

A FURTHER ENQUIRY AFTER TRUTH.

*Wherein is shown, what Faith is required of
unregenerate persons; and what the Faith of
God's elect is, which is a blessing
of the Covenant of Grace.*



A DEFENCE OF THE FURTHER ENQUIRY AFTER TRUTH.

*Wherein is shown the Nature of the Faith of God's
Elect; also, in what sense we assert the
Law is not to be preached.*

By LEWIS WAYMAN

**ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN 1738 & 1739
COMPLETE & UNABRIDGED**

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A Further Enquiry After Truth

Wherein is shown, what Faith is required of unregenerate persons; and what the Faith of God's elect is, which is a blessing of the Covenant of Grace.

Occasioned by

A Pamphlet, entitled, "A Modern Question Modestly Answered."

By LEWIS WAYMAN

"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matt.9:13.

"So long as a man thinks his own righteousness good enough, that he shall do well enough, Christ does not call that man to believe." John Owen.

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THE INTRODUCTION

Upon the appearance of anything controversial, it's natural to ask the occasion; now the occasion of the present controversy is as follows, the author of the Modest Answer, in a sermon preached at the opening of a new meeting place at Rowell, delivered himself in the following words, Page 18,19.

"The eternal God indeed, does, by his word, make it the duty of poor unconverted sinners, wherever the Gospel is preached or published, to believe on his Son Jesus Christ, repent and be converted. To suppose the contrary, is to strike at the root of the eternal moral law of God. God, which obliges them to love God with all their soul, and all their strength, and be found in the proper use of all means leading to that, and to their own eternal happiness; yea, such a supposition opposes the strongest Gospel instructions, the preaching and practice of the disciples of our Lord; makes unbelief and distrust of Christ to be no sin, nor can faith itself, according to this, be looked upon as any part of obedience. But with such folly as this the churches of Christ have not been much troubled, though it has knocked at the doors of some."

How agreeable this is to his text, or theme, I leave to the judgment of the wise. He loads the contrary supposition with dreadful consequences; and then represents it as folly that had knocked at the doors of some churches; that if he failed to stir up anger, he need not fear to expose to contempt. It is not easy for me to guess what moved him to meddle with this matter, unless an unhappy disposition to be falling out with he knew not who; seeing, as I have been credibly informed, he has since declared, in the presence of an assembly, that he never had talked with one that was otherwise minded; and I don't know that there has been anything from the

press relating to this controversy since seventeen hundred and seven.

Seeing what was done reflected dishonor upon the labors of the deceased, and cast an odium upon some now living; and sounded an alarm to call out people to enquire and see where those silly churches are who have held, and do hold, that notion that is attended with such desperate consequences; I thought it no ways inconsistent with my duty, or disagreeable to the law of love, to inform those whom God has put under my care, what kind of faith it is, which is the duty of unconverted sinners, by the law; and what that faith is, which is the gift of God, by the covenant of grace; which was done in an evening exercise, without so much as once mentioning either the author or work that moved me to do it; not supposing that such a liberty could have offended any of the generation of the righteous, much less have moved to wrath and bitterness one who should not be soon angry, but in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, &c. However, a great deal of uncomely warmth was produced, and brought hastily to the birth, the pamphlet I have here to do with.

It was to be wished that men, and especially those who profess the fear of God, would, before they take up arms, consider well the nature of that which they contend for; also the station and character of those they contend with, lest haply they be found overcharging matters of opinion, wherein the godly have differed, and fall foul upon the children of the kingdom, as if they were enemies to God; to the personal injury of their brethren, and discredit of a glorious cause.

It ought to be observed, that the question is neither about the attributes or perfections of God, the person or office of Christ; election, redemption, or efficacious grace; nor about adoption, justification or sanctification nor yet about any other doctrine of the

glorious Gospel of the grace of God; but about the duty of unregenerate men, which this author allows they have no power to do, nor inclination to attempt. A question millions may never think of who go to heaven, where disputations shall never come.

Have not eminent lights in the church of God entertained different sentiments about many points in divinity? Some, that God chose his people out of the pure mass, and others that he chose them as considered in the fall. And has it not been disputed for a long time, whether the justification of God's elect be before, or at believing? And much contention about the place of faith therein? The order of God's house, the power of the keys, and to whom committed, and many other points, have been constantly agitated. Yea, in what have the godly of all denominations and sizes agreed in, except in this, by grace are ye saved?

Now, should all these rise up one against another with the out-cry of dangerous, pernicious errors, should every one take his fellow-servant by the throat, and cast out his name as vile on the account of different opinions, what confusion should we soon be involved in! Were private sentiments among those who subscribe from the heart the articles of our protestant reformers, and cordially embrace Christ, made a test of orthodoxy, and carried to the height some men seem to be leading to, it would, I fear, soon be as perilous living in Great Britain, as in some other countries.

Cruel anger is unbecoming a Christian. Flesh is a bad weapon in the cause of God; the truth stands in no need of it; and charity, were it thrust into her hand, would cast it to the ground. By public writings, and letters sent up and down among the churches, {to omit what's from the pulpit, one would blush to name,} which have a tendency, and I fear are done with an unkind design to beget and stir up anger and displeasure in the less discerning, and make divisions in, and among the

fellowships of the faithful, is a practice no way becoming a minister of the Gospel of peace. And yet, how the case stands with respect to these things, even strangers in Jerusalem have heard.

I am persuaded, did unprejudiced, honest hearted believers consider what part we act in this controversy, they would not be offended. We are not aggressors; we are not assertors; but another asserts, that it is the duty of unconverted sinners, not only to believe the Gospel, to believe Christ and his ministers, {which we constantly affirm,} but also to believe in Christ; by which he must mean to possess Christ for themselves, or believe Christ to be theirs whilst in unregeneracy, or else, I conceive, the distinction to be without difference; from this we withhold our assent till proof is made; and they that do otherwise, only see with another's eyes, and pin their faith upon the sleeve of a fellow-worm.

Let me desire the gracious soul, which is acted by a spirit of love, courteously to consider the case, and do nothing by partiality, because their Lord is no respecter of persons. Answer soberly, is there not a cause? The author knew my judgment in this many years ago, and I his; he had his own way of thinking and speaking, without the least interruption, and might have had it without offense to me, if that would have sufficed. He might have commanded the dead to live, the dead in trespasses and sins, to stretch forth the withered stump; and have justified it by the vision of the dry bones, as a certain person has of late inadvertently done, applying Ezekiel 37, at the beginning, to the first quickening of dead sinners, manifestly contrary to the design of the Holy Ghost, verses 11 & 12, "then he said unto me, son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord GOD; behold, O my people, I

will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." This was done to revive the hope of God's people, concerning their return from the land of their captivity, and not to beget life in dead sinners. However, he might have used his liberty to his dying day without stumbling me. But as if God had given him dominion over the understandings of others, "to suppose the contrary {says he} is to strike at the root of the eternal moral law of God, &c."

He calls it "a whimsical notion, stating folly, a dangerous pernicious error, a pernicious principle, a barbarous anti scriptural opinion, to the last degree dangerous; a doctrine of darkness, directly against the dominion of God, that tends to overturn the whole Bible, and root out all religion," and they who have received it, "whatever they may profess, they cannot cordially love the Bible," &c., and a much larger chain, which, however he may glory in it, will be no ornament to his neck. How do these adorn the lips which are said to be as a thread of scarlet? What grace do they minister to the hearer? Is it not unpleasant reading of controversy, which should be managed so as to increase light and love, when every page is stained with the gall of vulgar spite? Besides, this burden falls not only on the living, whom he seems resolved to crush, but upon many of Christ's worthies, now in glory with him; among whom is that eminent light, Doctor Goodwin, who has declared himself to be of the same opinion we profess, Volume II, of the creatures, and the condition of their estate by creation, page 52, and handles what relates to it, and amounts to a demonstration of it, in the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of the same book; whose judgment I subscribe to, and declare that I entertain no sentiment different from the Doctor in the fore-cited places, to the best of my knowledge.

The title this author gives his performance, is, "A modern Question Modestly Answered." This, no doubt, was done to cast contempt on the question, and applaud the answer. The question may not be so modern as he would have his readers think it to be, but if it was, pray, what is it the worse? He would have us think his argument on the unpardonable blasphemy is new; is it therefore to be despised? I don't think God has sealed up all revelation, and all knowledge, in this worthy author; but that he will bring to light glorious truths in his temple here below, which far wiser hearts than his have not yet conceived.

"Modestly Answered." Modestly indeed! But ought we not to believe God rather than man. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." Jas.3:14-16. Where is this meekness and gentleness? Where is the example of the believers in charity in spirit, I Tim.4:12, which should answer to the title and adorn the work? Had it approved itself to be a modest endeavor by love to serve others, in meekness to instruct, it might have been thank-worthy as a labour of love. But the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

His title page he graces with the words of the prophet, "to the law, and to the testimony, Isa.8:20, we desire to bring all to that test, and hope we shall find mercy to renounce what is not agreeable thereunto." But to pretend a regard to the law and to the testimony, Rom.2:23, whilst we walk in our own haughty angry spirits, and neglect those things wherewith we should adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour, deserves not the regard and imitation of others, but their pity. Therefore considering myself in the body, I shall take but little notice of what in his book has a tendency to chase and

provoke things of that nature being doomed to the flames in that day, I Cor.3:12, when wood, hay and stubble shall be burnt; and pursue my enquiry after truth according to the ability God has given me. Eph.4:7.

A FURTHER ENQUIRY AFTER TRUTH, &c.

CHAPTER I

The question as stated and explained by the author, further explained and brought to its just state.

The question stated by the author stands thus, whether the eternal God does, by his Word, make it the Duty of poor unconverted sinners, who hear the Gospel preached or published, to believe in Christ?

In the explanation he gives, he tells us, "it is not here asked, whether it be their {namely, unconverted sinners} duty to give their assent to the report, and grant that all that is said in the Gospel is true. But whether God does, by his Word, make it the duty of unconverted sinners, who hear the Gospel preached or published, not only to believe Christ, but to believe in Christ?" And he adds, "any person, surely, who lays aside all affectation of singularity, and sincerely and unfeignedly makes the Bible the rule of his faith, must say, that God does, by his Word, plainly and plentifully make it the duty of unconverted sinners, who hear the Gospel, to believe in Christ. This I affirm," &c.

At the first onset, here's an heavy charge upon his antagonists; affectation of singularity; insincere, and but a feigned pretense of making the Bible the rule of their faith; which, whether he designed it or no, falls upon some stars of the first magnitude, who have shined in the hand of him that walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, as Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Ridgley, and others, but as this is no part of his argument, nor tends to the glory

of Christ, to the establishment and comfort of godly and honest minds, {which are his professed aim,} it might, without breach of the laws of love and civility, have been conveniently feared. I shall therefore pass it by.

We ought, in the first place, to see that the terms of the question are simple and clear, or that we understand them alike; otherwise we may raise a dispute where there is no difference; which is often the case, through ambiguity of words, and irregular zeal in disputants.

This worthy author, seeing the controversy hinges on believing, goes about to explain that term and no other; and by limiting the duty to those who hear the Gospel, suggests, that a revelation of Christ is necessary before the law takes place here; and brings a demand upon the fallen sons and daughters of Adam to believe in him in which we agree; yet, inasmuch as he has not been pleased to tell us what kind of faith he means in any of those scriptural phrases, {as, like precious faith, the faith of God's elect, faith of the operation of God, II Pet.1:1; Tit.1:1; Col.2:12,} which denote it to be that faith which is peculiar to those whom God had appointed unto salvation, Acts 13:48; but in a term, that possibly may admit of disputation; I shall declare, as plainly as I can, what faith it is that I mean; and discover, as far as I am capable, what faith this author means, that we may have the plain and just state of the question; and then enquire, whether the Word, and preaching of the Gospel, make such a revelation of Christ to all that hear it, as makes it the duty of all to believe with that faith which shall appear to be intended in the question.

It is not necessary to go about to make a distribution of faith into its several kinds, wherein I might follow those who have gone before; but, as sufficient to my present purpose, shall observe, that there is a natural,

common, or historical faith; and a supernatural and special faith, both which I find in the scriptures.

By natural and common faith, I mean such a faith as is attained in the natural and ordinary way of our knowing and believing; and I call it common, because men may have it who perish, or whilst in unregeneracy, as well as those who are saved by grace, being born again; Simon Magus as well as Peter; then Simon himself believed also; and devils are said to believe also and tremble. I Pet.1:23; Acts 8:13; Jas.2:19; Matt.11:20-21. And this faith hath for its object that which is equally evident to all who have the same natural and external advantage and opportunity of knowing and believing.

How apt our nature was, as it came pure and un-beclouded out of its Creator's hand, to believe whatever God would hint to it, by any way or means God was pleased to make use of, to make his mind known unto his creature, and how it may be with standing angels in that respect, I am not able being a fallen creature, to declare; but even now, under the fall, there's an aptness and ability in a reasonable Creature, to know and believe without any supernatural and special assistance. As you cannot set before the eye of a man a point and a line, but the mind immediately conceives a difference; it knows that the whole is more than a part; nor can anything be related, as done in the Indies, but it presently judges the relation true or false, and approves or disapproves of the thing.

Thus to receive a testimony human or divine, may be called human or divine common faith, according to the testimony it receives, and yields assent unto; and that it is the duty of fallen man, even in unregeneracy, so to believe every testimony and declaration God makes of himself, works and ways, either by preaching or the written word, is not denied; this faith having been in our first parents in its perfection; and yet, it will not, I

presume, be affirmed, that our first parents, before the fall, partook of that eternal life which God gave unto his elect in Christ, and which every called vessel of mercy is made partaker of. Tit.1:1; Jn.17:2. This common faith therefore, is not in question.

By supernatural and special faith, I mean, that faith which none ever had, or was ever possible for any to have, but those who were from the beginning chosen to salvation, II Thes.2:13, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth. Jn.10:26. There were some who believed not because they were not Christ's sheep; and others, of the same lump, are said to be saved by grace through faith; and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God, Eph.2:8; and this I call supernatural. 1. Because it is not attainable by mere nature or reason; 2, nor in the ordinary way of our knowing and believing; neither, 3, are its objects those things that are equally evident to all who have the same latitude of mind, and the same outward advantage and opportunity.

I: It is not attained by mere nature. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Jn.1:12-13.

II: Nor in an ordinary way of knowing and believing. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." II Cor.4:6. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." I Cor.1:26-27. Had this knowledge and faith been attainable in the ordinary way, doubtless the wise and learned had gained the kingdom, and babes and sucklings had been shut out. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit,

and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." Lk.10:21. But on the other hand, as one said, personating the wise of this world, "the unlearned arise and take heaven, whilst we go cunningly to hell."

III: Neither are the things it converses with, and acts upon, alike evident to all, nor even to the same person at all times; though they have the same latitude of mind, and the same opportunity. But as it is written, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor.2:9-14. "But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." Gal.1:23. This difference arose not from the creature which was alike in the fall, and of itself; nor from the Gospel, which, like its subject, Christ, is the same yesterday, today, and forever; but from the sovereign dispensation of God, "when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." Gal.1:15-16. Let men assume what air of assurance they please;

to deny the distinction of faith, is either, first, to deny that they who are said to believe, {as Simon Magus,} "then Simon himself believed also," Acts 8:13, and the many {whom our Lord said} "believed in his name, when they saw his miracles," Jn.2:23, had any kind of faith at all; which is not to expound, but to contradict the Word of God; or consequently they are all gone to heaven, having that faith which always accompanies salvation. Or else to deny the distinction, is to deny the necessity of any supernatural work upon the soul, to make it meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col.1:12, that is, to deny the necessity of regeneration; or it must place regeneration in the power of nature, and make our salvation as to the application of it to be of nature, not of grace, contrary to the Apostle, "ye are saved by grace, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph.2:8.

It is probable some may object, that the first kind of faith is but a false faith, and therefore no faith at all. To which I answer, the assertion is false, and therefore no objection at all. Faith may be said to be true or false, as that which we believe is true or false. But to believe that Messiah is come; to believe that he died for sinners, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; to believe that he rose again from the dead; that he ascended up to heaven, and sat down upon the right hand of God, which is commonly believed through the Christian lands, is as really true as was the faith of the Apostle Paul, "who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal.2:20; or Thomas', "my Lord and my God," Jon.20:28; though not of the same kind.

And that this worthy author means the same faith which I call special supernatural faith, appears from his distinction. "Unconverted sinners {saith he} are not only to believe Christ, but to believe in Christ; not only yield assent to the report, and grant all that is said in the

Gospel is true {thereby intimating, that he knows that those he opposes allow that} but to believe in Christ." Whereby if he does not mean to believe with that faith which arises out of union to Christ, which the phrase, in Christ implies, Eph.1:4, and by which it hath knowledge of, and communion with God in Christ, above what it had, or was capable of, in unregeneracy, there is no justice in the distinction; but both the members mean one and the same thing. And the distinction is used, and so understood by Perkins, Volume I, page 128, "to believe {saith he} is one thing, to believe in is another; and it contains in it three points or actions of a believer. 1. To know a thing. 2. To acknowledge the same. 3. To put trust and confidence in it, as, I believe in the Father, and believe he is my Father; and therefore put my whole trust in him."

This author, in his discourse of faith working by love, says, page 7,8, "we read in the scripture, of some who believed upon Christ's preaching; such faith Simon Magus had; and such have all his followers, who serve Christ for the loaves. Some, indeed, under the power of mere historical faith, arrive at a commendable degree of outward civility and useful morality among the children of men; but our concern is with that faith which always accompanies salvation and is itself a special part thereof." Hence it is plain that he means the same faith that I do.

Upon the whole, there is a manifest agreement about what kind of faith is intended in the question, namely, not a common, natural or historical faith, but the faith of God's elect; that which is the perceivable beginning of eternal life in the soul, Jn.4:14, and unto which the everlasting enjoyment of God in Christ is inseparably connected; or in the words of this author, "that faith which always accompanies salvation, and is itself a special part thereof." I desire it may be observed, that the question is not simply, whether it be the duty of

poor unconverted sinners, who hear the Gospel preached or published to believe, but whether it be the duty of unconverted sinners to {have and} believe with, that faith which is a special part of salvation?

The author having the affirmative, it lieth on him to prove, and order requires, at present, only that I give my answer to what he has produced to support his assertion; but to testify my aversion to litigation and strife, which, possibly, might be prolonged thereby, and the reader kept still in the dark, as to our just sentiment; I shall take the affirmative, and offer the reasons of my judgment to the sober enquirer, for his approbation, or friendly reproof. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." Psal.141:5.

CHAPTER II

Of the Extent and Comprehension of the Law. The notion opposed makes condemnation to come upon the non-elect, for not believing with that faith which is called saving. First Reason for the contrary. Objections answered.

I shall a little further explain myself concerning faith, and declare our judgment touching the extent and comprehension of the law, wherein we stand impeached.

Having before declared what faith we both intend, namely, special supernatural faith, it must here be observed, that faith, as an act, is a believing upon an inwrought persuasion, Jn.6:69; 16:13, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth. And though I do not say it is a knowing more than the word declares; yet it is such an inward knowledge which no man ever could attain by all the declarations of the Word only. And upon this knowledge follows the reliance, that recumbency which Peter's words suggest, "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life," Jn.6:68, and as David plainly expressed, "and they that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Psal.9:10. There's an inseparable connection between knowledge and recumbency. Wherefore, he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, I Jn.5:10, God giving this testimony that Christ is his. He that hath the Son hath life, I Jn.5:12, and as faith, hope and love, though they have but one principle, are said to be three, I Cor.13:13, diversified by the diversity of objects, or according to a respective difference of the object the principle acts upon, as when the eyes of the understanding being enlightened,

Eph.1:17-18, by the Father of Glory, the soul views Christ, believes the truth of God's salvation as it is in Jesus; this view may be called faith. When the soul from begun tastes, I Pet.2:3-4, according to the nature of the thing and promise of God, desires and expects the fruition and enjoyment of what it views at a distance, that act may be called Hope; and when it delights in, and so embraces that which it sees and believes, Heb.11:13, it is love. In all which, namely, Faith, Hope and Love, there is a real enjoyment, and present possessing of the object. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Heb.11:1. So if we will keep up a just distinction founded on the Word of God, by faith in general, understand a believing of a report or testimony, "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record {report or testimony} that God gave of his Son," I Jn.5:10, and here by special faith, or believing in Christ, understand a possessing of Christ; and an inward appropriating of Christ. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Job 19:25.

But if it be said, this appropriating act is not the lowest act of faith, and that there is a lower act of faith, which does not appropriate Christ; I answer, it is a query with me, whether there be any act of special faith that hath not the nature of appropriation in it; and sure I am there is none, where there is not a right. And further, I must enquire; is it faith at all to believe with appropriation, that the Lord who hath appeared unto me, Gen.12:7, is mine? Was it faith in Thomas, that said, "my Lord, and my God?" Jn.20:28. And in Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth?" Job 19:25. If it be granted, as I think it will hardly be denied, or yet doubted; let this author assign a reason why it is the duty of poor unconverted sinners to believe, with one degree of faith

of the same kind, and not with another? And lastly, if he shall say it is not the duty of poor sinners, who hear the Gospel, to believe that Christ is theirs; will not his own opinion labour under the weights which, in his imagination, he hath rolled on ours, namely, "there to believe {Christ is theirs} is will worship; for who hath required it at their hands?"

First, touching the law of God, we constantly maintain its perfection. The moral law is perfect, that is, it contains a perfect rule of duty for all God's reasonable creatures, angels and men. We do own and embrace the scriptures as the only, full, and sufficient rule and directory in all the duties God requires of us in every relation, condition and circumstance in life, and in the worship of God. The moral law, or law of nature, being that on which the morality of all positive institutions and laws is founded. Yet to assert that believers are under the law, is to contradict the Scriptures, "ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom.6:14.

To assert that believers are without law, is likewise to contradict the scriptures, "being not without law to God, but {in} the law to Christ." I Cor.9:21. To remove the seeming difficulty, in reconciling these places and the minds of some men to them, is what I shall not undertake here, but conceive the law to be essential to a rational creature; if there be such a creature, there must be such a law; for the creature, as a creature, owes its being and subsistence unto God, and must be subject to his providence and disposing. God is a Father and everlasting Portion unto some; a Creator, Conserver and Benefactor to all; therefore the creatures are under an indisputable and inviolable obligation to love and obedience; nor will going to heaven make it void, but heighten it.

Secondly, every, even the least transgression of the law, or defect in point of duty, in deed, word or thought, incurs the penalty of the law; the soul that

sinneth shall die. And this righteous sentence of the law must be executed on the sinner, {which would press him as low as fallen angels,} unless delivered from going down into the pit, Job 33:24, by that ransom which God hath found, "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb.9:22. Even God's own people, who are made partakers of eternal life, which is in his Son, have sin in them, and in all they do, whilst in this body, even in their most holy duties; the guilt whereof was bore by Christ when wounded for our transgression, and bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him. Isa.53:5. He bare not only the iniquity of all, as in the sixth verse, Isa.53:6, but all the iniquities of the many for whom he is said to suffer, Isa.53:8, and to be cut off out of the land of the living. Isa.54:12. And this I conceive was signified by the priest's bearing iniquities. And it, namely, the plate of gold with the inscription, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts. Exod.28:38.

The opinion of our author, by necessary and undeniable consequence, makes wrath and condemnation to come upon the children of disobedience, for not believing in Christ, not having that faith which is a special part of salvation; which, beside the absurdity of making, not being saved by grace, the cause of damnation, seems to give too much countenance to that mistake that conceives Christ to have set our score in Adam even; and that now justice deals with men only for their actual sins, which they may atone for by their own faith and repentance. Whether it be not as agreeable to truth to make non-election the cause of damnation, as to make, not having the special benefits of election-grace, the cause, I refer to the judgment of them that know the truth.

The author, in affirming, that to believe in Christ is the unconverted sinner's duty, affirms, "that their not believing in him" {which could not be without their being in him} "is their sin, and consequently a cause of condemnation," but, as what he has produced to support his assertion carries in it no show of argument to convince, I defer taking notice of it till I have offered the reasons of my different herein. And, there's no foundation in the scriptures for unconverted sinners to believe that Christ is theirs; and therefore their not believing it cannot be the cause of their condemnation by a just law. Not being saved by grace, only leaves the creature to perish in that condition he is plunged in by the fall. He that believes not is condemned already. Although his not believing, and doing what was in his power to believe and do, and his not abstaining from those things which the natural conscience directed by the word, must confess, are contrary to God; and will, in every instance, aggravate the guilt, and consequently the wrath; yet, it cannot be denied, but that men are born under wrath and condemnation, according to the inexorable sentence of the holy, just and good law of God, Rom.7:12, because born in sin, polluted from the womb, Psal.51:5; which is demonstrated by the Apostle in the reign and dominion of death, even over them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, Rom 5:14, had no actual sin in their own persons. It would be uncouth and strange for one to affirm of a person, capitally convicted, that he is condemned because the king will not pardon him; nor would it be less odd to say, that because he will not believe, the king will not forgive him his offense; therefore he must die; whereas he was a dead man in law before he possibly could need a pardon. For whatever grace was necessary to have kept us from falling, and upheld us in our integrity; yet there could be no need of pardoning mercy, of a justification from all things from

which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, Acts 13:39, but by the fall. And by that law every mouth is stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Rom.3:19. Justification of an innocent creature, stood in God's approving of it in that state wherein he had placed it, and was in the first covenant; but justification, which includes non-imputation of sin, II Cor.5:19-21, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness, is by the covenant of grace, and requires no act or duty of the creature to give it being, or complete it. This cannot be supposed to be altered by any change the creature hath passed through, without inferring a change in the covenant; yea, in God himself, whose immutability is said to be the cause why the sons of Jacob are not consumed. Mal.3:6. We are all condemned by the law which we have broken. God hath not saved all by the covenant of grace; nor by the Gospel propounded a remedy for all upon conditions. I do not therefore see reason to think that men are condemned for not believing in Christ according to the sense of that term in the question; nor yet, that it will be an aggravation of the guilt and punishment of those that perish, that they have not believed in Christ, any more than their not being chosen in him is. I humbly conceive, to put the creature upon doing anything for life, to procure peace and pardon, agrees neither with the law nor the Gospel, the covenant of grace nor of works. For the covenant of grace would not be a covenant of grace if it admitted the works of the creature by way of condition, Rom.11:6; and the law as a law, in reverence be it spoken, knows no conditions of peace and pardon. He will by no means clear the guilty. Exod.34:7. Whether the scheme I oppose be not entangled with these difficulties, I shall leave to the consideration of those who are disposed to deliberate the matter in the fear of God. But, I will illustrate the argument by a similitude. Suppose twenty persons under sentence of death in Newgate, or

any other of his Majesty's prisons, and the king should respite their sentence; would this be sufficient ground for them to believe the king had, or would pardon them? And when they come to die, according to course of law, would it not be amazingly strange, to conclude they die for not believing the king would pardon them, or for not relying on his clemency for a pardon? Whereas they were under condemnation, and suffered death for open rebellion committed against him, before they stood in need of pardon.

Further, suppose the king had conceived in his royal breast a favor for some, and had ordered his gracious pleasure to be proclaimed, that he would pardon some of them; would it follow, that those who were not in the act of grace should die, or be held culpable for not being in the act of grace; which, whilst unblameable, they needed not; and, when faulty, not in their power to be in it, it being the act of the sovereign to take whom he pleased into his favor, not the act of the subject? Or, would they be further guilty for not believing they were pardoned, whereas indeed they were not?

Now thus the case stands with us fallen creatures. By the law all are under sentence of death. Wherefore as by one man "sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned," Rom.5:12; therefore, as by one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, &c, Rom.11:32, without reason for anyone to conclude he is not under sentence, and that he shall not fall under the stroke, though God in his sovereignty, suspends the execution.

But God hath conceived a gracious purpose towards some, Eph.2:4; even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace, Rom.11:5, and God proceeds in calling according to it, "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy

calling not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Tim.1:9. He hath also published and proclaimed his pleasure and purpose, and the means by which he will execute it, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," Exod.33:19, and this grace and mercy flows down upon its objects through Christ, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his {namely, the Father's} grace." Eph.1:7. And this comes not as purchase, but gift; not as bought, but conveyed; it arises and flows from its first, its highest spring, according to the riches of his grace, for the Father himself said, our Lord loveth you. Oh, this is pleasant music; this is glad tidings, a joyful sound! Sweeter than the honey and the honey comb to the soul that sees its need of it; being by the spirit of life secretly quickened, graciously enlightened, and its ear opened to discern the joyful sound. But this is not a sufficient ground for unconverted sinners to believe that Christ is theirs, or that this grace and mercy is bestowed upon them. For here's no general promise, no general declaration that God will be gracious to all, and nothing short of such a promise or declaration of God's design to save all, can be a sufficient ground for all to believe their interest in God's salvation.

Nor yet is a bare declaration a ground for any to believe more than the report, which is all the creature hast whilst in unregeneracy. Even God's secret choice, who have a life hid with Christ in God, Col.3:3, are nor culpable for not believing upon the mere declaration. For if the declaration alone {by which I mean the outward report of the Gospel, without an internal revelation} made it the duty of any, it would make it the duty of all, the declaration being alike to all that come under the sound of it; and so the rest, Rom.11:7, who have no secret

covenant interest in the Lord, should be bound by the declaration, to believe that which is false; and consequently Judas, and the reprobate Jews, to whom our Lord said, ye are of your father the devil, Jn.8:44, suffer the wrath of almighty God for not believing that which was not.

Admit what this worthy author says in his answer to the objection of particular Redemption, "that there's no body that hears the Gospel preached, can justly say, Christ did not die for him; it would be a great sin in any one to say so," that is, it would be his sin to say it, because he does not know it. It follows, by the same just way of reasoning, that seeing, upon a bare declaration, nobody can justly say Christ did die for him; it would be a sin in any one to say so.

Whatever God hath declared to the children of men concerning himself, or concerning the works of his hands, that they are bound to believe. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar. I Jn.5:10. To believe more than is written and declared, is to make God speak, when he is pleased to keep silence. But to believe what God hath declared is not, is to bear false witness against God. Now God hath declared, that whosoever believeth shall be saved, Jn.3:16, but he hath not declared, that all that hear the Gospel shall be saved; yea, he hath declared, that there are of them that hear the Gospel that shall not be saved; there are, among them that hear the Gospel, some that are lost, Jn.10:26; II Cor.4:3; II Cor.2:15, that perish. Therefore it is not the duty of all that hear the Gospel, to believe, with an appropriating faith, that Christ is theirs, or more than Christ hath said, more than the report.

That which God hath appointed to be the token and special evidence of an interest in Christ, that alone can be the sufficient ground of the souls believing its interest; but the outward declaration is not that evidence,

that being made as well to them that have no special interest as to them that have. What is faith but a well-grounded persuasion? Heb.11:13. And what is presumption but a groundless faith? "You say {said our Lord to the Jews} he is your God; yet ye have not known him but I know him; and if should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you." Jn.8:54,55. And though I do not say, this notion makes a virtue of a vice, I cannot but think it countenances the blind presumption that is in the world. Indeed Christ's sacrifice for sinners is precious meat to an hungry soul. "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." I Tim.1:15. Yet it ought to be observed, that this proposition must be taken in a particular sense; that is, that Christ died for some sinners, not for all; and gave his life a ransom for many. Matt.20:28. But this notion makes it the duty of all to eat the bread of life, and drink that wine; which is drink indeed, which must suppose a right, which it cannot be proved all who hear the Gospel have; yea, the contrary is evident.

This suits the taste, or rather the want of taste, in the multitude, it tells them it is their duty to believe in Christ, though in unregeneracy, not having passed under a change {for the question refers to that state only} and suggests that they have a right. For it will not be easy to defend the notion of duty to possess a blessing and privilege but upon the foundation of right. They think they have a right, and doubt not but they do the duty too; because they believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, according to "those precious and extensive promises," as they are called; as if their preciousness lay in the extensiveness of the terms, "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time," I Tim.2:6, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every one," Heb.2:9, "and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole

world." I Jn.2:2. Thus they are commanded to believe, and thus they believe, and think all is well; and without distinguishing, they are left to think so. This is the couch on which Moab hath been at ease from his youth. Jer.48:11.

By the way, I desire that it may be observed, we are not against self-examination, with respect either to actions or state, though it is suggested we are, "no wonder persons entangled with this notion, should look so indifferent upon the duty the Lord calls them to, examine yourselves whether you be in the faith." But what room does this notion leave for examination, which makes it the duty and privilege of all, promiscuously, to believe in Christ, and feed upon the bread of life? We maintain, that it is not the right of all to have Christ; and therefore men ought to examine and see whether they have a right, whether their title be good. To as many as received him, to them gave he power {privilege} to become the sons of God. I Jn.1:12. But the notion I oppose makes it the right of all; therefore none need enquire further.

Objection 1. As in hereditary kingdoms, where, upon the death of the king the next of blood succeeds, upon the proclamation of the new king the subjects are all bound to pay allegiance, so upon the proclamation of Christ, as a Saviour, all are bound to believe in him.

Answer. It is the duty of all to believe the report, and acknowledge him as King of kings, and the only and alone Saviour, because God hath declared him to be so. But there is not the same reason for all who hear the proclamation of the Gospel, to believe Christ is their Saviour, as upon the proclamation of a king, for every subject to acknowledge the king proclaimed to be their king. For he who is proclaimed king, is over all his people; but he that is proclaimed a Saviour, is not the everlasting Saviour of all that hear the Gospel. It would have been an

evil in any of the people of Great Britain, upon the proclamation of king George, not to have acknowledged him; there being the relation of king and subject between them. But what virtue would it have been in Judas, and the reprobate Jews, to have believed Christ was their Redeemer, that he loved them, and gave himself for them whereas there was no such relation, as our Lord declared, ye are not my sheep? Jn.10:26. And what credit would it have been to the Gospel, seeing they were not saved?

Objection 2. But though there are no general promises to build upon, there are indefinite promises to build upon; and seeing no man can say justly he is not intended in them, he ought not to exclude himself; but is bound, under pain of damnation, to believe. He that believes not shall be damned. Mk.16:16.

Answer. I shall take notice of three things here. 1. There are, says the Objector, indefinite promises. 2. No man knows that he is not in the promise, therefore ought not to exclude himself. 3. Therefore, all are bound under pain of damnation to believe. To which I answer. 1. There are promises and declarations made to and concerning Christ, whereby God gives us some knowledge of the transactions of that covenant he hath made with his chosen, and the certainty of their salvation thereby; as, "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes," Isa.42:6-7, and "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Psal.110:3.

2. There are also declarations and promises made to the called of Jesus Christ, which concern, and are suited to convey, that relief and succor, they, as born again, stand in need of, and have a desire and appetite for; and these are made to, and concerning them, under some peculiar characters, which are the effects of the Spirit's work, in distinguishing them from others who are

not called; as willing, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev.22:17. As hungry and thirsty, which denotes a sense of want, and is peculiar to the living. For as the dead cannot praise him, so the dead in sins cannot thirst after him; but as the Apostle Peter saith, "if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." I Pet.2:3. To such the Lord spake, "if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," Jn.7:37; as weary and heavy laden, bowing down under the felt weight of Jewish services, or the felt weight of the body of death, Rom.7:24; and lastly, as seeing and believing that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Jn.3:16. These and such like may be called indefinites, not having every or some, which denote universality or particularity, prefixed; yet are they to be taken in an universal sense, that is, for every one that is made willing, Psal.110:3; for every one that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, and hence thirsts for the sincere milk of the word; and so of the rest. Now as the promise of life and salvation, in respect of men, is particular, intending some, but in respect of the chosen of God universal; so these and the like promises, with respect to the chosen of God, are particular; but to the called, universal and definite, being to them descriptive, having, as it were, their names and characters set upon them. "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." Jn.10:4. And as suited to them, and none but them, are addressed to them, and none but them. Suppose a legacy given to the poor of such a parish, or to the blind and lame of such a city, could the rich, and those that have sight and soundness of limbs, judge themselves entitled to it? To suppose God promises life and salvation, or offers life and salvation to more than he designs to save and bring to Glory, whatever show of kindness men

may make of it, they do thereby a foul dishonour to the God of truth.

Objection. "No man knows that he is not intended, and so ought not to exclude himself." Answer. This I conceive, argues not to the purpose for which it was designed; for the question is not, whether men ought to believe that God {will not} save them by his grace, but whether he will; whether Christ be theirs; but in this there is nothing directed that way. I will make it plain, the objector does not know that king George will not adopt him, or call him to court, and make him to stand in his presence, and cannot certainly conclude he will not; but here's no ground for him to persuade himself the king will confer these favors on him. But if it be further urged, it was the Father's design in giving Christ, and Christ's design in giving himself to save sinners, and it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, I Tim.1:15, and therefore as we do not know who in our assemblies, it may be this or that poor profligate sinner, or it may be all, we ought to tell them it is their duty to believe.

Answer. It is a sweet truth, that it was the design of the Father, and of Christ, to save sinners by his death; but to suppose that the design of God shall not take effect, and save all that he had designed to save, infers either want of power or change of purpose; both which are highly dishonorable to God. That Christ came to save sinners, and why not this or that, or the other? Is a good way of reasoning against despair; but as it's commonly used, it's laid for a foundation of presumption. Oh, these words have been, and often are, under an inward feeling of the deep pollution of my heart, when I discover in myself, as in the sepulchre of the dead, nothing but stench and rottenness, very sweet to me, "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities," Isa.53:5, and all the story of his suffering for

sinner gives delight. Then, it is my soul feels the efficacy of the blood of Christ secretly staying of it, powerfully supporting its hope, and sweetly engaging of it to himself. And now I find I was upon the heart of Christ when he hung upon the tree, and bled and died only, as Herbert says, "to purchase my good will," whilst I feel it on my heart, carrying and setting my heart upon that which sounds his highest glory and my sweetest praise. Yet here's nothing in all this mercy for all to conclude they were upon the heart of Christ when on the cross; nor for any, till God shall please to signify it by some token for good, and then the man will be changed, and so out of the question. "None ought therefore to exclude themselves." This is a popular expression, used by some, who when they speak, mean nothing; or by others, who mean worse than nothing; for what can it mean, but that there was a provision made for the salvation of all, and that it is tendered upon terms, whereby men may obtain a right if they will, but if not it's their own fault. It's true, man's condemnation is just; he that perisheth, perisheth for his own sins, "for these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience," Eph.5:6, but it is not the fault of men that they have not an interest in Christ. No; Christ is God's gift; and may not God bestow him on whom he will? "Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Jn.4:10.

"Therefore {saith the objector} they are bound to believe under pain of damnation." As if fallen creatures were not condemned already, though the Scripture saith, "he that believeth not, is condemned already, Jn.3:18; yea, are not the vessels of wrath already by sin fitted to destruction condemned; though God willing {for high and glorious ends} to show his wrath, and make his power known, endures with much long suffering, Rom.9:22, and

does not suddenly execute the sentence? And may it not be thought of those whom God in sovereignty hath passed by, called in Scripture the rest, Rom.11:7, in contradistinction to the election of his grace, may it not, I say, be conceived of them, as of angels, that kept not their first estate but left their own habitation, that he hath reserved them in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day? Jude 1:6; II Pet.2:4 And the rather, because the apostle compares their case and lot. Our Lord in the Gospel of Mark does not speak one word about the cause of damnation, but of the certain estate of final unbelievers. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mk.16:16.

Objection. "God makes a revelation of Christ by the Gospel; men ought therefore to believe in him."

Answer. Whatever God reveals unto the children of men they ought to believe; they're not believing is sin, and makes God a liar, but whether the preaching of the Gospel be properly the revelation of Christ, seeing so much stress is laid upon it, {as appears by this author's restraining the duty to those that hear the Gospel,} deserves to be enquired into, for if it be not, the weight of the objection is removed. I know it is the opinion of many, that the giving of the word is all the revelation God makes of his Son Jesus Christ in order to salvation, and that nothing more is necessary thereunto. But this is a palpable mistake, and runneth hard against those places of Scripture which set forth the state of man by nature, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. Eph.4:18. It agrees not with the words of our Lord concerning the necessity of the new birth, "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jn.3:3. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter

into the kingdom of God," Jn.3:5, implying, that we as really need an internal work of the Spirit, in order to our seeing the things which belong to our eternal peace, notwithstanding we have the Word and Gospel, as a blind man stands in need of eyes, in order to his seeing men or trees when they stand before him in a clear day. It directly opposes the express testimony of the apostle, "but the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither indeed can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor.2:14. It makes the spirit of wisdom and revelation to be the spirit of revelation only, as to the giving of the word; and not in respect of any inward work, which the apostle calls enlightening the eyes of the understanding; therefore no more is given unto the believing than to the unbelieving at Ephesus, or any other place where the word comes.

Upon this presumption, I conceive it is that men have run to so great a length in allowing and applauding men as able ministers of the New Testament, who have been furnished with skill in human sciences, to understand the scriptures as they understand any other writings, without much, if any regard to an internal work of grace, and an unction from the holy One to enable them for it; the consequences whereof the church of Christ groans under and on the account hereof, the words of God, "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," Hos.4:6, may be uttered with lamentation. I will give you Dr. Owen's sense of this matter, in his Book of the causes, ways and means of understanding the mind of God, &c., "but this knowledge, that may be thus attained, {says he,} doth only inform the mind in the way of an artificial science, but doth not really illuminate it; and to this end men have turned divinity into an art, like other common arts and sciences, and they learned it instead of a spiritual wisdom and understanding of divine mysteries; and it

may be attained as any other art or science may, without any supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit, and is sufficient to drive a trade with, which, as things are stated in the world, men may use and exercise to their great advantage." This therefore justifies the laudable undertaking of a society of religious men, who, by their articles, make a satisfaction about grace, the ground they go upon, to encourage learning.

It appears, from what has been said, that the word is not all the revelation God gives of Jesus Christ unto the souls of those whom he saves; nor is it sufficient for the soul to see Christ so as to believe in him unto everlasting salvation. And whether the preaching of the Gospel can, in any good sense, be called a revelation of Jesus Christ to all that hear it, is doubted. That it is not a revelation of Christ in all that come under the sound of it, may be on good ground affirmed; but seeing words which are arbitrary, alter not the nature of things, nor the ideas we have of them, and would thereby convey to the understanding of others, I shall not here dispute it; yet I conceive, had custom pleased to call the word, preaching, and all that is external only by the name of declaration; and the inward manifestation, the opening the heart and sealing of instruction, by the name of revelation, it might have prevented much confusion. The scripture plainly distinguishes the giving of an understanding from the Proposition of the things to be understood; that consists in the doctrine of the Gospel, this in an ability to comprehend and know it. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true." I Jn.5:20. And our Lord saith, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and from the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Lk.10:21. In which it is more than barely implied, that those things which God, in his sovereign good pleasure,

reveals unto babes, he did not, he does not reveal to the wise and prudent, from whom, saith the text, thou shall hid them; though, it's probable, they knew more of the letter of the scripture than those babes did. And, I think, upon this text alone, one might modestly affirm, that the word, either written or preached, is not a revelation of Christ unto all that have it; unless to hide and reveal be one and the same thing.

The Word is like a cabinet, filled with precious jewels, but locked up so that the vulture's eye cannot see them, neither are they perceptible to any, till the Spirit, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, opens the understanding, opens the word, and discovers the precious things therein contained in his own light. "And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Lk.24:32. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Acts 16:14. "For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Psal.36:9.

But that we may not strive about words to no profit, I shall assent to the distinction of external and internal revelation; and then seeing, as this author supposes justly, the revelation brings the obligation along with it; I conceive it will fairly follow, that according to the nature of the revelation the obligation binds, that is, they that have only the external revelation, are only bound to believe the report, but they that are blessed with the internal revelation, they have that light, that faith, which lays hold upon the hope set before them; and what God hath joined together, no man shall put asunder.

CHAPTER III

The point argued from the different relation Christ sustains to the church, and the rest of the creation.

I come now to a second reason of my dissent from what this author hath asserted, that God makes it the duty of poor unconverted sinners to believe in Christ; which is, because there is no special relation between Christ and all unconverted sinners; as the proposition must be understood to intend, to ground their Faith upon.

The sense of the terms in the question, what kind of faith is meant, and how we take it, must be remembered through the whole. The faith we mean, is that which is called saving, as being the beginning {as intelligible to the believer} of God's salvation in the soul, and called by the Apostle our meetness to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. Col.1:12. For if this faith is not intended he hath disquieted himself in vain; and if he means this same faith which God's own people have, it must be the same for principle, matter and form; and every degree of the same faith too, which he affirms is the unconverted sinners duty to have and believe with; for if one degree of faith of the same kind be due, every degree must be due by the same law or else, where the higher degrees are found, according to his own way of reasoning, it must be will-worship, as hath been already observed. And that we leave no room for evasion, I shall lay down the following conclusions.

Conclusion I. The law of God hath respect unto the creature according to the relation he hath been pleased to constitute. This is evident from the word, "the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law unto her husband as long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead

she is loosed from the law of her husband." Rom.7:3. The moral obligation ceaseth, there being no such relation.

Conclusion II. The Law of God binds no creature to believe that which is not. This is evident from its nature; for if the law binds to believe that which is not, it binds to sin; and so the law should oblige to that which it condemns the creature for doing. And now the better to explain and give the force of this argument from relation, I shall lay down the following proposition. That all our salvation, from the foundation to the top stone thereof, proceeds according to a special relation which God hath constituted between Christ and his church.

As among men there is a natural and necessary relation, as between parents and children; and a voluntary relation, as between husband and wife, so there is a natural, and a voluntary relation between God and the works of his hands. This first relation, as I may call it, in allusion to the Apostle, "howbeit that was not first which is spiritual," I Cor.15:46, took its rise from the decree of creation, and exists upon the execution of that decree; and this subsists between God and all the works of his hands; angels and men stand alike to God in this relation. Hence the law of nature took its rise, and has its denomination. And it is upon this ground that man in the apostasy thinks it hard that any of Adam's fallen race are saved by mighty grace, if all are not saved; not considering, that fallen angels have the same reason for hope or complaint as they; being all alike in this way related to God, and yet their pity and concern does not turn towards them.

There is, besides this, another relation between God and some of his creatures, which took its rise from a decree to bring to glory, and the everlasting enjoyment of himself in the highest heavens, those whom he had chosen to salvation, by ways and means of his own finding out and providing; concerning which the Apostle

expresses himself with so much wonder, "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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom.11:33-36.

1st. It is grace alone that saves. It arises from the sovereignty of God, and is distinguishing. It flows in a way of voluntary relation. By grace are ye saved, Eph.2:5,8, is the standing declaration of the word, and the common faith of all that are made partakers of salvation. "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." Psal.115:1. Grace and mercy found through both Testaments, as proclaimed by God himself to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." Exod.33:19. And when the Spirit pronounces it in the conscience of a poor sinner, the soul answers it is as an echo answers the voice of him that speaks, Grace, Grace, unto it. Zech.4:7. Grace is written upon everything God has done for his people; and on every step he takes with them here, "mercy and truth shall go before his face," Psal.89:14, and when they shall see them in a pure light, heaven itself shall be filled with the praises of it. They shall see that all the way the Lord their God hath led them was right, Psal.107:7, and shall praise his wonders. "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD, thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints." Psal.89:5.

2dly. This arises from the sovereignty of God, and is distinguishing grace. It is the good pleasure of God, as the highest end of all his counsels; the counsel of his own will, Eph.1:11, to show forth the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness to us, Eph.2:7, the vessels of mercy

whom he had afore prepared unto glory, Rom.9:23, and this in its matchless manifestations and effects, as distinguishing, the Apostle sets forth, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph.1:3-5. We are said to be made accepted in the beloved, Eph.1:6, and to have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of his will. Eph.1:7-9. As if he should say, such was the fullness of grace in Christ towards the vessels of mercy, that, like the swelling of Jordan, it overflowed its banks, and came down upon us in manifestations, in sweet discoveries, in the revelation of Christ to us. Gal.1:16. It was like love in the breast of Joseph, which could not be contained there; but though his brethren had hated him, and used him despitefully, his bowels yearned towards them, and made way over all their unkindness, over all their cruelty, and brake out, and said unto his brethren, "come near me, I pray you; and they came near, and he said unto them, I am Joseph your brother," &c. Gen.45:4. To what end was this? "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." Eph.1:10. Not all angels, and all men, but God's all, Psal.73:25, that is, all his peculiar treasure; for as Christ is the believers all, so the church is said to be Christ's body, and "the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Eph.1:23. "But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom

is all my delight." Psal.16:3. All his delight is said to be in them. And all this rich, glorious, distinguishing grace, bestowing upon the elect all spiritual blessings in Christ; predestinating unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ; making accepted in the beloved; forgiving their sins through his blood; and gathering them together in Christ their head, is built upon its own basis, upon its own foundation, by the Apostle, in the end of the ninth verse, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. Eph.1:9.

3dly. Let us take a short view of saving grace, as it is directed, and flows in a way of voluntary relation. God saith, "I have made a covenant with my chosen," Psal.89:3, and has confirmed it forever. "He will ever be mindful of his covenant." Psal.111:5. This contains all the salvation of the church from first to last. "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, for this is all my salvation, and all my desire." II Sam.23:5. There is no salvation in another way. By chosen, in the first place, understand Christ, whom God has as his elect, "behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delights." Isa.42:1. Several passages in the Psalms admitting of a proper application to none but him; as, "I will make him, my first born; higher than the kings of the earth," Psal.89:27, agreeing with his New Testament style and title, "first born of every creature," Col.1:15, and, "prince of the kings of the earth." Rev.1:5. But if it be said, these words were spoken of David as king over Israel; I answer, but with an eye to Christ, the root and offspring of David, the bright and the morning star. For as the penman of the Acts of the Apostles says, "men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath

to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Acts 2:29-32. So may I say, God having sworn, that he would raise up Christ, the righteous branch, who should reign and prosper; and David being a prophet, foreseeing of it, spake this concerning his spiritual kingdom, "his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Psal.89:29. And further, by chosen, we may understand, taking the term in its extent, all the election of God's grace, who are said to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Eph.1:4.

Christ was constituted head and husband of the church, or chosen of God. Head, in whom all the grace of the covenant is treasured up, "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Col.1:19. Husband, nearest kinsman, in whom the right of redemption is, as was intimated by Boaz, "howbeit there is a nearer kinsman than I," Ruth 3:12, that through the redemption in his blood all the blessings of the covenant might flow down upon his mystical body. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." II Cor.8:9. Christ is called the head, and he is the head of the body the church. Col.1:18. And in this he stands in a different relation to the church than to any other of the creatures; which is significantly expressed by the Apostle, "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Eph.1:22,23. Here observe, the extent of his headship and dominion over all things, over all principalities and powers, "angels, authorities, and

powers, being made subject unto him." I Pet.3:22. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Psal.8:6-8. All the creatures are at Christ's disposal, and all enemies are subjected to his control. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Psal.76:10.

2. To the church, this power and dominion, Jn.17:2, this fullness and headship over all, he has, if I may so say, in truth for the church, to be exercised and employed for the use and benefit of his church. "All are yours," I Cor.3:22, saith the Apostle, and "all things do work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose." Rom.8:28. The relation the church stands in, which is his body, words which are suited to convey that nearness we have to Christ; the same nearness that Eve stood in to Adam; which is enough to assure, that he will use and dispose of all things with that love and tenderness, as will work our welfare and advantage in the end. Heb. 12:11. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church, for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Eph.5:29-30.

As head over all, as Lord of providence, the man that executes God's counsel, Isa.46:11, he presides over the kingdoms of this world, over all the affairs of men; he places princes on their thrones, and casts down their crowns at his pleasure, Prov.8:15,16, he upholds all things by the word of his power, Heb.1:3, he is the conserver of all things; yea, there is not a raven or a sparrow but is fed by him. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that cry." Psal.147:9. All

this respects his dominion and common providence; but as he is head of the church, he is a fountain of life and gracious influences, so as he is not said to be the head of any other of the creatures, angels or men.

He is an husband to the church, and in consequence, as her case required, a Redeemer. "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." Isa.54:5. He is not an husband to all; nor a redeemer of all, but by a special covenant relation. But he is an husband to the church, and loved the church in that relation, so as to give himself for it; and has by the offering himself a sacrifice for her sins, purging them by his own blood, Eph.5:25-32, opened a way for the blessings of the covenant to stream down upon it. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." Psal.46:4. Hence we are said not only to have redemption through his blood, Eph.1:7, the forgiveness of sins; but to have access into this grace wherein we stand, Rom.5:2, and through him an access unto the Father. Eph.2:18. We had a right to the creatures, at the first, which we lost by the fall; and the ground, and what springs out of it, came under a curse for man's sin, Gen.3:17, but by Christ's sufferings they are sanctified to the use of the church, and we have all things richly to enjoy in Christ's right. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." II Cor.8:9. Hence the believer may be said to be rich in his poverty and straits, whilst the ungodly, as being under a curse, are poor in the midst of all their plenty. "A little that the righteous has is better than the riches of many wicked." Psal.37:16.

3. Grace directs its course in the execution of God's counsels by the man of God's right hand,

Psal.80:17, according to this relation by voluntary constitution, and takes no step with a further or more comprehensive view. Here God hath set its bounds, hitherto shall it come and no further. When God sent his Son into the world, to seek and save that which was lost, he had his eye upon his own chosen. Rom.11:7. "God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom 5:8. Had not this 'us' been restrained, it would have issued in the universal salvation of all men; but the Apostle limits it, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, and who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," Rom.8:33-34; that is, for all the Father gave him. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." Jn.17:6.

4. When Christ came out of the Father's bosom, and came into the world to die for sinners, he had his eye upon his people, "having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end," Jn.13:1, implying, that his eye was upon them as they lay scattered abroad, Jn.11:52, among the rest. This was the treasure that lay hid in the field, for which the rich merchant purchased the whole field. Matt.13:44,45.

5. Christ prays for them, not for the world; but for those whom the Father had given him, Jn.17:9; others were not upon his heart when he came into the world; their sins were not upon him, Isa.53:6,12, when he died upon the cross; nor will he, however awful it may sound, offer their drink offerings of blood, nor take their names into his lips. Psal.16:4. And, in the last place, for the further clearing of this point, if anything were further needed, let us see what the Evangelist saith, "now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they

assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not." Acts 16:6-7. This was not because there were not sinners, poor miserable creatures, as well as in other places, where he sent the Gospel; but because his elect were not there.

I will sum up our argument from this place. There are two sorts of people in the world, the election and "the rest," Rom.11:7, to whom God stands in a different relation; to the rest a Creator and Benefactor, but to the election an everlasting Father in Christ. Jn.20:17. Christ is by divine constitution, a Mediator and Lord, for the existence, conservation and government of all; but he is a Head and Husband, to redeem and save with an everlasting salvation all the Father gave him. Col.1:17-18; Eph.5:25. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Jn.6:39-40. He died for the one, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, I Pet.3:18, but for the rest he did not die, that he might bring them to God; or they should certainly have come; he would not have miscarried in his design.

He prays for the one, but he does not pray for the other. "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Jn.17:9. Further, it is the Father's will, who sent Christ, that of all he gave him he should lose nothing, but raise it up to a state of glory. Jn.6:39,40; Phil.3:21. But it is not the will of the Father that Christ should raise up the rest to a state of glory. Therefore, as the law hath respect to relation; by the first conclusion, there being no special relation between Christ and all that hear the Gospel, the law does not require all that hear the Gospel to believe

with the faith of God's elect; which, as we have shown before, is the faith in question.

But, secondly, the notion of this author makes the law of God to bind men to believe that which is not true; and so countenances the lie of unbelief under the guise of faith; which our Lord reprov'd in the blinded Jews, "Jesus answered, if I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God; yet ye have not known him; but I know him, and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you, but I know him, and keep his saying." Jn.8:54-55. And seeing upon the distinction of relation laid down above, some have a right to life, pardon, communion with the Lord, yea, to the Son himself, and others have not a right; is it comely for ministers of the Gospel of Christ to stand and offer Christ, offer grace, offer life and salvation to them that have no apparent right, nor yet a secret right; as the case is with respect to the rest among the assemblies of the faithful? And would they think themselves well used, if their servants, who are appointed to feed their children, as Peter was to feed Christ's sheep and lambs, Jn.21:15,17, should, instead of keeping their master's charge, take his food, take his raiment, take his belt and most valuable goods, stand at the door, and offer them, and tender them to strangers, and especially when they have not the least intimation of their master's design to bestow them? And yet the case is thus here, with regard to the vessels of wrath, Rom.9:22; Rom.11:7, whom God has appointed to destruction. And, would it not be sufficient for those that have a dispensation of the Gospel committed unto them, to preach the Gospel to all that come under the sound, and wish them to wait at wisdom's gates, till they shall have further intimations of their master's will and pleasure concerning them? And when they perceive the grace of God to be bestowed upon any among them, then exhort them with purpose of heart

to cleave unto the Lord, as Barnabas did, Acts 11:23, and as we find the Apostles did, in the writings of the New Testament? Acts 2:37,38.

And last of all, only suppose the thing to be, that all who hear the Gospel should believe in Christ for life and salvation, according to what this author tells us is their duty; would there not, probably, be millions in the world believing in Christ for life and salvation, to whom God hath not given eternal life in Christ, and who shall never obtain salvation by him? "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." Jn.10:26. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." Lk.10:21.

CHAPTER IV

An argument taken from Adam's capacity before the fall. Objections answered.

Condemnation doth not come upon them that hear and receive the report of the Gospel for their not believing with the faith of God's elect; because it was not in the power of man, in his best estate, before the fall.

The law threatened death upon transgression, Gen.2:17, but by way of duty, or active obedience, it required no more than what's contained in this one precept, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might," Deut.6:5, and this as Creator and Benefactor, according to the relation I have before called natural and necessary; that is, a relation that must be, if God created man at all; for this must be the extent of duty to them that are under the law; because God had made known no other relation before the fall, and since stands in no other, but by his sovereign choice, of which above. Nor is more required than was given; but Adam in his best obedience, and even standing angels, must say with David, "but who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." I Ch.29:14.

It is our indispensable duty to do allegiance to the prince upon the throne, and in case of failure, we incur the pains and penalties which the law inflicts; and notwithstanding our suffering for default, we owe the same we did before we failed; but I do not conceive we owe more; but if the king should forgive our offense, and further should adopt us, and take us into his family, this would be an additional obligation, and bring upon us a

new duty, arising from a new relation, viz., sons and daughters. Thus when it pleases God to make himself known in a nearer relation in Christ, the discovery brings an obligation along with it, and sweetly influences the will to answer it in grateful returns, "what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Psal.116:12.

1. To assert the law requires of man more than God enabled him to perform, justifies the impious charge of the slothful servant, "then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." Matt.25:24.

2. It places man in a state of misery by creation. For if the law required of man what God did not enable him to do, had he acted up to the height of his ability, he must still have been a debtor, and his want of conformity to the law would have exposed him to the penalty thereof. And as the former impeaches the justice, this reflects grossly on the goodness of God; and offers an occasion to the creature to take up a complaint, as the king of Israel did when the Syrian king requested him to cure Naaman of his leprosy, "and it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me," II King.5:7, seeing the creature could no more do what this notion makes the law to require of him, than the king of Israel could heal Naaman's disease.

These are consequences of the notion I oppose, unless Adam had the faith we are speaking of, and lost it for himself and posterity; the contrary whereof I shall endeavor to demonstrate. But as far as possible to prevent mistakes, and convince of misrepresentations, I shall further declare, that whatever power God gave to

men, and whatever endowments he bestowed upon our nature in Adam, we being in Adam our head, those endowments he bestowed upon every one of us, and the law of nature respects us as in such state and condition as God placed us in by creation; and so Adam's sinning and losing of his original righteousness was our act, we being in his loins, as Levi was said to pay tithes in Abraham, being in his loins, Heb.7:9,10, and is as justly chargeable upon our persons as upon our first parents. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom.5:12,14. Hence infants, who have no actual sin by their own personal transgression, may be said to be guilty before God, not only for Adam's transgression imputed, but for his corrupt nature imparted; for we are all streams from that corrupt fountain. Wherefore the law has a double claim upon fallen Adam's posterity. 1. Perfect and perpetual obedience to God, as a Creator and Benefactor, according to the law of nature. 2. Satisfaction for transgression committed. Now I shall proceed upon the common personality of Adam.

What Adam had we all had in him; and what Adam lost we all lost in him; and are debtors to God on both accounts; but Adam had not the faith of God's elect before the fall, and did not lose it for his posterity; therefore they are not debtors to God for it while in unregeneracy.

To affirm that we lost what we never had is so ridiculously weak, that no man would debase himself to take notice of it; therefore what we have to do here is to prove that we had not this grace in Adam. But before I offer my reasons for the assertion, to convince my adversary that it is not mere affectation that rules here, I will produce the testimony of two men, out of more, that may be brought, whose reputation in the church is established. The one is Doctor Owen, speaking of the

necessity of a special spiritual illumination of the understanding, in order to our discerning the mind of God in the Scriptures; his words are these, "but yet if men should be allowed to suppose, that our minds were no way vitiated, depraved or darkened by the fall, yet it is most irrational to imagine, that we can comprehend or understand the mysteries of the Gospel, with special spiritual illumination. For the original light and abilities of our minds were not suited or prepared for the receiving and understanding of them. For neither their being, nor revelation were consistent with the state of integrity. Wherefore although our minds should be allowed to be as wise and perspicacious with respect to that natural knowledge of God, and all that belongs unto it, which was proposed unto us, or necessary for us in the state of nature; yet would it not follow, that we are able to discern the mysteries of grace when proposed unto us." Nothing can be plainer. Here he supposes the mind as free and quick sighted as Adam's was before the fall; and that the mysteries of grace were proposed to it in such calm and un-beclouded condition; yet he concludes, that in such a condition it is most irrational to imagine, that we can understand or comprehend the mysteries of the Gospel without a special spiritual illumination; and the reason is, because the original light and abilities of our minds were not suited or prepared for the receiving and understanding of them.

The other is, Dr. Goodwin, who has handled this subject, of the creatures, and the condition of their estate by creation, as he alerts his judgment in the following position, "that Adam's best knowledge and enjoyment was inferior, and of a lower rank, than that knowledge and fellowship with God, which we in Christ, through faith do here enjoy, in that state of grace the Gospel puts us into."

Here is another plain testimony, that Adam before the fall did not know and enjoy that fellowship with God, which believers in Christ do know and enjoy in this world. I will add two passages more from Mr. Goodwin, "and if men will say, that the elect men in Christ {and so Adam among the rest} should in the end have been translated to heaven, although men had never fallen; I shall not gainsay it, but then it is by another's right and covenant, and would have required supernatural grace first wrought in them, for to have owned and taken Christ for their Head." Again, "the conclusion is, that all the faith which Adam had may well be resolved into natural light, as the first principle and foundation of it; although further revealing and confirming what else the light of nature could not, or would not so easily have known; and though we suppose the things to be such as were out of the reach of natural light; yet still the bottom of its assent to divine authority had been but such a natural light aforesaid, and principle of nature sown in his heart, which made him capable so to converse with God, and to believe his word, as to understand God out of his works, but it is otherwise in our faith. And so far, I conceive, it is, that wicked men are blamed now for not believing the word of the Law and the Gospel, so far, as such natural light as was in Adam would have enabled them thereunto." What can be plainer, than that this is the Doctor's judgment? That Adam's knowledge is inferior to that which believers have by Christ; that he could not have gone to heaven, had he not fallen, without supernatural-grace wrought in him; and that wicked men, now under the Gospel, are blamed only {with respect to faith} for not believing so far as such natural light, as was in him, would have enabled them to believe. It is evidently his judgment, that we did not lose that faith, which is in the question, in Adam, because we had it not in him; and it is equally evident that his judgment was, that men now are not condemned for not

believing in Christ, because, saith he, they are not blamed for it; which is all I am contending for.

It would be the wisdom and honor of some men, not to make, as they do, Doctor Goodwin and Owen an argument against us; for thereby they discover their unacquaintance with those eminent lights, or their baseness in quoting of them against their manifest sentiments. But it is an incurable disease in many to be so light of belief, as to receive whatever any man can say, or any thought that comes into their minds, if it be but directed against some party, or some point. But I shall not rest in the authorities cited, but offer the reasons of my assertion, viz., that we had not this grace in Adam, because faith is a spiritual blessing given in Christ. The weight of this reason lies here, that all spiritual blessings were given in Christ, to be communicated to his mystical body, and none but them. The two Adams, as the Apostle calls them, first and last, as heads of the two covenants, as they are called, were common persons to the respective seeds, viz., Adam was a common person to all mankind, as being in him; so Christ a common person for his seed, as chosen in him. Eph.1:4. And the blessings belonging to the two companies were respectively lodged in their heads; and of a distinct nature, as is intimated by the Apostle. "As it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth earthy; the second is the Lord from heaven." I Cor.15:45-49. Their companies are said to be as they are, have born, and shall bear their images distinctly. Now this earthy Adam was, and enjoyed all that his body should, or could be, and enjoy from him. For had he stood, there could have been no advancement of himself, or posterity, as a reward; because there could be no possibility of meriting by his obedience, that being by the law of nature due before; and after all, therefore we must have said, "we are unprofitable servants; we have done

what was our duty to do." Lk.17:10. Nor is there anything more intimated in the prohibition, "for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," Gen.2:17, than, that if he abstained and did not transgress, he should enjoy that life and felicity he was possessed of, and contented with. On the other hand, the last Adam, who was made a quickening spirit, had all fullness of grace stored up in him, in whom all spiritual blessings are said to be bestowed upon the elect. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. These all spiritual blessings are peculiar to them that are Christ's, "according as he hath chosen us in him, &c.," and the phrase, spiritual blessings, is suited to uphold the distinction between the lot of those who are Christ's, and the lot of all mankind in Adam; which was all natural blessings. Gen.1:26-28.

To assign to earthy Adam all earthly natural blessings, suited to gratify his appetite, and yield him all contents in his creation capacity, and this spiritual blessing and capacity too, had been too much to have made him happy in that state; because the lowest degree of that faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, Heb.11:1, would have begotten those desires, which, I conceive, could not have been gratified in that state; and would therefore, as Dr. Goodwin thinks, have been so far from augmenting his happiness, as it would have made it less. For his enjoyments in Eden then would not have been commensurate to his desires and there would have been an emptiness and restlessness on the account of that want, which is not consistent with perfect happiness. For the regenerated soul is not fully blessed in this life, not by reason of the body of death only, Rom.7:24, but because its new desires are not fully gratified. "I shall be satisfied," saith the psalmist, "when I awake with thy likeness," Psal.17:15, intimating, that he should not be

fully satisfied before. For though there can be no more blessings provided than are already in Christ, Eph.1:3, yet the soul can be more blessed, as to fruition and enjoyment, when Christ's prayer shall be granted, and the believer shall attain the end of his hope. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, &c." Jn.17:24.

Further, had this faith of God's elect, which is so called on the account of its cause, election-grace, or its subjects, the chosen of God, or because it apprehends the relation, or all of them together; had this faith, I say, been in Adam, it would have been no more the faith of God's elect, than of the rest, according to the above rule, what Adam had all had in him, he being, before the fall, a common person for all mankind.

Some are of the opinion, that in regeneration, the Spirit of God restores that image we lost in the first Adam; and if so, seeing he works this Gospel Faith, we must needs have had it in our natural head. Answer: Suppose he did restore Adam's image, it follows not that this faith of the operation of God is that image, or any part of it, unless we have no more by Christ than we lost; for if we receive more by Christ, this faith may be a part of that we had not in Adam. But, I think it will not be difficult to demonstrate the contrary, viz., that what is wrought upon the soul in regeneration is not the image of the earthy, but of the heavenly man, I Cor.15:49, which, saith the Apostle, we shall bear, in contradistinction from the image of the first man Adam, which we are said to have born, in the same verse. But as this does not immediately fall under my consideration, I shall only give you one passage out of the late Mr. Robert Bragge's first sermon on justification, "Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, has brought in such a way of knowing and enjoying God, as the first Adam, and his covenant, were utter strangers to."

Secondly, had Adam had this principle he would not have fallen at all; and so redemption by Christ had not been necessary, therefore had not been; yea, all the designs of God which were directed to, and shall issue in the praise of his glory, Eph.1:6, in the final and everlasting state of his own chosen, upon the plan and foundation of election, and the covenant of grace, had been frustrated.

That there had been no need of a Redeemer, had not man fallen, no need of a discharge from the curse of the law had not sin entered, and we thereby become guilty before God, needs no proof; both revelation and reason give in their joint and full evidence for it. We had then been, in respect to the law of God, in the condition of standing angels; and all that purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, in order to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel, II Tim.1:9,10, as the Apostle saith, would have rested there; because there would have been no death to abolish. "For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Rom.5:12. There remains no room for enquiry, but, whether this principle would have been proof against temptation, had it been in Adam? To which I answer, the Apostle speaking of his new life, saith, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal.2:20. Now, though we cannot tell, how Christ lives in the soul of a sinful man, as we cannot tell a great many of the mysteries in nature; yet it is plain from this, and other places in Scripture, that Christ is the principle and spring of life in his children, and that their continuance in life depends upon it, "because I live, ye shall live also," Jn.14:19, Christ and a believer have but one life; and, as one said, both shall fail or neither. And though it is not proper to say, that Christ believes and repents, &c., in the regenerate soul, but these are said of the renewed man; yet I may conceive of

them according to Moses, they are precious things brought forth by the sun, Deut.33:14, who though he does not always shine, remains in union with the soul. Now, if angels, who are not united to Christ, as the elect, and called among Adam's race, are; and who therefore do not partake of eternal life from Christ, as believers who are in Christ, as the branch is in the vine, Jn.15:5, do partake of it; and yet by confirming grace only are upheld. What reason can there be to suppose, that if Adam had partaken of this grace in the state of his integrity, he should not, at least, have been confirmed as well as they?

The Scripture, in many places, favors this supposition, that the nature of the new principle is such, that had it been in innocent Adam it would have kept him so, that the evil one could not have touched him. I will mention a few, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened," Matt.13:33; that is, grace in the soul preserves itself, and ceaseth not to work till the whole spirit, and soul and body, I Thes.5:23, be sanctified. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Jn.4:14. The Apostle speaking of the regenerated soul, saith, it is born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, I Pet.1:23, the distinction must, I conceive, lie between the seed of light, knowledge and love, sown in the heart of the first man Adam, who was made a living soul; and that which is in and from the last Adam, a quickening spirit. That seed was corruptible, though not corrupted, as it came out of God's hand, and so the beauty of that image was darkened, marred, corrupted, and lost; but this is unfading, incorruptible, remaining through all the variable frames, and various dispensations the soul passes under in this world. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his

seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I Jn.3:9. Now if this seed of God which remains, preserves itself, and keeps the soul alive in the midst of ten thousand deaths; is it not highly reasonable to suppose, that if this seed had been sown in Adam's heart before the fall, it would have made him proof against all the attempts of the devil?

Further, had Adam in innocency had that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for, he could not have lost the earnest, nor would that hope have been in vain; but as in us, the faith of the operation of God shall reach unto the inheritance, it must needs have done so in upright Adam, or else it had not been the same; and so, according to what hath been said, all the designs of God upon the foundation of election, would have been frustrated.

Objection 1. But the children of God, who are called out of darkness into God's marvelous light, I Pet.2:9; Rom.8:11, in whom the Spirit of Christ is said to dwell, often fall; and sometimes they fall as if they had not been anointed with oil; therefore if our first father had had this principle, he might, notwithstanding, have fallen, as they do. Answer. The people of God often fall, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows; but their falls argue not the weakness of the new principle of grace, but the badness of the old principle of corrupt nature; "I am carnal, sold under sin," Rom.7:14, saith the Apostle, and therefore "when I would do good, evil is present with me." Rom.7:21. The case of Adam before, and of his recovered children since the fall, do not agree. He, in his innocent soul, had no sin; they have nothing but sin dwelling in their flesh. The Apostle, even after regeneration, speaking of indwelling corruption, or lust, which wars against the soul, expresses himself concerning it, not as though it was a visitor, or one that turns aside to tarry for a night; but as an inmate or

inhabitant, that has taken up every room. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Rom.7:18. It is in us, and remains as long as we shall continue in these infected tabernacles, like the leprosy in the house under the law, which could not be cleansed but by pulling of it down. Lev.14:45. Yet this seed of God remains, and shall not cease to be, till it springs up into everlasting life. But Adam had this advantage above his fallen children, he had then no sin; therefore it follows not, that he might have fallen, if he had had this principle of light, the spirit of Christ dwelling in him.

Objection 2. If Adam had not the faith believers now have, then was he not perfect. Answer. Adam had a perfection in its kind. A child is said to be perfect, when it hath all the parts proper to a man, and well formed. Noah was said to be perfect in his generation. Gen.6:9. And as there is a natural and a spiritual body, an earthy and an heavenly state, I Cor.15:44, so there is a perfection of each kind. This first man, who is of the earth earthy, I Cor.15:47, was perfect in that kind, both in his knowledge and enjoyment; he was endowed with natural and moral perfection, Eccl.7:29, every way capable of enjoying God, through his works, to his content, in that condition that it pleased God to place him. But the spiritual perfection, which the vessels of mercy shall be raised unto, is of another kind, in respect both of soul and body, and consists in another way of knowing and enjoying God, in and through a Mediator, II Cor.4:6, which is begun here, and shall be completed at the resurrection, when Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, Phil.3:21, not like Adam's before the fall, but Christ's after the resurrection; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. I Thes.4:17.

Objection 3. But though it should be allowed that Adam had not, before the fall, a revelation of Christ, Gal.1:15, and so did not actually believe, as those do, in whom it pleases God to reveal his Son; yet he had in his innocent soul a power and disposition to believe whatever God should reveal, and in that respect may be said to have had faith. Answer. He had a passive capacity, as wax hath to receive the image from the seal, and in his pure nature nothing contrary to God. But if a capacity of receiving the manifestations and impressions of light be the having of those impressions and images; will it not follow, that the Apostle Paul was sanctified when a blasphemer and a persecutor, I Tim.1:13, because it is evident he afterwards received the impressions of divine grace renewing and reconciling him to God, of which he was capable. It's true, we fallen creatures have in us that abominable enmity against God, Rom.8:7, which was not in our nature as it came out of God's hand, for which we are styled children of wrath, Eph.2:3; Tit.3:3, yet this does not render us un-capable of receiving the grace of God, or the powerful impressions of light and truth, the knowing and enjoying the things which God has prepared for them that love him, I Cor.2:9, any more than Adam. For he could not have known them without an internal revelation, which would have effected an inward change, as Doctor Goodwin thinks; and we cannot withstand it when God is pleased to work. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Psal.110:3. The work of God in regenerating a soul is not wrought by moral suasion, or by an offer or proposal made to the reasonable creature, and left there; which had it been made to innocent nature, would have effected nothing, "the original light and abilities of our minds not being suited and prepared for the receiving and understanding of them," saith, Dr. Owen, but by a powerful work called creation, Eph.2:10, and we could as well have refused to be, when we had no

existence, as refuse this second more powerful work. Eph.1:17-20. We could as well not have seen when God brought us into this world, as not believe, when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness shines in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. II Cor.4:6. No, when God opens the understanding, "truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eye to behold the sun." Eccl.11:7. Shall not he, who breathed into man the breath of life, have access unto the soul which he hath created, and make what impressions and enlargements he pleases, even in an infant of days?

Objection 4. The law of God commands a reasonable creature to love the Lord with all his soul, with all his mind, and all his strength, which cannot be without faith in Christ; therefore the law must needs command faith. Answer. It is man's duty, where the Gospel does not, as well as where it does come, to love the Lord with all his soul, mind, and strength; but they are not sinners for not loving with more than all the strength God ever gave, which the objection makes them to be. Angels of light, under the law of nature, love God with all their strength, though they have no interest in the Lord Jesus as a Redeemer, and therefore no faith in him as such to them. Adam had love put into his heart, which was drawn out to God his Creator, for the benefits bestowed upon him, before he knew God in a Mediator, as the object of Gospel-faith, or needed such a provision or discovery of it to make him happy. Thus his posterity are bound to love him. But further, whereas the objection urges, they cannot love God without faith in Christ, therefore they are commanded to believe in him in order to love God, it hath been observed, that man could have loved God without the knowledge of a Redeemer. And now I would ask, are not sinners, by the same way of reasoning, commanded to regenerate themselves, and so that is made their duty

as well as believing, seeing they cannot love God unless they be regenerated? Hence if this reason proves anything, it proves too much.

Objection. 5. But the Gospel is a blessing where it comes, and affords an opportunity for all to be saved if they will; therefore the not improving this opportunity will be their condemnation. Answer. The force of this objection is abated, by what has been answered to an objection before; yet as here it appears in a different form, and seemingly strengthened, I must take notice of it. I grant the Gospel brings a blessing along with it wherever it comes, the Lord sending his disciples, whither himself would come, Lk.10:1, to gather his elect from the four winds. And whereas the dark corners of the earth are filled with the habitations of cruelty, the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations, Rev.22:2, though the fruit is only for the children to feed on, as the hidden manna, Rev.2:17, secretly given. Where the word is received into an honest, or sanctified heart, bringing forth fruit to God, Rom.7:4, in a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, nations, towns and neighborhoods, are often reformed and benefited thereby. This is a providential favor, and men ought to acknowledge it, in attending upon the word, and imitating the best examples; lest by sinning against this light they heat the furnace hotter, and pull down fiercer vengeance on themselves. But it ought to be observed, that though the abuse of temporal favors will aggravate the guilt, and consequently the plagues of them who are not saved by grace; yet the improvement of temporal favors will not procure eternal salvation. The Gospel, blessed be God for it, with the exemplary lives of those who received the truth in the love of it, hath, in a comfortable measure, healed Christendom, and brought kings in general to govern by wholesome laws, and kingdoms to act with more humanity than the Pagan world. Kings acknowledge

that they hold their crowns of Jesus Christ, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, Prov.8:15, and promise to use the power he entrusts them with, in the administration of justice, according to his word, which God requires them to do. Psal.2:10-12.

Thus the Gospel is a benefit where it comes. "The beast of the field, {saith the Lord,} shall honour me, the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen." Isa.43:20. But to make the Gospel an opportunity for all to be saved if they will, when we are assured by the word, and informed from the pulpit, that there is not, nor can be, such a will in the creature, till God works it by his grace, Jn.6:44, overturns the notion of opportunity; for, what is opportunity of having a thing, but bringing that thing within possible conditions to the creature? Besides, how does this low and cold word 'opportunity' agree with the absoluteness of God's covenant, which secures the salvation of his chosen upon absolute promises? "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Jn.6:37. And again, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Psal.110:3. Here is an absolute promise, which vastly transcends, and is as far above a bare opportunity as the heavens are higher than the earth. Isa.55:9. Does the Gospel effectually bring salvation unto all? Or only offer an opportunity to all? It is evident it does not effectually save all; and to make it an opportunity of salvation upon conditions, is to destroy the nature of the Gospel, and make it a new law, offering life and salvation upon terms and conditions to be performed by the creature, notwithstanding what may be said to the contrary.

But why must it be supposed, that God offers an opportunity to all to be saved? And, how can we understand it to be a privilege and blessing, to have an

opportunity upon impossible conditions? And especially, seeing the duty supposed to arise from this opportunity is required under pain of damnation? To the first some answer, "that God affords an opportunity to all, that he might vindicate himself, that is, his justice, or his mercy, or both, from the charge his creatures might probably bring against them." This supposes, I conceive, that God will be brought to the bar of the creature to give account for his conduct towards the works of his hands; which indeed, through the amazing and confounding pride of our hearts, is frequently done. We quarrel at his righteous decrees; we quarrel at his gracious dispensations, our eye being evil because he is good; and we fall out with him as Jonah did, about the shadow of an herb, Jonah 4:9, for such is the monstrous deformity of fallen nature! But admitting this, that God was arraigned, his justice needs no vindication. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Rom.3:19. The saved of the Lord justify him in his sayings, and clear him when he is judged, Rom.3:4, they own, that had they been sent to hell, the sentence had been just, and wonder that they are not there; and as for the rest, who are of the works of the law, Gal.3:10, their guilty conscience will stop their mouths at the bar of God, and send them with Judas, sullen, to their place. Matt.27:3-5.

If this is designed to vindicate God's mercy, it is an ill concerted scheme. For to pretend to vindicate God's mercy to all, by a way that does not manifest the same mercy to all, which would have effected their everlasting salvation, verily answers its design. Further, it furnishes no plea for the mercy of God towards the nations and people where the Gospel never came; and with respect to them, it is left as defenseless as the doctrine of absolute election is supposed to leave it with us. But suppose the

Gospel had offered an opportunity of salvation, wherever it comes, and that it had been preached to every man in the world, and fallen angels had not had it too as an opportunity of salvation for them, God's mercy would have been liable to be impeached by them for the same reason; so that this answers not its design.

To the second, how can it be conceived to be a blessing {as this worthy author must be understood to mean} to be commanded, under pain of damnation, to do what is absolutely impossible for a creature to do? Would any of us think it a privilege and blessing to be required and commanded by the prince upon the throne, under pain of death, to build ourselves a mansion house in the stars? Yet this would be as easy for us to do as to quicken ourselves when dead in trespasses and sins, which must be before we can believe. It is a supernatural act which this author makes the duty of unconverted sinners; which the late Dr. Ridgley, of immortal memory, expressly denies, where speaking to an objection, which supposes, that we hold that God commands men to put forth supernatural acts of grace, though they have no principle of grace in them, saith, "but let it be considered, that this God nowhere commands any to do."

And here I will add a passage from the mouth of that late eminent man of God, Mr. Gouge, which I had from the notes of one who wrote after him, whose reputation among the godly demands credit. "To change faith into obedience is to change the Gospel for the law; and in a sense to say, you may obey a promise instead of believing."

Let us enquire, upon a supposition, that God had made a declaration to our first parents in Eden before the fall, of his designs by Christ, as he declares them in his word, and by them that have preached the Gospel, how they would have been affected with it, and how differently it affects us, who are delivered from the power of

darkness, and are translated into the kingdom of his dear Son; which may clear and confirm the answers to the third and fourth objections above.

First, suppose God had been pleased to propose to Adam a design of raising him higher, by taking him out of his earthly paradise, and from his then satisfying enjoyments, to be with him in another room above the visible created heavens; and that his company should be the bright angels; and moreover, one in his own nature should be head of them all; whatever expectation it might have begotten in him, who could not fail, while he stood, to yield assent to the truth and goodness of what God should say to him; would this have made him meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light? Col.1:12. I conceive it would not; for there must be an internal meetness, and suitable appetite, before there can be an enjoyment of anything. Now Adam's highest perfection, as the first man, of the earth earthy, was suited to the enjoyment of God in a lower way, and altogether according to the covenant of works. And therefore without a supernatural work of grace, which we pass under in regeneration, carrying his soul from that natural way of knowing and enjoying of God, into another way of knowing him in a Mediator, and enjoying of him in a nearer relation by Christ, Eph.1:5, he would have remained what he was before. He must have been born again of the Spirit, Jn.3:5, as our Lord said to Nicodemus, or he could not have seen the kingdom. And this receives countenance from the condition of angels, who though they behold the face of God, Matt.18:10, and have seen all that hath passed in the world since the beginning, have seen the mystery of godliness, I Tim.3:16, yet are said, now to learn by the church the manifold wisdom of God, Eph.3:10, which implies, that the church, in her low estate, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, knows that of God, which those bright intelligences do not know. We

know there was not, nor could there have been in any of us, a sanctified desire of going to heaven, had there not been a letting of somewhat of heaven into the soul; which the Apostle calls, "the love of God shed abroad in the heart," Rom.5:5, as the strength and confidence of hope. When any express a desire of going to heaven, being in unregeneracy, it can mean no more than that, whereas they feel pain and sorrow by reason of afflictions, crosses and disappointments, from their low, earthy, and sinful pursuits, and at times uneasiness arising from guilt unremoved, they would be freed from these things; which, if I may so call it, makes but a negative heaven, there being in all this no real positive enjoyment. But that which is our meetness for heaven is an inwrought work, which gives the soul a taste. Now he that has wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who hath also given to us the earnest of his Spirit. II Cor.5:5. This is what the Apostle means by "knowing in yourselves," Heb.10:34, as if he had said, ye do not know barely by the word, but by an inward experience, having tasted that the Lord is gracious. I Pet.2:3. The joys of heaven are unknown in degree, but not in kind, to the saved of the Lord.

Secondly, had God been pleased to deliver to Adam a copy of his will, and of his covenant transactions with Christ, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, Col.1:14, would it have been legible to him? That the things therein would not have appeared to him, as they do to us, may be supposed from their nature and end. The precious things brought forth by the sun, Deut.33:14, as I may say, were not suited to his first state, but to ours; the provisions made for the election of grace before time, II Tim.1:9, were not to descend and flow down upon them but as vessels of mercy in time. The Gospel gives account of the bread of life, the balm of Gilead, the robe of righteousness, to cover the naked, with everything necessary to, and suited

for the relief and succor of the poor and needy. But Adam, before the fall, had not guilt nor fear; had no wound; knew no want of bread to eat, or raiment to put on; had no defect in the frame of nature, but God was breathing on him prosperous gales; now had these tidings been brought to his ears, what could he have understood of them? "Neither the things, nor the revelation of them, being suited to a state of integrity," as saith Dr. Owen. There being no suitableness in them to his case, he could, I conceive, have been no otherwise taken with them than standing angels are, nor yet so much; for they, some way or other, see relief handed out to the miserable, and hear the praises of recovering mercy sung by them, Rev.5:9,10, but there was no such object of mercy for Adam to have looked upon, no such praise to have raised his attention and wonder. Perfect health and soundness do not dispose the creature to hear and receive with gladness the tidings of a remedy. "The whole need not a physician." Matt.9:12. What are food and raiment to one that is not hungry nor needy, having no sense of want? And though men now, under the fall, have some consciousness of guilt and want; and may speak Christ fair on the account of his sufferings, his patience in his afflictions, Isa.53:7, and love for all the hatred that was testified against him, as they receive his story by an historical faith; yet whilst they continue unchanged, and the vail not taken away, they see no beauty nor excellence in Christ. But the soul that sees its misery, feels its wound, discerns its nakedness and want, is convinced by the Spirit, as an indwelling principle of light, of the suitableness of Christ to its own case; it is taken with the great designs of God by him, and at times will, and does with inward approbation and sweet affection pronounce him, "the chiefest among ten thousand," Song.5:10, yea, that he is "altogether lovely." Song.5:16.

Thirdly, suppose the sun had shined out upon innocent nature, as the sun of righteousness shines out upon us, vessels of mercy, would it have wrought equal wonder, equal love, equal reverence? If it be allowed, that it would have advanced innocent nature, and set it wondering and praising with standing angels; yet the advance not being from so great a deep, the work would not have been so great, and the wonder not so great. And as there would have been no room for discriminating grace to have displayed itself, as it does now, there would not have been the inquiry and admiration, why me, and not another? "Lord, how is it, that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jn.14:22. Men raised and advanced in a state of integrity would have contemplated and admired God in his greatness, his unsearchable goodness; but that shining attribute mercy had made no appearance, had found no place, because the creature was not become miserable. Yea, love had not appeared in its full lustre; his "all wisdom and prudence," Eph.1:8, had been yet concealed; all these glories being in Christ, they are opened and displayed by the redemption we have in him. Lk.2:14. In the case supposed, our first parents would have found themselves amazingly railed; but as they had not been wounded they had been strangers to a cure; but their fallen posterity, on whom the sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings, Mal.4:2, they feel a cure, and are filled with wonder and joy on the account of it.

2. The supposed glorious shine upon pure nature would not have wrought the same, or equal love, as it does in fallen man. Love to God, in pure nature, I humbly conceive, arose from that love which was manifested by the God of nature; it was begotten by bounty and goodness let in upon the reasonable creature; whereby it was made to embrace its God as a bounteous Creator and Benefactor; and this seems to be its height by the law of

nature. Psal.4:2. All God's creatures, either standing angels, or recovered men, must with all humility say with the Apostle, "by the grace of God I am what I am." I Cor.15:10. What is love to God in the heart of a poor creature, but the effect of the love of God let in upon the soul? "We love him, because he first loved us." I Jn.4:19. There would not, there could not, in reverence be it spoken, have been such beaming in of the love of God in all its various glorious forms upon innocent nature, either man before the fall, or elect angels, I Tim.5:21, as upon fallen sinful man. To conclude that love would have been the same, or equal in the creature, had it not fallen, and then been recovered by the love of God through Christ in a way of companion and mercy, is to argue beside the rule. "There was {said our Lord to Simon} a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, thou hast rightly judged." Lk.7:41-43. In the former case love had looked down upon man on even ground, and drawn him up to heaven; but in the latter it looks down upon man as under ground, yea, in the depths of hell, and raises him from thence. "For great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." Psal.86:13.

3. This fills it with the highest joy, and bows it with the deepest reverence. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD." Psal.40:2-3. The sweetest praise for the greatest benefits. "What shall I render to the Lord?" Psal.116:12. When the soul is led to look into the deeps, the depths of our misery by

sin, the bottomless pit into which we were fallen, and discovers there the depths of mercy that founded the depths of our misery and drew us out; then prostrate at the throne of grace are our souls, our inward powers, and cry out, O the depths of the riches, not only of the wisdom and knowledge, but of the love and mercy of God too! Eph.2:4.

I would appeal to all, I would ask all the saved of the Lord, when are you most filled with abhorrence of sin? Most humbled and bowed at the foot of God? Made to walk in most tenderness and forbearance of one another in love? Eph.4:2. Is it not when you are led to look into the depths of your misery, set forth by the depths of God's mercy, when the pains of hell got hold of him, Psal.116:3, who drank of the brook in the way; therefore hath he lifted up the head. Psal.110:7.

CHAPTER V

Of the principle of faith, and how it is implanted in the soul. That as to its being, it comes not under the notion of a duty at all.

Faith as a grace, and a new covenant blessing, comes in a way of Divine Sovereignty, and stands, to the creature, upon the same foot as election, the covenant of grace, and imputation of righteousness do; and is God's application of the salvation he hath provided to the soul; and therefore called his saving of it. Eph.2:8. Its principle, and how wrought, we shall show.

First, when grace comes down to dwell in the soul, it comes in the form of light, and as such takes up its dwelling in the understanding. He hath given us an understanding. It is not a shadow, as the apostle saith, the law had, of good things to come, but the very image of the things; as Christ is said to be the image of the invisible God. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, Jn.17:2; Heb.10:1; Col.2:17; Heb.11:1, {as well as,} the evidence of things not seen. The Apostle John speaking of it, calls it the truth that dwelleth in you, and shall be with you forever. II Jn.1:2. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." I Jn.5:20.

As light was the first beauty in the first creation, "and God said, let there be light and there was light, and God saw the light that it was good," Gen.1:3, so in the second creation this light is first, "the eyes of their

understanding being enlightened." Eph.1:18. "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." Isa.29:18. The Apostle speaking of this new creation's likeness to the first, saith, "for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." II Cor.4:6. {God hath written one book for reason to read in, another for faith; the creature discovers to reason, now eclipsed, the eternal Power and Godhead; but God's glories are written in the face of Jesus Christ as Mediator and Saviour, and there it is that the saved of the Lord read his glories, and shall be reading of them to all eternity. "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Eph.2:7.}

Had God made man before he commanded the light, and placed him upon the unformed earth, the shapeless chaos had not appeared, nor had man appeared to himself; so our souls, devoid of moral rectitude, that image enstamped upon us at first, and now defiled, and full of ugly deformity, see what they are, whilst they remain unenlightened; for the light does not give being to things, it discovers them as they are, "for whatever doth make manifest is light." Eph.5:13. And therefore though the condition of man by the fall, and the rich provision God hath made in Christ, and proclaimed by the Gospel, are the same before as they are after this work of God upon, or in the soul; yet till the day-spring from on high, through the tender mercy of our God, visit us, Lk.1:78, we discern neither ourselves as we are, nor what God hath prepared for us; but when the sun of righteousness arises, with healing in his wings, the soul makes in that light its secret removed from the covenant of works to that of grace. "But what things were gain to

me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil.3:7-9. And though there is, and will be a gendering to bondage still, yet will there be a ceasing from confidence in the flesh. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil.3:3.

This being the principle or seed sown in the soul, from hence arises what makes up a fuller definition, or account we have of faith in the scriptures. I: It discovers the inward pollution of the nature. The natural conscience, by comparing the actions of life with the word, yes, the natural conscience, where the word does not come, accuses and charges the guilt of some things upon itself, Rom.2:13-15, yet does it not discover the spring from whence they flow, and it doubts not but it can make some atonement, and bears itself up in the pride of its own doings; but this light discovers the loathsome pollution that is within, humbles and brings down the soul at God's foot. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Isa.6:5. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:5-6. Rom.7:12-24.

II: It brings over the will. It does not make the soul bow by a kind of force or violence put forth upon it; but that becomes its choice which before it had no value nor esteem for. This answers the promise, "thy people

shall be willing in the day of thy power." Psal.110:3. Lofty thoughts, and haughty imaginations about its own works and doings, as the Pharisee had, are now brought down, Lk.18:11-12, not because the soul would uphold them though it cannot; but it would let them go, would be found in Christ, not having on its own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ. Phil.3:9. They that know thy name will put their trust in thee. Psal.9:10. And though there may and do remain in the soul many faintings, and many fears, by reason of sin, indwelling sin; and thoughts now arise, that Christ will have nothing to do with one so vile, with so unworthy; this does not alter its will; no, but here it waits, and another thought of God's design to pardon and save, keeps us from sinking quite, and stays us at his foot. "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Psal.130:3-4. This light does not make the soul to fly from the Lord as guilty; but to bow and rely upon him as Peter, "to whom shall we go?" Jn.6:68.

III: This engages the soul to the Lord in love and desire. It does not only make the soul willing to be saved in this way, but begets in it a liking of it, and kindles love and desire to it. The soul feels the bands of love, and moves toward it. "We love him, because he first loved us." I Jn.4:19. The soul would not be as it was before, at ease upon the first covenant; no, though it might be supposed to think it should not perish; yet it has found that which is better to it than its former ease and carnal security. It has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and follows him. Jn.10:27; Jn.4:14. The discoveries the Lord has made of himself affects the soul as the sun does the body; delights the eye in the beholding, and gratifies it with a sense of feeling. "And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Lk.24:32. Indeed

when the Lord withdraws, the soul grows cold, and desire languishes; and though for a while, it may be, looks after him with languishing, as the eye waits upon a departing friend till out of sight; and through fumes of corruption from within, the perplexing cares of this life, together with the many baits the adversary prepares to draw off our eye, to draw off our thoughts from Christ; in these circumstances the soul falls asleep, and we have no more sense of the things of God than we have of the things of nature when we slumber on our beds; yet then if the Lord makes his appearance, but as through the lattice in an ordinance; or when we hear others speaking of him, or any other way he is pleased to appear. The soul knows him from a stranger; desire awakes and she moves after him. "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle." Job 29:2-4. Thus a child of light, as born of the light, it owns its birth, I Thes.5:5, breaths after the light; nor can it be satisfied without it. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Psal.17:15.

Secondly, as this principle is light, so it is immediately, and in a moment from the Father of lights; it cannot be conceived to be wrought in the soul either in a way of persuasion or reasoning, but by the direct shining of God. But if we consider its nature as spiritual light; and that it is in all that are, or ever were, and shall be saved, among whom there are many that could not receive in the former way; and the manner of the Holy Ghost speaking of it in the Scripture, it will fully appear to be immediately and instantaneously from God. It is a spiritual light, which no man hath or can have without the Spirit. When the soul is thus favored with the anointing

from the Holy One, it hath some discerning of spiritual things, and till then it cannot discern them at all. This incapacity did not come upon us by the fall; we lost our moral rectitude, but not any of the special blessing of the covenant, which were given only in Christ. The prophet saith, "for since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." Isa.64:4. By these words, since the beginning of the world, the prophet carries our thoughts back, beyond man's fall, even to his estate before sin entered and in saying, none besides thee, excludes all creatures from having had this knowledge. The secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear him, through all this space of time since the foundation of the world, is said not to have been perceived by the ear or the eye; however God may be pleased, after he hath shown the soul light, Psal.118:27, to make use of both in carrying on the work. See what the Apostle saith, how he declares the things of the Spirit unattainable, and that for a reason that held as good before as since the fall; because they are only spiritually discerned. I Cor.2:14.

Many things are discoverable by reason, and a rational knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel is attainable by the use of the Word; and men are highly to blame that they do not use their opportunity more, which would certainly answer their pains whilst here. It is an unhappy mistake that we are fallen into, to tell our hearers, that unless they get some spiritual benefit by that opportunity they had better have been anywhere than there; and at the same time, if we preach the doctrines of the Gospel, we tell them, it's not in their power to get any; and thus whilst we press them to do what we tell them they cannot do, we discourage them from doing what is their reasonable service; and which, if done, would render them pleasant to themselves and

profitable unto others. How much better would it be for youth to attend a sermon, than to give their ears to hear the lewdness and profaneness that is acting upon the common stage of the world; to employ their eyes in looking into the Scriptures, the best body of morals in the world; the most surprising history, where all the wonderful facts related are well attested, rather than to read wanton plays and idle romances? Virtue is its own reward here, though it does not merit heaven. But to the point in hand; reason is a serviceable light, but not a saving light. We can see many things by the light of a fire, by the light of a candle, but we can see the sun only in his own light. So by the spirit of a man, which is the candle of the Lord, Prov.20:27, we see many profitable things for the present state; but Christ, the Sun of righteousness, Psal.36:9, is only seen in his own light; and till he comes, there is not one ray of spiritual light in the soul. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." I Jn.5:20.

Reason is further useful, as it is sub-ordinated unto faith in the children of light. This ought to be attended to. The Apostle uses persuasion to stir up the children of God to outward obedience. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom.12:1. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Phil.2:1-2. Yea, and the children of God reason with themselves, and in themselves, in this light, "what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that

grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Rom.6:1-2. "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people." Psal.116:12-14. Yea, and we know, that by comparing one thing with another, by the assistance of the Spirit, in the use of our faculties, we arrive at a more particular and useful knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, and an understanding of what Israel ought to do. "And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." I Chron.12:32. But as the principle of faith is a light above reason, so it is not reasonable to suppose, that it was wrought or begotten by reasoning, but by the revelation of the Holy Ghost. "But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 32:8. And seeing the principle of faith is one in all, for let the opinions of God's people be ever so diverse, and ever so many, and the difference ever so great as to degrees of knowledge, the principle is one, {"one Lord, one faith, one baptism," Eph.4:5,} and all are alike passive in the reception, or implantation of that principle. We were as passive in it, as in our mother's conception of us. How different so ever the method of providence may have been with us before calling, or after calling, as to trying, afflicting and comforting; I am not able to conceive a different way in the first quickening, but that it is immediately from the Lord. "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." Job 33:14-17.

{Some have been at loss to make a judgment about their state, because they know not when the change was wrought. Says such an one, I indeed find in myself a need of Christ, conceive him to be a suitable Saviour, and sometimes feel him precious to my soul; but I do not know when this began, what can I make of it? To which I would answer; as we don't know when we were quickened, nor how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child, so we may not know when God infused life into the soul. But as there must be life before motion; so these cannot be a new motion but there must be first a new life. To the principle of life in the soul that is born again Christ and the Gospel are as music to the ear, and as precious meat to the palate, or as milk to babes; this carries its own evidence in it, for "blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance." Psal.89:15.}

So concluding his way to be one in all, I would ask, can it be supposed, that by reasoning from, or upon the word, God gave life to those who were saved by grace before there was any part of the written word in being? Surely, no; or, can it be thought, that infants are so wrought upon who are not capable of understanding one word; yet these must be born again, Jn.3:5, that die in infancy and go to heaven? And, besides, there have been idiots who have given testimony for the grace of God; and some have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, Col.1:13, who could not read one word; and this one done before they ever heard the Gospel preached. Reasoning could not take effect here, but it must be an immediate work.

I will add a few places of Scripture, that persuade me, that the first effectual work upon the soul is instantaneous and immediate. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together

with Christ, by grace ye are saved." Eph.2:4-5. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Col.2:12. And further, it is called a creation, "for 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.

Let us only consider, whether there were the least space of time between the outgoing of the divine command and the existence of the creature. What arguments were used to persuade the light to shine out of darkness, or what persuasives were made use of to Adam's dust to receive the figure of a man? Yet when God had made his creatures, and masterpiece of all his works here below, he succored, and upheld by the means of the other creatures, so when God hath put new life into the soul, he sanctifies and blesses his word and ordinances, as means he hath appointed, Eph.4:11-12, for the feeding, nourishing, and building up his saints in their most holy faith. Jude 1:20. Now seeing this work is at first wrought immediately by God, and comes upon the soul as light from the sun; it follows, that the poor soul that is dark, yea, darkness itself, may, in a moment, be made light in the Lord, Eph.5:8, and be made to say, as the man in the Gospel, "one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Jn.9:25.

An infant may be made a partaker of light as well as men of full age, "hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, yea; have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Matt.21:16. Here the weak, the foolish, yes, idiots, stand upon even ground with the great, the noble, the wise men of this world; and God casts the lot as it seems good in his sight. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath

chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." I Cor.1:26-28. Further, as Joseph's cup was secretly put into Benjamin's sack, so this blessing may be secretly conveyed into the bosom of a poor sinner of any way, of any denomination; whereby the soul is made to see its misery, and feel its want, and is guided to look to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness; though thou "canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth," Jn.3:8, neither is able to give much account of it. And on the other hand, there may be those who can say many things from the word about regeneration, who are yet strangers to the thing.

Objection. But those who are called by grace are said to be begotten by the word, and born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. I Pet.1:23. Therefore it is done in a way of reasoning from the word.

Answer. The children of the second Adam are begotten into his image by himself, who was made a quickening spirit, I Cor.15:45, as the children of the first Adam received their image from him. They are not said to be begotten by that word which was not so soon as time began, and when time shall be no more shall cease to be, but by that WORD which liveth and abideth forever; which was with the Father; was made flesh and dwelt with us, and now is in every one that believeth. The written word was designed, rather to be the means of the souls feeding, and to satisfy it, that is passed from death to life, than to work the first change; as writings may satisfy a person of his title to an estate, through they do not give him eyes to see it, nor to read his title. And as reason was not set in a Gospel-way of knowing and enjoying God, and

still takes a different course, Rom.7:23, "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, &c." We have need of the written word to reprove our carnal reasonings, and keep our judgements right in the doctrine of the Gospel; and to direct our steps in the outward worship of God, and discipline of his house, Isa.8:20, which we should not know without the word. Also God hath been pleased to give us the more sure word of prophecy, I Pet.1:19, as a weapon against the adversary, to repel the subtlety and rage of men and devils. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph.6:17. There are many uses of the word to the quickened soul, and to others; but it does not appear from hence, that it works the first life in the soul.

But if it be allowed, that the preaching of the word is a means of God's conveying life at first to the soul; can it be supposed, that a command, which is of the law, {and will always suggest, that it is the creature's duty to do something in order to its own salvation, and generally is understood to suppose a power too,} is so well adapted to answer the design, as the preaching of the Gospel, which is a pure doctrine of grace and mercy? "This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal.3:2.

From what hath been said above, viz., that the principle of faith is a supernatural light, distinct from reason; and, that it is from the Father of glory, Eph.1:17, by an immediate shine through Christ upon the soul; and so as to the principle, it is God's act or work, not the creature's; how can we conceive that faith, as to the being of the principle, comes under the nature or notion of a duty at all, without bringing the author of it under a law, which is unsuitable to his being? And seeing it is allowed to be a special part of God's salvation by grace, and so a peculiar privilege; how came this alone to be under the

law and not election, and other blessings of the New Covenant? And does it not stand upon an equal foot, to make creation, regeneration, and resurrection unto a state of glory, the creature's moral duty too; seeing this never was in the creature's power, any more than those? And as it cannot be conceived the duty of us creatures to be, it being the pure Sovereignty of God that gave us being; yet when it pleased God to make us, and to bless and adorn us with all the hues of nature, as Dr. Goodwin calls the moral rectitude, God created us in; it was our duty to live to his glory; so when it pleased God to create us in Christ, Eph.2:10, we are under all the glorious ties of love and grace to praise him, and magnify him through time and eternity. This principle of light will abide wherever it is, as a token of God's favour, Prov.14:10, and be in the heart that knows its own bitterness, that joy which a stranger intermeddles not with, Isa.60:20, till the Lord, who will be the everlasting light of his people, will put an end to the days of darkness and mourning. I Jn.3:2.

CHAPTER VI

A brief view of several texts produced by this author, with his reasonings on them, as opposed to our sentiments.

As we have reason to suppose, it was one design of this author to expose to contempt the labors of that eminent servant of Christ, Mr. Hussey; so it may not be improper to refer the reader to the book and page where he hath given his sense of many of the Scriptures made use of in the modest answer; that upon the comparing them, the unprejudiced enquirer may judge, whether of the two have given the more consistent interpretations. Here it must be observed, that this author hath two things to do, to show, that the texts he brings, speak to unconverted sinners; and that they command them, as such, to believe in Christ with that faith which is called saving. If he fails in either of these, his assertion falls to the ground.

The foundation he lays in Psalms 2:10-11, from the exhortation here, to kiss the Son, which this author argues is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ. But it follows not hence, unless the phrase be used in no other sense elsewhere; and if it were not, unless the analogy of faith, and the light of the context, oblige us to understand it so, it is possible it may have another meaning here. I conceive he hath neither of these to support his inference. For, to kiss, may intend to receive instruction, as when a scholar receives doctrine from the lips of his master. And it is used for a testimony of homage to and acknowledgment of a king; as when Samuel is said to kiss Saul, "then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" I Sam.10:1. And to this kiss

of homage some refer these words. Both these are the duty of kings and judges to do, and they themselves profess to do them, where the Bible is received. That this place does not intend a general call to faith in Christ, appears from its being directed to kings and judges, and not to all men. And that it does not intend a call to believe in Christ, according to the sense of the question, is evident from what the author calls motives to their mentioned duty, viz., a dread of Christ's anger and kindled wrath. For though dread of anger and wrath may, and often does restrain a creature from doing what its vicious appetite lusts after; yet is it none of the sweet cords that draw the soul to Christ, Hos.11:4, or, that constrains it to love and obedience when it hath received him. "For the love of Christ constraineth us." II Cor.5:14. Besides, this makes them motives to dead sinners to quicken themselves; which being God's act, not the creatures, for man is not put upon doing of. It was man's sin to destroy a moral life; but it is not man's sin that he hath not a spiritual one. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." Hos.13:9. It is God's eternal grace that gives life. Tit.1:1. When we creatures use motives, we suppose life, and an habit or capacity of being moved. Who of us will offer to delight a blind man by holding colors before him? Or draw a deaf one after us by melodious sounds? Men may and ought to be stirred up to rational and moral acts by proper motives; and those that sleep may be awaked and routed up; but the dead cannot be made alive thereby. No, the soul must first be quickened before it moves, or before external motives can possibly take effect. What motives can be laid before the dead {as all in unregeneracy are said to be} to excite them to vital acts? Eph.2:1-3. And what better success could we expect, than if we should go into the church-yard, and use motives to the dead to raise themselves?

Nor is there the same ground to exhort all to believe in Christ as their Saviour, as there is for all kings and judges to be subject unto him. Matt.20:28. For he did not give himself a ransom for all the individuals of mankind; but he is the prince of the kings of the earth; and the Father will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Psal.2:8. Be wise, now therefore, may possibly have respect unto those kings and judges whom God will call by grace, and make willing in the day of his power; or more extensively to kings and judges, to sway the scepters he hath given them, and use the power he hath entrusted them with, for the outward good and welfare of his church in the kingdoms where he hath set them to rule. This seems plainly to be Calvin's sense of the text. "David exhorts all kings and rulers to kiss the Son of God, he does not bid them, giving over their authority, bind themselves down to a private life, but submit the power they bear to Christ, that he alone may have pre-eminence above all.

"O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the LORD will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD." Psal.4:2-5. This Psalm, as some think, was penned on the revolt of the tribes under Sheba, II Sam.20:1-2, and if so, it contains an exhortation to them to return to their lawful King, verse 4, whom God had let apart for himself; and to offer sacrifice, verse 5, which none were commanded or permitted to do, but the church; and that only upon his own altar in Jerusalem. "But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his

habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come.” Deut.12:5.

But it is said, they were unconverted, because they turned David’s glory into shame, verse 2, loved vanity, and followed lies. Answer. It follows not, that they were unregenerate, any more, than that Ephraim was, of whom God saith, “he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart,” Isa.57:17-18, or those whose story God gives in the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel; or those whom God calls his own people, who are bent to backsliding, and yet the Lord cannot give them up. Hos.11:7-8. Indeed they did very wickedly, but, “if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities; O Lord, who shall stand?” Psal.130:3. Besides, he treats them in the following verses, not as he is wont to treat the Lord’s enemies, but with brotherly kindness. To the triumphant demand, “and who in the fear of God, can say, that though God did command them, yet it was not their duty?” Page 6. I answer, nobody. But how does this prove they were unconverted sinners; but rather, that they knew him as the object of their trust.

Proverbs 1:20-23. “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates, in the city she uttereth her words, saying, how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity; and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” This, says the author, “is a special command to turn, which must include submission, conversion, and therefore faith.” Answer. The text, Jeremiah 3:12, “go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD, &c.,” includes conversion and faith, but does not prove, that the backsliding children were unregenerate; nor do the words of the twenty second verse. But if they did, they prove no more that they are

commanded to believe with a special saving faith, than that they are commanded to regenerate themselves; for they can no more believe without regeneration, than turn without faith.

Proverbs 8:1-5. "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart." Here this author concludes that the persons spoken to were unconverted, because simple ones and fools. But it follows not from thence that they were unconverted. Our Lord said to his disciples, Lk.24:25, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe, all that the prophets have spoken!" And then our author infers, they were called to believe in Christ, for reasons and motives, to which I need say nothing more than has been said above.

Proverbs 9:4-6. "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding." Christ is here supposed to have finished his work, and upon that, the call to unconverted sinners to come in, &c. Answer. After Christ had finished his work, there were some who were born again, that had not turned into the dispensation. Acts 10. But he concludes the call is to the unconverted, because they are said to be simple. If so, we may conclude David unconverted, when he said, "the Lord preserveth the simple, I was brought low and he helped me." Psal.116:6. One would think a person very necessitous to catch at this place, to prove a general call; for if all were intended by it, pray, who must they forsake, as they are commanded to do? "They are," saith he, "to come and eat the bread

of life, and drink of that wine which is drink indeed; and this cannot be done but in faith. The motive, they shall live." Here's the plain truth of the case. They are to come and eat the bread of life; but this they cannot do without faith, without life; yet they are to be moved to it by a promise of giving life. That is, they are to come, being dead, and if they come they shall live. But this, like the rest, proves nothing to his purpose. {See Mr. Hussey's God's Operations, &c., page 264-265.}

Ecclesiastes 12:13. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." The whole duty of man is here mentioned; and every duty is a privilege, Psal.19:11, yet there are privileges which are not the duty of a creature. It's the duty of man to keep the whole law; it is mere and pure privilege to be saved by grace; and faith is a part of that salvation. Eph.2:8. To be made upright was the creatures privilege; and it was his duty to walk so; though, as a certain faithful minister said, God did not command him to make himself wings and fly. From this text the author concludes it to be the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ, which is but a begging of the question; and what he asserts, viz., that it is impossible to fear God without it proves it not. I desire him to inform us, whether it be the duty of the heathen to fear God, who never heard of Christ; and therefore, as he allows, not under any obligation to believe in Christ.

Isaiah 1:18. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The persons spoken to here, are said by this author, to be vile unconverted people, because their sins are said to be like scarlet and crimson. But this proves it not; for the sins of God's people are not less heinous than the sins of the rest;

neither are their aggravations after calling less than they were before. "We {saith the prophet} are all as an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isa.64:6. Whatever some men may think of their sins, and of themselves, the Apostle thought no better of himself, than the Holy Ghost speaks of the house of Israel here. "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Rom.7:14. But suppose they were allowed to be un-regenerated, what is there here to prove that it is their duty to believe in Christ? It is an absolute promise, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool. {See Hussey's, "Glory of Christ Unveiled," &c., page 448, 449; plus, Gill's, "Cause of God and Truth," page 78.}

Isaiah 27:5. "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." First, if the unconverted be intended here, then is it the sinner that makes his own peace; for it is said in the text, "and he shall make peace with me." Yea, secondly, then is our peace made twice, or else Christ hath not made it at all. But the words are to be referred to Christ, who hath made peace by the blood of his cross. {See Hussey's, "Operations of Grace," page 270 to 275.}

Isaiah 55:1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." To make this serve his purpose he tells us, "that this thirst is not of an evangelical spiritual kind, which increases in proportion to our communion with the Lord, but a thirst to be removed by faith; why? Because they are supposed to be restless." Answer. This proves it not, for in those that are born again there is still an appetite to the things of nature, and the flesh lusteth against the spirit, Gal.5:17, and so restless

were God's people, that they forsook him, Jer.2:13, who is the fountain of living waters; she, the church, went after her lovers, Hos.2:13, and forgot me, saith the Lord. They might, notwithstanding, be regenerated, and restless on the account of a natural appetite, or for want of pure ordinances, in which God hath promised to satisfy his people with the fatness of his house. {See Hussey's, "Operations of Grace," page 263 to 267; and Gill's, "Cause of God and Truth," part 1, page 91.}

Isaiah 55:2. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." The foregoing answer shall serve here; only as this author, to confirm his opinion, that the persons spoken to were unregenerate, observes, they were such who labored for that which satisfieth not. I answer, so did Ephraim, Hos.12:1, yet a dear son, Jer.31:20; Hos.11:8, and a pleasant child.

Isaiah 55:7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." To make these words to intend the first turn, as this author does, makes repentance, or turning to God, antecedent to pardon; which is contrary to the doctrine of the Scriptures. Psal.130:3. Plus it makes the encouragement to be to an impossible condition, i.e., to what the creature cannot do; and what is not provided for the non-elect; and so in respect to them an encouragement in the air. Is it accounted serious among men, to invite to an entertainment, when we know the persons invited cannot possibly come? Or to promise when there is no design to bestow? But if we understand the words here to be a call to God's backsliding people to return, then the words, and he will abundantly pardon, are suited to take off that fear,

that its probable they might be under by reason of their offense. Thus it agrees with God's method in other places; as Jeremiah 3:12-14 & Hosea 14:1-4. {See Hussey's, "Glory of Christ Unveiled," &c., page 368-369.}

Isaiah 45:22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." The author understanding this to be a general call, argues the general duty of all to believe from it. But, first, these words seem to be directed to God's own remnant, by what goes before, verse 20, "assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations." The Lord observes to them the vanity of trusting in idols, as the heathen did, and declares himself to be the only Saviour; and then in this 22nd verse, says, "look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, &c.," he does not say, all lands, or all nations, but all "ye" whom he is said to have gathered out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south. Psal.107:3. Or, secondly, if we take them as a prophesy to be fulfilled in succeeding ages, then may they intend God's efficacious call {which is to be distinguished from his moral commands} to his election among all nations; and his providential call to the rest to receive his word, and acknowledge the Lord's dominion. And this, I conceive, may be the sense, by the following words, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Isa.45:23.

Ezekiel 33:11-16. "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel, &c." The author of the Modern Answer, remarks on these words, "the mercies and compassions of the Lord to poor wicked sinners, and the pleasure he takes in their conversion." By which we must understand

all poor sinners, and that they should convert themselves, as Mr. F. Goodwin, and others understand them, or else they are nothing to the purpose. But, first, to refer this text to condemnation before God, and its contrary, viz., justification of life, Rom.5:18, is to place our justification in our own righteousness, our freedom from condemnation and death in our own works, and thereby make the death of Christ to be in vain. For if righteousness come by the law then Christ is dead in vain. Gal.2:21.

Secondly, it makes our justification alterable, that is, that a man may be in a justified state one day, and out of it another, {contrary to Romans 8:1, &c.,} for the 11th and 12th verses speak of the righteous man's dying, as well as of the wicked man's living; yea, that the same person may live and die, and die and live again; and cannot therefore refer to our state before God, which is invariable in Christ.

Further, to take this text in a sense that opposes the doctrine of the perseverance of the called of Jesus Christ, Rom.1:6, as this author does, is to take it in an unsound sense; for, "he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil.1:6. This place therefore cannot intend that life which is opposed to death in trespasses and sins, Eph.2:1, because it supposes they may die again. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph.2:13. Dr. Owen saith of a parallel place, Ezek.18:24-25, "that this should be a standard and rule of God's proceeding with his people in the covenant of mercy, no man that seems to have either understanding, judgment or conscience can reasonably imagine." {See John Owen, "Doctrine of Saints Perseverance," Page 403-404.} Lastly, the message was sent to the house of Israel, which was the peculiar people of God, verse 10, and cannot be supposed to be an

unregenerate body. {See Gill's, "Cause of God and Truth," part 1, page 141, &c.} But I suppose the words to concern the Jews, and to be suited to their state and condition in the land of Canaan, and to have a typical meaning, as many other places in the Old Testament have. Ezek.18:2. Or if they may be referred to anything in the New Testament church, it must be to our being in Christ, Jn.15:5-7, by visible profession, wherein a man may be said to live and die, be justified and condemned in the church, but not so before God.

Micah 6:8. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" His argument for the state of the man, is the enquiry which he calls "considering, whether he should give his firstborn for his transgression," proves not the man in unregeneracy, &c. We have here God's controversy with his own people, Mic.6:2, wherein he lays before them his kindness and gentleness, in melting expressions of love and fatherly affection, "O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee?" Mic 6:3. He puts them in mind of an eminent appearance for them, "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD." Mic.6:5. O my people, consider these things, and how I was their refuge and defense; how I blasted the rage, and baffled the designs of the king of Moab, and the kingdom of darkness; and made a wizard say, "surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" Numb.23:23. Hell stood confounded at God's appearance for his people. Now remember this, saith God, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord; that is, how I

have kept covenant and mercy with a provoking people, "a people bent to backsliding from me," Hos.11:7, and yet, "how shall I give thee up Ephraim," Hos.11:8, they are my people still.

This wrought upon the soul of the man, and filled him with an abhorrence of self and sin, Job 42:6, as God's appearance did Job; it melted him, and awaked in him a sense of the desirableness of God's presence, favor, and communion; which made him say in effect, I had rather part with the dearest things to nature, than be cast out of the presence, Psal.51:11, of so dear, so gracious a God and Father; yet all these things were I to give would not do. For I conceive, such enquiries do not necessarily infer, that he thought, they would atone for sin; but rather express the depth of his contrition, and a sense of their insufficiency; as when Job said, "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?" Job 7:20.

But if it be urged, that the man was perplexed about access to, and communion with the Lord, therefore an unbeliever. Answer. I would ask, is confusion of mind, about communion with God, and access to God, a proof that the soul is in total unbelief? Surely a concern about access to, and fellowship with the Lord, carries in it a sweet intimation of a better principle, and things that accompany salvation. Heb.6:9. Have not many of God's children, after calling out of darkness into his marvelous light, I Pet.2:9, by reason of indwelling sin, Job 23:2-3, though not in total unbelief, sometimes felt an horror of darkness, and inexpressible confusion about matters of this nature?

Nor, is the language here, such, as of those in total unbelief, mentioned in the Word of God; here's a wherewith shall I come before the Lord, importing desire; but the kings, and captains, the great men of the earth;

yea, the bond and free, all being in unbelief, and apprehensive of impending wrath, are represented as flying from him, and saying to the mountains, and to the rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, Rev.6:15-16, implying the utmost dread, without the least mixture of hope.

To conclude, 1. The man was one of God's own people. 2. It may be justly supposed he knew the way; for it is not said, as this author says, "he should have known better," but "he hath shewed thee, O man." 3. God is here said to be his, walk humbly with thy God, which signifies covenant right. Yea, "happy is that people, that is in such a case yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD." Psal.144:15.

Matt.3:3:2,8. "And saying, repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, &c." "As true repentance {says this author} is always a concomitant of faith, and in a sense may be said to flow from it, so he commands them to believe in Christ, prepare his way, and make his paths strait." John was the messenger sent to prepare the way before him, &c., Matt.3:1; Lk.1:76, and was as one that is sent before a king who visits his dominions, to proclaim the king's purpose to come, and that he is at hand; that they may get ready to give attendance when he comes, and hear his pleasure and design more particularly. {See Hussey's, "Operations of Grace," page 240 to 241.} This author concludes that saving faith is here commanded, because John said, repent, &c. But it ought to be observed, that this proves it not, unless there be no kind of repentance due from the creature but what is a fruit of new covenant grace, as the faith in controversy is allowed to be. To force the text to speak contrary to the analogy of faith is a desperate strain to serve a turn. Now does the Gospel teach, that it is man's duty to prepare himself for Christ to save him? Or, that

Christ is God's salvation by absolute gift? Certainly Christ is God's salvation? From first to last in every step of it. "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the LORD; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Isa.42:6-8. He is a complete and perfect way. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jn.14:6.

Take this author in the plain sense of his words, and it is this, poor unconverted sinners, says he are commanded to believe, prepare Christ's way, &c., that is, they are to make themselves alive, as a preparation for Christ to make them alive; for faith is a fruit of life. Alas, is the Gospel come to this? Unconverted sinners must prepare a way for Christ to come to save them, as a woman prepares room to receive a guest. No, where Christ comes, and when Christ comes, he brings that along with him that prepares himself a room, and obtains the souls welcome.

Matt.11:29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here the weary and heavy laden are called; and they are bid to take upon them Christ's yoke, &c. It has been already observed, that dead men are not spiritually weary; the body of death is no complaint to them. Christ's yoke seems to be opposed to the yoke of Moses, which, saith the Apostle, neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. Acts 15:10. That contained circumcision, and all the heavy and painful service and discipline of the law; this the sweet and easy service under the Gospel. The call, probably, may be to them to come under the new dispensation, as Mr. Hussey

understands it. {See Hussey's, "Operations of Grace," page 348 to 367.} Or, it may be understood as an expression of Christ's heart, Jn.6:37, particularly designed for the encouragement and relief of those, who, being quickened by grace, feel the body of death, and groan under the burden. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom.7:24. Thus it is often used by the Spirit.

"Nothing {saith this author} but the most blinded, resolute prejudice, dare say our Lord did not here command them to believe in him." Here's a positive sourness. Was poor Mr. Hussey a blind unregenerate sinner when he wrote? For these words of the author will agree with none but such an one; and no doubt he knew whose sense of the text he opposed. This is an heavy censure indeed! It's to be hoped, he may not always find a pleasure in spurning at the precious dust of the venerable dead. But in all his anger he had the thought to stay, whilst that faithful servant was entered into the joy of his Lord, and had gotten quite out of hearing. Matt.22:2-4. It might be sufficient here to say, as the text doth, it is a parable. And I think we are hard driven, when we have recourse to parables to prove doctrines.

But how does it appear to be the duty, &c., from hence? "Why, saith this author, what he meant and intended by their coming, was, in the first place, their putting on the wedding garment, their putting on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, &c." It's true, all that have not the righteousness of Christ will perish; but it's strange to say, they perish because they have it not, seeing it is a gift; and we must say of it, as our Lord said to the mother of Zebedee's children, concerning the right and the left hand places in the kingdom, it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. Matt.20:23. The righteousness of Christ is a glorious garment upon the church; but not left to the creature to put it on, any more

than it was left to the creature to prepare it. No, he who made our first parents coats of skins clothed them. Gen.3:21. Provision and application are both of grace. God, who hath made Christ unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," I Cor.1:30, imputeth that righteousness; and gives faith to the soul, as an eye to see how fine grace hath made it, Song 4:1, and as a tongue to sing its praises in sweeter notes, and in a humbler strain. He hath clothed me. He hath covered me. He hath done all for me, and all in me, while I with joy am made to behold it. No, no; to talk of the creatures putting on the righteousness of Christ will not sound harmoniously with what the church says, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, &c." Isa.61:10.

But if it be said, it is Scripture-language, "but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," Rom.13:14, I answer, the words mean no such thing, as putting on Christ and his righteousness in this author's sense of the phrase. For the Apostle is not speaking to unconverted sinners, but to the called of the Lord, Rom.1:6, with whom he joins himself in the foregoing verse, "let us walk, &c." Phil.3:15. Neither is the exhortation to believers to do the special act of God. For imputation of sin to Christ, Isa.53:6, and Christ's righteousness to us, are both ascribed to God. Yea, and it is the Spirit that leads the soul into the possession of all. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come." Jn.16:13. But the exhortation is to outward acts, opposed to the vices mentioned in the foregoing verse, as rioting, drunkenness, chambering, wantonness, strife and envying; that by treading in the steps of the Lord, and

imitating his example, they might show forth the praises, I Pet.2:9, and virtues of him that had called them.

Matt.23:37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" That our Lord does mean by gathering, to save with an everlasting salvation, ought not to be supposed; for had that been the design he could not have missed it. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, &c." Jn.6:37. How does such a sense agree with personal election, particular redemption, and the doctrine of efficacious grace? Had Christ died for them, they would have been sent forth out of the pit, wherein is no water, through the blood of his covenant; and have been saved eternally. But if here, we understand our Lord, that he had done those things, and showed those miracles, which were sufficient to have convinced the reason of, and prevailed upon, the children of Jerusalem to have attended his ministry, had they not been restrained by their guides; and even the rulers themselves, had they not through prejudice, and love to the world, turned away their ears, and shut their eyes; the sense is agreeable to the analogy of faith, and no way inconsistent with the text. {See Gill's, "Cause of God and Truth," part 1, page 134.}

John 6:27-29. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed, &c." Here it is said by this author, "they were unconverted who followed him {viz., Christ} for the sake of the loaves." To which I answer, if low and carnal ends prove men to be unregenerated, I know not where he will find a convert. But admitting that the words were spoken to the unconverted, to reprove their vanity in following him for a piece of

bread rather than to see his mighty works. What is there in this place, Jn.6:16, to prove that they were commanded to believe in him? This author tells us they were bid to labor, &c., and says, "by it he means faith in himself." But this proves it no more, than our bidding our children go to the ordinances of worship, not to show themselves, or to look about them, but to hear the word preached, proves our command to them to believe. To say "but by it he means faith in himself," is to take for granted what ought to be proved; by which method, transubstantiation, or anything else, may be proved. The word he brings to explain it, viz., "this is the work of God, &c," Col.2:12, helps him not; for it is, says our Lord, God's work that ye believe, not your own; but here he would make it the creature's, which is not agreeable to the word. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Jn.7:37. This, I conceive, no more proves a general call, than, whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth, &c., proves a general salvation. He that believeth on me are words not adapted to prove that Christ calls unconverted sinners to believe in him.

John 12:36. "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." The Jews had the light of Christ's doctrine and miracles, and ought to have believed in them. But what is there here to prove, that it is the duty of dead sinners to make themselves alive.

John 16:8-9. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, &c." Here indeed it is justly observed by this author, that if faith was not a duty, unbelief would be no sin. I grant this place fairly concludes his assertion in terms. So also does, John 3:18, "but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." This is a

strong proof that faith is a duty. But I must desire that it may be observed, that we do not deny it to be a sinner's duty to believe. Yet, this proves not enough, unless there be no other kind of faith but that one, which we call saving faith. For if there be another kind of faith, which we have demonstrated there is, chapter one, and that it is the duty of those that hear the Gospel, or that saw the miracles of Christ, to believe with that sort of faith; then what hath been yet said, proves not that the faith, which is opposed to the unbelief in this text, means saving faith; because there are two kinds. "We both labour {saith the Apostle} and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God {who is the Saviour of all men} especially of those that believe." I Tim.4:10. Now how does this text in John prove, that saving faith is meant, any more than this in Timothy, proves for the Arminian, that eternal salvation is meant? I desire that those who are enquiring after truth would compare these things, I Cor.2:13, and weigh them together. If we have no way of reasoning from the Scriptures, but drawing conclusions from the letter; it will not be so easy a thing to maintain our ground against the common adversary, or even to confute the doctrine of transubstantiation.

It is not, whether it is the duty of sinners to believe, but what they are to believe, which is in question; or what kind of faith, is required of un-regenerated sinners. "That therefore {as this author reasons} the commends of God made it their duty to believe, or their not doing so would not have been their sin," does indeed prove what is not denied; but that does nothing at all towards proving what it is deigned to prove. Neither does it appear to me, that our Lord in this place of John, intends that special work upon the world which he effects in his own children; whereunto that unbelief is opposed, which is supposed by this author to be the cause of condemnation. Because to reprove, or convince the world

of sin, &c., is none of those sanctified forms of speech made use of in the Old Testament, where God speaks concerning his calling of his own people, as, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Psal.110:3, "they shall see the glory of the Lord, &c," Isa.35:2, but the words are such as were fore-spoken concerning the enemies of Christ, who should perish, "every tongue that riseth in judgment against thee thou shalt condemn." Isa.54:17. Now if the work here be not a saving work, I don't conceive any reason to conclude, the unbelief here is such as is opposed to the faith of the operation of God.

In the context we have plainly a distinction between the disciples and the world; which our Lord in this Gospel makes use of to signify the election and the rest. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Jn.17:8-9. We have also an account of what the Spirit should do to the one, and what to the other, "he will guide you {the disciples} into all truth," Jn.16:13, "he shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Jn.16:14. But the world he shall reprove of sin, Jn.9:16,30-31, and of righteousness, and of judgment, &c. This shall be their lot, which was done when the Spirit came upon the disciples at the day of Pentecost, and they spake with tongues, and did many wonderful works in the name of their exalted Lord. Here was a further reproof of their sin of unbelief, in that they had not believed Christ to be the great power of God, who had opened the eyes of the blind, and now by the Apostles restored a cripple to the use of his limbs. Acts 3:6 & Acts 4:9-10,13-14. The world of the Jews was then reprov'd of righteousness, that is, that Christ, whom they had counted an impostor, was

risen from the dead, and gone to the Father, which he could not have done, had he not been a righteous person. They were reprov'd of judgment, because the prince of this world was judged, in a manifestation of the victory Christ had gotten over him; who was now ascended up on high, having led captivity captive, Psal.68:18, and made it manifest by the devils becoming subject to the Apostles through his name, Lk.10:17, Satan falls, and his kingdom gives way to the kingdom of Christ. That the aggravated sin and guilt of the Jews was their not believing Christ to be the Messiah, and acknowledging him as such, with a rational assent, upon the evidence of the mighty works which he did, is very plain to me from his own words. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." Jn.10:37-38. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Jn.15:24.

Matt.28:18-19. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." From the commission given to the disciples, the duty of unconverted sinners to believe is argued thus, "they are to teach poor unconverted sinners to observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded them; and it's well known Christ commanded them to believe, ye believe in God, believe also in me." But it's not said, they should command them to believe, but teach them to observe. Now teaching to observe, and commanding to believe, are two things; the one is to be done to them that received the word gladly; they were to be baptized, to be taken into visible fellowship, Acts 2:41, to be formed and builded for an habitation of God through

the Spirit, Eph.2:22, not as unconverted sinners, but as converted to Christ. The other not being in the text I shall say nothing to it. If, as the author supposes, poor unconverted sinners were to be commanded to do all things that Christ commanded his Apostles to do; then were they to command them to go into all nations, to preach the Gospel, to heal the sick, to call out devils as well as believe; for Christ commanded his Apostles to do all these. Further, it is not apt to the case; for the disciples were believers, when Christ spake these words to them, "ye believe in God, believe also in me." Jn.14:1. Christ commanded the living to move, therefore we must command the dead to live; this is not a good way of reasoning. Nor lastly, are Christ and his Apostles to be imitated in all they did by the ordinary ministers of the Gospel; these may not go to the grave of Lazarus, and say, "come forth," Jn.11:43, nor to the upper chamber, where the dead lay, and with Peter say, "Tabitha, arise," Acts 9:40.

Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 16:31. "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, &c." In the two former places repentance is commanded, and in the latter it is said, believe, &c., which are supposed therefore to be plain proofs, that it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ. But, it must be observed, that neither Peter in the former, nor Paul and Silas in the latter, commanded to repent and believe at the first coming together of the multitude, or at their entrance into the prison; which had they done, it would have carried more conviction with it; but they stayed while the persons manifested a deep concern, which discovered a gracious work upon their hearts. For they did not say as persons under a covenant of works do, "what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life," Matt.19:16, but as made to

see their wretchedness, and helplessness in themselves, Job 42:6, which I take to be an effect of the Spirit's work, discovering the deadly pollution of nature, as well as the guilt of sin; as Job said, "I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, &c." Job 7:20. That repentance which may be called gospel repentance, Acts 5:31, being opposed to legal repentance, such as Judas' was, Matt.27:3, is not the first work of grace upon the soul; but as it stands in a turning to God under a Gospel sense of, and sorrow for sin, it follows upon a gracious work, "surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, &c." Jer.31:19. Now this inward change seems to have been already wrought, which the Apostle perceiving, and no doubt understood it to be a verifying of the promise, "I will pour upon the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn," Zech.12:10, and therefore exhorts them to turn to the Lord by all the outward testimonies of an inward change. Nor does it appear to me, that these words, repent, believe, were spoken to all the assembly, or to all that were in the prison; but to those who testified a deep concern about their salvation, or such as the Apostles owned by the designation of brethren. Acts 3:17.

Acts 17:30. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "Wherever, saith the author, this doctrine came, God in it commanded all men everywhere to repent." This carries its answer in it. God, saith he, in it, viz., in this doctrine, commands men to repent, that is, as far as doctrine carries a command in it; which, I conceive, cannot well mean any more, than that wherever the doctrine comes, men ought to believe it; and that we always allow and maintain, "he that believes not God hath

made him a liar." I Jn.5:10. It is evident here the Apostle is endeavoring to bring those wretched pagan idolaters to the acknowledgment of God, as the object of worship, Acts 17:16-28, where he quotes a passage out of one of their own writers, to convince them, viz., "in him we live, and move, and have our being," and concludes, for that reason, that we ought not to think the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by man's device. Then tells them, Acts 17:30, and the times of this ignorance God winked at; he let them go on, took no outward notice of them; or in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, Acts 14:16, but now, in this dispensation, commands all men, that is, where the word comes, to repent. As Barnabas and Paul said to those who would have done sacrifice to them, we preach unto you, that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things which are therein. Acts 14:15. And though such a repentance as is here hinted, is but matter of drollery and jest with some; yet, I am persuaded, it will one day appear to be a truth, that God will have the outward report of the Gospel received, and the Bible received and kept by those, who have no special interest in the promise, and grace contained in it; that it may be in a readiness for his hidden ones, where, and when it than please him to give them grace, and call them out of darkness into his marvelous light in their appointed months. {See Gill's, "Cause of God and Truth," part 1, page 164-168.}

Matt.22:37. "Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This hath been spoken to before, chapter 4, and I shall only add here, that it is the duty of man to love God with all his soul, &c., but this author is contending for more, than all that Adam in his innocency ever had.

Rev.14:6-7. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The author here, as heretofore, without regard to the scriptural distinctions, between the election, and the rest, Rom.11:7, between the called of Jesus Christ, Rom.1:6, and them that are not called; between a special faith, the faith of the operation of God, Col.2:12, and a common faith; between natural worship, Phil.3:3, the duty of all the creatures, and worshiping God in the Spirit, the blessing and privilege of the saved of the Lord, concludes, that neither of the duties commanded can be done without faith; therefore in commanding of each of them God commands faith in his Son. To which I shall answer as before, if they cannot be done without faith of the operation of God, they cannot be done without the Spirit working that faith; therefore in commanding them he commands them to regenerate themselves, and to have the Spirit; which, I think, does not sound agreeable to the Gospel. I shall only add one word, which, I think, will offend no godly mind, "but unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" Psal.50:16.

I have taken sufficient notice of the places of Scripture made use of by this author to prove his assertion, to which we have the promise of many more; but if as many more should be brought, and not applied to prove, either, 1. That Adam had the faith of God's elect before the fall. Or, 2. That his fallen posterity may have it, i.e. that it is put in their power to have it. Or, 3. That the holy, just, and good law of God, commands man, under pain of damnation, to do what never was in his

power to do; I shall not think it concerns me, with regard to this controversy, to take any notice of them.

CHAPTER VII

A reply to this author's answers to several objections.

Objection. 1. "But we are sure there is an election of grace; and this doctrine seems inconsistent therewith." Answer. "Our Lord Jesus Christ did not think so. Many are called but few are chosen." Reply. Our Lord does not say all are called, but many; and it were as just to infer a general redemption from Matthew 20:28, "the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many," as to infer a general calling from this. Again, there is an outward call, and an inward call; the outward call is to the acknowledgment of the Messiah's being come, Jn.1:46; 4:29, and to come into the new dispensation, and to walk accordingly; the inward call is into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, I Cor.1:9, and as it always proceeds according to election, and shall be commensurate thereunto, had that been intended in this place, it would have been effectual. For when the Holy Ghost speaks of that calling which is a new covenant blessing, he limits it to the election, Rom.8:30, and makes it peculiar to those who have a right to the blessing, Rom.8:29; 9:23, even us whom he hath called; denoting that they were called, others not. "Let others {saith he, viz., unbelievers} give diligence to make their calling, or their answering the call of God, and then their election sure." These words were, by the Apostle, spoken to those who were born again, and are an exhortation to them to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; and not an exhortation to dead sinners to live, as he would make them. The doctrine he pleads for does not only seem inconsistent with election, but upon due trial will be found so; for, I humbly conceive, personal election of some to

salvation, and a general call to all to be saved by grace, will not stand together to the glory of God.

Objection. 2. "Redemption is particular; Christ did not die for all that hear the Gospel preached, therefore why should it be their duty to believe in Christ?" Answer. "There is nobody who hears the Gospel preached can justly say, Christ did not die for him; it would be a great sin in any one to say so." Reply. The force of this objection lies here, Christ did not die for all, therefore it is not the duty of all to believe that he did. For if one degree of faith be the duty of the unregenerate sinner, every degree of faith of the same kind is his duty, and consequently that which appropriates Christ. And as nobody knows Christ did not die for him, so nobody knows that he did, till God reveals it by his Spirit, and then the man cannot be an unbeliever. To his calling, II Tim.2:6; Heb.2:9; I Jn.2:2, precious, extensive promises, I need only say, that unless we understand them according to a scriptural restriction, the doctrine of particular redemption cannot be defended. And further, if those general texts are a foundation for everyone to believe, they are a foundation for us to believe all shall be saved, as well where the Gospel doth not, as where it doth come.

Objection. 3. "But seeing all are not saved, why are all commanded to believe in Christ?" Answer. "It is not said, all are commanded to believe in Christ; but all who hear the Gospel preached are so commanded; and how it may be with them in the event, God only knows." Deut.29:29. Reply. The objection might have been stated thus, seeing all are not appointed to salvation, why are all commanded to believe Christ will save them? For the faith we are concerned about always accompanies salvation, and is itself a special part thereof. And his answer should have shown why God will have all men believe with a saving faith, though he never designed nor appointed them to salvation. But, saith he, "how it may

be with them {viz., all that hear the Gospel} in the event, God only knows." Here he plainly declares, that neither he nor anybody else knows, but that all who hear the Gospel are eternally saved; though I hope he knows better. Judas heard the Gospel by the greatest preacher, yet is fallen, that he might go to his place, Acts 1:25, that is to hell; and our Lord said to the Pharisees, "ye are of your father the devil," Jn.8:44, and does nobody know what becomes of the devil's children? Therefore, Deut.29:29, serves not his purpose; for God hath revealed, that all that hear the Gospel are not saved; therefore it belongs to us to know it.

Objection. 4. "Man is weak, and hath no power to obey, therefore why should he be commanded?" Answer. "Though man has lost his power, God has not lost his authority; nor is the law of God disannulled; besides, though man has lost his power, he has not quite lost his reason; therefore to deal with him by precepts, prohibitions, and promises, is the most agreeable way." Reply. It's true, God has not lost his authority by man's fall, nor is man's obligation lessened by his loss of original righteousness; but whatever Adam, by the law of nature owed to God, that his fallen posterity to a man owes, and for his nonpayment must suffer wrath to the uttermost, unless saved by the grace of God through a glorious Redeemer; nor is the law of God disannulled; for if the law had been disannulled, sinners might have been saved without the death of Christ; but what is this to the purpose, seeing Adam had not this grace before he fell? The law commanded man to walk upright on earth, and so it does still; but it did not require Adam to make himself wings and fly to heaven; nor does it command any of his fallen posterity so to do. "Besides {saith the author} though man has lost his power, he has not quite lost his reason; therefore to deal with him by precepts, &c., is the most agreeable way." Here I conceive him

somewhat inconsistent with himself, for he tells us, "that reasoning with God must intend faith in the Messiah, for there can be no reasoning with God out of him; but here, God deals with man according to the remains of reason, as the most agreeable way." How these agree I am not wise enough to discern. But there it was to serve one turn, here another; however, it seems "the 'most' agreeable way" now. But I must ask, what it may be thought to agree with?

1. With the covenant of grace it does not agree; for that is a pure covenant of promise, and sure to all the seed, Rom.4:16, upon no other ground. Gal.3:18. In applying the grace of the covenant, the first thing God does is to make the soul alive; but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. Eph.2:4-5. However agreeable it may be thought to be to the state of man, who "though he has lost his power, hath not quite lost his reason." I am persuaded, since the world began, not one dead sinner has been made alive by it; but by the mighty power of God put forth on the soul. Yea, had all lain in the promise made, and not been applied by the mighty arm of the Lord, we had all perished to a man. "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not enter into the city." Hos.11:9.

2. But it agrees with a pure covenant of works, Gal.3:12, wherein is contained first, precepts, prohibitions, and then promises. This is said to be the most agreeable way, as though there might be others, yet none like this. But, lo! The Gospel shows us a more excellent way.

Objection. 5. "If he was commanded to perform moral, natural acts, it might seem more agreeable; but

you say he is commanded to perform acts which are not in his power." Answer. "Pray, what power hath he to perform moral natural acts? The Scripture says, he is without strength, Rom.5:6, and Paul says, that he, after conversion, was not sufficient to think anything, and therefore not a moral good thing." Reply. To command moral acts might seem more agreeable, that is, to the law, saith the objector. So indeed they do, for all moral acts are the duty of the creature notwithstanding his impotence. But supernatural acts Adam could not put forth before the fall; and as Dr. Ridgley saith, "let it be observed, that this God nowhere commands any to do." {Volume I, page 9.} But the design of the author's answer, or at best, its tendency, is, to set natural, moral, and spiritual acts upon a level, that is, to make the same power and degree of strength necessary for us, to eat, drink, walk, to think and reason about the affairs of this life, and to do the duties we owe to God and one another, as, to raise the dead, to quicken sinners who are dead in trespasses and sins. Eph.2:1-2. But this is to confound what God hath distinguished, and may serve to amuse; but God, who created all things, hath given to them a nature as it pleased him; and hath put in them, by his eternal power, Rom.1:20, a motion which they retain as long as he is pleased to uphold their being, the sun will shine, the waters flow, the pulse beat, and everything produce its kind, Gen.1:22, without a supernatural aid. Divine concurrence continuing with the creatures they continue as they are; but this concurrence, without a supernatural work, raiseth not one dead sinner to a new life.

There are also moral acts done with regard to the law; and that too among the heathen, who had not the written word, "for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which

shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Rom.2:14-15. Kind thoughts of God, as a succorer of the works of his hands; loving and honoring of parents, and rendering the lives of the creatures; doing to others as we would they should do unto us; observing the laws of chastity; keeping the boundaries of property, not going beyond, nor defrauding any man; not injuring our neighbor by false charges, nor withholding a faithful testimony when it tends to his good; and being content with the lot which God gives, with all those acts of kindness and beneficence which are done by the children of men; these I call moral acts, and so far good as they are done, i.e., good and profitable unto men. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." Tit.3:8. These are not sins in themselves, but as they are short of what they ought to be. And though they are not the matter of our justification before God in whole or in part; Christ's righteousness being the whole of that; yet do they not anywhere stand charged or reprov'd in the word. Nor can I yet believe, that it is the same in the eye of God's law to kill, as to preserve men's lives. Notwithstanding, these moral virtues cannot be supposed to be the special work of grace; because, they have been found among the heathen worshippers of dumb idols; and it is not to be doubted, were more or less conspicuous in those whose zeal and devotion the Apostle mentions; who being ignorant of God's righteousness had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Rom.10:3. Now if a man may have these things and yet fail, they cannot be the fruits of that faith, and acts of that principle, which

the Apostle Peter says is incorruptible, I Pet.1:23, and our Lord said, shall not fail. Lk.22:32.

I readily grant, that the image of God enstamped upon man by creation is utterly defaced; and that the most rude, barbarous, and cruel things, that have been acted by the most abandoned poor wretches, as rapine, filthiness and murder, might and would have been a part of our story, had not God in mercy laid his hand upon us, for we are all streams from one polluted fountain, Rom.5:12, but restraining grace is bestowed upon the election and the rest, according to the wisdom, and goodness of divine providence, to keep the world in order. The places quoted, viz., Rom.5:6; II Cor.3:5, do not, I conceive, answer his intention; and I desire the reader to consider, whether the Apostle, in either of the places, be speaking of natural or mere moral strength? I must confess I am at a loss to know, what he means by, "if God in the one or the other publishes and pleads his authority as a lawgiver, &c." If by the one or the other be intended natural or spiritual acts, how can God be said to publish and plead his authority in the creature's acts? If by the one or the other be meant the Law or the Gospel, I am still at a loss to know, how publishing and pleading authority as a lawgiver, agrees with the definition of the Gospel, and its distinction from the Law.

Objection 7. "But unto all moral obedience the children of men are called, especially those who have the written law." Answer. And wherever the Gospel is preached and heard, faith in Christ is a moral duty, and repentance towards God is a moral duty; there the moral law requires that faith. The eternal moral law of God is every way perfect. Christ has not given a new law to his church distinct from that." Reply. There are in this answer some positive assertions; I don't see how they fit the objection. I have already declared myself touching the extent and comprehension of the law, and can say no

more to that. It has been always confessed and maintained, that there is a faith which is the duty of unregenerate sinners where the Gospel comes, and a repentance consequent upon it. But there is also a faith, by some called a divine grace, which, as to its principle, or first implantation, Eph.2:10, in the soul, comes no more under the notion of a moral duty than creation or the resurrection of the dead do. And further, I desire it may be considered, whether there be the same reason to conclude, that saving faith is a moral duty, as that repentance is a moral duty; seeing man's fall was from God, as he had made himself known as a Creator and Benefactor, but not as a Father in Christ? "Christ, says he, has not given a new law to his church distinct from that." True, he has not given a new law distinct from the old, nor needs there any, that being, as above, perfect. But if we must be accounted Antinomians, because we do not believe the law of God obligeth sinners to save themselves by the covenant of grace, which is all that can be charged upon us, we must be Antinomians still. The answers to the eighth and ninth objections, containing assertions without any pretense of proof, deserve no regard.

Objection 10. "But how is it possible to think, that Christ makes it the duty of persons to believe in him; and yet it seems to many of them he does nor give faith?" Answer. "As possible as to think he makes it the duty of all to speak without cursing and swearing, and live without lying and cheating their neighbors, and continue in chastity, and the observation of all other moral commands; and yet it is plain he does not bestow such grace upon the tenth part of mankind." Reply. God made man upright, and put into him a disposition to do all those virtues, whole contrary vices stand charged by the law; which therefore the law requires, and threateneth wrath against all disobedience, Gal.3:10, but that faith, which is

a new covenant blessing, was not put into man as any part of his creation endowment; therefore, I conceive, there is not the same reason to suppose the law commands faith, as that it commands to abstain from immoralities. It is no fair way of reasoning, that because the law requires of man what God put into his hand, therefore it requires what he never put into his hand. If a man entrusts another with a hundred pounds, and when it is lost he should bring an action against him for millions, would it be thought just? Suppose a law in being, which condemned men to imprisonment and loss of goods for putting out their eyes; would this law condemn a man which never had fight. Man was endowed with all moral perfections before the fall; but was not made a partaker of new covenant blessings, of which faith is one.

CHAPTER VIII

Consequences charged upon our sentiments removed.

"That it is the duty {says this author} of unconverted sinners, who hear the Gospel preached, to believe in Christ, is a proved established truth; and seeing it is so, it's to be hoped that all the faithful ministers of Christ will in their labors for their Lord tell the people so." That it is the duty of all that have the word, whether they hear men preach or no, to believe all that is declared therein, hath been constantly maintained; but upon the distinction between common and special faith, it hath not been proved, that it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe Christ is theirs; or that they have a special propriety in him; therefore it's to be hoped, the ministers of Christ will observe their commission, and preach the Gospel, of which commands are no part. And if they do this, they must preach personal election, particular redemption, and efficacious grace; and let the people know, that "except a man, be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jn.3:3. And I think Christ's ministers may tell the people, that there are some who believe not, because they are not Christ's sheep, Jn.10:26, that the election obtained it, and shall obtain it, while the rest are blinded, Rom.11:7, and, not handle the word deceitfully, II Cor.4:2, and speak as if there were a likelihood of all being saved where the Gospel comes. And seeing, as this author allows, it is not in the creatures power so to believe; what fruit can be expected from pressing of it, more than the praise of the multitude, who always look to doing in order to having?

"I am far from thinking it their glory, or their duty {says the author} to stand a long while together, as they have been represented, offering grace, and offering Christ, offering life, calling and inviting, &c. Oh, that I could prevail upon you to take him, &c., I never heard such preaching in my life, nor do I think it becomes any servant of Christ to deliver himself in such a manner." But why should the author think it unbecoming a minister of Christ to call, invite, &c, if it be the duty of unconverted sinners to receive and possess Christ for themselves, Jn.1:12,13, which are the acts of that faith he makes to be their duty. Surely it becomes his ministers to exhort them to it; and then, "oh! that I could prevail upon you to take him," is but the expression of a good wish, and agreeable to the sense he gives of Matthew 23:37, and I conceive agreeable enough to his opinion. Only it's not to be insisted upon, they are not to stand a "long while together," but I desire to be informed, why it may not be insisted on, if of so great consequence as it is said to be.

"Nevertheless {says he} when a minister has labored in the word and doctrine of Christ's person, covenant, love, grace, and salvation, it becomes him to say with all freedom according to the Scriptures, that God, in his word, makes it the duty of poor ruined, lost and undone sinners, who hear such tidings, to believe in so great a Redeemer; and to encourage them, should further observe, that him that cometh Christ will in no wise cast out." Here he is pleased to give us the order, how and when it is to be done, that is, when unconverted sinners are to be told this their duty, with a motive to encourage them to do it. But the unconverted sinner generally thinks himself a believer, because he believes Christ hath died for all sinners; and that's his encouragement already. A poor soul can never have a right notion of faith, till it hath faith to know it by; any more than a blind man can form a right notion of what it

is to see. The unconverted sinner generally thinks that he hath faith enough, and that what he hears others speak of more is but fancy, conceit and pride; and hates the believer for it. Nor can men be persuaded that they want faith till they are convinced that they want Christ. When they see that nothing will do for a saviour but Christ; when they see a need of his blood to cleanse them from all sin, I Jn.1:7, of his righteousness to clothe them, Phil.3:9, and cover their nakedness; when they see a need of his intercession, by which he saves to the uttermost all that come to God by him, Heb.7:25, and that they are forever undone without Christ; then they are sensible of their want of faith, and encouragement; but then though the poor soul, it may be, cannot tell how it came into this way of thinking, what has done this, yet as it sees its need of Christ, it conceives a preciousness in Christ; this soul cannot be concluded to be dead in sin, {though it thinks itself so by reason of the body of death it now feels} but it has that faith which works by love secretly implanted in it. "To you therefore which believe he is precious." I Pet.2:7. The encouragement, here mentioned, is not suited to, nor was it designed to be an encouragement for unconverted sinners; for our Lord saith, "and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Jn.6:37. Now the comer is not a dead sinner, but quickened and drawn by a secret hand, Hos.11:3, though it may have many objections and fears arising from within, which these words, when brought in by the Spirit, are suited to relieve it under, and give it encouragement in the face of them all. There is nothing suited to encourage the dead sinner to move spiritually. No, he is as unapt to spiritual motion, as a corpse in the churchyard is to natural motion; and we may as well expect the slain in the field of battle to arise and return to the charge, as for dead sinners to arise and come whilst they are so. If God has given an ear to hear the joyful sound, and

know it as such, he hath given the blessing too. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." Psal.89:15. The truth is, we first live, then move; but, I conceive, this form supposes the soul must first move, then live.

On page 27 of his book, he calls for a lamentation over some places, "where whimsical notions have been started," hereby suggesting, that there are many such notions, though he does not think it worth his pains to take notice of any but this, "to mention them {says he} is no part of my present business, only you may imagine, that I think that to be one, which denies it to be the duty of a poor unconverted sinner to believe in Christ; I mourn under this; I mourn under the fruits and consequences of it where it was first started." It is not to be greatly wondered at, that there are many notions in the churches called whimsical, when everything that has not the approval of one man must needs be a whim. But, by the way, I would entreat him to consider in the fear of God, whether Christ hath appointed that his children should be excommunicated from his church for whims, for weakness and mistakes in lesser matters, &c.? I desire that Romans 14:1 & 15:1-3 may be considered. "I mourn {says he} under this; I mourn, &c." If mourning, and fierce resentment, be one and the same thing, we want no proof of this assertion. But suppose he does indeed mourn "under the fruits and effects of it, where it was first started," by which, no doubt, he means Cambridge; he may possibly be mistaken about the matter. For if the children of God at Cambridge have fallen under decays, and unhappy divisions have fallen among them there, how does he know that those uncomely divisions are the consequences of what he calls whimsical notions? Where was there a more flourishing and harmonious church than that at Cambridge, where those despised notions were embraced, while they there enjoyed the blessed ministry of the late Mr. Hussey? Would this worthy author think it

kind, if his brethren should charge the sins that have been committed at Rowel upon his notion? Or would it be fair? No, as saith the proverb of the ancients, "wickedness proceedeth from the wicked." I Sam.24:13. And still it may appear one day, that there is, even now, a church of Christ at Cambridge, acceptable to the Lord in that relation; wherein the faith and order of the Gospel are observed and kept, as well and as truly as in other places. Had he been pleased to have left this out, I cannot think the Modest Answer would have less answered its character. There are many alive who knew Rowel, Cambridge, Kimbolton, &c., in the days of Davis, Hussey, Bailey, &c., and know them now, who are, I hope, ready to join with this author in a solemn mourning for them all. "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me, &c." Job 29:2-5. I cannot think this author happy in the method of a cure. Love edifies the body. Gal.5:14-15. But as an angry spirit can do nothing that is generous and kind; so it never can fully express itself; but when it hath said all it can, there's yet more.

"Nobody {says this author} can tell the chain of bad consequences which must follow, wherever it enters, unless wonderful grace prevents." {Modest Answer, Page 27.} So that when he has named several very dismal ones, his reader ought to believe, that there are many more which neither he nor anybody can tell, nor find out. This is a ready way to incense the greater part of men. This weapon seldom fails of doing execution. What {say they} must we not believe a people to be bad indeed, when we have it from the pen of a good man, and a minister? If it had been from an enemy we should have

taken no notice of it; but the author of the account is a neighbor, one of the same sect, who was in communion with them, and would not speak what he did not know, nor the worst of what he did know. For it is enough with many that it was but said or written. But what are those consequences?

“There the servants of Christ, through the many hundreds of years from Christ’s time, till now, must be despised, and their labors, so far as they are known, derided; yea, there the Bible itself, whatever they may profess, cannot be cordially loved and delighted in, because, throughout, it is against that beloved notion; there the unconverted cannot be reprov’d, because they believe not in Christ; for they are told it is none of their duty; nor is their unbelief and distrusting Christ a sin; and their faith in Christ must be will-worship; for who hath required it at their hands; there the poor, weak, doubting believer, can have no relief.” I desire the reader will weigh the matter, and consider, whether their consequences follow the opinion he opposes; that is, that God does not require sinners in unregeneracy to believe with a saving faith. To the first, suppose some ministers, through the many hundreds of years since Christ’s time, have been of a different opinion about this question; or it may be it hath not been much thought of by many; for it is not the only question in divinity; does it necessarily follow, that those ministers must be despised, and their labors derided? This author hath entertained a different opinion about the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, than had been generally received; does he therefore despise and deride the godly and their labors? Would he be judged as he judges others? Again, this is but one thing which we don’t see alike, there are many that we do agree in; therefore it does not hinder, “the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” Phm.1:6.

The second consequence charged on our opinion is, "there the Bible itself, whatever they may profess, cannot be cordially loved and delighted in; because throughout it is against that beloved notion." Charity, which thinks no evil, I Cor.13:5, would not have said, "they cannot love the Bible." The consequence follows not; and the reason he gives is not true. When he will show us one text out of the whole Bible against what he calls "that beloved notion," I hope we shall obtain mercy to renounce it. We have as much reason to suppose him out of humor with the glorious doctrines of distinguishing grace, because they will not countenance his opinion. We see all the sweet doctrines of the Gospel favoring and agreeing with this truth. Eternal personal election gives it life and being; particular redemption takes it by the hand and the doctrine of efficacious grace carries it in its bosom; therefore, through grace, we do love the Bible, and truly delight in it.

The third is, "there the unconverted cannot be reprov'd for their not believing in Christ, nor is their distrusting Christ a sin." It hath been already declared, upon the distinction on which we proceed, viz., between a common and natural, and a special and supernatural faith, that unbelief in the unregenerate is a sin; and that their not believing every word that God hath spoken, is punishable as a breach of the first commandment; but that it is sin in the unregenerate not to believe with an appropriating faith, to believe that Christ is their own, does not, I conceive, stand anywhere censured by the word. If this author, or any other, will show that it does, I will freely yield the cause, and desire to lay my hand on my mouth and bow. Judas heard the Gospel and did not believe with the faith of God's elect, Jn.10:26, was it his sin? Yea, had he believed that Christ was his, as Thomas did, would it not have been false? Or, was his not

believing the cause, why he had no special interest in him? This has been spoken to before.

Souls in unregeneracy are blamable for not believing the Gospel according to the plain sense of the Holy Ghost; that is, for not believing the record. The text runs thus, "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I Jn.5:10-12. Here is first the believer, I Jn.5:10, who hath the faith of the operation of God; being born of God, and having an understanding given. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." I Jn.5:20. This soul is said to have the witness in himself; the principle giving testimony of its author. For God only can open the eyes of the blind. This comes in a new covenant way, and is the accomplishment of a promise, "they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God, &c." Isa.35:2. Truth in the understanding answers to the truth in the promise; and he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal, that God is true.

Then we have the unbeliever, "he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar." I Jn.5:10. The Apostle doth not say, he that believeth not in Christ, {though it's true, he that believeth not in this respect is not a believer in Christ,} yet God hath been pleased so to express the case, I conceive, to signify the difference between believing in Christ, and believing the word concerning Christ. For the very expression shows wherein the guilt lieth; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And in the eleventh verse the Apostle tells us

what that testimony is, "that God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son." It is "to us." Who? All mankind? No, but to his chosen in Christ. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Tim.1:9. The one believeth in, as being in him, the other believeth not the record concerning him. This unbelief stands always reprov'd.

The fourth consequence is, "there faith must be will-worship." It follows not from our sentiments. We profess, that whatever God makes known to a creature, is the creatures duty to believe. In unregeneracy to believe all the record that God hath given; and when God is pleased to make himself known in Christ as a Father, and seal up the promise of life to the soul, Tit.1:1, then is it its duty to believe the relation, and glorify God on that account. We hold, that it is not the moral duty of dead men to live; and we are charged, by way of consequence, for holding, that it is not the duty of living men to ask.

Lastly, "there {says this author} poor, weak, doubting believers, can have no relief." It ought to be observed, that the believer, weak or strong, is not in the question, but as the ministry is said to be deficient, with regard to the weak believer, where this notion is held; it may be necessary, for the sake of some, to show, that it is not thereby made deficient.

I don't yet see how the command, which is moral, is suited to relieve the doubter, and give him satisfaction of his state at all; and yet this is thought to be the way to relieve the poor, doubting believer; and the want of this is said to make the ministry useless, with regard to the weak and doubting. The better way, as this worthy author counts it, tells the soul, that it is not in his power to believe, any more than it is in the power of a dead man

to walk; but it is his duty because God commands him. Suppose a man fallen into a deep well, crying out in distress; and some should come to the well's mouth, and say, O man, it is thy duty to get out; the man answers, I cannot; true, say they at the top, you cannot get out, yet, to comfort you, we must tell you, it is your duty to get out; God commands you to preserve your own life, and if you don't get out, you are a self-murderer for not doing it; would not the poor perishing mortal reply, "miserable comforters are ye all." Job 16:2.

But if instead of commanding the poor man to do what he cannot do, they should tell him in this distress, that that well had been open for thousands of years; and that a vast number of people who passed that way had fallen in, yet there were few if any that had perished there; this might stay his heart a little, and keep him from deep despair, which the other way hath no tendency to do. And if they should tell him further, that they have read of many, and some they have known, who were relieved in the same case, by one who had sound means, II Sam.14:14, to deliver poor creatures, Job 33:24, out of those circumstances; and had not only all things for it, to accomplish it with ease and safety, but also gave constant attendance, Isa.30:18, to that work; his heart was wholly in it, though he did not always show himself, nor instantly appear; would not this story yield him some relief, and keep him from fainting, Psal.27:13, and dying away? Now somewhat of this may be done where this new notion is received. Yea, they go further, and tell the man, that they have been in that well themselves, and in very deep distress, Psal.116:6, that the waters almost passed over their heads. Psal.42:7. They could hardly look out, or cry, by reason thereof; and when they were ready to yield up the ghost, lo, to their great surprise, one, with an unseen hand, let down a line and drew them out. Psal.18:16. "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me,

and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD." Psal.40:1-3. The hearing of this would give some relief, and satisfy him that his cause is not singular nor desperate; seeing others who have been in his case, are now walking upon dry and firm ground. Psal.40:2. Hope and desire would both find some life from hence.

God's way of comforting distressed souls is not by the Law, but by the Gospel. Not legal commands, but gospel promises and declarations, are the pipes through which the God of all grace conveys his comforting influences to his children. They are children of the promise, Gal.4:28, and the promises are the breasts that give them suck. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." I Pet.2:2-5. The Comforter, when he comes, glorifies Christ, by receiving the things of Christ, and showing them to the soul. Jn.16:14. The Lord sets before the soul what Christ is, what Christ hath done and suffered; what Christ is now doing, and how his bowels move towards his children; all as suited to its case, complaint and cry, to entertain and delight it. The Lord himself, by the word of grace speaks to and in the soul, so as never man spake; and sounds in it for comfort what Christ hath done to save. Isa.49:14,15; Isa.42:21; Heb.12:24. And while the soul hears the joyful sound, Psal.89:15, it hears the blessing too; it feels the dew of the Lord, Hos.14:5, to fall upon it, yielding inward peace, joy, and sweetness, and

leaves an inward glow upon the heart. "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us, and opened to us the Scriptures?" Lk.24:32.

This is not enthusiasm, whatever men are pleased to think and say of it. The soul is not warmed and stirred, with it knows not what; but with the voice of its beloved, Song 5:2,4, and the communication of his grace. It views a surpassing beauty, Psal.45:2, glory and excellency, in him; is taken with him, and is drawn after him. Which we see happily expressed through the fifth chapter of Solomon's Song.

Now, whilst the soul is thus entertained, it does not feel its doubts and fears, but when those blessed discoveries are a little withdrawn, and influences withheld, the mind is called off by other things; clouds interpose, and a gloom overspreads the soul; just as you see a cloud obscure the face of the sun, and cast cold and darkness upon us; then the soul, remembering what is past, finds a doubt about its interest in it; because now it does not feel and enjoy the beloved as before. It conceives a suitableness and real worth in Christ, and feels therefore a desire for him. "Oh! That I knew where I might find him." Job 23:3. And yet, at the same time, if possible, there are a thousand confused and wandering desires, crying after other things; which occasion such noise and confusion, that the poor soul knows not what judgment to make of itself, and what it has met with. It doubts because it desires; for where there appears nothing desirable in a thing, we don't doubt, nor fear that we have no interest or share in it; we are perfectly indifferent about that. Thus it is with souls, that do not see their need of Christ. There's no real desire for, nor concern about him. But it is the soul that has drank of the water which Christ gives, Jn.4:14, that is troubled for his absence, and finds inward disputing, jealousies and fears. Now, says this author, to relieve such an one, we must

tell him, that it is his duty to believe; and where we do not tell him that, he can have no relief at all.

But alas, the command yields him no relief. He wants to know his right and privilege. Besides, says the poor soul, I can't believe; and you tell me it is not in my power, and so I find. What relief does this afford? I once, says the soul, thought that it was not only my duty, but in my power too; I thought that I believed as well, and as much, as was necessary for any man; but now I see my mistake. I am convinced that such a common faith is of no avail in this great concern. I am now a doubting soul. I don't doubt of the sufficiency of Christ to save; nor of the suitableness there is in him to my case. I stand convinced of this, mine eye is fixed, I know not whither else to look, Jn.6:68, yet I doubt of my interest in him. The Scripture speaks of like precious faith, II Pet.1:1, and I want to know whether God has bestowed this heavenly endowment on me. For herein lieth the doubt. Now, blessed be the Lord, we can say something from the word suited to the relief of such a soul.

We can tell the soul, as it appears to be the case of this doubting believer, that whereas it hath an eye to see, though but with a weak and glimmering sight, as we may suppose the stung Israelites, at the furthest end of the camp, had but an imperfect sight of the brazen serpent, Numbers 21, yet, we hope, this is of God; and that as the path of the just is as the shining light, so the Lord, whose going forth is prepared as the morning, Hos.6:3, will shine more and more, and come upon it as the latter and as the former rain upon the earth. And thus we can encourage the soul, as we have had encouragement ourselves, with respect to a begun work, and have found the Lord to answer our hope. II Cor.1:4.

We may, and do say to such a doubting soul, that whereas it is now made to see that filth and pollution in itself, that wretchedness and misery, which it did not

always see; and as it discerns a remedy that God has provided, which it thought not of in time past, at least as it thinks of it now; I say, we can tell that soul, that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matt.9:13. Those whom God hath been pleased to pass by, leave under the law, and deal with according to the covenant of works, he does not convince of the insufficiency and shortness of their own doings, so as to make them renounce them as filthy rags. Isa.64:6. They who are left, are, in their own esteem, righteous persons, whole, that need not the physician. Lk.18:11,12. Such, saith the Lord, I came not to call; and such have not ground, from the word, to believe he did. For as Dr. Owen says, "as long as a man trusteth in himself that he is righteous, Christ doth not call that man to believe." But the doubting believer, whose case we are speaking to, though he does not know that he is a believer, comes under the encouragement of the word. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." I Tim.1:15.

But if it be yet said; though I am convinced of my state by nature, and see my need of Christ, and that nothing else will do before God, I am still in fear that this is but a common work. Answer. This is not a common fear, nor is the work common. Our Lord said to Peter, "blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Matt.16:17. God was graciously pleased to relieve my soul, Psal.66:16, when pressed with such fears, by the same word. Soul, look out into the world, and see if you cannot discern in the multitude a different cry. Have they seen the deep pollution of nature, and been convinced of their utter impotency? Have they seen their need of Christ, not as a partial, but as a perfect and complete Saviour? You shall hear them say, that they are

sinner, and that they believe Christ to be a Saviour; that they must do what they can, and then trust to the mercy of God through the merits of Christ for the rest. Thus they betray the secret of their heart, and the covenant on which they stand. They plainly declare, that Christ is not all and in all to them; that he comes in but at second hand; and that their regard is more unto themselves, and their dependence more upon their own doings, Lk.18:11,12, than upon the mighty one, on whom God hath laid our help. Psal.89:19.

On the other hand, enquire of those whom God has redeemed among men; let them out of every nation, kindred, and tongue, be attended to, and you will hear them all with one voice declare, that they are poor, vile, wretched creatures in themselves, and that their help is only in another. Yea, look into the Scripture, and hear the confessions and experiences of those whose story God hath been pleased to give us, and you will find an agreement. "I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?" Job 7:20. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isa.64:6. "Then, said I, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." Jon.2:4. This will be found to be the one, the common language of those who are now gone to heaven, and all the followers of the Lamb here on earth, "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life."

From what has been said it will appear, that the consequences charged upon our opinion follow not from it. Whether preaching the Lord Jesus, Acts 11:20, where the command, this author pleads for, and where the offer is not used, be not blessed to the succoring and relieving of poor, weak, doubting believers, and the comforting of those that are cast down, I must refer to the experience

and testimony of those whose lot is cast where the Gospel only is preached.

To the rest of the consequences, which this worthy author says nobody can tell, I cannot tell what answer to give, only that this cannot hinder the salvation of one vessel of mercy, notwithstanding what he hath unwarily said. {Modest Answer, pg. 29.} For all that the Father had given to Christ should have been, as they were, reconciled, and made willing in the day of Christ's power; and shall be to the end of time. "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Jn.10:16. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Jn.6:37-39. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48. Plus it cannot hinder those that are born again, in their love and gratitude to God, for all his benefits bestowed upon them; nor in their showing it forth in their walk with God, and one another; neither doth it restrain their pity or prayers for those that are unregenerate.

It cannot discourage the unregenerate, the dead in trespasses and sins, from doing anything. For as this author allows, they have not the least strength to do this, nor inclination to attempt it. Where then must the consequences fall? For election and the rest, called and uncalled, make a perfect division of all mankind, and neither of these can be injured by it. There are none in a middle state, between the election and the rest, between the called and the uncalled; therefore we know not one whom the supposed blow can fall.

And now we come to the commodities and advantages that attend the author's way of thinking "on the other hand, says he, the favor of the good knowledge of God is made known by those, who declare the whole of his counsel in every place." We may suppose that every good man thinks his own way right, or he would not choose it. But the favor of the good knowledge of God is not made known by the Law, but by the Gospel. "For we are {saith the Apostle} unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish." II Cor.2:15. Commands all belong to the Law. Who are those that "declare the whole of his counsel in every place?" The Apostle said, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," Acts 20:20, viz., the disciples, and the elders of the church at Ephesus. And, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Acts 20:27. That is, he had preached to them the Gospel. He had delivered to them the ordinances and institutions of Christ. "Now, I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you. For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," I Cor.11:2, &c., all that the Lord had given him to deliver to the churches, I Cor.11:23, he had kept back nothing. Counsel must here be taken in a limited sense; for men have not known the whole of God's counsel. Who then merits the praise of this author? Or, who stands charged? We hope we have not kept back anything that might be profitable to the church or our assemblies; nor shunned to declare, according to our ability, the measure of the gift of Christ, Eph.4:7, what God has made known to us, with respect either to doctrine or worship.

But we stand charged with unfaithfulness if we don't tell our assemblies, that it is not the duty of unconverted sinners to believe, &c. We declare that it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe more than they

do; but if we do not think it to be their duty to believe with a saving faith, why must we be urged with unfaithfulness if we do not tell them so? Was this author to undertake to tell his auditory everything that they ought not to do, would not he find work enough for an age, and his life run out very unfruitfully? We have no negatives in the commission. I will here read it. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt.28:19-20. The first teaching is explained by, "go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mk.16:15.

Here's the commission, and all the commission we have, and that is, to preach the Gospel. Accordingly, the Apostles did, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. Acts 11:20. "And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." Acts 8:5. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Acts 8:35. And thus Christ himself did, "and beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Lk.24:27. Baptizing them, &c., that is, when the Lord opened their hearts, as he opened the heart of Lydia, so that they attended unto the things which were spoken; they were taken with the grace that had provided such a Saviour, and wrought such a salvation; then were they baptized. Acts 2:41. Teaching them to observe, &c., God having begun a good work in them, would not have them lie like loose stones; but will have them laid upon the foundation by visible profession, and be built up a temple for himself. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the

building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph.2:20-22. And would have it formed, ordered, and governed, according to the commandments which he gave unto the Apostles whom he had chosen. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." Acts 1:1-2. {Not the law of Moses, which they had in writing, but the institutions of Christ, according to which his churches were to be formed, officers chosen and ordained, ordinances administered, and discipline and government exercised for the edification of the body. Tit 1:5; Eph.4:11-14; Jn.14:21,22,23.} Therefore when Barnabas was come to Antioch, and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. Acts 11:23. "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." I Thes.4:1.

However, some may glory in telling the people, that the commission of a minister is to preach the law as well as the Gospel; till I have light into that matter, I would say with the Apostle, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Rom.1:16.

At the bottom of page 29, this author gives a flight to his fancy, and breaks a jest upon the notion he opposes, as he had done above in the same page; but as though he feared it would be overlooked by his reader, we must have it again with enlargement. His words are these, "what must this new notion say to them? We don't know what you are; you don't know what you are

yourselves; as you may belong to those who are to be pitied, we pity you; but we cannot tell you that. We can tell you Christ is a Saviour to some, but we cannot tell you that you have any concern with him, only you are bound to believe that what we say is true; but we cannot tell you that it is your duty to believe in Christ. Seeing you walk in darkness and have no light, we dare not tell you it is your duty to trust in the name of the Lord, you don't know that you are converted, and we don't know that you are; therefore only wait in the way, and just believe all we say is true, though we don't say it is your duty to believe you have any other concern with it."

What doctrines have not been drooled by profane wits? If men would give way to a ludicrous fancy they might make themselves and others merry with anything; the doctrine of election hath been so used; but it is a mean thing, though too common for men to ridicule what they cannot by fair reasoning confute. This is not the weapon of a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

On page 31, he tells us, "though some have thoughtlessly and too suddenly took up that notion, yet let them now, in the presence of God, impartially compare it with the Scriptures, some texts whereof I briefly produced, as persons willing to submit their souls to the revealed will of God, and they will see that it is a pernicious dangerous error." I have now, with this last advantage, considered the texts produced, and this authors observations and reasonings upon them, and can see nothing either to uphold his own assertion, or evince that what he calls a dangerous, pernicious error, is so.

Indeed, another's weakness and inadvertency do not make our folly less; nor is it an excuse that we have been misguided by men, seeing we should have made the word our rule; yet it is some relief, when the wind blows hard, to think that we must sustain the shock in such good company, as Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Owen, Dr. Ridgley, Mr.

Gouge, and many others, who held the same dangerous and pernicious error. And I hope, for the future, this worthy author will suffer fools gladly, bearing the infirmities of the weak, and not please himself, Rom.15:1, and in his wisdom and goodness spare the dead, and be more gentle and kind towards the living. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Phil.3:15-16.

If this author, or any other, shall please to take any notice of this in a spirit of brotherly kindness, I am willing to sit at his feet, and shall thankfully acknowledge him to be the means of a benefit, when I shall receive conviction; but if the contention shall appear to be for the last word; and neglecting the weapons of our warfare, he shall betake himself to bitter words, an outcry of dangerous, pernicious errors, dismal consequences, that nobody can tell, &c., to expose us to contempt, and enrage the less discerning; I am content to yield the prize, and quit the field to such a combatant. "For ye have not so learned Christ." Eph.4:20.

FINIS.

A DEFENCE of the Further Enquiry AFTER TRUTH.

Against the Exceptions and
Misrepresentations of Dr. TAYLOR in his
Address to young Students, &c.

Wherein is shown the Nature of the
Faith of God's Elect; also, in what sense
we assert the Law is not to be preached.

To which is added, CONSIDERATIONS
on the Modern Question, Affirmed, &c.

By LEWIS WAYMAN

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THE PREFACE.

Since this work was in the press the "Modern Question Affirmed" came to hand, on which I have bestowed some considerations, sufficient till we see further occasion.

The Author would not admit of any other state of the question than what he has given, and about fifty persons have subscribed, viz., that God commands unconverted sinners to believe in Christ for salvation. This introduces a new law, by making faith the condition of salvation. Only think what you mean, when you say, a man is to do you service for so much money, be it more or less; do you not mean that his service is the condition, and meriting cause of his wages; and his wages a due debt when the service is done? By this the Gospel is made a mere covenant of works.

And further, if the faith he means be a special part of God's salvation, then is it a blessing of the Covenant of Grace; and so, contrary to all sound divinity, he makes that which is a blessing of the covenant, to be a condition of the covenant; and contrary to all reason, the effect to be the cause, the fruit to bear the tree, and not the tree to bear the fruit. But if he means any other faith, we say nothing to it, for the absurdity will be evident. It used to be said, that the Gospel or Covenant of Grace, gives life in order to obedience, not that it requires obedience in order to life; and to say that the law of God requires obedience of fallen man, in order to salvation, or as a condition of salvation, by the Covenant of Grace, is absurd enough. He that runs may read it. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Rom.11:6.

That his arguments drive to this point, and conclude in the words in which he has put the qualification, may be seen. Whether those who zealously forwarded the work read it, I know not; but if they did, it bewrays their judgment; if they did not, their prudence in it will appear. As to the unwary subscribers, {several of whom I personally know,} my heart's desire is that God would restore them, Isa.1:26, as at the beginning. I beg leave to conclude in the words of the apostle, "and now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it." Acts 3:17.

A DEFENCE OF THE FURTHER ENQUIRY AFTER TRUTH

Mr. Taylor having in the first page of his address given a false sense of what he cautions his followers to avoid, viz., "some strange paradoxes which have been lately laid down, the evident tendency of some of which is, that Christ is not to be preached to unconverted sinners," proceeds in haughty anger through the thirteen following pages; bending his main strength against a faithful asserter and defender of the truth; one whom God has placed quite out of his reach, who has returned him an answer. In his fifteenth page he falls upon my Further Enquiry after Truth, &c., and forasmuch as it concerns me to defend the truth asserted and proved therein; and that I may free his readers from abuse, I shall give attendance to him.

The question between us and our opponents stands as follows. Whether the Law of God commands unconverted sinners who hear the Gospel preached, to have, and believe with, that faith which is a special part of God's salvation? This faith is styled in Scripture the

faith of God's elect, Tit.1:1, and that it is a special fruit of election grace, may be concluded from the words of the apostle, viz., "but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Rom.11:7. That is, they had obtained the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, while the rest remained in darkness, being concluded in unbelief. Rom.11:32. In regard to its efficient cause, it is called the faith of the operation of God, Col.2:12, and said to be wrought by the exceeding greatness of his power, Eph.1:19, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. The apostle says expressly it is the gift of God. Eph.2:8.

Johannes Wolleb saith, speaking of faith, "that it is an immediate effect of special vocation, and is the gift of it; and that the impulsive cause of faith is the same grace by which we are elected and called." Calvin, after Augustin, makes it the daughter of election; and concludes therefore, that it cannot be general because election is special. He saith, "faith is fitly joined to election, so that it keeps the second place," and further affirms, "that faith is a singular pledge of God's fatherly love, laid up for his adopted children."

That it is the duty of all who hear the Gospel and have the word, to believe the things declared thereby and contained therein, we also assert and maintain; and I do further declare, that if it can be proved that Adam had this faith before he fell, the contrary of which I have demonstrated; or that it is in the power of his fallen posterity to have it, and they will not, the controversy with me is at an end, and I will freely confess my mistake. But that it should be a sin not to have that faith which is a special fruit of election grace, any more, than not to have the grace from whence it springs? How man should be obnoxious to the vengeance of God, for not having that peculiar gift that God never was pleased to bestow upon him; and how he can be culpable, for not having that work

upon his soul God never thought good to work, are things I must confess myself ignorant of. But let us consider what he has said to confute what we have written, and convince us of our supposed mistake.

Page 15. "As to the pretense {saith he} that Christ should be preached only to the elect, there's nothing in it, for how can we know who is elected and who not, as long as sinners remain unregenerate?" This he suggests to be a sentiment of ours, but does not cite any of our words for it, or so much as refer his reader to the place whence he gathers it; which would have been but fair and reasonable; for then his reader might have seen and judged for himself, and would have detected the abuse; for we have not only nowhere said, that Christ should be preached to none but the elect, but otherwise; as may be seen, "Further Enquiry," pg.128, "God will have the outward report of the Gospel received, and the Bible received and kept by those, who have no special interest in the promise and grace contained therein." Could he read this passage, and not know that we hold the Gospel should be preached to others besides the elect? Neither is it a consequence of our sentiment, that Christ should be preached to none but the elect. That Christ will save none but those whom the Father gave him, Jn.10:26-29; Jn.6:37,40, &c., I suppose he will allow; and also, that the rest cannot save themselves; which is the doctrine of the Scripture and of our Protestant Reformers; but that Christ should be preached to none but the elect, follows no more from our hypothesis, than from his Confession. What, because we say the law does not bind unregenerate sinners to have that faith which is a special part of God's salvation; or in effect, that the law does nor oblige sinners to save themselves by the Covenant of Grace, do we therefore hold that Christ should be preached to the elect only? Does it not as well follow from the doctrine of personal election, that the elect only should have Christ

preached to them? The doctrinal report is made alike to all, though the gracious application is made to one and not to another. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I Cor.1:23-24. If we preach the Gospel at all, we preach it to all that come within the sound of our words.

But it is probable he may mean, our pretense is, Christ should be offered to none but the elect, seeing he imagines it is our notion about the offer of Christ that has misled us. "Men's going into the notion that an offer of Christ is not to be made in general, or that there must be no general tender of Christ made to sinners, has run them into a further absurdity. I never could see the great hurt of the phrase, offering Christ to sinners, because an offer cannot in all cases suppose a power and willingness to receive it." Page 14.

Here also he misses it, for we do not only deny a general offer of Christ to all, but an offer of Christ to any; we deny the thing, unscriptural and irrational. And admit, an offer does not in all cases suppose a power and willingness to receive it, {though he has given no instance wherein it does not,} yet if it does in this case, then, it should seem to him a hurtful phrase; for that is all the reason he has given for its justification. But does an offer suppose a power and willingness in the offerer to bestow the thing which he offers? Have men power and will to bestow God's Christ upon others? If you were to offer and proffer and tender earthly things that you have no right to dispose of, and if you had a right, would not give them; this would be accounted mockery.

But, as he says, he would not have his followers "stand up stiffly for it." Page 15. I take it, that he is inclined to give it up, and therefore I say little to it. Only, I observe, that to deny the general offer must be

accounted an absurdity. But if to offer Christ to all, or to offer him at all be a form of sound words, II Tim.1:13, and the doctrine be a truth, why does he say, "I should never advise you to stand up stiffly for it," and not rather as the apostle did exhort them to hold fast the form of sound words, and contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints? Jude 1:3. But if these words are not wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, I Tim.6:3, why should he reckon it an absurdity to reject them? Judge now where the absurdity lies.

The further absurdity we are said to have run into, is, "that unconverted sinners are not to be exhorted to believe in Christ, or seek after that repentance which is to salvation." That unconverted sinners ought to believe all that is reported by the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, and God's design by him, and do all that is required by the law, we have constantly maintained; but that it is their duty to have the faith of God's elect, and consequently, that those who are not of Christ's sheep, Jn.10:26, perish for not believing with the faith of the operation of God, Col.2:12, is, what I cannot at present assent to, for reasons already offered, and as yet, I conceive, not answered, nor so much as the shadow of an answer produced.

Page 16. He pretends to give his readers the reason why we hold sinners are not to be exhorted to believe in Christ, &c., "the pretense is {says he} that a sinner has no power of his own to believe and repent." Besides the ill expression of calling that a pretense, which he in his following words avows to be an evangelical truth, I must observe, that he has abused his readers; and, I dare say, if he has read what I have written upon the argument, he may know he hath not spoken truth with his neighbor. Eph.4:25. One passage out of many I will here produce to evince it, for God has not lost his

authority by man's fall, nor is man's obligation lessened by his loss of original righteousness; but whatever Adam by the law of nature owed to God, that his fallen posterity to a man owes, and for his non-payment must suffer wrath to the uttermost, unless saved by the grace of God through a glorious Redeemer. But what is this to the purpose, seeing Adam had not this grace before he fell? The law commanded man to walk upright on earth, and so it does still; but it did not require Adam to make himself wings and fly to heaven; nor does it command any of his fallen posterity so to do. We don't say it is not required of man because of his present weakness, but because this power was not in Adam before the fall.

"My great master {says he} addressed himself to a mixed multitude, saying, repent and believe the Gospel." Mark 1:15. The faith and repentance Christ called his own professing people to the exercise of in this place, are such as were their duty at a particular time, as his words clearly intimate, "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, &c." Now Christ was the object of faith as well when he was held forth in the promise, as when he was manifested in the flesh; his appearing in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, was the fulfilling of the promise, and accomplishment of prophecies, but did not bring in another way of salvation than the church had received before. This I conceive to be plain, from the apostle's referring to the scriptures of the Old Testament, the doctrine of his death for the sins, and of his resurrection for the deliverance of his people. I Cor.15:3,4. Therefore, it cannot be well supposed, that the Lord would make use of the consideration of the fulfillment of time, &c., to excite to that repentance and faith, which had no immediate regard to it. But if we take repentance, &c., for a receiving and acknowledging the Messiah to be come; and a forsaking typical ordinances, to worship

according to the institutions he would give, the fulfillment of time and approach of the kingdom appear to be a suitable argument.

But if it were granted, that Christ means here the exercise of that repentance and faith which by his Spirit is wrought in the hearts of his own children, it would not prove his conclusion; because then it might well be supposed, he intended those among the assembly which had a principle of grace in them. Dr. Ridgley saith, "when God commands persons in the Gospel, to do those things which cannot be performed without his special grace, he sometimes supposes them, when he gives forth the command, to have a principle of spiritual life and grace; which is, in effect, to bid one that is made alive, to put forth living actions; which respect, more especially the progress of grace after the work is begun; in which sense I understand the words of the apostle, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh, that is, hath wrought, in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."

Our antagonist proceeds, "the whole course of Christ's preaching was exhorting mixed auditories to believe, repent, and practice those duties which were pleasing to God, and were of a spiritual kind; and as he made no distinction among his hearers, certainly, what he pressed all to, was the duty of all." 1. Here he confounds preaching and exhorting, which God has distinguished. "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." II Tim.4:2. These were all parts of Timothy's ministry in the church, but not all the same thing. He is commanded to preach the word, but it is not proper to say exhort the word. This also deprives Christ of his honor as a preacher, &c. "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my

heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation." Psal.40:9-10. God anointed him to preach the Gospel, Isa.61:1, as our Lord tells us, and accordingly he did. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Lk.4:17-19. Mr. Taylor's and Christ's own account of his ministry do not agree.

2. He presumes Christ "made no distinction among his hearers." If he did not, I cannot see what service this would do him, but the contrary is evident. As, "ye believe in God, believe also in me." Jn.14:1. What were they to believe? "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Jn.14:3. Where did Christ command the ungodly multitude so to believe? See his answer to the ruler, Matt.19:16,17, and in John 8, he distinguishes one part of his audience from the other at the same time, "then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed," Jn.8:31,32, and to others of his hearers, "ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do." Jn.8:44. Nor does he command these to believe and perform spiritual duties, as Mr. Taylor says, the whole course of Christ's preaching was to do.

But, suppose our Lord had delivered himself in general terms to a mixed multitude, it would not follow that he intended them alike to all. As, when a minister gives the Lord's supper, and utters these words, "this is

Christ's body which was broken for you," he does not mean all that are under the roof, but only the communicants. Such words must be taken according to the design of the speaker. Rev.2:7. Besides, if he would be consistent with himself, by mixed multitude we must understand only unbelievers; for in the case of the jailer, the command to believe is made the argument of his unregeneracy. "If in that moment of time he had been renewed and converted, faith must have been wrought in him, and then {says he} the Apostle's answer must, upon the scheme of those we have in view, have been, thou hast believed, &c." Page 18,19. Thus he makes the exhortation to believe, the argument of his state; and consequently the mixed auditories made up of unbelievers only.

Now let me desire the judicious reader to consider his argument in its full weight; which in form runs thus, that which Christ pressed all to, was certainly the duty of all, but Christ pressed mixed auditories to believe, &c., therefore it was the duty of all to believe, &c.

I have a regard for truth, and would do nothing to evade the force of an argument, being disposed to receive conviction; but to yield my reason up to the assurance of a creature is beneath a man. I freely grant that what Christ pressed all to, was certainly the duty of all; and that it is the duty of all who hear the Gospel to believe it, and that to entertain a thought contrary to it is sin; but the question is, whether it be the duty of all to have that faith which is a special fruit of election grace; to prove which, he produces no fit medium; for his premises do not contain the conclusion. There is no conclusion that can be conceived in the imagination of a man, but what is capable of proof by this method. But take it for granted, and the point is gained.

Acts 13:38-41. He supposes holds forth both the command to believe, and that it was laid upon

unconverted sinners, to which by and by. "Now {says he} what was the duty, for their final non-compliance with which, they were to perish forever? It was trusting in Christ for forgiveness of sins, and justification in the sight of God."

It's true, he who dies in unbelief perishes, so he who is not elected and redeemed shall perish; but, properly speaking, not because he is not elected and redeemed, but, because he hath transgressed the law of God. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Rom.2:12.

If I may be allowed to speak of a depravity as existing, I would, with submission to the godly wise, say, not having the faith of God's elect, and not being interested in the grace of election, are both antecedent to the everlasting perdition of ungodly men; but, I hope, no one, who fears God, will say, non-election is the cause of damnation; and, I conceive, that no man is able to prove, that not to have that faith which is a special fruit of election grace, is the cause of damnation neither. To be born must be antecedent to dying, but not the cause, sin is that.

Let us see whether this text requires the mockers and blasphemers spoken of in the following verses to have the faith of God's elect; and whether the motive the apostle makes use of be avoiding everlasting perdition. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Acts 13:38-41. These words express no

command at all, neither do they propose any supernatural blessing to be bestowed upon the condition of believing and repenting; but are a declaration concerning the doctrine of pardon and justification through Christ, and the state of those who through grace do believe in him. He saith, through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; not, "through this man is offered unto you pardon and justification." Grace was not suspendable upon the will of the creature, but was settled upon the elect in Christ Jesus, before the world began. Rom.9:16; II Tim.1:9.

Indeed rejecting of the doctrine of the apostles is sin; mocking and despising the ministers of the Gospel and their ministry is provoking to God, and will aggravate the dreadful account of those that perish; and the wages of sin is death, Rom.6:23, eternal death; but that the motive the apostle makes use of here is avoiding eternal damnation, does not appear; for the Scriptures teach that eternal death is unavoidable by the fallen creature, who by the law is guilty and already under condemnation; though temporal deaths and desolations are in a sense to be avoided by the morality and outward conduct of the creature. Jonah 3. Nor do the words seem to favor his notion at all, for it is not said, beware lest you fall under the eternal vengeance of God; but, beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets; in which he had, no doubt, his eye upon Habakkuk 1:5, "behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously; for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you, &c." It is plain that temporal judgment was spoken of by the prophet, and the words of the apostle as plainly refer to it, beware, therefore, says he, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets. Now if the words of the prophet, concerning the desolation of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, meant the eternal perdition of that people,

i.e., the Jews, then may the apostle's words be so taken, otherwise they cannot, without doing violence to the scripture. They had lost their city and temple before by the Chaldeans, whom God brought up against them for despising his prophets, which you may read, II Chron.36:14-22, and they were now in danger of losing them again by the Romans, which soon after came to pass. Luke 19:41-45.

Moreover, to make an offer of the means of grace, {which God would have first made to the Jews, Acts 13:46,} is not attended with those absurdities, nor apt to nourish those mistakes about a general deign in God to save all, and the ability of the fallen creature to receive that which is offered when it pleases, as the doctrine and practice of the offer of grace is. The offer of the means, and exhorting men to receive the means and attend upon them, carries in it no impossibility of the unconverted sinner's acceptance; because a reasonable creature in unregeneracy, may receive the doctrinal report and embrace the externals of instituted religion, but an offer of the grace of God, carries in it an impossibility of the unregenerate sinner's acceptance. One dead in sins and trespasses, Eph.2:1, can no more accept of and receive the grace of spiritual life and salvation, than a dead man in his grave can accept of, and receive natural life, if it were offered over his tomb. One passage of Mr. Cotton's shall conclude here. "First, we have him {that is Christ} and him drawing us and fitting us by his Spirit, whereby we come to see him; and then we mourn over him for all the wrong we have done him; this is that faith and that repentance that flows from Christ, and then brings us to him; if it flows not from him, but first brings us to him, it is not the faith and repentance of God's elect, nor that which the Gospel holds forth."

The next place he brings is Acts 16:27,34, touching the jailer; which has been answered already,

{“Further Enquiry,” pages 125,126,} but as here we have something said to support the sense he gives of it, and make it prove what he would have it, I shall not pass it by in silence, though mentioning his reasons may be a sufficient confutation. “If you look {says he} into the history of the jailer’s conversion, you will find reason to think, that though he was scared and terrified when he sprung in and fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, sirs, what must I do to be saved, he was yet an unconverted person; for he was so far from having any right thoughts just before, that he was going to murder himself.”

It is not supposed but that the jailer was an unconverted man a little before; so was the apostle Paul the moment before the Lord met him in the way to Damascus, whither he was going to persecute the saints, Acts 9:1-3, but it follows not that he was unregenerate, when it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, Gal.1:16, and he trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Acts 9:6. These cases seem to agree; for it is said, he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, &c. I cannot conceive reason to believe the jailer was dead in sins, when, under a sense of his sin and misery by nature, he cried, what must I do to be saved? What time does he suppose necessary {seeing his argument is drawn from the suddenness of the supposed change} for the Holy Spirit to quicken a dead sinner? It is not noon at three quarters after eleven o’clock, therefore it is not noon at twelve, is a way of reasoning, even children would smile at. Yet thus this gentleman argues here; but, as in the resurrection, the body shall be quickened and raised in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, I Cor.15:52, so is the new life implanted in the soul, though the new born babe in Christ, I Cor.3:1, may not suddenly know it, or at present know what is the cause of its uneasiness and

sense of want. Growth is a work of time, Eph.4:15, quickening is instantaneous. Ezek.16:6.

He further urges, that if the jailer had been born again, the apostle would not have said, believe, &c., but thou hast believed, &c., but this proves no more than the former, for our Lord bid his disciples believe in him, when it is certain, they were born again, and were believers, "ye believe in God, believe also in me." Jn.14:1.

It is said moreover, "he pressed faith in Christ upon him, as the present incumbent duty upon him, if he desired safety." This, by the way, is not well expressed, for though comfort and peace to a troubled spirit come in by believing and no other way, yet safety, Psal.12:5, as it implies a being out of danger, is by God's own act, Prov.21:31, whereby he chose his people in Christ, before the world began. Eph.1:4. Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation. Isa.45:17. There is a saving from wrath, and a saving from fear; from wrath we are saved by the sacrifice of Christ, without any act of our own, or even the Holy Ghost's work. "Jesus which delivered us from the wrath which is to come." I Thes.1:10. There's also salvation from fear, Heb.2:15, which is effected by the Spirit through faith. A salvation from unsettledness and perplexity of heart, into a determination of conscience and rest on Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, Jn.14:6, into establishment, and sometimes into a rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I Pet.1:8. Yea, the apostle said to the Corinthians, ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, I Cor.15:2, that is, saved from error and seduction, I Tim.4:16, by retaining the doctrinal truths of grace. These salvations come in by believing, but deliverance from curse and condemnation only by the sacrifice of Christ. Gal.3:13; Rom.8:1.

For an answer to Acts 17:30,31. I refer to my "Further Enquiry," page 127, 128. "Men may be endured

{says he} in their disputing about the sense of the scripture; but it is not to be endured that they should bring in, as the pure Gospel, anything that is contrary to the words of holy men; and to all the just consequence, which can possibly be drawn from it, by right reasoning." We bring in nothing contrary to the words of holy scripture, but maintain it to be the duty of all who hear the word, to believe whatever it declares. His claiming the scriptures to be on his side, is but what all do. Is there not as plain scripture for general redemption, as for the sinner's duty of believing, and yet he will not allow that Christ redeemed Judas as he did Peter. It is the meaning of the scripture we are to be set down by. His just consequences to prove that it is the will of God that all unconverted sinners should have that faith which is the evidence of eternal life, Jn.17:3, and to the everlasting enjoyment of God is inseparably connected, will not be found just consequences, drawn from the scriptures. His endeavor is but rolling the stone up hill. For it is to make God's eternal will in Christ to contradict his revealed will. God has revealed his will touching personal election, particular redemption, and the everlasting salvation of his chosen; and has he revealed another will that all should partake of that salvation which he did not design for them? "I pray for them," said our Lord, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." Jn.17:9.

He comes to another of our absurdities, which, says he, I cannot but caution you against. "They have not the face to deny, that Christ and his apostles exhorted sinners to believe and repent, and therefore allow that faith and repentance may be preached; but as far as I am able to understand, these are to be recommended to sinners as moral virtues, and not as supernatural evangelical graces." And again, after he had told them in his way of drollery, to what purpose sinners should be

exhorted upon our plan, as he calls it; adds, "this must be the sum and substance of all we can have to say to sinners, upon the supposition, that they are to be exhorted to faith and repentance only as moral duties."

Here he acknowledges that we allow of exhortations to sinners, which is just; but charges us with a fault, because we restrain them to moral duties only. In the first place, I observe, our opponents do not agree among themselves in this matter; there is confusion in their language. Gen.11:7. The author of the Modest Answer saith that "faith is a moral duty, and repentance is a moral duty, the moral law requires that faith." And indeed, there being no other law, whatever is the duty of a creature is so by the moral law, and consequently moral. But he plainly suggests, that there are duties required of unconverted sinners which are not moral, or our allowing of exhortations to moral duties would be all he could desire. Pray what new law hath he found, whose duties are not moral, or more than moral? Where must we look for it?

This seems not a slip of his pen because he has urged it more than once; and we stand charged by him as erroneous, for denying that unconverted sinners should be exhorted to supernatural acts, or as he has expressed it, supernatural evangelical graces. To which I answer, by supernatural, I understand, that which is above the strength and reach of nature, under the common agency of the Spirit of God. Nature, I consider, as under, and as above and before the fall. As under the fall we constantly maintain, that it is the duty of the creature to do what it is now incapable of, that is, to keep the whole law; because God made man upright. Eccl.7:29. Supernatural acts are such as were above the strength or reach of nature when pure and perfect, under the common agency of the Spirit. Such I take the faith in question to be and therefore reckon it among the all

spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, Eph.1:3, above and beyond the reach of nature when seated on its throne, and this was Dr. Owen's judgment. But this gentleman will have it to be the duty of natural men, I Cor.2:14, to act above the sphere of nature's activity, even in its first and best estate; and makes them blamable for not doing what standing angels cannot do.

And whereas some who are not afraid to say anything, have given out that I have misrepresented Dr. Ridgley's opinion about this point, I shall here transcribe a passage out of his second volume, which is as follows.

"Objection. To this it is objected, that if Christ invites and calls men to come to him, as he often does in the New Testament; and when they refuse to do it, mentions their refusal with a kind of regret; as when he says, ye will not come unto me that ye might have life; this, they suppose, is no other than an insult on mankind, a bidding them come without the least design that they should; as if a magistrate should go to the prison door, and tell the unhappy man, who is not only under lock and key, but loaded with irons, that he would have him leave that place of misery and confinement, and how he would rejoice if he would come out; and upon that condition, propose to him several favors that he has in reserve for him; this, say they, is not to deal seriously with him. And if the offer of grace in the Gospel, answers the similitude, as they suppose it exactly does, then there is no need of anything further to be replied to it; the doctrine confutes itself, as it argues the divine dealings with men illusory. Answer. This similitude, how plausible soever it may appear to be to some, is far from giving a just representation of the doctrine we are maintaining; for when the magistrate is supposed to signify his desire, that the prisoner would set himself free, which he knows he cannot do; hereby it is intimated, that though God knows the sinner cannot convert himself, yet he commands him

to do it; or put forth supernatural acts of grace, though he hath no principle of grace in him; but let it be considered, that this God nowhere commands any to do."

Here this eminent man of God hath in plain and strong terms expressed the same thing, for which we are indecently called unruly and impertinent praters, whose mouths should be stopped; and according to the judgment or passion of Mr. Taylor, the doctor's ought to have been stopped too, but he that judgeth us is the Lord.

I cannot well forbear, to appeal to the conscience of a certain young minister in London, whom, for the respect I bear to him, I forbear to name, if he did not {upon my reading the above passage out of Dr. Ridgley last spring} declare in the presence of a large audience, that he was in our way of thinking; notwithstanding he has given himself a great deal of liberty since up and down in the country, to show his opposition to us. If he had been convinced of a mistake, he would have done the part of a friend, to have signified it to me; as also the reasons of the change of his judgment, before he had openly engaged himself in the opposition.

He concludes, if our sentiment be right, viz., that the law of God does not command sinners to perform supernatural acts, then Christ and his apostles did not preach the Gospel at all. His words are, "if it be so then, what is properly the Gospel never was preached by our Lord, and those whom he inspired in their exhortations, as far as we can find by the historical writings of the apostles and evangelists."

This is somewhat difficult to be understood, if it can be made sense of at all. Those whom "he inspired in their exhortations," is at best an awkward phrase. Holy men were inspired, II Tim.3:16, and we read in Job, there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. Job 32:8. But this is different. If he would have it read thus, those whom Christ inspired

never preached in their exhortations; then he confounds preaching and exhorting, II Tim.4:2, which God has distinguished. However, in one thing his expression is very plain, that is, what is properly the Gospel, is, an exhortation to dead sinners, to believe with the faith of God's elect, and while in unregeneracy, to perform spiritual, supernatural acts, or to make themselves alive spiritually, which they must be before they can move spiritually. The exhortation must suppose a command, or else, not to comply would not be sin; for where no law is, there is no transgression, Rom.4:15; hence, the sense, of what he says is indeed properly the Gospel, is purely the Law. Not promises and declarations of Grace, but commands, according to this, are the true Gospel. As to mistakes about lesser matters, I confess, 'tis too little to take notice of, nor would I have done what I have, had he not through the whole, used an ungentle freedom; but this is a point we ought to contend earnestly for, Jude 1:3, that the Gospel is not the Law, and the Law is not the Gospel. Besides, he might have found several places in the New Testament, where Christ and his apostles preached the Gospel, and did not command or exhort dead sinners to make themselves alive, nor even exhort at all, as Lk.4:16-32; Acts 11:20,21, &c., and something might be gathered from the account the apostle gives of the ministry. I Cor.2:1-8.

The impertinencies with which he has filled up pages 22-24, I suppose he may have taken from the "Modest Answer," page 29, and now thrown them out with usury; but I shall leave such froth to fall, die and perish of itself. We are to preach the Gospel, Mark 16:15, and teach the observation of Christ's institutions, Matt.28:20, and it may be, we use exhortations in the place Christ has appointed them, as much as those who make so much ado about them; but we are not to mingle and confound

the Gospel with the Law, the acts of the creature with the grace of God in the salvation of a sinner.

I come now to consider my account of faith, as he hath been pleased to give it, page 24, which indeed, at first sight, gave me fine uneasiness; because he affirms that some necessary ingredients in saving faith, such as looking to Jesus for life and salvation, staying upon him, and flying to him for refuge, as a hope set before us, &c., are struck out of the account of this grace; which, had I done, to the dishonor of the truth, and injury of the children of God, I should gladly have published my retraction, and have gone with sorrow to my grave. I would not render evil for evil; and that I might not injure him in pretending to give his sense, I set down his words, that the reader may see and judge.

"We are told, says he, that faith is a believing upon an inwrought persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth; that special faith, or believing in Christ, is a possessing Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ; and it has been surmised, though not positively asserted, that every act of special faith hath the nature of appropriation in it. If men, on this supposition, oppose its being allowed to be true, that it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ, they fight with their own shadow, for none will be so silly to say, a Christ-less person possesses Christ. You will at first view see, that what the Scriptures make to be necessary ingredients in saving faith, such as looking to Jesus for life and salvation, staying upon him, and flying to him for refuge, as a hope set before us, are struck out of the account of this grace."

Here he has given some of my words concerning faith, some he has left out without the usual mark of omission, the better to effect his purpose of exposing, &c., which I shall take notice of by and by. My account of faith seems very ridiculous to him, as indeed the faith of

God's people does to many, who call it enthusiasm and fancy, as he has hardly forbore to do in his Address; but whether it agrees with the Word of God, and the experience of the godly, ought to be considered. My words are, "that faith as an act, is a believing upon an inward wrought persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth," which amounts to this, that faith is a persuasion of the truth, which is made known in the soul by the Spirit of God. That faith is a persuasion, no man that hath either faith or common sense can deny. That it is a persuasion of or concerning the truth, is self-evident; otherwise it would be a mere nullity, an act without an object; that it, viz., the object, truth, is made known in the soul, is very clear from the Word, "he hath given us an understanding," I Jn.5:20, of him that is true; which, truth is said by John to dwell in us. II Jn.1:2. Not to dwell upon the lip only by profession, as it had been received by the ear, but to dwell in the heart, as it had been indelibly wrought there by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, and that it is the work of the Spirit of God, as an indwelling Spirit, Rom.8:11, will hardly be questioned by any of the generation of the righteous, whatever opposition it may meet with from the crowd of common professors. I called it a believing upon persuasion, because believing, well expresses an active idea. I believe because God has persuaded me. I called it a persuasion upon inward knowledge, to distinguish it from the blind notion that the common Christian has; and on which he builds his hope, without any regard to a change wrought in his soul; and I added, being led by the Spirit into the truth, to give the glory of this work to God who is the efficient cause of it; and that my definition might agree to the faith which is in question, viz., that faith which is a special part of God's salvation. I doubt not but God's Israel, for whom I wrote, understand it, and know it to be according to Scripture,

and rejoice to think they have such a faith, while others look at it as a matter of jest.

What he seems to make most advantage of, is the following passage out of my thirteenth page, namely, that "special faith, or believing in Christ, is a possessing of Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ."

Here are two words possessing and appropriating noted by him; but whether he dislikes both, or only one, he does not tell us; therefore, seeing they are excepted against and rejected, as not belonging to faith, it behoves us to enquire of the oracles of God, whether they do or no. I shall begin with the former {which he, indeed, by his following words, seems to level against} and enquire, whether the soul that is born again, by faith possesses Christ.

To possess a thing, is a notion so common and easy, that it is not necessary to say anything of it. The distinction between right and possession, is commonly known and allowed by all. Right is that upon which we legally possess, and legal possession is an entering upon and enjoying that which we have a right to.

Faith in Scripture is spoken of under metaphors taken from the senses, as seeing, tasting, handling; in the exercise of all which, there is a real enjoying or possessing of the object. The apostle speaking of that gracious work which God had wrought upon the souls of the believing Ephesians, saith, "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened," Eph.1:18, and in another place, "ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." Eph.5:8. And when this blessing of the covenant was spoken of in the Old Testament, it is sometimes expressed by seeing; as, "they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isa 35:2. "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." Matt.13:16. And concerning the serpent which Moses made by God's appointment and

direction, it is said, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived. Num.21:9. Now there is no way of the eye's enjoying its object but by seeing of it; and when the eye sees anything, the species of sight terminates in the eye, which thereby is joined to it, possesses and enjoys it. "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Eccl.11:7.

The apostle Peter speaks of it under the metaphor of tasting, "if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." I Pet.2:3. And David, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Psal.34:8. When Jonathan, whose spirits were exhausted by the heat and burden of the day, in a long battle against the enemies of Israel, found honey, he put forth the end of the rod which was in his hand, and dipped it in a honey-comb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes were enlightened. I Sam.14:27. Upon tasting the honey he found his spirits to return. What did not Jonathan possess the honey which he tasted? Did he not enjoy it? Yes, he did, and felt strength renewed thereby. Isa.40:31. Don't we possess and enjoy our food, when we feed upon it? When we taste pleasant fruit, do we not enjoy it, and when a poor soul tastes that the Lord is gracious, it does then possess and enjoy the gracious Lord then.

Faith receives Christ, "but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Jn.1:12-13. Here the children of God, who are born of the Spirit, Jn.3:5, and believe on the name of the Son of God, are said to receive him, and with him the privilege of adoption. The soul embraces him, as it were in its arms. The apostle speaking of the Old Testament saints who died before Christ came in the flesh, saith, "all these died in faith, not having received

the promises," Heb.11:13, that is, the things promised, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them. Here is receiving of Christ, seeing of him and his benefits in the promises, and embracing of them by faith plainly spoken of; and yet according to this teacher, possessing of Christ is excluded from faith. What faith has he found, that neither sees the Sun of Righteousness, nor has felt his healing beams; that hath not tasted that the Lord is gracious, nor been refreshed with the hidden manna? Rev.2:17. That hath not, doth not receive Christ in the Gospel, and lay hold upon him? Hath he found a new faith, that came newly up since the penning of the Old Testament, Deut.32:17, since the times of the apostles, yea, since the days of our reformers and martyrs, whose account of faith he despises? I am afraid it is a faith which doth not work by love, Gal.5:6, but produces pride and conceit, anger and evil speaking; a dead faith {which that faith must be that does not possess Christ} which though it may make assemblies and churches full, will reduce religion to a mere skeleton. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Jn.15:4.

By the phrase possessing Christ, no injury is done to our cause. His endeavoring to expose us on the account of that, has indeed betrayed his ignorance of the nature of faith. Let us now see what we are to fear, from that of appropriating of Christ; for this too seems grievous in his eyes. "It has been surmised, says he, though not positively asserted, that every act of special faith hath the nature of appropriation in it." My words are, in answer to an objection, "it is a query with me, whether there be any act of special faith, that hath not the nature of appropriation in it; and sure I am, there is none, where there is not right." It is to be hoped I have not missed it in my surmise, and in my assertion too. He will not surely

deny, that all special faith hath an aspect of appropriation; or how can it be an element of God's salvation, to which the everlasting testament of God is inseparably connected with. May we not suppose, that it is an evidential act of special faith to appropriate Christ, to claim an interest in its object? Nature does not always act to its height; yet no man in his wits will deny an infant to be a rational creature, because that infant, as far as he knows, does not reason; nor will anyone say, that a man when he sleeps, is not a reasonable creature, though his rational faculties are not in exercise. God has said, "thou shalt call me, my Father, &c.," and pray, does the Spirit work this disposition in regeneration, or when? We don't suppose that faith as it views Christ, tastes the sweetness of his love, and feels the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness, whereby it is drawn to him to trust in him forever, is free from disputing about its interest in the Lord, by reason of a different and contrary principle that is in the soul; therefore, as Johannes Wolleb says, "we do not teach such a confidence as is free from doubtings, but such a one as does not finally yield to them."

And as I had the happiness to be a member of the church at Rowel, in the time of the eminently godly and judicious Mr. Richard Davis, where I received the notions for which now I suffer reproach; and which, to the best of my knowledge, was a sentiment generously received and held, till they came under a change; and for quietness sake, gave up one thing after another, till they lost their eyes. I will mention one passage or two out of his "Treatise of Faith," on John 6:40, "two things I will peculiarly remark from the words, that the weakest act of saving faith that ventures on Christ, takes possession of him, and eternal life in him; and that the weakest act of saving faith is, and may, and ought to be improved as a sure evidence of our interest in Christ, and eternal life by him."

But admit that every act of faith does not appropriate Christ, what then? It cannot be supposed by any who are not perversely disposed to cavil, that by my words, "and here by special faith, or believing in Christ, understand a possessing of Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ," I intended that there is no act of faith but that of a subjective assurance, or believing that Christ is mine. No, but my design was, in the first place, to pitch upon that act of faith, which I supposed none would say was the duty of all that hear the Gospel preached; and then desired my opponent to assign a reason, why it is the duty of unconverted sinners, to believe with one degree of faith of the same kind, and not with another.

Here I stand, and here I must stand still; for till I am satisfied, by what law it is the duty of unregenerate sinners to believe in Christ, with that faith which is called, the faith of God's elect; and yet not their duty to believe, they have any interest in the grace that gives being and denomination to that faith, there's no progress further for me. I am very desirous to be informed, what the unregenerate soul is to believe more than the report; what the soul is to do, that agrees with the definition of faith; what he is to be persuaded of more than the truth of the doctrinal report, till God has given some token of his favor. I really wish some would, laying aside all guile, vouchsafe to tell us in plain words what the unregenerate soul is, or has a right to believe more than the truth of the report; which we maintain is their duty to do. Pray, what is that faith, what can it be that does not take hold upon Christ, possess Christ, and in some degree claim Christ; and yet is more than a believing of the report? If it be said, it is a looking to him, a relying upon him; I would desire to know, whether it be a looking to him, &c., only as he is declared in the word without an internal revelation, or by a special revelation? If the former, it is

a mere natural act, and not that faith which is in the question. If the latter, then the soul is spiritually enlightened, and far out of the question. Besides, by this gentleman's favor, reliance is no more of the essence of faith, than he imagines assurance to be; but reliance is an immediate effect of that inward knowledge and persuasion, by which we define faith. "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Psal.9:10. There's an inseparable connection between the knowledge of Christ and recumbency, yet may they be distinguished; the one as the cause or antecedent, the other as the effect or consequent. And further, is he to rely that he may be a believer, or as being a believer?

This gentleman will have it the duty of unregenerate sinners to believe with that faith which is a special part of God's salvation; and yet at the same time, not their duty to believe the salvation they partake of is theirs which I cannot well understand.

To graft this notion upon the Calvinistical scheme, makes confusion. For that asserts, that it is not the will of God, that all who hear the Gospel should be saved with an everlasting salvation, by the Covenant of his Grace. This is the known and acknowledged sentiment of all that hold the scripture doctrine of eternal personal election, as our Reformers did which appears evidently by the 17th article of the Church of England. And it also maintains, that the whole of God's salvation is inseparably connected to every special part, which is dispensed according to God's Everlasting Covenant. This I take to be the sense of the doctrine of the final perseverance of the called of the Lord; and the meaning of the apostle, where he saith, "he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ." And yet, at the same time, which makes the confusion, our Calvinists assert, and would maintain, that it is the will of God, that all who hear

the Gospel should have that faith, which is a special part of God's salvation, and a peculiar blessing of the Covenant of Grace. But, if special faith takes possession of Christ, and hath the nature of appropriation in it, he seems to yield the point. His words are, "if men on this supposition oppose its being allowed to be true, that it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ, they fight with their own shadow, for none will be so silly to say that a Christ-less person possesses Christ."

Here he has lost the question, for we are not talking about what a Christ-less person does, but what he ought to do, what is his duty in unregeneracy. If this be his sense of it, we are come to an issue; for it is as silly to say an unbeliever believes in Christ, as to say a Christ-less person possesses Christ. Or, if the faith, he affirms to be the duty of the unconverted, be only such a one as men can have in unregeneracy, which neither sees, nor apprehends and lays hold upon Christ, our controversy is at an end with him.

But, says he, you will at first view see, "that what the scriptures make necessary ingredients in saving faith, such as looking to Jesus for life and salvation, staying upon him, and flying to him for refuge, as a hope set before us, are struck out of the account of this grace."

Why staying upon him, and flying to him, rather than flying to him and then staying upon him, as the nature of the thing, and order of the apostle's words plainly imply, "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," &c., here's flying for refuge, and then abiding there, and why a hope, instead of the hope, which expresses it with more emphasis, according to our use of the article; and not as though there were other hopes set before us, and only allow Jesus a place among them; these I leave him to account for. But passing these by, as also, his making faith a

compound made up of several ingredients, there is one thing I must take notice of, viz., he tells his readers, the things he mentions "are struck out of the account of this grace."

Suppose they had not been mentioned, it is not just to say they are struck out of the account, unless we had denied that they did in any wise belong to faith. A man may give a short and imperfect account of a thing, and yet not deny that which is necessary to the perfecting of it; but if, we have not only not struck them out of the account, but have taken them, or any of them into the account, and that even in the same place whence he has taken our account, how will he answer for his saying so, in the presence of God or man? I will give you my words as they are.

Faith, as an act is believing upon an inward persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth. And though I don't say, it is a knowing more than the word; yet it is such an inward knowledge which no man ever could attain by all the declarations of the word only. And upon this knowledge follows that reliance, that recumbency, which Peter's words suggest, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" And David's words plainly express, "and they that know thy name will put their trust in thee." There's an inseparable connection between knowledge and recumbency.

You see with what justice we are used. With what honor, as a gentleman, could he leave out part of my words, which immediately follow those he mentions, and contain what he tells you is struck out of the account; when indeed, it is only struck out by his own pen? It is possible a man may mistake the meaning of another's words, which is frequently done without ill design; but it's hardly to be thought, that he did not know of my words, when they were under his eye; especially seeing he took the words that go before, and some that follow at a few

lines distance. This one would think was done with design, and discovers the spirit of those whom David complains of, "who have said, with our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" Psal.12:4.

On page 25, he tells his students, what, upon our scheme, they must not tell convinced sinners, and what they must. "Nay, you must tell them, that until they can appropriate Christ, it is not their duty to trust in him because special faith is a possessing Christ, an inward appropriating of him; it is an eye of the soul to see how fine grace has made the righteousness of Christ, and a tongue to sing his praises." If this was intended to show that the ministry is rendered defective by our hypothesis, that we have nothing to say to a convinced soul, it has been answered in removing a supposed consequence charged upon us. "Modest Answer," pages 153-161. If designed to urge us with an absurdity, it may be retorted thus, until they know they can trust in Christ {which no unregenerate sinner can do in an especial manner} it is not their duty to trust in him, because faith is a trusting in him; yea, and then his point is gone, for they must, according to his way of reasoning, tell unbelievers, that until they can believe in Christ it is not their duty to believe in him. Many of the ungodly multitude think they do much in Christ, though they are strangers to an inherent work; and the scheme we oppose is suited to uphold them in their ungrounded confidence. Besides, it hath been already observed that we have no negatives in our commission, but are bid to preach the Gospel, &c.

He further advises his pupils to tell unconverted sinners, "if they would not perish they must believe in Christ, and they must repent of their sins, leaving the Holy Spirit to bless the word of exhortation, as he in his infinite wisdom sees fit." Why cannot he leave the preaching of the Gospel; the preaching of the doctrine of God's love in giving Christ to die, making him to be sin;

of the forgiveness of sins by the man Jesus, and the doctrine of free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, with the Holy Spirit to bless it as he sees fit, and especially seeing we are told that, they "who were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord." Acts 11:19-21. A blessing, I do not remember anywhere to be said to have attended the exhortation or command. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal.3:2. Has he never found the doctrine of grace more powerful, more effectual and healing to a wounded conscience, than the commands of the law, or exhortations? I would not conclude he has not.

I suppose he would have it thought that the other words concerning faith art mine, viz., "it is an eye of the soul, to see how fine grace has made the righteousness of Christ, and a tongue to sing his praises." The author of the Modest Question, upon the parable of the king's son, Matthew 22, saith, "what he meant and intended by their coming, was, in the first place, their putting on the wedding garment, their putting on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith." In answer to which, among other things I have the following words, "no, he who made our first parents coats of skins, clothed them. Provision and application are both of grace. God, who hath made Christ unto us righteousness, imputeth that righteousness; and gives faith to the soul, as an eye to see how fine grace hath made it, {i.e., not the righteousness of Christ, but the soul,} and as a tongue to sing its praises." He may ridicule this, as he is wont to ridicule all things, but whether it be so ridiculous to say, faith is as an eye, whereby the soul sees how fine it is, being adorned with the righteousness of Christ, and as a tongue to sing the praises of grace, I

refer to the judgment of those who know the truth. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Rev.19:8. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee, be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isa.41:10. He may still call it rumbling out unscriptural stuff, but it may one day appear, that he hath spoken unadvisedly with his lips.

He falls pretty warmly upon those who do not distinguish faith from assurance; and indeed, it behooves him to bestir himself here; for, if faith possesses Christ, his cause is lost; as he himself confesses. "It argues, says he, a great deal of ignorance in men, for any in this day, to confound faith with assurance." Their difference he gives in the following words, "faith is a duty incumbent on all believers at all times, and assurance is a privilege which the Spirit bestows on believers, as he in his sovereign pleasure thinks fit, and he entreats his young students "rather to keep to the general notion of faith, than to give into the confused notion of those, who confound a constant duty, with a privilege bestowed by God at pleasure."

The difference between faith and assurance, he makes to consist in these things. Faith is a believer's duty, assurance is a privilege; faith is a duty at all times, assurance is bestowed at pleasure, or sometimes; assurance is a gift of God, he bestows it, faith is a duty, not a gift bestowed upon the believer; for so we must take it to make a difference here. Let these differences, as he has expressed them, be a little considered. That assurance is a privilege and blessing, is readily granted; but that the faith which is a special part of God's salvation, should not be reckoned a privilege too, cannot be complied with. No man will ever deny that faith is a

privilege and blessing, who knows anything of it, "blessed is the people that know the joyful sound," they are not said to be blessed only because of a privilege and blessing in reserve; but are already blessed, and enjoy a privilege many know nothing of, as our Lord said to Peter, "blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Matt.16:17. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." Lk.10:21. If it be a privilege to have the light rather than to be in darkness; it must needs be a privilege to have God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shining in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

"Assurance, says he, is bestowed by God." Faith is a gracious bestowment of God at his pleasure too. Faith is a gift, "ye are saved by grace through faith, and that not of your selves it is the gift of God." Eph.2:8. The lowest degree of that faith which accompanies salvation, is as really the gift of God as the highest; it is like precious faith with that of the apostles. II Pet.1:1. It is the gift of God to discern the things of Christ, I Cor.2:9,14, to discern a precious suitableness in his blood and righteousness whereby the soul is made to cleave to, and rest upon him, is as truly the gift of God, Jn.16:14, as that faith whereby we apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Jesus. Phil.3:12. The first spring of spiritual light in the understanding of a poor sinner, is the dawn of glory, the beginning of eternal life; and shall surely grow up into further knowledge, and the full fruition of God in the state of glory. Grace and glory are both of free gift. Why would this gentleman have believers think faith is not a gift, that it is not freely bestowed on

them by the Lord? To what end? Surely, this is not the way to establishment, this is not the way to stir up to thankfulness and holiness; but to bind up souls in themselves. A persuasion and sense of God's benefits excite the soul to humble holy gratitude, "what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

He who hath not that faith which is a peculiar gift of God, is doubtless, a wretched unbeliever. Whatever he may fancy himself to be, or others may think of him. If this writer is contending for a faith that is not a blessing and gift of the covenant of grace, he is but taking pains to no purpose.

Special supernatural faith is a privilege as well as assurance; and the one a peculiar favor bestowed by God on the election of his grace, as well as the other. The same eternal love that gives Christ, gives faith also, whereby the soul apprehends and takes possession of him. The distinction therefore, that he would express by those terms, is without difference; unless he would have us understand, that faith is a duty and a privilege; assurance a privilege, but not a duty. We have shown that faith, as to its implantation, or to be born again, comes no more under the notion of a duty than creation, or the resurrection of the dead doth. And now, whether it doth not appear rather a duty to believe certainly the favor of God towards us, when he has manifested his loving-kindness in the soul, seeing God himself declares it to be a fruit of his everlasting love; than for the soul to discover those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man; which are to be known only by the Spirit; and without the knowledge of which the soul hath no object of special faith, is a question one would think, every man would answer in the affirmative upon hearing. It must be thought the duty of the natural man, to believe with that kind of faith which always supposes that knowledge of the object, which

never was in the power of the creature to attain; but not the duty of a believer to have any certainty of his interest in the favor of God, who hath made a revelation of his Son in him, Gal.1:16, and with loving-kindness drawn him to himself. This is strange, but not true. No, for as light bespeaks the being of the sun; and as favors done us are testimonies of friendship, so the manifestations of God's love to the soul, point out the peculiar favorites of heaven, and are the pledges and tokens of God's love to that soul, and ought to be acknowledged as such. But to make this matter as plain as I can, I will here distinguish assurance. Assurance is a certainty of the object, or truth believed; or, of our right to and interest in that object or truth. To deny the former assurance to be the duty of a believer, even at all times, is to run a desperate length. To deny it to be the duty of all who hear the word so to believe, is what those he opposes dare not do, for we constantly affirm, that it is the duty of all to believe the record. Jn.5:10. Yea, to exclude this assurance from the idea of faith, confounds faith with opinion; for if I have no certainty of the truth of what I profess to believe, I have but a mere doubtful opinion; but, if I do indeed believe, I am persuaded of the truth of what I believe, to me it is certain; especially when I believe upon the evidence of a divine testimony. "We believe {said Peter} and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Jn.6:69.

With whatever uncertainty souls may hold the truths of the Gospel, who have received them only by education, hearing, reading, learning, and the common illuminations of truth; and have considered Christ in his person and offices, the discharge and effects thereof, and the whole of the Gospel as a consistent system of truths, without a conviction of their suitableness to their own particular case; yet that soul that has seen them as suited to its own case and want, has been convinced of its own

misery by nature, and of its absolute need of Christ; that soul having heard and leaned of the Father, hath such an assurance of the truth as can never be taken away from it. It did not receive it at first in a way of reasoning; neither can all the reasonings in the world dislodge the soul of it. The truth is so wrought in and united with the understanding, that many times when it is most opposed, it holds it with the most sensible certainty.

But supposing that by assurance he means certainty of right to Christ; this seems to be denied to be a believer's duty in this place, if he means anything to his purpose, which is to show the difference between faith and assurance. It is not imagined, much less asserted, that the soul is not regenerated till it attains to an assurance of its interest in Christ. That there are disputings, jealousies and fears about an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, when there is a conviction of our need, and a sight of the precious suitableness of the blood and righteousness of Christ, for the blotting out of sin, and justification of a sinner before God, have been already taken notice of, "Further Enquiry," pg.157, but, it follows not, that this soul hath not a right, or that it is not its duty to lay hold upon, and appropriate Christ. If he should say it is not its duty because not in its power, this argument would fall with insupportable weight upon himself, for no man will affirm, that it is in the power of an unregenerate sinner to believe with the faith of the operation of God, though they affirm it to be his duty. But why should it be thought not to be the believer's duty to appropriate Christ? Is it not the duty of a believer to be assured of what God declares? God hath said, that "every one that seeth the Son, and believeth, should have everlasting life," yea, that "he is passed from death unto life," then certainly, it is the duty of such a one to believe his interest in Christ, and eternal life by him, or else it is not his duty to believe all that God hath declared. Besides, unbelief in

the soul that is born again, and brought out of darkness into God's marvelous light, I Pet.2:9, I conceive doth not consist in not believing the report of the Gospel, assenting and consenting to the truth and goodness thereof; for that it generally retains; but it includes not believing its interest in the promises, not believing with appropriation. The Lord saith, "I will testify against thee," Pslm.50:7, against thy unbelieving thoughts as well as omissions, I am God, even thy God. "But Zion said, the LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Isa.49:14-16.

I would not be mistaken, I do not say, persuasion of interest is the first act of faith put forth by the regenerate soul; there must be another, a former act, arising from the Spirit's work in the soul, before I can or ought to believe that Christ is mine. For unless Christ had died for all, there must be somewhat more than the declaration of his death and the end of it, with our assent and consent to the truth and goodness thereof, before we can, on good ground, believe our particular interest therein. But when he opens the eyes of our understandings, to see our wretched and helpless condition by nature, {"I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself," Job 7:20,} to discern a precious suitableness in Christ, as a bleeding Saviour, and see our need of him, whereby we are made to fly to him for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us; to the end we might have a strong {or firm and unwavering} consolation, God has given his word and oath, "God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel,

confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb.6:17-18. Now I cannot understand, how the poor soul can have a strong consolation, that does not appropriate Christ unto itself? Nor yet, how it can be conceived to fall in and comply with the design of God, in giving his word and oath, if it does not believe the refuge it hath laid hold upon is a refuge for itself. "The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Psal.9:9-10.

It is strange to me {but, who can account for it} that he should assert, that it is the duty of all to believe with the faith of God's elect; and that, that faith consists in a looking to Jesus, staying upon him, and flying to him; and yet when the soul does these things, deny that it is its duty to believe itself forever safe there. I say again, who can account for such divinity? "They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." Psal.125:1.

Had he been disposed to have followed his own notion, instead of what he has done, to let his students know how, upon our plan, as he calls it, they ought to exhort sinners; he might have informed them how, according to his own notion of faith, they ought to exhort believers, viz., "you must tell believers it is their duty to look to Christ, stay upon him, and fly to him for refuge, as a hope set before them; but you must not tell them, that they have any right to or interest in him, you must tell them that it is their duty to trust him as a Saviour, but not as their Saviour, not as one that died for them; for that's not the business of faith, as believers, they are not to be concerned about that; because assurance of interest comes in another way, not by believing. All the

comfort they are to take up in Christ is, that he is a saviour, without any regard to his being their Lord and Redeemer, who hath loved them, and given himself for them!" Let any unprejudiced person judge, whether this is not more consonant to his sentiment, than what he hath said is to ours.

I grant {says he} "that some of our reformers defined faith, as that which carried its own evidence in it, which must imply assurance; and that many of the noble army of the martyrs, &c." Well then, it seems we are not alone in this mistake, if it be a mistake; and he ought to have been more modest and sparing, for the sake of the martyrs and reformers, who defined faith as we do. The apostle also saith, "he believeth on the Son of God hath the witness himself." I Jn.5:10. Whether he will allow faith, according to the apostle, to carry its evidence in itself, I know not; but this I am certain of, that it hath the testimony of God, which carries an indisputable evidence in it. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." I Jn.5:9.

But {saith he} "they might run into this misapprehension, out of eagerness to oppose the papists, who deny the possibility of proper assurance; but what, as I apprehend, chiefly led them into it, was their own experience, and the strength of their faith." Was it then the gracious experience of the martyrs, that led them into this culpable blunder, as Mr. Taylor calls it? And it ought to be reckoned a mercy, if a gracious experience has led others into it too. Here, it's observable, he allows it was by the strength of their faith that they attained assurance, though a little above he excludes assurance from faith.

To prove what nobody denies, viz., that believers are sometimes disconsolate, he saith, there are "many instances of persons, who, it is to be hoped, have the faith of God's elect, who are complaining of their want of

comfort." If he designs this to prove there may be faith where there is no certainty; or that faith doth not take possession of Christ, nor hath the nature of appropriation in it, it proves neither. David had faith of interest in the Lord, when he complained for want of comfort, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me," Psal.42:6, "I will say unto God my rock, why hast thou forgotten me," Psal.42:9, which is often the complaint of a child of God, when the Lord turns away the light of his countenance. "But Zion said, the LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Isa.49:14. Again, expostulating with himself, he saith, "why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Psal.43:5. None ever mourned under a sense of the want of spiritual comforts and the light of God's countenance, who were strangers to them. No; this is a trouble the heart of a believer knows; and there is a joy attending it, which a stranger intermeddles not with. Prov.14:10. Let the poor, the weak and despised of Christ's flock answer here. Do you not in an hour of darkness, in a time of desertion find still an anchor hold within the vail, a secret hope that stays you from fainting away? Heb.6:19. Have you not such hold on Christ, being kept by the power of God, I Pet.1:5, that you cannot let him go? Psal.27:13. Don't you find, as David did, "in the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul?" Psal.94:19. Does this man think that where there is a persuasion of God's love, there can be no sorrow in the heart, no troubles in the breast? Alas, you know there may be darkness in an enlightened soul, and where the joy of the Lord is the secret strength of the heart, II Cor.4:9, sorrows come; comforts under castings down, as it were the company of two armies. Song.6:1.

He adds, "if the men we have in view will deny, that such as walk in darkness, and see no light, have special faith, they deny what God himself supposed might be," and gives for proof, Isaiah 50:10. "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God." From this place it is evident, that whatever darkness is meant in the text, they were walking in the fear of God under it; and it may be well supposed that the persons spoken to, knew that God was their God; for had they been ignorant of that, there had been no motive in the exhortation, "let him stay upon his God." God, says he, "supposed it might be." We suppose things, and make the best judgment we can, because of the imperfection of our knowledge, but it is not so with the Lord, whose understanding is infinite. I do not think it comely to talk of suppositions in God.

As above, the reformers and martyrs {who had not, as I know of, provoked him, nor had been alleged against him} fall under his censure; so here faith and true assurance can hardly escape. "I don't say but that they might notwithstanding, be pious persons; for it must be owned, that by reason of the weakness of grace, enthusiasm may graft itself on faith, as well as spiritual pride may on true assurance, if Christians do not take care."

"Enthusiasm may graft itself upon faith," {says he} as if faith were a proper stock for it to grow upon. But what does he mean by enthusiasm? It usually signifies, when applied to religion, a misconception about being inspired, as Dr. Moore takes it, or a mistake about spiritual comfort. It is the latter of these, I conceive, that he means; and so expresses his contempt of a comfortable persuasion of our relation to Christ, and standing in the unchangeable love of God; making it a

fancy. We might have expected from a spiritual guide, an example to the believer in faith, I Tim.4:12, and that he should have taught and encouraged those who receive the truth in love, as Christ taught his disciples to pray, "our Father which art in heaven," Matt.6:9, but instead of that, when those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, in whose hearts the love of God is shed by the Holy Ghost, take in the comfort of it, this must be esteemed a tincture of enthusiasm. And this "enthusiasm may graft itself on faith, as well {says he} as pride may on true assurance, if Christians do not take care." Indeed a false confidence cannot produce good fruit, Jn.15:4,5, but I have thought a true assurance would have born much fruit, according to the doctrine of our Lord, in the 15th chapter of John. Yet this seems dangerous with him too, except Christians take more care of themselves, than God takes of them in bellowing the blessing. The apostle John saith, "every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I Jn.3:3. But I shall leave it with him to reconcile his expressions with the words and known sentiments of the apostles Paul, Peter and John. Rom.5:5.

I cannot conceive why he should call assurance a privilege bestowed by God, if there is so much danger in it as he suggests; but thus it is, and thus it will be with men in the ministry, whatever figure they make in the world, or character they bear in the church, for want of some ripeness of experience, when they meddle with the mysteries of faith, and especially the Spirit's work, for they handle them as men handle things with their gloves on.

And now he comes near affront with us, as we have a two-fold absurdity charged upon us at once. "They who are against sinners being exhorted, and pressed to believe and repent, though sensible that the writings of the prophets are full of exhortations to amend their ways,

and turn to the Lord; this, says he, is a great difficulty upon their scheme; therefore, to ward it off, they have run into a twofold absurdity; one is, that all which the prophets mean by turning to God, is for sinners to turn from idols, to break off from their false worship, and to reform their outward conduct; and that the death and destruction they are threatened with, is the demolition of the temple, and razing the walls of Jerusalem; another is, that sometimes declining believers are addressed to as sinners."

These absurdities, as he calls them, seem to be added, especially the latter, only to make up the number, for it's hardly to be thought, that anyone who has the least acquaintance with the Scriptures, and God's method with his people, can be ignorant of this, that God frequently speaks to, and exhorts his own children under declensions and decays, as backsliding sinners. To think otherwise discovers great ignorance, and if he does not really think so, it is rash beyond comparison, to charge for an absurdity, what he knows to be agreeable to the methods of God.

Some instances, out of many contained in the scripture, I will produce, wherein God speaks to and exhorts his people as sinners. "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you, and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." Jer.3:12-14. "Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even

from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I showed it thee...yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened, for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off." Isa.48:4-9. "And my people are bent to backsliding from me, though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him." Hos.11:7. "O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake, for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee." Jer.14:7. Though God does not speak to his people as unregenerate; yet he speaks to them as backsliders from him, as transgressors, a stiff-necked and rebellious people, and notwithstanding exhorts them to return.

I come now to attend his proof of the former absurdity, viz., "that all which the prophets mean by turning to God, is for sinners to turn from their idols, &c." Here I desire that it may be observed, that no interpretation of a text proves a position, until that interpretation be proved to be genuine, and that, that sense of a text which is contrary to the plain and evident meaning of another text, or militates against any known and established truth as it is in Jesus, cannot be the genuine and true interpretation of that place.

We have already answered most of the places alleged, yet it may not be improper to take further notice of them here, and what he offers to support the sense he gives. It will appear to every sober mind that contemning men by calling them "solemn triflers, the least degree above an idea, men who will not stick to say anything, let it be ever so foolish, and the like instruments of a churl," have no aptness in them to inform the judgment, and demand assent; nor does it greatly move us to be so

used, it having been the method of such as could not comprehend the truth, even in the apostles time, to scoff and deride us, Acts 17:18, I shall, therefore, pass this by, and apply to the work that is before me.

The first place he allegeth is, Isa.55:6,7, which he concludes to be a call to unregenerate sinners to be regenerated, or to regenerate themselves. But it is observable, the prophet urges those to whom he speaks, with the consideration of God's nearness, and his being yet to be found. He ought to have shown, before he concluded he had the meaning of the text, when and how God is near to unregenerate sinners, when he may be found of them, and when not, for these words, while he may be found, while he is near, plainly imply that the Lord was near and might be found; but probably, if they did not obey the voice of his servants, he would withdraw himself from them, so that they could not find him. This seems a key to the place. God had set his tabernacle among his people Israel, Lev.26:11, had appointed them ordinances, and promised his presence to them to bless them, Psal.132:13-15, he had enjoined their attendance in his house, Deut.12:5, and to encourage their obedience, said "I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat," and "in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee," Exod.20:24, but to deter them from disobedience, he threatened the removal of his tabernacle, and withdrawment of his presence, in case of their departure from him. Hence those words of David to his son Solomon, "if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." I Chron.28:9. Not that the Lord would cast off his beloved to their everlasting perdition, Rom.11:1, but bring them under his providential rod; he would chasten them with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, as he said to David. II Sam.7:14. This was verified in the captivity which the

tribes underwent for neglecting God's worship. II Kings 17:5-7. And in the New Testament our Lord saith, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I." Matt.18:20. A church state and ordinances were designed to be the seat of the Lord's presence, and means of a blessing to his people. Psal.132:14,15. We have found the ways of wisdom to be pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace; and the want of a church state and ordinances, hath been found to be attended with darkness and death, though "nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom.8:38. Now the house of Israel was under grievous declensions at this time, and we may justly suppose, that the prophet exhorted and stirred them up to return to their obedience and in the 7th verse lays before them an encouraging motive, as if he had said, though you have revolted and sinned grievously against the Lord in forsaking of him, and by other provoking sins, which generally follow upon casting off God's fear; yet, seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him in his ordinances, before the glory is quite departed; for therefore "the LORD will wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you, for the LORD is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him." Isa.30:18. "And Samuel said unto the people, fear not, ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; and turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and the right way, only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart, for consider

how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." I Sam.12:20-25.

But let us hear what he hath said. "Here, says he, to take mercy and abundant pardon only for averting temporal judgments, when yet at last God might show no special mercy, and might be so far from pardoning, that after he had spared for a little space from worldly ruin, he might glorify his justice in punishing, would be very odd indeed."

Would it be odd indeed? He must be very ignorant in the scriptures and methods of divine providence that does not know that God's tender mercies are over all his works, Psal.135:9, and yet his special and eternal mercy is bestowed only on some. "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Psal.103:17. And does he not know, that God often preserves nations that know him not, and families that call not on his name, from worldly ruin, and shields them providentially from the stroke of their fellow-sinners, and yet may glorify his justice in punishing them forever? "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Rom.9:22. Here's much long-suffering exercised towards those that perish. Did not a national reformation avert a temporal judgment from Nineveh? Jonah 3:10. And yet it does not appear, that they were saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; and if not, God would glorify his justice in punishing them forever. If he shall say, these are not acts of mercy and forgiveness wherein God abounds over the sins and provocations of his creatures. My answer is, averting those judgments which are denounced against sin, is sometimes called putting away, or pardoning of sin. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the

LORD. And Nathan said unto David, the LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." II Sam.12:13.

However, this does not press us, because we don't understand this place in the sense he intimates. But he gives another reason why this text in Isaiah must intend "a call to unregenerate men to regenerate themselves, or be regenerated; that is, because Christ is set forth in a glorious manner, as a Saviour of the Gentiles in all nations."

But, it follows not, that because Christ is set forth as a Saviour of the Gentiles, therefore the Gentiles, or yet the Jews are commanded to save themselves or put forth supernatural acts before they have a principle of grace. Christ is set forth to be the resurrection and the life. "I am the resurrection and the life." Jn.11:25. But who ever thought to infer from thence, that it is the duty of dead men to raise themselves and put on immortality? It is indeed a sin not to believe that Christ is what he is set forth to be; but not the creatures sin not to be saved by Christ; and the faith we are speaking of is a part of his salvation. It is the constant duty of a creature to love God, wherein it is active; but I do not conceive it to be consistent with common sense, to say it is the duty of a creature to be loved of God in Christ, wherein the chosen of God are altogether passive. And so it is in respect of regeneration and the resurrection of the body.

I suppose, he may imagine the third verse to contain an argument against us, "incline your ear and come, hear and your souls shall live, &c.," but neither do these words conclude what he would have them; for, before there can be an inclining of the ear spiritually, a new and gracious principle must be supposed, and besides, the promise of life, or that their souls should live, lays us under no necessity to understand the words as he does, for to live, does not signify only, if at all, to quicken at first, but joy and comfort, or a fruitfulness in the soul

that is born again. Now, saith the apostle, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," I Thes.3:8, that is, it yields us joy and comfort to behold your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ, Col.2:5, and "if ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom.8:13. In neither of these places can the word live be taken for the implantation of that principle, which the Spirit implants in regeneration; or for justification before God.

Can anything be more irrational and stupid, than the sense our opponents give of this text? Men are bid and commanded to come, being dead and remaining so, and urged to it, by pretending a promise that God will give them life if they do. Hearing and coming to the Lord spiritually are acts of a gracious principle. "No man can come unto me, said our Lord, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Jn.6:44-45. Yet God, by this method, is represented as calling, and commanding dead sinners to perform those living acts of hearing and coming; and, in order to induce them thereunto, promising, that in case they do put forth those vital acts, he will give them that living principle, without which, he himself declares they cannot put them forth. Can anything argue the dealings of God with his creatures more illusory? Would we not be ashamed to use our fellow creatures so? I am amazed to think, that men of thought should persist in so manifest an absurdity; though I don't wonder, that many godly unthinking men, who are content to see with their ears only, for want of better employment, toil in this maze in their pulpits by the month together. "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people

to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD." Jer.23:30-32.

After this gentleman has held forth the covenant of grace as conditional, proposing life to dead sinners and that God will make an everlasting covenant with them, upon their compliance with the terms of hearing and obeying; he would have you think that he holds the promise to be free, "the wicked and the unrighteous are pressed to come to God through him, {meaning Christ,} and, says he, mercy, peace and pardon are freely promised to them."

What reason can admit a promise to be free, which is made to, and suspendable upon an impossible condition required of the creature; for it is impossible for a dead sinner to make himself alive. Here you may see what a Neonomian free promise is, "mercy, peace and pardon, says he, are freely promised." But, it must be observed, there is a condition required of the creature, that he is no more capable of performing, than he is of raising the dead, or creating of another world.

This master of Israel, Jn.3:10, has been pleased to give us a rule for judging of the exhortations in the prophetical writings; but why his rule will not hold in the writings of the New Testament, he has not been pleased yet to tell us, "wherever you find, says he, in the prophetical writings, an exhortation backed with a promise of a blessing of a spiritual nature, you may be sure that exhortation relates to something more, than a bare moral reformation."

He has let his reader to guess what he means by "bare moral reformation," and, it may be, he found himself under necessity so to do. But passing that, I must observe two things. First, that his divinity is false; secondly, if true, it would not answer his end. He will never be able to show, as we have observed above, that

the creature was ever exhorted to do that which is not moral, or more than strictly so, and especially, in unregeneracy. There are promises of God's presence made to the observation of his institutions, which are positive in both testaments, yet the observation of those institutions is moral; or else, not to observe them would not be sin; and the moral law respects the inward thoughts, as well as the outward actions; as our Lord shows, Matt.15:18,19, otherwise thoughts would not be sinful or virtuous; which, I think, he will hardly deny them to be. But suppose any tolerable sense could be put upon his words, "you may be sure, that exhortation relates to something more than bare moral reformation." Pray how would that prove, that such exhortations were given to unregenerate men, to stir them up to regenerate themselves; which, if he does not intend by his exhortation to something more than a bare moral reformation, I cannot conceive he means anything at all.

"But, says he, if the aforesaid subterfuge will not serve the turn, they have another silly surmise at hand, that, for ought we know, they might not be unconverted sinners who are exhorted to duty in the Old Testament, but believers under decays and declensions."

I must observe that the scriptures of the Old Testament were given to the church and none else. "What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom.3:1-2. Yet were there among them ungodly and unregenerate sinners; and we do not deny, that exhortations were to be given unto them, but we want proof that they were exhorted to regenerate themselves; for until that be done, nothing is done to purpose, from all the exhortations in the Bible. This then, is what he is to prove, and in order to it, he brings in Proverbs 1:22-30. But this, I conceive, stands him in no stead at all, for the sense he

takes it in establishes the notion of the day of grace being past before death, as verse 28, "then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me, &c." Whatever he may think about this notion, some have thought there never was a day of special grace, or an opportunity for the rest to be saved, but the election shall surely obtain it. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Rom.11:7. And further, the evil to be avoided by receiving and observing the counsel of wisdom, does not appear to be the wrath which is to come, I Thes.1:10, of which the apostle speaks, but some temporal calamities, distress and anguish; as may be gathered from verses 26, 27, and the last verse, "but whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

He saith, page 32, "that according to some men, they shall be destroyed forever who die without the faith of assurance." If here he means the blessed martyrs, they are gone into the inheritance, and cannot be affected with it; if he intends me, according to his sense of assurance, he uses me very unjustly; and for a confutation, I refer the reader to my "Further Enquiry," pages 153-161. I shall only add that according to some men's behavior, they value themselves on the account of such things, as every modest man would blush at.

Proverbs 8:4,5. This he concludes was spoken to unconverted sinners, and we must suppose too, that he imagines they were called to regenerate themselves, or to be regenerated; but the proof he offers, if I understand him, is a mere begging of the question, taking for granted what he ought to prove, viz., that these words were spoken to the unregenerate. "Solomon, says he, in his Proverbs, always means by fools unconverted persons." Whether he will admit the distinction between regeneration and conversion, I don't know; but I

conceive, he ought to have given a reason, why fool in the Proverbs should always signify an unregenerate person and not so in the New Testament. Christ said to his disciples, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Lk.24:25. I hope he will not doubt concerning the state of these. But it seems he wanted no proof.

"Indeed, says he, I was ready to imagine, that it was so clear that he meant by the fool a wicked person, that I could hardly think any who is the least degree above an idiot, would dream of anything else being meant by it."

Here is argument enough for some men. But I desire it may be considered, whether "anything else" agrees with person. And I am not only ready to imagine, but free to say, such portly language deserves to be treated with the utmost scorn and contempt. When men would show themselves witty, let them do it in a clean and decent way.

Proverbs 9:4-6, he has huddled over with chapter 8:4,5, and I think, he could not have done better, for certainly Mr. Maurice, and he too, are sadly out, in choosing this text to prove a general call, wherein some are expressly required to come, and told to leave others, as verse 6, "forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding." Now if all were called, who are they that were to be forsaken?

There is yet one thing more he takes up against us, "it has been, says he, an absurdity, which has often been brought upon the stage, that the law is not to be preached by ministers; and many faithful dispensers of that which is the true genuine Gospel, because they have declared the whole counsel of God, have not escaped the censure of unruly tongues, but have been styled legal preachers, both in our times and in the days of our fathers."

It is beyond my design to take notice of everything that falls in my way in this my examination of the address; and which were I to do, would not be profitable to them whom I delight to serve. Several particulars in the above charge may be enquired into by those that have leisure and ability; as, why preaching of the law should be called, that which is the true genuine Gospel? Who they are that have declared the whole counsel of God? And, why it should be called a censure of unruly tongues, by those who hold it their duty to preach the law, to be styled "legal preachers," any more than they who preach the Gospel, esteem it a censure to be called Gospel preachers? It is somewhat strange men should be ashamed of the title, and yet glory in the thing. But these I shall pass by, and as the design of the author is, to charge an absurdity upon those who are not of his mind touching the preaching of the law, as far as I conceive myself concerned in it, shall briefly answer.

The passage, I suppose, that has given offense in my "Further Enquiry," page 166, is as follows, "however some may glory in telling the people, that the commission of a minister is to preach the Law as well as the Gospel, until I have light into that matter, I would say with the apostle, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Rom.1:16.

I shall freely declare what I do not mean by preaching the law; and then, what I do mean by it. What I do not mean by preaching the law. First, I do not mean opening and insisting upon that part of the word of God, which declares his will touching the conversation of reasonable creatures; and urging it upon them with proper motives, for this ought to be done.

The unbeliever should be exhorted to moral virtues, and attendance upon God's worship, by the common goodness of God towards his creatures, and his

gracious designs by the Gospel; and for avoiding the temporal effects of sin; as poverty, to him that deals with a slack hand; surfeiting and loss of health, to those that give themselves to excess, to an immoderate and sinful use of the creatures, &c., and that they do not aggravate their guilt before God, the righteous Judge, who will proportion their punishment to their crimes, unless of his free rich mercy, he purges them away by the blood of his Son.

2. All duties in common should be pressed upon believers, for avoiding the temporal effects of sin mentioned above, though the penal effects are taken away by the sacrifice of Christ, Rom.8:1, and that by a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, Phil.1:27, they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, Tit.2:10, and thereby put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, I Pet.2:15, who, for want of knowledge and experience, speak reproachfully of it. And further, the institutions of Christ must be opened, and laid before the children of God, and they moved to the observation of them also, by the consideration of the love of God, which is manifested in all that he has done for them in and through Christ. And this ought to be done for diverse ends; as, the provoking one another to love and good works. Heb.10:24. The enjoying more of the presence and communion of Christ, Matt.18:20, who has promised his presence in his ordinances. "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen, in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." Exod.20:24. Most of all, that they may express their gratitude to God for all his benefits bestowed upon them, Jn.14:21,23, and by a manifest subjection to the sceptre of his kingdom, show forth the praises and virtues of him who hath called them

out of darkness into his marvelous light, I Pet.2:9, that God may in all things may be glorified. I Pet.4:11.

Secondly, I do not mean by preaching of the law, opening the word to set forth the state of man by nature; showing the misery he is involved in by sin, and his utter impotency to help himself out of this his deplorable condition.

Thirdly, neither do I intend the opening and properly insisting on the word, which sets forth the demerit of sin, Gen.2:17, what the transgression of the law requires, and what the sinner must undergo, unless redeemed by Christ's being made a curse for him, Gal.3:10,13, "for without shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb.9:22. The demerit of sin would I endeavor to set forth, by insisting upon what Christ has undergone, Isa.53:3, as, the persecution, the sorrows, the agony and bloody sweat, the desertion and cursed death of the cross, Phil.2:8, all which were born and suffered by the Prince of Life, Acts 3:15, on the account of the sins of many. Isa.53:8,12. "And he said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Lk.24:44. Neither of these things are meant, when I intimate I am not for preaching of the law, but, as long as it shall please God to honor me with his service, I would continue to use the preceptive and historical parts of his word, as well as the promises, with all the purposes and views above mentioned, and more.

But, positively, by preaching of the law, I mean, preaching a covenant of works, for the rule without the sanction is not a perfect law; and with it, a perfect covenant of works. Do and live, transgress and thou shalt die, is all the idea I can form of the covenant under which God placed our first parents, and according to which he

deals with angels. And this is done either more openly and directly; or indirectly and concealed.

By some the law is preached more openly, and they don't spare to declare upon an unscriptural presumption of God's merciful goodness, that he does not insist upon a satisfaction for sin; or, if they allow that justice must be satisfied for sin, they say, original transgression was atoned for by Christ; and as for actual transgressions, they imagine the reluctance and penitence of the creature, will be a sufficient atonement. Yea, some there are who are so ignorant, as to fancy if a man does but say, Lord be merciful to me, with their expiring breath, that it will purge away all their guilt, and procure them a mansion in glory. Thus they would advance the head of one attribute in God, and depress another, rear up a monument to the praise of mercy, on the overthrow and ruin of justice; contrary to the glorious Gospel, in which mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. Psal.85:10. Of this sort are they who alert and maintain a power in fallen man, contrary to the protestant articles, which if he uses {and a very little use of it they vainly imagine will suffice} God will accept it for righteousness, through the merits of Christ, justify their persons in it, and admit them to a life of felicity and glory in an eternal state to come, on the account thereof. These are purely on a covenant of works, and enemies to what God has done by Christ. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom.8:3-4. Such were the zealous Jews, Rom.10:1-3, and such, generally, are the nominal Christians.

There are others that preach the law more covertly; they are a little more refined in their notions,

and acknowledge the impotency of fallen man, and his need of the righteousness of another, which they allow to be by Christ; but then they can't tell how to allow this righteousness to be for the justification of one sinner before God, till the creature believes and repents; and so make it a mere cypher till the sinner does something to stand before it. Some embarrass the free promise with conditions directly, and darken the glorious Gospel with terms proposed to and required of man, as entitling acts, thus while they speak it fair, they wound it under the fifth rib. They make the Gospel, which is glad tidings of great joy, to be, as to its special benefits, suspendable upon an impossible condition to man. These trouble the church with another Gospel. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal.1:6-8.

To handle any part of the word so as to direct the expectation, and give encouragement to the fallen creature to hope for salvation on the account of anything it does or shall do, is so far to establish the covenant of works, and abolish that of grace. The modish endeavor to shake it off, by telling the hearers, in a concluding word, "that you cannot do these things of your selves, they are not in your power, you must be saved by grace, if you are saved, yet are they your duty, and except you do them you cannot be saved," is but the trumpet giving an uncertain sound. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" I Cor.14:8. If urging faith upon the unregenerate, as some men do it, be not done with such a view {as it will have such a tendency} why do not ministers press other things upon their auditories, which they profess to be in their

power to do, and which if done, would make them useful and serviceable in all the several stations and relations God has placed them in this world?

The answer some give, viz., that they do it that they may be pure from the blood of all men, is so void of reason, that it deserves no reply. Is not all the world become guilty before God, Rom.3:19, and their guilt cannot be removed by the creature's act.

To conclude, if the Lord gave his apostles commission to preach the law, which some men boast of, it is somewhere written, and when they produce it, I will confess my mistake. He gave them a commission to preach the Gospel, "go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," Mk.16:15, he could as well have said, and preach the law too, if that had been his mind. The apostle Paul saith, "Christ sent me to preach the Gospel," I Cor.1:17; had he received a charge to preach the law, how will you account for his faithfulness in concealing of it, seeing all the succeeding ministers of Christ were to preach according to his commission. Gal.1:8. Yea, and further, our Lord said, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," Lk.4:18-19, but not a word of his being anointed to preach the law. And seeing the case was thus with the Lord, and with his apostles; and the apostle Paul said, "some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm," I Tim.1:6-7, whereof I shall again say with the apostle that "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Rom.1:16.

Now he may see the mask, as he has expressed it, cast off; let him not, like an evil shepherd, sleep void of care, but if apprehensive of danger, arise and contend. But I wish him to be so wise to let men's heads and hearts alone, till he knows more of heads and hearts than the names of them! "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil.4:8.

CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
Modern Question
AFFIRMED, &c.

I shall take notice of a few things more relating to this controversy, occasioned by a posthumous piece of Mr. Maurice, lately published called "The Modern Question Affirmed." And in the first place, my definition and distinction of faith are objected to. I have as much right to define faith as another man hath; and the definition I have given, is in no other words than what the Holy Ghost has made use of, referring to that Grace. {Vindication of the above Defense, page 25.} The defect this Author complains of is, I have not taken in the term 'word.' I have not, but in lieu of it, he might have found the term 'truth' which I judge equivalent. John 14:6; Eph.4:21. Besides, he might have seen the same defect, as he calls

it, in Dr. Chauncy's, "Doctrine According to Godliness," 1737 edition. "What is faith? Answer. It is a confidence grounded upon knowledge, whereby God is trusted in for life."

My distinction of faith, is founded on the Word of God, and will stand with the Bible. What I mean by natural, common, or historical faith, and what by supernatural, I hope, is sufficiently explained; nor has he, as I find, once attempted to answer what I allege to support the distinction, but cavils at the phrase natural faith. The Holy Ghost saith, "many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did, but Jesus would not commit himself unto them, &c." Jn.2:23,24. The faith "in his name," mentioned here, Mr. Maurice did not account having, in his "Discourse of Faith," pages 7 or 8, and, I suppose, would not have called it supernatural then. Besides, I will direct his readers where they may find the phrase, natural faith, Dr. Goodwin, Volume II, pg.50, contents of chapter VII, saith, "faith was natural both in respect of its motives and grounds, &c." {See the distinction in the same terms, Robert's, "Mystery and Marrow of the Bible," page 35.} And further, I called it natural, common, or historical faith; and he might have taken the latter as well as the former, if it would have served his turn as well. His causeless sneer at a word or two on my 4th page, as also his suggesting that I despise the assembly, and deride their catechism; and that I hold many great things to be attainable without the help of God, I pass by as weak, false and injurious, But I must distinguish between the common agency of the Spirit of God, and his special work in regeneration.

What I have alleged in favor of our sentiments out of Dr. Owen, Goodwin and Ridgley, I have taken verbatim from their works, and referred to the places where they may be found; and I mean no more than what their words literally mean, and what they themselves evidently intend

by them in the places where they stand; and if they have in other places expressed themselves as if they were otherwise minded, I am not accountable for that; they were but men, and no wonder if they were not always consistent with themselves; but seeing where I take them, it is plain they are consistent with the particular doctrines of the Gospel, I embrace them there, and follow them as they follow Christ. Further, I still conceive that it will be easier for any unprejudiced person, to reconcile the places produced here, to those I have quoted, than to bring over those to what is produced here. But no more, lest any should think the contention to be about the opinions of men.

He seems to boast of his numbers; and, indeed, his argument from the greater number concludes. But though number gives the stamp of currency, it is not the badge of truth. Let those who are in his way of thinking, pitch upon any particular doctrine, as eternal personal election, particular redemption, &c., and see if it be received and owned by all, even the profane and ignorant multitude, as the notion we oppose is; and then consider how weighty the argument is, that all believe it. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." Lk.6:26.

I am not ashamed to profess my value for Dr. Chauncy's works; nor did I know that it is not consistent with a just esteem for another man's works to love, or even prefer his. I think, I have a right to say whose writings I prefer. Had I sought worldly interest, I would not have declared myself as I have done.

The arguments he gives for mine, are not mine, but his own, as they are formed, and he might use them as he would; I have nothing to do with them. My first argument proves, that unconverted sinners are not under condemnation for not believing Christ is theirs; or, for not believing anything more than the report of the Gospel;

because there is no foundation in the word of God, for them to believe more. How this is supported, and what use I make of it in this controversy, may be seen from my above Defense. I argue from the different relations Christ sustains to the church, and to the rest of mankind, that it is not the duty of the rest to believe with appropriation, and consequently, not their sin, that they have not believed more than the outward declaration; because God has not constituted that relation, nor given that right which is the ground of possession and appropriation. I argue from Adam's being a common person {which all Calvinists profess to believe} in form as follows. What Adam had, we all had in him, and what Adam lost, we all lost in him; and are become debtors to God on both accounts; but Adam had not the faith of God's elect before the fall, did not lose it for his posterity; therefore they are not debtors to God for that in unregeneracy. He and Mr. Taylor too, might have seen this argument, and denied in form, if they had been inclined to have brought the controversy to a fair issue. I will venture the weight of all upon this argument alone. I have demonstrated, that the faith in question, as to its principle, comes not at all under the notion of a duty, any more than creation itself does; and if men will be willfully blind, and not see the absurdity of making it to be a duty to act without principle, or to move before God gives being and life, there is no help for them in man.

One thing I must observe here, that is, he was afraid once to mention the terms of the question, viz., that faith which is a special part of God's salvation {though they are his own words} but in the room of them puts, trusting in Christ for salvation without taking notice of the knowledge that is necessary thereunto. Dr. Chauncy says, "faith is a confidence grounded upon knowledge, &c." The apostle saith expressly, that in "the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God." I

Cor.1:21. Yea, God is said to have hid the things of the Gospel from the wise, &c., Lk.10:21; yet it is affirmed to be the duty of a sinner to trust in Christ with a living faith, without any regard to that knowledge which is antecedently necessary thereunto, and without which it never was possible to be done. Such a blind circle we must tread.

We allow it to be the duty of all that hear the Gospel, to assent and consent to the truth and goodness of every proposition therein; and particularly to this, that there is no other name given among men, whereby we must be saved, Acts 4:12, consequently, that they ought not to seek after another saviour, but in their minds wait and abide here; yet this assent and consent is not that faith which we are concerned about; or, that whereby the soul is actually united unto Christ {as some express it} which is a special new covenant blessing unless it arises from an higher spring, than that of nature in its best estate.

The Further Enquiry stands as it does. We might have expected his endeavors to defend his reasonings from the several scriptures made use of in the Modern Question; but it seems, he knew better than to attempt that. It is reasonable to believe, that all but his second chapter was drawn up several months before my Enquiry was published; for it was given out that something was done to show Mr. Hussey's inconsistencies; and to prove the point in controversy, another way than in the Modern Question. Mr. Hussey's judgment in this point is well known, notwithstanding that slip of his pen. {"Operations of Grace," page 442.} As to the question, he proves it nowhere. It is not very difficult to dance the rounds with him here; but altogether needless. The method taken may serve to hold his incautious subscribers in dark chains, and that's enough. Here is nothing done to prove that Adam had the faith of God's elect before the fall; or,

that it is in the power of his fallen posterity to have it; or vindicate the justice of God in punishing his creatures, for not having and keeping what he never gave them. Until some of these can be attempted, I have little more to say. I look upon all besides to be but cobwebs, to entangle the weak, or garments of leaves to cover the nakedness of an indefensible cause. It is a known rule, that the question ought to be contained in the premises, and expressed in the conclusion. Now the question is not, whether it be the duty of sinners to repent and believe the Gospel; but, in plain terms, whether the law binds men to have that faith which is a special part of God's salvation? Neither of his syllogisms conclude in the terms of the question; therefore are not to the purpose. They prove not what they ought to prove.

Touching the method taken in the Modern Question affirmed I will give you Rohault's opinion in his preface to his philosophy, "that it is not a way to the acquisition of new truths, nor as such intended, but only a sort of exercise and sport of the mind, whose end is nothing else, but only to mix and entangle truth with falsehood, by the help of some little tricks and quirks, by which either side of the question maybe maintained, and neither of the litigants seem to yield, though the propositions they hold be never so absurd, and the reason to the contrary never so strong."

Only for instance, I will take his last syllogism, page 97. Objection. "If the tidings of the Messiah's coming to save sinners were worthy of all acceptance, then Adam was bound to believe in him, but these tidings were and are worthy of all acceptance; therefore, &c." Answer. If by believing, &c., be intended, that seeing and relying that arises out of vital union to Christ, the consequence of the major is denied; if anything else be meant, it does not concern the question. Such are the rest. He should have replied to my answer given to consequences

charged on our sentiment; but instead of that, we have some of them with an addition of more, under the name of absurdities.

Objection. "It pretends to be a truth, yet can be profitable to no body." Answer. It is proved to be truth, and that the contrary is but a mere covenant of works, "believe for salvation, and do for life," sound the same thing. Besides, we have the negative proved.

Objection. "It tends to keep back poor sinners from believing in Christ." Answer. Faith is the gift of God. That faith that can be hindered by man, must be in man's power to have.

Objection. "It leaves a poor, dark, doubting believer without relief." Answer. The contrary does.

Objection. "It blocks up the only way to God." Answer. By this the unregenerate sinner's duty is made the only way to God; and Christ, the only way shut out.

Objection. "It tends to make unconverted sinners careless about salvation." Answer. Personal election has as much tendency to make sinners careless, and has been charged with the same by the enemies of the Gospel.

Objection. "It shuts up parents from bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, &c." Answer. This has not so much as a show of common sense, and what follows it, is feigned and known to be false.

Objection. "It shuts out repentance for impenitence and unbelief." Answer. We allow unbelief to be a sin; though we deny it to be sin not to be spiritually united to Christ, which is a special fruit of electing grace.

Objection. "It shuts people up under a covenant of works." Answer. Then it is according to the doctrine of the scriptures; for man was made under a covenant, and now, God hath concluded them all in unbelief, &c., Rom.11:32.

Objection. "It contradicts the very words of Christ." Answer. We assent and consent to every word of Christ; but the notion we oppose is proved to be a mistake, and it carries in it a great discouragement to souls, because it tells them, except they have that faith which it is impossible for them to have, unless God gives it, every ordinance they attend will aggravate their guilt. Besides, by this the Gospel makes man's condition worse than it was by the fall; seeing it asserts that his guilt is aggravated for not doing what is not in his power; whereby the Gospel is made to be not only eventually, but inevitably a Curse.

The bitter reflections on the moral character of some, I know not who he means, nor what he intends by them. The whole is a sad verification of the account given in my introduction to my Enquiry, &c., and an explanation of the character hinted at in the preface to the work. But as he is gone to rest, and remembering the sweet converse I have had with him, I pass it in silence. The Prefacer could not forbear to cast a little dirt, which I hope never to return. How far he looks upon himself to be concerned in this controversy, time may show.

FINIS