

# VINDICATION

Of GOD's *sovereign free Grace.*

IN

Some REMARKS upon Mr. *John Beach's* SERMON, from *Rom. vi. 23.*

WITH

Some brief REFLECTIONS upon Mr. *Henry Caner's* SERMON from *Matth. vii. 28, 29.*

AND

On a Pamphlet, intituled,

A LETTER from *Aristocles* to *Authades.*

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Eph. ii. 8, 9. *By Grace are ye saved, through Faith : and that not of your selves ; it is the Gift of God : not of Works, lest any Man should boast.*

1 Tim. i. 7. *Desiring to be Teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

Isai. xlvi. 10.—*My Counsel shall stand ; and I will do all my Pleasure.*

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# VINDICATION

Of GOD's fovereign free Grace : in some  
REMARKS upon Mr. *John Beach's* SER-  
MON, from *Rom. vi. 23.* intituled, *A*  
SERMON *shewing that eternal Life is*  
*GOD's free Gift, bestowed upon Men*  
*according to their moral Behaviour.*

**M**R. *Beach* enters upon this Discourse with a sur-  
prizing Confidence ; and in Effect represents all  
those to be either *Fools* or *Knaves*, or both, who  
differ from him in the Sentiments, which he here  
espouses. “ Whether ( says he ) it be through  
“ *Weakness*, or *Perverseness*, or both, I can't deter-  
“ mine ; but it is notorious, that there is such a *Distinction* kept  
“ between those who pretend to be Preachers of the Gospel, as that  
“ one Sort are stiled Exalters of *Free-Will*, the other are called  
“ the Preachers of *Free-Grace* : As if *Free-Grace* and *Free-Will* were  
“ directly *contrary* to each other.” — A bold Stroke this, against all  
those who *keep this Distinction*, &c. But *who* are these ?— If it should  
appear upon Examination, that the *Church of England*, to whose  
Liturgy Mr. *Beach* has declared his hearty Assent and Consent,  
and whose Articles he has subscribed, do teach the very Doctrine  
that here stands indicted with *Weakness* or *Perverseness* ; and that  
too in direct and expers Opposition to the Scheme of Principles  
laid down by him in this Sermon ; he must appear but in a very  
indifferent Figure as a Clergy-man of the *Church of England*, un-  
der Vows and Subscriptions to her Formula's, while eating her  
Bread, and lifting up his Heel against her Doctrines. — If it  
should further appear, that all the *Protestant* Churches, without one  
Exception,

Exception, agree with the *Church of England* in the same doctrinal Articles of Religion, and teach as the *Church of England* does, the Contrariety between *Free-Will* and *Free-Grace*, and do directly contradict the very Scheme of Principles laid down by Mr. *Beach* in this Sermon; I can't envy him his Character of a *protestant Minister*, while directly and publicly opposing all the protestant Churches, in some of the most important Articles of their Faith. — If it should also appear that Mr. *Beach's* mannerly Sarcaſm does not stop here, but extends to the sacred *Scriptures*, and that his Doctrines are directly opposite to the *Oracles of God*, his Character of a *Christian* must be recommended by something better than this Performance; or else it will appear in as dark a View, as his Character of a *Churchman*, or a *Protestant*. — And once more, if Mr. *Beach* himself, in this very Sermon, has set *Free-Grace* and *Free-Will* in Opposition and Contrariety one to the other; and has most inconsistently treated upon the Subject in View, he must then at least share with the rest of the christian World, in the fine Compliment, he is pleased to give both himself and them.

If all these Things can be made appear ( as I am pretty sure they can ) there will nothing more be needful to be offered in Answer to this Sermon, but to obviate his plausible *Objections* against the Doctrines which he so confidently opposes: except a serious Address to those who espouse and propagate these his Principles, be thought proper and seasonable.

I am first to consider, whether the *Church of England* don't teach the very same Doctrines, which Mr. *Beach* thus treats with Disdain and Contempt. — That I may set this Matter in a proper Light, I will exhibit the Articles of the *Church of England* in one Column, and Mr. *Beach's* Doctrine in another; that the Reader may, in one View, behold the Conformity of his Principles to the Articles, unto which he is bound by such sacred Ties.

Article XVII. OF PREDESTINATION and ELECTION.

Mr. BEACH'S Sermon.

*Predestination to Life is the everlasting Purpose of God, whereby (before the Foundations of the World were laid) he has constantly decreed by his Counsel secret to us, to deliver from Curse and Damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of Mankind; and to bring them by Christ to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels made to Honour: wherefore they who be endued with so excellent a Benefit of God, be called according to God's Purpose, by his Spirit*  
working

Now this distinguishing Mercy of being translated out of the Kingdom of Satan, into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and enjoying the Privileges of the Gospel, is that *Election of Grace*, which so often occurs in the New Testament. — Now in that God has distinguished Christians from all the rest of Mankind, by making us his peculiar People, therefore all Christians are the *Elect*, the *Election of Grace*, and *Vessels of Mercy*. — Which is affirm'd of all Christians

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*working in due Season, they through Grace obey the Calling, they be justified freely, they be made Sons of God by Adoption, they be made like to the Image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, they walk religiously in good Works; and at Length by God's Mercy, they attain to everlasting Felicity.*

*As the godly Consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet pleasant and unspeakable Comfort, to godly Persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the Works of the Flesh, and their earthly Members, and drawing up their Minds to high and heavenly Things; as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their Faith of eternal Salvation, to be enjoy'd thro' Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their Love towards God, &c.*

THERE BE SUCH A THING, it is not in our Power to make it surer and firmer, than God has already made it. (Page 12, 13, 14, 15.)

When Mr. Beach can fairly reconcile this Doctrine of his to the XVIIth Article of the Church of England, which he has subscribed, and according to which he is obliged to preach, I here give him my Promise to reconcile the greatest Contradictions that he can devise, and to prove by the same Way of Reasoning which he uses to that Purpose, that Light and Darknes, Life and Death, Holines and Sin, are the same Thing.

If the Elect are those, whom God hath constantly decreed to deliver from Curse and Damnation; then they who belong to the Election of Grace, cannot yet notwithstanding perish, by walking unworthy of God's electing Love, as Mr. Beach says they may.—If the Elect are chosen in Christ out of Mankind, to be brought by Christ to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels made to Honour, as the Article teaches; then the enjoying the Privileges of the Gospel, is not that Election of Grace, which so often occurs in the New-Testament; and all (visible professed) Christians are not the Elect, the Election of Grace, and Vessels of Mercy, as Mr. Beach says they are.—It cannot be true, that they who are endued with so excellent a Benefit (as Predestination to Life) be called according to God's Purpose, by his Spirit working in due Season, — do  
walk

istians in general, because they are separated from, and preferred before, the rest of Mankind.—In the same Sense St. Peter uses the Word *Elect*, 1 Pet. v. 13. *The Church which is at Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you.* By their being *elect* together, he only means, that these two Churches were planted about the same Time. Not that every individual Person in them were, by an eternal Decree, absolutely appointed to everlasting Life. So that according to the Language of the Holy Scripture, every one of us Christians belong to the Election of God's Grace: Yet notwithstanding, we shall perish, if we do not walk worthy of God's electing Love. Hence St. Peter exhorts Christians, to give Diligence to make their Calling and Election sure.

Which cannot be meant of an absolute personal Election: for IF

walk religiously in good Works, and at Length by God's Mercy attain to everlasting Felicity, as the Article teaches; and yet it be also true, that all who enjoy the Privileges of the Gospel, belong to the Election of Grace; and that these may notwithstanding perish, by walking unworthy of God's electing Love, as Mr. Beach teaches that they may. But this is so plain a Case, that there is no Need to insist. I therefore proceed.

Article IX. OF ORIGINAL OF  
BIRTH-SIN.

Mr. BEACH'S Sermon.

*Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but in the Fault or Corruption of the Nature of every Man, that naturally is engendred of the Offspring of Adam, whereby Man is very far gone from original Righteousness; and is of his own Nature inclined to Evil, so that the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit; and therefore in every Person born into this World, it deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation.*

And to say that we lost our Power in Adam, does not help the Matter: because we could not help his Fall. And could we have had our Choice when Adam was created, I am perswaded, that no Man who had a just Regard to his own Interest, would willingly have reposed such a vast Trust in the Hands of Adam; or indeed of the best Angel in Heaven, as to be obliged to be eternally happy or miserable, according to the Choice he should make. (P. 19.) — And so again to the same Purpose, with

this additional Circumstance, that if any perish by the Imputation of Adam's Sin, they meet with harder Measure than the Devils. (Page 25, 26.)

The Comparison here between Mr. Beach's Sermon and the Article is obvious enough, that there needs not much to be said, to set it in a proper Light. — The Article asserts, that *in every Person born into this World, it (original Sin) deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation.* On the other Hand, Mr. Beach not only burlesques the Doctrine, and treats it with an Air of Contempt; but the whole Design of his Discourse is to prove, that Adam's Sin, and the necessary and unavoidable Effects of it, do not deserve God's Wrath and Damnation.

Article X. OF FREE-WILL.

Mr. BEACH'S Sermon.

*The Condition of Man after the Fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural Strength, and good Works, to Faith and calling upon God. Wherefore, we have no Power to do good Works pleasant and acceptable*

There is in every one a Power of self-determining, of chusing or refusing, by which a Man can comply with, or reject, the Suggestions of the Holy Spirit. And were it not for this self-moving Principle in the Constitution of Man,

## of sovereign GRACE.

*ceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good Will; and working with us, when we have that good Will.*

Man, he would be no moral Agent. (Page 21.) Again, If we suppose two Men of the same natural Abilities, and under the same Advantages and Operations of the Holy Ghost, the one may

so improve his Power of Consideration, as to become a wise and happy Man, and an eternal Companion of the blessed Angels; while the other by neglecting his Reason, and abandoning himself to be govern'd by his fleshly Appetites, may make himself so vile a Monster, as to be fit for Nothing but the Portion of Devils. (Page 28.)

The direct Contrariety of these Doctrines is visible to every Observer. *If the Condition of Man after the Fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural Strength and good Works, to Faith and calling upon God, as the Article asserts, then there is not in every one a Power of Self-determining, of chusing or refusing, by which a Man can comply with, or reject, the Suggestions of the Holy Spirit; Man has not this self-moving Principle in his Constitution, as Mr. Beach teaches us.— If we have no Power to do good Works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good Will; and working with us, when we have that good Will, as the Article asserts: then no Man can, by Advantages and Abilities common to the rest of the World, so improve his Power of Consideration, as to become a wise and happy Man, and an eternal Companion to the blessed Angels, as Mr. Beach says we may.*

### Article XI. Of the JUSTIFICATION of Man.

*We are accounted righteous before God, only for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by Faith; and not for our own Works and Deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesom Doctrine.*

Gospel, which like an Ornament or Wedding-Garment to the Soul, makes it FIT to appear before God, in the Company of Saints and Angels. (Page 31.)

Here likewise the Contrariety between the Article and Mr. Beach's Doctrine, is most conspicuous.— **To be saved NO OTHER WAY, than by our obeying the Gospel, as Mr. Beach asserts we are, and to be accounted righteous before God ONLY for the Merit of our**

### Mr. BEACH'S Sermon.

Grace saves us in no other Way than by our obeying the Gospel. (Page 33.)— Let us labour to excel in all Moral and Christian Virtues, in which is Founded the eternal Happiness of a rational Creature. (Page 37.)— Now this Wedding Garment is a Temper of Mind and Life agreeable to the

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Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not for our OWN WORKS and Deservings, as the Article asserts we be : To have our eternal Happiness **FOUNDED** upon our Moral and Christian Virtues, as Mr. Beach asserts, and to be justified by Faith ONLY, as the Article teaches : To be FIT to appear before God, by a Temper of Mind and Life agreeable to the Gospel, like a Wedding Garment to the Soul, as Mr. Beach asserts we are, and to be righteous before God only for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by Faith, as the Article teaches : These, I say, are all, or the most of them, Doctrines as directly opposite, as Light and Darkness.

I might in like Manner have proceeded to shew the Contrariety of Mr. Beach's Doctrine, to the XIIIth and XVIIIth Articles of the Church of England : But what is already done, is sufficient for a Specimen of his Conformity to the Articles, which he has subscribed.

I am not ignorant, that some of our modern and episcopal Clergy have attempted to represent these Articles as a Nose of Wax, even capable of an Arminian Sense. An Attempt no less ridiculous in it self, than it is scandalous to the Church of England, who have done all that can be done, to convince the World, that they understood these Articles in the plain literal Sense.— To this End were the Articles of Lambeth framed, by the supream ecclesiastical Governours of that Church, conven'd at Lambeth-House for that Purpose, Nov. 20. 1595.—It is true, that the Episcopal Clergy are not obliged to subscribe these Articles ; but as they represent to us what has been the standing Doctrine of the Church of England, and in what Sense the Church has understood the XXXIX Articles, which are subscribed by all her Clergy, it mayn't be improper to transcribe three or four of those Articles also, and set Mr. Beach's Doctrines in an opposite Column, to further represent his Conformity to the Doctrines of the Church of England.

## Articles III and IV.

*There is a certain and definite Number of the Predestinate, which can neither be augmented nor diminished.*

*Those who are not predestinated to Salvation, shall be necessarily damn'd for their Sins.*

frained to an elect Number ; but comprehends the whole Race of Adam. (Page 6.)— Every one of us Christians belong to the Election of God's free Grace ; yet notwithstanding, we shall perish, if we do not walk worthy of God's electing Love. — (Page 14.)

## Mr. BEACH's Sermon.

All Christians are said to be elected, and chosen before the Foundation of the World.— In this eternal Election, St. Paul comprehends all Christian People. (Page 13.)

And this redeeming Grace is so free, that it is not confined or re-

# of sovereign GRACE.

II

Articles VII and IX.

Mr. BEACH's Sermon.

*Saving Grace is not given, is not communicated, is not granted to all Men, by which they may be saved, if they will.*

*It is not in the Will or Power of every one, to be saved.*

Without supposing, that sufficient Grace is afforded to ALL, I cannot possibly understand the Sense of that Expostulation, *Isai.* v. 2, 4. (Page 23.)— All wicked Men are Self-Murderers, because God has put it in their Power to turn and live. (P. 18.)

I think, I may now refer it to the Reader, and even to Mr. Beach himself, whether I han't given full and plain Documents of the exprefs Contrariety of this Discourse of his, to the Doctrines of the Church of *England*: But after all, if this be not sufficient, I have much more to offer, when it shall be called for. And shall now only add, that *whoever affirm the XXXIX Articles to be in Part erroneous, are ipso Facto excommunicated by the Vth Canon of the Church of England.*

I am next to consider, whether all the *Protestant Churches* do not unitedly agree with the Church of *England*, in the Doctrines under Consideration; and expressly oppose the Principles so confidently taught by Mr. Beach, in this Sermon.

It would indeed be too tedious a Work for me, to transcribe the several *Confessions* of all the reformed Churches. Whoever wants Satisfaction in this Point, may read the *Syntagma Confessionum*, where he'll have them all in View at once; and see what were the first Principles of the whole Body of the Reformers, and what are yet their standing Confessions of Faith. He will see, that the *Sermon* under Examination, is expressly contradictory to every one of them, without Exception.

I shall however, endeavour to give a brief View of Mr. Beach's Opposition to the Judgment of the reformed Churches, by shewing how these Doctrines of his were condemned by them, when they were by their Delegates conven'd for that Purpose, at the *Synod of DORT*.— There the Delegates of the several Churches (and of the Church of *England* among the rest) separately gave in their Suffrages, in direct Opposition to Mr. Beach's Doctrine: And there they all unitedly stated and represented in a true Scripture-Light the Doctrines of *special Grace*; and then proceeded to detect and condemn the contrary *Errors*.— It will be sufficient to my present Purpose, to exhibit in one Column some of those Things condemned by them all as dangerous Errors; and to exhibit in the opposite Column, the same Errors taught by Mr. Beach, in this Sermon of his.

## The SYNOD of DORT.

Mr. BEACH's Sermon.

*The Synod rejects the Errors of those, who teach that every Election to Salvation is not immutable; but that some of the Elect (no Decree of God hindring it) may perish, and eternally perish. †*

When God called us to the Knowledge of Christianity; and elected and distinguished us; and preferred us before the rest of the World to be his People, his Design in this was, that we should excell all other Men in Virtue; and in the End obtain eternal Glory; and when we do so, we make our Calling and Election sure, firm and effectual. But on the contrary, when we walk not worthy of our Christian Privileges: But live in Wickedness, and let not the Gospel have its genuine Effects upon our Hearts and Lives, we then lose the End of our Calling and Election; and forfeit our Birth-Right as Christians. (Page 15.)—See also Page 14.

## The SYNOD of DORT.

Mr. BEACH's Sermon.

*The Synod rejects the Errors of those, who teach that God has of his mere righteous Will decreed, to leave no Body in the Fall of Adam, or to pass over no Body in the Communication of Grace, necessary to Faith and Conversion. †*

He doth not will an Event, who doth not will the necessary Means. And if God is not willing to give all Men sufficient Grace, I cannot conceive how he can be truly said to be willing and desirous, that they should turn and live: and to say that we lost our Power in Adam does not help the Matter, because we could not prevent his Fall. (Page 19.) See also Pag. 18. and 23.

## The SYNOD of DORT.

Mr. BEACH's Sermon.

*The Synod rejects the Errors of those, who teach that God the Father destinated his Son to the Death of the Cross, without any definite Counsel, of saving any one by Name, &c.\**

Christ died not for any Man absolutely (that we know of) but for all conditionally, that they might be eternally happy, if they would obey him. (P. 9.)

## The SYNOD of DORT.

Mr. BEACH's Sermon.

*The Synod rejects the Errors of those, who teach that an unregenerate Man is not properly and totally dead in Sins, or destitute of all spiritual*

Though Man is a fallen Creature; yet there is in every one a Power of self-determining, of choosing or refusing, by which a Man

† Acta Synodi nationalis Dordrechtanae. P. 284;

† Page 284. \* Page 291.

*ritual Strength to Good: But he can hunger and thirst after Righteousness; and offer the Sacrifice of a broken and contrite Spirit, which is accepted of God. †*

Man can comply with, or reject the Suggestions of the Holy Spirit. (Page 21.)

The SYNOD of DORT.

Mr. BEACH'S Sermon.

*The Synod rejects the Errors of those, who teach that God in the Regeneration of Man, does not use the Strength of his Omnipotency, by which he powerfully and infallibly bends the Will to Faith and Conversion: That all the Operations of Grace being supposed, which God uses to convert a Man, the Man may nevertheless so resist God and his Spirit, endeavouring his Regeneration, and willing to regenerate him, — that he may wholly hinder his Regeneration; and so it may remain in his Power, that he should be regenerated, or not be regenerated. ||*

The Reason why any are not converted and saved, is because they don't concur and co-operate with divine Grace. For when God works in us, he does not work irresistably; for in that Case we could not forbear to work out our own Salvation. But the Holy Ghost works so in us, that we may chuse whether we will work with him, or against him. We can at the same Time, either quench or cherish the Spirit. We can either resist or comply with the Holy Ghost; and according as we do either of these, so we shall be saved or damned. So that if we are converted, it is of Grace; and if we remain wicked, it is because we abuse Grace, when we could do otherwise. (Pag. 20.)

I might in many other Instances have shewn the direct Contrariety of Mr. Beach's Discourse, to the Doctrine of the reformed Churches in this their Convention: But what is already said, is a sufficient Document to every one, that will open his Eyes, how well the Man deserves the Character of a Protestant Minister, who teaches such Principles as are here found in Mr. Beach's Sermon.— I shall therefore add no more from this Synod, but a Paragraph or two out of their concluding Exhortation; which, it concerns Mr. Beach and those who join with him in these Pelagian Doctrines, and in his bold Invectives against the established Principles of the Protestant Churches, seriously to attend to.— “ This (says the Synod) is a plain, simple and ingenuous Declaration of the Orthodox Doctrine concerning the five Articles, controverted in Holland; and a Rejection of those Errors, with which the Church of Holland has been for some Time disturbed, which the Synod judges to be taken from the Word of God, and agreeable to the Confessions of the reformed Churches. Whence it clearly appears, that they whom it least becomes, would inculcate upon the People, what

† Page 305. || Page 306.

“ is contrary to all Truth, Equity and Charity.— The *Synod* there-  
 “ fore seriously admonish the Calumniators themselves, that they  
 “ would see how heavy a Judgment of God they lie under, who bear  
 “ false Testimonies against the Confessions of so many Churches,  
 “ trouble the Consciences of the weak; and busy themselves to  
 “ render the Society of the Faithful suspected to many.

Having thus consider'd how well Mr. *Beach's* Performance intitles the Author to the Character of a *Church-man*, and a *Protestant* : I am in the next Place to consider, whether it be more agreeable to the holy *Scriptures*, than to the Principles of the reformed Churches.— And this I shall also endeavour in the same Method I have already used, by setting the Texts of Scripture and his Doctrines in Opposition to each other, in different Columns.

## TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love: having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will, to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* Rom. ix. 23. *And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory, on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory.* Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30. *And we know that 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 he justified, them he also glorified.—* Rom. viii. 33, 35. *Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth. Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? Nay, in all these Things we are more than Conquerors, thro' him that loved us.*

## MR. BEACH'S Sermon.

Now this distinguishing Mercy, of being translated out of the Kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and enjoying the Privileges of the Gospel, is that *Election* of Grace, that so often occurs in the New-Testament. Now in that God has distinguished Christians from all the rest of Mankind, by making us his peculiar People, therefore all Christians are the *Elect*, the *Election* of Grace, and *Vessels of Mercy* : As the Israelites were once the elect People of God. (Page 12.) — So that according to the Language of the holy Scripture, every one of us Christians belong to the *Election* of God's free Grace : Yet notwithstanding, we shall perish, if we don't walk worthy of electing Love. (Page 14.)

The following Reflections are open to every one's Observation. If all the *Elect* were chosen before the Foundation of the World, that they should be holy and without Blame before God in Love, then all professing Christians are not the *Elect*; for it's evident, that they are not all ( ever in their Lives ) *holy and without Blame*.— This Consequence is necessary, unless God's eternal Purpose, that the *Elect* should be holy, be mutable and precarious; which, I hope, none will venture to suppose.

Again, If the Predestinate have the *Adoption of God's Children by Jesus Christ*, and are made accepted in the Beloved, as the Text assures us they are; then all professed Christians and Gospel-Enjoyers are not of the *Election of Grace*, as Mr. Beach supposes. For all professed Christians are not God's adopted Children, nor accepted in the Beloved.

Moreover, If the *Vessels of Mercy* are afore prepared unto Glory, as the quoted Text assures us they are; then all professed Christians and Gospel-Enjoyers are not *Vessels of Mercy*, as Mr. Beach tells us they be. For all these certainly are not prepared unto Glory.

I add, *If all Things work together for Good, to them who are called according to God's Purpose*, as the Text assures us; then all that enjoy the Privileges of the Gospel, are not the *Elect*, nor called according to God's Purpose. For many Gospel-Professors have by their Wickedness provoked God to leave them to themselves; are going on, in their Sins; and laying a Foundation of most aggravated Misery and Ruin in the End.

Furthermore, If all *whom God did foreknow*, were predestinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son, and are called, and justified, and will be glorified, as the Text assures us, then all who enjoy the Privileges of the Gospel, are not the *Elect*: Nor are the *Elect* liable to perish, by walking unworthy of electing Love, as Mr. Beach suggests. For all such are not conformed to the Image of God's Son, are not called and justified, nor will all such be glorified.— Neither can it be true, that they who are called and justified, and shall finally be glorified, can walk unworthy of electing Love, so as to perish.

Once more, If there can be *nothing laid to the Charge of God's Elect*, since God justifies them; and *nothing can separate them from the Love of Christ*; but they shall be in all Things more than Conquerors, as we are assured by the Text, then all Gospel-Professors are not the *Elect*. For there can be much laid to the Charge of many of them; God does not justify them; and they are separated from the Love of Christ.— It also follows, that the *Elect* cannot continue to walk so unworthy of electing Love, as to perish. For they that perish, are separated from the Love of Christ; and are not more than Conquerors.

I venture to say, that it's utterly impossible, fairly to reconcile these plain and manifest Contradictions, between the cited Texts

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of Scripture and Mr. *Beach's* Sermon. And if it be attempted with any Appearance of Plausibility, it must be by *wresting the Scripture-Expressions* to some foreign Sense, inconsistent with their plain and native Meaning; and inconsistent with the stated Sense of the same Expressions in the Word of God.

But it's Time that I should return, to the Consideration of some other Instances of express Contrariety, between the sacred Scripture and Mr. *Beach's* Sermon.

## TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

Psal. 1. 5. *Behold I was shapen in Iniquity; and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.*—Rom. v. 12, 16, 17, 18, 19. *Wherefore as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, even so Death passed upon all Men; for that all have sinned.*—*For the Judgment was by one to CONDEMNATION.*—*For by one Man's Offence, Death reigned by one.*—*Therefore as by the Offence of one, JUDGMENT came upon all Men to CONDEMNATION.*—*For as by one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners.*

personal Act; while these were undone by *Adam's* Sin, to which they never consented. Yet for this Sin, or the necessary and unavoidable Effects of it, they must be tormented to all Eternity. (Pag. 26.)

Nothing can be more plainly and strongly spoken, than these Texts do speak, that we were shapen and conceived in *Sin*; that by one Man (*Adam*) *Sin* and *Death* have come upon *all Men* in the World; that all Men are hereby *made Sinners*; and that JUDGMENT and CONDEMNATION upon *all* are the Fruits of this Sin. And yet Nothing is more evident, than that Mr. *Beach* does reject the Doctrine of our being under the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin; and of our Obnoxiousness to eternal Condemnation by Vertue of it.—And therefore, Nothing can be more certain, than that he does plainly contradict the infallible Dictates of the blessed SPIRIT in his Word.

Having already something particularly represented Mr. *Beach's* Attack upon the Specialty of God's Grace, in the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners, I shall not now have any Occasion to offer any

## MR. BEACH'S SERMON.

And to say, that we lost our Power in *Adam*, does not help the Matter; because we could not help his Fall. And could we have had our Choice, when *Adam* was created, I am perswaded, that no Man, who had a just Regard to his own Interest, would willingly have reposed such a Trust in the Hands of *Adam*, or indeed of the best Angel in Heaven, as to be obliged to be eternally happy or miserable, according to the Choice he should make. (Page 19.)—But are left in as helpless and hopeless a Condition, as the *Devils*, who fell by their own per-

sonal Act; while these were undone by *Adam's* Sin, to which they never consented. Yet for this Sin, or the necessary and unavoidable Effects of it, they must be tormented to all Eternity. (Pag. 26.)

any more than some brief Specimen of his Opposition to that important Article of the Christian Faith ; and of his greatest Contrariety to the Word of God therein.— It appears from the following Scriptures, that God does not give all Men *Grace sufficient* for their eternal Salvation.

TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

Mr. BEACH'S *Sermon.*

Matth. xi. 25, 26. *At that Time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these Things from the Wise and Prudent ; and hast revealed them unto Babes. Even so Father : For so it seemed good in thy Sight.—*Joh. iii. 3. *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

—Rom. xi. 7, 8. *The Election hath obtained it ; and the rest were blinded. According as it is written, God hath given them a Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they should not see, and Ears that they should not hear, unto this Day.—*Rom. ix.

18. *Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy ; and whom he will, he hardneth.—*1 Cor. iv. 7. *For who maketh thee to differ from another ; and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive ?*

That God's saving Grace is insuperable ; and that those who are Partakers of it, do not, will not, and therefore cannot reject it, is certain from the following Texts. Psal. cx. 3. *Thy People shall be willing, in the Day of thy Power.—*Eph. i. 19. *And what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power, to us-ward who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the Dead.—*1 Pet. i. 5. *Who are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.—*

Joh.

If God is not willing to give all Men sufficient Grace, I cannot conceive how he can truly be said to be willing and desirous that they should turn and live. (P. 19.) — Without supposing that sufficient Grace is afforded to all, I cannot possibly understand the Sense of that Expostulation, *Isa. v. 3, 4.* (Page 23.) — If we suppose two Men of the same natural Abilities, and under the same Advantages and Operations of the Holy Ghost, the one may so improve his Power of Consideration, as to become a wise and happy Man, and an eternal Companion of the blessed Angels ; while the other, by neglecting his Reason, and abandoning himself to be govern'd by his fleshly Appetites, may make himself so vile a Monster, as to be fit for Nothing but the Portion of Devils. (Page 28.)

The Reason why any are not converted and saved, is, because they don't concur and co-operate with divine Grace. For when God works in us, he does not work irresistably ; for in that Case we could not forbear to work out our own Salvation. But the Holy Ghost works so in us, that we may chuse whether we will work with him, or against him.— Faith and every other Vertue is the Gift of God : Yet so, as at the same Time, to be the EFFECT of our own Choice and Pains too.

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(P. 20.)

Joh. vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.— Rom. xi. 29. For the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance.*

That Faith and every other Vertue are not the EFFECT of our

own Choice and Pains ; and that every Man has not a Power of self-determining, appears most evident from the following Texts. Rom. xi. 16. *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth : but of God that sheweth Mercy.— Heb. xii. 2. Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith. — Phil. ii. 13. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.— Joh. iii. 27. A Man can receive Nothing, except it be given him from Heaven.— 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God ; for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.— 2 Cor. iii. 5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any Thing, as of our selves : but our Sufficiency is of God. — Prov. xx. 24. Man's Goings are of the Lord : how then can a Man understand his own Way ? — Joh. vi. 65. No Man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. — Eph. ii. 1. You hath he quickned, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins.*

That two Men being under the same natural Abilities, and under the same Advantages and Operations of the Holy Ghost, the one can't by the Improvement of his own Power obtain Salvation, when the other by the Misimprovement of his Power, may finally perish, is abundantly evident, from the Texts already recited, as well as by these that follow.

Rom. xi. 5, 6. *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 ; otherwise Work is no more Work.— Rom. iv. 4, 5. Now to him that worketh, is the Reward, not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt : But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness. — Rom. 3. 27, 28. Where is Boasting then ? It is excluded. By what Law ? Of Works ? Nay ! but by the Law of Faith. Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.— 2 Tim. i. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works : but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began.— Tit. iii. 5. 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.*

(P.20.) Tho' Man is a fallen weak Creature; yet there is in every one a Power of self-determining, of chusing or refusing, by which a Man can comply with, or reject the Suggestions of the Holy Spirit. (Page 21.)

I might go on to multiply Texts of Scripture, to the same Purpose with these already cited. For the Doctrine here represented is the great Scope and Design of the whole New-Testament. — The main Tendency of the whole is, to abase poor fallen sinful Man ; and to lay him low, under a Sense of his own Vileness, Impotence and Nothingness ; and to bring him to a humble Dependence upon the Riches of sovereign Grace, and the Merits of Christ only, for Justification and eternal Salvation. — And now, what Estimate must be made of the Doctrines, transcribed from Mr. *Beach's* Sermon, when they are impartially compared with so many Texts of Scripture, expressly contrary to them ?

I think, I have now fully perform'd the three first Things I proposed ; and have shewn the Contrariety of Mr. *Beach's* Sermon, to the Doctrines of the *Church of England*, to those of all the *Protestant Churches* ; and to the blessed *Oracles of God*.

It remains yet, to consider the SERMON's *Contrariety to itself* ; and I shall leave it to the Reader to judge, whether Mr. *Beach's* Doctrines of *Free Grace*, and his Doctrines of *Free-Will*, are not directly repugnant one to another.

*Mr. B.'s* FREE-GRACE.

*Mr. B.'s* FREE-WILL.

Because we can do Nothing but what we owed him ; and the paying that Debt we owed, cannot OBLIGE God to thank or REWARD us. (p. 4.)

So that his Promise to give them so much, was not of Debt, but of mere Grace ; and yet when he has promised, and they have complied with the Condition, Veracity and Justice OBLIGES

him, to make the Promise good ; and when he performs it, it is a *Reward of Bounty*. (P. 32.)

Thus then we find, that our Obedience *cannot* OBLIGE God to REWARD us ; and yet by Vertue of his Promise, our Obedience *does* OBLIGE God to REWARD us : And if this don't imply a Contradiction, I am at a Loss where to find one.

FREE-GRACE.

FREE-WILL.

Hence St. Paul says, *The Wages of Sin is Death ; but the Gift of God is eternal Life*. Death or Misery, he stiles WAGES : But eternal Life, he calls the Gift or Bounty of God ; not the WAGES of

The plain Truth is, God deals with us as a kind Father with his Children ; who, to encourage their Industry, promises them, if they will faithfully labour for him, that at Night he will REWARD

of our good Works. Misery is due to Sin, as WAGES are due to an Hireling, when he has done his Work. (p. 5.)

WARD each of them with an Hundred Pounds : now this Sum is both a Gift, and a Reward too. (p. 32.)

Here then, we are taught, that eternal Life is not the WAGES of our good Works, as WAGES are due to an Hireling when he has done his Work ; and yet we are also taught, that God deals with us in Relation to eternal Life, as a Father with his Children, whom he hires to do a Day's Work, with a Promise of an Hundred Pounds for a REWARD. — And is it not then the WAGES due to them by Promise ; and by such a Promise too, which Mr. Beach owns, *his Veracity and Justice obliges him to make good ?* — It is a Reward of their Hire, which is the proper Meaning of the Word *Wages*, whether there be, or be not, a Proportion between the Value of the Work and the Reward. — This therefore must go for another Self-Contradiction.

## FREE-GRACE.

And though Jesus Christ most graciously offers eternal Life to Men : Yet no Man will ever come to him, and accept of his kind Offer, unless the Father draw him, and it be given him from above. *It is God who works in us, both to will and to do. He makes us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will ; working in us that which is well-pleasing in his Sight.* (Page 15.)

Thus we are plainly taught, that *no Man can come to Christ till he be drawn of the Father, and it be given him from above, i. e. till God determines his Will and Choice ; and yet that there is in every one a Freedom of Will, and a Power to determine his own Will and Choice, by which he can comply with, or reject the Suggestions of the Holy Spirit.* — *It is GOD who works in us both to will and to do :* And yet we have this *self-moving Principle* in our very CONSTITUTION. — Are not these Contradictions !

## FREE GRACE.

Now *all* we do towards our Salvation, is to accept of Grace when offered : and if we do accept of it, we shall be saved ; and

## FREE-WILL.

If once you take away Freedom of Will from Man, you degrade him from being a moral Agent, into an intelligent Machine. (P. 22.) — There is in every Man a Power of self determining, of chusing or refusing ; by which a Man can comply with, or reject the Motions of the Holy Spirit, and were it not for this self moving Principle in the Constitution of Man, he would be no moral Agent. (P. 21.)

## FREE-WILL.

Grace saves us in no other Way, than by our obeying the Gospel. (Page 33.) — Let us cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Let us

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and if we do not, we shall perish. us labour to excell in all moral and christian Vertues, in which is founded the eternal Happinefs of a rational Creature. And can we desire eternal Life on easier Terms than a faithful Obedience? — These are the easiest and lowest Terms, on which God offers us the Gift of eternal Life; and he will never come lower. (p. 37, 38.)

Thus *our Acceptance* of Grace when offered, is *All*, and *Nothing*, which we do towards our Salvation. We are saved *only* by our *accepting offered Grace*; and yet *no other Way*, but by our *obeying the Gospel*, by our moral and christian *Vertues*, by a faithful *Obedience*.— Is not here a palpable Inconsistency!

This is a sufficient Exemption of the perfect and harmonious Agreement of *Free-Grace* and *Free-Will*, which Mr. Beach boasts of: by which, I think, every one will own, that he himself must take his Part of the mannerly Compliment, wherewith he began his Discourse.

I shall now proceed to take some particular Notice of Mr. BEACH's *Arguments* against the Doctrines of *special Grace*; and consider what Evidence he brings in Confirmation of his own Schemes.

His first Attempt is to prove *universal Redemption*, in the strongest and strictest Sense; from whence (I conclude) he would infer the harmonious Agreement of *Free-Grace* and *Free-Will*. "Our Redemption by Jesus Christ is (he tells us) the Gift and Effect of God's Mercy.— And this redeeming Grace is so free, that it is not confined nor restrain'd to an elect Number: but comprehends the *whole* Race of *Adam*.— As it is frequently and most expressly asserted in the holy Scriptures. *He died for all, he tasted Death for every Man, he is the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World.* (Pag. 6, &c.)

In Answer to this, I freely allow, that Christ has died for all Men, in such a Sense as that every Individual of the human Race may, by Vertue of the Ransom paid by him, obtain eternal Life, upon Faith in his Blood.— And that the Gospel-Invitation is indefinite, putting no Difference between *Jew* and *Greek*, *Male* and *Female*, *Bond* and *Free*; but that *every one* without Distinction is freely invited in the Word, and ought to be invited in the Ministry of the Word, to come to Christ, and believe in him, with a full Assurance, that upon his so doing, he should not fail of a Title to eternal Life.— And hence it is always true, with Respect to every Person, who remains impenitent under the Gospel, that the immediate Reason why he continues and perishes in

in his Sins, is only because *he will not come to Christ, that he might have Life.*— All this seems to be fully asserted in the Scriptures ; by which it plainly appears, that Gospel-Sinners *have no Cloak for their Rejection of Christ and his offered Salvation.* Universal Redemption is never taught us in Scripture, in any other Sense than this.

But then the Question yet remains, whether Christ has not in some *special* and peculiar Sense died for the *Elect* ? Whether he has not only died to purchase for these the Privilege, that they shall be *saved, if they believe* ; but also to purchase for and to bestow upon them that *Faith*, whereby they certainly *may and will believe*, and be saved ?— Or in other Words, whether he has not undertaken *efficaciously* to bestow *Grace* upon the *Elect*, whereby they shall be united to him, be justified and sanctified thro' Faith in him, be enabled to live a Life of Holiness, and thereby be qualified for future Salvation, with eternal Glory ?— And whether the blessed Redeemer has undertaken to bestow all these Benefits and Privileges upon the *rest of the World*, in the same Manner as upon the *Elect* ?— In short, whether this Salvation, altho' it be call'd *the common Salvation*, be call'd so in such a Sense as that we must conceive it equally intended for *all Men* ?

Mr. *Beach* can't be ignorant, that this is the true State of the Controversy : and that it has been the received Doctrine of all the reformed Churches, that in this Sense the Lord Jesus Christ has not wrought out the same Redemption for the *rest of the World*, as he has wrought out for the *Elect*.— This Gentleman however, in direct Opposition to them all ( as I have already shewn ) teaches the quite contrary Doctrine.— And if we understand the Words under Consideration, as being consistent with the rest of his Discourse, and pertinent to his Purpose, they must imply, that *this redeeming Grace is so free, that it is not* (in any of its distinguishing Benefits) *confined or restrained to an elect Number : but* (in the same Manner, in all Respects) *comprehends the whole Race of Adam.*— This therefore is now to be consider'd.

And I shall first take some Notice of what Mr. *Beach* offers, in Confirmation of his Principles. “ And as it is (says he) frequently “ and most expressly asserted in Scripture, *He died for all, He tasted “ Death for every Man, He is the Propitiation for the Sins of the “ whole World.* Now if such Expressions as *the World, the whole “ World, all and every Man*, be allow'd to mean not all indeed, “ nor the greatest Part, but only a small Number selected from “ all Sorts of Men, who do actually obtain eternal Salvation ; then “ the Holy Ghost with the same Propriety might have asserted, “ that the *whole World* should be saved, and that all and every “ *Man* should obtain eternal Happiness.”

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To this I first answer, as above, that I doubt not but the Redemption by Christ is of *sufficient Value* for every individual Child of Adam; so sufficient, that *every one* of them shall surely obtain Salvation, by Vertue of that Redemption, who exercise a true and lively Faith in Christ: And that *every one* under Gospel-Light has a *sufficient Warrant* to believe in Christ for eternal Salvation: And therefore, that there is nothing at all to hinder their being saved thro' Faith in Christ, but their own indulged Corruption, and wilful and obstinate Choice.— But such is the dreadful Case of a sinful World, that even Mr. *Beach* himself allows (p. 15,) *No Man will ever come to Christ and accept of his kind Offer, unless the Father draw him, and it be given him from above.* Whence it follows, that no Man will ever be saved by this general Grace or universal Redemption, because no Man will (by Vertue thereof) ever comply with the Terms proposed in the Gospel.— Though this general Redemption puts all Men under a Capacity of *Salvation*, upon Faith in Christ: Yet inasmuch as such is the natural *Opposition* of all Men to the Terms of the Gospel, that no Man ever did, or ever will comply with the Gospel-Offer, without *special* and *distinguishing Grace*, whereby they are *made willing in the Day of the Mediator's Power*; it is certain, that *no Man* will ever get to Heaven, who is not Partaker of a more special Redemption (whether in Point of Impetration or Application) than *the World* in general are Partakers of: As will be more particularly explain'd, before I dismiss this Subject.

But then, I have this further Remark upon Mr. *Beach's* Reasoning; that the Scripture does in Fact assert the *Application* of the Redemption by Christ, to the *World*, in the same Manner, and in the same universal Terms, as it asserts the *Impetration* of it. His boasted Argument can therefore afford him no Conclusion at all.— This is very apparent, from the following Texts of Scripture. 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto himself; not imputing their Trespases.*—Col. i. 20. *And having made Peace by the Blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile ALL THINGS to himself.*—Joh. vi. 33. *For the Bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the WORLD.*—Rom. v. 18. *Even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon ALL MEN unto Justification of LIFE.*—Joh. i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the WORLD.*—Joh. xii. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw ALL MEN unto me.*— Since these and such like Texts of Scripture must have a limited Construction, it belongs to Mr. *Beach* to give a Reason, why the Texts cited by him, are not to be understood with the same Limitations.— This Remark will be further corroborated by observing, that the Scripture not only every where considers the *Application* of special Redemption to be of the same Extent with the *Purchase* of it, but shews us, that the former is a necessary Fruit and

and Consequence of the latter. Thus, Rom. viii. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things?*— Joh. x. 11, 16. *I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep.— And other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold: them also I must bring in; and they shall hear my Voice.— Joh. vi. 37, 39. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. — And this is the Father's Will, that of ALL which he hath given me, I should lose NOTHING; but should raise it up again at the last Day.*

Now let Mr. Beach's Argument be turn'd upon himself; and what Answer soever he is pleased to give to it, may with like Propriety and Force be given to all that he has offered upon this Head. "Now if such Expressions, as God's reconciling the **WORLD** to himself in Christ, as reconciling **ALL THINGS** to himself by the Blood of the Cross, as that Christ giveth Life to the **WORLD**, as his bestowing upon **ALL MEN** Justification of Life, and his drawing **ALL MEN** to him, &c, be allowed to mean, that *not all* indeed, nor the greatest Part, but only a small Number selected from all Sorts of Men," are actually reconciled to God, justified, and made Partakers of eternal Life; then it can't be proved from the Use of the same, or like Expressions with Relation to Christ's purchasing of Redemption by his Death, that every individual Person is effectually redeemed thereby. — Moreover, If God will freely give all Things, to all those for whom his Son was delivered up; if those Sheep for whom Christ gave his Life, must be brought in, and shall hear his Voice; if **ALL** shall come to him, and he will lose **NOTHING**, that was given him to be redeemed, but will raise them **ALL** up at the last Day; then it follows, that all those whom Christ has redeemed by his Death, all those who were given to him by the Father to be redeemed, and for whom he undertook to work out an effectual Redemption, shall be eventually or actually and eternally saved; and the Application of Christ's Redemption does undoubtedly extend to every individual Person, whom he has undertaken to redeem and save.

Mr. Beach argues, "If Redemption is as much confined as *eternal Salvation*, and Christ died for none who do *perish*, it is certainly as proper to say, that all Men shall be eternally happy, as that Christ died for all."— To which I answer, he sees that the Scriptures do say the one as much as the other; and therefore, that they are both proper to be spoken, in the same Sense, and in the same Extent. And he can give no Reason, why the latter should not be as strictly and literally understood, as the former. — And thus all his Arguments on this Head, must necessarily fall to the Ground. — Upon the whole then it appears, that in whatever Sense we understand such Expressions of the sacred Scriptures, as that *Christ died for all, tasted Death for every Man, &c.* it must be

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be acknowledged, that he designed to, and will actually, bestow eternal *Salvation* upon all the Subjects of his special Redemption. — In what Sense he died for all, and in what Sense the Elect only are the Subjects of his special Redemption, I have spoken something already ; but am now to speak more particularly.

In Order to set this in a proper Light, I proceed in the next Place to consider; whether Christ has *equally* and *indifferently* redeem'd the *whole* Race of *Adam*; and is in the *same* Sense, and in all the *same* Respects, the Redeemer and Saviour of all Men alike.— That Christ has not *thus* redeemed all Mankind, will appear with the strongest Evidence, from the following Considerations.

If Christ be the Saviour of *Believers* in such a Way and in such Respects, as he is *not* the Saviour of *all* Men, then all Men are not equally and alike redeemed by him.—Now, that he is in such a *special* Manner the Saviour of *Believers*, is confirm'd from 1 Tim. iv. 10. *Who is the Saviour of all Men, especially of those that believe.* — Again,

If there be a *chosen* Number, in a Manner distinct from the rest of the World, *given* to Christ by the Father, to be redeem'd and saved by him, then *all* Men were not equally and alike redeemed by him.— And that this is so in Fact, we are assured from Christ's own Mouth. Joh. xvii. 9, 20. *I pray not for the World : but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine ; neither pray I for these alone (viz. that are now my Disciples) but for them also, which shall believe in me thro' their Word.*—Again,

If all those who are given to Christ by the Father to be redeem'd and saved by him, will eventually *believe* in him, and actually obtain eternal Life, then *all* Men are not equally redeem'd by him : Since it is undoubted Fact, that *all* Men have not Faith, but many perish in their Unbelief. — And yet we are assured from Christ's own Mouth, that this is so in Fact. Joh. 6. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me : and he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* So likewise, Joh. xvii. 2. *As thou hast given him Power over all Flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him.* See also Joh. vi. 39. And Joh. x. 28, 29.

Moreover,

If Christ *thinks* his heavenly Father, for *hiding* the Benefits of his Redemption from some, and revealing them to others, then it's certain, that he did *not* design his Redemption for every one equally, and alike.— Surely he did not thank his heavenly Father for defeating the Design of his Redemption, with respect to any Men, and yet he thanks him for *revealing* Salvation to some, and not to others. Matth. xi. 25, 26. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast*

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*bid these Things from the Wise and Prudent ; and hast revealed them unto Babes : Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight. Once more,*

If no Man whatever will be *eternally saved*, but those only who are *specialy redeemed*, in a Manner distinct from the rest of the World, then every individual Person of Adam's Posterity are not equally and alike redeemed by Christ. — Now, that no Man whatever will be eternally saved, but those only who are redeemed in a Manner distinct from the rest of the World, is evident, in that no Man can come to Christ, unless it be given unto him of the Father, (Joh. vi. 65.) and in that it is not given to any of the Father, to come to Christ and believe in him, but only to those for whom that Gift of Grace is purchased by the Redemption of Christ ; as appears from Joh. x. 14, 15, 16. *I know my Sheep ; and am known of mine ; and I lay down my Life for the Sheep. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my Sheep.* — The same is also further evident from the Consideration following.

If Christ has by his Redemption purchased *Faith*, and the actual Communication of all *sanctifying Grace*, for every one that will ever be eternally saved, then none can be eternally saved, but by Virtue of a *special* Redemption, not common to all Men.—For all Men don't obtain saving Faith, and sanctifying Grace.—And yet Christ has purchased the actual Communication of Faith, and all sanctifying Grace, for every one that will ever be eternally saved. Joh. xvii. 16, 17, 19. *They are not of the World, even as I am not of the World. Sanctify them through thy Truth ; thy Word is Truth.—And for their Sakes I sanctify my self, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth.*—Isa. liii. 10. *He shall see his Seed ; he shall prolong his Days ; and the Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hands.*—Rom. ix. 23. *And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory, on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore-prepared unto Glory.* — Eph. v. 25, 26. *Christ also loved the Church ; and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it : — That he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle or any such Thing : but that it should be holy and without Blemish.*

Thus then, upon a Review of the Case, it evidently appears, that although Christ is in some Sense *the Saviour of all Men*, so that all who enjoy the Gospel, have the gracious and free Offer of Salvation, yea, all have a full and sufficient Warrant to believe in Christ, and each Individual of them shall surely obtain Salvation, who comply with the free and gracious Offer of the Gospel : Yet Christ has wrought out a *special* and *distinguishing* Redemption for the Elect, whereby they are not only put into a salvable State, but shall be actually saved.— He has not only purchased for them

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a Possibility of Salvation ; but the actual Communication of Grace here and Glory hereafter.— He has not only procured for them, that they *may* be saved, if *they will* ; but that they shall assuredly have Salvation begun in them here, and perfected hereafter, because *God will*.

This Truth has (I think) been made sufficiently evident, to every unprejudiced Person.—But if further Evidence be thought needful, it shall be at Mr. *Beach's* Service (if God spare my Life and Health) when he has given a rational and fair Answer, to what is already offered.

I now proceed further to attend upon Mr. *Beach's* Reasoning.  
 “ But (says he) if *Redemption* be of no larger Extent than *Salvation*, then no Man who perishes in his Wickedness, doth or can  
 “ deny *Christ* who bought him ; he being no more bought or re-  
 “ deem'd by *Christ* than the *Devils* themselves.” (P. 8.)

How unjust is this Representation ! From whom did Mr. *Beach* take this View of the Case ?— Is it not constantly acknowledged by all the Reformed, that in some Sense *Christ* died for all ; that there is a sufficient Value in the Blood of his Cross, for the Salvation of all Mankind ; that Salvation by *Christ* should be preach'd to all ; that all are Partakers of the Strivings of the Spirit ; that there is nothing more needful for the Salvation of any, than their believing Entertainment of *Christ*, and Acceptance of the Benefits already purchased for them ; and that none will perish at last but through their Neglect of the great Salvation, and for their wilful Continuance in their Sins ?— And now is all this done for the *Devils* ?— What if *Christ* has done more for some, than others ; purchased for and bestowed upon them special efficacious Grace, whereby they are made willing in the Day of his Power, and brought to comply with the Gospel Offer ? Will this excuse the rest of the World in their Rejection of *Christ* ; for which they have no Plea, but their obstinate *Unwillingness* to accept of him, when offered upon Terms the most gracious and condescending !

Mr. *Beach* goes on to argue.— “ And if this be true, when  
 “ wicked Men are come into the Regions of eternal Despair, they  
 “ will be perfectly easy in their Consciences, and free from all Remorse and Self-Reproaches, for having despised redeeming Grace.  
 “ For they must know, that no Pardon, no Aids of the Spirit,  
 “ no eternal Life, was ever purchased or sincerely offered to them :  
 “ So that Necessity, not Choice, brought them to Hell. And he  
 “ must be a Fool, or a Mad-Man, that will vex or condemn himself, for what was never in his Power to avoid.”

Call it not meer Exclamation, if I say, Did ever Man venture to talk at this Rate! Would not a small Allay of Modesty and Sobriety, on so tremendous a Subject, have much better become a Man of Mr. Beach's Character? — What! will Sinners be perfectly easy in their Consciences, in the Regions of eternal Despair, when they come to reflect, that Christ wrought out a *sufficient* Redemption for them, *exhibited* himself, and freely *offered* his saving Benefits in the Gospel to 'em; but they wilfully *rejected* both him and them! — And when they reflect, that God had used all proper *Means* with them for their Salvation; made known their Duty, and the *Way of Salvation* to them; laid all proper *Motives* before them, by the Discovery of their Need of Salvation, by Threatnings and Warnings, by Promises and Invitations, that he might excite both their Hopes and Fears; sent them his *Ambassadors*, to beseech them to be reconciled to God; excited them to consider and turn to God, by the common Motions of his *Holy Spirit*; and long exercised *Patience* and Forbearance towards them in the Use of all these Methods and Means of Grace; and after all, they rejected, abused, and sinned away all these Advantages, from no other Necessity, but the Indulgence of their Lusts, and the Perverseness of their Wills; and finally perished, because they *would not come unto Christ, that they might have Life!* — Is it possible, *Conscience* should be *perfectly Easy* under these Reflections, when awaken'd by Hell-Fire! Surely, Sinners will have another View of Things in the Regions of Despair, than is pretended by Mr. Beach in his Discourse. Their Consciences won't then allow them to argue, as this Gentleman now seems to do, that they were *excuseable*, in not improving what Grace and Power they had, because Christ had not purchased greater Benefits for them, or not bestowed the same upon them, as he had done by some others. — They'll then feel, that their Perdition was their *wilful Choice*; and therefore most just and righteous.

Would Mr. Beach himself accept of such an *Excuse*, as he here puts into the Mouths of impenitent Sinners, from an unfaithful and rebellious *Servant*! Would he be satisfied with such a Plea as this! “It's true, Sir, I neglected your Business, and wasted your Substance: but it was because my Inclination and Will led me to do so; and I could not will otherwise than I did, while my Affections were so corrupt, and my Will was excited by such a View of Things as I then had: and therefore, I should be a Fool, or a Mad-Man, to condemn my self, for what was not in my Power to avoid. You should have used some effectual Methods to change my Affections; and should have done all in your Power to have efficaciously changed my Will: And then I should not have transgressed.” — It is certain, that the Foundation of this Plea is as just in the present Case as the other;

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other ; and the Application is accordingly most easy and familiar.

And now Mr. *Beach* must allow me to turn his own Artillery upon himself ; and let him try what Way he can avoid the Force of it.—— He tells us, that “ *Election* denotes certain peculiar Privileges and Favours, bestowed on some, whereby they are distinguished from others. To *elect*, is to chuse one before another. Now in that God has distinguished *Christians* from all the rest of Mankind, by making us his peculiar People, therefore all *Christians* are the *Elect*, the *Election of Grace*, and *Vessels of Mercy*.—— Which is affirmed of all Christians in general, because they are separated from, and preferred before the rest of Mankind, to enjoy the unsearchable Riches of God’s Grace, by Jesus Christ. (P. 8, 9.)

Thus then, by Mr. *Beach*’s own Account of the Matter, the much greater Part of the World of Mankind are by an Act of God’s Sovereignty left in a State of *Perdition*, without so much as the Means of Grace, or the Knowledge of any Possibility of Salvation by Christ ; while a smaller Number, selected from the rest of the World, are preferred before them, to be *Vessels of Mercy*, and enjoy the unsearchable Riches of God’s Grace by Jesus Christ.——“ And if this be true, then when those poor *Heathen* are come into the Regions of eternal Despair, they will be perfectly easy in their Consciences, and free from all Remorse and Self-Reproaches, for having despised the Riches of God’s Goodness. For they must know, that no Pardon, no Aids of the Spirit, no eternal Life was ever purchased for them, or at all offered to them : so *Necessity*, not Choice, brought them to Hell. And he must be a Fool, or a Mad-Man, who will vex or condemn himself, for what never was in his Power to avoid.”

When Mr. *Beach* will be pleased to pass his Censure upon his own Argument, as I have turn’d it : And tell us whether he does, or does not esteem it a good one, a Reply will be ready at Hand, however he decides the Case. —— If this Argument be good, as I have now apply’d it, then his Reasoning must be good for Nothing. For with what Colour can an Argument be urged against another Man’s Sentiment, which militates with as great or greater Force against his own ?— If this Argument be not good, as used by me, in the present Case, then it is certainly good for Nothing as urged by him. — For there is an infinite Difference in Point of Privilege, between those *Gospel-Enjoyers*, who are not Partakers of Christ’s special redeeming Mercy and Love ; and those poor *Heathen*, who never heard so much as the Name of Christ, the Saviour : As has been already proved.

Upon

Upon the whole then, how much better would it have been for Mr. Beach, to have reflected upon this tremendous Mystery of the divine Sovereignty in some such Manner as the great Apostle did, when discoursing upon the same awful Subject? Rom. xi. 33. *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments; and his Ways past-finding out! For who hath known the Mind of the Lord; or who hath been his Counsellor?*

I proceed next to the Consideration of Mr. Beach's Attempt to prove, that "Enjoying the Privileges of the Gospel, is that Election of Grace, which so often occurs in the New-Testament." This he repeatedly asserts, and particularly insists upon; and it must be received for true, as far as his Word will go in the Case. But the Reasons why he thus understands the Doctrine of Election, he sees fit to keep to himself; unless the mentioning some Texts of Scripture, without any proper Illustration or Evidence of their Pertinency to his Purpose, be esteem'd by him sufficient to prove the Point.—— Whether this be so or not, I shall now consider.

I shall first take Notice of two Texts of Scripture cited by him, from the first Epistle of Peter. I mention them both together, because one Answer will serve for 'em both.—— The first is, 1 Pet. ii. 9. *Ye are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People.* The second is, 1 Pet. v. 13. *The Church that is at Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you.*—— Of the first of these Texts he tells us, "It is affirmed of all Christians in general, because they are separated from, and preferred before the rest of Mankind, to enjoy the unsearchable Riches of God's Grace by Jesus Christ." Of the second he tells us, that "by their being elect together, the Apostle only means, that these two Churches were planted about the same Time."—— But why does he understand these Texts in this View? Is there any Thing in the Texts themselves, any Thing in the Nature of Things, which makes this Interpretation so much as probable? Here he is silent.—— This is his Sense of the Texts; and we must receive this Comment, upon his Authority.—— But let us look into the Case a little, and judge for ourselves.

Are all Christians, in general, "a royal Priesthood, and an holy Nation?" Do they all "shew forth the Praises of God," as they ought to do whom He hath "called out of Darkness into his marvellous Light?" Is it not evident beyond all Contradiction, that this Text does not, cannot, refer to all professed Christians, in common: But to such only, who are not meerly chosen to the Enjoyment of Gospel-Privileges, but are also chosen to Sanctification and eternal Salvation?—— Let the Apostle himself determine this

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Case, by the Superscription or Direction of this Epistle, in the two first Verses of it. — Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the STRANGERS scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; *Elect*, according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit, unto Obedience, and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ.— Here then, we see who the “*Elect*” are, to whom this Epistle was directed, who were “the chosen Generation, the royal Priesthood,” in the first cited Text: and how empty Mr. Beach’s Pretence is, that this implies “all Christians in general.”—— Have all professing Christians, in general, “the Sanctification of the Spirit, unto Obedience?” Are they all “sprinkled with the Blood of Christ?” Have they all this Evidence of their being “*Elect*, according to the Fore-knowledge of God the Father?” Alas, the Case is far otherwise!— Here we likewise see, what the Apostle means by the Word *Elect* in the second cited Text. He means such as were “chosen according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father,” to Holiness here and eternal Happiness hereafter; for to these was the Epistle expressly directed: and not, as Mr. Beach pretends, that *these two Churches were planted about the same Time*. For Nothing can be more trifling and ludicrous, than this Pretence.— Which, I beseech him, were the “two Churches that were planted about the same Time?” — The one must be the Church that was at *Babylon*, the other the Church of all the converted “STRANGERS, scatter’d throughout *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*.” This latter must be a vastly extended Church indeed; which must have required a very active and indefatigable *Metropolitan*, duely to inspect it! GALATIA, which was comparatively but a very small Part of this pretended Church, contain’d more than one Church, in the Apostle Paul’s Account of it. *Gal. i. 2. Unto the CHURCHES of Galatia*. — But were it admitted, that this prodigious Extent of Territory was all consider’d as one Church; Does this Gentleman suppose, that all the Strangers throughout so large a Tract of the World, were converted “about the same Time?” Don’t we all know, from the sacred Story, that it took the Apostles a very large Space of Time, to propagate the Gospel thro’ those very distant Regions of the World?— Thus we see what becomes of Mr. Beach’s first and chief Foundation for his new and chimerical Doctrine of *Election*.

The second Text produced by Mr. Beach in favour of this Notion, is, *Eph. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love; having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children*. — But how does he prove from this Text, that enjoying the Privileges of the Gospel is that “*Election of Grace*, that so often occurs in the New Testament?”—— He assures us that “in this eternal Election, St. Paul comprehends all Christian People.

People." And this is all the Reason he pretends to assign, for the Pertinency of this Text to his Purpose.

I can't imagine what should prompt him to cite this Text, unless it were merely to impose upon an injudicious Reader, with a Shew of Scripture-Authority. What can be more directly repugnant to his Scheme, than this Passage of Scripture?— Was not this Epistle directed to the SAINTS, which were at *Ephesus*, ver. 1? Are they not represented as *accepted in the Beloved*, ver. 6? Are they not, in the cited Text, said to be *chosen, that they should be holy and without Blame before God in Love*; and *predestinated to the Adoption of Children*?— But are all professing Christians SAINTS? Are they all *accepted in the Beloved*? Are they all *holy and without Blame*? Are they all God's adopted *Children*?— Could Mr. *Beach* imagine, that citing a Scripture, so directly repugnant to what he would maintain, will ever prevail upon Men of Reason and Conscience, to reject the Doctrines of the Reformation, for such a new and trifling Notion as this?

The last Text cited by him, is 2 *Pet. i. 10. Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure.*— Upon it I must observe, That all which has been said with Relation to the two first cited Texts, are applicable to this also; this being in the same Epistle, and spoken to the same Persons, as those other Texts were: and this therefore might have been consider'd conjunctly with them, were it not for an Argument Mr. *Beach* pretends to draw from this, which he may suppose deserves Consideration— He thus argues: "This cannot be meant of an absolute personal Election; for, if there be such a Thing, it is not in our Power to make it surer and firmer than God has made it." P. 14.— But is it not possible to make this sure to *our selves*? Is it not possible by making our *Calling* sure, to make it also sure, that we are the Objects of God's *electing* Love? Is it not possible to know the Cause by the Effect, the Fountain by the Streams; or the Antecedent by the Consequent? And does not the Apostle assure us, that this is possible by such Means to be known? 1 *Theff. i. 4, 5. Knowing, Brethren beloved, your Election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in Word only; but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance.*— But now let us turn the Tables, and see how pertinent the Text is to the Purpose for which it is cited, and to Mr. *Beach's* Doctrine of Election. In that View, it must be thus paraphras'd, "Let Christians give Diligence to make it sure, that they profess Christianity."— This is the necessary Construction of the Words, if consider'd as speaking in Favour of his Scheme; and there needs no farther Remarks upon it. It would be an idle and ludicrous Attempt, to undertake to prove, that there does not need much Diligence, to be assured, that we make a christian Profession?

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There is one Text of Scripture quoted by Mr. *Beach*, which I have not yet taken Notice of ; because I did not know whether he cited it as a direct Proof of his Doctrine of Election, or not ; though he tells us, that Election and the quoted Text are both to be understood of our being called to the Knowledge of Christianity. However, that he mayn't complain of Neglect, I shall take some very brief Notice of it.—The Text I refer to, is this, Eph. ii. 8. *By Grace are ye saved through Faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the Gift of God : not of Works, lest any Man should boast.* “ This Salvation (says he) which these Christians had already obtain'd, was not *eternal* Salvation : but a Deliverance from that wretched Condition they were in, and the horrid Guilt they had contracted, while *Heathens.*” — But I demand, Were they delivered from their former Guilt ; and therefore justified before God : And yet not Partakers of *eternal* Salvation ? The Apostle teaches us another Doctrine, Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he justified, them he also glorified.* — I have observ'd already, that these *Ephesians* were consider'd as SAINTS, and addressed as such, Chap. i. ver. 1. — Now God *hath given to such eternal Life.* 1 Joh. v. 11. He not only *will* glorify them : but he *hath* already glorified them. Glory is already begun in their Souls ; and will be carried on from Glory to Glory. 2 Cor. iii. 18. He not only will give them eternal Life : but hath already given it. They are at present actual Partakers of that Salvation, which shall never end. Joh. iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life.—And shall not come into Condemnation ; but is passed from Death unto Life.* Joh. v. 24.

Mr. *Beach* further observes, “ This Text does not mean, that their Faith is so God's Gift, as not to be of themselves, as is most evident to any who reads the Original.” *Ibid* — This is certainly a great Mistake. For many learned Commentators and Criticks, more capable Judges of the Original than he or I can pretend to be, have read the Original, and have found the quite contrary to what Mr. *Beach* asserts, to be most evident.— What, I suppose, he means is, that the Relative THAT, being of the neuter Gender, and the Word FAITH of the feminine, they can't agree together. But if he would only translate the Greek Relative *That Thing*, viz. the Thing last spoken of, so all Difficulty at once vanishes. (*Vid. Beza in Loc.*) — But what will Mr. *Beach* gain by this Criticism ? — It must be either *Faith*, or *Grace*, or else the whole Matter of the Sentence foregoing, which the Apostle asserts to be *not of our selves.* — There is the same Objection against the Greek Relative's agreeing with *Grace*, as with *Faith*. The Apostle must therefore, according to this Criticism, refer to the whole Sentence aforegoing ; and mean, that our Salvation, by *Grace*, through *Faith*, is not of our selves.— Well then ! *Grace*

is not of our selves ; *Salvation* is not of our selves ; and *Faith* is not of our selves : but they are all the *Gift* of God. And if Mr. *Beach* chuses this Comment, I'll not contend with him.— He understands it (he tells us) to signify that their being saved or deliver'd by the *Gospel*, was not of themselves. But he should remember, that the Apostle here speaks of no other but being saved by *Grace* through *Faith* : And therefore he here agrees with the same Doctrine, which he elsewhere teaches, that *Faith* is not of our selves ; but that *Christ Jesus is both the Author and Finisher of our Faith*. (Heb. xii. 2.) And that *God fulfills the Work of Faith with Power*. 2 Theff. i. 11.

But what Evidence have we all this while, that this Text refers to Nothing but our Enjoyment of the *Gospel* ?— No more than this, it is Mr. *Beach's* Opinion : but why it is so, he either does not know, or does not see Cause to tell.

To conclude this Discourse upon *Election*.— The infinite Perfections of the divine Nature make the Doctrine of personal Election most certain and evident : that there is no Room for any one, who has a just Apprehension of the glorious Attributes of God, to call it into Question, as Mr. *Beach* repeatedly does.— The divine Omniscience must certainly have all Futurities in View at once. — Impossible it is, that God should foreknow all Events with Respect to rational Agents, if they were not certainly future, or to be :— And equally impossible that they could be future, or foreknown by God as Futurities, if not according to the Counsel of his Will. — Hence it necessarily follows, that the eternal State of each single Person, with all the Means conducing to it, is what *God's Counsel had determined before*.— I am the more convinced of the Justice of this Reasoning, because the Apostle has used it long before me. Rom. viii. 29. *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son*.— When Mr. *Beach* pleases to make a Reply, and to shew the Reason why he doubts, whether there be such a Thing as a personal Election, I desire he would give a particular Answer to this Argument.

The Order of Mr. *Beach's* Discourse calls upon me next to consider, whether God has given to every Man Grace sufficient for Salvation : But he having in the Prosecution of his Discourse upon that Subject, made some very indecent Reflections upon the Doctrine of ORIGINAL SIN, it seems proper in the first Place, to consider and remove these out of the Way.

“ Could we (says he) have had our Choice, when *Adam* was created, I am perswaded, that no Man who had a just Regard to his own Interest, would willingly have reposed such a vast Trust in the Hands of *Adam*, nor indeed of the best *Angel* in Heaven,

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“Heaven, as to be obliged to be eternally happy or miserable, according to the Choice he should make.” (Page 19.) And again, “As to the Bulk of Mankind, he having given them such a *Diabolical* Nature, that they can no more cease to sin, than to breathe. — But are left in as helpless and hopeless a Condition as the *Devils*, who fell by their own personal Act; while these were undone by *Adam's* Sin, to which they never consented: Yet for this Sin, or the necessary and unavoidable Effects of it, they must be tormented to all Eternity.” — I am sure, I have no Need to make any Remarks upon the bold and daring (not to say the profane) Air of this Language and Manner of Address! It lies much too open to the Reflection of every Reader, who has any just Impressions of the tremendous Majesty of Heaven and Earth. — I shall therefore confine my Remarks, to what is principally design'd to be insinuated in this Part of his Discourse; which seems to be, that it would not be *just* in God, to impute *Adam's* Sin to his Descendants, because it was not equal, nor what we, if then existing, should have consented to, that he should be our federal Representative, and we appointed to stand or fall with him: And therefore, that we cannot be under such an Imputation of *Adam's* Sin. — This must have been his Meaning, if his Words are consider'd as signifying any Thing at all to his Purpose. This therefore, I shall briefly consider.

And I remark first, that to me there is nothing more evident, than that *Adam's* Sin is imputed to us; and consequently that God is most *equal* and *just* in the Imputation. For the Judge of all the Earth always does, and always will do *Right*. — It is much more becoming such poor Worms as we, to enquire whether God has done this, than whether it is equal that he should do it. — For if the former be evident, the latter should be concluded without any Hesitancy or Dispute. — This should swallow up all our Doubts and Enquiries of that Kind. The infinite Fountain of Justice and Equity most certainly does, and cannot but do, what is equal and right; whether we can see into the Equity of his Dispensations, or not. — And I think, we have no less Certainty from our continued Experience, that we are *fallen* Creatures, than we have of our own Existence. — No Man can look into himself, and not find the dreadful Defection of his whole Nature; his Understanding naturally dark, his Affections irregular, his Appetites and Passions exorbitant, his Will perverse; and his Soul running out more after the Creature, than the Creator; and dreadfully distant from a Conformity to, and Delight in the glorious Perfections of God. — No Man can look about him, but he must behold the World of Mankind in a degenerate State. He must see, that Wickedness covers the Face of the Earth; that the natural Disposition of Mankind in common, from Generation to Generation, is evil, only evil, and that continually. — And whence did this flow?

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It is certain from the divine Perfections, that we could not come thus polluted out of the Hands of God at our first Creation ; But that human Nature must have degenerated, and lost its primitive Rectitude. Nor could the blessed God be the Author or Spring of this : And therefore, that there must be some other Source of this Apostacy.— Why then can't we rest satisfied, without disputing, in the Representation God himself has given us of this Matter in his Word ? It is amazing, that any Man who has the least Reverence for the Word of God, should call in Question a Fact, which is so strongly and repeatedly asserted, as well as particularly explain'd, in many Places of the sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament ; though more fully in the latter, and perhaps most fully in the Epistle to the *Romans*.— Are we not there taught (in Chapter 5th) 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 ; That through the Offence of one, many be dead ; That the Judgment was by one, to Condemnation : And that by one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners, &c ?— Is it possible, that any Thing can be represented in more intelligible, expressive, and convincing Words, than the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin is here represented and confirmed ?— And what greater Confirmation can we have of any Truth, than our own Experience and the Word of God ?— What then stands in the Way of this Doctrine ? We mayn't perhaps see into the Equity of the divine Conduct, in this Matter. What then ? Can't we be thoroughly satisfied, that all God's Ways are just and right, whether we can account for some of them, or not ? Can't we adore his Footsteps, when we are forc'd to cry out, *O the Depths of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God !*

But then, in the present Case, there appears Matter enough of Satisfaction to every humble Soul, who will look into it with an unprejudiced Eye.— Mr. *Beach* indeed tells us, “ he is perswaded, that no Man who had a just Regard to his own Interest, would willingly have reposed such a vast Trust in the Hands of *Adam*.” — But on the contrary, I am perswaded that every Man (if then actually existing) who had known his own Interest, would willingly have reposed this Trust in the Hands of *Adam* ; and would have esteemed it much safer there, than in his own Hands.

Was it not an incomparably easier Thing, for *Adam* to have refrain'd from the *forbidden Fruit*, than for every one, or for any one of his Posterity, for ever to have kept the Law of Nature, in all its Demands ?— Was not *Adam* much more concern'd, than any of his Posterity could have been, not to incur the Penalty of a broken Law ; in that he had not only his own Interest, but the Interest of all his Posterity at Stake ?— Was not *Adam* much more likely to stand, than any of his Posterity could have been ; having

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at least as great natural Powers, and so much higher Motives, as his being God's immediate Workmanship, his personally receiving the Law from the Mouth of God, and his representing so many Millions of Souls besides himself, to give him the most lively Impressions of his Duty and Interest, and the strongest Inducements to Vigilance and Care lest he should fall?— Was there not the greatest Probability in the World, that *Adam* would by the Influence of such powerful Motives, have kept the easy Condition of Life; and have thereby established himself and all his Posterity in a perpetual State of Life and Happiness?— And on the other Hand, was there any Thing a like Probability, that every one of his Posterity would perpetually have kept the Law of Nature; when the Demands of it would have been (at least in their Duration) incomparably greater, their Strength no greater than his, and they liable to Temptation as great, every Hour of their Lives, as his was at the fatal Trial? And was it not a Thing infinitely desirable, to be brought into a State of Stability, and freed of all uneasy Apprehensions of Danger from a prevalent Temptation?— And I may add to all this; Would it not have been voted, by all the World, a Dispensation of infinite Goodness, if *Adam* had stood; and we had all through him been established in a State of Life and Peace for ever?— When all these Things are consider'd, let any Man judge, whether he would not have concurred to the Covenant made with *Adam*, if he had then personally existed, and it had been left to his own Choice; and whether this was not a good and equal Dispensation, in that God, who takes his Measures from the Perfections of his own Nature, and not from the future Conduct of his Creatures?— But of these Things I have spoken more largely in another Discourse, to which the Reader is refer'd, if he desires fuller Satisfaction.\*

I am now to consider, whether God has universally and indifferently given to all Men *Grace sufficient* for Salvation: Or whether we can obtain eternal Life, by Vertue of our Improvement of that *common Grace*, which is given to all Men.— This Mr. *Beach* strongly and confidently asserts, and endeavours to prove.

“ If that common Grace (says he) which God affords to all Christians, did not render their Salvation possible, we had e'en as good be without, as receive it.” (Page 17.)— That he means by their Salvation being possible, that it is attainable by their Improvement of that common Grace, is certain from his further Explications of his Meaning. He accordingly tells us, “ Tho' Man is a fallen Creature, yet there is in every one a Power of self-determining, of chusing and refusing, by which a Man can comply with, or reject the Suggestions of the Holy Spirit. (P. 21.)

\* *Scripture-Doctrine* &c. Disc. II.

—And again, “ If we suppose two Men of the same natural Abilities, and under the same Advantages and Operations of the Holy Ghost, the one may so improve his Power of Consideration, as to become a wise and happy Man, and an eternal Companion of the blessed Angels; while the other by neglecting his Reason, and abandoning himself to be govern’d by his fleshly Appetites, may make himself so vile a Monster, as to be fit for nothing but the Portion of Devils.” (Page 28.)—With much more to the same Purpose.— His Arguments to confirm this Doctrine, are now to be considered.

He argues from Ezek. xxiv. 13. *Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, therefore thou shalt not be purged any more.*— “ Which, without all Peradventure (says he) denotes, that God had done his Part: but it failed through their neglecting to do their Part.” (Page 17.)—Very well! God had done *his Part*, that is (according to Mr. Beach’s own Interpretation) he had given them *common Grace*, whereby they might reform their Lives, and perform the external Duties of Religion: But they provoked God by *not improving* these Advantages and Powers, that were given them.— Now what follows? How does it appear, that *improving common Grace* would have intitled them to, or qualified them for *eternal Salvation*? Does the Text say any Thing of this Kind; or can any Thing of this Kind be any Way deduced from it?—No! but this is the whole Force of the Argument. *Common Grace* must be sufficient to *all Men* for eternal Salvation; because God gave *common Grace* to *some Men*, and was provoked with them for not improving it. Or in other Words, God gives *Power* to Men to *improve common Grace*, therefore the *Improvement* of *common Grace* is *sufficient* to eternal Salvation.— *That is*, the *Improvement* of *common Grace* is *sufficient* to Salvation, because it is so.— Let Mr. Beach try his Skill; and make more of this Argument, if he can.

He proceeds.— “ So Hof. xiii. 9. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self.* But how can a Sinner’s Destruction be *of himself*, if he can’t help it, and God never put it in his Power to be any Thing else, but a wicked and miserable Creature?

To this I answer, that the Argument concludes the quite contrary Way. For, if it be as here supposed, that Sinners have Power to be nothing but *wicked* Creatures, it is certain that they will destroy themselves; and can’t do otherwise. For *Wickedness overthroweth the Sinner*, Prov. xiii. 6. — But perhaps by the Expression, *how can a Sinner’s Destruction be of himself*? Mr. Beach may mean, how can a Sinner be the *faulty Cause* of his own Destruction, if God has not given him Power to be any Thing else, but a *wicked Creature*?— But to this I also answer, as before. If this be supposed,

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posed, he must necessarily be the faulty Cause of his own Destruction, upon that very Account : For *Wickedness* is always faulty ; and always, by its natural and moral Efficacy, the Cause of Destruction : And therefore he that necessarily continues a wicked Creature, must necessarily, by that very Means, be the faulty Cause of his own Destruction.— What therefore could Mr. *Beach* mean by this Argument, unless it be to deduce this horrible and amazing Consequence ; That if God don't give the Sinner *Grace sufficient* for Salvation, he can't help his working *Wickedness* : and therefore God, and not he, must be the blameable Cause of it : And his Destruction must be of God, and not of himself !—— I can see no Colour of Argument in it, unless it be taken in this View. And if this be his Meaning, I must needs say, it is high Time he should learn more awful Reverence for the glorious GOD, than to dare either to speak, or think, after this Manner. And that this is indeed his Meaning, appears evident, by his sarcastick Flouts, elsewhere in this Discourse, particularly in P. 25, where he has these scandalous Expressions ; “ As to the Bulk of Mankind, he having “ given them such a wicked and *diabolical Nature*, that they can “ no more cease to sin, than to breathe, &c.” See likewise, Pages 19, 23 and 26.— There is therefore too just Occasion to apply the Apostle's Rebuke to him : *Nay, but O Man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, to make one Vessel unto Honour ; and another unto Dishonour ?* Rom. ix. 20.

Here then I might fairly dismiss this pretended Argument. But this being the main Plea, which runs through his whole Discourse, it may be proper to make some more particular Reflections upon it, once for all. And here,

1. What does Mr. *Beach* mean by God's *not* having put it in the Sinner's *Power*, to be any Thing else, but a wicked and miserable Creature ?— Don't the *Calvinist* Divines unitedly agree, that God has given *common Grace*, even to those, unto whom he has not given his special and saving Influences ? Is it not universally allow'd, that by Virtue of this common Grace, they have a Power to refrain from open Scandal, to perform the external Duties of Religion, to take Pains with their Hearts to get them into a proper Frame for Duty, and thereby to excite in themselves some Seriousness, Earnestness and Diligence, to consider of their own Impotence and Unworthiness, and continue to lie at the Footstool of divine Grace for all Supplies of Grace and Strength, for the Sake of Christ, the Mediator and Redeemer ?—— Is it not universally allow'd, that if this be their Temper and Conduct, they have sufficient Encouragement given them in the Gospel, to hope, that they may obtain the special and saving Influences of the bless-

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ed Spirit? Are they not told often, that in this Way Thousands have fought and succeeded; and that every individual Sinner has in this Way as much Reason to hope, as any unconverted Sinner in the World ever had?— And is not this enough to animate a poor condemned Malefactor to apply to his offended Sovereign for Grace and Mercy? Shall such a poor guilty Worm stand upon Terms, with an infinite and sovereign God; and refuse to comply with the Methods and Means of Grace, which he is able to comply with, unless God will first give him further Strength and Helps?— Shall he venture to go on in his Sins, under the most powerful Incentives to the contrary: And yet plead, that because God has not given him special Grace, his *Destruction* is not from *himself*, but from God; though the Sinner voluntarily indulges his Lusts, neglects the Means of Grace, and rejects the free Offers of Mercy?— If these be the Terms, that poor foolish Sinners will insist upon, they must finally know, by a terrible Conviction, when it is too late, that they have not only brought Destruction, but an aggravated Destruction, upon themselves.

2. Let it also be consider'd, where the *Seat* of this Impotency is, namely, in the *Will*: That the true Reason why Sinners *can't* comply with the Terms of the Gospel, is because they *won't*.— Their Hearts and Affections are wedded to their Lusts and Idols; and they have such a self-righteous Disposition, as to be too proud to stoop to the self-abasing, tho' most gracious Terms of the Gospel: and for this Cause, and this only, they continue in their Sins, and perish.— *Whosoever will*, are invited to come to Christ, and to partake of the Waters of Life *freely*. Let their Sins be ever so many, and ever so great, they may obtain Justification, Sanctification, and eternal Salvation, if they are but truly *willing* to accept of a precious Saviour, as exhibited in the Gospel. And they have no other Excuse for continuing in Sin, but that they would not comply with the Gospel-Call, embrace the Gospel-Promise, and trust in the only Redeemer.— From whence then is their Destruction, but from themselves; and from their own voluntary Choice?

Mr. *Beach* must allow this Argument to be conclusive, because it is *his own*; and may be found in this Sermon of his, now under Consideration. He himself tells us, "That all we do towards our Salvation, is to *accept* of the *Grace* of God, when offered. And "if we do accept it, we shall be saved: but if we do not, we shall "perish." (Page 25.) And yet he tells us, "That *no Man will* "ever come to Christ and accept of this kind Offer, unless the Fa- "ther draw him, and it be *given* him from above." (P. 15.)— And does it not then follow, that though no Man will comply with the Terms of Salvation, unless excited by the special Influences of divine Grace, they yet fail of Salvation, only by their wilful Rejection of the most condescending and gracious Proposal, which can be

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be made to rational Creatures ; and therefore that their Destruction is wholly of themselves ?

He goes on to argue ; “ When God (*Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*) swears, that he has *no Pleasure* in the Death of the Wicked, but *chuses* that he should *turn and live* ; how can this be true, that he don’t chuse that Men should remain wicked and perish, if he withholds from them that *Grace*, without which they can no more turn, than a dead Corpse can raise itself to Life.”

To which I answer, that the Printer of Mr. *Beach*’s Bible must have been very faulty ; or Mr. *Beach* himself very careless in reading the quoted Text. For I find Nothing there, of God’s *chusing* that a Sinner should turn and live. God does indeed there declare, that *he hath no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way, and live.* Yet all that can be justly infer’d from this Text, is, that the Repentance and Conversion of Sinners is a Thing acceptable to the God of all Grace, and according to the good Pleasure of his Goodness ; but not that he efficaciously *chuses*, purposes, and consequently endeavours the Conversion indifferently of Sinners in general. The former flows from the Goodness of his Nature : The latter would argue his Want of Power, with Respect to those who fail of Salvation.

This being premised, I proceed to consider the Force of Mr. *Beach*’s Arguings from the Text.

As for his first Argument, from God’s giving Men such a Nature, that they can’t help but be wicked ; I have newly consider’d it, and shall therefore now pass it over as impertinent.

His second Argument is, “ He doth not truly will an Event, who doth not will the necessary Means. And if God is not willing to give all Men sufficient Grace, I can’t conceive how he can be truly said to be willing and desirous, that they should turn and live.— By “ necessary Means,” he must intend, if he speaks to the Purpose, Grace sufficient for the Conversion of Sinners unto God. And what are these necessary Means, or this Grace sufficient ? What but *Christ’s making them willing in the Day of his Power* ? *Psal. cx. 3.* What but the Exercise of the exceeding Greatness of God’s Power ; and the working of his mighty Power ? *Eph. i. 19.* What but God’s working in them both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure ? *Phil. i. 13.* What but God’s giving a new Heart, and a new Spirit ; taking away the Heart of Stone out of their Flesh, and giving them a Heart of Flesh ? *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.*— These, and these only, are Means sufficient for the Conversion of Sinners to God ; as appears from Multitudes of Passages in the Word of God, besides these now recited.— The Question therefore is, whether God does in Fact

“ will these necessary Means,” in Order to the Conversion of all Sinners, without Distinction?— If so, whence is it, that all Sinners in common, don't *turn and live*?— Surely it must be within the Compass of the exceeding Greatness of God's Power, to give a new Heart, and a new Spirit to all Men, without Exception. For he can do *all his Will*.— But if God does not will these necessary Means for the Conversion of all Sinners indifferently, what becomes of Mr. *Beach's* Argument?— He “ can't conceive” how God can truly expostulate with Sinners as he does in *Ezek. xxxiii. 11*. And what then? Is there nothing true with Respect to the glorious God, but what Mr. *Beach* has an adequate Conception of?— But why can't he conceive the Goodness of God's Nature to be such, that he does not take Pleasure in the Death of a Sinner, as his Creature's Misery: but yet, at the same Time, conceive his Justice and Holiness to be such, that he mayn't see fit to exert his Almighty Power to prevent it?— Why can't Mr. *Beach* conceive, that Repentance or Conversion in every Instance would be acceptable to God, or agreeable to the *good Pleasure of his Goodness*, when yet he does not see fit to engage all his Power in the Accomplishment of it in the Case of every Sinner, without Difference?— And why can't he conceive, that though God be infinite Goodness and Mercy, yet that he is also absolute Master and arbitrary Donor of his own special Favours, which he owes to none, and has therefore a Right to bestow where and when he pleases, to *have Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy*?— Whether he can conceive of these Things or not, we have no greater Certainty of any Truths whatsoever, than that these are all true. *And he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

We are next told, “ When God *works in us*, he does not work “ *irresistably*. For in that Case, we could not forbear to *work out* “ *our Salvation*. But the Holy Ghost works so in us, that we may “ *chuse* whether we will work *with him*, or *against him*. We “ can at the same Time, either *quench*, or *cherish the Spirit*. — “ We can either *resist*, or comply with the *Holy Ghost*. (P. 20.)

There is a Vein of such extraordinary Discourse running through his whole Sermon.— But what Evidence have we to sustain it? Nothing more than his confident Assertion. All therefore that appears needful, is to look on the other Side of the Question; and to see if the contrary to this has no better Support.

The Scriptures represent to us, that the Conversion of Sinners is wrought by the special Illumination and Influence of the Spirit of God; whereby they have an effectual Discovery, not only of their own Sin and Misery, but of the glorious Nature and Way and Author of the Salvation revealed in the Gospel. And when they thus, *with open Face, behold as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord*, it powerfully *changes them into the same Image, from Glory to Glory.* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

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iii. 18. They can't but be pleased with & concur to the Gospel-Offer of Salvation, when the Spirit of God enables them to behold it in its Divine Grace and Excellency. They know themselves to be condemned Malefactors, and can't but be willing to accept a Pardon, when they have a sensible View that there is one freely offered. They feel themselves sinking & drowning in Perdition, and can't but be willing to be pulled out of the horrible Pit, when they have a sensible View of sufficient Help at Hand. They are irresistibly drawn to Christ, and compelled to turn and live.— But Mr. Beach tells us, that if this were the Case, “ we could not forbear to work out our own Salvation.” I answer, that though there be no Force in the Case, yet when the Mind is thus illuminated and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he invincibly perswades and influences the Will, so that the Sinner is necessarily, though freely and willingly, drawn to Christ, is sweetly constrain'd by the Love of Christ; and under this blessed Influence, he cannot, he will not, forbear to work out his own Salvation.— When I am told, that two and three make five, the Proposition commands my Assent, without offering any Violence to my Understanding. And so in the present Case, there is no Force upon the Sinner, when by a divine Light, and Life-giving Influence, he is brought to see and feel his Misery and Remedy; and thereby necessarily, but freely acquiesces in that Way of Salvation, so gloriously accommodated to all his Wants and Desires.— That this is the Case, in Fact, is abundantly confirm'd, not only by the Experience of the Children of God, who have found themselves thus compelled, and yet willing, in the Day of Christ's Power: but also from the Oracles of God, where this Method of the divine Operation is particularly described. 2 Cor. iv. 6. *For God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ.* So likewise Eph. i. 18. and many other Places.— That Sinners should thus have their Understanding enlightned, their Mind renewed, and thereby be brought into a willing Compliance with the Gospel-Offer, is absolutely necessary to their saving Conversion, because they are under the Power of Darkness, Col. i. 13. They are dead in Trespasses and Sins, Eph. ii. 1. And they receive not the Things of the Spirit of God; neither can they know them, until they are enabled spiritually to discern them. 2 Cor. ii. 14.— And I venture to shew my Opinion, that he who has not experienced this transforming Light and Power of the Holy Ghost, illuminating his Mind, alluring his Heart, and attracting his Will, so as to necessitate his free Compliance with the Gospel-Offer, such an one has Reason to fear, that he is yet in his Sins, a Stranger to Christ, and an Enemy to God.— Mr. Beach indeed insinuates, that this Doctrine takes away a Man's Freedom, renders him a mere Engine, and leaves him but an intelligent Machine. (Page 21, 22.)—But how, I beseech him, does a Man's acting from the clearest Light and purest Reason, from the

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most rational Convictions, and the noblest Motives impressed by the Spirit of God, render him an *Engine*, or a *Machine* ?

Another Argument Mr. *Beach* offers, to confirm his Doctrine, is this :— “ Without supposing, that *sufficient Grace* is afforded to all, I cannot possibly understand the Sense of that Expostulation, “ *Isai. v. 3, 4. And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard ; what could have been done more unto my Vineyard, that I have not done in it ? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes ?* ” — Upon which he observes, “ They could easily have answered, that he had not done the *main Thing*, without which all the rest was Nothing, and that he had no more put it in their Power to bring forth Grapes, than to create a new World.”

Page 23.

It's sad to consider, how triflingly and impertinently Men will reason, to serve an Hypothesis ! For, had not these, God's ancient People, the Powers of Nature and common *Grace*, besides the distinguishing Privileges of his Sanctuary and Ordinances ? And were not these *sufficient* to have enabled them (without the special renewing Influences of the Spirit) to reform their abominable *Idolatry*, and those horrid Impieties, which abounded among them ?— Were not these *sufficient* (without special *Grace*) to have put them upon the diligent Use of the *Means* of Conversion ; upon earnest Inquiries after God, and Endeavours of Conformity to his Will, and in that Way to have lain at the Foot of sovereign *Grace*, for renewing or saving Influences ?— And had not God the highest Reason to expostulate with, and complain of them, that they did not bring forth these *Grapes*, which were justly to be expected ; considering the *Expense*, which he had laid out upon them, and especially considering, that all was done, that needed to be done, or that even could be done, to produce those Effects ?

Mr. *Beach* proceeds to argue : “ In the Parable of the Sower, of four Sorts of Ground, but one was fruitful : Now, what made the Difference, arose from the *Soil*, as our Lord explains it.” — Very well ! but *Who* was it that specially *enrich'd* that particular *Soil*, and made it fruitful above the rest ? It is most certain, that all Men by Nature are like a *barren Heath*, uncapable as of themselves to bring forth any good Fruit ; and our Saviour accordingly tells us, *Joh. xv. 4, 5. As the Branch cannot bear Fruit, of it self ; except it abide in the Vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit : for without me ye can do nothing ; or can produce no Fruit. — I have chosen you, — that you should go and bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit should remain.* — Here then we see, that the distinguishing

distinguishing Fruitfulness of one more than another, is derived from an Union to Christ, and from his free and sovereign Grace.

We have one Argument more in the Way, which Mr. *Beach* (it seems) dare venture his Eternity upon; and this is, that "his Doctrine certainly yields greater *Encouragement* to all Men to strive for eternal Life, than that which teaches, that it is a mere arbitrary Act of God which secures Salvation to Men; and that their own Endeavours do neither hinder nor promote their Salvation: Which Notion if I should once entertain, I am sure, I should with good Reason cast off all Care and Solitude for my eternal Interest; and strive to be contented with the secret and decretive Will of God, whatever it might appear to be, when I come into the eternal World."

It is a soft Answer to this, and to much more of the like Kind frequently occurring in his Sermon, to observe, that it is a very unjust, abusive and bitter *Investive*, against the Doctrine which he is pleased to oppose.— For who ever supposed, that "our own Endeavours neither hinder nor promote our Salvation?" Don't the *Calvinist* Divines constantly teach, agreeable to the Oracles of God, that the Duties of Religion belong to the Way of Salvation, as God has appointed them in Order to the seeking of special Grace, in a diligent Attendance on them, and that we have no Reason nor Encouragement to hope ever to experience the special Influences of the Spirit, in any other Way? That although God be sovereign in giving a new Heart and a new Spirit, and in causing us to walk in his Statutes and keep his Judgments, and do them; and does this not for our Sakes, but for his own Name's Sake: Yet he will be inquired of by the House of Israel to do this for them? Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 32, 37.— And the Sovereignty of God is so far from a Discouragement to Diligence in Duty, that it ought to be improved as a most forceable Incentive to it: And the Apostle accordingly urges it, as a Motive to active Diligence, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling: FOR it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.*— If we lie at Mercy, we should most earnestly implore it. If God only can help us, we should the more diligently seek Help from him. If we are Bankrupts and depend upon Alms for our Subsistence, we should therefore seek, that we may obtain. If we are condemn'd Malefactors, and none but the Prince can forgive us, we should the more earnestly petition him for a Pardon.— But if Sinners are too proud and stout, to acknowledge a glorious God the sovereign Donor of his own Favours, and to lie at the Footstool of his Mercy: if they will run into those desperate Conclusions, which Mr. *Beach* here tells us he would do, and as he thinks, with good Reason, then they may expect, that the righteous God will leave them to the dire Effects of their own Pride and Contumacy. He will

will finally convince them of his Sovereignty, as well as Justice, whether they will now submit to it, or no.

Thus I have taken Notice, I think, of every Thing in this Sermon, which has so much as the Appearance of an Argument, in Favour of the "Sufficiency of common Grace for Salvation." I have indeed passed over many Things, which are justly exceptionable: but I think, Nothing which he could suppose to have any direct Tendency to the Confirmation of his Hypothesis.— And now let all serious and conscientious Persons judge, whether their Duty and Interest don't oblige 'em, to leave the glorious GOD in Possession of his Sovereignty, without finding Fault, and without quarrelling the Equity of his Dispensations. Let them judge, whether it don't become such sinful Worms as we, humbly to acknowledge, that God has a just Claim to absolute Liberty in the Exercise of his Grace, to *have Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy*; and with humble Abasement of Soul to prostrate themselves as guilty Criminals at his Feet, imploring Mercy for his Name's Sake, for his Son's Sake, and not for theirs; acknowledging, that if they are rejected and left to perish in their Sins, God is just, and they deservedly miserable: But that if they are saved, it must be from the infinite Riches of free unmerited and forfeited Mercy.— Let them judge, who know what vital Piety means, and have had a blessed Experience of the Power of the Holy Ghost in calling them to Christ, whether they are not under most unspeakable Obligations to acknowledge, that the Salvation begun in their Souls is the sole Result of sovereign Grace; owing to no other Cause but God's mere good Pleasure; excited by no other Motive, but *because it so seemed good in his Sight*.

Yet there is one Thing in Mr. Beach's Sermon, which I can't conclude without taking a more particular Notice of. And that is, his plainly insinuating, that we are *justified* before God by our own Works. Thus (Page 33.) "Grace *saves* us no other Way, but by "our obeying the Gospel."—So (Page 31.) "Now this *Wedding-Garment* is a Temper of Mind and Life agreeable to the Gospel, "which like an Ornament or Wedding Garment to the Soul, makes "it FIT to appear *before God*, in the Company of Saints and Angels."— So likewise (Page 37.) "Let us labour to excel in "all moral and christian *Virtues*, in which is FOUNDED the eternal "Happiness of a rational Creature."

He does not indeed explain himself and inform us, what this Obedience to the Gospel is, what this Temper of Mind and Life, or what these moral and christian Vertues are, which *save us*, which *make us fit to appear before God*, and upon which our eternal Happiness is founded.— But I think, let them be taken in what Sense he pleases, this Doctrine is directly subversive of the whole Tenor of the Gospel, and of the Method of Reconciliation therein proposed.

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If our blessed Saviour be *the Lord our Righteousness* (as in Jer. xxiii. 6.) If *we are justified freely by God's Grace, through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus* (as in Rom. iii. 24) If it be *not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saveth us* (as in Tit. iii. 5.) then we are not saved by our Obedience to the Gospel; nor will any Temper of Mind, or Life agreeable, serve for a *Wedding-Garment* to the Soul, to make it fit to appear before God: Our eternal Happiness is then *founded upon CHRIST's Righteousness only*, and not upon our moral or christian Vertues.

If *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness* (as in Rom. iv. 5) If it be *not of Works, that we are saved, lest any Man should boast* (as in Eph. ii. 9) And if *Grace and Works, are directly contrary one to the other* (as in Rom. xi. 6) then we are *not saved by our Obedience to the Gospel, by any Temper of Mind, or Tenor of Life, we have or can have; nor is our eternal Happiness founded upon our moral and christian Vertues.*—It is surprizing, that a Man of Mr. *Beach's* Character can teach Doctrines so directly repugnant to the whole Oeconomy of our Salvation by Jesus Christ.

Mr. *Beach* tells us, “Certainly he (*the Apostle*) did not mean to exclude our Faith, Repentance, Charity, and other Fruits of the Spirit, from being necessary to, or bearing a Part in our eternal Life.” But I answer, Certainly he did mean to exclude all these, as they are Works of our own, (though not from being necessary to, yet) from being any Manner of procuring Cause of our Salvation, or bearing a Part (as Works of ours) in *justifying, and intitling us to Life eternal.*

He further observes, that “by *Works* St. *Paul* means the *Works* of “the Law of *Moses*, and all such *Works* whereby Men pretend to claim the *Reward*, not of Favour and Courtesy, but of *Debt.*” — I would here inquire of Mr. *Beach*, whether if God has promised to *save us by our Obedience*, he is not indebted to us, to make that Promise good, upon our performing of that Obedience, whatever Proportion there may be, between the *Work* and the promised *Reward*? And if the *Condition* be *Works*, of whatever Value the *Works* be, is not the Fulfilment of the Obligation, due to him who has done the Work, and perform'd the Condition?

I shall now conclude these my *Remarks*, with a brief Expostulation with those of Mr. *Beach's* Disposition, who, not content with embracing these dangerous Opinions themselves, are so fond of making Profelytes. — Bear with me, *Gentlemen*, while I address you in a few Words; and briefly inquire into the Grounds of this Conduct.

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You will perhaps plead, that you can't *believe*, contrary to the *Reason* and *Evidence* that appears to your selves.— But why so fond of making Profelytes of those, who by your own Principles, are already (if they live up to the Articles of their Faith) in a more certain State of Safety, than you can with any Modesty pretend to.— They have common *Grace*, as well as you: Their Principles as much influence them not to receive the Grace of God *in vain*; and as much teach them the Necessity of *Holiness*, as yours can do. And if they walk worthy of their Principles, you must acknowledge, that though their Sentiments may be wrong, their Souls are safe. And though they may have Cause to reflect at the Bar of Christ, that they have had a more lowly Sense of their own Impotence and Unworthiness, than there was Occasion for, and have done more Honour to the Sovereignty of God's Grace, than they were oblig'd to: Yet they have comply'd with the Terms of the Gospel, and will therefore be accepted of their righteous Judge.— These (Gentlemen) are Consequences naturally deduced from your own Principles.— But now, if the Case be as the whole Reformation has voted it, that you are greatly mistaken, and that you deny that Submission to the Righteousness of Christ, and that Acknowledgment of the free and sovereign Grace of God in him, which the Gospel makes the Terms of your Acceptance with God, and of your eternal Salvation, you can't but know how dreadful the Consequence must be in the great Day of Trial.— Suffer me, Gentlemen, to tell you, that ten thousand Worlds would not tempt me to venture my Soul upon the Foundation, you are so earnestly perswading poor Sinners to build their eternal Hope upon.

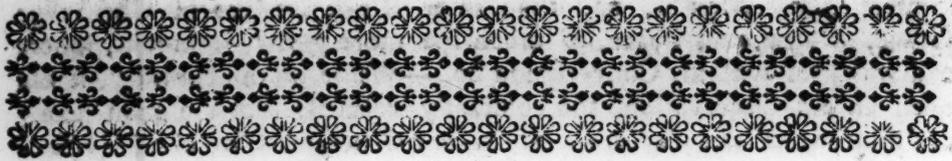
You may perhaps pretend, you are *certain* that you are in the *right*, and *cannot* be mistaken.— But would not common Modesty put you upon considering, That besides the Church of *England*, the whole *Reformation* in general have all along been, and still are professedly of a contrary Mind to you; That very many of these have taken as much Pains to inquire into this Cause, were at least as capable Judges, and have as good a Claim to Certainty, as your selves: And that these have seen the whole Tenor of the Gospel, in the plainest and strongest Language, opposing your Principles?

You may perhaps pretend, that the Doctrines of *special Grace*, as held by the *Calvinists*, are destructive of a religious and godly *Life*.— But you must know (how inconsistent soever you may suppose their Principles) that the *Calvinists* constantly teach the Necessity of *Sanctification*, in Order to final Salvation; and that *without Holiness no Man shall or can see the Lord*. And it is a notorious Fact, which cannot justly be disputed, that the Practice of Piety towards God, and Righteousness toward Men, prevails as much (at least) among those of the *Calvinian*, as among others of the *Arminian* Perswasion; yea, that the more humbly sensible of his own Impotence and Nothingness

thingness, any Man is, and the firmer Trust he has in Christ for Grace, Mercy, and Peace, so much the more godly, righteous, sober, and watchful will his Conversation be. — While on the contrary, it has been an old Observation, too constantly verified, that the most zealous Patrons of the *Sufficiency* of *common Grace*, and of our *Justification by Works*, have been generally very far from confirming or commending their Principles, by their Conversations.

You may possibly, after all, make it your Apology, that *Truth* is not to be estimated by *Consequences*, but by *Evidence*. — Well ! I have now been considering and examining your Evidence : and the World must judge, whether it will bear a Trial by the Standard of the Sanctuary. — And it concerns both you and me to consider solemnly, whether our Principles and our Hopes will bear the Trial in the great Day of Accounts. — The Lord of his free Grace direct and keep us in his own Way, that we mayn't at last be *ashamed of our Hope*, and find our *Expectation perish* : but that we may receive *the End of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls*. AMEN.





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# VINDICATION

Of GOD's sovereign free Grace, in some  
 STRICTURES upon Mr. *Henry*  
*Caner's* SERMON, from *Matth.* vii.  
 28, 29. Intituled, *The true Nature and*  
*Method of christian Preaching.*

**B**EFORE I had finished my Remarks upon Mr. *Beach's* Sermon, I had two other Pamphlets put into my Hands, written with the same Design as the Sermon already considered. The one of them intituled, *The Nature and Method of christian Preaching*; the other, *A Letter concerning the Sovereignty and Promises of God.* The former of these, written by Mr. *Henry Caner*: The latter (as I am well informed) by Dr. *Samuel Johnson.*— Though I can't but conclude, that what I have already said in Answer to Mr. *Beach*, is a sufficient Refutation of whatever occurs in these Discourses, if properly applied: Yet there being some Things here plausibly offered, which will be likely to stumble the unwary and injudicious Reader, and lead him off from the true Foundation of his Hope and Safety, it is thought needful, that there be some general View given of the false Foundation, upon which those Discourses are built, and of their dangerous Tendency to the Souls of Men.

I shall begin with some brief Reflections upon Mr. *CANER'S* SERMON; the professed Design of which is, to instruct us in the true Method of Preaching: But if he himself has mistaken his Way, our Saviour's Observation (*Matth.* xv. 14.) must take Place, *If the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch.*— Whether this be so, or not, comes under immediate Consideration.

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The *Sum* of what Mr. *Caner* endeavours to prove, is, that according to the Method of our blessed Saviour's and his Apostles Preaching, when we preach to the unconverted Heathen World, Repentance of their former wicked Life, and Faith in Christ, are the only proper necessary Doctrines, to be inculcated upon such Men as these. (Page 14.) But when we preach to those who are already Christians, who have professed their Faith in Christ, and have been received into his Church by Baptism, we should intirely change our Applications; and no longer now insist upon Faith, but Practice.

He says but little to illustrate the first of these Propositions; nor was there any Occasion that he should, it being on all Hands allowed for Truth. But he is large and particular in his Endeavours to confirm the latter Proposition: With what Success, I am now to inquire.

He begins with urging the *Pattern* of CHRIST himself: And his Evidence here is thus proposed. "First (says he) let us consider the Example of our blessed Saviour's Preaching, as it is exhibited to us in this Sermon (the Sermon on the Mount,) of which Mention is made in my Text. For though he taught upon many other Occasions, both in publick and private; yet we have no compleat publick Sermon of his, besides this which is here recorded.

"And the first Thing remarkable in this Sermon is, that it is adapted to his Hearers, that is, his Disciples. For though there was a mixt Multitude, that now heard him: Yet his Discourse was chiefly directed to his Disciples. (P. 8.) — These Men having already made Profession of CHRIST, and yielded up themselves to become his hearty and sincere Followers, and being received by him as Members of his Body, or of that Church which he came to establish, and whereof he himself is the Head, did not need a Discourse about Faith, nor an Exhortation about coming to CHRIST, so much as proper Instructions in Regard to their Conduct and Behaviour as Christians." (P. 11.)

This is the Sum of his Reasoning upon this Head, in his own Words. From whence these several Things offer to our Consideration and Inquiry.

1. Whether Christ's Sermon on the Mount was especially addressed to the twelve Disciples, and accommodated to their Circumstances; and not to the Circumstances of the vast Multitude, which attended it.

2. Whether there be no compleat publick Sermon of our Lord's, besides this in the Mount, recorded by the Evangelists.

3. Whether

3. Whether when our Saviour preached to his twelve *Disciples* only, just before his Crucifixion, he did not inculcate upon them the Necessity of their *Faith* in him. And,

4. Whether our blessed Saviour did not insist upon *Faith* and *Repentance*, in the whole Course of his Ministry.— These Things duly consider'd will set the Case in a proper Light.

I am first then to consider, whether this *Sermon* upon the *Mount* was especially addressed to the twelve *Disciples*, and accommodated to their Circumstances; but not to the Circumstances of the *Multitude*, which attended it.— Mr. *Caner* takes it for granted, that this *Sermon* was chiefly directed to Christ's own *Disciples* (the *Twelve* he must mean, if he would speak pertinently) and builds all his Reasoning upon this *Pöstulatum*. That *these Disciples had already received him as their Master, and listed themselves as his Followers.* (Page 8.) *Had already received him by Faith; and professed their Dependance upon him.* (Page 14.) *Therefore to these he gives such Directions as might govern their Lives; and make it evident, they did not receive their Religion in vain.* (Page 8.) *To these he preached the Doctrine of new Obedience; and exhorted them to live suitably to their holy Calling.* (Page 14.)— Now will there upon Examination be found any Manner of Foundation for all this?— Does not the Text assure us, it was upon *seeing the MULTITUDES, he went up into the Mountain*; that seating himself upon the Summit, so great a Multitude might (by the Declivity of the Hill) have the Advantage to sit in a Semi-Circle at his Feet, according to their Custom of attending upon the Teachings of the Jewish Doctors in that Day. †— *By his Disciples coming to him,* I think, we are not to understand the *Twelve*, who were not yet called to be his *Followers*: but the *Multitude* mention'd in the foregoing Part of the Verse, who approached to him as *Disciples* or *Learners* were wont to do to the Jewish Doctors, to sit at his Feet, and attend his Doctrine. They are called *Disciples*, not in the special and appropriate, but general and lax Sense of the Word, as they were now waiting on his Instruction and Discipline.— This seems the natural and necessary Construction of the Passage.— For what Sense can be made of our Saviour's going to the Top of a *Mountain*, for the Sake of the *Multitudes*, when he designed to appropriate or specially direct his Address to his twelve *Disciples*, whom he could have as conveniently instructed in a House, or on a Plain any where, as upon the Top of a Mountain?— It is therefore certain, both from the Text and from the Nature of the Thing, that he chose that Situation, that the *Multitude* might conveniently attend and hear him. And what puts this beyond Dispute, is, that the *Twelve Disciples* were not yet called to be his constant Attendants and Followers; as before hinted. We find indeed, by the 21st Verse of the foregoing

† Vid. *Godwin's Moses and Aaron. Lib. 1. Chap. 7.*

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Chapter, that the first four were now newly called to follow him. And it appears from *Mark* i. 17,—45. that there were no other *Disciples* in constant Attendance upon him, when this *Multitude* resorted to him, but *Simon, Andrew, James, and John*. The same is also evident from *Luke* v. 10,—15. In which Places our Lord's several Transactions from the Time of his calling these four *Disciples*, to the Convention of this *Multitude*, are particularly related; and we may justly suppose, it was a considerable Time before any other of the *Twelve* were called, as his stated Attendants.— I might moreover observe, that Mr. *Caner's* Text serves further to illustrate this Matter. It was the *People* (the *Multitude*) that were *astonished at his Doctrine*, and consequently to them was the *Sermon* directed; and upon them did our blessed Lord *designedly* impress it with such Power, as excited their Approbation and Admiration. — All those Remarks therefore upon our Lord's *accommodating* his Discourse to his *Disciples*, who had already lifted themselves as his Followers, received him as their Master, received him by Faith, &c. are merely imaginary & trifling.

The true State of the Case seems to be this. — The *Multitude* were struck with a Conviction, that *Jesus* was their expected *Messiah*, and from thence filled with an Apprehension, that he would quickly assume that *temporal* Dominion and Grandeur, which the *Jews* of that Day imagined necessarily consequent upon the *Messiah's* Appearing. They therefore seem to flock to him, that they may be early in his Service, assist him in his Victories, and secure a Part in the Glory and Magnificence of his *Kingdom*. — He accordingly adapts his Discourse, to check these their ambitious Views; corrects their Mistakes, and shews them, that instead of this temporal Pomp and Grandeur, Riches and Honours, Conquests and Triumphs, in which they hoped to be happy, true *Blessedness* consists in the *Seeing of God*, and enjoying the Honours, Privileges and Blessings of the *Kingdom of God*, which is spiritual and heavenly: And that the Characters of the *blest Man* are such as these, Poverty of Spirit, Meekness, Self-Denial, Patience, Love to all Men, Forgiveness of Enemies, and universal Conformity to the Will of God. — If any would see this set in a particular and clear Light, let him read Dr. *Doddridge's* excellent *Paraphrase* upon this Sermon in the Mount. — Upon the whole then, it is most evident, that this *Sermon* of our Lord's doth afford no Foundation at all for that Method of Preaching, which Mr. *Caner* attempts to establish upon it. But all his Pretences of our Saviour's preaching *Faith* and *Repentance*, to those only who were not brought over to the christian Profession, and *changing his Applications*, to those who had already received him, are meerly chimerical, without the least Countenance from his Text and Context; or indeed from any Thing else in the whole Gospels.

I'm aware, that it may be objected against this Reasoning, that where this same Sermon is recorded in the sixth Chapter of *Luke*, we are

are assured, that the twelve *Disciples* were previously chosen; and were all personally Auditors of this Discourse.— But, I think it certain, that the *Sermon* recorded in *Luke*, was preached at another Time, and upon another Occasion (probably of a like Kind with what has been just consider'd) and was not the same Discourse, though some of the same Things occur in it.— This is evident from the Discourse it self; the greatest Part of what is recorded in *Matthew*, not being found in *Luke*. *Matthew* records nine Beati- tudes: *Luke* but four, and with considerable *Variation* from *Matthew*. And on the other Hand, there is a Variety of Things in *Luke*, particularly three Verses together, wherein *Woes* are denounced, of which *Matthew* saith Nothing.— Besides, the *Multitude*, which at- tended the Sermon recorded by *Matthew*, came from *Galilee*, *Deca- polis*, *Jerusalem*, *Judea*, and from beyond *Jordan*. Whereas those men- tion'd by *Luke*, came from *Judea*, *Jerusalem*, and the *Sea-Coast* of *Tyre* and *Sidon*.— And what puts it beyond all Doubt is, that according to *Matthew's* Narrative, our Lord took the *Multitude* with him to the Top of the Mountain: But according to *Luke's* Report, he took his *Disciples* only into the Mountain, and continued with them there all Night in Prayer to God; and met with the *Multitude* in the Plain; after his Descent from the Mountain. According to *Matthew's* Ac- count, the *Sermon* recorded by him was delivered upon the *Mountain*: But according to *Luke's* History, he stood upon a *Plain*, after he came down from the *Mountain*, when he preached the Sermon there record- ed. *Luke* vi. 17. — Thus we see, that the very Foundation of Mr. *Caner's* Sermon is but a mere Quicksand; and what then must become of his pompous Superstructure?

I am next to consider, whether there be *no compleat publick Sermon* of our Blessed LORD's, besides this in the *Mount*, recorded by the Evangelists.— This Mr. *Caner* denies; insinuating thereby, that this *Sermon* is the *only Pattern*, which can be taken from our blessed Saviour's Preaching, to guide us in our Addresses to those, who are already professed Christians.— But how came Mr. *Caner* to make this egregious Blunder?— Did he never read the *sixth* and the *tenth* Chapters of *John's* Gospel? Were not they *publick Sermons*, that are there recorded? Have we not as much Evidence, that they were *compleat Sermons*, as we have with Respect to this *Sermon* in the *Mount*? Were not Christ's *Twelve Disciples* present, when he preach- ed them? And (what is full to the present Purpose) were not those whole Discourses upon the Nature, Necessity and blessed Consequences of *Faith* in Christ, of an Interest in and Union to him, and on the dangerous State of *Unbelievers*?— Some of his *Disciples* indeed were prejudiced against Discourses of such a Tenor. They concluded (no Doubt) with some of the present Times, that it was not a proper Method of Preaching to professed Christians; and therefore *went back, and walk'd no more with him*. *Joh*. vi. 66.— Such publick *Sermons*, however, our Lord did see Cause to preach, whether his

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*Disciples* were pleased, or displeas'd with them. And therefore Mr. *Caner's* Remark, that we have no compleat publick *Sermon* of his, besides that in the *Mount*, is certainly a very gross Mistake in Point of History.

But supposing it were Fact, that we have no Instance of any *public Sermon* preach'd by our blessed LORD to his profess'd *Disciples*, upon the Doctrines of *Faith* and *Repentance*; will it not be as repugnant to Mr. *Caner's* Scheme, if we can find a *private Sermon* of our Lord's, preach'd to his *Disciples*, wherein these Doctrines are insisted upon? His Business was to prove, that quite *other* Doctrine than *Faith* and *Repentance* was necessary, to those who had already received Christ by *Faith*, and submitted to him as a Mediator and Guide (Page 14.) And that this was *constantly* exemplified in our LORD's Preaching.— What then must become of this fine Speculation, if it appears, that when our Lord preached to his twelve *Disciples only*, and that too in the *last Sermon* they ever heard from his Mouth (certainly therefore after they had received him by *Faith*, and profess'd their Dependence upon him as their Mediator and Guide) the Doctrine of *Faith* in him, of Union to him by *Faith*, of the Fruits of *Faith*, and of the Peace and Consolation that should flow from *Faith* in him, were the *chief Subjects* of his Discourse! That this was so in Fact, cannot be debated by any one who will read the xivth, xvth, and xvith Chapters of *John*.— In a Word, what was the Spirit and Scope of our Lord's *Parables*, in general? Was it not to teach *Faith* and *Repentance*? And were not his *Parables* principally design'd for his *Disciples* Use? See *Matth.* xiii. 11.— From whence it follows, that as the Facts alledged by Mr. *Caner* are meer Imaginations, without any Appearance of Truth, the Consequences he has deduced from them, must be of the same airy Nature with the Premises, on which he argues.

Upon the whole then, I think, it must appear to every one who won't shut his Eyes against the Light, that although our blessed SAVIOUR preached upon a great Variety of other Subjects; and thereby has set an Example to those who minister in his Name, to bring out of their Treasure Things new and old: Yet the *chief* Subjects insisted upon in the whole Course of his Ministry, were the Doctrines of *Faith* and *Repentance*, or what depended upon them, led to them, and was necessary to the Description, Illustration and Enforcement of those important Points.— Thus he began his Ministry, *Matth.* iv. 17, 23.— Thus he continued it; as appears from the Gospel of *John*, † where his Discourses are more fully and particu-

† See *Job.* iii. from ver. 14, to the 22d.— *Chap.* iv. ver. 10, to 26.— *Chap.* v. 19, to 47.— *Chap.* vi. 27, to 65.— *Chap.* vii. 37. &c.— *Chap.* viii. 12, to 28.— *Chap.* ix. 35, to 39.— *Chap.* x. throughout.— *Chap.* xii. 31, to 37. and 44, to 50.— And *Chapters* xiv, xv, xvi. throughout.

larly represented.— Thus he *concluded* it ; in the *Sermon* above-cited, the *last* which he ever preached while resident among Men.— And these were the Doctrines, which without any Reserves, Limitations or Distinctions, he recommended to his Disciples, to *preach* also, when he commissioned them to go forth, and preach the Gospel in his Name. See *Mark* xvi. 15, 16. and *Luke* xxiv. 47.— And as the Apostles well understood his Meaning, they preached accordingly: *testifying both to Jews and Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* See *Acts* xiii. 38, 39. and *Chap.* xx. 21. With many other Places.— For his *Ministers* therefore (under whatever Pretence) to *neglect* insisting upon *these* important Points, as essentially necessary to a well-grounded Hope of Salvation, and as what alone will be productive of true Holiness in Heart and Life, is to *deviate* from the *Pattern* given them by the great Head of their Order, to counteract the Design of their Mission, to impoverish their Ministry, and to starve the Souls of their Hearers.

Thus I have briefly examined the Evidence Mr. *Caner* has pretended to produce, from the Tenor of our blessed *Saviour's* Ministry. — And the Reader must now judge, whether there be any Foundation for his Reasoning, or any Safety in his Scheme of Christian Preaching.— After all, I know it's the Opinion of some judicious Divines, that not so much *CHRIST's* own personal Ministry, as that of his *Apostles*, under the Dispensation of the *SPIRIT*, which follow'd his Ascension, is to be consider'd as the proper *Standard* of Christian Preaching : And as they observe, a *Mistake* about the Design of *CHRIST's* dwelling so much on the *Law* in his own Preaching, may be of *dangerous* Consequence; in many Regards.\*

I am next to consider, whether Mr. *Caner's* Scheme of Preaching will receive any better Countenance or Support from the Example of the *APOSTLES*.

Previous to a distinct Examination of this, it should be observed, that it is not the Question, whether the *Apostles* in their Epistles to the Churches, taught the Necessity of Morality, Obedience, and Holiness ; this is granted by every Body, and needs no Proof.— The Ministry of the present Age have undoubtedly an Example set before them in the *Apostolick*, to *affirm constantly*, that they who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good Works. And I can't imagine, to what Purpose, are those numerous Quotations in the Margin of Mr. *Caner's* Sermon to prove this.— I would further premise, that I have no Controversy with this Gentleman, about the chief Points

\* See this distinctly represented in an excellent Anonymous Book, lately publish'd, and ascrib'd to Dr. WATTS ; Intituled, *Orthodoxy and Charity united.* ESSAY III. Sect. V. Pag. 54. &c.— Compar'd with Pages 28, 119, 125, &c.

of *Doctrine* insisted on by the *Apostles*, in what he calls the *first* Period of their Preaching, from our Saviour's Ascension unto the Settlement of Churches and Societies of Christians. I agree with him, that "the Points then chiefly insisted on were these, *Christ crucified, Jesus and the Resurrection, Faith and Repentance, Putting on Christ, being baptized into Christ, and the like.*"

But then the Question is, Whether during what he calls "the *second* Period of their Labours, which they exercised towards those who were already *Christians*, who had professed their Faith in *Christ*, and had been received into his Church by Baptism, we shall then find that they intirely *changed their Applications*; and *no longer* now insisted upon *Faith*, but *Practice*, the Duties we owe to God, our selves, and one another?" As he assures us, the Case was. (Page 17.)

The only Method to set this Matter in a fair and just Light, is to take a general View of the several *Epistles*, written by the *Apostles* to the Churches; and see whether in them, or in any of them, they insist upon *Faith in Christ*, as well as upon Practice of the Duties we owe to God, to our selves, and to one another.—If upon Examination it is found, that this is the Case in Fact, in any of the *Epistles* written to the Professors of *Christianity*, who were received into the Gospel-Church, it must necessarily teach us the Impertinence of Mr. *Camer's* Reasoning, and the dangerous Tendency of his Doctrine in the Sermon before us.

To consider these *Epistles* in their Order, as placed in the Bible, I begin with the *Epistle* to the ROMANS. That this *Epistle* was directed to those who *professed their Faith in Christ*, appears beyond Debate, from Chap. i. ver. 7, 8. *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints.*— *I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your Faith is spoken of through the whole World.*— That the main Scope of this *Epistle* is, to prove the Necessity of *Faith in Christ*, in Order to our Justification before God, and our Progress in a Life of holy Conformity to his Will, must appear in a Meridian Light to every careful Reader.— This is summarily proposed, Chap. i. ver. 17. *For therein is the Righteousness of God revealed, from Faith to Faith; as it is written, The Just shall live by Faith.*— This is particularly proved, from the Impotence and Guilt both of *Jew and Gentile*, in the three first Chapters. And from thence is this Conclusion drawn in the 28th Verse of the *third* Chapter, *Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.*— This Conclusion is strongly ratified and confirmed throughout the *ivth* Chapter, by the Examples of *Abraham and David*, whose *Faith was imputed to them for Righteousness.*— The Manner in which we are Partakers of the Righteousness of *Christ* by *Faith*, is represented in the *vth* Chapter.— The State, Character, and Hope of *Believers*

*hears* is set before us, in the vi, vii, and viiith Chapters.— The Sovereignty of God in the Donation of his Grace, is the Subject of the ix and xith Chapters.— The Difference between the Righteousness of the *Law* and the Righteousness of *Faith*, is represented in the xth Chapter. — And some practical Reflections made upon the whole, in the remaining Part of the Epistle. This is a just Representation of the Case ; and must not all the World vote that Man very tho'tless and inattentive (to say no worse) who will venture to publish it for Fact, that with Respect to those who professed their *Faith* in Christ, the Apostles *intirely changed their Applications ! They no longer now insist upon Faith, but Practice.— The Duties we owe to God, to ourselves, and to one another, are the chief Subjects of their Discourses, in ALL their Epistles to the Christian Churches.*

I proceed now to consider the two *Epistles* to the CORINTHIANS : And to see whether in them, the Apostle does not insist upon *Faith*, as well as *Practice*. — Though the first of these was written on a special Occasion, to rebuke their Factions and Contentions, their Abuse of their spiritual Gifts, and their Profanation of the Lord's Supper ; and to answer some Letters, containing sundry Questions, relating to Marriage and Divorce ; whence it's necessary, that these practical Matters should be the principal Subjects treated on : Yet the important Point, which Mr. *Caner* says was *no longer insisted on* by the Apostles, in their Epistles to the Churches, was so far from being neglected or overlook'd, that this Apostle enters immediately upon that Subject, in the very *first* Chapter ; mentions the precious Name of CHRIST, not less than seventeen Times in that Chapter ; tells 'em, that *Christ crucified* was the great Subject of his Preaching (ver. 23.) That the Preaching of the Cross (or Faith in a crucified Saviour) is to those that are saved, the Power of God ; and that how wise soever the unbelieving Jews or Greeks might be esteem'd by themselves or others, their Wisdom was Foolishness with God, while the most weak, foolish and contemptible true Believers were wiser than any of them all ; because they are in Christ Jesus (are united to him by Faith) who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. (ver. 18. to the End.)— And in the second Chapter, he pursues the same Argument ; and shews them, that when personally among them he came not to them with Excellency of Speech, or Wisdom ; but determined to know nothing among them (to make nothing else the Subject of his publick Discourses) but Jesus Christ, and him crucified ; that their Faith should not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God. (from ver. 1, to 5.)— If then an Account of the Manner and Subject of his Preaching may be taken from the Apostle himself, the Matter is directly contrary to Mr. *Caner's* Representation. — I need not therefore spend Time distinctly to consider the Remainder of this *Epistle* ; nor the second *Epistle* to the same Church : the Apostle having thus determin'd the Point, with Respect to his Preaching among the *Corinthians*, beyond Debate.

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If we proceed to consider this Matter, as represented in the *Epistle to the GALATIANS*, it will appear that the great Design of this *Epistle* was a Refutation of some such Doctrines as are taught by Mr. *Caner*: with a distinct Proof and Illustration of the important Doctrine of our *Justification by Faith in Christ, and not by the Works of the Law*.— The Apostle begins this *Epistle* with a heavy Complaint of these *Galatians*, for being *so soon removed from the Grace of Christ, unto another Gospel* (that is, for their forsaking the Doctrine of *Justification by Faith, without Works*, as appears from the whole Tenor of the *Epistle*) and denounces an awful *Curse* against any Man, or Angel from Heaven, that should preach any *other Doctrine* to 'em, than he had preached, and thereby lead them from *the Grace of Christ, and the Way of Salvation by Faith, without the Works of the Law*. Chap. i. 6, 8.— A Text that demands the serious and solemn Consideration of those Preachers, who follow Mr. *Caner's* Directions, in the *Sermon* now before us.— The Apostle, after a particular Justification of his Mission to, and Conduct in the Gospel-Ministry, in the Remainder of the first and former Part of the second Chapter, proceeds in the latter Part of the second, and in the third and fourth Chapters, to explain and prove to the *Galatians* the Doctrine of our *Justification by Faith, without the Works of the Law*; to shew the Necessity of building all their Hopes of Salvation upon *Justification by Faith alone*; and smartly to expostulate with them, and reprove them, for being *so bewitch'd*, as to depart from this most important Doctrine of *Grace and Life*.— After this, he concludes his *Epistle* by a twofold *Exhortation*. The first is, to *stand fast in the Liberty, wherewith Christ had made them free; and not be entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage*. The second is, to bring forth the *Fruits of the SPIRIT*; and *walk worthy of their Christian Profession*.— This (though a very brief) is a just View of the main Scope of the *Epistle to the Galatians*. How astonishing is it therefore, that this *Epistle* should be cited by Mr. *Caner* (Page 19.) to prove, that in the Apostle's Addresses to those *who professed their Faith in Christ, they no longer now insist upon Faith, but Practice*.— This Conduct is exactly parallel to the Papist *Bellarmino's* Attempt to prove from *Matth. xxvi. 27. Drink ye all of it, that the Cup in the Eucharist must be withheld from the Laity*.— Upon the whole, this obvious Remark offers it self to Mr. *Caner's* Consideration, that it greatly concerns us all to imitate the Example, which this great Apostle recommends to his *Galatians, to live the Life which we live in the Flesh, by the FAITH of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us; lest we frustrate the Grace of God; since if Righteousness come by the Law, Christ is dead in vain*. Chap. ii. 20, 21.

If we go on to consider the Point in View, as represented in the *Epistle to the EPHESIANS*, we shall find that the Apostle begins that *Epistle*, as the others before consider'd, by distinctly treating upon the Doctrines of *special Grace*.— His *three first Chapters* are a particular  
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and elegant Discourse upon the Grace of God in *Election, Redemption, Vocation, Justification, and Adoption*; wherein he takes frequent Occasion to shew 'em, that they were Partakers of all the Benefits of Christ's Redemption, by *Faith* in Jesus Christ; that *he ceased not to give Thanks to God for their Faith in Jesus Christ* (Chap. i. 15, 16.) that they were brought to *believe in Christ, by the exceeding Greatness of God's Power, and according to the Working of his mighty Power* (ver. 19.) that *by Grace they were saved, through Faith; and that not of themselves; it is the Gift of God; not of Works, lest any Man should boast* (Chap. ii. 8, 9.) that *they have Boldness & Access with Confidence unto God, by the Faith of Christ*. (Chap. iii. 17.) With much more to the same Purpose.— And indeed it is the whole Scope of the *three first Chapters*, to shew them what were the Benefits procured for them by *Christ*; and that they must be Partakers of these Benefits by *Faith* in him: And to shew them, that the great Design of his Ministry among the *Gentiles*, was to preach *the unsearchable Riches of Christ*, Chap. iii. 1—9.— The *three last Chapters* of this *Epistle* consist of a practical Improvement of the Premises.— Thus we see, how far this *Epistle* is from justifying the Method of Preaching recommended by our Author.

Should we go on to consider this Affair, as represented in the *Epistle* to the *PHILIPPIANS*, it will equally make against Mr. *Caner's* Scheme. It is remarkable, that the Apostle is so far from treating of moral Duties only in this *Epistle*, that the dear Name of *CHRIST* is mention'd no less than eighteen Times, in the first Chapter. And how joyful, how thankful, does he shew himself, on the Behalf of these *Philippians*, for their *Fellowship in the Gospel*; and for their Enjoyment of the *preaching of CHRIST* among them? Whether he was preach'd out of *Envy and Strife, or of good Will; whether in Pretence, or in Truth, CHRIST was preached; and therein he did rejoice; yea, and would rejoice*. Chap. i. 5, 15 — 18. — This was the *Preaching*, that his Heart was set upon; this the *Preaching*, which he peculiarly insists upon, in all his *Epistles*.— If we proceed to take a View of the *third Chapter*, the Apostle there purposely handles the very Argument now before us. He there teaches Christians, to *rejoice in Christ Jesus, without Confidence in the Flesh*, ver. 3. He largely and particularly proves from his own Experience, the Deficiency of all imaginary Attainments of our own, and of all legal Obedience; and the Necessity of *esteeming all these Things but Loss, of suffering the Loss of all Things, and of esteeming them but Dung, that we may win CHRIST, and be found in him; not having our own Righteousness, which is of the Law; but that which is through the FAITH of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by FAITH*.— The explaining and confirming this Point, and improving it against the false Teachers of those Times, is manifestly the Scope of the whole *third Chapter*.— In the *fourth*, he concludes, as he does all his other *Epistles*

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*Epistles to the Churches*, with a practical Improvement of the Doctrines of *Grace*, he had before insisted upon.

The Apostle *James* calls on *Christians*, when they pray, to *ask in Faith*: And represents the *Prayer of Faith* as the only *availing Prayer*.— *Peter* declares *Christians kept by the Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation*;— *coming unto the Lord, as unto a living Stone*; — and exhorts them to *commit the Keeping of their Souls to Him, i. e. by renewed Acts of Faith*; but to *resist the Devil, steadfast in the Faith*. — The Apostle *John* tells us, *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*: — And *this is God's Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*.— The Apostle *Jude* exhorts *Christians to be building up themselves on their most holy Faith, and looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

Were it consistent with my designed Brevity in these Remarks, I might proceed to a more distinct and particular Consideration of all the *Epistles to the Churches*, through the whole *New-Testament*; and could prove, from every one of them, the direct contrary to what *Mr. Caner* asserts for Truth.— That this may be brought to a short Issue, I here challenge *Mr. Caner* to instance in *any one* of them (the *Epistle of James* not excepted) where the Necessity of a saving *Faith* is not insisted upon, and inculcated in these *Epistolary Sermons* to professed *Christians*. If he cannot do this (as I am very certain he cannot) what Truth is there in that Assertion, that they *no longer now insist upon Faith, but Practice*? Or what Foundation for the new Scheme, which he builds upon that imaginary Fact?

Thus I have very briefly shewn, that the Method of Preaching *Mr. Caner* directs us to, is so far from being warranted by the *Examples* of our Blessed SAVIOUR and his *Apostles*, that it is directly contrary to them.— And having thereby answered the chief Design of these Remarks, I should here conclude, were it not for two or three Things, which seem to demand our particular Notice.

One Thing which especially requires Attention, is expressed in the following Words: “ When we preach to *Christians*, we are not to spend Time in exhorting them to *believe*; for this their very *Profession* supposes they do already: But to press and persuade them to *live* as becomes *Christians*, to be found in the *Practice* of all *moral Duties*.” (P. 22.)

What *strange Doctrine* is here! — Does a bare *Profession* of *Christianity* suppose a Man to be a true *Believer* in *Christ*? It must then follow, that every *Professor* of *Christianity* is actually in a justified State, reconciled to *God*, and at Peace with him. For the *Righteousness of God by Faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all, and upon all them that*

that believe; for there is no Difference. Rom. iii. 22.— It will also follow, that these are all of them also sanctified. For Faith purifies the Heart (Acts xv. 9) works by Love (Gal. v. 6.) and overcometh the World (1 Joh. v. 4, 5.) It will likewise follow, that every Professor of Christianity will be an actual Partaker of eternal Salvation. For *whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting Life.* Joh. iii. 16. — *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* Mark xvi. 16. — And is this the Method of Preaching, which Mr. *Caner* recommends? Are the Ministers of the Gospel to do, as this Gentleman says he does, take it for granted, that such a one (a baptized Professor) has Faith, till we hear he renounces it again? (P. 25.) Are we to declare in the Name of the Lord, that the most secure and sensual of our baptized Hearers, are justified before God, are sanctified, and Heirs of eternal Glory?— Certainly the Case of that People is greatly to be pitied and lamented, who sit under such a Ministry, even as *Sheep without a Shepherd.*

Another Thing worthy of particular Notice, is Mr. *Caner's* Assertion, that “ a strong and lively Faith, is so frequently attended with the Fruits of a good and holy Life, all moral Duties and Virtue, do so generally, and as it were naturally, accompany and flow from it, that it is sometimes made Use of in the Scriptures, in a very comprehensive Sense, to signify both the Faith and Practice of a Christian.”— On which my Remark is, that I know very well a strong and lively Faith is not only frequently, but always attended with the Fruits of a good and holy Life; and that all moral Duties do not only generally, but evermore, nor only as it were, but properly speaking, naturally accompany or flow from it.— But then this is so far from rendering it a Propriety, to consider that Grace as signifying both the Faith and Practice of a Christian, that for this very Reason it cannot with any Propriety be consider'd in such a comprehensive Sense; unless the Cause and Effect, the Tree and its Fruits, may be properly consider'd as the same Thing.— And the Scripture is so far from considering it in this View, that in the Affair of our Justification FAITH and WORKS are frequently put in direct Opposition. Thus, Rom. iv. 5. *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness.*— Whereas on the contrary, there cannot be so much as one Text found in the whole Bible, to verify this Gentleman's Assertion.— He indeed does in his Margin cite three Texts, in Confirmation of this Imagination; and he might with as much Pertinence, have cited three Thousand.— The first Text he undertakes to prove this by, is Rom. iii. 28. *Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law!* Very well! A Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law; therefore Faith is the Deeds of the Law. It seems, if (in the Affair of our Justification) Faith be without the Deeds of the Law, it must be with the Deeds of the Law. Nay! it must contain the Deeds of the Law, in its very Nature,

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ture.— Another Text cited to this Purpose, is Gal. v. 6. *Faith worketh by Love.* Well! what follows? If *Faith* worketh by *Love*, must *Faith* therefore be, in its Nature, *Love*, and be all moral Duties and Virtues besides? If *Solomon* workt (in building the Temple) by his Subjects, does it follow, that *Solomon* therefore and his Subjects were one and the same? If the glorious God works by second Causes, is he therefore the second Causes themselves?— If *Faith* worketh by *Love*, it proves indeed, that it is productive of *Love*: but it also equally proves, that *Faith* cannot be the same Thing with that *Affection* which it produces.— A third Text cited by him, is James ii. 22. *Seest thou how Faith wrought with his Works; and by Works was Faith made perfect?* Well! If *Faith* wrought with his Works, it must needs be distinct from his Works. For there can be no Propriety, in supposing any Thing to work in Concomitancy with it self. *Faith's* being made perfect by Works, can imply no more, than that it was thereby manifested and proved to be perfect, i. e. a true, upright, and sincere *Faith*: and not, that *Faith* and Works are the same Thing. For how inconsistent would all the Apostle's Reasoning in this Chapter, about the respective Characters and Properties of *Faith* and Works, appear, if he had consider'd them both as one and the same moral Perfection or Excellency?

A third Thing worthy of particular Notice, is Mr. *Caner's* Representation of his Aim and Design in this Discourse. “What I aim at (says he) is to shew the Weakness and Absurdity of calling upon Christians to come to Christ, by a naked, barren, and ineffectual Faith; as if that would save them, without a serious Endeavour to obey his Commands.” (Page 25.)— But who does he find chargeable with this Weakness and Absurdity?— Has it not been the constant Profession of these Churches, and the constant Doctrine of their Ministers, that a true Faith is such a Receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, as unites the Soul to him, and both inclines and enables the Believer, through Grace and Strength derived from Christ's Fullness, to serve God in Righteousness and Holiness, all the Days of his Life?— And has it not been our constant Doctrine, that Holiness is the necessary Fruit and Evidence of a true Faith: and that no Man is to be reputed a Believer, who is grossly wanting in it?— We don't, with this Author, consider Faith as a naked doctrinal Assent to the Truth of the Gospel; but as also a hearty Consent to the Gospel-Offer, a cordial embracing the Promises, and a trusting in CHRIST both for Righteousness and Life.— And he that lives in the Exercise of this unfeigned Faith, finds it true, by happy Experience, that Christ does not leave him to be ashamed of his Confidence and Hope in him. He does find, by happy Experience, that Christ Jesus is to him, not only Wisdom and Righteousness, but Sanctification and Redemption also.— From whence it follows, that as an unholy Life is utterly incompatible with the State and Character of a true Believer, so all Shews of Holiness, without Faith in Christ, are but Streams with-

out a Fountain, that will soon dry up, and leave the poor Soul to famish & perish for ever. *He that believeth in Christ, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.* Of what Necessity is it therefore, that this important Subject should be insisted upon by the Ministers of the Gospel, in their publick Sermons, and private Converse, as absolutely necessary, not only to the Beginning, but to the continued Progress of the divine Life in the Soul; since *the Righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith*; and *the Just shall live by his Faith*!—Ministers are to pray for *Christians*, that God would fulfil in them the *Work of Faith with Power*; and to exhort *Christians*, that they continue in the *Faith*; that they abound therein; and whatsoever they do in *Word or Deed*, that they do all in the *Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*; that they come unto *God by Him*, in all their religious Duties and moral Obedience; eyeing *Christ* as the only *Medium* of their Hope in *God*, Access to *Him*, and Communion with *Him*; being in the daily Exercise of a humble *Trust* in *Christ*, for *Righteousness* and *Strength*; and looking for the *Mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ*, unto *eternal Life*. — May we be found so doing!



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# VINDICATION

Of GOD's *sovereign free Grace*, in some  
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nymous Pamphlet, intituled, A LET-  
TER from *Aristocles to Authades*.

**T**HAT this *Letter*, written by Dr. JOHNSON, had its Rise from a printed *Sermon* of Mr. COOKE's (of *Stratfield*) upon *Exod.* xxxiii. 19. seems necessary to be taken Notice of, on Account of some Occasion I shall have for comparing the *Letter* with the *Sermon*, against which it is level'd.

This being premised, I shall immediately proceed to consider the State of the *Question* in Debate.— This the *Dr.* proposes in the following Words. “ You may remember, it was your chief Inquiry, “ as a Test of my being a true Christian, *Can you in Sincerity subscribe to the Truth of our Doctrine?* By which you meant the Doctrine “ of the divine *Sovereignty*, as you had explain'd it, *i. e.* (if I understand you right) as implying God's *eternal, arbitrary, and absolute Determination of the everlasting Fate of his Creatures*, from his own mere Motion, and without any Consideration of their good or ill Behaviour.”

But what was the Reason, the *Dr.* could no better understand Mr. *Cooke's* Doctrine? It was plainly and intelligibly expressed, in the following Words:—*The Mercy of God to any of his SINFUL Creatures, hath its Foundation in, and taketh its Rise from, his mere sovereign arbitrary good Pleasure.*—Is there not a very wide Difference, between these two Representations of the *Objects of God's Sovereignty?* Mr. *Coke* in his *Doctrine*, and in the whole Prosecution of it, considers the *Sovereignty* of God with Relation to his *sinful, fallen* Creatures. The *Dr.* considers it with Relation to God's *Creatures, as such*, and no where takes Notice of its respecting us as in an *apostate, sinful* State.— If he thought this to be the best Method to make a plausible Appearance against the Doctrine he saw fit to oppose, he should however have remembered, that it was not the best Method to recommend his own Justice and Candor to the World; nor to discover

the Truth in the Point debated.— They must have a very dark and unjust Apprehension of the Subject under Consideration, who don't allow, that the *Objects* of God's eternal Counsels of *Grace*, as well as of both the Impetration and Application of saving Mercy, were the *apostate, guilty, polluted Children of Men*.— Hence it appears, that the *Question* before us should be thus stated,

*Whether all God's Designs of Mercy, and all the actual Exercises of his saving Grace, to any of the apostate, sinful, guilty Race of Mankind, don't flow merely from his sovereign good Will and Pleasure; and from no other Motive whatsoever?*

This, held in the Affirmative, was what Mr. *Cooke's* Text directly led him to treat of: this, so held, is a just Representation of the Scope of his Sermon: This therefore should have been the Subject of Dr. *Johnson's* Letter, when he was pleased to write in Opposition to Mr. *Cooke's* Sermon: and consequently this is the proper Subject of the present Inquiry.

I must, however, consider his Reasoning as it is proposed (whether pertinent or not) and see whether he can disprove the *Sovereignty* of God, in the Donation of his special saving Mercy.

He first argues, "That it is contrary to the Nature and Attributes of God; because it appears plainly inconsistent with his being a moral Governor of the World. For it represents him as laying his Creatures under a *Necessity* of being what they are, whether good or bad; and so leaves no Room for either Virtue or Vice, Praise or Blame, Reward or Punishment, properly speaking.— Nay, it implies a *form'd Design* of laying far by the greatest Number of his Creatures under a *Necessity* of being eternally miserable, antecedent to any Consideration of their *Desert*.—It imports a manifest *double Dealing* with them. (Page 2.)

In Answer to this, I should first inquire, How the Dr. will according to this Method of Reasoning, vindicate God's Attributes and moral Government, with Respect to his most open, known, and constant Dispensations of Providence, towards the World of Mankind?— It is a visible, undisputed Fact, that the *greatest Part of the World* are left by the Providence of God, in a State of Ignorance, Impiety, and abominable Idolatry; to live and die in the Denial of God our Maker, and of God our Saviour, and in the Worship and Service of their dumb Idols and vile Pagods: while the same *Sovereignty*, which has left them utterly ignorant of the Way of Salvation, has opened the Door of Salvation to others, no better than they.— Now what Reason can possibly be assigned, why God may not (consistent with his moral Perfections) hold the same Method with *Individuals*, as we see in Fact he does with collective Bodies and Nations of Men?— What Reason can possibly be assign'd, why God has not a Right to act with the same *Sovereignty*, in the Donation of saving Grace, as in the Distribution of those Favours and Privileges, upon which eternal Salvation is so dependant?— Let it be brought to the Trial. Let the *Dr.* undertake to vindicate the Attributes and moral Government of God,

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God, in this Act of his *Sovereignty* I have now specified, by any Arguments he can devise; and it will then be seen, whether the same Arguments won't as fully vindicate the divine Attributes against all Imputation, in the other Case also.—This therefore shews the Weakness of this Argument: for if it proves any Thing, it proves a great deal too much.—It is certain in Fact, that God does act in Ways of arbitrary *Sovereignty* in the Affairs of Men's eternal Salvation: And therefore, it is also certain, that he acts agreeable to his glorious Attributes, and worthy of the moral Governour of the World; whether our shallow Intellects can fathom the unsearchable Depths of his Dispensations, or not.—But perhaps the *Dr.* will tell me, that this only cuts the Knot, and does not untie it. I shall therefore next consider, whether there be any Force at all in his Reasonings, with Respect to any Representation of God's *Sovereignty*, either in Mr. Cooke's Sermon, or any other of our *Calvinist* Divines.

Is it not an unquestionable Truth, that God *owed no Mercy* at all to any of his fallen Creatures? And therefore, that he might without any Injustice have left us all, with the *Angels* that fell, *in Chains of Darkness, reserv'd unto the Judgment of the great Day?* For *we have all sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. Both Jews and Gentiles are all under Sin; and the whole World become guilty before God.*—What Impeachment then of God's moral Government can there be, on the Account of his eternally purposing, and actually in *Time* bestowing that special *Grace* upon some, which none have deserved, and which none can claim? Shall we murmur and complain, because God does not bestow his Salvation upon *all*; when we should have had no just Cause to complain, if he had bestow'd it upon none of the apostate Race of *Adam*?

But “*this lays his Creatures under a Necessity of being what they are, whether good or bad.*”—What does the *Dr.* mean by *Necessity*? If he means, that the *Sovereignty* of God's Grace, consider'd either in his *Decrees*, or in the *Execution* of them, has any *necessitating Agency* upon Men, so as to compel or force them to be *good*, or *bad*, he knows that this is what the *Calvinists* have always disclaim'd: And it is certain, that it is no natural Consequence from the Doctrine of God's *Sovereignty*.—The *Decrees* of God can have no such active Influence, while they remain Counsels secret and unknown to us; and therefore without any direct Agency upon our Minds, or impulsive Constraint upon any Part of our Conduct. God has never *chosen* any Man to *Salvation*, but through *Sanctification of the Spirit*, producing a free and voluntary Acceptance of Christ, and a chosen Life of Holiness and Conformity to God. *God has from the Beginning chosen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* 2 Thess. ii. 13. The *Sovereign* Counsels of God's Grace do therefore make it evident, that no Man can be constrain'd, either to Holiness, or Happiness: but both must be his own free Choice; or else be obtain'd in a Way contrary to the sovereign and immutable Purpose of God's Grace.—Besides, what is the Decree of God, but God himself  
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acting in a Way of infinite Counsel and Knowledge? And how does it follow, that we must be put under any *coactive Necessity*, because there is a God of absolute Perfection, infinite in his Knowledge and Counsel? Upon the whole then, there can be no just Pretence to our being brought under any *compulsive Necessity*, from the Decrees of God.—If this be consider'd with Respect to the sovereign Grace of God, *renewing* and *sanctifying* our Souls, it will also appear, that there is no Place for any Pretence of a *coactive Necessity*. For in this Change, *Christ's People are made willing in the Day of his Power*; are brought into a chosen and delightful Conformity to the Nature and Will of God.—And as for those, who in God's holy *Sovereignty* are left to themselves, what *Constraint* are they laid under; while they have their own free Choice, and act according to their own moral Dispositions? Here therefore is no Shadow of any *coactive Necessity*.

In whatever Light this Case is viewed, there can be no Appearance of any other, than a *consequential Necessity*, flowing from the *Sovereignty* of God's Grace. That is, there's only a *Certainty*, that eternal Salvation will be the Consequence of our Participation of God's *sovereign Grace*; and on the contrary, that they will certainly perish, who are not the Subjects of God's *sovereign Grace*.—This *Necessity*, if the *Certainty* of a future Event may be called *Necessity*, I readily allow; not only in the present Case, but with Respect also to every Event of every Kind, that ever has happen'd, or ever will happen in the World.—But then, this is so far from being inconsistent with the divine Attributes, that it is a rational and necessary Deduction from them. If there be an *omniscient GOD*, he certainly had, from Eternity, all Things in his View at once: And it is equally certain, both that this *Omni-science* was agreeable to his *Will*, and all other Perfections of his glorious *Nature*, without the least Repugnancy among the divine Attributes; and also, that every *Futurity* will eventually be according as God has from Eternity *known* that it would be, unless we blasphemously suppose a Defect of Knowledge in the glorious God.—From this View of the Case, I think, it manifestly appears, that the *Dr's* Argument from *Necessity* is really trifling, and has nothing in't.—God has by his *Sovereignty* put no Man under a compulsive *Necessity*, to be either holy or wicked: But all are, notwithstanding, in such a State of perfect Freedom, as to be capable of acting their own voluntary Inclinations. And though all Events will come to pass according to God's eternal Counsel and Knowledge, this no Way infringes the *Liberty* of the Creature: nor can any Pretences of this Kind be justly made, unless it be supposed, that there cannot be an *omniscient GOD*, and a *Creature*, notwithstanding, in a State of *Liberty*. Here then, it mayn't be improper, to put the *Dr.* in Mind of his own Answer to this pretended Difficulty. His Words are, “The CERTAINTY, before it is, that any Thing will be, can no more infer the NECESSITY of it, than the Certainty, when it is, implies its being a necessary Event.”—Well then, what becomes of his Argument from

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from *Necessity*? What becomes of the frightful Consequences he would draw from this imaginary *Necessity*; when such a *Necessity* as he supposes, has no Existence, but in his own Imagination; nor can any Way be deduced from the Doctrine he opposes?— Does he then treat the dreadful MAJESTY of Heaven and Earth with a Reverence becoming his holy Profession and Character, when he speaks of GOD's having a *formed Design of laying by far the greatest Number of his Creatures under a NECESSITY of being eternally MISERABLE*; of his being acted by a most SELFISH View to his own Glory; and of his using manifest DOUBLE DEALING; and the like?

Dr. *Johnson* proceeds to argue, that “ this Doctrine appears to be “ evidently contrary to a great many plain Texts of holy “ Scripture, which assure us in the clearest and strongest Terms, that “ God is not willing, that any should perish; but that all should come “ to Repentance. That he would have all Men to be saved; and that “ for this End he sent his Son into the World, who tasted Death for “ every Man; and became a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole “ World; and gave himself a Ransom for all; nay, even for those “ that by denying the Lord that bought them, bring upon themselves swift “ Destruction.”

I would here inquire of Dr. *Johnson*, Whether he understands by these, or any other such Texts of Scripture, that God has a *Purpose* and *Design* actually to save all Mankind without Exception, or not? — A fair Answer to this will obviate the Difficulty. If he answers in the *Affirmative*, how then is it true, that *God's Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure*? (Isa. xlv. 10.) That *the Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever; and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations?* (Psal. xxxiii. 11.)— If he answers in the *Negative*, why can't it be true, that God wills the Salvation of all Men upon the Terms of the Gospel; though he in *Sovereignty* bestows special Grace upon a select Number only? I think, the Dr. will hardly suppose, that God will save any, who do not comply with the Terms of the Gospel: and the Doctrine before us will exclude none, that do comply with the Gospel-Terms. He will hardly suppose, that God will save any Men against their Wills: And the Doctrine before us will exclude none who are willing that He should save them.— Where then is the Difficulty? Why is not the Dr's own Scheme as contrary to the cited Scriptures, as ours?—God indeed, in a Way of *Sovereignty*, gives *special Grace* to some, and not to others. But he gives *common Grace* to all the gospelized World; which is as much as this Gentleman seems to suppose given to any at all. He freely offers Salvation to all: he prohibits or hinders none from a Compliance with the gracious Offer. If any perish from under the Gospel, it is merely on Account of their Rejection of a most condescending Treaty of Grace and Life.— These are Truths confessed on both Sides of the Question; and Truths as consistent with the cited Texts of Scripture, upon the *Calvinistical*, as upon the *Arminian* Principles. God's bestowing  
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*Special Grace* upon some, is no Hindrance to others, from improving of that *common Grace*, whereof they are all Joint-Partakers.

Let these Gentlemen therefore, on the other Side of the Question, bring the Matter to a fair Trial, and it will appear, that their own Sentiments are every Way, and in the same Manner, as repugnant to the quoted Scriptures, as they can pretend ours to be. If we *contradict* these Scriptures, *they* do so too; or if their Sentiments are *concurrent* with these Scriptures, *ours* are equally so also; there is no Difference in this Respect.—Are they bold enough to argue, with Dr. Johnson, (p. 2.) that *it imports manifest double-Dealing, or a secret Will inconsistent with what God has clearly revealed*, to suppose that God has in *Sovereignty* designed *special Grace* to some, and not to others, when he declares himself *willing, that all should be saved*? Won't the same Consequence appear, with equal Force, from the Supposal (which they themselves must necessarily allow) that God has *not* willed and designed the *actual* Salvation of each individual Person, notwithstanding he has declared himself *willing, that all should be saved*? Is there not as much Appearance of a *secret* and *revealed Will* in this Case, as in the other?—Will they argue, as both Mr. Beach and the Dr. do, that he who wills the *End*, must will the *Means*? It is allow'd by the *Calvinists*, that God does will the common Means of Salvation to all who live under the Gospel; and our Opponents themselves cannot pretend, that he wills *effectual* Means to all Men: For then all without Difference would actually be saved. There can be therefore no Difficulty in this Case, when the *Calvinists* unitedly allow, that God does will the same general Means for the Salvation of all the gospelized World, as the *Arminians* themselves suppose he does: And it is nothing inconsistent with this, to suppose, that of his *sovereign* Grace He also wills *special* efficacious Means to some, by which they are actually saved.

Upon the whole then, for ought I see, there can stand no *Objection* against the *Sovereignty* of God in the Donation of his *special Grace*, but this only, *Our Eye is evil, because God is good*. He acts as one that has a Right to *do what he will with his own*. He deals with all better than they deserve, better than they can claim at his Hands: And yet bestows *special* distinguishing Mercy upon some, to which he has no Motive, but his *sovereign* Pleasure.—To conclude this Head in the Words of Another; “God would *have all Men come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and be saved*: That is, he obligeth Ministers to preach to them, and others to pray for them and help them, and themselves to obey, and receive his Grace; and he giveth them Means, and giveth Christ and Life by free Donation to all, so they will but *accept the Gift*. And he that strictly *willeth* thus much, may be said, after the Manner of Men, to *will the Event*. And this is *all* (says he) that *both Sides* mean, if they understood themselves.”

Another Argument Dr. Johnson has produced to this Purpose, is, that “It seems manifestly repugnant to the general *Drift* of the “whole *Word* of God (which is plainly to excite our utmost Activity in

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“ in the Pursuit of Holiness of Heart and Life) there being Nothing  
 “ that can so effectually tend, not only to tempt us to entertain hard  
 “ and unworthy Thoughts of God, but also to cut the Sinews of all  
 “ our Endeavours to repent and return to him and our Duty, as the  
 “ most distant Surmize, that possibly all our Labour may be in vain ;  
 “ since, for ought we know, we may be absolutely excluded from all  
 “ Possibility of succeeding, by a *sovereign* and *inexorable Decree* of  
 “ *Reprobation.*” (P. 3.)

Not to insist upon the Impertinency of this Argument to the Subject the Dr. undertakes to treat upon, and his leaving the Doctrine of God's *sovereign Grace*, to harangue upon the Decree of *Reprobation* ; which, by his Leave, is quite foreign to the Purpose : for God may be *sovereign* in the Bestowment of his special Grace, whether there be, or be not an absolute, or (as he words it) an *inexorable Decree of Reprobation*. It is *sovereign* Grace, if God has *chosen* some, in such a Manner as he has not chosen others, to be the special Heirs of Salvation ; whether there be an actual, positive Predetermination of any Man's final *Perdition*, or not.— But passing this, as foreign to the present Debate, I would inquire, *Who* ever taught, *Who* ever supposed, such an *inexorable Decree of Reprobation*, as would make *all our Endeavours to repent and to return to God and our Duty, and all our Labours, to be in vain* ? Don't every Body allow, that the Means and the End are connected together, both in the Nature of Things, and in the divine Decree ; so that to expect the latter without the former, is but a groundless Presumption ?— And don't all allow, that *Faith* and *Holiness* are our Evidence, that we were *chosen in Christ from the Foundation of the World* ? — The more diligent therefore we are in the Way of God and Godliness, the more Evidence we have, not only that there can be no *Decree against* us, but also that we are the Subjects of God's *Electing Love*.—*Holiness* begun here, and perfected in Glory, belongs to the Essence of that *Salvation*, to which the *Elect* are predestinated. To speak therefore of an *inexorable Decree of Reprobation*, against those who are sincerely pursuing a Life of *Holiness*, is a most glaring Contradiction.

I might further observe, that the Doctrine of God's *Sovereignty* is so far from *cutting the Sinews of our Endeavours to repent and return to God*, that it is the most powerful Incentive to it.—What Argument can more powerfully animate us to *give Diligence*, than the Consideration, that this is the Means. *to make our Calling and Election sure*, and that *if we verily do these Things, we shall never fall* ? 2 Pet. i. 10.— Is God *sovereign* in the Gift of his special Grace ? What Cause have we then to *lie at his Foot*, with humble and earnest Application for unmerited Mercy ! This is the Method which poor starving *Beggars* use at the Doors of the Rich, or such as are able to relieve them : This is the Method which condemned *Malefactors* use, in seeking a Pardon or a *Reprieve*, from their offended Sovereign ? And this is the Method which the Apostle exhorts us to use in the present Case. *Work out your own Salvation* (says he ;  
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with Fear and Trembling : For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure. Phil. ii. 12, 13.— Is God sovereign, having Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy, what vast Encouragement is this to the greatest of Sinners, to flee for Refuge, to lay Hold on the Hope set before them ; since they are to hope for MERCY, for GOD'S Sake, and for his SON'S Sake, and not for their own ; not on Account of any personal Qualifications intitling them to special Grace ; and since therefore, they have as good a Plea for Acceptance and Favour with God, as any unrenewed Sinner in the World ever had ; and no Grounds of Discouragement or Despondency on Account of their Guilt or Impotence ?— I may add to this, that the Doctrine of God's Sovereignty has a direct Tendency to make the Sinner low and vile in his own Eyes ; to bring him to have a suitable Dependance upon the mere Mercy of God in Christ, and to offer the Sacrifices of God, a broken Heart, and a contrite Spirit, which He will not despise.— I might subjoin, that there is nothing has a greater Tendency to put Men upon an active Improvement of the present Season of Grace, than the Doctrine of God's Sovereignty. This teaches them of what Concernment it is, in the Morning to sow their Seed, and in the Evening not to withhold their Hand, since they don't know which will prosper, whether this or that. This teaches them the dreadful Danger of neglecting the Day of their Visitation ; lest they provoke God to hide the Things of their Peace from their Eyes, to withhold the Influences of his blessed Spirit, and to give them up to a hard Heart and a reprobate Mind.— These are not vain and airy Speculations : but we see by Experience, that when this Doctrine of God's Sovereignty is heartily received, and rightly understood, it commonly has a good Influence upon Men's Conduct ; and it is indisputably evident, that they are (in general) more regular in their Lives, and more seriously concern'd about their Souls, who realise the Truth of this Doctrine, and cordially embrace it, than those of the opposite Perswasion. I speak it not out of Envy, but to the Praise of the Glory of divine Grace.

But then on the contrary, they who suppose (on the one Hand) that they have a natural Power, or Ability by the Help of meer common Grace, to believe and repent, without the special Influences of the Spirit ; and (on the other Hand) that God is ready to forgive and receive them upon such Repentance and Return to him, as is thus within their own Power, commonly give into Delay for the present, in Expectation of some future Opportunity of returning to God, and securing the Salvation of their Souls : And this seems to be the common Cause of that Security, which so prevails, even in the professing World.

What I suppose Dr. Johnson designs for another Argument, against the Doctrine of the divine Sovereignty, as represented in the Sermon he writes against, is this.— He “ cannot think it consistent with “ the divine Attributes, God's Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Goodness “ &c. to give Being to any of his intelligent Creatures, without putting

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“ting them into a *Condition* that every Thing being considered; in  
 “the whole of their Nature and Duration, would render Being *desir-*  
 “*able* to them; nor to put them eternally into a Condition that is  
 “*worse* than *not to be*, but for *their own personal Fault*, or voluntary  
 “*Misconduct* in Opposition to his Will.” (P. 6; 7.)

The *Dr.* must suffer me to tell him; that I think this Argument altogether impertinent, — For;

1. Did not God, when he gave *Being* to Man at *first*, put him into a *State*, that was much *better* than not to be; and a State of Happiness, that would have continued to his *Posterity*, as well as to himself, during *the whole of their Nature and Duration*, had it not been for *Man's own Fault*; and *voluntary Misconduct* in Opposition to the Will of God?

2. Has not the glorious God, at an infinite Expence, provided a Way of *Recovery* for apostate Man from their fallen guilty State; and made a free Tender of the glorious Salvation to all, under the Gospel, and actually excluding none who don't wilfully reject it, and so by their *personal Fault*, and *voluntary Misconduct* in Opposition to his Will; cut themselves off from the *unspeakable Gift*.

3. The *Sovereignty* of God's Grace is no *Hindrance* to any Man living, from a Compliance with the gracious Terms of Salvation by Jesus Christ. Everyone who is truly willing to embrace the Gospel-Promise; will be Partaker of the Benefit: And if they are *not* willing to accept such an infinite Good, *whose Fault* is it? — The *special Favour* shewn to some, is no Bar in the Way of others. There is no Impediment in the Way of their everlasting Happiness, but an Attachment to their Lusts and Idols, and the Prevalence of an *evil Heart of Unbelief*; they *will not come to Christ*, that they might have *Life*. — God's (unknown) Counsel and Purpose of special Grace to some, can have no proper Influence; but to animate all to a Care, that they may secure and evidence their own Interest in his special Favour. — The Obstructions of Mercy are not on God's Part, but on Man's altogether.

4. It is certain, that none of the divine *Attributes* do lay the glorious God under *Obligation*, to restore every or any fallen Creature to his primitive Integrity. — This we are assured of, by his Conduct towards the fallen *Angels*; as well as by the Pravity and Corruption of human Nature, found in the whole Race of *Adam*; and which finally continues in a great Part of them. — Whether *Dr. Johnson* can see through the Equity of God's Dispensations, or not, these are certain Facts; which can't be disputed; and therefore cannot be contrary to the Perfections of the divine Nature. For, *shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right!* — To conclude this Head, it is most certain; that God has made the brightest Displays of his *Goodness* towards the human Race, both in the first and second Covenant; and whoever of them fail of a Happiness worthy of their Being, are *personally in Fault*; for the Enmity of their Nature to God, and for the Sinfulness of their Hearts and Lives; and are therefore justly punish'd by their Judge.

Thus I have very briefly consider'd the *Dr's* several Arguments against the *Sovereignty* of God's Grace, as represented in Mr. *Cooke's* Sermon.—

I shall next proceed to take Notice of some few of the many *exceptionable* Things, which incidently occur in his Letter to Mr. *Cooke*.

I might first have taken Notice of his pretending to quote some Passages out of Mr. *Cooke's* Sermon, and to take Occasion thence of a most pathetick Complaint of *Censoriousness* and *Uncharitableness*: But this not being to the Merits of the Cause, there needs no more to be said upon it, but to desire the Reader to compare the 19, 33 and 34 Pages of Mr. *Cooke's* Sermon, with the *Dr's* Quotation; and see with his own Eyes the very great *Misrepresentation* of Mr. *Cooke's* Words; and the great Injustice of that Cry of *Uncharitableness*, pretended to be deduced from them.

I proceed to take Notice of Dr. *Johnson's* Representation of the Doctrine of God's *Sovereignty*, according to his own Apprehension of it. He thus writes, "I agree then, that God is entirely *sovereign* and *arbitrary*, as a *Benefactor*, in the Distribution of his Talents and Favours both spiritual and temporal, as proper Means of Trial and Probation in the World, *i. e.* the various Abilities, Privileges and Advantages he bestoweth upon Mankind." (Page 6.)— Again he allows, "1. That God is merely *sovereign* and *arbitrary*, in the various Distribution of his Favours; and in *chusing* and *rejecting* whom he pleases, with Regard to the Privileges of being his *peculiar* People. 2. That however he was now very just, in rejecting them (the *Jews*) and leaving them to the Hardness of their Hearts, as he did *Pharaoh*." (Page 14.) And again, "In the Distribution of Talents and Favours in this State of Probation, the *Sovereignty* of God as a *Benefactor*, does truly take Place." (P. 20.)

I need not inquire of the *Dr*, whence he derived his Authority to draw a Line of Limitation, to the Exercise of God's *Sovereignty*? Or whence it is, that God has not a Right to dispose, according to his good Pleasure, of one Instance of undeserved Favour to poor guilty Sinners, as well as another; since none is deserved, but all forfeited, and all the Product of mere Bounty and Mercy?— I need not (I say) insist upon this; nor press him to an Answer where none can possibly be given; because I am greatly mistaken, if he does not by this give up the Case, and in Effect allow all that Mr. *Cooke* pleads for, in the Sermon which his Letter was design'd against.— I think, it cannot be denied, that *saving* Grace is one of the Talents and Favours distributed in this State of Probation. If therefore, God be *sovereign* and *arbitrary* in the Distribution of his Talents and Favours in this State of Probation, (as he allows) then he is *sovereign* in the Donation of *saving* Grace, which was the only Thing asserted and illustrated by Mr. *Cooke*; and the only Thing which Dr. *Johnson* should have attempted to disprove, in his Remarks upon that Sermon.— Besides, it will also follow, from the *Dr's* own Concessions, that God is *sovereign* in withholding the necessary Qualifications for future Glory,

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in that he allows, God was *sovereign* in leaving the *Jews* in an Estate of *Unbelief*; and therefore in an Estate of inevitable Perdition.—I think, he can't pretend, that those *Jews* to whom God has so long given a *Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they should not see, and Ears that they should not hear, unto this Day*, can any of them be the Heirs of *Salvation*. No, *their Eyes are darkened, that they may not see; and that they may bow down their Back alway*.— I may add, that if we consider the other Part of his Concession, it will likewise appear, that *God is sovereign and arbitrary* also, in bestowing saving Grace upon such of the *Gentiles*, as are made Partakers of it. For if he has in mere arbitrary *Sovereignty*, without any Desert of their own, chosen them in the Place and Stead of the *Jews*, to be Partakers of the *Means* of *Salvation*, has he not in like *Sovereignty* also, chosen them to that *Salvation*, which will be the necessary Consequence of their due Improvement of those *Means*?— I think, the *Dr.* won't pretend, that God had no *Design* of *Salvation* to any of the *Gentiles* by that Act of *Sovereignty*, by which they are brought into the Enjoyment of Gospel-Privileges. And if he had a *Design* of their *Salvation*, in that Act of *Sovereignty*, he must then allow, that God is (to use his own Words) *merely sovereign and arbitrary*, with Respect to the eternal *Salvation* of all such of the *Gentiles*, as shall be eternally saved.— Thus then he has fairly given up the Case; and whatever Arguments he brings against Mr. *Cooke's* Doctrine, do equally militate against his own.— Such Inconsistency must necessarily be the Consequence of limiting the divine *Sovereignty*, to temporal Favours and present Privileges only.

The *Dr.* observes, that “ It seems to him very necessary to distinguish, between the Consideration of God as a *Benefactor*, and a *Judge*; and between the Bestowment of various *Talents* and *Favours* upon Men in this Life, which is a State of *Probation*; and the *Retribution* to be awarded in the Life to come, according to what *Use* they shall have made of them here.— In the one God acts as *sovereign Lord* of his Favours; and in the other as a *righteous Judge* of the Behaviour of his Creatures under them.” (P. 6.)

To which I answer, that this is all very true; but then it is difficult conceiving, to what Purpose it is urged; unless to pull down with the one Hand, what is built up with the other, and to express his full Consent to the Doctrine which he opposes.— Does not God act as a *Benefactor*, in the Donation of his special *Grace* to whom he pleases? Is not special *Grace* a *Talent and Favour* bestowed upon Men in this Life, which is a State of *Probation*? Did ever any Body suppose, that Men will be brought to a Trial before their Judge at the great Day, for their having received, or not received, special *Grace* from God? Is it not allowed on all Hands, that the *Retributions* to be awarded in the Life to come, will be according to what *Use* Men make of the *Talents* they are here entrusted with? Is it any Way inconsistent with this, that God has bestowed upon some, such special and distinguishing *Grace* and *Favour*, as he has not bestow'd upon others?— Is there not then a full Concession before us, that in the Donation of special *Grace*,

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God acts as sovereign Lord of his Favours ; and gives, or with-holds it, according to his own good Pleasure ?—What then is the *Dr.* writing against ?— Is not this all that *Mr. Cooke* undertook to prove in his Sermon ; and all that any Body (in the present Case) asserts or contends for ?

I shall next consider some Reflections made by *Dr. Johnson*, upon the divine *Præscience*.— Not that I propose a Debate with him about the physical Propriety of the Word, *Foreknowledge* ; as applied to the infinite and glorious God.— I allow, that *there is neither past nor to come, neither fore nor after in him*. But what I would particularly take Notice of, is the *Consequences* he would draw from that Subject : “ For as it cannot be (*says he*) but that God’s *Knowledge* must be “ absolutely perfect, he must therefore *foresee*, or rather *see* every “ Thing certainly *as being what it is* ; necessary Events, as being necessary ; and contingent, as being such ; and the Actions of such “ as he has made free Agents, as being free.” (Page 11.)

Were this granted, what is the Consequence ? How will it follow, from hence, that God is not *sovereign* in the Donation of his *special Grace* ?— *God did foresee, or rather see*, the World of Mankind in just such a State as it is in, an apostate guilty impotent State, utterly undeserving of any Favour at his Hands. He saw that none of the human Race, without the renewing Influences of his Spirit, would accept of the most gracious and free Offers of Pardon and Salvation, which he has made them through the Merits of his dear Son : He saw it to be his merciful good Pleasure (this their Guilt and Obstinacy notwithstanding) to bestow *special Grace* upon some (and not upon others) of this apostate Race, whereby they should be drawn to a Compliance with the Gospel-Offer, and to an Acceptance of Christ Jesus and his saving Benefits.— He *saw*, from Eternity, each individual Person, who would be the Subject of his *special Grace* ; and every individual Person that would not.—And he *saw*, that every one of those, whom in sovereign Mercy He is pleased to draw to CHRIST (and none but they) would *come to him*, and through him be eternally happy.—How unreasonable therefore, and utterly inconsistent with the divine Perfections, as well as with the Word of God, is *Dr. Johnson’s* Notion of the *Decrees*. “ ALL the Notion (he tells us) he can have of the “ *Decrees* of God is, that he decreed that this should be the Result “ of Things, *viz.* that the *Righteous* should be *happy*, and the *Wicked* “ be *miserable*.— And he can’t but think, that whatever Objections “ may seem to lie against this from the *Foreknowledge* of God, must “ arise only from the Narrowness of our own Way of conceiving “ Things. (P. 10.)—But I must tell him, that an inspired *Apostle* had quite another Way of thinking. Rom. viii. 29, 30. *Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son. And whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* — This is the Language of Scripture ; and this a necessary Deduction from the Nature of Things.— If there be a God, he must be om-

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*niscient*, and must know, not only in *general*, the future States of the *Righteous* and the *Wicked*, but the State of each individual Person.— He must even number the very Hairs of our Head : *he must foresee, or rather see, every Thing certainly AS BEING WHAT IT IS* ; and therefore every Event must certainly be according as he eternally *knew* it would be.— This *Knowledge* of His (as I have before observed) must agree with all his other *Perfections* ; and therefore must agree with his *Will* ; unless we should blasphemously suppose a Discord & Jar among the divine *Attributes*.—Hence, a divine *Decree* with Respect to each individual Person, necessarily follows from the *Foreknowledge*, or (if Dr. *Johnson* won't allow us, in the Language of Scripture to use this Word) from the infinite eternal *Knowledge* of God.— But we are told, that *God knew necessary Events, as being necessary ; and contingent Events, as being such*.—I am surprized, to find a Gentleman of the *Dr's* Capacity talk at this Rate. Does he indeed think, that there is any Thing *contingent* with Respect to God ?— With Respect to us indeed, *Futurities* are *contingent*, and it is from the *Defectiveness* of our *Knowledge* and *Power*, that they are so. But has not he himself told us with Respect to God, that “ by one single Act, one infinite all-comprehending View, to which all Things that with Respect to our narrow limited *Minds* are past, present, or to come, are equally and at once present.” How then, I beseech him, can any Thing be *contingent*, either liable to be, or not to be, with Respect to God, with whom they are actually *present*, and *in View*.

Another Thing worthy of Remark, is the *Dr's* *Paraphrase* upon the *ninth* Chapter to the *Romans*. In which he tells us, that “ he cannot find one Syllable relating to the *future eternal* Condition of particular *Persons* ; it being only a *Vindication* of God's *Sovereignty* in dealing with whole *Nations* of Men ; and particularly in electing the *Jews* at first, and rejecting them now ; and calling the *Gentiles* to be his *peculiar People*, to enjoy peculiar *Talents* and *Favours* in *this World*. (Page 13.)— But I would inquire of him, whether it ben't just arguing, from the *Sovereignty* of God towards whole *Nations* of Men (some of whom are left in the Way of *Destruction*, while others are brought into the Way of *Life* and *Peace*) to the *Sovereignty* of God with Respect to particular *Persons*.— I think he can hardly pretend, that God is *sovereign* with Respect to Men in *general* ; and not *sovereign* with Respect to *Individuals* : That he is *sovereign* with Respect to his *withholding* Grace from the *Jews*, and not *sovereign* in the *Donation* of Grace to whom he pleases among the *Gentiles*.— Could not then the *Apostle* justly deduce this Consequence from those Premises, that God as a *Sovereign* has Right to *have Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy* ; and to *harden whom he will* ? And is it not a *Fact*, most notorious and open to every one's Observation, that the *Apostle* does reason after this Manner ?— Dr. *Johnson* tells us, “ It is only with Respect to the Bestowment of certain *Privileges* and *Talents* in *this Life*, that St. *Paul* is to be understood in the *Text* now cited.” (Page 15.)— But let any unprejudic'd Person read the 22d and 23d  
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*Verses of that Chapter, and see whether they can persuade themselves to believe such a Gloss. What if God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-Suffering, the Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction: And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory, on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory!*— There needs no other Remark upon these Words, than to observe, that if they are consistent with the Dr's Interpretation, and if they refer to *this Life only*, then Words must be no longer consider'd as *Signs of Ideas*; nor must we pretend to know the Meaning of Scripture, by the Language of it.

There is one Thing more, which calls for some Attention in Dr. Johnson's Letter, which is a long Discourse to prove that there are *Promises of special Grace* made to *unregenerate Persons, while such*. Upon which Subject he challenges his Antagonist, with an assuming Air, in the following Words. "Pray, Sir, let me ask you, *Are there Promises?* " or are there *not*?— If you say, there are *not*, as your Argument " seems plainly to import, I must think we are laid under a *Necessity* " of being *deceived*. For surely no Words can express *Promises*, if " those of the Scriptures do not. (Page 23.)— And yet after this pointed Challenge, he does in the same Page fairly give up the whole Cause. " I own (*says he*) that the *Matter of the Promises*, is Matter " of mere *sovereign free Grace*." And again, " Which *Right* there- " fore he has granted us (I allow) not to plead in the Virtue of any " Thing *we can do*; but *merely* in the Virtue of what CHRIST *has* " done for us, in whom alone it is, that the *Promises* are *Yea and A-* " *men*."— Well then! The *Matter of the Promises*, according to his own Representation of the Case, is, That God will give *divine efficacious Aid, or special Grace* to one, not yet thoroughly converted from Sin to God, upon his being deeply sensible of his own Guilt and Weakness, his earnestly coming to God for Help, and striving in earnest, that he may be qualified for God's Help. (Page 25.)— This, according to him, is the *Matter of the Promises*; and in *this* he himself acknowledges God to be *sovereign*: That is, (if I understand what *Sovereignty* means) God may bestow this *Matter of the Promises*, or may withhold it, according to his own good Pleasure. Here then the Debate may end. For I know of no Body who contends for more than *this*.— If now we look into the *other Concession* of his, the same Consequence will follow. Are we to plead for the Good of the *Promise, not in the Virtue of any Thing We can do*? Then it is certainly true, that we can do nothing by any *Sollicitude for Salvation*, by any *Sensibility of our Guilt and Weakness*, by any *earnest Cries to God for Help*, or by any *Striving that we may be qualified for God's Help*, which will give us a Claim to the Good of the *Promise*. Here then the Debate may rest again.— For who contends for more than this? Are we to plead for the Good of the *Promise, merely in the Virtue of what CHRIST has done for us*? I think, Dr. Johnson must allow, that none can *sincerely* do this, without a saving *Faith* in Christ: For how can any *sincerely* plead in the *Virtue of what Christ has done for us*, that don't

can't sincerely believe in him, and rely on his Merits? And whoever doubted, that all the *Promises* of the Gospel were made to *true Believers*?—Once more, Are all the *Promises* *Yea and Amen* in CHRIST alone?—Surely then, none can claim the Good of the *Promises*, but they who are *interested* in CHRIST by a lively Faith. How can those that are *Neglecters* and *Rejecters* of this Saviour, be *Partakers* of the Benefits treasured up in him, and to be obtain'd *only through him*, in whom *they have no Part or Lot*?—Here then again *ex Ore suo* the Controversy is finished. For every Body allows them to be *interested* in the *Promises*, who are *interested* in *Christ*, the Fountain, the Foundation, and the Treasury of them *all*.

The *Dr.* goes on to argue, “If you *allow* there are *Promises*, where “ is the Absurdity in supposing, nay, what else can be made of them, “ but that God designed to pass over a *Right*, at least a *conditional* “ Right to his Creatures, of what he *promises* them? (*Ibid.*)— But how will this serve the *Dr.*'s Cause?— They have *no Right*, then, till they comply with the *Conditions*, upon which the *Promises* are made. And what are *they*? Let *Dr. Johnson* shew, if he can, *one Text* in the Bible, wherein a *Promise* of special Grace is made upon any lower Condition, than *gracious Sincerity* in seeking. It is true, *continued Supplies* of Grace are promised to the sincere Seeker: but we are every where assured, that none other have a Claim to the *Supply of the Spirit of Christ*.—Sincere Seeking is what none but a truly *regenerate* Soul is capable of; and therefore none but such do *comply* with the Terms, and have thereby a Claim to the Good of the *Promise*. He that don't *ask* in Faith, *nothing wavering*, *must not think to receive any Thing of the Lord*. Jam. i. 6, 7.— But we are told, that “ *it is absurd, 'tis to make perfect Nonsense of the precious Promises of God*, to interpret the *Promises* in *Matth. vii. 7—11, 28. Luke xi. 13. &c.* in this View — But wherein, I beseech the *Dr.* does this *Absurdity* and *Nonsense* consist? Do true *Believers* stand in Need of *no Favours* from God? Should they not ask them of him? Or should they not be animated to *ask* and *seek* for them, from the *gracious Promise* of *receiving* and *finding*? Is there no *Door* of Mercy, which *Believers* want to have (at least further) *opened* to them; at which they have therefore *Occasion* to *knock*?— Is not the *Way* in which that *Rest* promised to the *heavy laden*, may be expected, *their coming to Christ*; which is but another Word for the Exercise of *Faith* in him? Can they therefore claim the *Promise*, before they comply with the Terms of it; before they *come to Christ*, and are true *Believers* in him?—Where then is the *Nonsense* of all this; or the *Absurdity* of any Part of it?—But that this Point may be put beyond all Doubt, we may observe, the *Promises*, in both the Places quoted by him, are expressly made to the *Children of God*; and the Matter of the *Promise*, (or the Good in it) to be expected from their *heavenly Father*. They therefore who have no *Right* to that *Character*, have no Claim to those *Promises*.— The *Multitude* who attended upon our Saviour's Preaching when the *Promises* were made, were not indeed in general the *Children of God* by *Faith in Christ*: Yet there was no *Impropriety*

in representing to 'em, the glorious *Privilege* connected with this *Character*, that they might be animated to an earnest Care, to get into that happy State.

To conclude, tho' there be (strictly speaking) *no Promise* of special Grace to unconverted Sinners, yet there is great *Encouragement*, for the Unregenerate to lie at the Footstool of God's *sovereign Mercy*, for the gracious Influences of his blessed Spirit. This is the Way in which they are directed to seek: This is the Way in which they are encouraged to *hope*: This is the Way, in which Multitudes have *sought* and *obtain'd*: And this is the *only* Way, in which they have any Warrant, to look for renewing, sanctifying, and saving Mercy. Nor is there any *Promise* whatsoever, that can prove a sufficient Incentive to Duty, where these *Considerations* fail of that Effect.

May the glorious God grant us to experience the Power of his special effectual Grace in our Hearts (whatever speculative Mistakes we are liable to) and carry on his Work in our Souls; till the Imperfection of our Knowledge shall vanish away, 'till our Charity be perfected, and Grace compleated in eternal Glory, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

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