

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PREDESTINATION,
TRULY AND FAIRLY STATED:
CONFIRMED FROM CLEAR SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE;
AND
Defended against all the material Arguments and Objections
ADVANCED AGAINST IT.
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED;
A SHORT AND FAITHFUL NARRATIVE
OF A REMARKABLE
REVIVAL OF RELIGION,
IN THE
CONGREGATION OF NEW-LONDONDERRY,
AND OTHER PARTS OF PENNSYLVANIA:
AS THE SAME WAS SENT IN A
Letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston.

BY SAMUEL BLAIR,
Late Minister of the Gospel, at Faggs Manor, Chester County, Penn.

BALTIMORE:
1836.
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PREFACE BY THE PUBLISHER.



It is very nearly, *one hundred* years, since the works of the *Rev. Samuel Blair* were published, and about the same length of time since his death. The number of copies originally published, was probably small. These two causes have contributed to render the author and his works little known by the ministry and laity of the present generation. One instance will suffice to prove this. The publisher inquired of two of the most venerable fathers in the Presbyterian church of the present day, what they thought of his writings. The answer from each was, "I have never seen, and never heard of them." One of them mentioned that he had heard, that he was one of the most eloquent gospel ministers of his day, either in Great Britain or America. Presuming that the mass of readers, know as little about him, it will be proper to publish what we can gather of the author.

His birth place is unknown to us, most probably it was in Pennsylvania or New Jersey, as we find that he was a pupil of the *Rev. William Tennent*, father of *William & Gilbert*, two men who were so successful in the work of the ministry. Blair, the Tennents, and Whitfield, were warm friends and frequently together in preaching of the gospel. For some time he was settled as pastor over the Presbyterians in *Shrewsbury*, New-Jersey. From thence he removed to the congregation of Faggs Manor in New Londonderry township,—Chester county,—Pennsylvania, in the month of April, 1730. Here he remained until his death, which happened on 5

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July, 1751,* aged 39 years and 21 days. From a record of his advice to his congregation, on his death bed, we learn that he was *seventeen years* in the ministry, *eleven* of which were spent at Faggs Manor, and the *six* preceding at Shrewsbury, and in the bounds of the New Brunswick Presbytery. He must have entered on the work of the ministry in his twenty second year.

As a pastor we cannot speak of him but in the language of those of his own day. *Mr. Finlay*, in his funeral sermon, says of him, "He was diligent in the exercise of his office to the utmost of his bodily strength, *not sparing himself*; and God did very remarkably succeed his faithful ministrations to the conversion of many souls." Of his character in the judicatories of the church says the same, "We waited for the sage remarks, and heard attentive his prudent reasonings: after his words, how seldom had any one occasion to speak again? His speech dropped upon us, and we waited for him, as for the rain."

With almost every department of science, he was familiar. But laid all aside to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn, the great mystery of redemption, that he might be able rightly to divide to saint and sinner their portion.

The *two* treatises, which we have selected from his works, for publication, are very distinct in their character, but really harmonious in their parts. The *one* is an exposition of the doctrine of the sovereignty of the eternal God; his right to do according to his will; and a vindication of the same, from the attacks continually made upon it by those who deny the Almighty the right to do

*Mr. Blair was buried in the grave yard of Faggs Manor, where his tomb stone is now to be seen, with the following inscription.

Here lyeth the body of
REV. MR. SAMUEL BLAIR,
who departed this life
The 5th day of July, 1751,
Aged 39 years and 21 days.

In yonder sacred house I spent my breath:
Now silent, mouldering, here I lie in death.
These silent lips shall wake, and yet declare
▲ dread *Amen* to truths they published there.

according to his pleasure. The *other*, is also an exposition, by way of narrative, of the glorious display of God's sovereign grace, in plucking sinners as bands from the burning, and gathering together in Christ Jesus a people for his own praise and glory.

In the *first* treatise, *Mr. Blair*, takes up a doctrine, which was much misrepresented, and even scurrilously ridiculed by many who professed to be distinguished favourites of heaven. He treats it with all the calmness, humility, piety, and dignity of one who felt that he was advocating, and defending the doctrines which *Jesus* his master preached, which Paul his follower, so zealously and laboriously defended, against the judaizing teachers of his day. In it, there is no attempt to overcome an adversary, no terms of reproach, no bitter sarcasm, no personal invective; all is conducted in the spirit of the gospel. Whoever shall read it, cannot but find, much to interest and profit, nothing to wound.

The *second* treatise will be interesting to all those who delight in hearing of the display of God's sovereign grace in the conversion and salvation of sinners. The author calls it 'the late remarkable revival of religion.'

On the doctrine of Predestination, we do not know of an author, who has treated the subject, more clearly, forcibly, or in any way more judiciously than *Mr. Blair* has done in the treatise under that head.

It is not a little remarkable, how earnestly, and zealously those fathers of the Presbyterian church contended for this doctrine, and all those doctrines which are now made so light of, by the followers of New Haven Theology. In reading *Mr. Blair's* preface, one would think who did not notice the dates, that he meant those very men; and yet they claim to be followers of the Tenents and Blairs! Could those men rise from their graves and speak they would cause many a blush among those who profess to be their followers,—their followers, when they reject every thing that they held dear!!

Well would it be for the Presbyterian church, if her ministers would learn what their fathers did hold.

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DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

TRULY AND FAIRLY STATED.

IN order to speak clearly, and to advantage, upon any subject; and especially if it be much controverted in the world, it is in the first place necessary, that it be exactly defined, and bounded by its proper limits; that it be represented properly, as it is maintained by those who contend for it, that so both parties may have the same fixed, determinate idea of what they reason about, and speak both still to the self same thing. Endless are the confusions and contentions that are introduced into the world, either for the want of this care in defining, and rightly understanding the subject in debate; or for want of honesty in an opposite, when he will not keep close to the very thing, though he doth understand what it is. It is the readiest way to bring any controversy to a right issue, rightly to state and represent the case, and then to keep close to it, as so stated, and not suffer another thing, under the same name, to be shuffled in, in its place, through the course of the argument. In this way, such objections, as suppose the case to be different from what it is, are easily answered, by reducing the objector to the prefixed limits, and so shewing his argument to be nothing to the purpose in hand. And, I think, there is no where more need of this care and attention, than about the doctrine of *God's decrees*, or *Predestination*, which is the subject of this small treatise. I know not any doctrine more furiously opposed, without being rightly understood; or by being disingenuously and uncandidly misrepresented. I shall therefore, first of all, state the doctrine truly, and then defend and confirm it.

1. As to the true state of the doctrine, it may be taken up in these two or three propositions,

1. That as God, from everlasting, was pleased, in his own free sovereignty, to decree and determine to create this world; and to make man in it a reasonable creature, in his own image, holy and upright, every way fitted and impowered for that duty which was due, from such a rational creature, to the great God creator, with full ability to persevere and continue in that happy state of integrity; and to enter into a covenant of life with him, wherein all the human race were to be concerned and engaged; and *Adam*, their first father, constituted their public head and representative; so that, as he kept or broke the covenant, they were to enjoy or lose the promised blessings of it: And as God infallibly foreknew the fall and transgression of *Adam*, as what he had decreed to permit, and so the depravity and ruin of his posterity consequent thereupon, according to the covenant; with all the actual sins which every individual should ever be guilty of; so he was likewise pleased, of his own mere grace and free favour, to decree and determine, to recover and save a number, only known to himself, of that fallen wretched race, through the mediation of his own son's redeeming them, by answering the precept and penalty of the broken law for them; and through the sanctification of his eternal spirit, making them fit for and capable of glorifying and enjoying him for ever.

2. That God's determining and appointing to save any of fallen mankind, or any in particular more than others, was not upon the foresight of any difference which he foresaw they would make among themselves, by the better improvement of any common helps and advantages, as the reason of it: But it was purely of his own sovereign, free, wise pleasure, and distinguishing grace.

3. That the rest of fallen mankind, not thus chosen and ordained to eternal life, he was pleased, of his sovereign, wise and righteous pleasure, as a just king and lawgiver, to determine to leave in their fallen state; and punish them according to all the sin and disobedience which they should be guilty of, and chargeable with.

This is, briefly, a just view of the case I am upon; which I hope, with the divine direction and conduct, to maintain against all the arguments commonly opposed to the doctrine. I cannot indeed expect, that this repre-

sentation of it will render it generally acceptable and agreeable to those who have been long prejudiced against it; but that is not the question, whether we would incline and desire to have it so; but, whether it be truly and really so, whether we would desire it should be so, or not? Many of the laws and commands of God are very contrary to the will and inclination of depraved sinners; but they are not the less truly the commands of God for that. In the defence of this doctrine, I would *first* shew, *that it is a reasonable*, and *next*, *that it is a scriptural doctrine*; and speak to the arguments which may be urged, both for and against it, from both these topics, of reason and revelation.

II. 1. Those who oppose the doctrine of absolute decrees, generally bring in a heavy indictment against it, as big with the most glaring absurdities, inconsistencies, and contradictions to the very light of reason: And these such as involve in them the grossest impiety, and most horrid blasphemy against the divine majesty; as, that it is directly contrary to, and necessarily infers the exact reverse of most of, the glorious perfections and attributes which reason as well as scripture teaches us to ascribe to the great God; that it makes him unjust, and tyrannically cruel: Some say, (I dread to express it) worse than the very devil; that it makes him the author of sin, chargeable with most, if not all the guilt of it; that it makes him a most gross, hypocritical dissembler, &c.

But sure, it is not the proper *Calvinistic* doctrine upon that head, that these men bring in all these awful and shocking charges against; but some horrid composition of their own brain, which they will palm upon the *Calvinists*, whether they will or no: or else they just resolve to bring a popular odium upon the doctrine, by such vile, bold, and daring methods; to impose upon such as are not well capable to reason clearly or closely upon such a sublime subject, that they may abhor the very thoughts of it. I readily own, that whatsoever notion infers the least imperfection in God, is unreasonable and worse than false. But let the account I have given of this doctrine, be but duly and unbiassedly considered; and then tell me, if there is any thing so dishonourable to God, or unreasonable, in it: if there is, in which of the three propositions, or articles is it? Is it in *the first*, when it is said, that God decreed to permit

Adam's fall? But you must own, that he did permit it, that is, that he did not prevent it; if you own that *Adam* did fall; and consequently you must own that God decreed to permit or suffer him to fall; for it is highly absurd to say, that he did permit it without determining to permit it; that is the same thing as to say that he took no notice of it at all, till it was done; that it never once came under the view of his all-comprehending, all-discerning mind, how *Adam* would behave himself in such circumstances as he was in, when he did transgress, if left merely to his own use of his original powers: but this is to deny God's infinite, and boundless perfection. Well then, if he had this view and knowledge of what *Adam* would do in such a case, if thus left to himself; that is, that he would sin; he determined either to hinder or suffer it, to prevent or permit it. It is manifest he did not determine to prevent it, for if so, it would not have been. And his not determining or decreeing to prevent it, when he infallibly knew it would be if he did not, was decreeing to permit it. And then upon this decree to permit the fall, proceeded God's certain foreknowledge of it, as future. Moreover, this permissive decree, and foreknowledge of man's transgression and apostacy, plainly appears from God's having foreordained a Redeemer before the foundation of the world, as according to 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20. And now seeing these things are plainly so, viz. that God did thus determine to permit the fall of man, which in his perfect and boundless knowledge, he saw would be, if he did not hinder it by his immediate, superadded influence; and consequently foresaw it, as a thing that would surely be; so plain that he must have a strange art of managing his reason, who will carefully follow these few steps I have here taken, and not be constrained to yield his assent. Then, surely, one would think there was more reverence and honor due to the great and glorious majesty of God, than for any poor worms of the dust to bring in their bold charges against him here, and say, that for these things he is the author of sin, either in that he created man at all, or in that he did not prevent his sin, when he could have done it. Who art thou, Oh man, that repliest against God? Surely, it becomes us to entertain more honourable, exalting thoughts of God, than to give

the least way to such a vile suggestion; even supposing our poor mole-eyes should not be able to discern, to our satisfaction, how it could be otherwise. We may, on the one hand, be clearly assured of God's permissive decree, and certain foreknowledge of man's sin; and, on the other hand, as well assured, that he is essentially and infinitely holy: and though we should not be able to reconcile these together; yet he can; and that ought to silence and satisfy us. It does not well befit us to put ourselves upon a par with him; and think that he can know nothing but what we must know too. But yet, I see no need of leaving the case at this issue neither: For how unreasonable and ridiculous is the ground of the charge? God did not purpose and determine to prevent *Adam's* sinning, when it was easy to his power to have prevented it; well, and what then? Did not the Lord give him sufficient power to have prevented it himself? And was not this enough to free the kind Creator of all blame in the case? Cannot God make a creature perfect and complete in its order and rank, endowed with full ability and power to preserve its glory unstained, and put in a state of probation and trial, without a criminal charge? Must he be called to answer at the creature's bar, for its own miscarriage and voluntary rebellion, in such a case? Indeed, if we maintain that God did not give *Adam* sufficient power to preserve his fidelity, and withstand the temptation; or, that God, by his immediate energy, overpowered him to a compliance; then, I confess, there would be no standing before the argument: but, as we assert no such thing, nor any thing that will afford such a consequence, how unfair and inexcusable is it, to give out as if we did: which is the method of too many, either ignorantly or wilfully. And let me observe that the *Arminians*, yea, men of all sorts of religions in the world, are no less obliged to answer this difficulty than the *Calvinists*; for they must all acknowledge that there is sin in the world, and that God has permitted it; otherwise it could not be; yea, you must acknowledge yourselves to have been guilty of sins, and such as you might have avoided. But dare you lift up your face before God, and say to him, 'I have done many evils, even such as I had power to refrain; but they are thy sins, and not mine, because thou didst not keep me from them.' Would not your own reason con-

found you with shame, at the thoughts of such a wicked, senseless speech to God? As little reason is there, whatever less, for charging the righteous God in the case of *Adam's* transgression.

Or, is it matter of just prejudice against this doctrine, that mankind are said to have been considered, in the divine decree, as universally fallen in Adam, in consequence of his breach and violation of the covenant of God, wherein he was appointed the covenant-head and representative of his posterity? But, sure, yourselves must acknowledge that all mankind did fall in Adam's transgression, if you profess to believe the holy scriptures: So long as the fifth chapter of St Paul's epistle to the Romans stands in the Bible, it will be impossible, with any face of modesty, to deny it; where we are told, that by *one man sin entered* into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that *all* have sinned. And, that by the offence of one, *judgment* came upon all men to condemnation. When you say, that all mankind are recovered again out of the condemnation and ruin which the sin of *Adam* brought upon them, by Jesus Christ; is it not an acknowledgment that they were all once fallen and ruined by it? And inasmuch as yourselves acknowledge it was so, you must acknowledge it was reasonable, and no way inconsistent with the perfections of God, that it should be so; or else you say point blank, that God was, at least once, unrighteous. And now, seeing mankind were fallen in *Adam*, which God's glorious perfections will not suffer us to think it was any way unreasonable or unjust in him; it necessarily follows, that it would have been no way unreasonable or unjust in God, if he had so pleased, to have left them all in that fallen state, without restoring any. Seeing there was once a plain forfeiture of all rights and privileges, according to law and justice, it was at the free pleasure of the great lawgiver, to bestow them again upon any or not; unless you will say that our recovery by Christ was not of free and mere grace, but what God was bound to order and bring about, or else oppose his own nature, and be unjust; and so, that herein he did what we have no reason to thank him for; which is not only a gross inconsistency in itself, but such an impiety against God, that few, I believe, would be so bold as to venture upon it. It is ridicu-

lous to talk of our being redeemed by God out of a miserable state, which it was unjust for him either to suffer us to come into, or yet to leave us in. There is no need of a mediator and redeemer in such a case. Then indeed Christ is dead in vain. Thus far we have made our way clear. Well then, I say again, if it would have been no way unbecoming God, if he had so pleased, to have determined to leave all mankind in that fallen state; no man will say, who duly considers what he says, that it would have been any way unbecoming him, had he so pleased, looking upon them in this fallen, guilty, apostate state, to have made this distinction among them, in his eternal purpose, which I am defending: and so the proper doctrine of predestination, in the right notion of it, must be owned to be entirely reasonable; and the very method, for what we know, that God (unless he has told us the contrary) was pleased to take.

But to make all this yet clearer, I would give this farther brief account of the reasonableness of mankind's partaking in the sad fruits of *Adam's* transgression. I would account for it from his being set up as their public head and representative, in the first covenant. If this constitution and appointment of God was reasonable, then all that was natively consequent upon it, according to the tenor of it, must be so too. To make it appear, that this constitution was every way just and reasonable, let it be considered, that it was in its own nature adapted and directly calculated to the great good and advantage of mankind; securing to them a confirmed state of innocence and everlasting happiness, upon their first father's continuing obedient, so long as God saw fit to leave him in a state of probation and trial; so that none of them would have been any more in the danger of a probationary state for themselves. Adam was sufficiently impowered to manage this great trust, endowed with full ability to keep the covenant; yea, with as full as any of his offspring would have had, had they been to pass a time of trial for themselves: and his motives to care and watchfulness were as strong as theirs could have been, having his own eternal interest as much engaged in the case as theirs; so that their whole stock, all their everlasting concerns, were every whit as safe in his hands as they would have been in their own. And seeing their case was, this way, as

safe as if it had been in their own management; and there was a rational prospect of a glorious, unspeakable advantage by it, though there was an awful evil on the other hand, in case of disobedience, yet, since the rational hope, on the one hand, was far greater than the danger on the other, it was surely a reasonable, wise, and good plan; and which, I am satisfied, we would all have admired, and praised the glorious God for, had our representative fulfilled his part of the covenant, and we now been enjoying the happy consequences of it. If so, then how unreasonable and wicked must it be now, to quarrel with the scheme and its glorious author, on the account of it, because it has eventually proved, through our trustee's default, to our disadvantage? If it would have been just and altogether right, had he obeyed; does his sin and disobedience make it wrong, and unjust? One thing more may be observed here, to free the subject of all misapprehension, viz: that it is not imagined, that the same degree of punishment is justly due to *Adam's* posterity, merely on the account of his transgression, which was due to himself for it. Thus far only is certain in this matter, that beside our being exposed by it to the various miseries of this life and death itself, we lost all right and title to the life and happiness which God promised in the covenant, and the glorious moral image of God in our souls, viz: our original righteousness. So that instead of being now naturally holy and upright, we are naturally depraved and sinful, which is the awful foundation and spring of our numberless transgressions, whereby we deserve an awfully aggravated condemnation; I say, persons for their actual sins, though they flow from their original corruption, as the spring and fountain of them, deserve an awfully aggravated condemnation, or unspeakably greater than the law denounces only on the account of *Adam's* transgression; inasmuch as that man or woman cannot be found, of whom it could justly be said, that they had never been farther guilty of actual sin, than what was absolutely unavoidable from the original depravity of their nature. These things may suffice, to evince the reasonableness of the doctrine of all mankind's being fallen in *Adam*; and of their being considered as such, in the decree and purpose of God concerning their eternal states; which, as has been already shewn, proves the reasonableness of

the doctrine of predestination; forasmuch as God might justly have determined, either to save none, or to save all, or to save only a part, as he pleased.

But farther, if any should yet be unwilling to yield the reasonableness of mankind's being so disinherited of all their spiritual and eternal privileges; and their being liable to such a state of misery, by *Adam's* sin and disobedience; whatever temporal calamities they might in justice and reason be exposed to by it. I would prove the reasonableness of the doctrine I am chiefly insisting upon, from principles which they must unavoidably grant, if they are not lost to all the common sense of mankind. You must own, that all mankind, except infants, have actually sinned, whether you own it to be the effect of *Adam's* sinning or not; All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: That it is so, in fact, is too notorious to be denied. Yea, you must own that mankind are naturally inclined to sin, and have a strong bias and propension that way: these things you must confess, account for them how you will: and I am apt to think, the scripture account, resolving the universal depravity and sinful propensions of the human nature, into the transgression of our first parent, as the cause, will answer full as well as any you can give: it will be as satisfactory as either Plato's pre-existent state in the stars, or the eternal evil principle of the Manichees; or yet the imitation and example of Pelagius. However, that mankind are so universally guilty of sin, let it come how it will, is but too manifest. Moreover, you must grant that they justly deserve punishment for their sin, from the sovereign lawgiver of the rational world; to say otherwise, is to say that sin is not sin; sin must be as good as obedience and duty, if the sinner deserves no worse for it; which is an absurdity a little too big to swallow, that takes away all distinction between moral good and evil, and destroys all the notions of justice in the world. You must also grant, that God, from all eternity, certainly foresaw all the sins of all men, unless you have a God like yourselves, who knows now, what he did not know before, by information from others. Now lay these few things together, and then see if it does not follow, by an unavoidable, logical necessity, that God might justly have decreed, and purposed from everlasting, to punish the sinful, disobedient chil-

dren of men, and not to save any of them out of their guilty state: for if God from everlasting foresaw that they would deserve to be thus cast off and punished, then he might justly determine to deal so by them; unless you will say, it was unjust for him to determine to do what was just to do. And is the justness of his determining to punish a part of them only, according to the rules of governing justice, less conceivable, while he determines to save the rest, in a way agreeable to the glory of his majesty and government, through the mediation and redemption of his eternal Son? Thus you may see, the denying of *original sin* does not overthrow the doctrine of predestination; all that is gained by it, is a certainty that all such as die in their infancy, were elected to eternal life: but then, they were not chosen in Christ, a redeemer, nor are they brought to happiness through his redemption; which is a notion that does not chime very well with the scriptures, which every where represent the atonement of Christ as the only way of eternal happiness, to any of the human progeny: which I think, is a farther evident proof of *original sin*. And thus, I think, I have sufficiently cleared the first proposition.

2. In the next place, is there any thing so horrid in the second article? viz: that God's decree and purpose to save any of the fallen, apostate race, was not founded upon his foresight of their good works, and diligent endeavours, as the cause of it; but was purely owing to his own sovereign pleasure and grace. This is a sentiment so far from being unreasonable, that I think the contrary is plainly so, absolutely considered, viz: that the imperfect, corrupted, and altogether selfish endeavours of rebellious, guilty creatures, should be of such high price with God, as necessarily to determine him to save them; so that he would be unjust, if he did not thereupon design and effectuate their salvation. Is this a notion, either so very reasonable in itself, or honorable to God? And yet this is the principle that must be maintained, if the doctrine I am defending, be charged with being in itself unreasonable. To manifest a little the unreasonableness of such a notion, I would ask, if an entire and perfect obedience to the law of God, without the least defect, would be any more than our duty to him, as he is such a glorious being, and we his crea-

tures? If it would not, (and no man in his right wits will say otherwise) then how can the very imperfect, the every way corrupt, and contemptible obedience, that is performed by guilty sinners, make it so necessary for God to pardon their past disobedience, as that he would be unreasonable and unjust, if he did not? According to this principle, pardon would not properly be pardon; it would not be an act of mere grace, and rich mercy, but of just debt. But who is there that has the front to demand it, as such, for all the good works that ever he did? I believe you would find hard work of it to bring the notion into practice, and very formally tell the great God, that 'though you had sinned against him, and contemned his authority; yet you had done so well since, that you would not now be beholden to him for pardon, you claim it as your due, on the score of his essential equity, which he would be unjust if he refused.' It is, moreover a notion that entirely supersedes and takes away all necessity of Christ's atonement and satisfaction. What need of such a propitiation and ransom, if any thing that guilty sinners could do, could render it unjust in God, not to save them? And now, seeing these things are plainly so, it as plain and necessarily follows, that it was no way unreasonable, nor unbecoming any of the divine perfections, for God to make his own sovereign, absolute good will and pleasure, the rule of his determinations, of dispensing his saving mercies to any fallen, guilty sinners; and not their works of endeavours. Yea, I will add, it is highly presumable from reason itself, and seems to be its very dictate, that this was actually the way of God's proceeding in the case; as what was most suitable to his independent sovereignty, for the maintaining, and illustration of his exalted glory; and to abase the pride of all flesh, that none should glory in his presence; but as it is written, he that glorieth, shall glory in the Lord alone: that his redeemed and saved people should forever ascribe the whole glory and praise to his sovereign, free, distinguishing grace. This method, in the case, was proceeding like a God; as becomes the supreme JEHOVAH: exalts both his own glory, and the happiness of saved sinners, to the highest; while they are ever sensible, that as he might justly have saved none, so they have nothing to ascribe to themselves in the matter, why he

saved them more than any others. Hence their hearts beat high with the tenderest, sweetest resentments of love and wonder, with the highest ascriptions of glory and praise, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. So that, I believe, this doctrine suits best with the language of heaven, however it be relished on earth. If we consider the hateful, horrid, and criminal nature of sin, what can there be in any sinner to engage to him the love and favour of a God of infinite holiness, and incomprehensible majesty; in whose sight the heavens are not clean; who charges his angels with folly? Now, though all these considerations make it plainly appear, that it is every way reasonable, yea, most becoming the adorable majesty of God, that the reason of his appointing any fallen sinners, in particular, more than others, to eternal life, should be wholly resolved into his sovereign pleasure; that it should be entirely founded in himself, and not at all in them; yet I am apprehensive that here lies the main ground of the quarrel; for though sin has made man extremely poor, it has not made him humble, but much to the contrary; the unbroken pride and haughtiness of sinners' hearts, will not allow it to be right or equitable to all, that it should be altogether at the free, sovereign pleasure of God, whether to save them or not; unless they have it in their own hand, they will quarrel with God himself; although they deserve not so much as the least ground for hope that ever he will save them. It would surely better become such hell-deserving rebels as we, to be so humbly sensible of our vile iniquities, as to acknowledge God's sovereign right to dispose of us as he sees fit; that if he should abandon us to misery for ever, it would be but just and right, notwithstanding all that ever we could do; and if he saves us, it will be an instance of the most glorious, free, sovereign grace and mercy, which he might righteously have denied. But these things may suffice here, to shew that this part of the doctrine also stands free of all unreasonable absurdity, and unbecoming reflections on God. And if you would have the whole evidence again in a narrow compass, you may take it thus: God, the great creator and upholder of all things, is the rightful lawgiver and moral governor of the reasonable world; considering the infinite, boundless glory and perfections of his nature, and

his right in and over us, as his creatures, our obligations of love and duty to him are inconceivably great and infinite: hence sin and disobedience against such infinite majesty, and obligations, is infinitely evil; deserving the sinner's everlasting rejection from God, with a super-added positive punishment. All mankind, through the sin and disobedience of their first parent, are become destitute of original righteousness, and all right to the life and happiness promised in the first covenant; and all such as are preserved to years in the world, have sinned actually in their own persons, and that far beyond what was absolutely unavoidable from their original depravity; when they in justice deserve a far greater punishment. God had as clear and certain a knowledge of *all this* apostacy, and sin of mankind, from all eternity, as after it actually came to pass; so that in his decrees concerning them, he considered them as in such a fallen, guilty state, deserving the execution of his vindictive justice; and altogether insufficient to do any thing that might in the least satisfy its demands, for the averting of the stroke. And so, from the whole, it clearly appears, that God had as absolute, just, and great a sovereignty over them, to appoint any part of them for life or death, according to his own pleasure, as the *potter has over his clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour.*

And now, after all these things, what can reasonably be said against the third and last of the propositions? Which is, that God determined to leave a part of these guilty sinners (viz: those whom he did not choose to salvation) in their fallen guilty state; and to execute justice upon them for their sins. To say, that this is unjust. &c. is to say that justice is injustice, &c. All I shall farther observe here upon it, is, how injurious and unfair treatment it is, to give out, as too many that oppose the doctrine, do, as though we maintained, that God doomed man to everlasting perdition, without any respect to, or consideration had of, their sin. We say, that the reason why God chose some and rejected others, that is, these rather than those, was not because of the greater goodness of the one part, and greater sinfulness of the other, for all were *clay of the same lump*, without any difference of this kind among them, amounting to such value, but because it *so seemed good in his sight.*

We assert that none are doomed to everlasting perdition but for their sin: but then, it is not the reason of the difference that is made between them and those that are chosen to everlasting life.

Now, though what has been already hitherto said, in explaining and vindicating the doctrine of predestination, might sufficiently furnish a careful, understanding reader, with satisfactory answers to the objections that are usually supposed to be deduced from reason against it; yet, for the more full satisfaction of all, I shall consider them more particularly.

One objection that makes a mighty noise in the world, is, that *it makes God the author of sin*. But it is as easy for me to deny this, as for the objector to assert it; and asserting is all he can do, if he obliges himself to urge it against the doctrine, only as I have represented and explained it in the preceding pages. Let such objectors show us what part of it is justly liable to such a charge; and how it contains or infers any such blasphemy: Does it make God the author of sin, to say, that he decreed to suffer Adam to sin; when in the mean time we assert, that he gave him sufficient power not to sin; and only suffered him, without any compulsion, to abuse his liberty? How ridiculous and senseless is such a charge for this? Such objectors seem to think, or else be willing to have it thought, that we maintain, that God either did not afford Adam sufficient ability to persevere. or that by his superior power he forced him to sin. But let their slander die with them. Yet, I think I have met with an author that pretends to prove this vile absurdity consequent upon the score of bare permission. This, indeed, would be a rare art, could he make it do, to free the whole world of the blame of sin all at once; for if God cannot so much as permit sin, without being the author of it himself, then I think we are pretty clear, and all the devils too. He proves it by a simile: *suppose a man to be standing on the top of a very high wall, holding a child over it by the arm; well, he does not press it down, or force it to fall; but only lets it go, and suffers it to fall;* (if it will, I suppose) and then the demand is, *whether that man was not the author of that child's fall and death?* I think it is no great difficulty to answer the question: I believe none would pretend to vindicate such a gross murder. But then I would ask, if the cases are any way like one

another? If this simile is supposed to be parallel to the case it is brought to illustrate, then our opinion must be, that God at first so upheld Adam by the hand of his power, as that it was impossible for him to sin; and then withdrew his hand from him, so as that it was impossible for him not to sin: Whereas we assert the direct contrary of both. Before the simile can be made in any tolerable degree similar to the case, many other things must be supposed in it; particularly, that the child is endowed with such a power as that it is as easy for it to stand in the air as to fall to the ground; that the man has a rightful sovereignty and authority over it, to put it in such a situation, and make it its indispensable duty to stand where he has put it; that it has clear knowledge of its duty, and warning of its danger; and the like. These suppositions, I believe, will pretty much alter the case.

Another objection, brought against the doctrine, is, *that it makes God chargeable with the most unjust cruelty, and sovereign tyranny.* But I have already sufficiently vindicated it from this awful charge; unless it be unjust cruelty to decree justice; which is a contradiction in express terms. Was it not just in God to make man free, as well as perfectly holy and upright? To appoint Adam the covenant-head, and representative of his offspring, as it has been explained? To permit him to act according to his original freedom and liberty? To permit all men to sin, as they do? And to punish some of them, whom he pleases, for all the sin they are guilty of? If these things are all righteous and just enough, was it unjust in God to fore-appoint and determine them? Would those, who oppose the doctrine of predestination, but fairly represent it, and speak to it still as it is, they would surely be ashamed to offer such a charge as this against it: And of this themselves seem to be sensible; and therefore they commonly so manage the objection, as grossly to misrepresent the doctrine, as though it contained in it, that God, in his eternal purpose, doomed a number of mankind to destruction, without any consideration at all had of their sin, whereby they would justly deserve it; or that he purposed, by his irresistible power, to compel them to sin, that so he might damn them with some colour of justice. Whereas we disclaim both the one and the other, with the utmost abhorrence.

Again, it is objected, that this doctrine makes God *partial*, and a respecter of persons; which is justly reputed a very ill character in men, and therefore cannot in the least belong to God. This argument seems to be much depended on among the more ignorant: But those who make so much of it, ought to consider what that respecting of persons is, which is so criminal in men. It is their making such a difference between persons, in their temper and conduct towards them, as is contrary to right and equity; on account of some accidental things or circumstances, wherein they may differ from one another; such as nation, worldly dignity, relation, gifts, bribes, or the like. And I really own, that partiality and respect of persons, in this sense, is very far from God. He accepts not the persons of *princes*, nor regards the rich more than the poor, Job xxxiv. 19. He is not only far from doing injustice to any, but he makes no account at all of the little differences among them, of nation, worldly state and condition, or the like, as a reason of any of his dealings towards them: And it is in this sense, that respecting of persons is always taken in scripture, wherever it is condemned in men, or denied concerning God. And, sure, the doctrine I am defending, is so far from inferring any such respect of persons in God, that is at the first view directly contrary to it. Yet farther I would observe, there may be among men a favouring of one more than another, which you may call respecting of persons, or, if you will, partiality, or by what name you please; but it carries no ill idea in it: Such, for instance, as our Lord speaks of Matth. xx., where the lord of the vineyard gave to some of his labourers an undeserved bounty, while he gave to others only what justice necessarily required: And this is brought in by our Lord Jesus himself, for this very case, (see ver. 16.) to vindicate God's making such a difference among guilty sinners, against such as make this objection: And God's defence here is unanswerable against all the murmurings of such as he has not chosen to salvation: *Friend, I do thee no wrong, whatsoever good I do to others; Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?*

It is farther objected, that, according to this doctrine, *it is God's fault, and not theirs, that any perish; inas-*

much as it was ever impossible for them to be saved, seeing they were under an irreversible appointment to destruction, before ever they had a being. But what has been said already, will easily answer all the difficulty that may seem to be in this argument, viz: that God appointed them to be punished only for their sins, whereby they in justice deserve it: And, surely, their sinning is not any fault in God; nor yet his appointing them to deserve punishment for it: But seeing all their punishment will be only according to the demerit of their sin, their whole destruction will properly be of themselves, and their own fault. But if any should yet foolishly think, that the mere necessity, or infallible certainty of the event, would render sinners free of all the blame of their destruction, because it was always certain, that so it would be in the end; let them try any other scheme they please, and see whether they can rid themselves of the difficulty: for whatsoever at any time is, was always infallibly certain to be, whether you allow a decree concerning it, or not: So that you must either deny that it is so much as possible for any creature to perish justly at all; or you must own that the bare certainty of the event, that they will perish, does not free them from being the proper blameable causes of their own perdition: And its being certain by a divine appointment, makes them no more clear of the blame; because the decree only is, to punish them for, and according to, the demerit of their sins; which sins it lays no forcible constraint or compulsion upon them, to be guilty of.

Again it is said, that *if this doctrine be true, then it follows, that God creates men to damn them.* This seems to be a ready-hand argument, almost in every one's mouth that denies the doctrine.

Before we speak to any words or propositions, we ought to understand what is meant by them. Now all the meaning I can conceive in this sentence, (*God creates men to damn them*) consistent with the propriety of speech, is, that their damnation is God's end in creating them; the final cause and reason of his bringing them into being; and this imports in it that God loves and delights in the punishment and misery of creatures, merely as such, and for its own sake; which is a thing most blasphemous to suppose of him. To suppose, that the mis-

ery of any creature, strictly and abstractly in itself, without any other consideration, is agreeable and pleasing to God; yea, so agreeable, that he makes them for this very end that he may have the pleasure of punishing them; is, indeed, to represent him like the very worst of beings. But then I would ask, does God's decreeing to punish men for their sin, as they deserve, for maintaining the dignity of his government, and the shewing forth of his infinite holiness, justice, and rightful authority; does this, I say, bear in it any such thing, as that he delights barely in the misery of creatures, so as to create them for the sake of it? How irrational is such a consequence? But if any will yet insist on it as a just consequence, I desire them to consider a little how they will free their own scheme of it; which is every whit as liable to the charge: Unless they have stupid ignorance and blasphemous presumption enough to deny God's infinite understanding and foreknowledge of all things, it is just as reasonable to bring this objection against the *Arminians*, as the *Calvinists*; and say, that *God creates men to damn them*, if he knows before-hand that he will damn them; if he foreknew that they would die impenitent, in unbelief; and thereupon has decreed their damnation before he has created them. The truth of the matter is this, God decreed to create all men for the manifestation of his own glory, which is his end in all his works; and looking upon mankind in their apostacy and sin, he decreed to leave a particular part of them in that state, and to punish them according to their sin, for the manifestation of the glory of his sovereignty, holiness, and justice, and the right and infinite obligations of his authority, as a lawgiver over his reasonable creatures. This view of the case gives no ground for the charge contained in the objection. Though God foresees that mankind will sin against him; cannot he, notwithstanding, create them; and determine to punish them, or any part of them, as their sin deserves, for the illustration of his glory aforesaid, without being chargeable with creating them just that he might damn them? To say so, is the same thing as to say, that the sin and default of the creature must bind up God's hands from doing that which is in itself every way reasonable and right; and, in short, to say that right is wrong. But I presume I have been long enough on the first method proposed for defending and confirming this doctrine: And

that, from what has been said, it sufficiently appears, at least, that it is a doctrine, free of all unreasonable absurdity in itself, and no way dishonourable to God. So that reason has nothing to say, why it may not be so. And if in the next place we find, that God's infallible word of truth declares that it is so, this ought to put a final conclusion to the debate, and fully determine the controversy. If there is nothing in the doctrine absurd, or contrary to reason, why it may not be so; then, when a passage of scripture is brought to prove that it is so, we must not be put off any more with this answer, that 'whatever the scripture means, it cannot mean 'Predestination.' A great assertor of the *Arminian* doctrine; I think, as good as owns the reasonableness of the *Calvinist* doctrine, I mean Bishop *Burnet*, when he says, 'It is one of the points wherein all agree, that 'God might have condemned every man to have perished for his own sins.* If God might have condemned all men to perdition for their sins, then surely much more a part of them only. But farther, reason not only readily allows, that God might have formed his eternal purposes and decrees, concerning fallen man, according to this doctrine; but (if duly attended to, without selfish prejudice) it seems, as has been already hinted, powerfully to persuade us, that so the case really is, as being most becoming God's independent sovereignty; and most expressive of the absolute freeness, and glorious riches of his grace, to those that are saved; whereby the whole glory of it is secured to himself, and no ground afforded to the hell-deserving sinner, for any thing, contrary to those humble acknowledgements of his own wretchedness, that will become him: Whereas the contrary doctrine leaves room to the sinner, to trust to something in himself, and ascribe something to himself, in the matter of his salvation. It sets too high a value upon the despicable, religious endeavours of corrupted sinners; when it maintains, that God is thereby induced to receive the sinner to favour,

* *Expos. XXXIX. Art. pag. 167, fol.* This great man manages the debate with the greatest candor and temper of any I have met with, of the *Arminian* side, and yet even he is far from dealing so fairly as he ought, especially when he represents the maintainers of absolute Predestination, as maintaining, that the decree lays a compulsory force on the creature to sin. On this misrepresentation much of his arguing for the *Arminians* proceeds. He lays hold on the *Supralapsarian* scheme for it, and, without sufficient evidence, pretends that the *Sublapsarian* scheme ultimately resolves and terminates in the same, as so represented.

notwithstanding all his rebellions. And by thus representing the God, whom by disobedience we have contemned and dishonoured, as so readily and surely reconciled to us on such terms, it depreciates his injured honours, and takes off from the infinite malignity and due horror of sin. If sin against God is looked upon as a thing that is so easily compensated; and the breach occasioned by it, so readily made up, on such low conditions: What mean, unworthy conceptions are we like to entertain of God's infinite perfections, and adorable attributes, when the contempt of them by sin is reckoned such a small matter? But,

2. I proceed, with more express evidence and certainty, to prove and confirm the doctrine from the divine oracles, the infallible scriptures of truth. And here I shall first prove, that God has appointed and chosen some of fallen mankind to eternal life and salvation; and that merely of his own sovereign grace, and good pleasure, and not upon the foresight of any goodness of theirs, whereby they would distinguish themselves from others, as the reason of it. Next I shall prove, that the rest of mankind, not thus chosen to life, God has appointed to leave in their sins, and to punish them for them, according to their deserts. And then I shall answer such objections as are supposed to be in the scriptures against this doctrine, and give the true meaning of such scripture passages, consistent with it.

The first place of scripture I shall adduce for the proof of *absolute election*, is Acts xiii: 48, where, after an account of the opposition made to the apostles Paul and Barnabas, at Antioch, and the strong endeavours used by some, to prejudice the people against the doctrine which they preached, it is said, that *as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed*. The plain sense of these words is, that notwithstanding all the means used in that place, to hinder the people from believing the apostles' doctrine, yet a considerable number did believe; because God had ordained them to eternal life, and so gave them faith to believe, in spite of all the arts of men used with them to the contrary; and therefore it was impossible for the enemies of Christianity to keep them in unbelief. And this is perfectly agreeable to the sense of our blessed Lord, Matth. xxiv: 24. when he says, that false Christs and false prophets should arise, shewing such signs and won-

ders, that if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect: Clearly implying, that, God has elected some to everlasting salvation, and the necessary means of it; whom it is therefore utterly impossible for false teachers, with all their powers, finally to deceive and keep from believing in the true Redeemer. If any should say, that the reason why these were ordained to eternal life, and had grace given them to believe, was because they were more religiously disposed, and better than the rest: This is not only contrary to the scope of the place, and the mode of expressing the matter in the text, but we find in the next verse but one, that there were some of the most religious that believed not; we are told that these opposers stirred up the devout (that is, the religious) and honorable women; as well as the chief men of the city, to persecute the apostles; but they could not have the same influence upon those whom God had ordained to eternal life; it was impossible for them to deceive the elect.

Another very clear, and most express passage to our purpose, is in Rom. xi: 5, 6, 7. Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace.—What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Here the apostle observes, that as in the time of the greatest defection of the people of Israel, in *Elijah's* days, God had reserved to himself a remnant of *seven thousand*; even so, at that present time, when the greater body of the Jewish nation had rejected Christ, there was also a remnant, according to the election of grace, that did believe: This believing remnant of the Jewish nation, were those who were elected and chosen out of it, to faith and salvation: And this election, whereby they were thus chosen, was an election of grace. Well, you will say, perhaps, you own all this, that God had elected a remnant of the Jews to faith in Christ, and salvation by him; but then the reason of God's electing them was their good works; whereby he foresaw they would render themselves more worthy of his choice than the rest. But don't you see, that the apostle expressly bars against such an imagination, when he says, It is an election of grace; and that if it be of grace, then it is no more of works: Or else grace

is not grace. He tells you, that the election of works, which you contend for, is not the election of grace, which he asserts: If it be of works, it is no more grace. An election of grace and of works both, is a downright inconsistency, if we allow St. Paul to be judge. *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for*; there were many of *Israel*, who were left to unbelief; that were seeking for righteousness and life as much as the others that were notwithstanding sanctified by faith: Though they were thus equal among themselves; yet there was an election among them that *obtained it*, when the rest were blinded; that is, left to their own blindness. I cannot see how the doctrine of absolute election can well be asserted in more strong, plain, and express terms, than the apostle uses for it in these verses. It cannot be said, that all he means by the *election of this remnant*, was only God's purpose of affording them the privilege of the gospel, and outward means of grace: For all the rest had these advantages afforded them, as well as they, according to the words of our Lord, Matth. xx: 16. *Many were called, but few* (i. e. a remnant of them only) were chosen; which manifestly shews that they were elected to the saving benefit of those means, in consequence of which they actually did obtain it: When the rest, who had the same advantage of those outward means, and were seeking for justification and life as well as they, did not obtain it; but were left in their blindness and unbelief. To conclude this argument, the apostle here asserts an *election of some*, out of others, to *eternal life*; and asserts it to be an *election of grace*, in such a full sense, as that it cannot be of *works* in any sense. So that you may see here a flat contradiction between the inspired apostle and the Arminians. They say, election is on the account of works foreseen; he says, it is not of works, but wholly of grace. They say, *It may be so of works and of grace both*; he says, *It cannot, without destroying the nature of both*.

For another proof you may look as far back as the viiith chapter of this Epistle to the Romans, ver. 28, 29, 30—“All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son.—Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he

called, them he also justified, and whom is justified, them he also glorified. Those whom the apostle terms the *called*, according to God's purpose, he tells us, ver. 28. are those that *love God*; and ver. 30, they are those who are *justified*; and, in the end, will be as surely *glorified*. So that by calling here the apostle means being *called effectually to faith and holiness by the spirit of God, or saving conversion*. And he tells us, that those who are thus effectually called, and converted by God in time, are so called by him in pursuance of his *preceding purpose and decree* concerning them; for *they are called according to his purpose*. He *predestinated*, or fore-appointed them *to be conformed to the image of his son*, to be made like Christ in holiness. And as this purpose and fore-appointment of God made their sanctification and justification infallibly certain; so it equally secures their final glorification. For *whom he did predestinate, them he called, justified and glorified*. And those who are predestinated, and fore-appointed of God to holiness and happiness are said to be those whom he foreknew: By God's foreknowing them we are not to understand his having a bare speculative foreknowledge of them, and of what they would be before their effectual calling; for in this sense he foreknew all others, as well as them; but his having had a special love to them, and gracious design to do them good; beyond the rest of mankind: Or it signifies his foreknowing them as his own; as those whom he had chosen, and distinguished for himself, in his eternal purpose, according to what is said 2 Tim. ii: 19. *The Lord knoweth them that are his*. Thus you see, this place is a clear proof of an election and predestination to grace and salvation; and that represented so sovereign, and entirely of God, as not to be founded on any qualification in the creature: Insuring both the sinner's true conversion to holiness, and his final perseverance to the heavenly glory: And all this according to God's purpose, and not their own management or behaviour.

The 6th chapter of this epistle is very plain and express on this argument. In the beginning of it the apostle speaks with reference to the unbelief of the general part of the Jewish nation, their rejection of the true Messiah; declaring his great grief on that account. And then in the 6th verse he comes to speak to a difficulty which seemed to occur, concerning God's leaving the main body of the Jews

to unbelief, and so casting them off from being any longer his people, taken from his word of promise to Abraham, and often afterwards, that he would be a God to him, and to his seed after him forever. It would seem, at that time, when God had cast off that people, all to a very small remnant, and removed his church to the gentiles, as if he had broken his word, and his promise had not been fulfilled, or taken effect. To this the apostle answers, that that was no argument that the word of God had taken no effect; and he clears it up, by shewing that the word of promise peculiarly respected those of Abraham's offspring who belonged to the election of grace; saying, they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; that is, they are not all that Israel which God had principally in his eye in the promise, who belong to Israel by natural relation, or external visible union: The peculiar Israel, or children of the promise, were those whom the Lord had elected and chosen among them to everlasting life; and to these the promise was always made good, whether they were more or fewer: The promise, indeed, being a plain intimation that a large number, belonging to the election of grace, should be of Abraham's progeny, was the foundation of a visible church among them, and gave them all a right to the visible privileges of it, till they made a forfeiture themselves: But the promise, in the full import of it, by way of engagement on God, related only to those whom he had chosen among them; that this is the apostle's meaning here, appears plainly from all that follows: For the illustration and confirmation of this case, he shews, that God put a great limitation upon that seed of Abraham to which he particularly designed the promise, in his words to Abraham himself, saying, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called.* Hereby the Lord signified to him, that there was a greater number of the election to be of his posterity in Isaac's line than in the line of Ishmael, or of any of his other sons that he should ever have, as he had several by a second marriage; and therefore God would take a more special care of Isaac's offspring. And, indeed, no other account can be given for his distinguishing concern about them more than the rest of Abraham's posterity; or for his affording greater advantages to one nation than another at this day, but because of a much greater number of his elect ones being among them; because he knows whom he has chosen. And then the

apostle comes to give another instance of the same kind, viz. the distinction which God made between the two branches of Isaac's offspring, in the 10th and following verses, And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth) it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. Here the apostle shews, that though God had said, that the *seed* of Abraham, which he chiefly intended in the promise of being their God, *was to be in Isaac's line*, yet he intended one part of Isaac's seed more than the other; which he intimated to Rebecca before her twin children were born; when he said, *The elder shall serve the younger*. And thus he observes, there was a distinguishing purpose and decree of God concerning them, (*before they had done any good or evil*) according to election, which purpose of election is not of works, *but of him that calleth*, according to his own sovereign pleasure. The apostle's meaning is plainly this, that God's choosing Jacob, and a great number of his posterity, more than Esau or his posterity, was not on account of any good works to be performed by any of them, more than by the others, as the reason of it, any more than it was on account of good works already done, before they were born, when neither of them had done either good or evil. So, though the apostle's words very likely refer to the respective posterities of those two brothers, as well as to their own persons; yet they respect their spiritual interest more than their temporal; and signify, that God had many more of his elect in the posterity of Jacob than of Esau, at least while they continued two visibly distinct bodies: and therefore he took more care of Jacob's posterity, taking them into, and keeping them in, a visible church-relation to himself, while he suffered the posterity of Esau to degenerate into heathenism and Pagan idolatry; so casting them off from so much as any visible relation to him, as his church. And this directly answers the apostle's purpose; which is to shew, that God had a peculiar elect seed among the seed of Abraham and of Isaac, which he principally designed, and referred to, in the promise; and therefore it was no argument that the word of God had failed, or taken no effect; though great bodies of their natural seed were ne-

glected, and separated from his church, and it was as reasonable to suppose the same thing of Jacob's seed. This election, he asserts, was not of works, but purely of him that calleth, as he pleases. And so, ver. 14, & seq. he goes on, to answer the grand objection which he saw would readily be laid against the doctrine, viz. That it makes God unjust, cruel, partial, and all what not: What shall we say then? says he, is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. He observes, that God had sufficiently answered the objection himself, in these words to Moses, *Exod. xxxiii: 19.* Which clearly signify that all had sinned, and justly deserved the execution of his wrath; and so were become objects of mere mercy, which he might bestow, or withhold, according to his own sovereign pleasure, without any unrighteousness: And, indeed, this is the answer that will stand forever; and wherewith God will one day silence all the quarrellings of haughty creatures. And in these words he declares, that as he justly might, so he really has reserved this royal sovereignty to himself, of bestowing mercy to guilty creatures, just as himself pleases; that he will have mercy and compassion on whom he will. From whence the Apostle clearly infers, ver. 16. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. i. e. The election of any guilty sinners is not at all of themselves, as being better inclined and behaved than others, but altogether of God, who bestows mercy as he pleases; *who* will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and *who* will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. But I presume I need prosecute the argument no farther from this chapter; it is fully clear already, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that it maintains the very doctrine I have undertaken to prove.

And it is no less clearly maintained in the first chapter to the *Ephesians*: *According as he hath chosen us in him, (viz. Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him, in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ver. 4, 5.* The election which the apostle here speaks of, was more than a choosing of them to external church privileges, even an election to eternal salvation;

for he says, *God had predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself: And (as he says Rom. viii: 17.) if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* Moreover, he describes them as those that were in a state of saving grace, ver. 3, saying, "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus:" And then immediately adds, "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy. Their being blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, was according to God's foregoing choice of them; it was the fruit of a gracious and eternal purpose to that end; and they were chosen, not because they would be holy, but that they should be holy; their goodness was not the cause, but the effect of their election. And ver. 5, they were predestinated, or fore-appointed, to be the children of God, not according to their good works, or dispositions, but according to the good pleasure of his will; not to their own praise, but to the praise of the glory of his grace; as it follows ver. 6. And very expressly, to the same purpose, he says, verse 11, *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* We are not predestinated to the heavenly inheritance, says he, according to the purpose of one who proceeds according to the will and behaviour of others; but according to the purpose of him who does all things after the counsel of his own will.

Another place of scripture, very expressly asserting an absolute election, you may see in 2 Tim. i: 9. *God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* The plain meaning of these words (if they can be made plainer) is, as if the apostle had said, 'God hath saved us, and effectually called us, out of a state of sin to holiness; and this is not to be ascribed to any works or endeavours of ours, as the reason of it, but to his own sovereign purpose and grace, or free favour; which grace was made sure to us in Christ, by the father's engagement to him in the eternal covenant of redemption, before the world began,' This is a natural and easy paraphrase upon the words, though indeed they do not need any; I am very sure, if they were found any where else

but in the bible, every one would readily acknowledge they contained the Calvinist doctrine of election. See also 2 Thess. ii: 13, 14. 1 Pet. i: 2. John xv: 16. with many other places of scripture, which it is needless to mention.

But beside these direct and immediate testimonies of scripture to the doctrine, it may be farther clearly proved from such scripture passages as declare the absoluteness and sovereignty of God's proceeding in the effectual calling and conversion of sinners to himself. If God, in the regeneration and conversion of sinners, proceeds in an absolute sovereign way, calling whom he will, without regarding their previous motion and behaviour, as the reason of his proceeding, on which it is suspended, then his choosing of them must be absolute, and sovereign too: For actual renovation in time is just the fruit and execution of the eternal purpose; and therefore the one must exactly answer to the other. Many are the places of scripture which plainly teach us that God's renewing and converting of any sinners is wholly owing to his sovereign, distinguishing favour and mercy, and not to any distinguishing goodness of their own. I shall just only select a few. What can be more express to this purpose than those words? Tit. iii: 3, 4, 5. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, *not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us*, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. In the same manner the apostle speaks in the second chapter to the Ephesians: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein, in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ*, (by grace ye are saved.) Oh sirs, thousands that are now in heaven, would have been in hell,

had God waited for their good works, or preparing themselves for his grace, before he had laid hold of them by converting power. And what great excellency is there in all the good works (falsely so called) of an unregenerate sinner, when he has done them, to engage God to save him? How clearly is the free, absolute sovereignty of God in *effectual calling*, declared, 1 Cor. i: 26 to 30. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world*, to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." Here you see, God calls just whom he will, among the guilty children of men: Some of the high and mighty of the world; but more generally he has ordered it that those whom he designs to call, shall be poor and mean in all worldly respects: and the general reason is, to dash down all human pride, that no flesh should glory in his presence; but that he that glorieth, should glory only in the Lord, ver. 31. And it is remarkable, how the apostle alters the term, after he had begun with *calling* he puts in *choosing* in the place of it; because temporal vocation exactly corresponds to eternal election, as the certain consequent and evidence of it; and the one is as free and absolute as the other, so that it was equal which of the terms he used. Numbers of scripture instances prove this truth. What good works of obedience to Christ had Paul done? Or what good dispositions had he towards him, before he reached him by his powerful grace, to induce the Lord to choose and call him? Were not great numbers of his nation, as good as he, left to perish in unbelief? What were the good works and dispositions of Abraham, more than others, when God called him, as he was serving other Gods on the other side of the flood, with the rest of his father's house? Josh. xxiv: 2. of whom the Lord says, Isai. li: 2. "I called him alone and blessed him." This argument is so clear, and certain in all its parts, that I think it would be quite superfluous to bestow any more pains upon it.

Again, the doctrine of absolute election appears from the only way of fallen sinners' salvation, as it is laid down

and declared in the gospel, viz. The way of believing only and entirely in the merit and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, for actual reconciliation with God. The argument here may be thus formed: That doctrine which leaves no room for guilty sinners to rest and depend on any thing but the merit and atonement of Jesus Christ only, for the reconciled favour of God, and their acceptance with him; (the contrary of which does give room to sinners to rest, and depend also, on something else for reconciliation and acceptance with God) must be true, and its contrary false, according to the scriptures: But the doctrine of absolute election leaves no room for guilty sinners to rest and depend on any thing for the reconciled favour of God, and their acceptance with him, but the merit and atonement of Jesus Christ only: And the contrary doctrine does give them room to rest, and depend also, on something else for it, viz. something in them, or done by them; therefore the doctrine of absolute election is true, and the contrary doctrine false, according to the scriptures.

The scripture clearly teaches us to look only to the merit and atonement of Christ's obedience and sufferings for actual justification before God, and reconciliation with him: And it is as clear, that the doctrine of sinners being chosen in Christ, and fore-appointed to justification and eternal life through him, of God's mere, sovereign, free grace, agrees very well with this; it cuts all the sinews of self-dependence, and leaves the sinner no other foundation to cast himself upon, but the sovereign mercy of God, through a redeeming Saviour. And I think it is as clear again, on the other hand, that the opposite doctrine, of a conditional election, founded either upon the actual existence of some good in, or done by, the sinner, or upon the foresight of it to be in him, or done by him, lays a foundation for self-dependence, and so tends to keep undone sinners from closing with Christ in the way of the gospel. This delusive opinion makes poor creatures swell very big with a conceit of themselves, and what they do, when they imagine their qualifications and doings are of such price with God, it makes them halve the procurement of their salvation between Christ's righteousness and their own, which he will never bear: It makes them patch their filthy rags, and menstruous clothes, to his complete, unspotted robe, for a joint recommendation of them to God's acceptance. Indeed I cannot see a material difference between *Arminian* Protestants and the *Papists*, about the doctrine

of justification. And I find two great bishops, one of each sort, of my mind. Says Bishop *Burnet*, in his *Exposition* (more properly *Perversion*) of the XXXIX articles of the *church of England*, page 126. 'This matter was so stated by many of the writers of the *church of Rome*, (after 'the reformation) that, as to the main of it, we have no 'just exception to it.' The bishop of *Meaux*, in his exposition of the doctrine of the *Catholic church*, page 93, after he has been explaining their sense of justification, and merit of good works, says, 'And indeed we must acknowledge, that the learned of their party, meaning the *reformed*, do not contend so much of late about this subject, as 'they did formerly; and there are but few who do not now 'confess there ought not to have been a breach upon this 'point. But if this important difficulty about justification 'upon which their first authors laid all their stress, be not 'looked upon now as essential by the wisest persons 'amongst them, we leave them to think what they ought to 'judge of their separation; and what hopes there would be 'of a union, if they would but overcome their prejudice, 'and quit the spirit of contention. Thus we see *Protestants* and *Papists* cordially shaking hands, and agreeing again in one of the most material matters of difference. And all the contest remaining, is, which side has made the approach to the other. The one says, *you have come to us*: The other says, *no; but you have come to us*. And this, I believe, will be judged but a small matter for brethren to fall out about. However, I think I might venture, in a court of equity, to undertake to obtain sentence, upon this plea, in favour of the Romish gentleman.

The last argument I shall offer, for confirmation of this doctrine, shall be taken from the declared scope and design of God in the gospel; which is, as it is highly reasonable, to secure the whole glory of sinners' salvation to himself; and for ever hide pride from man: he assures us, he has so concerted the scheme, and laid the plan, that the saved sinner shall not have the least ground to boast, or glory: which evidently proves, that election is not conditional, founded on sinners' good works or disposition; but absolute, founded on God's good pleasure, for upon the conditional scheme, the justified, converted person has it to ascribe to himself, that he, more than another, is in such a happy state. The reason cannot be God's distinguishing love and grace to him, beyond others; but his own distinguishing goodness: for the others are supposed to

have had as much love and kindness from God, as he; whence then came the difference that is between them? Not from God, for he made no difference; but from himself. And does not this give some ground for boasting of himself in the case? To arrogate some glory and praise to himself? But the true gospel way of salvation, will not, in the least, admit of any such thing. It is cross to God's declared view and design in it. See Eph. ii: 8, 9. "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. The way which God has laid for sinners' salvation, is such, that it precludes and bars against all boasting in those that are saved; and therefore it is not of works, but through faith, which is a soul-humbling, self-emptying grace, and a gift of God's royal bounty, which he bestows at pleasure, Rom. iii: 27. After the apostle has clearly laid down the true gospel way of guilty sinners' justification and salvation, through the alone righteousness of Christ, imputed in a way of believing; he asks, *Where is boasting then?* and answers, *it is excluded. Not by the law of works, but by the law of faith.* All boasting is entirely excluded by that method which God has established. And hence we may, with abundant evidence, conclude, that that doctrine which affords any room for glorying and boasting, is not of God, being directly contrary to the plan and design of the gospel.

Having now, I think, with great clearness, from God's word of truth, proved the doctrine of absolute, unconditional election; I proceed, in the next place, to prove, that those of guilty mankind, whom God did not thus choose to everlasting life and salvation through Christ, he determined to leave in their guilty state, and inflict upon them their deserved punishment. And upon this branch of predestination I need be but short, because it is abundantly proven already, by the proof of the former; for the one is a necessary consequence of the other. If God determined to deal with guilty mankind in such a sovereign way as has been proved, making his own righteous, sovereign pleasure the only rule of his proceedings towards them, then it necessarily follows, that such as he did not ordain to life, he did ordain to deserved death. To suppose an absolute and certain election of a part of guilty sinners to be redeemed and saved, and yet, that the rest are not reprobated or rejected, are very inconsistent notions. For, seeing all mankind were looked

upon and considered by God, in his decrees, as under a righteous sentence of condemnation to punishment for their sin; then sure, such as he did not determine to deliver out of that condemnation and ruin, were left in it, to suffer the law. To say, *that they were all elected conditionally, though the others were absolutely,* is as contrary to those scriptures that have been adduced, as to deny an absolute election altogether. For they assert election to be universally absolute, contrary to such a distinction of a two-fold election: It is a notion, especially contrary to those passages which declare the absoluteness of effectual calling in all those that are so called; and those passages which declare, that all that are saved, are saved in such a way as excludes all self-glorying and self-depending. But I proceed to offer a few other proofs from the scripture, for the confirmation of this head. And first I argue thus, those who were not given in charge by the father to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him, were left in their sins, and ordained to suffer the law for them themselves.

But those who were not certainly elected to salvation, were not given in charge by the father to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him: therefore they were left in their sins, and ordained to suffer the law for them themselves. That those, who were not certainly elected to salvation, were not given in charge by the father to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him; is plain from this, that all those, who were so given in charge to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him, shall certainly be saved by him; and were certainly and infallibly ordained to be so. This is clearly proved from the words of Christ, John vi: 38, 39; "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." These words, I think, plainly say, that all such as are not in the end actually saved by Jesus Christ, if he be faithful to his trust, were not committed to his charge to be redeemed by him, and consequently they were left under the condemnatory sentence of the law.

Another proof, that those whom God has not absolutely elected to salvation, he has left to perish, and abandoned from his saving care, you have Rom. xi: 7. where, after

the apostle has said, that 'the remnant of Israel, which God had reserved to himself, according to the election of grace, had obtained righteousness and life; he adds, And 'the rest were blinded.' Very full and express to the same purpose are those words, 1 Pet. ii: 8. 'Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.' God appointed to leave them to blindness, stumbling and disobedience; which things are always consequent upon God's leaving any to themselves.

This doctrine, of sinners' *rejection or reprobation* in the eternal purpose of God, is indeed, I acknowledge, a very awful and solemn one; especially to those who do not find in them the comfortable evidences of election; and might reasonably excite in them a deep concern about the great concern of their souls, and stir them up to take no peaceful rest, till they find in themselves the hopeful tokens of God's electing love, in a supernatural work of renewing, sanctifying grace in their souls. But then let us take care, that we do not charge God foolishly and wickedly in the case, as if he were cruel and unrighteous. What, if God was willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, upon *the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction*, and worthy of death, who can justly find fault with him? What, if he had reprobated all apostate mankind, as well as apostate angels, who could say, he had done wrong? Every mouth must have been stopped, all the world being guilty before him.

But I come to speak to the objections commonly urged from the scriptures against the forgoing doctrine, in both its branches. And here I shall first take notice of the method which those on the other side of the question put a main confidence in, for the overthrowing of this doctrine; by going about to prove a *universal redemption*; that *Christ died equally for all and every individual of mankind; for one as much as another*. This they think they can very easily prove from such places of scripture as speak of his dying 'for all men; all the world; the whole world; for every man;' and the like. But these universal expressions of scripture will not amount to sufficient proof of what they bring them for, for all so plain as they think they are for them. If such universal terms of scripture must of necessity be understood in such a large extent as they might seem to carry

in them; we shall then as easily prove many other things from scripture which no man of common sense will believe to be intended in it: For instance, as readily and plainly as they will prove that Christ laid down his life for *every* individual person of Adam's race; as plainly, I say, will I prove that every individual person of Adam's race will have praise from God at the day of judgment; from 1. Cor. iv. 5, where the apostle says, 'then shall every man have praise of God:' As plainly and fully will I prove, that after John Baptist's preaching, every individual of mankind pressed into the kingdom of God; from Luke xvi. 16; "Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." And by the same rule you may have it proved that every human creature spoke of the faith of the Christians at Rome, Rom. i. 8. "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." These few examples, instead of great numbers which might be produced, are sufficient to show that such universal terms in scripture must be often understood under very great restrictions; and quite in another sense than our opposites will allow, when they are used concerning the death of Christ. Some of those places of scripture, where such universal terms are used concerning Christ's death and the effects of it, only signify the virtue and efficacy of it, to those who partake of the benefits of it. Some others signify that his death was designed promiscuously for some of all nations, and of all ranks and conditions of men, as not confined to any one particular nation, or degree of mankind. Others again only mean that Christ is the only Saviour, that none are saved but through his death. In the first sense we are to understand, Romans v. 18. The design of that whole chapter is to show that Christ's death and satisfaction is of *sufficient* virtue for the justifying and saving of the *most guilty* sinners. For this purpose the apostle observes the efficacy of Adam's sin, and breaking the law, to the condemning of those to whom it was charged and imputed, declaring that much more is Christ's fulfilling the law effectual to the complete justification of those to whom it is imputed, notwithstanding their former condemnation. And so when he says, that "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." His meaning is, that as the offence and disobedience of Adam

prevailed to the condemning of those to whom it reached, and was imputed; even so the righteousness of Christ was sufficiently effectual to the full justification of those to whom it was imputed, from the guilt of that offence, and all others; so as to entitle them again to eternal life. So that the apostle's design is not at all to run a parallel between *Adam's* offence and *Christ's* righteousness, in the extent of their influence and effects; but to compare the one with the other, as to the efficacy of their influence, in respect to which he observes that Christ's righteousness is much superior, as it justifies to life, even after Adam's offence has condemned to death. And thus the phrase, *all men*, in both parts of the verse is to be understood with this limitation, viz. *all men on whom it came*: In the first part of the verse, *judgment came upon all men*, on whom it came, *to condemnation*; i. e., so as to condemn them: In the latter part, *the free gift came upon all men*, on whom it came, *to justification of life*; i. e. so as to justify them to life. I presume, if every man, had been in the text, instead of *all men* the *Universalists* would have thought it every whit as strong for their purpose as they now do. And you may see how that this phrase must be understood the same way, Mark viii. 25,* where it is said of the man that had been blind, to whom Jesus Christ gave sight, that *he saw every man clearly*; which cannot be understood of the extent of his sight, that he saw every man that was in the world; but of the strength and efficacy of his sight, that he saw every man, whom he did see, clearly. It is indeed true, that *by the offence of Adam judgment came upon* every individual of his posterity, except the human nature of Jesus Christ, *to condemnation*: and this verse is a clear and certain proof of it. But then I conceive it is not the universality of the term here that proves it: It is as fully proved from the next verse as from this; where it is only said that *by his disobedience many were made sinners*; because the imputation of his sin *at all*, is evidence enough that it is imputed to *all and every one* that descends from him in the ordinary way of generation; seeing his relation was the same to all, as the natural and common parent of the human race. But farther, there is this plain reason, evincing that the universal term here

* I accommodate myself here to those who understand only the English translation: The term in the original is in the plural number *all men*, as well as in Rom. v. 18. But it is equal as to the sense, which of the ways it is rendered.

must be understood in this limited sense, viz. Because if it be understood in the large, extensive sense in which the Arminians will have it, it will prove a great deal too much for them, not a *universal, conditional redemption*, which they contend for, but a *universal, absolute redemption and salvation*. It will then prove, that every individual of the human race are *actually justified* to eternal life, by the *righteousness* of Christ: and we are sure, that *whom he justified, them he also glorified*. Rom. viii: 30. Thus you see the true sense of this text, and manifest design of the whole context, destroys all foundation of an argument for universal redemption.

The proper import and design of those words 1. John ii. 2. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, is, that the death of Christ was a propitiation, or atonement, not only for people among the Jews, or for those who were then believers in those parts of the world; but also, be they more or less, in all parts and ages of the world: for he was to be God's salvation unto the ends of the earth.

When the apostle says, 1. Tim. ii. 6, that *Christ gave himself a ransom for all*; it appears from the context, that he means persons of all ranks and degrees; for he brings it in as an argument to enforce his exhortation, to *pray for kings, and all that are in authority*. The same universal term, he manifestly intends in the same sense, in the first verse, when he says, *I exhort thee therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men*. He cannot mean, sure, that they should pray for the millions of men that were dead, and gone to their own place before that time: neither can he intend that they should pray for such as the apostle John excludes from an interest in our prayers, 1 John v. 16. *There is a sin unto death; I do not say that a man shall pray for it*; that is, for such as are guilty of it; But he explains his meaning to be for men of all stations and degrees, the high as well as the low; adding, 'for kings, and all in authority.' When the apostle says, Heb. ii. 9, that *Christ tasted death for every man*; the meaning is, for every man that is saved; to signify that *none* are saved but through Christ's death, that his death is the *only purchase* of salvation for any man. In the same limited manner we must understand the same term, Col. i. 28, 'We preach Christ, warning *every man*, and teaching *every man*;' that is, warn-

ing and teaching every man to whom we have an opportunity to preach. So 1. Cor. iv. 5; *When the Lord comes to judgment, every man shall have praise of God*; that is, every man that is saved, or has been truly godly. Another place of scripture which is brought in, to serve the cause of universal redemption, is, 2 Peter, ii. 1. where the apostle speaks of some 'who should privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.' But the apostle only speaks of the Lord's having bought them, as what might have been hoped concerning them as well as others. The gospel revelation of a Saviour that died to redeem sinners, affords ground to all to whom it comes, to hope that his death might have been designed for them as well as others, though it was not intended for *all and every one* alike, seeing it does not point out the persons in particular for whom he did not intend the benefits of his death. And so, concerning these persons here, the apostle mentions it as a high aggravation of their crime, that they should *deny* that Redeemer of whom they had no reason to conclude to the contrary but that he had *bought and redeemed them*, when they had the same ground for hope this way that any others had before they had the special evidences of it in renewing grace.

Thus I have considered some of the most material passages of scripture which are advanced in favour of *universal redemption*. And, I think, any considerate person might see, from what has been said, that they come far short of answering the design they are advanced for. And any other passages of the like strain are to be understood the same way. I have already mentioned a place of scripture, John vi: 39, which proves that all those who were given to Christ to redeem, he will surely save, and finally glorify; unless it may be said he was unfaithful to his charge: for it was *the will of him that sent him, that he should lose none of them, but raise them up at the last day*; and so put the finishing stroke to their full glorification: which confirms a *particular* redemption in opposition to a *universal*. In the 10th chapter of John our Lord speaks of a *peculiar people*, which he had both among the Jews and gentiles, whom he calls his *sheep*; for *whom* he says, he *laid down his life*. And John xvii. he speaks of those *whom the Father had given him*, as distinct from the rest of mankind: For these, he says, he

prays, and not for the world, ver. 9. And ver. 19. he says, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself;' that is, it is for their sakes that I set myself apart to the office and charge of a Redeemer, and devote myself to be a sacrifice.

I shall only farther point out, as briefly as may be, some absurdities attending the doctrine of universal redemption; and so dismiss it. If GOD sent his Son to die for sinners, with an equal view and design to save them all by it, intending as much the salvation of one as another, without any difference, then it will follow, that those who are saved, are no more beholden or obliged to God than those that perish: And it was not from him that they were saved any more than others, but from themselves; and so he shall not have the glory of it; nay, he is rather beholden to them, for letting him have his end. Again, it will follow; that God in a great measure comes short of obtaining his end and design, and that in the greatest affair that ever he undertook, so far as we are acquainted: an end which he was so intent upon, that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the death, that he might obtain it. The end which he was intently set upon, was the salvation of all the human race, and yet he is greatly disappointed of it; for great numbers forever perish. Now, how can any man reasonably persuade himself, that God really proposed to himself, and intended such an end, and yet did not make it sure, and ascertain the attainment of it? Was it not easy to his power to do it? Has he not the hearts of all men in his hands? Would it have done them any injustice to have persuaded them by almighty power, and made them willing to be happy? But seeing he has not done so, it is plain that the salvation of all was not the end and design he had in view in sending his Son into the world to die. Would he have left a design he had so much at heart, upon the precarious bottom to say the best of it that any can say of the free-will of corrupted creatures, that were no way well affected towards him, but awfully disaffected? Nay farther, it will follow, that it might have so happened as that he would have entirely lost his end altogether? For, for all so seriously as he intended it, and was set upon it, yet it seems he did not make it certain, no, not as to the salvation of any one soul, but left it altogether to themselves. One would think by this, that he was not very intent upon it, for all the great pretences of some,

by this doctrine, to magnify his love and good will to men. And it may be considered, which doctrine magnifies the love of God most? That which renders the salvation of a considerable number infallibly certain, or that which leaves it altogether uncertain, as to any; leaving it entirely to the good pleasure of their depraved wills? I believe it will be found that more will be saved in that way, than would have been in this: for I think, upon this score, none at all would be saved. However, it is plain that great multitudes do finally oppose and contradict this supposed intention of God; and what hinders but all the rest might do so too, according to this universal scheme; and so not so much as one be saved after all; for all are alike opposite to the way of salvation, by nature? But you will say, perhaps, there was no danger of such a great disappointment and frustration of God's end as this; for he foreknew who would comply with the gospel, and be saved; and so knew that he would not altogether fail of his design. But this is so far from clearing the doctrine, that it introduces a new absurdity. For how can it be conceived that God could really intend and design the death of Christ, and the benefit of it, for those who he infallibly knew would never be partakers of it? Is it not an absurdity, may not I say impossibility, in the very nature of the thing? To what purpose was the death of Christ designed for them; or for what advantage? Not to save them, for that the Lord knew would never be: and every designing of an end includes in it some degree of expectation, which could not be in this case. Was it to purchase sufficient grace for them, that so they might be saved if they would? Well, but the Lord knew that they would not make the saving use of it; and why then was it intentionally purchased for them. Sure, you will not say it was to make their guilt and punishment the greater. Let the admirers of universal redemption consider a little, how they will digest and solve these things. But to proceed.

The opposers of the doctrine of absolute decrees argue farther against it, from some places of scripture, which they suppose declare a general will and desire in God of the conversion and salvation of all sinners; and how much he would be pleased with it: which they suppose is contrary to his having purposed not to give to some the grace necessary and sufficient for their conversion, but

to leave them to perish in their sins. I shall a little consider the principal passages which they advance to this purpose, and shew that they intend nothing contrary to this doctrine. One of them is, 1 Tim. ii: 4. God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. If all men here be understood for every individual man in the world, then God's willing them to be saved, cannot mean his having willed and purposed that they shall be saved; for then they all would be saved. because he can easily fulfil all his purposes, and surely will do so. For his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure, Isai. xlvi: 10. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations, Psal. xxxiii: 11. But if the words be taken in this unlimited sense, the meaning of the place must only be, that the salvation of all men, in the way of faith and holiness, would be a thing very agreeable to the approving and preceptive will of God, as he delights in holiness, and the happiness which is connected with it; and that sin, for which it is that any perish, is disagreeable and hateful to his holy nature: and yet, all this is no way inconsistent with his determining to punish sinners for their sin. But I think it is plain, from the context, that by all men here, we are to understand, men of all characters and degrees; for the words are brought in as an argument to encourage Christians to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority. And in the same sense the term all men is intended in the first verse, as I have made appear before.

Another place is, 2 Pet. iii: 9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise; but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. I think it is pretty manifest, that the persons the apostle speaks of here, are the elect of God: the persons to whom he writes these epistles, are considered under that character: in his first epistle, chap. i. 2. he calls them elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And in the first verse of this chapter we are informed that he writes this second epistle to the same, or some sort of persons: and of the same he speaks in the verse under our present consideration, joining himself, as being also an elect person with them; saying, the Lord

is long suffering to us ward; i. e. towards us, the election of his grace, not willing that any, viz. of us, should perish but that we all should come to repentance, and be called in. The apostle's design, in the words, is, to shew the reason of God's delaying to put an end to the present state of this world, and bring on the general judgment, in answer to the scoffers, that, he says, should be in the last days, saying; where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, ver. 3, 4. In answer, I say, to these atheistical scoffs, he observes that God had done as great, unlikely, and unexpected things already, as the shutting up the scene of this world in such a solemn manner, though they wilfully neglected to take notice of them. He had not only, by the word of his power, created the heavens and the earth out of nothing at first, but a long time after had destroyed the earth and its ungodly inhabitants by a flood of water: and so it was no incredible, nor unlikely thing, that he should, at last, burn it with fire at the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men; and notwithstanding it had stood so long, in much the same state, after the people of God had spoke of this, as what would surely be, he observes that a long space of time with us is but little with God, and then says, the Lord is not slack concerning his promise; as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us ward, &c. that is, the Lord's deferring the end of the world and last judgment so long, is not through forgetfulness, or careless neglect of his promise to that purpose; but the true reason of it is, that all his elect may be brought in, not being willing that any of them should perish, but that all should come to repentance, be converted and saved; and therefore he will not come to judgment at a time when there are any of them on the earth unconverted, nor until the last of the whole number is fitted for glory.

There is another scripture that is always brought in upon this head of argument, Ezek. xxxiii: 11. where the Lord declares, with the solemnity of an oath, "As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." When the Lord says, he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; the plain sense of the words is, that the death and misery of sinners is not a pleasure to him

in itself, or for its own sake, merely as it is a misery to the creature. But this does not say, but that their death and punishment may be agreeable and pleasing to him under other considerations; and it is an execution of justice, and manifestation of his own glory. If it were not so, would he inflict punishment upon any of them? Would he displease and make himself uneasy? And when he says, that it is a pleasure to him, that the wicked turn from his way, and live; the meaning is, that righteousness and holiness in his creatures, and the happiness consequent upon it, is the object of his approbation and liking, a thing in itself agreeable and pleasing to his holy nature. But this sure, is no proof that he equally and alike designed the sanctification and salvation of all sinners. If it proved any thing this way, it would prove that he designed it certainly for them all, if his power could effect it.

The words of our Lord, Matth. xxiii: 37. are often brought in upon this head, where he says of Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" If we understand the Lord Jesus to speak here of his willingness to have gathered them, with reference to divine nature, as God, the words only prove, that sinners' compliance with the gospel, and turning to holiness, is a thing in itself agreeable and pleasing to God's holy nature; holiness being the object of his love and complacence; that his dealings with that people, in the course of his ministry among them, tended in their own nature to bring them thus to their duty; and that their unbelief and impenitency was owing to the perverseness and corruption of their own wills, as the cause of it. But if we suppose him to speak of his willingness merely as man, in his human nature, then I see no inconvenience in allowing that it might signify an intense and passionate desire in him of their conversion and happiness: but surely, no such passions, or uneasy long desires, and especially for things which will never be effected, are to be ascribed to the divine nature. For my part, I cannot apprehend what sort of a will and desire for the conversation and salvation of all men, it is, which those who deny absolute predestination, suppose to be in God, any way consistent with his perfections: they suppose it includes much more than that the holiness and

happiness of his creatures is a thing in itself lovely and agreeable to him; that it is his preceptive and approving will that they should be holy; and consequently happy: which is very consistent with the doctrine they oppose, from this topic of a general will: and they cannot allow it to include so much as a real purpose that all shall be sanctified and saved; because then all would be so; which is contrary to fact: or else God's purpose would be frustrated, and he would come short of what he certainly intended should come to pass, which is highly absurd. But they seem to fancy a sort of an uneasy wishing and longing desire in God for that which notwithstanding will never be: and if this be not to make God such a one as ourselves, I know not what is: does it not argue God to be subject to the weaknesses of creatures? And not only so, but that he suffers himself to be made uneasy, and to be crossed in his desires, by that which he could easily prevent? Which is what no wise man would allow in himself: and therefore, though GOD may sometimes condescend to speak to sinners in such a language as they use to one another, when they would express the greatness and ardency of their desire for any thing; yet we are not hence to imagine that there are any such human passions and creature weaknesses in him: the design of such modes of speaking in God, is only to signify how desirable and excellent a thing it is in itself for creatures to love, to obey, and honour him; and how much it is both their interest and duty to do so: and the reason why this is expressed in such a manner, as imports weak passions in men when they speak so, is, because it is the most suitable way of dealing with such creatures as we are, best adapted to our capacity and condition; it is a method that has the most suitable tendency in itself to work upon and prevail with rational creatures, expressing best to their capacity the excellency and necessity of holiness, and the horrid, hateful nature of sin; for though it is the supernatural power of God's spirit that prevails with any sinners to be holy, yet, as a wise agent, he makes use of the most suitable and best adapted means for that purpose, dealing with men in a way suited to their rational nature, and human capacities. Thus it is we are to understand the various expostulations and entreaties of God in the scriptures.

As another topic of argument against the doctrine of God's decrees, the opposers of it seem to think that all

men have sufficient power to do that which is required as necessary to salvation, and with which salvation is certainly connected; or, at least, that they have sufficient power to ensure to themselves such supernatural power as is necessary for that purpose: and this is what is commonly called universal sufficient grace. For the support of this opinion they refer to such places of scripture, in which God commands all men where the gospel comes, to be holy as he is holy, to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, to make themselves new hearts, &c. Hence they argue that all have power some way to do these things; because, they say, it would be unjust for God to require more of men than they can perform: to this I answer, that these men seem entirely to overlook, in this way of reasoning, the ruin brought upon the human offspring, by the fall and apostacy of Adam, the covenant-head and representative of all mankind: he, indeed, until he sinned, was furnished with sufficient ability to do whatsoever GOD did, or ever should require of him; at least, had he not sinned, his ability would always have been increased equally with his obligations: there was a full proportion between his power and the law he was under. And so it would have been with all his posterity, had he fulfilled the conditions of the covenant; but as, by his transgression, they lost all right and title to that happiness, and life of communion with God, which was secured to them in the covenant, upon his obedience: so they lost God's moral image, and the power of holy obedience; and it was at God's *free sovereign pleasure* to confer happiness again, and the grace necessary to it, as he pleased: and as GOD was then under *no obligation* to afford strength answerable to the law, so neither was he *obliged* to bring down the requirements of his law to the level and capacity of the fallen ruined creature: though man, by his own default, has lost his power of obedience, that is no argument that God must lose his right and claim: the creature's sin, and wretchedness thereby, cannot dissolve his obligations of duty to God: God's law must still remain the same, as a perfect and eternal rule of righteousness, let creatures change and alter as they will. If it be asked, *for what end the law of God is set before us, and his commandments laid upon us in his word, if we have not ability to fulfil?* I answer, *for various ends:* to teach us what is our duty to God; what we ought to be aiming at,

and endeavoring after: to shew us our sins and transgressions; *for by the law is the knowledge of sin*, Rom. iii: 20. as the crookedness of a line is discovered by laying it to a straight one: to teach us our utter inability to fulfil the law, and obtain life by our obedience; (for which purpose our Saviour referred one to the *keeping of the commandments*, Matth. xix: 17.) whom he found big with the conceit that he could do much, that so we may see our necessity of getting righteousness and strength from Christ, a mediator: and thus the law is given as a school master, to bring us to Christ; it is a means whereby the Lord brings in his elect to the Redeemer by faith: and it is given as a rule of life to the renewed children of God, to direct them how they are to honour and glorify him.

If it be objected to the above account of sinners' *inability* to do what is now required of them under the dispensation of the new covenant, that *Adam* had not a power of believing in a Redeemer, or repenting and renewing his heart, as having no need of it; and the exercise of it being inconsistent with his state of innocence; and therefore we cannot be said to have lost it in him, seeing it was not given him while he stood in the character of our *representative*. To this it may be easily replied, that though he had not his power for such acts and purposes as these, in his innocent state; yet, had we, in our guilty state, that power restored which he had, we would be able to believe in the Redeemer, to repent, &c. The impossibility of his putting forth such acts, was not from the want of inherent power, but the inconsistency of them with his condition: it was inconsistent with his state of innocence, to have had any occasion for administering physic, to recover his health; yet that is no argument that he had not *sufficient ability* for it.

I would just farther refer it to the consideration of those who offer this argument against God's decrees, and yet, in the mean time, acknowledge, that *no man in this life can fulfil the law of God perfectly*, how they are consistent with themselves; for herein themselves acknowledge that *God requires more of men than they can now perform, since the fall*; and, sure, they will not own that *it is so*, and say *it is unjust too*.

For farther proof of this *universal power*, or *grace*, they urge the invitations of the gospel to believe in Christ, and its promises to such as do believe: such as Isai. xlv: 22.

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” And Rev. iii: 20. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, &c.” Such invitations, they think, infer that there is a power in man to comply with them otherwise they would be vain and needless. But this is a vain argument: for, though sinners are without strength through the darkness of their minds, and obstinacy of their wills; yet such invitations are needful, to shew them their duty, and the only way in which they can ever be happy; and to afford them a ground and warrant for believing in Jesus Christ, and resting their souls upon him for salvation: by these invitations, and promises to believing, the Holy Spirit encourages and persuades convinced souls to close with Christ, as their Saviour, and cast themselves upon his mediation and atonement, with humble joyful confidence. The spirit of God, by his power, brings a sinner to believe in Christ, in a way agreeable to his nature, as a reasonable creature; and so makes use of the offers and promises of the gospel, as the soul’s warrant for laying claim to Christ, as his Saviour, and believing in him for his salvation. Likewise, these invitations and promises are of great use for the comfort of true believers, showing that there is a sure connection between believing and salvation. When Moses tells the people of Israel; Deut. xxx. 19, “that he had set life and death before them, blessing and cursing,” and bids them choose life; the words may be easily understood in the same sense with the forementioned passages, to signify that there is a certain and inseparable connection between true holiness and eternal life, though this holiness is the effect of a supernatural divine power, exerted only *in whom the Lord pleases*: and the Lord proposes this holiness, which is connected with happiness, to sinners’ choice, to import the reasonableness and necessity of their choosing it; and that he may deal with them in a way agreeable to the nature of reasonable beings. But yet I think it is plain from the context, that the *life and death* here spoken of, was *temporal prosperity and adversity*; which life was promised to *that* people, upon their strict adherence to the outward prescriptions of the law that was given them: and it will be readily owned that they might thus choose and perform obedience without *special renewing grace*: and, in

tlis sense *righteousness* and *life* are to be frequently understood in the Old Testament.

It is farther argued, for this *universal grace*, from the parable of the *talents*, Matt. xxv. But we are not to understand by these *talents*, *universal sufficient grace*, whereby *all men* are enabled to convert themselves, *if they will*; and savingly to renew and change, *their wills*: but other gifts and bounties of divine Providence, such as natural endowments of mind, good education, health, worldly goods, outward gospel privileges, and the like; which God distributes to mankind in various measures, *as he pleases*. Those who made such improvement of their *talents*, signify the *truly godly*, who are *effectually* renewed by God's power, *according to his purpose*. The person who made no improvement, signifies *unconverted sinners* who do not *sincerely* love and honour God. The account taken of these servants at their Lord's return, and his different retributions of them according to their *past conduct*, are designed to teach us that the Lord Jesus *will surely come at last to judgment*, that we *must all appear* before his judgment seat, to give an *account for the deeds done in this life*, and that *our past behaviour here*, both in heart and outward practice will be the *rule* according to which the *sentence of judgment* will pass upon us: though the reward of happiness *to the godly*, will not be given them for *their godliness*, as the cause of it; yet it will be given to *them only*, who have been thus qualified and foreprepared by the Lord for it; and that in different degrees, according to their different degrees of care, zeal, and diligence in the ways of God, after their *conversion*. On the other hand, all the *ungodly* shall be condemned to punishment, according to the demerit of their works; and to different degrees of punishment, according to their different deserts. And thus, *the works*, the *dispositions*, and *conduct* of men in this life, will be the *rule* according to which the *final awards* will be made at the *last day to all mankind*, though not the *meritorious* or *procuring* cause of them to *all*, but *only to the wicked*. These things I take to be the very scope and design of the parable; and so the *universal men* have no service at all to their cause from it. It is mere trifling to ask, as some do, *if the servant that was punished, had made as good use of his talent as the rest did of theirs, would not have been as well accepted?* That is, whether finally impenitent sin-

ners would not have been accepted of Jesus Christ; as well as true believers, and sincerely godly persons, had they been true believers, and sincerely godly as well as they? I am free enough to answer in the *affirmative*: had they been such, it would have been a certain evidence that they had been elected to holiness and salvation as well as the others; for true justifying and sanctifying faith *is not of ourselves, it is the gift God*, given according to his purpose and grace, which was made sure to *all* believers in Christ Jesus, before the world began. But then the question does not at all touch the matter in debate, viz. Whether unrenewed sinners have had a sufficient inward grace given them to be true believers and godly persons, as those who are really such. Considering that sinners' impotency consists chiefly in their enmity, their inability in the opposition of their wills to God's will, I think it is plain that *no grace* is sufficient, but that which is *actually effectual*: their wills are not just in *equilibrio*, in an even balance between holiness and sin, as much inclined to the one side as the other, so as that they might bring their wills to a compliance with, and complacency in the ways of God, by their own reason; or by the help of some divine assistances, which they might also reject: but their wills are strongly set against the new covenant way of salvation, and the holy law of God, in its spiritual nature and extent; and therefore, *No man can come unto Christ, except the Father draw him*, John vi: 44.

Again, they argue in another method from the general calls, invitations, and offers of the gospel, reasoning after this manner: *it would, say they, be the highest instance of dissembling and deceit for God to call sinners to repent and turn from their evil ways, with such appearance of real sincerity and earnestness, if he had before infallibly decreed that a great many of them should not repent and turn* (not to communicate the grace of conversion and repentance to many, it should be.) *And what greater insincerity and illusion, say they, can well be imagined, than for God to make such a general, unlimited offer of Christ, and salvation through him, as Rev. xxii: 17. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely; when he has already purposed not to give salvation to many? How can such an open declaration agree with such a secret purpose? Would there not be a direct opposition between his outward expressions*

and inward sentiments? Which is downright falsifying and hypocrisy.

But all this plausible reasoning, on which some of the greatest patrons of the *Arminian* scheme bestow a great deal of eloquence, is grounded on a mistaken apprehension of the nature and true import of these calls and gospel offers: God's calls to sinners to *repent and turn to him, to believe in Christ, &c.* are only so many significations of what is sinners' duty, and what is agreeable to God's holy nature, pleasing and approveable in his sight: these calls do not signify what is God's *purpose* concerning men, but what is their duty to him; and that he loves holiness in his creatures, that *the righteous Lord loves righteousness*: and so, in all such calls and commands there is an entire agreement between God's words and his will signified by them: for he does indeed *will these things*, as the matter of sinners' duty, and loves them, as agreeable to his own holy law. This just view of the *many calls* of God in scripture to sinners for their repentance, and conversion to holiness, destroys *all the force* of the argument taken from them, as though they were inconsistent with God's secret will and purpose to leave *many* in their sins without *converting grace*; for they import *nothing* in their true design contrary to it. And when God condescends to use arguments and expostulations with sinners about what he requires, it is, that he may deal with them as reasonable beings, and convert his *elect* in a way agreeable to their rational nature.

As to the offers of Christ made to all where the gospel comes, and promises of salvation, through him, to all such as truly believe in him: it is most certain, that God does will and purpose to save all such as truly accept of his Son Jesus Christ, and believe in him, as he is proposed and set forth, in the gospel revelation of him; for he declares that *all such shall be saved*: but then, we are to consider this faith in Christ as the *gift of God*, according to Eph. ii: 8. and a grace of his *powerful operation* or *working*, Col. ii: 12. Eph. i: 19. 2 Thess. i: 11. bestowed *only* upon, and wrought *only* in those whom he has *chosen*, and therefore called the *faith of God's elect*, Tit. i: 1. And thus, the *promises of the gospel* run exactly parallel with the *election of grace*, and do not import any thing contrary to it. Indeed, to say that God does *not* really design to save *all* who shall believe in Christ, notwith-

standing he has declared that *he will*, were to impute the *grossest falsehood and deceit* to him; but there is no such thing in the *doctrine* which the argument is brought against. It is true, the offer of Christ, as a Saviour, is *made to all*, to be accepted and believed in, for their salvation in particular, wherever the news of the gospel salvation is sent: but then, this *offer* does not signify or import that God designed him, and the saving benefit of his death, *equally for all*; but that, inasmuch as all have *equal need* of him, and God has not revealed, or any way pointed out who they are whom he has *not chosen* to salvation through him, so as they might be known either to themselves or others, it is the great duty of *all* to accept of him with *all their hearts*, according to the declarations concerning him, in the gospel, *freely and willingly* to comply with the way of salvation through his atonement, casting a fiducial dependence upon him, *and him only*, for their eternal life; for which faith the infallible promise of salvation to all such as so receive him, is sufficient warrant and encouragement. And it was necessary that the *offer* should be thus *universal*, when it was not revealed who in particular *were elected* to salvation through him, that so the *elect* might be brought to believe in him, upon a rational ground and foundation; for they could not know that they *were chosen* to life through him, more than any others, before their believing; and therefore could not have had a ground for faith to go upon, were it not for the promise to *whosoever believes*, and the declarations that it is *every one's duty* cordially to comply, and be pleased with that way of salvation, through an atoning Mediator, and, upon the encouragement of this promise, to cast a reliance, and the whole dependence of their souls for salvation, upon him. In this manner it is that the *offers of Christ* in the gospel are *general and universal*: not importing that *he died alike for all*, or that he was *equally designed for all*, in the purpose of God; but that, seeing *none* have any reason certainly to conclude against themselves that they were *rejected* in the divine purpose; and, seeing *acceptance and eternal life*, through Christ, is promised to *all* that believe; it is the duty of *all*, with their whole hearts, to *embrace* him as he is proposed, and *believe* in him: and yet *none* will so believe in him but the *chosen of God, who are called according to his purpose*. And thus, as God is entirely consistent with himself in

the case, so are the ministers of the gospel consistent with themselves, in maintaining God's *absolute decrees*, and yet making such general offers of Christ, as a Saviour, to all that hear them, calling upon them to accept of and believe in him, using arguments with them for that purpose, and promising life and salvation, in his name, to all that truly comply with the gospel, and believe in him: and though they do not know the *elect of God* among their hearers, he does, and will apply this gospel to their hearts, so as to bring them to believe in Christ, and become *truly godly*. These considerations, if duly weighed and attended to, I think may be abundantly satisfactory in this case.

There is another argument, commonly insisted on by those on the other side of the question, taken from God's appointment of a gospel ministry, ordinances of worship and means of grace in his church, as if they were *altogether vain and useless*, on supposition of such *eternal decrees*. According to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, (say they) "it is quite needless for ministers to preach, and as needless for people to hear, or to perform any religious duty whatsoever; and the reason is, because they cannot alter the purpose of God concerning them, whatever it be, do they well or ill, they will fare as well, let them live as they list, as if they did never so well; and so they had even as good take their swing: nay, it had been much better for all the reprobate, that they had never had the privilege of the gospel; because, according to the Scripture, the condemnation and misery of those that perish, will be much aggravated by it."

This is an awful charge, indeed; and if it be just, the doctrine is certainly most insufferable; which takes off all restraints from the most profligate course of life, farther than what proceed from our temporal interest in this world; and arguments from private temporal interest do often sway more to the most inhuman crimes than moral honesty. But I hope to make it appear that the objection is *most false and groundless*. And to this purpose, let these few things be considered:

First, supposing there were no arguments for a pious godly life, to be had from our own eternal interest; yet, there are reasons of another nature, of sufficient weight and force in themselves, to induce us to it, and engage us to endeavour after it. Is not the great God, who is infi-

nately good and glorious, worthy of the greatest esteem, profoundest subjection, and highest adorations of all the rational creation? And has he not an inviolable right and claim to these things from us, as our Creator and preserver? And is not conformity to God, and to obey and honour him, the greatest honour and glory of a created being? These arguments, I know, have little weight with apostate creatures, whose understandings are darkened, and all their other faculties wholly corrupted; but that is not for want of sufficient weight in their own nature: nothing can ever dissolve God's title to the homage and obedience of his creatures.

Secondly, I would have two or three particulars considered and weighed together: first, that the *elect* are elected to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit; *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*. And this effectual calling, and sanctifying grace, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is the certain fruit and evidence of eternal election; whereby those who are the partakers of this grace, may, and frequently do, come to a comfortable satisfaction as to their election of God.

Again, you are to observe, that the *elect* themselves, before their conversion and effectual calling, have no notices or evidences at all of their being elected, more than others, which must needs be a very uneasy and distressing condition, when the spirit of God touches the conscience. And then, in the next place, let it be considered, that God has appointed the preaching of the gospel, and other religious exercises, such as reading the holy scriptures, and other good books, prayer, &c. to be the means whereby he ordinarily converts and sanctifies his *elect*, and affords them the comfortable tokens of his electing love. He has appointed these ordinances and means as the ordinary channels wherein to communicate his special grace to those whom he has chosen. Now if these things be duly adverted to; I think, it will be clear, that there is use, and great use too, for the preaching of the gospel, and other exercises of religion, in a consistency with God's *absolute decrees*: and that there are sufficient reasons to engage persons to a very careful observance of them, and of all the commands of God; for the ordinances of God are the means which he sees fit in his wisdom to make use of for the conversion and sanctification of his elect, which work of grace is the only evidence of our belonging to God, as

his elect people: and therefore one can hardly think, that any, but such as are stupidly unconcerned about their souls' everlasting states, could reason in earnest in the strain of the objection I am now upon: surely, one that is any way duly thoughtful about a matter of such vast moment his eternal well being, would readily think with himself to this purpose; 'Oh! what would I not give to have some comfortable, distinguishing evidences of being chosen of God, and appointed to life: well, his ways and ordinances are the means he uses for this purpose; the channels in which he is wont to communicate his special grace to those whom he designs to save; I must wait upon and look to him in that way of hope, and keep at the pool where he uses to come and heal diseased souls; it may be he will some time meet with me, in his own way, which he has appointed for visiting his chosen, and fulfil in me all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, and cause me to rejoice in his love. These ways of religion are not only the ways in which there is only reasonable ground of hope to meet with such blessings, but they are the commands and institutions of God, recommended with his awful authority; and therefore, to disregard and neglect them, will be to disobey and contemn God still the more, and also will expose me to a more awful punishment.' Consider now, if this be not a just and right way of reasoning in the case: nay, I am convinced, that the *Calvinist* doctrine, rightly understood, and really believed, will make people much more careful, serious, and diligent observers of the ways of God, than the contrary doctrine will; for it tends much more to bring them to a solemn, solicitous concern of heart about their eternal state, and consequently to make them more earnest in all the most hopeful, probable ways of meeting with satisfaction about it.

Thirdly, Though it is true, that such as are rejected in the purpose of God, will never be converted in the use of all the means of grace; yet, seeing they do not know the secret purpose of God concerning them, but have the same reason to entertain hopes that they may be chosen to life, that any other unconverted persons have, it would be a high and provoking contempt of God for them, to neglect the ordinances which he has appointed as means for the communicating special grace and sweet consolation to his elect; and which he, therefore, by his sovereign au-

thority, requires all, who have the opportunity, to attend upon: And they shall find it, if guilty of it, brought into the account against them, at the great day, when *every man shall be judged according to his works*, and they shall receive, proportionably, the *greater punishment*.

Fourthly, As to the *elect converted*, their hearts are so renewed, as to *love God above all*, and to make obedience to his will their hearty choice: believing in Jesus Christ, his love is shed abroad in their hearts, and sweetly constrains them to serve and honour him to whom they are under such endearing engagements. The consideration of God's having elected them to eternal glory, when he might justly have rejected them as well as others; the hope and prospect of that eternal glory with him, and the consideration of his having sent his Son to answer the law for them, and suffer in their room, that they might be delivered from deserved misery, and be made happy in the enjoyment of himself forever; their apprehensions of his glory and infinite excellence in himself, and his right in and over them as his creatures: all these things are powerful arguments with them, to love and praise God; it is their desire and delight to glorify and honour him. Moreover, the Lord Jesus takes them for his peculiar charge; it is a part of his office, as Mediator, to bring them safe to glory through all dangers; accordingly, his Holy Spirit dwells in them, as a sanctifier and comforter: thus they are engaged to God, in the way of holiness, by the most inviolable cords and loving bands: so that the doctrine of *absolute election* is far from destroying holiness of life: it is a strong excitement to it, in all the renewed children of God who love him, when they are enabled to see the hopeful evidence of their own election. And therefore, such as say (as some, no less wickedly than foolishly, do) that "if they were persuaded of the truth of the doctrine of predestination, they would never be at any pains or care to serve God more;" had just as good say plainly, they have no love to God, and they are entire strangers to the nature of true godliness.

Fifthly, Consider the method of reasoning in the objection, is such as you would not allow to be just in other cases of the like nature. Can you think it would have been just reasoning in king Hezekiah, to say that, "because the Lord had ordained that he should live fifteen years longer; (2 Kings, xx. 6.) he had no more need of either food or

physic?" The prophet Isaiah was of another mind, when he ordered *a lump of figs to be laid to the boil*, ver. 7. This shews us that God brings about his purposes in the use of suitable means, and that it is therefore necessary for us to observe them. Was ever any thing more absolutely and positively fixed in the purpose of God, than the time and manner of Christ's death? John vii. 30, and viii. 20, and xii, 33. Was he therefore unwise for using any means for his preservation from the hands of his enemies? of which we have frequent instances, John viii. 59, Luke iv. 29 30, John xi. 53, 54. Was Saint Paul so inconsistent with himself when, though God had told him that both he and all that were in the ship with him, should be saved through all the hazards of their voyage; yet, when the ship-men were about to go off in the boat and leave the rest in the distress, he said unto them, *except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved?* Acts xxvii. In the like manner it may be as truly and reasonably said, that *except the elect be converted and sanctified, they cannot be saved from hell*; because of the certain connection God has made between the means and the end. And none have any reason to expect *converting grace* while they profanely neglect the *means of grace*.

As to the latter clause of the objection, that "the non-elect who have had the opportunity of the gospel, will be more miserable than if they had not:" I answer, it is very likely it will be so, with the most of them: but then I think, if they improved the gospel, as they might do, though they would not be converted and saved by it, yet they would not be the more, but perhaps the less miserable for it. If it be enquired, *for what end the gospel is sent to such as God has not proposed to save?* I answer, it is chiefly for *the elect's sake* that are among them; that thereby they may be brought in to Christ, and prepared for the heavenly glory.

I shall now conclude the answer to the whole objection with a *general remark* or two. Seeing the doctrine in itself does not take away our obligations to a religious life, but affords sufficient motives and arguments for it, then it is no argument against the truth of the doctrine, though some ungodly men should abuse it to liberty to sin: other doctrines of the gospel are liable to the same abuse, as well as this. Thus *St. Paul* observes, that some might be ready to infer from the gospel doctrine of *justification*,

as he laid it down, that they might *continue in sin, that grace might abound*, Rom. vi. 1. That some would be ready to object against him, that he made *Christ the minister of sin*, i. e. one that gave liberty and encouragement to sin, Gal. ii. 17: and that some did actually affirm that he said *Let us do evil that good may come*, Rom. iii. 8. Again, the Lord Jesus, who came to *destroy the works of the devil*, and purchase to himself a *peculiar people, zealous of good works*, will have this end; though some men of corrupt minds should abuse this truth, to the awful aggravation of their guilt in the day of his appearing. And I think we have little encouragement to go to the Arminian scheme for the advancement of true practical religion, if we consider what advancement this way it has produced since it came in fashion.

What is farther brought as an objection, by some, I think is hardly worth taking notice of, viz. that "some will be apt to take occasion, from the doctrine of *predestination*, to live in a slothful negligence and security, from a presumption that they are elected, and so cannot miss of salvation: and others will be apt to fall into despair, from a fearful apprehension that they are not elected." As I hinted already, we are to *distinguish* between the *abuse* unreasonably made of a doctrine, and its *natural tendency* in itself: and what is there in this doctrine that leads to either of these *wide extremes*? How can it lead any to a *groundless presumption*, and *slothful negligence*; when, according to it, none have reason to persuade themselves *they are elected*, until they are renewed and sanctified; and then they cannot be careless about the honour and obedience due to God? *How shall they that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Rom. vi. 2. All the gospel arguments to a life of holiness, and this, of their election, among the rest, do then effectually engage their hearts to it. Indeed, if they knew their election before their conversion, before they believed in Christ, and loved God, no doubt they would abuse it to sloth and licentiousness, till God changed their hearts: but they have no sure evidence of their election till they are brought to a better disposition. And how can it bring any to *desperation*, when they *cannot* know that they are *not elected*? For persons to conclude positively that *they are appointed to destruction*, is to conclude without reason, and a pretending to know the unrevealed secrets of God's breast.

Some think the words of the Lord Jesus, Luke xix. 42, are contrary to this doctrine; when he says of *Jerusalem*, *If thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Which words, they suppose, import, that the inhabitants of that city had, before that time, had such inward assistance from God as put it in their power to convert themselves; but which were then forever withdrawn from them, for their abuse of them, so that their case was then beyond all hope. And in this same sense they suppose that *all men have a day of grace*, in some part of their life, or, rather as they choose to term it, *a day of visitation.* But this opinion is without any foundation in the text: how can the words signify that their day there spoken of, was a time in which they had sufficient inward grace; when they clearly imply that they did not so much as know the things that belonged to their peace in that day? The true import of our Lord's words is, that they had had, in that day of his public ministry among them, sufficient outward means of conviction that he was the true *Messiah*; sufficient to prevail with them, as rational creatures to acknowledge and own him as such; notwithstanding of which they rejected and persecuted him, and would in a little time put him to death; for which they should, before long, be punished with utter ruin, both of their city and nation, as it follows in the next words. And so the words also signify, that there was less probability and reasonable hope of their being converted to God, after all such means had been so long quite lost upon them, than there was before, according to God's ordinary way of working.

And now I have gone through all the contrary arguments and objections, of any consequence, that I know of; and, upon the whole, must desire the careful reader, seriously to look back, and consider, if the doctrine of *absolute predestination*, as it has been stated and represented, be not entirely agreeable to reason, clearly founded on scripture, and perfectly consistent with every part of it, and, consequently, a most certain truth of God. Let us not be wilfully resolved against admitting reasonable evidence, but *quit ourselves like men*, and use our understanding, with humble application to God, on whom all creatures are dependent, for a right judgment and a sound mind. Do not say, you will not believe it, just because you do not like it: That is both the shame and crime of a

reasonable being, and the greatest folly in the world; for if it be a truth, it will be so, whether you like it and believe it, or not. And let us also consider, what is the proper use, and native tendency, of the doctrine: and so, let us humbly lie low, as guilty criminals, before the foot-stool of God's sovereignty, acknowledging his right to *dispose of us*, for life or death, *as he pleases*. Let us not be stupidly easy in our minds, without the experience of supernatural, sanctifying grace in our hearts, the only evidence of our election, and mean of solid comfort, *without which no man shall see the Lord*. Let us seek and long for it, in all the ways of God's commands and ordinances, where it is most likely to be found; and not treasure up greater loads of wrath to ourselves, against the day of wrath, by disobedience to the great lawgiver's authority. Let such of us as God has given the tokens of his special love unto, in our sanctification, give the *glory and praise to him alone*: and still endeavour to live answerable to the obligations of such wonderful, distinguishing love and grace. Let us give up all confidence of our own ability, and dependence on our own righteousness and good doings, to entitle us to happiness; casting ourselves only on the mediation and atonement of the Son of God, as he is revealed and proposed in the gospel; seeking for that living faith in him that brings joy and peace to the soul, that works by love, and the freest obedience. Such as these are the things which this doctrine naturally leads to; and so, it agrees to the great design of God in the *new covenant*, the illustration of the greatest glory of his *free grace*, in the salvation of guilty sinners: whereas the contrary scheme defaces and sinks it down: but God will have the glory, and it is fit he should: the whole glory, from first to last, he has secured to himself. As he laid the foundation of sinners' salvation, in pure, free, and rich grace, so, at the last day, *he will bring forth the head-stone thereof with shouting, crying, grace, grace unto it*. Zech. iv. 7.

ADVERTISEMENT.



It may be proper to acquaint the reader with the reasons of the composure and publication of the following letter: for which purpose I must apprise him that there is a book published at Boston, by the ingenious Mr. Prince, jun. under the title of the *Christian History*, containing accounts of the revival and propagation of religion (of late) in Great Britain and America: which exhibits to us a large number of very satisfactory and joyful accounts, chiefly from the provinces of New-England, and the kingdom of Scotland. This History is first published in weekly papers, of the materials come to hand, and then all the papers of the year are bound up in one volume at the year's end. The first year's volume was completed in March last; and the young gentleman expects to carry on the History for at least one year more. His reverend father, one of the reverend ministers of Boston, was pleased to direct a letter to me, desiring me to send him as cautious and exact an account as might be, of the happy revival of religion in my congregation, whereof he had got some information, to be made public along with other relations of that kind in the abovesaid *Christian History*. This motion was acceptable enough to me, as I am convinced it is our duty, in the most open manner, to declare and bear testimony unto the work of God's grace among us at this day, for the honour of his name, and good of his church, both in the present and future generations: *according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What has GOD wrought!* Numb. xxiii. 23. The *Christian History* is not like to be so common in people's hands in these parts as I could heartily wish it; and that is the reason of my publishing this copy of my letter to Mr. Prince singly by itself here: that so people in this country may more generally have the use of this account of the work of God's grace and power in the land than otherwise they would have. And in the meantime I hope this will not make them any thing the less, but abundantly the more desirous to have the use of the *Christian History*, whereby they may see the astonishing spread and progress of the same divine work in other parts of the work.

May the Lord bless this relation of the work of his grace to the reviving of those who have been the subjects of it; to the removing of the sinful and very dangerous prejudices of many others; and, in a word, to the solemn conviction and saving conversion of many souls.

S. B.

REVEREND SIR,

I DO most gladly comply with your desire in sending you some account of the glorious appearances of God in a way of special grace for us in this congregation, and other parts of this country; and am of the same judgment with you and many other pious and judicious people, that the collecting and publishing of such accounts may greatly tend to the glory of our Redeemer, and the increase of his triumphs. I much rejoice in the publication of such a collection in the *Christian History*, so far as it is already carried on: I think it may serve to many excellent purposes, and be a happy mean of advancing the dear interest of our glorious Redeemer's kingdom, both in the present age and the ages to come. And I cannot but look upon myself as called of God in duty, being thus invited to it by you, Rev. Sir, to put a hand, among many others of my reverend fathers and brethren on both sides the Atlantic, to the carrying on of the design of the said History, containing accounts of the revival and propagation of religion in this remarkable day of grace.

I cannot, indeed, give near so full and particular a relation of the revival of religion here as I might have done; had I had such a thing in view at the time when God was most eminently carrying on his work among us: I entirely neglected then to note down any particulars in writing, for which I have been often very sorry since; so that this account must be very imperfect to what it might otherwise have been.

That it may the more clearly appear that the Lord has indeed carried on a work of true real religion among us of late years, I conceive it will be useful to give a brief general view of the state of religion in these parts before this remarkable season. I doubt not then, but there were still some sincerely religious people up and down; and there were, I believe, a considerable number in the several congregations pretty exact, according to their education, in the observance of the external forms of religion, not only as to attendance upon public ordinances on the Sabbaths,

but also as to the practice of family worship, and perhaps secret prayer too; but, with these things the most part seemed, to all appearance, to rest contented; and to satisfy their consciences just with a dead formality in religion. If they performed these duties pretty punctually in their seasons, and, as they thought, with a good meaning, out of conscience, and not just to obtain a name for religion among men, then they were ready to conclude that they were truly and sincerely religious. A very lamentable ignorance of the main essentials of true practical religion, and the doctrines nearly relating thereunto, very generally prevailed. The nature and necessity of the *new birth* was but little known or thought of, the necessity of a conviction of sin and misery, by the Holy Spirit's opening and applying the law to the conscience, in order to a saving closure with Christ, was hardly known at all to the most. It was thought, that if there was any need of a heart-distressing sight of the soul's danger, and fear of divine wrath, it was only needful for the grosser sort of sinners; and for any others to be deeply exercised this way, (as there might sometimes be some rare instances observable) this was generally looked upon to be a great evil and temptation that had befallen those persons. The common names for such soul-concern were, *melancholy*, *trouble of mind* or *despair*. These terms were in common, so far as I have been acquainted, indifferently used as synonymous; and *trouble of mind* was looked upon as a great evil, which all persons that made any sober profession and practice of religion, ought carefully to avoid.— There was scarcely any suspicion at all, in general, of any danger of depending upon self-righteousness, and not upon the righteousness of *Christ* alone for salvation. *Papists* and *Quakers* would be readily acknowledged guilty of this crime, but hardly any professed *Presbyterian*. The necessity of being first in *Christ* by a vital union, and in a justified state, before our religious services can be well pleasing and acceptable to God, was very little understood or thought of; but the common notion seemed to be, that if people were aiming to be in the way of duty as well as they could, as they imagined, there was no reason to be much afraid.

According to these principles, and this ignorance of some of the most soul concerning truths of the gospel, people were very generally through the land careless at

heart, and stupidly indifferent about the great concerns of eternity. There was very little appearance of any hearty engagedness in religion: and, indeed the wise, for the most part, were in a great degree asleep with the foolish. 'Twas sad to see with what a careless behaviour the public ordinances were attended, and how people were given to unsuitable wordly discourse on the Lord's holy day: In public companies, especially at weddings, a vain and frothy lightness was apparent in the deportment of many professors; and in some places very extravagant follies, as horse running, fiddling and dancing, pretty much obtained on those occasions.

Thus religion lay as it were dying, and ready to expire its last breath of life in this part of the visible church: and it was in the spring *Anno Domini* 1740, when the God of salvation was pleased to visit us with the blessed effusions of his Holy Spirit in an eminent manner. The first very open and public appearance of this gracious visitation in these parts, was in the congregation which God has committed to my charge. The congregation has not been erected above fourteen or fifteen years from this time: the place is a new settlement, generally settled with people from *Ireland*, (as all our congregations in *Pennsylvania*, except two or three, chiefly are made up of people from that kingdom.) I am the first minister they have ever had settled in the place. Having been regularly liberated from my former charge in *East-Jersey*, above an hundred miles north-eastward from hence; (the Rev. Presbytery of *New-Brunswick*, of which I had the comfort of being a member, judging it to be my duty, for sundry reasons, to remove from thence) at the earnest invitation of the people here, I came to them in the beginning of November, 1739, accepted of a call from them that winter, and was formally installed and settled amongst them as their minister, in April following, There were some hopefully pious people here at my first coming, which was a great encouragement and comfort to me. I had some view and sense of the deplorable condition of the land in general; and accordingly the scope of my preaching through that first winter after I came here, was mainly calculated for persons in a natural unregenerate estate. I endeavoured, as the Lord enabled me, to open up and prove from his word, the truths which I judged most necessary for such as were in that state, to know

and believe, in order to their conviction and conversion. I endeavoured to deal searchingly and solemnly with them; and, through the concurring blessing of God, I had knowledge of four or five brought under deep convictions that winter. In the beginning of March I took a journey into *East-Jersey*, and was abroad for two or three Sabbaths. A neighbouring minister, who seemed to be earnest for the awakening and conversion of secure sinners, and whom I had obtained to preach a Sabbath to my people in my absence, preached to them, I think, on the first Sabbath after I left home. His subject was the dangerous and awful case of such as continue unregenerate and unfruitful under the means of grace. The text was, *Luke xiii. 7. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none, cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* Under that sermon there was a visible appearance of much soul-concern among the hearers, so that some burst out with an audible noise into bitter crying; (a thing not known in those parts before.) After I had come home, there came a young man to my house under deep trouble about the state of his soul, whom I had looked upon as a pretty light, merry sort of a youth: he told me, that he was not any thing concerned about himself in the time of hearing the abovementioned sermon, nor afterwards, till the next day that he went to his labour, which was grubbing, in order to clear some new ground: the first grub he set about was a pretty large one, with a high top, and when he had cut the roots, as it fell down, those words came instantly to his remembrance, and as a spear to his heart, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? So, thought he, must I be cut down by the justice of God, for the burning of hell, unless I get into another state than I am now in.* He thus came into very great and abiding distress, which, to all appearance, has had a happy issue: his conversation being to this day as becomes the gospel of Christ.

The news of this very public appearance of deep soul concern among my people, met me an hundred miles from home: I was very joyful to hear of it, in hopes that God was about to carry on an extensive work of converting grace among them; and the first sermon I preached after my return to them was from *Matthew, vi. 33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.* After

opening up and explaining the parts of the text, when in the improvement, I came to press the injunction in the text, upon the unconverted and ungodly, and offered this as one reason, among others, why they should now henceforth first of all *seek the kingdom and righteousness of God*, viz. that they had neglected too, too long to do so already. This consideration seemed to come and cut like a sword upon several in the congregation, so that while I was speaking upon it, they could no longer contain, but burst out in the most bitter mourning. I desired them, as much as possible, to restrain themselves from making a noise that would hinder themselves or others from hearing what was spoken: and often afterwards I had occasion to repeat the same counsel. I still advised people to endeavour to moderate and bound their passions, but not so as to resist or stifle their convictions. The number of the awakened increased very fast, frequently under sermons there were some newly convicted, and brought into deep distress of soul about their perishing estate. Our sabbath assemblies soon became vastly large: many people from almost all parts around inclining very much to come where there was such appearance of the divine power and presence. I think there was scarcely a sermon or lecture preached here through that whole summer, but there was manifest evidences of impressions on the hearers; and many times the impressions were very great and general: several would be overcome and fainting; others deeply sobbing, hardly able to contain, others crying in a most dolorous manner, many others more silently weeping; and a solemn concern appearing in the countenance of many others. And sometimes the soul exercises of some, though comparatively but very few, would so far affect their bodies, as to occasion some strange, unusual bodily motions. I had opportunities of speaking particularly with a great many of those who afforded such outward tokens of inward soul concern in the time of public worship and hearing of the word; indeed many came to me of themselves in their distress for private instruction and counsel; and I found, so far as I can remember, that, with by far the greater part, their apparent concern in public was not just a transient qualm of conscience, or merely a floating commotion of the affections; but a rational fixed conviction of their dangerous perishing estate. They could generally

offer, as a convictive evidence of their being in an unconverted miserable estate, that they were utter strangers to those dispositions, exercises and experiences of soul in religion, which they heard laid down from God's word as the inseparable characters of the truly regenerate people of God; even such as before had something of the form of religion; and I think the greater number were of this sort, and several had been pretty exact and punctual in the performance of outward duties. They saw that they had been contenting themselves with the form, without the life and power of Godliness; and that they had been taking peace to their consciences from, and depending upon, their own righteousness, and not the righteousness of *Jesus Christ*. In a word, they saw that true practical religion was quite another thing than they had conceived it to be, or had any true experience of. There were likewise many up and down the land brought under deep distressing convictions that summer, who had lived very loose lives, regardless of the very externals of religion. In this congregation I believe there were very few that were not stirred up to some solemn thoughtfulness and concern more than usual about their souls. The general carriage and behaviour of people was soon very visibly altered. Those awakened were much given to reading in the holy scriptures and other good books. Excellent books that had lain by much neglected, were then much perused, and lent from one to another; and it was a peculiar satisfaction to people to find how exactly the doctrines they heard daily preached, harmonize with the doctrines maintained and taught by great and godly men in other parts and former times. The subjects of discourse almost always, when any of them were together, were the matters of religion and great concerns of their souls. All unsuitable, worldly, vain discourse on the Lord's day seemed to be laid aside among them: indeed, for any thing that appeared, there seemed to be an almost universal reformation in this respect in our public assemblies on the Lord's day. There was an earnest desire in people after opportunities for public worship and hearing the word. I appointed in the spring to preach every Friday through the summer when I was at home, and those meetings were well attended, and at several of them the power of the Lord was remarkably with us. The main scope of my preaching through that summer, was, laying

open the deplorable state of man by nature since the fall, our ruined, exposed case by the breach of the first covenant, and the awful condition of such as were not in *Christ*, giving the marks and characters of such as were in that condition: and moreover, laying open the way of recovery in the new covenant, through a Mediator, with the nature and necessity of faith in *Christ*, the Mediator, &c. I laboured much on the last mentioned heads, that people might have right apprehensions of the gospel method of life and salvation. I treated much on the way of a sinner's closing with *Christ* by faith, and obtaining a right peace to an awakened wounded conscience; shewing, that persons were not to take peace to themselves on account of their repentings, sorrows, prayers, and reformations, nor to make these things the ground of their adventuring themselves upon *Christ* and his righteousness, and of their expectations of life by him: and, that neither were they to obtain or seek peace in extraordinary ways, by visions, dreams, or immediate inspirations; but by an understanding view and believing persuasion of the way of life, as revealed in the gospel, through the suretyship, obedience, and sufferings of *Jesus Christ*, with a view of the suitableness and sufficiency of that mediatory righteousness of *Christ* for the justification and life of law-condemned sinners; and thereupon freely accepting him for their Saviour, heartily consenting to, and being well pleased with, that way of salvation; and venturing their all upon his mediation, from the warrant and encouragement afforded of God thereunto in his word, by his free offer, authoritative command, and sure promise to those that so believe. I endeavoured to shew the fruits and evidences of a true faith, &c.

In some time many of the convinced and distressed afforded very hopeful, satisfying evidence that the Lord had brought them to a true closure with *Jesus Christ*, and that their distresses and fears had been in a great measure removed in a right gospel-way by believing in the Son of God; several of them had very remarkable and sweet deliverances this way. It was very agreeable to hear their accounts, how that, when they were in the deepest perplexity and darkness, distress and difficulty, seeking God as poor condemned hell-deserving sinners, the scene of the recovering grace, through a Redeemer, has been opened to their understandings, with a surprising beauty and glory, so that they were enabled to believe in *Christ* with

joy unspeakable and full of glory. It appeared that most generally the Holy Spirit improved, for this purpose, and made use of some one particular passage or another of the holy scripture that came to their remembrance in their distress, some gospel-offer or promise, or some declaration of God directly referring to the recovery and salvation of undone sinners, by the new covenant: but with some it was otherwise, they had not any one particular place of scripture more than another in their view at the time. Those who met with such remarkable relief, as their account of it was rational and scriptural, so they appeared to have had at the time the attendants and fruits of a true faith, particularly humility, love, and an affectionate regard to the will and honour of God. Much of their exercise was in self-abasing and self-loathing, and admiring the astonishing condescension and grace of God towards such vile and despicable creatures, that had been so full of enmity and disaffection to him: then they freely and sweetly, with all their hearts, chose the ways of his commandments; their inflamed desire was to live to him forever, according to his will, and to the glory of his name. There were others that had not had such remarkable relief and comfort, who yet I could not but think were savingly renewed, and brought truly to accept of, and rest upon, Jesus Christ, though not with such a degree of liveliness and liberty, strength and joy; and some of these continued, for a considerable time after, for the most part under a very distressing suspicion and jealousy of their case. I was all along very cautious of expressing to people my judgment of the goodness of their states, excepting where I had pretty clear evidences from them, of their being savingly changed, and yet they continued in deep distress, casting off all their evidences: sometimes in such cases I have thought it needful to use greater freedom that way than ordinary; but otherwise I judged that it could be of little use, and might readily be hurtful.

Beside these above spoke of, whose experience of a work of grace was in a good degree clear and satisfying, there were some others, (though but very few in this congregation that I know of) who, having very little knowledge or capacity, had a very obscure and improper way of representing their case. In relating how they had been exercised, they would chiefly speak of such things

as were only the effects of their souls' exercise upon their bodies from time to time, and some things that were just imaginary, which obliged me to be at much pains in my enquiries before I could get any just ideas of their case. I would ask them, what were the thoughts, the views, and apprehensions of their minds, and exercise of their affections at such times when they felt, perhaps, a quivering overcome them, as they had been saying, or a faintness, thought they saw their hearts full of some nauseous filthiness, or when they felt a heavy weight and load at their hearts, or felt the weight again taken off, and a pleasant warmth rising from their hearts, as they would probably express themselves, which might be the occasion or causes of these things they spoke of? and then, when with some difficulty I could get them to understand me, some of them would give a pretty rational account of solemn spiritual exercises. And upon a thorough, careful examination this way, I could not but conceive good hopes of some such persons.

But there were, moreover, several others, who seemed to think concerning themselves that they were under some good work, of whom yet I could have no reasonable ground to think that they were under any hopeful work of the Spirit of God. As near as I could judge of their case from all my acquaintance and conversation with them, it was much to this purpose: they believed there was a good work going on, that people were convinced, and brought into a converted state, and they desired to be converted too; they saw others weeping and fainting, and heard people mourning and lamenting, and they thought if they could be like those it would be very hopeful with them: hence they endeavoured just to get themselves affected by sermons, and if they could come to weeping, or get their passions so raised as to incline them to vent themselves by cries, now they hoped they were got under convictions, and were in a very hopeful way; and afterwards they would speak of their being in trouble, and aim at complaining of themselves, but seemed as if they knew not well how to do it, nor what to say against themselves, and then they would be looking and expecting to get some texts of scripture applied to them for their comfort; and when any scripture text, which they thought was suitable for that purpose, came to their minds, they were in hopes it was brought to them by the

Spirit of God, that they might take comfort from it. And thus much in such a way as this some appeared to be pleasing themselves just with an imaginary conversion of their own making. I endeavoured to correct and guard against all such mistakes, so far as I discovered them in the course of my ministry; and to open up the nature of a true conviction by the Spirit of God, and of a saving conversion.

Thus have I given a very brief account of the state and progress of religion here, through that first summer after the remarkable revival of it among us. Towards the end of that summer there seemed to be a stop put to the further progress of the work, as to the conviction and awakening of sinners; and ever since there have been very few instances of persons convinced. It remains then, that I speak something of the abiding effects and after-fruits of those awakenings, and other religious exercises which people were under during the abovementioned period. Such as were only under some slight impressions, and superficial awakenings, seem in general to have lost them all again, without any abiding hopeful alteration upon them: they seem to have fallen back again into their former carelessness and stupidity: and some that were under pretty great awakenings, and considerable deep convictions of their miserable estate, seem also to have got peace again to their consciences, without getting it by a true faith in the Lord Jesus, affording no satisfying evidence of their being savingly renewed: but, through the infinite, rich grace of God, (and blessed be his glorious name!) there is a considerable number who afford all the evidence that can reasonably be expected and required for our satisfaction in the case of their having been the subjects of a thorough saving change; except in some singular instances of behaviour, (alas for them!) which proceed from, and show the sad remains of original corruption even in the regenerate children of God while in this imperfect state. Their walk is habitually tender and conscientious; their carriage towards their neighbour just and kind: and they appear to have an agreeable peculiar love one for another, and for all in whom appears the image of God. Their discourses of religion, their engagedness and dispositions of soul in the practice of the immediate duties and ordinances of religion, all appear quite otherwise than formerly. Indeed, the liveliness of

their affections in the ways of religion is much abated in general, and they are in some measure humbly sensible of this, and grieved for it, and are carefully endeavouring still to live unto God, much grieved with their imperfections, and the plagues they find in their own hearts; and frequently they meet with some delightful enlivening of soul; and particularly our sacramental solemnities for communicating in the Lord's supper, have generally been very blessed seasons of enlivening and enlargement to the people of God. There is a very evident and great increase of Christian knowledge with many of them.— We enjoy in this congregation the happiness of a great degree of harmony and concord: scarcely any have appeared to open opposition and bitterness against the work of God among us, and elsewhere up and down the land, though there are pretty many such in several other places through the country. Some, indeed, in the congregation, but very few, have separated from us, and joined with the ministers who have unhappily opposed this blessed work.

It would have been a great advantage to this account had I been careful in time to have written down the experiences of particular persons; but this I neglected in the proper season: however, I have more lately noted down an account of some of the soul-exercises and experiences of one person, which, I think, may be proper to make public on this occasion. The person is a single young woman, but I judge it proper to conceal her name, because she is yet living. I was very careful to be exact in the affair, both in my conversing with her, and writing the account she gave of herself, immediately after; and though I do not pretend to give her very words for the most part, yet I am well satisfied I do not misrepresent what she related. The account then is thus. She was first brought to some solemn thoughtfulness and concern about her soul's case, by seeing others so much concerned about their souls.

When she saw people in deep distress about their souls' states, she thought with herself how unconcerned she was about her own. And though she thought that she had not been very guilty of great sins, yet she feared that she was too little concerned about her eternal well-being; and then the sermons she heard made her still uneasy about her case, so that she would go home on

the Sabbath evenings pretty much troubled and cast down, which concern used to abide with her for a few days after, but still towards the end of the week she would become pretty easy, and then by hearing the word on the Sabbaths, her uneasiness was always renewed for a few days again. And thus it fared with her, till one day, as she was hearing a sermon preached from Heb. iii. 15. *To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* The minister, in the sermon, spoke to this effect, 'How many of you have been hearing the gospel for a long time, and yet your hearts remain always hard, without being made better by it: the gospel is the voice of God, but you have heard it only as the voice of man, and not the voice of God, and so have not been benefited by it.' These words came with power to her heart: she saw that this was her very case indeed, and she had an awful sense of the sin of her misimprovement of the gospel, of her stupidity, hardness, and unprofitableness under the hearing of the word of God; she saw that she was hereby exposed to the sin-punishing justice of God, and so was filled with very great fear and terror; but she said there was no other sin at that time applied to her conscience; neither did she see herself as altogether without *Christ*. This deep concern on the forementioned account stuck pretty close by her afterward. There was a society of private Christians to meet in the neighbourhood some day after in the same week, for reading, prayer, and religious conference: she had not been at a society of that kind before, but she longed very much for the time of their meeting, that she might go there; and while she was there, she got an awful view of her sin and corruption, and saw that she was without *Christ* and without grace; and her exercise and distress of soul was such, that it made her for a while both deaf and blind; but she said she had the ordinary use of her understanding, and begged that *Christ* might not leave her to perish; for she saw that she was undone without him. After this she lived in bitterness of soul; and at another time she had such a view of her sinfulness, of the holiness and justice of God, and the danger she was in of eternal misery, as filled her with extreme anguish; so that had it not been that she was supported by an apprehension of God's all-sufficiency, she told me she was persuaded she would have fallen immediately into despair.

She continued for some weeks in great distress of spirit, seeking and pleading for mercy without any comfort, until one Sabbath evening, in a house where she was lodged during the time of a sacramental solemnity, while the family were singing the lxxxivth psalm, her soul conceived strong hopes of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, and she had such apprehensions of the happiness of the heavenly state, that her heart was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory: she sung with such elevation of soul as if she had sung out of herself, as she expressed it; she thought at the time it was as if the Lord had put by the veil, and showed her the open glory of heaven. She had very enlarged views of the sufficiency of Christ to save. She was clearly persuaded, to the fullest satisfaction, that there was merit enough in him to answer for the sins of the most guilty sinner, and she saw that God could well be reconciled to all elect sinners in his Son, which was a most ravishing delightful scene of contemplation to her. But while she was in this frame, after some time, she thought with herself, that notwithstanding all this, yet she could not, with the full assurance of faith, lay claim to the Lord Jesus as her own Saviour in particular. She could not say with such full satisfaction and certainty as she desired, that he would be a Saviour in particular to her: and hence, for want of thoroughly understanding wherein the very essence of a saving faith consists, she had some jealous fear that she was not yet brought truly to believe in Christ; however, she was much free from her former terrors after this sweet interview; but after some time she grew more disconsolate, and more sensibly afraid of her state on the fore-mentioned account. She heard that sinners, in closing with Christ by faith, received him for their Saviour, which she thought included in it a certain persuasion that he was theirs in particular, and she could not clearly say that this had ever been her case, and so she came awfully to suspect herself as yet an unbeliever; and though she came in time to that sweet plerophory and full assurance of faith, yet she has since seen her mistake in that matter, about the nature of a true and saving faith. She continued very much under these grievous dejections for about two years, and yet enjoyed considerable sweetness and comfort at times, she often came to hear sermons with a desire to get clearly convinced of her being yet in a

Christless state, and with a formed resolution to take and apply to herself what might be said in the sermon to the unconverted, but most commonly she returned very agreeably disappointed, she would generally hear some marks of grace, some evidence of a real Christian, laid down, which she could lay claim to, and could not deny, and thus she was supported and comforted from time to time, during that two years' space. It was still with much fear and perplexity that she adventured to communicate in the Lord's supper; but she could not omit it; and she always found some refreshing and sweetness by that ordinance. After she had been so long under an almost alternate succession of troubles and supports, the sun of righteousness at last broke out upon her to the clear satisfaction and unspeakable ravishment of her soul, at a communion table: there her mind was let into the glorious mysteries of redemption, with great enlargement; while she meditated on the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, she thought with herself, he was not just a man who suffered for sinners, but infinitely more than a man, even the most high God, the eternal Son, equal with the Father, and she saw that his being God, put an infinite lustre and value upon his sufferings as man. Her heart was filled with a most unutterable admiration of his person, his merit and his love, she was enabled to believe in him with a strong self-evidencing faith, she believed that he suffered for her sins, that she was the very person, who by her sins had occasioned his sufferings and brought agony and pain upon him. The consideration of this filled her with the deepest abhorrence of her sins, and most bitter grief for them; she said, she could have desired with all her heart to have melted and dissolved her body quite away in that very place, in lamentation and mourning over her sins.— After this enjoyment her soul was generally delighting in God, and she had much of the light of his countenance with her, and, Oh! her great concern still was how she might live to the Lord, how she might do any thing for him, and give honour to him. The Lord condescended to be much with her by his enlivening and comforting presence, and especially sacramental seasons were blessed and precious seasons to her. At one of those occasions she was in a sweet frame, meditating upon the blood and water that issued from the wound made by the spear in Saviour's side; she thought that as water is of a purifying,

cleansing nature, so there was sanctifying virtue as well as justifying merit in the Lord Jesus, and that she could no more be without the water, (his sanctifying grace to cleanse her very polluted soul) than she could be without his blood to do away her guilt, and her heart was much taken up with the beauty and excellency of sanctification. At another time, a communion solemnity likewise, she was very full of delight and wonder with the thoughts of electing love, how that God had provided and determined so great things for her before ever she had a being. And a very memorable enjoyment she had at another time on Monday after a communion Sabbath, when those words came to her mind, *the spirit and the bride say come; and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* The glory and delight let in upon her soul by these words, was so great that it quite overcome her bodily frame; she said, it seemed to her that she was almost all spirit, and that the body was quite laid by, and she was sometimes in hopes that the union would actually break, and the soul get quite away. She saw much at that time into the meaning of her Lord, in those words, *because I live, ye shall live also.*

About a time of sickness she had had, concerning which I enquired at her, she told me that she expected pretty much to die then; and was very joyful at the near prospect of her change; and was sensibly grieved to find herself recover again; chiefly, because that while she lived here, she was so frail and sinful, and could do so little for the Lord's honour. I was with her in the time of that sickness, and indeed I scarcely ever saw one appearing to be so fully and sweetly satisfied under the afflicting hand of God; she manifestly appeared to lie under it with a peaceful serenity and divine sweetness in her whole soul. In a word, her whole deportment in the world bespeaks much humility and heavenliness of spirit.

One of our Christian friends, a man about fifty years of age, was removed from us by death in the beginning of *May* last, of whom I can give some broken, imperfect account, which perhaps may be of some use. His name was *Hanse Kirk Patrick*, he was a man of a pretty good understanding, and had been, I believe, a sober professor for many years, though he had not been very long in *America*; after the work of religion began so powerful among us, I found, in conversing with him, that he believed it to be a good work, but seemed very unwilling to

give up his good opinion of his own case. He told me of some concern and trouble he had been in about his soul in his younger years; but yet the case looked suspicious that he had got ease in a legal way upon an outward form of religion: at another time, being at his house, and taking up a little book that lay by me on the table, which I found to be *Mr. Mather's Dead Faith anatomized, and self-justiciary convicted*; he said to me that was indeed a strange book as ever he saw, and that according to that author it was a great thing indeed to have a right faith that was true and saving: another thing than it was generally supposed to be, or to this purpose. He seemed to me at that time to be under more fears about his own case than I had observed in him before. Not long after this, as he was hearing a sermon one day, the word was applied with irresistible evidence and power to his heart, so that he saw himself as yet in a perishing, undone case; whereupon the distress and exercise of his soul was so great that he fell off the seat on which he was sitting, and wept and cried very bitterly. A little after this he went to *Philadelphia*, at the time of the meeting of the synod, in hopes that perhaps he might meet with some benefit to his soul, by hearing the ministers preach there, or by conversing with some of them. He told me afterwards, that while he was there, as he walked the streets, he was unspeakably distressed with the view of his miserable condition, so that he could hardly keep his distress from being publicly discerned upon him, and that he seemed sometimes to be even in a manner afraid that the streets would open and swallow up such a wretched creature. He told me of his trouble, and his very sweet relief out of it, in a most moving manner, under a very fresh sense and impression of both; but the particulars of his relief I have quite forgot. He was afterwards chosen and set apart for a ruling elder in the congregation. He died of an imposthume, and gradually wasted away for a long time before his death, and was for about two months entirely confined to his bed. He told me that for some time before he was laid bed-fast, he had been full of very distressing fears and jealousies about his soul's state, and was altogether unsatisfied about his interest in Christ; but that soon after he was confined to his bed, the Lord afforded him his comforting presence, cleared up his interest, and removed his fears. After this he continued

still clear and peaceful in his soul, and sweetly and wholly resigned to the Lord's will until death. While he had strength to speak much, he was still free and forward to discourse of God and divine things. One time, as two other of our elders were with him, he exhorted them to continue steadfast and faithful to God's truth and cause; for he said, if he had a thousand souls he could freely venture them all upon the doctrines which had been taught them in this congregation. One time, when I took leave of him, he burst out into tears, saying, 'I had been the messenger of the Lord of hosts to him, that the Lord had sent to call him out of the broad way of destruction.' For some days before his decease he could speak very little, but, to all appearance, with a great deal of serenity and sweetness of soul he fell asleep in *Jesus*.

There have been very comfortable instances of little children among us: two sisters, the one being about seven, the other about nine years of age, were hopefully converted that summer when religion was so much revived here. I discoursed with them very lately, and both from their own account and the account of their parents, there appears to have been a lasting, thorough change wrought in them; they speak of their soul-experiences with a very becoming gravity, and apparent impression of the things they speak of. The youngest was awakened by hearing the word preached; she told me she heard in sermons, that except people were convinced and converted, they would surely go to hell; and she knew she was not converted. This set her to praying with great earnestness, with tears and cries, yet her fears and distress continued for several days, till one time, as she was praying, her heart she said, was drawn out in great love to God; and as she thought of heaven, and being with God, she was filled with sweetness and delight. I could not find by her that she had at that time any explicit, particular thoughts about Christ as a Redeemer, but she said she knew then that Christ died for sinners. She told me she often found such delight and love to God since, as she did then, and at such times she was very willing to die that she might be with God: but she said she was yet afraid of going to hell. I asked her if she was troubled at any time when she was not afraid of going to hell? She said, yes. I asked what she was troubled for then? She said because she had done ill to God, meaning that she had

done evil and sin against God. Some time after she first found comfort; one night, when her father and all the rest of the family, but her mother and herself, were gone to a private society, she said to her mother, that the people were singing and praying where her father was gone, and she desired her mother to do the same with her. And after they were gone to bed she desired her mother to sing some psalms which she had by heart, for she said she did not want to go to sleep. Her sister was first brought into trouble about her soul that same summer, by sickness; it continued with her some time after her recovery, till one day, coming home from meeting, as she heard some people speaking about Christ and heaven, her heart was inflamed with love to Christ. She says that when she has Christ's presence with her, she does not know what to do to get away and be with God. Their parents told me that for a long time they seemed to be almost wholly taken up in religion; that no weather through the extremity of winter, would hinder them from going out daily to by places for secret prayer, and if any thing came in the way, that they could not get going out for prayer, at such times as they inclined and thought most proper, they would weep and cry. Their parents say they are very obedient children, and strict observers of the sabbath. There are likewise other young ones in the place of whom I know nothing to the contrary but what they continue hopeful and religious to this day.

This blessed shower of divine influence spread very much through this province that summer, and was likewise considerable in some other places bordering upon it. The accounts of some ministers being sometimes distinguished by their searching, awakening doctrine, and solemn, pathetic manner of address, and the news of the effects of their preaching upon their hearers, seemed in some measure to awaken people through the country, to consider their careless and formal way of going on in religion, and very much excited their desires to hear those ministers. There were several vacant congregations without any settled pastors, which earnestly begged for their visits, and several ministers who did not appear heartily to put to their shoulders to help in carrying on the same work, yet then yielded to the pressing importunities of their people in inviting these brethren to preach in their pulpits, so that they were very much called abroad and employed in in-

cessant labours, and the Lord wrought with them mightily, very great assemblies would ordinarily meet to hear them upon any day of the week, and oftentimes a surprising power accompanying their preaching, was visible among the multitudes of their hearers. It was a very comfortable, enlivening time to God's people, and great numbers of secure, careless professors, and many loose, irreligious persons, through the land, were deeply convinced of their miserable, perishing estate, and there is abundant reason to believe, and be satisfied, that many of them were in the issue, savingly converted to God. I myself had occasion to converse with a great many up and down who have given a most agreeable account of very precious and clear experiences of the grace of God, several even in *Baltimore*, a county in the province of *Maryland*, who were brought up almost in a state of heathenism, almost without any knowledge of the true doctrines of Christianity, afford very satisfying evidence of being brought to a saving acquaintance with God in Christ Jesus.

Thus, sir, I have endeavoured to give a brief account of the revival of religion among us in these parts, in which I have endeavoured all along to be conscientiously exact in relating things according to the naked truth, knowing that I must not speak wickedly even for God, nor talk deceitfully for HIM: and, upon the whole, I must say it is beyond all dispute with me, and I think it is beyond all reasonable contradiction, that God has carried on a great and glorious work of his special grace among us.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your very respectful son and servant

SAMUEL BLAIR.

New-Londonderry, in Pennsylvania,

August 6, 1744.

ATTESTATION.

WE, the under subscribers, ruling elders in the congregation of *New Londonderry*, do give our testimony and attestation to the above account of the revival of religion in this congregation, and other parts of this country, so far as the said account relates to things that were open to public observation, and such things as we have had opportunity of being acquainted with. Particularly we testify that there has been a great and very general awakening among people, whereby they have been stirred up to an earnest uncommon concern and diligence about their eternal salvation, according to the above account of it: and that many give very comfortable evidence by their knowledge, declaration of experience, and conscientious practice, of their being savingly changed and turned unto God.

James Cochran.

John Ramsay.

John Love.

John Smith.

John Simson.

William Boyd.

N. B. One of our elders not having had the opportunity of seeing this letter before it was sent away, his name is not here subscribed.