

# **THE UNREASONABLENESS OF RELIGION**

*BEING REMARKS AND  
ANIMADVERSIONS  
ON MR. JOHN WESLEY'S SERMON  
UPON ROMANS 8:32.*

**By JOSEPH HART.**

*"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" Job 11:7-8.*

*"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." I Cor.2:10.*

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## **Brief Biographical Sketch of Joseph Hart**

Joseph Hart was born in London, about 1712, to believing parents, who attended the ministry of George Whitefield at the Tabernacle in Moorfields. He begins the record of his own spiritual journey, {which he prefaced to his hymnbook,} thus, "as I had the happiness of being born of believing parents, I imbibed the sound doctrines of the Gospel from my infancy; nor was I without touches of heart, checks of conscience, and meltings of affections, by the secret strivings of God's Spirit with me while very young. But the impressions were not deep, nor the influences lasting, being frequently defaced and quenched by the vanities and vices of childhood and youth." Whilst his early life is somewhat hidden in obscurity, we do know that Hart was given a classical education, and eventually would become a language teacher of some sorts himself. He continues his narrative, "about the twenty-first year of my age I began to be under great anxiety concerning my soul. The spirit of bondage distressed me sore; though I endeavoured {as I believe most under legal convictions do} to commend myself to God's favour, by amendment of life, virtuous resolutions, moral rectitude, and a strict attendance on religious ordinances."

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Isa.42:16. This scripture was verily fulfilled, as young Hart took many spiritual lumps over the next few years in order for him to embrace more fully that blessed hope that was being set before him, Heb.6:18, and to look more exclusively to Christ as "the author and finisher" of his faith. Heb.12:12. He continues, "how did I now long to feel the merits of Christ applied to my soul by the Holy Spirit! How often did I make my strongest efforts to call God my God! But, alas! I could no more do this than I could raise the dead. I found now, by woeful experience, that faith was not in my power; and the question with

me now was, not whether I would be a Christian or no, but whether I might; not whether I should repent and believe, but whether God would give me true repentance, and a living faith. After some weeks passed in this gloomy, dreadful state, the Lord was pleased to comfort me a little, by enabling me to appropriate, in some measure, the merits of the Saviour to my own soul. This comfort increased for some time; and my understanding was wonderfully illuminated in reading the Holy Scriptures; so that I could see Christ in many passages where before I little imagined to find Him; and was encouraged to hope I had an interest in His merits, and the benefits by Him procured to His people."

Around 1740, the Methodist John Wesley, who by this time began broadcasting, {i.e., dazzling the religious world with his oratory skill,} his avowed hatred to numerous fundamental Gospel Truths, {amongst them, Eternal Unconditional Divine Election unto Salvation in Christ – Efficacious Particular Redemption of God's elect by Sovereign Divine Imputation – Irresistible & Invincible Grace by the Word of the Son of God in Holy Spirit Regeneration – Divine Preservation of the Called in Christ Jesus by the power of God through Faith unto Eternal Glory,} preached at Bristol a sermon from Romans Chapter Eight, which he afterwards had published, and which he deliberately and cunningly titled, Free Grace, a title well-suited to confound the minds of the simple, in dressing up many pernicious lies in the sheepish attire of 'grace,' even whilst vilifying that grace from cover to cover in a confused jumble of bare naked truths & errors so blatantly against the Gospel of Christ, that it deserves to be cast to the dunghill, from whence it ensued.

But just as the Lord, {in accordance with his predetermine purpose to fulfil all his good pleasure,} "put a lying spirit in the mouth" of John Wesley, I Kings 22:23, which spirit now cloaked under "all deceivableness of unrighteousness" {or in other words, unrighteous and outright evil doctrines lurking under a form of self-manufactured righteousness,} in going about to parade an empty form of blind devotion under

the pretence of 'free grace,' so the Lord will, {in accordance with his redemptive glory in Christ,} equip those that belong to him, not so much with an excellency of speech, I Cor.2:1, but rather with a determination to know nothing but "Christ, and him crucified," I Cor.2:2, and make them zealous for the glory which belongs to him alone! "I am the LORD; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." Isaiah 42:8.

And one of these simple believers was Joseph Hart, to whom the Lord had granted a measure of discernment, {having his spiritual senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb.5:14,} that for the elect's sake, Matt.24:22, {whom are chosen in Christ unto eternal salvation,} called or uncalled, or that were to arise in upcoming generations or succeeding times, he might be given a Gospel sickle in order to separate the precious from the vile, Jer.15:19, to blow a distinct trumpet in Zion, I Cor.14:8, for only when the trumpet is blown aright will it blast all Conditionalism to pieces, {i.e., salvation conditioned on a conversion experience, as opposed to the finished work of Christ,} as it magnifies the grace of God, and exalts the person of our Redeemer.

Though shamefully, relatively few of the friends of truth took issue with Wesley's sermon, or rather his {Doeg the Edomite like, I Sam.22:18} attempt to slay the faithful testimony of so many Gospel witnesses, {Ephesians 2:20, and the remnant few that embraced their message,} of former years, that have paved a road for the godly in all ages to travel upon, in all their journeys that lead them to Christ, {"every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," John 6:45,} there were a few contemporary 'brethren' that likewise sensed the danger of Wesley's message, and were not dazzled by any man's popular acclaim or moral rectitude, but instead judged all things in the light of "the mind of Christ," I Cor. 2:15-16, as revealed in sacred Scripture, of which Augustus Toplady, {known for his hymn 'Rock of Ages,'} was one, when he wrote, "it has also been suggested

that Mr. Wesley is a very laborious man, not more laborious, I presume, than a certain active being, who is said to go to and fro in the earth, and walk up and down in it; nor yet more laborious, I should imagine, than certain ancient Sectarians, concerning whom it was long ago said, woe unto you Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte."

In another work, concerning the poison of Arminianism, Toplady writes, "can anything be more shockingly execrable, than such a degrading and blasphemous idea of the ever blessed God? And consequently, is not the doctrine of human self-determinability the most daring, the most inconsistent, the most false, the most contemptible, and the most atheistical tenet, that was ever spawned by pride and ignorance in conjunction?" The theology of John Wesley, according to Toplady, was "an equal portion of gross Heathenism, Pelagianism, Mahometism, Popery, Manicheaenism, Ranterism, and Antinomianism, culled, dried, and pulverized, secundum artem; and above all, mingled with as much palatable atheism as could be possibly scraped together."

Robert Sandeman, the Scottish Nonconformist theologian, whose followers became known as Sandemanians, leaves no uncertainty as to his opinion of Wesley, when he in 1757, writes, "perhaps it will be thought needful, that I should define, with greater precision than I have hitherto done, what I mean by the popular doctrine; especially as I have considered many as preachers thereof who differ remarkably from each other; and particularly as I have ranked amongst them Mr. Wesley, who may justly be reckoned one of the most poisonous reproachers of that God, whose character is drawn by the apostles, that this island has produced. To remove all doubt concerning my meaning, I shall thus explain myself. Throughout these letters, I consider all those as teachers of the popular doctrine, who seek to have credit and influence among the people, by resting our acceptance with God, not simply on what Christ hath done, but more or less on the use we make of him, the advance we make toward him, or some secret desire,

wish, or sigh to do so; or of something we feel or do concerning him, by the assistance of some kind of grace or spirit; or, lastly, on something we employ him to do, and suppose he is yet to do for us.”

Whilst others cuddled this enemy of Christ, most extolling a show of religious piety as a far greater virtue than the truth itself, Hart proceeded to destroy Wesley’s Arminian altars, break down his images, cut down his groves, &c., Deut.7:5, incapable of speaking spiritual peace to those who embraced and proclaimed a false gospel, being made conscientious of this solemn and soul-searching truth that “whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.” II John 1:9. And though this book was written in Hart’s earlier days, there is no historical or written evidence whatsoever, {in direct contrast to many current religious articles that say that Hart himself was unconverted at the time of his writing this reply to Wesley,} that he ever deviated in one iota from the resolutions which he sought to bring to the forefront in this book.

Of course, those familiar with the name Joseph Hart, will know that he is mostly remembered as a hymn writer, many of his hymns being marked by great earnestness of spirit, accompanied with a passionate love of the Redeemer. The first edition of Hart’s hymnbook was published in 1759, and a year later he became a minister of the Gospel at Jewin Street Chapel in London, a large building with multiple galleries, and a congregation of significant size. A few Calvinistic Nonconformist groups have used Hart’s hymns exclusively over the years, of which William Huntington, and all those assemblies in ‘his’ connection were perhaps the most notable. His hymns have also appeared in many ‘church’ hymnbooks, and even today one can find most of his selections in Gadsby’s Hymnbook, which is used by the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists of England. In his preface to his own hymnbook, William Gadsby said that “Hart and Berridge are the sweetest and greatest experimental writers {many of Hart’s hymns reflecting his own spiritual pilgrimage} that have left any hymns on record.” So

likewise the Old School Baptists of America, in their hymnbook simply entitled Beebe's Collection, {named after their 'founder' Gilbert Beebe,} contains many of his choice hymns.

We will close with a copious extract from Hart's own experience, {as affixed to most copies of his hymnbook,} where we find his conclusion to all things, summed up in these extraordinary words, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, is now the only thing I desire to know. In that incarnate mystery are contained all the rich treasures of Divine wisdom. This is the mark towards which I am still pressing forward. This is the cup of salvation of which I wish to drink deeper and deeper. This is the knowledge in which I long to grow; and desire at the same time a daily increase in all true grace and godliness. All duties, means, ordinances, &c., are to me then only rich when they are enriched with the blood of the Lamb; in comparison of which, all things else are but chaff and husks."

And now having to look back in remembrance upon all the way which the LORD had led him in the wilderness, Deut.8:2, and from the wonderful dealings of God towards him, he endeavours to draw the following observations, "on the one hand, I would observe, that 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God which sheweth mercy.' That none can make a Christian but He that made the world. That it is the glory of God to bring good out of evil. That whom He loveth, he loveth unto the end. That though all men seek, more or less, to recommend themselves to God's favour by their works, yet to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. That the blood of the Redeemer, applied to the soul by His Holy Spirit, is the one thing needful. That prayer is the task and labour of a Pharisee, but the privilege and delight of a Christian. That God grants not the requests of His people, because they pray; but they pray, because He designs to answer their petitions. That self-righteousness and legal holiness rather keep the soul from, than draw it to Christ. That they who seek salvation by them, pursue

shadows; mistake the great end of the law; and err from the way, the truth, and the life. That God's design is to glorify His Son alone, and to debase the excellence of every creature. That no righteousness besides the righteousness of Jesus {that is, the righteousness of God} is of any avail towards acceptance. That to be a moral man, a zealous man, a devout man, is very short of being a Christian. That the eye of faith looks more to the blood of Jesus than to the soul's victory over corruptions. That the dealings of God with His people, though similar in general, are nevertheless so various, that there is no chalking out the paths of one child of God by those of another; no laying down regular plans of Christian conversion, Christian experience, Christian usefulness, or Christian conversation. That the will of God is the only standard of right and good. That the sprinkling of the blood of a crucified Saviour on the conscience, by the Holy Ghost, sanctifies a man, without which the most abstemious life and rigorous discipline is unholy. Lastly, that faith and holiness, with every other blessing, are the purchase of the Redeemer's blood; and that He has a right to bestow them on whom He will, in such a manner, and in such a measure, as He thinks best; though the spirit in all men lusteth to envy."

"On the other hand," he continues, "I would observe, that it is not so easy to be a Christian as some men seem to think. That for a living soul really to trust in Christ alone, when he sees nothing in himself but evil and sin, is an act as supernatural as for Peter to walk the sea. That mere doctrine, though ever so sound, will not alter the heart; consequently, that to turn from one set of tenets to another is not Christian conversion. That as much as Lazarus coming out of his grave, and feeling himself restored to life, differed from those who only saw the miracle, or believed the fact when told them; so great is the difference between a soul's real coming out of himself, and having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him by the precious faith of God's elect, and a man's bare believing the doctrine of imputed righteousness because he sees it contained in Scripture, or assenting to the truth of it when proposed to his



understanding by others. That a whole-hearted disciple can have but little communion with a broken-hearted Lord. That 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' That a prayerless spirit is not the Spirit of Christ; but that prayer, to a Christian, is as necessary and as natural as food to a natural man. That the usual way of going to heaven is through much tribulation. That the sinner which is drawn to Christ, is not he that has learnt that he is a sinner by head-knowledge, but that feels himself such by heart-contrition. That he that believeth hath an unction from the Holy One. That a true Christian is as vitally united to Christ as my hand or foot to my body – consequently, suffers and rejoices with Him. That a believer talks and converses with God. That a dead faith can no more cherish the soul than a dead corpse can perform the functions of life. That where there is true faith, there will be obedience and the fear of God. That he that lives by the faith of the Son of God, eateth His flesh, and drinketh His blood. That "he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." That many imagine themselves great believers, who have little or no faith at all; and many, who deem themselves void of faith, cleave to Christ by the faith of the operation of God. That faith, like gold, must be tried in the fire, before it can be safely depended upon. Lastly, that Christians are sealed by the Holy Ghost to the day of redemption; and to this seal they trust their eternal welfare – not to naked knowledge, or speculative notions, though ever so deep. They dread to dream they are rich, when they are blind and poor; to have a name to live, and yet be dead; or to be forced to fly for precarious refuge to the conjectural scheme of universal salvation, with those who hope to be saved, because they think there will be none lost."

"For my own part," Hart acknowledges, "I confess myself a sinner still; and though I am not much tempted to outward gross acts of iniquity, yet inward corruptions and spiritual wickedness continually harass and perplex my soul, and often make me cry out, 'O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death!' From me they are not yet removed; though I

once hoped, with many others, that I should soon get rid of them. All I can do is to look to Jesus through them all; cling fast to His wounded side; long to be clothed with His righteousness; pray Him to plead my cause against these spiritual enemies that rise up against me; and, though I feel myself leprous from head to foot, believe that I am clean through the word which He hath spoken unto me. In short, I rejoice, not because the Spirits are always subject to me, {for, alas! I find they are often too strong for me to control,} but because my name is written in heaven. I am daily more and more convinced that the promises of God, to His people, are absolute; and desire to build my hopes on the free electing love of God in Christ Jesus to my soul, before the world began; which, I can experimentally and feelingly say, He hath delivered from the lowest hell. He hath plucked me as a brand out of the fire. Though my ways were dreadfully dangerous to the last degree, His eye was all along upon me for good. He hath excited me to love much, by forgiving me much. He hath showed me, and still daily shows me, the abominable deceit, lust, enmity, and pride of my heart, and the inconceivable depths of His mercy; how far I was fallen, and how much it cost Him of sweat and blood to bring me up. He hath proved Himself stronger than I; and His goodness superior to all my unworthiness. He gives me to know, and to feel too, that without Him I can do nothing. He tells me, {and He enables me to believe it,} that I am all fair, and there is no spot in me. Though an enemy, He calls me His friend; though a traitor, His child; though a beggared prodigal, He clothes me with the best robe, and has put a ring of endless love and mercy on my hand. And though I am often sorely distressed by spiritual internal foes, afflicted, tormented, and bowed down almost to death with the sense of my own present barrenness, ingratitude, and proneness to evil, He secretly shows me His bleeding wounds; and softly, but powerfully, whispers to my soul, 'I am thy great Salvation.' His free distinguishing grace is the bottom on which is fixed the rest of my poor, weary, tempted soul. On this I ground my hope, oftentimes,

when unsupported by any other evidence, save only by the Spirit of adoption received from Him. He hath chosen me out from everlasting, in whom to make known the inexhaustible riches of His free grace and long suffering. Though I am a stranger to others, and a wonder to myself; yet I know Him, or, rather, am known of Him. Though poor in myself, I am rich enough in Him. When my dry, empty, barren soul is parched with thirst, He kindly bids me come to Him, and drink my fill at the Fountain-head. In a word, He empowers me to say, with experimental evidence, 'where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.' This was written in 1759.

Joseph Hart died on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1768, and his body was laid to rest in Bunhill Fields, London, where there is an obelisk erected over his grave, and on his tombstone he had written the following words, "Joseph Hart was by the free and sovereign grace and Spirit of God raised up from the depths of sin, and delivered from the bonds of mere profession and self-righteousness, and led to rest entirely for salvation in the finished atonement and perfect obedience of Christ."

## **TO THE READER.**

Though the publication of the following sheets was occasioned by the reading of the Sermon, in answer to which they are written; yet there are, I am persuaded, some things contained in them, which will be relished and owned by every experienced christian, to whose consideration I desire to offer them, though seemingly spoken to an unbeliever.

I shall add but one remark, which is this, that the contents of the ensuing papers are either truths or lies. If truths, they deserve not to be esteemed the less for coming out under the present relation. But if they are lies, they ought to be rejected as soon as discovered, though they had appeared in ever so bright a situation, or been arrayed in ever so glittering a dress.

**Joseph Hart**

## **THE UNREASONABLENESS OF RELIGION**

It is a truth of singular use and solid comfort, to those whose understandings are enlightened by the Spirit of God to perceive it, that religion and reason are not only widely different, but directly contrary the one to the other. As by religion I mean the knowledge of the true God, the right way of worshipping him here, and the sure and certain means of enjoying him in endless glory hereafter; so by reason I understand, the natural dictates of the human mind, whereby every man in this fallen state is capable of making rational deductions and

argumentations, and so advancing himself by degrees, in what is generally called knowledge. This will evidently appear to those who are made able to receive it, by instancing, in the few following particulars, the respective doctrines of those two principles, so diametrically opposite to each other.

1. First, reason bids me expect acceptance from the Almighty in a future state, according to the moral justice, equity, and goodness of mine actions in this present state. On the contrary, religion teaches me, that I shall be acquitted, justified, and accepted of God, by the righteousness of another freely bestowed, and given me, without the least regard to my own personal either merit or demerit.

2. So again reason tells me, that in order to secure an interest in eternal life, I must by mine own natural strength, strive, struggle, and labour; and pray for the assistance of God, to enable me so to please him here, that I may shun his wrath, and enjoy him in bliss hereafter. But religion plainly shows me, that when I was in my natural state, it was impossible for me to move one step towards heaven; no, not so much as to implore the divine assistance aright; but was utterly dead in trespasses and sins; and as incapable of exerting the least power or motion towards any spiritual good, as a dead carcass is of performing any action of natural life.

3. Again, reason in some, {for it is no settled principle, but differing in different persons, consequently incapable of leading any man into truth} asserts, that admitting man in his natural state cannot turn or prepare himself to seek the Lord, yet that divine power necessary to enable him so to do is given, or rather offered,

indiscriminately to all alike; since all alike are the workmanship of God; and suspended on certain terms or conditions on man's part, such as the closing in with the offer, and co-operating with the grace of God; so that the compliance or non-compliance therewith, renders the sinner justified or condemned in the sight of God; and makes him become a vessel of mercy prepared unto glory, or a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction. But Religion, in contradiction to this, declares, that the glory of God is the ultimate and only end of all his works; and that as even the wicked made for the day of evil, shall be instruments of setting forth his glory, in their destruction, which they are utterly unable by any means to avoid; so, on the other hand, those who are predestinated to the adoption of sons, shall be irresistibly wrought on by the Spirit of God, and shall infallibly receive the grace given them here, and enjoy the glory prepared for them in Christ before the foundation of the world, in a state of eternal union with God hereafter.

4. To instance one more particular for all. Reason, in those who are converted, is ever speaking thus, although I know by experience, that in my unregenerate state I was utterly unable to move the least step forward in the pursuit of religion, yet, now I am converted and born again, I must stir up the gift that is in me. It is my duty to pray to the Lord to increase my faith. I must endeavour to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In a word, I must exert all my natural powers and abilities to be more and more acquainted with God, and make greater progress in faith, and higher advancement in knowledge. In opposition to all which, the voice of religion speaks in this wise, I plainly see, and experimentally feel, that, as before conversion I

could not move one hair's breadth towards God and goodness; so, since I am new created in Christ Jesus, the old man in me is as rebellious and stubborn as ever. I have as great, or rather seemingly greater inclination to sin, and hatred to God, than before. And as my new birth was, at first, the sole supernatural work of the Almighty God; so, every new act of faith is a new miracle of divine power communicated to my soul. Every, the least sigh after, or prayer to God, is so far from falling under the notion of a duty, that it is the highest excellency, and greatest privilege communicated to a believer by the Spirit of God; by whose immediate influence alone I am enabled to act faith on the Mediator; without which all my prayers are but vain repetitions and considered in themselves, abominable and odious in the sight of God. In short, my hardest work in religion is, if I may so express it, to do nothing. My greatest labour is to lie quiet. My strongest struggle is to sit still; and my most active endeavours, to apprehend myself entirely passive in God's hand; a creature merely recipient of whatsoever measure of good he shall please to infuse into me; and to know, and see, my only business is to glorify God; which is done by believing, trusting, depending, relying wholly upon him, without any regard to my own frame or disposition of mind at all.

These are a few of the numberless instances which might be brought to prove, that the dictates of reason are utterly repugnant, nay, diametrically opposite, to the principles of religion communicated to the believer by the revelation of God's Spirit, and that not only in a few, or some, but in all, and every particular.

But here it may be objected. "Are there not many notional predestinarians, who have never

been wrought upon by the Spirit of God? And are not these taught the truth by mere reasonable deductions? If so, how then are the dictates of reason, and the doctrines of religion, contrary to each other?"

I answer, that there are many notional professors of election and predestination, I readily own; but that they are firm believers of it, I flatly deny, for all their life, and actions, speak to the contrary. For though they pretend to trust to God's predestination for their eternal happiness, yet they are notorious liars, and trust not to it at all, but are always striving to do something to make their election sure; and are continually filled with fears and misgivings, lest they should at last come short, and that especially after they have fallen in any gross violation of the moral law, {for these doubts and fears naturally arise in the minds of believers themselves; nor can they be dispersed by arguments of reason; but are overthrown by faith alone,} all which evidently proves, that their espousing this doctrine is, only because they think other doctrines as liable to objection as this, and they are professors of predestination, because they know not what to be else. But supposing they do believe it, {which is certain they do not, but deceive others and themselves too, not knowing what faith is,} yet they contradict true religion in this, that they think themselves to be elected. Whereas religion plainly declares, that none but such as are regenerated and made new creatures, are elected to eternal life; which these nominal electionists never experienced, but believe they know not what; and therefore, if we could suppose men made strict predestinarians by reason, still this reason of theirs speaks in direct contradiction to religion. But if they think the doctrine of election



to be true; and on the other hand believe themselves not elected, and so perish in despair, as many perhaps have done; then if we suppose them to have gotten this notion of predestination from reason, and not rather from the literal reading of the doctrine in the scriptures, or other writings; they still contradict the voice of true religion which teaches all those, to whom it discloses the doctrine of election, that they themselves are also elected.

This great and glorious truth, {though clearly discerned, and heartily embraced, by the spiritual part of those who are made new creatures, and born again by the Spirit,} meets with strenuous opposition, and bitter hatred, from all the unregenerate sons of Adam. And also from the old man, or principle of nature, in those who are regenerate, and have their wills in some measure made conformable to the will of God. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal.5:17.

The cause of this enmity and opposition in man to the aforementioned truth, is this, it utterly debases, or rather destroys, all human strength and skill; overthrows all towering conceits of man's wisdom; batters down all the engines of pride, and vain glory; exalteth none but the Creator alone; and lays the creature low, very low, debasing it even to hell, by declaring that it has not the least share, or part, in the work of salvation; no, not so much as to accept it when offered, or forward it when begun, but that it is entirely indebted for the beginning, carrying on, and accomplishing the whole work to him "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph.1:11. This the natural man cannot bear. He cannot be persuaded

that he knows nothing, and can do nothing, but is merely dependent for all he is, and all he hath; that God is the sole proprietor, and arbitrary distributor, of all his gifts to whom he will, "and that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" Dan.4:35. This galls and frets the carnal mind, making it swell with spleen and malice, and vent itself in bitter reproaches and hard sayings, against the truths of God contained in that repository of sacred treasures, his written word, and manifested to his chosen in all ages by his Holy Spirit. "And he said, unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Luke 8:10.

From the fall of Adam, quite down to this present time, thus has the case stood, there has always been a lasting enmity between the world and the church; the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. The former of which have always been, by numberless degrees the most numerous, and outwardly powerful. And this enmity, ordered and disposed by infinite wisdom for the illustration of his own glory, has continually discovered itself in man, talking, writing and acting, in subtle treachery, or open opposition to, the truth of God in the gospel of his Son. And as in former times, so in this degenerate age in which we now live; when darkness has overspread the whole earth; when religion is almost thrown aside; and faith seems in a manner to be banished from the world. When self-named preachers of all professions seem unanimously agreed, in a literal sense, to do nothing; except it be to strive for the fattest livings, and wealthiest congregations. Even at this time, I say, when some few have made some faint essays, to revive the doctrines of truth,

and vindicate the gospel of Christ, according to that small measure of light, and strength, they have received; it has alarmed the adversary, and stirred up some zealous opposers of that little truth, the others have ventured, though darkly, and weakly to assert. Among which opposers there has risen a zealot, who has drawn after him a number of followers to hear the old Arminian errors {in which all Christendom at present lies involved} debated in the fields and streets a little more warmly, than in the churches and meeting-houses. The person, I mean, is Mr. John Wesley; who, in a sermon lately come to my hands, preached at Bristol, and published the year before last, under the specious title of Free Grace, has {as far as his measure of natural abilities would permit him} debased, and vilified, the glorious doctrine of God's eternal love to elected sinners; bespattering it with all the slander and calumny that the devil, and his own wicked heart, could invent, in the aforementioned Sermon, on which I have at present undertaken to animadvert.

He begins his preface thus, "nothing but the strongest conviction, not only that what is here advanced is the truth as it is in Jesus; but also, that I am indispensably obliged to declare this truth to all the world, could have induced me, &c." Upon which we may reflect, how deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked is the heart of man! When an open oppugner of the gospel of Christ, shall be persuaded by the strongest conviction, that to deny the faith of God's elect is to advance the truth as it is in Jesus; and that he is indispensably obliged to declare it to all the world. May not this serve to let us in some measure see how far we should be from placing the least dependence on the sayings of any man, or the

suggestions and cogitations of our own hearts? For, "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually." Therefore, "thus saith the LORD; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm," and "blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." Jer.17:5-7. He goes on to make one request, "that his antagonist would do all in charity, in love, and in meekness, that his very disputing may show, that he has put on, as the elect of God," when in his opinion there are, properly speaking, no such persons, "bowels of mercies, gentleness, longsuffering. That even, according to these times, it may be said, see how these Christians love one another." To which I answer.

1. That, if the flames of anger or hatred were kindled in my breast by anything he has uttered, his admonitions to love, and meekness, I am apt to think, would be but of very little service in helping me to quench them, however they might induce me to hide them from the world. For the passions of corrupt nature are not to be worded into calmness at pleasure, and made obedient by a little sober advice.

2. But I can solemnly protest to him, if that will give him any satisfaction, that I have not any, the least anger, or ill-will, to his person; he being equally indifferent to me with any other unbeliever, whose face I have never seen, and I am so far from quarrelling with him for declaring his principles, that I like him the better for it. And I should be glad if those, who have received some knowledge of God, and call themselves preachers of the gospel, had courage enough to deal so honestly, as plainly to speak what they really believe; and not use softening terms, and

equivocal phrases, for fear of losing their esteem with their opulent auditors, and being forced to quit the bewitching charms of an easy, idle life. But, as I have no hatred to him as a man; so, I confess, I have no love to him as a christian. For brotherly love, and gospel charity, is in me confined to those only, whom I esteem believers. Consequently I can have none for him, out of whose own mouth I can gather nothing to persuade me that he is a christian, but much to induce me to judge him as yet, quite the contrary.

The text he has made choice of to prefix to his Sermon, is taken from the eighth chapter of the Romans; where the apostle in his epistle to all that were in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, is building up them, and all believers of all ages, to whom the Lord should make his writing serviceable, in their most holy faith, by setting before them the immutability of God's love to them in his Son; telling them that, "all things," nothing at all excepted, neither persecutions from the world without, nor sin and rebellion from their own wicked hearts within, "shall work together for good." To whom, but "to them that love God," and who are they? Why those, "who are the called according to his purpose." These who are foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified, according to the eternal purpose of God himself. Then joining himself with the Roman saints, and all the elect of God, he is transported with divine ecstasy, in this glorious view of the everlasting love of God to all the chosen members of his Son's body, in Christ their Head. He is, as it were, lost in wonder and astonishment, as he cries out, "what shall we then say to these things?" What can be said to things so far beyond expression, above conception, and so directly

contrary to sense and reason? If God be for us, who can be against us! And that he is for us, he has given the most undeniable proof, in that he hath sent his own dear Son, to purchase us to himself at no less a price than his own precious blood; consequently he will assuredly bestow on us all other blessings, and privileges, that can any ways conduce to our real good, both here, and hereafter. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom.8:32. Upon this text the author of the Sermon has endeavoured to build his doctrine of universal redemption.

He begins by telling us, in a confused manner, of the freeness of God's love or grace. That it is free in all, and for all. In all, that it does not depend on any power in man. When the power of receiving, or refusing this free grace, whatever it is, is lodged in man alone, according to his notions, if he has any at all about it. But, "it does not depend," he says, "upon the good works, or righteousness, or endeavours, or good tempers, of the receiver." Which is such confused and beggarly trash, that it deserves no serious answer.

"But it is free for all!" And yet many, who are loved with this free love of God, shall, in his own opinion, be never the better for it; but perish with it everlastingly. For he has nowhere said, that he believes all men shall be saved; but seems to grant in several parts of his sermon, that many shall fall short of heaven though loved by God, with this free love, or grace, he is so much exalting.

But we must excuse this precipitancy in him, in not letting us know his meaning concerning this free grace of his, and the objects of it. Because he is in a great hurry to rush furiously into the battle,

and fight with God's decree of election; so has no time to spare for other matters; but falls abruptly from exalting free grace, in a few loose, dark hints, to debasing predestination with all his might and main. As not caring whether or no we can see what he does believe, so he can but let us know what he does not. As if he had said, take free grace in any sense you can, but be sure you take the utmost care, not to believe predestination. For if you do not believe that, it is no matter whether you believe anything else, or no.

Being thus entered into the arena, he immediately begins the combat with the doctrine he is so eager to encounter. Stating it first according to its utmost strictness, and rigour, and then exposing the weakness of those who have gone about to make it appear less horrible to reason, by using more softening, and palliating expressions, forcing them by dint of argument to own, that they mean no more, nor less, than predestination, according to the first scheme, in which he has stated it. Thus he triumphs over the weakness of some notional and shallow professors, {who indeed have given him room so to do,} hectoring, and vapouring, as having wrested their weapons out of their hands, and laid them flat, and defenceless on their backs. And all this, only by asking a few pert questions.

But hold, vaunt not too soon; be not so hasty to boast of that victory, which you are likely never to obtain. But, since you are so good at asking questions, let us see also, how expert you are in answering such, as shall be asked of yourself. And then, if you can give a pertinent and satisfactory reply to all that shall be put to you, concerning the doctrine you so hotly oppose, I will at once give up the cause; cease to "contend for

the faith, which was once delivered to the saints," and not utter one word more against your doctrine of universal redemption. But if you yourself are nonplussed at the questions I shall ask you, and cannot answer them consistently, and satisfactorily to yourself or others, you must be forced to own, that you have yet no room for boasting, not having advanced one step further in knowledge, but being at best but upon a level still with a poor, ignorant and deluded predestinarian. For even in philosophical controversies, where the things disputed are natural, and seem more suited to the human understanding, a man of sense does not go about to convince, much less to convert his antagonist by noise and outcry, but by reason; not by calumniating and vilifying his adversary's cause, but by proving and vindicating his own. In short, not by starting objections which are easy; but by answering them, which is far more difficult, when started.

Can you then make it consist with your natural notions of justice and mercy, that many even in this life are left to groan beneath almost insupportable loads of pain, misery, and trouble; while others, perhaps more notorious offenders in the sight of men, and grosser violators of the laws of justice and equity, such as merciless tyrannical governors, griping extortioners, and cruel masters, shall live a life far more exempt from pain and loss, than those poor wretches, who suffer by their barbarity, oppression, and cruelty; and perhaps endure pain, sickness, poverty, and a numberless train of other evils; and that too, not for a small time; but some, the greatest part of their days; others, all their life long? Or can you account for infants bringing with them into the world a complication of distempers, gotten from the



contagion of their parents' disease, oftentimes the immediate consequents of lust and debauchery; and so suffering for the sins of their progenitors, and punished for vices not their own? Things too evident to be denied, though never to be reconciled to our natural notions of justice and mercy. But you will say, perhaps, the time is shortly coming, when their sorrows will end. But certainly to them the time is long. And it cannot be denied, but that it would be more agreeable to our conceptions of mercy and goodness, that even this short time should be clear from these pains and miseries. Again, what recompence for all their sufferings shall the brute creatures ever receive? Some of which, by the cruelty of man, undergo as much misery as they are capable of bearing; and sometimes sink under the pressure? If you say, it is owing to the wickedness of man; I grant, as it often is. But we must still remember, this makes not the torment of the poor suffering creature one jot the less, or lighter. Surely these things are disagreeable to our natural notions of goodness and mercy. And yet we see, so they are, and ever have been. How then can any man presume to say, that the doctrine of predestination cannot be true, only because it disagrees with our reason, and contradicts our natural conceptions of justice and mercy?

Again, do you believe that some sinners shall perish everlastingly? If you do; is it in any ways reconcilable to your own ideas of justice, that a creature for the offences committed in so small a time as the longest duration of man's life amounts to, should suffer the most acute pains, and bitterest torments, throughout all the ages of an endless eternity, especially as it is of the very essence of punitive justice, to proportion the

penalty to the crime, and not to let the punishment outweigh the guilt.

Once more, do you believe that if God decreed not, he did at least foreknow the damnation of reprobates? If you do, can you form any idea in your mind of any material difference between foreknowledge and preordination? Was the subject of the divine prescience a mere contingency, supposing anything could be imagined contingent? Was it possible, that what God foreknew, should not come to pass? If he certainly foreknew, that man would everlastingly perish by his own default; was it not better, according to your own notions of goodness, not to have created man at all; or to have forced him into happiness by an irresistible compulsion; than to have trusted him with the government of himself, when that trust was sure to prove his ruin? If God hardened not Pharaoh's heart literally; if, I say, he did it spiritually, will that please you the better? Or did he it permissively? For that is the softest expression it will bear. If he did, what avails strife about words? Does it not amount to the same? For, I suppose, you think he could have hindered it, if it had so pleased him. But not to hinder an evil, if able; what is this but to consent to it? And is not the consent of the will equivalent to the operation of the hand? I appeal to your own conscience, whether, if we descend into the merits of the cause, it does not, according to your own apprehension, reflect as much on the mercy of the Creator to say that he foreknew, and yet permitted the eternal ruin of his creatures, when it was in his power to hinder it; as to say, he decreed they should be forever miserable? If a father was to see a disobedient son running headlong into ruin, and obstinately pursuing his own destruction;

supposing all admonitions and reproofs to be lost upon him, yet if he had it in his power to save him, even against his will; should we not reckon him a very unnatural parent, to suffer his child to destroy himself, when he could have prevented it; and that very easily too, only by using a little restraint? I doubt not, but you yourself would readily pronounce him a hard hearted parent; and as accessory to the death of his offspring, as if he had murdered him with his own hands.

Thus you see, how much easier it is to ask than to answer questions; and that universal redemption is as liable to as many, and equally insuperable, objections as predestination. From whence we may gather, how absurd it is to attempt to measure the ways of God by the standard of human reason; and yet it is a fault, of which all mankind are guilty. So natural is it for proud dust and ashes to quarrel with its Maker, decrying and vilifying what it cannot comprehend, and denying the truths of the infinite God, only because they suit not with our gross and foolish conceptions. "For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Job 11:12.

And now, after all that has been hitherto said in the present dispute, I readily own, that it is at best but carnal reasoning; and that a man may espouse either side of the question, and yet be an unbeliever still. For though all believers are predestinarians, all predestinarians are not believers. A mere notional assent to the doctrine of election is of no more service to the soul, than the bare ocular sight of meat is of nourishment to the body. For it is not he that likes predestination which is a Christian, but he that lives it. It is therefore fit that, before I proceed to consider the consequences drawn by this author from the

doctrine in dispute, I should declare, according to the light of mine own experience, what is the faith of election that is effectual to the salvation of the soul; and how it is wrought, and confirmed in believers, by the operation of the Spirit of God.

But here it will be necessary to premise, that I would not be thought to confine the Spirit to one particular method of acting. For God is not to be tied to precedents; neither can we trace him in his ways. For, "his way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." Various are his dealings towards his people; and different are the measures of his grace communicated to them. Some are babes in Christ; and some are strong men; some, "who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage," are comfortably enlightened in their last hours, and go off the stage of life triumphant. Some are converted in their early days; receive sweet and ravishing assurances of the love of God to their souls; and then are left for a long time to grapple with temptations and difficulties; often cast down, yet never in despair; ever doubting, yet ever hopeful; still retaining a firm resolution, however harsh and severe the dispensations of God appear to them at present, to confide in his mercy, and hope for his free salvation; often crying out with Job in the midst of their dejections and bitterness of soul, "though he slay me," though he damn me, "yet will I trust in him." Others again walk comfortably with God a great while, experiencing frequent and repeated testimonies of his distinguishing love; living in the sunshine of his favour; daily receiving fresh discoveries of light and knowledge from the Spirit of truth; and enjoying delightful communion with Christ by faith. These are commonly trained up, and fitted for some work

allotted them by God; either to vindicate the gospel, and suffer for the truth; or to pass through some sore trial and temptation; or to fall into gross, notorious sins, for the glory of God, and the confirmation of their own, and others faith. And according to their day, so is their strength. Indeed it would be impossible to count up the various operations of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of believers, which differ according to the purposes of infinite wisdom, in such a manner as most conduceth to the glory of God, and the edification of his church. But then it is to be remarked, that this difference is only in method, or order, or degree. For the influences of the Spirit are the same, in kind, in all the elect. And as face answers to face in a glass, so does the heart of one spiritual man to another. So that the experience of one christian is, in some measure and degree, the experience of all.

To proceed then, the first thing generally done by the Spirit in the conversion of a sinner is to show him, that he is lost in himself, and must die eternally without the free mercy of God in the Mediator. The man now hangs as it were between heaven and hell. In his own apprehension, there is but one step between him and endless misery. Thus is he continually distressed, and unsatisfied, reaping no comfort from anything he reads or hears; till God shall shine in upon him by his Spirit, opening his understanding to understand the scriptures, or the language of the scripture spoken to him by some other experienced christian, with whom it is his lot to be conversant. He now begins to see a marvellous light in the sacred writings, unknown to him before by the letter. Christ is exhibited clearly in the word; and he is enabled to view him with spiritual eyes, and to close in with

him savingly, laying hold of the promises of God, by faith in his Son, and with an holy boldness appropriating them to himself, and feeling raptures and transports of inexpressible joy and comfort. Thus faith is kindled in the soul, never to be extinguished, till it is lost in fruition. While it acts, the soul is in heaven; the world is despised; sin is unheeded; the devil is defied, for God is with him; and who then can be against him? But this light of revelation must be clouded; and faith must combat with difficulties and dangers, for without opposition, it lies inactive, and not to be distinguished from a false and dead faith. The believer has now a more amazing sight of his own vileness and deformity; sees, that everything he thinks, and acts, is sin; yet faith tells him, he shall notwithstanding be saved. Shortly thereafter, his corruptions grow more prevalent; temptations to infidelity assault him; his lusts and vices become predominant; and he falls into sins as gross and as frequent as before, and perhaps more now than ever. Yet God, in the very midst of his rebellions, or immediately after his acts of iniquity, breaks in upon his soul, with new discoveries of his unchangeable love to him in his Son. This greatly strengthens his faith, and plainly shows him; that as nothing could move God at first to place his love upon him, so nothing can provoke him to take it from him. Nay, it often seems that the viler he is, he finds the Lord the more kind and merciful to him; and where sin abounds, grace to him does super-abound; and his iniquities are no hinderers, but {as channelled in a way of grace unto faith & repentance,} helpers of his faith. By this he learns, that the love of God is like himself, "the same yesterday, today, and for ever." That it was given him in Christ before the foundation of the world. He

now knows the doctrine of election to be true; because he knows himself elected in his Head, Christ Jesus. He feels himself united to him by faith; made a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone. And here I fix my foot; on this I join issue with every Arminian. I see, I know, I feel by faith, I am one with Christ. If he can perish, I shall perish with him. If he is loved with an everlasting love, I am part of his body, and am beloved with the same love. If he was chosen by God, before the world began, I was chosen with him, and in him. Upon this foundation; to wit, my union with Christ; I build my belief of electing grace; and I am sure it will stand to all eternity. Neither the persecutions of the world, nor the outcry of infidels, nor the temptations of the devil, nor mine own sins and transgressions, be they ever so gross, and ever so often repeated, shall be able to overthrow this my house, because it is founded on a rock; even that Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus. I know and feel the difference between my present state and my former, and consequently between myself, and the unregenerate world. I am chosen; and they are left. But if any ask me what will become of the unbelieving multitude? I answer, I am not the Lord's counsellor; nor do I desire to pry into things that do not concern me. I am, at times, enabled to rest satisfied in God's good pleasure, and let him do what he will with his creatures. The Judge of all the earth will do right, what he sees to be right; and not what men think to be so, he delighteth in his own glory; and, blessed be his name, I can sometimes delight in it also. Therefore ask not me, but search the scriptures; and they will tell you, that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16. What that damnation is, either as to

its nature or duration, I am not able to say. The scriptures use the terms of outer darkness, fire and brimstone, and such other terrible metaphors; and say, it shall endure for ever and ever. Thus the Bible sets it forth; and here I leave it, being saved from it by predestinating, distinguishing, electing, uniting, love and mercy. And to the judgment of God I refer the cavilling, unbelieving reprobates, to try the sad experiment.

Having thus very briefly declared, what is the experimental faith of God's elect, I now proceed to answer the objections brought against this glorious doctrine by the Arminian author, with whom I am at present engaged.

And first, says the objector, "if this be so, then is all preaching vain." To which I answer.

1. If the end of preaching be the conversion of souls, most of the preaching now used in the world is vain, indeed. His own preaching, with that of the rest of his brethren, is the "doctrine of devils." And, I believe, if one were to ask all the preachers of all persuasions in England, who bid them speak in the name of the Lord; very few, if any one of them, could vindicate their assumed authority, or prove their mission. The far greatest part of them, I am persuaded know nothing of Christ, but by name only. And those few, who are believers amongst them, preach themselves more than Christ Jesus; and are not honest enough to utter, what they know to be the truth; but clip the language for fear of persecution, and are more zealous of being called, Rabbi, Rabbi, and of cramming their bellies, and hoarding up filthy lucre, than of publishing abroad the glad tidings of free salvation to elected sinners. But this zealous priest, I suppose, thinks his preaching is of great use to the people, and therefore is so assiduous in



preaching about in fields, and other public places. In which indeed he acts consistent with himself, and to the shame of his indolent brethren, who batten in ease, and wallow in luxury; troubling themselves, or others, with religion no oftener, {and for the most part not so often,} than the laws and rules of their spiritual polity oblige them to it. And though they pretend to be our guides to show us the way to heaven; yet if they were not so extravagantly paid for their prating, we should soon be left to stumble in the dark, and go to hell in our ignorance, for anything they would do to prevent it, if we were foolish enough to think them able. For the best of them all of every denomination, keep as it were a divinity shop, where they vend their religious wares to their customers at a certain price; selling them so many prayers, and sermons a week, for so many pounds and shillings per annum. But the truth is, the preachers of free-will and universal redemption, may very well refrain from teaching, because they have nothing to teach, for men are made Arminians ready to their hands. They may sit still, as they do, in ease and indolence, and see their cause go swimmingly on. Few oppose their doctrine; none persecute it; and every natural man likes it. It grows up with them from their cradles by nature only, without the help of preachers; and they suck it in as it were with their milk. The doctrine of election indeed, though ever so weakly asserted and faintly vindicated, meets with opposition from the learned and unlearned; from the wise, and from the foolish. Everyone has wit enough, he thinks, to cry down and ridicule that; though he is hardly endowed with common sense. All are wise enough to condemn what they do not understand,

and to think that beneath the lowest, which is infinitely higher than the highest of them all.

2. But surely all preaching is not vain, because predestination is true. For as God hath decreed salvation for the elect, so he has also ordained preaching as a means to convert those, to whom the preacher is sent. Thus God bid the primitive apostles and teachers to speak to such a man, or go to such a place, or continue long in such a city, because he had ordained their preaching to bring about the conversion of that man, or of those particular persons in those places, who were from all eternity predestinated to glory; though as yet unknown to the preacher. And his infinite wisdom thought fit to use them, as instruments in his own hand, to bring to pass his own purpose.

3. But even the preaching of this author, and other false preachers of all denominations, is not vain. For that, with all other iniquity, shall be overruled, and made subservient to the illustration of the Almighty's glory, in the day when the veil shall be pulled off from holy knavery, and priestcraft; and the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; and God shall confirm, what he spake of old by his prophet Jeremiah, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." Jer.23:21.

The next objection brought by Mr. Wesley against this doctrine, is, that it tends to destroy "all holiness; all hope of future reward, and fear of punishment; all hope of heaven, and fear of hell." To which I readily make this reply, that it really does so. It effectually cuts off all hope of reward to those, who are working for life under terms of acceptance; and all fear of punishment to those, who by faith are enabled to apply the exceeding

great and precious promises, given to believers under grace in the gospel. It utterly damns all zealous work-mongers, who are for patching up a filthy garment out of the nasty rags of legal holiness, and joining it {if it were possible} to the pure and spotless robe of the Mediator's righteousness; freely given to all the elect; for whom it was prepared before the foundation of the world.

As to his saying, "if a sick man knows he shall unavoidably die, or unavoidably recover, thought he know not which, is it not reasonable for him to take physic." This is a very weak and trifling objection, but because it is very commonly made, I shall briefly declare mine own thoughts concerning it. I think then, every man that hath but what is called a common stock of understanding, knows, when he is sick, he shall either unavoidably die, or unavoidably recover; for one of them must unavoidably happen. But he takes physic, in hopes that it will prove a means for his recovery. And this even a true predestinarian himself may do, consistent with his own principles, but with this difference. Whereas the Arminian takes it at a hazard, and makes his physician his god, the other must be fully persuaded, that those are the right means appointed by God for his recovery, otherwise he acts in direct contradiction to his profession, as all, through natural weakness and infidelity, often do. And indeed, strictly speaking, nothing deserves the name and appellation of means that does not infallibly produce the end for which it is used. For if I drink a physical potion when sick, in hopes of a recovery, and nevertheless do not recover, the physic cannot be called the means of preserving life to me. But if it contributed, as very probably it did, to effect my

predetermined end, it was to me the certain means of death; and I doubt not, but a very great part of the physic taken in the world, may justly be so called. But to proceed.

"It directly tends," says our author, "to destroy several particular branches of holiness. Such are meekness, love of our enemies, of the evil and unthankful, &c." But surely it cannot destroy what has no being. For is there any such thing in nature, as the love of enemies, blessing from the ground of the heart {for I grant lip-blessings are frequent enough} those, who curse us? For my part, I freely acknowledge, I find no such thing in my nature, but rather quite the contrary. Instead of loving those who hate me, I am inclined to hate them with equal hatred. And so far am I from blessing those that curse me, that I am more ready to give them two curses for their one. This is my nature, whoever has a better, let him declare it. But you will say, Christ commands it. True, but instead of obeying I mortally hate this and all other commands of Christ; because they are wholly contrary to my lusts and corruptions. "But it is wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God." It is so indeed, but then it is only in those who are endued with the Spirit. And they are only such as "are the called according to his purpose," who see by faith their election in Christ, before the world began. If these, indeed, as it often proves, have any natural enmity or hatred to each other, it is at times entirely subdued by the mighty operation of the spirit of love; and quite banished, and lost, when they can see their communion and fellowship in their mystical Head, and are enabled to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." If one of those, through the weakness of his love, and the prevalency of his corruptions, vents his malice in

bitter reproaches, or hard sayings against another; if the offended is fully persuaded that the offender is a brother, he is sometimes made able and willing, not only heartily to forgive him, but also affectionately to love him, earnestly desiring his everlasting welfare; and wishing that God would bless him with all spiritual blessings in heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 1:3. Thus our Lord prayed for his crucifiers, many of whom were his dear brethren; the adopted sons of his and their Father; the elected people of his and their God. Thus Stephen, too, prayed for his murderers; those amongst them, whom by faith he knew, were to be converted, and brought into the church; one of which was the great apostle of the Gentiles; who was then "consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." This is what I apprehend by those commands of Christ and his apostles. If there is any other meaning in them, as there may, for ought I know to the contrary, I freely own, it is not as yet discovered to me. Nor do I experience any other sort of love to enemies, than that already mentioned. But that the doctrine of predestination tends to inspire or increase sharpness, or eagerness of temper in those who hold it, when they are opposed, is a notorious falsehood. For as sharpness, or eagerness of temper, is a natural corruption, equally common to the assertors of freewill with those of election; so a genuine predestinarian, for I trouble not myself about the bastard brood of notional professors, has the least plea to vindicate this corruption; and the strongest motive to incline him to stifle, and subdue it, as much as he can. For if I firmly believe, and clearly experience, that the difference made between creatures exactly alike in nature, is wholly owing to the will of the great Creator; I

cannot, at least while this persuasion is warm on my mind, indulge myself in anger, or hatred towards my fellow creature, for his not seeing with my eyes. Because so doing I deny mine own principle, that God has given me that knowledge which he has thought fit to withhold from the other. Consequently thankfulness to God flows from this belief; and not anger towards him, who is not as yet blest with such an inestimable privilege; though for anything I know, may be one of those for whom the blessing is kept in store by God in Christ from all eternity. In short, I, who am a rank predestinarian, defy this author, with all his universal love and charity, to read this mine answer to his sermon with less stirrings of anger or malice towards me, than I now feel towards him, whose notions of religion I abhor and detest.

But, thirdly, "it is an uncomfortable doctrine." Indeed so it is, to those who cannot see their interest in it, but marvellously sweet and comfortable to all, who by grace are made partakers of it. And for the uncomfortableness that accrues to others from it, you must blame the scriptures, I think, for setting forth such a doctrine, as tends to destroy their peace and comfort. For even you, who judge it to be false, cannot but own, that it is expressly asserted in the letter of the word. And so, by your own confession, the scripture has laid traps and snares to catch men in this uncomfortable doctrine; and tempt them to believe this unpleasant lie.

And is not your doctrine uncomfortable also, and that not to some, but to all? For thus must the Universalist commune with himself, "I am taught that eternal happiness is in my own power; and that in order to obtain it, I must be sincere and holy. How can I tell, when I am sincere and holy to

such a degree," {supposing him to be in his natural state, consequently blind enough to think himself holy at all,} "as God will accept? For if I come not up to the terms and conditions required, but fall short in one degree, I may be damned even for that. I know not what measure of sincerity and holiness, {as they call it,} will serve my turn. If it must be universal obedience; surely there is no such thing," {for I cannot believe, any free-will professor is so inexpressibly stupid, as to think, he has no sin at all,} "but if it may come short of universality, and yet be accepted; I know not how high a pitch it must arrive at, to stamp it sterling. I am therefore much afraid, that this faith and holiness I must be possessed of, will fail at least of one degree of being effectual. Or if I may have a sufficient quantity now, perhaps I shall lose it again before I die, having no eternal decree of God for its foundation, and seeing myself a changeable creature." This is the natural language of the maintainers of, and dependents upon, this comfortable doctrine of universal redemption. "Whose ways," says Mr. Wesley, "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace."

And now we are going to be put to the trial, and asked, what our happiness is. It is not as he hopes, if you can believe he hopes so, a notion, a speculative belief, a bare opinion of any kind; but a sensible possession of God in our hearts, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. If it be so, how comes it to pass that this work of the Holy Ghost in us, is so contrary to what it is in him, and his followers? I must confess, that I have no experience of a faith enabling me to depend on Christ for the forgiveness of past sins, and not at the same time taking in the future also. Nor do I believe that ever such a faith was wrought in any soul by the Holy

Ghost. It seems to me to be a very lame, and maimed kind of faith, and such as is so far from supporting the creature, that it needs to be supported, and expects it too, by the creature itself. For if I can lose or keep it as I please, it relies upon me, and not I on it. If ever I have experienced a vital act of faith, as I know to my comfort I have, it was such a faith, as gave me full confidence and assurance of the mercy and love of God, from a spiritual view of my eternal union with him in his Son, without any possibility of ever being separated from him. Because as he is one with his Father, so are believers with him. And this confidence irresistibly prevails against all opposition of the carnal mind. But for a man to talk of obstructing the witness of the Spirit is to betray his own ignorance of the matter. For all the actings of God upon the soul are like himself, free and omnipotent. And it is as impossible for flesh and blood to obstruct or hinder them, as it is for the prince of darkness to scale the walls of heaven, and to depose the eternal God from his throne of sovereignty and absolute dominion. But though every uniting act of faith carries in it this infallible confidence of salvation, consequently excludes all fear of falling away, and by its sealing testimony assures the soul of final perseverance; yet when the extraordinary influences of this revelation are withdrawn, fears and doubts arise in the soul, and faith, which when once wrought by the mighty power of God, is never totally lost, is left to fight with infidelity, and to encounter misgiving fears, and jealousies, and to maintain the field against all opposition of doubt, and unbelief; being often in seeming danger, yet always invincible and safe. Thus is the life of a christian, a continual war between flesh and spirit, faith and infidelity. But to



talk of uninterrupted assurance, without the least doubting or unbelief, for many years together, as our author pretends, is one of the most monstrous notions in religion, that ever I heard in all my life, and an evident sign, if we can yet stand in need of any more signs, that men who thus prate, never in all their days had any experience of the least degree of true, justifying, uniting faith. For faith without a contrary principle of flesh to encounter with, is, in my experience, no faith at all; it being one of the essential properties of justifying faith, "in hope to believe against hope."

Again, "it is very uncomfortable that thousands and millions of men, without any preceding offence," {for that, you must know, would much mend the matter, and make it more comfortable,} "were unchangeably doomed to everlasting burnings." I own that indeed it is uncomfortable, and so are all the ways of God to flesh and blood. But to whom are they so? Why peculiarly, {according to Mr. Wesley,} "to those, who being filled with bowels of mercy, tenderness and compassion, could even wish themselves accursed for their brethren's sake." Romans 9:3. But who are these merciful and compassionate men? Is Mr. Wesley one of them? Could he wish himself accursed for my sake; who am his brother according to his own notions of fraternity? If he could, I grant, it is more than I could do for him, or any other man on earth. But if he could not, as, if he were so ingenuous as to confess the truth, he must own; then it is impertinent for him to quote a scripture, which himself allows, he has no knowledge of. But the apostle Paul did so say. True, he did, but by what spirit, I will not answer. Let Paul speak for himself; who often talked, and wrote, and acted too, as weak and carnal as other

men; and perhaps this was one of his carnal expressions. But as it never was revealed to me, I shall pronounce nothing dogmatically concerning it, for I profess to know no scripture, but by revelation.

Fourthly, "this uncomfortable doctrine tends to destroy our zeal for good works." And here I will lay hold on the present opportunity, and employ it in declaring to such, as the Lord shall give power to receive them, those conceptions, and ideas of good works, which have been communicated to mine understanding by the revelation of God's Holy Spirit, in reading his written word. Good works then, spiritually good, are all such as are done only in faith, with a single eye to the glory of God in the Mediator. Not a few of the good works truly so called, instanced and related in the scriptures, were immoral; done in direct violation of the moral law. Such was Abraham's murder of the Israelites borrowing jewels and gold of the Egyptians, never designing to repay them. Rahab's lies and treachery in concealing the spies; which with the aforementioned of Abraham, are the only two works instanced by the apostle James. James 2:21-25. Elijah's first mocking, and then slaying the prophets of Baal. Elisha's causing forty-two little children to be torn in pieces by she-bears, for childishly sporting, and mocking him; with numberless more instances in the Old Testament. And in the New Testament we shall find some as little agreeable to the common notions of universal benevolence, as the other. For even the healing the sick, and curing the blind and lame, done by Christ and his apostles, though naturally good to all to whom they were done, yet, strictly speaking, they were but partial. Some, and not all the diseased, were healed; and of those some, great part were

either believers themselves, or the relations and friends of those who were so. The nine unbelieving lepers seem to have been healed for the faith of the poor believing Samaritan. One impotent man at the pool of Bethesda was cured; when the great multitude of blind, halt, and withered, {for anything we read to the contrary,} were left to groan under their infirmities still, and to wait in the porches for the troubling of the waters. Mary Magdalen's breaking the box of ointment, and profusely throwing it on Christ's feet, was, strictly speaking, little better than extravagance. For had it really been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor, as Judas falsely pretended he would have it, it would have been much more agreeable to our natural notions of charity and almsgiving. But it was done out of love to Christ, and therefore it was a good work. And the reading this passage was the means made use of by God, to give me an insight into this mystery. So again, when the primitive believers sold their possessions, and laid the money at the apostles' feet; it was but a narrow-spirited charity, if tried by the common conceptions of universal generosity and benevolence. For we do not read, that they gave one single penny to any poor unbelievers, but kept it all in their own community, and shared it among themselves. And yet, for keeping back part of the price of an estate, God struck Ananias and his wife dead upon the spot; which was also a good work. It would be tedious to multiply particulars; but to what has been said we may add this one remark. That the pronouncing the decisive sentence at the last day will be according to the tenor of the foregoing description of good works. For as the actions of the sheep, for which they are there commended, are works of charity only to

Christ in his members; so the goats are said to be condemned, not for murder, adultery, theft, and the like; but, "I was an hungered," says the Judge, "and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink, &c." They had, no doubt, been serviceable to each other, and many of them, I question not, had actually relieved some poor members of Christ's body. But not having faith to do it purely upon that account, because they belonged to him; and therefore to prefer them to others, who were not interested in him; they were judged destitute of good works, and bid to depart from him into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matt.25:41-42. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

These are the works that are accounted good in the sight of God. But there are other actions of morality, which have a relative goodness in them; and are called good works, from the temporal advantage that accrues from them to those, who shall reap the fruits of their benefactor's kindness, and feel the comfortable influences of their favour and benevolence. And these are common to the entire world, and approved, and practised, as much by predestinarians as others. If I see an object of compassion, standing in need of mine assistance, I am inclined to relieve him. First, because I know not but he may be an elected member of Christ's body, though now shut up under unbelief. Secondly, if I am not incited to it by this hope, yet as I have at present no ill-will against any particular person, I am to leave all secret things to God, and remit all men to the disposal of their common Creator. And in the mean while am commanded, while I have time, "to do good unto all men."

Thirdly, natural pity and compassion move me to succour the distressed, and help the indigent; and in so doing I relieve, and ease mine own mind. For pity, wherever it remains, causeth pain of spirit. But I am so far from thinking these actions to be spiritually good, that I look upon them as nothing else but weaknesses. For natural pity, whatever fine glosses and glittering titles may be put on it by Pharisees, is in reality natural infirmity. And I had rather see ten thousand unbelievers perish for lack of sustenance, than one child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, destitute of the necessities of life, when I have it in my power to help him. As "to taking pains about their salvation," in his sense of the matter I desire to take no pains about mine own. And as I am neither preacher nor expounder, according to the modern acceptation of the words; nor have any immediate call to go about to convert souls; so the less pains I take about it the better. Yet, had I the honour to be sent with a message of good news to any poor elected sinner, I should reckon it an inestimable favour from God; and animated by his Spirit, should run to the work with joy and gladness; and after all, I verily believe, I am as anxious and solicitous for the salvation of Mr. Wesley, {though at the same time I freely own, I have not the least care about it,} as he with all his zeal, and universal charity is, in reality, concerning mine.

Another black charge brought against the doctrine of election is that "it tends to overthrow the whole christian revelation." Strange indeed! But how does it so? Why, "by making it not necessary," and therefore, "not true." And how does it make it not necessary? Why, "if some are ordained to salvation and others to damnation; then there is no need of the christian revelation." This is much such

another wise objection, as the saying, "then is all preaching vain." God has elected all that shall be saved in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and has ordained his Son to suffer for their sins, and to purchase them to himself by his own blood. From thence our adversary argues, the coming, preaching, and dying of Christ is not necessary; and therefore exclaims he, "tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon."

But, "this is not all, {he continues,} for it overthrows the christian revelation, in making that revelation contradict itself." To prove this, scripture is brought to fight against scripture; and a fine cobweb notion as just mentioned, of a chimerical difference between foreknowledge and preordination. And we are told in words, without any possible meaning in him that tells us so, that God is willing to save men, but men will not be saved. He would have all if he could; but because they will not, he cannot help it. "But the scriptures say, God is not willing that any should perish," to which I answer.

That the letter of the scripture evidently contradicts itself in many places, I am so far from denying, that I readily and heartily grant it. Nay, I believe, it would be difficult to find any human writings, either historical or philosophical, wherein are jumbled together greater heaps of grosser contradictions, {as evaluated by our carnal and unbelieving minds,} than those contained in the letter of the Bible. And for a man to go about to make it consist with itself by any labour, study, or skill, is a bold, impudent, antichristian enterprise, invented by the devil, and undertaken by expositors, and interpreters, and is as vain a piece of presumption, as to strive to reconcile contrarieties in nature. For after all, the scripture is

as much a contradiction to itself as ever. A man may study himself mad, and pore in the scriptures till he is blind, and yet not understand them one jot the better. The knowledge of the original tongues, in which they were written, will avail him nothing. Nor will the Greek word, *pistis*, show a learned doctor what is meant by believing in Christ, one whit better than the English word, *faith*, will convey the thing to an illiterate ploughman; although the former be capable of critically laying down the etymon of the word; and of showing the theme from whence it is derived. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they {those blinded to Christ} have not known them." Psal.147:19-20.

I believe, as I said before, the doctrine of election to be true, because I believe myself elected. It is so, because it is so; is good logic in religion, though ridiculous in philosophy. It is to a believer the glory of the scripture, that it contradicts itself; because faith has thence the greater ground for triumph. In short, the literal contradictions of the scripture; the lusts and corruptions of nature; the sins and iniquities of the flesh, {in those who are brought under Holy Spirit conviction of sin into a state of self ruin, and a true realization of complete lostness apart from God's free grace in Christ,} and the persecutions and reproaches of the unbelieving world, are so many glorious trials of a believer's faith, and are so far from hurting him, or hindering his happiness, that they all work together for good to every elected member of Christ, in proportion as he is exercised therewith.

But neither is this all, "for it is a doctrine full of such blasphemy, as any good man would dread

to mention," but that, "the honour of his God, and the cause of his truth, will not suffer him to be silent. But you must take care, as you will answer it at the great day, not to charge the blasphemy upon him." But suppose the doctrine of predestination should happen to prove true; whose would the blasphemy be then? For he expressly asserts this blasphemy, as a consequence drawn from it, "and the more you are grieved with them, that do thus blaspheme, see that you confirm your love to them the more." You need not doubt, but he knew by his own experience and practice, that this lesson is possible, nay, easy to be learned by admonition and precept. Love to those with whom we are most grieved, is, according to Mr. Wesley, a principle easy enough to be acquired to what perfection we please; if we would but be so good as to take pains, and go about to attempt it. But what is this blasphemy of this doctrine? Why, it represents our Lord as a hypocrite; a deceiver of the people; a man void of common sincerity. Indeed it does represent him as such to his mind, and that of every other man, be he never so much in esteem for piety and knowledge that has no other apprehensions of Christ, or conceptions of his words, but what are learned in the school of nature, and drawn from the corrupt principles of human reason. But how is this charge maintained? Why, "it cannot be denied," he says, "but that he everywhere speaks as if he were willing that all should be saved." No? Certainly it can be denied. For my part, I confess, I can see nothing like it in many of his sayings, but rather quite the contrary. And if this author had but given us some meaning of that mysterious text, that tells us of Christ's weeping over Jerusalem; it might have carried some seeming color of argument. But as he has



not, I must take the liberty to retort the charge of blasphemy back upon himself. For as it is blasphemy to accuse Christ Jesus with lying to Jerusalem, in saying he would have gathered them, when he designed no such thing; so it is as horrid blasphemy to say, he lied in his prayer to his Father, where he says, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." John 17:9.

But there is more blasphemy behind still. "For just as it honours not the Son, so does this doctrine honour not the Father. It destroys all his attributes at once." And what is meant by his attributes? Certainly when men use the word, attribute, they can have no other idea of it in their minds, but what is agreeable to their conceptions. Whatever then is by men attributed to God is called by them an attribute. And then, say I, may all these attributes be forever destroyed. For whatever is attributed to God by any man, is, like himself, corrupt and false, and quite beside the divine perfections. Philosophical reasoners may perplex and tire themselves all their lifelong in searching into, what they call the perfections and attributes of God's nature; and after all is done, they will not have, in the minutest degree, any clearer knowledge of the Deity, than they had when first they began to learn. No, not though they take in the letter of the scripture likewise, as an help to their enquiries. For the true knowledge of God is given to his own without any pains, or labour in them at all. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." I John 2:27. Let this then suffice for an

answer to all the like cavils of this noisy objector. For if I go about to reconcile the ways of God to the conceptions and apprehensions of the natural man, I make myself a transgressor; by building up with one hand, what I am destroying with the other. For I at first asserted, and do still maintain, they are irreconcilable. I desire, if it were possible, never to form or entertain the least thought of God out of Christ, because I can have no apprehensions of him so, but what are either wild and confused, or terrible and affrighting; representing him as a consuming fire. But though the carnal mind is at utter enmity with God, always replying against him, because his dispensations are disagreeable to natural reason; and all endeavours to reconcile them are wicked, and fruitless; yet the soul, that is renewed, and born again by the Spirit, is taught to let the glory of God be its chief delight. And is enabled, at times, to lay down all the weapons of flesh and blood, the reasonings and cogitations of the human mind; which are ever used in rebellion against the Lord of life; and to close in with the promises of God in his dear Son, to rest satisfied in the ways of God, letting him do what he will with his own. And being fully persuaded of God's love to itself, desires to know nothing but Jesus Christ; sees its own ignorance, vileness, nothingness; and cries out with joy and wonder past expression, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Then with a calm resigned humility, submits itself to the divine will, and says to God from the bottom of the heart, cheerfully relying on the Mediator's blood, "Lord, here am I, do with me whatsoever seemeth thee good."

He now goes on from accusing the doctrine of blasphemy in respect to God, to charge it with foolishness in relation to the devil, "for it makes Satan act inconsistently, in tempting those to destruction, who are before decreed to become his prey." But if this be all the folly of it, we may readily plead guilty to the indictment. For I am so far from denying it, that I positively affirm, that the devil and all mankind are inconsistent in all their ways. That men are so, I believe few will deny, and that Satan is so likewise, appears to all believers in this, that he is ever, out of malice and hatred, tempting them to evil; yet all his temptations shall infallibly be turned into blessings, and contribute to advance their eternal welfare. Nay, their sins do not destroy, but often increase their comfort even here, {in trashing any hope of self-help or personal improvement, and causing all their expectations to converge upon the fact that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Eph.2:10,} and this, which I have myself experienced; and all, who are converted, in some measure do; is certainly great inconsistency in him, if he knows it. If not, it proceeds from the same ignorance in him, which appears in all his disciples and instruments, the preachers of free will and universal redemption. This is certain, and beyond dispute, that he was so foolish as to have a trial with Christ himself; tempting him to worship him, and destroy himself. And no Arminian or Universalist can dare to say, that there was a possibility of Christ's falling a prey to the temptations of the devil.

Before I dismiss this author, I shall just take a short view of his scheme of predestination at the latter end of his sermon, which in effect is this.

Man may be saved if he will, if not he may let it alone. Consequently it is in the power of man, whether any one single person shall be saved or not. And so Christ may purchase no people by his blood; and his death may happen to prove vain and insignificant. For to say, God foreknew that some would certainly be saved, is tantamount to saying, he foreordained it; as has been hinted already. This scheme, he says, "is worthy of God, and every way consistent with all the perfections of his nature." Upon which I will ask him one question. Is this scheme satisfactory to his own mind? And does he see a perfect harmony and consistency in it? If he says that he does, he is certainly one of no great depth of thought, as we say, but is easily satisfied with anything. But if he owns, as I think he must, that he is not satisfied with it, what is it better than downright lying, thus to dissemble with others by telling them of a consistency in those notions, which neither himself, nor any other man, ever was, or ever will be able to discover? As to the heap of scriptures cited to prove, if possible, this consistent scheme, I shall only remark; that it is easy, very easy, to bring scripture to countenance any opinion. And nothing is more common than to see authors, and hear preachers, mention scriptures by wholesale in their books, and sermons, without understanding the spiritual meaning of one single text.

Thus have I examined Mr. Wesley's Sermon of Free Grace; which title how well it deserves, I leave anyone, who has the least measure of spiritual understanding, to judge. And now perhaps someone may ask me, if I profess every man's knowledge is circumscribed by God; and no one can know any truth in religion, but what he hath decreed to teach him, why I should trouble myself

to write this pamphlet, to declare truths, which none can savingly receive, but those who are predestinated to know them? To which I answer.

First, as God has everlastingly decreed, whatever shall come to pass; so he has consequently ordained the publishing of these papers. Secondly, the motive that induced me to write, was a strong inclination so to do, and I love to gratify mine inclination. And as it is my principle that all things shall contribute to the glory of God; so, I am persuaded, shall these writings. Either, they shall be instrumental in God's hands, to teach the truth to those, who yet know it not, or to confirm it in those, who know it. Or they shall serve to stir up the enemy to rage and malice against the gospel; and to harden the hearts of the sons of perdition. Or lastly, they shall be thrown by with the insignificant works of that innumerable herd of authors of all ages. And so at last shall be a means to let us know, that man's thoughts and works are all vain; that the Lord's own arm effects his own purposes; making use sometimes of despised instruments, and sometimes of none at all. That man can do nothing by prating, or writing, but "the help that is done in the earth, he doth it himself."

**FINIS**

## **TWO OF OUR FAVOURITE HYMNS**

### **THE FOUNTAIN OF CHRIST**

#### **1**

The fountain of Christ, assist me to sing,  
The blood of our Priest, our crucified King;  
Which perfectly cleanses from sin and from filth,  
And richly dispenses salvation and health.

#### **2**

This fountain so dear, he'll freely impart;  
Unlocked by the spear, it gushed from his heart,  
With blood and with water; the first to atone,  
To cleanse us the latter; the fountain's but one.

#### **3**

This fountain is such (as thousands can tell),  
The moment we touch its streams we are well.  
All waters beside them are full of the curse;  
For all who have tried them, swell, rot, and grow worse.

#### **4**

This fountain, sick soul, recovers thee quite;  
Bathe here and be whole, wash here and be white;  
Whatever diseases or dangers befall,  
The fountain of Jesus will rid thee of all.

#### **5**

This fountain from guilt not only makes pure,  
And gives soon as felt infallible cure;  
But if guilt removed return and remain,  
Its power may be proved again and again.

#### **6**

This fountain unsealed stands open for all  
That long to be healed, the great and the small.  
Here's strength for the weakly that hither are led;  
Here's health for the sickly, here's life for the dead.

**7**

This fountain, though rich, from charge is quite clear;  
The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here;  
Come needy, come guilty, come loathsome and bare;  
You can't come too filthy; come just as you are.

**8**

This fountain in vain has never been tried;  
It takes out all stain whenever applied;  
The water flows sweetly with virtue divine,  
To cleanse souls completely, though leprous as mine.

**LAMB OF GOD**

**1**

Lamb of God, we fall before thee,  
Humbly trusting in thy cross;  
That alone be all our glory;  
All things else are dung and dross;  
Thee we own a perfect Saviour,  
Only Source of all that's good:  
Every grace and every favour  
Comes to us through Jesus' blood.

**2**

Jesus gives us true repentance,  
By his Spirit sent from heaven;  
Jesus whispers this sweet sentence,  
"Son, thy sins are all forgiven."  
Faith he gives us to believe it;  
Grateful hearts his love to prize;  
Want we wisdom? He must give it;  
Hearing ears, and seeing eyes.

**3**

Jesus gives us pure affections,  
Wills to do what he requires;  
Makes us follow his directions,

And what he commands inspires.  
All our prayers and all our praises,  
Rightly offered in his name,  
He that dictates them is Jesus;  
He that answers is the same.

**4**

When we live on Jesus' merit,  
Then we worship God aright,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Then we savingly unite.  
Hear the whole conclusion of it;  
Great or good, whate'er we call,  
God, or King, or Priest, or Prophet,  
Jesus Christ is All in All.

**FINIS**