

SERMONS, &c.

I. On the Divisions among Christians.

II. On the Necessity of Regeneration to future Happiness.

III. The Scripture Doctrine of Election.

IV. Extract of a Letter from Mr. *Whitefield* to Mr. *Wesley*.

V. An Address to the Deists.

By HENRY PATTILLO, A. M. of *Granville*, NORTH-CAROLINA.

In necessariis unitas; in non-necessariis lenitas; in omnibus charitas.—

ANON.

W I L M I N G T O N,

Printed by JAMES ADAMS, for
the AUTHOR, 1788.

P R E F A C E.

IF the following little treatise has any thing in it worthy of the public ear, the reader will discover, and I hope, profit by it. If it is destitute of merit, no preface can give it any. Among my acquaintance, no great things will be expected from me; and beyond that circle, my obscurity will secure me from raising high expectations in my readers. My time of life will prevent me from being greatly elevated, should my book be popular, (this, I hope, would rather humble me in the dust, than raise my pride) or greatly depressed, should the contrary happen; as I must then have recourse to my motives for this publication; which are zeal for truth, and benevolence for the grossly ignorant, the strongly prejudiced, and the carnally secure. I do not mean that I am dead to praise, or insensible of contempt; a state of mind perhaps as unattainable, as it is undesirable. I expect to be read by many with a double pleasure; one arising from the force of truth; another because this is an *American* production, and the work of one whom they have often heard from the pul-

pulpit. To these I say, My dear friends, *call no man master on earth*: believe nothing, because I assert it; reject nothing because I deny it. Learn truth at the feet of Jesus. If this little book is made instrumental for your edification, conviction, comfort, or quickning, give God all the praise. And if you would do me the greatest favour possible, often and earnestly beg of God, that He would bless it to all that read and hear it.

I had been often applied to for my advice and opinion, respecting a change of profession. The first discourse is designed as a general answer to all such questions; and to express my sentiments on the changes which so frequently occur in the present day, that they are scarcely taken notice of. Though firmly fixed in my own principles, and well satisfied with the church in which I was baptized and educated; yet there is no person on earth who can say I ever persuaded them to be of my profession; or ever dissuaded them from assuming any other. I believe, indeed, people seldom consult ministers on this subject, until they are resolved on the change; and then to dissuade, is lost labour. The author, in that sermon, has also shewn, from his own practice, how sociable we may be with our brethren, of other denominations, in those duties of religion and fellow-

fellowship, in which their peculiarities will allow them to walk with us. He had also to defend his practice against some narrow spirits in his own church.

The subject handled in the second sermon, to wit, the connection betwixt present holiness, and future happiness, the author deems one of the most important topicks in divinity; and if really believed by the bulk of mankind, must have a powerful effect on their temper and practice.

The dedication prefixed to the third discourse, will speak the writer's motives for that publication, as well as for the letter annexed to it.

Respecting the *Address to the Deists*—the author was aware, that it is much easier for incautious and unsuspecting youth, to have their principles corrupted, than it is for them to know the history and progress of infidelity; and the wilderness into which it leads them. Those who consult Dr. *Leland*, will see how much the *Address* is indebted to that judicious writer, as far as it is historical. And though nothing can excuse ill manners, either to the living or the dead; yet, if the *American* has dropt some of that respect and deference, paid by *European* writers, to their *right honourable* antagonists, he hopes for the indulgence of his country-men, for whom,

only, he writes. *Americans* are too deep sufferers, from the destructive decrees, and sanguinary counsels, of the *right honourables* and *right reverends* beyond the *Atlantick*, to retain that respect for their *stars* and their *mitres*, which those must shew, who are under the influence of their sovereignty. The author believes it no easy task, to write with complaisance against a set of men, who labour so assiduously to lead the christian world back again to heathenism; and lower still, to level them with the brute. *Deists* have sufficient proofs of the benevolence and philanthropy of *christians*; who, instead of chasing them out of the world, as the worst of destroyers, have, with such patience and perseverance laboured to convince and reclaim them. The little piece here offered to our *American* brethren, of this unhappy cast, can have no motive, but their advantage; and pleads no merit, but that of offering its hand, where better helps are wanting. Should any reader judge the conclusion of the Address too warm, the writer apprehends, that, should the divine mercy ever verify it on a *Deist*, he would have very different sentiments: he would wish for the glow, "Of the rapt Seraph, that adores and burns," and pronounce the warmest lines there, a frigid composition.

The author allows his judicious reader to smile,

smile, when he comes to the encomium on the *famous Tinker*.* He has long owed Mr. Bunyan a good turn, for the many melting emotions his works have afforded him; tho' he never could hope that an occasion would offer, of paying any part of that debt of gratitude, until he sat at his feet in a better world: and to do it now, he has been forced to place him in very unsuitable company.

The notes beg the reader's indulgence. They hide in the margin, as if half afraid to be seen. And while the honest planter wisely passes them by, as things he would not puzzle his head about; the more curious reader will peruse them with attention; gratify a laudable curiosity; and allow them what weight their evidence may merit. The author can only say, his arguments are probable to himself, and with the reader he leaves them; little solicitous concerning the reception *they* may meet with; but by no means equally indifferent respecting the truths handled in this little work: *these* he apprehends are of infinite importance, and demand the most serious attention from every reader.

Book-writing is but in its infancy in these states. Let no one *despise the day of our small things*.

* *Bunyan.*

things. *Americans* will naturally relish the fruits of their own soil, though they sinell of the congenial forest, and fall short of the more elaborate productions of foreign climes. And so affectinglly scarce are good books, among the common people of these southern states, since the late war, that this little piece may compose the whole library in some houses its author has called at.

As a *moderate*, but settled *Calvinist*, the writer would naturally wish, that the doctrines denominated *Calvinistic* were more generally known, and better understood, in the christian world. He laments, he deplores, that an active growing sect amongst us, are so amazingly prejudiced against these doctrines. Indeed the piety, and activity of the *Methodists*, joined with orthodoxy in doctrines, would be a felicity which the present state of the church militant cannot possibly admit of; and be an anticipation of that glory, which God has so often promised to put upon his Church, before the end of time. But let us moderate our grief: *The Lord reigneth.* CHRIST is king in Zion; and as king, has enacted this law, that his followers should *love one another*. With this temper, and a practice agreeable thereto, we may be assured we are building up his kingdom. If we *bite and devour one another*,

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we are as surely weakening his kingdom, and building, and strengthening the kingdom of the accuser of the brethren. The author will take an occasion to speak to the Methodist brethren in his intended dedication. At present permit him to repeat, what he knows from his own experience to be true, That christians of different denominations will always love in proportion as they cultivate acquaintance ; converse freely, on the great doctrines and duties in which they agree ; worship God together, and avoid controversies. There are bigots in all churches. All new converts to a profession, must be allowed a season of bigotry. Of how many spiritual meals, does this contracted temper of soul deprive the christian world ? I fear we have many such in our own church, who miss having their souls quickened, by the preaching of an honest Baptist, or a warm Methodist, because they have different views, of some christian doctrines, from the system embraced among us. Give such hearers what they call a *sound sermon*, and all is well ; though it leave them as stupid as the seat they sit on. Were my own experience of any weight, with persons of this narrow disposition, I could assure them, that I have often sat with pleasure and profit, under the preaching of both these denominations :

denominations : and if they dropt a word on their peculiarities, I left that to such as could receive it, and fed on the rest. Who would throw away a purse of gold, because a few pieces of brass had found their way into it? Or spurn from him all the provisions at his table, because a dry leaf lay hid in his salad? To be sound in the faith, is highly desirable ; but to be pious in practice, is much more excellent. Christians may differ in points of faith, without sapping foundations, or endangering their future happiness : but virtue and holiness are uniformly the same, in all ages, nations, and professions ; and indispensably necessary to the christian character. To *contend earnestly for the faith*, is undoubtedly the duty of *some* ; but to study peace and holiness, is the great business of *all*. An error in judgment, where all honest pains for information have been taken, cannot be ranked among the vices. In such a case, guilt can have no place, for the will is not concerned. One evil word ; one wicked action ; one harsh censure, as they proceed from the heart, and are the choice of the will, have infinitely more of evil in them, than a mistaken judgment has. Thou who judgest, and condemnest thy brother, for unsound opinions, *shalt thou escape the judgment of God?* The better life of thy brother

brother shall rise up against thee, and condemn thy better faith, that did not *work by love*.

If Mr. *Samuel Blair's* little judicious tract, on predestination, were circulating among us, my sermon should not have seen the light. I thought it more eligible, in that discourse, to handle a few texts, and try where they would fairly lead us, than to multiply quotations; as half a dozen good evidences are sufficient to prove any point. *And if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* The controversy does not turn on this question, whether the sacred Scriptures teach divine decrees, and predestination; for none that read them can deny this. But the great question is, in what sense these doctrines are to be taken; or indeed whether they have any sense at all. For if you will believe a famous living modern, when the Scriptures teach these doctrines, you are to understand the Almighty, as *Calling things that ARE NOT, as though THEY WERE*; and the infidel will require no greater latitude to overturn the whole Bible.

The *only* copy of the *Address to the Deists*, is gone to the press; occasioned by the length of the piece, the author's avocations, and the want of an amanuensis. But inaccuracy is not the only difficulty that piece labours under;

under: For when christians write to men of that unhappy turn, they need some charm to induce them to read. Those who love the blessed JESUS, will read what has a tendency to promote his honour, and confirm their faith; while they, whose advantage is principally intended, will too probably neglect it. This *Address* has little to recommend it, but its brevity. Those learned defences of revealed religion, may not be at hand, whose number and magnitude might deter a reader. If either Christianity or Deism be worthy of a wise man's attention, they must be worth the three or four hours reading which the *Address* will require. If an author's own opinion ought to weigh any thing, the Deists owe him gratitude, for bringing the controversy into so small a compass; though it was impossible to enlarge on particular branches within such narrow limits. After all, if Deists will not search for truth, as candour, honesty, and self-love require; still the *Address* may be of use to Christians. As noxious weeds are the production of every soil, infidelity is the growth of every heart. And should the *Address* miss its immediate aim, to convince and reclaim the infidel; or at least to set him on the search, it may yet furnish the Christian, when his faith is assaulted, with such defensive arguments

ments, as might not readily have occurred to his own mind, when he most needed their assistance.

The author casts himself, and his little book, at the feet of sovereign mercy ; and commends that, and his reader, to the grace and blessing of God. Amen.



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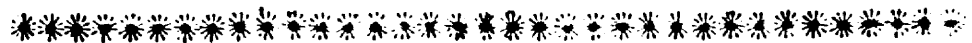
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The Divisions among Christians;

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S E R M O N.



I. COR. I. xiii. *Is CHRIST divided?*

THE Christian religion was first introduced at Corinth by the ministry of *Paul*, assisted by *Silas* and *Timothy*, and afterwards by *Apollos*, of which we have the history Acts 18. so that many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized, and a numerous church was formed of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and many of them enriched with the gifts and graces of the HOLY SPIRIT. But the powers of hell took advantage of their prosperity and security; and pride and emulation found place among them: *pride* of their great gifts and privileges; and *emulation*, who should most excel in tongues, miracles and popular talents.

lents. They became litigious, and haled each other to courts of law, that were still under the management of heathen magistrates. Husbands and wives separated, because the one became a christian, while the other remained an unbeliever. Some of them still frequented the feasts instituted in honour of idols: and all of them appear to have concurred in keeping within the pale of their church a man who had taken to his bed his father's wife, and that during the life of her husband. They had grossly abused the holy ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*; the rich eating and drinking, even to excess, while the poor could not partake at all. They ungratefully forgot the holy Apostle, who was their spiritual father; and encouraged preachers to set themselves up in opposition to him, and sink his reputation. It would seem, that their preachers interrupted each other whilst speaking; a number of them preaching, praying, or prophesying at once: every one bringing into the assembly *a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation*. Their women, forgetting their subjection, and the modesty of their sex, prayed and spoke in the public assemblies. How many tares may be sowed among the wheat in a little time! What a train of evils can Satan and his

his instruments bring on a church, in the short space of three years ! For we can allow no more in the present case. If you look into a Bible with the chronology, you will find that *Paul* first preached in *Corinth* in the year of CHRIST 54 ; when he is commanded by the *Lord*, Acts xxiii. 9. *Be not afraid, but speak and bold not thy peace ; for I have much people in this city.* Accordingly he continued a year and six months among them ; and doubtless left them in an orderly and flourishing state. Now his first letter to that church, in which he animadverts on all these disorders, is in the year 59 ; and if we allow them to continue in the same beautiful regularity but six months, (which is not extravagant ; considering the skilful hand that planted them) then it appears, that from the beginning of the year 56, until some time in the year 59, all these enormities had been introduced into the Apostolic church of *Corinth* ; within which were many persons richly endowed with gifts and graces. Blessed JESUS, if thou wert not the great shepherd, what must befall thy poor sheep in this wilderness, where the lions and wolves are ever ready to scatter and devour them ! But one evil yet remains unnoticed in the church of *Corinth*. *There are contentions among you.* What room for contentions ;

could *Paul*, that wise master-builder, leave among his beloved *Corinthians*? *I am of Paul*: he is my spiritual father; and has the least of the *Jew* in him of any christian preacher that has been among us. He is besides, an *Apostle*, a dignity which the others do not possess. *I am of Apollos*: We find *Apollos* at *Corinth* in the year 56, where he had thoroughly learned christianity. An eloquent man he was, and mighty in the *Scriptures*. This worthy minister is made an excuse for further divisions in the *Corinthian* church. *I am of Apollos*: He is the first speaker, and has the warmest address of any that has visited us, and is my favorite among the whole. *I am of Cephas*: How *Peter's* name comes in as the head of a party in *Corinth*, is not easy to determine. There is no authority from the apostolic history to believe that *Peter* ever travelled out of *Asia*; but his name was famous through all the churches. I believe it may be safely asserted, that, if ever *Peter* was in *Greece* at all, he had not been at *Corinth* so early as this date requires. Those who ranged themselves into a party under his name in that church, were probably *Jewish* Christians, who, like many believers in *Judea*, were all zealous of the law; and knowing that the Apostleship of the circumcision was committed to *Peter*, and that he

he had on various occasions shewn his attachment to some of their customs, these *Corinthians* might, with some shew of reason, prefer him to all others. The Apostle *Paul* is made acquainted with these irregularities and parties in the Church of *Corinth* by his friends in that city, and particularly by the family of *Cloe*. His holy soul takes the alarm, lest by these names and distinctions that name should be lost at *Corinth*, which was first given to the disciples by divine appointment at *Antioch*; that name, which it is the great glory of disciples to wear, the name **CHRISTIAN**: that new name, promised to the *New-Testament* church, which the mouth of the **LORD** should name. Is it come to this among you, ye *Corinthian* believers, that, being once called by that honorable name, ye now quit it, as weary or ashamed of it? Will ye give up your chief glory and distinction, and take upon you the name of a fellow-worm? Remember, *Peter*, *Paul* and *Apollos*, utterly disclaim such a distinction, and bear their joint testimony against it; and our glorious Master is but little beholden to your zeal and attachment, who would rob him of the glory due to his name; and forget your own dignity as anointed ones.* In your party

* *Christi, uncti.*

ty distinctions, you would treat the blessed JESUS worse than the soldiers did, who crucified him : His seamless coat they did not divide, but cast lots for it entire. *Is CHRIST divided?* The true answer is, surely no : but his followers are lamentably divided ; and that for many ages, from a very early period of the Church. Of these divisions, it is my intention at present to give a concise relation.

1. The first division in the Church of Christ, arose in the following manner : Some were converted to Christianity from among the Jews, and some from among Gentile profelytes, or heathen idolaters. Many of the former, as has been hinted, believed that the Law of *Moses* was perpetually obligatory ; and that every convert from among the heathen, ought to be circumcised, and submit to that law. This, the Apostle *Paul*, some other *Jews*, and all the Gentile converts, denied. But the contention continued until a Synod of apostles, elders and brethren, at *Jerusalem*, determined against it. This gave great joy to all the Gentile christians, and encouraged others to join the church, when they found that they were not to be subjected to circumcision, and the *Jewish* law.

2. Another great division arose in the christian church respecting the time of celebrating

ing *Easter*. The eastern churches judged, that the time to be observed in commemoration of Christ's death should be the day on which the *Jewish Passover* happened; and that was always guided by the full moon in their month *Nisan*, what ever day of the week it might fall on. The *Western* churches, on the other hand, determined, that the *Lord's day*, following the said full moon, was the fittest time to celebrate that festival.—My audience can readily see, that this dividing controversy depended on no command of CHRIST to observe the day of his death as a sabbath; nor on the authority of any of his apostles, though both parties plead apostolic example, for their practice. If men will be inventing duties that God never required, we would judge, that those who observed the day of the Jewish passover, for the celebration of the christian *holiday*, had the best of the argument; for our blessed Lord was certainly crucified at that festival. But so positive were their opponents, that the bishop of *Rome*, before the end of the second century, excommunicated all the *Eastern* churches for their heresy in this particular; and it was not until after several *General Councils*, that they all agreed to observe the *Sunday after the passover* for the time of *Easter*.

3. The next great division of christians
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was into what were called the orthodox, or *Catholick*, and the *Arians*. *Arius* was a Presbyter of *Alexandria*, and denied the eternity of *Jesus Christ*, and his equality with the Father. This heresy infected the churches, especially of *Asia* and *Africa*, where the orthodox ministers were often expelled from their charges by violence and blood-shed; and *Arians* forced in upon them, sometimes by the order of *Arian* emperors, and at other times, by the violence of the faction. This controversy continues in the christian church to this day, as there are still some who believe it to be a robbing of God to ascribe the divine nature to the second or third persons of the Trinity.

4. Another great division among christians, is into the *Eastern* and *Western* churches. The western or *Latin* church asserted the supremacy of the bishop of *Rome* over all the christian world. The eastern christians disputed this claim, and insisted that the bishops of *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Constantinople*, were nothing inferior to him of *Rome*. This division also still subsists. The Eastern or *Greek* church extends over the *Turkish* and *Russian* Empires; and though its professors are not *Papists*, they are not less superstitious, and much less enlightened, than the *Papists*.

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5. The next great division of Christians is, into *Papists* and *Protestant*. The former take this name from the word *Papa*, *father*, by which the bishop of Rome is called.—The *Protestants* acquired that distinction on the following occasion. The *Reformation* had made a considerable progress in *Germany*. The Pope, his clergy, and almost all the princes of *Europe* took the alarm. The Emperor Char. V. summoned a Diet of the Empire at *Spire*, in the year 1530, where it was enacted, “That there should be no innovation in the established religion.” Against this decree, the princes of *Saxony*, *Brandenburg*, *Hesse*, and *Lunenburg*, entered a solemn PROTEST, and thenceforth they and their adherents acquired the name of PROTESTANTS. At this time, however, *England* was so far from joining in a protest against Popery, that its King, *Henry VIII.* wrote a book against the reformation; and so well defended the Roman Catholick religion, in the opinion of the Pope, that, by a decree in the consistory, he solemnly declared him *Defender of the Faith*, which his protestant successors absurdly retain among their titles to this day. However, in the following reign, under the pious youth *Edward VI.* the reformation took place in *England*; and that kingdom embraced the doctrines of the other reformed

formed churches of *Europe*, expressed in her Articles ; but retains more of the old religion in its hierarchy, ceremonies and liturgy, than any other protestant church. I would here just mention the division of Protestants, on the continent of *Europe*, into *Lutherans*, and *Calvinists* ; and in the three insular Kingdoms, into *Episcopalians* in *England* and *Ireland*, and *Presbyterians* in *Scotland*. But that I may hasten to my principal design, I shall confine myself to the divisions in the Church of *England*, the first of which happened about the year 1559, in the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* reign, on the following occasion. About seven years before this, *Edward VI.* died, and was succeeded by his sister *Mary* ; whose Popish principles, and natural cruelty, soon cut off, or drove out of the kingdom, the most zealous Protestants in it. These residing, during their exile, in the reformed cities of the *Low Countries*, *Germany* and *Switzerland* ; and seeing the reformation there, carried to a greater degree of purity, from Popish dregs, than it had arrived at by King *Edward's* reformation in *England*, they returned home at the death of Queen *Mary*, resolving, if possible, to bring the *English* Church nearer than it had been to the foreign churches they had seen. Had they exerted their united efforts for that purpose,

pose, success would probably have attended their endeavours: but some of them conformed to *Elizabeth's* reformation, though in some things nearer to Popery than that of King *Edward*; while others insisted on a farther reformation, and were known by the name of PURITANS, from their endeavours after a purer worship than was then established. This body of men exerted themselves to have the *popish* dress, the square cap, the surplice, and other habits that had been defiled by idolatry; and some popish ceremonies, either totally discarded, or at least left discretionary, such as kneeling at the sacrament; the cross in baptism; bowing at the name of JESUS; God-fathers and God-mothers; the ring in marriage; reading the Apocrypha; Saints days, &c. But the Queen and Archbishop *Parker*, enforced the Act of uniformity on all the clergy; and many of those who had been sufferers and exiles in the last reign, pleaded conscience in vain, and could not be permitted to preach to the people, though many churches had not a sermon in them for many months together. At length, in 1566, they agreed to reject entirely the English liturgy, as these were cut off from the church; and to assemble in private houses, or elsewhere, as they had opportunity. And thus they continued, and still

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continue, a separate body, known at different times by the denominations of *puritans*, *non-conformists*, and *protestant-dissenters*; whose sufferings, in that protestant land, would fill many volumes: And these for their conscientiously refusing to comply with some ceremonies, which their persecutors acknowledged were insignificant, or unessential; but which, however, they imposed as equally binding with the Law of God itself.

The Church of *England* had no other considerable division in it, for a number of years, unless the parties distinguished by *High-church* and *Low-church* may be called such. *High-church*, is that party in the Church of *England*, who are *Tories* in the state; and seem inclined to raise the prerogative of the King, and the power of the church, above controul; and are for enforcing uniformity to all that the church enjoins. *Low-church*, is that part of the church of *England*, who are *Whigs* in their political principles, friends to civil and religious liberty; civil to the dissenters; and have, on sundry critical occasions, joined those Dissenters, for the preservation of British liberty. But high and low church-men, all agreed in doctrine, ceremonies, and modes of worship, till about fifty years ago, when' a division happened in that church, which has spread itself over
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ver the three kingdoms, and about twenty years ago, extended to *America*.—You can readily conjecture, that I mean the *Methodists*. Whether they at first assumed this name, because they adhered more closely to the methods of the church of *England*, than other people of that communion; or whether it was given them, by way of contempt, for their greater pretensions to strictness in the devotion required by the said church, I shall not determine. It is a denomination by which they are now every where known, and which they readily assume to themselves in their printed books. Among this people, there happened, I think, no division for several years: their two principal leaders, Mr. *Wesley* and Mr. *Whitfield*, were both ordained Ministers in the Church of *England*; and being men of great zeal, and popular talents, they did not confine themselves to one place or people, but preached about the kingdom to crowded audiences, in the Churches of the *Establishment*, as long as those houses were open for them. But the zeal, popularity and success of these men, offended their brethren, and they almost universally concurred in refusing them their pulpits, which induced them to take to the streets, church-yards, fields and woods; where their assemblies sometimes amounted

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to many thousands ; and hopeful and lasting impressions of religion were wrought on many. Thus those celebrated preachers carried on their united and successful endeavours for the good of mankind, till a period which I cannot ascertain ; but at which, they also *divided* : Mr. *Wesley* and his adherents, embracing the *Arminian* tenets, while Mr. *Whitfield* and his party, stood firm to the doctrinal articles of the Established Church. Those doctrines denominated *Arminian*, have their appellation from the man who first taught them, *Jacobus Arminius*, a divine at *Leyden*, who, about the year 1600, introduced the controversy respecting *Election*, the extent of CHRIST'S redemption, *original sin*, *effectual grace*, and *perseverance*. The protestant world took the alarm, and the states of the *Netherlands* judged it necessary to convene a national Synod at the city of *Dort*. As *Arminius*, by denying the five points mentioned, was only bringing men back to the opinions they naturally form in a state of ignorance ; it is not to be wondered at, that his doctrines were eagerly embraced by many ; and those violent contentions ensued, which endangered the public tranquillity, and which the States hoped to allay, by the authority of this Rev. Synod. It was composed of about sixty of the most learned divines
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of the age, and twenty laymen. The divines were collected from the *Low-countries*, *Great-Britain*, the *Palatinate*, *Switzerland*, *Hessia*, *Geneva*, *Bremen*, *Embsen*, *Nassau*, and *Wateravia*. The English divines were the Bishops, (then or afterwards bishops) *Hall*, *Carlton* and *Davenant*, with the Doctors *Ward* and *Goad*. They met November 13. 1618, and by the 1st of June following, they had held one hundred and eighty Sessions. The English divines concurred in every article of the *Belgick Confession of Faith*, but differed from the Dutch Divines with respect to *ecclesiastical Government discipline*. When the five famous points came to be debated, the English divines did not distinguish betwixt the *sufficiency* and *efficacy* of CHRIST's death; for Dr. *Davenant* was inclined to the doctrine of universal redemption, though he maintained the *certain salvation of all the Elect*; but believed it possible for some of the *non-elect* to be saved. From this last opinion, a report was raised, that these divines had given up the doctrine of their church: but *Hall*, writing to *Davenant* afterwards, says, "I shall live and die in the opinion of the *Synod of Dort*; and I assert that the doctrines of *Arminius* cannot stand with the doctrines of the Church of *England*." *Davenant* replies, "I know that no man can embrace

Arminianism, in the doctrines of *predestination* and *grace*, but he must desert the articles of the church of *England*; nor in the point of *perseverance*, but he must vary from the received opinions of our best approved doctors, in the *English* church." *Arminianism*, however, found its way into England, and became the fashionable doctrine of the Court and City divines; and spread, as might be expected, among the great, and such as were willing to think man less depraved, and that more was in his power to do, than the other opinions allowed. This departure from the doctrines of the Reformation was greatly promoted by, and highly pleasing to the *Papists*. In 1628, an *English* Jesuit, writing to the Rector of their college at *Brussels*, says, "We have planted that sovereign drug *Arminianism*, which we hope will purge the *Protestants* from their heresy, and it flourishes and bears fruit in due season."—How so learned and pious a man, as I believe Mr. *Wesley* to be, fell off from the doctrine of his own, and every other protestant church: how he fell into the same track of thinking, with the ignorant and graceless part of mankind, has often been astonishing to me. It is well known, truth lies too deep for vulgar and common observation. *Veritas in puteo*, is an old observation, *truth lies at the bottom*

bottom of a well; and but few of mankind have line or bucket to reach it. But this observation is not true, if Arminianism be true. For were you to ask all the ignorant and graceless you meet, whether GOD hath chosen his people in CHRIST before the foundation of the world? Whether they are Elect, according to the foreknowledge of GOD the Father? Whether he hath predestinated us to the adoption of children, by JESUS CHRIST, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will? Whether we are predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will? Whether God doth foreknow, predestinate, call, justify and glorify his people? Whether the grace that Christ gives, shall be in the soul a well of water springing up to everlasting life? Whether man is so utterly depraved and helpless, that he cannot think a good thought as of himself, but all his sufficiency is of God? Whether the Lord causes his people to walk in his ways, and they shall keep his commandments, and do them? Whether saints are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation? And whether neither angels, men nor devils, nor any thing created, shall be able to separate believers from CHRIST JESUS their LORD? Were you, I say, to ask the bulk of mankind these questions, they would probably answer, that they had not made religion much

much their study; but it appears to them, that all these queries but the last, may be answered in the negative ; and that the last question must be answered affirmatively ; for there are doubtless many things that can separate the believer from God.—But if you assure the person, that these are the very words of inspiration, and admit of no negative nor opposing particle, he will either acknowledge that he does not understand them, but has always thought otherwise, when he thought upon the subject at all ; or he will oppose his reason to revelation, and find a thousand objections to the doctrines. But as this subject requires a more particular investigation, I shall dismiss it for the present, and proceed to what is my more immediate design.

Episcopacy in England and Ireland, and Presbytery in Scotland, with the known agreement of their doctrines, in these important points, lay as an insuperable bar in the way of Mr. *Wesley's* establishing his own tenets, and reducing them to a System ; nor was there any prospect, for many years that this could ever be accomplished. However, *American Independence*, obtained, after a violent and bloody struggle, in direct opposition to the *pacific* principles of Mr. *Wesley's* followers, opened a door for the entrance of his
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new-formed church, with doctrines, liturgy, officers and ceremonies, to his own heart in every thing. And though the obnoxious texts still maintain their station in the *Bible*, yet the doctrines themselves, for having worn the name of *Calvinism*, and for their own heterodoxy, no doubt, made no part of the new System : the whole seventeenth article of the church of *England* is discarded, and NOT SO written on every text that asserts it.

And now, my brethren, we are come to the principal design of this discourse. The short historical narrative I have given you, has cost me but little labour, and may be new to many of you.—But now my difficulties beset me round ; How I shall answer to the *Presbytery*, of which I am a member ; to the congregations with the charge of which I have the honor to be intrusted, and to the world in general, for the apparent inconsistency of my own conduct. Here have I been, in words as strong as I can express them, declaring my opinion, that Mr. *Wesley*, and all who believe as he does, are very corrupt in doctrine ; and are far departed from the truth, as it is in *JESUS* ; and yet I have treated them, both preachers and people, as brethren ; have held christian communion with them, broke the bread of life to them, and indulged them with the
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use of my pulpit, though I knew the points in which we differed.

Our new friends were several years around and among us, before they manifested any disposition to cultivate acquaintance with me, or, I believe, with the Church under my Care. Of this I complained in my letters to a popular clergyman, who was familiar with the *Methodists*; and let him know, that I much desired to be acquainted with their preachers, but that they seemed shy and avoided me. To this he answered, that he believed they had such injunctions to avoid *Calvinism*; that he did not know but it extended to particular persons. However, you can recollect, that about a year ago, we received some warm friendly letters from them; expressing their wishes to cultivate a nearer intercourse with us, and that bigotry might cease from amongst Christians; and further, requesting that we would allow them the use of our house for their quarterly meeting. You know the answer we returned was, "they were welcome, and we should be glad to see them." They came accordingly; we received them; we treated them as brethren, and invited them with us to the table of the Lord. But this is rather narrating facts, than producing the reasons of our conduct. Take then the motives that prevailed

vailed with me, and in which you concurred. They knew we were *Calvinists*, and most certainly believed the doctrines which they condemn; and yet they themselves removed the gulph of separation, and desired church-fellowship with us. We received them, not because they were sound in their doctrines, but because we believed them godly in their lives. The points in which they and we differ, have employed the clearest heads, and keenest pens that Europe has produced for one hundred and fifty years; and we knew the people I am now speaking of had been bred up in America, with but little opportunity to study the controversy, and perhaps had been forbidden to read the books necessary for information, if they had them. We knew too, that the man whom they admire and follow, had tinctured their minds, and given them such views of these doctrines, that it must be deemed an exploit of charity in them, to shew a temper so sociable towards those who maintained them. On the other hand, we knew the truths in which they agreed with us: Repentance towards GOD, and faith towards the LORD JESUS CHRIST—The degeneracy of man, and the necessity of divine grace—The work of the divine SPIRIT in regeneration, and the indispensable obligation

obligation of all professions to universal holiness and charity. Add to these, the pleasure it gave us to find these people so sociable and friendly, after standing aloof so long; and we resolved the distance should not be continued on our part. Accordingly, they sat down with us at the *Lord's* table, though told they were at liberty to use their own posture, without offending us. And as we were engaged in the cause of the same common master, and against the same common enemies of man's salvation, we judged this whole conduct looked more like one fold and one Shepherd, than its opposite would have done. But I cannot flatter myself, that the over-rigid will be satisfied with this reasoning: they will produce a number of objections against the step we have taken, and this in the front of them, that we have,

1. Taken into communion with us, a people not sound in the faith. To this I answer, though they acknowledge not the election of God, yet we hope they have "the faith of God's elect." And though they deny the perseverance of the saints, yet we believe many of them, will persevere to eternity. We did not receive them as sound, in the disputed points; but we received them as **CHRISTIANS**, who, though they may be

too much of Mr. *Wesley*, yet we believe them to be more Of CHRIST; and that they never will follow that adventurous leader, farther than they believe he follows CHRIST JESUS. We received them to the table on earth, as those with whom we hope to sit at the table in glory. We received them to an ordinance with which the *Arminian* controversy has nothing to do: in which we all agree in *substance*, and they objected not to our *mode*. In a word, we received them as a people whose lives are better than their doctrines, (a very rare case) and to whom we could not refuse the children's bread, without shutting out a people, perhaps better than ourselves.

2. It will be objected, that, by admitting them to the Lord's table, we have broken through an order of *Presbytery*, "That persons shall not be admitted to sealing ordinances, who do not usually attend public worship in our assemblies, and whom we never see, but when they apply for said ordinances." We acknowledge the weight of the objection, and the propriety of this act of *Presbytery*: but it was formed to prevent the prostitution of ordinances to persons of *no church*; who neglect public and family religion; who seem to think that baptism and the Lord's supper, constitute the whole of a religious
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life ; and if they can have these, are regardless of their temper and conduct on other occasions. But we could not rank the people we now speak of among persons of this character. If they were not at our meetings, they were at their own ; attending, at least weekly, on their class-meetings, with a diligence that should excite our emulation. And though we approve not of all things that pass in those classes, for instance, women speaking and praying in the presence of men, and thus usurping authority over them ; yet we can readily believe, what they all assert, that these meetings tend to mutual edification, and are a spur to their diligence in the things of God. Add to this, that the case was singular, or what we believe has rarely happened, that six or eight gospel preachers, with a number of their people, whose christian conduct we had no reason to doubt of, attending after previous notice at that solemnity ; laying aside the former prejudices, and now headed by an *Canonian*, with one of the first literary titles, and all desiring to partake among us the memorials of our common Lord ; we considered them as by no means coming under the description of persons excluded by that act, and we willingly received them. Let those who condemn this as improper, consider

sider what appearance the contrary conduct would have made. We must have said something like this:—Brethren, you may be better christians than we are; but we must deny you a seat at the Lord's table, because, by an act of our *Presbytery*, you ought to attend statedly on public worship in our religious assemblies. Now as some of you live twenty, and others fifty miles from our Meeting-houses, you must ascribe your exclusion to your distant places of residence; and you must look on while we partake. I apprehend the Rev. *Presbytery* would have been little obliged by such a comment on their act, and such a conduct resulting from it.

3. But it will be farther objected, That by admitting these people to communion among us, we level all distinctions, and give the world room to believe that we make no difference betwixt the sound and unsound—That we sacrifice orthodoxy to charity; and that it will encourage our young people, who are not well settled in their principles, to join the *Methodists*, and, with their practices, to embrace *their* principles. I answer, As to levelling distinctions, I think my text, and many other parts of sacred writ, strike directly at distinctions and divisions in the christian church. But when divisions have actually taken place, I think the same scriptures

tures require we should make the best we can of them, by endeavouring to remove or lessen them as much as may be. Error is usually *involuntary*: It is not natural to wish *to think* wrong. And although persons may be led into mistakes by a criminal inattention to evidence on both sides of a question, yet, as this is generally the result of the prejudice of *education*, it is deemed the most pardonable of any that is incident to humanity. Were christians to forget their distinctions, and walk together as far as they are agreed—Were they to converse freely on experimental and practical truths, where heart would answer to heart, as *face to face, in a glass*; and thus *stir each other up to love and to good works*, without once touching on the points in which they differ; they would love each other much better, and profit each other much more, than by souring, if not imbittering each other's temper, by disputing on points in which they are sure to disagree. I often think of a sprightly expression of Mr. *Wesley's*, "We think, and *let think*: We agree to *disagree*." Though I fear its author, by some of his productions, falls short of his own rule, as well as other men. And indeed it requires more charity, liberality and catholicism, than perhaps any man living possesses, to end a controversy

fy of any length, and love his opponent as well as when it commenced. As religious disputations are then so generally *irreligious*, that is, calculated to deaden or extinguish brotherly kindness and charity, why will christians so far forget the principal characteristic of their profession, LOVE TO EACH OTHER, as to fall on expedients naturally tending to kill the little love that subsists among us! The farthest I think we can go with safety, in our endeavours to lead an erroneous person into truth, is calmly and plainly to tell him our own faith, and the Scriptures on which it is founded; and, committing the whole to the divine blessing, leave the man to his own reflections. As to sound and unsound, there is, no doubt, a great difference: But let it be ever remembered, that every man's opinion is sound to himself, at least; and though this will not satisfy error, yet it will plead for the erroneous, and exempt him from all idea of criminality; provided he has taken honest pains in examining into the truth; for it is *To the LORD* he retains his opinion, and *To the LORD* he must change it when more light is afforded. Men will think differently in the affairs of common life, politicks, philosophy and religion: Let them differ in a friendly manner. The sheep of CHRIST must not forget their nature, and

worry each other. The wolves of earth, and lions of hell, will do that for them. Besides, if *uncircumcision* (error) *keep the law of CHRIST*, it is better than an idle or censorious orthodoxy: For it is a shame for a man to charge another with heterodox opinions, when the life of the accused is better than that of the accuser. Had the christian world in all ages sacrificed a few grains of orthodoxy for charity, it would have been an immense gainer by the exchange: For if *charity* be greater than *faith* and *hope*, I would not hesitate to pronounce it greater than orthodoxy; and would rather dispense the ordinances of God's house to a pious liver with some sentiments I judged unsound, than to the orthodox head whose life corresponds not to his principles. As to our young people, and others not well settled in their principles, joining other professions, and particularly the *Methodists*, I would just observe, that this seems to be the versatile season with *America*; and a change of religious profession has become almost as common, and as little noted, as the variation of the weather in this most changeably climate: And to aim at preventing such changes, might be as imprudent in the one case as in the other, and not much more successful.—Being often consulted respecting such changes, I now give my
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judgment once for all. Though I could not advise another to take a step I dared not to take myself, yet neither would I be strenuous in my opposition, if any belonging to me expressed a great desire to join them. I should suppose, that neither wife nor child would take such an important step without consulting the husband and father. If parents or husbands be graceless or ignorant persons, and consequently unfit to instruct their families, or direct their choice, I think they should not restrain their households from joining any society they please. But if they are persons of knowledge and piety, they have, I think, a double right to interpose their authority, if they do not approve of the measure. The first is from a power given to fathers and husbands, in the law of Moses, to reverse and disannul, even vows actually entered into by wives and daughters, if they disapprove them. The other arises from their superior knowledge and experience. They can tell them, that it is what they do not approve, and could not do themselves. That they may enjoy the public ordinances of God's house, and social worship, in the family of the husband or father—That they may be as much employed in reading good books, and secret devotion, as they please. If they wish for something

thing like the Class-meetings, let the family be turned into such a little church, and let them pray for and *exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day*. Thus where there are two, three or more persons, piously inclined in a family, they can form a little class at home, if they are fond of that name; or a domestic church among themselves; and set apart what time they please to agree on for religious exercises, without the trouble of going abroad for them; and may draw in the other members of the family, and be a great blessing to their connections. Two or three such family churches may meet together, statedly or occasionally, for prayer, praise, reading and conversation; and particularly for answering such questions as were referred from the last meeting, and under such regulations as they might be furnished with. If people cannot be satisfied with this, and nothing but the class will suffice, they must, I think, be indulged with their choice: Only I freely give it, as my own opinion, that the whole family should concur in all such great changes; and either refuse them, or comply with them, generally. For if people are piously disposed, and firmly fixed in their religious principles and practices, I apprehend it is beyond the lot of humanity for different professions to dwell
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under the same roof, and maintain that family harmony and union of hearts, in the worship of God, that is necessary; or that love for each other which they would have if they were *perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.*

Though different professions among christians may have a tendency to stir up a laudable emulation of each others piety and virtue, and people may sometimes change for the better, especially when the most useful truths are neglected, and the power of religion disesteemed and out of practice in their own church; yet, I apprehend, all such changes should be made with great caution, and from the best motives. We have often seen persons pass from one denomination of christians to another, without *passing from death unto life.* We have seen a new profession with the old conduct: *New wine in old bottles.* It is easier to change the profession than the practice; and the one is often made to stand for the other. Could we obey that divine command, *make you a new heart,* the change of profession would scarcely deserve a thought: But the one needs only taking on us a new name, while the other commands us to take up our cross, and follow the blessed Jesus. Were we real christians, any profession might suffice; but no external

nal change will compensate the want of that. If any person could say, I want repentance, faith, conversion and holiness, but can never obtain them in the church I belong to; there a change is indispensibly necessary; and cannot be made for the worse, chuse as we will. But this is supposing what can never be true, as we have some living witnesses, who, without church, ordinances, or a pious person in their knowledge, have obtained regenerating grace, and *the work of faith with power.** The case with conscientious people appears to be this: "I think a change of my profession would be of advantage to the work of my salvation." If such persons will often lay their case before God, and desire to follow as he may lead them: If they will weigh, in impartial scales, the supposed advantages resulting from a change, to the certain inconveniencies of making a schism in the church or family from which they are to part; and after all, still judge it to be their duty *to divide*, I apprehend, no pious head of a family would use coercive means to restrain his connections, though he must grieve to think, that creatures so dear

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* The author, by looking back about forty years, thinks that he can point to, at least, one person who answers to this description; and he has met with some similar instances in the course of his experience.

to him should separate from him, in a case so tender, before the pilgrimage of life is over. However, let all such still practice the duties of mutual love, and prayer for each other, and commit the issue to God.

I have now gone through what I had chiefly in view. But before I dismiss the subject of divisions, I must take some notice of our *Baptist* brethren. They made their appearance in *Germany* soon after the reformation began. But the present race of *Baptists* are happily very unlike the furious and blood-thirsty bigots who wore the name at that time. This party, in the christian church, are also divided into *Regular*, *Separate*, and *Seventh-day Baptists*. The regular *Baptists* have a *confession of faith* which agrees with all other protestant churches in the doctrines commonly denominated *Calvinistic*, as opposed to *Arminian*. The separate *Baptists* have neither formed nor adopted any confession as yet; but profess to draw all their doctrines immediately from the Scriptures.* Whether it

* Since preaching and transcribing this discourse, I have received a letter from Mr. John Williams, a worthy Baptist minister, who, whilst he maintains his own principles, derives also a Catholic spirit, and favours me with his friendship and correspondence; in which he says,--the distinction betwixt regular and separate Baptists, is not such as I expected;

it proceeds from this, or some other cause, I cannot determine; but they are not all clear and uniform in the doctrines of grace. But considering that they have no written standard of orthodoxy, and that their preachers are men without a liberal education, I have often sat with wonder and pleasure to hear them so sound in doctrine as they really are. In church government, the *Baptists* have adopted the *Independent* plan; the inconveniency of which they often experience, as it provides no final and decisive judge of controversy, nor tribunal to pronounce on heresy or false doctrine.† But the distinguishing characteristic of the *Baptist* profession, is their excluding infant, and practising only adult baptism, and making it their great term of communion, excluding all other christians from the Lord's table among them, and not suffering their members to communicate with other churches. How they can acknow-

pected; and where it has been carried too far, he hopes it is dying away, and disappearing; and, that there is an open communion, on each side.—Since the above note was written, I am informed that a union, between the differing Baptists, has been effected at a late association.

† *I have often thought that the popular, congregational government of the Independents, joined to the Presbyterial judicatures, as a final resort, would form the most perfect model of church government that the state of things on earth will admit of.*

acknowledge any other people to be a church of CHRIST, and yet continue this bar of separation, is not to be accounted for ; and we must leave them under the weight of this difficulty, until themselves are pleased to remove it. I need not observe to my audience the friendly intercourse that subsists betwixt the *Baptists* and us in all other respects : it is known and acknowledged on all hands.

But finally, to do impartial justice, I must take some notice of the divisions that subsist in the *Presbyterian* church. In *France*, they are called *Hugonots* ; in *Germany*, *Switzerland*, the *Low Countries*, &c. they are called *Calvinists* ; in *Scotland*, *Presbyterians*, and these divided into the *Established Church*, the *Covenanters*, and the *Seceders*. The established church needs no description : they hold the churches, glebes and parish salaries, and compose the *Presbyteries*, *Synods*, and *General Assembly* of that national church. The *Covenanters* assert the *National and solemn League and Covenant* to be perpetually binding on posterity ; and that the church of *Scotland* are guilty of apostacy, by not renewing and adhering to those covenants. The *Seceders* have separated from the church of *Scotland*, on account of the said covenants, and because they submit to *patron-*

ages ; that is, allowing the land-holder to present the minister to the parish on his estate, without admitting the people to have the choice of their own spiritual guide. The *Seceders* also object to the king's sitting in the General Assemblies of the church, either in his own person, or by his lord high commissioner. This, they think, is subjecting the ecclesiastical to the civil authority ; and making the sovereign the head of the church of *Scotland*, as he is by act of *Parliament* declared to be the head of the church of *England*. My audience know that none of these objections lie against the *Presbyterian* church in *America*. We never, as a church, took those covenants. We now do, and always did, call and adjourn our church judicatures, without consulting king or governor ; and no man imposes a minister on any congregation : he must be the choice of a great majority, as his precarious stipend arises from their voluntary contributions. Were you and I in *Scotland*, I know not what rank we should fall into. We so long smothered under the weight of an establishment, that I apprehend we could not be easily reconciled to an *Established Church*, though of our own profession. Among the pious *Seceders*, I doubt the door is too contracted to admit persons of our more liberal

ral sentiments, for they have made a *Secession* from other Presbyterians even in *America*, where the grounds of their complaint against the church of *Scotland* never had existence. We should be, then, a little drop in that sea, 'loving all around us ; but more or less despised, for the latitude of our principles. And now, my brethren, from this brief account of facts, you see how **CHRIST** is divided amongst his members on earth ; from which I would draw a few reflections.

1. Though the people of **CHRIST** are divided in name, yet they are one in will and affections. Their will is to do, and submit to, the will of **GOD** in all things ; their wish and endeavour is, to be holy ; and their affections are set on things above : they love each other too, notwithstanding their different names, and would love more if they were better acquainted.

2. **GOD** over-rules the divisions among professors, for the general good. Besides the emulation taken notice of above, should any party of christians fall into gross errors, other churches would expose those errors, by having recourse to the fountain of truth, the sacred Scriptures. And this is one, among many reasons, why those holy books are preserved pure and entire ; because no party could alter a single sentence, word, or letter,

er, to countenance an error, without being opposed by others ever ready to detect the fraud.

3. Though christians are divided into different parties now, yet the blessed period is hastening, when all shall *with one mouth glorify God* : when the divine promises shall be accomplished to the church, *in the latter days* : when *all shall know the LORD, from the least to the greatest*. Or should even that desirable period fail to effect an universal agreement among the professors of christianity, yet remember, there are no divisions in heaven. There, at least, under CHRIST, their glorious head, shall all his members be reduced to order ; universal harmony reign through all the blissful plains ; and the transported inhabitants look back with wonder on their former animosity, though in the cause of truth itself. *There* will be collected from the four winds of heaven, the different regions of the world, all the servants of our God, and followers of our blessed JESUS, and be of one heart, and one soul, in the various exercises of devotion, through all eternity.

Suffer me now, in the conclusion, to address myself to two different classes of mankind.

1. To those who reject the religion of Jesus

fus, as false or fabulous, on account of the supposed uncertainty attending it, through the divisions which have taken place amongst its professors——

My unhappy fellow mortals ! Your objection is founded on the imperfection of man, and militates equally against the constitution of the system of *nature*, and the *Gospel* of *Jesus*. The works of nature, and the operation of Providence, have been the subjects of much controversy, as well as the doctrines and mysteries of Revelation. Divided speculation, in the one case, does not suggest the shadow of a doubt with respect to the *divine original and government of nature*, and neither ought it, in the other, with respect to the *divine original of the Gospel*. Without a constant series of miracles, this must have been the case. But amidst all the divisions that have prevailed in the christian world, the sincere disciple of Jesus has greatly the advantage over you. If christians are divided in many circumstances, those of them who are *believers indeed* agree in the things which are most essential to life and godliness, to purity of heart and manners, and eternal salvation. They still love those who appear to love God, and they conscientiously adhere to what they believe to be their master's will. If you love your friend, the christian not

only does the same, but moreover loves, and prays for, his enemy. Whilst you are *talk-
ing* about the sufficiency of *natural* religion, without being agreed in what it consists, the christian is *practising* the duties of a religion both *natural and revealed*. Whilst you are denying the LORD that bought you, the christian is bowing with delight before the blessed Jesus as the great Law-giver and King of his church. Whilst you are wandering after nature's feeble *taper*, the christian's certain path is illuminated by the full blaze of heavenly light, beaming from the *Sun of righteousness*. Whilst you are drowning the troubles of life in voluptuous excesses, or sinking under them in sullen despair, the true christian is relieved from his sorrows by the consolations of the SPIRIT, sent as a *comforter* by his blessed friend, to whom he has committed his all, both for time and eternity; and even in his sharpest trials, he is fully persuaded, that his beloved Lord will order every thing for the best. The promises of that sacred book, which you foolishly reject, fill him with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*. Even if you suppose him a credulous enthusiast, still he has the advantage over you; for his steady *faith* and *lively hope* furnish him, through life, with those consolations of which your *infidelity* deprives you. If
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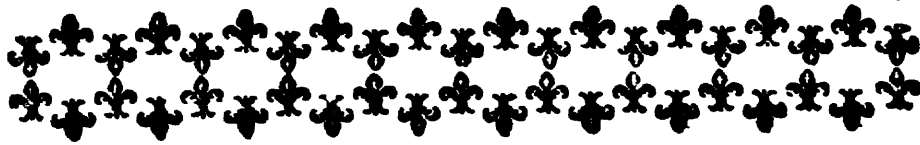
you are right, and Deism be the true religion, the christian is also right; for he firmly believes every truth of natural religion, and is a true Deist: But if christianity be a revelation from God, you are deplorably wrong, for no deist is a christian. Every shadow of objection to christianity has been abundantly refuted by its friends; and if you would read their masterly defence of the faith, with attention and candour, accompanied with serious prayer to God for light and direction, I trust, you would desert the camp of infidelity, and enlist under *Jesus*, the captain of salvation.

2. Let me address those who profess to regard christianity, but make its divisions a pretext for neglecting its duties. Your pretext for irreligion, and living without even a form of devotion, is, because amongst so many parties you know not how to chuse a profession, or with whom to associate in the worship of God. But let me remind you, that all churches under heaven agree in the things which you most need, reformation, repentance, faith and holiness—All agree in the necessity of engaging in these without delay—Of flying from the wrath to come, before you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and God *swear in his wrath, you shall not enter into his rest.* All
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your excuses, therefore, are but refuges of lies ; for *whoever* is right, *you* are confessedly wrong. You hate the holy religion of Jesus ; and your life is opposite to that of all the true christians in the world ; every one of whom will tell you, *he that committeth sin is of the Devil*, and that *he who is born of God, doth not commit sin*, of whatever church he may be a member. Be then true penitents, humble believers, and godly liver, and you will not go far astray in your choice of a profession. But without these, your being of *this* or *that* church, will avail you no more at the tribunal of God, than the colour of your skin can defend you against the arrest of death. May you have wisdom given you from above to fly into the sheltering bosom of the Saviour, and enjoy the happiness of being united and one with him ; and may the days speedily arrive when the greatest contention amongst christians will be, who shall love their Redeemer best, and who shall serve him with the greatest zeal. Amen.



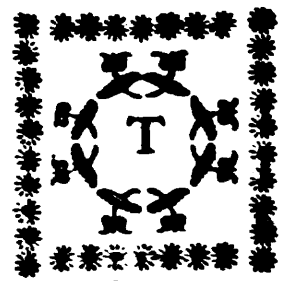
SERMON



S E R M O N II.



JOHN iii. 3. *Verily verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD.*



THE celebrated visit of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, to our divine master, by night, together with the instructions which he received upon that occasion, are too well known to need a repetition here.

I would ascribe this visit which *Nicodemus* made to our blessed Saviour, rather to his piety, his curiosity, and his prudence, than to his fear lest the world should know he had taken such a step. His piety would not suffer him to continue a stranger to a person of a character so extraordinary, asserting that he had been sent from God.

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His curiosity was doubtless excited to know, whether our LORD, in private conversation, would answer the idea that publick fame had raised of him. And his prudence would readily suggest, that the fittest season for his visit would be at a time when our Saviour was resting from the labours of the day; and he might have him, as we say, all to himself, for an hour in the evening. Nicodemus appears to have visited CHRIST, as a delegate from the Sanhedrim, or at least with their knowledge and consent: **WE KNOW** thou art a teacher, come from God. As if he had said, You may well suppose, sir, that the Jewish Senate cannot be inattentive to a character so uncommon as yours. You are frequently the subject of conversation amongst us; and from the strict enquiry we have made into your doctrine and miracles, I can answer for the orthodox Pharisaical members of the house, that they all, together with myself, believe you to be really a prophet, with an extraordinary commission from God: your life, your doctrines, but especially your miracles, are unanswerable proofs of this. But how far your commission extends, or how far you may excel, or fall short of other prophets, it is one design of my present visit to discover. We know, from prophetic testimony,

testimony, and all concurrent signs of the times, that the promised Messiah must be at hand. We earnestly long for his appearance, to crush the *Roman* power, so dreaded and formidable—To raise our nation from oppression and obscurity—To sit on the throne of his father *David*, and subject all the nations to it. My text is our LORD's answer to his address. *Verily verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* The word Amen, here repeated, and translated adverbially, verily, is an Hebrew substantive, and signifies *truth*. The answer then, may be to this purpose ; I, the truth, the very truth, assure you, that, except a man be born again, a heavenly birth, he cannot see the beauty, the glory, the spirituality of the kingdom I am setting up, nor will he, without such a change, ever become a genuine member of it. In the course of the conversation, this doctrine is further insisted on, and illustrated ; the absurdity to which Nicodemus would reduce it, is obviated ; the almighty Agent asserted, the divine Spirit operating with a sovereignty, free as the wind, while the manner of his operation is as unaccountable—The meritorious, procuring cause of this great change, CHRIST lifted up on the cross, to attract the eager look of

of men, dying in their sins; and all this originating in that eternal love of God to lost man, which brought down the Son of God from heaven, to receive the homage and subjection of our race, for their salvation.

As my design is to treat chiefly on the latter clause of the text, I shall briefly dismiss the first; especially, considering that it makes a part of almost every discourse you hear from this place; and that this subject is treated at large by many excellent pens, whose works may be procured, and *whose praises are in all the churches*. It is sufficient for me then at present, with bearing my testimony to the truth and necessity of this capital doctrine of regeneration. That it is necessary to the very existence of true religion—That you might as easily become the children of *Adam* without a natural birth, as to become the sons of God without this spiritual birth. That as our first birth is from beneath, this second birth is from above—That the Sacred Spirit is the author and agent in this mighty change; so that what he does is as visible as the effects of the wind, and yet the manner of his operation is above all comprehension. This is that work of God on the soul, without which you are neither true penitents, nor true believers.—That work of
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of God, that enlightens the mind to discern the glory and excellency of CHRIST's kingdom, and encourages the creature to become a willing subject of it—That work of God, that is the grand preparative for further happiness. This brings me to the chief design of this discourse, to prove and illustrate this truth,

That without regeneration, or the heavenly birth mentioned in my text, no child of Adam can be a genuine subject of *Christ's* kingdom, in this world ; nor is it possible for him to see, possess or enjoy the kingdom of God, in the future world.

1. Except a man be born again, he cannot be a genuine subject of the kingdom of CHRIST, in this world.

I have no doubt, this is the leading thought in my text ; and that our blessed Lord, by the kingdom of God, means the same thing here, which he does almost every where else in the four evangelists, by that expression, viz. His gospel church—That society, of which he is king ; to which he gives laws, and appoints its officers ; on which he confers its privileges and immunities, and to which he distributes rewards and punishments, according to his sovereign pleasure. That the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, generally mean
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the gospel church on earth, let me produce the following examples: Matt. vi. 33. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Gospel grace must be here meant, for temporal blessings are promised along with it: Luke xii. 28. *The kingdom of God is come unto you.* I am now setting up my gospel kingdom among you: Luke xxi. 31. *The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.* They become the subjects of my gospel kingdom, while you continue to oppose it: Matt. xxi. 43. *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* And we cannot be at a loss for the meaning of the phrase, when we so often read of *preaching the kingdom of God*; of *the kingdom of God being come unto them*; like a net stretched to gather fishes; like a stalk of mustard, multiplying its seed, and extending its shade; like leaven in a mass of dough, preparing the whole for the oven, as gospel grace fits the soul for heaven. Let us now, according to this sense of the words, see what our Lord teaches us in my text. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Without regenerating grace, and a new birth, the Jews will never submit to my spiritual kingdom, and give up their fond hopes of

a temporal kingdom under the *Messiah*, and follow me, as such, whose kingdom is not of this world. Without this change of temper, men will not become my subjects, receive the law at my mouth, arm on my side, and enter the field of battle under me against the world, the flesh and the Devil. They are under all the corruption and debility of their fallen state ; and have neither eyes to see, nor hearts to relish the glory and excellency of my government ; nor will they hazard the loss of all things for my sake ; for spiritual things are only thus, spiritually discerned. If I have expressed the sense of the text, then it follows, That the church of Christ is composed of regenerate persons : or, in other words, That only those who are born again are the genuine subjects of God's kingdom on earth. To this agrees our Saviour's description of a church of his, *Two or three gathered together in his name*. Apostolick churches are composed of such. That of *Rome*, *belov'd of God ; call'd saints*. That of *Corinth*, *are sanctified in CHRIST JESUS*. The church of *Ephesus*, *are saints and faithful in CHRIST JESUS*. The *Colossian* church are saints and faithful brethren in CHRIST at *Colosse*. The *Thessalonian* church, is *In God the Father, and in the LORD JESUS CHRIST*. *Peter* addresses the *Asiatick*

stick churches, as Elected of GOD the Father, sanctified of the SPIRIT unto obedience, and sprinkled with the blood of JESUS CHRIST. And lastly, Jude writes to them, as Sanctified by GOD the Father, and preserved in JESUS CHRIST, and called. Agreeable to which, our Confession of Faith says, "The visible church consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion; and is the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God." And the church of England calls it, "A company of faithful men." I think, then, we may safely assert, That only regenerate persons compose the church of CHRIST; or that the kingdom of God consists of visible saints. I say *visible*; because as He who reigns over this kingdom, has given his churches no infallible rule of judging who are genuine members, but *by their fruits*, it is clear church officers must proceed only by this rule: and while they hold the keys of this kingdom of Heaven, they must open it only to visible saints: that is, to all who appear to the eye and the ear, to be such. If only those who are born again, should enter the kingdom of heaven, let such alone be admitted. If any church opens the gates of this kingdom to all promiscuously, they abuse their power; they prostitute the ordinances

nances of God ; they forget that *these are not theirs to give*, but to persons properly qualified to receive them : They let in guests, whom their master will not welcome ; and they must answer to him, for *giving his holy things to dogs, and casting his pearls before swine*. Such forget, that the kingdom of God is a holy society, *called to be saints*, and should indeed be such. Say then to the wicked, *what hast thou to do to take GOD's covenant in thy mouth ?* Say to every communicant, *examine thyself, whether thou art in the faith*, and be a visible and a real saint, before thou *eat of this bread, and drink of this cup ; lest coming unworthily, thou eat and drink judgment to thyself*.

But, on the other hand, Let not church-officers go beyond their rule in measuring the stature of church-members. If, on conversing with them, they have a competency of knowledge ; and if their knowledge has a proper effect on their temper, conversation and practice, which must be known from our own personal acquaintance with them, or from others that know them better : In a word, if they had time to discover the change, and have reason to believe the tree is made good by the fruit it bears, I apprehend, no church can deny its privileges to such a character, though the person should

not be able to describe the work of regeneration with that clearness and precision which some others can. And indeed, I have long thought that churches, who take a description of a work of grace from the person's own mouth, and admit them to church privileges on that alone, forget their Master's rule, *By their fruits ye shall know them*. But, I apprehend, a description of a work of God upon the soul, though related with the utmost clearness, cannot be called *fruit*, as that must be something that can be seen by every eye. No man's evidence should be taken in his own cause. An experience, as it is commonly called, is a good negative evidence; that is, without it, there can be no true piety; but it can be a positive evidence only to the person himself: He may even have assurance of the goodness of his state; but that cannot satisfy the church, for two reasons: 1. Because it is impossible that the church should know that what the person relates, is true; or, if true, that it is certainly a work of God. 2. Because, though both true and a work of God, yet it is not the rule by which Christ has directed his churches to go. Thus, if a person was really regenerated, and if he should die the next day or hour, would be admitted into the church triumphant; yet this alone will not procure him

him membership in the kingdom of God, in this world, for the reason assigned, the church cannot know it; and he has not had time to bear those fruits of holiness that are the true qualifications for membership in the church, and the only evidences of his being really born from above.* Church-officers may be mistaken,

* How small a proportion of doctrinal knowledge may consist with true piety, no people, perhaps, better know, than gospel ministers in the middle states of *America*; where country-born, and *African Negroes*, compose a part of most congregations, and in the author's, in particular, amount to, at least, one hundred and fifty communicants. They are generally kept at *catechumens*, in a state of trial, for some months previous to their being baptized or admitted to the Lord's table. In the mean time, the black members are very diligent with them, instructing them, and narrowly inspecting their conduct. And as soon as their masters or overseers can certify, that they are become faithful and honest servants, and no longer guilty of the vices they formerly lived in; and when the pious Negroes can testify, that there appears to be a work of God upon them, after once more conversing with them, they are taken into the church. But in doctrinal knowledge, they are very raw; and it cannot be otherwise, from their low breeding, their total want of education, and their being often the property of masters, who teach them nothing but hard labour and wickedness; and if they cannot banter them

ken, and yet act right. *Peter* and *John* baptize *Simon*, the wizard, on a profession of his faith, repentance and reformation. But the churches at *Jerusalem* refuse admittance to *Saul*, as noted a convert as the gospel ever made, until *Barnabas* produced the fruits of his conversion. Every rule has its limit, beyond which it cannot pass, and retain its nature. The officious servants in the gospel would have invaded the rights of Omniscience, and anticipated dooms-day itself, had
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them out of the notion of becoming religious, will sometimes use severe methods. But this is happily a rare case; most masters having humanity enough to indulge their slaves in liberty of conscience, whether they are, or are not, religious themselves. On the other hand, pious masters have great disquiet and vexation, from the unteachable and incorrigible temper of their slaves. No persuasions, nor threatnings, can prevail with them to attend the worship of GOD in their master's family. And even when the Negroes become engaged in a religious profession, as many of them do, if they separate from the church to which their master belongs, and join some other denominations, they become such narrow bigots, that they no longer attend publick or family worship with such master, though of a religious character. But I have no reason to believe they are encouraged to this total separation by their preachers; but they naturally infer

not their wiser Master prevented. *Wilt thou that we root out the tares?* If half the field had gone to wreck, they will shew their zeal against hypocrites. And if the whole draught which the net has enclosed should be the sacrifice, not one bad fish shall touch the land. No, my servants, your zeal for me would carry you too far: Let all visible saints enjoy common privileges. It is better that hypocrites should eat, than that the children should starve. While the foolish virgins

infer it, from hearing certain peculiarities of their new friends so often insisted on as necessary to constitute a christian. Of the religious Negroes in my congregation, some are entrusted with a kind of eldership, so far as to keep a watchful eye over the black members; give information when things are wrong, which, I bless God, happen but seldom; and they are entrusted, two or three of them in company, to distribute the tokens. The great matter of scandal among the Negroes arises from their marriages or matches. Masters are so often selling their slaves, or removing to a distance, that, as the creatures generally belong to different masters, a marriage they commonly prefer to that of a fellow-slave, they are often parted, or their places of residence become so distant, that they can seldom see each other. Many masters, however, will rather exchange or sell, than part husband and wife. And their promiscuous manner of living, and crowded manner

gins carry the lamp of a fair profession, they must keep their station in my house. The bridegroom is coming, and will let in only his true friends to the marriage. The harvest is approaching, and then not one stalk of cockle shall enter my barn. The end of the world is advancing, when *the angels shall gather out of my kingdom all things that offend; and then, and never till then, shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked.* According to this rule, an hypocrite must be admitted

manner of sleeping, expose them greatly to temptation; and their women especially, by the wicked of all colours. A few of them can read a plain book; and many others of them would learn on Lord's days, and sleeping times, if they had spelling-books, catechisms, testaments, and *Watts's* hymns, as they are peculiarly fond of singing. Could my poverty supply them, I should be poor no longer: I should be greatly enriched with the prayers and blessings of many who have nothing else to give. Are the channels entirely shut up, by the independence of *America*, through which so many good books were conveyed about thirty years ago? I reside an hundred miles from *Petersburg*, our centre of trade, and nearest tide of water; and so am out of the way of books. My *European* readers, should I have any such, will consider the latter part of this note as *elemosynary*; and should it provoke their liberality, they will not have an ungrateful beneficiary, nor a negligent almoner.

mitted into the church, while his life is like the christian; and the real convert must be kept out, until by his fruit he prove himself *a tree of righteousness*. Indeed it is generally to be presumed, that none but truly regenerate persons will offer themselves as subjects of the kingdom of God. Its laws are too strict, and the self-denial it requires is too mortifying to the flesh for unregenerate persons to desire admission, or long to continue a credible profession, if they are in it. Tho' the church of CHRIST is a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people*, yet there will always be a call for ministers to *reprove, rebuke, exhort, suspend and excommunicate*. If the rod answers its end, and the offender *brings forth fruit meet for repentance*, the church will rejoice over the returning backslider, confirm their love towards him, and treat him as their fellow-subject, and brother in CHRIST.

I now come to what I had principally in view, and that is to prove,

II. That except a man be born again, he cannot see, possess, or enjoy the kingdom of God in the world to come. The argument which the text furnishes, is this—If without a new birth and regeneration, a man will not, cannot be a willing, dutiful subject of Christ's kingdom in this world, less still will
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the same unregenerate person be qualified to see, possess or enjoy the kingdom of God in the future world.

As our Lord's expression is, *he cannot see*, he teaches us that although this incapacity is of a moral kind, yet it resembles a natural defect of faculties for the enjoyment of heavenly happiness.

The unregenerate have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear what passes there. As by our first birth, we hear and see external objects ; so this second birth is equally necessary, to see and understand the things of the kingdom of God. *If the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned ;* and if the same objects are presented to the view of the inhabitants of heaven, and the same incapacity remains in the creature ; the same impossibility of seeing or enjoying those objects, must remain to eternity. All the beauties of colours are lost to the blind. The pleasures arising from a concert of music, are lost to the deaf : or if the man has his hearing, but no musical ear, *a sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal*, would please as well as the harp and organ : This moral incapacity affects all his powers. As he has no eyes to see, nor ears to hear, the things of the upper kingdom, so he has no understanding

standing to comprehend them ; no will to chuse them ; no affections or passions, to delight in them ; no tongue to employ in the praises suitable to the place ; nor feet to move in the ways of the inhabitants. In a word, the very nature of things, stand betwixt the unregenerate, and heavenly happiness ; and nature must change in the one, or in the other, before the creature can find his happiness there.—Suffer me to dwell a little longer on this subject :

The unregenerate have eyes, and ears, and hands, and tongues, and understandings, and wills, and affections and passions, for other objects, but not for the things of the kingdom of God. The eyes of a sinner can, with a degree of pleasure, see external objects, and “ the human face divine ;” but they cannot see *the glory of God in the face of JESUS CHRIST*. He has ears to hear the calls of temporal gain, and the enticing voice of carnal pleasure ; but not to *hear the joyful sound*. He has a tongue, but not to glorify God, nor to dwell with rapture on the divine praises. His understanding can comprehend things natural, and things rational ; but things divine are beyond its reach : Nor would the heavenly state at all improve his condition. The understanding that cannot see the glory of the infant JESUS in

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the manger, or of CHRIST on the cross, can never with heavenly rapture behold the same JESUS in his exalted state. The sinner has a will to chuse, and refuse; but if he always chuse the evil, and refuse the good, in this world, he would carry the same depraved taste with him to the heavenly world. And there is nothing there, which could incline him to make a better choice. For if the unregenerate refuse the things of GOD's kingdom, because they are holy, it is clear, their aversion would increase, as holiness increases. And as to the affections of wicked men, it is certain there is nothing in the heavenly state to gratify and please them; and being deprived of what they loved, they must be miserable, in proportion to the degree in which they are attached to the good they have lost. It is equally evident that the bliss of heaven could not repair the loss; for that, they have no taste; and would rather be restored to their corn, wine and oil, than to possess the *rivers of pleasure and crowns of glory that are at GOD's right hand for evermore.*

But, to be more particular, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD,* in glory, for the following reasons. His own inability—The company—The employments—The nature of the gospel plan—The

---The laws of heaven---Justice, propriety, and the nature of things, exclude the unregenerate from the heavenly world.

1. The sinners *inability*, and incapacity to enjoy heavenly happiness, exclude him from it.

A supernatural support must be afforded to our strength, let me tell you, before we can bear heavenly glory—a *weight of glory*, an *eternal weight of glory*—a *far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory*. Sinners discover their folly in nothing more than in desiring or wishing for heavenly happiness. Who but a fool, would wish to have a single thousand weight laid on his body, unless he had first tried his strength, and knew he could bear it? So would the glories of heaven crush the sinner to atoms. How many have aspired to offices and honourable stations in this world, which, when obtained, have only exposed their folly, and degraded them into a degree of contempt, to which their former obscurity would never have exposed them? In support of my position, let us see how some of the wise and good have borne a little taste of heavenly happiness. *Moses* desires to see the divine glories, *Exod. xxxiii. 18. 19. 20.* The Almighty answers, *Thou canst not see my face and live; but I will make all my goodness to pass*

pass before thee. As if he had said, *Moses*, you know not what you ask ; a sight of my glories would strike you dead ;* but I will do something better for you, than you can ask or think : I will shew thee as much of the glory of my goodness, as thy present embodied state will bear. In the future world, your strength will be greatly increased, and there will I shew thee my glory, as thou art able to bear it. On the mount of transfiguration, *JESUS* puts on, for the occasion, his celestial robes. The three attending disciples sink under the glory, and close their eyes, in what the evangelist calls sleep, till the cloud comes, and shelters them from the splendor. *Saul* is struck with a ray from the glorified body of *CHRIST*, and under it he sinks blind to the earth. The same man, under his *Roman* name *Paul*, is caught up to heaven : whether in the body, or out of the body, he knows not. But either then, or in some of his other extacies, straining under the pressure of the glories which he saw, in what he calls paradise, his body, it is probable, contracted some

* The heathens appear to have had some suitable ideas of at least the glory and splendor of their supreme God ; though they presumptuously, and I think atheistically, sink his moral character, as appears from *Ovid's* tale of Jupiter and Semele.

some deformity, or became bent to one side ; which, in one place, he calls a *thorn in his flesh*, and in another, *the infirmity that was in his flesh* ; and which he feared would render him despicable, and mar his usefulness. We find then, that Moses desires a glimpse of heavenly glory, and, in mercy, it is denied him. *Peter, James and John*, have a momentary view, and they sink under it. *Paul* is first blind and afterwards lame, from the little tastes of heaven afforded to him. And I may add, that *Jacob*, from near intercourse with an inhabitant of heaven, is a cripple through life. And yet we, living sinners, and dying sinners, talk as confidently of going to heaven, as if we had the strength of Angels to bear it. In nothing do we shew such folly, ignorance and presumption, as in the things of God and religion. Every wise man would chuse that employment which is suited to his genius or bodily strength ; and he would not expose himself to the contempt which must attend his attempting what he had not capacity for. But every graceless fool, would venture into heaven, without considering what it is, or whether he is fit for it or not. Let me ask such in my hearing, have you considered the prophet's question, Isa. xxxiii. 14. Who shall dwell with the devouring fire ?

Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings ? It is true, hell is every where represented as an unquenchable fire ; but if you read the context, verses 15, 16, 17, you will find it probable that the person, concerning whom these questions are asked, is promised a *dwelling on high*, and that *his eyes shall see the king in his beauty*. And, perhaps, you will be the more inclined to believe the devouring fire and everlasting burnings here mentioned are meant of the heavenly glory, when you consider, that *fire* is the common attendant, and representation of, the divine presence. GOD speaks to *Moses* out of the burning bush ; and delivers his law to *Israel* out of the midst of the fire ; Deut. v. 4. At the dedication of the temple, 2. Chron. vii. 1. *the fire came down from heaven, and the glory of the LORD filled the house*. In *Ezekiel's* vision of the divine glories, Chap. i. 27. there is *the appearance of fire round about*. When *Daniel* has a view of the Ancient of Days, Chap. vii. 9. 10. *His throne is like the fiery flame, and his wheels like burning fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him*. And the Apostle, Heb. xii. 29. assures us, that *Our God is a consuming fire*. I think the words may with plausibility at least admit of this interpretation, and the question may now bear a repetition thus,

Who shall dwell with the devouring fire of God's presence? Who shall dwell with the everlasting burnings of the divine glories? Not the weak-eyed, unregenerate sinner, surely; he would shrink back at the intolerable splendor of those rays, compared to which a thousand suns are but as so many sparks struck from that uncreated light. Not the bird of night, but the strong-eyed eagle can view the sun in his strength. While the rays of heavenly glory enlighten, cherish, delight and transport the pious soul, they would have the direct contrary effect on the sinner; who would call on the mountains to cover him from the face of him that sitteth on the throne. Ministering angels are so assimilated to this glory, that they also, Heb. i. 7. are a flame of fire. How miserable are land-animals immersed in water? How soon will the fish expire in the open air? They are both out of their proper element; but not more so than the unregenerate in heaven. Never, never, sinner, look there for happiness; for heaven to you would be the deepest hell.

2. *The company in heaven are not suited to the sinner, nor he to them.*

You need not be told how happy or miserable company can render a person. With what pleasure do you meet the friend you
love

love at your door? How happy in his presence and conversation? And all your anxiety arises from the thought of parting. On the other hand, how have we all suffered in some companies? A wise and good man, but especially a decent and modest woman, tied to the company of rakes and reprobates, is in a most disagreeable situation; and the sufferer would prefer the stable, or the solitary desert, to such a circle, though attended with all the delicacies in nature. And it is surprizing, that any person would subject themselves, and their connections, to a voluntary penance of this kind, by inviting to their houses such of whom they know they can learn nothing that is good; and in whose company they cannot preserve their innocence. Now we know what company heaven is composed of: They are *the spirits of just men made perfect—an innumerable company of angels—the SPIRIT of holiness—JESUS the Mediator and GOD the Judge of all.* 1. The Spirits of good men may be supposed the meanest company in that world: But a little reflection will convince you, that the ungodly would be very unsuitable companions for these. They did not consort well together, even in this world, where the sinner bore some resemblance to the saint; and the saint, in some things, too nearly resembled the

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the sinner. But, in that world, the spirits of the just are perfect; and from the sinner is *taken away even that which he had*: The little goodness he possessed here, he is totally deprived of at death, and appears in eternity all evil, and only evil. Now this is a subject our reason can grasp, and every man's reason will readily agree, that God would not punish the righteous with the company of the wicked, to disturb their society, and grieve their hearts, which they generally did in this world, when there was a nearer resemblance betwixt them; but which would be greatly increased in that state, where the dissimilitude is so very great.

2. Angels make up a large proportion of the heavenly company; and they have less right, if I may so express it, to be disturbed with wicked men, than even the glorified part of the same species have. And we have the utmost assurance, that God will not affront and offend those blessed spirits with the presence of those who were beneath them in their best estate; and not now, especially, when the difference is so immense.

3. The ETERNAL SPIRIT resides in those happy mansions, and diffuses his almighty energy through all the blissful regions. And can we allow ourselves to think that this infinite purity can look with complacency on those
 impious

impious wretches who resisted his operations,
 quenched his motions, and did *despite to*
this SPIRIT of grace? Sinners may well ask,
Whither shall I flee from thy SPIRIT? For
should they ascend to heaven, he is there be-
fore them; and should they make their bed in
hell, there they find him; not, as formerly,
 offering his healing influences to sanctify
 and save them; but as an offended sove-
 reign, punishing his rebellious subjects. 4.
 There is JESUS, *the Mediator of the New Co-*
venant: There is no heaven without him:
 That JESUS, who left the glory of those re-
 gions, and exchanged the anthems of angels
 for the temptations of devils, and the mid-
 dle throne for the manger and cross, that he
 might raise the sons of earth to be citizens
 of heaven, and make them the children of
 God by a birth from above.—That JESUS, who,
 with the most winning and melting invita-
 tions, persuades and entreats sinners to come
 unto him and be saved.—That JESUS is there,
 shining as a sun amongst those *morning stars,*
 and diffusing ineffable pleasures to all the
 enraptured inhabitants. There that Elder
 Brether treats, as children of the same hea-
 venly family, all the new-born sons and
 daughters of grace. There are, indeed,
 many publicans and sinners still around him;
 but not one of them that is not first born
from

from above, before they could take up their residence there. This is that company of whom he has said, *Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, to behold my glory*. Surely, ignorance and presumption themselves would not thrust polluted sinners into HIS presence, especially, when I add, that there is, 5. GOD *the Judge of all*. Well may we cry out with the men of *Bethshemesb*, *Who is able to stand before this holy LORD GOD? before whose face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there is found no place for them*. Even heathens, in the worship of their idols, proclaimed, before their sacred rites began; *Procul, O procul este profani, Hence, far hence, ye profane*. And could nature's light teach them to exclude the wicked from the mysteries in the worship of their brutish deities; and shall we open the holy of holies, in the heaven of heavens, to the view of every profane eye? Ask yourself, my friend, how you would feel to be called before an earthly sovereign, sitting on his throne with all the appendages of majesty, his robes, his crown, his sceptre, his sword and ministers of state, his guards and whole court around him. Would you be happy in such an interview? Would you be in your proper element? Can you think your education and breeding have qualified you to bear your
part

part in the homage, the duties and conversation of the place? No, you would chuse the company of the meanest creature you ever saw, rather than to stand under the eye of majesty, and be obliged to go through a round of duties to which you had never been accustomed; while, at the same time, you were an enemy to the king in your heart, and he well acquainted with your enmity. But now, when you think of dying, you hope to appear before God; that is, you hope, with all your guilt upon you, and all your sins about you, to rush into the presence of that Majesty, who *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*. O sinner, that eye, *That Eye* which, at a single glance, pierces through immensity; that every moment sees every object in ten thousand worlds; that penetrates to the deeps of hell, and greater deeps still, the human heart, and all its motions; that eye would be ever on you; nor could you hide from it in the vales of heaven, nor behind ranks of adoring worshippers.* It is as present with you, as your own essence; and while you endeavour to fly, it pursues you still, as if there was no other object in nature;

* We have some pictures so drawn, that were there a thousand people present, they keep their eye on every one of them.

ture ; and to avoid *that eye*, you seek your final residence in utter darkness. O Sinner ! think not of meeting *That Eye*, until it can view you, as a father doth the son in whom he delighteth.

3. The *employments* of heaven proclaim, that the unregenerate *cannot see the kingdom of God*.

Could some of you be making money there, by land and slaves, trade and bargains, you would be as happy there as your grovelling minds can conceive. Could others of you find there the things you delighted in here, variety of dishes, choice of liquors, boon companions, splendid clothes, with the music and the dance ; this would be a heaven to your taste. Others would require greater degrees of vice, to make them happy ; the language of devils in their mouths, with gluttony and drunkennels, chambering and wantonness ; while others again must have blood and plunder, and the conquest and ruin of whole kingdoms, for their happyfying portion. What employment then, could sinners find in heaven ? Let us enquire how its inhabitants are employed ; and what a round of duties and exercises that world calls for. Contemplation on the divine nature, glories and perfections, natural and moral—On the divine

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works of creation, providence and redemption---On the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, his divine and human natures, and the union of these in his person---On his mediatorial offices, as the instructing prophet, the atoning priest, the ruling king, the interceding advocate, the great shepherd of the flock, and the atoning lamb of God---On his incarnation, life, doctrines, miracles, wounds, death, resurrection, and ascension---On the nature and agency of the ETERNAL SPIRIT, the wondrous revelation he has given, and the glory and power of his energy on the human heart. The blessed in glory, with ever encreasing knowledge and transport, will read the great open volume of nature; the equally instructive book of providence; and the more amazing wonders of salvation. They will forever admire and adore the infinite purity and excellency of the law of God. And to add no more, they will fly with willing speed, in the service of God, through the boundless creation; and every new discovery of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, will furnish fresh matter for songs of praise, through all eternity.* Time would

* It has been questioned, whether there are any
in

would fail me to enlarge on each of these wonderful topics ; and I shall only repeat them, as subjects for your meditation.

4. The nature of the gospel *plan* of salvation

in heaven, who sustain the character of teachers ? But I can see nothing absurd or out of nature, in admitting that there may be such. That much is there to learn, no body disputes ; but I think the common notion is, that the new-arrived, get, by immediate inspiration, all the knowledge they are ever to possess ; and that on the first hour of their arrival, they are as knowing in the laws, duties and inhabitants of that world, and are as learned in the deep things of GOD, as they ever may expect to be. But I think this opinion about equal to that of the earth's being fixed as a center, and all the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, planets, comets, and fixed stars, moving around it, at equal distances, in twenty-four hours ; and am ready to believe the one as great an error in divinity, as the other is in astronomy. If we may form a conjecture, from the method in which GOD teaches mankind in this world, by spreading before us the three books of creation, revelation, and providence ; and from the slow and regular advance we make in the path of science ; and that ascending thus by gradual steps, from infancy through the path of life, is perfectly agreeable to the nature given us ; If, I say, we may form a conjecture from these, there is probably a gradation in the attainment of knowledge in heaven ; and then there may be teachers, and probably

vation stands in direct opposition to the future happiness of the unregenerate.

This plan was laid from eternity, and its very name implies, that the creatures for whose advantage it was intended, were dead and lost. Now if CHRIST alone has commission and power to save ; and if he saves only on the gospel plan ; and that plan expressed

bably are such, as well as on earth. We have Dr. *Young's* authority for it, that the deepest learned Angels, are learning still. And though study will not be attended with the anxiety, nor its issue with the uncertainty with which it often is, here, yet no doubt they are very studious there, and have at least benevolence enough to communicate their discoveries. When a "Newtonian Angel" takes an excursion through worlds remote, and returns fraught with new discoveries of the Creator's power, wisdom and goodness, what a delighted and transported audience must he have, in a circle of the blessed spirits in glory ? When an infant soul, or pious pagan first arrives, some one learned in the great salvation, may be employed to teach them the Saviour by whose merits they found entrance. When a christian would gladly learn those deeps in revelation, which he could not fathom in this world, prophets or apostles will, probably, be the teachers. And when the students in providence would become adepts in that instructive science, they will, probably, apply to *Noah, Job, Moses, David*, or others who saw most of it while on earth.

pressed in my text, by a new and heavenly birth, it follows, that, should any one enjoy heavenly happiness, without this change, they must go thither in their sins---they must be saved without salvation---they must be sons, without being born---they must fare as loyal subjects, while in a state of rebellion---they must be in heaven, with the temper of hell in them. They must render the eternal counsels of GOD a mere cypher ; the death of CHRIST a farce, and the work of the Spirit of GOD on the soul, an unnecessary parade, or a mere delusion : for they can attain heavenly happiness, it seems, in opposition to them all.

5. The *latus* of heaven exclude the unregenerate.

The highest authority has enacted, that *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.* And Matt. xviii. 3. *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* It is again enacted, Psal. i. 5. *The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.* And 1. Cor. vi. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* If, in opposition to these laws, and him that made them, the unregenerate could enter and enjoy the kingdom of heaven, then God is not what

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he was when the scriptures were written. But we are sure he is incapable of change. He can never change for the better, and he surely never will for the worse. He is then the same God, and his law stands, and will stand in full force, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

6. Justice, propriety, and the nature of things forbid, that the unregenerate should enjoy the kingdom of glory.

If justice is a perfection, the divine Being possesses it in the highest possible degree. That justice is a perfection, you learned from the last villain you had dealings with. That justice is a perfection, you will learn at any time from the laws of your country, in the hands of twelve men, unswayed by sophistry, or uninfluenced by passion or prejudice. If you still doubt whether justice is amiable, let the hand of violence attack your person, family or property; and should you find no redress nor protection on earth, how desirable would justice appear, and how would you lament its absence. Now if justice may be defined a rendering to every one their due, then let reason say whether the friend of God, and the enemy of God, shall fare alike; and whether it is right they should? In times of rebellion the loyal subject, who appears for the government, and
fights

fights till the insurgents are subdued, expects
 his country should distinguish him from the
 disturbers of the public tranquillity; and
 would be justly offended, should he suffer with
 them, or they reap the rewards of victory with
 him. And *shall man be more just than his Maker?*
 Heaven is the reward of CHRIST's purchase;
 and will justice, that keeps the door, re-
 ceive to a station there his friends or his
 foes? If *there is one event to the righteous and to*
the wicked, in this world, it is owing to the im-
 perfect state of things, where providence is
kind to the disobedient and unthankful. Surely
 justice must arise at last, and do what eve-
 ry enlightened mind expects, and every up-
 right heart desires, to winnow the chaff
 from the wheat; distinguish the bearing
 from the barren tree; separate the sheep from
 the goats; sever the wicked from among the
 just; take out of his kingdom all things
 that offend; sentence the wicked to ever-
 lasting punishment, and receive the righte-
 ous to life eternal. Should these things fail
 to be accomplished, every creature of God
 would be disappointed of their expectations,
 and the word of truth of its accomplish-
 ment. Here they saw all things full of dis-
 order; but when *that which is perfect is come*,
 they then expect that perfect justice, perfect
 holiness, perfect order and propriety shall take
 place;

place; and as they always believed, so shall they now see, that *the Judge of all the earth will do right*. But it would not be right that the righteous should fare as the wicked, and make his bed in hell. It would not be right that the unregenerate and unholy should take up his residence with God and his saints; therefore while God acts right, it never can be so.

And now, my brethren, what do you think of the Scriptures produced, and the reasons advanced, in proof of the doctrine. Can you, from this day forward, believe it possible for an unconverted sinner to go to heaven? Or, if he was there, that he could enjoy its happiness, with the hell within him? Would it not be reasonable that every soul in my audience should concur with the preacher, and say, Well I am convinced that heaven is holy, that its inhabitants and employments are all holy; and that those who enter it must be so too. I am convinced, that *without holiness no man shall see the LORD*: It is unscriptural, unreasonable, impossible. Until bitter become sweet, and sweet bitter; till darkness become light, and light darkness; till heaven become hell, and hell heaven, I will never expect to see the kingdom of God without a converted soul, and a holy life. If this be the lan-
guage

guage of your hearts, and you would profit by your present convictions before they wear off, consult your own happiness immediately, attend to the voice of conscience, cherish the motions of the divine Spirit, and hear the warning voice of your best friend, who has written his love for you in characters of blood; and longs to see the fruit of his labour, and *the travel of his soul*: That friend, who has opened the doors of his church, the arms of his mercy, and the gates of future glory, for your acceptance and salvation. But to what purpose are the doors of his church open, if you stand without? What avail his inviting arms, if you avoid them? Or the expanded gates of glory, if you cannot enter them; and if the reason you cannot enter them be, because you are not born again; and if the reason you are not born again be, because, instead of seeking this great grace from God, you shut your ears, close your eyes, stiffen your necks, and harden your hearts against him? He has called you, warned you, and invited you, ever since you were five years of age; and that is a long time for some of you. He has left nothing unattempted, that became a God, seeking your happiness. He laid a plan for your salvation from eternity. He sent his beloved Son to fulfil all righteousness,

ness,* to make a complete atonement, and to purchase grace and glory for you. He commissions his ministers to warn and invite you. He sends the blessings of his providence to allure you,

* Having a half sheet to spare, I shall fill it with a note on the peaceability of the *Man Christ Jesus* ; or, in other words, whether it was possible for our Saviour, while on earth, to have been guilty of sin. Every christian, at first hearing, starts back with horror from the thought ; and is ready to pronounce it the height of presumption and blasphemy, to imagine such a thing. But a man of liberal sentiments, who indulges a rational freedom of thought, as he would not lightly embrace an opinion merely because it runs in the beaten track, so neither would he reject a sentiment only because it is new, or sounds harsh at first hearing. He will bring the object near, view it on every side, weigh what may be said for and against, and embrace that side to which the weight of evidence preponderates. In attempting to solve this question, I would run the parallel betwixt the first *Adam*, and *Jesus Christ the second Adam*. 1. They were both men. For he that was born in *Bethlehem* was a *real* man, tho' not a *mere* man. 2. They were both publick persons : The first at the head of all his posterity ; the second at the head of all his spiritual seed. And thus to each of them matters of infinite importance were intrusted. 3. Both were endowed with such gifts and strength as were suited to the trials they were to meet with. 4. Both had a perfect freedom of will to chuse or reject whatever should offer, at their own pleasure. 5. Both were to meet with such trials and temptations as were like to put their virtue to the fullest proof. 6. The trials and temptations of the second Adam far exceeded those of the first Adam in number, strength and duration. Now, I apprehend, every

you, and his fatherly corrections to alarm you. He sends his blessed word to direct you, orders conscience to arrest you, and sends forth his SPIRIT to convert and sanctify you ; and
his

every christian will grant each of these *postulata* ; and if he does, he grants all I desire to prove the affirmative, That Jesus Christ could have sinned if he had chosen to do so. If he had a perfect freedom of will, he could surely chuse as he pleased. For example— Could not Jesus, when hungry, have shewed impatience enough to turn stones to bread, as the tempter suggested ; or could he not have accepted the government of the Roman empire, which Satan offered him on the mountain ? Might he not, had he seen fit, have wore that crown his disciples were for compelling him to assume ? Or could he not, at his own pleasure, have concealed himself, and avoided his sufferings ? Did Jesus Christ meet with temptations ? Were these temptations real, and great trials of his virtue ? The Apostle assures us, *He was in all things tempted like as we are.* But nothing could be called a temptation, had it been impossible for him to comply with it. I expect that every enlightened christian believes his Master had more and greater trials than Adam, or any man ever had, or will have. But if persons will fix their attention on the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, and keep in their mouth that assertion, *God cannot be tempted with evil* ; and again, if Jesus Christ could have possibly sinned, then the person that was God might have sinned ; they will prove too much, and far more than their piety, or the honour they have for Christ will allow. For in which nature do we consider the blessed Jesus, as born of a woman, tempted in the wilderness, as hungry and weary, as agonizing in the garden, dying on the cross,
and

his providence is constantly employed for your protection and happiness. What could have been done for you, that God has left undone ? Have you not a witness in your own breast,

and rising from the dead ? No one believes that any of these can be true of his God-head ; and yet they are all true of *the person that was God*, in his human nature. Now he declares to the world, *That he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again* : He had equal power to comply with a temptation, as to resist it. And christians should be extremely cautious of asserting, that their Master *could not* sin ; as this thought naturally follows, then, perhaps, he *would* have sinned if he *could* : And surely, it is infinitely more honourable for the blessed Jesus to believe and assert, that he had a perfect freedom of will to chuse sin, or duty, at his pleasure ; but that notwithstanding all the temptations he met with, yet his virtue was proof against them all, and he came off a glorious conqueror over greater temptations than ever man was tried with. How could he *know how to succour them that are tempted*, from his own experience, had he never felt the force of temptation ? Were a child, with a straw in his hand, to attack an armed giant, would any one call it a trial of the giant's skill or valor, to repel so feeble an adversary ? But every body knows, or ought to know, that the word temptation signifies a trial. If ever the blessed Jesus, then, was *tempted*, his virtue was put to the trial. That he was tempted, his whole life testifies ; and sometimes he complains of it, *Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites* ? It is not good divinity to say, his God-head preserved him from sin. It was his perfect virtue, as a man, in a state of innocence, like Adam, that kept him from sin. For *God cannot be tempted with evil*. It might well



DEDICATION.

*To the Revd. Mr. FRANCIS ASBURY,
SUPERINTENDANT, and to the ELDERS and
Lay PREACHERS of the Methodist Society, in
America.*

Dear Brethren,

 IN the course of last summer a sermon, intitled **FREE GRACE**, came into my hands, with Mr. *Wesley's* name prefixed. Seeing it lately printed in *America*, I read it as a late production ; and cannot now remember, that any thing I ever read gave me equal surprise.—That Mr. W. of whose piety I had always entertained so high an opinion—That Mr. W. at four score years of age ; who had spent his life among books, learned men, and in the study of divinity, should, at such years, with such a spirit, and in such language, publish to an enlightened age a discourse on so trite a subject, and therein convince every intelligent reader, that he was condemning a doctrine he had never allowed himself to be acquainted with ; and writing on a subject he never had studied : For I am well assured, that great man could
no

no sooner be induced to study predestination, than you, Gentlemen, could be prevailed on, to seek acquaintance with the arts of gaming, or tricks of fortunetellers. You can speak against them, though you do not wish to understand them. Thus Mr. W. collects the whole force of his *reason* against a doctrine of *revelation*, with which, I doubt not, his *first acquaintance* will commence in the heavenly world. Much spare paper in the margin of the sermon, invited me to fill it up with remarks ; but the subject grew on my hands, until it came to what you will read in the following discourse. All this time, my mind was doing Mr. W. a degree of injustice ; for that neither charity, experience, nor extreme old age, could correct the severity of his pen, nor teach him to treat the reformed churches of Christendom with more respect. But after some time, I discovered, that the sermon in question was published near fifty years ago : and though this was an alleviating circumstance in Mr. W's favour, yet we ought to consider, he was then a man of learning and piety ; a fellow of a college, and towards forty years of age. And if such a man, from the seats of erudition, could give so lame and distorted an account of this doctrine, it was not to be expected, that his unlettered

ed followers in *America*, who so readily imbibe all his principles, could entertain juster notions of it.

As soon as I resolved to publish this discourse, I purposed to dedicate it to you, Gentlemen. My motives are these. 1. I love your persons, and honour your piety and zeal; though I differ from you in some of the doctrines of Christianity. 2. I wished you, my brethren, to read the discourse; which coming thus directed to you, makes it, in a sense, as much your property as a private letter. 3. I wished our *Methodist* brethren to know the *Calvinistic* doctrine, on the subject of divine decrees and predestination, as far as my small abilities could unfold them in the bounds of one discourse; and as far as I understood them myself. I did not expect to make you *Calvinists*: your prepossessions are too strong to be removed by any thing my feeble pen can produce. But I did, and do hope, on perusing this little piece, that you may be induced to think more favourably of your christian brethren, than you can possibly do at present, if you believe *Calvinism* to be what Mr. W. has represented it: like the poet's giant, a huge, horrid, deformed monster, with ne'er an eye in its head. That great man has published three pieces, at three distant periods, against

gainst these doctrines ; the last of which he titles *Predestination calmly considered* ; as if conscious that the discourse he strangely calls *Free Grace*, was written in a storm. This sermon, which shews what *manner of spirit* its author was of, half a century ago, you republish in *America* ; and I fear, thereby expose your *father's nakedness*. All these pieces you disperse through the Thirteen States ; and probably there is not a house in fifty, that is furnished with any thing on the other side, in this controversy. My sermon is a little piece of defensive armour, held up against three attacks made on my faith, by a powerful assailant. May I not hope, that this doctrine will, in future, elcape those *hard speeches* which some of you have uttered against it ? Consider us, my brethren, as sacrificing all our fond opinions, and carnal reasonings, to the authority of Revelation. I never saw *Predestination* in the Bible, till about forty years ago, when God opened my eyes, to behold the wondrous things contained in his law. There, and only there, do we learn this doctrine ; which reason is so far from suggesting, or favouring, that we find it difficult to give to faith its full scope ; and to prevent the hand-maid (reason) from taking place of the mistress (faith.) *And this is the victory that overcometh the whole world*

world of carnal reason, *even our faith*. We know what advantages your cause derives from hence ; that it has all the force of prepossession, and all the strength of human reason on its side ; while ours has nothing to support it, but divine revelation.

When a soul is *born of God*, *old things pass away*, and *all things become new*. But, my dear brethren, we are sadly perplexed when we apply this to your convert. For, if a month before his change, he would heartily deny, and even curse predestination ; and assert the sufficiency of man's will to become truly religious whenever he pleases, and continue religious just as long as he pleases ; a month or year afterwards, he shall retain the same sentiments, All things are *not* become new. His old reason maintains its ground, and his old mode of reasoning, in some important points. Old things are *not* passed away, until reason submits to Revelation ; and the proud rational becomes the humble believer. And yet, that there are a goodly number of truly pious persons among our *Methodist* brethren, I have not a shadow of doubt. But this is not so much to be ascribed to the soundness of your doctrines, as to your abstractedness from the world, and unwearied diligence in the duties of religion.—And would to heaven,

heaven, other professions may be stirred up to emulation !

Such of you as I have the pleasure to be acquainted with, know how far I am from encouraging debate and contention, either in my private conversation, or publick ministrations. Christians of all professions may profit by mingling with others. And if, in our social intercourse, while I have found my soul quickned, and my love increased ; if you have profited nothing by the interview, it was your loss, and my misfortune.

Among the subscribers for my book, the names of but few *Methodists* will be found, after all the respect I have shewn, and feel for your persons. Whether this arises from the fear of reading any thing that flows not through a certain channel, or whether from my re-publishing an extract from Mr. *Whitefield's* letter, I know not. But that letter was written, though near fifty years ago, on the very same occasion with my sermon. To the letter I am indebted for the information, that Mr. *Wesley* never believed the doctrine of predestination——That he published his sermon, *Free Grace*, in compliance with a lot which he had cast, and against the strong remonstrances of his brother *Whitefield*. This letter written on the spot, coming into my hands

hands soon after I had finished my discourse, and containing some arguments that had not occurred to me, I considered it, and still do, as a very proper supplement to the sermon; and cannot think of suppressing it, should I miss a thousand subscribers by it, as I desire the prevalence of *truth*, more than my own popularity. Let *that* increase, and let me decrease. If heaven see fit, it can stir up a sufficient number to launch my little book, and set it afloat with gales of prayer. In this sense, indeed, I miss the help of my *Methodist* brethren, whose happy turn for devotion might draw down a blessing on the book and its author. But I flatter myself you will think more favourably of us both when you have read it.

Upon the whole, my brethren, I desire to spend the remaining fragment of my days in promoting *brotherly kindness and charity* in my own breast, and in that of all I can influence. As, on the one hand, I dare not give up truth to any man; so, on the other, I dare not give wilful offence to any of God's creatures, and much less to a people of whose piety I think, and on all occasions speak, so highly. It is transporting to look forward to that state of consummate perfection, where all the servants of God, and followers of Jesus, notwithstanding their present difference
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in principles or opinions, shall *all speak the same things*, and *there shall be no division among them*. Let not the sons of the same Father *fall out by the way* to that celestial *Canaan*, where the *Calvinist* and *Arminian* shall regret that they did not sooner taste the heaven of brotherly love. Allow me the transcendent pleasure of hoping, that there you will acknowledge me,

Your brother in CHRIST JESUS,

HENRY PATTILLO.

Granville, North-Carolina,

Jan^y 14. 1787.



K

The



The Scripture doctrine of election asserted, and objections answered.



S E R M O N III.



I will declare the decree. Plal. ii. 7.



And binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

POPE's Universal Prayer.



I. THESSA. i. 4. *Knowing, brethren beloved,
your Election of GOD.*

 H E doctrine of GOD's eternal election of his people in CHRIST, is often treated as the martyrs have been, in some ages and nations, who were wrapped in the skins of wild beasts, and

and then torn in pieces by furious dogs. Or as those protestants, who have fallen into the hands of the inquisition, who were clothed in canvas, on which devils and infernal flames were painted, and thus actually committed to the fire. Such severe treatment does this blessed gospel doctrine often meet with, that it requires a person to be well settled in his principles, to retain his belief of it; and to possess a good share of fortitude, to profess that belief. Ignorance and prejudice are in arms against it; and he who would stand up in defence of this article of *the faith once delivered to the saints*, is deemed a fatalist, and unfriendly to piety. And so deeply rooted are these prejudices in the human heart, that a more hopeless undertaking can scarcely be thought of, than to appear in its defence: the man's reputation as a rational believer, and his knowledge as a theologian, are both likely to be forfeited. You will be ready to ask, then, why any man in his senses, would appear for a doctrine he knows to be so generally exploded? Which some think *useless*, many judge *dangerous*, and others condemn *to perdition*, with all that favour it. I humbly thank the divine goodness, I possess the moderate share of abilities unimpaired, that I ever was blessed with; and yet I appear in the cause of
this

this revealed truth "On GOD's own day, in his own house;" in the presence of his people, and in the hearing of persons of, perhaps, all religious professions amongst us. And though I do this because *I am in my senses*, yet it is no fond opinion of my own abilities, that draws me into this controversy, but a firm persuasion of the truth of this doctrine, that it is *written for our learning*; that it brings *Glory to GOD on high*, and *peace to the soul on earth*—that it is the duty of all the friends of revelation, to appear in its defence—that, particularly, it is my duty, at this time; because I am fully persuaded this doctrine is as plainly taught us in the sacred books, as the doctrines of faith and repentance. Yes, my Brethren, if ever I read the Bible with understanding, I as plainly see the one there, as the other; with only this difference, that the light of nature may discover a GOD, the object of faith; and that repentance for sin, is a becoming temper: but predestination is a doctrine of pure revelation. The incarnation of CHRIST and the resurrection of the body are not more plainly revealed in scripture, though reason has nothing to do in the discovery of either of them; but they are to be received and credited, as what GOD has revealed, on the authority of the revealer; and as what the

reason of man would never have thought of, and never can fathom. Is this the cause, that reason so often quits its proper sphere, usurps authority over faith, and attacks these doctrines of revelation? Reason's line is infinitely too short, to sound these *deep things of God*.

That persons who live in ignorance of God the Saviour, themselves, and gospel truth; That persons who read not their Bible, and live (*athēoi*, atheists) *without God in the world*, should disbelieve and combat this doctrine, is not strange. But the thing to be admired at, and which I never could account for is, that any godly person, who has learned his religion at *the feet of Jesus*; who hath tasted his grace, and experienced his power, willingness and suitableness to save, should be so hardly persuaded to believe that his love is *an everlasting love*, and is from eternity to eternity.

Knowing, brethren beloved, your Election of God. I stand not to enquire, whether the words had not best be rendered, *Knowing brethren, beloved of God, your election*; or whether the common reading is preferable: either way, the words assert their *election*, and the *knowledge* of that *election*. The Apostles knew their election, not from immediate revelation, but ver. 2. from *their work*

work of faith; from their good works, that proved the truth of their faith; from *their labour of love*; from their labours bestowed on the cause and members of CHRIST, from a principle of love to him and them.—From *their patience of hope, in our LORD JESUS CHRIST*; from their patience under the sufferings and persecutions, which the unbelieving *Jews*, and their rabble, raised against *Paul, Silas*, and the *Thessalonian* believers; Acts xvii. which patience was built on the cardinal grace of *hope*, that defended them, as the helmet does the head of the soldier in battle; and all this *in the sight of God and our father*: as under his eye; as done for his glory; and as acts of duty and submission to his will, like obedient children to their heavenly Father. It was from these precious fruits of holy obedience and resignation, that Paul inferred the election of the *Thessalonians*; and, if heaven permit, it may appear, before I finish, that they, from like premises, might draw the same conclusion respecting themselves.

I wish, with the seraphick *Harvey*, to study this doctrine on my knees: and I shall draw all my materials from the sacred fountain of truth, the holy Scriptures; which Scriptures, I humbly apprehend, teach us a four-fold election.

1. Of

I. Of CHRIST himself.

II. Of Nations, or a whole people.

III. Of some persons and places, for particular purposes.

IV. Of some persons in CHRIST, to eternal salvation; or in other words, to grace here, and glory hereafter.

I. The Scriptures teach us, that Christ himself is the *Elect*, or chosen of God. Isa. xlii. 1. 2. 3. 4. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall ~~not~~ fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." Though these words will agree to none but to our *Lord* JESUS CHRIST, yet they are expressly applied to him, Matt. xii. 18. and following verses. Read also Psal. lxxxix. 3. 4. and from the 19th verse to the 37th, particularly the 19th, where it is said, *I have exalted one chosen out of the people*; which, though it had its primary accomplishment in the choice of *David*, and his posterity, to fill the Jewish throne, yet every intel-

intelligent reader finds *a greater than David there*, even the blessed Jesus, whose throne shall be *as the days of heaven*. In Prov. viii. 22—25. a speaker is introduced, saying,
 * *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways :*

* That the Mediator speaks here, I believe no one doubts ; but that the God-head of the second Person speaks, I humbly deny. I certainly believe the Divine nature of Christ never was *set up* ; never was *brought forth*, as this speaker twice asserts he was. To know who speaks, let us remember, that there is something belonging to CHRIST, that is called *the first-born of every creature ; and the beginning of the creation of God*. This is not true of *his deity*, for that never was born, nor had a *beginning*, nor was *brought forth*. It is not true of his *complete humanity* ; for millions were born before him, in that sense. It is true then of the *soul* of the *Man* CHRIST JESUS, and of no other being, that it is *the beginning of the creation of GOD ; and the first-born, or produced, of every creature ;* as being the first, the most glorious and accomplished creature, divine power ever produced. And I think the Scriptures furnish us with reasons for the prior existence of his soul, that in this, as well as in all things, *He might have the pre-eminence*. 1. It appears necessary, that, in the *Covenant of Redemption*, something should be present to agree to its own sufferings : But I dare not venture to say the God-head of CHRIST suffered, or could *agree* to suffer. 2. If I mistake not, we find this glorious creature,
 the

ways : I was set up from everlasting, on the mediatorial throne ; to which throne he must have been chosen, in preference to all other beings. Let me read also, Isaiah,
xxviii.

the soul of CHRIST, present and speaking in the said covenant. *Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldst not ; but a body hast thou prepared me ;* that is, wilt prepare me : The past tense, instead of the future, is a style peculiar to Deity, and is frequently used. Again, the soul of CHRIST stipulates in that covenant, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, (in hades, the residence of souls betwixt death and the resurrection) nor suffer thine holy one to see corruption.* And as this soul of CHRIST was immediately, on its creation, united to the second person of the Godhead, the blessed Jesus acted from the first, as God-Man Mediator. As such he transacted for his people in the Covenant of Redemption. In this character he judged *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent ;* and gave the first notice of himself as *the seed of the woman.* Thus he appeared as one of three to *Abraham*, to whom the Patriarch presents his intercessory prayer for *Sodom*, whilst the two Angels proceed to that devoted town. Thus he was *with the church in the wilderness, The Angel of his presence that saved them, and led them all the days of old :* That was a shining firmament by night, and a sheltering cloud by day—That descended on the Tabernacle, gave forth his law from *Sinai*, dwelt between the cherubims in the Holy of holies ; appeared to *Joshua as captain of the LORD's host*, and had sundry temporary incar-

xxviii. 16. and applied by the apostle to our Saviour, 1. Pet. xi. 6. *Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious ; and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded.*

See

incarnations, previous to his *being made flesh to dwell among us.* And hence we are, perhaps, to understand the Almighty as speaking literally, when he so often mentions *his soul* in the Old Testament. And then, I think, we are helped to understand another great truth of revelation, to wit, the sonship of our blessed Saviour. Those who consider the relation of *Father* and *Son*, as respecting the *God-head* of *Christ*, must be involved in inextricable difficulties ; from which we are delivered by believing the paternity of the *Father*, and the filiation of the *Son*, as respecting only the human nature of our blessed Lord. For as soon as the soul of *Christ* was brought into existence, and united to the divinity of the second person of the *God-head*, then the *Father* could say, *Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee* ; which, I apprehend, implies, that the day before he was neither a *Son*, nor begotten. I have long conceived of this great gospel mystery thus, That the first Person of the *God-head*, previous to the *Covenant of Redemption*, brought into existence the Soul of *Christ*, by an act of his Almighty power, which he calls *begetting*. Then *God* was a *Father*, and never till then. By a similar act of Almighty power, he prepared for him a body, in the womb of the blessed virgin. Thus, as a *Son*, he is interior to the *Father* ; but as
God,

See also, Psal. xi. 6. *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion*, on the throne to which he was chosen, or elected (for every body knows they are the same thing) from everlasting. If these Scriptures prove the *Election* of CHRIST to the office and station of Mediator, we have got hold of one link of the great chain of the procuring causes of the gospel salvation.

II. The Scriptures teach us a *national Election*. Something

GOD, equal with him. *As a Son, he learned obedience*; as GOD, all obedience is due to him. As a Son, he knew not when the last day will be; as GOD, he knows all things. As a Son, he says, *My Father is greater than I*; as GOD, he says, *I and my Father are one*. And thus we are relieved from the perplexity into which the doctrine of Christ's eternal Son-ship involves us. For though Christ is eternal, as GOD, and a Son, as man, yet I doubt it is not good divinity to call him "The Eternal Son of GOD," if any more he meant than the existence of his Soul, prior to all other creatures. Thus too, we are delivered from the difficulty respecting the Holy Spirit *proceeding forth from the Father and the Son*, when we consider it as not at all respecting his participation of the Divine Nature, which he had from eternity; but his proceeding to his part of the great Redemption, which the Father planned, the Son executed, and the Holy Spirit applies to the redeemed, in the time and manner agreed on in the Covenant of Redemption.

Something of this appears in the preservation of *Noah* and his family in the Ark, when the rest of mankind were overwhelmed by the deluge. It approaches still nearer to a national election, when God calls Abraham to get out of his country, and from his kindred, and father's house ; and to go into another land, where he would make him a great nation : Where he would bless him, and make him a blessing ; and in him should all the families of the earth be blessed. Gen. xii. 1. 2. 3. But the actual election is declared, Gen. xxv. 23. when *Rebecca*, on consulting the divine oracle, receives this answer ; " Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels ; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people ; and the elder shall serve the younger." The Apostle recites this matter, Rom. ix. thus, " The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, *The elder shall serve the younger* ; as it is written, Mal. i. 1. 2. *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*" I presume the sense is to this purpose ; " I promised to fallen Adam, that the Seed of the woman should destroy the power of sin

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and the kingdom of the devil. I promised to Abraham that in *his seed* should *all the families of the earth be blessed*---I chose *Ishaac* as the father of *this Seed*, in preference to *Ishmael*; and now I prefer *Jacob* to *Ejau* as the father of this promised Seed, the Messiah, and chuse his posterity as my church and people, to whom I will give my lively oracles, laws, statutes, priests, prophets, with all the ordinances of my worship. Among this one people, will I preserve the great doctrine of the *divine unity*, while all the nations will fall into polytheism and idolatry; and among this people will I make clearer discoveries of the *promised Seed*, until *Shiloh* come, and to him shall the gathering of the nations be." Hence it is said, Psal. cxlvii. 19. 20. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them." Amos iii. 2. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." I shall leave to Almighty God himself, to answer the cavillers of the earth, for suffering all nations to walk in their own ways, Acts xvi. 16. while the Jews, one of the least cultivated, and the most obdurate people under heaven, are so highly favoured.

voured. To whom *Moses* declares, Deut. vii. 6. 7. 8. "The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee, to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not *set his love upon you*, nor *choose* you, because ye were more in number than any people; but because the LORD loved you." For this love, and the reasons of it, I refer all enquirers to that God, who doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and giveth an account of none of his matters.

I am now to speak a few words, on another election mentioned in Scripture, viz.

III. Of some persons and places for particular purposes.—And 1. Of persons---As of the Tribe of *Levi*, to the priesthood; Deut. xviii. 5. "For the LORD thy God hath *chosen* him, out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons forever." Moses is called the chosen of God to his office; and Aaron and his sons to the high priesthood. Saul, David and Solomon, are all called the chosen of God, to fill the throne of Israel. And thus the Apostles are elected to their office; Luke vi. 13. He called his disciples, and of them he *chose* twelve, whom also he named Apostles. And I shall willingly refer the

the reasons of his choice, to his own sovereignty, without presuming to ask him, *What dost thou ?*

2. Of places : such as mount *Gerizim*, for the blessing ; and mount *Ebal*, for the curse ; *Shiloh* first, and afterwards *Jerusalem*, as the places that God chose to put his name there : as the place towards which they were to turn their faces, and direct their devotions, in whatever part of the world they resided. And yet I presume, no one will assert, that there was any inherent holiness in these places, more than in *Hebron* or *Jericho*, *Memphis* or *Nineveh*. I come now to my last and chief design,

IV. The Scriptures teach us an election of some persons in CHRIST, to eternal Salvation ; or to grace here, and glory hereafter.*

I beg

* I shall throw a few observations respecting the election of Angels, into this note. I think we meet with this expression but once in the sacred books, 1 Tim. i. 21. " I charge thee before God, and the *elect Angels*." Now, as some of these mighty spirits, by a crime we are not well acquainted with, sinned against their Creator, were banished heaven, and became devils ; while others of the same order of spirits maintained their allegiance, and kept their stations ; the expression *elect Angels*, must respect,

I beg leave to premise a few things. 1. This is, as has been mentioned, a doctrine of pure revelation; and man's reason has no more to do with it, than with the doctrine of

spect, either some of these holy creatures, who are chosen to some station, or employment, in preference to their loyal brethren; or more probably, the whole order are so called, in opposition to the fallen, rebellious, and reprobate Angels. But, as we know not the constitution under which the Almighty placed the Angels; nor what was the pledge or test of their obedience, we ought to be contentedly ignorant, or very modest in our conjectures concerning them. I will however humbly venture a few. 1. That whatever their trials were, their strength was equal to them. This I think may be inferred, from some standing, while others fell. 2. That pride was the sin by which Angels fell. This perhaps the Apostle hints, when he advises Timothy, not to ordain a Novice to the ministry; that is, one who has lately entered the school of Christ, lest being lifted up *with pride*, he fall into *the condemnation of the devil*. 3. That this pride and condemnation arose from their refusing to serve Christ as mediator, and to worship him, when he should be born in a stable. The elect Angels *are all ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation*, under the Mediator; and worshipped him the night he was born. 4. These loyal Angels agreed to be marshalled under Christ, as the Messiah; and stood fast in his cause, probably in times of great danger

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of the Trinity. Whoever attempts to weigh this revealed truth in the scale of reason, can never submit to it as a truth of God. He might as well attempt to measure the sun's distance, with the surveyor's chain, or ascertain the stars in the milky way, with a common

and apostacy. 5. They were employed by him, in his mediatorial character, from their guarding the tree of life, to the giving the Apocalypse in the Isle of *Patmos*; where the Angel says, I am thy fellow servant, and the fellow servant of the prophets, and of all believers. And we are sure the ministry of these elect Spirits will continue, while there are heirs of salvation on earth. And man's last day, "Is not the least with Angels, or their King." For the judge assures us, he will *descend from heaven with all his holy Angels*; who, beside their active ministrations on that grand occasion, will receive superadded rewards from his hand, in proportion to the zeal and diligence they have exerted in the cause of Christ, his church and people. For as they are employed by the Mediator, in services of a peculiar and extraordinary nature, he will add to their happiness accordingly. The Apostle tells the believing Hebrews, that by their christian profession, they were *come to an innumerable company of Angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect*. Ye are now connected with all the host of heaven; and have one head, one cause, one interest, and one final residence with elect Angels. And the chain that binds the whole is GOD's eternal love in CHRIST JESUS.

common glafs, as, by reason, to judge *these deep things of God*. How do *Deists* abound in the disguise of christians? It is rank deism to reduce every thing to the standard of reason; and reject, as untrue, what they cannot comprehend. If you will believe nothing but what you understand, you will never receive the doctrine of the Trinity; The union of the divine and human nature, in the person of the Mediator—The resurrection of the body—The working of miracles—That Christ entered the room to his disciples, *the door being shut*; and other truths of a similar kind. Is not the attempting to reduce these and such revealed truths, to the standard of reason, the very thing that drives men into deism? And is not the same pride of reason, carried into the natural world, the parent of *Atheism*? When men cannot understand how the Almighty existed from eternity—How he produced the universe—How the attraction of gravitation acts at such immense distances, or indeed at any distance—How the attraction of cohesion is so vastly different in different bodies; when men I say, cannot, by reason, fathom these, and a thousand other incomprehensibles in the nature and works of God; instead of adoring, where they do not understand, they throw aside the whole volume
of

of nature, and commence Atheists. As all reasoning against natural truth, then, is a degree of Atheism; so all reasoning against revealed truth, leads directly to Deism. Let christians, therefore, be extremely cautious of setting up reason in opposition to revelation, and thus deserting the standard of Faith, and enlisting under that banner which is raised to oppose Him that is *the Author and finisher of faith*. Reason will rebel, till it is subdued at the feet of faith. And I am persuaded, this is one of the greatest exploits grace has to accomplish for man, in this world, to lay his pride and vain reasoning vanquished at the feet of faith and sovereign mercy; and delightfully swallowed up in the boundless ocean of God's infinite wisdom, and eternal love in CHRIST JESUS.

2. I would premise, that at the *Reformation from Popery*, when wise and good men came to draw the rules of their faith and practice from the pure fountain of *revelation*, every Protestant church under heaven, however they differed in modes of worship, church-government, or discipline, yet all agreed in doctrines, and particularly in believing, and inserting in their *Articles and Confessions*, the doctrine of divine decrees, and predestination; and there they remain, as a part of the public standard of the faith
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of every reformed church under the sun; the *Methodist* church, set up in *America* about eighteen months ago, only excepted. Nor can a man be admitted a minister in any protestant church in *Europe*, without professing his faith in this article. Some, indeed, from motives I shall not mention, confess this doctrine till they get in, and then oppose it through the rest of their lives. I do not mention this harmony of confessions to prove *the truth* of the doctrine, as *that* depends on *divine revelation* alone; and it is not more or less true, should all the world *believe*, or all the world *deny* it. But that you may be assured, as far as you can credit me, that the belief of this doctrine is neither a novelty, nor confined to a few christians; but is the doctrine of all churches, and the faith in which their confessors and martyrs lived and died. And by the way, this might secure it better treatment than it frequently meets with from its opponents, were it only for the sake of the company. But we trust to no name, nor number of names, out of the sacred books, as the ground of our faith in this doctrine. I shall read, and dwell a little on some few of those Scriptures that teach it. Eph. i. 4. 5. 6. "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that

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." If these are the words of inspiration—If they are the dictate of that SPIRIT, whom CHRIST promised to his apostles, *to lead them into all truth*; what do you think of them, brethren? Would you venture to say, as a grand opposer of this doctrine does, "Whatever the Scriptures mean, they cannot mean predestination." I would not say so myself, were *Gabriel's* station in glory, to reward my temerity: For if ever words conveyed ideas, those I have read to you teach both name and thing. And I appeal to my hearers, (and now do to my readers,) whether in the paraphrase I shall give of them, I offer violence to one word or sentence. *He hath chosen us in HIM.* The first pronoun *HE*, must mean *the Father*; the second *HIM*, the Mediator. Then the truth declared is this, The eternal FATHER hath *chosen* or *elected* us in CHRIST JESUS. If we ask when this choice was made? The answer is, *before the foundation of the world*. As this was before time began its reckoning, it must mean from eternity. We ask again, To what are we chosen? He answers, *That*

That we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. We are chosen then to a temper and life of holiness, innocence and love. This is a part of the divine decree, that the opposers of this doctrine never seem to think of. But our infallible guide will solve us still more questions on this great subject. For we ask again, Hath God indeed predestinated his people? And are they by this act of divine sovereignty, brought into the family of God? Let the apostle answer: *He hath predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself.* He hath predestinated us *to be the sons and daughters of the LORD Almighty*, by, through, and in JESUS CHRIST, our elder brother, *to himself*, to his own use and service, through time and eternity. But as we would not be deceived, and earnestly desire to know the truth, we again apply to thee, O Paul, thou man of God, to acquaint us with thy Master's will. Thou writest for eternity, and the faith of millions depends on the doctrines which thou hast recorded. Thou knowest *the natural man receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD.* Reason will gird on its armour against thee, and be slain on the spot, before it will yield. We entreat and charge thee, therefore, to tell us, whether God's decree of election is founded on good works, or faith fore-seen in

the *elect* ; whether God chose them, because he knew they would chuse him ? Or, whether he loved them, because he knew they would love him ? The Apostle, without hesitation, replies ; All this he does *according to the good pleasure of his will*. His own sovereign will and pleasure are the rule of his conduct ; and he that would know the reasons of the divine sovereignty, must either make his demand now, or wait God's time to reveal them. We ask our great apostle one question more at present : Thou inspired writer, the opposers of this doctrine say, it brings dishonour to God, and reproach on his grace : What sayest thou ?—Hear his answer : It redounds *to the praise of the glory of his grace* ; God will have all the praise, and all the glory, of his rich and free grace, to his chosen people, through all eternity.—But could we find an actual song of praise to God, that has the divine sovereignty for its subject, it would strengthen our faith, and excite our imitation, would the Scriptures afford us any such.---Let one suffice at present ; it is recorded Matt. xi. and Luke x. *Jesus rejoiced in spirit*. What sets the heavenly mourner on rejoicing ? On all other occasions, he is *A man of sorrows* :---His doxology will tell you ; I thank thee, O Father,

ther,

ther, Lord of heaven and earth, *that thou hast 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. I presume, the least that can be meant by the words, *thou hast bid*, is, thou *hast not revealed*. The following, then, may be a proper paraphrase of this song. I have preached my gospel, and wrought numerous miracles in the towns of *Cborazin*, *Bethsaida*, and *Capernaum*, (see the context, Matt. xi.) and I find the former more obstinate than *Tyre* and *Sidon*, in their wealth and pride; and the latter more incorrigible than *Sodom*, in her filthiness. I adore the sovereignty of thy dispensations, O my heavenly Father! my will answers to thy will, in that thou *hast not revealed* the glory and power of my grace, and the truth of my Messiahship, to the bulk of the inhabitants of those places: But, blessed be thy name, thou *hast revealed* these things to *some* in those places, and to *some* elsewhere, whom thou *hast* brought, as teachable little children, *to learn of me*, and to drink in *the sincere milk of my word*, *that they may grow thereby*. I adore the freedom of thy grace, and the depth of thy divine counsels: And I begin this song *to the praise of the glory of thy grace*, and my

M people

people shall prolong it to everlasting ages.*

If GOD speak once, it is sufficient. But I ventured to assert, what I now repeat, that this gospel truth is as plainly revealed in the sacred Scriptures, as the doctrines of faith and repentance are. To this I call another testimony, 2 Theff. xi. 13. 14. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; Whereunto he called you by our gospel." Do you find any difficulty, or ambiguity in these words, my brethren? Should the opposers of this doctrine insist that the words, *from the beginning*, mean no more than from the first preaching of Christianity, they will still prove the truth I am defending, thus: From the first promulgation of christian religion, GOD chose or elected you *Thessalonians*, in preference to the inhabitants

* The *wise* and *prudent*, mentioned in our Saviour's song, were the philosophers and reasoners who treated *Paul* with such contempt at *Athens*. Our blessed Lord met with persons of this description in the places mentioned, who were readier to reason against the gospel, than to sit at JESUS's feet, and receive his word by faith: But it *by professing themselves wise, they became fools*, Rom. i; O that all reasoners against gospel truth would take warning, and come unto JESUS, and learn of him! and they will be wise to salvation.

habitants of *Athens*, *Sparta*, and a thousand other cities, not merely to church-privileges, but to *faith*, *sanctification* and *salvation*. If *from the beginning*, means the same with *before the foundation of the world*, in the former Scripture, (and the word is used in the first of John's gospel to assert the eternity of the divine *Logos*, or word of God) the sense is altered only in respect to the commencement of God's choice. For then, the words offer this paraphrase---God hath from eternity chosen, or elected you in CHRIST JESUS, to eternal salvation, as the *end*; and to faith and holiness, as the *means* leading to that end: To which faith, holiness and salvation, ye were called by the ministry of *Paul*, *Sylvanus*, and *Timotheus*; the HOLY SPIRIT making the outward call effectual for your regeneration, sanctification and final salvation; and all this agreeable to the plan laid in the divine councils from eternity.

Allow me again to point you to Rom. viii. 28. 29. 30. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did pre-

predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." If the Apostle is not here teaching a truth of God, he is laying a snare to catch men to perdition. And I take the liberty to assert, the words are as plain and intelligible, and as incapable of perversion, as any words of the same number that ever were translated from an ancient author into modern language. And I will venture to say, that every plain, teachable and unprejudiced reader, who would follow his author, and not dictate to him, will here find divine decrees, and predestination; and may say with truth, if he is misled, an Apostle has done it. And a glorious chain of gospel truth, is here hung out, for our faith to fix on; from which, "whatever link you strike," first, last, or middle, you mar the salvation of man. We have it asserted, 1. That there are some who love God. 2. That those who love God, are *those who are called according to his purpose*, with the outward call of the word, and with the inward, effectual call of the HOLY SPIRIT. 3. That this purpose of God, according to which his people are called, is, Eph. iii. 11. *The eternal purpose, which he purposed in CHRIST JESUS our Lord.* And 2. Tim. i. 9. *His own purpose and grace, which he gave us in CHRIST JESUS,*

JESUS, *before the world began*: Deposited in the hands of CHRIST our surety, for our use and advantage, from eternity. 4. We have GOD's *fore-knowledge*; or his eternal love to his people in CHRIST, on which his decree of election is founded; Rom. xi. 2. GOD *hath not cast away his people, whom he fore-knew*; that is, loved with an everlasting love. That GOD's decree of election is founded on his foreknowledge, or eternal love, we have again asserted 1. Pet. i. 2. *Elect, according to the foreknowledge of GOD the Father*. And in the place before us, *Whom he did fore-know, he also did (5.) predestinate, or fore-appoint*; and this, not to future happiness, without regard to the way of holiness; for he also did predestinate, *to be conformed to the image of his Son*; to be begotten of GOD; born of the Spirit; and made, in their humble measure, like the blessed Jesus; and made joint heirs with him, their elder brother. 6. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called*. His elected ones shall have *the call*, at the time, in the manner, and by the instruments appointed from eternity: the Holy Spirit, in the mean time, performing his part in the work of salvation, by applying the grace of Christ to his elect people; John xvi. 14. *He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew or manifest it unto you*. He shall take the

gospel salvation, and clearly manifest it to the understanding, and bring it home, with saving power, to the hearts and souls of my people. And then, 7. *Whom he called, them he also justified.* While the blessed Spirit is convincing the soul of *sin, righteousness and judgment*; and as a heavenly wind is blowing upon them in regeneration, the glorious Mediator is interceding for them above. He pleads his whole active and passive obedience for them; and they are *justified*; are made just, or righteous, by the perfect righteousness of Christ, imputed, or made over to them, by an act of free grace: They are pardoned through his name, and sanctified by his Spirit: And then, 8. They are, they shall be glorified. God's decree takes care of, and secures every thing necessary, towards their complete and certain glorification. And this is that golden chain which eternal love has formed of foreknowledge, predestination, effectual calling, justification and glorification, which no power can break; which never has been separated, and certainly never will: *What, therefore, God hath joined, let no man put asunder.*

Another testimony for this truth, we have 1. Pet. 1. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and

and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied." You see, my brethren, the Holy Spirit ever leads the sacred writers to mention God's decree as including the *end*, and all the *means* leading to it. In the words before us, we have, 1. God's foreknowledge, or his eternal love in Christ, to these strangers scattered through the lesser *Asia*. 2. His decree of election, founded on his foreknowledge. 3. The agency, and operation of the Holy Spirit, on these elect souls: They were fore-known, and elected in Christ, through, and to sanctification of the Spirit. 4. They were elected, and sanctified to obedience to all God's commandments. 5. These strangers are elected to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. *For* them he agreed to shed, and *to* them he undertook to apply his blood: And having done this by the Spirit of sanctification---6. Grace and peace are multiplied: Fresh supplies of grace are provided in the decree, and shall be given at their humble suit, as their exigencies require; with the peace of God, to keep their hearts and minds; and both these abundantly multiplied in proportion to their holy diligence, and the trials they are to pass through. Turn again to Eph. i. 11. 12. "In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according

according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the * counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." Here we have the believer's inheritance, coming to him on his being predestinated--That this act of predestination originates in God's purpose, which *be purposed in himself*, (v. 9.) as the result of that council, and dictate of that sovereign will, that directs all the divine operations

* Whoever reads the Greek Testament, and casts his eye into the Lexicon, knows, that the word *Boulē*, here translated counsel, signifies a council, a consultation, and a court; as the word *bouleutērion*, is the place where the court is held. Now what idea can this convey to a reader, but this, That the Almighty is pleased to represent himself to his creatures as sitting in council, and consulting in his own mind, as in a court, on all his works of creation, providence and grace; and then accomplishing all things, agreeable to the plan laid. O how could godly Mr. Wesley cry out, "The horrible decree confound!" When, if his prayer were answered, GOD's creation, his works of providence, and the great salvation, are blotted from existence. Should any one defend the word *counsel*, in preference to *council*, as the true translation of *boulē*, they will get nothing by it in this controversy; as it will still prove, that after consultation, Almighty God, in all his proceedings, followed the counsel his own sovereign will gave him.

rations in the worlds of nature and of grace; and secures to God all the praise, and all the glory of that faith, by which we are enabled to venture our salvation in the hands of Christ; and more especially of those first converts who had few examples to follow, and great dangers to encounter.

And now, my dear brethren, though you are perhaps ready to say, *What need have we of further witness?* Yet let us sit a little longer at the feet of Jesus, and receive the law at his mouth. We are not opposing *this* man, nor favouring *that*, in this investigation; but coming with our empty pitchers, to the fountain of truth, that we may draw the waters of knowledge, *from those wells of salvation*. And I bless God, that I have not designedly forced a single sentence into the service of this doctrine; but have implicitly followed where I believed the Scriptures led. I shall finish my evidence for this gospel truth, though many other witnesses stand by, when I point out to you some other Scriptures, that place the *elect* of God, in a point of view, highly advantageous, safe, and honourable: such as those, where they are represented as—given by the Father to Christ—as having their names written in the book of life—as being the sure purchase of Christ's blood—as being those for whom
he

he prays or intercedes—and as those who are safe in his hand, and for whose salvation he is answerable.

1. The elect are given by the FATHER to CHRIST; John xvii. 2. 6. 9. Where the Mediator, in his intercessory prayer says, I give eternal life, to *as many as thou hast given me. I have manifested thy name to the men thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* And again, *I pray for them which thou hast given me.* John vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me;* John x. 29. They are Christ's sheep, *which the Father gave him.* And we have seen before, that the Elect were chosen in Christ, and consequently given to him, *before the foundation of the world.* 2. Their names are *in the book of life;* Phil. iv. 3. *Clement, and others, whose names are in the book of life.* If you ask when their names were inserted there, read Rev. xiii. 8. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are *not written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world,*"* or from eternity. And that e-
ternal

* This doctrine does not need the arts of criticism, for its support; but the reader may bear one critical note. On looking into three editions of the Greek Testament that were at hand, for the point-
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ternal life is meant, see Rev. xx. 15. "And whosoever was not found *written in the book of life* was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. xxi. 27. There shall in no wise enter the heavenly Jerusalem any, *but they which are written in the lamb's book of life.*†

3. The Elect are the sure purchase of Christ's blood; Isa. liii. 10. 11. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, *he shall see his seed : he shall see of the travel of his*

ing of these words, one has no stop from *gēs*, the earth, to the end of the verse ; and the other two have a comma at *esphagmenou*, slain. Beza's latin follows the first of these ; so do three English translations ; and a fourth has a comma at lamb. Three of the English, Beza, and one of the Greek editions, leave it doubtful, whether *from the foundation of the world*, be spoken of the lamb slain, or of their names being in the book of life. The comma in the other English edition, makes it, that the lamb was *slain from the foundation* of the world. The two Greek editions that agree, make it, that *their names were in the book of life from the foundation of the world* ; and which I have no doubt is the true pointing.

† I have been lately told of a man, and esteemed a worthy man too, who gave up the principles I am defending, because Christ says, Rev. iii. 5. concerning him that overcometh, That *he will NOT blot his name out of the book of life ; but will confess his name before his Father, and his Angels.* What would
this

his soul, and shall be satisfied." That is, when the blessed Saviour is undergoing his sufferings, he shall be supported and comforted under them, by the certain knowledge of what he is suffering for. He sows in tears and blood ; and he shall see the harvest of souls he is to gather in : that he is not dying at a venture, and without knowing who and what he shall have, as the purchase of his pain and travel. He shall see the fruit of his labour, and shall be well satisfied with the length and severity of his sufferings, and with the reward of them ; for he is making a sure purchase of grace, and glory, for his elect children, his spiritual seed.

4. Christ prays for his elect, and for none else ; John xvii. 9. *I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.* And v. 20. "I pray for them which shall believe on me, through their word." Here is mention made of some for whom Christ does *not* pray,—the world ; and some

this good man have done, if Christ had threatened *to blot out* his name, when he was scared out of his faith, by a most gracious promise, *that he never would do so* ? By this rule, when God promises his people, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, we are to understand him as meaning, that there is great danger he will do both ; for the latter promise is not more firm than the former.

some for whom he *does pray*, *those whom his Father gave him*; both his disciples present, and all future believers.

5. The elect are safe in Christ's hand, and he is answerable for their salvation. John vi. 38. 39. This is the Father's will, which I came down from heaven to do, *That of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* The Father's will is, that Christ should *lose nothing he had given him.* Christ came down from Heaven, *to do the will of his Father.* If then he loses any thing the Father gave him, he fails to do his will; and misses the end for which he came into the world. John xviii. 9. *Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.* John x. 28. 29. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me, is greater than all, and none shall pluck them out of my Father's hand." On this subject, the Apostle sings a triumphant song, Rom. viii. 33. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect?" * Will God that justifieth? "Who shall separate us from the love of
N Christ?"

* Had our translators, instead of the two little frigid words, *it is*, supplied the word, *will*, they would

Christ?" I am persuaded, that neither life, death, angels, devils, or earthly princes : that nothing in present circumstances, or future occurrences : not the height of felicity ; depth of adversity, nor any thing created, shall, with all their united force, be able to separate us from the eternal love which God has to us in CHRIST JESUS. But here a modern *Arminian* would interrupt the Apostle's

would have supported the pathos of this sublime passage ; and hit on the very word which every judicious reader sees must have been in the Apostle's mind ; but which, through a noble negligence, he omits to mention. This word, *will*, continues the interrogatory style, maintains the spirit of the passage, and makes the 34th verse a most beautiful climax of four degrees, thus : Who is he that condemneth God's elect ? *Will* Christ that died for them ? *Will* Christ condemn, who is risen again for their justification ? *Will* Christ condemn, who is even at the right hand of God, for our salvation ? *Will* Christ condemn, who maketh continual intercession for us ? Every judicious reader knows the interrogatory is a stronger affirmation, than had he barely said, No : He surely never will condemn. But to have the true sublime in style, as well as sentiment, let us make no addition, but read as the Apostle wrote :—Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? God that justifieth ? Who is he that condemneth ? Christ that died ? Yea rather that is risen ? Who is even at the right hand of God ? &c.

postle's song ; strike his harp from his hand, break the golden strings, clip the wings of his faith, and bring this towering eagle to the ground, by suggesting such raptures are dangerous ; and like the song of the Syren, allure men to destruction : for *Sin* can separate from the love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.— No, no ! replies this holy saint : my GOD has taken care of that, and of every thing else, in his eternal covenant and decree. *Sin shall not have dominion. We are the temples of the holy Spirit—Christ dwells in our hearts by faith—He keeps us as the apple of his eye—He makes us more than conquerors, and meet for the inheritance.—He will guide us by his counsel, and afterward receive us to glory. So I will sing, to present and future ages, NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE.*

And now, my dear brethren, what havoc do the deniers of this doctrine make of the sacred Scriptures ? They must put a negative, on all we have been reading ! They must say, GOD hath NOT chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world ; nor predestinated us to the adoption of children. God hath NOT from the beginning chosen you to salvation. He did NOT *foreknow* ; did NOT predestinate his people—That they are *not* given by the Father to Christ ; and their names are *not* in the book of

of life, from eternity. When those who love the Bible deny so great a part of it, those that love it not take leave to deny the whole. Or when the friends of revelation, explain away the plain grammatical sense; and reduce the Scriptures to the standard of reason; they are, unknown to themselves, deserting to the camp of the enemy, and enlisting under the banners of infidelity. But here you will remind me, that I am quitting scripture ground, and getting into the field of reason.—I own it my brethren; and assure you, it is with very great reluctance: as I would rather be learned in Bible truth, than make a *quintumvirate*, with those great masters of reason, *Socrates, Cicero, Locke, and Hutcheson*. But I am led thither by one of the most extraordinary men our world has produced these thousand years: by a man who does not chuse to tread on common ground; nor to follow the steps of any man, or set of men, that ever were born. A man of a genius so original, and unbounded, that, sitting in his study, he has formed an *ecclesiastical polity*, so new, and so complicated, that it requires a genius little less than his own, to understand and observe it; but which, this sovereign dictator, with an influence unknown to the most absolute princes, has extended

a thousand leagues around him ; and thereby subjected to his yoke, myriads of his fellow creatures, whom he never saw ; and who certainly owed him no natural obedience, either as a father, a sovereign, or a legislator. This character agrees to no one living, but to the aged, the learned, the pious Mr. *Wesley* ; whose sermon, intituled *Free Grace*, is now before me, and engaged me in my present undertaking. I assure my audience, I have no ambition to engage this great man on *his ground*, I mean reason ; and I can be safe, only by keeping some of the divine writers betwixt him and me. But I cannot give up my Bible to Mr. *Wesley* ; and he has too much piety to desire it. When Mr. *Wesley* wrote that sermon, he did not know what Predestination was ; and I should not have believed it possible for a man of learning to shew such extreme ignorance of the subject he was handling, as he discovers through the whole. For no age nor circumstance can excuse that person, who writes on a subject he does not understand ; and condemns a doctrine he never had studied. That this was the case with this good man, will now sufficiently appear. He creates a phantom that never appeared to any of God's creatures beside ; and it presents so "miscreated a front," that he

fights it with fury, and not the sword of the Spirit. He roundly asserts, page 5, That *predestination* is not a doctrine of God. We have seen it is the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles. They teach it as *from* God; he says it is *not of* God; and finds many that believe him. His first argument against predestination is, That it renders preaching vain; as the elected will be infallibly saved; and the non-elected as certainly damned, whether *with* or *without* preaching.—Surely, this objection must have been taken from some of the most ignorant of the human race; for I will pronounce it utterly unworthy of Mr. Wesley. We have seen that *Paul* is a great predestinarian; and, every body knows, he was a great preacher. Let us see his conduct on one single occasion. He comes to Corinth, where a few Jews resided among a populous city of *Greek* and *Roman* idolaters; and all of them far enough from christianity. He meets with such opposition, that he is discouraged, and intimidated. God tells him, Acts xviii. 9. 10. "Be not afraid, Paul, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee: *for I have much people in this city.*" I think the exhortation is to this purpose: There are many of my chosen ones in this town; and I have

have decreed that you shall be the happy instrument to open their eyes, and to turn from darkness to light, and from the power and worship of devils, to the saving knowledge of gospel truth : Go then, and labour with courage and diligence to bring them in. Accordingly, the Apostle continues eighteen months among them. He works, and God works. *Paul* calls ; the Holy Spirit enlightens ; and God justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. This is God's way ; and this is *Paul's* way. But according to Mr. *Wesley's* way, the Apostle should have answered, LORD, if thou hast many people in this city, my preaching *is vain* ; for they will infallibly be saved without it. But this man of God knew, that the decree of election always and invariably included all the means and instruments, by which his gracious purposes were to be accomplished, to every elect soul ; means, time, place, person, all in the decree, and never separated from it. This *chosen vessel* is himself to receive the knowledge of the truth, in part, from *Ananias* ; and the *Corinthians* from him.—So *we preached, and so ye believed.*

When Mr. *Wesley* says, it is not reasonable for a sick predestinarian to take physick, I strenuously deny the assertion, and venture to oppose myself to him, as an example to
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the contrary. No man more firmly believes predestination than I do; and no man readier to use the means of health in sickness than I am. For I know God accomplishes all his ends by his own appointed means. And if there are ignorant and obstinate *Predestinarians* in the world, there are doubtless some *Arminians* of the same culpable character.

He says, predestination destroys *meekness* and *love*; and naturally tends to inspire a sharpness of temper, and contempt and coldness towards those whom we suppose outcasts from God. If the belief of this doctrine would have such an unhappy effect on Mr. W. I hope he is better without it. But here again,—being a predestinarian, I am a better judge than any Arminian can be; and solemnly declare, that on reviewing the last forty years of my life, (and until these commenced, I was as great an enemy to divine decrees, as Mr. W. could wish me) for so long, I say, it never entered my head or heart, to treat with sharpness, contempt or coldness, any of God's creatures, because they were outcasts from him. If it be meant, that we do not love sinners so well as we do saints, we take the charge; seeing we know we are passed from death unto life, *because we love the brethren*. But if he means that

that we presume to say, or think in our hearts, you are *elected*, therefore we *love* you; and you are *not elected*, and therefore we *condemn* you, he does us great injury; and should retract it before God and the world: For we know as well as he, that both the one, and the other, are to be known only *by their fruits*: and the vilest sinner to-day may, in a few days or weeks, be *rejoicing with joy unspeakable*, and *know their election of God*.

Mr. W. objects against this doctrine, that it destroys the comforts of religion.—Here again, the great man's wisdom failed him. For who can believe, that the person who abides in Christ *from moment to moment*, as he phrases it, and must believe himself every moment in danger of eternal ruin, can enjoy the comfort of religion in the degree, or with the steadiness that the predestinarian can, who believes his standing decreed from eternity? Had Mr. W. imputed to us a *deceptive comfort*, he would have acted consistently with his principles. But who can excuse his giving the preference, in point of comfort, to *his* follower? who is in the hands of Christ to-day, and may, to-morrow, lift up his eyes in torment? Whereas the predestinarian believes he was chosen of God, and given to Christ from eternity:—that the blessed Jesus undertook for him

—was

—was born, lived, died, and rose again for him :—who believes he has been called, justified and sanctified ; and who is assured he shall never come into condemnation :—who believes he is one of Christ's sheep : safe in his hand ; and to whom he will give eternal life, unless he should cease to be *mighty to save*. Surely, surely, Mr. W's christian cannot have the ~~same~~ comfort *this* man has, be his peace a true, or a false one. For if he can, by the fruits, *know his election of God* ; he knows, by his own principles, that *that* secures to him holiness on earth, and eternal glory in heaven. We know Mr. W. believes ours to be a *dangerous* doctrine ; but we never expected to hear it charged with being *uncomfortable* : for this is peculiarly characteristic of his own plan ; as he has not a follower who can be sure of safety, to the end of a single hour.

His next charge is, that this *uncomfortable* doctrine, as he still calls it, destroys zeal for good works—That we would neither feed nor clothe the wicked, nor hope to save their souls. For why relieve their temporal wants, who are just dropping into eternal fire ? Or why seek to snatch them, as brands from the burning, when they were appointed there-to from eternity ?—Would any man, who understood the subject he was writing on,
ever.

ever have asked such questions as these? When, as Bunyan's pilgrim has it, a babe in divinity could answer a thousand of them.

1. We assure our opponents, that God himself keeps the book of life: We never saw a single name that is *in it*; so cannot possibly know who are *left out*. When such names as king *Manassah*, *Saul of Tarsus*, and *Wilmot of Rochester*, were at last discovered to be in that book, we despair of no name, however abandoned. 2. Has not every christian age exhibited thousands of gospel ministers, who were zealously employed in snatching sinners as brands from the burning; who lived professing, and died rejoicing in, the soul-comforting doctrine of God's decrees, and predestination? I can point Mr. W. to one; his own dear brother, Mr. *Whitefield*; the most extensive preacher, and greatest christian orator, the later ages have produced: And how staunch an advocate he was for the *Election of God*, his letter, that follows this discourse, will sufficiently testify. 3. Had Mr. W. that charity for his brethren, which *hopeth all things*, he must believe, that we would succour a fellow-creature in distress, were it possible for us to know he would be in hell the next hour.

His next objection is, that this doctrine has a tendency to overthrow the whole christian

tian revelation; and *allows the infidel all he asks*. For if the decree exists, one party of mankind must be saved, *though the christian revelation were NOT IN BEING*. Well! it is hard to believe Mr. W. *knew no better*, and harder still, to believe him guilty of *wilful perversion*. Charity then, ascribes this strange assertion to ignorance: and I assure myself, Mr. W. would rather be *ignorant*, than *malevolent*. And a wonderful conjunction he has made of predestination, which he thinks is believing *too much*; and infidelity, which believes *nothing at all*. "It allows the infidel all he asks: for one party of mankind must be saved, though the christian revelation were not in being." We have proved, that the divine writers, and all predestinarians, believe and teach, that God, from eternity, *chose* the blessed Mediator, and his *elect* in him—That their names were inserted in the book of life, and given to CHRIST—That the Saviour agreed to live and to die for them—That the HOLY SPIRIT undertook to apply the purchased redemption to them; and to give a revelation of this Saviour and redemption, in the holy Scriptures, which testify of CHRIST—That These holy books hold forth the *Lord JESUS CHRIST*, as the great meritorious, procuring cause of the salvation of his people;
while

while prophets, apostles, and gospel ministers, are the co-operating and subordinate causes, to gather in his elect from the four winds of heaven, in the time, and by the means appointed from eternity.—That these means are to be continued through all ages of the church, till the “number of his elect is accomplished;” and then the Mediator ascends his throne, and sits in judgment on men and angels.—And lastly, that he presents to his father, *all that he gave him*, and not one missing among them; a company which no man can number, to shew forth his praises to all eternity. O! how could a christian divine say, this is granting the *Deist all he asks*; when I think *he must know*, there is not an article mentioned, that the infidel does not utterly deny as false and fabulous. Does predestination give up the gospel revelation? It is there we learn the whole glorious plan. It is there we see a God decreeing the salvation of his chosen people—A Saviour suffering for them—The Holy Spirit sanctifying them; and all the instruments employed, as *workers together with God*, in bringing in his children, that *are scattered abroad*, to the fold and pastures of the great Shepherd, *who laid down his life for these sheep*; to be fed and nourished by him to life eternal. The predestinarian cannot

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not spare a single article, or clause of God's decrees; consequently, he cannot spare one *iota*, or tittle of the sacred Scriptures, which exhibit a God fulfilling his decrees.—He says again, This doctrine makes the scriptures contradict themselves.—Yes, if Mr. W. could find a Scripture that asserts there is *no predestination*, and that God did *not*, from eternity, decree to redeem, call, justify, and glorify his elect through CHRIST JESUS, then, indeed, the scriptures would contradict themselves: but, till then, it is only the eye of the *infidel*, or the resolved *Arminian*, that can discover the shadow of contradiction there. As a proof, however, he tells us, “God is love.” Yes, or he never would have had an elect soul upon earth. “The Lord is loving to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.” Surely: for their existence, their temporal mercies, and the means of grace, are the gifts of his love and mercy. He produces, Rom. xiv. to prove that some for whom CHRIST died, may perish eternally. “Destroy not with thy meat, him for whom CHRIST died.”—Does Mr. W. believe, that one man can destroy another *eternally*? Nothing, surely, can do that, but the creature's own sin and negligence. The direction then is this, Destroy not the peace and comfort
of

of thy fellow-christian, by indulging in the use of such meat and drink as he dare not partake of. "God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked."—And who thinks he has? We correct with reluctance, and pronounce sentence on the criminal with tears; but both must be done, let our delight in mercy be what it will. We acknowledge, and read with pleasure and instruction, all the general calls and invitations mentioned in the Bible. They are God's way by which *he brings in his elect*; and must be declared in general terms, and universal propositions. The difference is this: *We* say, God makes these calls effectual to the *certain gathering in* of his *chosen* ones—Mr. W. says, God thus invites all, but ensures the coming of none. —Predestination secures the certain salvation of all the elect; and many *Calvinists* judge the non-elect to be in as good a situation, as *Arminianism* places all mankind. For on that plan, there is no assurance of the salvation of a single soul of *Adam's* race: and CHRIST might have lived, and died, and rose again, and lost the whole fruit of his labour: For I expect no Arminian believes the whole race of mankind to be in a better situation than Milton places the non-elect in the following lines. Lib. III. line 183.

Some

*Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
 Elect above the rest; so is my will:
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
 'Th' incens'd Deity, while offer'd grace
 Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts,
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
 To pray'r, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut:
 And I will place within them as a guide,
 My umpire, conscience; whom, if they will hear,
 Light after light, well us'd, they shall attain,
 And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
 This my long-sufferance, and my day of grace,
 They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
 But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more,
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall:
 And none but such from mercy I exclude.*

According to this opinion, *the whole Elect world* are *sure* of salvation; and the *non-elect* may *attain to it*: and this is as far as an Arminian dare go, respecting any of our race. But as there is no end to the objections that reason offers against revealed truth, I must proceed a little farther in this disagreeable part of my work. It is objected against this doctrine, that it opens a door to licentiousness, and makes men *Antinomians*; that is,

is, it sets those who believe they are elected to holiness and salvation, *against the law of God*; for so the word Antinomian signifies. I have read of some both ancient and modern enthusiasts, who asserted, that by virtue of their faith in CHRIST, they were released from all obedience to the divine law, as well as delivered from its curse. But I neither *know* nor *care*, whether they were predestinarians or not; for I know that doctrine is as opposite to a licentious life, as truth and error are to each other. Inspired predestinarians, as we have seen, declare with one voice against continuing *in sin, that grace may abound*. Prophets and Apostles were strict moralists; and assure us that God *chose* his people *to be holy*, without which, *none shall see the LORD*: nor can any one conclude they are elected of God, but from the change wrought on them, and the holiness that follows. All *living* predestinarians that I ever saw, protest against such an abuse of this doctrine as leads to licentiousness; for they know, if grace has made the tree good, *its fruit will be good*. And they declare, with one mouth, that they have no evidence of their election, but that they *love God, and keep his commandments*; and hence infer, that they were chosen to this from eternity.

It is objected, that the doctrine of divine decrees destroys human liberty, renders our actions *necessary*, and consequently they can have neither good nor evil in them. I confess I once knew a *fatalist*; but I am sure he did not learn it from any doctrine of the gospel; for he heartily denied divine revelation. But I should judge it a sufficient refutation of this objection, if the Scriptures would furnish us with an event that was *foretold*, and consequently *decreed*; and yet the crime is charged on the performer, and proves him a free agent. Two notable instances of this kind offer themselves at once. Was it foretold that Judas would betray his Master? See Acts i. 16. *This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the HOLY GHOST, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus.* And Luke xxii. 22. *The Son of man goeth AS IT WAS DETERMINED.* And that the guilt of this horrid transaction lay wholly on the traitor, and proves him a free agent, the curses pronounced on him, Psal. cix. sufficiently assert; and are confirmed by his Master, where he pronounces woe to that man, by whom the Son of Man is betrayed, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he drowned in the deeps of the sea; and again,

gain, "It were better for that man, if he had never been born." Here we have the traitor's crime *foreknown, determined, and foretold*, and yet the whole turpitude of the action as chargeable on the miserable agent, as if it had been neither *foreknown, determined, nor foretold*. Again, Was the death of Christ fore-known, and fore-told? I should think, if our opponents would allow their Maker ever to have decreed any event, it would be the death of CHRIST. But whether they acknowledge or deny, the Scriptures teach this as clearly as they do the decree of election, Acts iii. 18. "Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER, HE hath so fulfilled." And Acts ii. 23. "Him being delivered *by the determinate council, and foreknowledge of GOD*." Here the death of Christ is foreknown, and determined or decreed in the councils of God, according to which, he is delivered up to sufferings, as all the prophets had foretold. Here our reasoners against revelation say, it is no sin, if persons are fulfilling the decrees of God. But Judas's guilt just mentioned, is a standing proof to the contrary. And the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, charge their hearers in these words: "Him ye have taken, and *by wicked bands*, have crucified

crucified and slain."—Here they are fulfilling the eternal councils of God in crucifying CHRIST, while, with free wills, wicked hands, and malicious hearts, they did it.

Fore-knowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown.

MILTON.

Another objection to this doctrine is, that it is unfriendly to the practice of virtue and holiness.—But how can those, who do not believe in election, know that it has this tendency, when all who profess it, utterly deny the consequence? An Arminian may say, If I was a predestinarian, I would neither watch, nor pray, nor study holiness, or self-denial; but rest secure in the divine decree, and in perseverance, that is connected with it. But the Calvinist reasons thus: I have no assurance of my election, but from its fruits: for if I am chosen at all, it is to be holy. And do I know my election of God? O my Soul! has he set his everlasting love upon thee, given his blessed Son for thee, and by his SPIRIT made him over to thee? And canst thou bear to return him evil for his good, and neglect him, for taking such distinguishing notice of thee? *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Is he not thy father that hath bought thee, drawn thee*
to

to himself, and bound thee with the cords of love ? Has he not made it thy meat and drink, thy privilege and heaven, to do his will ? Canst thou forget thy heavenly birth, and wallow in the mire of sin ? Whilst the Pharisee serves God from fear, or self-love, let gratitude draw thee to holy obedience. If Calvinists backslide, and become careless, worldly, or negligent, though they believe, Psal. lxxxix. that *God will not utterly take his loving-kindness from his people, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail ; yet they know he will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes :* This loving Father will not discard, nor disinherit his children ; but he will scourge them, in their persons, families, fortunes, and consciences : And *wee shall be unto them that they have sinned, when he restorath their souls, healeth their backslidings, and loveth them freely.* Or should they return to sin, *as the dog to his vomit ;* they would not say, They are fallen from grace, (which it is impossible to prove of any creature that ever was born ;) but that they *never had it,* are yet in their sins, and must seek for grace if ever they would find it.

It is again objected, that this doctrine makes God a *respeeter of persons.*—And who will assert he is not ? *The LORD had respect to Abel, and his offering ; and to Abraham's, and his*

his posterity, the Jews, more than to all the nations of the earth. God respects fallen men more than fallen angels. And surely the blessed Saviour respected his beloved John, more than he did Judas, who was a thief; who cared not for the poor; who was the traitor; who was a devil. And where the contrary is asserted, it only means respecting of persons in judgment betwixt man and man; or the Jews more than the Gentiles, as in the case of Cornelius; or servants more than masters, or masters than servants, as Col. iii. 25. But our dear mistaken brethren undesignedly rob God of his principal attribute, *his sovereignty*. They will not allow him to do *what he will with his own*: He shall not be free to dispose of his favours as he pleases; nor to bestow any grace or blessing on any of his creatures, that all shall not share in: and particularly, that the idea of *free grace*, is, that every body shall share alike. Where got our brethren this notion of free grace? If they mean the common favours of God's providence, (for the word *grace* signifies *favour*, and to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God, is to manage our estates with prudence and charity) in that sense, it is certain God bestows his grace upon all; for every creature has some temporal comforts: but it is
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just as certain, that he does not bestow his blessings equally on *all men*; and their different circumstances sufficiently prove it. If by *free grace*, they mean CHRIST and his benefits; the HOLY SPIRIT and his operations and comforts; and if they understand the Talents as meaning saving grace, as I find some are inclined to do; even there we have a proportion of five to one, in the distributions of divine sovereignty. *Free grace*, is something that is *freely bestowed*; 'whether a cup of cold water, from a man; or Christ and salvation, from God. If you should relieve a fellow creature in distress, you would not expect to hear him charge you with not doing it *freely* because you did not the same to all the distressed in the state. And when God bestows his grace, what makes it *free* is, not that every creature shall have the same favour; but that it is *freely given* by a God that *owes nothing*, to a creature that has *no just claim to any thing*. Thus every one who receives grace, knows that it is *free to him*; for on no other terms could he ever have possessed it. And he is so far from deeming it *not free*, because not bestowed on all mankind; that he esteems it the *more free*, in being given to him, while so many are left without it. And this is the true scripture idea of *free grace*, that God *freely gave his Son*.

*Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and with him freely gives all things, to whom he pleases. It is thus the prophet *Isaiab*, and the Apostle *Paul* teach the great doctrine of God's sovereignty, by comparing him to a potter, and his power over fellow clay, to make it a vessel as it pleaseth him, to honour or dishonour; in spite of all the reasoning pride of man. O how divinely sweet, to lie at the feet of sovereign grace, and be moulded thereby into a vessel of honour !*

Lastly, they say, this doctrine represents God as creating man to damn him.--If there is any sense in this objection, it must mean, That God created angels in heaven, and men on earth, although he knew they would both abuse a glorious liberty, and render themselves everlastingly miserable. This we freely acknowledge; and there is not an Arminian under the sun, that can deny it; unless he will rob God of his knowledge; or suppose him divesting himself of this perfection, as if he was as much puzzled with this difficulty, as "reasoning mites" on earth are. If God foreknows an event then, it will as infallibly happen, as if you called it a decree; for neither the one, nor the other at all affects the will of the creature, as we have proved. But God certainly does
create

create myriads of creatures, that he knows will be miserable through all eternity.

This brings me to the last thing : how the *Thessalonians* could *know their own election of God*. When they saw the Apostle and his helpers among them—when they heard the everlasting gospel ; and had the merits, the power, and the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, brought home to their hearts by the HOLY SPIRIT ; and found the wondrous change that gospel grace wrought in their temper, conversation and practice, every believer among them could reason thus ; GOD from all eternity laid the plan of my salvation ; chose the blessed Jesus as my mediator, sent him in the fulness of time as my redeemer—Has sent forth his ministers, as he decreed, to bring me the glorious tidings : and at the time, in the manner, and by the instruments fixed on, the HOLY SPIRIT has applied to me the purchased redemption. What I now am, GOD has made me : what is done, GOD has done it. And if he has done it, he purposed from eternity to do it ; in every respect, just as it is done. And now, my soul ! look back ; wonder and adore ! Didst thou seek after GOD, or did he seek after thee ? Did I bring the gospel to Thessalonica ? Or did GOD send it hither, according to his eternal purpose ? Many inha-
P bitants

bitants of this town still oppose the gospel, and persecute Christ in his members. Why am I not among them? Did I not oppose the gospel salvation, till the same power that raised our Lord Jesus from the dead subdued me, and created me anew? And did not God, in my favour, make good his promise to Christ in the covenant of redemption; *Thy people shall be willing, in the day of thy power?* And has God indeed revealed his dear son in me? And am I now a sheep of Christ, and safe in his hand? And all this from the free, eternal, distinguishing love of God to me in CHRIST JESUS? What shall I render to the LORD? Help me, men and angels to praise him! Now let my hands, my head, my heart and life be devoted to him, who hath brought me out of darkness into his marvellous light, and broke my bonds asunder. He hath spoken to my soul the peace of God, that passeth all understanding: I have joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and had I a thousand lives, they should all be devoted to him, whom I can now call, *my LORD and my GOD.*

To conclude: God sends forth prophets, apostles and ordinary ministers, to proclaim the great salvation. They know, that it is by their ministry the elect children of God, that are scattered abroad, are to be gathered
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ed in. They know not one of them ; and therefore are to *preach the gospel to every creature*. Where the fruits of repentance appear, they glorify that God, who is *filling up the number of his elect*. Though they fail, they do not despair. *The Lord knoweth them that are his* : and when his time is come, he will direct the arrow aright, while they draw the bow at a venture. Nor will they desist, till they see him die in impenitence ; and then they must conclude they were not the elect of God ; but he *gave them up to their own heart's lust, and they walked in their own counsels* ; and shall *reap the fruit of their own ways*. They do not perish because *not elected* ; neither had God's decree any influence on their sins ; but they sinned from depravity, and their own free choice, and their ruin is the unavoidable consequence. In a word, gospel ministers know, they are but a voice crying in the wilderness : Or like the prophet *Ezekiel* standing over the dry bones ; we cry, *O ye dry bones, hear ye the word of the LORD !* We wait for divine influences ; and when God says, *Son of man, can these bones live ?* We answer, *O Lord thou knowest* : we can do nothing towards this great work, but cry to them, and cry to thee. Come, thou heavenly wind—ye northern blasts of conviction, and ye south-
ern

ern gales of regeneration, and blow upon these slain, that they may live !

I trust the experimental part has so mixed itself with this discourse, that I may now conclude with two short practical addresses.

1. To you, ye children of God—ye lovers of Jesus ; ye holy souls, and humble believers, who know, or ought *to know your election of God*. Your glory and your song of rejoicing, is truly of *free grace*. When the SPIRIT *bears witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God*, you exult in the transporting thought, that the evidences that prove you a child of God, prove also, that he set his everlasting love upon you ; and chose you to be what you are, from eternity: that the work wrought on you, was no hasty resolve, that might be as hastily reversed ; but it is that *gift and calling of God, that is without repentance* ; of which he never did repent, and never will : because *according to the council of his own will*, he has accomplished in you *his own purpose and grace, and the work of faith with power*. He has loved you *with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness has he drawn you* : and given you *that good part which shall never be taken away from you*. If the cords of love, and bonds of gratitude *can bind you, you are bound to serve and glorify God*. If he has made you

trees

trees of righteousness, and planted you with his own right hand, it is that you may abound in the fruits of holiness, to the glory of his name.

2. Let me leave a word with you, ye sinners in Zion. *Calvinists* and *Arminians* all bear their testimony against the life you live. All proclaim to you, that death and hell are just before you. All warn you to flee from approaching vengeance. You shall find no refuge in their controversy: for all agree, that while you live an impenitent sinner, you are *accursed in the city, and in the field,* and *the wrath of God abideth on you*. If you will stumble over divine decrees into perdition, God and his throne are clear of your blood. An article of the church of England tells you, "The godly consideration of predestination and our election in CHRIST, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, that feel in themselves the workings of the spirit of CHRIST, mortifying their flesh, and earthly members—So for curious and carnal persons to have before their eyes, the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, and thrusts persons into unclean living, or desperation." To ask then, whether you are elected, is to begin your building at the top of the house, without laying the foundation

dation. Your proper question is, *what shall I do to be saved?* And how shall I obtain converting grace? Your duty, your interest, your salvation, require you, to hear God's gracious warnings.—To knock at mercy's door, *with mighty cries and tears.* To implore the saving operations of the divine SPIRIT.—To escape to the open arms of Jesus; and thus to make *your calling sure*, and then you may conclude *your election is sure.* No decree of God bars the door against you. If you perish, your own hands are your destroyers. Your harvest shall be connected with your seed-time. That which you sow now, you shall reap through eternity. O be wise! Have good sense enough to be your own friend. Escape to the blessed Jesus. Give men and angels, earth and heaven, joy of your conversion. Then shall you ever reap the harvest that He sowed, in tears, in blood, in death; and you shall be *brethren beloved*, and know your election of God. Amen.



Extract



E X T R A C T

O F A

L E T T E R

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley,
in answer to his Sermon, inti-
tuled, *Free Grace*.



Reverend and very dear Brother,



OD only knows what unspeakable
sorrow of heart I have felt on your
account, since I left England last.

But if I am faithful to God, and to

my own and other's souls, I must not stand neu-
ter any longer. Our common adversaries will
rejoice to see us differing among ourselves.
But the children of God are in danger of
falling into error. Nay, numbers have been
misled, whom God has been pleased to work
upon by my ministry ; and greater numbers
are calling aloud upon me, to shew also my o-
pinion.

pinion. I must then *know no man after the flesh*, nor have respect of persons, any further than is consistent with my duty to my Lord and master Jesus Christ.

It is not my design to enter into a long debate on God's decrees. I refer you to Dr. Edwards's *veritas redux*, which I think unanswerable. I shall make only a few remarks on your sermon, intituled, *Free Grace*. And give me leave to take some notice of what, in your preface, you term an *indispensable obligation* to publish it. I always thought you were quite mistaken on that head. The case you know stands thus : When you was at *Bristol*, I think you received a letter from a private hand, charging you with not preaching the gospel, because you did not preach up election. Upon this you drew a lot : the answer was, *preach and print*. I have often questioned, as I now do, whether in so doing, you did not tempt the LORD. A due exercise of religious prudence, without a lot, would have directed you in that matter. Besides, I never heard that you enquired of God, whether or not election was a gospel doctrine? But I fear, taking it for granted it was not, you only enquired, whether you should be silent, or preach and print against it. However that be, the lot came out, *preach and print*. Accordingly, you preached

ed and printed against election. At my desire, you suppressed publishing the sermon whilst I was in England ; but soon sent it into the world after my departure. O that you had kept it in ! Let not the children of God think that doctrine true, because you preached it up in compliance with a lot: For I cannot but think you have been much mistaken, in imagining, that your tempting God by casting a lot as you did, could lay you under an indispensable obligation to *any action*, much less to publish a sermon against the doctrine of predestination to life.

I must observe, that as you have been unhappy in printing at all upon such an *imaginary warrant*, so you have been as unhappy in the choice of your text. How could it enter your heart to chuse a text, to disprove election, out of the viiith of the *Romans*, where this doctrine is so plainly asserted? that once talking with a Quaker upon this subject, he had no other way of evading the force of the apostle's assertion, than by saying, "I believe Paul was in the wrong." And another friend lately, who was once highly prejudiced against election, ingenuously confessed, "that he used to think Paul himself was ~~mistaken~~, or that he was not truly translated."

It is plain, beyond all contradiction, that
St.

St. Paul, through the whole eighth of the *Romans*, is speaking of the privileges of those only who are really in CHRIST. And let any unprejudiced person read what goes before, and what follows your text, and he must confess the word ALL, only signifies *those that are in* CHRIST JESUS; and the latter part of the text plainly proves what I find dear Mr. Wesley will by no means grant; I mean the final perseverance of the children of God. "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all (i. e. all saints) how shall he not with him also, freely give us all things?" Grace, in particular, to enable us to persevere, and every thing else necessary to carry us home to our Father's heavenly kingdom.

Had any one a mind to prove the doctrine of *Election*, as well as of *final perseverance*, he could hardly wish for a text more fit for his purpose than that which you have chosen to disprove it. One that does not know you, would suspect you yourself was sensible of this: for after the first paragraph, I scarce know whether you have mentioned it so much as once through your whole sermon.

I shall not mention how illogically you have proceeded. Had you written clearly, you should first have proved your proposition, "that Grace is free to a"; and then, by way

way of inference, exclaimed against what you call the *horrible decree*. But you knew that people (because *arminianism* of late has so much abounded among us) were generally prejudiced against the doctrine of *reprobation*: and therefore, if you kept up their dislike of that, you could overthrow the doctrine of election entirely. For, without doubt, the doctrine of election and reprobation must stand or fall together.

But passing by this, as also your equivocal definition of the word *grace*, and your false definition of the word *free*, and that I may be as short as possible, I frankly acknowledge, I believe the doctrine of reprobation, in this view, that God intends to give saving grace, through JESUS CHRIST, only to a certain number, and that the rest of mankind, after the fall of *Adam*, being justly left of God to continue in sin, will, at last, suffer that eternal death, which is its proper wages.

This is the established doctrine of scripture, and acknowledged as such in the 17th Article of the Church of *England*, as Bishop *Burnet* himself confesses; yet dear Mr. *Wesley* absolutely denies it.

But the most important objections, which you have urged against this doctrine, as reasons why you reject it, being seriously considered,

sidered, and faithfully tried by the word of God, will appear to be of no force at all. Let the matter be humbly and calmly reviewed, as to the following heads :

First, you say, "If this be so, (that is, if there be an election) then is all preaching vain : it is needless to them that are elected; for they, with or without preaching, will infallibly be saved. Therefore, the end of preaching to save souls is void with regard to them : And it is useless to them that are not elected ; for they cannot possibly be saved : they, with or without preaching, will infallibly be damned. The end of preaching is therefore void, with regard to them likewise. So that in either case, our preaching is vain, and your hearing also vain."

O dear sir, what kind of reasoning, or rather sophistry, is this ! Hath not God, who appointed salvation for a certain number, appointed also the preaching of the word, as a means to bring them to it ? Does any one hold election in any other sense ? And if so, how is preaching needless to them that are elected, when the gospel is designed by God himself, to be the power of God unto their salvation ? And since we know not who are elect, and who are reprobate, we are to preach promiscuously to all. For the word may be useful, even to the non-elect, in restraining

fraining them from much wickedness and sin. However, it is enough to excite to the utmost diligence in preaching and hearing, when we consider, that by these means, some, even as many as the LORD hath ordained to eternal life, shall certainly be quickened, and enabled to believe. And who that attends, especially with reverence and care, can tell but he may be of that happy number?

Secondly, you say "This doctrine tends to destroy that holiness, which is the end of all God's ordinances: For it wholly takes away those motives to holiness, The hope of future rewards, and fear of punishment; the hope of heaven, and fear of hell."

I thought one who carries perfection to such an exalted pitch as dear Mr. W. does, would know, that a true lover of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, would strive to be holy for the sake of being holy, and work for CHRIST, out of love and gratitude, without any regard to the rewards of heaven, or fear of hell. You remember what *Scougal* says, "Love is a more motive than does them move." But granting that rewards and punishments (as they certainly are) may be motives from which a christian may be honestly stirred up to act for God, how does the doctrine of election destroy these motives?

tives? Do not the elect know, that the more good works they do, the greater will be their reward? And is not that encouragement enough to set them upon, and cause them to persevere in working for JESUS CHRIST? And how does the doctrine of election destroy holiness? Whoever preached any other election, than what the Apostle preached, when he said, *Chosen through sanctification of the Spirit?* Nay, is not holiness made a mark of our election, by all that preach it? And how then can the doctrine of election destroy holiness? The instance which you bring to illustrate your assertion, is, indeed, quite impertinent. For you say, if a sick man knows, that he must unavoidably die, or unavoidably recover, though he knows not which, it is not reasonable to take physick. Dear Sir, what absurd reasoning is here? Was you ever sick in your life? If so, did not the bare probability, or possibility of your recovering, though you knew it was unalterably fixed, that you must live or die, encourage you to take physick? For how did you know, but that very physick might be the means God intended to recover you by? Just thus it is, as to the doctrine of election. I know that it is unalterably fixed, may one say, that I must be damned, or saved; but since I know not which, for a certainty, why should

should I not strive, though at present in a state of nature, since I know not but this striving may be the means God has intended to bless, in order to bring me into a state of grace? Dear Sir, consider these things; make an impartial application; and then judge what little reason you had to conclude the tenth paragraph in these words: "So directly does this doctrine tend to shut the very gate of holiness in general, to hinder unholy men from ever approaching thereto, or striving to enter in thereat;" as directly, say you, paragraph 11, "does the doctrine tend to destroy several particular branches of holiness, such as meekness, love, &c." I shall say little to this paragraph. Dear Mr. Wesley has, perhaps, been disputing with some warm, narrow-spirited men that held election, and then infers, that their warmth, and narrowness of spirit, was owing to their principles. But does not Mr. W. know many dear children of God, who are predestinarians, and yet are meek, lowly, pitiful, courteous, tender-hearted, kind, of a catholic spirit, and hope to see the most vile and profligate of men converted? And why? because they know God saved themselves by an act of his electing love, and they know not but he may have elected those who now seem to be the most abandoned.

doned. But dear Sir, we must not judge of the truth of principles in general, nor of this of election in particular, entirely from the practice of some that pretend to hold them. If so, I am sure much might be said against your own. For I appeal to your own heart, whether you have not felt in yourself, or observed in others, a narrow-spiritedness, and some disunion of soul respecting those that hold particular redemption. If so, then according to your own rule, *universal redemption is wrong*, because it destroys several branches of holiness, such as meekness, love, &c. But I beg you would observe, that your inference is entirely set aside, by the force of the Apostle's argument, and the language which he expressly uses, Col. iii. 12. 13. "Put on therefore, (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as CHRIST forgave you, so also do ye." Here we see that the apostle exhorts them to put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, &c. upon this consideration, namely, because they were *elect of God*. And all who have experimentally felt this doctrine in their hearts, feel that these

these graces are the genuine effects of their being elected of God.

You know, Dear Sir, the Apostle exhorts us to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," and therefore you must not condemn all that appear zealous for the doctrine of election, as narrow-spirited, or persecutors, because they think it their duty to oppose you. I am sure I love you in the bowels of JESUS CHRIST; but yet I cannot help strenuously opposing your errors upon this important subject, because I think you warmly, though not designedly, oppose the truth as it is in JESUS. May the LORD remove the scales of prejudice from off the eyes of your mind, and give you a zeal according to true christian knowledge.

Thirdly, says your sermon, "This doctrine tends to destroy the comforts of religion, the happiness of christianity, &c."

But how does Mr. Wesley know this, who never believed election? I believe they who have experienced it, will agree with our 17th Article, "That the godly consideration of predestination, and election in CHRIST, is full of sweet, pleasant, unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the workings of the spirit of CHRIST mortifying the works of the flesh,

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and their earthly members, and drawing their minds to high and heavenly things, as well because it does greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through CHRIST, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God, &c." This plainly shews, that our godly reformers did not think election destroyed holiness, or the comforts of religion. As for my own part, this doctrine is my daily support : I should utterly sink under a dread of my impending trials, was I not firmly persuaded, that God has chosen me in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world, and that being now effectually called, he will suffer none to pluck me out of his almighty hand.

You proceed thus : " This is evident to all those who believe themselves to be reprobate, or only suspect or fear it ; all the great and precious promises are lost to them ; they afford them no ray of comfort." In answer to this, let me observe, That none living, especially none who are desirous of salvation, can know that they are not of the number of God's elect. None but the unconverted can have any just reason so much as to fear it. And would Mr. Wesley give comfort, or dare you apply the precious promises of the gospel, being children's

bread,

bread, to men in a natural state, while they continue so ? God forbid ! What if the doctrine of election and reprobation does put some upon doubting ? So does that of regeneration. But, is not this doubting, a good means to put them upon searching and striving ; and that striving a good means to make their calling and election sure ? This is one reason among many others, why I admire the doctrine of election, and am convinced it should have a place in gospel ministrations, and should be insisted on with faithfulness and care. It has a natural tendency to rouse the soul out of its carnal security. And therefore many carnal men cry out against it. Whereas universal redemption is a notion sadly adapted to keep the soul in its lethargick, sleepy condition, and therefore so many men admire and applaud it.

You say, " The witness of the spirit, experience shews to be much obstructed by this doctrine." But, dear Sir, whose experience ? Not your own ; for in your journal, from your embarking for *Georgia*, till your return to *London*, you seem to acknowledge that you have it not, and therefore you are no competent judge in this matter. You must mean then, the experience of others : For you say, " Even in those who have tasted
that

that good gift, who yet have soon lost it again, (I suppose you mean, lost the sense of it again) and fallen back into doubts, and fears and darkness, even horrible darkness, that might be felt," &c. Now, as to the darkness of desertion, was not this the case of JESUS CHRIST himself, after he had received an unmeasurable unction of the Holy Ghost? Was not his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, in the garden? And was he not surrounded with an horrible darkness, even a darkness that might be felt, when on the cross he cried out, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" And that all his followers are liable to the same, is it not evident from Scripture? For says the Apostle, "He was tempted in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be able to succour those that are tempted." And is not their liahleness thereunto, consistent with that conformity to him, in suffering, which his members are to bear? Why should persons falling into darkness, after they have received the witness of the spirit, be any argument against the doctrine of election? "Yes," you say, "very many of those that hold it not, in all parts of the earth, have enjoyed the uninterrupted witness of the Spirit, the continual light of God's countenance, from the moment they first believed,

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for many months or years, to this very day." But how does Mr. Wesley know this? Has he consulted the experience of many, very many, in all parts of the earth? Or could he be sure of what he hath advanced without sufficient grounds, would it follow, that their being kept in this light, is owing to their not believing election? No, this, according to the sentiments of our church, "Greatly confirms and establishes a true christian's faith of eternal salvation through CHRIST," and is an anchor of hope, both sure and stedfast, when he walks in darkness and sees no light; as certainly he may, even after he hath received the witness of the Spirit, whatever you, or others, may unadvisedly assert to the contrary. Then to have respect to God's everlasting covenant, and to throw himself upon the free, distinguishing love of that God, who changeth not, will make him lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees: But without the belief of the doctrine of election, and the immutability of the free love of God, I cannot see how it is possible, that any should have a comfortable assurance of eternal salvation. What could it signify to a man, whose conscience is thoroughly awakened, and who is warned in good earnest to seek deliverance from the wrath to come;

come, though he should be assured that all his past sins are forgiven, and that he is now a child of GOD; if, notwithstanding this, he may hereafter become a child of the devil, and be cast into hell at last? Could such an assurance yield any solid, lasting comfort, to a person convinced of the corruption and treachery of his own heart, and of the malice, subtilty and power of Satan? No, that which alone deserves the name of a full assurance of faith, is such an assurance, as emboldens the believer, under the sense of his interest in distinguishing love, to give the challenge to all his adversaries, whether men or devils, and that with regard to all their future, as well as present attempts to destroy, saying, with the Apostle, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD that justifies; who is he that condemns me? It is CHRIST that died: yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of GOD, who also maketh intercession for me. Who shall separate me from the love of CHRIST? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword! Nay, in all these things I am more than conqueror, through him that loved me. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things

things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." This, dear sir, is the language of every soul that has attained a full assurance of faith. And this assurance can only arise from an assurance of God's electing, everlasting love. That many have an assurance they are in CHRIST to-day, but take no thought for, or are not assured they shall be in him to-morrow, nay, to all eternity, is rather their imperfection, and unhappiness, than their privilege. I pray God to bring all such to a sense of his eternal love, that they may no longer build upon their own faithfulness, but on the unchangeableness of that God whose gifts and calling are without repentance. For those whom God hath once justified, he also will glorify; but your principle has a natural tendency to keep the soul in darkness forever; because the creature is thereby taught, that his being kept in a state of salvation, is owing to his own free will. And what a sandy foundation is that for a poor creature to build his hopes of perseverance upon? Every relapse into sin, every surprize by temptation, must throw him "into doubts and fears, into horrible darkness, even darkness, that may be felt." And though

though I would not judge of the truth of election by the experience of any particular person, yet, for these five or six years I have received the witness of God's Spirit, blessed be God, I have not doubted a quarter of an hour of a saving interest in JESUS CHRIST: but with great and humble shame, I do acknowledge, I have fallen into sin often since that. Though I do not, dare not allow of any one transgression, yet hitherto I have not been (nor do I expect while I am in this present world I ever shall be) able to live one day perfectly free from all defects and sin. And since the scriptures declare, "That there is not a just man upon earth," no, not among those of the highest attainments in grace, "that doth good, and sinneth not;" we are sure this will be the case of all the children of God. The Holy Ghost condemns the persons who say they have no sin, as deceiving themselves, as being destitute of the truth, and making God a liar. 1 John i. 8. 10. I have been also in heaviness through manifold temptations, and expect to be often so before I die. And thus were the Apostles and primitive christians themselves. And I believe your fighting so strenuously against the doctrine of election, and pleading so vehemently for a sinless perfection, are among the reasons or culpable causes

causes, why you are kept out of the liberties of the gospel, and from that assurance of faith which they enjoy who have experimentally tasted, and daily feed upon God's electing, everlasting love. This doctrine of election is that which mostly presses me to abound in good works. I am made willing to suffer all things for the elect's sake. This makes me preach with comfort; because I know salvation does not depend on man's free will, but the Lord makes willing in the day of his power, and can make use of me to bring some of his elect home, when and where he pleases.

You say, page 17, "This doctrine has a tendency to overthrow the whole christian religion." For, say you, "supposing that unchangeable, eternal decree, one part of mankind must be saved, though the christian revelation were not in being." But how does that follow? Since it is only by the christian revelation, that we are acquainted with God's design of saving his church by the death of his Son. It is settled in the everlasting covenant, that this salvation shall be applied to the elect, through the knowledge and faith of him. Isa. liii. 11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." [And the Scriptures are given to testify of CHRIST.] Nor will the right
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understanding, or the reverent belief of God's decree ever allow or suffer a christian, in any case, to separate the means from the end, or the end from the means. No, dear sir, you mistake. Infidels of all kinds, are on *your* side of the question. Deists, Arians, and Socinians, arraign God's sovereignty, and stand up for universal redemption. I pray God that Mr. *Wesley's* sermon, as it has grieved the hearts of many of God's children, may not also strengthen the hands of many of his most avowed enemies ! Here I could almost lie down and weep : " O tell it not in *Gath* ! Publish it not in the streets of *Askelon*, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice, lest the sons of unbelief should triumph ! "

If those texts, " God willeth that none should perish.—I have no pleasure in him that dieth," and such like, be taken in their strictest sense, then *no one* will be damned. But here is the distinction : God taketh no pleasure in the death of sinners, so as to delight simply in their death ; but he delights to magnify his justice, by inflicting the punishment which their iniquities have deserved.

You unjustly charge the doctrine of reprobation with blasphemy ; whereas the doctrine of universal redemption, as you set it forth,

forth, is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God, and the merit of his blood. Consider whether it be not blasphemy to say, as you do, page 20, "CHRIST not only died for those that are saved, but also for those that perish." The text you have misapplied to glose over this, see explained by *Ridgely, Edwards, Henry*; and I purposely omit answering your texts myself, that you may be brought to read such treatises, with *Dr. Edwards's Veritas Redux, Eliza Cole, on God's sovereignty*, and *Mr. Cooper of Boston*, which, under God, would shew you your error, and where, I doubt not, you would see all your objections answered. You cannot make good the assertion, "That Christ died for them that perish," without holding, (as *Peter Boehler*, one of the Moravian brethren, in order to make out universal redemption, lately frankly confessed in a letter) "That all the damned souls would hereafter be brought out of hell." I cannot think *Mr. Wesley* is thus minded. And yet, without this can be proved, universal redemption, taken in a literal sense, falls entirely to the ground. For how can all be universally redeemed, unless all are finally saved?

Dear sir, for JESUS CHRIST's sake, consider how you dishonour GOD by denying election.

lection. You plainly make salvation depend, not on God's *free grace*, but on man's free will ; and if thus, it is more than probable JESUS CHRIST would not have had the satisfaction of seeing the fruit of his death, in the eternal salvation of one soul. Our preaching would then be vāin, and all invitations for people to believe in him, would also be in vain.

But, blessed be God, our LORD knew for whom he died. There was an eternal compact between the Father and the Son. A certain number was then given him, as the purchase and reward of his obedience and death. For these he prayed, John xvii. and not for the world. For these, and these only, he is now interceding, and with their salvation, he will be fully satisfied.

I purposely omit making any further particular remarks on the several last pages of your sermon. Indeed, had not your name been prefixed to the sermon, I could not have been so uncharitable as to think you were the author of such sophistry. You beg the question in saying, " That God has declared (notwithstanding you own, I suppose, some will be damned) that he will save all," that is, every individual person. You take it for granted (for solid proof you have none) that God is unjust, if he pass-

es by any, and then you exclaim against the horrible decree; and yet, as I before hinted, by holding the doctrine of original sin, you profess to believe that he might justly have passed by all.

Dear sir, for CHRIST's sake, be not rash? Give yourself to reading. Study the covenant of Grace. Down with your carnal reasoning. Be a little child; and then, instead of pawning your salvation, as you have done in a late hymn book, if the doctrine of *universal redemption* be not true; instead of talking of *sinless perfection*, as you have done in the preface to that hymn book, and making man's salvation to depend on his own *free will*, as you have in this sermon, you will compose an hymn in praise of sovereign distinguishing love. You will caution believers against striving to work a perfection out of their own hearts, and print another sermon the reverse of this, and intitule it, *Free Grace indeed*. Free, because not free to all; but free, because God may withhold or give it to whom, and when, he pleases.

Till you do this, I must doubt whether or not you know yourself. In the mean time, I cannot but blame you for censuring the clergy of our church for not keeping to their articles, when you yourself, by your

principles, positively deny the 9th, 10th, and 17th. Dear sir, these things ought not so to be. God knows my heart, as I told you before, so I declare again, nothing but a single regard to the honour of CHRIST, has forced this letter from me. I love and honour you for his sake; and when I come to judgment, will thank you before men and angels, for what you have, under God, done for my soul.

There I am persuaded I shall see Mr. *Wesley* convinced of election, and everlasting love. And it often fills me with pleasure to think how I shall behold you casting your crown down at the feet of the Lamb; and, as it were, filled with a holy blushing for opposing the divine sovereignty in the manner you have done.

But I hope the LORD will shew you this, before you go hence. O how do I long for that day! If the LORD should be pleased to make use of this letter for that purpose, it would abundantly rejoice the heart of,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate, though unworthy

Brother, and servant in CHRIST,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

Bethesda in Georgia,

Dec. 24. 1740.



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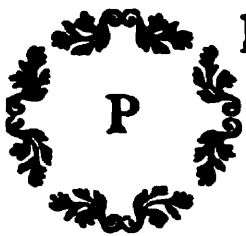
A D D R E S S

T O T H E

D E I S T S.



Gentlemen,



PERMIT a person unknown in the literary world, but neither a stranger to your principles, nor unconcerned for your situation, to address you. As I am in earnest upon the occasion, I hope you will be candid enough to attend with seriousness to what I shall say. It is no secret, that many of you engage in the cause of *Infidelity* without *reasoning* upon the subject at all, and glory in the name of Deists, which you assume, when you are scarcely acquainted with the import of the term. For this reason, as well as for the information of others

thers who may read this little book, you will permit me to explain your title, before I proceed to what I principally intend.

Deist is derived from the *Latin* word *Deus*, which signifies God, and is descriptive of a person who believes the existence of *One supreme*. But as this would include those also, who embrace divine revelation, the description is not sufficiently definite and precise. By a *Deist*, therefore, we may understand one who believes in *one God*, but denies the divine characters and authority of *Jesus Christ his Son*; or 'one who professes to receive natural religion, but denies revealed; or one who believes reason to be a sufficient guide of faith and practice, and consequently denies the sacred scriptures to be a divine revelation. Some persons are inclined to believe that *Deism* abounds, and that you are a numerous body; while the honest farmer who blends you with the *Albigists*, believes there can be no such animal, in the whole compass of being: for he knows no distinction betwixt denying the Bible, and denying a God. But be your numbers what they will, I am inclined to believe that persons of your description really exist, from the many books that have been written in the cause of infidelity; and the still more numerous replies written to those

those books, by the friends of religion. Nor have I passed thro' sixty years of my existence, without meeting with persons who answer to the description of a Deist, given above. Now, while I believe the Bible to contain a divine revelation, and that the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whom you deny, is the only appointed Saviour of sinners, and of course, that there is salvation in no other; I must have leave to pity you: I cannot be unconcerned at your situation, and its inevitable consequences; and had I more benevolence, for the human race, my concern would increase, in proportion. However, therefore, you may treat this short address, you may do me the justice to own, that it has benevolence for its motive, and your best interests as its desired end.

It is by no means my intention to enter largely into the controversy betwixt the *Deists*, and *Christians*. Too many learned pens have been employed in that controversy to leave any thing new to be discovered by a person so obscure as I am. No, Gentlemen, my intention is, not so much to reason with you, as to persuade you to pay a proper attention to the reasoning of others. In a word, that you would read and think closely on both sides of the question. For though I would not offend those whom I
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hope to profit, yet you must bear with me, when I again suggest, that you are not honest to yourselves, on the subject. There is too much reason to suspect, that you do not impartial justice, to both sides of the question. You must acknowledge that the truth or falsehood of the christian religion is a question in which you are most highly concerned, involving in it the immortality of the soul; a future state of rewards, or punishments; and your eternal destiny there.

The period is hastening, when you will ardently wish you had thoroughly weighed the subject, and that you had not been such ready and implicit *believers* in the *system* of *infidelity*. You must, you do acknowledge the importance of these questions: Is the Bible a revelation from God, or the production of artful impostors, or of enthusiasts and visionaries? Is JESUS CHRIST the only Saviour; or is he a flagrant impostor, and the vilest of men? My dear fellow mortals, your eternal interests depend on the solution of these questions. If truth lies on the side of Christianity; how must you fare? If JESUS CHRIST should be found at last to be the judge of the world; what must be your sentence? Can he acknowledge you, who denied him? Can he treat you as loy-
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al subjects, who fought against him? Can he bestow on you the purchase of his blood, when you trampled it under your feet? I ask these momentous questions, to induce you, if possible, to do yourselves justice, and to weigh the matter according to its importance. But, it may be, you have been seduced into the road of infidelity, before you were aware of your danger; and know not now, how to recover yourselves, whom to consult, or what to read on the subject. Would to heaven you were brought to this enquiry—That you were induced to read with *serious reflection*, and to *weigh* the arguments which have been urged with so much success against the Deistical writers! Perhaps your initiation into the *pernicious System*, which you have adopted, has been so superficial, that you are not even acquainted with those authors who have, with so much zeal, supported it, and much less, with their pious and learned antagonists.

For your information, therefore, upon this subject, and for the use of those *plain unlettered Christians*, who have not much access to books, permit me to give a short extract of the history of Deism, from *Leland's view of the Deistical writers*.

About 200 years ago, some sceptical gentlemen, in *Europe* proud of their attainments
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in science, estimating too highly the *powers of nature*, and averse from the *morality* of the Gospel, rejected its divine authority, and denied its necessity and excellence. They assumed the title of Deists, and agreed in denying revealed religion; but they did not agree what they should substitute in its stead. For while some of them professed to believe the immortality of the soul, others denied it, as also a future state of rewards and punishments, and the providence of God over men in this world; and so were distinguished into *mortal* and *immortal Deists*. Each of these, however, endeavoured to propagate their opinions in private only, until about one hundred and fifty years ago, when lord *Herbert of Chisbury*, composed a book which he titled, *De Veritate*, in which he insists, that an extraordinary revelation is quite unnecessary; because God has written the true religion of nature in every man's heart, which he reduces to five articles, 1. That there is a God. 2. That he is to be worshipped. 3. That piety and virtue are the principal parts of his worship. 4. That God will pardon our sins, if we repent of them. 5. That there are rewards and punishments in a future state. These he says, are absolutely necessary, perfect and complete; and teach every thing contained in
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sacred writ ; consequently the scriptures are unnecessary, and inadequate to their professed end, as they are known only to a few of mankind ; whereas his five articles are common notices, and universally known.

After his lordship had composed his book, and was in great doubt whether he ought to publish it, or not, he relates the following extraordinary event. “Being thus doubtful, in my chamber, one fair day in summer, and my casement open to the south, I took my book in my hands, and kneeling down, devoutly said these words : *O thou eternal God, author of this light which now shines upon me, and giver of all inward illuminations ; I do beseech thee, of thine infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make. I am not satisfied enough, whether I shall publish this book : if it be for thy glory, I beseech thee give me some sign from heaven ; if not, I shall suppress it.* I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud, though yet gentle noise, came forth from the heavens, (for it was like nothing on earth) which did so cheer and comfort me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign I demanded : whereupon also I resolved to print my book. This, how strange soever it may seem, I protest before the eternal God is true : neither am I any ways
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superstitiously deceived herein ; since I did not only clearly hear the noise, but in the sereneſt ſky that ever I ſaw, being without all cloud, did, to my thinking, ſee the place from whence it came.”

Thus lord *Herbert* ventures to requeſt his Maker to work a *miracle* in favour of a book written againſt thoſe ſacred ſcriptures in which numerous miracles are recorded ; and he ſucceeds in his attempt : for *he hears what was like nothing upon earth*. Here, gentlemen, you will notice his lordſhip's earneſt deſire and expectation of a miracle, or ſign, as he calls it, which expoſed him to deception ; for, at that inſtant, a burſting meteor, or diſtant thunder in the oppoſite quarter, might occaſion the noiſe his lordſhip heard, which gave him ſuch a tranſport of joy. Whereas if you compare this with what happened to *Paul*, on his way to *Damaſcus*, you will ſee a mighty difference in the incidents, and all their circumſtances. *Paul* neither deſires, wiſhes, nor expects a miracle wrought, in proof of CHRIST's meſſiahſhip ; for he is then perſecuting him as an impoſtor. It was eaſy for his lordſhip to conceive that heaven approved his favourite book : But what ſhall convince *Saul* that JESUS of *Nazareth* is the promiſed MESSIAH ? The *Baron* hears a *noiſe*, in a clear ſky : the

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Jewish persecutor sees a light that struck him blind ; and, trembling and astonished, he falls to the ground. The *English* nobleman hears not a word :—the *Jewish* bigot hears—*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? I am JESUS of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.* The *Baron* was alone. *Saul* has a company with their officers, to assist in apprehending the christians, and guarding their prisoners to *Jerusalem*, who all fall to the ground in the same consternation. By what the *Baron* takes for a sign, he is joyfully persuaded to do what he ardently desired before, that is, to publish a favourite book. By what befel this persecuting *Jew*, he is induced to do what was surely far from his first intention, I mean to preach JESUS CHRIST as the true MESSIAH—suffer a thousand indignities in propagating his cause ; and at last be beheaded for his sake. I shall now dismiss lord *Herbert*, after observing, that it is believed so learned and worthy a man would never have published his book, could he have foreseen to what a height succeeding *Deists* would have carried their infidelity : or could he have known what solid refutations would have been published against his book, by Mr. *Baxter*, Mr. *Locke*, Dr. *Whitby*, and Mr. *Halyburton*.

The next who employed his pen in the cause
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of *Deism*, was Mr. *Hobbes*, in his book called the *Leviathan*. He says the Scriptures are the voice of God, ruling all things by the greatest right : but then he says, they derive their authority from the *civil power* only, for they are no more than counsel and advice, 'till they receive the sanction of the prince or sovereign; whose power he raises so high, that he is bound by no compact with his people ; but can take from them what he pleases : and in matters of religion and conscience, christians must obey the prescriptions of even an infidel king, and deny CHRIST with their mouth, provided they hold fast the faith of CHRIST in their hearts; because the private reason must give way to the public : Consequently, all that ever suffered for truth and conscience, *died as a fool dieth*. As to the sacred scriptures, he says *Moses*, and the other early writers, were not the authors of the books that go by their names, but *Ezra*, who restored them when they were lost ; but he grants the books of the *New Testament* were written in the apostolic age, and by persons, some of whom saw the facts they relate. But that, upon the whole, a divine revelation is an useless superfluity ; for the soul is as *material* and *mortal* as the body. According to Mr. *Hobbes's* politics, every man, in a *state of nature*,
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is at war with every man ; may take every thing he sees, and conquer every man he meets, if he is able : and it is human laws alone that makes any thing good or evil, honest or dishonest, just or unjust. So that no opinions or duties, that respect a future state, are to be at all regarded ; for this world is man's all.—Such daring attempts against religion, morality and sound politics, drew many learned pens against Mr. *Hobbes* ; among whom Doctors *Ward*, *Bramhal*, *Tenison* and *Cumberland*, with the Earl of *Clarendon* and Mr. *Tyrrel*, distinguished themselves.

Mr. *Blount*, another writer of this class, about 100 years ago, translated and published the life of *Appollonius Tyanæus*, a *Pythagorean* philosopher, of the first century, with a view to depreciate the miracles of CHRIST, and his apostles ; because *Philostrophus*, in his life of *Appollonius*, mentions several miracles wrought by him, to support the pagan religion against christianity. For though the established idolatry of the pagans had all the laws and powers of the world to support it, yet it could not stand against the divine precepts of christianity ; the holy lives of its professors, and the stupendous miracles wrought in confirmation of it, without pretending to miracles also ;

and *Appollonius* was the man to whom they ascribed them. For tho' Mr. *Blount* would not quite deny the miracles wrought in confirmation of christianity, yet he thinks to confront them with miracles wrought in confirmation of Pagan idolatry. His book, titled *Religio Laici*, or, The Religion of a Layman, is little more than a translation of lord *Herbert's*, on the same subject, which had been so substantially answered long before. Another book of his, with the sounding title of *The Oracles of Reason*, was published by Mr. *Gildon*, after Mr. *Blount* had killed himself, overcome by a hopeless passion; in the preface to which Mr. *Gildon* defends self-murder.

The book consists of letters, fragments and translations; in which the author particularly militates against a *mediatorial* religion, as a mediator, he says, is both unnecessary, and inconsistent with the divine mercy; tho' it has been abundantly proven, that a mediatorial religion, is an institution of the greatest mercy and wisdom united. Mr. *Blount* enlarges lord *Herbert's* five articles of natural religion to seven; but he is a contradictory, and inconsistent writer: For his first article asserts an *eternal God*, the *Creator of the universe*; and yet he quotes authors, with approbation, who assert that
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the world was eternal. In his fourth article he says, *The worship of GOD consists in prayer to him, and praise of him*; but he seems to approve of those heathens who did not pray to GOD at all. Yet after all, in a letter to Dr. Sydenham, he has these remarkable words: "Undoubtedly in our travels to the other world, the common road is the safest; and though *Deism* is a good manuring of a man's conscience, yet certainly, if sowed with *christianity*, it will produce the most plentiful crop." Dr. Stillingfleet, Mr. Bradley, and Dr. Nichols, have answered Mr. Blount; and his friend Mr. Gildon, tho' he published, and warmly recommends the *Oracles of reason*, gives the world a remarkable proof, that he had retracted his errors, by publishing a useful book, intituled, *The Deist's manual*; in which he vindicates the existence and attributes of GOD, his providence and government of the world; the immortality of the soul, and a future state: Because, he says, many Deists of his acquaintance, denied those great principles, which lie at the foundation of all religion, natural and revealed.

Mr. Toland, who calls himself a christian, appears next in the list of Deists. In his book, which he calls *Amyntor*, he collects a long list of spurious books, which he says, were

were said to be written by JESUS CHRIST, his Apostles, or other eminent persons, in that age. His design is to shew that all these forgeries ought to have been retained, as a part of the sacred canon ; or the books which christians acknowledge to be genuine, ought to have been rejected ; for he thinks they deserve no better credit. Mr. Toland would not reflect, that there are no counterfeit bills, nor base coin, but where there are some genuine bills, and good money. The same writer in his *Serena*, attempts to prove, that motion is essential to matter. That the motion of the Planets, for instance, is no proof of divine power, because matter cannot exist without motion. This absurd, and unphilosophical opinion was followed by another book, in which according to its name, he embraces the *Pantbeistic* philosophy, the *Atbeism* of *Spinoza*, that *the universe is GOD* : And yet afterwards publishes a book, in which he has the confidence to assert, that the design of his *Amyntor* was to illustrate and confirm the canon of the *New Testament*.

Mr. Toland's divinity and philosophy, met with very learned opponents, in the persons of Messrs. *Beconfal*, *Beverly*, *Norris*, *La Faye*, *Nye*, *Richardson* and *Jones* ; with the
 Doctors

Doctors *Payne, Syngé, Brown, Clark, Mangey, Brett* and *Lardner*.

The Earl of *Shaftesbury* was the next who appeared in the rank of *Deistical* writers. The Christians gave him up with great reluctance, and thought they had a just claim to him, from a preface which he wrote to a volume of *Dr. Whitcomb's* sermons, published in 1698. In which preface he finds fault with those "in this profane age, that represent, not only the institution of preaching, but even the gospel itself, and our holy religion, to be a fraud. He hopes, that from those Sermons, even they that are prejudiced against christianity, may be induced to like it the better; and that the vein of goodness which runs through them, will make such as are already christians, prize christianity the more; and will be a security to them against the contrary temper of those other irreconcilable enemies to our holy faith."

This noble writer, has a fine imagination, delicate taste, and beauty of style. He has refined sentiments on the beauty and excellency of virtue; and asserts a wise and good providence, which governs the whole, in the best manner; and asserts, in opposition to *Mr. Hobbes*, the natural difference betwixt good and evil; and that man was originally

originally formed, not only for the exercise of mutual kindness and benevolence, but also for religion and piety too. Those things made many christians to favour Lord *Shaftesbury*. But alas! his lordship was not uniform! for in 1711, he published his *characteristics*; which obliged the christians to give him up. Lord *Herbert* had made the doctrine of future rewards and punishments an innate principle, known to all men. Lord *Shaftesbury* calls it "A new sort of policy, which extends itself to another world, and considers the future lives and happiness of men, rather than the present: so that *the saving of souls*, is now the heroic passion of exalted spirits." He calls the expectation of God's dispensing rewards and punishments in a future state, "an expectation so miraculous and extraordinary, as must naturally take off from other inferior encouragements to virtue. Where the imagination is *strongly* turned to infinite rewards, the other natural motives to goodness are apt to be neglected; such as the interests and duties of this present life; the duties men owe their friends, their neighbours and their country." On the other hand, if their expectation and belief be *weak*, it is still as bad; for he says, "There can, in some respects, be nothing more fatal to virtue, than the weak
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and uncertain belief of future rewards and punishments. For the stress being wholly laid on this foundation, if it seems to fail, there is no further prop or security to men's virtue." According to this reasoning the world would be better without the expectation of future rewards, than with them. For if a man's faith in these things be *weak*, it must destroy his peace ; and if *strong*, he will neglect all the duties and interests of the present life. But what a gross misrepresentation of christianity is this? That holy system not only implies, but most expressly and repeatedly enjoins every duty, sacred and civil, personal and relative ; towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves ; towards friends, strangers and enemies ; and forbids offering offence to any of God's creatures, Jews or Gentiles, friends or foes. Christians are not only to *do good unto all men*, but to persist in doing good, when nothing but evil is returned. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, is equally sacred and obligatory, with real christians, as *Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart*. And what God hath joined, true christians never put asunder. So that the christian never thought, with his lordship, of obtaining future happiness, by the omission of one half the duties which his religion enjoins. *Ld. Shaftesbury*

bury strenuously argues against Mr. *Hobbes's* scheme of reducing all virtue and vice to the laws of the state ; but he falls in with that writer in subjecting all doctrines and opinions in religion, solely to the civil power : so that no man has a right to judge for himself, in matters of religion ; but must submit implicitly to what the ruling powers prescribe as the standard of orthodoxy. This opinion condemns the conduct of *Christ* and his apostles, at the first propagation of christianity ; and the conduct of all those, who attempted a reformation from popery. And indeed, if this scheme be true, it is quite wrong to endeavour to turn the grossest idolater from the worship of idols to the true God : For every established religion is equally binding on its own members ; and Apostles, instead of turning men *from dumb idols, to serve the living God*, should have conformed to the idolatry of every country through which they passed. But his lordship's favourite scheme seems to be, to bring all truth to the test of ridicule ; for he declares that, whatever will not stand that test, is not true. In other words, whatever you can laugh at, has neither truth nor propriety in it. His lordship, indeed, declares against *scurrilous buffoonry*, that raises a laugh at every thing, as ungenteel, and unworthy a gentleman,

gentleman and man of sense : but he expressly declares ridicule to be the *test* and *criterion* of truth ; and would have it constantly carried about as a *rule*, to apply to every thing that offers, and see whether it will bear it. He produceth himself as an example of his own rule ; for he tells us, " he never cares to think of, or write on religion, without putting himself into as good a humour as possible ; *i. e.* treating it in a way of wit and *pleasantry*, *mirth* and *railery*." The good and wise, in all ages, have recommended the direct opposite conduct, to wit, a calm, cool, and attentive sobriety of mind, as the fittest disposition to discover and judge of truth. And I am persuaded, no man ever yet discovered a truth that was worth a wise man's knowing, by indulging a disposition to ridicule. A turn this way, must disqualify a man for cool and sedate reflection, and be a very great hindrance to the investigation of truth. Should a person indulge his wit and mirth for one hour on any subject that offered improvement, and employ another hour in close attention to the lessons which the same subject affords ; at the end of which hour would he be the wiser, or better man ? In which humour would he be the fittest to serve his Maker, to instruct his family, to feed the hungry,

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clothe the naked, visit the sick, or help the distressed? If he performed a good action at the end of the *first* hour, it would be but a part of his frolic, as being done without reflection, and a rational conviction of duty. If he performed a good act at the end of his *serious* hour, it would be the result of proper reflection; and probably proceed from a regard to God and his creatures. His lordship's rule is both dangerous and fallacious. It is *dangerous*, because the three best things that men or angels know, truth, piety, and virtue, have often been the subjects of ridicule: and it is *fallacious*; because though it may discover the spots on the fair face of truth, yet it pays no regard to her beautiful features, but often treats them as blemishes. The proper province of ridicule, is such trivial subjects or objects, as are beneath a serious reproof or investigation. But she quite mistakes her object, if she ever touch any thing of importance: For if it be an important good, it is folly and madness, as well as impiety, to laugh at it: if it be a natural evil, as pain, poverty, sickness or death, none but an impious fool can make it the object of ridicule. And lastly, if it be a moral evil, as murder, adultery, injustice, or cruelty, it demands a more severe reproof than railery. I shall dismiss

dismiss lord *Shaftesbury*, after I have named those learned men, who have animadverted upon; and refuted his reasoning, viz. Bishop *Berkley*, Dr. *Wotton*, Dr. *Warburton*, Mr. *Balguy*, but especially Dr. *John Brown*, in his *Essays on the Characteristics*.

Mr. *Anthony Collins*, about the beginning of the present century, published some writings, inimical to natural as well as revealed religion: for he reasons against human liberty and free agency; and attempts to prove, that the soul of man is neither immaterial, nor immortal. Dr. Samuel Clarke answers him on these subjects, with that strength and clearness for which his writings are remarkable. In the year 1713, Mr. *Collins* published his *Discourse on Free-thinking*; in which he insists on the necessity and usefulness of thinking freely, which consists, according to his own practice, in thinking and speaking with severity of all Divines, ancient and modern. If any of them have uttered any thing unwarily, published an odd or absurd opinion, or, in the warmth of debate, have cast angry censures on one another, these things are turned to the disadvantage of christianity itself; as if that was answerable for all the passions, follies, and inconsistencies of its professors: Or, as if the differences that have arisen among
christians

christians, were a sufficient proof that there is nothing in christianity worth regarding. The Deists have made this a standing topic for declamation, that whatever has been controverted, is doubtful and uncertain. But if so, then the sun is not so large as the earth—There are no antipodes—The earth is not a globe, but a flat plain—The sun, moon and stars, are all at an equal distance from us, and revolve round us every day, while the earth is fixed in the centre. The opposite to these, and a thousand other well established truths, are no truths at all by this rule; for ignorance has controverted every one of them. The controversies among christians, never respected the truth of their religion; for they all glory in it as divinely true: but they differ only respecting some of the truths, duties or ceremonies of their religion. And it would be just as rational to assert, that there is no truth in, nor regard to be paid to, history, philosophy or astronomy, because authors differ in their sentiments on some branches in these sciences.

Mr. *Collins* makes a great noise about the pious frauds of ancient fathers, and modern clergy-men, forging, corrupting, and altering authors, and even the scriptures themselves. Let the merit of this assertion be tried

tried. The *Greek* church in the east, and the *Latin* or *Popish* church in the west, had the keeping of the sacred books for a thousand years together. In both these churches, there is a countless variety of doctrines, ceremonies, practices and officers, not only unknown in the scriptures, but many of them expressly forbidden there. Now, if they altered the sacred text, it must have been with a design to support their own errors and superstitions by authority of those books. They must have made them speak a language that should countenance and defend their erroneous doctrines, and idle ceremonies. How happens it then, that no protestant has ever been able to discover in those books the least authority for the doctrine of *merit*, or works of *supererogation*? For a *purgatorial fire*, to purify the soul betwixt death and heaven? For *transubstantiation*, or that every wafer cake, when consecrated by the priest, and dipped in the wine, is changed into the whole body and blood of CHRIST? Why did they not make some part of the scriptures countenance creature-worship; the worship of saints, angels, and the blessed virgin, who has perhaps more adoration paid to her than the whole eternal Trinity? Why might not some part of the sacred canon have authenticated their five

spurious sacraments ? And to the Apostles list of church officers, why did they not add *Popes, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Arch-Bishops, Abbots, Deans, Arch-deacons, Vicars-general,* and a numerous rabble more belonging to their hierarchy ? Thus a succession of as crafty men, as ever the world produced, had not the precaution to mould the scriptures to authenticate a religion which they themselves had fabricated ; but the *Papish* and *Greek* churches are still as unscriptural as they are irrational, superstitious and oppressive.

Mr. *Collins* catches at the various readings in the manuscript copies of the New Testament, which he makes to amount to many thousands. But whoever reads Dr. *Bentley's Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, will receive full satisfaction on that subject ; and be convinced, that the various readings in different copies do not materially affect one single truth or doctrine of the christian religion. Mr. *Collins* charges christianity with no-where particularly requiring the virtue of *friendship*. If by friendship he means the union of persons for the practice of vice and immorality, his charge is just ; for the scriptures expressly declare against such a combination. But if by friendship he means loving and doing good to our fellow-creatures, this virtue is carried

carried to the sublimest height in our religion, by which we are commanded, *Do good to your enemies—Bless them that curse you, and render good for evil, though the more you love, the less you should be loved:* And respecting our christian brethren, to whom we are united by the most sacred ties, we are enjoined to *lay down our lives for the brethren.* Thus, as Dr. Taylor expresses it, *Christian charity is friendship to all the world.*

This gentleman published another piece on *The grounds and reasons of the christian religion*; in which he asserts, that Christ and his Apostles put the whole proof of christianity on the prophecies of the Old Testament; and as he thinks the evidence from thence is defective, he concludes that *christianity has no just foundation, and is therefore false.*—But I must not indulge prolixity; but refer you to some able pens, that were drawn against Mr. Collins; as Bishop Chandler, Dr. Hoadley, Dr. Samuel Chandler, Dr. Bullock, Dr. Sykes, Bishop Sherlock, Mr. Lowman, Mr. Jeffery, Dr. Rodgers; and among others, the *British Spectator*, who concludes his animadversions, with this censure, *If ever man deserved to be denied the common blessings of fire and water, it is the author of a discourse on free-thinking.*

Though Mr. Collins had fared so poorly
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in the hands of his learned adversaries, for attempting to allegorize the Old Testament prophecies ; yet Mr. *Woolston* was not deterred from undertaking to do the same by our Saviour's miracles, in a pamphlet intituled, *A Moderator between an infidel, and an apostate*, and two *supplements* to it. His design is to shew, that the great facts recorded in the gospel, are no facts at all, but to be understood only in a mystical and allegorical sense ; and that *the history of the life of Jesus, is only an emblematical representation of his spiritual life in the souls of men* ; and taken in the literal sense, they are false, absurd and fictitious : and this he pretends to prove from many christian fathers, who, though they believed and always asserted, the literal and historical facts, yet they had a custom of adding a spiritual and allegorical sense, and from thence made pious allusions. To make this plain to some readers, I would observe, that the ancient fathers, and divines in all ages, when speaking of the miracles recorded in the gospel, would tell their audiences, that the eye of the mind, that was blind to truth, must be anointed and opened ; the deaf ear must be unstopped, to hear the voice of God ; That Jesus could cure the leprosy of sin ; allay the rising storms of the soul ; still the furious waves

waves of trouble and persecution; and raise the person that was dead in sin, to a new and holy life. And that he was able and willing to perform these divine works of mercy and grace to the souls of men, now in his exalted state, as he was to perform them on the bodies of men while on earth. This allegorical sense, is the only one, in which Mr. *Woolston* will allow the gospel to be true. He insists that the gospel, according to the fathers, is in no sort a literal story: that taken literally, it is full of *improbabilities, incredibilities, and gross absurdities. That neither the fathers, apostles, nor Jesus himself, ever meant, that his miracles should be taken in the literal, but only in the mystical and parabolical sense.* And he expressly declares, *that if Jesus's miracles, literally taken, will not abide the test of sense and reason, they must be rejected, and Jesus's authority along with them.* And all this he does, with a rudeness and insolence, coarse buffoonery, and low scurrility, that had no example or parallel in any that appeared before him. And yet, after casting such base reflections on our blessed Lord, as must shock every christian ear that hears them, he charges the Bishop of London with *ignorance or malice*, in representing him *as favouring infidelity.* He declares *he is the farthest of any man, from being*

being engaged in the cause of infidels or deists: that he writes, not for the service of infidelity, which has no place in his heart; but for the honour of the holy Jesus, and in defence of christianity: That his design in his discourses, is the advancement of the truth, and of the Messiahship of the holy Jesus, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Such gross hypocrisy and impious prevarication, must make a modest *Deist* blush. He says, "It will be granted, that the restoring to life a person certainly dead, is a stupendous miracle; and two or three such, well attested, are sufficient to prove the author of them a divine agent, and invested with the power of God." Three miracles of this kind are recorded in the life of Jesus; but he objects to them all: To the raising of *Jairus's* daughter, because she was *but a girl of twelve years old*, which must, in his opinion, be a much less miracle, than if she had been twenty or fifty. Then he will have it, she was only in a fit; though all present saw she was dead, and were preparing for her funeral. Mr. *Woolston* objects to the raising the young man at *Nain*, that he was but a youth, a person of no importance, and the son of a poor widow: and that Jesus meeting the corpse, was a contrivance between them. But the resurrection of *Lazarus* galls him so, he loses all patience; and calls

calls the history of it, *such a contexture of folly and fraud, as is not to be equalled in all romantick history.* He has three objections to the truth of this miracle. 1. *Jesus wept.* This he thinks was unbecoming. 2. *Jesus called Lazarus, with a loud voice, to come forth,* as if a whisper had been more striking to the multitude. 3. *Lazarus's being bound with grave-clothes, and a napkin about his head, was a very suspicious sign, that he had not been really dead.* And he has very wisely found out that *Lazarus* lay four days while he was alive in the grave, that *Jesus* might have the honour of seeming to raise him from the dead.—The scribes and pharisees would have given Mr. *Woolston* a thousand a year for this discovery : For they consulted to put *Jesus* and *Lazarus* both to death, because it was a real miracle, which they could not disprove ; and the people were forsaking them, and following *Jesus*. *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him. For behold, the world is gone after him.* But the resurrection of *Jesus* himself, is the grand butt of this writer's resentment ; concerning which he has made two discoveries : 1. That the *Roman* guards, set by *Pilate* to watch the tomb, were either bribed or made drunk, by the disciples. 2. He has found, that there was an agreement betwixt the chief priests

priests and *Jesus's* disciples, that the seal put on the stone, at the door of the sepulchre, should not be broken, 'till three days were quite past; and therefore the breaking of the seal, before the end of said three days, was a breach of covenant, and a proof of an imposture. To name such objections, is a sufficient refutation of them. However, he has two more: One is, that from Friday, at three in the afternoon, 'till after day-break, on Sunday morning, is not complete three days and nights: therefore the account makes *Jesus* rise *too soon*:—Though it was an invariable custom with the Jews to reckon any part of a day in which an event took place, as a whole day; and therefore the afternoon of Friday was undoubtedly in their account the first, Saturday the second, and Sunday morning the third day, on which he rose agreeably to his prediction.—Another is, that he did not shew himself to the heads of the Jewish nation, after he arose from the dead.—But the learned men who have refuted the *Deists*, have shewn good reasons why it was not so. But to please Mr. *Woolston*, let us suppose that the risen Saviour had appeared ten times over to all the *Jewish* nation, until they had been fully convinced: In that case, they would all have become *Christians*, and then

their testimony with this gentleman, had not been worth a straw. What will please Mr. *Woolston*? Not the witness of those that were at last convinced of his resurrection. Not the testimony of angels, nor of the apostles and five hundred brethren at once, who lived, suffered and died professing and proclaiming that great truth. And yet he seems displeased, that *Jesus* did not take, what he judges the proper steps, to convince all the *Jewish* nation. But what if the whole *Roman* empire had been persuaded of the truth of *Christ's* resurrection, and left it recorded in all their public archives? It would still be the witness of *Christians*, whose testimony, with him, must ever be suspected. And if he will not receive the witness of friends, that of enemies is not to be expected. Notwithstanding Mr. W's scurrility, a number of learned adversaries appeared against him, and shewed themselves as much superiour to him in temper, calmness, and solidity of argument, as in the goodness of their cause: among whom appear Dr. *Gibson*, bishop of *London*, *Pierce* of *Rocheſter*, *Smallbroke* of *St. David's*, Messrs. *Ray* and *Adkinson*, Dr. *Harris*, Mr. S. *Brown*, in his *Fit rebuke for a ludicrous infidel*; bishop *Sherlock*, in his *Trial of the witnesses of Christ's*

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resurrection; Dr. Wade, Mr. Hallet, Mr. Stackhouse, and Gilbert West, Esquire.

Whilst the adversaries of christianity were so vigorously repelled in all their attacks, they were still meditating fresh assaults. Mr. W's attempt had raised a kind of horror and indignation in all sensible people, and in all persons of taste and refinement. It was therefore judged necessary, to attack religion in a more plausible way; therefore Dr. Tindal published his *Christianity as old as the creation*, or, *The Gospel a republication of the law of nature*. It first appeared in London in 1730. He expressly declares, that Christianity is the *external*, as natural religion is the *internal revelation of the same unchangeable God*, and that they differ only in the manner of their being communicated. He professeth, that his purpose is, to advance the honour of external revelation, by *shewing the perfect agreement there is between that and internal revelation*. He agrees "that Christianity itself, stripped of the additions that policy and mistake have made to it, is a most holy religion; and that all its doctrines plainly speak themselves to be the will of an infinitely wise and good God." Accordingly, he calls himself and his friends *Christian Deists*. Has not every reader then, a right to expect, that this writer would set himself

to illustrate and prove the agreement and harmony subsisting betwixt the gospel and natural religion? But he is as inconsistent with himself as any of his brethren had been; and asserts, "that the internal revelation of the law of nature, in the hearts of all mankind, is so clear, so absolutely perfect, and so well understood by the meanest capacities, that no external revelation can ever make it plainer: Nay, that God himself cannot add to it, nor institute any positive precepts, without exercising an unreasonable tyranny over his creatures." His reason for this daring assertion is this, that God is unchangeable, and absolutely perfect; therefore the religion given to man at first, is unchangeable, and absolutely perfect too; and therefore no change can happen to what is absolutely perfect. Now if Dr. *Tindal* could have proved one thing more, viz. that man is unchangeable, and absolutely perfect, his reasoning would have been conclusive. But if mankind had so far degenerated, as not even to know and adore the God that made them, but to fall off to polytheism, and gross idolatry, and to vices and crimes becoming the brutish deities they worshipped, it was an act of infinite mercy and goodness in the deity, and a proof of his unchangeableness, to give mankind a revelation

tion of himself and his will, and the worship and duties he would accept from them through a Mediator. I wish some opposer of revealed religion would shew how far the light of nature goes in the knowledge of God, and our duty to him, without borrowing any thing from revealed religion, or from education influenced by revelation; and after he had found, that the knowledge of the doctrines and duties of natural religion are so plain, so clear, and so absolute, that the meanest capacity cannot mistake them; the pagans of *Asia*, the nations of *Africa*, and the Indians of *America*, will be many millions of witnesses to the contrary: for we see, that the knowledge of the true God, and the worship and duties they owe him, are not found with a single individual of them. And if *our* infidels are more knowing, it is only because they live where the christian philosophy has taught them what their more remote brethren do not yet know, nor ever will know, without revealed religion. If, as this writer asserts, religion is so apparent to the meanest capacity, that God could *not more fully make known his will to all intelligent creatures, than he hath done this way*; no, *not if he should miraculously convey the same ideas to all men*; then all the best books, written on these noblest subjects,
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by the wisest men in all ages, must be discarded, as well as the scriptures : for no man needed the least assistance from them. And this too, after he had inveighed against that superstition, which he says prevailed among mankind at all times, and which, in his opinion, is worse than Atheism. So here are a set of creatures worse than Atheists ; and yet so perfectly well acquainted with their Maker and their duty, that God *himself could not make them more so*. There can be no *involuntary* error, on Dr. Tindal's principles, since all error, in matter of religion and morals, must be *voluntary*, in opposition to the clearest universal light. He blames Christian divines for passing too severe a censure upon heathens, though they make great allowance for the darkness and difficulties which the pagans labour under ; while he himself leaves them under the guilt of *sinning* against the clearest light possible, and destitute of that sincerity, which he makes the only title to happiness, and the favour of God.

The following authors have answered and refuted this writer, viz. Dr. Burnet, Dr. Waterland, Mr. Law, Mr. Jackson, Dr. Stebbing, Dr. Clarke, but especially, Dr. Foster, Dr. Conybeare, Dr. Leland, and Mr. Simon Brown.

The next that entered the lists of Deism was Dr. Morgan, in his book, stiled, *The moral Philosopher; a dialogue between Philalethes, a Christian Deist, and Theophanus, a Christian Jew*. In this he acknowledges the great usefulness of divine revelation in general, and the Christian in particular. When he speaks of man's natural weakness, and inability, he represents those as conceited of themselves, who talk of the *strength of human reason, in matters of religion*. He observes, that at the time of Christ's appearing, "mankind, in general, were in a state of gross ignorance and darkness, with respect to the true knowledge of God, and of themselves, and of all those moral relations and obligations in which we stand to the Supreme Being, and to one another: That they were under great uncertainty concerning a future state, and the concern of divine providence, in the government of the world; and at the same time full of pride and vain conceit of their abilities and self-sufficiency: That our Saviour's doctrines, though the true and genuine principles of nature and reason, yet were such as the people had never heard nor thought of before, and never would have thought of, without such an instructor: That those who would judge uprightly of the strength of human reason, in matters

matters of morality and religion, must take their estimate from those parts of the world that never enjoyed revelation; and this might make them less conceited of themselves, and more thankful to God, for the light of the gospel." He asks, "If the religion of nature, in the present corruption of mankind, was written with strength and clearness, in every man's heart, why might not a *Chinese*, or *Indian*, draw up as good a system of natural religion, as a Christian; and why have we never met with any such?" And he says, "the greatest moralists that ever lived without the light of revelation, have so intermixed their systems with superstition, and gross absurdities, as to defeat the main design of them." Had a zealous christian been opposing Dr. *Tindal's* favourite scheme, of the universal clearness, and sufficiency of nature's light, that renders revelation entirely useless, he could not have expressed himself with more truth and propriety than Dr. *Morgan* has in the lines quoted. So here we have *Morgan* against *Tindal*, in the very ground work of *Deism*; and we shall have *Morgan* against himself presently, notwithstanding this hypocritical parade and affectation of zeal for revealed religion. Deistical writers seem fated to self-contradiction, inconsistency, and gross prevarication.

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Dr. *Morgan*, with one breath speaks very honourably of JESUS CHRIST; and says he has brought clearer discoveries of our duty, and enforced it by stronger motives, and provided more effectual aids, than ever was done before; and declares himself a *christian on the foot of the New Testament*. And yet with the next breath says, it can never be proved, that God ever communicated his will by inspiration; and treats it as the invention of *spiritual scholastics*, and *systematical divines*. By *revelation*, he understands any discovery of truth, whether a man attains it by the strength of his own faculties, or any other way. So that all who have discovered rational or moral truth, may be said to have the light of revelation. And yet he says the *Indians*, *Chinese*, and other whole nations; even *Confucius*, *Zoroaster*, *Plato* and *Socrates*, lived without the light of revelation. Surely they attained to the knowledge of some rational and moral truth.

The great principle that runs through the whole book is this, That the grand criterion of divine truth, is the reason or fitness of the thing, when it comes to be proposed to the mind, and considered by the understanding. So that neither prophecy nor miracles are any proof of a divine revelation. He represents the law of *Moses*, as a wretch-

ed scheme of superstition, blindness and slavery, which recommends human sacrifices, as the highest act of devotion. The *Urim* and *Thummim* he represents as a priestly cheat ; and exclaims against the ancient prophets, as the disturbers of their country ; the authors of all the civil wars in *Israel* and *Judah* ; and the cause of the final ruin of both ; though the historical accounts he produces in proof of these charges, are directly against his representation.

Well, but if he is a christian, *on the foot of the New Testament*, surely that will meet with better treatment from him, than the Old. We shall see—He affects to speak with great veneration of the blessed Saviour ; but says he pretended to be the Messiah foretold by the prophets, though he knew they meant a temporal prince, that was to reign in *Judea* ; and suffered himself to be carried about by the mob for a twelve-month together ; and did not renounce that character till his death, when he absolutely disclaimed his being the Messiah of the prophets, and died upon that renunciation. He says, the Apostles never even pretended to be under the guidance and inspiration of the *Holy Spirit* : that they preached different, and even contrary gospels—that they all, but St. *Paul*, preached **JESUS CHRIST as the Jewish Messiah,**

Messiah, that is, the national prince, and deliverer of the *Jews*. This he represents, as the only essential article of the christian faith, and yet explodes it as false and absurd. The attestation given to our Saviour's divine mission, and the doctrine of the apostles by miracles, prophecy and the gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT, he denies to be any proofs at all. He says the New Testament leans strongly towards *Judaism*, and that it was corrected and revised by the *Jews*, who altered it to their prejudices and false opinions; so that as it now stands, it is a system of *Judaism*, and a jumble of inconsistent religions.

How happy is it for the world, that the prophetick writings are still extant, to speak for themselves, in which the spirituality, the glory and extent of CHRIST's kingdom to all ages and nations, are described, with a sublimity of poetry, an elevation of language, a glow of imagery, and a boldness of figures, that no other subject ever admitted, and no other pen ever attempted. Were there no other proof that JESUS CHRIST never renounced his character as the Messiah, *his good confession before Pilate*, and the superscription on the cross, are sufficient proofs. That the apostles had pretensions to the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT, their master's promising to
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send him upon them, to guide them into all truth; the history of his actual descent on the day of pentecost, and the gifts and languages which he is said to have bestowed on them, are sufficient attestations: That the Apostles were with much difficulty, brought off from *Judaism*, cannot be denied; that they preached different gospels, their immortal writings abundantly refute. But Dr. *Morgan* must have supposed there was not a reader of the *New Testament* in the world, when he had the confidence to say, it is altered by the *Jews*, and is a "system of *Judaism*," seeing not one of their favourite notions and prejudices, are there countenanced, but condemned; and the law and worship they were so tenacious of, is no where recommended to the practice of Christians, in the whole book. On the contrary, the obstinacy, the unbelief, and the persecuting spirit of the *Jews*, against Christ and his apostles and followers, every where occur; till a sentence of rejection passes upon them, and then comes, "*to we turn to the Gentiles, for so hath the Lord commanded us.*" What bungling editors were the *Jews*; to alter a book to their own wish, it seems, and leave so much of it to testify against it themselves. And as the *New Testament* is not a Jewish book, neither is it

it "a jumble of inconsistent religions." The same doctrines are taught through every book, by every writer, respecting GOD, the LORD JESUS CHRIST the mediator, the HOLY SPIRIT and his powerful influences. They all harmonize in the method of salvation through the merits of JESUS; in the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of men and angels, and in future rewards and punishments; in the indispensable necessity of a holy temper, and a godly practice; in calling sinners to repentance, offering the atoning blood of JESUS to the humble penitent, and the comforts of religion to the afflicted and persecuted. Thus the New Testament inculcates a harmonious, uniform, and consistent religion, tho' not systematically, for wise reasons; because a system, once for all, might have been exposed to corruption or alteration; but as it stands, the facts, doctrines and duties, occur in so many places, and on such different occasions, that even the loss of some books, would not materially affect the whole; and without a total alteration of the whole, the religion must still be preserved.

Dr. Morgan had too much exposed himself, to escape the animadversions of the friends of truth and revelation. *Mr. Joseph Hallet, Dr. Chapman, Dr. Leland and Dr.*

Samuel

Samuel Chandler, have largely refuted him.

The next Deistical writer conceals his name, but titles his performance, *Christianity not founded on argument*; London 1742. He sets himself, with seeming gravity, to prove, that a rational faith, or "an assent to revealed truth, founded upon the conviction of the understanding, is false and unwarrantable; and that person best enjoys faith, who never asked a single question about it; and that God never intended we should make use of our intellectual faculties at all in believing: for the HOLY SPIRIT so irradiates the souls of believers at once, and flashes such conviction in a moment, that his faith is completed in an instant, and the most perfect creed produced." He has the daring impiety to pray ardently, "that God would be pleased so to illuminate his mind, with a perfect and thorough conviction of the truth of his holy gospel; that the same HOLY SPIRIT, that first dictated that divine law, would powerfully set on his seal, and attest its authority in his heart." An instance of the most solemn mockery of the great God, that perhaps has not its equal in any age or nation. Under pretence of exalting the influences of the Holy Spirit, the scriptures are depreciated as of no use. They are called *Manuscript authorities*, and pa-

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per revelations, as if any law, divine or human, lost its authority by being written. He says that neither Christ nor his Apostles, in planting the gospel, ever proposed any arguments or evidences, to engage men to believe : which is just as true as what he adds, that *Christ* never designed that his miracles should be regarded as proofs and evidences of his divine mission : though himself expressly says, *The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. And believe me, for the very work's sake.* This enthusiastic Deist is thoroughly answered by Doctors *Dodridge, Benson, Randolph* and *Le-land*.

Though the *trial of the witnesses*, and other answers returned to Mr. Woolston's objections to the truth of CHRIST's resurrection, deterred *him* from attempting to vindicate that part of his writings against the answers that had been given to it, yet a bold adventurer entered the field of argument on his side, with a pamphlet, intitled, *The Resurrection of Jesus considered, in answer to the trial of the witnesses*, by a *Moral Philosopher* too; London 1744. He undertakes three things : 1. That Christ did not foretel his own death and resurrection. 2. That the whole story of the Jewish priests and rulers setting a watch at the sepulchre, and

and sealing the stone, is false, absurd and incredible. 3. That the accounts given by the Evangelists, of Christ's resurrection, are in every part inconsistent, and self-contradictory, and carry plain marks of fraud and imposture. For a refutation of the first strange assertion, I refer every reader to CHRIST's own declarations, so often and plainly repeated, that his enemies could tell *Pilate*, Sir, we remember that this deceiver said, while he was yet alive, *after three days I will rise again*. I leave to Dr. *Leland*, Dr. *Chandler*, and especially to *Gilbert West*, Esq; to refute and overthrow his 2d and 3d propositions; who have managed the controversy in a very masterly manner.

Come we now to Mr. Chubb's posthumous works. This writer is a kind of *deistical Bunyan*; that is, they were both unlearned men, but both men of parts; though Mr. *Chubb* must not be put on a level with Mr. *Bunyan*, in point of genius; for, to speak my own sentiments freely, I esteem *Bunyan* one of the most sublime writers in our language; and I take leave to give, as an instance, his *Holy war*, a production of genius, equal in sublimity to *Homer's Iliads*. No body will deny that *Bunyan's* subject infinitely excels that of *Homer*. In the latter, only a few petty states, on both sides of the *Hellepont*, are interested; in the former,

former, the interests of the whole human race are at stake. The city of *Troy*, was but one, among thousands our world afforded; but the *Town of Mansoul*, is the only one of its kind in the whole universe. If we compare the Leaders in these two famous sieges, both of the assailants, and defendants, I must think *Prince Immanuel* makes a more noble and military appearance than *Agamemnon*; Captain *Credence* may well vie with Achilles himself in true valour, with this advantage on his side, that he did not, from disgust to his general, lie idle during the greatest part of the siege; and Captain *Judgment*, and Captain *Execution*, cannot suffer by a comparison with *Ajax* and *Diomedes*. And if we compare the defenders, surely *Diabolus* makes a more striking figure than old *Priam*, and *Incredulity* is as vigilant and valiant as the brave *Hector*. The swords, shields, golden slings, battering rams, and displayed colours of *Immanuel's* army, in my opinion, surpass the military apparatus of the Greeks before *Troy*. The modern Poet (for the subject and action of the *Holy War*, are entirely poetical, and appear as much so to me as *Fenelon's Telemachus*;) the modern, I say, marshals his armies, appoints his officers superiour and subaltern, draws up his several brigades, and displays the whole

whole in battalia, to his readers, in a manner, If I mistake not, highly military ; and with an exactness so picturesque, and surprisingly descriptive, that we see the whole before us, and can call the very ensigns by their names, and read the motto on their colours. When the several attacks are made on *Mansoul*, I humbly think there is nothing in all the horror of *Homer's* battles, that excel it. And surely, *Immanuel's* marching in triumph through the streets of *Mansoul*, in the midst of his victorious army, every eye viewing him with rapture, and every tongue employed in his praise, is a sight unspeakably more glorious, than Troy set on fire at night, by a few sculking *Greeks*, shut up in a wooden engine. And whoever reads, if any can read without the utmost emotion, *Immanuel's* pardon, and wonderful blessings to the nobility and inhabitants of *Mansoul*, and sees *Diabolus* bound to the chariot of the *Golden Prince*, must pronounce it a more grand and glorious scene, than the destruction of the *Trojans* by the arms and fire of the *Greeks*, or the brave *Heſtor*, ignominiously drawn thrice round his native city, at the chariot of the furious *Achilles*. *Homer's Greek*, it is certain, is more elegant than *Bunyan's English* ; but that does not prove the ancient to be more sublime than the modern.

Idem: For *Longinus* tells us, that *sublimity* is produced by the force of genius, or mere strength of natural parts; he also adds, that learning is so far from contributing thereto, that by its rules and precepts, it cramps and binds it. The *Holy War* stands every test of the sublime: it cannot be read, to the fiftieth time, without moving all the powers of the soul; and if his style contributes nothing to this, it only proves the other parts of the work to be the more sublime. In that world where they now reside, how gladly would the father of *Greek* poetry, exchange reputations with the *Englisk Tinker*! O *Bunyan, Bunyan*! Were my reputation in the world of letters equal to thy merits, I would hold thee up to the present, and to every future age, as one of the greatest of geniuses, as well as one of the best of men; and thou should'st fill a conspicuous place in the libraries of the great and the curious, as thou now employest a dusty shelf, with the humble cottager; whose little family hear thy Wars, and the adventures of thy pilgrims, with even new delight!

After such a subject for panegyrick, it is not easy to return to so dry and worthless a subject as Mr. *Cbubb*, and his works. One of his principal tracts he names, *The true gospel of Jesus asserted*, and every reader must expect,

expect, he will make good his title; instead of which, he labours to subvert the gospel. What mean, unworthy arts do the *Deists* use, to engage readers, and seduce the unstable? And what a cause must that be, that requires such low arts to support it? I leave Mr. *Chubb's True gospel* to the weighty animadversions of Mr. *Joseph Hallet*, in his answer, intituled, *The consistent Christian*; and his *Discourse on miracles*, and *posthumous works*, including his *farewel to his readers*, and to the solid answer which Dr. *Leland* has given to the whole.

We come now to an anonymous pamphlet, intituled, *Deism fairly stated, and fully vindicated*. The author of this performance tells us, "Deism is the religion essential to man; the true original religion of nature and reason." But how can the *Deists* oppose it is to *christianity*, when all christian divines grant, and assert, that the gospel contains and includes the true religion of nature and reason? This writer gives us the *Deists* creed, in twelve fundamental articles; one of which he says, is the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments. All *christians* are agreed in this article, but all *deists* are not, for *Lord Bolingbroke* is a *deist*, and he does every thing in his power, to weaken or subvert this article. The true
state

state of the case then, betwixt the Christian and the Deist is not, whether natural religion, or revealed religion be the true; for christianity includes both: nor whether a system of natural religion, be true deism, for they are not agreed in any system; but whether the truths and duties of natural religion, enforced and illustrated by revelation, be the true religion that God has given to mankind; or whether rejecting revelation, and all systems, divine and human, every creature is to find out a religion for himself, by the mere force of natural reason. Dr. Tindal was sensible of this, as true deism; and therefore consistently, sends every man to the oracle in his own breast, as the only guide to duty and happiness. Mr. *Locke's reasonableness of the christian religion*, is a good refutation of *Deism fairly stated*, tho' written before it; and Dr. *Benson*, Mr. *Berrow*, and Dr. *Leland*, have answered it expressly.

We are now come to Mr. *Hume's Philosophical Essays*; London 1750. This subtil Metaphysician observes, "that the relation of cause and effect, is necessary for the regulation of our conduct, and even to the existence of our species; and if there be any object which it imports us to know perfectly, it is the relation betwixt cause and effect; as on this we found all our reasoning, concerning matter of fact and experience."

And yet this very writer attempts to prove, that no probable arguments can be drawn from cause to effect, or from effect to cause; and absolutely denies that the relation betwixt them can possibly be known *à priori*, that is, beforehand, or from the cause. What can be done with such a man? You cannot conclude, that fire applied to gunpowder will cause an explosion; or if it does so to-day, you cannot infer from experience that it will have the same effect to-morrow. You stand by, when a man fires a ball through the brains of another, and the person shot, lies dead in your sight: but you dare not swear that the bullet is the *cause*, nor death the *effect*; and neither judge nor jury can infer the one from the other; because "not even a probable argument can be drawn from experience, in any case, concerning the connection betwixt cause and effect." So if Mr. *Hume* has any knowledge, it is both useless and pernicious to society.—Concerning a future state, this sceptic says, "From the belief of a divine existence, men suppose, that the Deity will inflict punishments on vice, and bestow rewards on virtue; and whether this reasoning be just or not, is no matter: for its influence on their life and conduct, will still be the same. And those who attempt to disabuse them of such prejudices,

judices, may be good reasoners, but I cannot allow them to be good citizens or politicians: since they free men from one restraint upon their passions, and make the infringement of the laws of equity and society, in one respect, more easy and secure." What a bad citizen and politician then is Mr. *Hume*, who writes a long essay to persuade men, that there is no just foundation in reason for expecting a future state of rewards and punishments? His next stroke is still more daring: He tells us, it favours more of flattery and panegyrick, than of just reasoning and sound Philosophy, to ascribe any attribute or perfection to the supreme Being, *which appears not to have been exerted TO THE FULL, in his works;* and yet he says, "God discovers himself by some *faint traces or out-lines*, beyond which we have no authority to ascribe to him any attribute or perfection." According to this doctrine, we must ascribe no perfection at all to God, but only the *faint traces, or out-lines* of perfection. In his Essay on miracles, he designs to shew, that no evidence which can be given, however seemingly full and strong, can be a sufficient ground for believing the truth of miracles; or that miracles are, in the nature of things, incapable of being proved by any evidence or testimony whatsoever.

soever. So that had you been one of two, who for twenty years together had carried the cripple to the beautiful gate of the Temple ; and had you seen the two apostles take him by the hand, and heard them say, *Such as I have give I thee ; In the name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, rise up and walk.* Had you then seen him try his new strength, by first walking, and then

“ To leap, exulting, like the bounding roe.”

POPE,

Had you attended him through all his raptures ; *his walking, his leaping and praising God*, and thus entering the temple amidst a hundred thousand admiring witnesses : Had you accompanied him to his house, and to the end of a long life, and never seen him lame more, you ought not to have believed it was a miracle : Mr. *Hume* certainly would not ; and he gives you this good reason for it, “ That experience is our only guide, in reasoning concerning matters of fact ;” and as neither you nor he ever had experience of such an event, you must never admit it as true. But even this is not enough for Mr. *Hume*. He tells you, “ as it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of God, otherwise than from the experience which we have of his productions, we cannot be sure that *he can effect miracles,* which

which were contrary to all our experience, and the established course of nature." It is hard to know what Mr. *Hume* means here by his favourite word *experience*; whether that we never saw God work miracles, or that we never wrought any ourselves. But whatever he meant, you have his expression; and if he applies it to the Divine Being, the creation of the universe should never have been attempted; For Almighty God himself had no *experience* of his creating power, from *matter of fact*, till he had produced something. If he applies it to Our seeing God work miracles, or our working them ourselves, still the proof is defective, because *miracles are incapable of being proved, by any evidence or testimony whatsoever; neither can we be sure that God can effect them.*

After he has thus instructed and blest mankind, by guarding against the *possibility of miracles*, he nevertheless manifests his malice against the wonders wrought by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, by comparing them with the miracles said to be wrought at the tomb of a *French Priest, the Abbé de Paris*, under the influence of a party of the same principles with the deceased, in *France*, while their opponents were employed in disproving their reality; and he is inclined, in point of credibility to give the
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the cause to the latter, in preference to the former. Mr. *Hume* knows now, whether the sacred Scriptures, and the Saviour they exhibit, merited the obloquy he has thrown upon them, or not: and the cause, in this world, I rest in the hands of Mr. Adams, Dr. Leland and Mr. Douglass.

The last of the Deistical writers I shall take some notice of, is the famous *Henry St. John*, made *Viscount Bolingbroke* by *Queen Anne*, as one of her *Tory* ministry, in the last four or five dishonourable years of her reign. His lordship asserts and maintains the existence of a supreme Being; and that God is possessed of *power* and *wisdom*, to an infinite degree; but he denies his moral attributes, or that the divine Being is possessed of *holiness*, *justice*, *truth* and *goodness*, because "God's natural attributes absorb the moral; and the former may be inferred from his works, but not the latter." The reason his lordship thus presumptuously "Maims heaven's perfections," appears from his reasoning to be, lest mankind should endeavour to imitate the moral attributes of the Deity, against which doctrine he strongly declares himself; and calls it *extravagant*, *false* and *profane*. To be good and benevolent then, because God is good to all; to practise holiness, because God is infinitely holy; to be just, in imitation of a God of inflexible justice; or

to speak only what is true, because he is a God of perfect truth, is *extravagant, false* and *profane*. Thus we have one taste of his lordship's morality, and the tendency of his writings, and their effect on the temper and practice of mankind. Yet after all his *invectives* against divines, for ascribing moral attributes to God, he says, "We are taught to ascribe *goodness* and *justice* to God, wherever either his works, or the dispensations of his providence, do as necessarily communicate these notions to our minds, as those of wisdom and power are communicated to us in the whole extent of both." But it is an uncommon thing with the *Viscount* to continue in the same sentiment to the end of a single essay.

Lord *Bolingbroke* treats largely on the subject of divine providence; by which I understand the doctrine of an "all-perfect mind preserving and governing the whole universe, presiding over all creatures, especially rational, moral agents; inspecting their conduct, and superintending and ordering the events relating to them, in the best and fittest manner, with infinite wisdom, righteousness and equity." But this description will not suit his lordship; for he declares expressly, that "it is plain from the whole course of God's providence, that he regards

regards his human creatures *collectively*, not *individually*, how worthy soever every one of them deems himself to be a particular object of the divine care." This he frequently repeats, and it is a favourite topic with him. He says, indeed, "God may see all the most contingent events that happen in the course of his general providence; but not provide for particular cases, nor determine the existence of particular men." So that individuals are punished by human laws, and wicked societies, in the course of a general providence. If a flagrant offender, then, can escape punishment from the civil magistrate, he has nothing to fear from God, unless the whole community be as bad as himself: and even then, the public calamities may be deferred for ages, and the offender out of the way, before they arrive. Lord *Bolingbroke's* general providence, is really no providence at all: it denies to God the glory of being the benefactor, father and guardian of his rational creatures: it denies to the good man all the encouragements to virtue and goodness, which he derives from the consciousness of his Maker's gracious attention and approbation; it denies to the sufferer and the oppressed, all hope of support or redress; or the unspeakable pleasure of believing himself the care of heaven:

heaven : It makes no provision for the punishment of vice, if it can but escape the gallows ; but holds forth a safe asylum for the robber, the oppressor, and the murderer ; for if there are but a few worthy characters in the country, to divert national judgments, the wretch goes off the stage triumphing in his crimes, and finds a secure retreat in the grave, “ and laughs at gods and men : ” for his lordship assures us, that the soul and body rot together there. But this writer has not told us, that I can find, how many individuals make a community ; whether a whole empire, or the several states and kingdoms into which it is divided—Whether a whole kingdom—principality, county, city, parish or neighbourhood. I know not that his lordship has any where asserted, that the world was eternal, and man eternally on it : he would then probably admit, that one man, and one woman, were the progenitors of our race ; and if so, that two persons made a community. As a community, providence interested itself for their safety and happiness, whilst, as individuals, it took not the least notice of either of them. If his lordship could surmount this difficulty, I would be curious to know what he would do, or have heaven do, with *Selkirk*, the sailor that was left alone on the island of

Juan

Juan Fernandes. For the four years he lived there, he was the whole community, and but an individual. In the former capacity, he has a right to the notice of his Maker, and the care of heaven for his happiness; the latter capacity, neither God nor his providence are to take the least notice of him. It puts me in mind of a certain ecclesiastic, who, on a certain occasion, doffed his canonicals, and put on regimentals. A friend asked him, in what capacity he wore that dress? He answered, in the military. Very well, sir, replied his friend; but should the *devil* catch the *soldier*, what is to become of the *clergyman*? To nearly such a dilemma is lord Bolingbroke's providence reduced respecting poor *Selkirk*: if it meddles with the individual, it transgresses all the rules his lordship has prescribed to it; if it takes no notice of him, then it neglects the care of the whole community on the island; and his lordship will be as angry with providence for its delinquency, as he is with *Moses*, *Socrates*, *Aristotle*, *Plato*, and the apostle *Paul*, among the ancients; or with *Clarke*, *Cudworth*, *Cumberland*, *Stillingfleet*, *Bochart*, *Tillotson*, *Grotius*, *Selden*, *Puffendorf*, *Locke*, *Wollaston*, and lord *Forbes*, among the moderns. All those famous men he represents as *dreamers*, *mad-men*, or *enthusiasts*; and

modestly leaves his readers to draw this conclusion, That the blessed æra which produced lord *Bolingbroke*, was the true golden age of knowledge, piety, virtue and good morals ; for there is no sage, ancient or modern, that his lordship would think worthy to be his amanuensis. Should you see a powdered fop, at the head of his company, with his shoulder-knot, and "cockade-brow," and hear him harangue the gaping crowd, with his feminine voice, and assure them on his *honour*, that *Joskua* never saw service ; that *Hanibal* was a coward, *Sertorius* a sculker ; that *Julius Cæsar* was wholly ignorant of the art of war, and *Bellisarius* a man of no experience ; that *Gustavus* never crossed the *Baltic* with his army ; that *Turenne* ever run when he should advance ; that *Marlbrough* never led an army to the field ; that *Eugene* only dreamt he beat the *Turks* ; that *Charles XII.* was a mere poltron ; and again swear by the only thing he has to spare, his *honour*, that General *Washington* gave lord *Cornwallis* a thousand acres of land on *Obio* for surrendering his army at *York*, without a blow : Should you, I say, hear such an edifying rhapsody, from such a "thing of the doubtful gender," you must conclude, by all the rules of modern good breeding, that he was the greatest of all

all great men ; nay, that there never existed a man before him, who was fit to scour his soldiers muskets. You will excuse me, gentlemen, when I must, from the striking resemblance, compare the *English Secretary* to this doughty hero ; and the implicit followers of the one, to the dastards that would obey the other.

Lord *Bolingbroke* observes, that “the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and : future state of rewards and punishments, was taught and established long before we have any light into antiquity : that it was strongly inculcated from time immemorial”—“That the belief of future rewards and punishments, could not fail to have a great effect on the manners of men, to encourage virtue, and to restrain vice.” He calls it a “doctrine useful to all religions, and incorporated into all the systems of Paganism.” He says “reason will neither affirm, nor deny that there is a future state ; but as the doctrine has so great a tendency to enforce the civil laws, and to restrain the vices of men, reason will not decide against it, on the principles of good policy.” “Let this doctrine rest on the authority of revelation ;” for “it does not so much as imply any thing repugnant to the divine perfections. I receive with joy the expectations it raises

raises in my mind." "I should have no difficulty which to chuse, if the option was proposed to me to exist after death, or to die whole." Here his Lordship acknowledges the antiquity and great utility of the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and a future state; that all legislators taught it; all nations believed it; that it has a powerful influence on the conduct and morals of mankind; that it agrees with the divine perfections, is agreeable to sound policy, gives joy to the mind, and is "a consummation, devoutly to be wished." Now what creature of God can give a reason, or form an apology for this same man; who without pretending to any fresh discoveries, or change of sentiments, attacks the doctrine of immortality, and a future state, not with reason, for he says reason will not deny it, but with all the art and virulence he could collect. If a man believes this doctrine to be so friendly to virtue, and that it lays such restraints on vice, what an enemy to virtue must he be, who would tear away its principal supports? And what a friend to vice was that man, who endeavoured to remove the restraints it lies under, and turned it loose without controul? If good policy requires this doctrine, his Lordship is as bad a politician, as he is a moralist. If the expectation

pection of future rewards raise such joy in the mind, what a foe to the happiness of mankind is the *essayist* who would rob them of this happiness? And if every wise and good man, would make the same choice his lordship does, *to exist after death, rather than die whole*, then the *Viscount* must divest himself of both wisdom and goodness before he could endeavour to drive this doctrine out of the world. He says "justice requires, that rewards and punishments should be measured out in various degrees, according to the circumstances of particular cases, and in proportion to them." But he will not allow the application of his own rule; for he will have it, that "it is absurd or extravagant to assume, that the divine providence has one criterion towards mankind, in this world, and another in the next;" but that the christian scheme will have the proceedings of the future state, "the very reverse of the present; for then every individual is to be tried, and the most *secret actions*, nay the very thoughts of the heart are to be laid open, and sentence pronounced accordingly." Now as his lordship will not allow providence to meddle with the individual at all; not in this world, for it regards only the whole community; not in a future state, because there is no future state; it follows

follows unavoidably, that *secret actions*, and the *thoughts of the heart*, are never cognizable at all ; for the laws of men, and courts of justice cannot reach them ; and it is *extravagant for providence to assume one criterion in this world, and another in the next*. Men have nothing therefore to fear, if they can but keep their actions *secret* : and as for the thoughts of the heart, and the temper of the mind, though they are the fountain from which all evil actions proceed, yet man is not to have the least regard to them, for God, it seems, has not. When you meet a real disciple of lord *Bolingbroke* in a secret corner, be upon your guard ; for if his interest or resentment demand your life, you are gone ; and, by all the rules of his master, he has nothing to fear from God or man, if he can conceal the murder, by keeping his own counsel. You dare not safely trust your money, your wife or daughter, with one of this school. *Fear* cannot restrain him ; for secret actions have nothing to fear. *Conscience* can be no restraint, for it has no rule to go by, in all his lordship's creed : and *honour* has no foundation on which to build, nor principle on which to fix ; for none, but honourable beings, can possess that sacred thing *honour*, which, when real, considers its station as nothing less than

than an heir of immortality; and its relations the world of spirits, from itself up to the throne of God. This writer, and his followers then, are too transient, short-lived and insignificant beings, for an immortal to trust his honour to them; and though they should swear by it fifty times a day, yet the bulk of mankind will never be persuaded, that he is an honourable being, whose body and soul are to rot in the grave, like the tenants of the forest. This *disbonourable*, right honourable writer, ascribes future punishment to "the revenge of a being, who punishes to the extent of his power, for the pleasure of punishing, without any regard to justice, creatures, who never had offended him, *merely for the pleasure of offending him*; and who might plead in excuse, their frailties, passions, imperfections and numerous temptations." What an advocate for vice is lord *Bolingbroke*! I presume there is not a crime committed among a million of mankind, *merely for the pleasure of offending God or man*; while therefore the culprit can plead *frailty, passion, imperfection, temptation*, it is flat injustice to punish. This is indeed

To set at odds heav'n's ~~just~~ attributes;
 Bid mercy triumph over ~~God himself~~,

Undeified

Undeified by such opprobrious praise :

A GOD *all mercy* is a GOD *unjust*.

YOUNG.

It is not difficult to conjecture why lord *Bolingbroke* should be offended with mankind, and have his temper soured towards them. He fell from a towering height ; from being *secretary of state*, and the hope of the *English Tories*, into contempt, danger, exile and impeachment ; and in the impeachments to be distinguished in the house of *Commons* only as the *band*, the *clerk*, and *scholar* of lord *Oxford*, must have been very grating to a man of his lordship's unbounded pride and ambition. For these reasons, his lordship might feel a malignant pleasure in turning loose that mob, who, he complains, were his judges to teach each other, without the restraints of conscience, a throne of judgment, or future punishment ; though in so doing the *Tories* were to suffer with his enemies the *Whigs*. But what has exasperated this writer against his Master, is not so easy to discover. By his own rule, divine providence could not keep alive the individual *Queen Anne* ; nor longer preserve to his lordship the seal of office ; or prevent the scurvy usage he received from the *whig* ministry of *George I.* for I do not see where

where this writer has told the world, that he was the whole community, and thence entitled to the care of heaven; and if it left him to his fate, it was only observing the conduct he had prescribed to it. But on his being permitted to return, and enjoy *his retreat*, we might have expected that his lordship would be in a better humour; for he declares that, in that state, "he is superiour to fortune and exile, has attained a perfect philosophical tranquillity, having paid in public life what he owed to the present age, and would in private life pay what he owed to posterity, and was determined to *write and live without passion*." But his philosophic calm is quickly disturbed, by reflecting that "his country had reaped the benefit of his services, whilst he had suffered for them—That he had saved the publick, which had accomplished his private ruin—That art and malice had made his best actions pass for crimes—That the sacred voice of the senate was made to pronounce a lie, and its records to become the vouchers of imposture and calumny." And it could not well be otherwise; for "the members of parliament had made business a *trade*: few knew, and fewer respect the *British* Constitution; and every idea of wit and taste, was lost among them." Notwithstanding

standing all this, "*He was resolved to preserve the British constitution of government; for which he expected HIS REWARD FROM GOD ALONE, to whom he paid this service.*" But how, or when, or where, *my lord*, can this happen? You will not allow your Maker to have the least connexion with you, *in this world*; for your lordship knows you are but one man; and in *the future world*, you will put it out of your Maker's power to reward you; for your lordship knows, you intend to step out of existence, and preclude the possibility of reward! So that if this nobleman had no admirers among those that read *English*, all his patriotic labours, to save the *British* constitution; and all his benevolent endeavours to instruct, and render mankind happy, had escaped unrewarded by heaven and earth. All the answers I have seen to lord *Bolingbroke's* writings are by Mr. *Hervey*, by Mr. *Feilding*, who began an answer which death prevented him from finishing; and by Dr. *Leland*, to whom I am indebted for this catalogue of deistical writers, the names of the authors who have answered them, and for many of the observations: and to this dispassionate, patient, and judicious reasoner, I commit lord *Bolingbroke*, and all his admirers.

And now, gentlemen, if I have not too
much

much trespassed on your patience already, I wish to press a few reflections more, though I will not *much* longer offend. Some of my readers are probably better acquainted with *Deists* and *Deism* than they were two hours ago; and may be better qualified to judge how far they are, or are not, *Deists*. You have the names of thirteen writers, in that cause, with a brief view of their doctrines and sentiments, and three anonymous pieces, with some remarks on the whole. I have also given you the names of seventy or eighty writers, who have appeared on the christian side of the question, in opposition to these productions of deism, and sometimes have pointed out the most copious and esteemed. If the subject weigh with you, but half in proportion to its importance, you will not rest, until you are possessed of some of those answers, that you may be able to say, "My bane and antidote are both before me." But perhaps, among so many, you are embarrassed with your own liberty, and know not which to chuse. And though you and I may say with *Ovid*, "*Inopem me copia fecit,*" ~~abundance has~~ *abundance has* rendered us poor; yet allow me to recommend to you, to procure a few of the answers, under the great names I have mentioned, and among them, *Mr. Stackhouse's history*

history of the Bible, and Dr. *Leland's view of the Deistical writers*. I do not point out these two authors as superiour, or perhaps equal, to many who have appeared in this controversy; but chiefly because they have collected together, and brought within a narrow compass, the objections of the *Deists* against the Scripture history and miracles, and against natural and revealed religion; and given you a summary of the answers that have been, or may be returned to them.

To the last mentioned author, in particular, *Deists* and *Christians* are all indebted: the former, because he has produced in one view, their principal writers, and their productions; and has collected, as to a focal point, the whole force of their arguments: the latter, because he has, with equal faithfulness and diligence, given us the answers, the Authors, and their books; and of some of the most noted, he has given us the plan.

And now, gentlemen, what think you of this great controversy? Are you *Deists* on solid grounds, after much reading, and more thought, for and against revealed religion? I request you to ask yourselves, lest my questions should offend, am I a *Deist*, from strength of argument, and force of rational conviction? Am I a *Deist*, because to be so, is a duty I owe to God, to truth, to myself,

self, to my country, and connections? Am I a *Deist* on such well-grounded principles, that I shall have nothing to accuse myself of, on a dying bed; and in the future world, that God my judge will approve the steps I have taken, and the faith I have embraced? But perhaps I am carrying you too far. I know not whether I am writing to a *mortal*, or an *immortal* *Deist*; and it may be you have not yourself determined to which class you belong; nor whether you are a brother of the stall, or a relation to Angels. You are, perhaps, equally at a loss to know, whether there be any essential difference betwixt virtue and vice; or whether they both derive their nature and properties from human laws alone; for the writers of your party, cannot agree about it. They leave you in equal perplexity, whether you are to worship the God of nature or not. Nor have they determined among themselves, whether the divine Being rules the world by his providence; or whether he does, or does not take the least notice of your person or conduct. Nay, they have not agreed whether man is a free agent, or a machine; and consequently, whether he can do good or evil, is wholly doubtful. And to add no more, your writers have not agreed wherein *Deism* consists, nor how a man shall be initiated.

ated into its principles. Lord *Herbert's* five articles of natural religion, and Mr. *Blount's* seven, have divine worship, prayer and praise, and future rewards and punishments in them ; but you know these are utterly rejected by succeeding Deists. These, gentlemen, are no trivial matters ; they affect the very foundation, and lay the axe to the root of all religion, natural and revealed. You have no standard of orthodoxy, no rule of faith, nor indeed any *object* of faith, but a being at the head of the universe, either too indolent to employ his attention about you, or too much engaged in other matters, to bestow a thought upon you. Nay, it does not appear that he even knows you have a being ; for lord *Bolingbroke* gives you from under his hand, “ that God may see all the contingencies that happen in the course of his general providence ; but not provide for particular cases, *Nor determine the existence of particular men.* If the whole were ripe for destruction, he might find you out in the day of vengeance ; but otherwise, he pays no more regard to men, it seems, than they are generally inclined to pay to him. By the *Deists* creed, if they have one, you dare not look unto God, nor pray to him for any blessing, nor trust in him as your support, nor confide in him as your *Father in heaven.*

What

What a gloomy, melancholy life must you live, and what a death must you die! If you are a *mortal deist*, "abhorred annihilation" waits your last breath, and swallows up your whole existence: If you are an *immortal deist*, then you go, you know not whither, to society you know not whom, and employments, you know not what. For as a *deist* you must not think of the *Bible-Heaven*; to that, JESUS CHRIST is the way, the door; and of it, he is the *bliss*. You are to expect future happiness by a uniform obedience to the religion of nature. Have you considered what that requires? Read the life of JESUS, and there learn: natural religion requires you to live holy, innocent, and unstained, as he did. It gives no licence for the smallest deviation from the rule of right; nor does it appear that it holds out the least idea of pardon to the delinquent; for it makes no allowance for delinquency, as that which is wrong, nothing can make right: and *Deists* must not think of the pardoning grace the gospel offers; for they are entirely off that plan, and can have nothing to do with it, or it with them. And this introduces another thought which has often occurred to me, in your case. Our heavenly teacher has told the world, that there is a sin which shall

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never be forgiven; and that, he denominates, the sin against the *Holy Spirit*. The best account I have seen of this sin, makes it consist, in rejecting the gospel salvation, the management of which the *Holy Spirit* took upon himself, in a publick and solemn manner, on the day of *Pentecost*, and bore his testimony to it, with *signs*, and *wonders*, and *mighty deeds* innumerable. This is God's last dispensation of grace, to save a fallen world, from which there is no appeal ; and he who rejects this, rejects the only method by which he can be saved ; tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God ; doth despise unto the *Spirit* of grace ; and must die of his moral disease, by spurning from him the only cure, in the whole compass of nature. In vain you think to screen yourself amongst ancient pagans, and the idolatrous nations of the present day : your situation is vastly different from theirs. They did not, they could not resist and reject the force of evidence which the HOLY SPIRIT gave, and is still giving, of the truth of CHRIST'S Messiahship, and of the gospel salvation ; for it never was in their power to examine that evidence. But this is not your case ; you are born in a Christian land, where the *Bible* offers itself to your examination every day you live. That book,
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you either neglect or its evidence you resist, and thence you are in danger of living and dying under the guilt of a sin that can admit of no pardon, but on quickly applying to the gospel salvation.

Allow me also to tell you, that I do not see how *Christians* and *Deists* can consistently compose the same body politick, in the important matter, of administering and taking an *oath*. You know, gentlemen, that an oath is an act of worship paid to the supreme being, and a solemn appeal to him, as the *God of truth*, for the uprightness of our intentions, and the sincerity of our declarations, as God shall help us in the hour of death, and day of judgment; and all this declared on *the holy Evangelist of Almighty God*. The absurdity, the impiety of this act of religious worship, in the mouth of a *Deist*, must strike every person present with a degree of horror. The life or property of a christian is at stake; it is in the power of a man who is to swear on the *Holy evangelists*, though he believes it to be a compound of lies—*Of Almighty God*, though he is so far from believing the blessed *Jesus* to be the *Almighty God*, that he will not allow him to be an *honest man*; and his declaring the truth, as he expects the favour and help of the judge of heaven and earth, is
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mere hypocrisy and grimace: for he never expects to appear in judgment; and if he can escape an indictment for perjury, or elude its force, he has nothing to fear from God or man. The poor client trembles on the brink of destruction, and is ready to cry out, "Tell me, O infidel, *wherewith thou mayest be bound*, for no christian sanction can bind thee." I readily believe, that *Jews, Turks*, and all denominations of *Christians*, may very well form a community, and government subsist among them; because you have a hold of each of them, and know how to get truth out of them, in their several ways; but it is as much out of the line of duty, reason and religion, to swear a *Deist* on the *New Testament* as a *Jew* or a *Mahometan*; for they are equally unbelievers of its contents. It is true, a professed christian may be guilty of false swearing; but he must first surmount infinite obstacles. He believes the book on which he is sworn to be a divine revelation; he believes he shall stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST, and be charged home with every word and circumstance in his evidence, that is redundant or defective; too much or too little: nay, that the very thoughts of his heart, and his mental evasions of truth, will be all cognizable there. Not so the *Deist*: you
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have no hold of him, but by his *fear*, or his *honour*. The *former* may be often evaded, for no one on earth may know the transaction, but himself; and the *latter* we have seen, has no existence, in such momentary beings; or if it exists, let it be taken at once, without prostituting a christian oath, to these *anti-christians*. It is true the believing part of the community may think it hard, that their honour should not pass as current as that of an infidel; but from these embarrassments, the wisdom and piety of our legislatures alone can extricate us.

Allow me to ask again, what is *Deism*? Is it a *religion*? Where are the devotion and piety, the faith and articles, the laws and sanctions, the rules and practice, the rewards and punishments, that a religion implies and requires? You are not, and probably never can be formed into a society, because you cannot agree in fundamentals. And though you may object, that christians are divided as well as you, yet remember, that the most corrupt christian church under the sun, holds all the principal duties and doctrines of Christianity; and the *Papists* are christians, though they are something more; having so adorned CHRIST's seamless coat of simple, gospel truth, that the constituent parts are but barely discernible

ble through the trimmings. Permit me now to ask you, *what think ye of christianity* when contrasted with the unintelligible, uncertain, absurd, and inconsistent scheme of *Deism*? We have seen that there is no coming at a description of the latter directly; but a professor of it must be described only by negatives; that is, he is one who does *not* believe the doctrines, who does *not* practise the duties, of either natural or revealed religion—He does *not* believe that divine providence rules the world, nor that God takes a particular notice of the individuals of our race—He does *not* know that he is a free agent, or that virtue and vice are more than *nominal*, or at least, *political* distinctions. He is *not* satisfied of his own immortality, nor at all clear in the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. Surely, surely gentlemen, this doubt and uncertainty, and this disagreement in points so capital and interesting, among men of genius and learning, loudly proclaims this great truth, THAT THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD; and as loudly calls on heaven for a revelation, to lead such bewildered creatures to the knowledge of God and their duty. . And, *Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth*—such a revelation God has given! Yes, He has sent it from his throne,
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by the hand of his ever-blessed son—A revelation of God as the creator, preserver, benefactor, legislator and final judge of all rational creatures—As a Being possessed of all possible perfections, natural and moral—as a Being of untainted holiness, spotless purity, and inflexible justice; and yet which proclaims him, *The LORD, the LORD GOD merciful and gracious*; so transcendent in mercy and grace, as to send the son of his eternal love, to whom all the prophets had borne witness, to be born, to live, to die and to rise again from the dead, to glorify the divine perfections, and open a way for mercy to flow in copious streams to the fallen, helpless and ruined sinners of mankind. He paid a perfect obedience to the divine law, in his life, and he suffered the punishment due to the sinner in his death—~~He procured~~ for man all he needed, acceptance with God, pardon, peace and reconciliation, grace and holiness in this world, and eternal glory in the future. And what can you wish or desire beyond this? What evil has the blessed Jesus done to you, that provokes your malice against him? Is it thus you requite his love, and return insult for his pangs? And is it not enough that you have, for yourselves, renounced the God of revelation, and the Saviour of the world, but

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will you propagate the rebellion, and diffuse around you the poison of infidelity? As if it was a commendable, a very blessed thing, to take from piety and virtue their supports, and from vice the restraints which revelation has laid on it! If you rob a man of his wealth, his domestick peace, or his reputation, providence will, sooner or later, repair his losses; but if you rob a man or woman of their Bible, their immortality, or their Saviour, what compensation can you offer? Had you a thousand worlds, and an exclusive and perpetual right in those worlds, to bestow, you could not compensate the loss of *that far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory*, of which you have bereft him; and at the moment when you did so, you left him in a wilderness of dark perplexity: For a map of heaven, and his charter of privileges as a christian and an immortal, you presented him with a perfect blank; and for the precious promises of the Bible, you can promise him nothing but exemption from the worship of his Maker through a mediator; deliverance from the restraints which religion lays on his vices; and a dispensation to offend without controul.

“Asylum sad, from reason, hope and heaven!”

YOUNG.

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He may be as vicious as yourselves, before he makes this great sacrifice ; but while a creature holds fast his Bible, there is at least a possibility, that some time or other, its blessed truths may take a powerful hold of him, transform him into the divine image, and make him all that God would have him to be. But if you rob him of this treasure, you make him in your own opinion not a better man than he was ; and in the opinion of Christians, you draw him into a state that admits no remedy ; you deprive him of all the pleasures that religion affords its votaries ; and you cut him off from the possibility of eternal happiness. This, you will say cuts off the whole heathen world, too ; but I answer, No : the heathens have no revelation to reject, nor Saviour to deny. It is not of pagans, but of persons possessed of superiour advantages, of whom the Saviour and judge of the world hath said, *He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father and his Angels.* And again, (how near are *Deism*, and *Atheism* related !) *He that despiseth me, despiseth HIM that sent me.* Leave the heathens where Christians leave them, in the hands of a God of justice and mercy. I hope many of them have had the power and grace of the gospel brought home to them by the SPIRIT of God, and

and have had Christ in their heart and life, though strangers to his name in this world:

Your own particular case as *Deists*, is in every view deplorable, and extremely dangerous: but if, not content with renouncing your Bible and your Saviour for yourselves, you should disturb the faith of a christian, and endeavour to bring him first to doubt, and then to disbelieve, he has a good right to demand of you, from under your hand and seal, *That if there be a future judgment, you will appear for him at that tribunal, and then and there make it appear, at the hazard of body for body, and soul for soul, that the sacred Scriptures are a compound of lies, and that JESUS CHRIST is not the Saviour and judge of the world, but a grand impostor.* That your way may be cleared to this horrid transaction, (though there will be no appearing there by proxy, but each for himself, in his own proper person) one previous step will be necessary for your own satisfaction, and it is this: In one of your serenest hours, and after full demonstration of the truth of your principles, sit down and write, and sign and seal these words;—On such a day and year, I A. B. reject the books called the Old and New Testament, as the invention of designing men; their promises I despise, and their threatnings I defy. I renounce all dependence

dance upon, and connections with *Jesus Christ*; and if he is the Saviour of the world, I agree to go without salvation; if he is the judge of the world, I agree to receive my condemnation from his lips: and I am so fully persuaded he is an impostor, that I declare perpetual and irreconcilable enmity and opposition to him and his cause; and I call heaven and earth to witness the transaction, as my hand and seal testify.---Do you start back from the tremendous precipice, and say, God forbid! I would not take such a step for the empire of the universe? I have had my doubts; my faith has been sadly shaken, and I have trod on very dangerous ground; but I ardently long to find the path of truth, of duty, and of safety. If I am right, the christian cannot be wrong, for he has all that I have, and O! he has infinitely more: he has a *book* he values more than life, and a SAVIOUR he loves more than heaven; whilst I have neglected the one, and denied the other. How easily did I suffer myself to be seduced! The cruel spoiler came, and with his pestiferous breath, blasted all my blooming hopes! I listened to his *Siren* song, and had neither virtue nor courage sufficient to resist his allurements. He promised me freedom, though he himself was the slave.

of vice; he promised me liberty from the restraints of religion and conscience, but he laid snares for my feet, and has brought me into bondage ! Religion arises in her awful glories, and asserts her injured honours ; and conscience, like an armed giant, though stunned for a season, arises with fury in its aspect, and threatens that destruction I can neither endure nor escape. It meets me in the loudest laugh, the sprightly dance, the midnight bowl, and the arms of the courtesan. It assures me it will chase me through life, nor ever miss the track, and meet me with ten-fold rage in my fatal hour. *I a mortal Deist ?* I feel at least that conscience is *immortal*. It whispers, it thunders, " for any thing you certainly know, JESUS CHRIST is the Saviour, and the Judge of the world : " And if he be, where then am I ? By embracing christianity, *I may* be wrong ; but by living an infidel in principle, and a libertine in practice, *I must* be wrong. I have more than reason to suspect that *deism* is not a profession for a *wise man*. Any fool can talk profanely, and live wickedly ; and this is a summary of what I have seen and heard among them. A Religion I must have ; and all I know of *deism* is, that it is the want of *all religion*. Shall I have recourse to the *Jewish* ? That was but the day-break of