

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

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“ In Doctrine shewing uncorruptness,”

GOD'S BUILDING.

WISDOM hath builded her house; the foundation of this house is glorious; the stones are laid with *fair colours*, and its foundations with *sapphires*. When God is to lay the foundation of his church, he invites all the world to come and behold its glory: “ Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.” This foundation is none other than Christ, “ the brightness of the Father’s glory,” as the Apostle Paul declares, “ Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Such is the glory of the foundation, that it transmits a Divine glory upon all the inhabitants, all the vessels of the house.

The form of the house is glorious, when moulded according to the pattern shewed in the mount of Divine revelation. A house must needs have a form; to deny this, is to make it like the primitive chaos, “ without form, and void.” The Old Testament church had a certain form both of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; much more must the New Testament church, considering that the whole Mosaic œconomy was but like a porch to lead the world into the greater glory of the New Testament dispensation. Of this form of the house the prophet Ezekiel speaks as a thing most sacred: “ Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.” Where you see that the form and

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fashion of the church of the New Testament, among the Gentile nations, is reckoned by God such a sacred thing, and of so great importance, that the prophet, and consequently all ministers of Christ, are commanded expressly to shew the form and fashion of it, from the pattern described in the mount of Divine revelation; and not only so, but to write it in a book, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

The form of the house of God is glorious, as is the form of every work of his hand. And therefore let us still "walk about Zion, and go round about her, and mark her towers and bulwarks, that we may tell it," in a way of testimony, "unto the generations following; for this God," who has set up the towers and walls of his church among us, "is our God in covenant for ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death."

The door or entry of the house is glorious. And if you ask, What is the door of the church visible or invisible? I answer, Christ answers the question, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." This is the gate of God, by it the just shall enter in; and by it the sinner may enter in, and become just; no sooner doth he enter this door by faith, but he is clothed with the garment of salvation, and covered with the best robe of the imputed righteousness of Christ; yea, becomes the righteousness of God in him, he being "the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth."

The pillars of the house are glorious: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars." These pillars are the perfections of the Divine Nature, as they are displayed and manifested in Christ, his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, mercy, love, and faithfulness; all which do, with a pleasant harmony, combine to support the fabric of the house of mercy, which God has said shall be built up for ever.

The ordinances of the house are glorious; there Christ and his family do meet, and have fellowship one with another. David cries out, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! One day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in thy house, than dwell in the tents of sin." And when he was, through the fury of Saul, and other persecuting enemies, driven to the wilderness of Judea, and so deprived of access to these galleries of the King of glory, where he used to enjoy communion with him, how doth his heart and flesh cry out after the living God! And they that have David's experience of fellowship with God in his ordinances, will be ready to say with him, "I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."

Not to multiply particulars, all the offspring of the house are glorious: "The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold." The servants of the house are glorious in

the eye of the church: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace!"

What happy and privileged persons believers are, who are the offspring and issue of this family, being born of God, and having a name and a place in his house, even an everlasting name which shall never be cut off. O, (says David,) "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, for they are still praising thee. Happy art thou, O Israel: Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!" Only let it be remembered, there is a great difference between a free-born son, and a servant in the house, who is working for his lawful wages; for the son abideth in the house for ever, but the servant is often turned to the door. There is a difference between a coming into the house for a while, and a being planted there by regeneration; for "they that are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God." They are the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, in whom he will be glorified.

What a dangerous risk they run who do injury to this house; instead of building the house of God, do their utmost to pull it down, and raze it to the foundation. There are a generation of men in our day, who turn the house of Christ's Father into a den of thieves, who plunder the house of its valuable furniture, and spoil the offspring and issue of the house of their valuable privileges. They call themselves the servants of the house, and yet, contrary to the laws of the house, they beat and cast out their fellow-servants, for no other cause but for contending and witnessing against them. In a word, truth falleth in the streets; equity cannot enter; error in doctrine is patronized; they go to, as with axes and hammers, to break down the carved work, which, by the authority and oath of God, we are bound to maintain, preserve, and defend. Well, but shall they always trample on the Divine authority, and break God's covenant, and escape? No, they shall not, says God. Jerusalem will yet be a burdensome stone; and the head-stone of the corner, which they reject, will in the event fall heavy upon their heads, and grind them to powder. E.

ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 562. of last Volume, and concluded.)

4. And lastly, What Christ will do when he is come.

The principal event which will take place after Christ has actually appeared in the clouds of heaven, and made his entrance once more on earth, will be the solemnization of his spiritual marriage with his church; and then his church, with him, will reign over all the nations. Thus our Lord announces his Coming, for this purpose, in the Parable of the Virgins, by the exclamation, "Behold, the BRIDEGROOM cometh!" As the glory of his first Coming was manifested, and the beginning of miracles, at a marriage

feast, so he will display the glory of his Second Coming at his own marriage ; when he will, indeed, turn the *water* into *wine*. This is the consummation of all the works of God, with which the inspired Volume of Revelation begins and ends ; for the first creation, I consider, as typical of the new ; and the marriage of Adam as typical of that of Christ, who is called the second Adam. Since the works of creation are designed to display the glory of God, the more enlarged view we take of those works, the more we shall discover of God's infinite perfections, till we behold the full display of them in the person of Christ, and have the enjoyment of them in and with him, as our true husband and everlasting King. The material world is an image of the immaterial and invisible things of God ; and the Scriptures are a ministration of the Spirit, to inform us more accurately what is so represented to us. The first and second chapters in the Bible, are a perfect title to the whole book, and contain a summary view of the Divine dispensations during the whole age of the world, which, agreeable to this analogy, is 7,000 years. By stating each day's work of creation, and the analogous dispensation, we shall shew more clearly in what order Christ will come, and the consequences.

1st Day. The substance of the heaven and earth, when first created was totally dark, yet out of that state God created *light*, and the rays of light were dispersed abroad through the first evening and morning. So man was made at first a rational being, but had no moral sense, no knowledge of good or evil, and after the Fall, only a knowledge of evil ; in which state, God revealed to him the first *promise* of Christ the true light, which Adam communicated and testified himself through the first thousand years, during nearly the whole of which he lived.

2nd Day. The elastic air, or firmament, which is capable of supporting the greatest pressure, was created between the waters above and below. So in the second thousand years, A. M. 1056, Noah was born, whose family was secured by the first *covenant*, of which the rainbow was the sign, and thus distinguished from the nations (which waters represent) both before and after the Flood.

3rd Day. The solid earth was formed separate from the seas ; and brought forth herbs and fruits by the power of God, before there was either sun or rain, while the seas remained barren. So in the beginning of the third thousand years, A. M. 2006, Abram is born, to whom, and to whose descendants, God gave the covenant of circumcision and the institutions of religious worship ; by which he separated them from the nations represented by seas ; and which he blessed to produce many religious characters ; while he left the Gentiles to their wild imaginations in religion, which are like the sea, barren and unprofitable.

4th Day. The sun, moon, and stars, were placed in the ærial heaven ; and as in the day of creation the evening preceded the morning, the moon and stars first shone ; and afterwards, at the close

of that day, the sun first arose. So in the beginning of the fourth thousand years, God's presence, which is the light of the world, was first visibly manifested by appointing a house to be built for him, which was finished, A. M. 3000. As the moon waxes and wanes, and totally disappears, so the Temple, from its first erection was frequently destroyed, and re-built. The prophets were like the stars, who shone in the Jewish night. At length, at the close of the Jewish state, Christ appeared as "the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings;" which the last prophet foretold. The glory of Christ's works eclipsed all the beauty of the material temple; therefore the Christian church is clothed with the sun, or Christ's righteousness, and has the moon under her feet. Rev. xii. 1.

Hitherto we have only seen the component parts of the inanimate creation produced, which are governed by the laws of motion without any enjoyment of life or liberty. Such was the general state of the world till the Gospel; and even Christ, though he made his people free, was himself made under the law.

5th Day. Two sorts of creatures were produced, which had life, the fishes and the fowls; of which the one had a less degree of life being dumb, and dwelling in a thicker element than the other, who fly high and sing aloud. So in the first thousand years after Christ, the fifth from creation, A. M. 4036, the Gospel of life and liberty was preached in the world, and was professed by two sorts of persons, of which the one were *Gormalists*, who were dumb as to speaking of any experience of grace; among whom arose Antichrist, called "Leviathan, that crooked serpent, the dragon that is in the sea," Isaiah xxvii. 1.; but the other were heavenly-minded believers, who sweetly celebrated the praises of Christ from hearts tuned by his grace.

6th Day. All the beasts and creeping things were formed, most of which are beasts of prey, and some are poisonous, as the serpent; and last of all, man appeared in the image of Christ's human nature, and endowed with a rational nature, which empowered him to have dominion over all the preceding works of creation. So at the beginning of the sixth thousand years, the second after Christ, A. M. 5099, earthly sovereignties, which beasts represent, were completed, being influenced not only by motives of worldly gain, but by a blind zeal for religion, the most earthly principle of all, which appeared by the crusades, or holy wars. Governments are represented by beasts of prey in Daniel, and are most rapacious when urged by pious motives to make war on each other. We now come to the principal object of all the works of God, and of this inquiry, the second man, Adam, of whom the first Adam was the image. He only is the true image of God, as it is evident that no mere creature can be an image of the infinite Deity; but Christ being God and Man, is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. He will stand on the earth as such, at the end of this sixth thousand years. To him will be presented the whole church,

formed out of his wounded side and the travail of his soul, gathered out of all nations by his Spirit, and united to him, to reign with him over all the kingdoms of the world. "The Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Dan. vii. 22. He will dwell in Eden, a garden of pleasant fruits; which represent the various ordinances of a pure and spiritual worship, and the doctrines of grace, which are sweet to the taste of Christ and his people. Before these sixth thousand years are expired, all the kingdoms must be subdued, and the nations learn war no more; all conversion-work, both among Jews and Gentiles, must be accomplished, and all the elect will be gathered in, which many call the spiritual reign previous to the Millennium. The six working days must include all the works of God, both in the creation, and the government of the world.

7th Day, Was a perfect and holy rest, which however ended in a dispensation of grace to the man and woman, and the everlasting punishment of the serpent and his seed. So the seventh thousand years, called the Millennium, is that perfect rest from all our own works, as God did from his, and that holy enjoyment of Christ's presence, and of our own conversion and resurrection, which remain for all the people of God. The resurrection of the church is implied in the formation of the woman from a rib, which had lived in Adam's side, but was deprived of that life, and then endued with much more vigour in the person of Eve. At the close of the Millennium will be the final judgment, the ultimate glory of the saints, and the everlasting misery of all the wicked and non-elect. How awful, how astonishing these events! What quick, great, and durable changes do they imply! Am I changed by grace from sin to righteousness, from Satan to God? I shall not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be cast into the depth of the sea, though the waters thereof rage and swell. His everlasting love and perfect obedience secure me amidst all storms. Though I die, he will redeem me from the power of the grave, both by receiving my soul, and affording me an early resurrection; and all my trials shall issue in joy unspeakable and full of glory.

D—s, Nov. 27, 1811.

ADELPHOS.

JESUS' VICTORY OVER DEATH.

SIN entering into the world, Death obtained an universal dominion over mankind: Rom. v. 12. "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;" it reigned as a king, ver. 19. "Nevertheless Death reigned from Adam to Moses;" it became universal monarch, swaying its sceptre over all nations, kingdoms, and empires, from the one end of the earth unto the other. Every man receiving life in this world, not excepting those that are born

to crowns and kingdoms, are born subject to Death. It is the most terrible king, even the king of terrors: an absolute one, against whom there is no rising up. This universal dominion it got by the law, upon sin's entering: Gen. iii. 19. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." 1 Cor. xv. 56. "The sting of Death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."

The kingdom of Death consists of two very different territories or countries; one is the upper country, namely, the sinful world; the other the lower country, in the other world, that land of utter darkness, where the light is as darkness. In the former, the government of Death is comparatively mild, but in the latter inexpressibly horrible. Here Death's subjects have some gleams of light, joy, hope, though mixed with many sorrows; but there they will never see light more, nor enjoy the least ease from their pangs; which is the second Death, Matt. xxii. 13. "Cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Death's power over sinners by the law, reaches to the transporting of them out of this world into its dominion in the other world; it has power to carry them to the pit, and shut the bars thereof for ever upon them. Hence we find the rich man dying, and buried, and then in hell lifting up his eyes, Luke, xv. 23.; an impassable gulf is fixed between that miserable company and the saints above, ver. 26.; so that by Death's power, had it not been hemmed in, all mankind had landed there.

That all mankind might not perish, the Father gave a kingdom to his Son, which he was to conquer out of the kingdom of Death in this upper world; in which kingdom life might reign for evermore through Christ: John vi. 37. "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." This our Lord undertook willingly, resolving to spare no expence, even of his own blood, to recover it.

Our Lord Jesus coming on this expedition, findeth all mankind fettered with the bands of Death; Death has seized them all without exception, fastened on their souls and bodies, keeping them as prisoners, till they should be transported into the pit from whence there is no redemption; and his own that were given to him of the Father, he finds wrapt up in the common ruin; so he, putting on a zeal for his Father's glory and the salvation of the elect, encountered Death in their room, and, after a bloody battle, gained the victory. But after all this the chains of Death still continue on his people, and they lie under them till the Conqueror, who by his Death has purchased their liberty, come and loose them, in pursuit of this victory.

He looses the bands of that spiritual Death under which he finds them; morally dead, lifeless, senseless, and motionless to any spiritual good. He puts a principle of spiritual life in them, quickening them by his Spirit, Eph. ii. 1. "And you hath he

quickeneth, who were dead in trespasses and sins." With authority he asks the grim vanquished tyrant, as he did others in the case of Lazarus, O Death! where have ye laid him? He comes to the grave, saying, My Word and my Spirit roll away the stone; and with a powerful voice he cries, Dead soul, come forth! Then feeble Death loses its hold, and the dead comes forth to walk before God in the light of the living; and then he is a new creature; old things are done away.

He looses the band of legal Death off the sinner; he is by nature a condemned man, dead in law, and Death holds him fast with the cords of unpardoned guilt. But now the soul, uniting to Christ by faith, and so being clothed with his perfect righteousness, having his satisfaction applied to him, the cords of the guilt of eternal wrath give way, can hold no longer, and so Death is beat from its hold of him, Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Now may the soul say, "It is God that justifieth, Who is he that condemneth?" The mighty Lord has burst the bars of iron asunder, Death's snare is broken, and we are escaped.

He destroys the body of Death in the believer. Still the grave-cloaths hang about the believer, even strong corruptions and divers lusts, the remains of that Death from which they were raised in regeneration. There is a body of Death cleaves to them, complete in all its members, therefore called the Old Man, which is the remaining corrupt nature, with the lusts thereof. This makes them groan, and long for delivery, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this Death?" This also is swallowed up in the pursuit of this victory, by degrees. For,

It is crucified, gets a deadly wound, and its destruction ensured, in the conversion of the soul to God: Rom. vi. 6. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." The nails are driven through it, and every member thereof: Gal. v. 24. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. It is nailed to the Cross, and shall never come down till it breathe out its last. Its reigning power is broken, and can no more command with that full sway it did while the soul was under the dominion of Death: Rom. vi. 14. "For sin shall not have the dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

It is weakened and mortified more and more, in the gradual advances of sanctification: Rom. viii. 14. "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Every new supply of grace weakens corruption more and more. The grace of Christ in the heart is a spring that will never be quite stopped, and therefore will work out corruption by degrees, as the spring does the mud: John iv. 14. "But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." They

will be like the houses of Saul and David; while the former waxeth weaker, the latter waxeth stronger.

At the Death of the body, the body of Death is utterly destroyed: Heb. xii. 23. "And to the spirits of just men made perfect," there is not the least remains of it to be seen any more then; then there shall not be the least darkness in the mind, corruption in the will, nor disorder of the affections. When they are taken up into the mount, they are stripped of their rags, and cloathed with change of raiment; for then Christ says, "Loose him and let him go."

He dries up all the sorrows of Death, wipes away all tears. David was sometimes encompassed with them, but he is now got beyond them all. Death entering the world at the back of sin, has made an universal flood of misery, that covers the face of the whole earth; even the redeemed ones walking to Zion, cannot miss to dip their foot in it, and that often very deep; they are liable to afflictions on their bodies and souls; and all that is their's; they are distressed with desertions and hidings of God's face; they often go mourning without the sun. And what are all these but the arrows of the foiled enemy, wherewith he annoys the Mediator's company in this lower world? But Christ will also spoil this part of Death's game in his kingdom; he has taken the poison and strength out of these arrows already, that they cannot give a deadly wound; and in a little these Egyptians, whom they see to-day, they shall see no more for ever: Rev. xxi. 4. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

He brings all his people safe through the valley of the shadow of Death: Psalm xxiii. 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." Death advances, at length, to the saint as a king of terrors, to loose the soul from the body. They are ready to be affrighted at the sight, but the waters are dried up where they are to pass. It stands before them like a serpent; but the sting of it is gone, they can get no harm of it. "O Death! where is thy sting?" may the dying saint say; they tread then upon the serpent, while they pass over to the other side; it casts down the body into the grave, but their more precious part it cannot touch. It is like the storm to Paul; the body, the ship of the soul, is dashed to pieces; but the soul, the passenger, gets safe to land. This is a noble Victory got through Jesus Christ.

Death has nothing of Christ's but the bodies of his saints, not a foot of ground in his kingdom but the grave; and these he will also wrest out of his hand at the resurrection. So, then, at the last day, by the sound of the trumpet, Death shall be summoned, in the Conqueror's name, to give up its dead; and immediately it shall fling open its doors, and yield all up to him: Rev. xx. 13. "And

the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and Death and hell gave up the dead which were in them.—Then this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in Victory.*" Death will hold fast by them that are his own, even when they are come out of the grave; but then, nothing that ever belonged to it shall any more be about those that are Christ's.

In consequence of the absolute Victory over Death, it shall be shut up, and confined for the ages of eternity to the lower regions, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone: Rev. xx. 14. "And Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second Death." As the waters of the Deluge, that overspread the whole face of the earth some time, were, by the voice of God, chased away into, and confined in the deeps; so Death, in its whole extent, as comprehending all miseries, greater or lesser, that some time ranged through the earth at liberty, shall be gathered together, and thrown into the place of the damned, there to prey for ever upon its proper objects, the enemies of Christ, the great Conqueror.

REPLY TO TWO QUESTIONS.

MR. EDITOR,

It will, probably, be thought, by some of your readers, a piece of presumption on the part of a Stripling to attempt an answer to G. E.—'s Query from the 8th of Romans. (see Gospel Magazine for January, 1812.) The difficulty of the undertaking is readily admitted, but were that a sufficient objection, little light would, probably, be thrown upon the passage; and should the following attempt be only the means of some one more qualified taking up the subject, the writer of this will consider himself fully compensated. The chapter from which these propositions are taken, is full of christian experience, and encouragement to those who are addressed by the honourable appellation, of "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."

The first Query that I am called to answer, is, "What creature this is?" As we have two very distinct characters pointed out in this connection, one as possessing a good degree of hope, and the other as having none; which latter is called the creation, (verse 22.) and is said to groan and travail in pain, but no hope, through all the connection, ascribed to this character; but at verse 23, and 24, much is said respecting the hope of the creature; I am led, therefore, to consider the creation as the non-elect of mankind, who may be said to groan and travail as well as the elect, but not with that sense of sin, or of desire to be delivered from its dominion, as the elect at conversion; but owing to the corruption of our nature, as derived from our fallen head, Adam, and which is common to both, I mean that corruption and disease of body, which was entailed by our

federal head upon all his descendants. If, then, I am right as to the characters called Creation, it follows; that the creature must be those who are regenerated from amongst them; and who are waiting in earnest expectation, for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the glory that shall be revealed in them, either in the thousand years reign, or state of ultimate glory; and with which the greatest sufferings of this life are not to be compared.

The second thing which I am called to shew, is, "Who we are to understand subjected the same in hope." Adam made me subject to vanity willingly, and without hope; but when Jesus came with power to form my soul anew, he made me subject in hope;* and altering the bias of my will, but not my nature, I still remained subject, but not now willingly, having, also, hope that I shall in due time be delivered from vanity. I, therefore, desire to give him all the praise; even Jesus who made me subject in hope, as well as all his elect; and to remain satisfied, it was his good pleasure that his chosen should remain, whilst in this wilderness, subject to vanity, though not willingly, that they may be made to cry to him who is alone able to deliver, and who as an earnest hath given this hope.

The last thing which I am called to prove, is, "How we are to understand it was not willingly?" If I am right respecting the creature being the renewed man, possessing two such opposites as nature and grace, there is no difficulty in shewing that he is the unwilling subject of vanity; such a doctrine, I presume, is quite agreeable to this complex character, and I hope G. E. will be satisfied with what the Apostle Paul says on this head; he informs us how he prayed for the removal of the thorn, which shewed his desire to be delivered from vanity, and that after the new man, he was not the willing subject of it; and was, also, informed it should not be removed, but that he should still remain subject to it, not willingly, but in hope; and though he had the promise of Christ's grace being sufficient for him, he still felt the warfare by what he afterwards said: "When I would do good, evil is present with me." The great High Priest of our profession did not suffer on the Cross that we might be delivered from all vanity, whilst inhabiting these houses of clay; but being in our natural state made subject to it, without hope, we might, at our regeneration, (having a new principle which cannot be the willing subject of it,) be made, unwillingly, subject to it in hope. Your's, Mr. Editor,

A STRIPLING.

* I do not mean that God is, or ever can be, in any sense, the author of vanity; but finding me a willing subject to vanity, before I was new-born, it was not his will to alter that state, but to create me anew, still subject to it in hope, and which is all that is meant by his subjecting the same in hope; for the will of the renewed man is to be delivered from vanity; but God, for the display of his own grace, chose the warfare should continue; therefore, instead of a complete deliverance from all vanity, he created me anew in hope, subject to vanity, during my stay on this side Jordan.

GLIMPSE OF GLORY.

(Continued from p. 597. last Vol.)

By thy blood, and only by thy blood, dear Lord, have we entered these oceans of unspeakable happiness—Through thee have we such full access to the Father; thou art *our wisdom, righteousness*—all things. O perfect security for ever and ever! What wonder this could not enter the minds of mortals! This is only to be conceived by manly capacities. Before, we resembled thee in part, because we saw thee by faith, as through the glass of thy Word, but in part; now, we are capacious; now, thou shinest upon us in full splendor, whereby thine image is fully impressed upon us; we know thee face to face, as thou art, without the benefit of interposing creatures and ideas, extracted from other things. O immediate vision of God! O clear discoveries of infinite perfections! I see, I see the infinite *One face to face, as I am seen, and my life is preserved*. I am fully satiate, ravished, overcome with thy lovely image! What wonder I am like thee, who partake of thy nature, the beams of thy excellency every where darting upon me! O this illumination! The high pitch of glory! The everlasting smiles of my Lord's countenance! Manifestations of more and more throughout eternity! All the enjoyments of eternity are as one moment: all ages are swallowed up as in the infinite depths of boundless excellencies. Creature enjoyments are empty, and may be received; but infinite love ravisheth throughout eternity. When more ages are past than there are atoms in the creation, then shall I be, just as I am now, ever swimming and diving in the depths of thy infinite perfections, and never attaining the furthestmost. This is a life! How sweet to dwell under the noon-day beams of thy ravishing countenance! All darkness and ignorance are quite dispelled; every thing is known as it is, in its own proper essence: here wisdom flourisheth in its highest region—my former attainments are swallowed up, like the light of a candle beside the sun. O this light day of eternity! Eternity, thou art not sufficient, wherein I may delineate what my elevated heart doth conceive! All are inexpressible: mysteries are no mysteries, and yet eternal mysteries! How was I beset with darkness, and could not attain suitable knowledge of thee? How was I vexed with low and unbecoming thoughts of thy all-glorious Majesty; whence deadness and unfitness of spirit for worshipping of thee aright; now I am enlightened with the full and immediate beams of thy glory. And how great and precious are my thoughts of thee! O this ravished frame of spirit! How am I all inflamed with Divine love! I am rendered divine; therefore I bend to thee with an incessant and eternal propensity: holiness before was in part, now the top-stone is upon it. How beautiful and comely are we become, through the blood of the Lamb! I see,

Well-beloved, thou canst wash black fair and white, till it become fit for heaven and glory. Are we not far changed? May not every one of us say, I am not I? Might we not mistake ourselves, were it possible such a thing were compatible with glory?

The wonderful mystery of thy being One in Essence, yet Three in the way of thy subsistence, was only to be believed by mortals; and not to be understood demonstratively: but now I behold, with a noon-day evidence, what I believed. 'Thou art One, in the most simple manner; and yet there are Three in the blessed Godhead; every one of which is God, who are only distinguished by proper ways of subsistence. I believed in the land of darkness, this, as all other mysteries, should be fully manifested in the land of glory. Now all, all is accomplished. 'My hope hath not made me ashamed: he hath fulfilled the desire of those that fear him.' O blessed I, for evermore! What a life is this, thus to swim in the oceans of delight! O this enjoyment! My heavenly Father! First Person of this all-adorable, eternal, co-essential generation! O thou *brightness of thy Father's glory, and express character of his person!* O Holy Ghost, the eternal conspiracy of love betwixt the Father and the Son! O ravishing sights! Shall I not behold, with an eternal overcoming delectation? *What is God*, will take eternity to answer, though we behold thee as thou art; one view of thy infinitely amiable essence and way of subsistence would seal up innumerable worlds of men and angels in everlasting ravishments!—Can I express what I behold! Should I write new volumes through millions of ages, until the creation were filled, they should contain nothing to that my heart is filled with. Should I write to all eternity new songs of thine immortal praises, should I not be ever beginning, and never fully begun?—O sweet fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! O my Redeemer! Do I not behold thee *the brightness of the Father's glory, the express character of his Person*, his efficacy and his wisdom, by which he made all things? *The Lord possessed thee in the beginning, ere ever the earth was*; even then thou wast by him, as one brought up with him, and wast daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.—Immortal blessings and praises to thee, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Art thou not lovely, excellent, full of all delights and sweetness, who hast begotten such a matchless, super-excellent One as Christ Jesus our excellent Well-beloved, our Redeemer, our head, our days-man, our *all in all*? The substantial image is lovely, O my heavenly Father! O then thy loveliness!—Men and angels, you are but as so many painted accidental draughts of God's excellency; but Christ Jesus is the substantial image of God, his very power, efficacy, and excellency, by which he doth all things his very self. None but Christ!—Is he the Father's darling, and is he not our's? Is he his wisdom, joy and delight, and is he not our's also?—O eternal ravishments! God hath given to and for us the Son of his everlasting delights!—

Sent he not his only Son and heir into a base and inhuman world, that he might save and gather together the sons of his eternal choice? —O blessed council, from eternity, of the glorious Trinity! O happy we, that ever free, free love bowed and condescended so! What could Jehovah do more for us than he hath done? Hadst thou any greater gift than the only Son of thy love? Didst thou give thy bosom delight to be a propitiation for us, the offscourings of all things? Is not this love infinitely transcending all finite capacities? That thou vouchsafed a being on us was a great bounty—but more that thou created us after thy lovely, Divine image—yet more, thou condescended to enter into a covenant for us—and yet higher, to be appointed thy everlasting minions. But what shall we think, men and angels, hath he not given unto us the Son of his everlasting delight? This gift can never be enough admired and esteemed: O Almighty Jehovah! thou givest like a king—too great a gift indeed for us to receive, but not too great for thee to give. Nothing can be too great for thee; and this was the greatest gift that thou couldst give. Hadst thou gifted us ten thousand worlds of beauty, stored with all imaginable paradises of pleasure, with innumerable fair created heavens of sweetness, with infinite legions of men and angels, should they not have been esteemed rich and noble gifts?—But all is just nothing to matchless Jesus. It is a shame to lay any thing in the balance with him.—One ray of his Godhead would confound all possible created excellencies to nothing. O thy excellency, thy excellency! Am I not overjoyed that I shall cry thee up through numberless ages?—Ye may hide yourselves, men and angels; for all your beauties and glory, what are you to him? It is astonishing condescension he admits you to stand beside him! I can but extol thee before assemblies of men and angels. My heart is fixed, eternally fixed: Shall we not, as it were, contend who shall extol thee most? And said you, Amen, my Well-beloved, to the blessed, a thousand times blessed bargain of the new Covenant? Verily; that love thou manifested in the fulness of time, did show the love that flamed in thy heart before all ages: though thou was *in the bosom of the Father*, ever delighting him, and delighting in him; yet didst thou come down to base earth, and conversed familiarly with silly, sinful, frail man! and was found to be a man, that thou might save him, lost and undone to the uttermost.—Men and angels, you are looking in with astonishment. To behold God personally, clothed with the human nature, is a sight we can never enough view and admire—the mirror, wherein we behold the love of God to creatures in its full splendor. Wast thou never enough near and intimate with us, until thou becamest *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*—until thou becamest one with us, who art one with the Father? “For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all one: for which cause thou art not ashamed to call us brethren.” O

essential love! Art thou not here manifested transcendently? That sentence was comely in thy mouth, *Love your enemies*. Hast thou not loved thy mortal enemies to the death? Were we not heirs of wrath, born enemies against thy Majesty? But in despite of our enmity didst thou love with an everlasting love. Nothing can stand in the way of infinite redeeming love. No matter what I have been, since I am lovely in thy sight: it is wonderful loveliness to become the object of thy eternal love; and this only will I glory in. The more vile and loathsome I have been, the more doth the loveliness, nobleness, and freeness of thy love appear. Sovereignty shines forth in all thy actions. "Who shall give thee, and it shall be recompensed? Not unto us, not unto us, but unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, be glory for ever and ever."—O blessed Spirit of grace, the eternal aspiration of love, and outgoing of the Father and the Son!—Thou great Jehovah, blessed for evermore—how sweet a co-operation hast thou in this glorious work of redemption, this transcendent manifestation of altogether free grace! How sweet hast thou been unto us in the days of our pilgrimage! How didst thou convince, convert, enlighten, and comfort? We should have perished in our journey to this goodly land, hadst thou not strengthened us in our inward man. And wast thou so sweet in the days of our sinning? Art not thou now sweet, infinitely more than sweet?—O the full, incessant, eternal flowings of the Spirit of love! This south-wind breathes strongly, causing the spices of the higher Paradise to exhale a ravishing fragrance every where: how, in every high tide, nothing but ravishing perfumes? No winds, but the breathings of the Holy Spirit. O what rivers, oceans, worlds of consolation! One drop of this falling from the heart appeared heaven itself; but this is more than heaven: every drop of this boundless ocean of sweetness, I am entered for ever into, would ravish ten thousand worlds of men and angels. This could not be conceived by mortals, unless in a childish manner; the first-fruits surpassed their apprehensions, and yet had no proportion considerable with the harvest. None can apprehend this except they be experienced therein; and none can be capable of this experience, but those who are raised to this wonderful pitch of glory. These floods of sweetness would have undone us in a moment, had we entered them in our frail mortal state. O miraculous elevation of glory, which can bear such sweetness! Are we not as so many trophies and monuments of thy transcendent power in its high victory? Much of thine excellency was to be seen in thy kingdom of nature, much more in thy kingdom of grace, but most in this of glory: here shine forth thy infinite excellencies in their noon-day splendor.

REMARKS ON THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN'S REFUTATION OF
CALVINISM.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

THIS fourth chapter treats of *Universal Redemption, Election, and Reprobation*; through which you see growing the same noxious weed as in the preceding parts, viz. a *self-righteous* disposition; or, *conditions* to be performed by us, in order to enjoy eternal life.

It is our unspeakable privilege to have the Bible in our hands, in which is revealed a salvation that is altogether suitable to the case of lost and helpless sinners. Respecting this salvation, the God of heaven repeatedly says, by Isaiah, *My salvation!* hereby assuring us that it is of *Him*, and NOT of another. Pursuant to which the apostle is authorized to assert that, *All things, concerning this salvation, are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*; and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation, that we should proclaim it to the guilty sons of men. And, being of God, it must be by GRACE; as the unfaltering voice of revelation declares from beginning to end. Salvation must have a *cause*; and, we are sure, the *cause* is not in the saved; for they all disclaim the honour, by giving the praise to another—*Not unto us, is the language of them all.* The *impulsive* cause is the *good-will* of God the Father. The *procuring* cause is the *obedience and death* of God the Son. And the *efficient* cause, in the conscience and experience of the saved sinner, is God the Holy Spirit. If these ideas be founded in truth and fact, as we shall eventually see they are, then the salvation of sinners will openly appear to be of GRACE. My meaning, by the term *grace*, I shall give you in the words of another. “It is the everlasting and absolutely free favour of God, manifested in the vouchsafement of spiritual and eternal blessings to the UNWORTHY.*” If any *worthiness* be pleaded, or *conditions* trusted, besides the perfect work and sufferings of Christ the Lord, either we inevitably perish, or the Bible ceases to be the Word of truth. I speak in this decided manner, because I read, that the *whole* of salvation, in the design, the execution, and the enjoyment of it, is, TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE. Either, then, this emphatical and striking expression means nothing worth our notice, and so *deceives us*, or the sinner *deceives himself*, who puts any *worthiness* into his confidence for eternity. Either the God of glory is to receive ALL the praise of a sinner's salvation, or he is not: to divide is to destroy. Here the question turns. If any *work* of the creature be allowed, in any sense whatever, to *entitle* him to salvation, or to *secure* his future enjoyment of it, *worthiness* is acknowledged, and *grace* is denied; and, for this reason, the truth of Scripture cannot stand.

* Booth's Reign of Grace. Chap. I.

Here I beg leave to refer you to the *principle* laid down at the opening of Letter the second; for, if salvation be of *grace*, or the *good-will* of God, as just stated, it is highly rational to conclude that he *fixed* the number of those who should be saved. If this be not received, I may safely deny the *certain* salvation of any individual. Salvation is the *effect* of some *cause*; and a *certain effect* implies a *certain cause*; but there is no certainty in any thing, except the Will of God. All besides is *mutable*, and of course *uncertain*. Here his Lordship opposes—but, *Why?* Does not his Lordship claim—possess, a *right* to bestow his favours on whom he pleases, without the controul or censure of others? And shall not the GREAT SUPREME be, at least, *equal* to sinful man! Jehovah, himself, stoops to put the question, Is it not *lawful* for me to do what I will with *my own*? Who would dispute it? He that *reproveth* God, let him *answer* it. There would be no objection to the doctrine of *Election*, if we could but suppose that *something* in man, or *done by* him, *actuated* the Divine Will in the choice, or would *secure* the final event: but, the voice of truth is like that of Pilate—*What I have written, I have written*. Grace will be grace while the throne of God endures. Accept a thought on

Election. No word would be more inoffensive than this, were it not for the truth it teaches; but the opposition it receives has long shewn me the certainty of its import. Would the deceiver of men induce them, generation after generation, to set their faces against a device of his own? It is not Satan's practice to oppose his own interest. If *Election* were an error, mankind would as readily embrace it as they do others. What rancour and rage have I seen, and heard expressed, when this has been the topic of conversation! I have been told, "*That hell is paved with the skulls of Electionists! That it came from hell, and should be sent from whence it came.*" O, what a mercy that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God! But, amidst all the hard speeches this doctrine has sustained, there it stands, in the Bible, where it has ever been, and where it will always remain. Opposition has been conducted in *various* forms, but the cause is *one*—it lays the sinner in the dust before the Majesty of heaven, strips him entirely of self-dependence, and gives him no hope of future happiness, but in the *finished* salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ; and teaches him to give the whole praise to the God of all grace. This is the sole cause why *Election* is so very unwelcome to the self-righteous. I have known some of this description, who would avoid reading certain parts of the Bible, that their minds might not be disturbed with this hated doctrine, (a proof, by the way, that it was there recorded, even in their opinion,) and yet expect to have their good works accepted and rewarded through the merits of Christ. O, how inconceivably deceitful is the human heart! No man can render a reason why the Holy Spirit so often employs the term, if

it be designed to convey no more distinguishing and appropriate meaning than his Lordship chooses to give it. A *definitive* term, of general and *indefinite* signification, is a solecism that fair argument not only never justifies, but would disdain to adopt it. An unprejudiced mind would be superior to such a fallacious proceeding. To draw a *general* conclusion from a *special* term; discovers almost as much inattention to *logical* argument, as it does disrespect to the *sacred page*. And, can modest enquiry suppose, that the God of truth, who cannot deceive, would encourage such a disposition! Besides, if the *word* Election could not be found in the Bible, we should remember that the *doctrine* is taught us both by *facts* and other *modes* of expression. So that, if the *doctrine* be not of God, his Word must be the most vague of all books. Accept, therefore, a few, as a specimen of these

Facts. It is an old maxim with me, that the *hand* of God explains and confirms his *Word*; and thereby leaves our opposition to his Word without excuse; nay, renders it the more aggravated. Consider *Cain* and *Abel*. The two *first-born* of men; the one taken, the other left. Look at *Noah*, distinguished from *all* the world. See *Abraham* leaving the idols of his country, and receiving the promise that the Messiah should descend from him in a future period. *Isaac* is also separated from *Ishmael*, and from the sons of *Keturah*, to carry forward the promised seed from *Abraham*. And *Jacob* from *Esau*. Yes, and the Lord of glory afterwards honoured the names of *Jacob* and *Israel* by adopting them for his own. And, among the numberless descendants of *Jacob*, we see *David*, by name, the appointed ancestor of the promised Seed; who condescended to be called *The Son of David*, and to bear the name *David* in person. And, when the promised Seed was to appear, was there no virgin of the house of *David* but *Mary* the espoused wife of *Joseph*? None beside, however, was to be the mother of *Jesus* of *Nazareth*. Look out of *Israel* for a moment, and ask, Was there no woman in *Jericho* to receive the spies but *Rahab*? And, among the *Moabites*, could none be found to trust under the wings of the God of *Israel* but *Ruth*? In the land of *Uz* we hear of *Job*, and a few others, who knew the God of grace.—I have selected these as a specimen only; and now ask, Are these *facts* preserved merely as amusing, historical anecdotes? Would such a thought comport with the wisdom of God? Are they not recorded *designedly* to prove the truth of discriminating favour, both in time and for eternity? And, being such, are they not *confirming* evidence of the doctrine before us? Let us remark here—Every child of *Adam* is a subject of the same depravity as the fallen father: and yet we see that some *differ* from others. This difference must have a *cause*. Did *they* make the difference themselves? By no means; for they were, by nature, *equally* alienated from the life of God with the rest. It follows, then, that *God* made the difference, for his own pleasure, and to his own praise. They were

believers; and no man ever yet made himself a believer; for faith is the *gift* and *work* of God. The language of our Lord to his disciples is true also here, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* And, indeed, in every age and nation it is an unchanging truth, We love him *because he first loved us.* A great cloud of witnesses are ready to attest this fact, whenever they are requested to appear. From these few facts let me proceed to notice

Modes of expression. These all unite in bearing testimony to the same pleasing verity.—“I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” I will say to the North, *give up*; and to the South, *keep not back*; bring *my sons* from far, and *my daughters* from the ends of the earth. Thus saith the Lord that *created thee*: O Jacob, and he that *formed thee*, O Israel, fear not, for I have *redeemed thee*, I have *called thee by thy name*; THOU ART MINE. *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.* “Thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall be called.” They shall be *mine*, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when “I make up my jewels.” Can any person possibly suppose that the God of truth employed these expressions to convey the idea of his *general goodness* to men! It is difficult to say how far the influence of *prejudice* may prevail! And, in the New Testament, also, we hear the Saviour declare the same doctrine with the prophet. He repeatedly describes his people in appropriate terms, as, “My sheep—Those whom thou hast given me—They are MINE, and I am glorified in them—My brethren—The children thou hast given me.” And the Apostles likewise adopted specific language on the subject. Speaking of the chosen as, *The body—the church of Christ. A peculiar people. I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty. *This relation* originated in the Divine Will, and can never be dissolved. But, why do I multiply quotations? I have given you enough already. Now, if there be a “*perfect harmony*” between the sacred writers, and, if “every word of God be *equally true*,” as his Lordship assures us, then, I would beg to know, How it is possible to *receive such facts and expressions* for truth, and yet *deny the doctrine of Election*? I mean that *Election* whose original is the sovereign good pleasure of God, and which infallibly issues in the eternal blessedness of the chosen! How these things are to be reconciled I never knew, nor do I expect ever to understand. If any sinners be eventually saved, they must be saved by the God of grace; and saved for no other reason than because it was his good pleasure so to bless them. As to the

Term *Elect* and *Chosen*, I grant they are sometimes applied in a *providential* sense, and not directly connected with final felicity. Thus they are used of the nation of the Jews, as a *collective body*. God had taken this nation from the midst of another nation, and had provided Canaan for their residence long before Abraham their

father had a being. In this view they were typical of God's spiritual Israel, for whom he had prepared an inheritance before the world began; and whom he selects from the rest of mankind, in successive ages, and brings them to the knowledge of himself, as he did Israel in the Wilderness, before he conducts them to the promised rest.* But the Holy Spirit takes care to inform us, that *all* Israel were *not of Israel*—that is, though they were *all* chosen to national favours, yet they were *not all* chosen to eternal life. One would suppose that this should be obvious to every one who reads his Bible as an honest enquirer after truth. In this *external* and *providential* sense was Judas chosen to take *part* of the apostolical ministry, yet perished at last, with multitudes of his countrymen, who were, likewise, in *this* view, *chosen* as well as he. What sober, unbiassed mind would ever conclude, that, because the term *God* is used of Moses and magistrates, therefore it is never designed to convey the idea of *The Great Supreme*? And, for a similar reason, who would once suppose that the word *Election* is never applied to a peculiar people appointed to spiritual and eternal blessings, because we find it, *occasionally*, adopted for an inferior purpose! The thought would never have entered the mind of man, if he had not *previously* conceived an aversion to the doctrine it teaches. It is under this disposition of "*improper interpretation*," that his Lordship leads away the mind of his reader from the *true sense* of Scripture, and renders the page of truth the most doubtful of all records; for, by such a proceeding, *Arianism* and *Socinianism* might plead Scripture without fear of being refuted. It was observed, in the first Letter, that the *precious* state of mind in the interpreter, will *always* account for the interpretation—and this you will find confirmed in examining the case. But, suppose we give up *Election*; what do we gain?—A *dead blank* for all our prospects of eternity: for no man ever yet delivered his own soul from the wrath to come. *Election*, then, is a cheering truth, if properly understood. Shall the Author of all knowledge be a stranger to the proper import of words? Or, shall he be supposed capable of adopting improper terms to convey his own meaning to men? Let us have honesty enough, then, to speak of the things of God in the words which the Holy Spirit teaches.† His Lordship, indeed, says, there is no "infallible certainty of salvation in consequence of a Divine decree, throughout the New Testament." (P. 203-4.) If this be true, then salvation can be "*certain*" on no ground whatever, and it is in vain for the sinner to expect it. But, who would question the propriety of the terms employed by the Spirit of truth, in speaking of this subject? Especially as the Word of God was penned on purpose

* The Jews were told *expressly*, that the Lord their God gave them not that good land for *their righteousness*, but for his own pleasure. And, shall we expect the heavenly Canaan for *our goodness*? The *greater* obtained, and the *less* denied? God forbid! How vain and groundless the notion!

† See Doddridge and Whitley on 1 Cor. ii. 11—13.

to encourage the sensible sinner's hope! And yet, it looks very much like such a disposition, when strong efforts are made to explain Scripture in a sense so opposite to the evident tenor of the inspired writers! But let us try this assertion by some few passages of the New Testament; and then you will judge of its truth or falsehood. There are persons whom the Lord calls *his sheep*—*given him of the Father*; of whom he uses these emphatical words—"I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." The Great Shepherd, surely, would not have thus pledged the truth and glory of his own character, if there had not been a "*Divine decree*," that secured the "*infallible certainty*" of the blessing promised. Whether the terms of this text were too pointed and expressive to admit of a comment upon them, or whether they were forgotten, I cannot say; but I do not recollect any notice taken of them. "*Every word of God is true*;" this is the Word of God, and cannot, with innocence, be contradicted. You can draw the inference. However, other texts are introduced, and comments given us; and therefore I shall present you with two or three of them; which may suffice for the whole. The inspired Paul says, 2 Thess. ii. 13. "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." And again, 1 Thess. v. 9. "God hath appointed us to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here the *choice*, the *appointment* of God, or the "*Divine decree*," ensures the work of the Holy Spirit for sanctification and belief of the truth, by the way and salvation as the *END* in such explicit words, as, one would suppose, could not be easily misunderstood. But, if a prejudiced mind cannot muster boldness enough to *deny* the truth, it will invent *evasions*; for—1. We are told that sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, "are here denominated the *being chosen* to salvation." (P. 210.) By which the *cause* and the *effect* are confounded, and the order inverted. According to the apostle, the choice of God, or the "*Divine decree*" was the *cause*, and first in order; and the *effect* follows, in their gracious experience, or sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Such plain declarations needed some management to hide their *express* design from the reader's view. And—2. Notwithstanding they were *chosen* and *appointed* of God, to *possess* and *enjoy* salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the comment says, "The Thessalonians, by embracing Christianity, *were now enabled to obtain salvation*" themselves; so that, by embracing Christianity, they possessed a power of "*obtaining*" *that for themselves*, which the God of grace appointed them to obtain *through*, or by virtue of the obedience and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor is this all, for—3. Their "*salvation was NOT certain and infallible*," though God had chosen them, and the Holy Spirit had sanctified them, unless they "*secured*" it by "*a continual progress in obedience*." As though the decree

of God, which was ever of old ; and the operation of the Holy Spirit, which was the work of Omnipotence ; were suspended, for eventual *efficiency*, on their progressive obedience ! What a mercy for us that this is *NOT* gospel ! Here, to use a former figure, you have not only the prosperity, but the *very life* of the tree depending on the fruit ! A notion as variant from common sense, as the doctrine it teaches is from the word of truth. Just as though a believer must not be exhorted to walk worthy of his high calling, the only way in which he can honour his heavenly Father before men, without *resting* the salvation of his soul on his *imperfect* works ! God grant that we may be preserved from this yoke of bondage, from this *self-righteous* disposition. That our obedience may flow from a grateful sense of blessings *already* received ; like obedient *children* ; and not from the spirit of *slaves*. Had the inspired servants of God *not* used exhortations to believers, they would have been deemed patrons of vice and immorality under a mask of religion ; but *now*, because they urge such a conversation as becometh the Gospel, therefore men must be their *own Saviours* ! What is to be done ? Do this—Regard the Word of truth, and leave the event with him who will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe, *in that day* ! I now request you to look at another passage, the native glory of which you find eclipsed with a similar comment as the preceding. I said, *eclipsed* ; because an eclipse of the sun does not *destroy* its shining, it only *hides* his beauty, for a time, from certain persons. To the *Ephesians* the apostle writes in delightful strains ; but it seems his triumph was premature, though he had his views and language from his heavenly Teacher. “ 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 to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”—Although his Lordship has given his readers more of Paul’s words, in Eph. i. 3. than I have transcribed, yet I observe the last verse I have given you is omitted—which is the glory of all the rest ; for which reason I was not willing to withhold it. You see here the heart of the apostle was enlarged to bless God for all spiritual blessings given to his people in Christ. This letter was sent to the Ephesians in the *name*, and by the *authority* of God, and expressed in words easy to be understood in their plain grammatical construction : but, whether his Lordship’s comment does not *pervert* the apostle’s meaning, and tend to *deceive* those who embrace it, you shall judge. “ The election and predestination here spoken of,” his Lordship says, “ relate to God’s eternal purpose to *make known* to the Ephesians the mystery of his will in the blessings of the gospel.” (P. 207.) Can any person read the text and

the comment, and not see the glaring difference between them? The *text* says, God HATH blessed us—HATH chosen us—HAVING predestinated us—HATH made us accepted in the beloved—HAVING made known to us the mystery of his will—all in the *past* tense, to speak grammatically; plainly referring to what was *already* fixed in the purpose of God before the world began; but the *comment* speaks of what was *to be done* in some future period, no one knows when. Did the Holy Spirit of truth, who dictated the *text*, lead to such an *exposition* of it? Who can believe it? If “every word of God be true,” this must be true as the apostle represents it; and consequently the *comment* cannot be true. But the concluding part of the *comment* is bold indeed. Because these Ephesians were exhorted to walk worthy of their vocation, “therefore it was possible for those, who were *saints, faithful, chosen and predestinated* to walk unworthily, to incur the wrath of God by disobedience, to yield to sinful temptations, and consequently to *fail* of salvation.” So that, it seems, neither the will of God, nor the redemption of Christ, nor the earnest of the Spirit, though he remains with the saints till the day of redemption, nor all these united, for they cannot be divided, can secure our final salvation; except we add our *imperfect obedience* to render the whole *effectual*! With what striking propriety might the God of glory say, in such a case, These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; “thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.” May the Lord accomplish the *latter* part of this text in gracious experience to those in whom the *former* part has been verified. I will trouble you with but one text more on this part of the subject. The sacred historian says, concerning the hearers at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts xiii. 48. that, as many as were *ordained* unto eternal life *believed*. Here the *comment* is open and roundly asserts, “This text does NOT mean that there was an *ordinance of God appointing* that *certain persons should believe* and obtain eternal life.” (P. 233-4.) At least this cannot be received in an *unqualified* sense; but only in this view, viz. God having *appointed* the condition of faith as necessary to eternal life—and *foreseeing* who would believe—and these persons having accordingly believed—so far, and for this reason, they might be said to be *ordained* to eternal life, *because* they had fulfilled the appointed condition: but the fallacy and danger of this statement, will be considered hereafter under the idea of *faith foreseen*. The criticism employed by Dr. Doddridge to evade the force of this text is not given us, and therefore I pass it; but one is introduced in a note from Mr. Stebbing. (P. 233.) This author proposes a different translation of, what I call, the offensive part. Instead of reading *ordained* to eternal life, you are gravely told it should be “set in order, or made ready” to eternal life. But *how*, I ask, or by *whom*, is this to be effected? I deny that any one can confer the favour on another; and I deny that any man “sets in order, or

makes ready" himself to eternal life. There is not only no *disposition*, but *aversion* to it. So that, when we come to the truth of the matter, if any sinner be "*set in order, or made ready*" for eternal life, the power of God must perform the work; and, if it be the work of God, it must be done according to his eternal purpose; and therefore, after all, we are obliged to recur to the *meaning* of the text, though we attempt to evade its *language*: for, it was true *then*, and so it is *now*, that as many as were *ordained* to eternal life believed, and *none else*. God grant we may be of the happy number. I thought these few passages sufficient to shew you that there *IS*, in the New Testament, an "infallible certainty of salvation in consequence of a divine decree," to all the family of God. *Election*, according to the scripture, can have no *cause* but the sovereign will of God; and no *end*, or *design*, but the glory of his grace, in the perfect holiness and happiness of the chosen. But this makes the creature a mere unworthy *receiver*, and a total *debtor* to grace; and therefore, as long as self-righteousness reigns in the heart, this doctrine will be hated and resisted; and the prerogative of the Most High in bestowing his favours will be disputed. Had fallen man been admitted a privy counsellor of heaven, and had his selfish passions been consulted, we should have heard no complaint; but, we shall find the will of God stand, when all our disputings are at an end. He has determined that no flesh shall glory in his presence. This doctrine shines through all our Lord's ministry, and in the labours of his apostles; and will shine in heaven for ever. If you request it, I shall be willing to extend the evidence now given, at a future period, though I forbear for the present; and proceed to

Predestination. This also is a dreadful term with some persons; but chiefly, if not wholly, with such as have never studied it and are ignorant of its proper import. It must mean every thing that is evil, and nothing good; and such must the persons be who espouse it. And, though the God of holiness and mercy has used it in his own scriptures, yet it is treated as an hateful term. Is not the only wise God as competent a judge of the propriety, or impropriety of language as we? It seems not. O what consummate vanity in the human heart! Let us disabuse ourselves, and dare to sit at the feet of our Divine Teacher whoever may oppose. *Vain* man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are *vain*. But the Spirit of truth can make *wise* unto salvation;* and all his disciples, in the progress of tuition, are made cordial believers in the truth of *Predestination*. And, indeed, except our reason be asleep, who can suppose, even for a moment, that a Being of absolutely unerring wisdom would act without *design*, or would form a plan

* "He calls the *fool*, and makes him know
The mysteries of his grace,
To bring aspiring *wisdom* low,
And all its pride abase."

which he could *not* execute? And yet, if *Predestination* be not true, the Governor of the world must either act at uncertainty, or not act at all. But I find concessions on this subject much to my satisfaction. “The *dispensations* of God,” his Lordship says, “are the *result* of the concurrent operation of his *perfect* attributes. The *infinite wisdom* of God contrived a scheme of redemption which his *infinite power* enabled him to execute.” (P. 261.) And Dr. Doddridge, in another place, is introduced to testify, that “God takes such *methods* to answer his purposes, as he *knows* will be in fact successful.” (P. 207. note.) Happy the writer who is always in unison with himself and with the truth.* These charming concessions in behalf of truth, lead us at once to believe that God does work all things after the counsel of his own will, and that the final issue of all things is according to his purpose; because he *knew* that the “*methods* taken would be in fact successful”—“successful” in executing, by his *infinite power*, that scheme of redemption which his *infinite wisdom* contrived. Here, give me leave to put a few questions. Are the final states of men, to be considered as the “*dispensations* of God?” Yes. And, are these dispensations the “*result*” of the concurrent operation of his perfect attributes? Yes. And, have the “*methods*” taken been in fact *successful*, according to his *knowledge*, to effect his purposes? Yes. And, has infinite power *executed* the scheme of redemption which infinite wisdom contrived? Yes. And, are *all men* finally happy? No. What follows? One of these two conclusions. Either—1. That universal redemption was *not* the object of the Divine purpose, or—2. The knowledge, wisdom, and power of God are *dishonoured*, because the methods taken have *failed* of effecting the end designed; or, have *not* been in fact successful in accomplishing the object for which they are said to be employed. If this *reproach* on the character of God be not admitted, then his Lordship’s concessions must testify the truth of *Election* and *Predestination*. But there does not appear to be a consciousness, nor even suspicion of it, as you will see by several observations which will be stated. You may call them *objections* to the doctrine of *Election* and *Predestination*; or *evasions*—but they speak *opposition* which must be noticed.—1: You are told that “the *proud* and *selfish* nature of man falls an easy victim to the *fascinating* doctrines of *Election* and *Grace*.” (P. 283.) In an inferior author I should call this an *ignorant* assertion, but now I consider it an egregious *oversight* of scripture on the subject. If this were true, those who drink deepest into the doctrines of Election and grace, would be the *proudest* and most *selfish*. But, is this fact? Do these doctrines *feed* the *pride* of human nature? Have they any *tendency* to it? Let competent witnesses be heard. *Jacob* was *chosen* of God, and was a subject

* We may recur to these concessions in our progress, either to silence *error*, or to corroborate the evidence of *truth*.

of his *grace*. Was he *proud*? Hear him before the Lord. I am *not worthy* of the *least* of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant. Harken to *David*, also, who was one of God's *elect*: *Who am I*, O Lord God, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? Mark the man who preached "*Election and Grace*" wherever he went. Christ told Ananias that he was a *chosen* vessel unto him. Yes, not merely chosen to the ministry, but likewise to eternal life: for his language concerning the *Saviour* is, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." And of *himself* it is, "Less than the least of all saints—the chief of sinners—By the grace of God I am, what I am." Is this the voice of *pride*? Or, were the other servants of God *proud*? Can these be called *selfish*? Did they wish to keep "*Election and Grace*" to themselves, that others might not share with them, for fear they should not have enough? This would be *selfish*, I confess; but did they discover such a temper? Those who enjoy the blessing know the reverse to be the fact in all ages. Whereas preaching *offers and conditions*, which leave the event of future happiness to the option of *free-will*; it is *this* that fosters *pride* and self-conceit—It is *this* that makes, or rather keeps, men unwilling to confess themselves debtors to grace. Of all the vices of the mind, that of *pride*, especially *pride* of self-righteousness, we feel, perhaps, the greatest reluctance to confess; but, confessed it must be, and that with abhorrence, if ever we enter the abodes of bliss: for *pride* was never known in heaven since Satan was expelled, and it will never enter again. Does it nourish *pride* to be taught, that we have destroyed ourselves, and that there is no help, nor hope of help, but in the good will of God in Christ Jesus? But this is the unfailling effect of Election and Grace, when known in experience. It was said, if his Lordship's assertion were true, then those who drank *deepest* into the doctrine would be *proudest*—It will be granted that, where the doctrine is most clearly understood and most enjoyed, there it *must* have the strongest effect. Nor will the inhabitants of heaven be suspected of having the highest degrees of this knowledge and enjoyment: Let us hear their sentiments. Their language is, Unto him that *loved* us, and *washed* us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Again, they cast their crowns before the throne, and sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and "hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, &c." Is this the voice of *pride*? Then where shall we find *Humility*? That these songsters knew the doctrine of Election and Grace, I think, cannot be questioned; and here you see the native and necessary effect—and, may the God of all grace give us and his Lordship to join their song in that day. And further, when a sinner reflects on the depravity of his heart, with the sin of his life, and yet has reason to conclude, from grace given him in

time, that he was chosen in Christ *before time*; Does this so feed his *pride* and fix his mind on *self*, as to beget indifference about the eternal welfare of his fellow sinners? Just as a midsummer sun would engender ice on a piece of water! one, as soon as the other. The truth is, he never prays for the salvation of *others*, till the Spirit of God brings salvation to his *own* soul. And, when he can bless God for his *own* Election and Grace, he will glorify God for bestowing the same favour on *others*, and not till then. So that, not *my* view of the subject only, but that of all others who have enjoyed the blessing, is directly contrary to what his Lordship has given us. But this is not all—The doctrine of Election and Grace is said to be "*fascinating*" also. I remember Paul speaks of the Galatians as being *bewitched*, or "*fascinated*:" but that was because they were drawn aside *from*, not because they *adhered to*, the doctrine he had preached among them. And I recollect that the same messenger of truth cautioned the Ephesians against being tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the *sleight* of men, and *cunning craftiness*, whereby they *lie in wait to deceive*. And of himself he says, My preaching was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom." We walk not in *craftiness*, not handling the word of God *deceitfully*; but by "manifestation of the truth," commending ourselves to "every man's conscience in the sight of God." Hence it appear, by the judgement of the inspired Paul, that the "*fascinating*" property and tendency must be applied to *error*, and not to the truth of God; and I must be excused, therefore, if I abide by him and refuse all who differ from him. As no man in the world ever preached more freely and openly the doctrine of Election and Grace than Paul; it follows then, no man need be afraid or ashamed to tread in his steps, or to walk in his spirit. But—2. I have heard it said, 'That *Election* and *Predestination* should not be brought forward in public; it is a deep subject, and can do no good, but may do *much* harm.' You may be sure such preachers will either never name the words, or will attempt to explain away their meaning, according to the scripture. Permit me to ask, Did Omniscience perceive that these terms would be, not merely useless, but hurtful, to us? Why, then, order them to be inserted in his book? A good man once said, We are but of yesterday, and *know nothing*; but, as the world is older, it seems we are wiser—However, we should watch and pray that we be not despisers of the wisdom of God; for, who hath *known* the mind of the Lord, that he might *instruct* him! 'Man, know *thyself*! All wisdom centres there!' But I forbear, and proceed—3. To hear his Lordship who "contends, that Calvinism is a system *peculiarly liable to abuse*." (P. 284.) A person may *misrepresent* what he does not understand; and if this be intended, I readily consent: but, I wish to know *how* a person can be said to "*abuse*" your kindness *before* he has received any specific tokens of it? Or, is there no difference between *misrepresentation* and

“*abuse*?” But let the expression stand as it is—and then I ask, What man ever refused to *use* the natural comforts of life, because others “*abused*” them? Are they, *in themselves*, pernicious, and to be rejected, because sinful men suffer from the *manner* in which they “*abuse*” them? Let common sense answer. So here—What sober dispassionate mind, would conclude a doctrine to be false, and therefore reject it, because a person, who professed to dislike it, should state his view of it? Would not an *honest* enquirer examine and form a judgment for himself? I confess I have heard it said, ‘My actions were *decreed*, and therefore I cannot help doing as I do.’ Judas might have said the same; and so might the devil: but, one went to his *own place*, and the other is miserable for ever. Though men *love* sin, yet they *fear* to receive the wages; and therefore, rather than confess or forsake, they would lay the blame on God himself. This temper was foreseen and properly answered by the apostle. Thou wilt say unto me, “Why does he yet find fault? for who has resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” See Rom. ix. 19, 20. What if some choose, in this way, to “*abuse*” the glorious truth of God; let such persons prepare to meet the issue of their own voluntary conduct; but let not us be actuated by such an irrational objection. If the doctrine be of God, of which there is sufficient evidence, how shall we abide his judgment for denying it? This thought deserves our very serious consideration. The *mercy* of God is a charming truth; but what multitudes presumptuously *abuse* it to their eternal ruin! Are we therefore to reject, or even to disregard, its important truth? The argument is just as solid on this subject, as respecting Election and Predestination; for every word of God is “*equally true*,” and therefore *equally* interesting, and *equally* worthy of our cordial reception. Besides, we shall find, in the final issue of things, that the *mercy* of God to eternal life is exercised, or displayed, *only* in the line of Election and Predestination; for which reason the saved of the Lord are specifically described as *vessels of mercy* afore prepared unto glory. Once more—4. This doctrine is represented as “leading to *despair*.” It is said, “If I am not elected I cannot be saved, do all I can.” If you expect salvation *for your doing*; and if by “*despair*” be meant, that this doctrine cuts off all hope of happiness from *your* accepting “offers” and performing “conditions;” then, I confess, the objection is founded in truth, for the word of God is a stranger to such “conditions” and “offers:” but, on the other hand, if God had not predestinated some to eternal life and chosen them to salvation, there had never been an incarnate Saviour; and, of course, no gospel revelation of him, nor ministers to preach salvation in his name, nor the Holy Spirit to make the word effectual to the salvation of men—we had all been in the state of devils, which would be, indeed, a state of “*despair*.” But the Book of truth assures us that, whom God predestinated, them he also *called*, as

the effect and evidence of it—not of the *Jews* only, but also of the *Gentiles*. So that, if we believe God, who cannot lie, effectual calling *in time*, is a standing proof of electing and predestinating grace *before time*: for which reason this doctrine is so far from “leading to *despair*,” that it lays the *only* sure foundation a sinner can have for good hope through grace of eternal life. And in this way, but no other; perishing sinners have been saved in all ages, and will be to the end of time.—Lastly. We are told the doctrine should not be published because of its “*licentious tendency*.” Persons will say, “If I am elected, I shall be saved, and therefore no matter how I live.” If you *choose* to live in sin under such an idea as this, you must abide the issue; for such a disposition discovers pleasure *in sin*, and no desire of deliverance *from* it. The fact is, it shews heart enmity against the truth, and willing ignorance of it; for the God of glory has shewn you in his word, in language easy to be understood, that his people were chosen before the world began on purpose that they “should be holy and without blame before him in love:” and, whom he did *foreknow*, he also did “predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Here opposition must be silent, unless *conformity* to the image of Christ can be considered as *licentiousness*. This every one may know, if there be a will to read the Bible. But I view all such objections as mere cavilling—the effect of a rooted aversion to the doctrine itself; and not at all arising from a genuine concern for the interest of morality. I treat all such speeches as mere pleas of deception, but the day will declare it. *Willing* ignorance is the most inexcusable and aggravated; and *voluntary* ignorance it must be, while we can read the word of God and judge for ourselves. Here let me drop a word on

Faith foreseen. *Foreseen faith* is supposed, by his Lordship and others to be the reason why God elected and decreed to love such as believe—yet, I think, not only the absurdity, but the impossibility of such a notion may be proved to our satisfaction. Let me observe then, that no man is by *nature* a believer; for if faith were natural to man, every one would possess it, there would be no unbeliever upon earth: but inspired Paul says, “All men have not faith.” Nor can man *make* himself a believer; for faith is the gift and work of God. And it is impossible to prove that the gift and work of God *in the man*, is the ground or motive of his decree *concerning him*; because this would suppose the work of God *in time* to be the actuating or influencing cause of his decree *in eternity*. This would make the *will* of God depend on his *work*; instead of considering the *work* of God the effect of his *will*. And this would render the whole impossible to be proved, because it would make the decree to be *temporal* instead of *eternal*, seeing the *cause*, faith in man, must precede the *effect*, which is the decree: for then the decree could not originate in his own most wise and sovereign pleasure. In (p. 246.) you are told that “many of God’s decrees

arose from the *foreseen conduct* of men." If the "*conduct*" of men be viewed as the "*result*," or accomplishment of his "*decrees*," I believe and approve, as in the death of Christ; but, if the "*foreseen conduct*" of men be stated as the *ground, reason, or influencing cause* of his "*decrees*," I must deny; for, if the will, or decree of God be supposed to arise from any thing without himself, he must be dependent on that thing for that act of will; and not only so, but let it be whatever you please, that thing which influences his will must exist independent of, and be superior to him, in that effect it produces in his will. If you please to shew me how to avoid this conclusion, I will own the obligation: but, if the conclusion be fairly drawn, then the notion of *foreseen faith* is an *Atheistical* figment of human vanity. And, in my mind, it is less evil to deny his Being at once, than to represent him, in any possible sense, a dependent Being. A dependent FIRST CAUSE, is worse than the first born of *all* absurdities. I by no means suppose that the patrons of this notion are aware of its awful consequences; and therefore the subject should be more maturely considered. His Lordship justly observes, that "the pre-science of God is *perfectly distinct* from his will." (P. 229.) This is readily admitted; but, it should be remembered, that they are not to be *separated*, nor are they ever at *variance*. I remark here, that the understanding, with creatures, may lead the will in its volitions, because we know not *what* to choose, but as the object is presented to the view of the mind. I agree with Dr. Doddridge in believing we have *no innate ideas*—our knowledge is *all* derived, and bounds the exercise of volition, seeing we cannot choose that of which we have no perception or idea. But this sort of reasoning cannot be predicated of the *Great First Cause*. Our knowledge does NOT give being to the objects known; and, with reverence, I observe, that the knowledge of God does NOT *CREATE*, or *cause to exist*, the objects of his knowledge; and yet they *must* have a *cause*—but, where shall we seek for the *cause* of faith? Not in the subjects of it, as said before; then there can be *no cause* of it but the *gracious will* of God. I make this further remark, because his Lordship says, concerning the hearers of Paul at Antioch in Pisidia, that "*All might have believed*," (p. 234-5.) as well as those who did; and, if they had, they would have been saved as others were. This is designed to teach us that *none* of them believed in virtue of being *ordained* to eternal life. But, of what avail is such an assertion? If it means, that faith is the work of *man*, and arises from his naturally good disposition; it is groundless, and leads away the mind of the reader from the *true cause* of the difference between them. I must enquire again; Of what avail is the assertion? None at all: for, if the will of God never designed to bestow the grace of faith, it could not be "*foreseen*"—especially *not* "*foreseen*" as the appointed "*condition of salvation*," because it is, *in itself*, one of the blessings of salvation: and we can never suppose, surely, that the blessed God

would make the bestowment of *one* favour the condition, *to himself*, of giving *another*! And yet, if "*foreseen*" faith be the condition of election and salvation, how shall we avoid this absurd conclusion? The fact is, if man, as a dependent sinful creature, be finally saved, he receives the blessing, in every view, as a mere *unworthy* creature, and is thereby *totally* indebted to the sovereign grace of God; who is gracious only *because* he will be gracious. But, if possible, to keep this *humbling* doctrine out of sight; what devices have been formed from age to age, and repeated from one generation to another! However, great is the truth, and it must and will prevail. The great Jehovah neither needs, nor will admit, assistance from man, nor will he divide his glory with the work of his hands! The "*foreknowledge*" of God is very freely and openly stated by his Lordship in p. 247-8. What ideas, then, must we entertain of the everlasting God, after such an honourable concession, before we can suppose that the purposes of his will are suspended, in any possible sense, on the being or circumstances of his creatures? Or, what excuse can be made for such a supposition? for, even Omniscience itself cannot know what never has existed, or never will exist. And, nothing can, or ever will exist, but by the will of God. None will be found *believers* at the day of judgment but those who were made such by the grace of God, in virtue of his sovereign will concerning them in Christ Jesus before the world began. The will and omniscience of God are so harmonious, that there cannot possibly be any variation. What was *not* willed, is *not* known; and what is not known, was never willed, or decreed. I always view Omniscience in exercise, in the order of *nature*, not of *time*, as subsequent to, but parallel with, the purposes of the Divine Will. Perfectly co-extensive, without deviation. The knowledge of God is infinite and unsearchable to us, as all his perfections are. He has perfect knowledge of himself, and of all the volitions of his will—but, though the knowledge of God be, *in itself*, properly speaking, immense and boundless, yet its objects, *without himself*, are not such; for then the creation would be *equal* to the Creator; which is too absurd even to be supposed. *Known* unto God are *all his works* from the beginning of the world—or from *eternity*. *How* came they to be thus known? *Because* they were objects of the divine decree—they are *his works*, whether in the world of nature or grace. Being all present in *the will*, they are *known* of God: and for that reason. The *certain* existence of creatures, and events connected with that existence; may therefore, in this view, be as safely inferred from the *knowledge*, as from the *decree* of God; because, as essential perfections of his nature, they are *inseparable* in themselves, and absolutely *united* in their objects. Things come to pass, for *certain*, because they were foreknown; and they were foreknown because the Divine will had *determined* their existence. His Lordship observes that, "what the prophets had predicted, was *certain* to come to pass; but this certainty by no means *caused*

the events to be the *decrees* of God." (P. 223-9.) Every one knows that "*events*" and "*decrees*" are as distinct as *cause* and *effect*, or antecedent and consequent; and no one would think of confounding them, or inverting their order; yet, if the "*events*" had not been "*decreed*," there had been no "*certainty*" of their coming to pass; for there neither is, nor can be, any *previous* certainty of events in the universe but in the will of God. Deny this, and you give up the government of Providence, and the moral government of the world, as in the hands of God, at once: for, if any event be uncertain to him, or arise uncaused by him, either directly or indirectly, he can be no more than a *nominal* character. The inference from all is, that "*foreseen faith*," as a condition of election and salvation, rises out of a deceived heart, and has no support from the truth of God. Similar reasoning must be regarded when we consider the awful subject of

Reprobation. I have often observed how the opposers of election and predestination have employed their pens in *declamation* on this solemn truth, to interest the passions of their readers *against* it, instead of sober and fair *argument*, to explain and *defend* it. But, what is the result? Have they erased it from the book of truth? There it yet stands, and there it will remain, till the *fiat*, the unappealable sentence of the Judge, shall finally confirm his word before an assembled world. The sentence of that day will effectually convince us all, that every action, word, and thought *in time*, contributed, so to speak, in its place and measure, to the accomplishing of the plan which was formed *before time*. Then will the word be fulfilled, which is recorded "for our learning," *That thou mightest be justified, when thou speakest, and be clear when thou art judged.*

That angels and men are *voluntary* agents is evident, or they could not be *moral* agents, and amenable at last. They could neither be *worshippers* of God, nor *transgressors* against him; except their volitions had been free from all coercion, or external force. This is always readily admitted; and yet every event comes to pass according to Divine decree, with the same *certainty*, as if the reverse had been the fact. It is the glory of the Great First Cause, the adorable Supreme, to govern, not statues, nor slaves, but voluntary beings; and by their thoughts, words and actions, to carry into effect his stupendous design, both for time and eternity. The will of man is as free from *compulsion*; as though there was no decree in God; and the decree of God as surely effected, in every view of it, as though there had been no will in man. On this important branch of the subject I have the pleasure of his Lordship's company, as far at least as foreknowledge is concerned; (p. 247.) and, we agree freely to confess, that the theme exceeds our comprehension, yet we believe its truth. How much to be desired, then, that we avoid inferences to its dishonour. Inferences, which, almost, discredit it our cordial reception of the truth. For inferences

which dishonour *any* of his perfections, only betray our incompetency to judge of his counsels and his conduct; and therefore had much better be omitted. Let me shew you his Lordship's words again. The dispensations of God are the *result* of the concurrent operation of his perfect attributes. (P. 251.) This shews us the *concurrence* of his perfect attributes in his dispensations towards his creatures—but, some *are* in misery, and others *will* be with them. This is *one* of his dispensations, and must be, respecting those creatures, the consequent, or “result” of *other* dispensations: for, if his perfect attributes concur in the “result” or final consequent; they must equally agree in all the circumstances of the antecedent, or whatever led on to the final issue. God takes such measures to answer his purposes, as he knows will in fact be successful. I have said before, and now repeat it, “Truth can have no bad consequences;” let us therefore abide by it, and we shall not be injured, though we proceed to consider the profoundest subject which can be proposed.

It seems an agreed case, that *Election* and *Reprobation* imply each other. They do so; and therefore, because the *latter* is disapproved, the *former* must be explained away—or, which is a shorter course, *both* must be denied. (P. 256.) It is our mercy that the truth of God has no dependence on “modern” Calvinism; and it is the glory of that truth to derive no importance from human candour. I grant the term *Reprobation* is not found in scripture as applied to our present subject; yet the Bible is not silent on the doctrine. There are *elect* angels, of course, some were *non-elect*. This *choice* was made *previous* to, and irrespective of, the consideration of sin; for there were none chosen after they were *fallen* angels. Consequently, these voluntary agents were all viewed in the same state, one with the other, when the *choice* was made. Yet, while in this identity of state, you see a *selection* made by the sovereign will of God; and no subsequent change appears among them, or ever will. A similar proceeding, you have reported in the page of truth, respecting mankind. And, whether you consider the *choice* made *over*, or *under* the Fall, the argument is nearly the same. Though I believe the *former*; yet I do not *now* rest upon it, because I am only speaking of the *fact*; namely, that God eternally *selected* a certain number of the human race for his own pleasure; and, of course, there are others *not chosen*. The number of each cannot possibly be known by us till the great day of decision; when all disputing about it will be closed. I have given you part of the evidence whereby *Election* is proved; now I am to observe the testimony which the inspired writers bear to *non-election*. But, permit me to step aside for a moment to notice an observation his Lordship makes before I proceed. “It is not denied that God had a *right*, founded on the uncontrollable will of the *Creator* over his *creatures*, to consign the far greater part of men to *eternal misery*, and to bestow *eternal happiness* on a chosen few, although there was

no ground whatever, in themselves, for such a distinction." (P. 258.) And this may be "*safely allowed*," it is added, if God possessed no attribute but that of "*Almighty power*." We "*allow*" ourselves to say strange things of the divine Being; but, with what "*safety*," the event will decide. Would any, but a *prejudiced* mind, entertain the thought of a Creator consigning his *creatures*, as such, to eternal misery? The only idea we can have of eternal misery is that of *punishment*, and punishment necessarily implies *offence*; but here is no offence supposed, for they are consigned to eternal misery simply as *creatures*! All the world knows that the *friends* of gospel doctrine believe no such thing. It belongs only to the *enemies* of truth. (P. 250.) According to this strange notion, "*Almighty power*" gives the Creator a "*Right*" to inflict eternal punishment on his creatures although they never offended him! What a reproachful idea! and could never have entered the mind of man but under the influence of prejudice against the truth. But the whole is an extravagant *fiction*, for a Creator with *only* the attributes of "*power*," is not a supposeable character in *real* life. By such language we see what a fertile invention will produce to support, if possible, a cause which cannot support itself. But this Creator, with *one* attribute, is represented as having an "*uncontrollable will*"—Allow me to ask here, Is the will of our Creator, who shines in the assemblage of ALL divine perfections, is his Will subject to *controul*? From whom; or from what? Does not his counsel *stand*; and, is not his pleasure *done*? If he *desired* to have prevented any events of time, or the eternal misery of angels and men, but *could not*; then he does not possess even the *one* attribute of "*Almighty power*:" but, if he *could* have hindered the one or the other, yet *did not*; the inference to sober REASON is, Then *both* are according to his Will; which I am now to observe is the doctrine of *scripture* also. I shall not aim at giving you the whole testimony of the sacred page on the subject, because "*every word is true, and equally true*," and therefore we need not multiply citations; for the old maxim is a good one, 'We need not employ *many* to perform a work which may be done by *few*.' The prophet says, concerning certain characters, He that *made* them will *not* have mercy on them, and he that *formed* them will shew them *no favour*. This sentence accords with his eternal purpose. And our Lord, after stating the pleas and expectation of some preachers and professors, assures us before hand what reply he will make. Then will I profess unto them, "I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." This cannot be understood of the *perfection* of knowledge; for, in that sense, he knows *all* his creatures, without exception; but it means he *never knew them as given of the Father* in election; nor did he ever *love* them as his brethren. Likewise the Judge has opened the process of the final day, and recorded the sentence; which, when we hear pronounced, we shall recollect to have read in his Word, and what impression it made on the

mind, if any. On the *right* hand we see the *sheep*; these he *knew* from everlasting, loved them by name, and for them the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world; and therefore they are invited to take possession of their patrimony. On the *left* hand the *goats* are placed, to hear the sentence, and depart into everlasting punishment. The *goats* were *always* distinct from the *sheep* in the eye of the Judge. Their characters, with reference to that day, were never confounded; nor could they ever be interchanged. In *Adam*, indeed, and in *personal* moral disposition by nature, they were *all alike sinners*; but the *goats* were *not* chosen in Christ as were the *sheep*, nor was the kingdom prepared for *them*, as the language of the Judge most clearly testifies. While on earth, as well as now, he *knows* his own, and therefore said to some, Ye are *not* of my sheep. The Lord *knows* them that are *his*. Concerning the sheep, the Saviour says to his Father, I pray for *them*: I pray *not* for the world, but for *them* which thou hast given me; for they are thine. Here is a similar distinction with the preceding, though expressed in different terms. The sheep of Christ were given him *out of* the world; and therefore the *world* is *left out* of the Saviour's intercession, while his sheep were remembered. *Judas*, was a *son of perdition*.* So also the *man of sin*: and *Cain* was *of the devil*. Such description is decisive evidence that they were *not* given to Christ to be saved. These are awful things, but they are the *true* sayings of God. The Spirit of truth taught the apostles to adopt language of like import on the same subject. Paul, in the ninth chapter to the Romans, professedly states and defends the doctrine; answering objections and vindicating the character of the Most High in a very explicit manner. Not applying his argument to *collective* bodies of people, but to *individual* persons: as the case of *Jacob* and *Esau*,† was introduced designedly to prove, and the potter and his clay to illustrate and confirm. And it had such an effect on a certain preacher, some years ago, as his friend informed me, that he was disposed to cut the chapter out of his Bible. But, had he displaced it from *his*, it would have remained in *our's*. The *vessels of mercy*, and the *vessels of wrath*, are strong testimonies in evidence of the doctrine—and his Lordship should remember that “*every* word of God is *equally* true;” and therefore this part must not be interpreted in a sense *inconsistent* with others. The same apostle says, Israel hath *not* obtained that which he seeketh after; but the *Elect* hath obtained it, and the *rest* were blinded. The *rest*, or those who were *not chosen*, were left in their native blindness. Nor is better instruction desired by them. Nay, they love darkness, and not light. Again; God hath *not* appointed

* See Doddridge on John xvii. 12.

† The decision between these brethren had no respect to *moral* character, for they were *not* considered as having either *good* or *evil*: but the case is stated to shew us *how*, or on *what ground*, the doctrine of Election stands. And, as here, the one is chosen, the other *not*, so in all the rest. As far as Election is concerned, the sovereign will of God is the *sole* cause of the difference.

us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we have divine *appointment* applied to the final states of both the sheep and the goats, too plainly to be misunderstood. The *wrath* of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men—and therefore, when, or wherever the *wrath* of God is inflicted it is for transgression, and proceeds according to his eternal appointment. The subjects of his displeasure have ever been before him, without variation in their number; for he knows whom he HAS chosen, and whom he has NOT. They are not *creatures* consigned to eternal misery by their *Creator*; but they suffer as *rebels* against the righteous *Lawgiver* of the world. Every individual indeed *deserves*, but all are not appointed to *endure*, his displeasure. Once more; the same pen assures us that God shall send *strong delusion*, or the energy of error, on some, that they should, for certain, *believe a lie*; that they all might be damned *who believed not the truth*, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. And *Peter* holds the same doctrine with his beloved brother *Paul*. To you that believe, he says, Christ is precious; but unto them who be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of *stumbling*, and a rock of *offence*, even “to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.” Appointed to be left under the power of that error by which they *stumbled* at Christ crucified as the only salvation of sinners. Many such characters, it is to be feared, may be found in the present day. *Jude* likewise speaks in a similar manner, to those who were *chosen* of God the Father, *preserved* in Christ Jesus, and *called*: to them he says, There are certain men crept in unawares, *not unawares* to God, but to them, “who were before of old ordained to this condemnation,” ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. To add no more, I shall only observe, that our Lord himself, repeatedly asserts in his last book, that *some* of the human race were NOT *written in the book of life*. Such language as this, from the Judge of all the earth is decisive evidence—That there is a book of life—That *some have* their names in that book—And, that *others have not*. To write, or omit, a name there, is the *exclusive* prerogative of the Great I AM—and, from his own mouth, we learn that some are *not written* there. This book was written *before* the foundation of the world, and by him who is the *First* cause and *Last* end of all things.—The purposes of whose will are as independent of all his creatures, as his being is infinitely superior to theirs. Taking, therefore, God’s own testimony to the truth of our doctrine, we have a *guide* to our understanding and our faith in comparing his *Word* and his *providential* dealings with the sons of men. Hereby we are kept from stumbling, or being discouraged at his dispensations, seeing they are *not* regulated by human views, but infinite Wisdom. And, if his dispensations be the “*result*”

of his *perfections* in exercise, then they must be likewise of his *will*, because his will and his other attributes can never be at variance. And, if the "*measures*" adopted be successful to accomplish his "*purpose*," then the events of time and eternity could not but be as they are; and yet the wills of angels and men, both before and since the Fall, be absolutely free from all *compulsion* and *force*. Ask the sinner, at the day of judgment, "*Were thy volitions compelled while on earth? Were not thy actions the effect of thy own choice?*" Every man, who has, and exercises his reasoning powers, can answer this question before the time. And, would any one indulge a notion *now*, which he cannot vindicate *then*? Truth may be spoken, even before the eternal Judge, without hesitation. If it will be true *then*, that my volitions, while here, were *forced*, it must be true *now*; and I must be conscious that I do *not* choose my own way—but, let conscience honestly reply. If angels and men had not been *voluntary*, they could not have been *moral* agents, and consequently had never sinned. Predestination, therefore, let the final issue be happiness or misery, secures the glory of God in using *voluntary* agents as instruments in accomplishing his grand designs for time and eternity. And this is done, without making men *contributors* to their salvation, or *excusing* their sins. Those who are saved are debtors *alone* to sovereign grace; and those who perish *deserve* what the Judge inflicts upon them. Here I may drop a few thoughts

On the introduction of *moral evil*. That this event made a part of the deep mysterious plan appears from two considerations. As—1. If the Great God had so determined, he had power to have prevented it.* This is exemplified in the *elect* angels. They never sinned, for they were held up by super-creation grace. Yet our God, who is glorious in holiness, neither was, nor can be, the *efficient*, or *actuating* cause of sin. If he were, he could not *justly* punish it, as he has always done, and will do to all eternity. On this branch of the subject I approve of his Lordship's term "*permission*;" (p. 246.) yet such a "*permission*" as was predetermined to be exercised, so as *not* to hinder the *certainty* of the event; either with angels or men. And I further conclude that *moral evil* made a part of his inscrutable plan, because—2. The Lord of glory was "*foreordained* before the foundation of the world" to the wonderful work of Redemption, not, in case sin *might happen* to appear; but, on the *absolute certainty* of its occurrence; and with the *direct* design to effect the salvation of those who were the *chosen* of God. In this way it becomes us to contemplate the GREAT SUPREME, whose

* On this, and all the parts of Predestination, I can cheerfully refer you to Letters entitled, "*Predestination calmly considered.*" By W. Tucker. I have not read the piece for some years, nor is it by me, but you will find it the *best* defence of the doctrine in our language. A Mr. Brocas, being troubled with the itch of scribbling, three or four years ago, wrote against this piece; and, by exposing his weakness, or something much worse, occasioned a *good defence* by the author, entitled, "*Arminianism dissected.*"

counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, if we would give him the glory that is due unto his name. But it may be said, '*Absolute certainty* destroys voluntary agency'—We may say what we please, but such an assertion is contrary both to scripture and existing facts. Our Lord said to his disciples, "One of you **SHALL** betray me." It came to pass accordingly. But, was not Judas a *voluntary* agent in the horrid deed? His conscience and conduct will answer the question. Predestination is the *root* of all prophecy; and yet prophecy is accomplished, with *absolute certainty*, by voluntary agents. Again; the divine Father says to the adorable Mediator, "Thy people *shall be willing* in the day of thy power." And their being a *willing* people, as they *most certainly* are, is a demonstrable fact which proves the truth of our position. Besides; the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is *not* subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*. But is their voluntary agency hereby *destroyed*, or their conduct rendered *innocent*? This, however, would be the happy effect, if necessity and voluntary agency were *inconsistent* with each other. Facts; therefore, indisputable facts, attest our voluntary agency; and facts, equally indisputable, shew us that the will of God is accomplished according to his word. The conclusion is, that *moral evil* was in the plan of the Governor of the Universe, and that its appearance and continuance is one of the means by which he displays the glory of his character. Eternal happiness is complete deliverance *from sin*, and eternal misery is suffering the penalty *due to it*; and both according to his unchangeable decree. And shall we who, at our *best* estate are altogether vanity, and consequently possess, by confession, but "*narrow capacities*;" shall we decide what is, and what is *not* "*consistent*" in his proceedings? Are not his dispensations the "*result*" of the united exercise of his perfect attributes? And do not his "*measures*" accomplish his purposes? Is it wise to determine on a subject proposed *before* we have competent knowledge of it? Or, cannot we give Jehovah credit, and wait the day of decision? But, it seems, the scripture doctrine of *Predestination* is *not* "*consistent*" with some of the divine perfections; yet universal redemption may be reconciled with their exercise. I must request to remark—1.

On "*mercy and goodness*." (P. 257,) that God created all men, and that "*he foresaw the misery*" of those who perish, are facts admitted—and that "*final unhappiness is the effect of man's own sin*," is freely granted; but, that he "*enables every man born into the world to work out his own salvation*," is mere assertion, or begging the question, and must be denied; for it was never yet proved that the Lord suspends the salvation of the sinner on his *own works*. Gabriel told Joseph, concerning the approaching Messiah, Thou shalt call his name **JESUS**, for **HE shall save** his people from their sins. This, I call salvation, and this was to be performed by *Jesus, the Saviour*. And, the Lord of angels de-

clares ; I, even I, am Jehovah, and besides me there is *no Saviour*. Till these words are false, no one can prove that man's salvation rested on his own works ; for the Lord has more mercy on sinners than to leave their salvation in their *own hands* ; for, in that case, not one of the whole race would ever have been saved. Nor has God "given to *every individual* of the human race the *means* of final happiness." One text tells us, where no vision is, the people *perish* ? Another says, God suffered all nations to walk in *their own ways*. And, a third informs us, that God winked at the *times of ignorance* among idolaters. Every word of God is *true* ; but, Had "*every individual*" among these nations the *means* of final happiness ? What, where there is no word of revelation ? And even where the means of final happiness are bestowed, where the joyful sound of salvation is heard, *every individual* is not made to feel its power and believe in Christ. It is the work of God, and not of man, to render the Gospel effectual to salvation ; for his Lordship believes, as well as we, that "man by his own natural strength and good works *cannot* turn to faith." (P. 256.) If therefore, the mercy of God cannot be "*fully vindicated*" but by such notions as these, we had better decline the dispute till we have more light into the subject. That the mercy of God is an essential perfection of his nature is true ; and, that his creatures would never have known such a perfection but for sin is equally true ; but, must we set up *our opinion* of its exercise, and call such opinion a "*full vindication*" of it ! Have we forgotten that his thoughts and ways are as high above ours, as the heavens are above the earth ? Have we found out the Almighty to *perfection* ! Has he not mercy on whom he will have mercy ! There is an innumerable multitude of the human race chosen as *vessels of mercy* ; But is there ONE of the fallen anges ? Why not ? Was not their fall *foreseen* ? And, are they not the *creatures* of God ? Do *we*, either as creatures, or as sinners, *deserve* mercy more than *they* ? Would not eternal happiness be as *important* to a fallen angel as to a sinful man ! How comes it, that we *decide* on the glories of the Divine character ? Did we hear the Most High ask, 'Who is this that darkneth counsel by words without knowledge'—What would be our reply ? How should we feel in his presence ? Are not the circumstances of the fallen angels included in his "*dispensations* ?" And, are not his dispensations the "*result*" of the concurrent operation of his perfect attributes ? And, has he not taken such "*measures*" to answer his purposes, as he *knew* would be in fact successful ? Shall the same pen, after these honorable concessions, undertake to assert what is, and what is NOT, "*consistent*," in the counsels and conduct of the everlasting God ! And found the assertions too on what has no evidence in fact for its support ! But this is not all.—

2. *Justice* must likewise come into the account. This is not surprising ; for, if we consider ourselves competent to judge of the exercise of *mercy*, we can easily proceed to that of *justice*. Pre-

destination, that "pernicious error," cannot be "consistent with infinite justice." (P. 259.) This doctrine cannot be reconciled with "the harmony which subsists between all the attributes of God." This is the opinion of those of us whose understanding of the subject is adequate to such a decision. But, I beg leave to observe, that the two concessions just now cited, will warrant this remark; that, if the wisdom of God, in forming his plan, appointed such "measures to answer his purposes, as he knew would be in fact successful;" and, if his "dispensations are the result of the concurrent operation of his perfect attributes;" then, we may assure ourselves that the display and glory of justice could not be forgotten by the only wise God; seeing this is not only one of his attributes, and must be in "harmony" with the rest: but more especially, being that perfection by which he was to be eminently known as our Lawgiver and Judge. Here, then, I ask, were not the circumstances of the angels, in their primeval state, as pleasant and happy as those of innocent Adam? Were they not "endowed with faculties of perception and reason," equally "admirable" with those of our nature? And, were not their future state, in case of sin, as subject to an "irreversible decree" as that of man? Was God obliged to prevent their first sin, or ours, lest his justice should be censured for appointing any of them, or of mankind, to eternal misery, as transgressors against him. Or, had the fallen angels ever "the means of escaping everlasting torment" given them? Is there any thing "inconsistent with infinite justice, in all this proceeding of the Most High with sinners? Mere assertion, or declamation, will not satisfy. If any solid argument can be offered, I am desirous to see it stated: but, if not, it would be our wisdom to believe that God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. If angels and Adam were endowed with power to obey the Lawgiver's will which it is confessed they were; and, if the Creator put no evil into them, nor withhold from them what they had a right, as creatures, to possess, then he is not unrighteous in taking vengeance, nor in predetermining so to do, nor in continuing his displeasure for ever; seeing the punishment does not exceed the crime. As God spared not the angels that sinned, but, hath reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day; so he knows how to reserve the unjust, of men, unto the day of judgment to be punished. None of his creatures were ever condemned BECAUSE they were not elected, but only for transgressing his holy law; and therefore the justice of God, in that condemnation, should not be censured. Indeed, I never knew that the devil exhibited the charge though men have not scrupled to do it. If the punishment, in itself, be just, then the decree to inflict it cannot be unjust. If we dislike the doctrine of Predestination, of course we attempt to persuade ourselves that it must be "inconsistent" with the divine perfections; notwithstanding both his word and his dispensations bear such evident testimony

of distinguishing and discriminating conduct both with angels and men! When this profound subject is before us, in which the glory of the Divine character is essentially interested, before we assume a tone of decision of "*inconsistency*," we should retire and reflect on his word to Job. "Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." Where wast 'thou when I laid the foundation of the earth declare, if thou hast *understanding*? What words more calculated to shew us our dependence, and our ignorance of Jehovah's grand designs! And, what a forcible motive to receive his testimony with implicit confidence! The world had been governed in equity and truth for thousands of years before Job was born; with distinguishing favours bestowed on some, and awful displeasure shewn on others; and unless he existed *before* the earth, the language implies, he could not possess *understanding* sufficient to censure the *purposes* formed, or the *measures* pursued to bring them to pass. 'Man was not made to *question*, but *adore*! But the grandeur of Jehovah and the meanness of man, you have represented by the prophet Isaiah, in terms still more striking and emphatical. The close of which is, *ALL nations*, united together, *before Him*, or compared with him, *are as NOTHING*, and *they are counted to him LESS than nothing*, and *VANITY*. The *former* appeals to an individual, *this* to the *whole* of human intellect collected—and, what is it? *NOTHING! LESS than nothing! VANITY!!* Not in itself, but in comparison of him! What a lesson does this humbling representation teach those of us who may be disposed to determine what *is*, and what is *NOT* "*consistent*," in the counsels and conduct of Him, who is the *first* cause and the *last* and of all things!!

" May not the sov'reign Lord on high
Dispense his favors as he will?
Choose some to life, while others die,
And yet be *just* and *gracious* still?
Shall man reply against the Lord,
And call his Maker's ways *unjust*?
The thunder of whose dreadful word,
Can crush a thousand worlds to dust?" WATTS.

Happy is the man who feels like the great Paul, who, having stated the evidence of *Predestination* at large, exclaims in the profoundest reverence, "O ye depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways *PAST* finding out! God grant us this happy frame of mind. So prays, Dear Sir, yours, &c.

MINIMUS.

N. B. I hope to be excused if I defer *Redemption* till my next Letter.

No. IV.—VOL. VII.

2 A

AN ANSWER TO A QUERY IN THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE, FOR THE
MONTH OF JANUARY, 1812. PAGE 41.

The things taught by Paul at Rome, when he persuaded the people concerning Jesus, out of the Law of Moses. Acts xxviii. 23.

SIR,

IN answer to your's, "Paul taught things both out of the Law of Moses and the prophets," these things seem to be near each other, and do not appear likely to be separated. It is evident that Paul taught out of both.—First, the Law.

He says, "It is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." This is what the apostle taught at Rome, out of the Law of Moses, and shews us, that "by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in the sight of God." He shews the awful state of man by nature, and his utter helpless condition; for he says that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" both Jews and Gentiles, all, without exception, there is no difference; "for God has concluded all under sin." And seeing this is the state of man, it is absolutely necessary that those who are saved, must be saved by grace; or it would be utterly impossible that any should be saved, being a complete mass of iniquity—just as a corrupt fountain, bringing nothing forth but deadly poisonous water, and constantly boiling up with filth, mire, and dirt, and cannot change nor alter its state, in this helpless condition, and that the law cannot help them, only curse them as ungodly sinners: this is its language, if the law is not obeyed or satisfaction made; and it is utterly out of the power of any, either to fulfil or make recompence for their many offences, according to the words I have just quoted; therefore "by the deeds of the law, &c.;" for it is impossible for the law to clear the guilty, but "the curse of God abideth on them."

He also taught that no man had any claim upon God, no more than devils, and that salvation is entirely by grace, the whole and every part of it, and that he himself was one of them that was saved, and that by grace; and shews the means by which this salvation was accomplished, namely, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" and that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, had made him free from the law of sin and death, or from that law that worketh death and condemnation, wrath and desperation in his soul, and killed him outright; or that the law shewed me, by painful experience, that there was no help, nor hope of salvation from it, and in this sense was my schoolmaster to bring me to Christ; for here he learnt by experience the suitableness of the Saviour. But,

Secondly, The prophets.—"He taught and persuaded them out of the prophets." The prophets do testify that Christ is God; for the Church exclaims, and says, "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.—O God of Israel, the Saviour!" God by the prophet says, "I am God; and beside

me there is no Saviour." He is said to be "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." And the apostle proves from out of the prophets, that he is God; for in one of his references he says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom;" and that he is truly man, according to the flesh, but the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit, &c.; and there is salvation in no other; and that those who believe in him are justified from all things, which it was impossible for them to be justified by the Law of Moses: and if this is not teaching and persuading, I know not what is; for he does not lay a tottering foundation for the poor sinner's hope, but God himself, a triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are included in the things he taught; and all these things are witnessed by the law and the prophets: the Law acknowledges that it has received payment in full from this God-man; for it has received it from a Great One, and he has much honoured it in all respects, as it has received it from Zion's King.

The apostle taught and persuaded the Roman church of the doctrine of the Trinity—the doctrine of Election and Reprobation—effectual Calling of the Saints—their Perseverance, and final Glorification—*particular* Redemption—the Atonement of Christ—his Resurrection—the good-will of the Father, and the work of the Spirit—the safety of the saints—the good fruits of the Spirit evidenced in them, as the natural effect of special grace flowing from a proper source, under the direction of the King in Zion reigning in their hearts—the promise of God of faith, and not of the law—of those are under the law; their filthy practices under the influence of the devil—their recompense for loving lies, and hating God and truth, and abuse of his providential blessings; treasuring up wrath to themselves against the day of wrath.—Many things might be said, but I will not be farther tedious, for it is a great subject.

These are some of the things the apostle taught out of the Law of Moses and the prophets, to the church at Rome. I should be glad to see many such teachers, but there are but few in this degenerate age; for most of the teachers are dirtying the pastures of the sheep, and muddying the waters; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men—crying Peace to *hypocrites*, and making the sons of Zion howl under their legal preaching; but all this is under the influence of old Beelzebub, sewing pillows under arm-holes, covered with a covering, but not of my Spirit, saith the Lord. But the apostle was not a teacher of this sort, but fed the flock of Christ, which he purchased with his own precious blood—not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind; for he cared for the flock of Christ, and laid a good foundation for their hope, and preached of that grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ, in all its parts.

If my friendly enquirer is not satisfied with this, and wishes a farther explanation, he will have the goodness to say wherein he is dissatisfied; but all that the apostle taught at Rome would fill a large

book; so that he has set me too great a task, if he meant ALL that the apostle taught. I conclude with wishing all prosperity, love, and peace, to all the friends of Zion at large. Amen, and Amen.

Manchester, Feb. 23, 1812.

ASS.

QUERY ON MATTHEW III. 15.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

MR. EDITOR,

THE thoughts of any of your Correspondents upon Matthew iii. 15, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."—What the righteousness here alludes to, mentioned by our Lord? Likewise Colossians ii. 12. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead:"—would be very thankfully received by a constant reader, whose mind is much harassed—and Whether the latter-verse has any allusion to natural baptism, as I cannot see it has, comparing it with the preceding verse?

Poplar, March 1, 1812.

AN ANXIOUS ENQUIRER.

AN ADDRESS TO PLAIN PETER.

SIR,

IN defending a point against "James," (see page 323, for 1811,) you have mistaken my signature.—Will you have the goodness to state, in a future Paper, where I have manifested, in my writing, a vindication of the doctrine "James" wishes to defend; seeing that I have repeatedly condemned the doctrine of *tenders, offers, overtures, or conditions*, to be performed by the creature, as *unsound, unscriptural, and unsupportable*, by its advocates; and also, What you mean by saying, "*You have only to act as copyist to Eliezer?*"

I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

March 12, 1812.

ELIEZER.