righteous, holy, and just God: And, 2. It much better accommodates his causal particle, *γαρ*, *for*, in the beginning of the verse, which, as was hinted, importeth a reason given in this verse of what was said in the former. There it was said, that “though the number of the children of Israel should be as the sand, yet a remnant should be saved.” Now why only so few of such a vast multitude should be saved, our Apostle, according to the sense given of the clause in question, gives this reason, namely, because God intended to consult the honour of his justice or righteousness in the busi-



ness, and to preserve no more, how few soever they should prove to be, than only those whose Preserver and Protector he might be known to be without any disparagement to his holiness. Now concerning those who should be excellently righteous, it could be no blemish to the holiness or righteousness of God to be looked upon as their Saviour and Protector.

“Because Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, will make a concise consummation,” or consumption, “in this whole land.” The Prophet, in these words, seems to give the reason why he had said that a “remnant” only of the vast numbers of “the house of Israel” should “return;” that is, as our Apostle interprets, “be saved;” as also why he had said that this remnant, which he terms the precise or determined consummation, as we have heard, should overflow righteousness. The substance of the reason which he gives of both is to this effect; namely, that God, being the Lord of Hosts, and in this respect able to subdue under him, punish and destroy as he pleaseth, the greatest numbers of men whatsoever, is resolved to make very district and thorough work amongst the people, throughout their whole land, and to show the favour of exemption from public calamity unto none, but unto such only whom he shall, in the day of his visitation, find like unto Noah in his generation, very just and upright. The reason of which great severity may well be conceived to be that briefly hinted by himself: “You only have I known,” that is, owned for a peculiar people unto me, and given countenance from heaven, “of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” (Amos iii. 2.) But this by the way. Our Apostle, it is probable, in his citation of that clause of the Prophet now before us, mentioneth God only by the relation or name of *Κυριος*, *Lord*, not, as the Prophet, “Lord of Hosts,” because that which he hath occasion to show or prove concerning him, namely, the rejection of the greatest part of the Jews for their unbelief, requireth not so much the greatness of his executive power, as a power of right to dispose of his creatures, men, according to such rules as himself pleaseth, which power, or right of dominion, is better expressed by the simple term or name, “Lord,” than by “Lord of Hosts.”

But all this while the question is, how that which the Prophet Isaiah spake or prophesied of, as to be fulfilled in his days, or soon after, can serve our Apostle to prove that which he saith

would come to pass in his days, or not long after, namely, that the main body, or far greatest part, of the nation of the Jews would be abandoned and rejected by God from being any longer a people unto him. Calvin\* takes knowledge of such a question as this offering itself in this place, acknowledging the words of the Prophet cited by Paul related, in their letter, only to his own times, and things to be fulfilled then; and teacheth, in effect, that they accommodate the Apostle's scope and purpose, now mentioned, only by the way of analogy and proportion thus: It need seem no new or strange thing to the Jews to hear that the generality, or far greater part, of them should be, for their sin and stubbornness, rejected by God, inasmuch as it appears, by several testimonies from one of their own greatest Prophets, that God had, upon the like occasion, formerly proceeded after the same manner against them in their forefathers. From whom, notwithstanding, they derive all the prerogative they can pretend unto, either for being the people of God, or of immunity from punishment above other nations. Grotius agrees in judgment with Calvin upon the premises, only dissenting from him touching the literal sense of the passages here cited from Isaiah; Calvin understanding them of the Babylonish captivity, and the great depopulation of the Jewish nation thereby; the other, of the devastations made of this people somewhat before by Sennacherib,† as we lately hinted. Musculus,

\* *Nam etsi Propheta, postquam descripsit populi vastitatem, ne putarent fideles extinctum prorsus esse Dei fœdus, spem aliquam gratia facit residuam, restringit tamen eam ad paucos. Sed quia ille de suo tempore vaticinatus erat Propheta, videndum quomodo ad institutum suum Paulus accommodet. Sic autem debet; quum Dominus vellet e captivitate Babylonica populum suum liberare, ex immensa illa multitudine, ad paucissimos modo liberationis suæ beneficium pervenire voluit, qui excidii reliquiae merito dici possent, præ numero illo populo, quem in exilio perire sinebat. Jam restitutio illa carnalis, veram ecclesie Dei restorationem figuravit, quæ in Christo peragitur, imo ejus duntaxat fuerat exordium. Quod ergo tunc accidit, multo certius nunc adimpleri convenit, in ipso liberationis progressu et complemento.*—CALVIN *ad Rom. ix. 27.* *Aliud ex primo capite testimonium affert ubi vastitatem Israelis, pro suo tempore Propheta deplorat. Id autem si semel factum fuit, non est novum exemplum. Nihil enim prerogativæ habet Israel, nisi a parentibus, qui tamen eum in modum tractati fuerant, ut Propheta conqueratur sic afflictos fuisse, ut parum abfuerint ab excidio Sodomæ et Gomorrhæ.—Idem in v. 29.*

† *Ingentem vastitatem terræ Judææ, quæ per excellentiam γη sive οικουμένη intulerat Sennacheribus. Pauci, qui Hierosolyma se recepere, relictis tanquam ex clade superstitibus, &c. Paulo post; quod tunc fecerat Deus, non mirum si rursus faciat et de multis paucos ad veram salutem perducatur, quos, quibusque de causis, ipsi visum,—*HUG. GROTIUS *ad Rom. ix. 27, 28.*

likewise, supposeth the Babylonish captivity to have been a type of that great and sad rejection of the Jewish nation, and this to have been predicted thereby.\* So that expositors more generally agree in this, that that most grievous rejection of the Jewish nation, which the Apostle had insinuated in the beginning of this chapter, the improbability, or rather pretended impossibility, whereof the Jews urged as a great argument against his doctrine of justification by faith, was not *κατα το ρητον*, literally, expressly, or directly prophesied or foretold by Isaiah in those passages of his prophecy here insisted on, but only that which typically, and by way of similitude, presaged and presignified this rejection, and is no otherwise intended or applied by him. Only Estius conceives that though the said passages were meant literally of the small remnant that should remain and be gathered together upon and after the captivity, yet that allegorical, typical, and sublime sense wherein the Apostle citeth them was more principally intended by the Holy Ghost than the other. The testimony following (verse 29) is of the same import with that now opened, being, I conceive, added unto the former only for a further hammering of the same nail; I mean, for a more thorough and effectual inculcation of the same thing into the Jews, the probability, or certainty rather, of their rejection by God, for their rejection of his Gospel, and unbelief, in case they persist and persevere herein.

Verse 29. *And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha*—“And as Esaias said before;” that is, and it shall or is like to come to pass, according to what the same Prophet had in type pre-declared in the preceding part of his prophecy, namely, chap. i. 10, or, more simply, prophesied of; namely, that “except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed,” &c.; *προειρηκε, hath said*; for *had said*, the preterperfect tense for the preter-pluperfect is Hebrew-wise.†

Whether this testimony relates to the same time or exigency

\* *Tollit autem in his duobus locis alterum scandalum de paucitate eorum qui ex Judæis Christo crediderunt, docens, sive typum respicias, qui in captivitate Babylonica præcessit, sive rem ipsam prophetice prædictam, ita dispositum esse a Domino, ut multi sint vocati, pauci electi.*—MUSCULUS ad Rom. ix. 27—29.

† *Præteritum perfectum hic est pro plusquam perfecto, more Hebræo; vult enim dicere, sicut in prioribus, id est, capite primo, dixerat idem Esaias.*—GROT. in loc.

of the Jewish affairs with the former, and so whether it be to be conceived as a prediction of what was future when the Prophet uttered it, in which notion the verbs in it are rather to be construed in the future tense,\* or as a relation and reminding of somewhat that had been done formerly, are the discussions of expositors upon the place. But inasmuch as the difference between opinion and opinion, in either of the particulars mentioned, nothing concerns our Apostle in his present business, nor, indeed, is otherwise much edifying, I shall supersede the examination of the said questions in this place, recommending the reader desirous of satisfaction in them unto the learned commentaries of Musculus upon the place in Isaiah. The service which the Apostle requires at the hand of the said testimony is only this, as hath been already touched,—to give his countrymen the Jews to understand that it ought not to seem any strange or new thing unto them, much less any thing impossible, or repugnant to any promise or word of God, that they should, by hundreds, and thousands, and millions, yea, the whole nation of them, a small remnant only excepted, so far incur the displeasure of God by disobedience, stubbornness, and unbelief, as to be abandoned and destroyed by him; inasmuch as this had been the condition and case of their nation formerly, and this over and over, by the redoubled testimony of one of the greatest of their own Prophets. Notwithstanding, let us subjoin some brief exposition of the words:—

*The Lord of Sabaoth*—The Hebrew, יהוה צבאות, signifieth, according to some, *the God of angels*, or, *of the stars*; according to others, *the God or Lord of Hosts*. † God is styled the God of angels, either for his special grace and favour to the angels, in which respect he is called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and sometimes the God of his people; or else, to express his majestic greatness, as being environed and attended with innumerable angels, who themselves, though creatures, are yet excellently glorious, and of incredible strength and power, “beholding his face continually,” as our Saviour speaks, and in this posture attentively awaiting all significations of his pleasure unto them, respectively, for employment. And because he that hath the absolute command

\* *Vide* MUSCULUM in *Isaiam* i. 10.

† Of the divers significations of the Hebrew אֲבִיר, see the same Grotius on Matt. xxiv. 29.

of all the angels must needs, upon this account, be conceived to have the like command over all creatures besides, even of those that are of greatest strength and most formidable, he may, probably, be styled “the Lord of Hosts.” In the period before us he seems to be mentioned by this name, “the Lord of Hosts,” to show that it was not for want of strength, or power, or of instruments, to have done the execution, that the whole number of us, or of our nation, that we were not all from the first to the last swept away with that flood of destruction which covered, in a manner, the whole face of the land, and overwhelmed the far greater part of us, but for his truth and promise’ sake, having long before engaged himself unto Abraham, to be a God unto him and his seed; that is, to such of his posterity who should walk in the steps of his righteousness and faith. Or else, the said appellation, “the Lord of Hosts,” is here used to insinuate that had not God, as well by the interposure of his mighty power as of his grace or faithfulness, rescued the said remnant or seed from the rage and revengeful hand of their enemies, when this was lifted up on high to destroy and make desolate, they had most certainly perished with the rest. (See Psalm cxxiv. 1—5.)

*Had left us a seed*—Or, “left us seed.” Isaiah hath it, “a remnant.” He compares the small remnant which God reserved from perishing in the great desolation of the Jewish nation unto seed: 1. In respect of the smallness of their proportion, compared with the vast numbers of their fellows who perished; as the seed which the husbandman reserves out of his crop for another sowing of his land is but a little quantity in respect of the product or increase of his whole harvest. 2. In respect of that fruitfulness and great increase which this small remnant, through the abundant blessing of God, and according to his promise in this behalf, was to produce, after the ruin and destruction of all the rest. (See Jer. xiii. 14, 16.) Seed, we know, useth to be separated and spared for the propagation of a new harvest. 3. And lastly: In respect of that goodness and uprightness of heart, wherein they were more excellent than all their neighbours, who were consumed by death; even as the best and soundest of the grain which the harvest affords is wont to be picked out, and laid by for seed. Now, whereas the leaving of this seed is ascribed unto God, “Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed,” &c., it implieth one of these two things;

either, 1. That the wrath and fury of the enemy were so implacably high against the Jews, that, had not the Lord of Hosts himself opposed them in their way with his irresistible power, they had made an utter desolation of this people, and left them neither rush nor branch remaining; or else, 2. It implicth that the true reason why that remnant or seed which now escaped was reserved or preserved by God was, not the merit of their righteousness, as if God should have done unjustly, in case he had not preserved them, but his mere grace or his merely-gracious respects unto that weak and imperfect righteousness that was found in them. God, in strictness of speaking, is the Author only of what he doeth of grace or favour, not of what he doeth according to the exigency either of merit or demerit, either in men or angels. But of these two I incline rather to the latter, as being of nearest affinity with the Apostle's scope and argument in hand; which is, in effect, to prove and show that his grace, not men or their works, are the authors of justification and salvation upon it.

*We had been, or been made, or become, as Sodoma, and made like unto Gomorrha*—Meaning, that they, their race and nation, had been utterly extinct and consumed from off the face of the earth, as these two cities, with all their inhabitants and respective families, had been. The Prophet, it is probable, rather chose to express that *παραλεθρία*, or *total ruin*, between which and the Jewish nation there was but so short a step as we have heard, by the mention of these two places, Sodoma and Gomorrha, than in plain and direct terms, to smite the souls and consciences of the Jews, to whom he prophesied, so much the more effectually to awaken them into some such thoughts and apprehensions as these, that their sins were growing on apace to the like degree of provocation with the sins of these cities, and that it would be their wisdom to take heed by their example of coming under the dint of the like fiery indignation of God by rebelling against him as they did. The Holy Ghost, in his threatenings and admonitory applications unto men to desist from sinning, very frequently remindeth them of what God hath done formerly in a way of punishment or taking vengeance upon others, whether persons or nations; this being a method or course much more piercing and convincing than to deal with the consciences of men by simple and direct threatenings. For as men are more like to do what and as they have

been accustomed to do, especially when they shall also say and threaten that they will do so, than what they barely say or threaten they will do; so, when God shall not only or simply threaten sinners, but together herewith remember them with what severity he hath been wont from time to time to handle such persons as they, executing the same or like judgments upon them, this must needs be like the piercings of a sword to a hard heart, and awake the secure conscience most effectually. "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." (Jer. vii. 12, 14. See also Jer. xxvi. 6, 9; xlv. 30; Num. xvi. 40; Zech. i. 6; Amos vi. 1, 2; 1 Cor. x. 5—7, &c.; Heb. iii. 15, 16, &c.; Jude 5, 6, &c.; to omit many others.) But this by the way.

Sodom and Gomorrah are both mentioned, probably, to show that God spareth not one place or people more than another, when they are in the same condemnation, and under the like guilt of sin. Besides, the naming of a plurality of cities, whose inhabitants respectively have been destroyed by God, with the same severe destruction, for sin, representeth the like destruction as so much the more likely to be inflicted upon any other people that should sin after the same manner or degree. Moreover, a double parallel of the misery which a people was in imminent danger to have suffered, the more emphatically commends that interposure, whether of mercy or of power, or of both, by which it was prevented. That phrase, *Και ως Γομορραν ωμοιωθημεν*, *And should have been likened as Gomorrah*, signifieth, We should have been in all ages mentioned upon all occasions for a people exemplarily destroyed, rush and branch, by God, as Gomorrah now is. The Greek translators use the like expression elsewhere: *Ωμοιωθη ο λαος μου, ως ουκ εχων γνωσιν*, that is, *My people is become like, or, hath been likened, as not having knowledge*, (Hosea iv. 6,) that is, to a people which hath not knowledge; for which the Hebrew hath, "as they who judge the Priest," or, contend with the Priest. So, likewise, Ezek. xxxii. 2: *Λεοντι εθνων ωμοιωθης συ, και ως δρακων*.

Let us only now, as formerly we have done, draw out some

brief observations from the verses last opened, before we make further progress in our exposition.

1. From these words, “Even us, whom he hath called,” (verse 24,) so related and understood as the preceding exposition hath awarded, this doctrine ariseth,—that those only are vessels of mercy prepared by God unto glory, who, by his calling them, have been prevailed with truly to believe. (Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 21.)

2. From the particle, *και*, *even*, or *also*, in the said clause, *ουο και εκαλεσε*, *whom he hath also called*, so notioned as we were directed in the explication, this may be observed,—that for God to call men unto the blessed estate of justification and salvation upon it, so as to put them into a actual capacity of hearing and making answer accordingly, is an act of a most gracious condescension in him. (James i. 18; Titus iii. 4, 5; Eph. i. 7—9.)

3. From these words, “Not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also,” according to the import assigned unto them, this truth offereth itself to observation,—that sometimes such persons who, in the judgment of men, are most estranged from God, are as well, yea, and as soon, prevailed with in his evangelical call, to answer by faith and repentance, as those who in many respects were much more promising in this kind than they. The Jews looked upon the Gentiles as strangers unto God, as indeed they were, and on themselves as his household. Yet some of these Gentiles, the Apostle here informs them, obeyed the evangelical call of God as well as any of themselves. (1 Cor. vi. 9—11; Eph. ii. 1—5, 12, 13, &c.)

4. From the Apostle’s end and scope, formerly declared, in citing these words, “I will call them my people, which were not my people,” &c., (verse 25,) it is not unworthy observation, that, whatsoever God hath done in the world heretofore in any way of grace, it is very possible that he may do the same or the like again in our days, or at any other time. (Zech. x. 8, 10.)

5. The tenor and import of the said words shineth the light of this doctrine unto us,—that the posterities or after generations may remember themselves, turn unto God, and be owned by him for his people, whose forefathers so far forgot themselves as not to seek after him, or the knowledge of him. (1 Peter ii. 10; Eph. ii. 12, 13.)



6. From these words, "And her BELOVED," meaning, and I will call her beloved, "which was NOT BELOVED," this doctrine issueth,—that that love which God beareth unto men before conversion, and whilst they are yet impenitent and unbelieving, though it be simply and in itself great, yet it is no love in comparison of that affection which he beareth unto them afterwards. (John xiv. 21, 23; xvi. 27; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Luke xv. 20—23, &c.)

7. These words, "There shall they be called the children of the LIVING GOD," (verse 26,) according as they were notioned in the preceding exposition, exhibit this observation unto us,—that such persons who are really and with the whole heart converted unto the true God shall be notably differenced by him from worshippers of idols, and from the children of any other God. (Exod. ix. 3, 4, 6, 7, 25, 26; Heb. xi. 29; Rev. iii. 9.)

8. From the Prophet "Esaias CRYING concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved," (verse 27,) it may be observed, that the greatest vehemency of affection is then especially required in a messenger of God, when the message which he is to deliver from God unto men is of great consequence unto them, and yet very hard or unlikely to be entertained or believed by them. Both these properties or characters are easily discernible in the message now mentioned, put by God into the mouth of his Prophet to be uttered by him in the ears of the people. (Isaiah lviii. 1; Hosea v. 8, 9, &c.; Jonah i. 2.)

9. From the tenor and literal import of the same words or message, namely, that "though the number of the children of Israel were as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant shall be saved," this doctrine faceth the world,—that when God at any time entereth into a district and close judgment with a people or nation, though never so confident, generally, of their own goodness, yet there are very few amongst many that will be found able or meet to stand before him, or to escape the judgment. (Jer. iii. 14, 16; Isaiah xvii. 4—6; Deut. xxviii. 62; 1 Peter iii. 20.)

10. From the typical import of the said words, together with the Apostle's scope in citing them, both specified in their opening, this doctrine showeth itself,—that amongst those many who

are called by the Gospel, and make some kind of profession of it, the number of those that will at last be saved will be but small comparatively. (Matt. vii. 13, 14; x. 26; Luke xii. 23, 24.)

11. These words, "And cut it short in righteousness," (verse 28,) so importing as hath been affirmed, afford us this for observation,—that God, when he intends to take a thorough and full vengeance on a wicked people or nation, commonly spareth or showeth favour to those that are upright and just, if any such be to be found amongst them. (2 Peter ii. 5, 7, 9; Isaiah xvii. 5—7; lxxv. 8—10.)

12. From these words, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed," &c., (verse 29,) this doctrine putteth forth,—that, in public calamities and desolations, if any, though never so small a number escape, it is to be ascribed to the interposure of the grace and power of God to effect it, not to chance, nor yet either to the inability and weakness or to the remissness of the enemy, to have destroyed even these also. (Isaiah xiv. 22, 23, 30; xv. 9; xvii. 6; xxxvii. 31, 32; xli. 3; Jer. xxxix. 16—18; xlv. 27, 28; xxxiii. 8.)

13. From these words, "Had left us a seed," the metaphor so understood as interpreted, these three particulars are observable,—(1.) That a numerous people or nation amongst whom God hath been truly worshipped, and this for a long season, and whom he hath time after time countenanced from heaven with wonderful preservations and deliverances, may, notwithstanding, for their wickedness, be destroyed by him to a very small number remaining. (Deut. xxviii. 61, 62; Isaiah xvii. 4, 5.) (2.) That those few to whom God showeth mercy in public miseries and calamities are, commonly, the best and most righteous in those places where such sad executions are done. (Psalm xxxiii. 18, 19; Jer. iii. 13, 14; Isaiah iii. 8, compared with verse 11; Isaiah iv. 2, 3.) (3.) And lastly: That when God hath severely punished a nation for sin, and wasted the inhabitants to a very few, for the most part he so blesteth the remnant that is left that in time he maketh a great and flourishing nation of them. (Isaiah iv. 4—6; vi. 11—13; xli. 17, 18; Gen. ix. 1; Isaiah xxxvii. 31, 32; Jer. xxxiii. 9, 10, &c.)

Lastly: From these words, "We had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah," it may well be observed, that no city, nation, or people have received any such measure of severity from the hand of God for sin but that any other city or

nation whatsoever under heaven is liable unto the same, yea, and certainly shall receive it upon the like provocations. Dreadful above measure was the overthrow and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; and yet the Jews, and Jerusalem itself, were in danger of having the same line of destruction stretched over them also. (Hosea v. 5, 12; 2 Kings xxiii. 27; Deut. vi. 14, 15.)

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

It is evident from the particle *sv*, *then*, "What shall we say then?" that the Apostle, in verses 30 and 31, intends either to draw up, in brief, the sum and substance of what he had lately argued and proved more at large, or else, which I rather judge, to declare and avouch a certain inference and conclusion from his premises, which he conceived sovereignly necessary for his countrymen the Jews, for whose sake the disputatory part of this Epistle was chiefly undertaken, to take knowledge of and consider, namely, "that the Gentiles," though they "followed not after righteousness," had yet now "attained to righteousness," &c.; "but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." But whether he intends this inference as the consequent merely and simply of those prophetic passages which he immediately before alleged, (verses 25—29,) which seems to be the sense of expositors more generally, or of the main discourse managed in the preceding part of the chapter, from verses 6—30,

whereunto the said passages only serve in a collateral, applicatory, and allusive way, as hath been showed, may be some question; although I suppose the truth in question to be near at hand. For, evident it is by the light given in the unfolding of the passages, that neither of the testimonies cited from Hosea (verses 25, 26) do directly or of themselves prove, no, nor so much as speak of, the conversion of the Gentiles unto God, much less do they prove their justification by faith. Therefore, the said corollary or conclusion concerning the Gentiles obtaining righteousness by faith, and the Jews non-obtaining it, by seeking it as it were by the works of the law, is not any thing that follows from the said testimonies, simply considered; but from the just tenor and import of the premised discourse in this chapter, of which these testimonies are but a part, and this not so intrinsical or essential to it neither, but only mentioned by the Apostle as proper and sufficient by their typical import to prevent or answer such an objection which he knew the Jews were ready to make against that doctrine which he had now built up, as we showed more particularly in our exposition of the said testimonies respectively.

If it be demanded, “How, or by the mediation of what principle in reason, doth it follow, from the main body of the discourse carried along this chapter, that either the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, yet attained unto righteousness; or, that the Jews, following after the law of righteousness, did not attain thereunto?” I answer, that both these consecutaries clearly and directly follow from the Apostle’s doctrine of justification by faith, only by the mediation of these two suppositions, both plainly asserted by him in the words before us: 1. That the Gentiles did believe. From hence it follows, that if righteousness or justification be by faith, then they, the Gentiles, believing, must needs be justified, or, which is the same, attain righteousness: 2. That the Jews sought righteousness or justification otherways than by faith, namely, “as by the works of the law.” From hence, likewise, it clearly follows, that if justification be by faith, and by no other means attainable, then the Jews, seeking it otherwise than by faith, namely, “by the works of the law,” must needs miscarry and never come to be justified. And the truth is, that the double consecutary we speak of, and which the Apostle delivers, verses 30, 31, cannot in either branch of it be conceived to be the result or

consequence of any other premises or doctrine whatsoever, but only of justification by faith; least of all can it be imagined to be the sequel of any such doctrine or discourse wherein a reprobation of men under a personal consideration from eternity should be asserted, it being altogether irrelative hereunto. So that here again we have another impregnable argument to evince and prove that the Apostle's theme or subject-matter, discoursed all along in the precedure of this chapter, was not the doctrine of such either election or reprobation from eternity, whether *divisim* or *conjunctim*, which swims down the stream of the commentations of men upon the chapter, and out of which the generality of Ministers now upon the stage have taken and given it instead of orthodox and wholesome nourishment unto their people; but that great point of contest between him and his Jewish antagonists, wherein he had laboured, from the beginning of the Epistle until now, some few necessary digressions haply excepted, and wherein he labours yet further in the two chapters next following, I mean, the doctrine of justification by faith, and not "by the works of the law." Let us now go on to the explication of the words before us, and so draw to a conclusion.

Verse 30. *What shall we say then?*—This is an interrogative form of words, familiar with this Apostle, to provoke either himself or others, or both, to consider sometimes what may reasonably be objected against, otherwhile what may certainly be deduced or concluded from, things formerly argued and asserted. We met with the same words, verse 14, where we spake somewhat of them.

*That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, &c.*—These words, with those which follow to the end of the next verse, are an answer given by himself to this question or demand, "What shall we say then?" "Then," that is, things being thus, as I have now declared unto you, touching the counsel and purpose of God about the justification of men. What follows from hence? Clearly this, saith he, in effect, amongst other things, namely, "That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have," notwithstanding, "attained unto righteousness," &c. The universe of mankind is frequently in Scripture divided into Jews and Gentiles, (Rom. ii. 9, 10; Acts xxi. 21; Rom. iii. 9; besides other places,) as the Gentiles are subdivided into Grecians and Barbarians, (Rom. i. 14.)

though, possibly, the Greeks numbered the Jews themselves amongst their Barbarians; so that by the Gentiles are meant the rest of the inhabitants of the world, the posterity of Abraham by the line of Jacob only excepted. Yet not all these inhabitants neither, but such of them only who believed. It is usual in the Scriptures to ascribe that to a generality or multitude indefinitely expressed, which, in strictness of speech, belongeth only to some, sometimes only to a few, yea, sometimes only to one of this generality. Thus our Saviour, by those that believe, (Mark xvi. 17,) understandeth only some; yea, probably some few only of this qualification or capacity. "And these signs shall follow THEM THAT BELIEVE: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents," &c. His meaning is not, that all without exception that should believe in him should be workers of miracles, this being contrary to that of our Apostle:—"Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues," &c., (1 Cor. xii. 29, 30,) but that those who should believe in him should have persons amongst them, or of their holy corporation, that should be endued with such miraculous gifts as these. Thus, also, Matthew imputeth that to the THIEVES, indefinitely, that were crucified with Christ, (Matt. xxvii. 44,) which was done only by one of them, as is evident from Luke xxiii. 39, 40. So, likewise, the disciples are said to have had indignation at the woman's pouring out the box of precious ointment upon our Saviour's head, and to have said, "To what purpose is this waste?" (Matt. xxvi. 8; Mark xiv. 4.) Some are said to have indignation at it; yet it appears, from John xii. 4, 5, that it was only Judas Iscariot that was in this condemnation. There are many other instances of like kind in the Scriptures.\*

The Gentiles here spoken of are said, not to have followed after righteousness, the participle of the present tense, *διωκοντα*, being put for the pluperfect tense, *εδιδιωκοντα*, that is, not to have sought after righteousness, or not to have steered a course in order to the obtaining of such a thing. The verb, *διωκειν*, among some other acceptations, signifies, *to seek after* or *prosecute* a thing in the nature of an end or design, as, namely, with diligence, and seriousness of intention. (1 Cor. xiv. 1; Philip. iii. 12, 14;

\* See AINSWORTH on *Num.* xxi. 21.

1 Thess. v. 15 ; 1 Tim. vi. 11 ; to omit many others.) When he saith, “The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness,” he doth not imply that there was none, or that there was never any, of this sort of men that gave themselves to ways and works of righteousness, or that desired and endeavoured to approve themselves unto God, as righteous,—for besides Cornelius, of whom we read, Acts x., we understand, upon very credible terms, from other histories and writings, that there were divers found among the Gentiles that were great professors, and practitioners too, of righteousness,—but his meaning is, that the generality of those who were now known to have believed the Gospel, and so to be justified, were none of those who much minded any righteousness, but “had walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, abominable, and to every good work reprobate.” For in saying that they “followed not after righteousness,” his meaning is, that they lived very wickedly and profanely, and in high contempt of all righteousness ; the phrase being a Hebraism, wherein adverbs of denying signify the contrary unto that to which they are applied ;\* examples whereof we have many. (Rev. xii. 8, 11 ; Heb. x. 38 ; Lev. xix. 7 ; 1 Cor. x. 5 ; Jer. xxii. 30 ; Prov. xxviii. 13, &c.)

The reason why the Apostle here mentioneth the case or condition of the believing Gentiles in this point, that they “followed not after righteousness,” probably is this,—to prevent the Jews that they might not object it unto him, when he should avouch their justification, by believing, and this in opposition to their (the Jews’) sinful and unjustified estates, by means of their unbelief, notwithstanding their willing and running after justification in their way of works. For it hath some colour or face of a thing improbable, that they who never minded or looked after righteousness, but had lived loosely, wickedly, and in abominable idolatries, all their days before, should, on the sudden, and this only by believing in another, be made righteous ; and, on the other hand, they who had zealously, and with all seriousness of intention, always lifted up their hearts unto righteousness, had been diligent observers of a most excel-

\* *Non prevaluit, pro devictus est, figura est, ut dixi, Hebraica, qua adverbia negandi ejus, cui adhibentur, contrarium significant.*—MED. in *Apocad.* xii. 7, 8.

lent law, prescribed unto them by God himself, should, notwithstanding, be rejected as sinners, and condemned. Therefore the Apostle, to show that he was very well aware of this objection against the justification of the Gentiles by faith, and, withal, that he finds nothing in it to incumber his mind or judgment touching the truth and certainty thereof, avoucheth the truth of such their justification, as it were in the very face and presence of this objection.

*Have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith*—Κατελαβεν δικαιοσυνην, that is, *overtook or laid hold on righteousness*; meaning, that when righteousness or justification came to be preached and offered unto them in the name of Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, they soon accepted and received it at the hand of God, upon the terms on which it was offered and held forth unto them, namely, by believing. And, accordingly, the Apostle, specifying and distinguishing that kind of righteousness which they thus unexpectedly obtained, calleth it *the righteousness of faith*, δικαιοσυνην δε την εκ πιστεως. As if he should have said, “When I affirm that the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness, yet attained unto righteousness, I mean not any such righteousness as that which the Jews dream of, or which consists in a strict and perfect observation of the law; living as they had, they were manifestly incapable of any such righteousness; but that righteousness I mean, which, according to the gracious compact and covenant of God established with the world in that behalf, is obtained by faith in Jesus Christ, and consisteth in the pardon and forgiveness of all a man’s sins, as I have formerly showed and proved unto you.” (Rom. iii. 24, 25, &c.; iv. 5, compared with verses 6—8.)

By the way, when he saith that Abraham’s believing God was imputed unto him for righteousness, (Rom. iv. 3,) and that to him who believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness, (verse 5,) he differs only in expression, not in sense or meaning, from himself in this place, where he affirms righteousness to be of or by faith, not faith itself, or so counted by God. For as these two expressions, “Christ is the salvation of the world,” and, “The salvation of the world is of or by Christ,” though they differ in formality of expression, yet, rightly understood, differ not in sense or substance of matter; so neither is there any material,



but verbal, difference only between these two, "Faith is a man's righteousness," and, "A man's righteousness is of or by faith." For when it is said, "Faith is a man's righteousness," it cannot, according to principles of common sense, be looked upon as *propositio formalis*, "a proper" or "formal proposition," there being nothing more apparent than that a man's believing is not the same thing, either in whole or in part, with the forgiveness of his sins; but must needs be conceived to be *propositio causalis*, or *consecutiva*, wherein the effect is predicated of the cause, or the consequent of the antecedent; of which kind there are many in the Scriptures.

When the Apostle saith, that "the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, yet attained the righteousness which is of faith," he doth not suppose or imply that that faith by which they attained this righteousness was given unto them by God whilst they slept, or without the exercise of their intellectual abilities, reason, judgment, understanding, &c., or that they were necessitated by him to receive it, and could do none other but believe, or the like; all that can be inferred from the said period in this kind may be reduced to these three particulars: 1. That God graciously overlooked and winked at the times of their former ignorance, and the many abominations which during these times they had committed, and that, these abominations notwithstanding, he vouchsafed the Gospel in the letter and oral ministry of it unto them, together with such dispensations of his Spirit, which ordinarily, at least in these times, did accompany this ministry. 2. That they, falling in and going along with the gracious overtures and motions of the Spirit of God within them in order to their believing, did, through the grace and blessing of God upon their endeavours in this kind, arrive at this fair haven of peace and safety; I mean, did actually believe. In respect of these two, that which is cited by our Apostle, in the next chapter, from the Prophet Isaiah is verified in them: "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." 3. And lastly: That these Gentiles, believing, God kept covenant and mercy with them, and justified them accordingly. But God's being found of those who sought him not, in this sense, is no argument to prové, either, 1. That those who do unfeignedly seek after him are not in a more likely and hopeful way of finding him than those who seek not after him: "If thou seek him,

he will be found of thee." (1 Chron. xxviii. 9. See also Prov. viii. 17.) There is no such promise made to those who shall not seek him. Or, 2. Doth it prove that those who, living under the sound of the Gospel and ministry thereof, shall, from time to time, neglect the grace and great salvation offered by God therein, are not further off from finding him, or in a worse and more disadvantageous posture for believing, every day than other; although, it is true, a man can be under no such disadvantage through any neglect whatsoever, but which, by a proportionable care and diligence, may very possibly at any time be redeemed. Or, 3. And lastly: Doth it prove that God is or will be found savingly by any person whatsoever at any time, but only then or at such times when his mind, heart, and soul are seriously engaged and intent about and upon those means whereby and wherein he is to be found, and which he vouchsafeth unto them for such a purpose. Nor do the words, "I was found of men that sought me not," at all import any saving discovery or manifestation of God unto those who, at that time, when he was thus discovered unto them, did not seek him, or at least carefully attend to those means by which he was thus discovered unto them; but only unto those who had not, in all the foregoing part of their lives, sought after him.

Verse 31. *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness*—Israel is that honorary name which was imposed by God himself upon that famous Patriarch and progenitor of the Jewish nation, otherwise known by the name of Jacob. The signification of this name, in part, together with the occasion of the imposition of it, are declared, Gen. xxxii. 28; xxxv. 10. Sometimes the whole and entire posterity of this person is signified by this name Israel. The signification of it is frequent and obvious in the Scriptures. Sometimes, again, it signifies, not the universality, but only the generality, or main body, of that people, who were and are his posterity, as distinguished from those amongst them who were righteous and just, and true worshippers of God. In this sense the Prophet David useth it: "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me." And again: "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" (Psalm lxxxi. 11, 13.) This is the signification of it in the place before us. Sometimes it signifies, not this generality

neither, but only some considerable number or part of it. Thus Moses useth it: "And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor." (Num. xxv. 3.) Sometimes it signifieth the ten tribes, which rent themselves from the house of David, in opposition to the other two tribes, which are oft expressed by the name Judah. Thus the Prophet Hosea useth it: "Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend." (Hosea iv. 15.) And lastly, in a more emphatical and strict sense, it signifies only that part of this posterity or people who resemble their father Israel in faith and holiness. Thus our Apostle useth it in this chapter: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (Verse 6.) Yet in this place, and probably elsewhere, it may, I confess, signify those who resemble Israel the Patriarch in his faith and holiness, whether according to the flesh they be descended from him, or no. (See Gal. vi. 16; John i. 47.)

Now the unbelieving party of Israel, or of the Jews, are here said to have "followed after the law of righteousness." Calvin, with whom Estius also herein accords, conceives the Apostle speaking by the figure hypallage in these words, "the law of righteousness," and that he means the righteousness of the law; but in the latter clause, by "the law of righteousness," he understands the norm or rule of righteousness. But this is altogether improbable; because the Apostle assigns this for the reason why Israel attained not this law, namely, that "they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." Now to seek to attain the rule of righteousness, which is nothing else but the law, "by the works," that is, by doing the works, "of the law," is so far from being a reason why men should not attain unto this rule or law, that there is no other way or possibility to attain unto it, but by these works only. Some expositors, by "the law of righteousness," understand simply righteousness itself; as they suppose this Apostle, by an Hebraism, elsewhere by "the law of sin," (Rom. vii. 23, 24,) meaning sin itself; and so by "the law of the mind," (Rom. vii. 23,) the mind itself; and again, by "the law of the Spirit of life," (Rom. viii. 2,) the life of the Spirit, &c. But it is very improbable that by the "law of sin," he should understand only sin, barely and simply considered; and not rather some property or adjunct of sin, answerable in some respect unto a law, as expositors upon the place more generally resent and explain. There is the same reason of those other expressions, "the law

of the mind," and, "the law of the Spirit of life." And, to the place in hand, if by "the," or a, "law of righteousness," nothing should be meant but righteousness simply, there can no good reason be given why the Apostle, speaking of the Gentiles, should only say, that they "followed not after righteousness," and again, "attained not unto righteousness;" but, speaking of the Jews, should enlarge his expression, and say, not simply that "they followed after righteousness," but, "they followed after the law of righteousness;" and again, "they attained not unto the law of righteousness." Therefore, some others, with more probability, by "the law of righteousness" here understand, "the way of righteousness," that is, the way or method of such a righteousness, which they conceived would please God.\* I conceive, that by "the law of righteousness," which the Jews are here said to follow, the Apostle meaneth some law, rule, or terms, upon the observation whereof God hath suspended the justification of men; and to the observation whereof he hath annexed the same by covenant or promise. The Jews, 1. Conceived in general, and herein they were not mistaken, that God had appointed some law or rule for the justification of the world, without the observation whereof by men he was resolved not to justify any. 2. They apprehended, and this with confidence, in particular, that that law or rule which he had appointed in this kind, and without the observation whereof he was purposed to justify no man, was that law, or body of precepts, which God delivered unto Moses on Mount Sinai, as appropriate unto them and their nation, and those that should proselyte-wise incorporate with them, to observe. This "law," saith the Apostle, they "followed after," that is, endeavoured to observe and keep, as, or as if it had been, "the law of righteousness," according unto which God intended to justify men. But by occasion of this dangerous and sad mistake, as he saith, in effect, in the verse following, "they attained not unto the law of righteousness," that is, they never came to understand, and so were in no capacity to observe, the TRUE "LAW of righteousness," indeed, which our Apostle elsewhere calleth "the law of faith." (Rom. iii. 27.) The original, *οὐκ ἐφθάσε*, translated *attained not*, properly signifieth, *prevented not*, or *came not before*. So that his meaning may be, that

\* *Νομος* hic viam significat. *Judæi quærebant via justitiæ ejus, quæ Deo placeret, sed frustra plerique.*—HUG. GROT. in loc.

though the Jews contended, might and main, about the observation of such a law which they imagined to be the law established by God for the justification of men; whereas the Gentiles neither minded this, nor any other, in order to the obtaining such a privilege or blessing as justification is; yet they (the Jews) came no whit nearer or sooner to the true law of justification than the Gentiles. Or if we here construe the negative, *οὐκ*, by the rule lately delivered, the Apostle's meaning, in saying that the Jews, *οὐκ ἐφθάσαν*, did not prevent the Gentiles in their attaining or coming to the law of justification, must be this, that they came far behind them in this race; or that whilst the Gentiles, submitting to the law of righteousness appointed by God, came to be justified, they remained in the guilt of their sins, and under a sentence of condemnation. Some interpret this clause, "attained not unto the law of righteousness," as if the meaning were, that the Jews did not attain unto the righteousness of that very law which they followed after, that is, of the Mosaical law, falling many ways short in their observations of it. But the reason given in the verse following, of their non-attainment in this kind, riseth up against such an interpretation; for their non-seeking of righteousness by faith can be no reason why they did not perfectly observe or fulfil the law of Moses.

By the way, the reason why the Apostle here mentioneth the Jews their following after a law of righteousness, seemeth to be, that he might anticipate them in this pretence, and declare that their zealous willing and running for justification in such a way, which God never appointed for their justification, was so far from furthering them in the great business of justification, that it set them at a far greater distance from it. But because the Jews might probably think this a strange or hard saying, that, following so hard as they did after the law of righteousness, they should be never the nearer to it, but rather the further off, the Apostle gives them an account of such his saying in the words following:—

Verse 32. *Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone—Διατι, wherefore?* As if he had said, "Doth any man ask, 'Wherefore or how cometh it to pass, that the Jews, who followed after the law of righteousness, should, notwithstanding, be as far, or further, off, as the Gentiles, from

*attaining unto the law of righteousness?* I will tell you," saith he; "the clear reason hereof is this; namely, 'because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law,' &c. These words, "they sought it," meaning righteousness or justification, are not in the original, but left to be understood and supplied from the former verse; and are necessarily inserted by our translators, to make the sense more obvious and plain. The former clause, "because they sought it not by faith," borrowing the particule  $\omega\varsigma$ , *as*, from the latter, may be read thus: "Because they sought it not *as* by faith;" that is, as if it were by faith. Such borrowing and lending of words as this between neighbour sentences is frequent in the Scriptures. The reason why the Jews "attained not the law of righteousness," or justification, which yet "they followed after," though in a mistake, is said to be, 1. In the negative, "Because they sought it not by faith," or, because they followed not after this law by the way of faith; they thought believing in Jesus Christ would never bring them to it. 2. In the affirmative, because they sought it, or followed after it, as it were "by the works of the law," or,  $\omega\varsigma$ , "*as* by the works of the law;" that is, as if it had been to be attained by the works of the law. The particles,  $\omega\varsigma$ , and  $\omega\sigma\epsilon\iota$ , are frequently used in such a construction. (Mark xiv. 48; John xv. 6; Rom. iii. 7; and in other places.) Or the Apostle may thus speak, they sought it "as it were" by the works of the law," either in an oblique manner, to tax the confidence of the Jews, who looked upon their works as if they had been the works of the law, whenas some of them were the works of the devil, (John viii. 41, 44,) and few or none of them, in truth and strictness of construction, the works of the law; or else, to discover their error unto them, who supposed that such a righteousness which should or would render a person accepted with God unto salvation, was to be attained by such an observation of the law, as either themselves, or any other person of mankind, were in a capacity to perform; whereas such a supposal is an untruth, inasmuch as the best and holiest men's endeavoured observations of the law are but "as it were" the works of the law; that is, things or works somewhat like, or of some affinity with, the works of the law, but not strictly and completely these works indeed. In which respect he frequently elsewhere denieth all possibility of justification in the sight of God by the law, or the works thereof. The reason why the Jews pursued not the law

of righteousness by the way of faith, but by the works of the law, or, rather, by works somewhat like to those required by the law, is rendered in the following clause:—

*For they stumbled at that stumblingstone*—In the original it is, τῷ λίθῳ τῆ προσκομιματος, *at the stone of the stumbling*. For if we make either of the articles emphatical, there is no reason, I conceive, why not the other also. If we make them both emphatical, (which I judge to be their native construction here, respectively,) the former must be understood to insinuate or point at the signality or remarkableness of the stone here spoken of; the latter, at the like extraordinary remarkableness of the stumbling here intended likewise; like unto which, for matter of danger, and sadness of consequence, there is no stumbling besides whatsoever unto which men are obnoxious. The stone at which the Jews are here said to have stumbled, as appears both by what went before, as also by what immediately followeth, signifieth Christ, who is elsewhere called “a chief corner-stone, elect, precious;” (1 Peter ii. 6;) the import or effect of which honourable epithets or appellations is asserted unto him in the said verse, immediately following, in these words: “And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed,” or confounded. So that he may well be termed, ὁ λίθος, *THE stone*, κατ’ ἐξοχην, or, *that stone*, no property whatsoever of a stone being ever vested in any subject whatsoever of a like transcendent worth and excellency.

Again: As the stone here spoken of is the most signally and wonderfully excellent amongst all stones, so is the stumbling here specified the most signally dangerous and dreadful amongst all stumblings. Of this, both stumbling and stone, this Stone itself speaketh: “And whosoever shall fall,” that is, shall so stumble at or on, “this stone as to fall on it,” συνθλασθησεται, “*shall be broken*,” or, *shattered and dashed in pieces*; (Matt. xxi. 44;) meaning, that whosoever shall take any such offence at Christ or his doctrine, as neither first nor last to believe in him, and profess him in the world, shall be utterly undone hereby, and never find help or healing for his wound. “But on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder;” that is, yet his case shall be much more miserable than the others, who, having once believed on Christ, and professed his name, so, as it were, coming under him, and his grace and power, shall, notwithstanding, apostatize from him, and turn head against him afterwards. Of the same,

both stone and stumbling, likewise, in type, the Prophet Isaiah had spoken long before: "And he shall be for a sanctuary;" meaning, unto those who shall betake themselves for refuge unto him; "but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." (Isaiah viii. 14, 15.) The meaning is, that many of the ten tribes, and many of the two tribes also, not being aware of, or not minding, the truth and faithfulness of God in his word, as well in his threatenings sent by his Prophets unto them, as in his promises, would suffer hereby very grievously, some in one kind, some in another; some to a lesser, some to a greater, degree.

By the opportunity of the happy interview of the scriptures, now met together in our present discourse, to give some check to that daring and devouring error which blasphemously lifteth up itself against Him whom our Apostle, as we heard towards the beginning of this chapter, styleth, "God blessed for ever," insultingly, and, as it were, to his face, telling the Lord Jesus Christ that he is not God. In the passage now cited from the prophecy of Isaiah, He that is termed "the stumbling-stone and rock of offence," &c., is expressly said to be, "the Lord of Hosts HIMSELF;" (Isaiah viii. 13, compared with verse 15;) whereas, in the scripture before us, this "stumbling-stone and rock of offence" is as plainly signified to be Christ: "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence," &c. Evident it is, that He who layeth the stumbling-stone, here spoken of, in Sion, is not the same, I mean, personally the same, with the stumbling-stone itself laid by him. Therefore, 1. If the stone itself laid in Sion be the Lord of Hosts, then he that layeth it must of necessity be conceived to be the Lord of Hosts also; unless we shall say that the Lord of Hosts may be laid, or disposed of, by a creature, or one inferior to himself. If, then, both the layer of this stone, and the stone itself laid, be the Lord of Hosts, and yet are not, cannot be, personally the same, it undeniably follows, that there is a plurality of persons subsisting in the same divine essence, and interested herein. There is no evading this argument or consequence, but by denying the sun to be up at noon-day; I mean, by denying the supreme Being, which we call God, to be signified



by, "the Lord of Hosts;" a denial which the Scripture in twenty places, and in ten, laughs to scorn. 2. If Christ be this stumbling-stone, as Paul supposeth, and the Lord of Hosts this stumbling-stone also, as the Prophet Isaiah affirmeth, it roundly follows, either that Christ is the Lord of Hosts, that is, really, properly, and truly God, or, that this stumbling-stone is not one, but two stones; which yet is contrary to our Apostle's supposition in these words: "AS IT IS WRITTEN, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone," &c., which implicth, that that stumbling-stone which he speaks of was the same with that of which the Prophet wrote long before. But this only by the way.

The reason why the Jews followed not after the law of righteousness by the way of faith or believing, which would have led them thereunto, the Apostle declares to be their stumbling at that stumbling-stone: "For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone;" meaning, that they disliked, hated, were offended at, and rejected, Jesus Christ; being, indeed, such a person, who, by reason of his deep poverty and humiliation in the days of his flesh, and especially by his suffering the most ignominious death of the cross, may very possibly be rejected, and not be believed on as the great Saviour sent from God unto the world, by earthly-minded men, and such who are either less intelligent, or less considerate of the nature, counsels, and ways of God, as far the greater part of men in the world are. The reason, properly, why any man stumbleth at a stone, stick, or the like, in his way, is not so much or so frequently want of light sufficient to discover unto him the stone, block, or stick in the way, at which he stumbleth, as the want of consideration, and sufficient taking heed lest he should or doth stumble at any such thing. The occasion of a man's stumbling is, partly, the *offendiculum* itself, in respect of the nature or quality of it; that is, the thing at or against which he stumbleth; partly, also, the situation or lying of this thing in such or such a place; as, namely, 1. Below, or on the earth; 2. In that part of the earth where a man's way lieth. So, then, the reason why the Jews stumbled at Christ, (and there is the same reason why any others stumble at him,) was only their own voluntary and very vincible ignorance of him, together with such evil principles and dispositions in them, all voluntary also, as were the causes of this ignorance; as, namely, pride, covetousness, earthly-mindedness, self-conceited-

ness, estrangement from God, &c. They stumbled at him because they saw him not, were not aware of him : They saw him not, because they had no mind or will to see him : They had no will to see him, because their wills were inordinately engaged and taken up with other things. Their wills were thus inordinately engaged, because they did not stir up, improve, and employ, the implanted light of their souls, to understand and consider the emptiness and insufficiency of those things, with the inordinate love whereof they suffered their wills to be thus engaged. The occasion of their stumbling at Christ was, partly, his low situation, position, or condition here on earth ; partly, his being in this low condition before them, and in their way. “ He hath no form nor comeliness,” saith the Prophet Isaiah, personating his countrymen the Jews ; “ and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected by men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” (Isaiah liii. 2, 3.) To the same purpose the Evangelist Luke presenteth his Eunuch, reading chap. liii. 8, of the same Prophet, in these words : “ In,” or by, “ his humiliation,” or, if we make the article emphatical, *ΕΝ ΤΗ ΤΑΠΕΙΝΩΣΕΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ*, in *THAT* his humiliation, meaning, that great, that strange, that incredible humiliation, wherein he appeared in the days of his flesh, “ his judgment was taken away ;” (Acts viii. 33;) that is, that honourable esteem which was due unto him was denied unto him ; by means of that dark and thick covering of a poor and despicable condition in the world, spread over the face of his majesty, men were hindered from judging righteous judgment concerning him, and from acknowledging him to be the great Messiah, the only-begotten Son of God, and Saviour of the world. In a like sense of the phrase of taking away a man’s judgment, Job complaineth that God had taken away his judgment ; (Job xxvii. 2;) meaning, that he had so strangely and grievously afflicted him, that men, even his friends, could not, by reason thereof, be prevailed with to judge him an innocent and righteous man, but still arraigned him at the bar of their judgments for an hypocrite. And in Scripture notion, when and whilst God blesseth and prospereth men in the world, he is said to cover their sins, namely, from the view and sight of men ; as, on the contrary, when he punisheth or bringeth any

great evil upon men, he is said to discover their nakedness or sin unto the world. (See Isaiah iii. 17; Jer. xiii. 22, 26; Lam. iv. 22; Ezek. xvi. 37, 57; xxiii. 10; Hosea ii. 10; Nahum iii. 5; Rev. iii. 18, &c.) Now the Jews, it is like, building upon this Scripture notion, and not distinguishing between what God is wont to do in the ordinary and standing course of his providence, and what he judgeth meet to do upon special and particular design, seeing the Lord Christ in a mean garb and poor condition in the world, disparaged and reproached by the great men of his nation, men high in esteem for wisdom, sanctity, and understanding, and at last put to a cruel and shameful death as a notorious malefactor, judged him to be no better than an impostor and deceiver; a man that suffered whatsoever was inflicted on him from the hand of divine justice upon the account of his sins; according to that of Isaiah: "Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; yet we did judge him as plagued, and smitten of God, and humbled;" (Isaiah liii. 4;) meaning, as an evil doer, and for his own transgressions. By all this it appears, that the low position of the stone, at which the Jews are here said to have stumbled, was one special occasion of this their stumbling.

Another occasion of their sad miscarriage in stumbling was, that this stone lay in their way; it was laid or pitched in Sion; that is, amongst and, as it were, in the midst of the Jews. The ordinary and familiar converse of Christ, in his mean garb and habit, with and amongst the Jews, together with that knowledge which they had, or at least supposed they had, of his parentage, kindred, place of birth, and education, was another great occasion of their stumbling at him: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him:" (Matt. xiii. 55, 56:) Implying, it seems, that had they not had such particular knowledge of the said matters relating to him, they had not been so likely to stumble or take offence at him. In another place: "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" (John vi. 41, 42.) And elsewhere: "Howbeit we know this

man whence he is : but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." (John vii. 27.) So that, from several places, it appeareth that the Jews' stumbling at Christ was in part occasioned by his being or lying in their way ; I mean, by his being so near, so well known unto them in matters relating unto his flesh and outward condition, and by his being so frequently and familiarly conversant amongst them.

#### STUMBLING, WHAT.

IF it be demanded, " But whether may such Greeks or Gentiles who believed not in Christ any whit more than the generality of the Jews be said to have stumbled at Christ as they, the Jews, did ; especially, considering that the Scripture oft speaketh of the Jews stumbling at Christ, but nowhere useth the phrase or metaphor about the unbelieving Gentiles ? "

To this I answer, 1. The metaphor or similitude of stumbling properly imports the dashing or striking of the foot against somewhat in a man's way which is resistive and hard, and may well coimport the harm or mischief which a man gets by such a careless uncircumspect action or striking, and which often proves an impediment unto him from making any further progress in his journey. And I conceive that when the Jews are said to have stumbled at Christ, it is to be understood of the worst and sorest kind of stumbling, and particularly of that which is accompanied with such a hurt received by it, or discouragement, which renders a man either unable or unwilling, or both, to hold on his way to his journey's end. For they, cavilling, quarrelling, and contesting against Christ as being none of their Messiah ; and Christ being their Messiah indeed, and so in no capacity to yield or give place to their cavils and contests in this kind ; they, through the just judgment of God in taking away his grace and good Spirit from them upon this great provocation, grew into a most bitter and blasphemous hatred of him, and so were utterly disabled from going along with him in that way of faith and holiness which leadeth unto salvation ; and were occasioned hereby to betake themselves unto such ways for attaining this blessedness, the end whereof was and is, by the just decree and appointment of God, endless misery and destruction. In this sense that of the Apostle Peter is to be understood : " And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient : *whereunto also,*" or *even,* " *they*

were appointed," εἰς ο καὶ ἐτεθῆσαν; (1 Peter ii. 8;) meaning, that they who reject the Gospel through disobedience and unbelief are appointed by God to be destroyed or dashed in pieces by Christ, as a ship is by the rock against which it striketh or dasheth itself. Or, if we construe the simple verb, ἐτεθῆσαν, in the known signification of the compound, διετεθῆσαν, that is, *were disposed*, which is a signification that some of our best lexicographers assign to it,\* and may very well be the signification of it in many other passages of Scripture, (see John x. 11, 15, 17; Acts i. 7; 1 Cor. xii. 18; 2 Cor. v. 19, with many others,) although our English translators have not thought meet so to render it, the sense of the place last mentioned will be, that those to whom Christ is a "stumbling-stone, and rock of offence," and "who stumble at the word," becoming hereby disobedient and unbelieving, are only such who are and were before disposed, in respect of the wicked frame of their hearts, hereunto, namely, to stumble at Christ and at the Gospel, not by God, but either by "the god of this world, or themselves,† or both. The place thus understood, perfectly accordeth with this of our Apostle: "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them" (that is, only to them, the restrictive particle, "only," being frequently understood, as hath been formerly noted) "that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) So, likewise, with that of our Saviour himself, to omit very many places besides of like notion and import: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 44;) implying, that the reason why they believed not his doctrine, or on his person, was that indisposition hereunto which they had contracted and voluntarily continued under, by their ambition and wretched combination to uphold the credit and authority one of another, and this in ways and practices dishonourable

\* *Vide Rob. Constantini Lexicon in verbo τιθεμαι.*

† Verbs of the passive form are oft used in a reciprocal sense, and import the effect specified to be done by the persons themselves who are spoken of or to in such verbs. Thus: Οὐκ υπεταγησαν, *They were not subjected*; that is, they did not subject themselves. (Rom. x. 3.) Υποταγησομεθα, *shall be subjected*; that is, shall subject themselves. (Heb. xii. 9.) So James iv. 10; 1 Peter v. 6: Ταπεινωθητε, *Be ye humbled*; that is, humble yourselves. *Vide HUG. GROT. Acts xiii. 48.*

and displeasing unto God. As for the sense awarded by some unto the place in Peter now before us, which beareth, that those who stumble at Christ and at the word, being disobedient or unbelieving, were hereunto, that is, unto this stumbling, or disobedience, ordained and appointed by God, hath no affinity or correspondency with any other scripture, tolerably understood, but is repugnant to the main stream and current of the Scriptures, which teach us that all stumblings at Christ, and all disobedience to the Gospel, are sins very hateful and provoking in the sight of God. If so, most certain it is, that he neither appoints nor ordains any man, much less any great numbers of men, to or for the perpetration and committing of them. Who ever designed or appointed either men, or other agents whatsoever, to perform or act such things which are most contrary to their minds and desires, and which they prohibit all men, as far as lieth in them, to do? But this by the way. To the question propounded concerning the Gentiles, Whether such of them who reject the Gospel, and Christ tendered therein, may by reason of their unbelief, be said to stumble at Christ as the Jews oft are said to do, I answer,

2. That, according to the import of the metaphor of stumbling, lately opened, all unbelievers, as well Gentiles as Jews, especially to whom Christ, in the letter of the Gospel, hath been brought and offered, may, in sufficient propriety of speech, be said to stumble at him; because, not owning or acknowledging him for a Saviour, they fall foul upon him either with contempt or hatred, and so are taken off and hindered from passing on any further in the way of life and peace. For every man may be said to be in this way whilst he is considering of Christ, and debating with himself whether he should believe in him, or no. But when once he comes to resolve that he will not believe in him, or to neglect or reject him, now he stumbleth at him, and is hereby spiritually maimed and mischieved, and so hindered from making any further progress in his way. Nor is the phrase of stumbling at Christ so appropriated in the Scriptures unto the Jews, but that it is as well applied, or at least left applicable, unto the Gentiles also. Witness the passage in Peter lately insisted on; which, questionless, suits as well the state and condition of the latter as the former. And when our Saviour himself said, “Blessed is he, whosoever, *μη σκανδαλισθη*, shall not be offended in me, (Matt. xi. 6,) that is, “shall not

stumble at me,"\* in that term of universality, "whosoever," he comprehended as well the Gentiles as the Jews. The reason why our Apostle termeth Christ a "stumbling-block to the Jews," not so to the Greeks or Gentiles, but "foolishness," (1 Cor. i. 23,) is not because he was in no respect this latter unto the Jews; for he had a little before said in the general, that the "preaching of the cross," that is, Christ crucified, was "to them that perish foolishness;" so neither because he was in no respect the former, "a stumbling-block," unto the Greeks; but because the Jews having had Christ personally in the flesh amongst them avouching himself, as well by the sinlessness of his life, as by his doctrine and miracles, for their Messiah; yet, being offended at the meanness of his birth, breeding, and condition, all too mean and low by many thousand degrees, as they supposed or pretended, for him that was to be their Messiah, fell heavier upon him with hatred, indignation, and disdain, than the Gentiles generally did; even those, I mean, who refused to believe in him. And in this respect he may in a more signal and particular manner be termed *σκανδαλον*, a *scandal*, *offence*, or *stumbling-block* unto them. They were the nation that first stumbled or were offended at him in all the world; yea, they were more offended, and stumbled at him more forcibly and with greater violence than any other nation. Whereas, for the Grecians or Gentiles, though in a general sense, which hath been declared, they may be said to have stumbled at him likewise, yet his poverty or meanness of condition or suffering death did not occasion their offence or rejection of him, and, consequently, their offence was not so properly a stumbling as that of the Jews. It is like that some of their own wise men and great philosophers, who were in high esteem amongst them, were as mean of parentage and condition in the world as Christ was represented unto them to have been; yea, and possibly suffered very great indignities from unjust and cruel men, as Christ also had done. So that their refusing to believe in Christ did not, probably, proceed from any want of secular greatness, in one kind or other, in him. But that which occasioned their unbelief was, that they who preached him, and salvation by him, did not satisfy or convince them by philosophical arguments or natural demonstrations of the truth and certainty

\* The substantive, *σκανδαλον*, is translated *stumbling-block*, 1 Cor. i. 23; Rom. xi. 9; Rev. ii. 14.

of those things which they affirmed of him. But, to give the Jews to understand that they might very possibly stumble at that stone he speaks of, (the Lord Christ,) he cites a testimony from one of their own greatest Prophets, wherein he is termed a “stumbling-stone,” that is, such a person at whom many would be offended, to their great misery and ruin. The words of the testimony are these:—

Verse 33. *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*—This testimony is framed of two or three several clauses taken out of two or three several passages in Isaiah, and put together, with some little variation of words. The former words of this testimony, “Behold, I lay in Sion,” are verbatim found, Isaiah xxviii. 16; only the word Englished, “I lay,” in the original soundeth, “I will lay foundation-wise,” or, “I will found,” or “firmly lay.” The next, “A stumbling-stone, and rock of offence,” are thus expressed: “For a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence.” (Isaiah viii. 14.) The last words, “And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed, are thus read, a little after the former words, “Behold I lay in Zion:” “He that believeth shall not make haste.” In this third and last clause, there are three particulars, wherein the Apostle relieveth the Old-Testament darkness, with evangelical or New-Testament light. First, he expoundeth the Prophet’s indefinite, “he,” “He that believeth,” by his universal “whosoever,” “Whosoever believeth,” or, *πας ο πιστευων*, *every one believing*. The pronoun “he,” in such constructions as this, is frequently expounded by, “every one that,” “whosoever,” and the like. Thus, “He that believeth on me,” (John vi. 47; Mark xvi. 16; 1 Peter ii. 6; 1 John v. 5, 10, &c.) is interpreted by “Whosoever,” or, “Every one that, believeth.” (John iii. 16; xii. 46; Acts x. 43, &c.) Secondly, whereas the Prophet expresseth himself only thus, “He that believeth,” not specifying either the person or thing to be believed on, our Apostle, in his citation of the words, *Και πας ο πιστευων επ’ αυτω*, *And every one believing ON HIM*, plainly informeth, 1. That it is a person who is to be believed on; \* and, 2. That this person is he that is compared to a “stone of

\* *Αυτω* cannot relate unto *λιθος*, because of *πετρα*, being the feminine gender, coming between; therefore must needs relate unto the person signified by that *λιθος*, or *stone*.



stumbling, and rock of offence." Thus sometimes actions are mentioned, without any mention of their objects; which, notwithstanding, are named elsewhere. Thus our Saviour promiseth that to them "that hear more shall be given," (Mark iv. 24,) not specifying either who or what it is they must hear, in order to such a gracious consideration from God. But both these are sufficiently explained in other scriptures. (Matt. xvii. 5; Luke x. 16; John viii. 47, &c.) Thirdly, and lastly, the Apostle explaineth the Prophet's "will not make haste," or rather, "let him not make haste," by his "shall not be ashamed;" although some learned expositors conceive, that the Hebrew word anciently read in the text in hand was of the same signification with our Apostle's *καταισχυθη*, *shall not, or cannot, be ashamed*. However, the reading now extant in the Prophet, "will not make haste," may readily be reconciled with the Apostle's "shall not be ashamed." The former, in saying, "He that believeth will not make haste," or, "let him not make haste," meaneth, that whosoever shall believe and stay himself on that Stone he speaks of needs not be like unto those who are fearful of a disappointment where they trust, who by reason of their fear in this kind are impatient of all delay, and tormented herewith, until they see the issue; hereby implying that which the latter, our Apostle, plainly affirmeth, namely, that such "shall not be ashamed," or confounded. This for making even reckonings between a great Prophet, and an Apostle greater than he, in the particular before us. Now for the sense and mind of the Apostle in the words:—

*As it is written*—This clause, "as it is written," meaning, in the book of God, or amongst the oracles of God, doth not import the testimony or words following to be, or to contain, a direct probation of what he had last before affirmed, namely, that the Jews stumbled at the stumbling-stone, Christ; but only to show and prove that Christ was a "Stone of stumbling," that is, such a kind of stone, so laid or pitched, so disposed of and contrived by God, that men would be apt to stumble at him, yea, and many would actually stumble at him; and, consequently, that the Jews might very probably stumble at him. The said clause, "as it is written," is frequently in the New Testament used in much a like sense, not importing an express proof of what went before in that which follows, but only some kind of aspect upon, or relation unto, or affinity between, the

one and the other. (See Luke ii. 23 ; iii. 4 ; Acts xiii. 33 ; Rom. iii. 4 ; viii. 36 ; with many others.)

*Behold*—This word, “behold,” in such constructions as this, is like a trumpet sounding from heaven to call the world together from their several quarters, to attend with all their might, and consider what is now ready to be declared unto them. And the truth is, that this trumpet never sounded upon a more solemn and weighty occasion than that before us in the words following:—

*I lay in Sion*—In the Prophet’s language, according to some of his interpreters, the words sound thus, *Fundabo in Sion*, “I will found,” or firmly lay, “in Sion.” Arias Montanus, in his interlineary, translates them thus: *Ecce, ego fundator in Sion lapidis, &c.*, that is, word for word, “Behold, I the founder in Sion of a stone,” &c. ; Junius and Tremellius, in their translation, thus: *Ecce, ego fundamentum posui in Sione lapidem* ; that is, “Behold, I have laid,” or placed, “a foundation in Sion, a stone ;” others, thus: *Ecce, ego fundo in Sione lapidem* ; that is, “Behold, I found,” or lay foundation-wise, “in Sion a stone ;” Jerome, in the last place, thus: *Ecce, ego mittam in fundamentis Sion lapidem, &c.* ; that is, “Behold, I will put,” or cast, “in the foundations of Sion a stone,” &c. The meaning of the words, together with those following in the verse, suffers little or nothing from this variety of translations, being clearly this, or to this effect, namely, that God here promiseth that in due time he would cause such a person to rise up, or to take his being, from and amongst the Jews, who should be like unto a stone, which is of transcendent worth and value, at which, notwithstanding, many would be apt to stumble, by reason of the situation and position of it ; that is, should be invested with an irresistible strength, power, and authority never to be taken away from him, and who should continually act and exercise this power, for the happy making and keeping of all those that shall depend on him, and commit themselves unto him ; and yet, nevertheless, should be so ordered, disposed of, and contrived by him, that wicked persons, careless, and regardless of the mind and counsels of God, may very easily overlook both his excellent worth and power, and so be offended at him, to their own irrecoverable loss and ruin.

*In Sion*—Sion was a part of the city Jerusalem, situate upon a hill towards the north, in respect of the rest of the city. Sometimes the hill itself is called by this name ; but more

frequently the series of the buildings upon it are termed Sion. This seems to have been the principal part of the city, 1. By reason of the temple; 2. Of the royal palace; 3. Of that strong and impregnable fort or tower, called the "strong hold of Zion;" (2 Sam. v. 7;) all standing hereon. This tower, being won by David from the Jebusites, and enlarged with many buildings adjoining, or near to it, became his habitation, or seat royal, and, as it seems from 2 Sam. v. 7, and 1 Kings viii. 1, from the largeness and great compass of buildings added by him unto it, was itself called, "The city of David." So that when God saith, "Behold, I lay in Sion a stone," &c., his intent may be to insinuate, that the person here represented by the metaphor of a stone should be of the house and lineage of David; which is of a gracious import, as well unto the Jews as the Gentiles, leading the former directly to that particular house and family, from whence their Messiah was to be expected, and so preventing those distractions, wanderings, and uncertainties of mind and thought, otherwise incident unto them about his pedigree and descent; and, consequently, confirming the latter in the truth and certainty of his being the Messiah indeed, in whom the New Testament vesteth this transcendent honour and dignity.

*A stumblingstone and rock of offence*—Some expositors, too much either Arianized or suspected, understand these expressions as not meant in Isaiah concerning Christ, but God himself; and as only allusive-wise, and for commodiousness of phrase, applied by the Apostle unto Christ; on purpose, it is like, to decline the pregnancy and force of such an argument, which otherwise from between the two passages riseth up like an armed man to assert the Divinity of Christ. But how hard a saying it would be, that God, speaking of himself, should say, "Behold, I lay in Sion a stone," and that his meaning should be, "Behold, I lay myself in Sion a stone," needeth no arguing. Besides, if the Prophet Isaiah did not by his stumbling-stone, and rock of offence, directly and principally intend Christ, the Apostle, as is evident, should make very small earnings for his purpose of the testimony in hand. For, from God's being a "stumbling-stone and rock of offence" in Isaiah's days, it no ways follows that therefore Christ must of necessity be the like, namely, "a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence," in the Apostle's days. And if such a consequence as this be of no value, the truth of the Apostle's affirmation, or intimation, that Christ

was or is “a stumbling-stone,” &c., must rest only upon his own credit and authority; which we know were of very light esteem with his countrymen the Jews, whose conviction, notwithstanding, as hath been oft said, is the main prize for which he runneth the long race of this and the two following chapters.

If it be demanded, why, or in what respect, Christ should be termed, a “stone of stumbling, and rock of offence,” I answer, 1. Negatively, (1.) Not because he was by God intended, at least antecedently, for such, either a stone or rock: All stumblings and offence-takings at Christ are acknowledged by Calvin himself to be accidental and adventitious,\* that is, besides the intentions of God, and proceeding from the pravity of men themselves. Nor, (2.) Because they who stumble and are offended at him were appointed or ordained by God unto these or any the like sinful miscarriages, God appointing no man to do that which he universally prohibits all men from doing, as hath been formerly touched. Nor, (3.) Because he is so, or upon any such terms, exhibited or set forth by God unto the world, that any man should be constrained or necessitated, either by his own weakness and corruption, or by the devil, or by any other instrument or creature whatsoever, to stumble or take offence at him: Actions constrained or necessitated upon men are neither demeritorious nor punishable. Nor yet, (4.) And lastly for the negative: Because he is so contrived by God in respect of any circumstance, or matter relating or appertaining to him, that any person should be so much as tempted, or reasonably induced, by any of these to stumble at him: “God,” saith James, “tempteth” no “man:” (James i. 13:) This is as true of Christ also. But, 2. For the affirmative, in two words: Christ is therefore termed a “stone of stumbling,” &c., partly because he is so laid, placed, or disposed of by God, that however no man, as hath been said, is either necessitated to stumble at him, or enticed, by any thing appertaining unto him, thus to miscarry, yet men, willingly

\* *Quod autem alibi docet Christus, se in iudicium venisse, quod vocatur petra scandali, quod dicitur positus in multorum ruinam, id accidentale est, vel (ut ita loquar) adventitium.*—CALVIN in *John* iii. 17. *Hoc antitheto demonstrat, quod tam male accipitur Christus, neque suo vitio, aut universali hominum genio hoc fieri, sed in causa esse eorum pravitate, qui illuminati a Deo non essent.*—*Idem* in *1 Cor.* i. 23. *Notandum vero est, hoc [viz., esse lapidem offensionis] Christo proprie et a seipso non competere, sed potius accidentale esse ex hominum malitia, sicut mor sequitur.*—*Idem* ad *Rom.* ix. 32.

ignorant, and wilfully perverse and wicked, may very possibly stumble at him; partly, also, because, though God intended, as hath been said, no man's stumbling at him, yet he knew that many would, through wilful blindness, and perverseness of spirit, *de facto*, stumble at him, and so expressed him by a prophetic character answering the event, and predicting that which in time came to pass.

If it be demanded, whether the two expressions, "a stone of stumbling," and "rock of offence," be synonymous, of one and the same import, or whether there be any material difference between them, I answer,

1. Some expositors conceive them to be altogether the same in signification and import; only apprehending the doubling of the expression to be somewhat emphatical, and tending to deeper and more serious inculcation of the matter or thing expressed; which they observe, or at least suppose they observe, to be frequent with the Prophets in like cases.\* But though *πετρα*, here translated *rock*, be sometimes found to signify an ordinary or lesser stone, as the word *λιθος* doth, yet properly it signifieth *saxum*, or *cautes*, "a great massy stone," "a rock or mountain of stone," and is accordingly, for the most part, translated *rock*. (Matt. vii. 24, 25; xvi. 18; Luke viii. 6; 1 Cor. x. 4; Matt. xxvii. 51; Rev. vi. 15, 16.) Therefore,

2. It is more probable that both the Prophet and Apostle intended somewhat differing in the one expression from the other, and that by the former, *λιθος προσκομματος*, a *stone of stumbling*, they might imply that Christ would prove unto some only a stone of such a stumbling, from whence they would recover themselves, and believe on him unto salvation afterwards; by the latter, *πετρα σκανδαλου*, a *rock of offence*, that he would be unto others that which a rock in the sea is to the ship that runneth and dasheth itself with violence against it, and is split, shattered, and broken in pieces by it, never to be repaired. Some state the difference between the two expressions thus: That Christ is termed "a stone of stumbling," because, coming in humility, he was not owned or acknowledged

\* *Sed et hoc constat, vocabula vicinæ significationis, ubi verborum copia quæritur, maxime apud Hebræos, usurpari pro eodem significato. Quare, quæ omnium fere sententia est, in verbis Prophetæ dicimus, esse ejusdem rei inculcationem, Prophetis familiarem: ut quemadmodum Græca προσκομμα et σκανδαλον, et quæ ex Hebræo vocabula respondeant, accipiuntur velut synonyma ita etiam lapis et petra.—ESTIUS in Rom. ix. 33. Vide Rob. Constant. Lexicon in verbo πετρα.*

by the Jews, but rejected; but a “rock of offence,” because, after his resurrection and ascending up into heaven, he became a rock, and fell upon them, overwhelmed, and ground them to powder, by the Romans taking away both their place and nation. But the former interpretation, I conceive, is the less strained.

It may yet be some man’s question, how Christ can be said to have been laid by God “in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence,” in the days of the Prophet Isaiah, and in reference to the Jews then living. I answer,

1. That both the places in Isaiah, of some parts whereof the testimony now before us is, as hath been showed, compacted and made up, relate unto the times of Sennacherib, and to the protection which God promised unto those that would hearken unto his counsel, and betake themselves to Jerusalem, and abide there.\*

2. It is to be considered, that all promises of grace, peace, safety, deliverance, &c., made by God at any time unto men, are, and have been, made in Christ, that is, upon the account of that grace and favour which formerly he had procured for men by his sufferings, whilst they were yet only undertaken for and not undergone, and since, by the same sufferings having been undergone and endured by him. So that Christ may, in sufficient propriety of speech, be said to have been, and to be, in all promises of grace whatsoever at any time made by God unto men. And they who shall stumble at or reject any of these promises through unbelief, may, in like manner, be said to stumble at Christ; and so to render their condition much worse and more grievous. Therefore,

3. When God, by his Prophets, sent a promise, one or more, of safety and protection unto the Jews, upon condition of their subjection unto his counsels and commands, intending, withal, that they who should not believe this promise, nor obey his counsels, should hereby bring destruction and ruin upon themselves, he might well say, “Behold, I lay in Sion a stone of stumbling,” &c.; meaning, that Christ now appearing, and being discovered by God in such a gracious promise, and as a sanctuary unto the Jews in the time of their utmost danger, would, nevertheless, prove an occasion of stumbling, falling, and perishing unto many, who would neglect and despise him.

\* *Recte autem ista loca conjunxit, quia in utroque agitur de temporibus Sennacheribi, Deique tutela iis promittitur, qui intra Hierosolyman manentes in lege Dei perstitissent.*—HUGO GROTIUS, *ad Rom.* ix. 33.

4. And lastly: It is a thing of frequent observation in the writings of the Prophets, that God, having either promised, or being about to promise, any great and signal blessing unto his people, is wont, either in the front or in the rear of such a promise, to renew his promise and intention afresh, of sending Christ unto them in due time, by way of confirmation of such his promise; yea, and sometimes to involve and, as it were, to wrap up the one promise in the other. (See Isaiah vii. 13—15, &c.; ix. 1, 2, &c.; xi. 1, 2; x. 12, &c.; xlvi. 13; xlix. 1—7, &c.; li. 4—6, &c.; lii. 7, 8; liii. 2, 3, &c.; lv. 4, 5, &c.; lix. 20; lxi. 1—3; lxii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, &c.; Hosea xiii. 14; Zech. iii. 8; ix. 9; Mal. iii. 1, 2, &c.) So that, speaking and promising thus unto the Jews, being now in danger of being devoured by a potent and formidable enemy, “Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, a rock of offence; and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed,” he may well be conceived both to promise the sending of the Messiah, and salvation by him, unto those that shall believe on him, and also to threaten ruin and destruction unto those that shall reject him; and, withal, inclusively, and after the manner of prophetic involution, to promise in the former deliverance from the present danger unto all those that should believe this promise, and hearken unto his counsel delivered with it; and in the latter, to threaten those with bondage or death who, through unbelief of this promise, should refuse obedience unto his counsels.

*And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*—The copulative “and” is frequently used in an adversative sense, and signifies “but;”\* and is accordingly rendered in most translations, where the sense of the place requires it; as Gen. ii. 17, 20; iii. 3; xlii. 10; besides sundry others. Sometimes our English translators retain the proper signification of the word, and translate “and,” where the construction requireth “but;” as Luke viii. 18; and so in the place before us. For the Apostle, in this clause, evidently opposeth the great benefit and blessedness which from Christ redoundeth unto those who shall believe on him, to that misery and ruin which they bring upon themselves who shall stumble at and reject him. We have given notice already that our Apostle interprets the Prophet’s indefinite “he,” by his universal “whosoever.” He

\* See M. AINSWORTH in Gen. ii. 17.

doth the like in the following chapter. (Verse 11.) His reason, probably, may be, the more plainly and expressly to insinuate, that as well the Gentiles as the Jews shall partake of the unspeakable blessing that is brought unto the world by Jesus Christ, upon their believing on him.

*Whosoever believeth on him*—To believe God, and so to believe Christ, and to believe ON the one and ON the other, are frequently used as expressions of one and the same import; at least, in respect of the great blessings depending on either justification and salvation; the same promises being made to believing God which are made to believing ON God; and again, to believing Christ which are made to believing ON Christ. (Consider to this purpose, and compare, John xx. 31; Acts viii. 37, 38; John iii. 33, 36; viii. 24; xi. 26, 27; Rom. iv. 3, 5; x. 9; 1 John v. 5; to omit many other places.) Nor is this any thing but what is frequently observed and affirmed by Luther, Calvin, Peter Martyr,\* and other as well modern as ancient Divines, as I have showed at large elsewhere. † To believe on Christ formally and properly is not an act of faith, but of hope or trust; only including or presupposing faith: And it is well observed by the late Bishop Downham, in his “Treatise of the Covenant of Grace,” page 214, that “doubting, properly, is opposed to faith; distrust, to affiance, or hope.” ‡ The reason why the great and precious promises of justification and salvation are so frequently in Scripture made to acts of recumbency, or to a resting, trusting, or believing in God or Christ, or rather unto those who do rest, trust, or believe on him, is not because they do originally, formally, or precisely belong to those acts or qualifications, but partly because such acts as these do suppose in their subjects, and in their natures include and comprehend, the act of faith, unto which the said promises do originally and properly belong; partly, also, I conceive, to inform and teach men that they who do truly and unfeignedly believe either God or Christ, in what they speak and assert in the Scriptures, have a sufficient and pregnant

\* *Videas in sacris litteris, tam fidei, quam fiducia promissiones esse factas; nempe quia fides fiduciam semper secum trahit.*—P. MARTYR. *Loc. Com.*, p. 510.

† See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 397—399, &c.

‡ *Sed nos haud paulo aliter philosophamur: Primo spem et fidem ratione sui et definitione distinctas, re tamen semper indivulsas esse; adeo ut neque quisquam vere credat, qui non vere speret, neque rursus vere speret, qui non vere credat, &c.*—DAN. CHAMI. *Panstat.*, tom. iii. l. 13. c. 3. s. 9.



ground to rely, depend, or believe on the one and the other, for the obtaining of all things promised, according to the tenor and intent of the said promises respectively, yea, and that they cannot lightly but hope, trust, and depend, accordingly. And, therefore, whereas many say and acknowledge that they believe the truth of all the promises and declarations that God hath made throughout the Scriptures, and this with the greatest confidence that may be, and without the least hesitancy or regret in their faith, and yet complain, withal, that they cannot, with any semblable confidence, trust or depend upon God for justification or salvation, the reason of this irrational and unnatural discord in the soul must needs be, either their ignorance of the mind and true meaning of God in those promises, which they say and think that they believe, or else a strange defectiveness in their reasons and understandings, by means whereof they do not see and apprehend that which is as clear as the light at noon-day, that they who do truly, and with their whole heart, believe the promises of God, are *ipso facto* by this their believing actually invested in a right to all the good things mentioned and contained in them ; and, consequently, have a clear and sure foundation for a steadfast expectation of these things, whatsoever they are, from the hand of God.

But whereas some conceive, that to believe God in his promises, and to believe Jesus Christ, do not import justifying or saving faith, but only that which they call an historical faith, of which they make reprobates and devils themselves capable, thus unsanctifying and depreciating this faith, as they suppose, and that it is only a believing ON God or IN God, and so on or in Jesus Christ, which is justifying and saving ; the truth is,

1. That to believe God in his promises, and so Christ, with a faith unfeigned, as the Apostle speaketh, is as justifying and saving as any believing on or in God, or on or in Christ whatsoever. This we have lately proved from John iii. 36 ; xi. 26, 27 ; xx. 31 ; Acts viii. 37, 38 ; Rom. iv. 3, 5 ; besides several other places. We might here add, that the Scriptures from place to place do not only hold forth a true and unfeigned belief of, or assent unto, what God or Christ spake, especially in matters evangelical, as a faith truly justifying and saving, but even a like belief of the Minister or messenger of God, when he testifieth and declareth the word of God and of Christ in such things. “ Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That

the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye BELIEVED HIM NOT : but the publicans and the harlots BELIEVED HIM." (Matt. xxi. 31, 32. See also John iv. 42 ; Acts viii. 12 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16.)

2. It is very questionable, whether to believe on or in Christ doth always in Scripture signify or import such a faith which justifieth ; considering what the Evangelist John saith : " Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed ON HIM ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue : For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John xii. 42, 43.) Now that they who are ashamed of Christ before men, and through fear shall not confess him, as, likewise, that they who love the praise of men more than the praise of God, are no sound believers, nor persons justified, the former is evident from Matt. x. 32, 33, compared with Mark viii. 38 ; Luke ix. 26 ; Rom. x. 9, &c. ; the latter, from John v. 44. And concerning the phrase of believing in or on Christ, or the name of Christ, that it doth not always import such a faith which is justifying and saving, plainly appeareth from John ii. 23, 24 ; iv. 49 ; vii. 31 ; compared with John i. 11 ; iii. 32 ; xi. 45, 48 ; to omit other places. Therefore, when the Holy Ghost, in the words before us, avoucheth, " that whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," he must be understood to speak of such a trusting or believing which, as our Apostle elsewhere speaketh concerning faith, " worketh by love ;" that is, engageth the heart and soul truly and really to love both God and men, and to walk towards both according to the exigency or requirement of such an affection. For as the Scripture speaketh of a kind of faith which it calls dead, meaning hereby such a faith which is workless and fruitless, and concludes this not to be of that kind of faith unto which God hath annexed the great and precious promises of justification and salvation, and, consequently, that men and this faith may, like rich men and their money, " perish together ;" so it speaketh also of a lively or living hope ; (1 Peter i. 3 ; ) which supposeth, by way of antithesis, a lifeless or dead hope likewise, which hath neither part nor fellowship in the blessed business of the promise in hand : " Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." See Matt. vii. 26, 27 ; where this dead hope we speak of is found by Christ in such

persons, who hear his sayings, and do them not ; that is, who expect and hope for salvation by him only upon a formal and fruitless profession of his name.

Whereas the promise of not being ashamed, that is, of being made eternally glorious and blessed, as we shall see anon, is here ascribed to a believing on Christ, notice may be taken that elsewhere the effect and substance of it is ascribed to a believing or trusting on God. (Psalm xviii. 30 ; xxii. 4, 5 ; xxxvii. 3, 4, &c. ; cxlvi. 5 ; 2 Cor. i. 9, 10 ; iii. 4 ; 1 Tim. vi. 17, &c.) Yea, the truth is, that they who believe or trust on Christ do more properly believe and trust on God than on Christ, according to that saying of Christ himself, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me ;" (John xii. 44 ; ) that is, believeth not so much on me, as on God himself who sent me ; namely, because God is he, who hath by all his Prophets since the world began, yea, and now last of all by me also, engaged himself that life and salvation shall be given unto all those who shall believe on me, that is, expect salvation at his hand upon my account, and by means of that atonement which I am shortly to make with my blood. So that the truth and faithfulness of God in his word is the bottom, ground-work, and foundation of our believing in Christ. Nor can any man reasonably or with judgment believe in Christ who questioneth the truth of those promises, concerning life and salvation, which God hath made unto those who shall believe in him. And in this sense that of our Saviour may well be understood : "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ;" (John vi. 44 ; ) that is, unless God, who hath sent me to be believed on unto salvation, shall draw him, that is, prevail with him by the credit and authority of his promises made unto the world in that behalf. There may be, I grant, another sense given of the words, and this commodious and edifying, which we shall, I conceive, have occasion to declare some other time.

It is a question of no easy solution, whether such a believing on Christ, to which this promise is made, he "shall not be ashamed," necessarily and universally requireth a distinct knowledge of Christ, or a knowledge of him by name ; or, whether such a person, who never heard of the name of Christ, may not, notwithstanding, believe on him, or, which is the same, believe on God through him, unto acceptance, justification, and salva-

tion. The just debate of this question would cause too large a digression in a commentary or exposition, and therefore I shall not charge the reader's patience with it here; especially considering that I have given an account of my sense upon it, and this somewhat at large, in a discourse not long since published, entitled, "The Pagan's Debt and Dowry." I shall here only add the words of Peter, which, well understood, are sufficiently decisive of the question propounded: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts x. 34, 35.) He speaketh these words upon occasion of that special acceptance which he now plainly understood Cornelius had found with God. Yet, by the carriage of the whole relation concerning him, it fully appears that he never had heard of the name of Christ until Peter's coming and preaching this name unto him. Yea, there is little question to be made, but that which God chiefly intended in that extraordinary vision, wherein Cornelius was admonished and directed to send for Peter, was, that the name of Christ, together with the great mystery of the grace of God in him towards the world, might by Peter be made known unto him. Therefore, men may believe in God through Christ, and this unto salvation, although Christ by name be not as yet manifested unto them. But more of this elsewhere.

*Shall not be ashamed*—Or, as the margin hath it, "confounded;" that is, shall be advanced by him to great blessedness and glory. Observation hath been formerly made, in our explication of verse 30, that, according to the Hebrew dialect, which is much frequented in the New Testament, adverbs of denying signify the contrary to the import of that verb whereunto they are joined. Thus, "It shall NOT be accepted," (Lev. xix. 7,) signifies not simply a non-acceptance, but a rejection with high displeasure, as of a thing abominable, as the thing spoken of is expressly there termed. Thus, likewise, "A man that shall NOT prosper in his days," (Jer. xxii. 30,) imports a man that shall be calamitous and full of misery whilst he liveth. "With many of them God was NOT well pleased," that is, God was highly displeased and provoked by many of them, insomuch that, as it followeth, "they were overthrown in the wilderness." (1 Cor. x. 5.) Of like interpretation is that, "My soul shall have no pleasure in him;" (Heb. x. 38;) that is, such a person

shall be the hatred and great abhorring of my soul. To omit many others of like character, "He shall NOT lose his reward," (Mark ix. 41,) implieth that such a person shall be very highly and bountifully rewarded. Thus, in the clause in hand, "Whosoever believeth in him shall NOT be ashamed," these last words, "shall NOT be ashamed," do not simply import that such a person shall not be brought to shame or shall not perish, but that he shall be exalted unto exceeding great honour and dignity, and be made everlastingly happy.

Some observe that the word *κατασχυνεσθαι*, which properly signifieth, *to be ashamed*, sometimes signifieth, *to be deceived* or *disappointed*; because a trusting in such promises or persons which fail men in their expectations commonly makes them much ashamed; it being matter of dishonour or disparagement to a man to be known to trust or depend upon such, whether things or persons, which want either strength or honesty to answer their expectations. "O my God," saith David, "I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed;" (Psalm xxv. 2;) let me not be disappointed of help and protection, which I expect from thee, inasmuch as such a disappointment will be matter of shame and dishonour unto me. From whence, by the way, it may be observed, the nature of man being, as it were, conscious both of that dignity wherein it was created, as of that likewise whereof it is yet capable, abhorreth nothing more than shame or disparagement, not trouble, pain, or torment itself. In which respect the Holy Ghost frequently expresseth the most woeful condition of wicked and ungodly men after death, by ignominy, shame, and contempt. Thus, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to SHAME and everlasting CONTEMPT." (Dan. xii. 2. See also Isaiah lxvi. 24.) On the other hand, the happy and blessed estate of those who shall be saved by believing on Jesus Christ is very frequently commended unto us under the notion of honour and glory. "But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." (Rom. ii. 10.) (Consider to the same purpose, 1 Cor. xv. 40—43; Rom. viii. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 7; 2 Cor. iv. 17; to omit many other places.) But there is scarce any thing of more ready observation from the Scriptures, than to find frustration and disappointment, in matters of expectation, signified by shame. Sennacherib, being full of expectation of carrying Jeru-

salem by means of his puissant and formidable host, when he found himself disappointed by that heavy slaughter which the angel of the Lord made in his army, cutting off all his mighty men of valour therein, he is said to have "returned WITH SHAME of face to his own land." (2 Chron. xxxii. 21.) Thus: "Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your SHAME, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your CONFUSION. They were all ASHAMED of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a SHAME, and also a reproach." (Isaiah xxx. 3, 5. See also Isaiah liv. 4; Hab. ii. 9, 10; Isaiah xx. 5; xlii. 17; xliv. 9; Jer. ii. 36; xiv. 3; xx. 11; xxii. 22; xlviii. 13; Zech. ix. 5; not to mention more.)

If it be demanded, "But though it be true that 'whosoever believeth on him,' that is, Christ, 'shall not be ashamed,' yet doth this suppose or imply, that whosoever shall not believe on him shall be ashamed or confounded?" I answer,

1. That the position of one means doth not by any logical or rational consequence exclude or remove all others. When our Apostle, speaking of the woman, saith, "She shall be saved," *Δια της τεκνογονιας*, *by*, or *through*, *child-bearing*, he doth not imply but that she may be saved in some other way or service besides that of bearing children. He that informs a traveller that such or such a way will bring him to such a town or city, whither he is travelling, doth not necessarily suppose that there is no other way that leadeth to the same place, but only this. In like manner, when the Holy Ghost expresseth himself only thus, "Whosoever believeth" on Christ "shall not be ashamed," it doth not follow *vi formæ*, from any express import of the words, that therefore there is no other means to preserve a man from shame but only by believing on Christ.

2. When any action or course is simply or indefinitely directed or enjoined by way of means for the compassing of such or such an end, the direction or injunction is to be conceived as respecting such persons only who are in a capacity, either immediate or remote, of performing such an action or taking such a course, not those who are simply incapable of either, as if these must necessarily be deprived of the said end because they do not use the means prescribed in such a case. When Christ saith, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," (Mark xvi. 16,) his meaning is, not to impose either faith or baptism upon infants, as without

which there is no possibility for them to be saved, because infants, as and whilst such, are simply uncapable of believing; as, likewise, in respect of their own procurement or demand, of being baptized. There is much the same consideration of those who are naturally simple, and never received so much as a first fruits of reason or understanding. Therefore, believing in the said passage of Christ is prescribed only to persons of years and of competent understandings, as a means simply necessary to salvation; and a being baptized, that is, a making profession of such their faith, not as a means of equal necessity to salvation with believing, as appears from the latter clause, where damnation is threatened, not to those who shall not be baptized, but to those only who shall not believe, but as necessary only in case time and opportunity should serve for it. God, in his word and Gospel, having only to do with persons capable of understanding what his mind and meaning is in them, chiefly herein declares his counsel concerning them, prescribes rules and laws unto them in order to their peace; speaking more sparingly, and, as it were, only on the bye of others, as, namely, infants and persons void of natural understanding, rather insinuating than declaring how and by what means he intendeth the salvation of these; although his insinuations in this kind are not so sparing or reserved, but that they are very accessible to the understandings of such persons who take pleasure in them, and are diligent in searching them out.

3. And lastly: Although it followeth not, upon the account specified, from the assertion before us, "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," that there is no other way or means to preserve men from shame or confusion, but only believing on Christ; yet, by comparing this saying with the words immediately preceding, "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone," &c., and more especially by consultation had with the general purport and current of the Scriptures, it fully appears that for persons competent in understanding there is no other possible way or means for their preservation from everlasting shame, but only by believing on Jesus Christ, either virtually and interpretatively, or else formally and explicitly, as we have formerly and elsewhere distinguished,\* and this by warrant from the Scriptures.

\* See *Pagan's Debt and Dowry*, pp. 37—39.

The essential and indissolvable connexion between these two, believing on Christ, and not being ashamed, depends upon, though not the mere, yet the absolute and unchangeable, will and good pleasure of God. Believing on Christ is no natural means of any man's preservation from shame; it produceth no such effect as this by any native or inherent virtue or property in it, but by the irresistible efficaciousness of His will who hath instituted and appointed it for such a purpose. Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy upon his washing seven times in Jordan. But his cure depended not, save only sacramentally, upon the waters of Jordan, nor upon his seven times washing in them; neither the one nor the other of these had any native property or virtue in them to accomplish such a cure. That which healed him was the glorious operativeness of His will and pleasure who prescribed the use of those means unto him. In like manner, the walls of Jericho fell down flat upon the compassing of the city seven days together by seven Priests, having the ark of the covenant with them, and blowing with so many trumpets of ram's horns, together with the shouting of the people; yet that which produced this great and wonderful effect, the utter demolishing of these walls, was not any property or force either resident in or issuing from any of the said means, ark, Priests, trumpets, compassing, shouting, or the like, but the most potent energy, force, and power of the will of God, who prescribed all the said means, not so much in order to the effecting of the end mentioned, the bringing down the walls of Jericho, as to the making of his own will actually efficacious to the effecting of it. For it is no ways probable either that Naaman would have been cleansed of his leprosy, unless, according to divine prescription, he had washed seven times in Jordan, although this washing, as was said, had nothing in it able or likely to effect the cure; or, that the walls of Jericho would have fallen down flat on the ground had not all the particulars specified been performed by Joshua and the children of Israel; however, these, neither *divisim* nor *conjunctim*, contributed any thing considerable of themselves towards the effect. The reason of both probabilities is this: Had God absolutely and without the performance of such things as he enjoined Naaman in reference to his cure, and the Israelites for the bringing down the walls of Jericho, intended the said gracious effects, or had it been meet for him to have effected either the one or the other



without the said performances respectively ; doubtless he would have required neither the one nor the other upon the said accounts. For it is as true in divinity as philosophy, that God and nature do nothing in vain.\* And what can more apparently be done in vain than to prescribe such or such means for the effecting of such an end, which should certainly be obtained or accomplished whether any of these means be used or no. As the case hath been represented in Naaman's cure, and in the bringing down of the walls of Jericho, so is it in that great and blessed concernment of men, expressed, in the clause in hand, by their not being ashamed. God hath enjoined the world to believe on Jesus Christ in order to the attainment of this transcendent blessedness ; not as if there were any thing in this believing, either of any natural or moral consideration, sufficient to invest men with such a blessedness, but because his most gracious and good pleasure is to confer this blessedness upon them, upon and by means of such their believing, not judging it meet or worthy his wisdom or righteousness to grant such an investiture upon any other terms, or in any other way. They who hold and teach that faith justifies, and, consequently, saveth, in respect of the object, as they speak, meaning Christ, place the justifying virtue or property of it in the nature and essence of it, not considering that in such a notion they give the right hand of fellowship to that popish doctrine which maintaineth that faith justifieth by the inherent dignity or intrinsical worth of it. For what is or can be more intrinsical or essential to that faith which justifieth than its relation to its object, Jesus Christ ? It cannot be defined but Jesus Christ must of necessity *ingredi definitionem*, as logicians speak, that is " enter or come into the definition ;" which is an infallible note of an essential relation to the thing defined. Yea, that faith which justifieth, in the very nature and essence of it includeth such a reference or respect unto Jesus Christ, that this being separated from it, it vanisheth into nothing, at least loseth the justifying glory of it. Besides, if faith should justify by virtue of or by reference unto its object, Christ, there can no reason be given why the love of Christ, or the worshipping of Christ, should not justify as well as faith in Christ, inasmuch as they have all one and the same object. To object that they have not all the

\* *Deus et natura nihil faciunt frustra.*

same relation to this object, and that faith justifieth and not the other, because of that particularity of relation to the object wherein it differeth from the other; to object to this, I say, in the case in hand, is clearly to take away that honour from the object, Christ, which the opinion pretends to ascribe unto him, I mean, the honour of justifying, and to cast it upon a *modus* or particular manner of a relation, namely, of that relation which faith beareth unto him. But the Scripture very plainly and expressly, from place to place, placeth the justifying virtue or property of faith in Christ, in the will, pleasure, and appointment of God, which are things altogether extra-essential and extrinsical unto faith. “But as many as received him, to them GAVE HE POWER,” or the right or privilege, as our margin hath it, “to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John i. 12.) It is not the receiving of Christ, or believing in his name, no, nor yet Christ himself passively considered, that is, as received or believed on, that gives power or privilege to those that believe on him to become the sons of God; but Christ in an active consideration, namely, as willing, ordaining, and decreeing, together with God the Father, that whosoever should believe on him should hereupon and hereby become a son of God, that is, a person justified and in favour with God. If it had been the receiving of Christ, or the believing on his name, that had given this power or privilege unto men, the Evangelist need not have said that he, that is, Christ, or God, gave them this power, meaning by an act of grace or good pleasure. So again: “This is the Father’s WILL which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is THE WILL of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life,” &c.; (John vi. 39, 40;) clearly implying, that both seeing the Son and believing on him would have been available unto no man to the obtaining of everlasting life, had not the will, pleasure, and decree of God interposed to make them available in this kind. It is true the sufferings of Christ, especially the sweet and heavenly frame of soul considered under which so great a person suffered in respect of his deep humility, willing subjection unto God the Father, ardent love unto men, &c., are a consideration fully valuable, both in point of wisdom and of justice, why God should or

may be willing to pardon the sins of what persons he pleaseth ; but they are no reasonable consideration why faith in this Christ, without or contrary unto the will of God, should justify any man ; nor do they give any such dignity, worth, or merit to this faith, that God, setting aside his promise in this behalf, should be either unjust or hard unto men in denying them justification upon the exhibition or tender of it. But of these things I remember we have reasoned elsewhere.\*

Let us therefore at present only take knowledge of some principal doctrines contained in the four verses last opened, and so conclude our exposition of the chapter.

1. Whereas the Apostle affirmeth, that “ the Gentiles followed not after righteousness ; ” (verse 30 ; ) it is observable, that great numbers of men and women in the world live without any care or thought of approving themselves unto God, or, which is in effect the same, how they may be justified in his sight. (Eph. ii. 12 ; iv. 17, 18 ; Philip. iii. 18, 19 ; Job xxi. 14, 15.)

2. Whereas he informeth us, that “ the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, ” meaning for a long time and until the letter of the Gospel came amongst them, yet at last “ attained to righteousness ; ” the doctrine from hence is, that sometimes persons who have been careless and negligent of things of a spiritual concernment for a long season are at last, by some special dispensation of God or other, awakened out of their security, and brought to repent and believe. (Matt. xxi. 31, 32 ; 1 Cor. vi. 11.)

3. Whereas the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness are here said to have “ attained, ” notwithstanding, “ to the righteousness of faith ; ” the doctrine from hence observable is, that forgiveness of sins which, according to the most gracious promise or covenant of God, is given unto all those that believe in Christ, is such a righteousness whereof the greatest sinners, as well as the lesser, are capable. (Rom. iii. 21, 22 ; iv. 5, 7, 8, 23, 24 ; Eph. ii. 1—3, compared with Col. ii. 13.)

4. Whereas we have it here expressly from the pen of our Apostle, that the Jews who “ followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness ; ” it may be observed, that some men are apt to seek, and this with

great diligence, confidence, and zeal, justification, and acceptance with God, in such ways and means wherein they are not to be found. (Rom. x. 2, 3; James ii. 14—16, &c.; John xvi. 2; Matt. vii. 21—23, 26, 27; Isaiah lv. 2; John ix. 40, 41; Philip. iii. 6, compared with Acts xxvi. 9—11.)

5. Whereas the Apostle (verse 32) assigns this for the reason why the Jews, though following after “the law,” or a law, “of righteousness,” yet “attained not to” this law, that is, fell short of justification, namely, because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law; the doctrine is, that in what way or by what means soever men shall seek justification or forgiveness of sins at the hand of God, without faith in Jesus Christ, they will miscarry and perish eternally in their sins. (John viii. 24; vi. 53; iii. 36; Acts iv. 12; Mark xvi. 16.)

6. Whereas he here saith, not simply or directly, that the Jews sought after righteousness by the works of the law, but *ως, as, or, as if it were*; the doctrine, according to one exposition given of the particle *ως*, is this,—that many are deprived of the fruit and benefit of many things which they do with some conformity to the law and will of God, by reason of their ignorance of the regular and true end of them, and by ascribing that unto them which is above their line, and of right appertaining unto another thing. (Philip. iii. 6—11; Ezek. xxxiii. 13; Rom. iii. 30.) Or, according to another construction of the said particle *ως*, the doctrine may be this,—that many are apt to please themselves in themselves, as if they were very worthy observers of the law of God, whenas, in the mean time, they are full of unrighteousness and disobedience. (1 Sam. xv. 13, 20, compared with verses 14, 19, 22, 23; Isaiah lviii. 2—5, &c.; Luke xi. 45—47, &c.)

7. Whereas the Lord Christ is here termed by the Holy Ghost a stumbling-stone, for the reason specified in our exposition; it is worthy the observing, that the great humiliation of Christ, in the days of his flesh and in his sufferings, if men be not very wary and considerate of other things relating to him, may, very possibly, prove a snare and occasion unto them to despise and reject him. (1 Cor. i. 18, 23; Isaiah liii. 2, 3; Matt. xxvii. 39—42.)

8. Whereas the Apostle delivers this as the cause or reason why the Jews sought after righteousness, as if it had been to be attained by the works of the law, and not by faith, namely,

their stumbling at the stumbling-stone, Christ; the point observable from hence is, that non-understanding of the mind and counsel of God in Christ, for the justification and salvation of the world, is the reason why men turn aside into other ways of hope and expectation in this kind. (Rom. x. 2, 3; Isaiah lv. 2, 3; Gal. ii. 16.)

9. Whereas the Lord Christ is here styled not only a stumbling-stone, but a rock of offence also; the doctrine is, that to fall foul upon Jesus Christ, as either by despising, blaspheming, or opposing him, or the like, is of most dreadful consequence to the creature, and, without repentance, accompanied with the sorest condemnation. (Heb. ii. 2, 3; x. 28, 29; 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Matt. xxi. 44.)

10. Whereas though the Lord Christ be, as he is here termed, a stumbling-stone and rock of offence, yet hath this honour given unto him by God, that "whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed;" it is worthy observation, that the great and general stumbling or neglect of Christ in the world, by persons of all sorts and conditions, is no reasonable ground to discourage any man from believing in him. (1 Cor. i. 23, 24; 1 Peter ii. 7, 8; John x. 39, compared with verses 41, 42; xii. 37, with 42; vi. 66, 67, &c.)

11. And lastly: From that awakening particle, "Behold," (verse 33,) the tenor of what is immediately subjoined, considered, "Behold, I lay in Sion, a stumbling-stone," &c., it is of worthy import to consider, that although the counsels of God, concerning the salvation of the world, be of that nature or so laid that, unless men be very ingeniously circumspect and considering, they may easily neglect or be ensnared with them, yet he is graciously pleased to give knowledge and warning hereof unto the world, to prevent their stumbling and ensnaring in this kind. (Luke ii. 34; John ix. 39; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Isaiah liii. 2, 3, &c.)

# A T A B L E

OF

## SOME TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE

OCCASIONALLY TOUCHED IN THE PRECEDING EXPOSITION, AND  
IN PART OPENED.

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- Gen. xviii. 14. *At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son, page 102*
- xxvii. 33. *Yea, and he shall be blessed, 128*
- 1 Sam. ii. 30. *I said indeed, that thy house—should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me, &c., 172*
- 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, &c. *And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people.—But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words—till there was no remedy, 210, 254*
- Job xxvii. 2. *Who hath taken away my judgment, 320*
- Psalms xcix. 4. *The King's strength also loveth judgment, 212*
- cv. 25. *He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants, 177*
- Prov. i. 32. *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them, 180, 181*
- Eccles. vii. 29. *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions, 199, 239*
- x. 10. *If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, he must then put to more strength, 46*
- Isaiah v. 4. *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? 209*
- viii. 14, 15. *And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, 318*

- Isaiah xxxviii. 1. *For thou shalt die, and not live, 50*  
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 lx. 19. *The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, 77*  
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- Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 11. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation—to pluck up, and to pull down—If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent.—Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return you now every one from his evil way, &c., 171, 172*  
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- Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live, 240*
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- Jonah iii. 4. *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown, 172*
- Matt. vii. 26. *That heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, 336, 337*  
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1. EXPRESSIONS of the same things, both negative and affirmative, are sometimes emphatical, page 50.

2. It is very frequent in Scripture to use one and the same word in different significations, in one and the same sentence, and this with elegance and emphatical acuteness, 88.

3. A race or generation of men is sometimes termed by the name of some of their progenitors, especially being persons of note and fame in the world, 88.

4. It is not unusual in the Scriptures to appropriate a general or common term, by way of emphasis, to some special particulars, one or more, contained under that general; yea, and sometimes to bereave such particulars which are less considerable and less perfect of that very name and appellation which agrees to the general, and to appropriate it to those particulars which are most considerable in their kind, 88, 89.

5. It is a frequent dialect of Scripture to term men the children of such persons whom they resemble in spirit or practice, especially when this resemblance hath been occasioned or produced either by their persuasions or example, 90.

6. Negative or exclusive particles do not always suppose or take for granted whatsoever in the same kind is not particularly denied or excluded; but sometimes simply and precisely deny or exclude, without any connotation or implication in this kind, 91.

7. It is frequent in Scripture to mention words spoken by a person, without mentioning either the person speaking them, or, sometimes, the person to whom they were spoken, 92.

8. The pronoun relative, *ος, qui*, “who” or “whom,” is sometimes used *concretè*, and signifieth not simply or barely the subject to which it relateth, but as so or so qualified, 150, *note*.

9. It is the manner of the Evangelists and Apostles, and sometimes of Christ himself, in the New Testament, to cite passages from the Old, for confirmation of what they say or teach, when there is only an analogy or proportion of sense or matter between the one and the other, 153.

10. The connexive particle *και, and*, is sometimes causal, 153.

11. There is nothing more usual in the Scriptures than for the Holy Ghost to express such purposes of God, simply, absolutely, and without any mention of a condition, which yet are conditionally to be understood, as the event in many cases hath made manifest, 172.

12. Such acts are frequently in Scripture ascribed sometimes unto God, and sometimes unto men, some occasion only whereof they administer, though they act nothing positively or directly in order to the production of them; no, nor yet intend their production, 177.

13. The Scripture, speaking of God’s intentions, especially those that are primary and antecedent, never makes them concurrent with such events of his providences or dispensations which are accidental and occasional only, but only with those which are natural and proper, and which the said dispensations are of themselves, and when not abused, apt to produce, 178, 187.

14. Some things there are so expressed and represented in the Scriptures, as if they were simply and absolutely the intentions of God, and may, upon this account, be called his intentions, whenas they are but parts only of these his intentions, the other part of them, respectively, being to be supplied and made out from other scriptures, 183.

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16. Words not only of an equipollent, but of a cognate, signification also, and such which import things of a mutual concomitancy, are oft interchanged, 195.

17. The Scriptures often speak of the power of God as regulated, 209, &c.

18. Places more particular and full ought to rule the sense of

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19. Many times the negation of a power to act is included in the negation of the act only, 218.

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21. God in the Scriptures is oft said to do such or such things, when he doeth that which is proper for him to do in order to the effecting of them, though, through a defect in men not doing that which they ought to do, the thing be never actually done or effected, 267, 268.

22. The Scriptures are very frequent and pregnant in asserting this, that men must more than simply believe to become meet for glory, or such on whom God is pleased to confer eternal life, 270.

23. It is the manner of the New Testament, and of the Spirit of God uttering himself here, in citations from the Old Testament, to deliver the sense and substance of matter contained in them with what variation of words they please, 279, 280.

24. It is frequent in prophetic predictions of the Old Testament to be formed in such words and phrases, that they may not only suit and fit those particular cases or events which are principally, directly, and immediately intended and aimed at by them, but several others also, being of like nature with them, which were to take place in the world afterwards, 282, 283.

25. Nor is it unusual in the New Testament to style many events the fulfilling of such and such predictions or sayings of the Prophets, which did not relate unto them but in a kind of secondary and collateral way, 283.

26. It is a frequent metaphor in the Scriptures to compare a state, body, or society of men, whether politic and civil, or sacred and ecclesiastic, unto a woman; and, under such a prosopopœia, to discourse of them and their affairs, 287.

27. Bodies of people are sometimes called theirs who are over them, and sometimes, the people of each member respectively, 290.

28. *Eav, if*, not always *dubitantis*, but frequently *ratiocinantis*, 290.

29. The exclusive particle *only* is frequently omitted and left to be understood, 290, 323.

30. Abstracts in Scripture are often used for their concretes, 294.

31. The preter-perfect tense oft used for the preter-pluperfect, 297.

32. God, in strictness of speaking, is the Author only of what he doeth of grace or favour, not of what he doeth according to the exigency either of merit or demerit, whether in men or angels, 300.

33. It is usual in the Scriptures to ascribe that to a generality or multitude, indefinitely expressed, which, in strictness of speech, belongeth only to some, sometimes only to a few, yea, sometimes only to one, of this generality, 308.

34. Adverbs of denying, Hebrew-wise, signify the contrary unto that to which they are applied, 309, 338.

35. There are many propositions in the Scriptures which are not *formales*, but *causales* or *consecutive*, wherein the effect is substantively predicated of the cause, or the consequent of the antecedent, 311.

36. Borrowing and lending words between neighbour sentences frequent in the Scriptures, 316.

37. In Scripture notion, when and whilst God blesseth and prospereth men in the world, he is said to cover their sins, namely, from the view and sight of men; as, on the contrary, when he punisheth men he is said to discover their nakedness or sin, 320, 321.

38. Verbs of the passive form are oft used in a reciprocal sense, and import the effect specified to be done by the persons themselves who are spoken of, or to, in such verbs, 323, *note*.

39. The indefinite pronoun "he," oft expounded by "who-soever," 326, 333, 334.

40. Sometimes actions are mentioned without their objects; which, notwithstanding, are named elsewhere, 326.

41. It is of frequent observation, in the writings of the Prophets, that God, either having promised, or being about to promise, any great and signal blessing unto his people, is wont, either in the front or in the rear of such a promise, to renew his promise and intent afresh of sending Christ unto them in due time, yea, and sometimes to involve and, as it were, to wrap up the one promise in the other, 333.

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THE

BANNER OF JUSTIFICATION DISPLAYED:

OR,

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE DEEP AND IMPORTANT MYSTERY

OF

THE JUSTIFICATION OF A SINNER:

Wherein the several causes thereof, being both numerous and various, are, from the first to the last, diligently inquired after, and their several contributions towards so great and happy a work clearly distinguished, and assigned to their proper causes, respectively.

And more particularly is showed, how God, how the grace of God, how the decree of God, how the sovereign authority of God; how Christ, how the active obedience of Christ, how the passive obedience of Christ, how the resurrection of Christ, how the knowledge of Christ, how the Spirit of God, how faith, how repentance, how works, how remission of sins, how the word, how the Minister of the word, how the person himself which is justified, may all truly, though upon several accounts, and after different manners, be said to justify.

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.—Isaiah liii. 11.

*Solet Scriptura, cum ad unum effectum multæ causæ concurrunt, modo uni, modo alteri, effectum tribuere.*—CHAMIER, *Panstrat.*, tom iv., l. 22, c. 4, sect. 39.

*Scire, est per causas scire.*

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.*

## BRIEF PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE,

CLEARLY SHOWING AND PROVING, THAT ALL THE PARTICULARS MENTIONED IN THE TITLE-PAGE, AS CAUSES OF JUSTIFICATION, OR CONTRIBUTORS HEREUNTO, ARE ACKNOWLEDGED AND SUPPOSED FOR SUCH IN THE SCRIPTURES THEMSELVES.

“It is God that justifieth.” (Rom. viii. 33.) “Being justified freely by his grace.” (Rom. iii. 24.) “This is the will,” that is, the decree or fixed pleasure, “of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life,” and, consequently, be antecedently justified. “It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” (Rom. viii. 33, 34;) meaning, that his authority in justifying is sovereign and paramount, and so liable to no reverse or contradiction. “But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ,” &c. (Gal. ii. 17.) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed,” and, consequently, not justified, “with corruptible things;—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter i. 18, 19.) “Much more then, being now justified by his blood.” (Rom. v. 9.) “And was,” that is, Christ was, “raised again for our justification.” (Rom. iv. 25.) “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” (Isaiah liii. 11.) “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. vi. 11.) “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God,” &c. (Rom. v. 1.) “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” (Mark i. 4.) “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,” &c. (James ii. 24.) “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;” (Rom. iv. 7;) that is, who are justified, as appears from verses 2 and 5. “And how shall they believe in him,” and, consequently, be justified, “of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. x. 14, 17.) “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee;” (1 Tim. iv. 16;) and, consequently, shalt justify both, inasmuch as salvation presupposeth justification. “Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.” (Gal. ii. 16.)

## TO THE READER.

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CHRISTIAN READER,

I WELL know with which of my hands these papers are offered unto thine; but I am somewhat doubtful with which of thine they will be received. For I am far from judging thee unworthy the salutation of *Christian*, because my thoughts may not be thine in matters of a more arduous and difficult contemplation. Only the evil genius of these times worketh so effectually, acteth so imperiously, yea, tyrannically, in the minds and fancies of many, that it permits them not the use of their right hand in receiving any thing from another, which is not already an ingredient in the composition or body of their faith. But persons of this character seem not so much to desire to be free from error, as to presume themselves so to be. The cross of Arminius is grown so heavy amongst us, and the generality of professors so weak, that the greater part of them are not able to take it up, though truth be tied fast to it, and the burden of it hereby made much more easy and light. Yet, if many of those who occupy the places of the learned were not more contradictious than their opinions, or at least than many of their sayings, the cross we speak of would soon be abolished, and the offence of the innocent doctrine disguised with the vizard of Arminianism put upon the face of it would presently cease. And the certain truth is, that the unhappy dividing character between those who, measuring themselves by themselves, call themselves orthodox, and those whom, because they cannot and do not measure themselves by their measure, they vote Arminian, doth not stand in this, as most men take for granted, namely, that the latter hold or teach things contrary unto, or inconsistent with, the doctrines or opinions delivered and taught by the former; but rather in this, that the latter, in their judgment and doctrine, are yea and amen; the former, yea and nay: My meaning is, that the latter are more uniform, steady, and coherent with themselves in their notions and doctrines; whereas the former are desultory,

and themselves, as it were, possessed with a spirit of amphibology, which sometimes taketh and casteth them into the fire of Calvinism, and otherwhile into the waters of Arminianism, so called. And this declaring of themselves *toties quoties*, and from time to time, for the Contra-Remonstrant tenets, is their expiatory sacrifice, to cleanse them from the guilt of being thought Arminian, notwithstanding their never so palpable and clear asserting the Remonstrant principles at other times. Yea, let the Minister commit the foul crime of Arminianism never so openly in one part of his sermon, and but do penance in a fair contradiction in another part of it, hereby he stands *rectus in curia*; orthodoxism and soundness in the faith are imputed unto him. Yet it is no great matter of commendation for such men to be orthodox, who, if truth lieth in either part of the contradiction, (as it always doth, and of necessity must,) will be sure, I cannot say so properly to hold it, but to teach it. Whereas, they who shall in their doctrine deliver the express matter and substance of what was taught by the other, yea, though they should deliver it in the selfsame words and expressions, yet, unless they shall ever and anon be pulling down with their left hand what in this kind they build up with their right, they shall be debtors, and be compelled to bear the cross of Christ under the name and notion of Arminius. That whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ shall be saved, is the frequent, constant, and most avouched doctrine of those men, whose eye is so evil against their brethren, for standing at the left hand, as they suppose, of the truth, in the quinquarticular controversies. I am far from assuming unto myself any logical acumen, or sharpness of apprehension, to espy conclusions that lie any thing remote or deep down, in their principles or premises; and it would be folly in her exaltation for me to pretend to any thing above my line, this being so well known unto the world; yet neither, on the other hand, dare I speak or think any thing so far beneath the light of that understanding which God hath given me as to say or judge that I do not clearly see and apprehend the sense owned and professed by me in the said controversies, so contained and taught in that one doctrine lately mentioned, that by a ready, rational, and pregnant extraction I am able to evince and prove them from it, to the conviction, if not satisfaction, of any unprejudiced and considering man: Somewhat, I remember, I have briefly essayed upon this



account in some of my writings; and may, God entrusting me with life and health, and opportunity for the service, hereafter give a larger account of my apprehensions and confidence herein. I do not insist upon the doctrine specified as the only ground or proof upon which I conclude that those who profess and teach it profess and teach the clear and direct sense of those whom they expose to the hatred and reproach of poor ignorant souls, under the aspersive character of Arminians. The truth is, that very many sermons are preached by them, wherein, though the face of the doctrine they teach be set against one or other of those opinions, yet, in their use and application, they reconcile themselves unto them. And as the Roman orator observed, that the force of justice is such, and so great, that even thieves and robbers, both by sea and land, who live upon injustice and rapine, yet cannot live upon their trade without some practice of it amongst themselves.\* In like manner, the necessity and power of those tenets or doctrines, nicknamed Arminian, is so great for the accommodating and promoting the affairs of Christianity, that even those persons themselves, who get a good part of their subsistence in the world by decrying them, and declaiming against them, yet cannot make earnings of their profession, are not able to carry on their work of preaching, with any tolerable satisfaction to those that hear them, without employing and asserting them very frequently. Yea, the truth is, that the grounds and principles of the Remonstrant faith—for so we have been and are unhappily constrained to distinguish—are, as it were, *πειρατα τεχνης*, some of the choicest and most useful implements or tools, with which they work upon their art, whereby they get their living.

I begin to find, at least am in some thoughts, that my late acts of binding my hands, by public engagement, from contending with men of unfair and provoking principles, though misunderstood, hath encouraged some persons of this character to appear in their colours against me. I understand, by some of my friends, who, it seems, have had the opportunity and leisure

\* *Cujus [justitiæ] tanta est vis, ut nec illi quidem qui maleficio et scelere pascentur, possunt sine ulla particula justitiæ vivere. Nam qui eorum cuiquam, qui una latrocinantur, clam furatur aliquid aut eripit, is sibi ne in latrocinio quidem relinquit locum. Ille autem qui archi-pirata dicitur, nisi æquabiliter prædam dispertiat, aut occidetur a sociis, aut relinquetur, &c.*—M. T. CICERO. *Offic.*, l. 2.

which I have not yet had, to look into a book not long since published by one Mr. Hickman, a gentleman altogether unknown to me, and not heard of, until of late, casting mine eye upon a piece of Mr. Pierce's writing, I found such a name there, that this gentleman, pretending, in the said book, only an answer to Mr. Pierce, touching some things in his writings, at which he made himself aggrieved, two or three several times in this pamphlet stepped out of his way, into his genius, it seems, and disposition, to ease his mind, perhaps his conscience, in remonstrating unto the world, what high Remonstrant misdemeanors he had found in me. In one place of his book, as I had the passage transcribed by a steady hand, sent unto me, having charged the "English Tilenus" with "making the Triers to ask such questions of those that come before them, as in all probability never came into all their thoughts to ask," upon this his probable misdemeanor, himself making no more of it, he advanceth this Radamanthine and severe sentence, both against him and me: "Which," saith he, "is such a piece of impudence, as no one hath ventured to imitate him in, but that Ishmael of Coleman-street, whose hand being against all men, hath provoked all men, even to the common pamphleteer, to lift up a hand against him." The best is, in case Mr. Hickman's reproach here could, without the help of the figure *κατ' αντιφρασιν* be admitted for true, that Jeremy of Jerusalem was a man of strife, and a man of contention, to the whole earth, as well as "that Ishmael of Coleman-street," and yet was a true Prophet, and never the less like so to have been for the numerousness of his contests. Noah also was "a Preacher of righteousness;" yet his proportion of opposers in the world far exceeded mine; and the number of those who embrace my doctrine with their whole hearts far exceedeth the number of those who upon such terms received his. Yea, our Saviour himself testifieth, that, in the Church and nation of the Jews, they who had the more general approbation and applause were the false prophets, not the true: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." (Luke vi. 26.)

But because Mr. Hickman judgeth himself orthodox, in charging me with impudence; what, if it be found that the ingredients in the composition of his charge here levied against me, and proclaimed as with sound of trumpet and drum in the

ears of the world, be, notwithstanding, all errors, and broad untruths; will he not make a covering of shame for his own face for an accusation which he hath here drawn up against me? Let us fairly examine the case, and with as much love to the examinee as he or his friends can reasonably expect.

First. Whereas he chargeth me with "imitating his English Tilenus." Is not here a palpable and unscholarlike jeofail? Did Shimei, in reviling David, when his condition was low and mean in the world, imitate Mr. Hickman, in reproaching a Minister of Christ being under hatches, and trampled upon by men? or did not Mr. Hickman in this action rather imitate him? He that acteth before another, whatever his action be, doth not imitate him that followeth him in the same kind of acting; but, on the contrary, he imitates who follows the example or pattern that has been set before. If there be any similitude between Tilenus and me, in our respective handling of Mr. Hickman's Triers, Tilenus must bear the crime of imitation, not I, who was before him in what was done by me, relating to those his clients.

Secondly. Whereas he chargeth me with "venturing to imitate Tilenus, in making the Triers to ask such questions of those that come before them, as in all probability never came into all their thoughts to ask:" The truth is, that he chargeth me with the crime of such a courage or boldness whereof I was never conscious. I never made any venture to imitate Tilenus, in such an attempt as is here charged upon him; nor did I ever go before him in any such. I no where either challenge them or charge them with asking "such questions of those that come before them, which in all probability never came into all their thoughts to ask." If I charge them with asking any questions in the case, they are only such which themselves and their own consciences know that they do or did ask frequently, and from time to time. And for the questions which Tilenus himself maketh them to ask, as far as I remember, if they were not the same formally, *et in terminis*, yet they were the same materially, and in reality of import, which they were wont to ask. And for a man in his own words to report another man's sense uttered in his, is no such venturous piece of impudence; it is rather a piece of this calculation so to call it. But,

Thirdly. Whereas my accuser chargeth me with having my hand against all men: Neither is he orthodox in this, unless he

takes sanctuary under the wing of the good figure *synechdoche*, which hath had a privilege time out of mind to grant a pardon to men for this delinquency in speaking, namely, when meaning only some, they say all; or, intending only a part, yet mention or name the whole. For, otherwise, Mr. Hickman himself is, doubtless, a man,—though to measure him by himself, and so to please him, if it may be,—one of a thousand. Yet, my hand, certain I am, was never against him; no, nor his against me, that I know of, until Mr. Pierce of late touched him where, it seems, he was very tender, and hereby provoking his choler and scholarship together, put him into an athletic passion; under the fiery and fierce conduct whereof in his march his hap was to fall foul upon me, and so it fell to my share also to feel, as well as others, the weight of his learned faculty in reproaching. But it is a good sign on the truth's side, when her enemies retreat and flee to their patheticals; for this argues that their intellectuals fall short, and that their heart serveth them not to confide in them any further. Yet I cannot but mention this by the way as matter of sad consideration, although of too frequent occurrency, that men who have competent gifts and parts of wit and learning, whereby they might serve their generation and be useful unto many, yet, suffering themselves to be overgrown with a conceit that these gifts and parts are far greater than they are, they hereby stifle their opportunity, and give hostages unto sin and Satan, that they will never do any great matters against them. Such a conceit as this is a dead fly in their ointment; causing it to cast forth a stinking savour, and betrayeth them into many, and sometimes into sad, inconveniences. But to return to Mr. Hickman: Although the figure *synechdoche* interposeth with the best of her authority for the salvage of his, both credit and conscience, in charging me with the being of my hand against all men, yet this figure will prove but a cypher unto him for any such service, if his words in the charge be but strictly interpreted. For in true construction, and propriety of speech, his hand is with men, and for men, not against them, which is stretched out or lifted up against their errors only. These are they that are against them; and they that wage war against these fight on their side. I am not conscious to myself that my hand hath been against any man in any other sense than this. Nor is my severe accuser able, I believe, to prove the contrary: However, though I am no great lawyer,

yet, methinks, charges and accusations against men should be of little value or force which cannot be verified or made good but by the favour of figures. Yet,

Fourthly, and lastly, for this: The remaining article of his charge, namely, that I have provoked all men, even to the common pamphleteer, to lift up a hand against me, will keep him out of the New Jerusalem also, without the mediation of the said figure synecdoche. (See Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 15.) I know it would be offensive to the gentleman, if I should relate how many letters and messages otherwise of thankful acknowledgments of the grace of God given unto me, for the clearing of those doctrines of election, reprobation, &c., and of Christian encouragements to proceed in my way, &c., I have received time after time from several persons of considerable worth for godliness and knowledge, inhabiting in several parts of the nation, some of them Ministers of the Gospel, and others of them students in the University of good standing, &c. But because such a story as this would, I presume, be a heavy burden to a tender and weak shoulder, I shall forbear it. In the mean time Mr. Hickman must give me leave to tell him, and all the world, this plain story, namely, that I know certainly, infallibly, above and beyond all possibility of mistake, that he spake not by the Spirit of God, when he said that my hand hath provoked all men, even to the common pamphleteer, &c. He is an Athenian, and seems to have some sympathy in blood with him that laid claim to all the ships that came into Piræus as his own. But he may know, if he please, that there are seven thousand, and seven thousand more to them twice told, amongst the Israel of God in this nation, who either never bowed the knee of their judgment to the bloody Moloch of his reprobation, nor to any of his confederates, or else have repented of that superstitious and unadvised homage. But what emphatical reach or design he should have in mentioning the poor "common pamphleteer" disparaging-wise, as it is evident enough that he doth, and yet make him one of the retinue of those whom I have provoked to lift up their hands against me, I verily understand not. Doth he present him as an index, or significator, of the manners, quality, or condition of the whole retinue? Would he have an estimate made by him, who or what sort and kind of persons they are whom I have so provoked as to move them to lift up their hand against me? Or is it his mind, in singling him out from his company,

and showing him personally and particularly, to say unto his reader, *Crimine ab uno disce omnes*; that is, "Know this vile person, and know all the rest." I can hardly think that he should understand himself no better than thus to prevaricate with his interest and cause, and to associate himself, and his best-respected friends, with the "common pamphleteer." And yet I am to seek what other treasure he should think to make of him here. However, there is somewhat in the old saying,—

*Noscitur ex comite, qui non dignoscitur ex se.*

"Men's ways and manners when they hidden lie,  
Are oft betrayed by their company."

If those whom I have provoked make one genius with the "common pamphleteer," *res mea est in vado*, I am in no danger of just blame for doing that by which they have been provoked. For that saying of Seneca will at this turn guard me round about: *Recti argumentum est, pessimis displicere.* "The worst men are commonly most displeas'd with that which it best." And thus we see with how great weakness and unworthiness Mr. Hickman hath quitted himself, in levying the sore charge mentioned against a person that never did him nor thought him the least harm.

But in the passage now examined he hath only chastised me with his rods; elsewhere he makes a scourge for my back of scorpions. For thus my transcription reporteth him: "And indeed a spirit of most childish insultation seems to have possessed as many as have lift up an English pen against the orthodox in this quinquarticular controversy. I will instance only in Mr. John Goodwin, who, in the preface of his '*Triumviri*,' saith, that he hath not met with any thing in the writings of any or of all the three men contesting with him, which had in the least shaken his confidence concerning the truth of the things by him asserted, or that for the least space of time put him to any stand or loss in his understanding concerning them, or to seek what to answer to any thing they offer or object against any of them. Which lines the greatest charity must look upon as so much vapouring rhetoric dropped from his pen in the absence of judgment and conscience, or as an essay of the Spartan's valour, who, being struck down by a mortal blow, used to stop their meuths with earth, that they might not be

heard to quetch or groan, thereby to affright their fellows, or animate their enemies." Here is work enough for all day : But,

1. I perceive the truth of the old saying is not yet out of date :—

*Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit.*

“ Comply, and friends thou shalt create ;  
Speak truth, and look for mortal hate.”

I perceive, if, instead of speaking the truth in the passage cited by Mr. Hickman, I should have comported with him in his sense and notion, and have said that the three men had given my confidence a mortal wound, and had objected such things against my tenets which put me to a stand, and that I knew not which way to turn me for an answer unto them, or the like, this might have purchased me the right hand of his fellowship, and have restored me to the synagogue of the orthodox, out of which I was cast long since, and have remained an outcast several years. When the Lord Christ had said unto the Jews, that God was his Father, and that he knew him, which they did not, this saying, as it seems, was ill resented by them, their desire being that he should unsay it, and that he should not assume unto himself any other or any more knowledge of God than what they had. “ If I should say,” saith Christ, “ I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I know him,” &c. (John viii. 55.) If I should have said that I met with that in the writings of the three men of whom Mr. Hickman speaks which did put me to a stand, &c., I should herewith have pleased him ; because, in so saying, I should have complied with him, and made myself like unto him. But,

2. Mr. Hickman arraigning me for the high misdemeanour of speaking untruth, (for his charging me to have written as I did, “ in the absence of judgment and conscience,” amounteth to no less,) he should have done well to observe the due process of law and reason, and first have made substantial proof of the crime or matter of fact objected, before he had proceeded to a sentence of condemnation ; and have produced some argument or objection, one or more, out of the writings of some of the three men, which he should substantially prove did put me to a stand or loss in my understanding what to answer. If he could name any such argument or objection from any of the said men, that to his knowledge did the feat which he presumes was done, though I deny it, I mean, which did put me to a stand, &c.,

this would not justify him, unless he could give a sufficient account of such his knowledge unto others. For the rule is, *Non esse, et non apparere, æquiparantur in jure*; "That which is not, and that which appears not, are of the same consideration in law." And yet I judge it an easy matter for him to give an account of all the knowledge he hath in this kind. But the law of conscience and Christianity forbids the sacrificing of any man's reputation at the loudest instance of probabilities or conjectures; at least of such which have no more weight or reason in them than those upon which Mr. Hickman hath offered up mine upon the service, whether of his pleasure or displeasure. But if either he, or any of his colleagues in judgment, could and would be pleased to afford me the interview of any such argument or objection against my tenets, by-named erroneous, whether out of the writings of some of the three men, or out of their own treasuries, or out of the abundance of any of their judgment, which would put me to such a stand that I should not remove, or to such a loss in my understanding that I could never recover or repair, they would be the best benefactors unto me in the good things of this world that I have met with these many years; especially they would have been such unto me, had they befriended me in that kind heretofore, whilst and when I was more capable of the courtesies and benefactions of the world than now I am, expecting daily to remove into that climate where the sunshine of this world hath no warming or cheering influence at all. For certain I am, that those tenets, from under the conscience whereof I might well have been delivered by the means specified, have divided between the world and me, and kept many the good things thereof from me, by reason of their insupportableness unto the greater part of men, and more especially unto the great men in the state of my sojourning, and to those who by their consent (yea, they love to have it so) exercise dominion over their faith, under the impertinent claim of being orthodox, and sound in their judgments from the one end of them even unto the other, in matters appertaining unto God. I have neither any disposition within, nor occasion without, to turn plaintiff against the world; a man with a competency of wisdom may very well be content with my portion in it. For my good God (*etiam in vitâ mundi Minerva*) hath fed me and mine with food convenient, yea, and clothed and harboured us accordingly. And the truth is,



that for things greater than these, it is best receiving them at the resurrection. Or,

3. If it be not matter of untruth, in my words of his angry observation lately mentioned, wherewith and for which my accuser intended to humble me, but rather the subject-matter or inward thought imported in the words, as that I should arrogate unto myself an attainment so incredible and rare, as not to be put to a stand or be at a loss in my understanding what to answer to any thing I had met with in any the writings of the three men; if this, I say, be the sword that passed through the soul of my accuser, and be apprehended by him so highly criminal, as to deserve that heaped measure of indignation which he hath troubled his learning to pour upon it, I shall, for the composure of his spirit, and for the dissolving of the unhappy appearance of so much guilt where none was, administer unto him that well-approved *dosis* of Augustine: *Non est arrogantia, sed fides, prædicare ea, quæ accepisti*. "Upon occasion to profess or declare what a man hath received of undeserved favour and bounty from God, is no point of arrogance or pride, but of faith." And the truth is, that God hath so blessed me in the labour and travail of my soul, about those great points of election, reprobation, the intent or extent of the death of Christ, &c., wherein I have with some diligence, and with no less integrity and simplicity of heart, exercised myself for several years past; that before the coming forth of any thing printed by the three men against me, I was master of such principles and grounds, partly from the light of nature and common impressions found in the hearts and consciences of all men concerning God, partly from the writings of learned and worthy men, as well of the Contra-Remonstrant party, as Calvin, Beza, Musculus, &c., as the Remonstrant, but chiefly from the Scriptures, by which I was able to give myself present satisfaction about any thing I met with objected in my way by any of those three men. And I partly believe that Mr. Hickman himself, though but a young man, comparatively, yet conceiveth of himself at not a much lower rate than to be able, without much study, to maintain the peace of his present judgment against all the attempts that either I, in any of my writings, or any other of my judgment in theirs, have made upon him to disturb him. However, if he should make a declaration or profession of such a tenor or import, I, judging him to be a man of conscience and

sober-minded, should not reflect upon him, nor do I judge it my duty so to do, as a man speaking that which was not, nor yet conclude him to be a man of a lofty and confident, arrogant, or self-willed spirit; much less should I arraign him openly as a person guilty of such misdemeanours. I confess it is very incident to men to abound in their own sense to such a degree as to presume that they want nothing wherewith to answer any man that shall oppose it. Indeed, if he should declare or profess after this manner, or the like, namely, that he is resolved, whatsoever hath been written, or whatsoever shall be written, by any man or men whatsoever, yea, or whatsoever can be written, in opposition to his present judgment in those points, that yet he will stand by this judgment unto death, this, I confess, would put me into thoughts of another nature concerning him. But I have not put him to the trouble of any such consideration as this about me; my profession, with which, notwithstanding, he vexeth his impatient soul, being of a far different spirit. But,

4. And lastly: As to those words, “And, indeed, a spirit of most childish insultation seems to have possessed as many as have lift up an English pen against the orthodox in this quinquarticular controversy;” I am real in believing the truth of these words, but not in the meaning of him that wrote them. But admit his sense and meaning in them for truth, never was the “spirit of childish insultation” more childishly reprovèd, or with less authority and power, in respect of the tenor and notion of the reproof. For the credit of that old saying of grave Cato is authentic to this day:—

*Turpe est doctori, cum culpa redarguit ipsam;*

“A burning shame it is when teachers will  
Reprove, and yet themselves commit the ill.”

Or, is there any species of childish insultation more impertinent and weak, than *ante pugnam canere victoriam*, “to sing victory before the battle be begun,” or whilst it is yet with great heat of courage and confidence prosecuted and maintained by the opposite side? Or, is there any solecism in logic broader or more illogical than that which they call *petitio principii*, when that is presumed or taken for granted which is the main question in dispute? Or, when Mr. Hickman takes the honour unto himself and his party in the quinquarticular controversy,

of being the orthodox, and more signally and peculiarly such in the said controversy, doth he not cry victory before the battle, or whilst his adversaries, in good order, with their troops unbroken, yea, undaunted, without the loss of so much as an inch of their ground, keep the field? Or, is it not, by a near-hand interpretation, the very spirit and quick of the controversy between him and them, which of the two be the orthodox? Yet Mr. Hickman gives us this pill to swallow without chewing, that he and his have the right end of the staff, are the orthodox in the points and questions depending. He doth not walk by the King of Israel's advice unto Benhadad; (1 Kings xx. 11;) for he hath but newly girded his harness to him, and yet boasteth as if he were putting it off. But I would gladly here know of him, how, by what title or right of claim, he and his come to be the orthodox? I am afraid they came not to the honour as orderly or honestly as Aaron did to the priesthood; but that they took it unto themselves, being never called to it by God or the truth. Our Saviour, even in his own case, acknowledgeth equity in that maxim of law, that a man's testimony of or for himself is invalid. "If I," saith he, "bear witness of myself, my witness is not true," that is, not true or valid in course of law. (John v. 31.) I never heard, nor can I believe, unless Mr. Hickman or some of his friends could lend me their faith, that they hold the title of orthodox by any other right of claim than that by which the Jews held that honour which they received "one of another." (John v. 44.) Nor do I know any reason why they should bear away the bell of orthodoxism from their brethren, their friendly adversaries, unless it be because they are the far better ringers, ever and anon, upon occasion and without occasion, pealing and sounding it in our ears, that they are the orthodox; and as the Jews of old made great treasure of their *templum Domini*, and thought themselves safe enough under the protection of it, ever and anon having it in their mouths, and importunately urging it to stave off the threatenings of the Prophets of God against them for their sins, as God himself, by his Prophet Jeremy, expresseth their devotion in this kind, "The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these." (Jer. vii. 4.) So is the covert of orthodoxism in sacred request with the men we speak of: When they have invested themselves with it they are as in a castle of war; there is no coming at them, no touching

them with any charge or imputation of error, heresy, blasphemy, or the like; ever and anon in their writings, in their preachings, in their discoursings, they are, in effect, saying, "The orthodox, the orthodox, the orthodox are these," pointing at or meaning themselves, and those that are of their judgment. When they have once given such an account of their faith as to be admitted to commence orthodox, they are as secure from infection in their judgments with any of those noisome and poisonous creatures, errors, mistakes, heresies, as a room built or ciled with Irish oak is from the danger of any spider's web. But, doubtless, there can no sufficient reason or ground in equity be given, why, *pendente lite*, the matter being under so sober and serious a dispute between them and their brethren of opposite judgment, as it is which of them are the orthodox, they should antedate the issue and success of the contest, and run away with the crown upon their own heads before they have won it, yea, if standers by and impartial men may have leave to judge, before they are like to win it. So then, let the word "orthodox," in Mr. Hickman's passage lately mentioned, be taken orthodoxly, and signify those who are, as I verily believe, orthodox indeed in the controversy he speaks of, and then without controversy what he saith is most true, "That a spirit of most childish insultation seems to have possessed as many as have lift up an English pen against the orthodox in the quinquarticular controversy." Of the truth of the words, in his sense of orthodox, he gave but one instance only, and this strained and stretched beyond its staple, as hath been proved. But of the truth of them in my sense of the said word orthodox, I have prevented him, somewhile since, with two instances, pregnant and uncontrollable, of two men, both of them great Doctors and men of renown, famous in the congregation of the Contra-Remonstrants, Dr. Kendall, and Dr. John Owen, whom, in my preface to my *Triumviri*, and in the discourse itself, I have produced as witnesses, beyond exception, against themselves as to the point of the delinquency, whereof Mr. Hickman speaks, I mean "most childish insultation;" and in this preface have given him measure heaped up, with a third instance in the same kind, of a person highly, I question not, esteemed by him, though not so well known unto him, I mean himself.

As for his Spartan valour, if his breast be ennobled with it, or if so much as a spark of it warms his blood, I doubt not but

he will have an opportunity to show it by that time Mr. Pierce hath done with him.

Good reader, I have detained thee over-long with an apologetical story of no great consequence in respect of myself, nor, haply, unto thee. Only my hope is, that the person concerned in it with myself may, through the blessing of God upon his perusal and second thoughts of it, advance somewhat towards the better understanding of himself. I call God for a record upon my soul, that I bear him not the least grain of any grudge or ill-will; I love myself better than not to love him. And that I do not neglect or despise him, I think the pains I have now bestowed, to set myself straight in his thoughts, will sufficiently witness for me.

Nay, upon the account of what I have heard concerning the genius and strain of his book, I judge him a man commendably pregnant; and that, if he shall take heed of wronging his strength by over-pragmaticness and confidence in undertakings, or his conscience by unadvised clashing with the truth, he may make happy earnings of serving his generation.

Thus far Mr. Hickman.

Concerning the sequel of the papers now in thy hand, the argument or subject-matter of it is an essay or endeavour to make,

1. A discovery of all the causes, from the first to the last, as far as they are either held forth or insinuated in the Scriptures, of that mysterious and weighty business, justification.

2. To assign unto every of these causes respectively their appropriate interests, interposures, and contributions, in, and about, and towards, this great and happy state of a sinner.

As there is no ground in Christian religion that hath, I conceive, more springs in it of questions and sublime contemplations than this of justification, so neither is there any about which the Holy Ghost, to my observation, hath employed so many pens, especially in that variety of discourse and inquiry. Intending only an epitome or summary comprisal of the more material points or difficulties relating unto the subject we speak of, we had no opportunity to insist upon any particular at large. That which was chiefly projected and desired by this little piece was to make diligent and narrow search after the different co-operations of those numerous causes which God hath judged meet to employ, ordinarily, according to their respective natures and capacities of acting, in and about the investing of a sinner with that great blessedness of justification which he hath contrived

and provided for him. That knowledge in matters of religion which is so commonly presumed to be in professors of this age, above the former, is rather a bulk than a body of knowledge; and though it commonly passeth under the name of knowledge, yet in propriety of speaking it is not so, but rather a confident persuasion or belief that things are so or so as they apprehend them to be. Which belief, though it answers the reality and being of that which is believed, and so, as it were by accident, be true, yet it is not knowledge, nor doth it argue knowledge, unless the believer understands the reason of what he thus believeth, or at least a substantial ground why he thus believeth it. Yea, in all matters of doubtful disputation from the Scriptures, for men to pretend or allege the Scriptures as a reason or ground of what they believe signifieth little, unless they should give a good and substantial reason to prove that to be the true sense and meaning of the Scriptures, which must countenance and confirm their opinion for truth against their adversary. Yea, when two shall contend for their respective opinions, being opposite the one unto the other, from or by the authority of the Scriptures, if neither of them be able to give any competent account why they interpret or understand the Scriptures so or so, in comportance with their opinion, as sometimes it happeneth, they do but beat the air with contesting, and both their opinions after the contest are but in the same condition of uncertainty or of being rejected in which they were before. It was a right saying of the philosopher, *Scire, est per causam scire*. Knowledge, emphatically so called, is when the reason or cause of a thing is known, as well as the thing itself. But the reason or ground of a man's knowledge may be one thing, and reason or cause of the thing known quite another. A clear apprehension of the former may produce certainty of knowledge; but it is the like apprehension of the latter that causeth the more perfect and satisfactory knowledge.

In this brief survey of the large field of justification, I have endeavoured perspicuity all along, and I trust with as good success as brevity is wont to find, or well knows how to expect. The several causes of justification I have caused to stand forth, one by one, respectively, no one encumbering or entangling his fellow, yet all conspiring and joining hand in hand to help a poor sinner on with his royal robe of justification.

This piece, though small, may, I conceive, do service to some

that, in some particulars, are at a loss in their judgments about the carriage and contrivance of the business of justification in the counsel of God.

If thou meetest with any thing which at first sight doth not approve itself unto thee, lay it aside, but do not cast it away until thou hast considerably reviewed it the third time.

I have read of a statuary whose workmanship looked better and gave better contentment by time. It may be now and then I have taken a step or two out of the common road; but it still hath been for thy profit, not for any pleasure I take in this kind of digression. For in matter of doctrine I never leave the way that is most occupied by pious, sober, and learned men, as far as I know it, unless it be either to carry some stumbling-stone out of it, or else to fetch in somewhat to make it more smooth and pleasant. And I believe it would soon double and treble my accommodations and comforts in the world, if I could make a covenant with my judgment and conscience to say amen to all that is sung for orthodox.

—*Sed ut valeas multa dolenda feres.*

A good conscience will not live upon sacrifices that cost men nothing.

But, good reader, I have, I fear, committed a solecism in manners, in keeping thee thus long in discourse by the way. That the ensuing lines shall to any degree balance thy inconvenience or repair thy loss, I cannot undertake; in many cases it lieth as much or more in the patient than in the agent what the issue or success of the action shall be. And I doubt not but that an ingenious and prudent behaviour towards them, in thy perusal of them, will win their heart unto thee, and teach them how to build thee up in thy most holy faith, and so to enrich thee with better treasure than of silver, gold, and precious stones.

The blessing of Him that justifieth the ungodly, that openeth the eyes of the blind, that raiseth them that are bowed down, that loveth the righteous, be upon thine understanding, judgment, conscience, and memory, in the reading of this little piece, and upon all thy conscientious applications of thyself otherwise, unto the things of thine eternal peace.

Thine, cordially addicted, both to please thee and to displease thee for thy good,

May 31st, 1659.

JOHN GOODWIN.

# BRIEF EXPLICATION

OF THE

## SEVERAL CAUSES OF JUSTIFICATION,

(AS THEY WERE MENTIONED IN THE TITLE-PAGE, AND ARE FOUND  
IN THE SCRIPTURES, AS WAS SHOWED IN THE NEXT PAGE  
PRECEDING,)

TOGETHER WITH THEIR PROPER AND DISTINCT INTERESTS IN THAT  
GREAT WORK, AND RESPECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS  
THE RAISING AND PRODUCTION OF IT.

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### SECTION I.

HOW GOD JUSTIFIETH, OR WHAT HE CONTRIBUTETH TOWARDS  
JUSTIFICATION.

**GOD** is the first and great Father and Founder of that blessed estate into which a sinner is translated by believing, and which the Scripture commonly terms justification. That which God contributes towards this estate or condition is, 1. Will or a willingness that such a thing as the justification of a sinner should be. 2. Contrivance. 3. Authority. 4. Assistance or help for actual attainment.

First. There was no necessity, either of justice or equity, much less of constraint, lying upon God ever to permit such a thing as the justification of a sinner to be, or such a state to be so much as once heard or thought of in the world: Therefore, he being at liberty in this case whether he would cause the justification of a creature that had sinned to be numbered either amongst the things that are, or amongst the things that are not, and there being none but he, or without him, able to umpire or determine this great affair, evident it is that he gave his consent



unto it, and that, without his contribution of will and good pleasure towards the being of it, it never had had being but in his own understanding only, where the world of pure possibles, and things that might have been, but never actually shall be, as well as the world of things that are, and of things that shall be, is situated.

Secondly. God contributes to the said happy effect of the sinner's justification contrivement also; and this, 1. In respect of the nature or form of the thing itself. 2. Of such things or means which render it feasible or producible with the salvage of his own honour, as well in point of wisdom as of justice. 3. And lastly: In respect of such means by which it may be actually attained by the sinner.

1. The nature or form of that justification we speak of consists in remission of sins, as is more largely proved in the sequel of the discourse, and this by divine contrivement and disposure only.

2. God projecteth the method, means, and carriage of all things requisite for the orderly and regular feasibility or producibility of it; as, that his only-begotten Son should take flesh of a virgin and become man; that he should take upon him the form of a servant; that he should be delivered up or left unto the wills of sinful, wicked, and malicious men, and so be obnoxious to suffer an ignominious and painful death; that, having suffered death, he should lie three days and three nights in the grave, and then rise again; to omit several other particulars in this kind, without which, could or should it be supposed that he would or might have justified a sinner, it would or must have been without such a declaration, or manifestation, at least, of the glory both of his justice and wisdom therein, as with which he hath now contrived it by the method and means specified.

3. And lastly: God hath projected likewise, and this with an eye, too, to the glory of both those attributes now mentioned, the way and means how the sinner may come to interest himself in the blessed estate of this justification; as, namely, by hearing the Gospel preached, the counsel of God concerning his justification opened, by understanding, considering, and believing it, with a sound and living faith, and such which is operative by love. The Scripture gives a loud and distinct sound of all these things; and somewhat further of them hereafter.

Thirdly. God contributeth yet further towards the justification of a sinner, by his sovereign authority. For by means hereof, that law or decree, according to the tenor and by virtue of which the sinner is justified, (of which somewhat more presently,) becomes inviolable, uncontrollable, and not liable to any over-rulement or nullification, by any power or authority whatsoever; according to that of the Apostle Paul, “It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” (Rom. viii. 33, 34;) meaning, that there is no person or creature whatsoever that hath any authority or power to rescind or make invalid that act, or rather that law of God, wherein and according unto which he justifieth a sinner; which, nevertheless, might be done, and so the justification of the believing sinner fall to the ground, and his person, notwithstanding his justification by God, be liable to condemnation, if the authority of God by which he is justified were subordinate, and not sovereign or supreme.

4. And lastly: God contributeth towards the justification of a sinner, *in actu exercito*, that real help and assistance by his Spirit, in conjunction with other means of an external nature, by which the sinner is enabled to believe in Jesus Christ, and this with a living and operative faith; and so by virtue of that decree or law of his concerning justification, “He that believeth in my Son Jesus Christ is or shall hereby be justified,” he comes to be interested in that state of blessedness, as David terms it, I mean, justification.

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## SECTION II.

### HOW THE GRACE OF GOD CONTRIBUTETH TOWARDS THE JUSTIFICATION OF A SINNER.

SECONDLY. The grace of God, as it importeth the divine attribute commonly known by that name, (for sometimes the word signifieth the act or acting of this attribute, and otherwhile the happy success or effect of this acting,) contributeth towards the justification of a sinner, as it effectually disposeth him to show kindness and do good where there is no preceding merit; nor any provocation, motive, or inducement administered why he should either show the one or do the other; and more particu-

larly, as it thus disposeth him to give his only-begotten Son unto those to whom he was no ways indebted or engaged for any courtesy, and to impute faith for righteousness unto, that is, to justify, a believing sinner, who hath deserved no favour or respects of love, either in this kind or any other, from him, but the contrary. In this respect and consideration we are said to be "justified freely by his grace," (Rom. iii. 24; Titus iii. 7;) and to be saved by grace. (Eph. ii. 5, 8.) We are said to be "justified freely," or *gift-wise*, δωρεαν, "by his grace," not so much, I conceive, if at all, because we are justified upon the account of the satisfaction made by Christ for our sins in his death; in this respect we may rather be said to be justified righteously or justly, than freely and by grace. But we are said to be justified freely by the grace of God, because Jesus Christ, by whom we are justified, and this justly and righteously on God's part, was given freely and out of mere grace by God to bring this great blessedness upon us, we having no ways not only not obliged him to do any such great and worthy thing for us, but, on the other hand, wholly disobliged him from us as his creatures, and provoked him by our rebellion against him. So that, in strictness of notion, the grace of God by which we are said to be freely justified is not merely or simply grace, but, in the Apostle's emphatical expression, *χαρις υπερπερισσευουσα*, (Rom. v. 20,) that is, *Grace in her greatest super-redundancy and height of exaltation*. To do good where or from whence none hath been received, is the genuine property of grace; to do good against evil, or where and from whence injury and unkindnesses have been received, is the property of grace well-advanced, and of considerable growth and strength in the soul. But to do the greatest good which the doer is capable of doing, where and from whence he hath received the greatest evil which he is capable of suffering, is the property of grace *υπερπερισσευουσης*, as it were, *overgrown*, and, *magnifying itself above itself*, in any limited or created perfection. This is a true and lively character of that grace by, from, or through which, as the Scripture speaks, we are justified and saved. So, then, the grace of God justifieth us as it moved and prevailed with him, 1. By the gift of Jesus Christ to put himself into a capacity of justifying us as, or though, sinners and offenders: and, 2. By acting according to this capacity to and in our actual justification.

## SECTION III.

HOW THE DECREE OF GOD WORKETH TOWARDS JUSTIFICATION.

THIRDLY. Justification may be attributed to the decree of God, I mean to the decree of God concerning it, because or as this ratifieth and establisheth it according to the terms on which it is granted and taketh place. This is that which maketh faith in Jesus Christ available and effectual unto justification, which giveth virtue and force unto it, I mean unto faith, for the production and raising of so glorious and blessed an effect as the justification, and, consequently, the salvation, of a sinner is. "This is the will," that is, the pleasure, purpose, or decree, "of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life," (John vi. 40,) which includes his justification. By the way, these words in this passage, "which seeth the Son," do not express any essential part of the will or decree of God concerning either the justification or salvation of a sinner, but are inserted by Christ occasionally only, namely, because the Jews, with whom he now reasoned, had the corporeal or external sight of him, and yet believed not on him, (verse 36,) without which he affirmeth unto them, in the place cited, that such a sight of him would stand them in no stead as to matter of justification or salvation; because the will of God required of men faith in him, as well with the sight as without the sight of him, in order to the obtaining of this. For, that the corporeal beholding of Christ's person is not necessary by any decree of God or otherwise, either for the justification or salvation of men, is evident by those words of Christ unto Thomas: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 29.) Now there is no blessedness of man without justification. (Rom. iv. 6—8.) So then it is the decree, purpose, will, or pleasure of God that gives being unto justification, in that way wherein and upon those terms whereon it is now obtained. Faith in Christ, considered in itself, and apart from the decree of God in that behalf, although it be a means or condition of the best and most proper complexion or consideration for God to entertain or pitch upon in a decree for justification, yet would it not be a proper or

sufficient means to justify any man ; because, in such a consideration, I mean as separated or divided from the justifying decree of God, as it hath neither any natural nor moral dignity or worth commensurable to so high and sacred an effect as justification ; so neither would or could it have any instituted or superadded authority from any other hand whatsoever, whereby to carry or achieve it. Whereas, if it be meet to suppose that the justifying decree of God could or would have joined itself, or taken into communion with itself any other thing, habit, or act ; as, suppose love, humility, patience, or whatever besides faith in Christ, for the work of justification ; this, by virtue of the sovereign authority or force of the divine institution or decree, in conjunction with it, would have justified all those in whom they had been found. Those ordinances, vestments, ceremonies, and observations recorded and described Lev. viii., and elsewhere, as enjoined by God under the law for the creation and consecration of Aaron and his successors, together with the inferior Priests of the tribe of Levi, into their respective offices of the Levitical priesthood, were, simply and in themselves considered, very comely and proper for the investiture and making of Priests of this order ; yet would no use or application of them, to any person or persons, of what tribe or family soever, have made any Priest to serve at God's altar, either with acceptance unto him or benefit unto the people, had there not a divine institution or law from God interceded for the authorizing or validating of these things, to the making or constituting of such Priests ; in which respect the law is said to make men High Priests, (Heb. vii. 28,) and, consequently, may as well be said to make Priests of the inferior order likewise. In like manner, though there be an aptitude in faith in Christ, above any other grace or qualification, for the justification of a sinner, yet that which makes it actually and effectually justifying is the decree or will of God in that behalf. Yea, the death of Christ itself would not be justifying, as now it is, did not the will of God interpose for the authorizing of it in that kind ; according to what we read, Heb. x. 10 : " By the which will," namely, of God, " we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." So that the offering of itself of the body of Jesus Christ doth not sanctify, and by the same reason doth not justify, men, but as appointed or ordained by the will of God hereunto ; or, to speak more

warily and properly, not without the authoritative concurrence of the will of God with it for the exhibition of such a benefit or blessing unto the world.

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## SECTION IV.

HOW OR WHAT THE AUTHORITY OF GOD CONTRIBUTETH  
TOWARDS JUSTIFICATION.

FOURTHLY. The authority of God, being, as hath been said, sovereign and supreme, and so the act, award, and determination of it not obnoxious to any defeisance, check, or annulment by any other authority whatsoever, contributes unto the justification of a sinner, I mean unto the justification which himself hath contrived and declared for such in his word, full and final, and irreversible ratification and establishment. This is that which the Apostle clearly supposeth or implies where he demands, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" that is, of those who believe, as is evident. "It is God that justifieth." As if he should say, If it were any other but God who should justify them, although in the same way wherein God now justifieth them; yet might their justification be repealable, at least by God, and further matter of accusation might be laid to their charge. But now God being he that justifieth them, and there being none above him nor yet equal unto him in authority, there is no fear that their justification should be obstructed, rescinded, or made invalid by any whosoever; or that any further crime or matter of guilt should be charged upon them, that should be of force by any equitable law whatsoever, or otherwise to condemn them.

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## SECTION V.

HOW CHRIST JUSTIFIETH.

FIFTHLY. Christ, as God, may be said to justify in all those considerations or respects wherein justification hath been ascribed unto God; yea, being one and the same God in nature and

essence with the Father, he acteth and doeth all the same things, in reference to the creature, in conjunction and communion with him.

Secondly. Being Θεανθρωπος, *God and Man*, or man subsisting in the human nature personally united to the Godhead, by the willing offering up of himself as a Lamb without spot in sacrifice unto God the Father, he made atonement for sinners in such a sense wherein the Scripture is to be understood, when it so speaketh, notwithstanding his justice and perfect hatred of sin; yea, notwithstanding his threatening of Adam and all his posterity with death, in case of his sinning. The death of a person of that transcendent worth and dignity was in true esteem, and so judged by the unerring understanding and wisdom of God, a valuable and equitable consideration why he should actually, and without any other thing intervening, pardon the sin of the world, as it is called, John i. 29; that is, the sin of Adam, as imputed or communicated in the guilt of it unto all his posterity, together with all the actual sins of all such of his posterity as should believe in him. To say that Christ by his sufferings merited either the justification or salvation of those who should believe in him, as it is no Scripture expression, so neither is it exegetical or explicative of any Scripture expression, nor, as far as at present my memory serveth me, expressive of any Scripture notion; and, however, it is too narrow and scant an expression of that grace of God in the death of Christ, herein commended by him both unto men and angels; unless we shall exclude from this grace all infants dying in infancy, or before they are arrived at a capacity of believing. And as it is not so proper to say that the blood of bulls and goats, &c., under the law merited those Levitical purgations or sanctifications, which yet they who were ceremonially unclean obtained by them, as to say that they were a competent and sufficient satisfaction, and so esteemed by God, for such uncleannesses, and so dissolved the guilt contracted by them; in like manner, it is more agreeable to Scripture, both notion and phrase, and to the nature of the thing itself, to say that Christ, in or by his death, being so highly considerable, as it was, made or gave satisfaction for the sins of men, and hereby made way for the pardon and remission of them by God, than to say, that by his death he merited the pardon of these sins, or the justification of a sinner. For, in propriety of speech, a person is not said to

merit any thing for another, but for himself only. When a man hath unjustly taken away any thing from another, or hath any way injured him, his friend, by giving a reasonable or valuable consideration to the person injured for the damage sustained by him, may properly be said to make satisfaction for him, or for the wrong done by him; by reason whereof he is in equity free from being impleaded or molested by law, or otherwise, by him to whom he had done the wrong. But it is somewhat improper to say that a man in this case, by making satisfaction for his friend, merited that freedom for him. So when a man gives a price or sum of money for the ransom of a captive, it is not usual nor proper to say that hereby he meriteth his liberty. A man is very improperly said to merit that which he purchaseth at a price, whether for himself or for another. Now that which Christ in or by his death contributeth towards the justification of a sinner, is frequently in the Scriptures expressed under the notion of a purchase, of a price paid, of a ransom, redemption, &c., but no where of merit: "And ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price;" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20;) meaning, out of the hand and power, and from under the guilt, of sin, by the blood of Jesus Christ, whose, therefore, you are by right of purchase, to honour and serve him. (See 1 Cor. vii. 23; 2 Peter ii. 1.) So Matt. xx. 28, and Mark x. 45: "And to give his life a ransom for many." So again: "Who gave his life a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) So also, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." (Titus ii. 14.) So, "Christ hath redeemed us," &c. (Gal. iii. 13.) "And hast redeemed us to God." (Rev. v. 9. See also Rom. iii. 24; 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; Heb. ix. 12, &c.) And besides, I do not see any reason why it may not be as truly and properly said that God the Father, in giving his only-begotten Son out of his bosom to die for the justification of men, and salvation thereupon, contributed by way of merit towards their justification and salvation, as Christ by dying. And, verily, why that act of God the Father should not be reputed every whit as great, in point of merit, in reference to the great business of justification, as the act of Christ in offering up of himself by death in order thereunto, I apprehend not. Certain I am, that the Scripture commendeth and setteth it forth upon the same, or as great, terms of grace, honour, and admiration as the other. (John iii. 16; Rom. viii.



31, 32; v. 8; to omit other places of like import.) Now, of the two, it is, I conceive, less probable and Gospel-like, that the respective contributions of the Father and the Son towards justification should be of the one and the same kind, than of a different. Yet of the same kind they would be, if both should contribute thereunto by way of merit. Nor do I see how any clear place will be left for praise and thanks unto God the Father from persons justified, for their justification, in case it may be said that Christ properly merited their justification. For to render or give unto a person only that which in rigour or strictness of justice either himself or another hath merited or deserved for him, especially where no occasion or tentation is in the way to persuade him to do otherwise, is scarce any matter of praise to him that doeth it, nor of engagement unto thankfulness upon him who receiveth only his own in such a case. It is true, there is somewhat a like consideration upon a valuable price paid for that which is bought or purchased. If a friend lays down a sum of money for the purchase or procurement of my liberty, and this fully commensurable therewith, and according to agreement with him of whom he is to purchase it, I am thus far, or in this respect, no great debtor of thanks unto him who sets me at liberty upon such terms. But in case he from whom I am to receive my liberty, if I ever enjoy it, being a prudent and just man, and withal at liberty to keep me in bondage for ever, what terms soever should be offered for my ransom, and moreover shall be so principled, that in regard of my foul misdemeanour, by which I became a captive, he could not condescend to grant my liberty, but upon terms highly material and considerable; in this case, I say, I shall be a signal debtor unto him for my liberty, if he shall so far commiserate my misery as to move any of his friends or relations to stand by me in this my great exigent, and to do or suffer that for the procurement of my liberty, upon which he can and will willingly grant it, and especially he being no ways engaged unto me by any service done by me, or courtesy received from me.

Now this is the case between God the Father and men, in the gracious business of justification. First. He was at full liberty, men having sinned, whether ever to have justified any person, or not, on what terms soever. Secondly. Being by nature infinitely prudent and just, he could not judge it meet for him, in case he should be willing or inclinable to justify men,

to do it otherwise than upon terms every ways becoming those his attributes. Thirdly. Such terms as these were not to be procured or had but only from Jesus Christ, and him voluntarily submitting himself unto death for this end. Fourthly. And lastly : Jesus Christ, though willing both to do and to suffer whatever he did in either kind, for the justification of men, yet would not have undertaken the business, nor actually either done or suffered any thing in order to their justification, had not the Father been willing to part with him, yea, and actually sent him into the world with order and commission from himself both to do and suffer whatsoever should be requisite on his part thereunto. (John iii. 16.) In these respects, besides others, the generation of men are most signally indebted unto God the Father for their justification, notwithstanding a valuable consideration or price laid down for the procurement of it.

But concerning the word “merit,”\* since it is so generally used by Protestant Divines, and other learned and worthy men, in their writings and discourses about justification, to express the congruity, complete sufficiency, yea, and super-sufficiency, of the doings and sufferings of Christ for the procuring of it, and this without any inconvenience, as far as I know, occasioned thereby, I shall not contend for the laying it aside, or censure in the least those that shall use it; only I conceive that in points and doctrines of so mysterious a nature, and so weighty a consequence, as the doctrine of justification is, it is safest, and best for edification, to use such terms which do with greatest propriety and strictness of notion answer and unfold the words and phrases wherein God himself hath in the Scriptures delivered his mind and counsel in such things unto us.

If it be here, objection-wise, demanded, “But if Christ made a full and complete satisfaction by his death for the sins of men, and hereby satisfied the justice and wisdom of God, so that he cannot justly or equitably require any thing further, either from men themselves, or from any other on their behalf, in order to their discharge, absolution, or justification from their sins, how or upon what account doth he still capitulate with men about their justification, imposing faith upon them,—a

\* It is not unlike but that in some of my former writings, before I made a more narrow search into the strict import of the word, I myself have used it in that ordinary notion.

faith working or apt to work by love, yea, and works themselves too, according to the judgment of some, whose words in this case are not guilty, if their sense be innocent,—in the nature of a condition, without the performance whereof no justification is to be had, notwithstanding the satisfaction made by Christ for their sins? Or how is the satisfaction made by Christ complete and full, if justification be not given upon it, without the addition or intervening of some qualification or performance in men? And if God, having received full satisfaction from Christ in his death for the respective debts or sins of men, should yet require satisfaction at their hands also in punishment, for the same debt, whether they believe in him, or no, should he not be unjust? Or is it consistent with justice to demand the same debt twice, or to exact a second satisfaction, when one hath been given already, and this every ways complete and full, and so acknowledged by the creditor and receiver himself?" I answer,

1. The completeness or fulness of Christ's satisfaction is not to be estimated by the will or counsel of God about the application of it, or actual communication of the virtue or benefit of it unto particular men; but by the proportion which it beareth unto the sin unto which it relateth in the nature of a price, ransom, consideration, or satisfaction. If it be commensurable in rational worth or value unto these, that is, if it be a matter or thing of that nature, consequence, and consideration, that God may, with the salvage or sufficient demonstration of the glory of his justice, or perfect hatred of sin, wisdom, &c., pardon the sins and transgressions of men, without any thing added thereunto by way of satisfaction or punishment, it is in reason to be judged a sufficient or complete satisfaction, although, upon some other account, he suspend the benefit or actual application of it unto particular men, upon reasonable requirements of them otherwise. In case a prince or nobleman, charitably and bountifully disposed, should intend the redemption of a company of persons out of captivity, and in order hereunto should freely give unto him under whom they are in bondage, and who hath power to set them at liberty, a sum of money fully answerable, according to the usual rate in such cases, to the liberty of these persons; but should, withal, desire of or covenant with him to whom he hath given or paid the said money, and who is the present lord of these captives, that he should not actually discharge or set at liberty any man of them, until they had tendered

or made a thankful acknowledgment of his grace and bounty towards them ; in this case, I say, the condition of acknowledgment required of these captives by their great benefactors before they are permitted actually to partake of the benefit of the price of their redemption doth no ways argue any scantiness or insufficiency in this price, but only declares the will and pleasure of him that ransometh them concerning their behaviour before their actual redemption.

If it be demanded, “ But what, if any or all the captives in this case should so far forget themselves, or be neglective of their own welfare, as not to tender or make such an acknowledgment to their benefactor, what becomes of that money or price laid down by him for their redemption ? Would it not argue want of wisdom or providence in him that should lay down a vast sum of money for the redemption of such persons, the far greater part of which he knew beforehand would be never the better for it, nor accept of their liberty upon such terms as he meant to impose on them in order thereunto ? ” I answer,

1. To the former of these demands, in case any or all the captives mentioned should be so desperately careless of their own welfare, as not to accept of their deliverance upon those equitable and easy terms on which it is offered them and may be enjoyed by them, their benefactor may, notwithstanding, have consideration for his money, satisfactory unto him, as, namely, both the conscience and honour of his most worthy and heroic act in sparing no cost to bring men out of misery and thralldom. Nor doth the Scripture any where suspend the glorious and high contentment which God takes in that transcendent act of his grace in the gift of his Son for the redemption of the world, upon the faith of those who believe on him by means thereof, or upon the great benefit which, by means of their faith, they actually receive from it, but upon the intrinsical and divine worth and adorableness of the act itself. Yea, the Scripture seems to make that great act of grace we speak of, of one and the same consideration or contentment unto God, whether men reap benefit by it, or no. “ For we are unto God,” saith the Apostle, “ a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.” (2 Cor. ii. 15.) So that Christ, that is, his grace vouchsafed unto the world by Christ, for their salvation, is of the same or like savour, sweet and pleasing, unto God, whether men accept it, and so are saved by it, or whether

they reject it and perish notwithstanding it. It is true, upon another account, God is highly offended with men when they reject his grace ; as, namely, because herein they act most foolishly and irrationally, not because they diminish or make any breach upon his contentment in vouchsafing such grace unto them.

2. To the latter demand, whether it would not argue want of wisdom or providence, &c., I answer,

(1.) That it argues neither want of wisdom nor providence in him that shall part with a great sum of money for the ransom of many thousand captives, although he should know beforehand that the greater part would be never the better for it, nor accept of their freedom upon the terms imposed on them in order thereunto, in case it be supposed that he knew that a considerable part of them, however, would accept of the favour, to the unspeakable benefit of their enlargement. Yea, as was lately argued, though he had foreknown that none of them would have accepted their liberty upon the terms required of them, yet had the honour, reputation, and conscience of such an act been a reasonable compensation for the money disbursed. But,

(2.) Such a demand as this is improper to the case in hand. For it cannot be truly said that God foreknew or foresaw that the greater part of men would reject his grace in Christ, and so perish, this notwithstanding, before this grace was given unto them, at least in his unchangeable counsel, purpose, and decree. For his decree of sending or giving Christ for the ransom of the world was from before the world began, I mean, from eternity ; and, consequently, there could nothing precede or be before it, especially in order of time, it being a rule of unquestionable truth that *in ceternis non est prius aut posterius*. But,

3. To the first objection or demand I answer further, that God's purpose or design in the death of Christ was not simply or absolutely either to justify or save men by it, neither did he judge it agreeable to his wisdom and righteousness so to do ; but to do both the one and the other conditionally, and upon terms such as he judged meet to prescribe and impose upon them for the obtaining of these great privileges and blessings by it. " God so loved the world," said our Saviour himself, " that he gave his only-begotten Son," not that all men, or that any

man simply and without any more ado, but, “that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.) Now the collation, application, or actual bestowing of the fruits or benefits of the death of Christ, not depending so much upon the intrinsical worth, value, or satisfactoriness thereof, as upon the will and pleasure of Him who voluntarily gave him to die for the justification and salvation of men, and, consequently, had a right of liberty to make the terms for the collation of these benefits what he pleased, he cannot, with any colour of reason, be deemed unjust in case he denies them unto those who refuse or neglect to perform his terms, notwithstanding they were by Christ purchased for them, that is, with a full and clear intent on his part, that they should have possessed and enjoyed them upon their believing. So that,

4. And lastly, for this: When God constraineth those who believe not to pay their own debts, and to make satisfaction themselves for their sins by being eternally punished, he cannot be said to require or take a double satisfaction or two satisfactions for one and the same debt, although it be true in a sense, namely, that lately declared, that Christ satisfied for them. For that satisfaction which Christ made for the sins of any person who believes not, I mean, who dies in unbelief, was never received or accepted by God in the nature of an appropriate, particular, or actual satisfaction for their sins; but only as a potential satisfaction, that is, as a thing of complete worth and value enough to have made a particular and actual satisfaction even for such a man's sins, as well as for the sins of those who believe, and which he as fully intended to accept for such a satisfaction on his behalf, in case he had believed, which he might have done, as he did to accept it upon such terms for them or for their sins who do believe.

If it be objected, “But if Christ made satisfaction for the sins of them who never believe, and God accepteth it not as a satisfaction for their sins, doth not God disapprove or disallow either Christ's doings, or his intentions, or both? For if Christ, in or by his death, made or intended to make satisfaction for the sins of unbelievers, and God refuseth to accept this satisfaction, or that which Christ intended for a satisfaction, for their sins, doth he not reject that which Christ desired and intended that he should accept?”

To this I answer, that an answer, in effect, hath been already

given. For in such a consideration or sense as Christ either desired or intended that his death should be a satisfaction for the sins of unbelievers, dying in unbelief, doth God the Father accept of it. Christ neither desired nor intended to make satisfaction by his death for the sins of unbelievers any otherwise, nor upon any other terms, than that God the Father should, upon the account thereof, justify such persons from their sins in case they should have believed; and, in this sense, he doth accept it as a satisfaction for them, being, for the sake thereof, most ready and willing to pardon all the sins, and so to justify the persons of all men, without exception, as well theirs who never will believe, in case they should believe, as theirs who shall believe and be actually justified thereupon. So that God, in causing or compelling unbelievers to suffer or to satisfy for their sins, doth not require or exact a second satisfaction for them after a former received, but only puts them upon payment of their debt themselves, who despised his grace in providing for them that which was indeed intended for the actual and real satisfaction hereof, upon condition of their believing, but was never upon these terms accepted by him, by reason of their non-performance of the said condition of believing.

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## SECTION VI.

### HOW THE ACTIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST JUSTIFIETH.

WHAT the active obedience of Christ contributeth towards the justification of sinners hath been in part declared already. Under the Mosaical law the beast that was to be offered in sacrifice, to make any of those Levitical expiations, was to be perfect, and without blemish; it was neither to be blind, nor broken, nor maimed, nor having a wen, nor scurvy, nor scabbed, not having any thing superfluous, nor any thing lacking in his parts, &c. (See Lev. xxii. 21—23.) If it had any of these or the like imperfections in it, it was not accepted. Now that which the soundness, perfection, and freedom from blemish, in the legal sacrifices, contributed towards their acceptation, and, consequently, towards the efficacy of their respective atonements or expiations, the same or the like in proportion doth the active

obedience of Christ contribute towards the acceptation of his sacrifice of himself, in order to the efficaciousness hereof for the justification of sinners. This similitude or proportion is plainly taught and asserted by the Apostle Peter, where he saith, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;" (1 Peter i. 18, 19;) that is, as well without any natural, original deficiency or imperfection, signified in the word "blemish," as without any adventitious or actual defilement intimated in the word "spot." So John Baptist looketh towards the same analogy, saying unto the people concerning him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) "The Lamb of God;" that is, a person highly acceptable with God, as being every ways qualified with innocency, righteousness, holiness, &c., and so meet, by his death, to make atonement for the sin of the world. So, then, as that which the unblemishedness of the beast for sacrifice, under the law, exhibited towards that atonement which was made by the offering of it, was the meetness of this offering of it for acceptance with God, and, consequently, for this acceptance itself, in order to his pardoning or passing by that ceremonial impurity or uncleanness for which it was offered; in like manner the active obedience of Christ, in conjunction with the absolute holiness and inward purity of his person, rendered his death or the oblation of himself a sacrifice, every ways meet and worthy acceptance with God, and, consequently, accepted with him for the expiation or atonement of the sins of all men.

If Christ had been so much as touched with the least tincture of defilement with sin, he had not been a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners," &c., but rather after the order of Aaron, who needed to offer sacrifice for their own sins. Neither had he been in any condition or regular capacity to have made atonement for the sins of others until he had first fully expiated his own. That the active obedience of Christ doth not operate in, or about, or towards, justification, in that way or notion which some have conceived, as, namely, by an imputation of the particular acts thereof, in the letter and formality of them, unto those that believe, whereby they should be constituted or made properly



and formally righteous, we have demonstrated at large in a just treatise upon that subject, where it is made good, upon several accounts, that the said notion hath neither countenance from the Scriptures, nor any tolerable consistency with the clearest principles of reason.

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## SECTION VII.

### HOW THE PASSIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST JUSTIFIETH.

WHAT place or interest the death or passive obedience of Christ hath in or about justification, we have, in like manner, briefly intimated in our fifth Section. It rendereth that great act of God, in the justification of a sinner, every ways comely and honourable unto him and worthy of him, and, consequently, makes him most willing and free to it. The Holy Ghost speaks plainly enough of that comeliness which the sufferings of Christ put upon the justification of a sinner by God, giving some intimation, withal, that unless this act had by one means or other been made thus comely for him, he would never have lift up his heart or hand unto it. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," meaning God, "in bringing many sons unto glory, to consecrate," or make perfect, "the Captain of their salvation through sufferings." (Heb. ii. 10.) That meetness or comeliness for God here spoken of, intending the salvation and glorification of many, to effect it in no other way than by the sufferings of him who was to be the Prince or Captain of their salvation, respecteth mainly, if not solely, his act in justifying them, in order to their salvation and glorification. For, otherwise, supposing them already justified, there needed more the life than the death of Christ to save them; according to that of the Apostle Paul: "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. v. 8—10.) We see here, 1. That our justification is ascribed unto the blood or death of Christ; and, 2. That

our salvation, our justification or reconciliation unto God presupposed, unto his life ; that is, unto that power which is given unto him in that life which now he lives in glory at the right hand of the Father to exercise for the saving of all those that believe in him. Life frequently imports vigour, activity, liveliness of strength, or power for action ; as death imports weakness and imbecility for action.

If you ask me, “But how, or in what respect, doth the passive obedience or death of Christ render the act of justification, as now it is exerted or performed by God, so comely or honourable for him? Or how may we conceive that either it would have been uncomely or less comely for him to have appeared in it, in case his hand had not been strengthened by the death of Christ unto it? Or doth it not well enough become the great God to forgive sin freely and without satisfaction?” I answer,

1. Whether we conceive the import of those words spoken by God unto Adam, and in him unto all his posterity, being yet in his loins, “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death,” either in the nature or notion of a dreadful threatening in case of disobedience, or of a most sacred and severe law, to restrain sin and disobedience, (the difference, I confess, is not much material, as far as at present I apprehend,) it was no ways honourable or comely for God to suffer either the one or the other to be trodden or trampled under foot by the creature to whom they were given, without looking after them, or calling for some satisfactory account for the contempt measured out unto them. It cannot reasonably be thought but that God, by the denunciation of such a threatening, or promulgation and sanction of such a law, awakened and amazed both heaven and earth, and raised great expectations in both what the issue or consequence would be. Now, then, Adam and his posterity, being, as was said, now in him, rising up in disobedience in the very face, as it were, and presence of so terrible a threatening, if God should have passed by, and made no words of this high misdemeanor, he might seem either, on the one hand, to repent that he had so sorely threatened them, and therefore now proceeded not to execution ; or else, on the other hand, that he was content and willing enough to be neglected or affronted by his creature ; both which would have been very uncomely and dishonourable unto him. Nor would

it have been of much more comely an interpretation, had he accepted any thing of an inferior value, or less considerable, instead of a compensation or satisfaction, and had not stood upon a just and full vindication of his sovereign authority, his excellent wisdom, his righteousness, and equity in his proceedings with his creature; the glory of all which was very injuriously handled, and suffered deeply in Adam's prevarication. So then, Adam and his posterity miscarrying with so high a hand of disobedience, there devolved a necessity upon God, if he meant to glorify himself, like himself, and as God, either to punish the whole brood of transgressors, according to the full exigency of their demerit, or, which is the same, according to the tenor and import of the threatening, or else to find out some other person to suffer for them, whose punishment or sufferings might be altogether as considerable, and argue as great respects to his authority, wisdom, and righteousness, as the punishment of Adam, and all that were now delinquents in his loins, that is, his whole posterity, the second Adam only excepted, up to the line of their transgression and guilt, would have done. And thus the Apostle, as we lately heard, layeth it down indefinitely and in the general, that if God meant to save and glorify any number of Adam's posterity, it concerned him in point of glory to provide, that he, whoever he should be, by whom they were to be saved, should suffer to perfection, that is, proportionably to what they ought to have suffered, whom he intended to save by him. For this I conceive to be the sense and import of these words: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to perfect," or make perfect, "the Captain of their salvation through suffering." (Heb. ii. 10.) That description or periphrasis of God, "For whom are all things, and by whom are all things," importing his transcendent sovereignty and greatness, seems to imply, that these were considerations that made it necessary and comely for him, in case he intended salvation to Adam and his posterity, to take that course which now he hath taken for the effecting it, namely, to impose such sufferings upon Him by whom it should or was to be achieved which might, in a rational estimation, answer the sufferings which they had deserved; and that had it been any but God, or had God been any but himself, the omission of such exactness of severity or justice in or about the accomplishment of the design would

not have been so uncomely for them, as now, it seems, it would have been for God to dispense with it, his augustissimal and unparalleled majesty and greatness being, as hath been said, considered. For it no ways, at no hand, becomes Him to whom the whole creation, heaven and earth, with all the hosts of them, stand bound to do the deepest homage and service, and whose wisdom and power have so gloriously quitted themselves in the beautiful fabric of the universe, and in all the parts and parcels of it, either to confess himself either unadvised or over-severe in making a law for the nurture and government of his creature, or to minister any occasion in the least unto his creature so to judge or conceive of him; which he should have done, had he taken a company of his creatures, who had despised and broken this law, into his bosom, yea, into part and fellowship with himself in his own blessedness and glory, without a just compensation for these transgressions, and fully commensurable, in one kind or other, thereunto. Now there being no creature, no person, to be found, either in heaven or in earth, nor any to be framed nor made by any appropriate or new act of creation, as least as far as the understandings of men are well able to reach, capable of suffering upon the terms mentioned, in regard of the unpreventible inconsiderableness of their beings, comparatively, and of their sufferings accordingly, and so not competent to make a just satisfaction for the high misdemeanour or provocation of so many; hence there arose a necessity, (a necessity, I mean, for divine conveniency, and a salvage of honour,) either that the Son of God, being first put into a suffering capacity, by being made flesh, should willingly undertake and perform this suffering service for the transgressors, or otherwise that the transgressors themselves, from the first to the last, should have borne their own sin, and fallen under it, and have perished by it for ever.

2. Suppose we, that some creature might have been either found or made; yea, suppose we, that some man might have been made upon like terms with Adam, whose sufferings might have amounted to a satisfactory consideration for Adam's transgression, together with all theirs who sinned in him and with him; yet, first, if he, in one respect or other, had not really and truly descended from Adam, as Christ did, the satisfaction made by him had not been so proper, or so clearly salvant of the glory of the wisdom and sovereignty of God in the threaten-

ing or law mentioned, "In that day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death," as that now made by the death of Christ. For Christ was not only of the same nature with Adam, but also lineally, though not according to the course of common propagation, descended from Adam. (Luke iii. 23, compared with verse 38, and the verses intermediate.) In which respect the threatening or penalty of the law, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death," was inflicted upon him, to whom the law was given, though not upon his person, personally considered, but as subsisting, and having a being, in that special branch of his posterity, Christ, as he had a being, likewise, in every other member of this his posterity, even as they also, in a reciprocal consideration, had a being in him, whilst as yet they actually were not. In this kind of dialect, God kept covenant with Abraham, when he performed those promises unto him, as subsisting in his posterity or seed, which yet he made unto him personally; unless we shall say, which haply may be true and proper enough, that this and such like promises made unto Abraham remain yet to be performed and made good unto him personally, in the first resurrection, and during the reign of Christ, and of the saints on earth, for a thousand years. Thus he promised unto him, yet personally subsisting and present, that he would give him the land of Canaan: "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." (Gen. xiii. 17.) So elsewhere: "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;" (Gen. xii. 3;) which yet was not verified in him, personally considered, but as subsisting in that most glorious and flourishing branch of his posterity, Christ. In like manner, Christ, assuming the human nature wherein he suffered from one of Adam's natural race, and, consequently, from Adam himself, though in an appropriate and supernatural way, the penalty of the law, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death," being inflicted upon Christ, may, in a sense, and this not much remote from that which is literal or proper, be said to have been inflicted upon Adam himself. The Apostle having, as we lately heard, affirmed that "it became God, in bringing," that is, purposing, or designing, and accordingly attempting to bring, "many sons," as, namely, his son Adam, (Luke iii. 38.) and all his sons, which were "many," and who, by reason of their

descent from Adam, may properly enough be termed the sons of God also, the Scripture frequently giving the appellation of sons or children to all lineally descending from the same progenitors, “unto glory, to *consecrate*,”—for so the word *τελειωσαι* very often signifieth,—or to “make perfect,” that is, completely to qualify, “the Captain of their salvation,” Christ, that was to procure their deliverance from death, by making atonement for them, “through sufferings,” proportionable to so great an achievement, and, consequently, to put him into a capacity of suffering, by investing him with the human nature, as is plainly laid down, verse 14; the Apostle, I say, having asserted this, he gives this account of it in the words following: “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one;” meaning, that the one and the other are both of one and the same original or descent; as, namely, from God by the line of Adam, and likewise of one and the same nature, or blood, as Acts xvii. 26: “And hath made of one blood all nations of men.” And, withal, that it was meet that thus it should be for conformity’s sake unto the Levitical type, where the High Priest, and those that were legally purified or sanctified by him, were both of one and the same nature, and likewise descended from one and the same progenitors.

3. It was very agreeable, both to the goodness and wisdom of God, that he who, by his appointment and at his instance, should serve Adam and his posterity in so arduous and difficult an undertaking, as by his own death to reinstate them in a condition of life and peace, should be satisfied with and enjoy this sore travail of his soul, and not sink or be wholly crushed under it; and, consequently, that he should not only suffer death, but overcome death, or, which is the same, be raised again from the dead, that so he might be capable of that great recompence of reward, which so transcendent a service both unto God and men well deserved. Upon this account, also, the Lord Jesus Christ was the only person, either in actual being or in possibility of being, that was accomplished or meetly qualified for that great undertaking of raising up the tabernacle of Adam, which was fallen, and of saving that which was lost. For, were it granted or supposed, which yet I cannot encourage any man to suppose, that some creature might have been found, or else made, so “holy, harmless, undefiled,” and “separate from sinners,” the shedding of whose blood, or whose death, for Adam

and his posterity, might have been so considerable in the sight of God, as that he could have judged it competently salvant of the glory of his wisdom, and of the awfulness and dread of his sovereignty, to have remitted the transgression of Adam, and his upon the account thereof; yet it is no ways probable that the considerableness or worth of this sacrifice would or could have abounded so high above the purchase or procurement of the redemption of Adam and his posterity, as to entitle or to inright him that should have offered it to a glorious resurrection also, such as was meet for him that had been the author of salvation to a lost world. And if the glory wherein Christ appeared upon Tabor was so exceeding great, that it only became the only-begotten Son of God, being a garment too above-measure rich for any person to wear but the only Son of the King of Kings, to which sense many of the expositors carry that of the Evangelist, (John i. 14,) much more would such a transcendency in glory, wherewith God hath judged it meet to invest and dignify him that is now the Saviour of the world: As the making him "higher than the heavens," placing him at his own right hand, giving him a name above every name that is named, &c., have been vastly disproportionable to the line of any mere created being whatsoever. And yet the Apostle plainly declareth, that "such an High Priest became us," that is, was necessary for us to have in respect of those high and vast concerns which were to pass through his hands and to be transacted by him, who, amongst other glorious prerogatives, should be made "higher than the heavens." (Heb. vii. 26.) In these considerations, and haply in some others like unto them, the contributions of the passive obedience and sufferings of Christ were sovereignly necessary to render the high transaction or dispensation of God, the justification of sinners, worthy of him and of a regular and clear consistence with his glory. As for the tenet of those who resolve this great act or dispensation of God we speak of, I mean justification, partly into the sovereignty of his greatness or authority, and partly into the abundance of his grace and goodness and liberty of his will, and partly into the obedience and regular conversation of men themselves, excluding the death of Christ from any part or fellowship therein, at least by way of atonement or satisfaction for sin, I conceive it to be broadly inconsistent with the tenor and purport of the Scriptures in places and passages without number.

## SECTION VIII.

HOW THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST FROM THE DEAD  
JUSTIFIETH.

8. THE resurrection or raising of Christ from the dead, in conjunction with his glorification which followed upon it, advanceth the business of justification by the assurance given hereby from God unto the souls and consciences of men, that he is well apaid and fully satisfied concerning that great debt of the sin of the world, the discharge whereof was undertaken by Christ in his death; hereby encouraging men who had incurred his displeasure by sinning to believe in him accordingly for their justification. This is the express doctrine of the Apostle Peter: "Who verily was foreordained," speaking of Christ, "before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God," and, consequently, that you might be found or put into a state of justification, without which "faith and hope in God" were little available. (1 Peter i. 20, 21.) And in this consideration, doubtless, it was that the Apostle Paul affirmed Christ to be raised again for our justification. "Who was," saith he, speaking of Christ, "delivered," namely, unto death, "for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25,) meaning, that he was "raised again from the dead:" Including in his resurrection, by a kind of synecdoche, the great glory and dignity given him by God upon it, that hereby a rational way might be made for sinners to believe in him or in God,—for the Gospel indifferently useth the one expression and the other to the same effect,—in order to their justification. Whilst the surety, or he that hath undertaken the payment of a debt, is kept in prison, there is no likelihood that the debt is paid, or the creditor satisfied. And upon this ground the Apostle Paul reasoneth first thus: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. xv. 14.) And again: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins;" (verse 17;) meaning, that they could have no reasonable ground to believe that they were discharged or acquitted by



God from the debt or guilt of their sins by means of the death of Christ, if he should be detained in the prison of death, the grave, until now, and not have been raised again and set at liberty. So, then, the rising again, or rather the raising again, of Christ from the dead by God the Father justifieth believing sinners, as it were, argumentatively, and as exhibiting a rational ground unto them whereon to build their faith, of a full and perfect atonement made by Christ in his death for them or for their sins; by which faith, according unto and by virtue of that promise made, or the law enacted by God in that behalf, they come to be justified.

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## SECTION IX.

### HOW THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JUSTIFIETH.

9. THE Prophet Isaiah bringeth in God the Father, speaking thus of his Son Christ: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." (Isaiah liii. 11.) That the particle or pronoun, "his," is here to be taken objectively, not subjectively,—a construction frequent in Scripture,—is, I presume, the award of every man's understanding. So that by his knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, is meant the knowledge of himself, which he shall propagate in the world by the ministry of the Gospel, and by means of this knowledge of him many shall be justified; according to that of the Apostle: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ," that is, by Christ believed on, as he explains himself in the verse next following, "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ," &c. Whence, by the way, it may be observed, that to be justified by Christ and by faith, or believing in Christ, is of one and the same import; so then, the knowledge of Christ is or may be said to justify men in somewhat a remote sense, namely, as it is a ground of encouragement unto them to believe on him, by which believing they are immediately justified.

## SECTION X.

HOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS OR MAY BE SAID TO JUSTIFY MEN.

10. MEN are said in Scripture as well to be justified as sanctified by the Spirit of God, and this as justification is distinguished from sanctification. “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. vi. 11.) Some expositors, indeed, understand the word, *εδικαιωθητε*, *ye were justified*, not of justification, properly so called, or which standeth in remission of sins, but of such a justification which consisteth in a progress or proficiency in righteousness, or in the profession and practice of Christianity. For the justification of which exposition they plead the exigency of the order or gradation in the text itself, as also the like use or signification of the word, *δικαιωθαι*, in the Apocalypse, xxii. 11: *Και ο δικαιος δικαιωθητω επι*, *Let him that is righteous, or just, be justified still*, that is, as the expositors we speak of interpret, “Let him increase and make forward in ways of righteousness.” It must be acknowledged, that to grow in grace and proceed in holiness and righteousness from day to day, may be called a man’s justification in a declarative or arguitive sense, namely, as they argue or declare a man to be a justified person, and his faith to be of the right kind, a living and growing faith; yea, they may be termed a man’s justification, as they are just matter of his approbation and commendation, which in many cases are used in a sense parallel to that of the word “justification,” as it is used sometimes. But the justification which is the subject of our present discourse doth not consist in any action, one or more, nor in any quality, one or more; but rather in a state or condition, namely, such whereinto a person is translated or brought by the pardon of his sins, or sentence of absolution awarded by God. Nor need we take the word “justification,” in the scripture lately cited (1 Cor. vi. 11) in any other sense but this. For justification, in this sense, may be ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as he hath a special and appropriate hand in raising the work of faith by which men are thus justified, in the hearts of those who do believe; in which respect faith is registered by the Apostle Paul amongst the fruits of the Spirit; (Gal. v. 22;) and by hi

fellow-Apostle Peter they who believe are said to “obey the truth,” speaking of the obedience of faith to the Gospel, “through the Spirit;” (1 Peter i. 22;) and the Christians in Achaia are said to have “believed through grace,” (Acts xviii. 27,) that is, through the grace of God in his vouchsafement of his Spirit unto them, by whom they were enabled to believe, yea, and actually believed. Now then, according to the known maxim or principle in reason, *Quod est causa causæ, est causa causati*, “That which is the cause of any cause producing an effect, is the cause of the effect itself, as well as of the cause producing it;” faith being the cause or means of justification, and the Spirit the cause of faith, justification may as truly, and not much less properly, be attributed unto the Spirit as unto faith.

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## SECTION XI.

### HOW FAITH JUSTIFIETH.

11. THAT faith justifieth is the constant assertion of the Scripture, and the architectonical doctrine of the Gospel. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” (Rom. v. 1.) Again: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom. iii. 28.) Yet once more, to spare citations in a case so generally known, “We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law,” &c. (Gal. ii. 15, 16.) By the way, upon occasion of these, with many the like passages in the New Testament, wherein justification by faith is *ρητως*, *expressly affirmed*, I cannot but mention my dislike of their strain in teaching, who lay down and deliver it to the people for a doctrine positively and plainly, that men are not justified by faith or by believing. Doubtless it is not convenient or comely positively to deliver or assert that for a doctrine of truth which is so diametrically opposite to the frequent, clear, and express words of the Scripture. If there be a limited sense to be put

upon such passages, wherein a truth is commonly, and from place to place, held forth in the Scriptures, this may conveniently and timously enough be done in the explication or opening of the doctrine; but I judge it very incongruous for any Minister of the Gospel to set up a doctrine as it were in defiance of, or in contest against, any thing so frequently and so directly in *terminis* affirmed in the Scriptures as justification by faith. And, doubtless, men need not be at all tender or afraid to deliver this positively for a doctrine of evangelical truth, that men are justified by faith, yea, or by faith alone, if they do but declare or signify withal, 1. What the Scripture means by that justification which it ascribeth unto faith. 2. What it means by that faith unto which it ascribeth justification. For,

1. That justification which the Scripture attributeth unto faith is precisely that which consisteth in remission of sins, as the Apostle plainly teacheth, Rom. iii. 25; but more largely, Rom. iv. 1—8; to omit other places. Now certain it is, that no kind of works whatsoever, enjoined in the moral law, have any thing at all, little or much, to do about remission of sins, or in the procurement or obtaining of it. For in case a man should transgress the law, or sin, only once, and this in the lightest manner, and should for ten thousand years together afterwards, with all possible exactness, observe and keep this law, yet this long tract or series of obedience or good works would not make his atonement for that sin, nor bring him off from the guilt of it with peace and safety. The reason is signified by the Apostle: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) The wisdom and righteousness of God did not judge it reasonable or meet that the payment of one debt by the creature, though amounting to never so great a sum, should satisfy for the non-payment of another. Now the most exact obedience that can be performed or yielded unto the law of God by any creature, whilst it hath any being, is but a debt due from this creature unto God: Therefore, no obedience in this kind can satisfy for or atone, either in whole or in part, the least disobedience or transgression. So that justification from sin, as the Scripture phrase is, (Acts xiii. 39,) that is, which standeth in remission of sins, cannot be purchased or procured, but by the death or bloodshed of Him that should undertake the redemption of sinners. Only God was pleased to

decree or make this for a law, which the Apostle calleth "the law of faith," (Rom. iii. 27,) that faith, or believing in him through Christ, should interest man in the benefit or blessing of the death and bloodshed of Christ, that is, in that remission of sins which was purchased by his death. And in this consideration faith justifieth, namely, by virtue of the sovereign authority of that most gracious decree or law of God, wherein he hath said or decreed, that it shall entitle men unto, or inright them in, part and fellowship of that benefit of the death of Christ which consisteth in forgiveness of sins; or, which comes much to the same, as it is a qualification or condition ordained, covenanted, or appointed by God, to bring upon those in whom it shall be found, the great blessing of that pardon of sin which Christ hath obtained for men by his blood. And because God hath not passed any such decree, nor made any such law concerning good works, as, namely, that these shall bring men into communion of the benefit of remission of sins purchased by the death of Christ, therefore they have nothing to do to justify men in this notion or sense of the word "justification." If by "justification" we mean *approbation, commendation, acquitting from blame*, or the like, in which sense also the word is frequently used in the Scriptures, (see Job xi. 2; xxxii. 2; xxxiii. 32; Isaiah xliii. 9, 26; xlv. 25; Jer. iii. 11; Ezek. xvi. 51, 52; Luke xvi. 15; xviii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16; James ii. 21, 24, 25,) good works are proper and necessary thus to justify us both in the sight of God and men; only with this explication or proviso, namely, that men live to meet with opportunities for the doing of such works, after their true believing. For, otherwise, if the case should so happen, that a true believer should be taken away by death the next moment to that in which he first believed, it is not to be thought but that he should die, not simply with his sins pardoned, but under the approbation of God also. Therefore, good works, *in actu exercito*, as the schoolmen speak, or actually performed, are not absolutely, universally, or in every case that may possibly happen, necessary, no, not to that justification itself which sympathizeth, as hath been said, in import with approbation, commendation, vindication from blame imputed, or the like. It is true, *in actu signato*, or as they are radically, seminally, or virtually included in that faith which justifieth by remission of sins, of which more presently, so they are universally, and in all cases possible, if

we speak of persons capable by years and discretion of believing, necessary thereunto. And God, who accepteth the will for the deed, when men want opportunity or means for action, looketh upon those good works which are conceived in the womb of a true and unfeigned faith as actually performed and done, when such a faith wants means, time, or opportunity to bring forth. In this notion our Saviour himself must be understood to speak, at least, in reference unto many of those to whom he speaketh, if he be conceived to speak unto all standing on his right hand, which I judge to be the more rational to suppose: "Come, ye blessed of my Father. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Matt. xxv. 34—36.) Doubtless some, yea, a considerable party, of those to whom the Lord Christ will express himself thus in that great day, will be such who had been poor in the days of their flesh, and afflicted, and stood in need of being relieved by their Christian brethren, better accommodated in the world than they, and in whose relief Christ will acknowledge himself relieved. (Verse 40.) Therefore, such as these had not been in a condition or capacity to minister actually unto the wants and necessities of other poor Christians in those respective supplies and accommodations here specified; and yet we find, according to our late supposition, that Christ gives the same testimony unto them for these services of charity which he gives unto those that had actually performed them. His meaning, then, must be, that even these poor distressed saints, who had not wherewith either to clothe the naked or to give entertainment unto strangers, actually, yet had both one and other the same works and services of Christian commiseration and charity here mentioned, in the bowels of the same kind of faith, out of which they actually proceeded from their better world-provided brethren, and were performed by them. But this occasionally here, and by the way, for the better explication of that justification, which the Scripture so constantly, as we have heard, ascribeth unto faith.

2. Concerning that faith unto which the justification mentioned is ascribed, the Scripture describeth it with much variety in respect of its object. Sometimes it calleth it a "believing God;" (Rom. iv. 3; James ii. 23;) sometimes, a "believing

on God;" (John xii. 44;) sometimes, a "believing in God," or, "in the Lord." (Acts xvi. 34; John xiv. 1; Acts ix. 42.) Once it is called, "the faith of the operation of God, who raised Christ from the dead;" (Col. ii. 12;) sometimes, a "believing on Christ," or "on the Son of God," or "on the Lord." (Acts xi. 17; John iii. 18; xii. 37; 1 John v. 10; besides many other places.) Sometimes, again, it is called a "believing in Christ;" (John iii. 15;) and so, "in Jesus." (Rom iii. 26; and oft elsewhere.) Otherwhile, it is expressed by "believing Christ," or "the Son;" (John iii. 36;) sometimes, by a believing that Christ is Christ, "the Son of God which should come into the world;" (John xi. 27;) and again, a "believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts viii. 37. See also John viii. 24; xi. 27.) Sometimes it is called a "believing in Christ's name." (John i. 12; ii. 23; iii. 18.) It is very possible that yet there may be in the Scriptures a greater variety of denominations or expressions of that faith which justifieth, in reference to its object, than that now represented. But all these that have been mentioned, and I doubt not but those others also, supernumerary unto these, if any such there be, are of an easy and ready reduction into one and the same notion and import. But that distinguishing character, one or more, of the justifying faith, which we are at present inquiring after, respecteth not the object, but the intrinsic nature or complexion, of it. The Scripture, in reference hereunto, sometimes describeth it to be a "believing in the heart;" (Rom. x. 9;) otherwhile, a "believing with the heart;" (Rom. x. 10;) sometimes, again, a "believing with all the heart." (Acts viii. 37.) It is twice called a "faith unfeigned." (1 Tim. i. 5; 2 Tim. i. 5.) The faith of a spurious kind, and which differs in nature, worth, and value from it, is termed, *πίστις νεκρά*, a *dead faith*. (James ii. 17, 20, 26.) And, by consequence, the true faith which justifieth must be understood to be a "living faith." But the most appropriate nature of this faith, or the property of it which is most considerable, and which, indeed, upon the matter, includeth all the other now mentioned, and most emphatically differenceth it from all other kinds of faith which want the seal of God to make them justifying, is that declared and asserted by the Apostle Paul, Gal. v. 6, where the Holy Ghost guided his pen to these words: "For in Jesus Christ," that is, in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and by the tenor and import of the

Gospel, “neither circumcision availeth any thing,” namely, towards any man’s justification before God, “nor uncircumcision ; but faith,” δι’ ἀγαπῆς ἐνεργουμένη, *effectually operative, or thoroughly, working by love.* His meaning is, that such a faith in God, which is raised or wrought in a man by means of Jesus Christ, as given by God unto men for a Saviour, and which, withal, is spiritfult, lively, and active in provoking the soul in which it resides to the love of God and men, and to ways and works suitable to such an affection, is the only thing or means designed, authorized, and appointed by God to bring men into part and fellowship of that justification or remission of sins which hath been purchased or procured by the death of Jesus Christ for men. A faith of this genius, temper, and complexion, borroweth no aid, help, or assistance from any of her children, I mean, from any of those good works which proceed from her, for or towards that justifying of men with that justification which standeth in remission of sins : She is, by virtue of that authority derived unto her by God, self-sufficient to give this great and happy investiture unto men ; yea, should she die before she had opportunity to bring forth, she would do that worthy service to him that had conceived her. It is true, as concerning that justification of which the Apostle James speaks so much in his second chapter, which is a justification of a person testified, declared, published, or made known, the faith we speak of standeth in need of the help and co-operation (as the same Apostle there speaks, verse 22) of her children. God himself will not report any man justified, I mean, any man capable of good works, nor would he have any man, of this capacity, judged or reputed by others a justified person, who hath not justified or commended his faith by such works. But this by the way, to vindicate and clear the interest of faith in the great business of justification, and to sever it from that of works, not more contended for than confounded with it by some.

To conclude this section : The virtue or power by which faith justifieth, it receiveth from the designation, ordinance, appointment, or decree of God ; the manner how it justifieth, is, by the giving of men interest or part in the great benefit of remission of sins purchased by Christ, according to the tenor of God’s ordinance or decree in that behalf. They who conceive or teach that faith justifieth as it is an instrument receiving



Christ's righteousness, or Christ himself, unadvisedly stumble at that Popish notion, as it is frequently charged upon men of that persuasion by Protestant writers, which placeth the justifying nature or virtue of faith in somewhat, in some worth that is essential and intrinsic to it. For evident it is, that there is nothing more inward or essential unto faith, than the receiving of Christ, or Christ's righteousness; this being the very nature and substance of it. Whereas the ordinance, will, or decree of God, which investeth faith, or the receiving of Christ, with the great privilege or power of justifying men, is apparently extrinsical and extra-essential to it, and so ministereth no occasion in the least unto faith to boast of any excellency or considerableness of worth in itself, but resolves that which is of that high and sacred concernment in it unto men, as, namely, to justify and to save them, into the grace and good pleasure of God. But I have given an account of my judgment touching this point somewhat more at large elsewhere. And this at present may serve to clear the interest of faith in or about justification, and to show particularly and distinctly what part it acteth in the investiture of men who have sinned with that blessedness.

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## SECTION XII.

HOW, OR IN WHAT RESPECT, REPENTANCE IS OR MAY BE SAID TO JUSTIFY.

12. CONCERNING repentance, that it also is no stranger unto justification or remission of sins, but hath a very material employment or part assigned unto it by God about the instating of sinners therein, is the frequent and distinct voice of the Scriptures: "Repent ye therefore," saith Peter unto the Jews, "and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," &c. (Acts iii. 19.) It is said of John, that he baptized "in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark i. 4.) I suppose the great and blessed effect here mentioned, justification or remission of sins, is not intended by the Evangelist as the effect of baptism, either only or so much, if at all, but rather of repentance; and that baptism is therefore

called "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," &c., if repentance itself be not here rather termed metaphorically a baptism, that is, a washing or cleansing a man's self from the defilement of sin; but if this be not probable, baptism, I say, may be called "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," because it is a sacramental pledge or ordinance of God vouchsafed unto the Christian world, to ensure remission of sins, upon repentance, in such a character or form of speaking as that of the Prophet Elisha upon the shooting of an arrow by the King of Israel as he was directed by this Prophet: "And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria;" meaning, that the King's shooting the arrow by order from God, signified unto him by the Prophet, was a confirmatory sign unto him, and so intended by God, that he and his people should be delivered out of the hand of their enemies the Syrians. (2 Kings xiii. 17.) Of the like construction is that of Peter to his new converts: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," &c. (Acts ii. 38.) The coupling of remission of sins so close with repentance as is found Luke xxiv. 47, and Acts v. 31, is, I conceive, a pregnant argument that the latter hath an indispensable interest in procuring the former. The tenor of the former of these texts is this: "And" Christ "said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations," &c. Of the latter, this: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give REPENTANCE to Israel, and FORGIVENESS OF SINS." Upon the same account, likewise, it was, that those Christian Jews (Acts xi. 18) termed that repentance which they concluded from Peter's relation, that God hath "granted unto the Gentiles a repentance unto life," meaning, unto justification or forgiveness of sins, which the Apostle Paul calls the "justification of life;" (Rom. v. 18;) that is, a justification which restores a sinner unto life, that is, unto a right, title, and capacity of eternal life, who before was under a sentence of condemnation, and so dead in law.

So, then, the question is, how repentance may be conceived to operate towards justification, or what it contributeth thereunto. I answer,

1. In the general it seems to be joined in the same commission with faith, and to be insisted upon and required by God in the nature of a condition or qualification to render men meet for so sacred an investiture or privilege as justification or remission of sins. And it is matter of ready observation that the Scripture maketh the like great and precious promises unto the one and unto the other; yea, and threateneth the want of the one and of the other with the same severe and terrible judgments. This matter being so well known, we shall not need quotation-proofs. Yea,

2. There seems to be a kind of a mutual or reciprocal involution between repentance and faith; not such as is between ordinary causes and their effects but between such causes and effects which, in different considerations and respects, are mutually both causes and effects, the one unto the other. Repentance, considered in the initiatory or imperfect work of it, comprehends faith in it as causes, especially moral causes, their effects, that is, dispositively, seminally, virtually, and the like. Again: Faith being brought into the soul by the opportunity of such a repentance, as a form into matter disposed or prepared, carries on that repentance to greater perfection, by means whereof, whilst it was yet in its minority, itself was furthered in its being. So that as faith was dispositively or preparative-wise in repentance, whilst repentance was imperfect, so is repentance perfectly, or in respect of its consummation, in faith. The Scripture speaks evidently of a repentance precedaneous unto faith; yea, and seems to assert a necessity of the precedency of it in order unto faith. "And ye," saith the Lord Christ to the Chief Priests and Elders of the Jews, "when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him;" (Matt. xxi. 32;) speaking of John's testimony concerning him, as that he was the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. So the Apostle Paul adviseth Timothy to instruct in meekness those that "oppose themselves, if God peradventure will," or rather shall, "give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" (2 Tim. ii. 25;) that is, a repentance which shall dispose or put them into an immediate capacity to believe the truth of the Gospel. As, on the contrary, our Saviour expostulates thus with the Jews: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?" (John v. 44;) clearly implying that there was a necessity lying upon them to repent of that their ambitious and

self-seeking humour, to put them into a regular or hopeful capacity of believing. Thus, then, we see that, according to the Scriptures, there is a repentance which is an harbinger or way-preparer unto faith ; in respect whereof faith may be said to be dispositively, as hath been said, and by way of preparation, in repentance. But this repentance, notwithstanding the great service it doeth unto men in accommodating their way towards believing, yea, and proceedeth also from the grace of God, and is to a degree and in its measure accepted with him in whomsoever it is found, yet is it but imperfect, and wants many degrees of that strength and soundness which afterwards it receiveth by its conjunction and communion with faith. And so, in respect of this enlargement or additional perfection, it may be said to have a being in faith. I do not think it worth the making a controversy or dispute whether that repentance which goeth before faith and qualifies the subject for a more ready or willing reception of it, and that which follows and accompanies faith, be of one and the same species, or of different. Yet I rather incline to think that they do not only not differ *specie*, unless it be *specie accidentali* ; as a man differs from a child, a man learned from a man illiterate, a man that is poor from a man that is rich, and the like ; but not so much as *in individuo*, as Paul was the same *individuum* when he was a man which he was when he was a child. That the one hath justification or remission of sins annexed unto it by promise from God, and the other not, doth no more prove them to differ *specie*, no, nor yet *individuo*, than Paul's proving in time a great and faithful Apostle, and chosen vessel unto God proveth him to have been either of another species or another *individuum*, when he was a fierce persecutor, and, as himself acknowledgeth, of sinners the chief. But this circle of discourse is, I confess, somewhat eccentrical to our business in hand, which is not to distinguish repentance as preceding and as accompanying faith, but to inquire out and declare, as God shall enable and direct, what, or how, repentance, as included in or accompanying faith, operateth towards justification or remission of sins. That which I conceive is this : God not judging it meet to invest a person, who yet retains the love and liking of sinful and wicked ways, with so great and sacred a privilege and grace as forgiveness of sins, was pleased to establish it for a law, that no man or woman remaining impenitent, and without unfeigned remorse of soul for their sins past,

should ever be admitted into part and fellowship of that unspeakable grace of his in Jesus Christ, which consists in pardon or remission of sins. Again: Being highly pleased with that most regular, generous, and worthy deportment of soul, in whomsoever it should be found, which consists in a genuine and real hatred and abhorrency of all unrighteousness, and of whatsoever is sinful or unclean, enacted another law in honour of this heroic act and deportment, namely, that whosoever should, with his whole heart and soul, repent of all his sinful miscarriages and misdoings, and stand resolved in heart for ways of purity and uprightness for the future, should be translated by him into that blessed state which standeth in remission of all sin. So that repentance seems to operate two ways towards justification or remission of sins. (1.) In the nature or after the manner of that kind of cause which logicians call *removens prohibens*, that is, which contributeth towards an effect, by removing that out of the way which, being not removed, would have hindered it. Thus the taking away of the dignity, place, and power, of the Roman Emperors was the cause of the discovery or rising up of the antichristian race and their power. (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8.) So repentance, by removing that wretched and wicked habit or frame of soul which, being unremoved, would have obstructed the grace and blessing of pardon of sin, contributeth towards the obtaining of it. (2.) As repentance includes, in the nature and constituting principles of it, a disposition or frame of heart so highly pleasing unto God, that he judgeth it no ways unworthy of him to honour and reward it with so great a reward as remission of sins, so it may be conceived to contribute or operate towards remission of sins or justification, *tanquam causa dispositiva*, that is, as regularly qualifying the subject for the reception of the form to be brought into it.

By this, I suppose, the interest of repentance, or that which it acteth towards, in, or about justification, may be clearly distinguished from the interest of faith, and that which it acteth in reference to the same end. When God in Scripture is said to “justify the ungodly,” the meaning is not that he justifies ungodly persons whilst they are or remain ungodly, but he is said to justify the ungodly in like form of speech as our Saviour useth: *Τυφλοι αναβλεψοσι, και χωλοι περιπατησοσι, &c.*, that is, *The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear.* (Matt. xi. 5.) The meaning clearly enough is, not

that the blind, whilst blind, did see ; or the lame, whilst they remained lame, did walk ; or that the lepers, whilst their leprosy was yet upon them, were cleansed, &c. ; but that such who had been formerly, and until Christ relieved them, blind, lame, lepers, deaf, were by him miraculously restored ; such as had been blind to their sight, such as had been lame to the usefulness of their limbs for walking, &c. In like manner God is said to justify the ungodly, when he justifies or makes such persons righteous by the pardon of their sins who had formerly been ungodly, profane, &c. But he doth not justify them, or make them righteous, by the forgiveness of their sins whilst they remain ungodly ; but upon the alteration and change of the sinful frame of their hearts by believing, he confers this justification upon them, namely, the forgiveness of their sins. And the reason why God doth not judge it meet to justify men or forgive them their sins whilst they remain ungodly, unrighteous, wicked, profane, or the like, may be partly to cut off all occasion from his creature to conceive of him as a friend to sin, or to impenitent and obdurate sinners, partly, also, to contrive his grace and high favour in justification into an alluring argument and strong motive to persuade men out of the love and liking of sin, and sinful ways, into the love and practice of righteousness and true holiness. The Apostle Paul was put to apologize for his doctrine of the grace of God in forgiveness of sins, because, according to it, this grace is promised and given unto sinners, though unto such sinners only who repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. "But if," saith he, "while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin?" that is, Doth Christ by justifying such sinners as he justifieth, namely, such who believe and repent, countenance, abet, or promote sin in the world? "God forbid." (Gal. ii. 17.) If, then, inconsiderate and unworthy men conceive that God would be liable to an imputation of favouring or cherishing sin in men, in case he should justify or pardon all sinners upon their repentance, which now he doth, how much more obnoxious would he have been, in such men's opinions, to this imputation and charge, in case he should have indulged this high privilege of justification unto sinners without repentance? Upon this account, then, it is most probable, that God hath not judged it meet to admit or allow any other kind of faith to bring men into communion of the

death of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, but only that which is accompanied with an unfeigned repentance, or which purifieth and cleanseth the heart, or at least is apt so to do, from the love and liking of all unrighteousness and uncleanness. If it be thus, then the interposure or interest of repentance about justification is by way of qualification, or of rendering the subject, the sinner, regularly capable of that high and sacred privilege. And though it doth not perform the office or work of faith about justification, which is, as hath been said, to bring men into the fellowship of the death of Christ, where and where only justification or remission of sins is to be had, yet it legitimates or authorizeth the person for the reception of this blessed accommodation from the hand of faith; and for this reason, also, it may well be conceived to have the promise of justification or remission of sins made unto it, as well as faith itself.

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### SECTION XIII.

#### HOW GOOD WORKS ARE AND MAY BE SAID TO JUSTIFY.

13. THAT good works have their part, also, in the great business of justification is the express affirmation of the Scripture: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James ii. 24.) Again: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (James ii. 21.) We have already upon occasion argued and showed the interest of works in or about justification. (Peruse Sect. 11.) We shall here partly add and partly repeat; (1.) That the justification which consists in remission of sins, and which instates a person in a right of title and claim to eternal life, is not attained but by sinners being brought into communion with Christ in his death; or, which is the same, into part and fellowship in this death, which is the only procuring cause of this justification by way of purchase. (2.) That whatsoever bringeth men hither, I mean into communion of or with the death of Christ, must be sealed and authorized by God hereunto. (3.) That a true and unfeigned faith in God through Jesus Christ, sometimes called faith in Christ, yea, and several other ways expressed, as hath been already observed, and this faith

only, not any work or works, of what kind soever or in what number soever, enjoined in the moral law, hath a commission or power from God to bring men into, or to give men part and fellowship in, the death of Christ. Therefore, good works have thus far no part or interest at all in justification, as it standeth in remission of sins, being excluded herefrom by the same law by which boasting also is excluded; which the Apostle termeth "the law of faith." "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but BY THE LAW OF FAITH." (Rom. iii. 27.) By this law faith hath the office or work of justifying men in this sense, and with this kind of justification, settled upon and confirmed unto itself alone. There is another kind of justification which the Scripture also frequently speaks of under this name, as was noted Sect. 11, which consists in the approbation, commendation, or vindication of a person from guilt or blame, whether justly or unjustly imputed unto him. Of this kind of justification, when it is duly and justly given or pronounced, good works in one kind or other, and for the most part those of the moral law, have a special and particular interest in it, being the only regular ground upon which the act or sentence of such a justification can or ought to proceed. And though God, by means of his appropriate privilege of καρδιогνωσια, or *knowing the heart*, can and doth, upon a sufficient ground, secretly and in himself approve of him who as yet only believeth, I mean with a true and unfeigned faith, and before he hath any ways justified or commended this his faith by good works; yet he is not wont to signify or declare, by one means or other, this his approbation of any particular person, until he hath showed the world his faith by his works. Nor doth he require of any man to judge of any other person, as a man justified in his sight by a true and unfeigned faith, who hath not given either unto him, or unto some others from whom he may receive the information, a fair and reasonable account by works suitable of such a faith residing in him. And questionless it was this kind of justification of which the Apostle James discourseth so largely in his second chapter, as appeareth all along the context, from verse 14 to the end. Therefore, when he demands, "Was not our father Abraham justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (verse 21;) evident it is, that by Abraham's being justified, he doth not mean that Abraham had his sins pardoned; for he had been thus



justified long before. And besides, his offering up his son Isaac upon the altar could be no means of obtaining remission of sins from God. But when he is said to have been “justified by works, when he had offered his son Isaac upon the altar,” &c., the meaning is, that upon this great testimony given by Abraham of the truth and effectualness of his faith God highly approved of him, loved him, and dealt by him as by a person righteous and just, and called him his friend. The tenor of the story in Genesis fully accordeth herewith. For immediately upon Abraham’s stretching forth his hand, and taking the knife to slay his son, “the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” (Gen. xxii. 11, 12.) A second time, also, the angel, upon this offering up of his son, “called unto him out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son : that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Gen. xxii. 15—18.) In these passages is that justification of Abraham expressed and contained, whereof the Apostle James speaketh, affirming him to have obtained it at the hand of God by works as well as by his faith, which he saith “wrought together with them ;” meaning, towards the procuring or obtaining of this justification or approbation from God, and was by them perfected, or made perfect, that is, was declared to be perfect, that is, sound and good ; or else, was *perfected*, *ετελειωθη*, that is, became effectual to the obtaining of its proper end, namely, the approbation and love of God, with favourable and friendly respects from him, which is the perfection, namely, arguitive or argumentatively, of any thing. As, on the contrary, when any thing pretending to be a means for the compassing of such or such an end proves yet unable to effect it, this argueth, though, haply, not always demonstratively, the imperfection or weakness of it. In much a like sense to that wherein Abraham, as we have heard, is said to have been justified by works, is Rahab the harlot, also, that is, who formerly had been an harlot,

said to have been justified. (Verse 25.) The meaning is, that upon Rahab's demonstration of the reality and truth of her faith, in exposing her life to danger by entertaining and hiding the spies sent from Joshua, God entreated her as a justified or righteous person, by preserving her and her father's house for her sake, with all that she had, when the city she dwelt in, with all that was in it, "both man and woman, young and old," besides, were utterly destroyed with the edge of the sword. (Joshua vi. 21—23, &c.) So that the word *δικαισθαι*, *to be justified*, in this contexture of discourse, doth not signify the proper effect of that act of God by which he constitutes or makes men righteous or just, or by which he justifies them; but the effect, one or more, of some such act of his by which he expresseth himself lovingly, graciously, and bountifully towards such persons who are or have been justified and made righteous by him, and hereby declares and, after a sort, pronounceth them righteous. But he doth not judge it fitting or meet thus to countenance them, or to entreat them as righteous or justified persons, until they have first given a good testimony of the reality and soundness of that faith, upon and by which he justifieth them. The expression wherein a person is said to be justified, when he is only respected or dealt with as being justified, that is, as a justified person, is metonymical and frequent in Scripture, the antecedent being oft put for the consequent. Thus by "hunting," (Gen. xxvii. 3,) is meant taking or getting by hunting; and to make a "son the first-born," (Deut. xxi. 16,) signifies to respect him as the first-born, or to confer upon him the privilege of the first-born. So, also, to be "made sinners," (Rom. v. 19,) imports a being made liable unto punishment, or such a condition which belongs unto sinners; to omit many the like. In this sense and notion of the word "justify," the Lord Christ may be said to justify those that shall stand at his right hand in the great day, in saying thus unto them: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The reason or ground in equity of this justification is declared in the words next following: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," &c. (Matt. xxv. 34, 35, &c.) This most gracious address and application of Christ unto those that shall be saved, especially in conjunction with that most dreadful and soul-confounding address, immediately following, unto those

that shall eternally perish, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," &c., together with the reason hereof, in the next words, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat," &c.; I say these respective decisions or adjudications of Christ plainly evince and prove that no person whatsoever, of years of discretion, and actually capable of knowing good and evil, shall receive the great benefit and blessing of justification by means of any such faith which shall not utter and approve itself before God and men by fruitfulness in well-doing, according to such means and opportunities as shall have been afforded unto them. And this, also, is the apparent drift and scope of the Apostle James in that discourse, some passages whereof we lately sifted and insisted upon out of his second chapter. Thus we see what the interest and part of good works is in the great business of justification according to the Scriptures.

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#### SECTION XIV.

##### HOW REMISSION OF SINS JUSTIFIETH.

14. THAT remission of sins, likewise, is no alien or stranger unto justification, but in some near employment about it, is of ready demonstration from the Scriptures. The discourse of the Apostle, Rom. iv. 1—8, inclusive, is pregnant to this purpose: "But to him," saith he, "that worketh not," namely, with an intent or hope of being justified by his working; or, "that worketh not," that is, that wanteth works competent or sufficient to justify him, "but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly," meaning God, who justifieth even those that have been ungodly, and so must needs be without works meritorious of justification, upon their believing, "his faith is counted for righteousness;" (verse 5;) that is, he is made a righteous or just man by means of his believing, and is accordingly looked upon by God. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness," that is, either the justification or the blessedness accruing by it, "of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness," that is, whom he justifieth, "without works;" namely, which are any ways meritorious of justification; for this Apostle, by works, in opposition unto faith, in the business of justification,

constantly understandeth the merit of works ; in which sense, also, his adversaries the Jews understood and urged it, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." By this description from the pen of David of the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness, that is, justifieth, as hath been showed, it appears that his righteousness or justification, passively taken, which is the cause or means of his blessedness, consists in the forgiveness of his iniquities, or, which is the same in substance, though differing in consideration or respect, in the non-imputation of sin unto him. By means, as well of the one as of the other, of these, the man's sins are said to be covered ; that is, I conceive, to pass unpunished ; indemnity from punishment being a kind of veil by which the sins of transgressors are kept from being much minded or taken notice of by men ; as, on the other hand, when God openly judgeth or punisheth men for their sins he is said to uncover or discover them. (Ezek. xvi. 37, 57 ; xxiii. 10 ; and elsewhere.) Now by that description, as the Apostle termeth it, which David giveth, as we have heard, of the blessedness of the justified person, placing it in this, that his iniquities or sins are remitted or forgiven, it is a clear case that remission of sins justifieth *per modum causæ formalis*, as the form or formal cause is said to give being to that which is caused by it. When a painter maketh a wall white, whiteness is the form or formal cause by which the wall is made white, or which maketh the wall white. Nor can it be with reason reduced to any of the other kinds of causes, as is evident, it being no efficient, or material, or final cause hereof, nor carrying the least semblance of any of these. In like manner, when God justifieth a sinner, that which he doeth to him or for him is precisely this, he forgiveth him his sins ; this is the very form of that his action, that is, the form which, by his act of justifying, he introduceth anew upon the sinner. Nor doeth he any other thing directly and immediately unto a person when and as he justifieth him, but only forgive him his sins. Of one and the same act or action there cannot be a plurality of effects, immediate and direct, really differing the one from the other.

It is true, as there may be sundry collateral, constructive, virtual, or consequential acts, acted or done in the doing of some one, so there may be, nay, there always is, an answerable variety

of effects produced by, and so attributable unto, this one act. When a Prince prefers some head of a family to a great place of profit and power in the state, or any other person who is a lover of his friends and relations in blood, he may be said to cast honour upon this person, to better his condition in the world, to raise his family, to give every particular member hereof hope of being better accommodated in matters of this life; yea, in case he doth bestow this preferment upon him for his father's or any of his ancestors' sake, as for any worth in them, or for any good service done by them, or the like, in preferring him, he may be said to impute the worth or faithfulness of such an ancestor unto him. But all such acts as these are but mediate, constructive, or consequential; and so are their respective effects to be interpreted likewise. A Prince, when he prefers a man, in strict propriety of speaking, doeth nothing else but prefer him, or, which is the same, confers some place of profit or of honour upon him. In like manner when God justifieth a man he may be said to bless him, to translate him from death to life, to give him a lawful title or claim to eternal life and his heavenly kingdom; and because he doeth it upon the account and for the sake of the obedience of Christ, as well active as passive, although in a more peculiar manner, upon the account of the latter, the Scripture constantly ascribing justification unto the blood, death, sufferings, &c., of Christ, and never, to my remembrance, unto his active obedience, unless haply as presupposed unto his passive, and as qualifying it for its high service, I say, because God justifieth men for the sake of Christ, and for what he hath done and suffered in serving his counsel and good pleasure, he may, when he justifieth any man, be said to impute the righteousness or obedience of Christ unto him. And because, in order to this act of his, I mean his act of justifying a man, he requires faith of him, and faith only, in the sense formerly declared and asserted, when he justifieth him, he may be said to count or to impute his faith unto him for righteousness. Again: When he justifieth a man, because he graciously confers upon him a righteousness of his own invention and contrivance, and doth not justify him with, for, or upon, any righteousness found in him whom he justifieth, therefore, when he justifieth him he is said to impute righteousness unto him, that is, as it were, to gratify him with a righteousness, remission of sins being a righteousness, properly enough so called, inasmuch as he who is

chargeable with no sin, which is his privilege or case who hath all his sins justly and authoritatively remitted, must needs be looked upon as an observer of the whole law. But when God justifieth a person, he doeth none of these things to him in a direct, formal, or immediate way, but constructively or consecutively only. All that he doeth upon such terms is only this, he justifieth him, that is, he remitteth unto him all his sins; remission of sins being that absolute and complete righteousness wherewith a sinner is invested by God in his justification, besides which, such a person is not capable of any, nor standeth in need of any, for the attainment of any end or benefit of righteousness whatsoever. And as for those that have been the greatest sinners, and neither gave meat unto Christ when he was an hungred, nor drink when he was thirsty, nor clothed him when he was naked, &c. ; if so be God should remit these and all other their sins unto them, which yet he cannot without their timely repentance and contrary practising for a season, because this would be to deny himself, I mean his righteousness and truth, they should hereby become as righteous and as capable of the reward of righteousness as the greatest saints, and those who continued for the longest time walking with God. This concerning remission of sins, and what part it beareth in the great and mysterious work of justification.

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## SECTION XV.

### HOW THE SCRIPTURES, OR WORD OF GOD, JUSTIFY.

15. THAT the Scriptures, or word of God, are not mere standers by neither, or lookers on, in the business of justification, but have somewhat to do in reference unto it, and for the promoting it, sufficiently appears from these and such like sayings of the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17.) "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts xi. 13, 14.) "Abraham believed God," that is, the word of God, "and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 3.) True faith, whether in the act, or habit, or both, having such an essential connexion by the

will and pleasure of God, as we have heard, with justification, and never failing to obtain it, whatsoever any ways worketh faith or contributeth towards the raising of it in the soul, must needs, in that respect, and so far, have a hand in justification; according to that known principle in reason, formerly mentioned, *Quod est causa causæ est etiam causa causati*; “That which in any consideration gives being to the cause is, in that respect, a cause of the effect produced by it.” Now the Scripture, or the word of God, I mean the mind, counsel, or will of God, which are the substance, matter, or truth contained and held forth in and by the Scriptures, which we are taught in them to call the word of God, which matter or truth are held forth, likewise taught and declared, in part, other ways than in the Scriptures, as by the light of nature, works of creation, of providence, &c.; I say the Scripture, or word of God, thus understood, is the only object or subject-matter of that hearing by which faith ordinarily cometh, as the Apostle even now informed us, meaning that faith by which men are justified. And as sanctification is ascribed unto the word of God: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is the truth;” (John xvii. 17;) *mediate fide*, by the intervening and mediation of faith, or the belief of it; (Heb. iv. 2;) so may justification by the same mediation be ascribed unto it likewise. Yea, faith itself, which justifieth more immediately and directly, and, consequently, justification, may be ascribed unto it, not only as it is the subject-matter or object of that hearing by which the faith which justifieth is produced, as hath been already said, but as it is such a word, or the matter of it so qualified and conditioned, that it is very apt, pregnant, and potent, to work or raise that faith in the hearts and minds of men which, by divine institution, as we have heard, is justifying. For it is every ways and on every hand so ἀξιωματικόν, so *worthy, meet, or fit to be believed*, and so authoritatively, and with that power of evidence and conviction, commanding the obedience of faith, as the Scripture speaks, unto it, that such persons to whom it is preached or set forth, like itself, must needs have much either of the brute or of the devil in them,—if there be place for the distinction, and the brute in men be not the devil in the shape or likeness of a sot,—if they give not the honour and homage of faith unto it. But of this I have reasoned more at large in a treatise concerning the divine authority of the Scriptures. And thus we see how, and after what manner, the

Scriptures also, or word of God, are operative in their way towards the justification of a sinner, and may be said to justify: They instruct and teach men the way that leadeth unto justification; yea, they most effectually persuade, urge, and press men to walk in this way, I mean the way of believing; and, by their innate property to convince the judgments and consciences of men of the truth of what they teach and say, they do much facilitate or make easy both men's entrance into and their walking, likewise, in this way. And as the law is said to have constituted or made men High Priests, (Heb. vii. 28,) because it directed and taught men how to make them; as, namely, by the performance of all those observations, rites, and ceremonies prescribed in this law, to give this great and sacred investiture to a person capable, by God's appointment, of the dignity, and then by declaring and authorizing them for such in the name of God. In like manner the Gospel, or word of God, may be said to constitute or make men righteous, that is, to justify them, both because it teacheth and prescribeth unto them what they ought to do and must do that they may be justified; and then, by authority derived from God, and in his name, pronounce, avouch, and declare them for such, I mean for persons justified, when they have performed and done that which they prescribe on this behalf.

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## SECTION XVI.

HOW THE MINISTER OF THE WORD MAY BE SAID TO JUSTIFY.

16. THAT the publishers or Ministers of the Gospel are not without some part and fellowship in the glorious and blessed business of justification, and, according to their interest herein, may be said to justify, is not a forced or far-fetched conclusion from the Scriptures. For when the Apostle Paul writeth to Timothy, that by doing what he had directed him to do, he should both save himself, and those that heard him; (1 Tim. iv. 16;) and so assumeth unto himself a capacity of the same glorious service, "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them;" (Rom. xi. 14;) when, I say, he ascribeth that great act and



service of saving men unto the Ministers of the Gospel, he doth implicitly, and by near-hand consequence, ascribe unto them the justifying of them likewise: For there is no consideration or respect wherein a Minister can be said to save men, but by a precedaneous or presupposed act of justifying them. Nor is there any person capable of being saved by a Minister of the Gospel, in his way or capacity of saving men, who is not as capable, or rather, more capable, of being justified by him. Yea, where our English translation readeth, "And they that turn many unto righteousness [shall shine] as the stars for ever and ever," (Dan. xii. 3,) Junius and Tremellius, from the original, render it, *Et justificantes multos, &c.*, "And they that justify many shall shine," &c. So, likewise, Arias Montanus translatheth, together with the late Dutch annotators. The Scripture, from place to place, mentions it as the proper work of the Minister, and as principally intended by God in the erection of the ministerial function in the world, to make men and women the sons and daughters of God by believing: "The same" John "came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe." (John i. 7.) So the Apostle demands, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed?" (1 Cor. iii. 5;) and calls Timothy his "own son in the faith." (1 Tim. i. 2.) Now in such a sense, wherein men may be said to be made believers by the Ministers of the Gospel, they may be said to be justified also by them; inasmuch as both these are accomplished or effected by one and the same act, the former directly and immediately, the latter mediately and consequentially. If you then ask me, "What doth the Minister contribute towards the justifying of men, or in what consideration may he be said to justify them?" my answer is, When he openeth unto them the counsel of God in the Gospel, concerning the justification and salvation of men by Jesus Christ, so effectually, so throughly, and with that evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, as the Apostle speaks, that men's reasons, judgments, and consciences are so far convinced, or persuaded of the truth of what is delivered upon such terms, that they truly, unfeignedly, and with the whole heart believe it: Now, and upon this account, he may be said to justify them. He that makes a man a believer, *ipso facto*, makes him righteous, that is, justifies him. There is nothing more familiar and frequent in the

Scripture than for the same action, and so the same effect, to be ascribed both unto God and man ; to the former, in respect of a superior and more excellent interposure, proper unto him ; to the latter, in respect of that subordinate efficiency or subserviency wherewith God hath been pleased to honour him ; \* yea, the Apostle Paul termeth the Ministers of the Gospel, *Θεοῦ συνεργοὺς*, *fellow-workers*, or *workers together, with God*, in and about the saving of the souls of men. (1 Cor. iii. 9.)

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## SECTION XVII.

### HOW A PERSON MAY BE SAID TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF.

17. THAT there is a consideration and sense, also, wherein the person justified may be said to justify himself, the Scripture itself seems to acknowledge. For when it is said, concerning Timothy, that by taking heed to himself, and to the doctrine taught by him, he should both save himself, and them that heard him, (1 Tim. iv. 16,) there is an action ascribed unto him, in reference unto himself, every whit as great, and as incompetent to him, in the ordinary signification of the word, as the act of justifying. To save a man's self sounds altogether as high as to justify a man's self ; yea, he that believeth may, by much a nearer-hand consequence, and with more propriety of speaking, be said to justify himself than to save himself. When a man labours in his calling, and puts forth that strength of "power" which God hath given him "to get wealth," (Deut. viii. 18,) for such a purpose, and, withal, thrives and prospers, through the blessing of God, in his way, he may properly enough be said to enrich himself, or make himself rich ; yea, somewhat more properly than when it is said, that "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." (Prov. x. 4.) In like manner, when a man doeth that upon which, or by means whereof, he shall certainly be justified, this fruit, or reward of his action, his justification, may, without the violation of any rule, either of grammar or of rhetoric, be ascribed unto him. Hence it follows, God having, by a perpetual and inviolable decree, settled

\* *Non novum est, verba quæ Deo summo jure competunt, aut Christo, sensu quodam subordinato tribui hominibus.*—HUG. GROT. M., 1 Tim. iv. 16.

the great benefit and privilege of justification upon believing, that whensoever any person, man or woman, shall lift up his heart hereunto, I mean, to believe, by this action he may be said to justify himself; not, indeed, after any such manner, or upon any such terms, as God is said to justify men upon their believing, as, namely, authoritatively, or as having a sovereign right to justify whom, or upon what terms, he pleaseth, or the like; but in such a way or sense only wherein a person may be said to do that which, upon his action, is done unto him by another. Of this construction or dialect there are instances more than a few in the Scriptures.

It may be here demanded, “But is it meet or tolerable to say that a man, when he believeth, imputeth righteousness unto himself, or forgiveth himself his sins? and yet both these are done unto him by another, namely, God, upon his believing; yea, these are, as hath in effect been formerly said, but interpretative expressions of justification itself: And therefore it seems, that whosoever may in any sense be said to justify may, in the same sense, be said to do both the one and the other of these; and this in reference to any or all of these persons whom they are said to justify.” To this I answer,

1. That the expressions put to the question in this demand are, indeed, uncouth and harsh, grating upon ears that have any competent taste of words; nor do I judge them fitting to be applied to, or spoken of, him that believeth. But,

2. When a man is said, by believing, to justify himself, the meaning is not, that he absolveth himself from his sins, or pronounceth a sentence of absolution over himself, or that he imputeth righteousness unto himself, or the like; but only that he levieth, puts forth, or performs such an act whereby he prevaileth with God, according to his gracious covenant and promise to justify him, and therein to do all these things to him, or for him. As when a man is said to save himself, which, as we heard, is the Apostle’s own expression, the meaning is not either that by a strong hand, or by any physical power, he over-matcheth the devil, and keeps himself out of his clutches, and from being carried or thrust by him into hell, or that he invests himself with the state of blessedness and glory, which is signified and meant by salvation; but that he takes such a course, as, namely, by believing and persevering in it unto the end, whereby he shall find favour in the sight of God, to do

these things for him. Now to say a man by believing takes an effectual and direct course to prevail with God to forgive him his sins, to impute righteousness unto him, &c., are as proper and convenient expressions, as to say that he prevails with him to justify him. Yet,

3. And lastly : It may be considered, that one and the same thing may admit of several considerations, and different respects ; and in and under some one of these considerations and respects may admit of some attributions of which it is not so regularly or smoothly capable under another. As for instance : Salvation, or the saving of the soul, is one and the same act ; yet it may be considered, either as it is procurable at the hand of God by men, as, namely, by faith, and continuance in well-doing ; or, as it is a rescuing or vindication of men, by strength of arm, from the power of the devil ; or, as it is an actual instating in, or putting men into, a real possession of that blessedness and glory which God hath assigned by promise unto his saints, and those that shall be saved. Now in either of these two latter considerations it is not ascribable unto men ; but in the first of the three, as we have heard, it is.

In like manner, the act of justifying is one and the same act, yet it admits of sundry considerations. (1.) It may be considered either as an act of God imputing righteousness unto men, or as an act of his forgiving men all their sins, or as an act of grace and high favour purchased at his hand by Christ for men ; or, (2.) As an act attainable from God by men for themselves, by performing of such conditions or terms upon and according unto which he hath covenanted and promised the vouchsafement of it. The former considerations of the act we speak of are of that nature and import, that, in respect of none of them, it is attributable unto men, they all importing such things which are above the line of men ; but in the consideration last mentioned it may, in very passable and convenient language, be attributed unto men who believe, in reference to themselves. Nor need it be offensive unto any man to hear it said, that men who believe in that sense justify themselves.

There are two other causes of justification yet remaining, not mentioned in the title-page, amongst those that have been insisted on ; namely, the material, and the final. Of these in few words.

## SECTION XVIII.

## CONCERNING THE MATERIAL CAUSE OF JUSTIFICATION.

18. CONCERNING the material cause of justification, they who make it to be either Christ himself, or the righteousness of Christ, either active or passive, or both, express themselves very improperly, and confound two causes always distinct and contradistinguished; namely, the efficient and the material, the former being always extrinsical, the latter intrinsical, to the effect or thing caused by them, in conjunction with the other two causes. And besides, in so notioning the matter, or material cause of justification, they decline the ordinary rule, by which men who love exactness and propriety, as well in conceiving as in speaking, are wont to walk in both, in cases of like nature and import. For whereas no action, as no accident besides, hath any matter or material cause, properly so called; yet, being an effect, or somewhat that is caused, there must be some vice-matter, or somewhat answering the nature or consideration of such a material cause, found in it, or relating to it. Now that which relateth unto an action with greatest affinity unto matter, or to a material cause, properly so called, is *subjectum recipiens*, or *circa quod*, as logicians speak; that is, “the subject receiving the action,” or “the object upon which the action is acted.” According to this notion, the believing or repentant sinner, or, which is the same, the person justified, or to be justified, is the material cause of justification. Such a person exhibits or presents, as it were, unto God, matter duly fitted and prepared according to his mind, for him to work or act upon or about justifyingly. And when God doth justify such a person, he doth introduce a new form, as, namely, righteousness, remission of sins, or justification passive,—for these I take to be much the same,—into matter rightly and appropriately disposed for the reception of it; which matter is, as hath been said, the sinner now believing. As when fire heateth the water that is hung over it, or otherwise applied unto it, the water is the matter upon which the fire acteth in this act of calefaction, and the heat which it causeth in the water is the form which it induceth, or introduceth into it. This briefly for the material cause of justification.

## SECTION XIX.

## CONCERNING THE FINAL CAUSE OF JUSTIFICATION.

19. THE final cause of justification is commonly distinguished into that which is subordinate or less principal, and that which is ultimate and supreme. The former is with one consent affirmed to be the great benefit or blessedness of the creature or person justified; which blessedness standeth in two particulars, chiefly,—deliverance from under the guilt of sin, with all the misery consequential hereunto, and an investiture with a regular title or claim unto that immortal and undefiled inheritance, which is reserved in the heavens, to be enjoyed in due time by all those who shall be found in a due capacity to be admitted into part and fellowship therein. The ultimate or supreme end, or material cause of justification, is concluded with a *nemine contradicente*, as far as I know, to be the glory of God, partly in the just vindication of a sinner from under the guilt of sin, and from the punishment incurred thereby, and partly in the salvation and eternal glorification of the person so vindicated.

As for the opinion or notion of those who conceive that God designeth nothing, acteth nothing, in strictness and propriety of consideration, for himself or for his own glory ultimately, but all for the good and benefit of his creature, I shall not upon this occasion either plead or implead it; only I shall crave leave to say this, that, as far as I have yet looked into it and conversed with it, I do not find it so extravagant or uncouth, or so hard of reconcilment, either with the Scriptures, where they seem most contradicting it, or with any the received grounds or principles of Christian religion, as I suppose it is like to seem unto many at its first appearance and hearing. And though there may be more in the opinion, were it narrowly examined and scanned from the one end of it unto the other, as well for the glory of God as for the benefit and comfort of the creature; yet, because such an examination of it may haply require a just treatise, and more of the ordinary rank of professors are more like to be startled or amazed at it than to embrace it, I shall therefore forbear to encumber the commonly received doctrine, concerning the final cause or ultimate end of justification, with any further mention of it.

## SECTION XX.

## THE CONCLUSION.

20. THUS we have showed how great a number, and what variety, as well of things as of persons, there are, all, both of the one kind and the other, joining hand in hand, and making, as it were, one shoulder to bring the great blessing of justification upon the head of a poor sinner. God, who is “wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working,” (Isaiah xxviii. 29,) judged it meet that a matter of so gracious and rare, of so profound and wonderful, a contrivance should pass through many hands before his creature man, to whom it was meant and intended, should be invested with the actual possession and enjoyment of it. There is scarce any thing of a more humbling consideration to the height and pride of the spirit of a man, than to be subjected to a multiplicity of dependencies, especially upon such, either persons or things, which he either judgeth but equal unto, but most of all if beneath, himself, for the obtaining of that of which he stands in need, and without which he fully understands that it cannot be well with him. Such a posture or subjection as this sets him off at the greatest distance in his condition from God, in point of true greatness and glory. Nor is there any thing in all the unlimited circumference of the blessedness of God, that renders him greater or more glorious in the eyes of his creature, than his *αὐταρξία*, or *self-sufficiency*, and his absolute independency upon all, whether persons or things whatsoever, besides himself. And, doubtless, in such cases, where the number of dependencies is not established by any indispensable law or decree of God, they that can contract themselves to the smaller number of them, for the enjoyment of themselves with comfort and contentment, will reduce their present conditions to the nearest affinity whereof it is capable with the blessedness of God himself. But where God hath by any revealed appointment or declared will suspended the attainment of any spiritual enjoyment, privilege, or blessing upon men’s application of themselves unto him in the use of such and such means, of what number or kind soever, their non-subjection to this law or appointment of his in the neglect of any one of these means is of a very dangerous and sad presage that they will fall short in

the attainment of the blessing. And for this reason my soul cannot but sadly lament over the case and condition of all those who have, in the ignorance, vanity, and pride of their spirits, turned their backs upon the ministry of the Gospel, setting their faces towards fancies and conceited methods of their own, though of Satan's inspiration, for their justification in the sight of God, whereas it hath been evidently showed and proved from the mouth of God himself, that amongst those various actors in and about the great business of justification which have been presented upon the theatre of this brief discourse, he hath assigned a worthy co-operation or part unto the ministry and Ministers of the Gospel. Therefore, they who disdain to have the royal robe of righteousness or justification put upon them by men of this function and office, as judging them unworthy and too mean to serve them in so high and sacred a concernment, for any hope that I am able, upon any good ground, to give them of a better issue, they are never like to wear it.



# EIPHNOMAXIA :

THE

## AGREEMENT AND DISTANCE OF BRETHREN :

OR,

### A BRIEF SURVEY

OF

THE JUDGMENT OF MR. JOHN GOODWIN, AND THE  
CHURCH OF GOD WALKING WITH HIM,

TOUCHING THESE IMPORTANT HEADS OF DOCTRINE :

- I. ELECTION AND REPROBATION: II. THE DEATH OF CHRIST :  
III. THE GRACE OF GOD IN AND ABOUT CONVERSION :  
IV. THE LIBERTY OR POWER OF THE WILL, OR OF THE  
CREATURE MAN : V. THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

Truly and plainly declaring the particulars, as well agreed upon as  
dissented in, between them and their Christian brethren of oppo-  
site judgment to them in some things about the said doctrines.

Together with a short touch of some of the principal grounds and  
reasons upon which the said Pastor and church cannot consent  
in judgment with their brethren about those particulars, relating  
to the said heads of doctrine, wherein the disagreement standeth.

If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Never-  
theless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us  
mind the same thing.—Philip. iii. 15, 16.

And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, &c.—  
Rom. iii. 8.



AN

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER,

CONCERNING THE ENSUING DISCOURSE.

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GOOD READER,

THE small piece now in thy hand is, in true construction, only apologetical and defensive, and therefore we hope will not be offensive unto thee, or any other. It is lawful, yea, and matter of duty, even for an offender, and this unto merit of death itself, in case he be unduly, and contrary to course of law, assaulted, to rise up in his might for his own defence; how much more for him that is conscious to himself of no miscarriage, but knoweth certainly that such things are laid to his charge which he knoweth not. Though the greater part of the bulk of these papers be bestowed upon the justification of ourselves in some doctrines and tenets which we own, and for the owning of which, together with a supposed owning of many others, we suffer in many men's thoughts, words, and deportments, relating to us, the penalty of persons deeply and dangerously erroneous, if not heretical; yet this is not the right eye of our design in drawing up the account here presented unto thee; but rather the washing of our hearts and hands in innocency before all the world, from the guilt of many enormous, and some ridiculous, opinions, which some would fain thrust into the company and retinue of those tenets which we hold in opposition unto them, hoping by this means to disparage and render these the more obnoxious unto jealousies and prejudice in the minds of men. For are there not some Ministers in and about the city so far from all Christian ingenuity, as, in a language sufficiently understood by their hearers, openly, and from their pulpits, to declaim against us, as, in our doctrine of election,

denying the Godhead of the Father, as Arius denying the Godhead of the Son ; as holding an election of qualities, not of persons, unto salvation ; as exalting nature above or against free grace ; as affirming that men by their own strength, and without the special grace of God, may repent, believe, and be saved ; as denying a power in God to bring to pass his intentions ; to omit many other particulars, of like wicked and absurd import, which not only we from our soul, but our doctrines also, do as much abhor as themselves, and much more than some of their doctrines.

To prevent, for the future, the sin of slander, or, at least, of unadvised speaking, in others, who, through the undue suggestions of their teachers, may speak much evil of us and our doctrines falsely ; and in ourselves, the sin of leaving a pit uncovered, into which men may very possibly fall, yea, and by falling receive much prejudice and harm ; we have drawn up and published this brief model of our sense, as well in the negative as affirmative, about the five heads of doctrine which, in some particulars relating to them, are at this day solemnly controverted between us and many of our brethren, partakers, many of them, we question not, of like precious faith with us. Herein we have plainly and faithfully, as far as God was pleased to assist our understandings and memories in the work, expressed under every of the said heads, respectively, all the particulars of moment, wherein we consent in judgment with them, as also wherein we dissent from them. It is very like there are sundry other particulars in either kind which are not here mentioned ; but we suppose they are all dependent upon, and reducible unto, these, as consequences or conclusions are to their principles or premises. Henceforth, we trust, that mouth of ungodliness will be stopped, which hath opened itself wide against us, to charge us at peradventure, if not with the regret and gainsaying of the conscience belonging to it.

Amongst the particulars of agreement, when any thing is mentioned, which may possibly, to some, seem doubtful on our brethren's side, as, namely, whether they concur with us in such a thing, or no, we specify in the margin some authentic author or other, one or more, known to be of their judgment in these controversies who asserteth it, together with direction where the said assertion is to be found in his writings. Concerning such particulars of this import, which are generally

known to be as well the sense of our brethren as ours, we content ourselves with the naked mention or naming of them.

Concerning the account we render of our judgment in those particulars wherein we dissent, as we conceive, from our brethren, we do it, partly by Scripture, partly by ground and argument otherwise; and in both we, according to the exigency of our purpose in these papers, are very brief, sometimes only pointing at the scriptures which we build upon, and nowhere insisting long upon any; and for our arguments otherwise, we rather show their heads only, than the just proportions of their bodies. Only for such, both scriptures and arguments, which have been more thoroughly discussed in a treatise not long since published by one of us, entitled, "Redemption Redeemed," we in our margin, and sometimes in the page itself, refer thee to the particular places of their respective discussions. We do not here intermeddle, little or much, with any objection made by our adversaries, either against our pleadings from Scripture, or other arguments; nor with any argument levied by them in defence of their opinions, both these being eccentric to our present design, and, indeed, inconsistent with the brevity resolved upon by us. Only we conceive that it may, probably, hereafter fall in the way of some of us to discourse our sense concerning them, and to vindicate both our Scripture-pleas, and others, from all prejudice or annoyance by them.

If any man's heart shall stir him up to make answer to what is here argued and pleaded by us, either from the Scriptures, or otherwise, in justification of our dissentings from our brethren, in the heads of doctrine specified in the title of these papers, our desire to him is, 1. That if he desires either our satisfaction or reply, he will please to give as fair and Christian language as here he receives. For it is not lightly possible that any Rabshakeh should satisfy us; nor probable that we shall so much as attempt to satisfy him by any reply. 2. When he shall, in the course of his answer, come to undertake such, either proofs from Scripture, or other arguments, to the fuller and larger debate whereof elsewhere we refer, that he will not oppose or insist upon any thing which is there already answered, unless, withal, he be able substantially to refute those answers. 3. And lastly: That he will not deal so disingenuously as to trouble either us or others with impertinences under the name of answers, or with such notions instead of replies which his own conscience shall

tell him are but evasions and shifts, and which he knoweth himself how to answer and satisfy.

The chief oracles which we have consulted about this great soul-concernment, our forsaking our brethren's doctrine, which we sometimes embraced with them, in the particulars specified in these papers, were these two: 1. The nature and attributes of God, as they are plainly written and asserted, as well in the book of nature as of grace. 2. The interest of true godliness, sufficiently stated and declared in both books likewise, though with more lightness and authority in the latter. And we verily believe, that if thou wilt lay the same ear of a conscientious unprejudicateness as close to them as we have done, thou wilt hear them distinctly admonishing and advising thee also to steer the same course with us. Far be it from us to obtrude any of our notions upon thee, or any other man: We desire a liberty of judging for ourselves; and therefore cannot reasonably prescribe unto others. Nor dare we so much as advise thee to drink of our waters, unless thou drawest them from the same fountain with us. The Lord Christ rather reproveth him who saluted him by that honourable title of "good," as not knowing, it seems, a sufficient ground for such a salutation, nor believing him to be God. (Matt. xix. 17.) Nor do we desire thine or any man's flattering or complimentary owning of our notions for truth. If thou seest them not upon their foundations, thou seest them not in their glory; neither canst thou, with ingenuity of conscience, either think or speak worthily of them. Truth delighteth little in the tongues or countenances of men, until she hath secured their judgments, and set up her throne in their understandings. But this we can, with all good assurance, inform thee concerning her; that, well understood, she will bear any man's charges that shall travel with her through the world; though we must confess, withal, that many times her company is very costly. But what she spends in silver she repays in gold; and with the rubbish and ruins of men's names, friends, and fortunes in the world, builds up their consciences with that peace which passeth all understanding, and with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.

Neither shall it be any matter of discouragement or discontent unto us, in the least, that the generality of men, whether learned or others, cannot presently comport in judgment with us about the doctrines held forth and avouched in these papers.

Nor is that weakness in men, which our Saviour taketh knowledge of, any offence at all unto us in our case. "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new : for he saith, The old is better." (Luke v. 39.) We consider, that as men's bodies must have a competent time allowed them for a removal of themselves from one place to another distant from it, so must their minds and understandings also for a regular and man-like quitting of a former opinion, held with any tolerable degree of probability, to take up another opposite to it in its stead. We ourselves were not suddenly, nor without many a looking back towards our former opinions, nor yet without many a going round about them before we left them, built up in that faith wherein we now stand, and for the entertainment whereof we have not only forsaken many of our brethren in the way of their judgments, but persons nearer unto us than they, we mean ourselves. Notwithstanding we are full of this belief and expectation that, within the compass of a few years, if not sooner, there will be as great a change in the greatest part of the present opposers of these our doctrines as there was in Paul, when the churches of Judea heard this of him : "That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed ;" (Gal. i. 23 ; ) well knowing that it is the nature and property of truth, having a convenient time allowed her for the exploit, to deal with errors as Moses's rod turned into a serpent did by the rods of the Egyptian enchanters when it devoured them.

We are unwilling, good reader, to surcharge thy patience ; otherwise we had several other things relating to the business before thee, and very worthy thy cognizance, to have imparted unto thee ; especially concerning that dangerous generation of men amongst us, who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, whilst they pretend to open it unto them ; for they neither enter themselves, neither suffer they them that are entering to go in. But we shall dismiss thee at present with those few advertisements already given, only following thee with our fervent and unfeigned prayer unto God, that he will keep thee from our errors, and not suffer men to keep thee from any his precious truths with us.

Thy cordial friends and well-willers in Christ,

JOHN GOODWIN

THOMAS LAMB

JOHN PRICE  
DANIEL TAYLOR  
GEORGE FOXCROFT  
WILLIAM ALLEN  
RICHARD ARNALD  
WILLIAM GODFREY  
HAMOND BREND  
JOHN DYE  
JOS. HUTCHINSON  
THOMAS TASSEL  
GEORGE COOK  
SAMUEL SOWTHEN.

In the name and by the consent of the church.



# EIPHNOMAXIA .

THE

AGREEMENT AND DISTANCE OF BRETHREN.

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## CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

PARTICULARS OF AGREEMENT ABOUT THE FIRST HEAD  
OF DOCTRINE.

ABOUT this our brethren and we agree in these particulars:—

1. That the Scripture expressly holdeth forth and asserteth both a decree of election and a decree also of reprobation in God.

2. That these decrees were in God from eternity, or before the foundations of the world were laid.

3. That both these decrees, as well as all others attributable unto God, are really and simply God himself.

4. That these decrees, as all others in God, are like God himself, absolutely immutable and unchangeable.

5. That God acteth nothing in time, in order to the execution of his decrees, but what he decreed, at least in the general, or in the rule by which he acteth, to act or do from eternity.

6. That God actually electeth, and so actually reprobateh, only in time, and not from eternity.\*

7. That the number of those already elected and that will be elected hereafter, as, likewise, of those already reprobated and that will be reprobated hereafter, is certainly known unto God.

8. That there can no moving cause from without or in the creature be assigned of God's decree, either of election or reprobation.

\* DR. PRIDEAUX, *De absoluto Decreto*. Lect. I.

9. That the end of the decree of election is the manifestation or praise of the rich and free grace of God.

10. That God, when he electeth unto salvation, doth not elect qualities but persons only.

PARTICULARS OF DISSENT ABOUT THE FIRST HEAD OF  
DOCTRINE.

THE particulars wherein we dissent about this head of doctrine are these :—

1. We hold and teach, that God hath not decreed from eternity to elect any person of mankind upon any terms but that, in case he liveth to years of discretion, he may very possibly perish, notwithstanding any such decree. Our brethren hold and teach the contrary.

2. We hold, that God hath not decreed from eternity the reprobation of any person of mankind, considered as such, who may not very possibly be saved, any decree in God notwithstanding; much less do we hold a decree of reprobation from eternity, against the far greatest part of mankind, excluding a possibility of their salvation. Our brethren hold the contrary.

3. We hold, that God hath not decreed the reprobation of any infant dying before the commission of actual sin. Our brethren affirm it.

4. We hold, that faith and repentance in particular persons are not the fruits or effects of election, but election rather the fruit of these. The sense of our brethren is herein also contrary to us.

5. We hold, that the only decree of election that can be asserted from the Scriptures is this, for substance and effect, “Whosoever believeth shall be saved;” as the only decree of reprobation this: “Whosoever believeth not shall be damned.” Our brethren cannot, it seems, accord with us in either.

6. We hold, that the intent, at least the primary or antecedent intent, of God in his decree of reprobation is the salvation, not the censure, of men. Our brethren differ much from us in this likewise.

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE FIRST PARTICULAR.

REASONS of our dissent in these particulars are,

1. We judge, that the threatenings of damnation in the Scriptures, denounced to and against believers in case of apos-

tasy, or turning aside into any the ways of the wickedness of the world, as well as against the ungodly and unbelieving, to be absolutely inconsistent with a peremptory intent in him that thus threatneth, especially with a signification of such an intent in him unto those who are thus threatened by him, to confer salvation upon them. (See Ezek. xviii. 24; Matt. xviii. 3, compared with verse 1; Rom. viii. 13, compared with Rom. i. 6—8; with many more places of like import.) Even as we judge it a very senseless part in a father to give his child a complete assurance, under hand and seal, that he will make him his heir, against all possible interveniences whatsoever, and yet presently threaten him, that unless he shall behave himself dutifully he will certainly disinherit him.

2. We judge that, in case any person were so adjudged to eternal life from eternity, by any decree of God, that as there is no possibility of his miscarrying, there were no necessity or occasion of Christ's dying for him. For we cannot conceive how any more just, equitable, or complete title to an inheritance or possession should accrue unto any man, than by the adjudication of the same unto him by such a person who hath an absolute and unquestionable right to dispose of the same as he pleaseth, and to confer it upon whom he will. So that our sense is, that such an election is extremely injurious to the death of Christ, and utterly dissolveth the necessity of it.\*

3. We judge such an election to be an open enemy unto godliness, and, consequently, to be anti-evangelical, inasmuch as the Gospel is, according to the Apostle's definition or description of it, a "doctrine which is according to godliness;" (1 Tim. vi. 3;) that is, calculated and contrived in all the veins, parts, and members of it, for the advance of godliness in the world. For we cannot conceive but that such a notion as this planted in the judgments and souls of men, namely,—that if the uttermost of what they are able to do in serving and pleasing God will save them, the lowest and slightest strain or degree in either will as certainly do it also, which is the natural and express result or consequence of such an election,—must needs make men very remiss, loose, and indifferent in the service of God; for who will strain and toil himself in running for such a prize, which he knows he shall as certainly obtain by going an easy, soft, and ordinary pace?

\* See more of this, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 461.

4. We conceive that such a notion of election as we now oppose, lays the honour, yea, and far the greatest part, if not the whole, of the necessity of that great ordinance of God, the ministry of the Gospel, in the dust. For if the elect, so called, shall as certainly be saved, and, consequently, be prepared and made meet for salvation,—for without this no man shall be saved by a weak, simple, yea, or corrupt ministry, yea, and this, it may be, enjoyed but a day or two in all a man's life, or loosely and negligently attended upon whilst it may be had, as well as by a ministry learned, lively, and faithful, and the most diligent and conscientious attending hereon,—wherein is the ministry of the Gospel to be esteemed? Or of what great consequence unto the world are the richest gifts, as of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, utterance, faithfulness, zeal, &c., for the ministry of the Gospel, if all those who are in any possibility of being saved by them, may, and shall as certainly, be saved without them? Or upon what account can men be urged and pressed by Ministers, as commonly they are, to a frequent, diligent, constant, serious, careful, and conscientious attendance upon the ministry, if salvation, and, consequently, preparations and meetness for salvation, shall as certainly be obtained by a broken, careless, and superficial attendance in this kind?

5. Such an election as we contend against we judge to be most unworthy the most excellent nature of God, and at manifest defiance with sundry his greatest attributes and perfections; as, namely, wisdom, holiness, mercy, justice, &c. We shall instance only in the two former at present. Such an election is inconsistent with his wisdom, because it supposeth him to project such a design for the manifestation of his grace, mercy, as also of his justice, which is unproper and disservient hereunto. For, doth it argue any sovereign or high strain, any super-abounding richness, of grace or mercy in any man, when ten thousand persons have equally offended him, only to pardon one or two of them, and make these great, and in the mean time implacably resolve to punish, yea, torment, all the rest to the utmost extremity of their demerit; and this against all possible interveniency of sorrow or repentance for their offence? Again: Such an election we conceive to be notoriously inconsistent with the holiness of God, because it representeth him unto the world as irreversibly resolved to make only a few persons, comparatively, happy, and this whether they shall labour and spin or no; and

to leave the generality or great body of mankind in such a condition of despair, wherein it is not lightly possible that their hand should be strengthened unto holiness. And, doubtless, it is repugnant unto holiness in any person, especially unto holiness in any great exaltation, to go so to work in any kind as to discourage the far greatest part of men in the world about him from holiness, or to put them into such a condition wherein it is not possible for them to be holy. How much more, in case it be supposed that this man hath an opportunity before him to give them all high and worthy encouragements unto holiness, and this without the least loss, prejudice, or inconvenience to himself!

6. We read but only of one decree of election in the Scriptures; whereas we judge that such a kind of election as our brethren hold forth in opposition to us supposeth as great a number of decrees of election as there are persons to be elected. For Peter's election, for example, doth not include or suppose either David's or Abraham's election. So that unless David, and so Abraham, be elected by a decree of election appropriate to himself, he cannot be supposed, according to that form of election which we are now breaking in pieces, to be elected at all. Nor can it reasonably be said, that the whole number of the elect, how many soever they be, may be all included in one and the same decree of election, unless it be supposed that this one is equivalently and in substance many; which, we conceive, cannot be proved of that decree of election which the Scripture countenanceth.

7. We conceive that all the passages and texts of Scripture which our brethren are wont to produce and argue for the establishment of their election, (as Rom. ix. 11, 12, &c.; Acts xiii. 48; Eph. i. 4, 11, &c.) with the rest, are merely irrelative to such a purpose, all forced against their native and proper imports, respectively, to serve in this warfare, being all very capable of a more orthodox, fair, and Christian interpretation, than that which they make subservient to their opinion.

8. We find no competent, indeed no tolerable, satisfaction in any of those arguments which our brethren are wont to levy and insist upon for the defence of their doctrine of election; and judge in our souls and consciences that we are able to give a rational, fair, and Christian account of their insufficiency and weakness.

9. Lastly: We are the more confirmed in our dislike of their opinion about election, because we very frequently find, and meet with, from the pens and mouths of those that are counted pillars of the said opinion, such things which are palpably inconsistent therewith; which to us plainly shows that their doctrine of election encumbereth and thwarteth many wholesome and necessary truths in Christian religion, and that many orthodox and worthy doctrines cannot be pertinently and effectually managed without the influence and aid of this our principle, that there is no election, or decree of election, of particular persons, as such, but only of an entire species of men, from eternity.

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE SECOND PARTICULAR.

OF our dissent in the second particular expressed, some of our grounds and reasons are these:—

1. We judge that when God professeth thus: “I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth;” (Ezek. xviii. 32;) and again, when he interrogates thus: “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (Verse 23;) and yet again, when he protesteth and sweareth, “As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live;” (Ezek. xxxiii. 11;) we judge, we say, that the ever-gracious and blessed God doth not in any of, much less in all, these passages express himself ironically or antiphrastically, but declareth his very heart and soul towards and concerning wicked men in general; and, consequently, that such professions and protestations from him as these are signally incompertant with any purpose or intention in him from eternity to destroy them, or any of them, considered as men, yea, or simply as wicked, unbelieving, or impenitent, but only as persevering such unto the end, which yet no decree of his neither doth any ways necessitate them unto.

2. We judge, also, those most pathetic, affectionate, and bowels-breathing wishes or desires of God for the peace and prosperity even of the vilest and worst-deserving men, mentioned Deut. v. 29; Psalm lxxxi. 13, 14, &c.; Isaiah xlviii. 18; Jer. xlv. 4; Matt. xxiii. 37, to be utterly inconsistent with such a bowelless and merciless reprobation of far the greatest part of mankind, as our brethren allow and teach.

3. We conceive such a reprobation to contain in it a very fiery and notorious antipathy and contrariety to those impressions of love, tenderness, and care, which God hath planted in the natures of all living creatures towards their young ones, the ostrich only excepted; of whose hardening against her young ones, as if they were not hers, God himself giveth this account: "Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted unto her understanding." (Job xxxix. 17.) So that we cannot but judge, that they that go about to fasten such a reprobation upon God as we oppose make him altogether unlike that part of his workmanship or creation which himself most commendeth, and most like that only part of it on which himself hath set a peculiar brand of ignominy and folly, and this in respect of that very property which such a reprobation as we speak of chargeth upon him.

4. We conceive, that if all living creatures be propense in affection, tenderness, and care for the preservation of those which receive being from and are propagated by them, and God be as hard of bowels, and as implacably bent upon the eternal ruin and torment of the far greater part of men, who are all lineally descended from him through the loins of Adam, who was his son, (Luke iii. 38,) and this without and before any cause given by them, as our brethren's doctrine of reprobation clearly rendereth him to be; those creatures of his would rather be a dishonour, prejudice, and reproach unto him, by those more lovely impressions we spake of, found in them, than a praise or glory unto him by their creation.

5. All particular persons of mankind, without exception of any, were in Adam before his fall; otherwise they could not have fallen in him or with him. If they were in him before his fall, they must be in the same state and condition of righteousness and holiness with him, and, consequently, of grace, favour, and acceptance with God. Now we judge it clearly impossible that any person should at the same time be in an estate of righteousness, or of grace and favour with God, and yet under a severe decree of reprobation also. So that we cannot but conceive such a decree of reprobation from eternity as our brethren maintain to be a mere and plain impossibility.

6. Besides, all particular persons of mankind were in God himself, and in him only, I mean in the secret of his will and power, before they were in Adam, and, consequently, were nothing

really but God himself, according to the known maxim universally received by Divines: *Quicquid in Deo est, Deus est*, "Whatsoever is in God is God." So that if any person or persons of mankind were reprobated or decreed to destruction from eternity, they must be conceived to lie under this decree whilst they were yet only in God himself, and, consequently, whilst they were nothing but God himself; and so God should be as well the object as the subject of his own reprobation, (which we judge to be a kind of blasphemous impossibility,) or at least should lie under this his decree, which mends the matter very little.

7. We further conceive, that such a decree of reprobation clearly overthrows the very foundation and substance of the Gospel,—breaks the very heart and soul of it. For we cannot understand how God can fairly, or with simplicity of truth, say unto all and every person of mankind respectively, "If thou believest thou shalt be saved," in case it be supposed that any of them lie under a peremptory and irreversible decree of reprobation. For, if so, impossible it is that they should be saved, yea, though they should believe.

8. We conceive that all those most sweet and gracious applications, frequent in Scripture, made by God unto the generality of wicked and impenitent persons, in admonishing, exhorting, inviting them to repentance, and this by a most loving and free tender of all the great and precious promises unto them, by way of encouragement thereunto, to be notoriously inconsistent with our brethren's decree of reprobation; and that they who make God to speak so graciously, and so much to the hearts of men, with a doomful decree of reprobation in his breast against them, make him like the worst and vilest of men, even such as David describeth: "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." (Psalm lv. 21.)

9. We judge our brethren's doctrine of reprobation not to be able to stand before that great and most exquisite touchstone of doctrines, formerly mentioned, that description of the Gospel delivered by the Apostle, where he calls it a "doctrine which is according to godliness;" and that it is most perniciously destructive to the interest and advancement of godliness in the world. For, (1.) It presents the Gospel unto men like a lottery, wherein



there are many blanks, but few prizes ; in which respect sober and considering men refuse to adventure their money upon it. And, (2.) In case of any declining or miscarriage of men through temptation, it is apt to cast a snare of fear upon them that they are reprobated, and, consequently, that it is in vain for them to seek reconciliation with God, or live holily.

10. We judge such a decree of reprobation to be diametrically repugnant to all those blessed manifestoes or declarations made by God himself of the riches of his grace, mercy, love, kindness, goodness, compassion, patience, long-sufferance, bounty, unto the world. (See Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7 ; Psalm lxxxvi. 15 ; cxi. 4 ; John iii. 16 ; Titus iii. 4 ; Psalm cxlv. 8, 9 ; to omit other places without number.)

11. We cannot find any mention, nor the least intimation, of any such decree of reprobation in the Scriptures. Nor doth our brethren's doctrine itself of election, were it granted for truth, necessarily draw after it any such reprobation as they notion unto us, however in their apprehensions, we presume, it doth. For, otherwise, we gather by many things occasionally coming from them, that they would willingly enough let go their doctrine of reprobation, if they knew how to retain their doctrine of election without it. But a man may invite twenty persons or more to a feast, and send a coach and horse to fetch three, five, or any less number of them, and yet leave the other in a capacity to come on foot, or otherwise.

12. We clearly and very frequently find, both in the writings and oral discourses of the patrons of the said decree of reprobation, such sayings and passages which we know not how to reconcile with this decree ; and, consequently, cannot but judge such a decree to be very disharmonious to the true strains and doctrines of the Gospel.

#### REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE THIRD PARTICULAR.

OUR reasons of dissent in the third particular expressed, are,

1. We judge that the Apostle, Rom. v. 15—19, comparing the virtue or saving tendency of the grace or gift of Christ, with the condemning force or power of Adam's sin, maketh them adequate, and commensurable in their extent, and in respect of the number of persons related unto by the one and by the other ; only giving the precedency or pre-eminence of operative-ness, or potency of working, unto the gift and grace of Christ :

Which we conceive cannot stand, if it shall be supposed that Adam's sin reacheth all men without exception with the condemning force or influence thereof, and the gift or grace of Christ but a few, comparatively. Our doctrine in this point is argued and proved more at large from this contexture of Scriptures by one of us elsewhere.\*

2. When our Saviour, having taken a little child, and set him in the midst of his disciples, speaking thus unto them, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me," (Matt. xviii. 5,) we conceive that he clearly supposeth all children to belong unto him, and to be interested in that redemption which cometh by him. Otherwise, how should a child be said to be received in Christ's name, that is, to be looked upon, to be respected and tendered, as one of those for whom he vouchsafed to shed his blood?

3. When the Lord Christ saith elsewhere to his disciples, "Suffer little children to come unto me," giving this reason for it, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven;" (Matt. xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16;) we conceive that he clearly avoucheth the happy estate of infants, whilst such, and, consequently, their non-reprobation by God. And thus both Calvin himself, and Musculus, two of our best and most orthodox expositors, understand the place. "In this word, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven,'" saith the former, "Christ comprehends as well little children themselves, as those that are like unto them." † The latter hath these words upon the place, among many others of like import: "In saying, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven,' he saith more than if he had said, 'Of these:.' So far is it from being true, that he spake less to the commendation of children, by saying, 'Of such.'" ‡ The reason hereof he had expressed immediately before. A little after, he speaks yet somewhat higher to the point: "We see here that infants are the more chief or principal in the kingdom of God: So far is it from truth, that they are not at all partakers thereof." §

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 108, 109, &c., 493, 494, &c, 515, 516, &c.

† *Hac voce, tam parvulos, quam eorum similes comprehendit.*—CALVIN. *Harm.* in *Matt.* xix. 14.

‡ *Multo plus est ergo quod dicit, Talium, quam si dixisset, illorum; tam abest, ut minus dixerit ad commendationem parvulorum.*

§ *Videmus autem hic potiores esse in regno Dei infantes; tam abest, ut non sint illius participes.*

4. Some infants, dying in their infancy, our brethren themselves acknowledge to be elect, and, consequently, saved. Now we, knowing, (1.) The just and merciful God to be no acceptor of persons; (2.) The case of all infants, as well to matter of righteousness as of sin or guilt of sin, to be the same; (3.) And lastly: That as well remission of sins, and the salvation of persons thereupon, as the retaining of sins, and condemnation upon it, to be judiciary acts of God, proceeding from him as a most righteous Judge; cannot but conceive, that if some infants, dying infants, be saved, the same must needs be the condition of all.

5. We know not how to reconcile the tormenting of millions of poor infants, who never provoked God by any actual sin, with that philanthropy, those tender mercies, bowels, and compassions, that great propension and readiness to pardon, which the Scriptures so frequently, and with such expressness of words, depredicate in God.

6. We meet with nothing throughout the whole Scripture which ministereth any sufficient ground unto us, on which to build a belief, that any infant dieth under any decree of reprobation by God. The scriptures commonly alleged by our brethren, in defence of their tenet to the contrary, as, "We were by nature the children of wrath;" (Eph. ii. 3;) "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me;" (Psalm li. 5;) with some others; though they prove original sin, which, in an orthodox and Scripture sense, we deny not, as some, it seems, misreport us, yet do no way evince or prove, but that they who by nature, that is, upon the account of their natural descent or propagation from the first Adam, are "children of wrath," may, by the supervening of the gift and grace of the second Adam, be children of delight and acceptance; as those, it seems, were, whom the Lord Christ, this second Adam, took up into his arms.\*

7. We judge, that all those scriptures and grounds which hold forth and prove the universality of atonement made by Christ in his death, for which we shall, God willing, account in the next chapter, do evince the safe estate and condition of all children dying before the commission of actual sin.

8. Lastly: We meet with many very pregnant and express

\* See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 518, 519.

acknowledgments or assertions of that which we maintain for truth in this particular \* in the writings of the greatest masters and defenders, at least so esteemed, of the contrary faith, as of Calvin, Musculus, and others ; by the light whereof to us it plainly appeareth, that our sense in the business is so rational, so obvious, and near at hand, to the considerate thoughts of men, that ever and anon they meet with it, not knowing how with honour or conscience to avoid it.

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE FOURTH PARTICULAR.

REASONS of our dissent in the fourth particular mentioned are these :—

1. Our brethren holding with us, as hath been noted, that there is no election of persons but in time, though the decree of election be from eternity ; we cannot conceive what should or can reasonably determine the time when this election should be made, at least in persons living to years of discretion, but only their faith in the first raising it in the soul ; and that upon their believing, and not before, they are numbered amongst the elect of God.

2. We do not remember that any person or persons are in Scripture termed the elect of God, (we mean, with that kind of election which is unto salvation or eternal life,) but only those who do believe ; and believers we observe to be thus styled frequently. (Matt. xxiv. 31 ; Luke xviii. 7 ; Rom. viii. 33 ; Col. iii. 12 ; 2 John 1, 13, &c.)

3. The Apostle Peter styleth the saints to whom he writeth, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” Now we conceive that the Apostle’s meaning in these words is, that they were “elect,” that is, chosen by God unto salvation, “through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ,” that is, by means of that gracious work of the Spirit upon them, whereby they were brought to obey the Gospel, and to believe in Jesus Christ ; and that their election in this kind, and according to these terms, was “according to the foreknowledge,” or rather, fore-approbation, as the word in the original frequently signifieth, “of God the Father ;” meaning,

\* See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 552, 553, &c., 110—112.

that God the Father had from eternity purposed to elect such persons unto life and salvation, as they now were, by means of the said sanctifying work of the Spirit in and upon them. This to be the true sense and meaning of this passage of Scripture, one of us hath showed and proved elsewhere more at large.\*

4. Lastly : What our brethren, or men of their judgment in this point of difference, are wont to produce, at least, as far as we have had opportunity to observe, either from the Scriptures or otherwise, for the countenance of their sense in the business, is no ways satisfactory or convincing to us. When the Apostle saith, "According as he hath chosen," that is, decreed to choose, † "us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," &c. (Eph. i. 4,) he speaks of the continuance and increase of holiness in those who are believers, which God expecteth from them upon the account of that gracious decree of his from eternity, concerning the choosing or designing such persons as they now were to salvation ; of the benefit and blessing of which decree they were now, through his grace, made partakers by their being "in him," namely, in Christ, through faith. He doth not speak of holiness, either as already wrought in them by God, or as intended to be wrought in them, either infallibly or irresistibly, because he had chosen or elected them ; but as a fruit or equitable return expected by God from them of the grace of election which they had received through believing. But of the mind of the Holy Ghost in this text of Scripture, one of us hath elsewhere given a large and full account. ‡

#### REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE FIFTH PARTICULAR.

OUR dissent from our brethren in the fifth particular expressed standeth upon these grounds :—

1. We do not find that either the Lord Christ himself, or any of his Apostles, preached any other decree, either of election or reprobation, but only these ; and these they often, yea, constantly, preached, either in form and expressness of words, or in substance and import of matter. Places are obvious.

2. We judge, that if there be any other decree, either of

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 463.

† The purposes and intentions of God concerning such and such acts or dispensations are very usually expressed by the names of the acts or dispensations themselves.

—See *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 462.

‡ *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 461, 462.

election or reprobation, besides these, either they must be parts and members of the Gospel, or not. If so, we desire our brethren to show us where they are taught, either by Christ or any of his Apostles. Paul approved himself to the Elders of the church of Ephesus upon this account, that he had not shunned to declare all the counsel of God unto them. Yet do we not find in his Epistle to this church, nor indeed in any other, the least mention or intimation of any other decree, either of the one kind or the other, but only those specified. If those other decrees of election and reprobation, supposed and held forth for such by our brethren, be no parts, nothing of the Gospel, how come they to pretend and say that they, either the one or the other of them, are delivered and taught, especially as such high, mysterious, and necessary doctrines in the Gospel?

3. Those other decrees of election and reprobation, so called by our brethren, are so far from being either parts, members, branches, or appurtenances of the Gospel, that, as far as we are able to conceive or consider of them, their faces are set towards another interest, diametrically opposite to that of the Gospel. Hereof we have given some account already in our grounds of dissent upon the two first particulars of this present head of doctrine.

4. Any other decree of election or reprobation, besides those owned and asserted by us, and more particularly those framed and taught for doctrines under such a notion by our brethren, we judge altogether unworthy God. Nor can we relish or taste the least savour, especially in that of reprobation, of any those most glorious and blessed attributes or perfections of the divine Being, as either holiness, mercy, justice, goodness, wisdom, or any other.

5. Again: That there are no other decrees of election and reprobation but those specified and acknowledged by us, and more especially that the decrees of this denomination levied by our brethren are shadows of mountains, not men, human, and not divine, conceptions, those endless digladiations and irreconcilable divisions amongst themselves about assigning or stating the object of these decrees are an abundant confirmation unto us. Some of them hold that men, simply and indefinitely considered, are the objects of these decrees; others contend, that men considered as yet to be created or made are this object. A third sort stands up against both the former, with this notion, that

men considered as already created and made are this object. A fourth disparageth the conjectures of the three former with this conceit, that men considered as fallen are the said object. Another findeth a defect in the singleness or simplicity of all the former opinions, and compoundeth this in opposition to them, that men considered both as to be created, and as being created, and as fallen, together, are the proper object of those troublesome decrees. A sixth sort formeth us yet another object, and this is, men considered as salvable, or capable of being saved. A seventh, not liking the faint complexions of all the former opinions, delivereth us this as strong and healthful, namely, that men considered as damnable, or capable of damnation, are this object. Others yet again, super-fancying all the former, conceit men considered as creable, or possible to be created, to be the object so highly contested about. A ninth party gives the pre-eminence to their sense who disciple the world with this doctrine, that men considered as *labiles*, or capable of falling, are the object of those men-confounding and God-abasing decrees. A tenth squadron, coming up in the rear of all the former, supposeth that they all left the truth behind them, and that themselves have gathered it up, in this notion, namely, that men considered as repairable, or capable of restoration, are the object of that predestination which men have laboured to build up, and yet could never agree about the materials. And whether all the scattered and conflicting opinions about the object of our brethren's decrees of election and reprobation be bound up in this bundle, or no, we cannot say; we are rather negatively inclined. However, by those uncouth distractions and interferings in opinion amongst them, where or how to bottom their said pretended decrees, we are jealous with a very great jealousy, that neither they, nor any others, are able to find so much as an inch of firm ground whereon to build them.

6. Lastly : That extreme tenderness, loathness, and averseness which we find in many of the most judicious and considerate patrons of the said decrees, to be put upon any thorough explication of themselves about their decree of reprobation; those many cautions, limitations, and provisoes which commonly they premise before they come to express their minds touching the same; the manifold pleas and pretences they use, either to excuse themselves from speaking plainly, particularly, and distinctly in the business, or else to salve and colour what they

fear they shall speak to the regret and offence of the reasons, judgments, and consciences of men, as, that the Scriptures speak very sparingly, or very obscurely, about reprobation,—that the doctrine thereof is very mysterious and profound,—that men must not wade too deep into the secrets of God,—that men must submit their reasons, judgments, and understandings to the will of God, though to their apprehensions there is neither reason, justice, or equity in that which they obtrude upon them for the will of God in this kind, with many the like;—these things, we say, are strong symptoms unto us of the crazy constitution of their decree of reprobation, and of election, consequently; at least, as themselves notion the dependence between them; and that no such decree hath either footing or foundation in the Scriptures. For if reprobation be any part of the counsel, especially of the evangelical counsel, of God, why should the Ministers of the Gospel more shun to declare it, use more *ambages* and circumlocutions when they are to preach and publish it, than any other branch or doctrine of the Gospel? Nay, the truth is, whensoever they preach it, they preach it as if they preached it not, or cared not whether they preach it, or no; they never preach or show it with open face.

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE SIXTH AND LAST PARTICULAR.

WE dissent from our brethren in the sixth and last particular for these reasons:—

1. We judge that the Apostle Paul made use of God's decree of reprobation for the advancement and security of his salvation where he expresseth himself thus: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be," or, rather, *should become*, *γενωμαι ἀδοκιμος*, *a reprobate*, or, "*castaway*." (1 Cor. ix. 27.) Doubtless, he was not in the least afraid of becoming a reprobate, but only according to God's decree of reprobation. Nor can we conceive that he should either misunderstand or misuse, pervert or misapply, this decree, in converting it to so happy and blessed an use or end as the keeping under his body, &c., and this in order to his salvation.

2. We judge that many thousands of those saints who have died in the faith, and so are saved, have been awakened to repentance and seeking after God by the terrible alarm of God's decree of reprobation, and by considering what God hath



declared against persons found impenitent and unbelieving, as, namely, that they shall be damned. Even as his intent in his decree concerning the destruction of Nineveh within forty days, by means of the preaching of it to this city by Jonah, was the preserving of this city from destruction, at least at that time.

3. We cannot judge that God's intentions or ends, in his penal statutes or decrees, should differ from the intentions of the best of lawgivers amongst men in their penal constitutions.\* It is a clear case, that the primary intent of penal legislation is not the punishment of those that shall transgress the law, but the prevention of the transgression of the law; and, consequently, not only of the punishment of him that transgresseth, considered simply as a man, or as a member of the commonwealth, and as not having yet transgressed, but of the sorrow, trouble, and civil disquietment also, as well of him, under the considerations specified, as of all other members of the same civil community with him. And there is little question to be made, but that by means of the penal laws, wisely provided and established in every commonwealth or state, the disturbers of the peace and prosperity thereof are fewer than otherwise they would be; and, consequently, many preserved and kept from evil practices who otherwise were likely to be ensnared by them.

4. We judge that the Gospel, not only in some or in many, but universally in all, and every part, vein, and branch of it, and, consequently, in the doctrine of reprobation itself, delivered there, is most exactly calculated and composed for the advancement of godliness in the world, according to that brief description of it, formerly mentioned, 1 Tim. vi. 3, where it is styled, "the doctrine which is according to godliness." Now that which clearly and directly tends to the advancement of godliness amongst men must of necessity tend, after the same manner, to the salvation of men.

5. Again: As every pair of the disciples which our Saviour sent forth two by two to preach the Gospel accorded in their work, each labouring to advance the same business and end with his fellow; in like manner, we conceive that the Lord Christ, having divided the body and substance of his Gospel into these two parts, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he

\* See *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 479.

that believeth not shall be damned," could not but intend that both of them should be subservient unto, and carry on, one and the same design in the world, and not be divided in their ends. If, then, the primary and antecedent counsel and purpose of God clearly be, by the promissory part of the Gospel, "He that believeth shall be saved," to advance the salvation of men, and not the condemnation, evident to us it is, that it is his counsel and purpose to do it also by the other.

6. Lastly : We conceive that the threatening or forewarning a person, that such or such an evil or misery will certainly befall him upon such or such a neglect and miscarriage of himself, is as proper and direct a course as well can be taken to consult the safety and freedom of this person from the said evil and misery ; and, consequently, when God threateneth and denounceth damnation unto men, for the neglect of that great salvation which he sendeth unto them, and for their unbelief ; we judge that his clear and direct intentions are, by the mediation of such a threatening, to prevent this damnation, and, consequently, to procure and bring about their salvation.

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## CHAPTER II.

### CONCERNING THE SECOND HEAD OF DOCTRINE PROPOUNDED, THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

#### AGREEMENT IN PARTICULARS ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

1. OUR brethren hold and teach, that Christ died sufficiently for all men, without exception. Herein we fully accord with them.

2. They hold, that some benefit was intended by God in the death of Christ for all men, without exception. This also we hold as fast as they.

3. They hold, that "whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish through any want of atonement made, or of redemption purchased by the death of Christ for them. In this likewise we give the right hand of fellowship unto them.

4. They affirm, that whosoever perisheth, perisheth not through any defect in the death of Christ, but for his sins and through his unbelief. This both they and we affirm together.

5. They say, that all men shall not be saved by the death of Christ. We are one in sense with them in this particular also.

6. Their doctrine is, that “forgiveness of sins and salvation are to be offered in the ministry of the Gospel freely unto all men, as such, without exception, upon the account of the death of Christ. This, also, we embrace as orthodox with them.

But as we agree in all these particulars about the death of Christ, so we dissent in some others.

#### PARTICULARS OF DISSENT ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

1. OUR brethren maintain, that Christ, according to the counsel and intentions of God, died only for the salvation of a certain determinate number of men, and these very few, comparatively, whom they call “the elect;” and that there was no atonement or redemption made or purchased by his death for any other. In this we cannot join judgments with them.

2. They hold, that there is no person for whom Christ died that shall or can perish. We are in this, also, contrary-minded.

3. They teach, that Christ by his death purchased and procured, at the hand of God the Father, the gift of faith and repentance for all those for whom he died, to be actually conferred upon them in time, against all possible interveniences on their part whatsoever. Neither will our consciences suffer us to say Amen to this doctrine.

#### REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE PARTICULARS MENTIONED ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

OUR reasons of dissent in the first of these particulars are,

1. We judge the Scriptures, both texts and contexts, to be very plain, pregnant, and express in asserting this doctrine,—that Christ died for all and for every man, as in these places, besides many others: 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9; Titus ii. 11; 1 John ii. 2; John iii. 16; i. 29, &c.

2. We do not find in Scripture that Christ is any where said to have died for any man for whose salvation he died not; nor can we judge it a thing any ways probable in itself that Christ should die for any inferior accommodation of such persons for whose salvation he should yet refuse or not deign to die.

3. The contrary doctrine, namely, that Christ died for the elect only, or only for those that shall in fine be actually saved, or the

like, we find no where delivered in any such expressness of terms in the Scriptures. And for those consequences or argumentations from some scriptures by which our brethren endeavour to establish the said doctrine, we apprehend them to be very invalid and unconcluding ; and that those texts of Scripture, respectively, from whence they pretend legitimacy of descent, know them not, but reject their claim as being aliens and strangers unto them. And we humbly conceive that we are able to demonstrate upon evident and clear grounds the invalidity of them.

4. When the plain, obvious, literal, and grammatical sense of Scripture doth not obviate or fall foul upon either some article of faith, or some other passage of Scripture, or the scope and series of the context, or some clear and sound principle in reason, we judge that it ought not to be declined, but to be preferred before any other sense or interpretation whatsoever. Upon this account we conceive that our sense of the scriptures pointed at in the first particular of our present dissent, which importeth Christ's dying for all men, being plain, literal, and grammatical, and every ways conditioned, as hath been expressed, ought to be received.

5. We are not able to conceive how the Gospel can, with simplicity, truth, and clearness of sense and notion, be preached unto every creature under heaven, in this or any like tenor of words, "If thou believest thou shalt be saved," unless it be granted and supposed that Christ died for all and every man. For in case it should be said to any man for whom Christ did not die, "If thou believest thou shalt be saved," such a saying cannot be justified nor avouched for truth ; because where a commodity is not it cannot be had upon any condition or terms whatsoever. Now certain it is, that there is no salvation in Christ for any man but only for those for whom he died. Therefore, to encourage such a man to believe for whom Christ died not, by saying unto him that in case he believes he shall be saved, is but to feed him with ashes, or to make him glad with lies. For how should such a man be saved, yea, though he should believe, for whom there was no salvation purchased by Christ ; especially, considering that his believing in Christ would not invest Christ with any more salvation than was in him before, and, consequently, whether he believed, or no ? The Synod of Dort itself, in some of its members, saw and acknowledged the convincing force of this argument, though their

heart, it seemeth, served them not to displease their company for the truth's sake.\*

5. We judge that our brethren's doctrine, asserting that Christ died only for those few who will, in conclusion, be actually saved, will not abide the touch of that golden touch-stone of doctrines, mentioned once and again before, the description of the Gospel delivered by the Apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 3. If a Minister of the Gospel should go and preach this doctrine to a numerous auditory of souls, that God hath given his Son Jesus Christ to die for the salvation only of a small handful of men and women in the world, comparatively, and that none of them who were now before him had any certainty that they or any of them were of this number; yea, and that the best amongst men had very little ground to hope or think that he should be one of these few, and that the rest of mankind, let them do the best that they are able, shall, notwithstanding, be certainly damned; (for all this is nothing but the evident and express import of our brethren's doctrine;) must not such a message as this, being believed, directly cause a fearful despondency of heart and soul, a general hanging down of hands amongst them, a quenching of all desires, and, consequently, of all endeavours, either to apply themselves to the means of believing, or to the exercising of themselves unto godliness in one kind or other? Or, doth such a doctrine as this any ways agree with that declaration which the angel made, concerning the Gospel, unto the shepherds: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people?" (Luke ii. 10.) This reason is further argued by one of us elsewhere.†

6. We judge that Christ died for all those who stand bound to believe, or to depend on him for salvation; because God is never found to encourage, exhort, or call men unto, but constantly to dissuade and take men off from, vain dependencies, and from trusting in those, whether persons or things, which are not able or like to help them. Instances hereof we are able, if need were, to produce very many. Now that all men, without exception, considered as men, stand bound to believe or depend on Christ for salvation, is to us out of question, and hath by one of us been sufficiently proved from the Scriptures.‡ Therefore, we cannot but judge that he died for all men.

\* See *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 547. † *Ibid.*, pp. 496, 497.

‡ *The Pagan's Debt and Dowry*, pp. 44—46, &c.

7. That doctrine which directly tends to separate and divide between the creature and the Creator, blessed for ever, or to create and raise jealousies and hard thoughts in the former against the latter, cannot be evangelical, nor consonant to "the truth which is according to godliness." But such we judge our brethren's doctrine clearly to be, which denieth Christ's dying for all men, without exception. This argument is further prosecuted and maintained against all such objections, which, as we suppose, can with any show or colour of reason be made against it, by one of us elsewhere.\*

8. If God really and unfeignedly intends and desires the salvation of those who perish, then he really intended, in and by the death of Christ, the salvation of all men. The reason hereof is, because it is no man's question but that he really intends, in the death of Christ, the salvation of those who are or shall be saved. Therefore, all men being either such who shall be saved, or who shall not be saved, if he really intends the salvation of these he must needs intend, after the same manner, the salvation of all. Now that God really and unfeignedly intends and desires the salvation of those who perish, is evident to us from these with many other scriptures of like import : Deut. v. 29 ; Psalm lxxxi. 13, 14 ; Isaiah xlvi. 17 ; Jer. xlv. 4, 5 ; Matt. xxiii. 37, &c. This argument, together with the arguing and opening of these scriptures, is further urged and insisted upon, and all objections against it answered at large, in the late-mentioned book, entitled "Redemption Redeemed," pp. 470—472, &c.

9. We conceive that our brethren's doctrine, which teacheth that Christ died only for a few, is extremely discouraging, both to men and women, from believing and from applying themselves either to a diligent searching of the Scriptures, or to the use of any other means proper and likely, through the blessing of God, to raise a work of faith in them ; and, consequently, we cannot but judge it to be a doctrine extremely anti-evangelical, the Gospel every where inviting, persuading, encouraging, yea, and importuning, all men to believe. For, whatsoever breaketh the heart and strength of any man's hope to obtain, discourageth from action and use of means proportionably.

10. The Scripture, comparing the extent of the saving gift

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 475, 476, &c.

and grace given by Christ unto the world, with the extent of the condemning force of Adam's sin, makes them adequate, and commensurable the one with the other, in respect of the number of persons to whom they are respectively extended; and, comparing them again in the strength or efficaciousness of their respective tendencies of the one to condemn, of the other to justify and save, gives the pre-eminency, and this with a great surplusage, unto the gift of Christ, and the grace given by this gift. Both these are evident from the Apostle's discourse, Rom. v. 15—19.\* And from both we cannot but reason and conclude thus: As Adam sinned unto all men without exception, involving all men in the guilt of his transgression; so Christ was given unto all men, and all men put into an estate of justification by him: Otherwise, the sin of Adam must needs be more forcible and prevailing unto condemnation than the gift of Christ, and the grace by this gift, are unto justification.

11. Our brethren grant that Christ died sufficiently for all men, or for the salvation of all men. If so, we cannot conceive but that he must needs die intentionally also for all men. For, (1.) There could be no virtue, value, or sufficiency in Christ's death, but what God intended should be in it. (2.) We cannot conceive how that can be said to be done sufficiently for a man, by which it is impossible for him to be accommodated, or receive benefit. Nor can we judge any means to be sufficient for the obtaining of an end, by which it is impossible that the end should be obtained. He that gives a poor man, that is ready to perish through hunger, nothing at all out of his abundance to relieve him, cannot be said to have done that which is sufficient for his relief.

12. The Apostle plainly affirms, the ministry, or Ministers of the Gospel, to be "unto God a sweet savour of Christ," as well "in them that perish," as in "them that are saved." (2 Cor. ii. 15.) Now we are not able to understand how the Ministers of the Gospel should be "a sweet," or, the sweet, "savour of Christ unto God, in them that perish," unless it be supposed that Christ died for them. For to what account of praise, or glory unto God or his grace, in the condemnation of those that perish, can the preaching of Christ's death for those, and only those, that are saved, turn? We conceive that Christ's non-

\* See these texts argued, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 516, &c.

dying for wicked men, and such who perish, if it were a truth, would be a savour of some sweetness, ease, or contentment unto these men, in their condemnation and punishment for sin; and they might comfort themselves thus: "Had Christ died for us, as he did for those that are saved, we had been both as holy and happy as they;" and thus might they truly and clearly resolve both their sin and punishment into the will of God, yea, into a deficiency or want of love in God towards them, with the justification, at least to a very great degree, and comfort of themselves.

13. If Christ shall be supposed to have died only for that small parcel of mankind which our brethren term the elect, then must the world, or mankind, be conceived to have been invested with, or put into, a far better estate and condition by God in the first Adam than in the second. The reason hereof is plain. In the first Adam, the generality of mankind, even all men without exception, were in a good and rich capacity of being happy and blessed for ever, having received from God, in him, a sufficiency of grace and strength, and means, whereby to have observed and kept, had themselves so pleased, those terms and conditions, the observation whereof God required of them, in order to their happiness, and upon the performance whereof it was by him promised unto them. This is the sense and doctrine of our brethren themselves generally. So that in case it be supposed that the universality, in a manner, and a small remnant only excepted, of mankind, notwithstanding any grace or benefit received by the second Adam, in or through his death, is in an absolute and utter incapacity, yea, lieth under an impossibility, of escaping eternal misery and torment, evident it is, that their condition was incomparably better in the first, than it is in or by the second, Adam. But how inconsistent such a notion or supposition as this is with the truth, the course and current of the Scriptures, wherever they speak of the transcendent grace of God vouchsafed in Jesus Christ unto the world, which is the great subject or argument of their delight, and in the exaltation whereof from place to place they triumph, do abundantly testify. Doubtless, the tabernacle of Adam being fallen, and raised up again by Jesus Christ, is in so much the better condition by means of this raising up, above what it was before it fell, as the earthly tabernacle of the bodies of the saints will be, by being raised up from the dead, above what



their state and condition was before they died. This argument, also, is further cleared, and vindicated against objections, in the fore-named book, styled, "Redemption Redeemed," p. 492, &c.

14. If Christ died not for all men, without exception, then no man whatsoever, in his unregenerate estate, stands bound to believe in him, or to depend on him, at least with any certainty of faith or hope for salvation. This is evident, because no man stands bound to that which is simply impossible, or to do that which in the nature of the thing itself cannot be done. Now if Christ died not for all men, but for a handful only, or a very few, comparatively, as our brethren teach, no person, being yet in an unconverted estate, hath any ground to depend upon him with any certainty, yea, or so much as with any probability, or comfortableness of faith or hope, for salvation. Where twenty men have equally deserved death by committing treason against their Prince, and a declaration shall be made by this Prince, that only one of the twenty shall be pardoned, without the least intimation given who this one should be, no one of this number can have any certain, no, nor yet any probable, ground of hope, that he is the person that shall be pardoned. But that all men, without exception, as well unregenerate as others, have ground sufficient, and stand bound, to believe or depend on Christ for salvation, hath been formerly proved. And if they stand bound to believe, certainly they stand bound to believe, not faintly, not haltingly, not imperfectly, but with all strength and fulness of assurance. The process of this argument, likewise, is further managed in the last-mentioned book, p. 496, &c.

15. We judge our brethren's doctrine, which denieth Christ's dying for all men, to be very palpably and broadly inconsistent with that most gracious property in God, which the Scripture calls philanthropy, that is, the love of men or mankind, and commendeth unto the world. For he that hateth, and desireth the misery and ruin of, the generality of any greater body or community of men, cannot, either with reason or truth, be said to be a friend or lover of this community, only because he respects and loves two or three persons relating hereunto; but only a lover of these persons. The said book (p. 408, &c.) discourseth the strength of this argument, also, more at large.

16. If God intended a sufficiency of means unto all men for

their salvation, then, questionless, Christ died for all men; inasmuch as there can be no sufficiency of means for any man's salvation, without atonement made for him by Christ in his death. But that God intended a sufficiency of means for salvation unto all men, appears, (1.) Because otherwise God should deal more districtly, and with far greater severity, with men in the Gospel, or in the covenant of grace, than he did in the covenant of works made with them in Adam. For under this covenant they had a sufficiency of means granted unto them for the performance of the terms and conditions in it. (2.) God should deal more rigorously and severely with men, and this under the Gospel and covenant of grace, than he doth with the devils themselves, in case he should not vouchsafe unto them a sufficiency of means for their salvation; because the Gospel, and the ministry of it, must infallibly, irresistibly, and of necessity turn to the aggravation of the sin, and, consequently, to the increase of the condemnation of men, in case they be not sufficiently provided of means to believe it. Whereas, most certain it is, that God hath designed nothing, acteth nothing, not only which tends necessarily or unavoidably, but which hath any tendency at all in it, to increase the punishment or condemnation of the devils, above the demerit of their first sin. The authority of this argument is further confirmed by sundry pregnant considerations in the oft-mentioned book, p. 498, &c.

17. We conceive that all, or far the greatest part, of our arguments and grounds, formerly insisted upon to justify our dissent from our brethren in their doctrine of reprobation, are of force to justify us, also, in our dissent from them about the extent of the death of Christ. For if God hath not, by any decree of reprobation, excluded any person of mankind, considered as such, from salvation, or from a possibility of being saved, neither hath he excluded them by any purpose or decree from part and fellowship in Christ's death.

18. We cannot imagine or comprehend what real inconvenience followeth upon or attends that doctrine, which affirmeth that Christ died for all men; or what principle, notion, or ground our brethren can reasonably conceive would be gained for any Christian end or purpose whatsoever, in case it should or could be proved, that Christ died for no more than the elect only, above what is gained by the contrary doctrine.

19. Such of us who have consulted the records and writings

of the most judicious, learned, and orthodox antiquity, here find that Christ's dying for all men was a doctrine generally, if not universally, held forth and taught anciently in all Christian Churches, and accordingly received. Yea, we find amongst our late Protestant writers themselves, of best esteem with us, very many passages and sayings of perfect consonancy and accord with that doctrine, which avoucheth universality of redemption purchased by Christ. The consideration hereof is some further establishment unto us, that the restraint of God's gracious intentions in the death of Christ only to the elect, as our brethren count elect, is built upon no foundation, either of Prophets, or Apostles, or Christ.

20. Lastly: We judge that we are able to show and prove that these places, "I pray not for the world," "I lay down my life for my sheep," "Even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it," with some others, which are commonly brought upon the stage to act the part of enemies to the doctrine of general atonement by Christ, hold good correspondence with it, and for matter of enmity are altogether unrelated to it.

If the reader desires any further account of our dissent in the great point now argued, he may please to receive satisfaction by perusing the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, eighteenth, and nineteenth chapters of the oft-named book, "Redemption Redeemed."

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE SECOND PARTICULAR, UNDER  
THE SECOND HEAD.

OUR grounds of dissenting, in the second particular mentioned under the second general head of doctrine, are these:—

1. We conceive that the Scriptures very expressly teach a possibility of such men's perishing for whom Christ died. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." (Rom. xiv. 15.) "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" (1 Cor. viii. 11.) "Who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter ii. 1.) These scriptures, with some others, the reader may please to see argued and debated at large, and fully vindicated from all such interpretations which endeavour to carry their sense and meaning any other way, "Redemption Redeemed," chap. viii., throughout.

2. We cannot find any text or passage throughout the whole Scripture which so much as hinteth, in the least, an universal impossibility of their perishing for whom Christ died.

3. We cannot conceive how the Apostle Paul, or other Ministers of the Gospel, should be unto God the sweet savour of Christ in those who perish, unless it be supposed that Christ died for them, yea, and that the Apostle preached, and that other Ministers do preach, this, in the name of God, unto them.

4. Inasmuch as the Scriptures no where teach that any person, living to years of discretion, is put into an immediate capacity of salvation by the death of Christ, but only by and upon the intervening of faith; and further, that they no where teach that all those for whom Christ died shall or will at any time believe, we conceive it indemonstrable from the Scriptures that none of those for whom Christ died shall perish.

5. We conceive that the glory of the death of Christ, yea, and of that grace which is given by God unto the world therein, is the same, whether any person believe in him, and, consequently, be saved by him, or no; and that no person or persons whatsoever, by any action, deportment, or behaviour whatsoever, can either add any thing to, or diminish, or take away any thing from, it: And we judge further, that whosoever shall estimate or measure the death of Christ, and the grace or gracious intentions of God therein unto the world, by the event or success of both, or either, except in part only, are highly injurious both to the one and the other.

6. Lastly: We verily believe that no text of Scripture that can be produced, nor any argument that can be levied by our brethren, for the probation of this doctrine, that all those for whom Christ died shall certainly be saved, but, upon examination and due trial, will be found defective in, and fall short of, any such proof.

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE THIRD AND LAST PARTICULAR,  
UNDER THE SECOND HEAD OF DOCTRINE.

OUR reasons of dissenting from our brethren in the third and last particular, relating to the second of the five heads of doctrine propounded, are these:—

1. We find no good footing in the Scriptures to stand by our brethren in this doctrine, that Christ by his death purchased the actual collation of faith or repentance upon any man, against

all possible interveniencies, as of negligence, looseness, profaneness, &c.

2. We find no ground in Scripture for any such apprehension as this, namely, that Christ by his death hath procured any such grace, benefit, or privilege for any of those, much less for all those, for whom he died, as an infallible necessitation of them to repent or believe; or, that all such certainly or infallibly will or shall either repent or believe.

3. All the reasons and grounds assigned by us for our dissent in the last particular justify us in our dissent in this also. For if some of those for whom Christ died may possibly perish, notwithstanding, it roundly follows that he did not by his death purchase any such privilege, if privilege it were, for those for whom he died as a certainty or necessitation by the power of God to believe.

4. The end of God's giving Christ to die for men is not said to be that all to whom, or for whose sake, he was given might or should believe, but, that "whosoever believeth in him," that is, should upon this giving of him believe, "should not perish, but have everlasting life;" (John iii. 16;) which plainly showeth that the intention of God in Christ's death was not that any particular person or persons, by name, should positively or absolutely believe, but that "whosoever," namely, out of the generality of mankind, whether fewer or more, should believe, "should not perish, but have everlasting life."

5. We conceive that such a donation of faith and repentance by God, which is opposed by us in this particular, is utterly inconsistent as well with the nature as the end of the grace of God vouchsafed unto the world by Jesus Christ; and that, in case any such donation were made by him, it would render the receivers, according to the laws and terms of that righteousness by which he hath declared that he will judge the world, incapable of eternal life, yea, indeed, of any reward at all. Of this we shall render some further account under the next head of doctrine, concerning the grace of God.

6. Lastly, for this: All that we have yet met with from our brethren in way of argument or ground to justify their sense in opposition to ours, in the particular in hand, doth no way satisfy us; and we judge ourselves able to give a fair, Christian, and satisfactory answer unto it.

## CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE THIRD HEAD OF DOCTRINE PROPOUNDED, THE  
GRACE OR FREE GRACE OF GOD.AGREEMENT IN PARTICULARS ABOUT THE FREE GRACE  
OF GOD.

1. OUR brethren teach, that the original or first spring of the salvation of the world was and is the grace, the free and mere grace, and good pleasure of God. In this we agree like brethren with them.

2. They teach, that the first and primary cause of the salvation of every particular person which comes to be saved is, in like manner, the free grace and good pleasure of God. Neither in this are we divided from them.

3. They hold, that the gift of Jesus Christ for a Mediator and Saviour unto the world issued wholly and solely from the same fountain of free grace. Herein, also, we make one in judgment with them.

4. They say, that the purpose, grant, and promise of justification by or upon believing in Christ, made by God unto men, are the genuine fruits of the free grace of God. Neither do we ascribe them to any other cause, either in whole or in part.

5. They teach further, that it is from the free and undeserved grace of God that any person of mankind is put into a capacity of believing, or hath power and means vouchsafed unto him sufficient to enable him to believe. Neither have we any propensity in our judgments to dissent from them in this.

6. Their doctrine is, that that which they call, properly enough, preventing grace is given irresistibly by God, and cannot be withstood or rejected in or about the receiving of it by men. We embrace our brethren's sense and judgment in this also.

7. They further teach, concerning this preventing grace, which otherwhile, as we suppose, they call common grace, that as it is irresistibly, so likewise universally, given by God unto

men. Nor doth this doctrine separate us in thought from our brethren.

8. They teach, also, that this talent of initial or exciting grace, as sometimes they term it, being once granted, is never taken away by God from any man, unless he first voluntarily, and of his own free accord, burieth it.\* This doctrine of our brethren we approve, likewise, as savoury and sound.

9. They yet teach, that there are certain inward workings or effects wrought by the word and Spirit of God, preceding conversion and regeneration in the hearts of persons not yet justified, which God ceaseth not to promote and carry on towards conversion, until he be forsaken in his way by the voluntary negligence of men, or until this initial grace of his be repulsed.† Here, also, we build with them with both our hands.

10. They further affirm, that these preparatory or previous workings of the Spirit of God in men, in order to their conversion, may be wholly choaked, stifled, and extinguished by the viciousness or corruption of the will.‡ Their sense and ours accord in this also.

11. They hold, that God doth very seriously and in good earnest invite and call all those to faith and conversion in whom, by his word and Spirit, he worketh a knowledge of the divine will, a sense of sin, a dread of punishment, some hope of pardon, &c. All which, notwithstanding, they acknowledge may vanish and come to nothing.§ We praise our brethren's doctrine in this also.

12. They hold, likewise, that actual conversion is not wrought by any act or power of God, until the will itself, being acted or moved by God, turneth itself unto God and believeth.|| We accept of our brethren's doctrine in this point also.

13. They teach, that men are justified by a covenant of free grace, and not by a covenant of works. We both expect and teach justification upon the same terms with them.

14. They teach, that not only the power of converting and believing, but the acts themselves, are the effects and fruits of, and ought really to be ascribed to, the free grace of God. Our brethren's thoughts are our thoughts in this likewise.

\* *Vide Acta Synod. Dordr.*, part. ii., p. 129.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Acta Synod. Dordr. In Sentent. Britannorum Theologorum circa 3 et 4 articulos, &c.*

|| *Ibid.*

PARTICULARS OF DISSENT ABOUT THE THIRD HEAD OF  
DOCTRINE.

ABOUT this head of doctrine, therefore, we dissent from them only or mainly in these particulars:—

1. Our brethren limit and restrain the free grace of God, in his intendments of salvation, to a determinate number of men, and this, comparatively, very inconsiderable, whom they term “the elect;” we, on the other hand, believe the grace of God to be so free, rich, and abounding towards mankind, that he seriously intends the salvation of all men.

2. Our brethren, likewise, straiten and confine the grace of God, in the vouchsafement of means sufficient for salvation, to the said determinate parcel or small number of men; we, contrarily, judge it to be diffusive, in this expression or fruit of it, throughout all mankind.

3. They resolve the non-conversion and non-believing of all those who are not effectually converted and brought to believe, into a defectiveness of or in the grace of God towards them. We, on the contrary, teach the sole cause of men’s miscarrying, in not partaking the great blessings of conversion and believing, to reside in men themselves only, or in their own voluntary neglect and wickedness.

4. They affirm, that when God works effectually upon men by his Spirit, in order to their conversion, or with an intent to convert them, men are hereby infallibly and irresistibly necessitated to convert, and cannot possibly so withstand this work of God about or in order to their conversion, but that first or last they will, shall, and must be actually and really converted. Whereas our sense, about this particular, is, that no man is so constrained or necessitated, by any act of God or of his grace, upon his will to convert or believe; but that he may possibly, through his voluntary negligence and obdurateness of heart, remain finally unconverted and unbelieving.

REASONS OF DISSENT ABOUT THE FIRST PARTICULAR UNDER  
THE THIRD HEAD OF DOCTRINE.

IN these four particulars we cannot subscribe to our brethren’s doctrine for the reasons ensuing. Concerning the first:—

1. We conceive that the Scriptures, from place to place, do very pregnantly, and without parable, represent and assert the



love and free grace of God in his intentions of salvation unto all men, considered as such, without exception. (Ezek. xviii. 23, 32; xxxiii. 11; John i. 7; Acts iii. 26; Prov. i. 20—22, &c.; 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6; Heb. ii. 9; 2 Peter iii. 9; 1 John ii. 2, &c.)

2. Considering, (1.) That there was a time when all men were righteous, as, namely, in Adam before his fall; (2.) That God loveth the righteous, and, consequently, intends salvation unto them; and, (3.) That God's intentions are himself, and therefore unchangeable; we are not capable of understanding how it is possible but that he should intend the salvation of all men.\* Nor doth the change of men from righteousness unto sin make or suppose any change or alteration at all in the intentions of God. For even whilst he did intend the salvation of righteous men, and, consequently, their salvation, being yet righteous; he did intend, also, the condemnation of wicked men, and, consequently, their condemnation in case of apostasy and declining unto sin.

3. That high reverence we bear to the truth and faithfulness of God in his sayings suffereth us not to judge or think but that as he offereth salvation unto all men, promising, without exception, that whosoever shall believe in his Son shall be saved, so he intendeth their salvation accordingly. So that in case any person be not saved, this great misery doth not befall him through any defect in the intentions of God about his salvation, or because his salvation was not as well intended by God as theirs who come to be saved, but only because he voluntarily neglecteth salvation, being offered unto him, which he that believeth, and so comes to be saved, doth not. How and in what sense the intentions of God may, according to the Scriptures, and without the least reflection of weakness or other disparagement upon God, be said to miscarry, or to be made frustrate, hath been declared at large by one of us.†

4. We cannot but judge it injurious and dishonourable in the highest, to the infinite and immense grace of God, to conceive, that it should content and contain itself within the strait bounds and narrow compass of minding or intending the salvation only of a handful or small number of men, whenas he had an opportunity before him to provide

\* "God's purpose was to condemn all, as well one as another, upon condition of their disobedience."—Dr. Twisse against Mr. Cotton. *Predestination*, p. 95.

† See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 22, 35, 215, 434.

for the salvation of all; yea, and by the self-same provision which, as our brethren themselves acknowledge, he made for some few, might, if he had pleased, have equally provided for all; which they, also, will not deny. Nor are we able to cast it or make it out in our thoughts, how it can possibly stand with the unsearchable riches of that grace which is in God, rather to suffer the blood of Christ, in respect of many millions of millions of poor creatures, who stood in every whit as much need of it as those whom our brethren grant to be relieved by it, to vanish into the air, or be as water spilt upon the ground, than to provide for the support and relief of those poor creatures by it. And as the Apostle John, speaking of such a man, who, “having this world’s good, and seeing his brother have need, and yet shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him,” demandeth, “How dwelleth the love of God in him?” so, doubtless, there would be a far greater occasion to demand concerning God, “How dwelleth the love of man in him, or how he is so unmeasurably gracious, if, having means and opportunity in his hand to relieve the whole world of mankind in their great misery and utmost extremity, yea, and this without the least inconvenience unto himself in any kind imaginable, yet shall suffer the far greatest part of them to perish everlastingly, without showing them the least grace, favour, or compassion, or so much as intending the least degree of relief unto them thereby?”

5. Our brethren themselves grant, that the Ministers of the Gospel may truly and seriously call every person of mankind unto remission of sins and salvation; and that whatsoever, according to the Gospel, is offered or promised by the Ministers thereof unto men, is, after the same manner, offered and promised unto them by the Author of the Gospel himself, with much more to like purpose.\* Now if God truly, seriously, and without all simulation, offers and promiseth remission of sins and salvation unto all men, without exception, he must needs be conceived, truly and seriously, to intend the salvation of all men.

6. All the reasons assigned by us, which are many, for our dissent from our brethren in the second and sixth particulars under the first head of doctrine justify us in this also. For if God hath not decreed from eternity the reprobation of any per-

\* *Act. Syn. Nation. Dordr.*, part. ii., pp. 78, 79, 128.

son of mankind, as such, who may not very possibly be saved, any such decree notwithstanding, yea, and the primary end or antecedent intention of God, in his decree of reprobation, be not the condemnation but the salvation of men, it roundly followeth, that then his gracious intentions of salvation extend themselves unto all men.

7. Again: All the arguments and grounds laid down by us, to justify our dissent in the first particular under the second head of doctrine, serve us upon the like account in this also. For if it be true that Christ, according to the counsel and intention of God, died for all men without exception, it must needs be true, also, that the grace of God, in his intentions of salvation, stretcheth itself unto all men.

8. Lastly: We have neither seen nor heard of any thing offered by our brethren, either from the Scriptures or otherwise, that causeth the least hesitancy or doubtfulness in our judgments about what we assert and hold in this particular.

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE SECOND PARTICULAR, UNDER  
THE THIRD HEAD OF DOCTRINE.

THE grounds of our dissent in the second particular, under this third head of doctrine, are,

1. We judge the Scriptures to be very pregnant and clear in holding forth this,—that God vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means unto all men whereby to be saved. Otherwise, we cannot conceive how it can, with truth, be said of him that he “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;” (1 Tim. ii. 4;) or, that he is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;” (2 Peter iii. 9;) or, that he desireth not “the death of him that dieth.” (Ezek. xviii. 32.) For, doubtless, he is not willing that all men should be saved, who, (1.) Knowing that they cannot be saved without sufficient means granted unto them by himself in order thereunto; and, (2.) That himself is able, without the least inconvenience, to grant them these means, shall yet refuse to grant such means unto them. Nor can he be said not to desire the “death of him that dieth,” who, knowing that he must of necessity die, unless himself vouchsafeth sufficient means to prevent his dying, being every ways able, and without prejudice to himself in the least, to afford them, shall, nevertheless, deny the vouchsafement of them. That these

texts of Scripture cannot be evaded by any interpretation whatsoever hath been largely showed and proved from their respective contexts elsewhere.\*

2. The Scripture clearly affirmeth the counsel or purpose of God about those who perish to be this, that they shall be left without excuse. (Rom. i. 20; iii. 19.) Now we conceive that a plea of impotency to perform that which a person is commanded to do, being made according to truth, is the fairest and first-born of all excuses; yea, indeed, somewhat more than an excuse, being a very equitable account of such a non-performance. Yea, if they who perish should be in a capacity of pleading only this, that the abilities of repenting or believing, which were given unto them in Adam,† were lost by him without their knowledge or consent, would be a very considerable and competent excuse for their not believing.

3. The Scriptures report that the Lord Christ marvelled both at the unbelief of some who did not believe, (Mark vi. 6,) as also at the faith of others who did believe. (Matt. viii. 10.) From the former we cannot but infer, that certainly Christ knew that they at whose unbelief he marvelled had sufficient power to believe; inasmuch as no man, consistent in his wits, marvelleth at a man, because, being in danger of his life, he doth not fly in the air like a bird to make an escape, or doth not vanish out of sight like a spirit or angel. The non-performance of known impossibilities is no sober man's wonder. From the latter we shall make inference in due time.

4. The Scripture, likewise, frequently resolveth the unbelief and impenitency of men into the stubbornness of their wills, but never, to our best remembrance, into a deficiency or want of means or power for repenting or believing, especially not till after long and voluntary obduration. "And ye WILL not come to me, that ye might have life." (John v. 40.) So to Jerusalem: "How often would I have gathered thy children—and ye would not;" (Matt. xxiii. 37;) "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye WILL not believe;" (John iv. 48;) with many the like. From whence we cannot but conclude, that the cause of every man's impenitency and unbelief resideth in his will, and not in

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 103—105, &c., 284, 417, 418.

† We do not believe that men ever received any ability in Adam, either to repent or believe, but only make this supposition according to the sense of our adversaries. See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 503, 504, &c.

want of means sufficient for his enablement to repent and believe, or to make him willing to do both.

5. The Scripture testifieth that God vouchsafed unto some persons, who yet repented not, means for repentance every whit as gracious and effectual as his wisdom permitted him to do. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes."\* (Isaiah v. 4.) A spirit of the same sense and import ruleth in that text, also, lately cited, Matt. xxiii. 37. From whence we argue, that no man's impenitency or unbelief any ways proveth a want of means sufficiently enabling him to repent and believe; unless we shall say, that God is not able to give any such sufficiency unto every man; which, we presume, is no man's thought. The Synod of Dort itself alloweth us orthodox in this, teaching the same doctrine in these words: "Those helps of grace which are administered unto men by God are to be estimated by the nature of the benefit offered by them, and by the manifest word of God, not by the abuse of them or the event."† Nor can we judge but that if God vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means of repentance unto some, who, notwithstanding, repent not, he doeth the same unto all others, being not able to satisfy ourselves why God should make a difference in this kind; although, by the way, we do not hold that God vouchsafeth either an identity of means or equality unto all.

6. The Scripture frequently upbraideth those who believe not with the example of others who do believe: "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and YE BELIEVED HIM NOT: but the publicans and harlots BELIEVED HIM: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." (Matt. xxi. 32.) "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall CONDEMN it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Matt. xii. 41.) "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by

\* See this passage of Scripture largely opened and debated, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 428, 429, 473.

† *Ex natura beneficii oblati, et verbo Dei apertissimo judicandum est de illis gratie auxiliis, quæ hominibus suppeditantur, non autem ex abusu, aut eventu.*—*Act. Syn. Nation. Dordr.*, part ii., p. 128.

the which he CONDEMNED the world." (Heb. xi. 7.) Now we judge it a thing clear and evident, that the repentance of those who repent, and so the faith of those who believe, can be no matter of shame, disparagement, or condemnation unto those who repent not, and so who believe not, unless it be supposed that they who repent not, and so who believe not, have a like sufficiency of means enabling them to repent and believe with the other. The casting great matters into the treasury by great men was no disparagement or shame to the poor widow that cast in two mites only, because these two mites were her whole substance; she was not able to cast in more: In which respect our Saviour himself gives her this testimony, that she had "cast in more than they all." Their casting in great matters would have been matter of just disparagement unto her, in case she had been as wealthy as they, and should have cast in her two mites only. Nor is the flying of a fowl in the air any disparagement to a man, in that he doeth not the like: Nor is the speaking of Greek and Hebrew by him who hath been seven years at school to learn these tongues, and hath had the help of men expert and skilful in them to direct him, any matter of disparagement to an infant of days, who is not as yet capable of such education, though he speaketh them not. And generally, where there is not an equality of strength, means, and abilities, for the performance of an action that is commendable, the performance of it by him or them who have the advantage of strength and means in this kind doth no ways reflect disparagement upon the others, though they perform it not. If those who do believe have the omnipotency of Heaven to assist them in believing, nay, to necessitate them to believe, certainly their believing is no matter of disrepute or disgrace unto those who believe not, especially if it be supposed that they have no power at all to believe.

7. The Scripture requireth no other belief to enable any person to "come unto God," meaning, with acceptation, and so as to please him, as the context round about plainly showeth, but only to believe, (1.) That God is; (2.) That he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Now that men generally are in a sufficient capacity, partly by the light of nature, that sense and those impressions of a Deity, which, according to the judgment of Calvin, and all learned Divines, are found stamped by God himself upon the hearts and con-

sciences of all men, partly by the works of creation, and partly by the gracious tenor of those providential administrations wherein God and his goodness appear daily in the world; that men, we say, by all these, are in a capacity to believe both, (1.) That God is; (2.) That he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him; is evident, partly from the Scriptures themselves; (Rom. i. 19—21; Acts xvii. 27, 28, &c.); partly, also, from the writings of many Heathens, who never had the opportunity to consult with the Scriptures, little or much, in which they declare themselves to believe every whit as much, yea, and much more, concerning God, as is contained in the said two propositions. This argument the reader, if he please, may find further urged and vindicated elsewhere.\*

8. The Scripture oft mentioneth, that God most graciously, most affectionately, most earnestly, invites such persons to repent and to believe, and this in order to their salvation, who yet never come to repent or believe, but in conclusion perish. Places of this import are sufficiently known, and have been pointed at formerly. And this doctrine is canonical by the suffrage of the Synod of Dort itself † Now if it shall be supposed, that the men thus graciously, thus affectionately, thus earnestly, invited, called, importuned, by God to repent and to believe, have no sufficiency of power, neither mediate nor immediate, to do either, God, in such gracious invitations, and pathetic applications of himself unto them, must be conceived only to insult over them in their extremity of misery, and not to intend any thing truly gracious or of a saving import towards them. Whether such a conceit as this be any ways worthy the ever-gracious and blessed God, or so much as in probability comporting with those passionate wishes and desires of the peace and safety of those who perish, frequently ascribed unto God in the Scriptures, we leave to the Christian reader to give sentence.

9. The Scripture frequently ascribeth the condemnation and perishing of men to their non-believing; and, consequently, supposeth it to be a sin. “But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John iii. 18.) “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 506, &c.

† Part ii., pp. 128, 129.

abideth on him." (Verse 36.) "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.) Now if men have not a sufficiency of power given unto them by God to believe, but the act of believing, according to our brethren's doctrine, necessarily requires the unbaring, or some extraordinary stretching forth, of the omnipotent arm of God to effect it, in their being condemned for non-belief, they should be condemned for not acting or doing that which is proper only for God himself to do, and, consequently, for not being God, or omnipotent, as he is.

10. The Scripture placeth that unbelief of men which is condemning in this,—that it maketh God a liar. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." (1 John v. 10.) So then, if men generally have means and power sufficient from God to justify him in his sayings, as being a God of truth, or to refrain and forbear the horrid blasphemy of making him a liar, or charging him with untruth, they have a sufficiency of means to believe, and this to salvation. But that the light of the knowledge of God, which shines from Christ in the hearts of all men, without exception, is sufficient to preserve and keep them from dashing their foot at this stone of condemnation, the making God a liar, we suppose no man hath any sufficient cause to doubt or question; or, however, it is sufficiently proved by the scriptures mentioned in our seventh argument of this levy.

11. The Scriptures plainly teach, that the world, or generation of mankind, is put into a better state and condition in or by the second Adam than that wherein it was invested in the first. This we have proved formerly; and, besides, it is the sense, we presume, of all considering men. But if it be true, that the far greatest part of men have such terms put upon them by God, for the obtaining of life and peace under the second Adam, or the Gospel, which are beyond their strength, and which they have no sufficient power to perform, the case will be far otherwise; and the condition of mankind will be found to have been a thousand times better, more hopeful and desirable, in the first Adam, where, in the judgment of all men, they were in a sufficient capacity of performing the conditions required of them by God for obtaining life and happi-



ness, than it is in the second. This argument we made use of in a former point.

12. The Scriptures plainly affirm that God beareth more love and good-will unto men, though fallen, than unto the lapsed angels or devils. (Heb. ii. 14—16; John iii. 16; Jude 6, &c.) But certain it is, that the devils will be found God's favourites in comparison of men, (I mean, of the far greater part of men,) unless it be granted that all men have a sufficiency of means given unto them by God, enabling them to repent and believe. The reason of this consequence hath been formerly given in the sixteenth ground of our dissent in the first particular, under the second general head of doctrine; and the reader, if he please, may find the whole argument somewhat further opened and prosecuted elsewhere.\*

13. The Scriptures, times without number, affirm, that God is very gracious, merciful, bountiful, &c.; and in one place very plainly, that he accepteth a man "according to that" which he "hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii. 12.) But if he should require faith and repentance of men, as he doth of all men, and not give them wherewith or whereby to raise and exhibit them, he should be rather like to those cruel Egyptian taskmasters set over the children of Israel, who denied them straw, and yet exacted of them their tale of brick, and beat them if they made it not; (Exod. v. 11, 13, 14;) or like the hard man in the parable, charged by his servant to gather where he did not strew, and to reap where he did not sow; (Matt. xxv. 24;) than unto a tender, gracious, and bountiful God. That men never received power in Adam to repent or believe; and that, in case it could be proved they did here receive them, yet that it stands not either with the equity or graciousness of God's proceedings, nor with the tenor of several declarations made by him in the Gospel, to judge men upon that account; both these have been demonstratively proved by one of us in another discourse.†

14. The Scripture, from place to place, declareth that God will "judge the world in righteousness and with equity;" (Psalm cxviii. 9; Acts xvii. 31;) that he will judge every man, and render unto every man according to his works; (Rom. ii. 6; Rev. xx. 12;) that he is no respecter of per-

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 499.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 503—505, &c.

sons; (Rom. ii. 11; 1 Peter i. 17;) with much more of like import. Now we cannot understand how God can be said to judge the world in righteousness, and with equity, or to reward every man according to his works, and this without respect of persons, in case it be supposed, as our brethren suppose, that he rewards some men with eternal blessedness and glory, who do nothing but what they are irresistibly necessitated and overruled by a strong hand of power to do; and adjudgeth others unto the vengeance of eternal fire for not doing that which is impossible for them to do, yea, for not doing that which is possible only for God himself to do; especially considering that these adjudged to hell-fire may very possibly have done more which, in a way of equity, is rewardable, the scantiness of their strength and means considered, than they who are rewarded with heaven, considering not only the superabundant strength and means wherewith they were supplied by God, above the others, for the doing of whatsoever they did, but also that they were absolutely necessitated to do that for or according unto which they are so highly rewarded. Therefore, certainly all men have sufficient means from God for their salvation.

15. The Scripture affirms that the Apostles were, and, consequently, that all faithful Ministers of the Gospel are, in their ministry of the Gospel, "a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that perish," as well as "in them that are saved." (2 Cor. ii. 15.) Now we cannot conceive how or in what respect, one or more, either Christ himself should be a "sweet savour unto God" in those that perish, or his Apostles and Ministers the sweet savour of him, that is, persons who by their effectual tender of him unto men, as well unto those who perish as unto those who are saved, proclaim the unsearchable riches of his grace in him unto the world, which is a thing very savoury and acceptable unto God, unless it be supposed that even those who perish are in a capacity of receiving him, and believing in him to salvation, as well as those who come to be saved. But, this granted or supposed, it is very obvious to our apprehensions how the Apostles might be, and faithful Ministers of the Gospel now may be, the sweet savour of Christ unto God, even in those who perish, as well as in those who are saved; as, namely, by declaring and making it to appear that God was not straitened in bowels, or graciousness of intendments towards them, more than unto others; and, consequently, that their destruction is

solely and entirely from themselves, and not from him, nor from any deficiency or denial of his grace unto them.

16. The Scripture holdeth forth this rule of equity, as that by which God will proceed in his awards and dealings with men: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke xii. 48.) This clearly includes in it two other rules of like equity: (1.) That where, or to whomsoever, little is given, little of him will be required. (2.) That to whomsoever nothing is given, of him nothing will be required, namely, to their justification and salvation. From hence it clearly follows, in our apprehensions, that of whomsoever God requireth faith and repentance, as he doth of all men, to them he hath given a sufficient proportion of abilities, strength, and means, whereby to raise and afford them; and that in case any man be denied a sufficiency of power to believe, that God requires not faith of him.

17. The Scripture representeth the condition of all and every person of mankind, as well of those who shall perish as of those that shall be saved, in the parable of the talents; (Matt. xxv. 14, 15, &c.; Luke xix. 12, &c. ;) in which we hear of no man questioned or called to account, but only those that had received talents, one or more. They who had received more, brought in accounts of a proportionable improvement, and were accordingly commended and rewarded. He that received only one is sorely reproved by his Lord, and commanded to be "cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," as having been an "unprofitable servant," and "hid his talent in the earth." These talents must needs be supposed to have all been of one and the same kind, and therefore equally capable of improvement, to the approbation and reward of those who received them. Otherwise, if his talent, who was condemned by his Lord for hiding it, should have been so conditioned, that it was not possible for him to have improved it, as well as his fellow-servants improved theirs, the sentence of condemnation given against him by his Lord would have been very unreasonable, hard, and unjust, as having no other ground for it, but only this, namely, that a poor wretch did not do more, yea, a thousand times more, than was possible for him to do.

18. The Scripture defineth or describeth the Gospel, as we have formerly observed, by this character, that it is a "doctrine," or a truth, "according to godliness;" (1 Tim. vi. 3; Titus i.

1;) that is, a system or body of truth, or doctrine, the constitution, nature, and tendency whereof, in every vein and part of it, is to advance godliness in the world. So that every doctrine or opinion whose direct and proper tendency is to promote godliness amongst men must of necessity correspond and be of affinity with the Gospel, and, consequently, must needs be a truth; as, on the contrary, what doctrine soever is directly either destructive or obstructive unto godliness must of necessity be an error. Now, as far as we are able to judge, that doctrine which avoucheth every person of mankind to be, through the grace of God, invested with power and abilities to repent and to believe, is of an express and potent tendency for the advancement of godliness, and worthy engagements amongst men; as, on the contrary, that doctrine which labours to put men into a conceit or belief that they are bound hand and foot, and cannot move so much as one step towards repentance, yea, may labour all the days of their lives to repent and believe, and yet die impenitently, and perish everlastingly when they have done, we cannot but judge to be a doctrine of the keenest enmity and fiercest antipathy against godliness, that lightly can be imagined; because it quenqueth that spirit in men which principally provoketh unto action, and without which all other motives whatsoever are dull and dead; we mean, the spirit of hope by endeavours to obtain.

19. The Scripture ever and anon speaketh very glorious and excellent things of the grace of God towards men; and particularly affirmeth, that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Rom. v. 20.) Now we cannot but judge it to be highly contumelious and injurious to the grace of God, that any man should teach or say, that he purposed and resolved from eternity to destroy, and this with everlasting perdition, millions of millions, yea, in a manner, only a small remnant comparatively excepted, the whole generation of his best-beloved creatures, men, and this for or in case of a non-performance of such articles, terms, and conditions imposed on them, which himself certainly knew were impossible for them, even by the best and utmost improvement or deportment of themselves, to perform.

20. God certainly knoweth that men cannot repent or believe, but only by grace and means received from himself in order to the performance of these actions. And yet we know that he

threateneth damnation unto all those who shall not repent and believe. Now we cannot but judge it a strain of extreme weakness, and altogether unworthy and unbecoming the infinite wisdom of God, to threaten men with the most horrid punishment that can be imagined, for the non-performance of such things which he knows that himself only is able to perform, and that the persons threatened by him neither are nor can be in any capacity to perform them, but only by strength and means from himself, which, notwithstanding, he refuseth to grant unto them.

21. All our arguments propounded for our justification in dissenting from our brethren in the former particulars strengthen our hand here also. For if God really intends the salvation of all men, we cannot conceive how he should deny unto them a sufficiency of means whereby to be saved.

22. All the reasons and grounds, likewise, formerly laid down by us to render our dissent in the second particular, under the first head of doctrine, warrantable, stand by us in our present dissent also. For if God from eternity decreed not the reprobation of any person of mankind, so, or upon any such terms, but that, notwithstanding his decree, this person very possibly may, or at least sometimes might, be saved; nay, if that very decree of reprobation was made and published by God in order to the salvation of those who through their own wilful neglect come in time to be reprobated by it, which we make good in our sixth particular of dissent under that head, it clearly follows, that God, out of the unsearchable riches of his grace, vouchsafeth unto every man means competent for his salvation.

23. It much strengtheneth us in the point in hand, that we find all orthodox and learned antiquity, as far as any of us have had opportunity to search into their records, praising our doctrine concerning the free grace of God, as so far rejoicing over and magnifying itself in the world, as to put all flesh into a capacity of salvation; according to that of Austin: "We abominate the blasphemy of those who teach that any thing is commanded of God which is impossible for man to do; and that the commandments of God cannot be performed by every particular man, but only by all men together."\* And this, likewise,

\* *Ereccramur blasphemiam eorum, qui dicunt impossibile aliquid homini a Deo esse præceptum, et mandata Dei non a singulis, sed ab omnibus in communi posse servari.*

of Basil the Great: "It is impious to affirm that the precepts of the Holy Ghost are impossible."\* So that the great assertors of Christian religion of old found blasphemy and impiety in that doctrine which many pretending to orthodoxism in these days cry up as the great assertress of the free grace of God. We have in a readiness very many more testimonies from the best antiquity of like import.

24. Neither are we a little confirmed in the justness of our present dissent by those frequent passages and sayings, very plain, pregnant, and express, which occur to us in the writings and discourses of our brethren of opposite judgment, of perfect accord with that doctrine which we here maintain. We are able to produce many sayings from them of this import, but that now we are debtors, by resolution and promise, unto brevity. A testimony from an adversary, much more many from many, is, both by common interpretation, and upon a rational account also, of good authority and weight.

25. Lastly: We never yet met with any thing, either from our friends, the Scriptures, or from our adversaries, our brethren, any ways considerable to counterpoise our judgment against the weight of those, both Scripture and reason, which we have now briefly mentioned as the grounds of our dissent from our brethren in the particular in hand. Yea, we are so full of assurance, that we have truth on our side in this, that we cannot but judge the contrary doctrine to be very palpably and manifestly derogatory and detracting from the praise of the free grace of God; yea, to be the bane and quench-coal of godly endeavours in men, and to have directly occasioned the loss and ruin of many thousand precious souls, who, building upon the imaginary truth of it, never thought of awaking out of their sleep, or standing up from the dead; and, consequently, never were in that regular posture the Apostle speaks of, to have the light of life given by Christ unto them, "Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up," or arise, "from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.)

#### REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE THIRD PARTICULAR.

IN the third particular, mentioned under the third head of doctrine, we cannot accord with our brethren for these reasons:—

\* *Ασεβες το λεγειν αδυνατα ειναι τα τω Πνευματος παραγγελματα.*—  
*Homil. 3.*

1. We find the Scriptures, from first to last, resolving the punishment, condemnation, and destruction of men into themselves, and, for the most part, into their own wills, as was formerly observed, never into any defect of the grace of God towards them. We shall not need to cite passages upon this account, they are so numerous, obvious, and near at hand.

2. The Scriptures affirm that God “doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” (Lam. iii. 33.) If he doth not afflict with external afflictions, or grieve men willingly, that is, out of any propension natural or essential unto him, much less can we think that he doth willingly inflict the vengeance of eternal fire upon the children of men; and, consequently, neither can we judge that he is defective or wanting in such subministrations of grace and means of salvation unto them, by which they may very possibly escape or prevent this most dreadful infliction by his hand. And if so, then cannot the reason of any man’s perishing be ascribed unto God, or to any denial or withholding of grace by him, but only to the neglect or abuse of that grace which is by him vouchsafed unto them.

3. Those most affectionate expressions from God, formerly mentioned, of his zealous desires of the salvation even of those who perish, plainly enough declare that he is no ways accessory to their perishing; and, consequently, that they perish not for want of grace from him, whereby to be saved, but for their voluntary non-comporting with that grace which is vouchsafed to them, and which, complied with and improved, was sufficient to have saved them.

4. When God withholds such grace or such an assistance of his Spirit from men, without which they cannot actually repent or believe, this withholding is not to be charged upon God as if he were at all backward or unwilling to afford it unto them; but to be imputed to their own voluntary neglect or abuse of the grace already received; in which case God judgeth it not consistent with his wisdom and holiness, and, consequently, impossible for him, to advance any further proportion or degree of grace unto them, but rather gradually to withdraw the grace already given, according to that most equitable principle, oft mentioned and asserted by our Saviour in the Gospel: “To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundantly: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.”

5. All those twenty-five arguments, lately produced and insisted upon by us, to acquit ourselves from error in dividing from our brethren in the next preceding point, give testimony to our faithfulness in dissenting from them in this also. For if God vouchsafe sufficient means of salvation unto all men, he is, certainly, free from their condemnation, and the blood of their souls resteth upon their own heads.

6. Neither hath any thing as yet been presented to our thoughts, either by our brethren or otherwise, of any competent strength to turn our judgments unto them in this particular.

REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE FOURTH AND LAST PARTICULAR, UNDER THE THIRD GENERAL HEAD OF DOCTRINE.

WE cannot accord with our brethren in the fourth and last particular, under the present head of doctrine, because of these considerations lying in our way :—

1. The Scripture plainly informeth us, that God went as far as he could to make his vineyard, the people of Israel and men of Judah, fruitful, that is, to draw them to repent and believe, and so to bring forth fruits worthy repentance ; yea, he went so far in this kind, that he referred it to the persons themselves to consider, judge, and say, whether it was possible for him to have gone any further, or no ; as being confident that they could not charge or challenge him in this behalf ; as neither did they : “ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it ? ” Yet the words immediately following plainly show that they neither did repent nor believe : “ Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ? ” From whence it undeniably followeth, that when God advanceth to the highest pitch of grace, when he judgeth meet to exert or put forth, in order to the conversion of any man, it remains yet in the power or liberty of this person, until he be actually converted, not to be converted ; and, consequently, conversion is never wrought irresistibly.

2. The Scripture plainly declareth, that when the Spirit of God did most seriously, most affectionately, with all possible tenderness, and this for a long time together, apply himself to the gaining and converting men unto God, yet the effect of conversion did not follow, neither were the persons thus graciously and thus effectually intreated by God, gained hereby unto him : “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and



stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37.) When God most seriously, most affectionately, most tenderly, intends and attempts the conversion of men, it cannot be imagined but that he putteth forth himself with the greatest efficacy of strength and power for the procurement hereof, which he judgeth meet at any time, or at least, ordinarily, and in the standing course of his providence, to use in order to the obtaining of the like end. If, then, men, under the most affectionate and effectual applications of God unto them for their conversion may, notwithstanding, remain unconverted, evident it is that conversion is not wrought irresistibly.

3. The Scripture very frequently attributeth unto God a most pathetic and affectionate manner of dealing with wicked and impenitent men about their conversion, as that he stretcheth out his hands unto them, that he demandeth of them why they will die or perish, that he wisheth and desireth they would hearken unto him, that he hath compassion on them, &c. Now all such gestures and expressions from him as these must be looked upon only as theatrical, or as the mimic actings of love, friendship, pity, &c., by players upon a stage, in case it be supposed that they do not import a reality and cordialness of intentions in God, for the great good of conversion towards those to whom they are made and relate; and, consequently, a real communication unto them of such a measure of strength or assistance for their conversion, which he is wont to afford unto those whose conversion he most cordially intends, and who come actually to be converted thereby. For, otherwise, all the said expressions would amount to no more than as if a man should, in a solemn and grave manner, and with a serious contest of words, urge and intreat a person that is both deaf and dumb that he would speak; and, such applications of his not succeeding as to cause this poor man to speak, should hereupon affectionately complain and enter a grand contest with him because he did not speak.

4. The Scripture deeply chargeth some impenitent persons with resisting the Holy Ghost: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts vii. 51.) It is plain that such a resistance is here meant which was joined with impenitency

and unbelief. Now if the real intent of the Holy Ghost, in his workings, strivings, and contendings with these men, was not to convert and bring them home unto God, and, consequently, his workings in them of that kind of working by which men ordinarily are converted, but, on the contrary, either to leave them still unconverted, or to subject them to a greater condemnation, they might more properly and truly be said to have complied or comported with the Holy Ghost in that sinful carriage here laid to their charge, than to have resisted him. For he that goeth along with a man in his intentions, and especially, who doeth that without which such a man's ends cannot be obtained, cannot, in any tolerable propriety of speech, be said to resist him.

5. The Scripture records these words spoken by the Lord Christ unto the stubborn and unbelieving Jews: "But these things I say, that ye might be saved." (John v. 34.) And the counsel or gracious intentions of God in the ministry of John Baptist are thus expressed: "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe." (John i. 7.) Now from such passages as these we cannot but reason thus: If Christ's intentions in those things he spake unto the Jews were their salvation, or that they might be saved, then must he needs be supposed in, by, and with, those sayings of his to have vouchsafed unto them such a measure or degree of grace in order hereunto, we mean their salvation, by which they might have been, and by which men ordinarily are, saved. He that certainly knows that such or such an end cannot be obtained without such a proportion of means used by himself in order thereunto, by which such like ends are wont to be, or at least may be, obtained, and yet shall refuse to use such means, especially when the use of them is no ways prejudicial unto him, cannot with truth be said to intend such an end. But evident it is that the Jews, to whom Christ thus spake, and whose salvation he intended, were not savingly, we mean as to matter of success or effect, wrought upon; for it soon after followeth: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (Verse 40.) Therefore conversion is not wrought irresistibly. There is the same consideration of the other place also.

6. The Scripture very frequently ascribes regeneration or conversion unto the word of God or the Gospel: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James i. 18. See also

1 Peter i. 23, with 25 ; 2 Peter i. 4 ; Rom. x. 17, &c.) Now if conversion be wrought by any irresistible power of the Holy Ghost, we are not able to conceive how the word should be instrumental, or have any part or fellowship, in the work. For if the work of conversion be effected or accomplished with an irresistibleness of power, there is no place for the interest or interposure of the word about it. Or if it shall be said to be wrought by an irresistible or necessitating power, and yet by the instrumental efficiency of the word also, then it directly follows, that one and the same work, at one and the same time, may be wrought both resistibly and irresistibly. For certain it is, that the efficiency or operation of the word, which consisteth of exhortations, promises, threatenings, and other arguments of encouragement and persuasion, and, consequently, is only moral, is resistible ; yea, and is, according to our brethren's own principles and frequent concessions, frequently resisted. Or if it should be said, that the word worketh conversion irresistibly, and the Spirit also irresistibly, then should there be a combination of two irresistible powers or operations to produce one and the same work ; and if so, then, questionless, either the one or the other must be superfluous.

7. The Scripture, in the parable of the talents, presenteth those servants who were diligent and faithful in what was committed unto them, invested with commendations by their Lord and Master, upon the account of their faithfulness. "His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matt. xxv. 21.) And again : "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Verse 23.) And, elsewhere, such as believed are said to have "obtained a good report through faith." (Heb. xi. 39.) Now if the servants were necessitated, or irresistibly brought, to be faithful, or upon such terms that it was not possible for them to be other, there is no ground or colour at all why they should be so highly commended for it. In like manner, if the saints of old were made to believe irresistibly, or whether they would or no, they obtained their good report without cause. Praise and commendations are the regular rewards of such actions, not which men are necessitated or irresistibly drawn unto, but of such which, being worthy and good, are voluntarily performed by them, and when it was in their power either not to have done them, or to have done the contrary. A poor Heathen that performs an ordinary moral action freely, and without

being necessitated unto it, deserves more praise and commendation upon true account than such a Christian, who believeth upon terms of irresistibility, and because he could not help it, or do otherwise.

8. The Scripture, as was formerly observed, often mentioneth the faith and repentance of those who do repent and believe as matter of shame and disparagement unto those who do neither, yea, and as evincing the equity or justness of their condemnation. Now if it be supposed that all those who do repent and believe are put upon these actions by a strong and irresistible hand, and that they are in no capacity to withstand that power by which they are drawn unto them, their repenting and believing are no matter of shame or confusion of face, no, not so much as in colour or pretence, to those who neither repent nor believe, considering that these, at least according to our brethren's doctrine, have not so much as a sufficiency of power to do either. It is no disparagement to a man, that he moveth not between heaven and earth with as much expedition as an angel; much less doth it argue, that he deserves to be punished, because he doeth it not: Nor is it any disgrace to any inferior star, that it shineth not like the sun in his might; much less is it any reasonable ground why it should be plucked out of his place in the firmament of heaven, and thrown down to the earth.

9. The Scripture, whereof, also, notice hath been already given, very frequently, and with some emphaticalness of assertion, attributeth unto God the honour of that most worthy property, not to accept or respect persons; but to judge and "reward every man according to his work;" that is, according to the equitable consideration of every man's work, all circumstances duly weighed and compared. Now we cannot conceive but that God must needs show himself a "respector of persons," and be far from rewarding "every man according to his work," in case he shall award the great prize of eternal life unto some, only for or upon the doing of that which, had they not been necessitated by an irresistible hand to do, they would never have done; and the most dreadful doom of eternal fire against others, for or upon the non-performance of that which they had no power to do, though, haply, they have been more willing to do, and more faithful in doing what they had strength and power to do, than the others.

10. The scripture, of which, likewise, we took cognizance upon another occasion, presenteth the Lord Christ as marveling at the unbelief of some, to their reproof and shame: So, also, at the faith and belief of others, to their honour and praise. "When Jesus heard it, he MARVELLED, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great FAITH, no, not in Israel." (Matt. viii. 10.) If Christ judged the faith of this centurion a due occasion of marvelling, and this to his honour, it is to us a demonstrative argument or sign, that it was not raised or wrought in him by any irresistible or necessitating operation of the power of God; or, at least, that the Lord Christ did not so conceive or judge of it. For who marvels at that which he knoweth could not otherwise be, or which he knoweth comes constantly and uniformly to pass in like cases? It is no marvel to see figs growing on a fig-tree, nor grapes upon a vine; nor to see a man's feet at a distance from the ground, whilst he rides upon a tall horse; nor to see a stone moving upwards into the air, when it is thrown up with a man's hand; no more is it to see a man believing, though at never so great a rate, when we know he is necessitated unto it, and can do none other; at least, this is no matter of praise to him.

11. The Scripture taketh notice of the unbelief of the Jews, under so many miracles as Christ had wrought amongst them, as a thing very remarkable and strange. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." (John xii. 37.) If he had wrought ten thousand miracles more and greater amongst them than those which now he had wrought, their non-believing on him had been no ways strange or considerable, if it be supposed that no man can believe but by an irresistible working of the power of God. It is no strange thing, nor much to be minded, that a man stark-blind should not read on a book, though there be twenty candles burning bright before him on the table, it being generally known, that no proportion of light whatsoever is any advantage at all to help or cause a blind man to see. Nor is it strange that a child, who hath learned to spell English, should not understand a chapter in a Hebrew Bible, though the letter and print of it be never so fair. The non-performance of such things which are known impossibilities is no man's observation or wonder.

12. The Scripture reporteth these words from the mouth of our Saviour: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." (Matt. xi. 21. Compare also herewith, Ezek. iii. 6.) From hence to us it plainly appears, and this by a double argument, that the converting grace of God is not irresistible, (1.) Because those means, or that grace, which would have been converting unto some, had it been vouchsafed unto them, was vouchsafed unto others who, notwithstanding, were not converted by it; which of necessity they must have been, had this grace been irresistible. (2.) Because a sufficiency of power or means for conversion is here asserted unto great works, or miracles, as elsewhere we read of some actually converted by them; (Acts viii. 6, 7; Matt. xxvii. 54; John vii. 31; iv. 48; besides many other places;) whose influence or working, notwithstanding, upon the judgments and consciences of men, to persuade or overrule them into the belief of any thing, is but moral, and, consequently, resistible; even as we read of many who, in the very face and presence of many miracles, remained unconverted and unbelieving.

13. The Scripture likewise exhibiteth God himself speaking thus unto his Prophet: "Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house." (Ezek. xii. 2.) From hence we cannot but conceive and argue, that if, when God calleth, yea, urgeth and presseth, men to repent and convert, and, withal, vouchsafeth unto them means every ways sufficient hereunto, expressed by, "eyes to see," and "ears to hear," and yet they may, and sometimes do, remain rebellious, that is, impenitent and unconverted, at least, then the grace or gracious operation which he exerteth about, for, and in order to, the conversion of men is not irresistible, but only such which may and often doth leave them rebellious.

14. If God intendeth ordinarily to convert, yea, and ordinarily doth convert, men by the Gospel, then is not the working of grace about conversion infrustrable or irresistible. The reason, as hath been formerly signified, is, because the Gospel, according to the nature of it, consisting only of precepts, pro-

mises, exhortations, encouragements, threatenings, &c., worketh only morally; which kind of operation may, and frequently is, resisted. And if it be said that men are not converted by the Gospel, without the irresistible working of the Holy Ghost with it, or by it, then it follows, that the effect of conversion dependeth upon the joint concurrence of two causes, the one resistible in its efficiency, the other irresistible; which is impossible, and imports no less than a contradiction. For when an effect depends upon two causes, in or about the production of it, if either of these causes be frustrable, the raising of the effect must needs be liable to frustration also; which yet is inconsistent with the irresistibility of working in either of these causes towards it. And to us it is a clear case, that the doctrine of irresistible grace doth utterly abolish the necessity and use of that blessed instrument, sanctified by God for the conversion of men, (we mean the Gospel,) together with the ministry and preaching of it in the world, at least in respect of any usefulness in it for conversion.

15. If a necessitating or irresistible work of grace be absolutely necessary for conversion, then must it needs follow that no person can or could possibly convert, or be converted, until the very time wherein he is converted actually. If so, then is it in vain, at least in reference to conversion, for men to attend upon the word preached, or to regard any other means of conversion vouchsafed unto them by God, until they be thus irresistibly surprised, acted, and necessitated by him to convert. And what is this, being interpreted, but to teach men that which otherwise, and without occasion or encouragement ministered by any doctrine, they are more than apt enough to learn, we mean security, together with the neglect and contempt of the Gospel and the ministry of it?

16. If there be no possibility that any other men should be converted, but only those who are actually converted by an irresistible power, then there is no end imaginable worthy the grace, goodness, or wisdom of God, in his calling such persons to repentance and conversion who never come to be converted. As for those ends commonly pretended,—as, (1.) The rendering of such persons inexcusable; or, (2.) The declaring of his severity upon them; or, (3.) The teaching of them their duty, or what they ought to do; or, (4.) The trial of their obedience; with the like,—we clearly apprehend them to be no ways

attainable by any such applications of God unto them, which are insufficient to convert them.

17. We cannot but judge our brethren's doctrine of irresistible grace to be a doctrine ill comporting with the Gospel, because it frowns upon godliness, and, in the Scripture phrase, suffers not men to lift up their hearts to the means or ways of it. For he that shall persuade men that they can never be godly, how ardently soever they shall desire it, how diligently soever they shall use the best means to attain it, until they come to be overruled by a strong and irresistible hand into it, what doth he else but cut the sinews, and break the very heart, of all desires and endeavours of men after it; yea, and in effect say unto them, that they will every whit as soon and as certainly become godly, though they walk in the deepest ways of looseness and profaneness, as if they should exercise themselves never so diligently in the best duties or actions whereof they are capable. This is the clear voice of the doctrine of irresistible grace.

18. The said doctrine of irresistible grace, we apprehend, and this in clearness of vision, as we are humbly and Christianly confident, absolutely destroyeth, as far as lieth in a doctrine to do, the very nature, essence, and being of free grace. For whereas the nature of this grace is, so, and upon such terms, to aid, assist, and bless the poor creature man, as to invest him with a regular and due capacity, through believing, of that great recompence of reward, salvation; they who teach that it irresistibly necessitates men to believe, causeth or maketh men to believe upon no better terms, than only because they can do none other, do, in effect, and with clearness of interpretation, teach, that it only enableth men to believe, so, or after such a manner, as to render their faith, and, consequently, their other services also,—for these all depend upon their faith,—unrewardable by God. No law, no rule of justice or equity, provideth any reward for such actions, to the performance whereof the doers were, or should be, necessitated by a strong and irresistible hand. Yea, we conceive that there is more reason of the two, why actions, merely natural, and as such, as eating, drinking, speaking, walking, &c., should be rewarded by God, than any such actions whereunto men are necessitated by a power extra-essential to them. This argument the reader may find further opened and confirmed elsewhere.\*

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 319.



19. We are much confirmed that we have truth on our side in this particular of our dissent, because, as far as we have had opportunity to understand the sense of orthodox and learned antiquity in the point, we find them generally ours; according to the import of these sayings: "Neither the reward of good," saith Tertullian, "nor yet of evil, would justly be adjudged to such a man, who is found either good or evil, by necessity, not by will."\* And Jerome: "God hath made us with liberty of will, neither are we drawn by necessity, either to virtue or vice; otherwise, where necessity takes place, there is neither damnation nor crown;"† that is, neither heaven nor hell. So, likewise, Bernard: "It is only a will free from compulsion and necessity which maketh a creature capable of reward and punishment."‡

20. The frequent and full testimonies of accord with the doctrine maintained by us in the point in hand, which we meet with both from the pens and from the lips of our adversaries themselves, at least, so esteemed, give us measure of assurance, heaped up and running over, that in this our dissent from our brethren we are blameless, and have the truth with us. "He," saith Ursin, speaking of God, "governs and bows, doth not ravish or force, the wills of creatures; that is, by certain objects presented to the mind, he effectually moves," or persuades, "the will to move. For the will being moved by God, is able," or at liberty, "not only to resist, but also to assent unto, God moving, and this with her own and proper motion."§ Our brethren of the ministry, in their sermons, ever and anon bring forth out of their treasury things both new and old, of a manifest comportance with us in the particular in hand.

21. Lastly: Neither have we as yet found any thing in the

\* *Cæterum nec boni, nec mali merces jure pensaretur ei, qui aut bonus, aut malus necessitate fuit inventus, non voluntate.*—TERT. lib. 2, *contra Marcion.*

† *Liberi arbitrii nos condidit Deus; nec ad virtutes, nec ad vitia, necessitate trahimur; alioquin ubi necessitas est, nec damnatio, nec corona est.*—HIERONY.

‡ *Sola voluntas, quoniam pro sua ingenita libertate, aut dissentire sibi, aut præter se in aliquo consentire, nulla vi, nulla cogitur necessitate, non immerito justam vel injustam, beatitudine seu miseria dignam ac capacem creaturam constituit, prout scilicet justitia injustitiave consenserit.*—BERN. *De Grat. et lib. Arbitrio.*

§ *Regit et flectit voluntates creaturarum, non rapit, aut cogit; hoc est, ostensis menti objectis, efficaciter movet voluntatem ad movendum. Potest enim voluntas motu a Deo, non tantum repugnare, sed etiam assentire Deo moventi, suo ac proprio motu.*—URSIN. *Catcc.* pp., 54, 55.

Scriptures, nor in any argument, one or more, from those who dissent from us in the business yet under consideration, which doth any ways balance, in our judgments, the weight of those scriptures, together with the arguments built upon them, which have been produced and insisted upon by us for our justification herein.

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## CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE FOURTH GENERAL HEAD OF DOCTRINE, THE  
POWER OF THE CREATURE MAN, IN THINGS TENDING  
TO SALVATION.

PARTICULARS OF AGREEMENT ABOUT THE FOURTH GENERAL  
HEAD OF DOCTRINE PROPOUNDED.

1. WE hold, that all men by nature, that is, considered as sometimes in the loins of Adam, and as descended from him by natural propagation, are children of wrath, and liable to condemnation. And herein we doubt not but our brethren bear us company with their judgment.

2. We hold and judge, that all those dispositions and inclinations unto good, which were vested in the nature of man in his creation, were forfeited, lost, and ruined by his fall. Neither do we question but that our brethren and we make only one mind between us in this.

3. We hold, further, that no person of mankind, by nature, that is, considered as one of the house and lineage of the first Adam, hath any strength, power, or disposition to mind or will any thing that is spiritually good. We know we have our brethren's good-will in this likewise.

4. We yet hold, that men and women, generally, walking according to the course of this world, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, hereby become dead in sins and trespasses. We have good assurance of our brethren's concurrence with us in this too.

5. We hold, that no person, being dead in sins and trespasses, hath any power to quicken himself; that is, the Apostle himself being the interpreter, to forgive himself his trespasses.

(Col. ii. 13.) Neither do we fear our brethren's discontent in this.

6. We hold, that no person of mankind is sufficient of himself to think or reason any thing of a saving tendency, either to himself or others, as of himself; but that every man's sufficiency, in this kind, is of God. Our brethren, we believe, are as deeply baptized into this faith as we.

7. We hold, that no person can truly repent or believe without the gracious presence and assistance of the Spirit of God with him. We doubt not but that we meet with our brethren's sense here also.

8. We hold, that no flesh hath any reasonable or just ground of boasting in itself before God, but only in God, and in the freeness and richness of his grace. We know that our brethren are not our enemies in this neither.

#### PARTICULARS OF DISSENT ABOUT THE FOURTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE.

So that if in any thing we dissent from our brethren about this head of doctrine it is chiefly or only in these three particulars :—

1. We hold, that, as all men lost the grace and favour of God, whereof they stood possessed in their creation, and during integrity, in the first Adam by his fall, so, likewise, they are, through the free grace of God, restored again hereunto in the second Adam, by his righteousness or obedience. Our brethren's judgment suffers them not, it seems, to magnify the free grace of God with us in this point.

2. We hold, not only that all persons, without exception, are put into an actual possession of the favour of God, by his grace in the gift of Jesus Christ, which possession they still keep during infancy, and until the commission of actual sin, but, further, that all men living to years of discretion, and more especially whilst they have not yet foully corrupted or wretchedly hardened themselves by long continuance in ways of known sins, are, by the same grace, put into a good capacity of salvation; so that if they be not wanting to themselves, and this in a very gross, palpable, and unworthy manner, they may, by the grace of God vouchsafed unto them, come to repent and believe, and persevere believing unto salvation. We understand that this grace of God, also, is opposed by our brethren.

3. We hold, that at any time, excepting only times of possible distemper, even after long continuance and obduration in sin, in case men have not sinned that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, a guilt which we judge to be contracted by few or none in these days, they have yet such a presence of the gracious and good Spirit of God in them or with them, whereby they are enabled so to awake and recollect themselves, and to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, by whom they have been taken captive, although we judge, withal, that there is far less probability or ground of hope that such will recover or repent, than there is of the repentance of those whose sins are not of like growth or continuance. We know our brethren do not accompany us in the way of our judgment here.

REASONS OF DISSENT ABOUT THE FIRST PARTICULAR, UNDER  
THE FOURTH DOCTRINE.

THE grounds of our dissent in the first of these particulars we have delivered already in the account given for our dissent in the third particular, under the first head of doctrine. For if the virtue or saving efficacy of the grace and gift of Christ be commensurable, in the extent thereof, and in respect of the number of persons related unto, with the guilt or condemning force of Adam's sin, then with pregnancy of consequence it follows, that as all men sustained the unspeakable loss of the favour of God, in and by means of the fall of the first Adam, and therefore, considered in their natural relation unto him, and as descended from him by carnal propagation, must needs be looked upon as "children of wrath;" so considered as that species or kind of creature, to whom the gift of Christ, and the super-abounding grace of God in this gift, have been vouchsafed and given, must with a like necessity be esteemed a generation reconciled unto God. There is nothing more common than for persons, as well as things, to be capable of contrary denominations or attributions in different respects. "As concerning the Gospel," saith Paul, speaking to the Gentiles concerning the Jews, "they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." (Rom. xi. 28.) "For even that which was made glorious,"—he speaks of the ministry of the law, comparing it with the ministry of the Gospel,—"had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory

that excelleth." (2 Cor. iii. 10.) But although, as hath been signified, we have formerly laid down the grounds and reasons, or rather some of them only, of our dissent in the particular in hand, yet we shall here add somewhat further from the Scriptures, upon the same account.

1. From the mouth of our blessed Saviour we meet with these words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John viii. 34.) From whence we cannot but conclude, unless we should dissolve the force and emphatical authority of the words, that before and until the commission or perpetration of sin, that is, until the time of actual sinning, persons are no servants of sin; and, consequently, neither under the reigning nor condemning power of sin. The Scripture seems to make these two but one and the same, though Divines amongst us commonly distinguish them: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v. 21.) And if men and women be not the servants of sin until the actual perpetration of sin, certain it is that they are in favour with God.

2. Words of a like import we find, Rom. vi. 16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" that is, unto the justification of life, as in the next preceding chapter he had expressed it. In these words, as far as we are capable of understanding them, the Apostle implieth, (1.) That men's obeying of sin is not a natural or necessitated act, but free and voluntary: Men may be taken prisoners or made captives against their wills, but they cannot yield themselves but with their wills. (2.) That men are not the servants of sin until they have yielded themselves for such, that is, voluntarily consented unto the service. (3.) And lastly: That it is this voluntary yielding of themselves to the service and obedience of sin which renders them liable unto death and condemnation, and, consequently, that they were not obnoxious hereunto before.

3. We do not find the sentence of eternal death any where in the Scriptures awarded or denounced against infants, or persons dying before the perpetration of actual sin; nor yet any others termed dead in sins and trespasses, but only those who have walked in them, according to the course of this world, &c.;

(Eph. ii. 1, 2;) and, therefore, cannot but judge that it would be high presumption in us to condemn those whom we cannot find condemned by God.

4. Lastly: We cannot judge it any ways reasonable, equitable, or as looking like to one of the ways of God, that, having struck and established a new covenant, a covenant of grace and favour with the world, after and upon the transgression of Adam, he should take the advantage against any person of his miscarriage under the first covenant, or proceed to his eternal condemnation otherwise than upon delinquency, and this not light or ordinary, against the covenant now in force or being.

#### REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE SECOND PARTICULAR, UNDER THE FOURTH HEAD.

CONCERNING our dissent in the second of the three particulars lately mentioned, we have also accounted for it already, namely, in the reasons given for our dissent in the second particular, as, likewise, in the sixth, under the first head; and again, in the reasons assigned by us for our dissent in the first particular, under the second head; but especially, and most appropriately, in the reasons laid down by us for our dissent in the second particular, under the third and last preceding head. For in these we proved that the grace of God, in the vouchsafement of means sufficient for salvation, is diffusive, not to a determinate parcel or smaller number of men, but through the generality of mankind. And conceiving that enough hath been said by us already for our justification in dissenting from our brethren in the point now before us, we shall neither make repetition nor addition of any thing, but desire the reader for his satisfaction to consult the premises whereunto he hath been directed.

#### REASONS OF DISSENT IN THE THIRD AND LAST PARTICULAR, UNDER THE FOURTH HEAD.

WE are constrained to dissent in the third and last particular, under this fourth head, by the authority of these Scripture considerations over our judgments and consciences:—

1. God himself having first informed his Prophet that he dwelt in the midst of a rebellious house, which had eyes to see, and yet saw not, and ears to hear, and yet heard not, because

they were a rebellious house, notwithstanding, immediately subjoins, "Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house." (Ezek. xii. 2, 3.) By considering, we cannot think but that he means such a consideration which would produce and issue in true repentance; according to that of David: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Psalm cxix. 59.) Now unless it be supposed that this rebellious and obdurate people had, notwithstanding their long-continued rebellion, such a principle of grace in them, by the excitement and stirring up whereof they were capable of such a consideration, and, consequently, of repentance, there had been no place for this expectation in God concerning them: "It may be they will consider."

2. We find this passage upon sacred record: "Moreover all the chief of the Priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the Heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 14—16.) Evident it is from these words, (1.) That the people here spoken of had been rebellious against God of a long time before his wrath arose against them and destroyed them. (2.) As evident it is, that yet they were in a capacity, under some possibility, at least, of repenting, whilst the ministry of the Prophets was continued unto them, yea, until the very day wherein they were destroyed. Otherwise, the sending of messengers and Prophets unto them by God to the very last had been no argument of his compassions towards them. It is no argument of much pity to the dead that a Physician should be sent unto him.

3. When God said thus: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" meaning, in reproving, exciting, admonishing, persuading him to repent, "for that he also is flesh;" that is, though he be a weak, foolish, and frail creature; meaning, that this consideration of man did prevail with him, to spare him

the longer, and to afford him the helpful presence of his Spirit accordingly, in order to his eternal comfort and peace ; (Psalm ciii. 14;) “yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years ;” (Gen. vi. 3;) he clearly supposeth, that the men then in the world, of whom he speaketh more particularly, by the help of his Spirit which he was willing should wrestle and strive with them accordingly, all the time here mentioned and prescribed, would be in a capacity of repenting, even to the last period and moment of the said time, though in the mean time they should remain wicked, stubborn, and impenitent.

4. When God addresseth himself thus to the Jews, after a long-continued course of wickedness and rebellion, “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed ; and make you a new heart and a new spirit ;” demanding thus of them : “For why will ye die, O house of Israel ? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, &c. ; (Ezek. xviii. 31, 32 ;) he plainly supposeth, that yet there was such a presence of his grace and good Spirit with them, that it was no matter of impossibility for them so to alter the frame of their hearts, and change the tenor of their lives and ways, that, whereas they were at present under the stroke and dint of the heavy displeasure of God, and little better than prepared for destruction, they might, notwithstanding, come off upon terms of honour, safety, and peace.

5. When the Apostle Paul demandeth thus : “And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ?” &c. ; (Rom. ii. 3, 4 ;) it cannot, in our apprehensions, be conceived but that he takes it for granted, or at least as a thing that men may easily come to know, that the goodness of God expressing itself unto men, how wicked or vile soever, in his forbearance and long-suffering towards them, all the time of its being thus continued unto them, leadeth, that is, inviteth, allureth, persuadeth them to repentance ; and, consequently, that such men, by the help of some principle or other within them, are in a capacity all this while of being led home or brought to repentance by it. A man who is in an utter incapacity to repent cannot be said to be led to repentance by any thing or means whatsoever.:



6. So, again, when the same Apostle exhorteth Timothy to instruct in meekness those that oppose themselves, namely, out of a habit or settled disposition, as the word imports, “if God peradventure,” or rather, *at any time*, ποτε, “will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will,” (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26,) without controversy supposeth, that such men are not at any time, whilst they may be instructed, divested of all power or capacity to repent, and so to recover themselves out of the devil’s snare. And whereas he expresseth himself thus: “If God peradventure will give them repentance,” he doth not imply that God may possibly come upon them with an irresistible power, and make them to repent whether they will or no; Timothy needed not to instruct them with meekness for the bringing of them to repentance upon such terms; but that it might so come to pass that God, by the secret excitements and workings of that good Spirit of his with them, which was not yet wholly departed or taken from them, might persuade them to hearken to Timothy’s instructions, being meek and gentle, and, consequently, to embrace and own the truth taught by him.

7. Lastly: When the same Apostle presenteth God or the Scripture speaking, encouraging, and exhorting thus: “Awake thou that sleepest, stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,” (Eph. v. 14,) he plainly and without parable supposeth, (1.) That he that sleepeth, namely, in carnal security and sensuality, is yet capable of awakening himself out of it; for, otherwise, God doth not admonish or call upon men to do that, we mean to perform that part in acting, which is only proper for himself to perform; especially he doth not encourage them with promises to do it. (2.) That even he that is dead, that is, that is in a dying or perishing posture, in appearance like unto a man bereft of all spiritual sense and motion, ready to perish eternally, hath yet such a spark or principle of life in him which can be nothing but the Spirit of God, or nothing without it, by the ventilation, stirring up, and improvement whereof, he may stand up from amongst his fellows, dead in like manner in sins and trespasses with him, that is, either so betake himself unto Jesus Christ as to receive from him the light of life truly spiritual, and which is accompanied with salvation, or else, so to prepare himself, so to posture his heart and soul with

longing desires and studious inquiries after God, after righteousness, and after the things of his peace, that Jesus Christ, according to the unsearchable riches of his grace, and his frequent promises made in such a behalf, will reveal himself unto him, and cause the light of his salvation to shine upon him.

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## CHAPTER V.

### CONCERNING THE FIFTH AND LAST GENERAL HEAD OF DOCTRINE, THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

#### PARTICULARS OF AGREEMENT ABOUT THE FIFTH AND LAST GENERAL HEAD OF DOCTRINE.

1. WE hold that true and sound believers, as such, and remaining such, can never fall away, either totally or finally, from the grace and favour of God. This doctrine, we know, is our brethren's belief, as well as ours.

2. We hold that true believers, and persons truly justified before God, may possibly fall into very horrid sins, grieve the good Spirit of God, incur his indignation, and contract a damnable guilt. Our brethren, if we may estimate their judgment in the case, by some of the most intelligent and best learned of their party, profess the same things *in terminis* with us.\*

3. We hold that God hath promised unto true believers such supplies and interposures of his good Spirit, from time to time, which are abundantly sufficient to preserve them from falling away, if themselves be not slothful and extremely negligent in the things of their peace. Our brethren, we know, cannot dissent from us in this.

4. We hold that what supplies soever of his grace and good Spirit God any where promiseth unto true believers, in order to their perseverance, he always exhibiteth according to the tenor and intent of these promises. Neither do we fear reproof from our brethren for being thus minded, themselves being of the same mind with us.

5. Our brethren hold and teach, that many who have been first in appearance and profession of saintship and true godli-

\* DR. PRIDEAUX, *De Perseverantia Sanctorum*, Lect. VI.; *et Acta Synod. Nation. Dordr.*, part. ii. iii. p. 192.

ness may, and often do, prove last, falling away both totally and finally. Our brethren have no adversaries amongst us in this doctrine.

6. Our brethren hold and teach, that true believers can have no peace, no comfort, no assurance, of their justification, or reconciliation with God, whilst they neglect the study of holiness, walk loosely, lie impenitently under the guilt of any great and known sin, neglect the use of means appointed by God for the enabling of them to persevere, &c.\* The same doctrine is our brethren's and ours in this point also.

7. Our brethren hold and teach, that when regenerate or justified persons, through their own fault or corruption, fall into the perpetration of horrid sins, they lose their present aptitude or meetness (they mean, that aptitude which they had before the commission of such sins) for entrance into the kingdom of heaven.† Neither have we any doctrine amongst us opposite hereunto.

8. Our brethren hold and teach, yet further, that the unchangeable ordination of God requireth that a believer, breaking out into such enormous transgressions, must first, by a renewed act of faith and repentance, return into the way, before he can be brought to the end of his way, the kingdom of heaven.‡ We believe as our brethren believe in this likewise.

9. Our brethren yet hold and grant, beyond this, that a believer, between guilt contracted by some grievous sin, one or more, and the renewing of his faith and repentance, stands as a sinner to be condemned upon the account of his own demerit, and not as a person actually absolved, until he hath obtained pardon by the stirring up of his faith and repentance.§ We know no reason why to break company with our brethren at this turn neither.

10. Our brethren moreover hold and teach, that persons supernaturally enlightened, by means whereof they may understand those things to be true which are declared in the word of God, and yield an unfeigned assent unto them, yea, and have their affections in part changed, and their ways to a degree reformed, and who, in the judgment of charity, are and ought to be judged believers, persons justified and sanctified, may, notwithstanding, fall away totally and finally.|| And the truth

\* *Acta Syn. Nation. Dordr.*, part. ii., p. 197.

† *Ibid.*, part. ii., 192.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

§ *Ibid.*

|| *Ibid.*, part. ii., pp. 188—190.

is, that, holding and granting these things, in true interpretation, they hold and grant all that we affirm or hold in this head of doctrine, in opposition, as we are conceived, and without cause blamed, to them, as hath been demonstratively proved elsewhere.\*

11. Our brethren hold and teach, that it doth not spring or arise from regenerate men themselves, or from their will, that they fall not wholly away from faith, holiness, and adoption; but from the special love of God, and his operation in them, together with the intercession and safe-keeping of Christ. Neither do they assert any thing in this, but what we can, only being allowed an orthodox sense of the words, freely subscribe unto.

12. They teach, that the perseverance of the saints is the gratuitous or free gift of God. If our brethren be as orthodox in their sense as they are in their words, we are no adversaries to them at this point neither. We hold, that when any saint persevereth unto the end, it is of the free donation or gift of God, and that the grace by which he persevereth is not procured or acquired by any merit or worth of works whatsoever.

So that all the distance between us and our brethren about this fifth and last head of doctrine may be measured and taken by the opposition between these two positions only: They hold, that persons, once true believers and truly justified, can never fall away from their faith, either totally or finally: We hold, that even such persons may fall away in both considerations. But far should it be from us to dissent from them in this, were not our judgments and consciences overawed with these and such-like arguments from the Scriptures:—

REASONS OF DISSENT IN ONE PARTICULAR, ABOUT THE  
FIFTH AND LAST HEAD OF DOCTRINE.

1. WE read of some who, having had a “good conscience, put” it “away,” and hereby “concerning faith made shipwreck.” (1 Tim. i. 19.) Nor can we imagine, that the Apostle, by making shipwreck of faith, should mean the loss or deprivation of any thing but what, had it been kept by those who made shipwreck of it, would have been of a blessed and saving consequence unto them; nor that that “good conscience,” which

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 396—398, &c.

he expressly saith some had “put,” or rather, *violently thrust*, or *justled*, *αποσαμεινοι*, “away,” was any other than that spoken of, verse 5, out of which that “charity,” which is the “end of the commandment,” proceedeth; or that which he calls a “pure conscience;” (1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3;) and is elsewhere termed a “good conscience.” (Heb. xiii. 18; 1 Peter iii. 16.) And we are the more convincingly persuaded he speaks, both of such a conscience, and such a faith, which, had they been persisted in, would have accompanied salvation, because he admonisheth Timothy, in the beginning of the verse, to have or to hold them fast: “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.” This text of Scripture is elsewhere further argued to the clear eviction of the sense now given; and what may reasonably be objected, answered.\*

2. Again: We read of the “overthrow” of the faith of some by false teachers: “Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow,” *ανατρεπουσι*, *subvert*, or *turn upside down*, “the faith of some.” (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.) That by “faith” in this place can be meant no hypocritical, feigned, or pretended faith, but that which was real and truly justifying, is proved from the context itself in the fore-named discourse.†

3. We find the righteous God himself declaring his own mind in the point in hand, by his Prophet Ezekiel, in these words: “When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.” (Ezek. xviii. 26.) (1.) That by the “righteous man” here mentioned, is meant a person truly righteous, and justified in the sight of God; (2.) That it is here clearly supposed that even such a righteous man as this may possibly turn away from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, yea, and die in his apostasy; (3.) And lastly: That the death here threatened by God against this righteous person, so apostatizing as is expressed, is eternal death; have been at large, and against all contrary arguings and pretendings, evinced in the oft-mentioned discourse.‡

4. We cannot but conceive and judge, that by the just and equitable proceeding of the Lord, in the parable, Matt. xviii.,

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 353, &c.

† *Ibid.*, p. 358, &c.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 270—272.

against that servant of his who so cruelly handled his fellow-servant, as is there expressed, with whom he is said to have been "wroth," and to have "delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay the whole debt," and this after he had forgiven it unto him; we cannot, we say, but conceive that the Lord Christ, in and by this parabolical history, informs his disciples, and together with them the whole generation of mankind, that if justified persons themselves, who have received complete remission of sins from God, shall enormously transgress, especially in ways of unmercifulness, cruelty, and oppression, they transfer and remove themselves from under the blessed influence of that decree of God, by which they were and stood justified, and subject themselves to another decree of a contrary influence and import, by which they, with all others of the same rank of impiety with them, stand condemned, and guilty of eternal death. This to be the sense and drift of the said parable, the winding of it up by our Saviour in these words, to his disciples themselves, makes fully manifest: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matt. xviii. 35.) The parable the reader shall find opened and argued at large, and the result of it clearly and against all contradiction evicted to be the same in substance with what hath been now expressed, in the late-referenced book.\*

5. Neither do we know how to understand, or make any tolerable sense of, the parable of the sower, in some of the material passages of it, without the help of this principle, that true faith, and such which, persevered in, would save men, may wholly wither, and come to nothing. For the reason why the fruit that sprang from the seed which fell in the stony ground miscarried and withered away is not resolved into the nature, kind, or property of it, but into the lack of moisture; (Luke viii. 6;) or into the want of deepness of earth. (Matt. xiii. 5.) So, likewise, the reason of the miscarriage of the thorny ground was not because that which sprang up and grew for a time here was of a bastard or wild kind, or for the time it grew any ways differing from that which the good ground itself brought forth and bare, but because the "thorns sprang up" together "with the seed, and choked it." (Luke viii. 7; Matt. xiii. 7.) And

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 151, 152, 276, 277.

the reason why the professors resembled by the rock, or stony ground, come short of salvation is not said to be because they never believed,—for they are expressly said to believe, Luke viii. 13,—nor because they never truly believed, or because they were never justified, or the like; but only because they had no root, and in times of persecution fell away; which plainly showeth, that that faith which was in them for a time was justifying; and, persevered in unto the end, would have actually saved them. There is the like consideration of those portraited by the thorny ground. But this parable, also, the reader, if he please, may find largely handled, and perspicuously unfolded, in the said treatise, entitled, “Redemption Redeemed,” pp. 291---293, &c.

6. The Apostle, likewise, (Heb. vi. 4—6, &c.) as far as we are able to conceive, most pregnantly and convincingly teacheth a possibility of defection from faith, both total and final, not simply in true saints, but even in saints of great eminency and worth; for so we judge of the Apostle’s intent in the passage with the best of our understanding. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away,” (in the original it is *και παραπεσοντας*, that is, *and falling away*), “to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” We find all the characters here specified in those whose falling away, and this with an impossibility of repentance, is supposed to be presented by the Holy Ghost up and down the Scriptures, from place to place, as the appropriate and distinguishing characters of true believers. Besides, we cannot apprehend how hypocrites or formal professors can be said to fall away, especially how they should, by their falling away, put themselves into an incapacity of being renewed again by or unto repentance, whenas they are supposed to have been never renewed by or to repentance before. This passage of Scripture, likewise, is fully and at large debated, and all expositions proved null, which are bent to carry it another way, in the late-named book, pp. 282—284, &c.

7. That other passage of the same Apostle, Heb. x. 26—29, neither can we judge but to be of the same import with the former, holding forth the same doctrine which we found there:

“ For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses : Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ? ” That to be “ sanctified with the blood of the covenant, ” importeth true and real sanctification, and such which always accompanieth justification, we conceive, both from the scope of the place and proper significancy of the phrase, to be above all reasonable denial. And that such a sanctification as this, supposing it to be the sanctification here meant, may be wholly and for ever lost, we judge, both by the express tenor of the words, and by the carriage of the passage, to be unquestionable. However, this place, also, is diligently inquired unto, and, upon an impartial examination, found confederate with the doctrine maintained by us in the particular in hand, in the same quarters of discourse with the former passage.

3. The Apostle Peter also strengtheneth our hand very much to the laying fast hold on the same doctrine, by putting these words into it : “ For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge, ” or rather *acknowledgment*, *ἐν ἐπιγνώσει*, “ of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. ” ( 2 Peter ii. 20. ) In saying that the latter end of the men he speaks of, namely, who are re-entangled in the pollutions of the world, and overcome, after a “ clean, ” or “ real escape from them, ” ( verse 18, ) “ is worse with them than the beginning, ” he clearly supposeth that they were in a good and saving condition from the time of such their escape until their said re-entanglement. Otherwise, and in case this escape had been but in show only, and they hypocrites under and during their acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, he would rather have said, the latter end is worse with them than their state under such an acknowledgment. For doubtless they are in a better condition who never yet heard of or professed the name of Jesus Christ, than those who make a loose, hollow, or hypocritical profession of him ; so that it had been worse with them,



not only after their second entanglement with the pollutions of the world, but even whilst they were under the escape here specified, than it was in the beginning. But this scripture, together with those lately cited upon the same account, and some others, have been by one of us more fully discussed heretofore,\* and the doctrine maintained in the particular in hand, demonstratively evicted and proved from them.

9. That which our brethren most unduly and unjustly, and contrary to the manifest tendency of our doctrine concerning the possibility of the saints' total and final declining, charge upon it, as, namely, that it is injurious and destructive to the comforts of the saints, that it must needs render the lives and conditions of true believers miserable and full of fears, &c., we judge to be, upon true account, chargeable upon theirs, and that that doctrine which avoucheth an inamissibility of the grace and favour of God is of confederacy with Satan in filling the minds and consciences of the saints with perplexities, and inextricable doubts, horrid fears, and questionings about the truth of their faith, and, consequently, of their salvation. For,

(1.) Such a doctrine imposeth this hard task upon a man, to put him into the lowest degree of hope or comfort that he is a true believer, namely, to prove and evidence to his own soul that his faith is better, that is, more operative by love, and bearing more and better fruits of righteousness than the faith of any person who hath at any time apostatized from God and his ways ever was or did. Otherwise, according to the import of that doctrine, he can never come to have any certain knowledge or assurance, no, nor yet any tolerable or well-grounded hope that he is a true and sound believer. And what savour of peace or comfort can there be in such a doctrine or persuasion as this, that true believers can never fall away, unto such a man who hath entangled himself with such a conceit, which will very hardly, if at all, suffer him to judge himself, at least upon good ground, a true believer? or, who is there at this day under heaven, that is able clearly, or upon a reasonable account, to prove unto his own conscience and soul, that his faith abounds more with the fruits of righteousness, worketh to a higher and more excellent rate of love, than the faith of any backslider ever did? Again,

\* *Redemption Redeemed*, chap. xii., throughout.

(2.) Such a doctrine which is any ways encouraging or tempting, not simply unto looseness and vile practices, but even to a continuance and obduration herein, must needs, and this according to our brethren's own principles, bereave men of all spiritual joy, comfort, and peace, occasion them to doubt and question their justification and soundness of believing; as, on the contrary, such a doctrine, the tenderness whereof clearly worketh the hearts and consciences of men to an awful reverence of God, and watchfulness against sin, and breaking out of corruption, must needs be of a rich sympathy with the peace and spiritual comforts of believers. That our brethren's doctrine, in the point under present consideration, is of the former complexion and constitution, and ours, opposite to it, of the latter, is, as we conceive, undeniably proved in the ninth chapter of "Redemption Redeemed."

10. We cannot but judge our brethren's doctrine, investing the saints with an absolute certainty of perseverance, to war with a strong hand against godliness, and the advancement hereof in the world.\* The reason is, because it lays the reins of security upon the neck of the flesh and of the old man in believers; and deprives them of the sharpest bit which God hath given them wherewith to restrain and curb the unruly and unregenerate part of the soul, we mean, the fear and dread of eternal fire. And we verily believe that that very doctrine which we now oppose hath mightily strengthened the hand of that first-born apostate, Satan, in replenishing the world with a generation in his own likeness; we mean with persons who have forsaken the ways of righteousness and of truth, to walk in the paths of the ungodliness and profaneness of this present world.

11. Neither can we reconcile our brethren's doctrine with that most holy and righteous property in God, which gives him the honour of being styled *απροσωποληπτης*, a non-respecter of persons; an honour very frequently, as we know, cast upon him by the Scriptures. For if those who have once truly believed, and so been in favour with God, shall turn aside into the ways of the wickedness of the world, as of adultery, drunkenness, covetousness, oppression, &c., as our brethren's doctrine itself supposeth it very possible that such men may do, in case God shall not subject them to the same law of condemnation for and under

\* See this reason further opened and confirmed, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 333, 334, &c.

the commission of such sins, whereunto he subjecteth the rest of the world for the same crimes; what more manifest and notorious respect of persons can there be imagined than this; especially, considering that those who have known God, and been countenanced and loved by him, are greater sinners than other men, and are so adjudged and threatened accordingly by God himself, (Amos iii. 2; Deut. vi. 15; Lam. i. 12; Dan. ix. 12; Hosea ix. 1; Gal. iv. 9, &c.,) though committing but the same sins in specie with them?\*

12. We find many great and precious promises made by God unto those who shall persevere unto the end. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. xxiv. 13.) "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations," &c. (Rev. ii. 26.) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" (Rev. ii. 10;) to omit many others. Now we cannot look upon these and the like promises but, (1.) As vouchsafed and given by God, by way of encouragement, and in the nature of means, whereby those who at present are saints indeed and do believe may be enabled to hold out with constancy and faithfulness unto the end; this, we suppose, our brethren themselves will not deny; and, (2.) As altogether disabled, frustrated, and made void, in respect of any contribution towards such an end, by our brethren's doctrine of perseverance. For if the perseverance of the saints be absolute and unconditioned or necessitated, and wrought in them by an irresistible hand of power, we cannot conceive how the said promises should have any influence or operation at all upon them in order thereunto. For that which is wrought irresistibly can have no dependence, in the causation of it, upon any such means which is resistible or moral; and, consequently, not upon any promise, one or more, the efficiency of these upon the hearts and consciences of men being only moral, and such which may be, and too frequently is, resisted, and this to frustration, in respect of the end properly and primarily intended by the said promises, respectively.†

13. In like manner we look upon all the exhortations unto

\* See more upon the account of this argument, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 300, 301, &c.

† See this argument also further opened and fully vindicated against all objections, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 317.

perseverance administered by the Holy Ghost in Scripture unto the saints, which are very many, as evacuated and made void by that doctrine of perseverance, which is commonly held and taught by our brethren. For to what purpose can it be, seriously and solemnly to exhort, admonish, and persuade men to be diligent in the use of means, for the preventing of such an evil, which they have perfect and plenary assurance from God neither shall nor can ever befall or come upon them howsoever? Or is not this the voice of our brethren's doctrine of perseverance? The use of means is in vain, and with no consistency with the principles of reason prescribed or enjoined unto men, when either, (1.) They know that they shall be made or necessitated to use them, whether they intend or stir up themselves to use them, or no; or, (2.) That the end, for the obtaining whereof they should or are to be used, is so determined or decreed by God, that there is no possibility of their non-attaining it.\*

14. Nor can we judge our brethren's doctrine of perseverance of any better comportment with those threatenings which are so frequently bent against believers, in case of their non-perseverance or apostasy. "Now the just," saith the Apostle, "shall live by faith: but if he draw back,"—for so the place, if honestly translated, should be read,—“my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” (Heb. x. 38.) So again: “When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.” (Ezek. xviii. 26.) “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown;” (Rev. iii. 11;) to pass by sundry others. Threatenings and caveats, if regularly administered, always import danger; but how they should apprehend or be sensible of any danger, yea, or possibility, of falling away, who are assured by the infallible word of God that they shall never fall away, is beyond our capacity to understand.†

15. We, upon the premises, cannot but conceive yet further, that our brethren's doctrine of perseverance wholly, or at least to a very great proportion, evacuateth the ministry of the Gospel, so far as it concerneth the perseverance of the saints,

\* See this argument further enlarged, confirmed, and secured, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 302—304, &c.

† This argument, also, is managed more at large, and disencumbered of all objections, *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 311—313, &c.

which is one of the highest or most considerable ends or services of it, rendering it impertinent, vain, and useless. For a Minister of the Gospel is hardly capable of taking any other course, of using any other means, to further the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness unto the end, but only by his diligence and faithfulness in pressing such exhortations, threatenings, and promises in the Scriptures, which are here delivered by God, to furnish and strengthen his hand to that worthy work. So that as the doctrine of election, as it is commonly taught and received by our brethren, renders the ministry of the Gospel little useful, in respect of persons yet unconverted, in like manner such a doctrine which either makes these exhortations, threatenings, and promises themselves, which now we speak of, or else their preaching and pressing upon men, needless, useless, or void, must needs make the said ministry every whit as empty and weightless in respect of persons already called and converted, at least as to their perseverance. And our brethren's doctrine of perseverance we can at no hand judge to be innocent from this great offence.

16. Nor can we apprehend or conceive how the said doctrine can, with any reasonable gloss or interpretation, be drawn to any good consistency with the wisdom of God; but, in our eye, it representeth him weak, incongruous, and incoherent with himself, in his applications unto men. For to us it seems a thing very preposterous, that God should first charge a man confidently to believe that he will irresistibly cause him to persevere, and eternally save him; and yet presently threaten him also with suffering the vengeance of hell-fire, in case he shall not persevere. If a parent should first settle the inheritance upon his son upon such terms in law, that he should leave himself in no capacity or power to reverse his act in this kind, and should, withal, plainly declare to this son what he hath done in the business for him; would it not be a vain course for such a parent to threaten this child with disinheriting him, in case he should prove undutiful or unruly?\*

17. We find in Scripture that God proposeth and promiseth great rewards unto the perseverance of the saints. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. xxiv. 13.) And again: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee

\* See this argument more effectually propounded, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 318.

a crown of life;" (Rev. ii. 10;) with many like. Now we conceive that the perseverance of the saints is rendered altogether unrewardable by the award of our brethren's doctrine concerning it. For, as we formerly showed and proved, no act, to the performance whereof a man is irresistibly drawn or necessitated, so that it is or was not in his power to do otherwise, is, by any principle of justice, wisdom, or equity, capable of reward, no more than actions merely natural are; nay, such actions as these are rather rewardable than the other, as was showed likewise.

18. Again: If perseverance were absolutely and unconditionally promised unto the saints by God, then, when he admonisheth and chargeth them to persevere, or threateneth them in case they shall not persevere, he should admonish and charge them to perform his promises, and threaten them for non-performance of them. This consequence is undeniable, according to the principles of our brethren's doctrine. God, say they, hath positively and absolutely promised perseverance, or the gift of perseverance, unto the saints. Therefore, when by precept or exhortation he requires perseverance of them, or enjoins them to persevere unto the end, he must needs be conceived to require of them that which himself stands bound by promise to give unto them. And so when he threateneth them, or, indeed, any others, in case of apostasy and backsliding, he should threaten them, upon the account of such a doctrine, for not being omnipotent, or, which amounts to the same in substance, for not doing that which is only proper for omnipotency to do.

19. We conceive yet further, that such an absolute promise of perseverance as our brethren notion to be made by God unto the saints, is diametrically repugnant to his holiness, and to the perfect love which he bears unto it in his creature. For the import of such a promise, being plainly and right-down interpreted and understood, amounteth to as much as if God should be conceived to speak thus unto his saints: "Though ye turn sons of Belial, and walk according to all the abominations of the world, commit adultery, murder, lie, steal, cozen, oppress, give yourselves up to the pleasures of the flesh, and to all licentiousness, &c.; yet fear not the loss of my favour, nor of the kingdom promised unto you: I will love you with my greatest love, my love of election, in the midst of all these

abominations; and will pour clean water upon you for your washing, when I see my time: Take you no care, no thought, when or how to repent: I will engage with my omnipotency to bring you to repentance in due time." We tremble to put a promise of such a horrid import and consequence as this into the mouth of the most holy God. Nor are we able to understand how our brethren, if they will be ingenuous, and own their doctrine all over, can deny but that that absolute promise of perseverance which they with so much unadvised heat attribute unto God is a promise of no whit better an interpretation or import than so.

20. Nor do we know how to deliver or acquit our brethren's doctrine of perseverance from the high crime of turning all that most gracious counsel given by the Holy Ghost unto the saints into weakness and folly, which consists, partly, in the diligent information which he gives them, from place to place, of Satan's hostile, cruel, and bloody mind and intentions against them; partly in detecting and making known all his subtle stratagems, plots, methods, and dangerous machinations against them; partly, also, in furnishing them with spiritual weapons of all sorts, whereby they may be able to grapple with him notwithstanding; partly, again, in those frequent admonitions, exhortations, encouragements, to quit themselves like men in resisting him, which are found in the Scriptures; and, lastly, in professing his fear lest Satan should circumvent and deceive them. If it be supposed that the saints live under the protection, are defended with the shield and buckler, of an absolute decree, an unconditioned promise of perseverance from God, all those operous and gracious applications of the Holy Ghost unto them in order to their perseverance, and to prevent their apostasy, being weighed in a just balance, will be found very light.\*

21. Our brethren themselves grant and teach, as we have heard, that the saints themselves, and true believers, may possibly fall into very horrid sins, as murder, adultery, drunkenness, &c., yea, and may lie impenitently under the guilt of them, at least for a time. Now we find in Scripture the express will of God to be, that they that do such things as these should not inherit his kingdom. "Know ye not," saith the Apostle, as if

\* See *Redemption Redeemed*, pp. 338, 339, &c.

that which he was now about to say was nothing but what every Christian either knew, or easily might or ought to know, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? BE NOT DECEIVED: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Compare herewith, Eph. v. 5, 6; Gal. v. 19—21; Rev. xxi. 8, 27, &c.) There is no clause of indulgence mentioned, or so much as hinted, in any of these passages, on the behalf of such who have sometimes been friends of Christ, or believers; and we judge it no less than a matter of high misdemeanor in Christianity for men to presume to interline any declaration made by the Holy Ghost. Nay, in the former of the two texts last pointed at, namely, Rev. xxi. 8, the note of universality, *παντες*, is expressly added to one species of transgressors, there mentioned among others, and, according to the judgment of interpreters, is to be understood of the rest. The tenor of the place is this: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." The latter place of the same chapter is every whit as emphatical to our purpose: "And there shall IN NO WISE enter into it," the new Jerusalem, "ANY THING that defileth, neither WHATSOEVER worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." This latter clause, compared with the former part of the verse, notably confuteth that "book" of election which our brethren have made. For in this "book" of theirs there are "fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers," &c., written, as well as saints and believers. Therefore, "the Lamb's book of life," and our brethren's book, are not books of the same inspiration.

22. We cannot look upon our brethren's doctrine touching perseverance, but as gratifying, spiring, and indulging the flesh, and as weakening, flattening, cooling, and quenching the Spirit in men. If the flesh, or old man, in the saints should desire a Gospel according to their genius or interest, what other Gospel could they rather desire than that which should warrant salvation upon the highest terms of assurance, though the flesh



should roar and rant, disport and magnify itself in all manner of impiety and ways of abomination? Or what doctrine can there lightly be imagined of a more melancholy, damping, deading import unto the Spirit, than that which insureth a man, that, though the Spirit layeth aside his sceptre, sits still, interposeth or acteth little in him, yea, though he suffers himself to be trodden and trampled upon by the flesh, yet the crown will be won notwithstanding, and the great price of salvation carried with a high hand? Or is not this the express import of our brethren's doctrine of perseverance? So, on the contrary, what doctrine can there be more nipping, cutting, or crucifying to the flesh, than that which avoucheth imminent danger of losing the crown of life and immortality, and of gaining the vengeance of eternal fire, if the flesh shall be suffered to reign in men, or to fulfil the lusts and desires of it? Again: What doctrine can there well be framed or supposed, which more naturally sympathizeth with the interest of the Spirit, is more quickening, strengthening, inflaming unto him, than that which, besides the mating and yoking of his enemy the flesh, suspends the glory and great things of the world to come, the immortal peace and blessedness of the soul, upon the hearkening unto his counsels, the obeying of his motions, and the delivering up the regimen both of soul and body into his hand? Or is not this the express tendency and import of the doctrine maintained by us against our brethren in the great business of perseverance?

23. Our brethren's doctrine of peremptory perseverance naturally and directly tendeth to beget and foment jealousies and evil surmises between brethren in Christ, and such as ought cordially to love, reverence, and honour one another. For it teacheth or directly occasioneth us to judge the faith and love of those whom we ought to love and honour, as saints and brethren in Christ, to be no better than the faith and love of hypocrites, dissemblers, hollow professors, &c., and is of the same tendency to occasion them to measure back again the same measure unto us. For we cannot reasonably judge either the faith or love of those whom we stand most bound by the law of Christ to love, reverence, and honour as saints and brethren, to be better, greater, or more sincere than sometimes we judged, or at least ought to have judged, the faith and love of those to have been, whom that doctrine of perseverance, which we now

oppose, teacheth us to judge to have been hypocrites and false hearted, even then when this faith and love of theirs were at the best. This argument is further prosecuted against objections, "Redemption Redeemed," p. 342, &c.

24. We find many instances upon Scripture record of persons who have *de facto*, some totally, others both totally and finally, fallen from the grace and favour of God, having been truly interested in them before; as of David, Solomon, the Galatians, and some others; whose cases, in reference to their respective failings and apostasies, are particularly and at large debated in the fourteenth chapter of the late and oft-mentioned book, entitled, "Redemption Redeemed;" so that we forbear to insist upon them here.

25. We are not a little confirmed, that we have the right end of the staff in the question in hand, by those numerous and sad examples amongst ourselves, of which we hear from time to time, and in persons, not a few, well known unto some of us, whom we have sometimes looked upon, and this not with the eye of charity only, but of the most district judgment whereof we were capable, not simply as persons truly sanctified, and real believers, but as pillars of Christian profession round about them, as persons for their exemplary zeal, faithfulness, and fruitfulness in all well-doing, more like to sit at the right hand and left of Christ in his kingdom, than any others known to us; who, notwithstanding, since have, with the dog, returned to their vomit, and with the sow clean washed, to their wallowing in the mire.

26. In this point of dissent from our brethren, we have likewise the great bush of orthodox and learned antiquity at our back, which voteth with us herein, and this with a *nemine contradicente*, as far as yet we understand. Hereof, we conceive good proof is made in the fifteenth chapter of the last-mentioned discourse.

27. Lastly: We are given to understand, and some of us know the thing more particularly, that there are very few of note, if any, amongst our Protestant writers themselves, who do not in their writings, now and then, give a clear and fair testimony to the truth of that doctrine, the cause whereof we now plead in dissent from our brethren. Yea, some of these, as Melancthon, Musculus, and Hemmingius by name, to whom Luther himself, and others, might, without any just cause of

exception or offence, be added, stand fully declared in their writings for our sense in the present controversy. Yea, the Synod of Dort itself, in the tenth particular of the agreement between our brethren and us, in the point in hand, formerly expressed, declaring their sense to be, that persons “supernaturally enlightened, and who hereby understand the things declared in the word of God to be true, and yield an unfeigned assent unto them, &c., may both totally and finally fall away,” do, in true construction, stand by us against our brethren in the doctrine of perseverance. This, together with the whole content and substance of this reason besides, is demonstratively asserted in the latter part of the fifteenth chapter of the late-named book, pp. 383—403, inclusively.

For a conclusion we only add this, that there are two main considerations and grounds, as may be observed along the premises, which, next to the divine authority of the Scriptures, have commanded our judgments and consciences, not to one or some, but to all, the points or particulars relating to all the five heads of doctrine specified, in which we dissent in judgment from our brethren.

1. We conceive our brethren’s doctrine, in all the particularities of our dissent from it, as they have been argued by us, hath in it a black thread of a manifest inconsistency with the nature and attributes of God, struck quite through it, and more especially and more visibly with his immutability, simplicity, wisdom, grace, goodness, justice, and love to mankind; inso-much, that, though we are most vehemently and even passionately inclined to unity and peace with our brethren, in matters of faith, yet are we not able, with the best of our understandings, to reconcile their doctrine in the points dissented with these glorious properties and perfections of our ever-blessed God.

2. Neither are we able, by the most diligent and most impartial engagements of our reasons, judgments, consciences, and understandings, to reduce our brethren’s doctrine in the said particulars to any tolerable consistency with the interest or advancement of true godliness in the world. And some of us have read how that worthy instrument of God, and companion of Luther, in the Reformation, Melancthon we mean, doth very frequently in his writings gravely admonish, and very seriously and importunately request, young men to take heed of such

doctrines or opinions, which, as he expresseth it, are *in Deum contumeliosa, et bonis moribus noxia*; that is, “reproachful unto God, and pernicious to good works;” speaking of those very opinions which our brethren maintain in opposition to us, according to the tenor of the premises. We, through the grace of God vouchsafed unto us, truly and ardently love him; and cannot bear a thought or apprehension, which we judge unworthy of him, or derogatory either to his grace or glory otherwise.

THE END











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