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APPEAL TO THE GOSPEL,

OR

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE JUSTICE OF THE CHARGE,

ALLEGED BY

METHODISTS AND OTHER OBJECTORS,

THAT

The Gospel is not preached by the National Clergy:

IN A

SERIES OF DISCOURSES

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD IN THE YEAR 1812,

At the Lecture founded by

THE LATE REV. J. BAMPTON, M. A.

CANON OF SALISEURY.

BY

RICHARD MANT, M. A.

VICAR OF GREAT COGGESHALL, ESSEX, AND LATE FELLOW OF
ORIEL COLLEGE.

“ I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God
“ unto salvation, to every one that believeth.”

“ Quod nos appellant hæreticos, est illud crimen ita grave, ut nisi videatur,
“ nisi palpetur, nisi manibus digitisque teneatur, credi facile de homine
“ Christiano non debeat.”

SECOND EDITION.

OXFORD,

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS FOR THE AUTHOR :

SOLD BY J. PARKER ; AND BY F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON, J. MURRAY,
AND J. HATCHARD, LONDON.

1812.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

JOHN RANDOLPH, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

MY LORD,

THE following Discourses are the fruit of studies, commenced when I had the benefit of your Lordship's instructions from the theological chair. They are designed as a humble tribute to what I believe to be the truth of that Gospel, a dispensation of which was committed to me by your hands; and for my fidelity in the preaching of which, my present situation in your diocese makes me responsible, under CHRIST, to your episcopal jurisdiction.

These considerations induced me to signify a wish, with which you have been graciously pleased to comply, that I might be permitted

to send my Lectures into the world under the sanction of your Lordship's patronage; assured, at the same time, that an attempt, which has for its object to rescue from misrepresentation some important articles of our holy Faith, and to vindicate the great body of the national Clergy from much unmerited aspersions, cannot be so properly inscribed as to one, whose high dignity is accompanied with corresponding exertions for promoting the welfare of our pure and apostolical Church, and, therein, of genuine Christianity.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's much obliged
and very dutiful Servant,

RICHARD MANT.

ORIEL COLLEGE,
May, 1812.

P R E F A C E.

HAVING in the following Inquiry ventured on a subject, in itself perhaps of an invidious character, I am anxious to avoid all unnecessary occasion of offence; and would therefore bespeak the candour of my readers on two or three particular points.

An enemy to controversy, as such, and especially an enemy to the bitterness of controversy, it has been my earnest desire to abstain from all intemperance of manner and of language. Firmly persuaded of the truth of those doctrines, which I have been defending, I have endeavoured to plead for them with firmness, but without asperity. If I have been occasionally betrayed into an opposite conduct, and induced to employ expressions, unworthy of my Christian profession, I beg that such language may be looked upon as never uttered; or at least may be regarded with indulgence, as the effect of human weakness, and not of a deliberate intention to offend.

In order to ascertain the sentiments of those, whose allegations I have undertaken to examine, I have principally had recourse to the

writings of the Founders of Methodism, and of the most eminent among those Ministers of the Establishment, who, like the professed Methodists, have been distinguished (I think unduly) by the appellation of Evangelical or Gospel Preachers. From the writings of these authors, to which have been added, as necessary to the same purpose, some of the works of Augustin and of Calvin, my quotations are neither few nor scanty. In making them, I trust it will appear that I have acted honestly; and that I am not answerable for the guilt of misrepresenting or perverting the sentiments of others, for the benefit of my own cause. At the same time, it may be proper to add, that, as there are probably comprised under the general descriptions of our accusers, many individuals; who do not subscribe to the opinions which their brethren have avowed, I request that my remarks may not be understood to apply to any man, farther than as he espouses the sentiments of those, whose works are particularly noticed.

As to my silence concerning a late publication by a learned Prelate, and the observations to which it has given occasion, it appears respectful to state, that the materials of the following Lectures were collected, and indeed the Lectures themselves were nearly completed in their present form, before the "Re-

“ refutation of Calvinism” was announced. For the compofition of my Difcourfes I had availed myfelf of a feafon of comparative leifure, which more numerous and preffing parochial engagements have fince prevented from recurring: fo that, had it been my wifh, it would hardly have been in my power, to devote due attention to the examination of any frefh publications. The truth however is, that it was not my wifh to be indebted to fo recent a production; efppecially to one, which, from the exalted ftation and well-known character of the Author, might be expected to be received into general circulation. Although by earlier works, therefore, I have endeavoured to profit, without fcruple or referve, (of which I hope that this general acknowledgment will be deemed fufficient, if at any time I have omitted to fpecify my obligation,) I determined to deny myfelf the fatisfaction, for the prefent, of reading the “ Refutation,” that I might at once avoid both the temptation, and the fufpicion, of being indebted to it.

Perhaps it may be thought, that I fhould have acted a more prudent part, if I had declined my own attempt, on the appearance of the Bifhop of Lincoln’s work. Had I been apprifed of his Lordfhip’s undertaking at an earlier period, it is moft probable that I fhould never have engaged in mine: or, when I firft

became acquainted with that undertaking, had not my Discourses been designed for a specific purpose, and my intention of being a candidate for that particular appointment been declared, the work would then probably have been relinquished. After all, notwithstanding the publication alluded to, if I do not magnify the importance of the Inquiry, in which I have been occupied, I am willing to think that it may not be altogether useless. The course of my subject has led me to notice some particulars, which can hardly have entered into a "Refutation of Calvinism:" and even with respect to those, which are common to both inquiries, the more superficial examination of the Predestinarian system, to which my limits and my abilities have confined me, may (by the blessing of God) be not unprofitable to those, who have not opportunity for studying his Lordship's more elaborate production.

I have only to add, that being desirous of comprising the whole of my observations in the body of the work, instead of throwing any part of them into notes, I found that most of the following Discourses had run to a greater length than was adapted to the pulpit, and therefore shortened them in the delivery.

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EXTRACT

FROM

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

— “ I give and bequeath my Lands and
“ Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars
“ of the Univerfity of Oxford for ever, to have and
“ to hold all and fingular the faid Lands or Estates
“ upon truſt, and to the intents and purpoſes herein-
“ after mentioned ; that is to ſay, I will and appoint
“ that the Vice-Chancellor of the Univerfity of Ox-
“ ford for the time being ſhall take and receive all
“ the rents, iſſues, and profits thereof, and (after all
“ taxes, reparations, and neceſſary deductions made)
“ that he pay all the remainder to the endowment
“ of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be eſta-
“ bliſhed for ever in the faid Univerfity, and to be
“ performed in the manner following :

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the firſt Tueſ-
“ day in Eaſter Term, a Lecturer be yearly choſen

“ by the Heads of Colleges only, and by no others,
 “ in the room adjoining to the Printing-House,
 “ between the hours of ten in the morning and
 “ two in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity
 “ Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St.
 “ Mary’s in Oxford, between the commencement
 “ of the last month in Lent Term, and the end of
 “ the third week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Di-
 “ vinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon
 “ either of the following Subjects—to confirm and
 “ establish the Christian Faith, and to confute all
 “ heretics and schismatics—upon the divine au-
 “ thority of the holy Scriptures—upon the autho-
 “ rity of the writings of the primitive Fathers, as
 “ to the faith and practice of the primitive Church
 “ —upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour
 “ Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy
 “ Ghost—upon the Articles of the Christian Faith,
 “ as comprehended in the Apostles’ and Nicene
 “ Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight
 “ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always printed,
 “ within two months after they are preached, and
 “ one copy shall be given to the Chancellor of the
 “ University, and one copy to the Head of every
 “ College, and one copy to the Mayor of the city
 “ of Oxford, and one copy to be put into the Bod-
 “ leian Library; and the expence of printing them
 “ shall be paid out of the revenue of the Land or
 “ Estates given for establishing the Divinity Lec-

“ ture Sermons ; and the Preacher shall not be paid,
“ nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are
“ printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall
“ be qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Ser-
“ mons, unless he hath taken the degree of Master
“ of Arts at least, in one of the two Universities
“ of Oxford or Cambridge ; and that the same per-
“ son shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Ser-
“ mons twice.”

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

I COR. ix. 16.

Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.

OUR blessed Saviour emphatically described the purpose of his ministry, when, applying to himself a remarkable prophecy of Ifaiah, he declared; “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor^a.” And he employed the same appropriate expression, when, having delegated to the Apostles the commission, which he had received from his Father, and having conferred upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost, he bade them, “Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature^b.”

Agreeable to the example and commandment of the Master was the conduct of the Apostles: both of those, who received their

^a Luke iv. 18.

^b Mark xvi. 15.

commiffion at his hands, before he afcended; and of him, to whom a fimilar difpenfation was miraculoufly committed, after the afcenfion of Chrift. To the Jew firft, and afterwards to the Gentile, they were indefatigable in preaching the Gofpel: in the execution of this office, they confidered and reprefented themfelves to be acting, as they really were, in obedience to the exprefs commands of God: they executed it, therefore, as a matter, not of choice, but of neceffity: not as a voluntary exercife, of the performance of which they might boaft; but as a folemn task, by the omiffion or neglect of which they would be difgraced: not as a gratuitous undertaking, for which they might claim a recompence; but as a bounden duty, which it were criminal to relinquifh. “Though I preach the “Gofpel,” fays St. Paul, in the energetic language of my text, “I have nothing to glory “of: for neceffity is laid upon me; yea, wo “is unto me, if I preach not the Gofpel.”

Nor did they efteem themfelves more bound to preach the Gofpel in general, than to preach it in its purity; uncorrupt, and unperverted. If difgrace and wo were to be their lot, fhould they neglect to preach it; an equal punifhment appears to have been apprehended by them, if they departed from its fimplicity, and blended falfehood, or error, with the truth.

of Christ. Such is the purport of the authoritative sentence of the same animated Apostle. "Though we," he pronounces to his Galatian converts, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed^c." And, as if he were fearful that the sentiment would not be sufficiently impressed upon his disciples, he deliberately repeats it in the following sentence with equal clearness and precision: "As we said before, so say I now again, "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed."

Distinguished from the first preachers of Christianity, inasmuch as they neither derive their commission immediately from Christ, nor are empowered to confirm the word "by signs and wonders and mighty deeds," the succeeding ministers of the Gospel are yet on the same footing with the Apostles in a very important respect. To them, in common with the Apostles, "a dispensation of the Gospel is committed^d." Neither selected from their brethren by the personal interposition of Christ on earth, nor called to be his ministers by the special appointment of a voice from heaven,

^c Gal. i. 8, 9.

^d 1 Cor. ix. 17.

they have not their office imposed upon them by that necessity, which assigned to the Apostles their more distinguished stations. To undertake the ministry of the Gospel is voluntary on the part of its preachers now. But when they have been once legitimately called and ordained to that ministry, and have willingly taken upon themselves the duties which are annexed to it, it is then no longer matter of choice, whether or not they will be preachers of the Gospel. As opportunities present themselves of publishing the good tidings of salvation through Christ, and of leading men to the knowledge of the truth in him, it is the duty of us, who are engaged in the ministry, to be found active at our posts. "Our hand is to the plough," and it is not permitted us to "look back."^e The sword of the Spirit is intrusted to us; and it is our business to wield it. Thus enlisted under the banner of Christ, "Though we preach the Gospel, we have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon us; yea, wo is unto us, if we preach not the Gospel."

Like its first preachers also, we are bound to preach it in the same purity, wherewith it hath been delivered to us from the fountain of light and truth. The will of God, which was

^e Luke ix. 62.

revealed to the Apostles in general by the mouth of Christ, and to St. Paul in particular by a more special dispensation, is delivered down to us in authentic documents, written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. From those documents the matter of our preaching is to be drawn; and wo unto us, if we preach any other Gospel, than that which we have so received.

Under these circumstances, no charge can be devised against the ministers of Christ, of a more disgraceful or a more capital nature, than that they are not Preachers of the Gospel. As therefore it is of so grievous a character to those, against whom it may be directed, it proportionally becomes every man, who may be disposed to advance it against any ministers of Christ, to be well assured of the grounds, on which he advances it. "Whereas they call us heretics," observed a learned apologist of the English reformation, "that is so grievous a sin, that unless it can be seen, unless it can be handled, unless it can be grasped by the hands and fingers, it ought not easily to be believed of a Christian man^f."

^f Nam quod nos appellant hæreticos, est illud crimen ita grave, ut nisi videatur, nisi palpetur, nisi manibus digitisque teneatur, credi facile de homine Christiano non debeat. *Juelli Apologia. Enchiridion Theologic.* vol. i. p. 200.

Whether such circumspection is at all times observed, is highly questionable. Certain however it is, that the charge itself has been of late, and is at present, perpetually advanced against a great majority of the ministers of the Church of England. Some of our own brethren in the ministry, who are attached to certain peculiar tenets, and who in consequence claim the appellation of Evangelical or Gospel preachers, thereby exclude, by implication at least, if not expressly, from a share in that appellation those of their fellow-labourers, whose opinions and style of preaching do not correspond with their own. It is no less notorious, that a large body of men, who have risen to be, according to their own imaginations, ministers of the Gospel, (how legitimately it is not my present purpose to inquire;) and multitudes besides, who resort to them in search of that spiritual improvement, which, as they allege, they despair of procuring at the mouth of a regularly ordained priesthood; make no scruple of pronouncing, in the broadest and most unequivocal language, that the Gospel is not preached in our Church.

Upon this pretext Methodism arose and hath been maintained. In avowed opposition to the parochial Clergy, and the authorized rulers of the established Church, to "heathenish

“priests and mitred infidels,” (for in the language of censure the Methodists have not been distinguished for their temperance,) the founders and abettors of the schism have gone forth, “to dispel the gross darkness of ignorance and ungodliness; and to spread the light of the Gospel over a benighted land.” The national Clergy, as a body, have been, and continue to be, stigmatised, as “ignorant of evangelical truth;” as preachers of “Popish and Socinian tenets;” as “substituting a heathenish morality for the doctrine of Scripture;” and as “corrupting, sophisticating, and mutilating the truth of God.” In the vocabulary of these modern reformers, Methodism and the Gospel are synonymous terms. And so exclusively do they assume the appellation of Preachers of the Gospel, and so arrogantly do they withhold it from others, that no ministerial qualification will exempt a man from this awful charge, unless his views of Scripture should happen to coincide with their own. “I have seen it asserted in print,” saith a learned prelate, “by one of these self-sent apostles, that the Gospel was first preached

§ See the works of Wesley, Whitefield, and other Methodists, throughout. See also “Sermons and Extracts by Edmund Outram, D. D. Public Orator of Cambridge,” containing a useful collection of extracts from the works of Arminian and Calvinistic Methodists.

“ on a certain day in a parish, where, to my
 “ own certain knowledge, every duty of a
 “ minister of the Gospel has been regularly
 “ performed by a diligent conscientious cler-
 “ gyman^h.”

By this sentence it is evident, that the matter of the discourses, delivered by the ministers of the Church of England in general, is the mark at which their accusers aim. And it is either intended to be alleged against them, that they renounce, and are apostates, from the Gospel, instead of which they substitute a style of preaching of a different character; a charge, which is pregnant with that “ wo,” denounced by the Apostle in my text; or it is intended to be alleged, that the Gospel is corrupted and perverted in their hands; an accusation, no less than the other, of a most alarming and tremendous nature, if we call to mind the warning of the same Apostle, that such persons are to be held “ accursed.”

We may however cherish the hope, that our preaching is not obnoxious to so grievous a charge as that which is here levelled against us. And without calling in question the purity of our accusers’ motives, and without putting upon their opposition any harsher construction than charity must allow, we may ad-

^h Bishop Randolph’s Charge at Bangor, 1808. p. 15.

mit a belief, that their zeal, whencesoever it may originate, and to whatever end it may be directed, is at least “not according to knowledge¹.” With this persuasion, a love of truth and of justice will second a becoming regard to our own characters and welfare, if we endeavour to maintain our ground against the assaults of our opponents; and should we, in repelling from ourselves the awful charge, that we preach not the Gospel, be driven to advance what may appear like recrimination, Christian charity, we trust, will authorise a measure, which is not prompted by a spirit of wanton hostility; but is provoked by unmerited aggression, and rendered necessary by self-defence.

An inquiry into the justice of the charge, that the great body of the national Clergy do not preach the Gospel, is proposed for the subject of these discourses. Consistent, as I trust it is, with the express intention of the Founder of this lecture, and worthy of the strictest attention of those, for whose benefit the lecture appears to have been more immediately designed, it is at the same time unquestionably a subject of very great and general concern. May it please Almighty God for Christ’s sake to give us the help of his Holy

¹ Rom. x. 2.

Spirit, and prosper the inquiry, if it be honestly directed to the promotion of the Gospel of his Son!

On all matters of religious controversy, and on this, in common with others of the same nature, appeal must be made to the sacred writings, as the only authentic records of the truth. These are the source, from which our arguments must principally be derived; and these are the test, to which all our reasonings must ultimately be referred. "Holy Scripture," as our Church expresses it, "containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed, as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation ^k."

But whilst we regard the Scriptures as the only infallible criterion of sound doctrine, I would add a salutary and seasonable caution, as to the use and application of them. It is the duty of every Christian, and it is the privilege of every Protestant, to "search the Scriptures;" for in them we read our title to eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ: but it is not every man, who is duly qualified, at least on controverted points, to

^k Art. vi.

explain them to advantage. "Scripture," said a very learned man, "is given to all to learn; but to teach, and to interpret, only to a few^l." "Ignorance of the Scriptures," as St. Jerome remarked many ages since, "is the mother and nurse of all error^m." But error is never more widely spread, or more deeply rooted, than when a familiarity with scriptural language is mistaken for a knowledge of Scripture: when, (as the same father describes the state of religion in his own time, and would that the description did not apply to ours!) "persons of whatever age, sex, or condition, all arrogantly claim the privilege of interpreting Scripture; wrest it, mangle it, teach before they have learned it; and with a certain facility and boldness of speech loudly proclaim to others, what they themselves do not understandⁿ:" when, like

^l Hales's Golden Remains, p. 12.

^m So quoted by Bp. Ridley. See his Life by Gl. Ridley, book vi. p. 470. The passage alluded to, appears to be as follows: Propterea errant, quia scripturas nesciunt; et quia scripturas ignorant, consequenter nesciunt virtutem Dei, hoc est Christum. *Hieron. Comment. in Matt. xxii.*

ⁿ Sola Scripturarum ars est, quam sibi omnes passim vindicant: hanc garrula anus, hanc delirus senex, hanc sophista verbosus, hanc universi præsumunt, lacerant, docent, antequam discant:—et quadam facilitate verborum, immo audacia, edifferunt aliis, quod ipsi non intelligunt. *Hieron. Paulino. Ep. ciii.*

“those rash presumers,” of whom St. Austin complains, “in support of their ungrounded
 “opinions, they pretend the authority of these
 “sacred books, and repeat much of them even
 “by heart, as bearing witness to what they
 “hold; whereas indeed they do but pro-
 “nounce the words, but understand, neither
 “what they speak, nor whereof they af-
 “firm °.”

In order to form “a workman that needeth
 “not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word
 “of truth^p,” not only are much zeal and dili-
 gence necessary in searching the Scriptures;
 but much study also in preparatory exercises;
 much care in comparing them; much judg-
 ment in applying them; much discrimination
 in distinguishing between passages of a limited,
 and those of an universal and perpetual
 import; much humility and sobriety of mind

° Quid enim molestiæ tristitiæque ingerant prudentibus
 fratribus temerarii præsumtores, satis dici non potest:
 cum, siquando de prava et falsa opinione sua reprehendi
 et convinci cœperint ab eis, qui nostrorum librorum auc-
 toritate non tenentur; ad defendendum id quod levissima
 temeritate et apertissima falsitate dixerunt, eosdem libros
 sanctos, unde id probent, proferre conantur; vel etiam
 memoriter, quæ ad testimonium valere arbitrantur, multa
 inde verba pronunciant, non intelligentes neque quæ lo-
 quuntur, neque de quibus affirmant. *August. de Genesi
 ad literam. lib. i. c. xix. tom. iii. p. 130. ed. Bened.*

P 2 Tim. ii. 15.

in explaining more mysterious points of doctrine; and especially a freedom from all prepossessions, and a steadfast attention to the sacred volume, as one great whole; consisting indeed of a variety of parts, but all the various parts of which necessarily depend on, and harmonise with, each other.

That such caution is reasonable will appear to those, who reflect upon the various persons, by whom; the various persons, to whom, and for whose use; and the manifold variety of local, temporary, and other circumstances, under which they were written: at the same time bearing in mind, that they relate to spiritual things, some of which it surpasses the capacity of the human understanding fully to comprehend; but that they all proceed from one unerring source, “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning^a,” and that they are all directed to one simple and harmonious end, “the bearing of witness unto the truth.”

Nor is it only from the reasonableness of the case, that I would enforce this salutary caution in examining and interpreting the Scriptures: but I feel justified in enforcing it, by the express testimony of an inspired Apostle, that in the epistles of St. Paul, or in the

^a James i. 17.

^r John xviii. 37.

subjects of his epistles, (for the sense varies with the original text,) “ there are some
 “ things hard to be understood, which they
 “ that are unlearned and unstable wrest, (σρε-
 “ βλουςιν; put to the rack, unnaturally strain
 “ and torture,) as they do also the other Scrip-
 “ tures, unto their own destruction.” And
 this caution I accordingly consider to be, as it
 were, the anchor of the orthodox belief, which
 many disregarding “ have been tossed to and
 “ fro, and carried about with every wind of
 “ doctrine^t,” and have unhappily made ship-
 wreck of the true “ faith, which was once de-
 “ livered unto the faints.”

Of such importance indeed is this caution to be considered in scriptural inquiries in general, and so peculiarly seasonable in the inquiry, which is proposed for the subject of these lectures; that I beg your attention, whilst, at the risk of anticipating, for the sake of a comprehensive view, some remarks which may hereafter recur more in detail, I proceed to enlarge on it to some extent in this introductory discourse; and to lay before you a general statement of the principles, on which I conceive that the charges of our assailants may be repelled, and the evangelical character of our preaching be defended and maintained.

^s 2 Pet. iii. 16.

^t Eph. iv. 14,

^u Jude 3.

I propose accordingly to place before your view several rules, which may be regarded of the greatest benefit towards a satisfactory interpretation of the Scriptures; and, having made an application of them to topics, on which Christians are for the most part agreed, shall subjoin examples of their application to more controverted points.

But here, before I proceed to a particular statement of the rules to be proposed, I must be allowed to protest most decidedly against a claim, advanced by certain religionists, who assume to themselves exclusively a supernatural illumination in the explaining of Scripture; a claim, which is, if I mistake not, asserted for themselves, and denied to us, by a large proportion of our accusers. It is obvious, that the admission of such a claim must at once supersede all rational investigation into any controverted matter; for it were vain to expect, that any argument should weigh with him, who believes himself to be guided by an infallible monitor within him. The claim therefore carries with it a plain proof of its weakness; for it is a claim, which one man may advance as fairly as another; and if they do so in mutual opposition, where is the criterion that is to decide? How far the weakness of the claim is exemplified in the two great leaders of Methodism, who maintained, each

that he was under the guidance of the Spirit, and each that his adversary preached another gospel^{*} : and of whom one at least confessed, that he had been at times under a strong delusion, is a question, to which I may hereafter have occasion to revert.

It is a further proof of the weakness of this plea, a proof, which however, I fear, that the persons in question will hardly be persuaded to admit ; that the claim is founded upon a misapprehension of that very book, which they would fain represent themselves divinely enlightened to understand. Admirable to this effect are the words of the ever-memorable Hales ; and the more worthy of our notice, as they were delivered at a period, the very counterpart of the present times in ecclesiastical insubordination and licentiousness ; and God grant, the comparison may not be preserved in their most melancholy and calamitous result ! “ As for those marvellous discourses of
 “ some, framed upon presumption of the Spi-
 “ rit’s help in private, in judging or interpret-
 “ ing of difficult places of Scripture, I must
 “ needs confess I have often wondered at the
 “ boldness of them. . . .The effects of the Spi-

^{*} See the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared, part ii. Pref. xxi. Wesley’s Fourth Journal, p. 78. Coke’s Life of Wesley, p. 214. Nott’s Bampton Lectures, p. 248. note.

“ rit, as far as they concern knowledge and
“ instruction; arē not particular information
“ for resolution in any doubtful case, (for this
“ were plainly revelation ;) but, as the angel,
“ which was sent unto Cornelius, informs him
“ not, but sends him to Peter to school; so
“ the Spirit teaches not, but stirs up in us a
“ desire to learn; desire to learn makes us
“ thirst after the means; and pious sedulity
“ and carefulness make us watchful in the
“ choice, and diligent in the use of means.
“ The promise to the Apostles of the Spirit,
“ which should lead them into all truth, was
“ made good unto them by private and secret
“ informing their understandings with the
“ knowledge of high and heavenly mysteries,
“ which as yet had never entered into the
“ conceit of any man. The same promise is
“ made to us, but fulfilled after another man-
“ ner. For what was written by revelation
“ in their hearts, for our instruction have they
“ written in their books. To us for informa-
“ tion, otherwise than out of these books, the
“ Spirit speaks not. When the Spirit regene-
“ rates a man, it infuses no knowledge of any
“ point of faith, but sends him to the Church,
“ and to the Scriptures. When it stirs him
“ up to newness of life, it exhibits not unto
“ him an inventory of his sins, as hitherto un-
“ known; but either supposes them known in

“ the law of nature, of which no man can be
 “ ignorant, or sends him to learn them from
 “ the mouth of his teachers. More than this,
 “ in the ordinary proceedings of the holy Spi-
 “ rit, in matter of instruction, I yet could
 “ never descry. So that to speak of the help
 “ of the Spirit in private, either in dijudicat-
 “ ing, or in interpreting of Scripture, is to
 “ speak they know not what. Which I do
 “ the rather note, first, because by experience
 “ we have learnt, how apt men are to call
 “ their private conceits the Spirit: and again,
 “ because it is the especial error, with which
 “ St. Austin long ago charged this kind of
 “ men, ‘ by so much the more prone are they
 ‘ to kindle schism and contention in the
 ‘ Church, by how much they seem to them-
 ‘ selves to be endued with a more eminent
 ‘ measure of Spirit than their brethren;’ whilst
 “ (as St. Basil speaks) under pretence of inspi-
 “ ration, they violently broach their own con-
 “ ceits.”

Leaving then these extravagant pretensions,
 as warranted neither by reason nor by Scrip-
 ture; but trusting rather, that the holy Spirit
 will vouchsafe his blessing upon the conscien-
 tious employment of the means, which he
 hath provided for our instruction, let us pro-

ceed to consider the principles, which appear best qualified to guide us in our inquiries.

And here the first rule, which I shall propose, is this; that in our interpretation of Scripture we be regulated, as far as possible, by its plain and literal sense. It were unnecessary to dwell long upon a principle so self-evidently just; a principle, let it be observed in passing, which ought to be especially cherished by Protestants, since it was one motive of our separation from the church of Rome, that she had added to Scripture her glosses as canonical, to supply what could not be proved from the plain text of Scripture: and since by the application of it a road was opened to the removal of her corruptions, and to the restoration of the pure doctrines of the Gospel. The neglect of it hath been fertile in error. But for this neglect, the Romanist had not thought of justifying his impiety, in offering religious worship to any being but God, or in attributing the office of Mediator between God and man to any other being than Christ:—the Quaker would not have renounced the sacrament of baptism; nor the Anabaptist excluded infants from partaking in it; nor the Calvinist have denied its regenerating grace:—Pelagius would not have denied the corruption of human nature; nor Novatian have pre-

tended to perfection and purity^z:—the Docetæ, and other heretics of old, would not have questioned the actual sufferings of the Saviour of mankind^a; nor the Socinian the atoning efficacy of those sufferings; nor the Calvinist have limited their efficacy to a comparatively small portion of mankind; contending, that Christ did not die for all men, and that God is not willing that all men should repent and be saved. “I hold it,” said the judicious Hooker, “for a most infallible
 “in rule expositions of sacred Scripture, that,
 “where a literal construction will stand, the
 “farthest from the letter is commonly the
 “worst. There is nothing more dangerous
 “than this licentious and deluding art, which
 “changeth the meaning of words, as alchymy
 “doth, or would do, the substance of metals;
 “maketh of any thing what it listeth; and
 “bringeth in the end all truth to nothing^b.”

2. Whilst we take the plain sense of Scripture for our leading guide in the interpretation of it, allowance must sometimes be made for its idiomatical and figurative diction; especially where an absurdity would follow from adhering to the literal sense.

^z Barrow's Works, vol. iii. p. 239.

^a Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. vi. part ii. ch. 5.

^b Eccl. Polity, book v. f. 59. vol. ii. p. 244. Oxf. edit.

With this latitude of interpretation we understand the sixth petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation;" agreeably to a scriptural form of speech, which represents a person as doing that, which he suffers to be done; and according to a reading taken by St. Cyprian from an old Latin copy, Suffer us not to be led into temptation. "For what?" as hath been well demanded: "Doth God lead man into temptation? God forbid! for God is not the cause of evil; but we will call upon him, that, of his manifold mercies, he may not suffer us to be tempted." So also with respect to "them, that are lost," those abandoned men, "in whom the God of this world" (that is, as St. Chrysostom expounds it, not the Devil, but the good God himself) "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not^d." "How then did God blind them?" saith St. Chrysostom: "not working in them to that effect; away with the thought; but by permission and concession^e," for so, remarks the learned Bar-

^c Τι γὰρ; Θεὸς εἰσαγεί ἀνθρώπον εἰς πειρασμόν; μὴ γένοιτο· οὐ γὰρ αἰτιὸς τῶν κακῶν ὁ Θεός· ἀλλὰ παρακαλεσόμεν αὐτόν, ἵνα τοῖς πολλοῖς αὐτοῦ οἰκτιρισμοῖς μὴ ἐάσῃ ἡμᾶς πειρασθῆναι. See Taylor's Life of Christ, part ii. sect. xii.

^d 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

^e Πῶς οὖν ἐτυφλώσεν; οὐκ ἐνεργήσας εἰς τοῦτο, ἀπαγε· ἀλλ' ἀφείς καὶ συγχωρήσας. Chryf. in 2 Cor. iv. 4. Hom. viii. c. 2. Op. tom. x. p. 494. ed. Par. 1732.

row, who cites the comment, the Scripture is wont to speak^f. So again with respect to the declaration, that God “hardeneth whom he will^g.” But how doth he harden them? surely not by an irresistible influence from above, as from the literal sense of the words might at first be imagined; but by suffering obstinate sinners to follow the bent of their own perverse dispositions; by suffering them, as it is elsewhere said, to “harden their own hearts^h.” In the same manner that God commands the Prophet to “shut the eyes” of those, whom two Apostles, St. Matthew and St. Paul, or rather whom our Saviour and St. Paul, describe as “closing their own eyesⁱ;” and that he is related in another place to have “moved David” to commit a crime, which he permitted him to commit in compliance with the provocation of Satan^k. “Whereas,” observes Melancthon, “from the sayings, I will “harden the heart of Pharaoh, and whom “he will he hardeneth, the unlearned argue “that God is the efficient cause of sin; to this “and the like phrases we must answer, It is “most certain, that verbs active according to “the Hebrew idiom often signify permission,

^f Barrow's Works, vol. iii. p. 339.

^g Rom. ix. 18.

^h Exod. viii. 32.

ⁱ Compare Is. vi. 10. Matt. xiii. 15. and Acts xxviii. 27.

^k Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. and 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

“not efficiency: As, lead us not into temptation, that is, suffer us not to be overcome when we are tempted¹.”

With the same latitude of interpretation we understand the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread:” amounting to no more than a petition, that God will enable us to procure our sustenance, provided we duly exercise the faculties we enjoy. And thus, in a scriptural sense, it is with all the gifts of God. He “giveth riches;” but it is “the diligent hand, that maketh rich:” he “giveth wisdom;” but it is “the man of understanding, who hath it^m:” he giveth faith and repentance, not by infusing them into the mind by an irresistible act of divine grace, but by supplying us with means

¹ Primum indurabo cor Pharaonis, hoc ita citatur, cum sit verbum activum, ut indocti ratiocinentur inde, Deum esse causam efficientem peccati: ad hanc phrasin et similes respondendum est; Certissimum est, Ebraica phrasi verba activa sæpe significare permissionem, non effectiorem: Ut, ne nos inducas in tentationem, id est, non finas nos opprimi, cum tentamur. *Melanth. de Causa Peccati. Opera*, vol. ii. p. 238.

Postea ait, quem vult, indurat: Ubi nota sit Ebræa phrasis, in qua verba activa sæpe permissionem significant: indurat, id est, sinit esse durum, &c. *Ejusd. in Epist. ad Rom.* ix. vol. iv. p. 160.

^m Compare Eccles. v. 19. with Prov. x. 4. and Eccles. ii. 26. with Prov. x. 23. And see Whitby's Discourses on the Five Points, p. 277.

and motives sufficient for their attainment. Nay, more: in scriptural phraseology, God is often said to do a thing, when he does that, which has a proper tendency to the effect, and is sufficient to produce it; although the effect may not be produced by reason of some defect or neglect in us, in whom it should have been wrought. “I have purged thee,” saith the Lord to Jerusalem, “but thou wast not purged.” “The goodness of God,” saith St. Paul, “leadeth those to repentance, who continue in the hardness and impenitency of their hearts.” And such is the purport of those promises to believers in several parts of Scripture; not that the Lord will absolutely keep them from falling; but that he will bestow on them that assistance, which is necessary for their security, provided they be not wanting to themselves. “The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil^p :” “Being confident of this, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ^q :” “Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ^r :” and if there be any other passages of similar import, they

ⁿ Ezek. xxiv. 13.

^p 2 Theff. iii. 3.

^r 1 Cor. i. 8.

^o See Rom. ii. 4, 5.

^q Phil. i. 6.

may be well explained by the comment of Grotius on the last of the preceding, God will do, “quod suarum est partium,” all that is requisite on his part, towards bringing you to happiness; if ye for your parts “continue in “the faith grounded and settled, and be not “moved away from the hope of the Gospel^s.”

Mistakes may often be avoided by such an allowance for the peculiar phraseology of the Scriptures, and a discreet qualification of their plain, literal sense. The qualification indeed (I repeat it) ought to be made with discretion: but still I apprehend, that the foregoing instances will show its propriety; and that the following will prove the neglect of it to be productive of error. It was from inattention to this principle, that many of the early Christians, misapprehending the warnings of Christ and of his Apostles, imagined the day of judgment to be at hand. It was a neglect of this principle, which gave birth to some of the monstrous enormities of the first Anabaptists^t. It is a neglect of this, which leads the Antinomian to reject the moral as well as the ritual law of Moses, and to renounce the authority of even the Ten Commandments: which

^s Col. i. 23.

^t Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. cent. xvi. sect. iii. part ii. chap. 3.

betrays the Romanist into the irrational and idolatrous extravagance of transubstantiation: which affords the Calvinist a support for his gloomy doctrine of reprobation: and which would, by parity of reason, make it the duty of every follower of Christ to extinguish all natural affection in his breast, and convert into foes all those of his own household. For why may we not contend, that no man can be a disciple of Christ, who doth not, in a literal sense, “hate his father and mother and
 “wife and children and brethren and sisters^u,” as well as the Calvinist may contend that, in a literal sense, “God hated Esau^x?” The truth is, the word, which in each case is the same, has but a comparative force. We are to hate our relations in comparison of Christ; or, as it is explained in the parallel passage of St. Matthew, we are to love them less than Christ^y; so as not to suffer a regard for any earthly connection to interfere with our duty as Christians. And thus God is said to have hated Esau; that is, to have loved him less than Jacob, whom he chose in preference to the first-born; according to the saying in Genesis, that “Leah was hated,” where the meaning evidently is, what is expressed in the preceding verse, that Jacob “loved Rachel more

^u Luke xiv. 26.^x Rom. ix. 13.^y Matt. x. 37.

than her^z." "The Jews," observes a learned Hebraist, "use to express comparisons by negatives, or rejecting the thing less worthy^a."

3. I proceed to remark, that for the right understanding of Scripture, and especially of controverted texts, it may sometimes be necessary to look beyond our own version of the Bible, and to seek assistance from the original scriptures: perhaps, because our excellent translators did not at first express themselves with sufficient precision; perhaps, because the language, which they employed, has in some degree deviated from its former signification; perhaps also, because their minds may have been biased by certain prepossessions in favour of particular opinions, which are no otherwise sound upon our belief, than as they can be proved by the pure word of Scripture.

It is generally agreed that the phrases, "Take no thought for your life^b;" "Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat;" and again, "Take no thought for the morrow;" are a very inadequate exposition of our Saviour's precept; the true intent of which must be sought in the original passages, μη μεριμνητε, μη μεριμνησθε, be not anxiously careful.

^z Gen. xxix. 30, 31.

^a Lowth on Hosea vi. 6.

^b Matt. vi. 25, 31, 34.

And many a well-disposed and humble Christian would be preserved from much needless alarm and scruple about the performance of a bounden duty, if he were aware, that when St. Paul declares, that "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself^c," the Apostle employs a word (*κριμα*) which means in a general sense judgment, as it is rendered in the margin of our Bible.

By an application of this rule we may confute some at least of the arguments, and expose some of the errors of our assailants; although it may be more generally necessary to conduct our defence upon a larger scale. If, for instance, the Anabaptist object to the baptism of infants, on the ground of our Saviour's declaration, "Except a man be born again;" we reply, that the original passage is of universal extent, without any limitation of age, *εαν μη τις γεννηθῃ*, except one be born again. If he object, that, according to our Saviour's commission to his Apostles, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them," an infant is incapable of baptism, for he is incapable of being taught; we answer, that the original commission would be more correctly rendered, as it is constantly rendered in all the Oriental

^c 1 Cor. xi. 29.

versions ^d, make disciples of, or disciple all nations, *μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη*. Or if he contend, that the total immerfion of the body is effential to baptifm, we call upon him to prove, how the word in our Saviour's commiffion muft of neceffity bear that conffruction, when the fame word is elfewhere employed by two of the facred hiftorians, to exprefs only the wafhing of the hands ^e.

Upon the fame principle may be removed fome difficulties, which our verfion may be thought to countenance, on the queffion of Calviniftic predeffination. When Paul preached to the Gentiles at Antioch, we read that "as many as were ordained to eternal life, "believed;" *οσοι ησαν τεταγμενοι εις ζωην αιωνιον* ^f; the meaning of the writer would probably have been more accurately given, if it had been faid, as many as were difpofed, or prepared; as were in a right difpofition, or preparation, for eternal life, believed: a tranflation, which Whitby fupports by feveral inffances of the like fignification of the word; and of which Pyle pronounces after Grotius, that He that feeth it not is blind ^g. However

^d Beveridge's Works, vol. i. p. 305.

^e Luke xi. 38. and Mark vii. 4, 5. See Wall's Hift. of Infant Baptifm, part ii. chap. viii. feft. 6. p. 219.

^f Acts xiii. 48.

^g See Whitby's Commentary on Acts xiii. 48. and

this may be, and whatever colour the Predestinarian may think is given by our version to his favourite opinions, before he avails himself of the text in support of those opinions, it is at least incumbent upon him to prove, what we apprehend is incapable of proof, that the original can be fairly construed into a reference to the divine decrees, considered as absolute and independent of God's foresight of the disposition of the people. I say, independent of God's foresight of the disposition of the people: that the people were well disposed to receive the truth, *εὐθετοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ*^h, according to a phrase, which Wolfius, and after him Parkhurst, consider to be equivalent with that before us, is a fact, which appears on the face of the narrative: that they became so in consequence of an absolute decree, is a mere begging of the question; an assumption of that, which is the very thing required to be proved.

If this passage is produced as a sanction for the doctrine of Calvinistic election, another may be cited as a sanction for its correlative, the doctrine of Calvinistic reprobation; each with the same semblance, and each with as little substance, of reason. St. Jude speaks of

Pyle's Paraphrase with his note. See also Parkhurst in VOC. ΤΑΤΩ.

^h Luke ix. 62.

“ungodly men, before of old ordained to this “condemnation”ⁱ,” the expression is the same as the former, in the English version; but not in the Greek: οἱ παλαι προγεγραμμενοι εις τουτο τῃ κριμα; not made and ordained by God to be punished; much less, ordained by God to sin, and so to punishment; but *præscripti*, according to the vulgar Latin; proscribed in some public record, some programma, as certain commentators interpret it^k; or foreshewn, written of, or described beforehand, to be deserving of condemnation for their ungodliness, as it is explained by others^l; conformably to the strict import of the original expression, and to the illustration in a subsequent verse, that “Enoch prophesied of these.”

As it may be clearing our way on some future occasion, I would take the present opportunity of remarking, that there are two or three other texts of this description, of which a similar explanation is requisite. St. Peter describes men, “which stumble at the word, “being disobedient, whereunto also they were “appointed,” εις ὃ και ετεθησαν^m: an expression probably of the same force as that of προγεγραμμενοι, just quoted from St. Jude; men, whose stumbling had been declared and fore-

ⁱ Jude ver. 4.

^l See Whitby in loc.

^k See Parkhurst in voc. προγραφω.

^m 1 Pet. ii. 8.

told by the Prophets and by Christ himself; or who had been appointed to stumble at the word, as a punishment for their disobedience; and St. Paul speaks of "God enduring with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction;" *κατηρητισμενα εις απωλειαν*ⁿ: disposed perhaps, or fitted, for destruction; as those who were before represented to be *τεταγμενοι*, prepared or disposed for eternal life; or as those, whom St. Paul elsewhere describes as "purging themselves" from false doctrines, and so becoming "vessels unto honour:" after the same manner these vessels of wrath are fitted by themselves for destruction, by their sins and impenitence, "after their hardness and impenitent hearts trafficking up unto themselves wrath," as the Apostle speaks in a former part of the same epistle: for let it be carefully observed, that there is not a shadow of reason for supposing it to be the intention of the text, to ascribe the effect to the agency of the Almighty, and that, as Whitby remarks from Œcumenius, the old ecclesiastical interpretation of the words was adverse to such a supposition^q.

ⁿ Rom. ix. 22.

^o 2 Tim. ii. 21.

^p Rom. ii. 4, 5.

^q Whitby on the Five Points, p. 21. *Εις ό και ετεδησαν, ουκ ώς απο του Θεου εις τουτο αφωρισμενοις ειρηται' ουδεμια γαρ αιτια απωλειας παρα του παντας ανθρωπουσ δελοντος σωθηναι*

Once more ; “ the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth :” not raised thee from the birth ; not created thee on purpose for thy everlasting destruction, according to the system of Calvin : but raised thee up, ἐξηγειρα, from the plagues which would have cut thee off, as the murrain cut off thy cattle ; made thee to stand, and preserved thee from the merited punishment, that thou mightest eventually be destroyed by an even more memorable and exemplary disaster. Such a signification of the word is warranted by several passages in the New Testament ; and accords both with the Hebrew text, as is noticed in the margin of our Bible, and with the Septuagint and other versions of Exodus’.

4. Without confining ourselves however to a single passage, and at the same time without stretching our view over a wide extent of Scripture, an attention to the immediate context will often enable us to convict error, and to discover the truth. If for instance the solemn assertion of our Saviour, “ I say unto

βραβευεται, αλλα τοις εαυτους σκευη οργης κατηρτικοσι και η απει-
θεια επηκολουθησε, και εις ην παρεσκευασαν εαυτους ταξιν ετεδησαν.
Œcumen. in 1 Epist. Pet. Comment. vol. ii. p. 496.

† Rom. ix. 17.

* See Whitby in loc.

“you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment,” were to be understood strictly of useless and unnecessary words, it would be impossible to converse with innocence. But the context shews that they are designed for such as “an evil man brings out of the evil treasure of his heart;” words, not simply unprofitable, but wicked and pernicious. If again damnation were the punishment denounced on the unworthy communicant at the Lord’s Supper, the apprehension of so dreadful a penalty might operate with reason on the tender conscience; which may be relieved by learning, what the context evidently points out, that the word, which has been already observed to mean judgment generally, can in this place only mean judgment of a temporal kind[†].

“Stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free,” says the Apostle to the Galatians; “and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage[‡].” The schismatic catches at the text, and uses it as a cloke of malicioufness, to skreen him in choosing whatever form of religion is agreeable to his fancy; and in rejecting the legitimate authority of those, who have the spiritual rule over him:

[†] Matt. xii. 35, 36.

[‡] 1 Cor. xi. 30.

[‡] Gal. v. 1.

not considering, what the few preceding or the two following verses would be sufficient to show, that the liberty and the bondage, of which the Apostle speaks, are a freedom from, and a subjection to, the yoke of circumcision, and the other ordinances of the Mosaic law.

“Be ye perfect,” says our blessed Lord to his disciples, “even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.” Hence the Methodist thinks to derive a support to his opinion, that believers may attain to perfection in this life, so as to be absolutely freed from the dominion of sin. Upon this opinion I shall have occasion to descant hereafter: I mention it at present, in order to exemplify the principle before us, by remarking, that the precept, taken in connection with the passage, which precedes, and from which it is a manifest conclusion, “Be ye therefore perfect,” is to be understood as referring, not to universal perfection, but to a forgiving and merciful disposition; and in fact appears to be only equivalent to the correspondent passage in the narrative of another Evangelist, “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”

There are several insulated passages, which are often applied in support of Calvinistic pre-

^y Matt. v. 48,

^z Luke vi. 36.

destination, in a sense incompatible with their context. I forbear at present to specify them. Of one however in particular I would remark, that, whatever difficulty may attend it, when taken by itself, the context supplies a most satisfactory solution. Allow the literal interpretation of the phrase, "that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh," no support is thereby furnished to the doctrine of absolute irrespective reprobation. It was before the plagues began to be inflicted, that the Lord announced to Moses, that he would "harden Pharaoh's heart";^a but it is at the same time a remarkable fact, that the threat was constantly suspended, in order (as it appears, and as was the case with respect to the people of Nineveh under a sentence of destruction passed on them by the Almighty^b;) that Pharaoh might have it in his power to "set his heart" to the judgments, which God was executing upon him, and to be obedient unto the word of the Lord. Five plagues had already been wrought in his presence by "the finger of God;" and he had continually and perversely hardened his heart against those testimonies of almighty power, which his very magicians, whom he had called in to rival them with their enchantments, were reluctantly compelled to ac-

^a Exod. iv. 21.

^b Jon. iii. 4, 5, 10.

knowledge; before the sentence of the divine wrath was accomplished against him, and “the Lord hardened his heart, as he had spoken unto Moses^c.” The measure of his iniquity was now full; and he had rendered himself by his own hardness and impenitent heart a vessel of wrath, so well fitted for destruction, that God would now have cut him off, as a punishment for his sins, but that he rather chose to endure him with much long-suffering, in order that he might thereby give a more conspicuous testimony of his wrath, and make his power to be more illustriously known. Let it be allowed then, that God did literally harden Pharaoh’s heart; it must also be allowed, that this his final obduracy was not the result of God’s absolute irrelative will; but was drawn down upon him by his own previous obstinacy and numerous provocations. That he hardened his own heart, was his sin; that the Lord hardened it, was his punishment: it was an act of righteous retributive justice upon an impenitent and obstinate sinner, who had despised the riches of God’s mercy and forbearance, and challenged the severity of his anger.

5. But further; as it is our business to “compare spiritual things with spiritual^d,” we

^c Exod. ix. 12.

^d. I Cor. ii. 3.

should be cautious not to fix our thoughts on some detached passage, and push it to its utmost extent ; but should rather examine, whether some other may not occur, which has a tendency to modify the former, and which (as part of the same divine revelation) has an equal claim to our regard. For, as our twentieth Article observes, “ it is not lawful so to expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another.”

“ Rejoice evermore^e,” is an apostolical precept ; agreeably to which our Lord hath assured us with indisputable truth, that “ his yoke is easy, and his burden is light^f :” but he also with equal truth pronounces a “ blessing on them that mourn^g ;” and warns us, that “ if any man will come after him, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow him^h.” Correct as each of these sentiments unquestionably is, and consistent as they are with one another, they may be converted into occasions of practices, totally at variance with themselves, and with the spirit of the Christian religion. Whilst from the former the worldly man may deduce a seeming sanction for indolence and inactivity, and in the latter the ascetic may perceive an obli-

^e 1 Theff. v. 16.

^g Matt. v. 4.

^f Matt. x. 30.

^h Luke ix. 23.

gation to unremitting penance and mortification; the sober minded Christian, by a discreet comparison of their respective imports, sees an injunction to deny himself every vicious enjoyment, and every recreation, which may interfere with his spiritual improvement; and at the same time an encouragement to persevere with cheerfulness in the pursuit of that wisdom, “ whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace.”

The same rule may not unaptly be applied to reconcile the seemingly hostile doctrines of grace and free-will. “ A new heart will I give you,” saith the Lord God to his people Israel, “ and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh: and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” But what says the Prophet in another place? “ I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his own ways,” saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

“ ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit^k.” From a partial survey of such passages as the former, the Manichæan or the Calvinist may argue, (and I see not how, with this confined view of the subject, we are to meet his argument,) that man is a mere passive machine, whose inclinations and whose conduct are regulated by a power, independent of his will, and subversive of his free agency. And why may not the Pelagian or the Socinian conclude, with equal reason, from such passages as the latter, that the free will of man is absolute; and that he is capable of repenting, and turning from his transgressions, and making himself a new heart and a new spirit, without any supernatural aid? The fact is, the truth lies between the two positions; and a comparison of them serves to point it out. For the renewing of the spirit of a man, neither the divine grace, nor the human will, is inefficacious. God works; and man must also work. “ God by his special grace preventing us doth put into our minds good desires; and by his continual help we bring the same to good effect^l;” or, to express the doctrine in one sentence of inspiration, we must “ work out our own salvation

^k Ezek. xviii. 30, 31, 32.

^l Collect for Easter.

“ with fear and trembling: for it is God,
 “ which worketh in us, both to will and to
 “ do, of his good pleasure ^m.”

6. In the comparifon of independent paf-
 fages, it is obvious to remark, as we proceed,
 that we fhould be careful to explain the more
 obfcure and difficult by the clearer and more
 eafy. “ The Holy Ghoft,” as Bifhop Hall ob-
 ferved in his difcourfe before the Synod of
 Dort, “ ought to be the judge of all contro-
 “ verfies; and thofe paffages or texts in the
 “ Bible, which feem to mention things ob-
 “ fcurely or elfe tranfiently, fhould be tried
 “ by thofe others, that fpeak out more plainly
 “ and clearly, and treat of the matters with
 “ defign ⁿ.” A diftinguifhed Prefbyter of our
 Church hath noticed, that this rule “ was laid
 “ down, although not ftrictly followed, by St.
 “ Auguftin ^o :” it were well, if the modern
 profefors of that father’s doctrines judged it
 more worthy of their attention.

Our Lord had faid to his Difciples, “ How
 “ hardly fhall they that have riches, enter into

^m Phil. ii. 12, 13.

ⁿ Brandt’s Hift. of the Reformation in the Low Coun-
 tries, iii. 32. book xx.

^o Daubeny’s Guide to the Church, p. 88. Ubi autem
 apertius ponuntur, ibi difcendum eft, quomodo in locis
 intelligantur obfcuris. *Auguft. de Doct. Chrift.* lib. iii.
 cap. xxvi.

“ the kingdom of God ^p :” but when he found them astonished at what probably appeared “ a hard saying,” he explained his intention by subjoining, “ how hard it is for them, that “ trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of “ God.” And he hath been graciously pleased by his holy Spirit to illustrate, for our benefit, many other positions, the intent of which we might otherwise have failed of apprehending.

Thus should we experience any perplexity about the interpretation of that controverted passage, “ He will have mercy on whom he “ will have mercy, and whom he will he harden ^q ;” and conceive it capable of denoting an arbitrary and irrelative will in God’s dealings with mankind: our understanding may be enlightened by such plain declarations as those which state, that “ blessed “ are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy ^r ;” that “ God resisteth the proud, and “ giveth grace to the humble ^s ;” that, “ the “ mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to “ everlasting upon them that fear him, and “ think of his commandments to do them ^t :” and that on the other hand, “ Because when “ the Gentiles knew God, they glorified him

p. Mark x. 23, 24.

s James iv. 6.

q Rom. ix. 18.

t Psalm ciii. 17, 18.

r Matt. v. 7.

“not as God, neither were thankful; for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections^u ;” that because “his people would not hearken to his voice, and Israel would none of him, so he gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust, and they walked in their own counsels^x :” and generally, that “he refuseth to hear those, who have set at nought his counsel, and would none of his reproof; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord^y.”

Or should we imagine that the Apostle, under the similitude of a potter “making one vessel to honour and another to dishonour^z,” intended to insinuate an unconditional election on the part of God in his dealings with individuals; the explicit declaration of the Prophet^a might convince us, that the similitude was intended to illustrate the dealings of God with respect to nations; and those also, not always at least unconditional, but liable to be influenced by the conduct of the nations themselves, even to such an extent, as for his purposes to be said to be altered, and his promise to be broken.

Or should we suppose, that “the purpose of

^u Rom. i. 21, 26.

^x Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12.

^y Prov. i. 25, 29. See the whole passage.

^z Rom. ix. 21.

^a Jer. xviii. 1—11. and compare Numb. xiv. 30, 34.

“ God according to election ^b,” noticed by St. Paul, had respect to the persons of Jacob and Esau ^c; the unequivocal language of Moses and of Malachi ^d might show, that it related to the nations, which should spring from them; according to the remark of Irenæus, that the conception of Rebecca was a prophecy concerning the two nations.

Or should we be led to doubt of the extent of the atonement made by Christ, by such passages as state, that he “ laid down his life “ for his sheep ^e ;” “ for his friends, who do “ his commandments ^f ;” for his “ church ^g ;” and that “ he gave his life a ransom for “ many ^h ;” and thence to infer that he did not die for all; other plain declarations may convince us, that, although eventually he died for a part only, inasmuch as a part only complies with the conditions, on which his blood is made effectual to salvation; yet such passages were not intended to limit the atonement made by his death; for that he died to save not his friends only, but “ his enemies;” not for the Church of God only, but “ for the

^b Rom. ix. 11.

^c Gen. xxv. 23.

^d Mal. i. 2, 3, 4. Ex quibus manifestum est, — partum Rebeccæ prophetiam fuisse duorum populorum. *Iren.* lib. iv. cap. 38.

^e John x. 15.

^f *Ibid.* xv. 13, 14.

^g Eph. v. 25.

^h Matt. xx. 28.

“ unjust, that he might bring them to God ;” not for the sheep only, that heard his voice, but for the sheep “ that were lost ;” not for the many only, but “ for all ⁱ :” for all men ; for every man ; for the world, the whole world ; not in the Calvinistic sense of all sorts of men, or some men of all sorts, the world of ^{*}the elect, and the like ; but in their plain and obvious sense, of the whole race of mankind, as contradistinguished from believers ; that as all had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift might come upon all men unto justification of life.

Or supposing again, that it were not evident to our apprehension, what St. Paul meant to convey by “ the Spirit dwelling in us,” and by our being “ led by the Spirit ^k ;” and that we were tempted to mistake ^mthe nature of his influence, as the enthusiast does, and refer it to some imaginary internal feeling ; we might be corrected by his stating expressly in another place, that “ the fruit of the Spirit is “ love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, “ goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ^l ;”

ⁱ Rom. v. 8, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Matt. xviii. 12. 1 Tim. ii. 6. 2 Cor. v. ⁿ14. Heb. ii. 9. John xii. 47. 1 John ii. 2. Rom. v. 12, 18.

^k Rom. viii. 9, 14.

^l Gal. v. 22.

as well as by the declaration of our Saviour with respect to those, who pretend to spiritual gifts, that “by their fruits we shall know them^m.”

Nor shall we suffer ourselves, on the authority of a few texts of doubtful or erroneous interpretation, to be seduced into the Moravian and Methodistical tenets, that a true Christian has a sensible and certain assurance of salvation, and is incapable of sin; or to adopt the doctrine of the Antinomian, that God sees no sin in believers; while we bear in mind the clear admonition of St. Paul, “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fallⁿ;” and the no less intelligible and universal confession of St. John, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and the truth is not in us^o.”

7. A farther rule, which I would propose to assist us in our interpretation of Scripture, unless indeed it be considered as a special modification of one of the foregoing, is, that where the same term is employed at different times and under different circumstances, we ought not to be satisfied with one independent description, but should compare and combine them together.

It is in pursuance of this principle, that we

^m Matt. vii. 20.

ⁿ 1 Cor. x. 12.

^o 1 John i. 8.

believe in three persons united in one Godhead ; and in the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. And it was from a disregard of this principle, that Noetus asserted, that the Father had united himself with the man Christ, and was born and crucified with him ; and that Sabellius pretended there was no difference between the persons of the Trinity, but that they were all one person under three names^p : that Nestorius divided Christ into two persons ; and Eutyches confounded in his person his two natures : that Arius denied him to be truly God ; and Apollinaris affirmed, that he was not really man^q.

I would apply this principle to the much controverted question of justification. “ We conclude,” says St. Paul, “ that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.” And again, “ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.” On these, and some similar texts, the Solifidian fastens : he overlooks, or despises, the testimony of another Apostle, who affirms that “ by works a

^p Mosheim, Cent. iii. part ii. chap. v.

^q See Bishop Horne’s Sermon on the Word Incarnate, Disc. vol. i. p. 205. Mosheim, Cent. v. part ii. chap. v. and Cent. iv. part ii. chap. v.

^r Rom. iii. 28.

^s Gal. ii. 16.

“man is justified, and not by faith only”;¹ and who thrice within a few sentences pronounces, that “faith without works is dead”;² he treats the epistle, wherein this testimony occurs, and which appears intended to obviate the false conclusions likely to be drawn from St. Paul’s words, as what Luther once lamented that he had called it, an epistle of straw: he goes so far perhaps, as to accuse the divinely inspired author “of false testimony, “of lying, of contradicting the Holy Spirit, “the Law, the Prophets, Christ, and all the “Apostles^x,” and so he persists in an unreserved and unqualified affirmation, that we are justified by faith alone.

Now as the epistle of St. James, not less than those of his brother in the Apostleship, forms part of the sacred canon; surely it would be both safer and more becoming, instead of confining ourselves to the testimony

¹ Jam. ii. 24.

² Ibid. 17, 20, 26.

^x Imo repertus est non nemo, qui eo audaciæ atque adeo impietatis processit, ut in Authorem ejus epistolæ; cui Jacobi nomen inscribitur, calamum liberius strinxerit, eumque falsitatis ac mendacii arguerit. Is fuit Althamerus, qui (citante Grotio) in Scriptorem, non modo innoxium, sed et divinum hæc verba indignabundus effudit. Directe (inquit) in Scripturam agit; citat Scripturas falso; et solus Spiritui sancto, Legi, Prophetis, Christo, Apostolisque omnibus contradicit. *Bulli Harm. Apost. Introd. sect. 3.*

of one alone, to compare and combine the declarations of both Apostles, as constituting consistent portions of the same holy revelation. And the result of such a comparison would probably be a conviction, that there is no inconsistency in the positions of the two sacred writers; but that "faith," in St. James's acceptance, signifies an inactive belief in the truths of the Gospel, not producing holiness of life, and, in St. Paul's, faith in Christ comprehending Christian holiness; that by "works," St. James intends a religious and charitable, that is a Christian, life; and St. Paul, the performances of man in his natural state, or a compliance with the outward ordinances, and sometimes with the moral obligations, of the Mosaic law: and that the position is accordingly true in one sense, but not in another, as that is true of Christ in his human nature, which is not true of him in his divine.

Election too, that other Shibboleth of a party, has two distinct scriptural significations, analogous to those borne by "the kingdom of heaven." As the kingdom of heaven sometimes signifies the whole body of professed Christians in this world, and sometimes "the assembly of just men made perfect" in another; so by the elect are intended sometimes all those persons, who are in covenant with God, and profess his religion, as all the people of the

Jews under the old dispensation, and all Christians under the new; sometimes they alone are intended, who give all diligence to make their lives agreeable to the doctrine, which they profess, and are chosen by God to eternal life on a foresight of their faith and obedience. However plainly the doctrine of God's election being absolute and unconditional may be asserted in the former signification of the term; the Scriptures give no sanction to the doctrine, if applied to the latter.

8. These interpretations will be confirmed by the application of another rule; namely, that we give diligent attention to the design and scope of the composition, which we are examining; instead of fixing upon it an arbitrary construction, foreign perhaps from the object of the author, and perhaps also incompatible with his principles. "It is a general and uncontested rule," as Archbishop Sharp remarks, "in the interpreting of Scripture and all other writings, that the scope of the author and the subject matter of his discourse is to fix and limit the sense of all his propositions; so that though a proposition be seemingly universal, yet it is to be extended no farther than the subject matter that is treated about."

That he might not do unnecessary violence to the feelings and prejudices of the Jews; and, at the same time, that he might open to their minds Almighty God's intention of admitting the Gentiles to a full share in the privileges of the Gospel covenant; our blessed Lord employed the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. The sinner, eager to avail himself of any pretext for deferring the amendment of his life, would fain consider the parable as pointing to individual penitents, and the reward bestowed on the labourer, who had wrought but one hour, as an emblem of forgiveness, promised to a late, it may be a death-bed repentance. His hopes are fallacious: as far at least as this parable is made the basis of them; for it has not any reference to Christians, or to repentance at all.

Equally fallacious is the doctrine of faith independent of Christian works, to which I have been just alluding; and that other kindred tenet of the absolute election of individuals to eternal life, and the consequent reprobation of others: fallacious, inasmuch as they rest on an assumption, that St. Paul was arguing for a different conclusion from that, which we apprehend to have been the real scope and design of his epistles. For, whereas the hypothesis of our adversaries must proceed upon the opinion, that he was distinguishing

between faith, and works, as parts of the same dispensation; the design of the Apostle appears to have been, to distinguish between the two dispensations of Moses and of Christ: and, whereas in the latter case their hypothesis presumes upon his arguments having a personal tendency; he appears in reality to be vindicating the justice of God in the election of nations, generally to be the instruments of his providence; and more especially of such, as he then chose to be the repositories of the Christian faith.

9. Much additional light may be thrown upon the subject of our inquiries, by an attention to the time, the persons, and other circumstances, with which it is connected: as Bishop Latimer remarked from St. Austin, "The circumstances of the Scriptures enlighten the Scriptures, and one Scripture doth expound another to a man that is studious, well-willing, and often calling upon God in continual prayer".²

When the malefactor addressed himself to his expiring Redeemer, (in whom perhaps he had never before had an opportunity of declaring his belief, and whom perhaps he had never before heard or seen;) and in the season of his distress, when his very Apostles had all

² Life of Ridley, p. 452.

forfaken him and fled, openly confeffed his divine character, and implored his compaffion ; “ Lord, remember me, when thou comeft into “ thy kingdom ^a :” our Saviour graciously accepted him, and faid, “ Verily, I fay unto thee “ To-day fhalt thou be with me in paradife.” But would it not be a moft delufive and mifchievous inference, were we to contend from this for the efficacy of the death-bed repentance of one, who had paffed his life in denying and difhonouring Chrift ?

Or becaufe, in allufion to the Jews, who rejected God’s gracious offers of mercy, and were therefore rejected from being his people, our Saviour pronounced, that “ many are called, but few chofen ^b ;” are we therefore to admit the predeftinarian doctrine, that a fmall part of mankind is abfolutely elected by God to everlasting happinefs, from which the great bulk are abfolutely rejected ?

Or becaufe St. Paul, who was “ a chofen “ vefel ^c” of Chrift for the propagation of the Gofpel, was infantly converted to a belief in the truth by a heavenly vifion ; are we to expect, that the hardened finner will now experience an inftantaneous converfion from his fins, by an irrefiftible act of divine grace ?

^a Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

^b Matt. xx. 16.

^c Acts ix. 15.

Or because the Apostle describes his Gentile converts, previously to their admission into the Christian Church, as “ dead in trespasses and “ sins, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise^d ;” are we now to address a congregation of baptized believers, as unregenerate: thereby stripping Christ’s holy ordinance of its sacramental character ; and, by an act of our individual authority, annulling the covenant of God ?

Or because the holy Spirit operated in an extraordinary manner on the Apostles and first Christians, are we to glory in his irresistible and sensible impulses ; and to affirm, in the language of Methodism, that “ the Spirit is “ visibly poured out in our assemblies ;” that “ the Holy Ghost descends in a glorious manner ;” that he “ comes like a rushing mighty “ wind, and moves over the whole congregation ;” or that “ the great God in a glorious “ manner fills and overshadows our souls ;” that “ the Holy Ghost comes upon us, and the “ power of the Highest overshadows us ;” that “ we daily experience the outgoings and incomings of the Holy Spirit in the sanctuary “ of our hearts ;” and that “ we can feel him “ daily filling our souls and bodies, as plainly

^d Eph. ii. 1. 12.

“ as we feel the air which we breathe, or the
“ food we eat ? ”

If these be errors, as I believe them, and on some future occasion shall attempt with God's good blessing to prove them, to be ; they arise in a great degree from inattention to the rule of interpretation now before us ; which directs us to consider, not only what is said, but the various circumstances, under which it is spoken : a rule, to the neglect of which some of the most extravagant peculiarities of Methodism, both in opinion and in practice, may be referred.

10. To the foregoing rules for the interpretation of Scripture, only one more remains to be added ; which however is of the most extensive application and utility : I mean, that no doctrine, however specious, is to be admitted as part of the Gospel, which is not agreeable to the general tenour of the whole ; in conformity with the prudent decision of our Church in her 17th article, that “ we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they
“ be generally set forth to us in Holy Scrip-
“ ture.”

This, as I have already said, is of the most extensive application : nor do I conceive, that

^e See Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 202. 223. 280. 237. 163. 166. 205. &c.

any of the popular doctrines, of faith independent of Christian works ; or Calvinistic predestination ; or irresistible grace ; or the perceptible influence of the Holy Spirit ; or regeneration, distinguished from the inward spiritual grace of baptism ; or an instantaneous and special conversion ; or a full and infallible assurance of salvation ; or a sinless perfection in the true Christian ; can in any way stand its test.

These are the points, upon which the charge, that we are not preachers of the Gospel, principally turns ; and to which therefore your attention will be directed in the succeeding lectures. I am well aware, that most, if not all, of these subjects have been often and ably discussed ; and that the theological student, who wishes to investigate them thoroughly, must be referred to other sources for more ample satisfaction. Still to bring the subjects forward in something of a connected form, and for the specific purpose, which has been stated ; thereby to direct the thoughts of the younger part of this assembly to the present state of religious opinions amongst us, on which, it is especially necessary, that they should be informed ; to apprize them of the nature of the objections, which are perpetually alleged against the great body of the national Clergy ; and to furnish them, if it may be, with some leading principles, by which those objec-

tions may be repelled ; with the view, not of superseding, but of encouraging, more extensive inquiries on the matters in debate ; has appeared to me an attempt, calculated to promote the knowledge of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is with this design, that I have ventured to engage in my present undertaking : however weak and imperfect may be the execution in other respects, at least I trust, that it will not be disgraced by that intemperance of language, and that acrimony of invective, which sometimes mark the accusations, that have been levelled against us. To “ speak the truth in love^f,” should be the resolution, under divine grace, of every follower, and much more of every minister of Christ. Zealous as we may, and ought to, be in the propagation of our religious opinions, it is our duty, as “ the servants of the Lord, to be gentle unto all men, patient and forbearing, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves^g.” And that man strangely mistakes the manner of spirit he is of, who knows not, that peaceableness, and gentleness, and mercy, as well as purity, are inseparable characteristics of “ the wisdom that is from above^h :” and that Christian charity ought never to be sacri-

^f Eph. iv. 15.

^g 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

^h Jam. iii. 17.

ficed even for the promotion of evangelical truth.

Now unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three persons in the unity of one Godhead, be ascribed all might, majesty, and dominion, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

MATT. XIX. 16, 17.

And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

THIS reply of our Lord is judged capable of two interpretations. By Calvin it is construed into an intimation, that eternal life is not to be attained by obedience to the laws of God^a. As if Christ had said, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments; but thou canst not keep the commandments: therefore thou canst do no good thing, that thou mayst have eternal life. The other interpretation is that which is sanctioned by our Church; who represents Christ as “ declaring by these words, “ that the laws of God be the very way, that

^a Calv. Inst. lib. iii. cap. xviii. §. 9.

“ doth lead to everlasting life;” and accordingly pronounces, “ that this is to be taken for a
 “ most true lesson, taught by Christ’s own
 “ mouth, that the works of the moral com-
 “ mandments of God, be the very true works
 “ of faith, which lead to the blessed life to
 “ come^b.”

Of these two very different significations the former has nothing to recommend it, but the supposition, that the inquirer was desirous of establishing a presumptuous claim to salvation upon the fancied merit of his own righteousness: a supposition, which seems to derive less support from the narrative of the sacred historian, than from the hypercritical refinement of the commentator. Of the latter, and, I think it may be safely added, the more obvious signification, the circumstances will warrant us in asserting, that it is more agreeable to the general tenour of our Lord’s instructions; to the general frankness and simplicity of his character; to the high esteem, which he uniformly expressed and encouraged for the moral law; and to the cheerfulness, and perspicuity, with which he communicated information in the great affair of man’s happiness; than an interpretation which changes the

^b Homilies; Second Part of the Sermon of Good Works, p. 41. Oxford edit.

whole character of the reply; which tends to disparage those commandments, “the least of which whosoever shall break and shall teach men so,” is pronounced by Christ himself to be “the least in the kingdom of heaven^c,” which is calculated to perplex the mind, and deaden the exertions, of the devout inquirer after happiness; whilst it invests a clear and merciful exhortation of Him, who is “the light and life of the world^d,” with the illusive and mysterious obscurity of an oracular response.

Influenced in our judgment by such considerations, and sanctioned withal in our interpretation by the authority of our pure and evangelical Church, we maintain the indispensable necessity of obedience to the moral law, as a condition of eternal salvation: and urging upon our hearers the obligation of their baptismal vow, whilst we call upon them on the one hand to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, we fail not to warn them on the other, that “if they will enter into life, they must keep the commandments.”

That “the children of this world,” indifferent to their everlasting welfare, should turn away from such “preachers of righteousness,” might excite more concern, than astonish-

^c Matt. v. 19.

^d John i. 4. viii. 12.

ment: but that "the children of light," that Christians, who profess to be, and many of whom (we doubt not) really are, solicitous for the salvation of their souls, should "forsake" "the assembling of themselves together" to exhortations such as these; that they should condemn the preacher, as a setter forth of strange doctrines; and reprobate his instructions, as a departure from the Gospel of Christ: a case like this would surely not be expected; and, unless on indisputable evidence, would scarcely be admitted to exist.

To obviate however any charge of misrepresentation, with respect to the conduct of our accusers; and at the same time to prevent my own sentiments from being misunderstood; it appears desirable, that the case, which is to be proposed for our present consideration, should be stated with greater precision.

I suppose it, then, to be the practice of the generality of our national clergy, in discharge of their duty as preachers of the Gospel, to divide their attention between faith in the Christian doctrines, and the practice of Christian holiness, or good works: to impress them with equal earnestness upon their hearers: to describe them, as jointly and equally necessary to the attainment of everlasting life: to represent them, not as meritorious causes, (God forbid!) but as indispensable conditions of happi-

ness : in a word, to publish in their discourses, what the Church appoints them to pronounce in the Liturgy, “ the absolution and remission
“ of sins to all them, that truly repent and un-
“ feignedly believe Christ’s holy Gospel :” so that as the venerable Latimer more largely expresses the position of the Church, “ whosoever
“ from the bottom of his heart is sorry for his
“ sins, and studieth to leave them, and live
“ uprightly, and believeth in our Saviour, con-
“ fessing that he came into this world to make
“ amends for our sins ; this man or woman
“ shall not perish, but have forgiveness of sins,
“ and so obtain everlasting life^e.” Offence is taken at our preaching, as an unscriptural exposition of the terms of the Christian covenant : we are told that our justification and salvation are to be wrought by faith alone, independently of good works ; that faith is all in all ; and that, by uniting with faith any other condition or qualification for happiness, we forfeit our title to the appellation of Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel.

The Calvinistic Founder of Methodism boldly demanded, “ Who dares assert, that we are
“ not justified merely by an act of faith, with-
“ out any regard to works, past, present, or to

^e Latimer’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 371.

“ come’?” He condemns the assertion, that good works are a necessary condition of our being justified in the sight of God, as “ a new “ gospel,” which “ he is sure is not what the “ Apostles preached; and which is as contrary “ to the doctrine of the Church of England, “ and the whole tenour of the Gospel, as light “ is contrary to darkness:” and for this cause he reprobates “ the generality of the Clergy “ of the Church of England, as preachers of a “ new gospel, as blind guides;” and laments over a venerable Prelate of our Church, as no better than “ a Roman Cardinalg.” His Arminian antagonist affirmed, that “ the condition of our justification is faith alone, and “ not good works^h,” that “ the most destructive of all those errors, which Rome, the “ mother of abominations, hath brought forth, “ compared to which transubstantiation and a “ hundred more are trifles light as air, is, that “ we are justified by works, or (to express the “ thing a little more decently) by faith and “ worksⁱ.” The charge continues to be maintained, not only by their followers, but by

^f Whitefield, Third Journal, p. 2. Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared, part ii. p. 151.

^g Works, vol. iv. p. 15, 16, 28.

^h Wesley’s Journal, N^o. IV. p. 17.

ⁱ Ibid. N^o. III. p. 89.

some even of our own brethren, more immediately in the bosom of the Church. One member of our Establishment censures those, “ who look to a righteousness of their own, “ made up of terms, qualifications, conditions, “ and such like trumpery, for acceptance with “ God^k.” Another condemns, as unscriptural, the notions of those, who “ dare proudly and “ arrogantly teach, that obedience to Jesus “ is the condition of salvation;” and deprecates “ zeal for holiness,” unless accompanied with his favourite notions of salvation, as “ a “ dreadful delusion^l.” A third vehemently protests against all duties, all obligations, as necessary to salvation; and pronounces, that “ the single qualification, expected by Christ, “ is, that a man believe the Gospel^m.” And it is not without an air of superciliousness and contempt, that the advocate of that party in the Church, which assumes to itself the exclusive denomination of evangelical Ministers, notices “ the doctrine of the most orthodox of “ his opponents at their most orthodox moments; that is, that we are justified by faith

^k *Pietas Oxoniensis*, p. 73. 2d edit. by Sir Richard Hill. Dr. Nowel's Answer to ditto, p. 124.

^l *Mason's Spiritual Treasury*, edited and recommended by the Rev. W. Romaine, p. 91. and 29.

^m *Prop against all Despair*, p. 15. by Robert Hawker, D. D.

“and good works together; or,” says he, “as they often express it, that faith and good works are the conditions of our justificationⁿ.”

Now I can have no scruple in admitting the truth of the doctrine, that “we are justified by faith only.” It is the doctrine of Scripture: it is the doctrine of the Reformation: it is the doctrine of the Church of England: If for some have set my hand to it, in what I believe to be its scriptural signification; and, if it be scripturally understood, I would forfeit that hand, rather than renounce the doctrine.

In order then to set this important doctrine in its proper light, I shall endeavour to prove, 1st, That the salvation and justification, mentioned in the passages alluded to, are noticed with a view to the admission of Christians into favour and covenant with God, and not immediately to their ultimate forgiveness and admission into everlasting happiness:—And 2^{dly}, That the faith, by or through which alone they are said to be saved and justified, is not intended to signify faith in opposition or contradistinction to good, that is to say, to Christian works. The former of these propositions I conceive to be of primary importance

ⁿ True Churchmen ascertained, p. 217. by the Rev. J. Overton.

to the argument, and the latter to bear upon it with much collateral force. Having therefore endeavoured to clear our way in the first place by the establishment of their truth, I shall then feel myself at liberty to make such remarks, as will occur upon a general survey of the question.

As a preliminary step however, it may here incidentally be remarked, that I use the words "justified" and "saved" indiscriminately. I do so, because they appear to me to be so used in Scripture; and to be so adopted by our Church, as on other occasions, so more especially in the indiscriminate application of the terms, "justification" and "salvation," as the title of one of her Homilies. Thus much at least I take to be certain, that persons are represented as being both justified, and saved, on their admission into the Christian covenant: justified, or accounted righteous before God by virtue of the imputed righteousness of Christ; saved, or delivered from the penalty of sin, by the ransom of Christ's death, originally paid for mankind in general, and now specially applied to themselves.

In the first place, then, Christians are represented as justified, or saved; as placed in a state of justification, or salvation; as being esteemed just for the merits of Christ; as being saved from the guilt, dominion, and pu-

nishment of sin ; and as being reconciled to, and admitted into favour with, God ; when they originally become partakers of the Gospel covenant : or as our Church explicitly affirms in her Catechism, that by baptism they are “ called to a state of salvation ;” and in her Homily, that they are justified when they are baptized^o.

I might rest the proof of this position on a general reference to any one of St. Paul's epistles ; which I select in preference to the other books of the New Testament, because, as it is to his authority that we are referred for the doctrine of justification by faith alone, his authority is the most unquestionable for deciding, what he meant by justification. And I might be satisfied with a candid answer to the following question, Whether Christians in general are not perpetually mentioned by him, as already justified or saved.

It may however be more convincing, if I adduce a few of the numerous passages, in which the doctrine is plainly asserted.

“ By grace are ye saved through faith^p,” says the Apostle to the Gentile converts at Ephesus : rather, *ye have been saved*, εσε σερωσμενοι.

“ Being justified by faith, we have peace

^o Homilies, p. 24. Oxf. Edit. ^p Eph. ii. 8.

“with God,” is his language to the converted Jews at Rome¹: *δικαιωθετες εκ πιστεως*, *having been justified*, we have peace. To the same Romans he says, “We are saved by hope² ;” rather, *we were saved*, *εσωθημεν*.

God “*hath saved us*, and called us with an “holy calling³,” he affirms in his epistle to Timothy, connecting their being put into a state of salvation, with their being called to a profession of the Gospel.

In his epistle to Titus, he unites salvation and justification, describing them as the fruit of baptismal regeneration, and as the introduction to the inheritance of eternal life: “According to his mercy he saved us, by the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the “Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; “that being justified by his grace, we should “be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life⁴.”

A similar combination occurs in his first epistle to the Corinthians, to whom he speaks of their justification as a past event, coupling it with baptismal regeneration and sanctification: “Such were some of you; but ye are “washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are jus-

¹ Rom. v. 1.

² 2 Tim. i. 9.

³ Ibid, viii. 24.

⁴ Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7.

“tified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by
“the Spirit of our God.” The allusion is
in a past tense, and should have been render-
ed accordingly: ἡγιασθητε, ἐδικαιωθητε, ye *have*
been, or *were* sanctified; ye *have been*, or *were*
justified.

To the Corinthians again he says, that they
are now in a state of salvation, making their
continuance in it conditional, or dependent
upon the conformity of their conduct to his
instructions: “I declare unto you the Gospel
“which I preached unto you, which also ye
“have received, and wherein ye stand: by
“which also ye are saved, if ye keep in me-
“mory what I preached unto you, unless ye
“have believed in vain x.”

To the Romans again he mentions their
justification, as an event already passed, under
the figure of freedom from sin; and describes
it, as obliging them to holiness and righteous-
ness in this world, and as conducting them to
everlasting life: “Being made free from sin,
“ye became the servants of righteousness y:”
and a few verses below, “Being made free
“from sin, and become servants of God, ye
“have your fruit unto holiness, and the end
“everlasting life z:” *having been made free,*

v 1 Cor. vi. 11.

y Rom. vi. 18.

x Ibid. xv. 1.

z Ibid. v. 22.

and, *having been made servants*, ελευθερωθεντες, and, δουλωθεντες; pointing, as it should seem, to some remarkable time, namely, their admission into the Christian Church.

To the Colossians he speaks of their reconciliation to God, also as a past event, to be followed by holiness of life, and by steadfastness in the faith and hope of the Gospel: "You
 " that were sometime alienated, and enemies
 " in your mind by wicked works, yet now
 " hath Christ reconciled in the body of his
 " flesh through death, to present you holy,
 " and unblameable, and unproveable in his
 " sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded
 " and settled, and be not moved away from
 " the hope of the Gospel."

Agreeably to these several instances of the application of such phrases to particular persons and societies, he describes the whole body of Christians by the appellation of "the saved," οἱ σωζομενοι, in opposition to unbelievers: "the
 " preaching of the cross is to them that perish,
 " foolishness; but unto us which are saved," τοις δε σωζομενοις ἡμιν, "it is the power of God"^b. And St. Luke also, in the Acts of the Apostles, employs the same term to denote believers in general, when he says, that "the Lord added

^a Col. i. 21, 22, 23.

^b 1 Cor. i. 18.

“unto the Church daily^c,” not such as should be saved, as our version renders the passage, according neither to the letter, nor to the spirit, of the original; but *τους σωζομενους*, *the saved*, or, as Parkhurst translates it, *those that were saved*.

From these passages, which I have selected, because they exhibit the doctrine to be established in several points of view, and in connection with various parts of the Gospel dispensation, I apprehend it to be made sufficiently clear, that the justification or salvation, mentioned in many passages of Scripture, which state us to be justified or saved by faith alone, has respect to the admission of Christians into favour and covenant with God:— (“This,” as our Reformers say, “is the very plain ordinary way, by the which God hath determined, that man being of age and coming to christendom, should be justified. For, as for infants, it is to be believed that their justification is wrought by the secret operation of the Holy Ghost in their baptism, they being offered in the faith of the Church. And this justification may be called the first justification, that is to say, our first coming into God’s house, which is the Church of Christ, at which coming we be received and

^c Acts ii. 47.

“admitted to be of the flock and family of
 “our Saviour Christ^d.”)—and that it has not
 view to their ultimate forgiveness and ad-
 mission to everlasting happiness, except in as
 far as they comply with the conditions, which
 at that time they engage to perform.

“We may observe,” (I employ the words of
 that profound theologian Dr. Barrow,) “that
 “in the Scripture style those persons are said
 “to be saved, who are only in a way towards
 “salvation, although they do not arrive thi-
 “ther; and the means conducing to salvation
 “are said to save, although their effect may
 “be defeated; σωζομενοι and σεσωσμενοι are
 “terms applied to all Christians; and Christ is
 “ὁ σωσας, he that hath saved them, although
 “some of them ειλην επιτευσαν, have believed in
 “vain or to no effect, forsaking and renounc-
 “ing their faith; and baptism saves them
 “who partake it, although being washed, they
 “return to their wallowing in the mire^e.”
 Again; “It was the Apostles’ method,” he
 remarks, “to declare and inculcate the main
 “points of the Christian history and doctrine;
 “attesting to the one and proving the other
 “by testimonies and arguments proper to that
 “purpose: and whoever of their hearers de-

^d Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man, 1543. Article of Justification.

^e Il. Barrow’s Works, vol. iii. p. 324.

“ clared himself persuaded of the truth of
 “ what they taught, that he did heartily assent
 “ thereto, and resolved to profess and practise
 “ accordingly, him, without more to do, they
 “ presently baptized, and instated him in the
 “ privileges appertaining to Christianity; or,
 “ in St. Paul’s language, did justify him, ac-
 “ cording to their subordinate manner, as the
 “ ministers of God.” And the same very
 learned writer elsewhere remarks, what might
 serve to cut short a great deal of unnecessary
 controversy on this point, that “ the justifica-
 “ tion, which St. Paul discourseth of, seemeth
 “ in his meaning, only or especially to be that
 “ act of grace, which is dispensed to persons
 “ at their baptism, or their entrance into the
 “ Church; when they openly professing their
 “ faith, and undertaking the practice of Chris-
 “ tian duty, God most solemnly and formally
 “ doth absolve them from all guilt, and ac-
 “ cepteth them into a state of favour with
 “ him.”

The inference to be deduced from this doc-
 trine, in connection with our present subject,
 is obvious. Whatever St. Paul may mean,
 when he affirms, that we are justified or saved
 by faith; and however exclusive justifying or
 saving faith may be admitted to be, or how-

† If. Barrow’s Works, vol. ii. p. 45.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 64.

ever completely (to use the language of the Homily) "faith shutteth good works out from " the office of justifying ;" that exclusion will not apply to the conditions, the observance or disregard of which affects our attainment of everlasting life.

I now proceed to my other proposition, that the faith, by or through which we are said to be saved or justified, is not intended to signify faith, in opposition or contradistinction to good, that is to say, to Christian, works.

Now if the former case be established, the latter appears to follow of course. Good works, by which I mean Christian works, and by which none but Christian works can be meant in a discussion of the present subject, (for "good works," as the Homily affirms, "cannot be done without a lively faith in "Christ^h,") such as obedience, godliness, holiness, charity, or by whatever term or terms it may be thought proper to signify the fruits of a Christian faith, could not have been performed by men, before they became Christians; and of course could hardly have been intended by the Apostle in his contemplation of a blessing, which was annexed to their admission into the Christian Church.

But as a clear view of this proposition is at

^h Page 25. Oxf. edit.

least of much secondary importance ; and as the illustration of it may serve to throw light at the same time upon the former case, relating to the time of our justification in the Apostle's sense ; I propose to consider more fully the three several cases, in which he asserts, that we are justified, or saved, by faith, without works or without the deeds of the law.

1. To meet the arguments of a heathen, who, reasoning " after the tradition of men, " after the rudiments of the world," might contend against the Gospel on the plea of its being unnecessary ; and urge the light of nature, as a sufficient guide for their conduct; and the goodness of their lives, as a sufficient ground of expecting the divine favour ; we may conceive the Apostle warning his Gentile converts in the following manner, to " beware " lest any man spoil them through philosophy " and vain deceit."

It is true, that although God was not pleased to favour you, and the rest of the heathen world, with an especial revelation of his perfections ; " he nevertheless left not himself " without witness among you, in that he did " good, and gave you rain from heaven and " fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with joy " and gladness^k." And although he was not

ⁱ Col. ii. 8.

^k Acts xiv. 17.

pleased to favour you with an especial revelation of his will; he nevertheless “made you
“a law unto yourselves, by giving you a con-
“science, which bore witness in your hearts,
“and thoughts which accused or else excused
“one another¹.” But then, as to the know-
ledge which you had of the Deity, when you
“knew God, you glorified him not as God,
“but changed the glory of the uncorruptible
“God into an image made like to corruptible
“man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts,
“and creeping things^m.” And as to the dis-
charge of your moral duty, and the warnings
of your conscience, you provoked God by
your wickedness to withdraw his assistance
from you; so that you have been “given over
“to vile affections, and to a reprobate,” or
undiscerning, “mind, to do those things which
“are not convenientⁿ,” and to “work all un-
“cleanness with greediness^o.” “You walked
“in the lusts of the flesh; you fulfilled the
“desires of the flesh and of the mind; you
“were by nature the children of wrath, and
“were dead in trespasses and sins^p.”

What was to become of creatures in such a sinful and abandoned state? The anger of God, “whom you did not like to retain in

¹ Rom. ii. 14, 15.

^m Rom. i. 21, 23.

ⁿ Ibid. 26, 28.

^o Eph. iv. 19.

^p Eph. ii. 1, 3.

“ your knowledge^q,” was fallen upon you: the arm of God, “ who will render to every man according to his deeds^r,” was raised to punish you: “ indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,” which are allotted to “ every soul of man that doeth evil^s,” must have been also your lot. “ Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise,” you were “ without hope,” as you were “ without God in the world^t.”

What was to become of creatures in so desperate a state? One remedy alone remained. “ Now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ^u.” “ You, who were dead in trespasses and sins, hath he quickened^x.” Converts to that “ Gospel, which is the power of God, unto salvation to every one that believeth,” “ *by grace YE HAVE BEEN SAVED through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast^z.*”

Such I apprehend to be the line of argument, pursued more or less directly by the Apostle, when he notices the condition of the Gentile world. And the purport of the whole

^q Rom. i. 28.

^t Eph. ii. 12.

^y Rom. i. 16.

^r Ibid. ii. 6.

^u Ibid. 13.

^z Eph. ii. 8, 9.

^s Ibid. 8, 9.

^x Ibid. i. 5.

^z Eph. ii. 8, 9. εἶς θεσωσμενος.

appears to be, that he might convince his Gentile converts of their sinful, abandoned, and desperate situation, before their conversion to Christianity; of the necessity, under which they lay, if they desired the divine favour, of becoming disciples of Christ and embracing the Gospel; of their great and unmerited happiness in being brought into a state of salvation by faithfully embracing it; and of the little reason they had to consider their call and their subsequent justification, as in any degree the reward of any previous merits of their own, instead of a free and gratuitous act of mercy on the part of God. For, let it be observed, that in the passage to which I have last alluded, no opposition whatever appears to have been intended between the "faith" and "works" of the Ephesians; no preference of one over the other; in a word, no comparison of one with the other. The intended opposition is between the free "grace" of God, which called them to a profession of the Gospel, and their own "works" previously to that vocation, of which they might be disposed to boast, as the meritorious cause of their being called: as in the article, wherein our Church briefly comprises the substance of St. Paul's doctrine on this head, it is asserted, that "we are accounted righteous before God, only FOR *the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus*

“Christ by faith, and not FOR our own works and deservings^z,” and as in the most celebrated confessions of the reformed Churches, it is distinctly and cautiously noted, that by “being justified by faith alone is intended the “being justified by grace alone, and not by the “merit of our works^a.” And the “faith,” through which the Ephesians are said to “be saved,” or rather to “have been saved,” to have been admitted to the privileges of the Gospel covenant, is so far from being a faith distinguished from Christian works, that it is in fact not distinguished from any works whatsoever.

2. Suppose again, that a Jew were object-

^z Art. xi.

^a Quod authenticas ecclesiarum reformati nominis confessiones attinet, certum est eas omnes, vel saltem earum primas ac nobilissimas, a nostris partibus veluti ex professo stare. Quippe etiam illæ quoque doceant, *Ex fide sola sine operibus hominem justificari*; effatum tamen illud eo sensu explicant, quem nos pronis ulnis amplectamur. Scilicet disertis verbis monent Confessionum Authores, sententiam istam figurate accipiendam esse, ita ut in *Fidei* nomine *Gratia*, quæ ei ex adverso respondet, intelligatur; atque idem sit *sola Fide justificari*, quod *sola Gratia, non ex operum Merito*, justificari: ac proprie loquendo, fidem cæterasque virtutes bonaque opera ad justificationem æque valere, atque esse necessaria: nec quicquam magis fidei in isto negotio tribuendum, quam cæteris virtutibus; adeoque se, quatenus a justificatione bona opera excludunt, eatenus et fidem ipsam rejicere. *Bulli Harm. Apost. Diff. I. cap. vi. sect. 1.*

ing to the necessity of Christianity, his objection would take a different turn. He would object, that God had specially revealed his will to the Jews already; that he had given them a law for the regulation of their conduct; and that he had made them partakers of his covenant.

The argument of the Apostle would consequently take a different direction in reply; but it would lead to the same conclusion as that, which we have been just following. We may accordingly imagine him allowing the superior privileges of the Jews, in that “to them were committed the oracles of God^b,” and “to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose were the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen^c.”

These things, I say, he would allow. But still he would contend, that the law, to which they laid claim, was not sufficient; that it required of them a perfect obedience; that it pronounced a “curse upon every one, who continued not in all things,” whether of a ceremonial or moral nature, “which are writ-

^b Rom. iii. 2.

^c Rom ix. 4, 5.

“ ten in the book of the law, to do them^d ;” that it provided no sufficient atonement for sin, no means of reconciling the sinner to God ; that as “ all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” so “ no man could be justified by the law in the sight of God^e :” that, in consequence, the Jew, no less than the Gentile, stood in need of a Redeemer ; and that such redemption was offered to them by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, “ whom God had set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare” (repeats the Apostle) “ his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus^f .”

Such is the regular course of the Apostle’s argument with respect to the Jews ; and so we are prepared for his general conclusion, that “ a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law^g .”

But are we hence to infer, that St. Paul intended by this decision to give a preference to Christian faith above Christian holiness ? Undoubtedly not. His language is strictly of the same import as that, which he employed in a

^d Gal. iii. 10.

^f Ibid. 24, 25, 26.

^e Rom. iii. 23.

^g Ibid. 28.

speech to the Jews of Antioch ; where, having declared that “ through Jesus was preached unto them the forgiveness of sins,” he adds, “ And *by him* all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified *by the law* of Moses ^h.” And the whole scope of his argument requires us to understand the manifest, decided, and important superiority, which he ascribes to the Christian over the Mosaic dispensation ; to the atonement made by Christ over the deeds of the law, both ceremonial and moral, which could not be perfectly performed, and by the non-performance of which the benefits of the covenant were forfeited. But it is strangely to misconceive the Apostle’s reasoning, and to misrepresent his conclusion ; if we contend, that he designed to establish any comparison, distinction, or opposition between faith and works, as parts of the same dispensation.

3. Again ; we find a similar conclusion, implying the same sort of distinction, upon a question somewhat dissimilar.

When the Jews, who had been converted to the Christian faith, “ zealous of the law ⁱ,” to which by education and national prejudices they were closely attached, insisted on the ne-

^h Acts xiii. 38, 39.

ⁱ Ibid. xxi. 20.

cessity of maintaining circumcision and the other ordinances of the Jewish ritual; St. Paul, in concert with the apostolical college, was earnest in exhorting them, to “stand fast” in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and not to be entangled again in “the yoke of bondage.^k” And he discusses the question at large, especially in his epistle to the Galatians, supporting his judgment by a variety of arguments, all of which hinge upon this single point. “We, who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified^l.”

What now does he mean in this passage, considered fairly in connection with the question before him, by “the works of the law?” Has it the most distant relation to the works of a Christian life?—And what does he mean by “the faith of Jesus Christ?” Is there any consideration, which will confine it to faith in Christ, as contradistinguished from obedience?—Evidently by “the works of the law” he

^k Gal. v. 1.

^l Gal. ii. 15, 16.

understands those ceremonial observances, those “weak and beggarly elements, whereunto the Jewish converts desired again to be in bondage^m ;” and by “the faith of Christ,” that active, enlarged, and comprehensive principle, which he describes in the course of his argument ; when he says, that “in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but *faith which worketh by love*ⁿ ;” and which he elsewhere denominates by different equivalent terms in two parallel passages ; where he informs the same Galatians, that “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creature*^o ;” and the Corinthians, that “circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but **THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD**^p .”

These remarks upon the several cases, wherein St. Paul speaks of our justification by faith, will probably throw light upon the former position, that we are justified on our admission into covenant with God. And although, as was before observed, the establishment of that position might be sufficient for our purpose ; and although these remarks do not bear so directly upon the subject of our immediate inquiry ; I am willing to persuade

^m Gal. iv. 19.

^o Ibid. vi. 15.

ⁿ Ibid. v. 6.

^p I Cor. vii. 19.

myself, that they will not have appeared irrelevant: but that they may be considered to supply an important collateral evidence in support of the truth; by showing, that the fancied distinction, which this great Apostle is so often represented to make between Christian faith, and Christian works, to the great disparagement of the latter, does in reality not exist in his writings; but is founded on a misconception of his argument, and a consequent misrepresentation of his doctrines. Such a misrepresentation was probably of very early date, and gave occasion to “the false and pestilent conceits of some persons, who, mistaking St. Paul’s expressions and doctrine, perverted them to the maintenance of Solifidian, Eunomian, and Antinomian principles, greatly prejudicial to good practice.” And it appears to have been a sense of its fallacy and danger, which, in the judgment of Austin and of many of the ancients, prompted the rest of the Apostles to be more assiduous and earnest in the recommendation of Christian holiness; and more especially induced

¶ Barrow’s Works, vol. ii. p. 57.

¶ Illud etiam notatu haud indignum est, quod veterum multi (eosque inter Augustinus) censent, epistolam Jacobi, et Johannis primam, et Judæ, et eam quæ Petri secunda dicitur, scriptas adversus eos, qui Paulinas Epistolas prave interpretantes, fidem dicebant sine bonis operibus

St. James to insist so strongly on the necessity of a lively operative faith; to contend that “by *works* a man is justified, and *not by faith only*;^s” to represent “faith as made perfect by works^t;” and to assert, and to reiterate his assertion, not without an appearance of contempt for the “vanity” of the opinions he was correcting, “that faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone^u.”

Having thus endeavoured to clear our way by removing, what appear to me, certain erroneous and unscriptural notions, by which it was obstructed, I am at liberty to take a more general survey of the subject; and to prove from an enlarged view of the sacred writings, that good works are a condition, indispensably necessary for those, who would derive any ultimate benefit from their participation in the Gospel covenant, and be finally justified in the sight of God. I say “finally justified;” for, inasmuch as the justification noticed by St. Paul, which we have considered to be (as the learned Barrow represents the Apostle’s doctrine) “the immediate consequent or special adjunct of baptism^x,” avowedly takes effect

ad salutem sufficere. See Bishop Bull’s *Harmonia Apost.* Diff. II. cap. iv. sect. 2. and Bishop Horne’s *Sixteen Sermons*, p. 65.

^s Jam. ii. 24.

^t Ibid. 22.

^u Ibid. 17, 20, 26.

^x Works, vol. ii. p. 59.

in this world; and as our Saviour no less indisputably speaks of our justification "in the "day of judgment", we hold ourselves warranted in distinguishing, with Cranmer and his brethren in the Reformation^z, between our first and our final justification; and in maintaining with the Homily, after Chrysoftom, that justification or salvation once had, may be "lost again": notwithstanding the supercilious rejection of the doctrine by our opponents as "a Popish and a Socinian notion," "of the "very essence of Popery," "the offspring of "pride opposing the word of truth". For we are not to be deterred from our adherence to what we esteem the truth of Scripture, by the stratagem, rather ingenious than creditable, of an invidious appellation; conceiving it to have been piously and wisely answered by a Sovereign of our own, "To say that an "argument is naught, because the Papists "make use of it, or that a thing is good, because it is practised by some of the reformed "churches, does not carry any conviction at

^y Matt. xii. 37.

^z See the Necessary Doctrine, &c. as above.

^a See Homily on Good Works, part i. p. 40. Oxford edit.

^b Overton, p. 179, 209. Sir Richard Hill's Reformation Truth restored, Pref. p. xiii. Venn's Duty of Man, Preface.

“all with it in my mind; nor will it ever, until you can demonstrate, either that the latter are infallible, or that the former maintain no truths at all.” The fact appears to be correctly stated by the remark of a zealous opposer of Antinomianism; and the remark deserves the serious attention of those, who think to disparage our cause by such invidious and “railing accusations;” that “in our well-meant zeal against Popery we have been driven to an extreme, and have not done good works justice^d.”

With these notions of justification, which I trust I neither value myself, nor wish to be adopted by others, farther than as they correspond with the representations of Scripture, I cannot enter into the objection of a very respectable and temperate advocate, in the present day, of justification by faith alone; who, allowing the expression of conditions of salvation, “when used in reference to the final result of religion,” steadily excepts against the notion of “conditions of justification^e.” As the subject presents itself to my mind, surveyed through the medium of holy writ, there is a salvation, as well as a justification, which we

^c Charles the First. See Brandt's History of the Reformation in the Low Countries, Dedication, p. 11.

^d Fletcher's First Check to Antinomianism, p. 72.

^e See Zeal without Innovation, p. 84.

regard as “ a perfectly gratuitous act of God,” conferred on us by faith alone; faith, not distinguished from good works, but in the sense, wherein it has now been explained: there is also a justification, as well as a salvation, no less referred “ to the final result of religion,” and no less depending on certain conditions. In other words I would be understood to say, that we shall not be justified in the sight of God at the last day, without the concurrence of Christian works, co-operating with Christian faith.

It would however be a waste of your time, and an insult upon your patience, were I to set myself formally and fully to demonstrate, what is delivered with such plainness, and at the same time with such variety of expressions throughout the New Testament, that as “ *without faith it is impossible to please God^f,*” so also “ *without holiness no man shall see the Lord^g:*”—that if, in the language of King Edward’s Catechism, “ faith, or rather trust “ alone, doth lay hand upon, understand, and “ perceive our righteous making to be given “ us of God freely, that is to say, by no deeds of our own, but by the free grace of “ the Almighty Father^h;” in the language of

^f Heb. xi. 6.

^g Ibid. xii. 14.

^h Enchiridion Theologicum, vol. i. p. 43.

the same, it is “godliness, which plainly openeth the way to heaven, if we will seek to attain thereunto¹:”—that if, as the Homily asserts, “the only mean and instrument required of our parts is faith, that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God^k,” so also “it is to be taken for a most true lesson, taught by Christ’s own mouth, that the works of the moral commandments of God be the very true works of faith, which lead to the blessed life to come^l;” and “being wrought in faith, are ordained by God, to be the right trade and pathway unto heaven^m:”—that, in one word, as Edward’s Catechism again expresses it, “*the sum of Christian religion standeth in TWO POINTS; in true FAITH IN GOD, and assured persuasion conceived of all those things, which are contained in the holy Scriptures; and in CHARITY, which belongeth both to God and to our neighbourⁿ.*”

When therefore we hear the Methodist confidently maintaining, that “there is no happiness till we can feel an union of the soul with God, and that *that* and that only is true and undefiled religion^o,” we feel little

¹ Enchiridion Theologicum, vol. i. p. 66.

^k Homilies, Oxf. edit. p. 362.

^l Ibid. p. 41.

^m Ibid. p. 49.

ⁿ Enchir. Theol. i. 9.

^o Whitefield’s Works, vol. i. p. 339.

disposed to accede to his position, and rather incline to embrace the more evangelical doctrine of a learned writer of earlier times. "I must confess," said the ever-memorable Hales, "that I have not yet made that proficiency in the schools of our age, as that I could see, why the second table and the acts of it are not as properly the parts of religion and Christianity, as the acts and observations of the first. If I mistake, then it is St. James that hath abused me; for he, describing religion by its proper acts, tells us, that true religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted of the world. So that the thing, which, in an especial refine dialect of the new Christian language, signifies nothing but morality and civility, that, in the language of the Holy Ghost, imports true religion."

Let it not be understood for a moment, that in asserting the necessity of good works, in conjunction and equally with faith, to our final acceptance with the Almighty, I attribute to such works the slightest shadow of merit. God forbid, that I should presume to derogate from the value of the Redeemer's sa-

crifice ; to “ rob Christ of his majesty⁴ ;” or admit any offering from his “ unprofitable servants” to participate with him, in making atonement and satisfaction for our sins ! In this sense, indeed, it is always and universally true, that “ we be justified by faith in Christ “ only ;” or, as our Church goes on to expound the doctrine according to the meaning of the old ancient authors, “ we put our “ faith in Christ, that we be justified by him “ only ; that we be justified by God’s free “ mercy, and the merits of our Saviour Christ “ only, and by no virtue or good works of “ our own that is in us, or that we can be “ able to have, or to do, for to deserve the “ fame ; Christ himself only being the cause “ meritorious thereof.” “ We therefore plead “ the meritorious righteousness of Christ,” (as the pious Burkitt says,) “ to answer the demands of the law ; but contend for a personal righteousness of our own, to answer “ the commands of the Gospel.” Whilst with the judicious Hooker “ we acknowledge “ a dutiful necessity of doing well ;” with him also “ the meritorious dignity of doing well

⁴ Latimer’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 435.

¹ Luke xvii. 10.

² Third Part of the Sermon of Salvation, p. 23.

³ Commentary on Rom. x. 3.

“ we utterly renounce ^u.” Whilst with the venerable Latimer we believe, that “ as touching our good works which we do, God will reward them in heaven ^x ;” with him also we acknowledge, that “ they cannot merit heaven,” but that “ it must be merited not by our own works, but only by the merits of our Saviour Christ ^y.” And we esteem it no less truly, than strongly, said by the ever-memorable Hales, “ Ten thousand worlds, were we able to give them all, could not make satisfaction for any part of the smallest offence we have committed against God ^z.” Nay in even stronger language, if stronger language can be devised, we would avow, that neither faith, nor holiness, nor any, nor every thing, which we can do, has the faintest claim to be regarded, as the meritorious cause of our salvation. “ All the martyrs that ever were,” I delight in adopting the sentiments and language of one of our great Reformers, “ all the sacrifices of patriarchs that ever were, all the good works that ever were done, were not able to remedy our sins, to make satisfaction for our sins ; nor any thing besides, but this extreme passion and blood-shedding

^u On Justification, sect. 8.

^x Sermons, vol. i. p. 435.

^y Ibid. vol. ii. p. 513.

^z Golden Remains, p. 121.

“ of our most merciful Saviour Christ ^a.” But as the *conditions* of falvation ; as the concur- rent caufes, (if the word be not improperly employed,) without which the effect will not take place ; as circumftances, equally and alike requifite to our profiting ultimately by Chrift’s facrifice ; it were to clofe my eyes againft the full blaze of revelation, to deny the abfolute neceffity of either faith or good works. On every page of that holy book it is infcribed in characters of light, that, as “ the greateft faint “ in heaven would never have been admitted “ there, had not his fins been washed in the “ blood of Chrift ^b ;” fo heaven will never be opened to any finner, whofe faith in Chrift is not “ made perfect” by repentance and holi- nefs of living.

I reft not upon the declarations of the Old Testament, that I may not be taunted with the charge of legality ; and yet it were an ar- duous task to fhew, wherein, as to moral ob- ligation, the law differs from the Gofpel ; and what authority is lent by the Chriftian code, for breaking one of the leaft moral command- ments of Mofes, and of the Prophets. But omitting fuch references at prefent, I do not fear to contend, that “ do this and live” is no

^a Latimer’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 222.

^b Examination of Tilenus, p. 270.

less the profession of the Gospel than of the law^c: it is the voice of the same holy Spirit; always at harmony with himself: it is the testimony not of the Prophets only, but of the Apostles, and of their master Christ^d.

For what saith St. Peter? "The Father, without respect of persons, judgeth *according to every man's work*^e;" and, "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with him^f." What saith St. John? "The books were opened, and the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, *according to their works*^g." What saith St. Jude? "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their *ungodly deeds*, which they have ungodly committed^h." What saith St. James? "Be ye *doers of the word*, and not hearers only, *deceiving your own selves*ⁱ." "You see

^c See Whitefield's Works, vol. iv, p. 28. and vol. i. p. 75.

^d Quod loquitur (D. Jacobus scil.) vox est Spiritus Sancti, ubique idem personantis. Idem testantur Prophetæ, idem Apostoli, idem Christus ipse. *Bulli Harm. Apost.* lib. i. cap. ii. sect. 2.

^e 1 Pet. i. 17.

^g Rev. xx. 12.

ⁱ James i. 22.

^f Acts x. 34, 35.

^h Ver. 14.

“ then that a man is justified by *works*, and
“ not by faith only^k.” What faith St. Paul,
the great champion, as he is fondly represent-
ed, of justification by faith alone? “ We must
“ all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,
“ that every one may receive the things *done*
“ in his body, *according to that he hath done*,
“ whether it be *good* or *bad*^l.” And again,
“ Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them
“ which do such things, and *doest the same*,
“ that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
“ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness,
“ and forbearance, and long suffering; not
“ knowing, that the goodness of God leadeth
“ thee to repentance? But after thy hardness
“ and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto
“ thyself wrath against the day of wrath and
“ revelation of the righteous judgment of God;
“ *who will render to every man according to*
“ *his deeds*; to them, who by patient conti-
“ nuance *in well-doing* seek for glory and ho-
“ nour and immortality, eternal life; but unto
“ them that are contentious, and do not obey
“ the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indig-
“ nation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,
“ upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of
“ the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but
“ glory, honour, and peace, to every man *that*

^k Jam. ii. 24.

^l 2 Cor. v. 10.

“ *worketh good*, to the Jew first, and also to
 “ the Gentile ; for there is no respect of per-
 “ sons with God^m.” For as he presently ar-
 gues in words, applicable not only, as Calvin
 contemptuously contendsⁿ, to the Jews, but
 generally, as the context indisputably proves,
 to “ every soul of man” that desires to be jus-
 tified, “ Not the hearers of the law shall be
 “ just before God, but *the doers of the law*
 “ *shall be justified*.” Words, which afford
 no weak foundation for the opinion, cited with
 approbation by Bishop Bull, in “ that palmary
 “ work,” as the late Bishop Horne denominated
 it, in a discourse from this place^p, “ That Paul
 “ desired so earnestly to recommend good
 “ works, as necessary to justification and eter-
 “ nal life, in order to put the reader on his
 “ guard ; lest, by misunderstanding his subse-
 “ quent doctrine, wherein he teaches justifica-
 “ tion by faith without works, he should find
 “ a stumbling-block, or fall into error^q.” Nay,

^m Rom. ii. 3—11.

ⁿ Qui hoc loco abutuntur ad erigendam operum justifi-
 cationem, etiam puerorum cachinnis sunt dignissimi. Pro-
 inde ineptum est et extra locum, huic longas de justifica-
 tione quæstiones ingerere, ad solvendum tam futile cavil-
 lum. Tantum enim urget apud Judæos Apostolus illud,
 de quo meminerat, legis judicium &c. *Calv. in loc.*

^o Rom. ii. 13.

^p Horne's Sixteen Sermons, p. 66.

^q Prius autem quam illustrem hunc locum missum fa-

our blessed Saviour himself, who, when he pronounced the forgiveness of sins, declared to the sinner, "Thy faith hath saved thee"; also cautioned the object of his mercy to "sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon him":—and generally he pronounced to all men that works, and not faith alone, are the conditions of everlasting happiness, when he declared, "If thou wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments*;" "If ye know these things, happy are ye *if ye do them*:" "In the day of judgment *by thy words thou shalt be justified*, and *by thy words thou shalt be condemned*:" "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be*. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they, *that do his commandments*, that they may have right

ciam, visum est, quæ ad eum scribit doctissimus Estius, commemorare: "Sane," inquit, "videri potest, Paulum idcirco tam diligenter commendare voluisse bona opera, ut ad justitiam ac vitam æternam necessaria, quo Lectorem præmuniret, ne sequentem ipsius doctrinam, qua justificationem tradit ex fide sine operibus, male intelligendo offendiculum pateretur, aut in errorem incurreret." Certe eatenus saltem ei lubens assentior, ut credam, non sine magna Dei providentia id factum fuisse. *Harm. Apost. Diff. ii. cap. iv. sect. 8.*

^r Luke vii. 50.

^t John xiii. 17.

^s John v. 14.

^u Matt. xii. 37.

“ to the tree of life^x.” “ Come, ye blessed of
 “ my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
 “ you from the foundation of the world; for
 “ I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I
 “ was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a
 “ stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye
 “ clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me;
 “ I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Ve-
 “ rily I say unto you, *Inasmuch as ye have*
 “ *done it* unto one of the least of these my
 “ brethren, ye have done it unto me. Depart
 “ from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, pre-
 “ pared for the Devil and his angels: for ve-
 “ rily I say unto you, *Inasmuch as ye did it*
 “ *not* to one of the least of these, ye did it not
 “ unto me^y.” “ The hour is coming, in the
 “ which *all that are in the graves* shall hear
 “ the voice of the Son of man, and shall come
 “ forth; THEY THAT HAVE DONE GOOD UNTO
 “ THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE, AND THEY THAT
 “ HAVE DONE EVIL UNTO THE RESURRECTION
 “ OF DAMNATION^z.”

How different from these scriptural exposi-
 tions of the terms of everlasting happiness, are
 the remonstrances and exhortations, addressed
 by the Solifidian to his hearers! “ Why dost
 “ thou lean to works,” is the expostulation of

^x Rev. xxii. 12, 13, 14.

^y Matt. xxv. 34.

^z John v. 48, 49.

a late minister of our Church, “ since salvation
 “ is by faith? Why dost thou disquiet thyself
 “ about attaining the righteousness of the law,
 “ and thereby suffer the law to disturb the
 “ peace of thy conscience, since thou hast a far
 “ better righteousness, which ought to reign
 “ there, even the righteousness, which is of
 “ God by faith ^a?” “ Remember thou art not
 “ required to obey in order to be saved for
 “ thine obedience; but thou art already fav-
 “ ed ^b.” “ The single qualification for salva-
 “ tion which Christ expects,” says a living
 teacher of our Israel, “ is to believe the Gos-
 “ pel: for he that believeth shall be saved.
 “ What! if they do such and such duties?
 “ Not a word of the kind. What! if they per-
 “ form such obligations? Not a syllable like it.
 “ It is an absolute promise of the Lord Jesus,
 “ founded on his own absolute power. Here
 “ are neither *ifs*, nor *buts*; no conditions nor
 “ terms ^c.” “ No previous preparation,” it is
 thus, that the Arminian Founder of Method-
 ism preached to his societies; “ no fitness is
 “ required at the time of communicating, but
 “ a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness
 “ and helplessness: every one, who knows that
 “ he is just fit for hell, is just fit to come

^a Romaine's Life of Faith. Works, vol. i. p. 49.

^b Walk of Faith. Ibid. 292.

^c Hawker's Prop against all Despair, p. 15.

“ to Christ in this and all other ways of his
 “ appointment^d.” “ If you are the chief of
 “ sinners,” exclaims his Calvinistic competitor;
 “ if you are murderers of fathers and murder-
 “ ers of mothers; if you are emphatically the
 “ dung and offscouring of all things; yet if
 “ you believe on Jesus Christ, and cry unto
 “ him with the same faith, as the expiring
 “ thief, Lord, remember me now thou art in
 “ thy kingdom, I will pawn my eternal salva-
 “ tion upon it, if he does not shortly translate
 “ you to his heavenly paradise^e;” “ who so-
 “ ever believes in his heart, may be assured
 “ that his pardon is sealed in heaven, notwith-
 “ standing he has lived in an open breach of
 “ God’s commandments all his life time be-
 “ fore^f.” “ if a man is once justified, he re-
 “ mains so to all eternity^g.” “ it is sorry di-
 “ vinity to talk of men’s doing so and so, to
 “ keep themselves in a justified state^h.”

That effects, of a very different character from those “ good works,” which the Apostle teaches us the Scriptures were given to promoteⁱ, should result from representations of the conditions of happiness so much at va-

^d Wesley’s Fourth Journal, p. 47.

^e Whitefield’s Works, vol. v. p. 387.

^f Ibid. vol. iv. p. 28.

^g Ibid. vol. i. p. 214.

^h Ibid. p. 209.

ⁱ See 2 Tim. iii. 17.

riance with the Scriptures, is a consequence reasonably to be expected. Persuaded that he is to be justified and saved by faith alone, the sinner is little careful to inquire into the quality of the faith, that is to save him. He thinks it enough to believe in Christ, and forgets that “the devils also believe and tremble^k.” “Applying to himself,” as Grotius says, “the perfect righteousness of Christ, he makes the merits of Christ his own. Every thing else is superfluous. How he lives, is of no importance. Without condition, Christ has made satisfaction for the punishment, which he owes: without condition, Christ has merited for him eternal glory^l.”

Shall we be told, that these are consequences, which do not in fact ensue? Wherefore then do we hear some religionists pronouncing “all the ordinances of religion, prayers, reading the Scriptures, public worship, and the sacraments, to be diabolical performances^m?”

^k Jam. ii. 19.

^l Justitiam Christi, quæ perfectissima est, et cælesti digna præmio, sibi per fidem applicantes, merita ejus sua faciunt. Id si ita fieri potest, cætera jam sunt supervacua: quomodo vivas, nihil interest. Sine conditione pro pœna, quam ipsi debent, satisfecit Christus: sine conditione gloriam æternam est ipsis meritus. *Grot. Rivetian. Apolog. Discuss. Op. tom. iii. p. 691. Lond. 1679.*

^m See Wesley's Journals, No. IV. p. 107. or the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared, part ii. p. 144.

Whence do we hear others speaking with contempt of “ your workers and good livers,” while they have favourable hopes of persons of a professedly debauched and profligate life? Whence the complaint of Whitefield over “ the havoc made by Antinomianism among “ his followers^o?” Whence the lamentation of Wesley, that “ a general temptation prevailed amongst his societies, of leaving off “ good works, in order to an increase of “ faith^p?” And whence the corroborating testimony of his friend, that “ Antinomian principles and practices spread like wild-fire in “ some of his societies, where persons, who “ spoke in the most glorious manner of Christ “ and their interest in his complete salvation, “ had been found living in the greatest immor- “ ralities, or indulging the most unchristian “ tempers^q :” and that “ multitudes, alas! “ rested satisfied with an unloving disobedient “ faith; a faith, that engages only the head, “ but has nothing to do with the heart; a “ faith, that works by malice, instead of work- “ ing by love; a faith, that pleads for sin in “ the heart, instead of purifying the heart from

ⁿ Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared, part ii. p. 155.

^o Whitefield's Works, vol. ii. p. 156.

^p Wesley's Journals, No. IV. p. 39.

^q Fletcher's First Check to Antinomianism, p. 23.

“sin; a faith, that St. Paul explodes, and that St. James compares to a carcass^r.”

Surely when we have our eyes thus open upon the dangerous consequences, to which the doctrine of faith alone is calculated to lead carnal minds, unless it be guarded with the utmost circumspection, and again and again explained to be ineffectual without the fruit of holiness: and when further we are aware, that, however circumspect may be the preacher, it is a doctrine, which men of carnal minds are especially prone to pervert to the encouragement of sensual living: and when we know moreover, that it is inculcated by many preachers themselves, so constantly, as to leave little opportunity for the recommendation of the Christian virtues, and so exclusively, as to disparage, if not to condemn, morality and good works; and that it is embraced by many hearers so implicitly, as to lead them to despise the qualification of a holy life: I apprehend, that we cannot more effectually preach the Gospel, than by warning those committed to our charge, that in the epistles of St. Paul “there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction^s :” and by

^r Fletcher's First Check to Antinomianism, p. 56.

^s 2 Pet. iii, 16.

persuading them, as they hope for happiness through Christ's merits, "to give all diligence," in the language of one Apostle, "that they add unto their faith virtue^t;" for that, according to the sentence of another, "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"; or, as the same doctrine is delivered by a third, the Solifidian's favourite, but misapprehended teacher, "if they have all faith, and have not charity, they are nothing^x."

- It is not however only, nor even principally, on account of the unguarded language of the more indiscreet advocates of the doctrine, or of the opinion which we entertain of its immoral effects, that we feel ourselves constrained to renounce it: but because we apprehend it to be fundamentally and absolutely erroneous. If indeed the Scriptures were less explicit, than we have seen them to be, in connecting our future lot with our present conduct, and in deciding, that our sentence will be, as our works have been; we might be tempted to accede to the position, that we shall be justified by faith alone, provided it were carefully explained to be such a faith, as is necessarily productive of good works: But in truth, the Holy Scriptures, at the same

^t 2 Pet. i. 5.

^u James ii. 26.

^x 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

time that they exclude such works from all pretensions to meriting salvation, do ascribe to them too much importance to permit them to be regarded solely as the signs and evidences of faith. Their proper office in connection with our salvation, and the mean between the two extremes of Romish arrogance and Antinomian licentiousness, are well defined by Vossius, who says; “ We think, that
 “ they say too much, who imagine, that a re-
 “ ward is promised to works, as the merito-
 “ rious cause; and we judge, that they say
 “ not enough, who determine, that the pro-
 “ mise is made to them, only as the signs of
 “ faith. Seeing there are many passages of
 “ Scripture, whereby it may be made plain,
 “ that our works are regarded in the business
 “ of salvation, as a cause, *sine qua non*, or as
 “ an antecedent condition, which draws along
 “ with it, by an indissoluble bond, the prize of
 “ eternal life.”

γ. Quæritur, an operibus promittatur merces, ut fidei signis? Nos et nimium dicere putamus, qui eam operibus promitti censent, ut causæ meritoria; nec satis dicere judicamus, qui tantummodo ut signis fidei, promissionem factam arbitrantur. Siquidem multa sunt Scripturæ loca, quibus planum fiat, opera nostra in salutis negotio spectari, ut causam sine qua non, sive ut conditionem præcedaneam, quæ præmium vitæ æternæ individuo secum nexu trahat. *Voss. de bonorum operum Meritis. Thef. 103*

Should we then, in order to avoid a strife of words, and for the sake of brotherly love, and Christian peace and unity, be willing to concede, that faith alone, thus carefully explained and understood, is necessary to our justification; the saying of Hilary admonishes us, as it heretofore admonished our reformers^z, that “the name of peace is beautiful, and the opinion of unity is fair, but that is the true and only peace of the Church, which is Christ’s;” and the express declarations of Christ himself, illustrated by the corresponding doctrine of every one of his Apostles, would operate to keep us steadfast in “the faith, which,” we believe, “was once delivered to the saints^a.”

Such, then, being the notions, which the Scriptures give us, of the conditions of everlasting happiness, I see not how we can refrain from impressing upon our hearers, that Christian works are jointly and equally necessary with Christian faith to the attainment of eternal life; from enforcing on them the precepts, as earnestly as we set before them the doctrines, of the Gospel; and from re-

^z See Ridley’s Life of Bishop Ridley, p. 495. Speciosum quidem nomen est pacis, et pulcra est opinio unitatis; sed quis ambigat, eam solam ecclesiæ et evangeliorum unitatem pacemque esse, quæ Christi est. *Hilar. cont. Auxentium. ed. Benedict. Op. tom. ii. p. 594.*

^a Jude ver. 3.

mind them with unremitting assiduity, that it will not be sufficient that they believe in, unless they also obey, “our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works^b.” If indeed we are so far forgetful of the distinctive features of our holy religion, as to suffer a regard to moral duties to divert us from inculcating and explaining with sufficient frequency the doctrines of the Christian faith; or if the practical duties, which we recommend, are drawn from the sources of heathen philosophy; if when Paul has furnished us with a text we suffer “Epictetus, Plato, or Tully to preach;” if our discourses are mere moral essays on the beauty and fitness of virtue; or if we represent holiness of life as a meritorious cause of salvation, or recommend it on higher grounds than as a necessary condition, whereby the blood of Christ becomes ultimately effectual for our redemption: I readily admit, nay, I cordially concur with our accusers in contending, that we desert the station which we have undertaken to maintain, and are guilty of apostasy from the Gospel. But if, on the contrary, as I hope and trust is more agreeable to

^b Tit. ii. 13, 14.

^c Cowper's Task.

the truth, the morality, which we preach, is Christian morality; if it is established upon Christian principles, and enforced by Christian motives, and clothed withal in Christian humility; if we derive, not our texts alone, but our subject matter, from the revealed word of God, calling upon men, and persuading them by the terrors and mercies of the Lord, to believe in God and to keep his commandments, to do unto all men, as they would men should do unto them, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world; at the same time never forgetting, that we are addressing the “unprofitable servants” of a crucified Redeemer, “God manifest in the flesh,” whose Holy Spirit is always necessary to enlighten, and strengthen, and support us; and whose meritorious blood is always necessary to make atonement for our numerous deficiencies, and to reconcile us to the Father:—wherein consists our guilt or our error, that we are accused of not preaching the Gospel? or why are we charged with apostasy from our profession, because we do that, which the example of the Apostles of Christ, nay, of Christ himself, warrants us, and calls upon us, and makes it our bounden duty to do?—When the Apostles went forth by the commandment of their Lord, to “preach the Gospel to every creature;” when Paul was commissioned by a

special revelation to “turn men from darkness
 “unto light, and from the power of Satan
 “unto God, that they might receive forgive-
 “ness of sins, and inheritance among them
 “which are sanctified by faith that is in
 “Christ^d,” how did they discharge their dis-
 tinguished office? Anxious that it might ever
 be in their power to take their hearers “to re-
 “cord, that they were pure from the blood of
 “all men, and had not shunned to declare
 “unto them *all the counsel* of God^e,” whether
 in their speeches or their epistles; whether to
 the self-righteous Jew, or the idolatrous Hea-
 then; whether to the Roman magistrate, or
 the Athenian philosopher; whether to indivi-
 dual converts, or to assemblies of the faithful,
 or to the whole universal Church of Christ,
 they were indefatigable in urging the practice
 of Christian holiness blended with the profes-
 sion of the Christian faith. Or, to place our-
 selves, if possible, on still higher ground, what
 are the points, on which our blessed Lord hath
 set us the example of insisting in his discourses
 in general, and, in particular, what are the
 topics of his parables and of his sermon in the
 mount? Is not the latter exclusively occupied
 in the recommendation of practical righteous-
 ness? Are not the former, with the exception

^d Acts xxvi. 18.

^e Acts xx. 26, 27.

of those, which illustrate the dealings of Almighty God towards the Jews, one and all directed to the same end?—We need not then be alarmed at the charge, that we are not preachers of the Gospel, in a particular wherein our practice has the sanction of such authority: nor need we be deterred by an injurious aspersion from treading steadfastly in the path, wherein Christ and his Apostles have gone before; or from repeating again and again, as the essence of his preaching, and of that of his Apostles, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER, WHICH IS IN HEAVEN*”^f.”

Now “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him,” in the unity of the Father and the eternal Spirit, “be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

^f Matt. vii. 21.

DISCOURSE III.

LUKE xiii. 23, 24.

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

IT would be well for the cause of genuine Christianity, if its professors would contentedly submit to that restraint, which its divine Author has imposed upon a presumptuous curiosity. Such a spirit appears to have actuated the person, whose question is recorded in the text; and to have prompted him to seek for discoveries concerning the future condition of the human race. And the correction of such a spirit appears to have been the object of our Saviour's answer, when, instead of replying directly and explicitly to the inquiry, he diverted the attention of his disciples from an unnecessary and fruitless concern about the welfare of others, to the necessity of strenuous exertions for their own salvation. "The question is,"

says Bishop Sherlock, " Are there few that be saved? The answer is in effect, What is that to you? Mind your own business, and strive to enter in at the strait gate^a."

Man however is eager to be wise above that which is written; and is not satisfied, unless he be permitted to know the secret things of God. Not contented to be informed in general terms, that they, who strive to enter in at the strait gate, shall be admitted, and that they, who seek, without striving, shall be excluded, he would fain infer a more mysterious doctrine from the admonition of our Lord. And because there are many, who shall not be able to enter in, notwithstanding their inability be specifically attributed to their own want of exertion, he concludes, that they are repelled from salvation by an absolute decree of the Almighty.

Now the more prudent, and the more reverent course for a minister of the Gospel to adopt in general, is to conform to the restraint, virtually imposed by our Saviour's answer on this occasion; and to abstain from a discussion of those subjects, which it has been the good pleasure of God to leave in obscurity. " It is our judgment," I adopt the sentiments, and express them in the language, of Episcopus

^a Sherlock's Disc. vol. ii. p. 96.

and the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort, where their forbearance and moderation did honour to the opinions they maintained : “ It
“ is our judgment, that those men think and
“ speak best and safest of those deep and diffi-
“ cult points of divinity, which far exceed our
“ understandings; that is to say, of the myste-
“ ries of religion, who treat of them cautiously
“ and moderately, and as much as possible in
“ the very words of Scripture ; being persuad-
“ ed, as the truth is, that men may very easily
“ be mistaken with respect to such deep and
“ impenetrable secrets, and that a small mis-
“ take in such weighty matters has often given
“ occasion to great and manifest errors ^b.”
Such, in earlier times, had been the practice of our own apostolical reformers, who, both individually and collectively, avoided and discouraged such doubtful disputations ; agreeably to the memorable declaration of him, whom Fuller calls “ the profoundest scholar of
“ that army of martyrs ^c,” “ the most learned
“ and judicious of all the prelates,” as Heylyn styles him ^d ; I mean Bishop Ridley ; who replied to one, that desired to engage him in the question about God’s election and predestina-

^b Brandt’s History of the Reformation in the Low Countries, vol. iii. p. 57.

^c Fuller’s Church History, book viii. sect. 25.

^d Heylyn’s Quinquart. Hist. part ii. chap. viii. sect. 8.

tion, "In these matters I am so fearful, that
 "I dare not speak further, yea almost none
 "otherwise, than the very text doth, as it
 "were, lead me by the hand".

In these sentiments we concur : and to this conduct we would cheerfully conform. When however these mysterious subjects are frequently, ostentatiously, and largely brought into discussion by others, who refuse to acquiesce in mutual forbearance ; when, in the progress of the discussion, the nature of the Christian dispensation appears to us to be grievously misrepresented ; when erroneous notions of the terms of salvation appear to be infused into the hearers ; when the glory of God appears to be assailed, and his attributes to be infringed, and his revelation to be calumniated ; when our doctrines withal, because we shrink from the public investigation of these mysterious topics, are broadly stigmatised as unevangelical, and made a foundation for the charge, that we are not preachers of the Gospel ; and when we cannot but perceive, that the minds of those committed to our care are thereby alienated from our teaching, that their respect is diminished for our persons, and that an obstacle is presented to our ministerial success : we apprehend that the

* Ridley's Life of Bishop Ridley, p. 553.

question then assumes a very different complexion ; and we deem ourselves warranted by that solicitude, which, as ministers of Christ, we ought to feel for the purity of his word and for the salvation of the souls of his people, in attempting, however feebly, to stem the torrent of heresy and false doctrine ; and to illustrate, as far as we are enabled by that light, which the holy Scriptures supply, the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

Having made these preliminary observations, as expressing my motives for venturing upon ground, which I approach with awe, and would otherwise leave untrodden ; I shall immediately proceed to state, that if, when we are accused of corrupting and perverting the Gospel, it is intended, that the preaching of the generality of the national clergy does not agree with the doctrines of the Gospel, as they are interpreted by those Christians, who inherit their name and their peculiar opinions from their founder Calvin, we are contented to plead guilty to the charge.

Such was the purport of the accusation in the hands of the Calvinistic establisher of Methodism, when he charged “ the generality of “ the clergy with hateful hypocrisy, in speak- “ ing contrary to the articles, and to the form “ of sound words delivered in the Scrip-

“ tures ^f ;” himself pronouncing Calvinism to be “ scriptural truth ^g.” Such was its purport in the hands of another graduate of this University, when he denounced the ministers of our Church, as “ dangerous heretics and “ schismatics,” for “ impiously and hypocritically setting their hands to doctrines, which “ in their hearts they never assented to ;” and for “ adopting the pride-soothing Arminian “ heresy of universal redemption ;” and “ maintaining the Popish heresies of universal redemption, free will, and falling from grace ; “ blasphemies as poisonous as those of Arius, “ Pelagius, and Socinus ^h.” Such, again, was its purport, at a somewhat later period, in the hands of a beneficed minister of our Church, when he passed the following comprehensive sentence against those, who were not of his persuasion. “ Arminianism,” he laments, “ is “ the grand religious evil of this age and country. It has more or less infected every Protestant denomination amongst us, and bids “ fair for leaving us, in a short time, not so “ much as the very *profession* of godliness. “ The power of Christianity has, for the most “ part, taken its flight long ago ; and even

^f Whitefield's Works, vol. vi. p. 95.

^g Eighteen Sermons, p. 160.

^h Pietas Oxoniensis, p. 44. and 81.

“ the *form* of it seems to be on the point of
 “ bidding us farewell. Time has been, when
 “ the Calvinistic doctrines were considered and
 “ defended, as the *palladium* of our established
 “ Church, by her Bishops and Clergy ; by the
 “ *Universities* and the whole body of the *laity*.
 “ It was (during the reigns of Edward VI.
 “ Queen Elisabeth, James I. and the greater
 “ part of Charles I.) as difficult to meet with a
 “ clergyman, who did not preach the doctrines
 “ of the Church of England, as it is now, to
 “ find one who *does*. We have generally for-
 “ saken the principles of the *Reformation*: and
 “ *Ichabod*, or *thy glory is departed*, has been
 “ written on most of our pulpits and church
 “ doors ever since¹.”

The charge, thus urged and repeated at several periods of the last century, (a charge, the confidence of which might well be diminished by a consideration of the acknowledged fact, as to the comparative numbers and authority of the accusers and the accused,) continues to be advanced with the same purport, and with unabated confidence, at the present time. It were unnecessary to enumerate the evidences of a truth, which must be notorious to all who hear me. I shall be satisfied therefore with remarking, that it is with this view, that one

¹ Toplady on Predestination, Pref. p. 5.

of the authors, to whom I have just referred, after the interval of half a century still continues to lament over “the poor deserted and “distracted Church of England, struggling for “breath in the midst of Popish and Pelagian “mire^k,” and that it is avowedly in a great degree upon the ground of Calvinism, that the advocate of a party in the Church claims for his party the appellation of “True Churchmen “and Evangelical Ministers^l,” and denies it to their fellow-labourers in the vineyard. The allegation against our true churchmanship is not our present affair; although perhaps it may incidentally be noticed. It has indeed been weighed in the balance; and it has been found wanting^m. Our business is with the charge, as it excludes us from the title of Evangelical Ministers: to which charge, inasmuch as it rests upon our declining to preach the doctrines of Calvin, we are (as I said before) contented to plead guilty. And that we do for the following simple reason; because the doc-

^k Sir Richard Hill's *Reformation Truth-restored*, Pref. p, viii.

^l *The True Churchmen ascertained, &c.* by John Overton, A. B.

^m See the *Articles of the Church of England* proved not to be Calvinistic, by Thomas Kipling, D. D. and *Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, by the Reverend Charles Daubeny.

trines of Calvin appear to us to be irreconcilable with the doctrines of Christ and of his Apostles; and if we adhere to the latter, and preach the Gospel in that purity, in which they have delivered it, we conceive that we must dissent from, and reject, the former.

It surely will not be understood from this declaration, that I mean to protest against all the doctrines maintained by Calvin and his followers. Some articles of faith are common to most, or all, of the professors of Christianity. Many articles of faith, and among these several of the prime and fundamental tenets of our religion, are common to us and to the Calvinists. The doctrines, which I have in view, are such as belong peculiarly to that denomination of believers; and constitute the characteristic mark, which distinguishes them from their brother Christians.

To prevent however the possibility of misapprehension, and to exhibit at the same time a clear and compendious view of the nature of the controversy between us, I propose to state, as concisely as I am able, the most essential articles, on which we differ from the Calvinists, and which are made the basis of so solemn an accusation against us.

Thus for instance it is the doctrine of Calvin and of his followers—I would be understood in the subsequent statement as referring to

those persons, who maintain the avowed principles of Calvin, and do not shrink from their obvious consequences; for as to those opinions, which their abettors denominate “ moderate Calvinism,” I shall have occasion to advert to them presently; and will here only remark in passing, that the framer of the more perfect system himself would have scorned them, as an unworthy subterfuge, and reprobated the appellation, as a contradiction in terms:—I say, then, it is the Calvinistic doctrine, that God has by an eternal, absolute, irrelative, and immutable decree elected and predestinated certain individuals to salvation, from which, by the same decree of predestination, he has excluded the great mass of mankind, excluding them from the benefits purchased by the death of his Son ⁿ. Our doctrine is, that

ⁿ Prædestinationem vocamus æternum Dei decretum, quo apud se constitutum habuit, quid de unoquoque homine fieri vellet. Non enim pari conditione creantur omnes: sed aliis vita æterna, aliis damnatio æterna præordinatur. Itaque prout in alterutrum finem quisque conditus est, ita vel ad vitam, vel ad mortem, prædestinatum dicimus. *Calv. Instit.* lib. iii. cap. xxi. sect. 5.

Quod ergo Scriptura clare ostendit, dicimus; æterno et immutabili consilio Deum semel constituisse, quos olim semel assumere vellet in salutem, quos rursus exitio devovere. Hoc consilium, quoad electos, in gratuita ejus misericordia fundatum esse asserimus, nullo humanæ dignitatis respectu: quos vero damnationi addicit, his justo

God hath made no such absolute election and predestination of persons, but that Christ is the common Saviour of mankind at large:—a doctrine, which we support on the general tenor of Scripture, and especially on these and the like passages; that “God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteoufness is accepted with him^o;” that “God sent his Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life^p;” that “Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world^q;” that “he is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe^r;” that he “tasted death for every man^s;” and that “God our Saviour would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, for the man Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for all^t.”—a doctrine too, which we apprehend

quidem et irreprehensibili, sed incomprehensibili ipsius iudicio, vitæ aditum præcludi. Ibid. sect. 7.

—reprobos vel a notitia sui nominis vel a Spiritus sui sanctificatione excludendo. Ibid.

—illos vult excludere. Ibid. cap. xxiii. sect. 1.

Deum ex perditâ massa eligere et reprobare. *De Prædest.* p. 613.

^o Acts x. 34, 35.

^q 1 John ii. 1, 2.

^s Heb. ii. 9.

^p John iii. 16.

^r 1 Tim. iv. 10.

^t 1 Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6.

to be unequivocally recognized by our Church throughout her Liturgy in general, which uniformly supposes Christ to be the "Redeemer of the world" in the obvious signification of the words; and especially in her baptismal services and in her Catechism, where she describes every individual in her congregation, as one of "the elect people of God," as one of the "redeemed" of Christ; in her Communion service, where she mentions the body of Christ as being given, and the blood of Christ as being shed, for every individual communicant, for every individual member of her body; in her Homily for the Nativity, where she teaches, that Christ "made perfect satisfaction by his death for the sins of all people"; and in her 31st Article, which affirms, agreeably to a similar declaration in the Communion service, that "the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world."

The Calvinist teaches, that the salvation of those, whom he terms elect, is arbitrary, irrespective, and unconditional; that it does not proceed from any respect to their qualities, present or to come; that it does not depend upon any difference between them, and other men; that it is not influenced by any relative

^u Homilies, p. 340. Oxf. edit.

worthiness, which God foresees in them; but that it is exclusively owing to the mere will and pleasure of God^x:—a doctrine, we may remark by the way, of very dissolute tendency, and calculated to make men any thing, rather than “zealous of good works.” We teach on the other hand, that no one, to whom the Gospel of Christ is preached, and to whom the promise of salvation is tendered through the blood of Christ, can attain eternal happiness without fulfilling certain conditions:—and this we teach, because, amongst a multitude of plain texts to the purpose, the promises of salvation always have respect to the repentance, faith, obedience, holiness, or other qualifications of them, to whom the promises are to be made good: because this life is perpe-

^x Quod hominem unum eligit Deus, altero rejecto, id non provenit ab hominis respectu. *Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxiii. sect. 10.

Deum eligere quos illi visum est. *De Præd.* p. 613.

—nullo humanæ dignitatis respectu. *Ibid.*

Non ex hominum dignitate vel indignitate pendet discrimen. *Ibid.* p. 612.

Falsum est, ac verbo Dei contrarium, dogma, Deum, prout unumquemque gratia sua dignum vel indignum prævidet, ita vel eligere vel reprobare. *Comment. in Rom.* ix. 11.

Dei nutu fieri, ut aliis &c. *Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxi. sect. 1.

Insistere debemus in istas particulas, ejus vult, et quem vult, ultra quas procedere nobis non permittit. *Comment. in Rom.* ix. 18.

tually represented as a trust, for which we are responsible ; as a stewardship, of which we are to give an account ; as a state of trial and probation, wherein God tries and proves us, whether we will walk in his ways or not: and because our blessed Saviour briefly instructs us in the nature of our future sentence, and in the plan of God's dealings with mankind; when he says, " Behold, I come quickly, and " my reward is with me, to give every man " according as his work shall be ^z." This we apprehend to be taught by our Church in her Liturgy, where she " pronounces the absolution " and remission of sins," expressly appropriating it to " them that truly repent, and un- " feignedly believe God's holy Gospel ;" and where she describes our pardon and acceptance with Christ as suspended upon various conditions ; " if we come unto him with faithful " repentance ; if we submit ourselves unto " him, and from henceforth walk in his ways ; " if we will take his easy yoke, and light bur- " den upon us, to follow him in lowliness, pa- " tience, and charity, and be ordered by the " governance of his Holy Spirit, seeking al- " ways his glory, and serving him duly in our " vocation with thanksgiving ^a:"—and this

^y James i. 2, 3. 1 Peter i. 7. iv. 12.

^z Revelations xxii. 12.

^a Commination service.

we apprehend her to teach in one of her creeds, which in her eighth Article she asserts “ may be proved by most certain warrants of “ holy Scripture,” affirming it as the ground on which every man’s final sentence will proceed, that “ they which have done good shall “ go into life everlasting, and they which have “ done evil into everlasting fire.”

The Calvinist teaches, that the salvation and eternal life of those, whom he styles the elect, are perpetually sure and infallible, are never in doubt or suspense ; but that the elect, having received the grace of God, cannot fall from grace, so as to be in danger of final perdition^b: thereby opening a spacious passage for carelessness, wickedness, and presumption. We teach, according to our views of the doctrine of our Church in her baptismal services and in her Catechism, that they, who have “ received the grace of God,” and are admitted into “ the number of his faithful and elect

^b Omnibus electis certa est vita æterna—excidere nemo potest—nulla violentia, nullove impetu quisquam rapitur—invicta Dei potentia nititur eorum salus. *De Præd.* p. 614.

Deus non modo salutem offert, sed ita assignat, ut suspensa vel dubia non sit effectus certitudo. *Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxi. sect. 7.

Salutem nostram Dominus perpetuo certam et tutam fore docet. *Ibid.* cap. xxii. sect. 10.

“ children,” *may* not, and that some *do* not, ultimately remain in that state of election and grace: that, in the language of her Liturgy, we who are God’s people and inheritance, may have “ his Holy Spirit taken from us:” or, as it is expressed in her 16th Article, that “ they who have received the Holy Ghost, “ may depart from grace given, and fall into “ sin,” deadly sin, according to the context; with a possibility indeed, but therefore without a certainty, of repenting and rising again; and therefore with a possibility also of perishing eternally: or, as her sentiments are more largely conveyed in her “ Homily of falling “ from God,” that they “ which are the cho- “ sen vineyard of God, may be no longer of “ his kingdom, may be no longer governed “ by his Holy Spirit, may be put from the “ grace and benefits that they had, and ever “ might have enjoyed through Christ; may “ be deprived of the heavenly light and life, “ which they had in Christ, whilst they abode “ in him; may be (as they were once) as men “ without God in this world, or rather in “ worse taking. And, in short, may be given “ into the power of the Devil, which beareth “ the rule in all them that be cast away from “ God, as he did in Saul and Judas: and may “ be brought to so vile a condition, that they

“ shall be left meet for no better purpose, than
“ to be for ever condemned in hell^c.” And
this we teach, because, among a multitude of
other authorities, God has told us by the
mouth of his Prophet Ezekiel, that “ when a
“ righteous man turneth away from his righ-
“ teousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth
“ in them, for his iniquity that he hath done
“ shall he die^d :” because St. Peter exhorts the
Christian converts to “ give diligence to make
“ their calling and election sure^e :” because
St. Paul admonishes the Corinthians, “ let him
“ that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he
“ fall^f,” and “ beseeches them that they re-
“ ceive not the grace of God in vain^g :” be-
cause he affirms of persons, “ who have once
“ been partakers of the Holy Ghost, that such
“ men may so fall away, that it may be im-
“ possible to renew them again unto repent-
“ ance^h :” and because he describes himself as
striving with the most resolute and indefati-
gable exertion, “ lest that by any means, when
“ he had preached to others, he himself should
“ be a cast-awayⁱ.”

It is the Calvinistic doctrine, that all those,
who are not in the number of the elect, are

^c Homilies, p. 71. Oxf. edit.

^d Ezek. xviii. 26.

^e 2 Pet. i. 10.

^f 1 Cor. x. 12.

^g 2 Cor. vi. 1.

^h Heb. vi. 4, 6.

ⁱ 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.

passed over, rejected, or reprobated by God; who has by an eternal and unalterable decree preordained, predestinated and doomed them, before they were born, to certain and everlasting death, ruin, perdition and damnation; for which he himself fits and prepares them; to which they are devoted, not because he foresees their unworthiness, but solely because he wills it; and which, from the very hour of their birth, he hath made it impossible for them to escape, and hath precluded and repels them from the means of escaping^k. Avoiding

^k Liqueat Deum occulto consilio libere, quos vult, eligere, aliis rejectis. *Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxi. sect. 7.

—aliis damnatio æterna præordinatur. *Ibid.* sect. 5.

Quos Deus præterit, reprobat. *Ibid.* cap. xxiii. sect. 1.

—dicimus, æterno et immutabili consilio Deum semel constituisse, quos olim semel vellet—exitio devovere. *Ibid.* cap. xxi. sect. 7.

Alioqui dixisset Paulus, reprobos se dedere vel projicere in exitium. Nunc vero significat, antequam nascantur, jam suæ sorti addictos esse. *Comm. in Rom.* ix. 23.

^l Dubium non est, quin utraque præparatio ab arcana Dei consilio pendeat. *Ibid.*

Quia perditum Deus volebat, obstinatio cordis divina fuit ad ruinam præparatio. *Inst.* lib. ii. cap. iv. sect. 3.

Falsum est Deum, prout unumquemque gratia sua—indignum prævidet, ita—reprobare. *Comm. in Rom.* ix. 11.

Dei nutu fieri—ut alii ab ejus aditu arceantur. *Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxi. sect. 1.

Consilio nutuque suo ita ordinat, ut inter homines ita nascantur, ab utero certæ morti devoti, qui suo exitio ipse nomen glorificent. *Ibid.* cap. xxiii. sect. 6.

“ this most dangerous downfall, whereby” (as our Church expresses herself in the 17th Article) “ the Devil doth thrust curious and carnal persons, lacking the spirit of Christ, either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation;” our doctrine is, in the language of our Liturgy and Homilies, that “ God willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather turn from his sin and be saved¹;” and that, as the condemnation of every man, that shall perish, “ will have been heaped upon himself by his own wickedness and the stubbornness of his heart; which despised the goodness, patience, and long-suffering of God, when he called him continually to repentance;” so there is no man but by the grace of God he may escape and be saved through Christ, provided he “ take heed betime, while the day of salvation lasteth; and abuse not the goodness of God, who calleth us mercifully to amendment, and of his endless pity promiseth us forgiveness of that which is past, if with a perfect and true heart we return unto him.” And

—quos damnationi addicit, his justo quidem et irreprehensibili, sed incomprehensibili, ipsius judicio vitæ aditum præcludi. *Inft.* lib. iii. cap. xxiii. sect. 7.

¹ See the Communion Service, and the Second Part of the Sermon of Falling from God.

this doctrine we support on the general promises of Scripture, and on innumerable individual passages, which might be cited in support of its several parts; and more especially on the declaration in the Prophet Ezekiel, where they are all expressly asserted. “When the
 “wicked man turneth away from his wicked-
 “ness, that he hath committed, and doeth
 “that which is lawful and right, he shall save
 “his soul alive. I will judge you, O house of
 “Israel, every one according to his ways,
 “saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn your-
 “selves from all your transgressions, so iniqui-
 “ty shall not be your ruin. Cast away from
 “you all your transgressions, whereby ye have
 “transgressed; and make you a new heart
 “and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O
 “house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in
 “the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord
 “God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live
 “ye^m.”

It is not without extreme repugnance, that I can bring myself to credit my own statement, that such opinions as those, which have been just ascribed to our assailants, could ever have been soberly maintained, as the declarations of the oracles of God.

Yet that such opinions in their full extent,

^m Ezek. xviii. 27, 30, 31, 32.

if not to a greater extent than hath been stated, were the doctrine of Calvin himself, is a position, to which his own writings bear unquestionable testimony: nor hath a syllable been here advanced, which those writings do not expressly warrant. The austere and rigorous character of the doctrine, (I wish to speak of it in the most unexceptionable and inoffensive terms,) and its tendency withal to foster the most dangerous wickedness, most dangerous, because connected with an erroneous principle, may have alarmed the more timid of his professed followers; and have deterred them from adopting it with all its frightful consequences, however necessarily they may result from his fundamental tenets. There have not however been wanting those among his disciples, both in earlier and in recent times, who have been hardy enough to employ such language, as will fully justify us, not only in declining to propagate, but in deprecating the propagation of, tenets so preposterous in themselves, and of such manifest injury to the cause of pure religion. Such was the case at the period of the Reformation, when, as a late learned Divine remarks, "Calvinism prevailed among a few Gospellers, who drew consequences from it, which Calvin would willingly have guarded against: but he had laid down the premises; and not-

“withstanding he stopped there, and would
 “have persuaded others to do the same, yet
 “the corrupt hearts of these men boldly drew
 “the conclusion for himⁿ.” Such also was
 the case in the time of Charles the First; and
 such it is in the present time^o.

What, for instance, shall we say of the fla-
 grant Antinomian tendency of those expres-
 sions, wherein a living Minister of our Church,
 of great and extensive popularity, asserts the
 doctrines of unconditional election and ir-
 resistible grace? “Wisdom crieth aloud, not in
 “the temple only, and in the courts of the
 “Lord’s house, but in the streets and the lanes
 “of the city, among the graceless and the
 “idle; those who are too graceless to attend
 “the ordinances of duty, and too idle to be
 “concerned for their salvation. And when
 “Jesus calls, observe who they are he calls.
 “He says, if any man thirst—if any man hear
 “my voice: he doth not say, if any good
 “man, or any moral man; but *any* man. As

ⁿ Winchester on the Seventeenth Article, chap. 4.

^o The Author has thought it necessary to bring for-
 ward at some length the principal Calvinistic tenets in
 the words of professed Calvinists, chiefly of the present
 day. Should the reader find this series of quotations irk-
 some, and be contented with Calvin’s own representation
 of the doctrines characterised by his name, he may pass
 on to page 144, where the moral tendency of the system
 is discussed.

“ if he had said, I will have my offer made
 “ among such as the world may fancy too
 “ worthless to be made partakers of my salva-
 “ tion, and too far lost to be recovered. Go
 “ ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel
 “ to every creature. The single qualification
 “ I expect is to believe the Gospel: for he
 “ that believeth shall be saved. And even that
 “ belief my Spirit shall bestow: He maketh
 “ my people willing in the day of his power.
 “ All that the Father giveth me, shall come to
 “ me; and him that cometh, I will in no wise
 “ cast out. Observe again the extensiveness,
 “ the freedom, the sovereignty of his grace.
 “ *All* that the Father giveth. Not one, or
 “ two, or ten thousand; but ALL. And they
 “ *shall* come. What, if they do such and
 “ such duties? Not a word of the kind.
 “ What, if they perform such obligations?
 “ Not a syllable like it. It is an absolute pro-
 “ mise of the Lord Jesus, founded in his own
 “ absolute power. Here are neither *ifs* nor
 “ *buts*. No conditions, nor terms. They *shall*
 “ come: and if they themselves will not, the
 “ Lord will make them *willing* in the day of
 “ his power. It is he that worketh in them
 “ both to *will* and to *do* of his own good plea-
 “ sure.”

P Prop. against all Despair, by Robert Hawker, D.D.
 Vicar of Charles, Plymouth, p. 15, 16.

What, again, shall we say of the gloomy and unhallowed picture of reprobation, exhibited by another of our brethren, not many years deceased⁹, and still commemorated by his admirers as “an eminent servant of Christ,” “a burning and a shining light!” Who asserts concerning the reprobate, whom he elsewhere describes as “necessarily and inevitably “condemned to infernal death hereafter,” and whose sentence he ascribes with Calvin “not “to their foreseen sins, but to the sovereign “will and determinate pleasure of God,” that “God did not barely suffer, but positively intended and decreed them, to continue in “their natural blindness and hardness of heart;” that they are “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” or, as he interprets the language of St. Paul, “put together, made up, formed, “or fashioned for perdition;” that “God “chooses and pitches upon men to do the “most execrable deeds;” and that “he does “not only negatively withhold from the wicked his grace, which alone can restrain them “from evil; but that occasionally, in the

⁹ See the *Doctrine of Absolute Predestination, stated and asserted, &c. by Augustus Toplady, A. B. late Vicar of Broad Hembury, Devon. edit. Glasgow, 1807. pages 109, 110, 111, 112, 160.*

¹⁰ *Evangelical Magazine, August, 1808. p. 325.*

¹¹ *Life of Toplady, prefixed to the above work, p. xvi.*

“course of his providence, he puts them into
“circumstances of temptation, such as shall
“cause the persons so tempted, actually to
“turn aside from the path of duty to commit
“sin, and to involve both themselves and
“others in evil.”

What again, with respect to the absolute impossibility of the non-elect attaining to salvation, shall we say of that monstrous position, that “the sentence of God, which rejects the
“reprobates, is so fixed and immutable, that
“it is impossible they should be saved, though
“they have performed all the works of the
“saints: and that therefore it is not true, that
“those, who perish through their own fault;
“might have been saved through grace, if
“they had not ceased labouring for saving
“grace?”

What again, with reference to the doctrine of the impeccability and final perseverance of the elect, or in the phraseology of the system, “once a saint and always a saint, once a child
“of God and always a child of God;” (a doctrine let me observe by the way after the

See “The Result of False Principles, or Error convicted by its own Evidence, extracted from the original of
“Dr. Womack, sometime Lord Bishop of St. David’s.”
edit. 1790. p. 78. An admirable exposure of the mischievous tendency of Calvinism.

learned Dr. Barrow, “ which is opposed to
 “ the unanimous consent of all Christendom
 “ for fifteen hundred years “ ;”) what shall we
 say of the arrogance and blasphemous impiety
 of that declaration, that “ the child of God in
 “ the power of grace doth perform every duty
 “ so well, that to ask pardon for failing either
 “ in matter or in manner is a sin ; that it is
 “ unlawful to pray for forgiveness of sins after
 “ conversion ; and that, if he does at any time
 “ fall, he can by the power of grace carry his
 “ sin unto the Lord, and say, Here I had it,
 “ and here I leave it * !” What shall we say of
 the flagitious tendency of that assertion, “ God
 “ does no longer stand offended nor displeas-
 “ ed, though a believer, after he is a believer,
 “ do sin often ; except he will be offended,
 “ where there is no cause to be offended,
 “ which is blasphemy to speak. It is thought
 “ that elect persons are in a damnable state, in
 “ the time they walk in excess of riot : let me
 “ speak freely to you, that the Lord has no
 “ more to lay to the charge of an elect per-
 “ son, yet in the height of iniquity, and in the
 “ excess of riot, and committing all the abo-

* Barrow’s Works, vol. ii. p. 51.

† Fifty Propositions taken from the Mouth of Mr. J. Brierly, prop. 19. See Grey’s Hudibras, part ii. chap. ii. ver. 245.

“minations that can be committed?” Or how can we sufficiently abominate the sanction conferred upon every species of profligacy, in such an affirmation as the following, solemnly delivered, and deliberately repeated and maintained? “Let any true saint of God” (said one of the Puritanical supporters of Calvinistic election in former times) “be taken away in the very act of any known sin, before it is possible for him to repent, I make no doubt or scruple of it, but that he shall as surely be saved, as if he had lived to have repented of it.” “I say that when God doth take away any of the saints in the very act of sin, he doth in that very instant give them such a particular and actual repentance, as shall save their souls. For he hath predestinated them to everlasting life; therefore having predestinated them to the end, he doth predestinate to the means to obtain it.”

Nor is it in the days of ancient Puritanism alone, that the assertion, that “the elect shall be saved, do what they will,” can boast its advocate, charged as it is with the most noxious and pestilential consequences, “destroying

† Quoted from Crisp in Fletcher’s *First Check to Antinomianism*, p. 87, 88.

‡ Pryn’s *Perpetuity of a Regenerate Man’s Estate*, pages 339, 341.

“ the necessity of all care and endeavours after
 “ righteousness, and cutting the sinews of all
 “ religion.” Nor is it, in principle at least,
 if it be avowedly, of such rare occurrence, as
 a recent writer, in his well-intentioned zeal
 for religious unity, would persuade us to be-
 lieve^b. I dwell not upon the scandalous as-
 sertion of certain early preachers of Method-
 ism, that “ after the elect have received the
 “ Spirit, they cannot sin ; and if they commit
 “ any sin, it is only an error in such ; and let
 “ them do whatever they please after their
 “ adoption, however sinful the act, they are
 “ sure to be saved notwithstanding.” But I
 rather ask, what is the principle, on which
 proceeds the language of a late Minister of our
 Church, that “ the salvation of every one of
 “ the elect is certain, and can by no means be
 “ prevented ;” when taken in connection with
 another of his positions, that “ the vilest sin-
 “ ner may, for aught we can tell, appertain to
 “ the election of grace, and be one day wrought
 “ upon by the Spirit of God^d.” I would ask,
 wherefore it is affirmed by another, who went
 out from us, that “ he feared not the falling

^a Stebbing on the Spirit, chap. xv. sect. xi.

^b See Zeal without Innovation, p. 58.

^c See Enthusiasm of Papists and Methodists compared,
 part iii. pref. p. xxx.

^d Toplady on Predestination, p. 53, 105.

“ finally, although he feared he should provoke God to let him fall foully;” and generally, that “ though God’s people may fall foully, however their poor souls may be harrassed, yet no wicked devil, nor their own depraved hearts, shall be able to separate them from the love of God: God has loved them, God has fixed his heart upon them, and having loved his own, he loves them unto the end^e.” I would ask, on what ground it is maintained by another of our brethren, still living, and still engaged in the active exercise of his profession, that “ every idea of moral goodness, as a qualification for obtaining pardon mercy and peace from God is done away^f :” that “ no demerit on the part of believers can arise to defeat the operation of God’s graces^g ;” that “ the present life is not a life of probation and trial^h ;” and that we have reason to “ hope, that the last day will bring forward to the admiring view of applauding worlds numberless examples of salvation, where divine grace has gloriously triumphed in the conversion of sinners in their last moments, when the whole life has been spent before in hardness

^e Whitefield’s Works, vol. i. p. 78. and vol. v. p. 245.

^f Hawker’s Prop to Despair, p. 11.

^g Hawker’s Zion’s Pilgrim, p. 60.

^h Ibid. p. 160.

“and impenitenceⁱ.” I would ask, with what view it is affirmed by a fourth, that the “will of God to do good to his children does not depend on their will, or on their faithfulness; or on any thing in themselves^k,” for what reason he lends his sanction to the doctrine, that “as it was not any loveliness in elect persons which moved God to love them at first, so neither shall their unlovely backslidings deprive them of it^l,” and more especially why he gives currency and authority to the wild position, that “suppose a believer be taken away in his sin, and hath not time to repent of it, there was that in him, that would have repented, and God reckons of a man according to that he would do;” or to the equally dangerous doctrine, that “though a believer be black as hell, polluted with guilt, defiled with sin, yet in Christ he is all fair without spot; free from sin, as viewed by God in Christ, fully reconciled to God, and standing without trespasses before him^m.” Still more particularly I would ask, what in-

ⁱ Hawker's *Misericordia*, p. 116.

^k *Walk of Faith*, by the Reverend William Romaine; Works, vol. i. p. 258.

^l Coles on God's Sovereignty, edited by Romaine, p. 294.

^m Mafon's *Spiritual Treasury*, edited and recommended by Romaine, p. 141. and 206.

terpretation must be affixed to the language of another modern Predestinarian of eminence; when, alluding to David's murder of Uriah and adultery with Bathsheba, he demands; "Though I believe that David's sin displeased the Lord, must I therefore believe that David's person was under the curse of the law? Surely no. Like Ephraim he was still a pleasant child: though he went on frowardly, he did not lose the character of the man after God's own heartⁿ." And again; "No falls or backslidings in God's children can ever bring them again under condemnation, because the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death^o." And again; "If Christ has fulfilled the whole law and borne the curse, then all debts and claims against his people, be they more or be they less, be they small or be they great, be they before or be they after conversion, are for ever and for ever cancelled. All trespasses are forgiven them. They are justified from all things. They already have everlasting life^p." "God views them without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: they stand always compleat in

ⁿ Quoted from Sir Richard Hill, in Fletcher's *Third Check to Antinomianism*, p. 72.

^o Ibid. p. 80.

^p Ibid. p. 82.

“ the everlasting righteousness of the Redeem-
 “ er. Black in themselves, they are comely
 “ through his comeliness. He, who is of purer
 “ eyes than to behold iniquity, can neverthe-
 “ less address them with, Thou art all fair,
 “ my love, my undefiled; there is no spot in
 “ thee.”

Far be it from me to assert, that every man, who calls himself a Calvinist, does admit these abominable tenets, however they may seem in reason, and by fair deduction, to form a constituent part of his creed, and avowed as they are by some of our accusers: or that every man, who does maintain these sentiments, as part of his creed, is prepared to take advantage of that sanction, which they supply to licentious practice! Some minds indeed there may be, and such unquestionably there are, of superior quality, whose love of God is too devout, and their piety too ardent, to suffer them to use their tenets as a licence for carelessness or immorality; and who remain, as Tully testified of the disciples of Epicurus, virtuous in spite of their principles †.

† Quoted from Sir Richard Hill, in Fletcher's Third Check to Antinomianism, p. 84.

‡ Sunt nonnullæ disciplinæ, quæ, propositis bonorum et malorum finibus, officium amore pervertunt. Nam qui summum bonum instituit, ut nihil habeat cum virtute conjunctum, idque suis commodis, non honestate metitur,

But this may be safely affirmed; that wherever such principles are maintained, (and that there are some persons bold enough to maintain them, the foregoing extracts will demonstrate,) the peril to a mind of the common stamp is palpable and incalculable. Let a man of ordinary temper be persuaded, that he is one of the elect; (and it rests with the Calvinist to show, that persons in general, who maintain his opinions, will not be so persuaded, unless on substantial grounds;) and let him moreover be persuaded of what we have seen there are not wanting teachers to persuade him, that no duties are required to be performed, no obligations to be fulfilled, no terms, no conditions to be observed, in order to qualify him for salvation; but that whatever sins he may commit, he is sure to be saved notwithstanding; that whatever be his falls and backslidings, all trespasses are forgiven him; that God views him without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; that he is justified from all things; that he already has everlasting life; that he stands always absolved in the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer:—that person is little acquainted with the corrupt and vicious propensities of human nature, who

hic, si sibi ipse consentiat, et non interdum naturæ bonitate vincatur, neque amicitiam colere possit, nec justitiam.
Cic. de Off. cap. i. p. 2.

will undertake to answer for the consequence; or rather it may be said, who will not undertake to affirm, that the consequence will neither redound to the credit of the doctrine, nor conduce to the everlasting welfare of its professor. “The great advocates of election and reprobation,” says Bishop Sherlock, a writer distinguished for the clearness and solidity of his judgment, “always reckon themselves in the number of the elect; and that their iniquities, of which they are often conscious, may not rise up against them, they maintain, that the act of man cannot make void the purpose of God, or the sins of the elect deprive them of the benefit of God’s eternal decree. Thus secured, they despise the virtues and moral attainments of all men, and doom them with all their virtues to destruction, whilst they advance themselves with all their sins to a throne of glory, prepared for them before the world began.” “If I be elected, no sins can possibly bereave me of the kingdom of heaven; if reprobated, no good deeds can advance me to it.” Such was the language of a German potentate in former times, when his friends admonished him of his vicious conversation, and dangerous state. “An objection,” remarks Heylyn, “not

• Sherlock’s Sermons, vol. ii. p. 89.

“ more old than common : but such, I must
“ confess, to which I never found a satisfactory
“ answer from the pen of Supralapsarian, or
“ Sublapsarian, within the small compass of
“ my reading^t.”

What fruit, on the other hand, is to be expected from those, who believe themselves to lie under a sentence of irrelative and inevitable reprobation; intended and decreed to everlasting torments by the unalterable will, and fitted for perdition by the omnipotent hand, of God? What in a man of ordinary temper, but “ a recklessness of unclean living,” a soul dead to every sense of religion, and a heart hardened in impenitence? Or, if such a persuasion gain possession of one, whose mind is endowed with higher and more ingenuous qualities, and alive to a nicer sensibility, to what other consequences can it be expected to lead, than a dismal melancholy; a fixed and comfortless despondence; or a gloomy alienation of reason; which will endure as long as his mortal existence, and will at length break forth perhaps in a paroxysm of frenzy, or in a death violent and premature? For such a being, an outcast in his own imagination from divine grace, and abandoned to irremediable condemnation, the present has no enjoyment

^t Heylyn's *Quinquarticular History*, part i. chap. iv.

to cheer, nor has the future any promise to comfort him. For him the blood of the Saviour of the world has not been shed:—for him “the God of all comfort” extends not the arms of his mercy:—“the day-spring from on high” does not visit him with one gleam of hope, “to guide his feet into the way of peace:”—but he advances through clouds and thick darkness towards the vale of the shadow of death, which he surveys before him, not as a refuge, “where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest;” not as an avenue to the abode of happiness, where his earthly sufferings are to be recompensed by “an eternal weight of glory;” but as the passage from a short life of intolerable misery and apprehension, to an interminable existence of far more exceeding horror!

This is not a picture of the imagination: would to God that it were! The experience, both of earlier and of more recent times, will furnish too many originals; whilst the same experience will also warrant an opinion, that the evils, which result from the system to the individual professor, are not redeemed by any benefits, to which it gives rise in his intercourse with society.

That Calvinism has a general tendency to create and foster humility and a Christian temper, is an opinion which its adherents may

fondly cherish^u, but which the evidence of history will not substantiate. If it be so, why did it not restrain the intolerant and persecuting spirit, with which Calvin himself maintained his doctrines, even to the banishment, if not to the death, of one of his unhappy victims^x; when, inconsistently with the assertion of a late biographer, that “he never used any expressions unworthy of a pious man^y,” he styled his opponents “fools,” and “impious;” “litigating with God;” “forgetful that they were men;” “virulent dogs, barking and vomiting forth their accusations against God;” “malignant and impudent calumniators of his doctrine^z,” in a word, accusing them of

^u See Calv. Inst. lib. iii. cap. xxi. sect. 1. and Whitefield’s Works, vol. iv. p. 61.

^x Sebastian Castalio. See Heylyn’s Quinquart. Hist. part i. chap. v. part iii. chap. xvi. Mosheim, cent. xvi. sect. iii. p. 2.

^y Mackenzie’s Life of Calvin, p. 140.

^z Figmenta, quæ ad evertendam prædestinationem commenti sunt stulti homines. *Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxi. sect. 7.

Quæ speciose ad fuggillandam Dei justitiam prætendit impietas. *Ibid.*

Hæc quidem piis et modestis abunde sufficerent, et qui se homines reminiscuntur. Quia tamen non unam speciem virulenti isti canes evomunt contra Deum &c. Multis modis cum Deo litigant stulti homines. *Ibid.* cap. xxiii. sect. 2.

—divinæ Providentiæ calumniator. *Ibid.* sect. 5.

Maligne atque impudenter hanc doctrinam calumniantur alii. *Ibid.* sect. 13.

every species of depravity, moral as well as intellectual, with such asperity of manner, and such virulence of language, as provoked the mild Bucer to write to him, that “he regulated his judgment by his passions of love and hatred, and these by his mere will;” and to bestow on him the appellation of “a Fratricide^a?” If it be so, why did it not check the arrogance, the turbulence, the slanders of his early partizans; the Contra-Remonstrants on the continent; and their abettors, the Gospellers, as they were termed, among ourselves? Why did it not mitigate that implacable temper, wherewith the opponents of Arminius belied, calumniated, and falsely accused him; and wherewith his colleague Gomarus in particular averred, that “he should be afraid to die in his principles, and appear before the tribunal of God;” and that, in so uncharitable a manner, as to draw from one, that heard him, the memorable declaration, that “he had rather die with the faith of Arminius, than with the charity of his accuser^b.” Why did it not correct

Perfidi et impii nebulones. *Epist. Col.* 142.

—quæmadmodum protervi isti canes contra nos blaterant. *In Ezek.* xviii. 32.

^a Judicas, prout amas vel odisti; amas autem, vel odisti, prout libet. See the Examination of Tilenus, p. 324.

^b See Brandt’s History of the Reformation in the Low Countries, vol. ii. p. 51, 48.

the domineering and tyrannical conduct, the bitterness and evil-speaking, the partiality and duplicity, the frauds, deceits, and equivocations, practised in support of their doctrine by the delegates at Dort, to such an extent as to excite the disgust and animadversion even of their adherents themselves? Why did it not moderate the bigotry, the intolerance, and the factious spirit of the Scotch Covenanters, who sold their King; and why did it not purify the hearts and lives of the English regicides, who bought and slew him; instead of giving a sanction to their vices, whilst they lived, and affording them, as was notoriously the case with Cromwell^d, peace and consolation in the

^c See Examination of Tilenus, Pref. Epist. p. 253. Brandt's Hist. vol. iii. p. 308—12. Hales's and Balcanqual's Letters from the Synod, especially p. 482. and following. Heylyn's Quinquartic. Hist. part i. chap. v.

^d "This minds me of a remarkable passage told by Dr. Bates, who wrote the *Elenchus Motuum Nuperorum in Anglia*. He, as a physician, was called upon to assist that night that Oliver proved a true deliverer of his country. The Protector was in great agonies of mind, often started, and asked them, if they saw any thing? At length he called for his chaplains; and the first question he asked them, was, If there was any falling from grace? To which being answered in the negative, Then, said he, I am safe. For he supposed that some time or other in his life he might have had a little grace. And then his usurpation, with the murder of the King, and devastation of three kingdoms, besides

hour of death, from the persuasion, that, whatever were their sins, they could not fall from grace, which they had once enjoyed? Why did it not prevent the Calvinistic champion of Methodism from committing, avowing, and justifying a breach of faith towards his Arminian antagonist, for the purpose of propagating these very doctrines themselves^e; and why did it not humble that imperious temper, “imperious” by his own confession^f, which prompted him to usurp and exercise dominion over the faith of his brethren, yea of his fathers, in Christ; and to pronounce on these controverted points with all the arrogance and fancied infallibility of a Roman Pontiff^g? Finally, why does it not infuse a milder, a more tolerant, and a more Christian spirit into its advocates of the present day; and incline them to regard us, who are of a different persuasion, with “brotherly love,” instead of denouncing us, as dangerous heretics and schismatics; as impious hypocrites; blasphemers;

“much blood shed abroad, and the overthrow of the
 “established Church, could do him no hurt! This is a
 “short way of quieting conscience, and to lull men asleep
 “in their sins! Thus poor souls are deluded by these doc-
 “trines of decrees.” Rehearsal, vol. iv. p. 45.

^e See Coke's *Life of Wesley*, p. 214.

^f *Whitefield's Works*, vol. i. p. 195.

^g *Ibid.* p. 95, 101, 182, 212, &c.

and perjured apostates from the truth? “Certainly,” remarked a late very learned Prelate^h, “the greatest fault of the Calvinists has been their want of charity for those who differ from them:” a fault, I cannot but add, little consistent with that “meekness,” which Whitefield professed to discover in Calvinⁱ, and which he proposed as a pattern for his own imitation. For my own part, to such “railing accusations” as those which have just been noticed, I reply in the language of a friend of Arminius, on whom similar appellations were profusely lavished by his opponents, “I am no Arian, no Papist, no Calvinist, no Lutheran, no Pelagian, but a CHRISTIAN, ordained to proclaim the perfections of Him, who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light^k.” But at the same time, when I thus survey the conduct of those, who have been most vehement in the propagation of these peculiar tenets;—when I reflect how aliene is religious intolerance from “the royal law” of Christian charity;—and when I likewise call to mind the promise of our blessed Lord, that “if any man will do his Father’s will, he shall know of the doctrine,

^h Bishop Horley’s primary Charge at St. Asaph.

ⁱ Whitefield’s Works, vol. i. p. 439.

^k Speech of Vitenbogart before the States of Holland. See Brandt’s Hist. vol. ii. p. 56.

“ whether it be of God' : ”—when I recollect moreover the tendency, that Calvinism has already been represented to bear, with respect to the moral conduct, and the peace of heart, of its professors :—I cannot but look upon it with a very suspicious eye ; and feel disposed to acknowledge, with humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God, that a doctrine, teeming with such dark presages on the one hand, and with such profligacy on both ; and so prone withal, if not to promote, at least not to discourage, an acrimonious spirit in its professors, is not the doctrine which we preach. If therefore, as was before remarked, when it is objected to us that we do not preach the Gospel, these doctrines are intended as the doctrines of the Gospel, we are not disposed to shrink from the charge. The words, which we preach, are the words of peace and consolation, not those of horror and despair : the fruits which we attempt to rear, are the fruits of holiness, from a meek and lowly heart ; not those of a presumptuous temper, and an unclean life : fearful of “ making the heart of “ the righteous sad, whom God has not made “ sad, and of strengthening the hands of the “ wicked, that he should not return from his “ wicked way, by promising him life^m,” the

^l John vii. 37.

^m Ezek. xiii. 22.

Gospel which we preach, we believe to be the Gospel of the Holy Spirit; as for those doctrines, which are sometimes preached for the Gospel, we know not what spirit they are of.

Let me here pause to remark on the case of those among our brethren of the establishment, who, unwilling, as it appears, to “launch out
“into that unfordable abyfs of horror and
“astonishment, the decree of eternal reprobation,” veil their opinions upon the subject of predestination under the specious title of “a
“milder and moderate Calvinism.” “Nothing,” remarks their Apologist, “is further
“from my purpose, than to infer from what
“has been advanced in this section, that the
“precise theological system of John Calvin in
“all its parts and to its full extent was intended to be established in the thirty-nine
“Articles to the exclusion of every milder sentiment.” “When therefore,” he continues, after some intermediate observations, “certain
“writers have formed a frightful system of
“nothing but absolute decrees, absolute reprobation, and other extravagancies, which we
“absolutely disavow, they may attack it as
“vehemently as they please; but it deserves
“their consideration, that it is a creature

ⁿ Examination of Tilenus, p. 292.

^o Overton's True Churchmen, &c. p. 93.

“ of their own, and that in respect to us at least the most pointed of their weapons falls, *Telum imbelli sine ictu*^p. Whether the extravagant and frightful system, which the writers here alluded to attack, be in point of fact a creature of their own; and whether to allege that it is so, be creditable to the ingenuousness of him who affirms it; are questions not destitute of importance, but they must be passed over as foreign to my more immediate purpose, to which I accordingly hasten.

Now we should rejoice in giving to all the followers of Christ, and especially to these brethren and ministers of our own communion, “ the right hand of fellowship.” I admire their zeal, and I honour their exertions. When therefore I hear them apparently excepting against “ several doctrines, which are contained in Calvin’s Institutions^q :” when I hear them denying, as it should seem, “ that the fall of Adam was the effect of a divine decree ;” admitting that the efficacy of “ Christ’s redemption extends” to all mankind; and disavowing and condemning altogether the doctrine of absolute reprobation, as being “ unscriptural or liable to abuse^r :” when

^p Overton, p. 96.

^q See Overton, p. 93.

^r Remarks on Dr. Kipling’s Pamphlet by Academicus,

they express themselves as “ wishing unequi-
“ vocally to teach, that man’s salvation is
“ wholly of grace, but that his perdition is
“ of himself; and neither to make God the
“ author of sin, nor man a mere machine and
“ unfit to be treated as a moral agent^s ;” “ the
“ cause of God’s rejection of any man being
“ his sin and rejection of the Gospel :” when
they moreover unreservedly contend, as the
unquestionable doctrine of Scripture, that “ we
“ shall be judged, rewarded, and receive ac-
“ cording to our works; that the wicked
“ shall be punished with different degrees of
“ punishment proportioned to their demerits;
“ and that God will give to his faithful people
“ higher degrees of glory in reward for higher
“ degrees of holiness and good works^t :” —
when some of these concessions and declara-
tions I hear, and others I think I hear, from
the moderate Calvinists, I am inclined to che-
rish a feeling of regret, that their attachment
to an obnoxious, or, to employ the epithet of
their Advocate, “ an odious name^u,” should
serve to keep open a breach, not required by
an essential difference of doctrine.

But when on the other hand I hear them
maintain, too plainly to be mistaken, but in-

^s Overton, p. 89.

^t Ibid. p. 291, 292.

^u Overton’s Preface, p. iv.

consistently I apprehend with the opinions just recited, that “ the fundamental principles on which the Calvinistic system rests, are incontrovertible^x ;” and that “ the Authors of our national forms unquestionably built upon the same foundation with this celebrated Reformer, but have not carried the superstructure to the same height^y :”—when I hear them referring more especially to the “ doctrines of Austin, as the great model^z ” of their opinions :—when I recollect, that one rigid maintainer of the higher system of Calvinism commemorates this father as “ the great,” “ the excellent,” “ the evangelical,” because of his steadfast attachment to, and nervous successful defences of, the decrees of God^a ; that another extols “ the piety, learning, and ability,” with which he confutes “ the doctrines of free-will, universal redemption, and falling from grace^b ;” and that it is the avowal of Calvin himself^c, that “ if he chose to compose an entire volume from Austin, he could readily convince the reader, that he

^x Overton, p. 355. ^y Ibid. p. 94. ^z Ibid. p. 95.

^a Toplady on Predestination, p. 136, 144, 151.

^b Goliath Slain, p. 124.

^c Si ex Augustino integrum volumen contexere libeat, lectoribus ostendere promptum esset, mihi non nisi ejus verbis opus esse : sed eos prolixitate onerare nolo. *Calv. Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxii. sect. 8.

“ had occasion for none but his words :”—
 when moreover I reflect, not on the representation of a partizan on either side, but on what I understand to be the real doctrines of Austin on the matter in debate ; as, that “ Almighty
 “ God does not will the salvation of all men,
 “ but only of the elect ^d ;” that “ Christ did
 “ not die for all men, but only for the elect ^e ;”
 that “ all men have not the means of salvation
 “ given to them by God, but that the non-
 “ elect are abandoned in a graceless mass of
 “ perdition, excluded from the gift of faith,
 “ and denied the opportunity of believing ^f ;”

^d Quod scriptum est, quod vult omnes homines salvos fieri, nec tamen omnes salvi fiunt, multis quidem modis intelligi potest, ex quibus in aliis opusculis nostris aliquos commemoravimus : sed hic unum dicam. Ita dictum est, *Omnes homines vult salvos fieri*, ut intelligantur omnes prædestinati ; quia omne genus hominum in eis est. *August. de Correptione et Gratia*, cap. xiv.

Ita debemus intelligere quod scriptum sit, *Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri*, tanquam diceretur, nullum hominem fieri salvum, nisi quem fieri ipse voluerit : non quod nullus sit hominum, nisi quem salvum fieri velit, sed quod nullus fiat, nisi quem velit. *Enchiridion*, cap. xxix.

^e Adde adhuc, *Qui proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit eum, quomodo etiam non cum illo omnia nobis donavit ?* Sed quibus ? Nobis præscitis, et prædestinatis, justificatis, glorificatis, de quibus sequitur. *In Evang. Johan. Tract.* cap. 45.

^f Hæc est prædestinatio sanctorum ; nihil aliud quam præscientia scilicet et præparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus certissime liberantur, quicumque liberantur. Ceteri autem

that "the commission of sin and the blindness
 "and hardness of heart of the sinner are not
 "barely permitted by God, but are positive
 "operative acts of his most omnipotent power,
 "and his free and unbiaſſed wills;" and that
 "Judas was choſen, not like the other Apoſtles

ubi, niſi in maſſa perditionis, juſto divino judicio relin-
 quuntur? Ubi Tyrïi relictï ſunt et Sidoniï, qui etiam cre-
 dere potuerunt, ſi mira illa Chriſti ſigna vidiffent. Sed
 quoniam ut crederent, non erat eis datum, etiam unde
 crederent eſt negatum. Ex quo apparet, habere quosdam
 in ipſo ingenio divinum naturaliter munus intelligentiæ,
 quò moveantur ad fidem, ſi congrua ſuis mentibus vel
 audiant verba, vel ſigna conſpiciant: et tamen ſi Dei
 altiore judicio a perditionis maſſa non ſunt gratiæ præ-
 deſtinatione diſcreti, nec ipſa eis adhibentur vel dicta di-
 vina, vel facta, per quæ poſſent credere, ſi audirent utique
 talia, vel viderent: Audiunt enim hæc et faciunt,
 quibus datum eſt; non autem faciunt, ſive audiant ſive non
 audiant, quibus datum non eſt. *De Dono Perſeverantiæ,*
 cap. xiv.

§ Quantum ad ipſos attinet (malos ſcil.) quod Deus
 noluit, fecerunt: quantum vero ad omnipotentiam Dei,
 nullo modo id efficere valuerunt. Hoc quippe ipſo, quod
 contra voluntatem ejus fecerunt, de ipſis facta eſt voluntas
 ejus. Propterea namque, *magna opera Domini, exquisita*
in omnes voluntates ejus; ut miro et ineffabili modo non
 fiat præter ejus voluntatem, quod etiam contra ejus ſit
 voluntatem. Quia non fieret, ſi non ſineret; nec utique
 nolens finit, ſed volens. *Enchir.* cap. xxix.

Non eſt dubitandum, voluntati Dei humanas voluntates
 non poſſe reſiſtere, quo minus faciat ipſe, quod vult: quan-
 doquidem etiam de ipſis hominum voluntatibus, quod vult,
 cum vult, facit:—ſine dubio habens humanorum cordium,

“ in mercy to partake of Christ’s kingdom, but
“ that he was chosen and pitched upon in
“ judgment on purpose to commit the damna-
“ ble act of betraying his Master, and to be
“ the means of shedding his blood^g:” —I catch
through the veil of mildness and moderation
too clear a view of that frightful phantom, of
“ those rigours of the system^h,” from which
our Calvinistic brethren would fain be released,

quo placeret, inclinandorum omnipotentissimam potesta-
tem. *De Corrept. et Grat.* cap. xiv.

Deus omnipotens, five per misericordiam cuius vult
miseretur, five per iudicium quem vult obduret, nec ini-
que aliquid facit, nec nisi volens quidquam facit, et omnia
quæcunque vult facit. *Enchir.* cap. xxix.

Agit Omnipotens in cordibus hominum etiam motum
voluntatis eorum, ut per eos agat, quod per eos agere
ipse voluerit. *De Grat. et lib. Arbit.* cap. xxi.

—Manifestatur, operari Deum in cordibus hominum
ad inclinandas eorum voluntates quocunque voluerit, five
ad bona, pro sua misericordia; five ad mala, pro meritis
eorum, iudicio utique suo, aliquando aperto, aliquando
occulto, semper autem iusto. *De Grat. et lib. Arbit.*
cap. xxi.

§ Electi autem sunt ad regnandum cum Christo, non quo-
modo electus est Judas ad opus cui congruebat. Ab illo
quippe electus est, qui novit bene uti etiam malis, ut et
per ejus opus damnabile, illud, propter quod ipse venerat,
opus venerabile completeretur. Cum itaque audimus, *Nonne
ego vos duodecim elegi, et unus ex vobis diabolus est*, illos
debemus intelligere electos per misericordiam, illum per
iudicium; illos ad obtinendum regnum suum, illum ad
effundendum sanguinem suum. *De Corr. et Grat.* cap. vii.

^h Overton, p. 96.

to suffer me to entertain a reasonable hope of any important approximation in our opinions.

There is indeed in absolute election, and in its obvious and necessary consequences, that which must stagger the faith of any man, who is not prepared to go to much greater lengths, than comport with the gentle terms of mildness and moderation. It was the memorable observation and advice of a late Predestinarian, "You will reap much improvement from the view of predestination in its full extent, if your eyes are able steadfastly to look at all which God hath made known concerning it. But if your spiritual sight is weak, forego the inquiry as far as reprobation is concerned, and be content to know but in part, till death transmits you to that perfect state, where you shall know even as you are known¹." What an acknowledgment is this, to the insurmountable prejudice of absolute predestination! For what can we think of a doctrine, which its strenuous maintainer represents, as made known by God, but at the same time as too formidable for the contemplation of an ordinary mind? And how can it be a part of that revelation, which Christ commanded to be disclosed to "every creature," and more especially to the poor and the weak?

¹ Toplady on Predestination, Preface, p. viii.

It is however upon the principle here avowed, that the conduct of the moderate Calvinist appears to be regulated. He endeavours perhaps to close his eyes on those parts of the system, which are too "horrible" (I use the epithet of its framer^k) to be steadfastly beheld by any other than an eye of uncommon firmness; and he endeavours to withdraw them from the foreground of the picture, and to throw them into shade, lest their deformity should shock and appal his weaker brethren. Still, with whatever caution these horrors may be concealed, they constitute an essential part of the system. "Where there is an election "of some," remarked the last cited author, "there must be a rejection of others^l:" and it was laid down by the Calvinistic Founder of Methodism, that "without doubt the doctrine "of election and reprobation must stand or fall "together^m." "No medium can be assigned," said Bishop Davenant, who was one of our divines that assisted at the Synod of Dort, "either on God's part, betwixt the decrees of "predestinating some men and not predestinat- "ing others; or on man's part, betwixt men

^k Decretum quidem horribile fateor. *Calv. Institut.* lib. iii. cap. xxiii. sect. 7.

^l Toplady, p. 106.

^m Whitefield's Works, vol. iv. p. 58.

“ absolutely predestinated to the attainment of
 “ life eternal, and absolutely pretermitted and
 “ left infallibly to fail of the obtainment of
 “ eternal life ; which we call Absolute Repro-
 “ bation ”.”

If any one disputes these positions, which are laid down by Calvinistic writers, let him satisfactorily explain, with what consistency he infers the absolute election of individuals from the declaration in Scripture, that “ God
 “ will have mercy on whom he will have
 “ mercy,” but denies the inference in support of the absolute reprobation of individuals, deduced from its counterpart, “ whom he will,
 “ he hardeneth.” Or waving the appeal to such detached passages, deprived of which however Calvinism will dwindle into a name, let him survey the question abstractedly, and fairly meet and repel the argument of Calvin, one of those “ fundamental principles on which
 “ his system rests,” and one which I adopt the epithet of the moderate Calvinist in describing as “ incontrovertible.” “ You are greatly de-
 “ ceived,” said he to a friend, “ if you think
 “ the everlasting counsel of God can be so
 “ mutilated, as for some to have been chosen
 “ by him to salvation, no one to have been

ⁿ See Whitby on the Five Points, Disc. I. p. 1.

“ destined to destruction. For if he hath cho-
“ sen some, it certainly follows, that all have
“ not been chosen. And what is to be said of
“ these, but that they are left in order to perish.
“ *There must therefore be a mutual relation be-*
“ *tween the reprobate and the elect* °.” And
again, to the same effect, in words which es-
pecially merit the attention of the moderate
Calvinist: “ Many persons indeed, as if they
“ wished to acquit God of blame, acknowledge
“ election in such a way, as to deny that any
“ one is reprobated: but with extreme absur-
“ dity and childish weakness; seeing that elec-
“ tion itself could not stand, unless it were op-
“ posed to reprobation. God is said to separate
“ those, whom he adopts for salvation: to
“ affirm that others obtain by chance, or ac-
“ quire by their own exertions, what election
“ alone confers upon a few, were worse than
“ a foolish assertion. **WHOM THEREFORE GOD
“ PASSES BY, HE REPROBATES:** and that for no
“ other cause, than that he chooses to exclude

° Tu vero, mi Christophore, longe falleris, si æternum Dei consilium ita posse discerni putas, ut quosdam elegerit in salutem, neminem exitio destinavit. Nam si aliquos elegit, certe sequitur non omnes esse electos. Porro quid de his dicendum erit, nisi eos relinqui ut pereant? Mutua igitur inter reprobos et electos relatio fit oportet. *Calv., Christophoro Liberteto, Col. 142.*

“ them from the inheritance, which he pre-
“ destinates to his sons ^p.”

Let me not be understood as insinuating by these remarks, that the moderate Calvinist does really entertain opinions, which he disavows. Charity forbids the insinuation; neither is it my wish to accuse, but to defend. But, for my own part, agreeing in this respect with the framer of the system, and regarding election and reprobation as inseparably connected, I am induced to state that connection as a reason, why the milder, as well as the more rigid, system is beheld by us with aversion; and why by the same arguments, which condemn the rigours of the Calvinistic system, we feel ourselves constrained to renounce, and justified in renouncing, the Calvinistic doctrines altogether.

Looking upon these doctrines then, however speciously they may sometimes be disguised, as

^p Multi quidem, ac si invidiam a Deo repellere vellent, electionem fatentur, ut negent quenquam reprobari: sed incite nimis et pueriliter; quando ipsa electio nisi reprobationi opposita non staret. Dicitur segregare Deus quos adoptet in salutem; fortuito alios adipisci, vel sua industria acquirere, quod sola electio paucis confert, plusquam infulse dicitur. Quos ergo Deus præterit, reprobatur: neque alia de causa, nisi quod ab hæreditate, quam filiis suis prædestinat, illos vult excludere. *Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxiii. sect. 1.

really and substantially the same, I proceed to affirm, and I trust I shall not be deemed presumptuous for affirming, that they are not the Gospel preached by Christ and his Apostles, and especially by St. Paul, on whom their advocates would willingly fasten them. The assertion needs not to be contradicted, that “every one, who has read St. Paul’s epistles, knows that they teem with predestination from beginning to end⁹ :” the question is, what is the predestination with which they teem, and on that question turns the solution of the whole controversy between us. Nor needs it to be denied, that the system of Calvinistic predestination may appear to be countenanced by some insulated passages in the writings of that Apostle, as well as in some other parts of holy writ. With respect to such passages however, some remarks thrown out in my first discourse, and some examples then adduced in illustration, render a particular notice of them again unnecessary. It may suffice therefore briefly to call to mind, that of the insulated passages which may seem to favour the Calvinistic tenets, some derive their colour from being understood in a literal, instead of their idiomatical sense; some from the English expression, in its present significa-

⁹ Toplady on Predestination, p. 134.

tion at least, not exactly corresponding with the original; some, from their not being compared with other passages on similar topics, especially with such as are more plain and explicit; others, again, from their not being considered with reference to the temporary and local circumstances under which they were written, or to the main scope and design of the composition, in which they are contained. In particular, as to the epistle to the Romans, which is perversely represented as the great storehouse of absolute predestination, it may be expedient to repeat in this place, what has been already partially stated; that the Apostle's object was to convince the Jews of the Gentiles being entitled to participate in the Gospel covenant, because the same God, who had formerly chosen to call the Jews alone to be his people, now chose to call the Gentiles also: and that accordingly the election, of which the Apostle speaks, is not God's election of individuals to a state of happiness; but his election of nations and societies of men, generally to accomplish the schemes of his providence, and more especially of such, as he then chose to be the repositories of the Christian faith.

To enumerate the passages in Scripture, which tend to confirm this sense of the expression in the Apostle, would carry us too much into detail. I shall therefore content

myself with remarking, that Whitby has shown, beyond all reasonable question, by tracing the phrase through the Old Testament, that the whole nation of the Jews, the bad as well as the good, were the elect of God; and that in the New Testament, when it is applied to Christians, it plainly includes as many as were converted to the Christian faith^r. In conformity to this language of Scripture, Christians of the early ages, (as Bingham has remarked^s,) were commonly denominated the Elect: “He hath made us a part of his election,” saith St. Clement in his epistle to the Corinthians, whom he admonishes to “take heed, lest the many kindnesses of God turn to the condemnation of them all, if they live not worthy of him, and do those things that are good and well pleasing in his sight.” And conformable to the same language is that of our Church, when in one of her Homilies she says, that “it profited not the Jews, which were God’s elect people, to hear much of

^r Whitby on the Five Points, p. 36—48.

^s Bingham’s Ecclesiastical Antiquities, book i. chap. i.

^t Προσελθωμεν εν αυτω εν οσιοτητι ψυχης, αγνας και αμιαντης χειρας αιροντες προς αυτον, αγαπωντες τον επιεικη η ευσπλαγγχον πατερα ημων, ος (ημιας) εκλογης μερος εποηισεν εαυτω. *S. Clem. Cor. ep. i. cap. xxix.*

Ὅρατε, αγαπητοι, μη αι ευεργεσαι αυτου αι πολλαι γενωνται εις κριμα πασιν ημιν, εαν μη αξιωσ αυτου πολυτευομενοι, τα καλα και ευαρεστα ενωπιον αυτου ποιωμεν μεθ’ ομονοιαις. *Ibid. cxi.*

“ God, seeing that he was not received in their
 “ hearts by faith, nor thanked for his benefits
 “ bestowed upon them; their unthankfulness
 “ was the cause of their destruction “:” when
 in her baptismal services and her Catechism she
 speaks of all baptized persons, as composing
 “ the number of the faithful and elect children
 “ of God ;” and when in another of her Ho-
 milies, namely, on the Danger of Falling from
 God, she warns us, that “ if we, which are the
 “ chosen vineyard of God, bring not forth
 “ good grapes, God will at length let us alone,
 “ and suffer us to bring forth even such fruit
 “ as we will, to bring forth brambles, briers,
 “ and thorns, all naughtiness, all vice, and that
 “ so abundantly, that they shall clean overgrow
 “ us, choke, strangle, and utterly destroy us*.”

It may however be further allowed, that
 the election, mentioned in Scripture, is not
 always of nations or societies, but sometimes
 of persons also, whether Jews or Gentiles, to a
 profession of the Gospel ; as, where St. John
 speaks of “ the elect lady” and “ the elect
 “ sister †,” that is, the Christian lady and her
 sister : agreeably to which our Church de-
 scribes every individual that she baptizes as
 “ an elect child of God :” but nothing will be

† Homilies, p. 400. Oxf. edit.

* Ibid. p. 69, 70.

† 2 John, ver. 1, 13.

gained to the Calvinist by this concession, unless it can also be made appear, that every individual, who was elected to a profession of the Gospel, was thereby elected likewise to eternal life: a case, which it were difficult to show how the Apostles could have known; and which, it is an undeniable fact, that they certainly did not believe.

Still further, however, it may be allowed, that the election, mentioned in Scripture, is sometimes the election of individuals to eternal life; but then, as Waterland has remarked on “the sweet and comfortable doctrine of predestination set forth in our seventeenth Article,” it is an election, “considered (not IRRESPECTIVELY, NOT ABSOLUTELY) but with respect to faith in Christ, faith working by love, and persevering^z.” “For whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son^a.” And let it be observed, that of such only as God foreknew would be conformed to the image of his Son, is it predicated, that their election would be effectual to salvation: for, as the Apostle adds, “Moreover whom he did predestinate,” (doubtless in the sense, which it

^z See Winchester on the Seventeenth Article, chap. 2. Churchman's Remembrancer, No. II. p. 26.

^a Rom. viii. 29.

bore in the preceding sentence,) “ them he
 “ also called ; and whom he called, them he
 “ also justified ; and whom he justified, them
 “ he also glorified.” No passage can be ad-
 duced, which so clearly indicates the whole
 process of the scriptural, as distinguished from
 the Calvinistic, election of individuals to eternal
 life : looking forward to the conformity of the
 elect to the image of Christ ; commencing in
 the foreknowledge of God ; ratified by his
 purpose ; and so carried into execution, and
 passing through the intermediate steps to their
 being finally received into glory. And at the
 same time no passage perhaps can be adduced,
 which more satisfactorily shows how much at
 variance with the scriptural notion, and con-
 sequently how little worthy of credit, is the
 irrespective predestination of Calvin. “ Re-
 “ member ever,” said a judicious Divine in his
 appeal to the Gospel on this important subject,
 “ Remember ever, that *whom he did foreknow*
 “ is as much before *he did predestinate*, as
 “ *whom he did predestinate* is before he call-
 “ ed^b.”

Such was the view of predestination taken
 by those, who were best qualified to under-
 stand the true signification of the sacred writ-

^b Plaifere's Appello Evangelium, p. 195. Churchman's Remembrancer, N^o. V. p. 94.

ings; I mean the primitive Fathers of the Christian Church. "It deserves to be considered," says Whitby, "that all antiquity, till the time of St. Austin, do with one consent concur in the interpretation of the Pseud. Ambrosius on this passage of St. Paul, Those whom he foreknew would be devoted to his service, them he chose to the promised reward^c." And Vossius declares, what Whitby and others have noticed after him, that "all the Greek Fathers always, and all the Latin Fathers who lived before St. Austin, were wont to say, that they were predestinated to life, of whom God foresaw that they would live piously and righteously; or, as others say, of whom he foresaw that they would believe and persevere^d." Nay more; when Prosper undertook to be the advocate of Austin's opinions concerning absolute election, he not only found himself unable to answer the objections advanced against the doctrine, that it was "contrary to the opinion of the Fathers and the sense of the Church^e," and "that

^c Discourses, p. 60.

^d Græci Patres semper, Patrum Latinorum vero illi qui ante Augustinum vixerunt, dicere solent, eos esse prædestinatos ad vitam, quos Deus pie recteque victuros prævidit; sive, ut alii loquuntur, quos prævidit credituros et perseveraturos. *Voss. Histor. Pelag.* lib. vi. thes. viii. p. 55^o.

^e Multi ergo fervorem Christi, qui in Massiliensi urbe

“ the things which he brought forward from
 “ St. Paul’s epistle to the Romans had never
 “ been so understood by any of the ecclesiastical
 “ men^f ;” but himself also frankly acknow-
 “ ledged^g, that “ having revised the opinions of
 “ those, who had gone before on this subject,
 “ he found them almost all agreeing in one and
 “ the same sentiment, whereby they under-
 “ stood the purpose and predestination of God
 “ according to his prescience ; that for this
 “ cause God made some men vessels of honour,
 “ others of dishonour, because he foresaw the
 “ end of every one, and foreknew what, under
 “ the aid of divine grace, would be the will
 “ and actions of each.” Nor is that a trifling

consistunt, in sanctitatis tuæ scriptis, quæ adversus Pelagi-
 anos hæreticos condidisti, contrarium putant Patrum opi-
 nioni et ecclesiastico sensui, quicquid in eis de vocatione
 electorum secundum Dei propositum disputasti. *Prosperi
 Epist. ad Augustinum, cap. ii.*

^f Obstationem suam vetustate defendunt ; et ea, quæ
 de epistola Apostoli Pauli, Romanis scribentis, ad mani-
 festationem divinæ gratiæ prævenientis electorum merita
 proferuntur, a nullo unquam Ecclesiasticorum ita esse in-
 tellecta, ut nunc sentiuntur, affirmant. *Ibid. cap. iii.*

^g Illud etiam qualiter diluatur, quæsumus patienter in-
 sipientiam nostram ferendo demonstras ; quod, retractatis
 priorum de hac re opinionibus, pene omnium par invenitur
 et una sententia, qua propositum et prædestinationem Dei
 secundum præscientiam receperunt : ut ob hoc Deus alios
 vasa honoris, alios contumeliæ fecerit, quia finem uniuscu-
 jusque præviderit, et sub ipso gratiæ adjutorio, in qua
 futurus esset voluntate et actione, præscierit. *Ibid. c. viii.*

confession, which (as Grotius remarks ^h) was freely made by Calvin, Beza, and others of the same opinion; that the Fathers of the apostolical and primitive times thought and spoke differently from them on these points¹. So that it was not without high authority that Melancthon, himself perhaps the most learned of the Reformers, a man pronounced by Calvin to be “acute and prudent and well exercised in the Scriptures^k,” and of whom it is well known that Cranmer and our English Reformers entertained the highest opinion, and with whom, there is every reason to believe, that they concurred in their theological senti-

^h Brandt's Hist. of the Reformation, book xxiv. vol. ii, p. 213.

ⁱ Hæc omnia, quæ posuimus, controversia apud multos non carent, maxime gratuita fidelium electio. Vulgo enim existimant Deum, prout cujusque merita prævidet, ita inter homines discernere: quos ergo sua gratia non indignos fore præcognoscit, eos in filiorum locum cooptare; quorum ingenia ad malitiam et impietatem propensura dispicit, eos mortis damnationi devovere. Sic interposito præscientiæ velo, electionem non modo obscurant, sed originem aliunde habere fingunt. Neque hæc vulgo recepta opinio solius vulgi est; habuit enim sæculis omnibus magnos authores. *Calv. Inst.* lib. iii. c. xxii. f. 1.

At Ambrosius, Origenes, Hieronymus censuerunt, Deum suam gratiam inter homines dispensare, prout ea quemque bene usurum præviderit. Adde et Augustinum in ea fuisse aliquando sententia. *Ibid.* sect. 8.

^k See Winchester on the Seventeenth Article, p. 60. and Heylyn's Quinquart. Hist. part ii. cap. viii. sect. 2.

ments, differed from some of his brethren on the continent concerning these mysterious doctrines; and expressed himself in terms, not only inconsistent, but pointedly and strongly at variance, with the system of Calvin; and reprobated some of his fundamental principles, as heresies which the ancients most severely condemned; as “the dreams of enthusiasm,” “the dotage of Stoicism,” and “the ravings of Manichæan madness¹.”

This statement of the scriptural significations of the term election, may perhaps serve to guard the inexperienced and unwary against much misrepresentation, which I apprehend to be employed, and much misconception which

¹ Non igitur repugnes Evangelio; non indulgeas diffidentiae; non cogites, ut somniant Enthusiastæ, expectandum esse violentum motum, quo te rapiat Deus etiam repugnantem, et iterum ruentem in scelera, &c. *Melancthonis Comm. in Rom.* ix. Op. vol. iv. p. 160.

His et similiter dictis confirmati, veram et perpetuam ecclesiae sententiam constanter amplectamur, et nequaquam applaudamus Stoicis et Manichæis furoribus, qui sunt contumeliosi adversus Deum, et perniciosi vitae; qui fingunt homines necessario scelera facere; et recte intelligamus dicta, quæ contra veram sententiam detorquentur ad Stoica deliramenta. *De Causa Peccati*, Op. vol. ii. p. 237.

Repudianda est et Cyclopica cavillatio quorundam veterum et recentium, qui dicunt, non ideo peccare Deum, quia impellat ad mala, quia Deo non fit lex posita. Hæc Cyclopica imaginatio execranda est, &c. *Ibid.* p. 238.

prevails, on the subject; and to supply them with a clue for unravelling several detached passages, some of them, we allow, not destitute of intricacy, which have been repeatedly explained, but are still continually forced upon our notice. It appears to me indeed to be a vital objection to the doctrines of Calvin, that they are grounded upon an imperfect and partial view of revelation, and rest upon a dubious at least, if not a decidedly false, interpretation of such detached passages, instead of being established on a comprehensive survey of holy writ: otherwise tenets could never be maintained, which are so incompatible with the notions, which the Holy Spirit gives us, of *God's attributes and his moral government of the universe; with the general conditions of the Gospel covenant; and with the promises of God, as they are generally set forth to us in holy Scripture.*

But I am venturing upon a point, not foreign indeed from my purpose, but requiring a fuller investigation than it can receive at the present opportunity. I shall here therefore quit the subject for the present with exhorting you, not to suffer yourselves to be puffed up with a vain conceit, that you are absolutely elected to eternal happiness; or to be depressed with an equally vain apprehension, that you are absolutely reprobated and condemned to

everlasting misery: but considering that the Jews, who were of old the elect people of God, the objects of his love, fell from his favour through their infidelity, and that the final sentence of every Christian, who is now in the number of God's elect people, depends on his fidelity to God; I would rather most earnestly admonish you, to improve the grace that he supplies you with, so that you may ultimately "work out your salvation;" and to "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." Such is the practical inference, which the Apostle drew from his own doctrine of election, for the benefit of the early converts to Christianity; and such is the inference, which he has left behind him, for the benefit of Christians of every age. "Thou wilt say then," he argues with the converted Gentile, "the branches were broken off," the children of Israel were rejected from being the people of God, "that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. BE NOT HIGH-MINDED, BUT FEAR. For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed lest he also spare not thee.* Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, *if thou continue in his goodness;* OTHERWISE THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF."

Now unto " God the Father, who hath
" made us and all the world;" unto " God the
" Son, who hath redeemed us and all man-
" kind ;" and unto " God the Holy Ghost,
" who sanctifieth us and all the elect people of
" God ;" be glory and dominion for ever and
ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE IV.

JOHN iii. 16, 17.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

I CONCLUDED my last Discourse after remarking, that the doctrine of Calvinistic predestination appears to me irreconcilable with the notions, which the Holy Spirit gives us in the Scriptures, of God's attributes and of his moral government of the universe; with the general conditions of the Gospel covenant; and with the promises of God, as they are generally set forth to us in holy Scripture.

Amongst an innumerable multitude of passages, which contribute to give a consistency and a harmony to the sacred volume, the declaration of our blessed Redeemer in the text, concerning the motive, which caused him to

be sent from God, and the purpose, for which he was sent, holds a conspicuous place. It was from the able application of this passage by Episcopius, that the ever-memorable Hales, who had been educated in the Calvinistic opinions, and went a Calvinist to the Synod at Dort, was there persuaded, as he was himself used to declare, to renounce the doctrines of Calvin^a: nor does the fact deserve our astonishment, when we consider, how incompatible those doctrines appear with the universal love of God to man, and with the universal tender of salvation and everlasting life, which this passage evidently proposes. It is not, however, so much upon this, or upon any other individual passage of Scripture, (unanswerable as many of them are,) that I would rest our defence, as upon the general scope and tenour of the whole: and *that*, not only because I consider such an appeal, as the mode, whereby we may be best defended; but also because I consider it, as the most equitable

^a “ I am very glad to hear you have gained those letters into your hands, written from the Synod of Dort. “ You may please to take notice, that in his younger days he was a Calvinist, and even then when he was employed at that Synod; and at the well pressing St. John iii. 16. by Episcopius—*There I bid John Calvin good night*, as he has often told me.” Farindon’s Letter prefixed to Hales’s Golden Remains.

method of investigating, and the safest and most certain way of arriving at, the truth. This is the kind of appeal, which, with the good blessing of God, I propose to make in the following discourse: wherein if I fail of satisfying our accusers of the goodness of our cause, I trust that I shall at least be able to convince any impartial observer, that in declining the doctrine of absolute predestination we do not act under the influence of some rash and groundless prepossession; but that, if our opinions are erroneous, they appear to be so well established on the declarations of Scripture, as that we may reasonably believe them to be scriptural truth; and that we are therefore far from deserving that asperity of reprehension and those opprobrious appellations, wherewith we are branded for entertaining them.

I. My first object will be to show, that the Calvinistic doctrines are incompatible with the notions, which the Holy Spirit gives us in Scripture, *of the attributes and moral government of God.*

But here, before I proceed, I wish to obviate an objection to our opinions, which our accusers attempt to establish on the same basis, on which we propose to establish our opinions themselves. We are told^b, that “to imagine

^b Hawker's *Zion's Pilgrim*, p. 158, 159.

“ our acceptance or refusal of grace to be the
“ result of our own pleasure, is to take from
“ God his omnipotence :” “ to fancy that our
“ improvement or misimprovement of grace
“ will render it effectual or the contrary, is to
“ take from God both his wisdom and his
“ glory ;” and “ to believe after what God
“ the Father hath given, and God the Son
“ hath accomplished, for the salvation of his
“ people in a covenant way, that souls, re-
“ newed by God the Holy Ghost and called
“ with an holy calling, may yet finally perish ;
“ this is bringing down redemption-work to
“ so precarious and uncertain an issue, as must
“ leave it altogether undetermined whether a
“ single believer shall be saved or not. And
“ this throws to the ground the distinguishing
“ character of God’s immutability.” But how
do we infringe God’s omnipotence, by suppos-
ing, that it is of our own will either to reject
or accept his grace, when we believe that the
exercise of our will is solely the consequence
of his permission, and of his not choosing to
overrule it, and to divest us of the responsibi-
lity of moral agents ? How do we impeach his
wisdom, abridge his glory, or shake his immu-
tability, by supposing, that our salvation, in-
stead of being fixed by an absolute irrespective
decree, is suspended on our voluntary fulfil-
ment of certain conditions ; when at the same

time we humbly confess, that with that infallibility, wherewith he foresees events that are contingent to man, he certainly foreknew, that some would, and who they were that would, observe the conditions : that with that immutability, wherewith he delights to reward virtue, he predestinated to life those of whom he foreknew that they would be faithful : and that the whole glory of the victory of those, who persevere, is to be ascribed to the free mercy of the Father, to the meritorious sacrifice of the Son, and to the preventing and assisting grace of the Holy Spirit ?

In fact, the supposition of conditional and respective election is, in this view of the subject, as innocent of infringing these attributes of God, as is that of unconditional and irrespective election. When therefore it is demanded of us by the advocate of moderate Calvinism, “ Had not the glorious Being, who
“ created the world, a right to create it for
“ what purposes he pleased ? And has he not
“ the same right to govern his own world ac-
“ cording to his pleasure ? And if his perfec-
“ tions are infinite, must he not act in confor-
“ mity to these perfections ; and must not his
“ purposes be assuredly accomplished ; and
“ must not all his creatures, in one way or
“ another, be the means of their accomplish-
“ ment ? Is not his the kingdom, the power,

“ and the glory ? Has he not told us, that his
 “ kingdom ruleth over all ; that he worketh
 “ all things after the counsel of his own will ;
 “ that he doeth according to his will in the
 “ armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants
 “ of earth ; and that none can stay his hand,
 “ or say unto him, What doest thou ? ” —
 When, I say, these questions are put to us in
 support of the assertion, “ that the fundamen-
 “ tal principles on which Calvinism rests are
 “ incontrovertible,” I apprehend them to be
 either altogether irrelevant to the subject, or
 else intended to insinuate against us an invidi-
 ous and an unwarrantable charge. Each sys-
 tem is founded on the sovereign will of the
 Almighty. By the Calvinist it is supposed,
 that God chose to pass certain absolute de-
 crees, and formed and disposed his creatures
 for their accomplishment : our hypothesis re-
 presents him as no less “ working after the
 “ counsel of his own will ;” as choosing, in
 his sovereign power and authority, to form his
 creatures with a freedom of will and action ;
 foreknowing, in the plenitude of his wisdom,
 what would be their conduct ; and immutably
 framing his decrees according to his fore-
 knowledge. So that, notwithstanding the re-
 mark, which has been ascribed to a royal Cal-

vinist in former times, that “ if he did not believe absolute predestination, he could not believe a Providence ^d ;” we apprehend that it is to represent the Almighty acting upon a plan, as much when it proceeds upon a knowledge of what use his creatures will make of his gifts, as when it is founded on his own absolute and overruling decree.

As these attributes of the Deity then remain unaffected by the doctrines, which we are maintaining, I proceed to show, how grievously others are assailed by the doctrines, which we combat. It was said with keen, but not unmerited severity to a Calvinist in former times, “ While you are so careful to re-
 “ serve to the Almighty a power to damn even
 “ poor humbled and prepared sinners, you
 “ seem to be more tender of his sovereignty,
 “ than of his goodness, mercy, or justice ^e .”

1. “ Justice and judgment,” says the Psalmist, “ are the habitation of thy throne ^f .” “ He
 “ is a God without iniquity,” says the Jewish lawgiver ; “ just and right is he ^g .” It is accordingly attributed to him as an essential property of justice, throughout the Scriptures ; in

^d King William the Third. See Toplady on Predestination, Pref. p. 11.

^e Result of False Principles, by Dr. Womack, p. 72.

^f Psalm lxxxix. 14.

^g Deut. xxxii. 4.

the Old Testament, and in the New; under the Law, and under the Gospel; by Prophets, and by Apostles; in passages, too numerous to be specified, too prominent to be overlooked, and too plain to be misunderstood, or misrepresented; that he is “no respecter of persons,” but that “he judgeth and rewardeth every man according to his works.” I ask not then, how is it reconcileable to our notions of justice, that by an arbitrary, irrelative, unconditional decree he should confer happiness on a small portion of mankind, and condemn the bulk to inevitable misery; but I ask, how is this reconcileable with the general tenour of Scripture, which uniformly affirms the impartiality and equity of God to be the rule of his dealings with men? For I cannot consider as any exception to this uniformity a few insulated passages, of some difficulty we allow, if separately and superficially regarded; but harmonising with the main import of Scripture, when examined by the fair laws of interpretation.

And here let it not be pretended, that “the works of God cannot be brought to any test whatever^h ;” when he himself supplies us with a test by an appeal to the equity of his proceedings. And let us not be told, that

^h Toplady on Predestination, p. 69.

“ they who exclaim against unconditional de-
“ crees, as cruel, tyrannical, and unjust, either
“ know not what they say nor whereof they
“ affirm, or are wilful blasphemers of his name
“ and perverse rebels against his sovereigntyⁱ ;”
that it is the effusion of “ the pride of our car-
“ nal reason, and the rebellion of our corrupt
“ nature^k .” Did we discover a clear revela-
tion in Scripture, that the decrees of God are
what our accusers represent them, we should
submit to that revelation, however mysterious,
strange, and hard to be understood, with all
humility and prostration of soul, convinced
that “ the Judge of all the earth” cannot do
otherwise than right. But when God himself
authorises, and encourages, and challenges us
to examine his treatment of his creatures in
the balance of the most nice impartiality, we
cannot feel inclined to admit a doctrine, which
in our conception subverts the equity of his
proceedings; and “ reduces them into a sys-
“ tem of favouritism^l ;” and attributes to him
partiality, in proffering salvation to “ some
“ and not to all, seeing all are equally liable to
“ damnation^m .”

Nor does it meet the difficulty to say, that

ⁱ Toplady on Predestination, p. 70.

^k Mason's Spiritual Treasury, p. 159.

^l Zeal without Innovation, p. 52.

^m See Bishop Hopkins's Works, vol. ii. p. 504.

“the Jews were an elect nation, and so the
 “ objection would lie as much against their
 “ election, as against this we are consider-
 “ ing :” for the election of nations to tempo-
 ral privileges differs, in manifold particulars,
 from the election of individuals to eternal hap-
 piness. Nor is it an answer to the objection
 to affirm, that “the scope of the passage plainly
 “ intends, that God respects no man’s person,
 “ either less or more, for his outward condi-
 “ tion or carnal privileges °.” It in truth con-
 veys a much more universal meaning : it in-
 tends that God has no respect whatever for
 one man over another, as to their final accept-
 ance, except what is founded upon their im-
 provement of his grace ; and that upon that
 ground alone will be established their respec-
 tive sentences, when he “ will render unto
 every man according to his deeds.”

2. Again, He is a God of mercy and good-
 ness : an attribute, amidst all his wonderful
 perfections, peculiarly worthy of being ad-
 mired^p. “ His mercy,” says the Psalmist, “ is
 “ over all his works^q ;” and natural religion
 appears to avouch the same, concurring with

ⁿ Coles on God’s Sovereignty, p. 100.

^o Ibid.

^p Θεός, οὐ πολλῶν ὄντων, ἐφ’ αἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν αὐτῶς ὡς τὸ
 πάντα εὐεργετεῖν ἰδιωτάτου. Naz. Orat. 26.

^q Psalm cxlv. 9.

the Scriptures of truth in representing “mercy as the darling perfection of his nature, “and that, in the glory whereof he is most “principally delighted.” When the heathen described the Deity by his two attributes of Optimus, Maximus, the Best and the Greatest, it was not without reason, that he gave precedence to that which denoted his goodness, over that which signified his power. When on the delivery of the Law, revealed as it was in terror, the Lord proclaimed his name to Moses, he shewed the quality of those attributes, wherein he most delighted; for he placed in the front of the proclamation, “The Lord, the “Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; “keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” And when the Apostle of the Gospel teaches us, that “God is love,” he appears desirous of magnifying beyond measure this most adorable of the divine perfections; of concentrating in it (if I may so express myself) the rest of the divine attributes; and of identifying the Godhead with love.

“His mercy is over all his works:” the

^r Stebbing on the Spirit, chap. vi. sect. 7.

^s Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

^t 1 John iv. 8.

predestinarian acknowledges it, but denies that it is "his saving mercy". Yet what is this but to deny the most glorious exercise of the attribute? "Doth God take care for oxen^x?" saith the Apostle: yea, saith this doctrine, much better than for man: for them he bountifully provides all that is needful for them; but man, sinful, fallen, but still immortal man, formed in the image of God, and still retaining in his reasonable and living soul some portion of his likeness to his divine original, from him he shuts up the bowels of his compassion, and excludes him from his loving-kindness and mercy. "Delighting as he does in mercy^y," and "in the exercise of loving-kindness^z;" abounding in love, even for his enemies; nay, even "waiting to be gracious," and "stretching out his hands all the day long unto a rebellious people^a;" and "not afflicting willingly nor grieving the children of men^b:" how can we reconcile it to this attribute of the Godhead, that he should form millions and millions of rational and immortal creatures for the very purpose of making them eternally miserable; that he should place them in a state of pretended trial, where he has previously de-

^u Whitefield, vol. iv. p. 69.

^y Micah vii. 18.

^a If. xxx. 18. lxx. 2.

^x 1 Cor. ix. 9.

^z Jer. ix. 24.

^b Lam. iii. 33.

creed them to be, and actually renders them, incapable of success; inspire them with hopes, which he has made impossible to be realized; and place before their view prospects of happiness, which he has put it totally out of their power to attain? “Is not this,” demands a late dignitary of our Church, “to represent “the good God in a very injurious light, as if “he was not only partial, but exceedingly “cruel? We are always taught, that it is our “duty, our interest, and our happiness, to be “like God, and to imitate his divine perfec- “tions as near as we can. But surely such “conduct as this, no good man, no honest “man, would choose to imitate, but would “detest and abhor. How then dare we as- “cribe that conduct to Him, which is so un- “worthy of ourselves, and would be such a “disgrace to us?”

3. Again; he is a God of holiness; an attribute, which one of our old Divines represents, “as his sovereign attribute; as that, “which of all others God doth, and which of “all others we should, most esteem^d.” In correspondence with this attribute, it is the caution of the wise son of Sirach, “Say not thou, “it is through the Lord that I fell away; for

^o Dean Tucker's Sermon on Rom. ix. 21.

^d Bishop Andrews; sixth sermon on the Holy Ghost, p. 653.

“ thou oughtest not to do the things that he
 “ hateth : say not thou, he hath caused me to
 “ err ; for he hath no need of the sinful man^c.”
 And to the same effect St. James, with divine
 authority, admonishes us, “ Let no man say,
 “ when he is tempted, I am tempted of God ;
 “ for God tempteth not any man^f.” But what
 is it to represent him with Calvin, as fitting
 and preparing men by “ crimes for destruc-
 “ tion^g ;” what is it to represent him, with
 Gomar, as “ not only predestinating man to
 “ death, but so also predestinating him to sin ;
 “ the only way to death^h ;” or to describe
 him with Piscator, as “ having so absolutely
 “ and efficaciously determined the will of
 “ every man, that he cannot do more good

^c Eccus. xv. 11, 12.

^f Jam. i. 13.

^g Quia perditum Deus volebat, obstinatio cordis divina fuit ad ruinam præparatio. *Calv. Inst.* II. iv. 3.

Dubium non est, quin utraque præparatio ab arcano Dei consilio pendeat. *Comm. in Rom.* ix. 23.

^h “ Gomarus, who saw that his iron was in the fire, began to tell us, that Episcopius had falsified the tenent of reprobation ; that no man taught that God absolutely decreed to cast man away without sin : but as he did decree the end, so he did decree the means : that is, as he predestinated man to death, so he predestinated him to sin, the only way to death : and so he mended the question, as tinkers mend kettles, and made it worse than it was before.” *Hales's Letters from Dort.* G. R. P. 435.

“ than he really does, nor omit more evil than
 “ he really omits^l ;” or to allow with Zan-
 chius, that “ the reprobate are bound by the
 “ ordinance of God under the necessity of sin-
 “ ning^k ;” or to affirm with Beza, that “ God
 “ hath predestinated, not only unto damna-
 “ tion, but also unto the causes of it, whomso-
 “ ever he saw meet^l ;” or to assert with Zuing-
 lius, that “ God moveth the robber to kill,

^l Ergo tu fateris istic ingenue, Deum ab æterno effica-
 citer absoluteque decrevisse, ne quispiam hominum plus
 boni faciat, quam reipsa facit, aut plus mali omittat, quam
 reipsa omittit. *Piscat. ad C. Vorstii amicam Dupl. resp.*
 p. 175. ed. 1618.

^k Quia reprobatio immutabilis est, &c. damus reprobos
 necessitate peccandi, eoque et pereundi, ex hac Dei ordi-
 natione constringi : atque ita constringi, ut nequeant non
 peccare et perire.—Non dubitamus itaque confiteri, ex
 immutabili reprobatione necessitatem peccandi, et quidem
 sine respiscentia ad mortem usque peccandi, eoque et æter-
 nas pœnas dandi, reprobis incumbere. *Zanchius de Nat.*
Dei, lib. v. cap. 2. de Prædest. Op. Tom. ii. p. 571.

^l Respondeo,—ordine causarum, priusquam illum con-
 deret, de fine, cujus causa illum erat conditurus, ac demum
 de causis ipsis mediis, per quas ipsos erat ad constitutum
 finem adducturus, constanter et immoto proposito statuisse.
 Ex quo consequitur recte et vere dici, omnes reprobos
 factos esse in Adamo simul eodemque momento, sicut
 Deus ab æterno constituerat, non tantum vasa, id est ho-
 mines, sed etiam vasa iræ, id est homines justæ per medias
 causas in ipsis reprobis hærentes damnationi, per media
 quidem contingenter sequutura, ex decreto Dei autem
 prorsus necessario eventura, destinatos. *Beza de Prædest.*
Op. vol. iii. p. 431. Col. i. ed. 1582.

“ and that he killeth, God forcing him there-
 “ to^m;” what is it to affirm with Knox, the
 Scotch reformer, that “ the wicked are not
 “ only left by God’s suffering, but are com-
 “ pelled to sin by his powerⁿ ;” or to contend
 with the English Perkins, whose doctrines first
 called forth the strictures of Arminius, that
 “ God hath most justly decreed even the
 “ wicked works of the wicked^o : ”—what is it
 to represent him, with other predestinarians, as
 not barely permitting sin, but “ providentially
 “ putting persons into such circumstances of
 “ temptation, as shall cause the persons so
 “ tempted actually to turn aside from the path
 “ of duty, and to commit sin^p ;” as “ working
 “ all things in all men, even wickedness in the
 “ wicked ;” and to affirm that “ all things are
 “ done by the irresistible decree of God, yea,

^m Porro injustitiam in sese nobis ostendere numen cum
 nulla ratione posset, ut quod undique verum, sanctum, bo-
 num natura fit, per creaturam injustitiæ exemplum pro-
 duxit, non quasi creatura illam suo Marte produxerit, quæ
 nec est, nec vivit, nec operatur sine numine, sed quod nu-
 men ipsum author est ejus, quod nobis est injustitia, illi
 vero nullatenus est. *Zuinglius de Provid. Dei*, c. v. tom. i.
 p. 364. *Tigur.* 1581.

Movet ergo latronem ad occidendum, innocentem etiam
 ac imparatum ad mortem. *Ib.* c. vi. p. 366.

Deo impulsore occidit. *Ibid.*

ⁿ Heylyn’s *Quinq. Hist.* part ii. c. xvi.

^o *Ibid.* part iii. c. xx. part i. c. v.

^p Toplady on Predest. p. 60.

“ whatever bad actions, they also are necessarily done “;”—but to make God the author of sin? “ Truth it is,” saith one of our excellent Reformers, “ that God tempteth. Almighty God tempteth to our advantage, to do us good withal: the devil tempteth to our everlasting destruction.” For, as another of them contended, “ God is not the cause of sin, nor *would not have man to sin*.”

If, however, these be not admitted as the avowed tenets of Calvinists in general, (although it must not be forgotten, that in the opinion, not only of the opposers of the system, but of Calvin himself, and of many of his most illustrious followers, they necessarily make a part of it,) how is this attribute of holiness at harmony with the assertion of Austin, that “ God suffers evil, and suffers it not unwillingly, but willingly;” and that “ he

¶ Quæcumque in mundo fiunt (tam mala quam bona) ea ex absoluto decreto et speciali præfinitione Dei fiunt. *Piscat. ut sup.* p. 191.

Et bona opera et mala ex decreto Dei fiunt necessario. *Ib.* p. 212.

¶ Omnia fiunt ex decreto Dei irresistibili, (etiam peccata quæcumque fiunt,) eoque necessario fiunt. *Ib.* p. 168.

^r Latimer’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 458.

^s Bishop Hooper. Preface to the Declaration of the Ten Commandments.

^t August. Enchir. cap. xxix.

“ works in the hearts of men to incline their
 “ wills whithersoever he will, whether it be
 “ to good or to evil “ ? ” Surely whatever gloss
 the supporters of these positions may attempt
 to put upon their deformity, when we connect
 them with the resolution of every thing into
 the “ certain, immutable, and most efficacious
 “ will of God ^x,” and with the position “ that
 “ whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by
 “ virtue of the absolute omnipotent will of
 “ God, which is the primary and supreme
 “ cause of all things ^y ; ” to affirm, that God
 willeth the being and commission of sin, is to
 affirm that his will, his certain, immutable,
 and most efficacious will, his absolute and om-
 nipotent will, is the primary and supreme
 cause of it.

Shall I be called upon to disprove such posi-
 tions ; and to show, how God can be omnipo-
 tent, if sin be not the result of his will ? I an-
 swer, that such inquiries are much better shut
 up in the general declarations of Scripture,
 which teach us, that “ God tempteth not any
 “ man,” that “ he is not a God that hath plea-
 “ sure in wickedness ^z,” and that “ this is the
 “ will of God even our sanctification ^a ; ” and in

^u De Grat. et lib. Arb. c. xxi.

^y Toplady, p. 43.

^a 1 Thef. iv. 3.

^x Enchir. xxvii.

^z Pf. v. 4.

those general representations, which refer us no farther for the cause of sin, than to the seductions of our spiritual enemy, and to the depraved appetites of our own sinful nature. For, as to that passage in Isaiah, (and if there be any others of the same tendency,) “ I make peace and create evil ; I the Lord do all these things ^b ;” that is a wise and pious distinction, which Melancthon insists upon, between sin and the punishment of sin ; rightly maintaining, that it is of the latter that the Prophet speaks, for that he ascribes, not moral evil, but penal sufferings to the creation of God, who ordained them in righteous vengeance for the sins of his people. ^c

^b If. xlv. 7. See Toplady, p. 60.

^c Amos 3. Non est malum in civitate, quod non fecit Dominus. Hujusmodi dicta cumulantur ab iis, qui vociferantur, Deum esse causam peccati. Hic autem nota sit omnibus vetus et necessaria distinctio. Differunt peccatum et pœna. Ac usitate peccatum nominatur malum culpæ, quod est aversio a Deo et odium Dei, quod nequaquam vult Deus, et nequaquam efficit. Sed pœnæ sunt destructiones rerum aut corporum, ut incendia, diluvia, morbi, fames ; aut in anima pavor aut dolor, horribiliter puniens eam : talis pœna est opus justitiæ Dei, et nominatur malum pœnæ : sæpe igitur Prophetæ sic loquuntur, Deum hæc mala efficere, id est, has pœnas velle ordine justitiæ. Sic Jeremi. inquit in Threnis, cap. 3. Quis dixit, ex ore altissimi nec bona nec mala veniunt. Ubi objurgat Epicureos, qui somniant, res secundas et adversas casu accidere. Sic et apud Jefa. cap. 45. Ego Deus fa-

In the mean time, that these doctrines of Calvinism are essentially different from those of the fatalists of old, which Justin Martyr represents as diametrically opposite to such as were taught by the Apostles and embraced by the primitive Church^d, it is for their abettors, if possible, to prove; and to exonerate themselves from the charge alleged against the patrons of necessity by Eusebius, that “their
 “ opinions absolve sinners from guilt, as doing
 “ nothing of their own accords which is evil,
 “ and would cast all the blame of all the wickedness,
 “ committed in the world, upon God
 “ and upon his providence; whether he himself
 “ impel them to wickedness against their
 “ will, or order matters so that they be constrained
 “ to do it by some other cause.”

ciens pacem et creans malum, de rebus secundis et pœnis intelligatur. *De Causa Peccati, Op. vol. ii. p. 239.*

^d Οὕτω γὰρ ἡμεῖς τὴν εκπύρωσιν φαμεν γενήσεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς οἱ Στωικοὶ κατὰ τὸν τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλα πάντων μεταβολῆς λόγον· ὁ αἰσχισὸν εἶναι ἀλλ' ὅδε κατ' εἰμαρμένην πράττειν τῆς ἀνδρωπῆς ἢ παύσκειν τὰ γινόμενα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μὲν προαίρεσιν ἕκαστον κατορθοῦν ἢ ἀμαρτανεῖν. *Just. Mart. Apol. i. Op. p. 45. edit. Par. 1615.*

^c Εἴτ' ἢν αὐτὸς κατ' ἑαυτὸν, εἴτ' ἢν παλιν αὐτὸς διὰ τινος ἀλλῆς πρὸς αὐτοῦ μεμηχανημένης ἀναγκῆς, τοὺς ἢκ ἐθελόντας τοῖς δε τοῖς κακοῖς περιβάλλοι, αὐτὸς ἢν εἴη, καὶ ἢκ ἄλλος, ὁ πάντων κακῶν ποιητὴς· καὶ ἢκ εἴτ' ἢν ἐν δίκῃ ἡμαρτηκῶς λεγοῖτ' ἢν ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ἀλλ' ὁ τῆς ποιητῆς θεός. καὶ τίς ἢν τῆς γενοῖτ' ἢν ἕτερος λόγων ἀσεβέστατος; *Eusebii Præp. Evang. lib. vi. c. vi. p. 251. Par. 1628.*

4. Again, He is a God of wisdom: when “ he founded the earth and established the heavens,” wisdom was his companion and his delight, the partner of his councils, and the inseparable assessor of the everlasting throne^f. But much as the Calvinist would attribute to the divine Omniscience, he circumscribes it within the limits of certain fancied decrees. “ He foreknew,” says Austin, “ because he “ predestinated^g :” “ He therefore foreknows “ the end of man,” says Calvin, “ because he “ has ordained and decreed it^h.” Nor can he discover any method for promoting God’s honour more suitable to his wisdom, than that of pretending to impose laws upon his creatures, whom he has previously disabled from obeying them; of treating men in the work of redemption as mere machines, whom he had created free and reasonable agents; and of appointing, by an absolute and irrevocable decree, that those things, which he most hates and abhors, should be most practised, and that those, which he most loves and approves of, should be omitted.

^f Prov. iii. 19. viii. 22—30.

^g Hoc est ergo prædestinavit: sine dubio enim præcivit, si prædestinavit. *August. de Dño Persev. c. xviii.*

^h Inficiari nemo poterit, quin præciverit Deus quem exitum habiturus esset homo, antequam ipsum conderet; et ideo præciverit, quia decreto suo sic ordinarat. *Calv. Inst. iii. xxiii. 7.*

5. Again, He is “ a God of truthⁱ.” He is not a man that he should lie ; and falsehood is the object of his hatred and disgust. “ Faithful in his promises,” saith St. Clement, “ and just in his judgments, he who hath commanded men not to lie, much less shall he be a liar himself ; for nothing, but a lie, is impossible with God^k.” But where, we humbly ask, is his truth, if, as will presently be more fully argued, his covenant be broken, and his promises rendered null ? Where is his truth, if it be properly attributed to him by Calvin, that “ God hath two wills, the one outward and revealed, whereby he most tenderly invites sinners to his grace, and most graciously calls them to repentance, seeming as though he were earnestly desirous of their salvation ; whereas his other will is inward and secret, which is irresistible, and takes effect infallibly ; and by this he brings men through ways unavoidable to an estate and course of sin here, and then to eternal damnation and punishment hereafter^l ? ” “ Let us not pretend that there are

ⁱ Deut. xxxii. 4.

^k Ταυτη εν τη ελπιδι προσδεσθωσαν αι ψυχαι ημων τω πισω εν ταις επαγγελιαις, και τω δικαιω εν τοις κριμασιν. Ο παραγγελιας μη ψευδεσθαι πολλω μαλλον αυτος η ψευσεται. Ουδεν γαρ αδυνατον τω Θεω, ει μη το ψευσασθαι. Epist. i. ad Cor. cap. xxvii.

^l Hoc verum est, quia neminem ex peccatoribus, qui

“contradictory wills in God,” said the wise Melancthon; “for, for this very cause the word of the Gospel has been delivered, that it may show the true and uncounterfeited will of God.” “Let us not pretend that there are contradictory wills in God,” repeatedly deprecating the propagation of so grievous an error; “for God is true; not at variance with his own wisdom, and with the word, which he has uttered and established^m.” If the very heathen condemned the man, who could speak one thing and mean another, as no less hateful than the gates of

resipiscunt; repudiat; quin potius sine exceptione omnibus ignoscit: sed interea non obstat hæc. Dei voluntas, quam in verbo suo proponit, quin decreverit ante creatum mundum, quid factururus esset de singulis hominibus, &c. *Calv. in Ezech. xviii. 23.*

^m Sciamus de voluntate Dei ex verbo revelato statuum esse; nec fingendas esse contradictorias voluntates in Deo. Hanc ipsam ob causam vox evangelii tradita est, ut ostendat voluntatem Dei veram et non simulatam. *Melancth. Comm. in Rom. ix. Op. vol. iv. p. 160.*

Tertia admonitio, cum dictum sit, necessario judicandum esse de voluntate Dei ex verbo ab ipso tradito, non ex imaginationibus humanis, tenenda est etiam hæc regula; Non esse ponendas contradictorias voluntates in Deo, quia Deus verax est. *Ibid.*

Nec fingendæ sunt in Deo contradictoriæ voluntates, quia Deus est verax; non dissentiens a sua sapientia, et a verbo quod edidit et sanxit. *Ejusd. de Causa Peccati, vol. ii. p. 238.*

hell^f, with what decency can we ascribe such duplicity to the King of heaven, “all whose works and his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth^g?” It was the pious and prudent advice of one of our most estimable Bishops to his Clergy, “In all your sermons and discourses speak nothing of God, but what is honourable and glorious; and impute not to him such things, the consequences of which a wise and good man will not own. Never suppose him to be the author of sin, or the procurer of our damnation. For God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any man. God is true, and every man a liar^h.”

6. Again; It is one of the first principles of religion, and it is stated expressly by an Apostle, and recognized throughout the Bible, as a primary article of faith, that “God is the rewarder of them who diligently seek himⁱ.” But according to the system of Calvin, his rewards are irrelative: and whatever be the diligence or sloth with which he is sought, and whether he be sought or not, they are determined by an everlasting decree, as un-

^f Εχθρος γὰρ μοι κείνος, ὅμως αἰδοῦμαι πύλησιν,

Ὅς ἄλλοτε μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ βαίνει.

Hom. II. ix. 312.

^g Dan. iv. 37. If. xxv. 1.

^h Bp. Jer. Taylor. See Enchir. Theolog. vol. ii. p. 274.

ⁱ Heb. xi. 6.

alterable, as it is unconditional. To talk of “men’s gradually working out their own salvation, by their own honest endeavours and through the ordinary assistance of God’s grace, with a humble reliance on the merits of Christ,” is sarcastically described as “our common divinity^k.” “To call on men to do so and so, to keep themselves in a justified state,” is derided as “sorry divinity^l.” Electing love is that, which “alone makes believers differ from the rest of their brethren^m :” “no demerit on their part can arise to defeat the operation of God’s graceⁿ :” “no unlovely backslidings can deprive them of it^o :” and as to sinners, although “the whole life be spent in hardness and impenitency,” yet, if they be in the number of the elect, “divine grace shall gloriously triumph in their conversion, in their dying moments^p :” “no duties, no obligations are required of them ; no terms, no conditions ; neither *ifs* nor *buts* ; they *shall* come ; and if they themselves *will not*, the Lord will make them willing in the day of his power^q .”

^k Whitefield’s Works, vol. iv. p. 152.

^l Ibid. vol. i. p. 209.

^m Ibid. vol. vi. p. 138.

ⁿ Hawker’s Zion’s Pilgrim, p. 60.

^o Coles on God’s Sovereignty, p. 294.

^p Hawker’s Misericordia, p. 116.

^q Hawker’s Prop against Despair, p. 16.

7. Again ; It is one of his scriptural properties, that he is a God, “ who heareth the “ prayer ;” who “ giveth to every one that “ asketh ;” who “ giveth his Holy Spirit, and “ with him all good things, to them that ask “ in his Son’s name ;” and who “ giveth not “ to them that ask not.” And therefore our Church exhorts us to “ confess our sins to “ Almighty God, with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart, to the end that “ we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by “ his infinite goodness and mercy.” “ If I “ should go through all the stories, which “ show us the efficacy of prayer,” says the venerable Bishop Latimer, after citing some memorable examples, “ I should never have “ done ; for no doubt faithful prayer faileth “ never : it hath remedied all matters. For it “ brought to pass, that when God would de- “ stroy the Israelites, he could not, because of “ Moses’s prayer : Moses let God of his purpose. And no doubt God loveth to be “ letted : for God loveth not to punish or “ destroy the people ; and therefore by a prophet God complaineth, that there was not “ found a good man, which might set himself “ as a strong wall before the people ; that is “ to say, which was so earnest in prayer, that

^r Pf. lxxv. 2. Luke xi. 9. Matt. vii. 11. Luke xi. 13.

^s Jam. iv. 2.

“God could not punish the people^t.” But on the Calvinistic hypothesis, all prayer is vain and ineffectual. “Thy prayers,” it is affirmed, “however frequent or fervent, do not influence the Lord to elect and choose thee to “salvation.” The elect need not solicit that, which is theirs by an irreversible law of omnipotence; nay, it is as absurd to pray or intercede for that which God hath absolutely decreed from all eternity shall come to pass, as to pray and intercede, that the world may not be drowned again; or that Christ may come to judgment: or be the Judge of the quick and dead; or that the bodies of the saints may arise; or for any other thing which shall infallibly come to pass by virtue of God’s absolute decree from all eternity^x. Whilst, as to the reprobate, that I may adopt the expressive language of the Poet,

—Prayer against his absolute decree
No more avails, than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth^y.

It is argued indeed, in reply to this objection, that “prayer is the duty of all without “exception. Every created being (whether

^t Latimer’s Sermons, vol. ii. p. 540.

^u Mason’s Spiritual Treasury, p. 182.

^x See Whitby, p. 388.

^y Paradise Lost, book xi. line 311.

“elect or reprobate matters not as to this point,) is as such dependent on the Creator for all things, and if dependent, ought to have recourse to him, both in a way of supplication and thanksgiving.” But of what significance is the performance of this duty to man, if his performance does not affect the recompence professedly suspended on it? And how does this reply preserve inviolate the honour of God, who hath declared that he “will give all good things to them who ask in his Son’s name,” if he has previously, with respect to his best, I mean his spiritual, gifts, closed the door upon all entreaty?

8. Again; God is perpetually represented under the similitudes of a king, a master, and a father: a king, entitled to our reverence; a master, to our honour; and a father, to our love. But, if we reason from the analogy of earthly relations, what reverence is to be claimed by a sovereign, what honour is due to a master, to what affection is a father entitled, who rules his subjects, his servants, or his children by arbitrary laws; showers blessings on a favoured few with partial hand; requires of the rest an obedience, which he either disables them from paying, or disregards if it be paid; and inflicts on them the utmost se-

² Toplady on Predestination, p. 126.

verity of punishment, in compliance with his own will, and to manifest the severity of his power? Let us not be told, that God may do what he will with his own. “ When under
“ the Roman and the Grecian government the
“ father had an absolute power over his chil-
“ dren, and in the eastern nations the prince
“ had absolute power over his subjects; would
“ this prerogative and sovereignty excuse them
“ from a severity and rigour unworthy of a
“ father or a sovereign, in leaving most of
“ their subjects and their children under the
“ extremest misery, when by the very same
“ means that a few of them have been rescued
“ from it, they might all have been so? And
“ shall we then impute that rigour, want of
“ natural affection and compassion to the Lover
“ of souls, and the benign government of our
“ heavenly Father, which we could not but
“ condemn and abhor in earthly governors,
“ and in the fathers of our flesh?” Nor is
this all: it is not only that he refuses to extricate his people and children from misery, but is himself the aggravator of their misery: he imposes upon them laws; he disables them from obeying; and he punishes, because they obey them not. Is this the conduct of that gracious Sovereign, who “ feedeth his own

^a Whitby on the Five Points, p. 175.

“ people and the sheep of his pasture ;” whose
 “ sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness ;” and
 who “ accepteth according to that a man hath,
 “ and not according to that he hath not ^b ?”
 Or is it rather the conduct of the usurper,
 “ whose own the sheep are not ;” and who
 withholds from them the straw, while he ex-
 acts the full tale of bricks ? “ You would not,”
 saith Athenagoras to the Roman Emperors,
 “ honour the good or punish bad men, if vice
 “ and virtue were not in their power ^c :” and,
 “ if men,” saith Chrysostom, “ pardon their
 “ fellow-men, when they are necessitated to
 “ do a thing, much more should this be done
 “ to men compelled by fate to do what they
 “ do : for if it be absurd to punish them, who
 “ by the force of barbarians are compelled to
 “ any action, it must be more so to punish
 “ him, who is compelled by a stronger power ^d :”

^b 2 Cor. viii. 12.

^c Ὡς δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων αὐθαιρέτων καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν
 κακίαν ἔχοντων· ἐπεὶ ἔκ ἀν ἑτ' ἐτιμάτε τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, οὐκ ἐκολάζετε
 τοὺς πονηροὺς, εἰ μὴ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἦν καὶ ἡ κακία καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ. *Athe-
 nagoræ Legatio pro Christianis*, p. 27. Ed. Paris. 1615.

^d Ἐἴτα ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἰσασὶ συγγινώσκειν, ὑπ' ἀνθρώπου τοῦ
 ὁμοφυλοῦ καὶ ὁμογενοῦς καταναγκαζομένου, τῷ δ' ὑπο εἰσαρμμένης
 οὐχὶ πολλὰ μάλλον συγγινώσκειν ἐχρήν ; καὶ γὰρ διαδραναὶ ἐδεῖ
 ἐκείνης δε, ὡς φαῖσιν, οὕτως ἀμνηστῆρος ἢ ἀρχῆς, ὡς καὶ εἰς ἐρημον,
 καὶ εἰς θάλασσαν, καὶ ὅπου τις ἀφικηται, τὰ νοήματα αὐτῆς
 οὐ διαφεύξεται. Πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἀτοκόν, τὸν μὲν ὑπο βαρβάρων
 βίας ἀγχομένον πλείους συγγνωμῆς ἀπολαύειν, ὡς μὴδε ἐγκαλειδῆσαι
 τὴν ἀρχὴν, τὸν δε ὑπο θανατωτέρως, ὡς φασι, θαναμῶς καταναγκα-

more and much more, let it be added, when the same power imposes the law, precludes obedience, and inflicts the punishment.

g. Again; God is represented as commanding “the Gospel to be preached to every creature^e;” as making it the duty of his ministers to exhort all men to receive it, and not to “neglect so great salvation^f;” as commanding all men to believe and obey it^g; as declaring that he will judge the world in righteousness by the word of the Gospel; and that the cause of men’s condemnation shall be their rejection of the Gospel faith^h. But, on the Calvinistic hypothesis, these commands and declarations are futile and unjust. For what have they to do with the obligations of the Gospel; or how are they to believe, and obey the Gospel; or how are they to be judged by the Gospel; or upon what principle are they to be condemned for disbelieving or disobeying it: who were the subjects of an absolute decree of reprobation, shut out from the possibility of having faith or repentance by a doom antecedent to the Gospel dispensation; and to whom the Gospel is preached, as Calvin affirms,

ζομιενον, δικην διδοιαι, και μηδε λογου μεταδιδοιαι προς απολογιαν αυτω τοιαυτην; *Chrysoft. de Fato et Provid. Orat. iii. Ed. Bened. ii. p. 761.*

^e Mark xvi. 15.

^g 1 John iii. 23.

^f Heb. ii. 2, 3.

^h John iii. 18.

only “ as a favour of death, and as matter of
 “ more severe condemnationⁱ?” But how then
 is this to be reconciled with the wisdom and
 justice of God? For “ who,” saith Austin against
 the Manichæans, whom he accused of blind-
 ness for denying, that man had free-will, or
 that it was in his power to do well or ill ;
 “ Who,” saith he, “ will not exclaim, that it is
 “ folly to command him, who hath not liberty
 “ to do what is commanded ; and that it is
 “ unjust to condemn him, who hath it not in
 “ his power to do what is required ? and yet
 “ these miserable men understand not, that
 “ they ascribe this wickedness and injustice to
 “ God^k.” And, to the same effect, “ it is the
 “ height of madness and injustice, to hold any
 “ person guilty, because he did not that which
 “ he could not do^l.”

ⁱ Est enim universalis vocatio, qua per externam verbi
 prædicationem omnes pariter ad se invitat Deus ; etiam
 quibus eam in mortis odorem, et gravioris condemnationis
 materiam proponit. *Calv. Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxiv. sect. 8.

^k Quis enim non clamet, stultum esse præcepta dare ei,
 cui liberum non est quod præcipitur facere ; et iniquum
 esse eum damnare, cui non fuit potestas iussu complere ?
 et has injustitias et iniquitates miseri non intelligunt Deo
 se ascribere. *August. lib. de Fide contra Manichæos*, cap. x.
 tom. viii. App. p. 26.

^l Peccati reum tenere quenquam, quia non fecit id quod
 facere non potuit, summæ iniquitatis est et insanix. *Lib.
 de Duabus Anim.* cap. xii. sect. 17. Op. tom. viii. p. 87.

10. Again ; It is fet forth as an evidence of the univerfal love and good-will of God to man, that “ he willeth not that any, even the “ wicked, fhould perifh ; but that all, that “ all men every where, fhould come to repent- “ ance and be faved^m :” not merely, as Calvin explains away the univerfality of the expref- fions, that “ God is prepared to pardon, as foon “ as the finner fhall be converted, and there- “ fore he willeth not his death, in as far as he “ willeth his repentanceⁿ ;” but that he abfo- lutely willeth both the end and the means, and fo affords to all men opportunity of repent- ance as the means, and falvation and happinefs as the end : as Voffius testifies to have been the fentence of the primitive Church, that “ God “ willeth the converfion and falvation of all men^o.” If he does not, what comfort do thefe promifes afford to the great body of mankind ? but “ thefe,” faith the venerable Latimer, “ are “ moft comfortable words ; for now we may “ be fure, that when we will leave our fins

^m 2 Pet. iii. 9. Tit. ii. 4. Acts xvii. 30. Ezek. xviii. 23. xxxiii. 11.

ⁿ Atque hæc fumma eft, non eſſe dubitandum, quin Deus paratus fit ignoſcere, ſimul ac converſus fit peccator. Ergo ejus mortem non vult, quatenus vult pænitentiam. *Calv. Inſt.* lib. iii. cap. xxiv. ſect. 15.

^o Veteris hæc Eccleſiæ ſententia fuit, velle Deum converſionem et ſalutem omnium. *Voff. Hiſt. Pelag.* lib. vii. theſ. ii. p. 652,

“ and wickedness, and turn unto him with all
 “ our hearts earnestly, then he will turn him-
 “ self unto us, and will show himself a loving
 “ father. And to the intent we should believe
 “ this, he sweareth an oath ; we ought to be-
 “ lieve God without an oath, yet he sweareth
 “ to make us more sure^p.” At the same time
 various scriptures concur in proving, that his
 love is not confined merely to “ some of all
 “ nations, or of all sorts, of men,” as Austin^q,
 and after him Calvin^r, affirm, and as their fol-
 lowers^s interpret such passages in Scripture ;
 but that all the children of men are objects of
 the divine benevolence. “ God is naturally
 “ good,” saith our great reformer Archbishop
 Cranmer, “ and willeth all men to be saved,
 “ and careth for them, and provideth all things
 “ by which they may be saved, except by
 “ their own malice they will be evil, and so

^p Latimer's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 623.

^q Aut certe sic dictum est, *Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri* ; non quod nullus hominum esset, quem salvum fieri nollet : sed ut *omnes homines* omne genus humanum intelligamus per quascunque differentias distributum ; reges, privatos, &c. &c. *August. Enchir.* cap. xxix.

^r —Deo, qui velit omnes homines salvos fieri. Quo nihil aliud profecto significat, quam nulli hominum ordini viam ad salutem præclusisse ; quin potius misericordiam suam sic effudisse, ut nullum ejus expertem esse velit. *Calv. Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxiv. sect. 16.

^s Toplady on Predest. p. 47. Whitefield's Works, vol. vi. p. 223. Eighteen Sermons, p. 160.

“ by righteous judgment of God, perish and be
 “ lost. For truly men be to themselves the
 “ authors of sin and damnation. God is
 “ neither author of sin nor cause of damnation.
 “ And yet doth he most righteously damn
 “ those men, that do with vices corrupt their
 “ nature, which he made good ; and do abuse
 “ the same to evil desires, against his most holy
 “ will. Wherefore men be to be warned,
 “ that they do not impute to God their vice
 “ or their damnation, but to themselves, which
 “ by free-will have abused the grace and be-
 “ nefits of God^t.” “ Christ,” saith the ve-
 nerable Latimer, “ *would have all the world to*
 “ *come unto him.* The promises of our Saviour
 “ Christ are general ; they pertain *to the whole*
 “ *world, to all mankind* ; wherefore then
 “ should *any man* despair^u ? And again ; “ See-
 “ ing the Gospel is universal, it appeareth that
 “ *God would have all mankind to be saved* ;
 “ and that the fault is not in him, if we be
 “ damned ; for it is written thus, God would
 “ have *all* to be saved. His salvation is suffi-
 “ cient to save all mankind ; but we are so
 “ wicked of ourselves, that we refuse the same,
 “ and we will not take it, when it is offered

^t Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man. Article of Free-will.

^u Latimer's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 471, 480.

“ to us ; and therefore he saith, Few are cho-
 “ sen ; that is, few have pleasure or delight in
 “ it.” And to the same effect Bishop Hooper
 argues, “ that as the sins of Adam, without
 “ privilege or exemption, extended and apper-
 “ tained unto all and every of Adam’s pos-
 “ terity, so did the promise of grace generally
 “ appertain as well *to every and singular of*
 “ *Adam’s posterity* as to Adam :” and again,
 “ The promise of grace appertaineth to every
 “ sort of men in the world, and comprehendeth
 “ them all, howbeit within certain limits and
 “ bounds, the which if men neglect or pass
 “ over, they exclude themselves from the pro-
 “ mise in Christ: as Cain was no more exclud-
 “ ed, till he excluded himself, than Abel ; Saul
 “ than David ; Judas than Peter ; Esau than
 “ Jacob ; by the Scripture it seemeth that the
 “ sentence of God was given to save the one,
 “ and to damn the other, before the one loved
 “ God, or the other hated God. Howbeit
 “ these threatenings of God against Esau, if he
 “ had not of his wilful malice excluded himself
 “ from the promise of grace, should no more
 “ have hindered his salvation than God’s
 “ threatenings against Nineveh ; which, not-
 “ withstanding that God said it should be de-
 “ stroyed within forty days, stood a great time
 “ after, and did penance. Esau was circum-
 “ cised and presented unto the Church of God

“ by his father Isaac in all external ceremonies
 “ as well as Jacob ; and that his life and con-
 “ versation was not as agreeable unto justice
 “ and equity as Jacob’s, the sentence of God
 “ unto Rebecca was not in the fault, but his
 “ own malice ; for there is mentioned nothing
 “ at all in that place, that Esau was disinherit-
 “ ed of eternal life ; but that he should be in-
 “ ferior to his brother Jacob in this world ;
 “ which prophecy was fulfilled in their pos-
 “ terities, and not in the persons themselves.”
 Nay, what more ample testimony of God’s
 abundant kindness and good-will to all men
 can be given, than his overture of mercy to
 such unprincipled wretches as Judas Iscariot
 and Simon Magus ? As the learned Barrow
 after St. Ambrose has remarked, “ that our
 “ Lord ought not to pass by the man that
 “ should betray him, that all men might take
 “ notice, that, in the choice even of his traitor,
 “ he did hold forth a pledge or mark of *all*
 “ *men being to be saved*.”^x

^u Preface to Hooper’s Declaration of the Ten Com-
mandments.

^x Barrow’s Works, vol. iii. p. 322. Venerat Dominus
Jesús omnes salvos facere peccatores ; etiam circa impios
ostendere suam debuit voluntatem : et ideo nec proditorum
debuit præterire, ut adverterent omnes, quod, in electione
etiam proditoris sui, servandorum omnium insigne præ-
tendit. *Ambros. de Paradiso*, cap. viii.

But according to the system of our opponents, the majority of mankind is devoted by him to necessary and irremediable misery. "God," we are instructed, "intends to give saving grace only to a few^y:" "God," as we are taught by another, "*doth not will the salvation of reprobates;*" and again, "the *sole cause* why some are saved, and others perish, proceeds from his *willing* the salvation of the former, and *the perdition of the latter*^z." Surely, if this be so, whilst it robs God of his honour, it deprives the great majority of mankind of their strongest obligation, both of gratitude towards God, and of charity towards their brethren. We are taught to be most devoted to God, because "he is merciful unto us, and forgiveth us our sins;" and to forgive our brethren their trespasses, even as our heavenly Father forgiveth us our trespasses." Alas for the subversion of affection, founded on gratitude, to "the Father of mercies;" and of love to our neighbour, founded on the love of God; if our heavenly Father is so far from forgiving us, that he doth not even will to forgive us; but inexorably withholds from us every measure of his grace, and hath pleasure in the death of him that dieth!

^y Whitefield's Works, vol. iv. p. 58.

^z Toplady, p. 47.

11. Again; In proof of his universal goodwill to man, he sent his only-begotten Son from the bosom of his love and from the right hand of his glory, to “taste death for every man^a;” “with absolute commission and fulness of power,” as the good Bishop Andrews says, “to be the perfect and complete Saviour of all^b :”—that “by his most sweet sacrifice,” as it is expressed in King Edward’s Catechism, “he might pacify his Father’s wrath against mankind^c :”—“that all men,” as the Homily teaches, “as they are God’s creation and image,” so also might be “deemed by Christ^d :”—that “dying once and offering himself for all,” as Cranmer says, “he might, so much as pertained to him, take all men’s sins unto himself^e :”—“to make,” as Cranmer again and Ridley say, “a sacrifice and oblation upon the cross, which was a full redemption and propitiation for the sins of the whole world^f :”—“to suffer for you and for me,” says Latimer, “in such a de-

^a Heb. ii. 9.

^b Serm. V. on the Nativity, p. 39.

^c Enchir. Theolog. vol. i. p. 25.

^d Homilies, p. 49.

^e Cranmer on the Sacrament, Lond. 1550. p. 107.

^f Preface to the same, and Preface to Bishop Ridley’s Disputation at Oxford. See Winchester on the Seventeenth Article, p. 38, 39.

“gree as is due to all the sins of the whole world : for all that I for my part have done, all that you for your parts have done, and that any man else had done^g.” “He tasted death for every man,” observed an eloquent and learned Prelate, whom as the Predestinarian recommends to others, he might submit to be guided by him himself ; “He tasted death for every man ; for every one that is of that nature, in which he did it. So that every man is capable of being saved by him : God excepts against no man, and therefore men must have a care, how they presume to do it. For this is to usurp upon God’s prerogative, and to limit his boundless love ; to refrain it to some particular persons, when he extended it to all : for he loved the world, the whole sinful world^h.”

“This,” says Vossius, “was the judgment of the ancient Church, that Christ had provided for the universal fault of men by an universal remedy ; by paying a ransom of infinite value, that no one might perish for want of itⁱ.” This we understand to be the doctrine of the Gospel : and however some texts assert-

^g Latimer’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 211.

^h Bishop Beveridge’s Works, vol. i. p. 119. See Whitefield’s Works, vol. ii. p. 166.

ⁱ Veteris Ecclesiæ judicium fuit, Christum pro culpa universali hominibus providisse remedio universali, solvendo

ing the doctrine of universal redemption may be boldly denied by an affirmation, that “ God “ delivered up his Son, not for all men, but “ only for those that are in Christ^k ;” or may be explained away by a sort of sophistry, which supposes such texts to mean, that “ his “ sacrifice and undertaking are infinite and all- “ sufficient, but that the application of this “ sacrifice and undertaking is every where “ confined to the elect people of God^l ;” it may notwithstanding be confidently maintained, that other passages remain, which represent the death of Christ as commensurate in its effects with the fall of Adam^m, “ that,” as Athanasius says, “ absolving the first man’s sin, “ he might take it away from the whole “ race :” — which speak of him, as “ the pro- “ pitiation for the sins of the whole world ;” not the world of the elect, according to the predestinarian refinement, but “ all men,” “ the “ whole human race,” as Calvin once expressed it^o ; “ all mankind,” as distinguished by our

λυτρον infiniti pretii, ne ejus defectu periret quisquam. *Voss. Histor. Pelag.* lib. vii. thes. iii. p. 680.

^k Whitefield’s Works, vol. iv. p. 57.

^l Pietas Oxoniensis, p. 67.

^m 1 Cor. xv. 22. Rom. v. 22, 18, 19.

ⁿ ἵνα ἐκεῖνου λύων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, ἀπο πάντος αὐτὴν ἀρῆ τοῦ γενούς. Athan. in pass. cap. 12. tom. ii. p. 90. ed. Paris. 1698.

^o Messias illa omnia cumulate præstitit, quæ erant ad

Church from “the elect people of God^p;” “the whole world,” as distinguished by St. John from Christians, that very world, “which lieth in wickedness^q;” (for in the Scripture, and more especially in the writings of St. John, “the world,” or “the whole world,” never signifies the elect only in opposition to the wicked of the world, but still the wicked of the world in opposition to the faithful Christian^r:)—and which describe him, as having “died for some; who might nevertheless perish “and be destroyed^s;” as having “bought “them, who nevertheless denied him, and “brought on themselves destruction by bringing in damnable heresies^t;” and as having

OMNIUM redemptionem necessaria. Neque vero intra unum Israelem tantum illud beneficium stetit, cum potius ad UNIVERSUM HUMANUM GENUS usque porrigendum esset: quia per unum Christum UNIVERSUM HUMANUM GENUS reconciliandum erat Deo. *Præfatio Johannis Calvinii in Editionem Gallicam Novi Testamenti Neocomi. Anno MDXXXV. Calv. Ep. Col. 543.*

Nemo hinc excluditur, (ab hæreditate scilicet regni paterni,) qui modo Christum, qualis offertur a Patre in salutem OMNIUM admittat, et admissum complectatur. *Ibid. Col. 545.* See Winchester on the Seventeenth Article, p. 16. ed. Churchman’s Remembrancer.

^p Catechism. Summary of the Creed.

^q Cf. 1 John ii. 2. and v. 19.

^r See Whitby on the Five Points, p. 130.

^s 1 Cor. viii. 11. Rom. xiv. 15.

^t 2 Pet. ii. 1.

“sanctified them, who tread him under foot,
 “and do despite unto the Spirit of grace, and
 “count the blood of the covenant an unholy
 “thing.” “Let us,” exclaims St. Clement,
 the fellow-labourer of St. Paul, and one the
 best qualified to supply a comment upon the
 language of the Apostle; “Let us look stead-
 “fastly upon the blood of Christ, and let us
 “see, how precious to God his blood is;
 “which, being shed for our salvation, did
 “bring the grace of repentance to the whole
 “world. Let us attentively regard all ages,
 “and observe, that in every generation the
 “Lord granted place of repentance to them
 “who would turn to him.”

And shall we be persuaded, in spite of such
 authorities as these, to give our assent to a sys-
 tem, which, (whilst it pretends to be the sys-
 tem, that peculiarly exhibits the Almighty
 “promoting his own glory and the greatest
 “possible ultimate good of his creatures^y),”
 deprives the mercy of God and the sacrifice of

* Heb. x. 29.

z Ατενισώμεν εις το αίμα του Χριστού, και ιδώμεν ώς εστι τιμίον
 τη Θεω αίμα αυτε, ό τι δια την ήμετεραν σωτηριαν εκχυθεν, παντι
 τη κοσμη μετανοιας χαριν ήπηνεγκεν. Ατενισώμεν εις τας γενεας
 πασας, και καταμάδωμεν, ότι εν γενεα και γενεα μετανοιας τοπον
 εδωκεν ό δεσποτης τοις βελομενοις επισραφηναι επ’ αυτον. S. Clem.
 ad Cor. ep. i. cap. vii.

y Overton, p. 89.

Christ of the greatest portion of their glory; charges with blasphemy the assertion, that Christ died, not only for those that are saved, but also for those that perish^a; restricts the illimitable current of the grace of God; and confines the operation of redeeming love to a favoured few^a? “Our Lord knew,” says the Founder of the Calvinistic Methodists, “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, and not for the world; for these, and these only, he is now interceding; and with their salvation he will be fully satisfied^b.” Woe then to the rebellious and deceitful prophets, who “prophefied smooth things” to every sinner of the house of Israel, and saw for every child of Adam “visions of peace, when there was no peace!” Woe to the false Apostles, who called upon “all men every where to repent and believe in him, who tasted death for every man, and whom God had set forth to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world!” O! the unutterable blindness of the heavenly host, when they hailed the nativity of the Sa-

^a Whitefield, vol. i. p. 212. vol. iv. p. 71.

^a Ibid. vol. i. p. 145.

^b Ibid. vol. iv. p. 72.

viour as “good tidings of great joy to all
“people;” in a hymn of Glory to God in the
highest, of peace on earth, and of good-will
towards men! No more let all men be invited
to exult in that Gospel of salvation, which is
good tidings of great joy only to a selected
few! No longer let all men be taught, that
“God so loved the world, that he sent his
“only-begotten Son into the world, that who-
“soever believeth in him might not perish but
“have everlasting life;” but that God so hated
the world, that he sent not his Son into the
world to save the world, but that, because it
believed not in him, in whom God rendered
it incapable of believing, the world through
him might be condemned!

How widely different from this represent-
ation of the divine benevolence, is that which
has been transmitted to us by some of the
holy fathers of the Church: “They compare
“our Saviour to the Sun, who shines indiffer-
“ently to all the world, although there be
“some private corners and secret caves, to
“which his light doth not come; although
“some shut their windows and their eyes, and
“exclude it; although some are blind and
“do not see it. They compare our Lord to a
“Physician, who professes to relieve such as
“shall have recourse to his help; but doth
“cure only those, who seek for remedy, and

“ are willing to take the medicine. The co-
 “ venant of grace, say they, is a door standing
 “ open to all, whereinto all have liberty to
 “ enter. Evangelical grace is like a fountain
 “ standing openly, to which all men have free
 “ access; at which all men may quench their
 “ thirst, if they will inquire after it, and go
 “ thereto^b.” It did not occur to them per-
 haps, and they would doubtless have deemed
 it derogatory to God’s honour, if it had occur-
 red to them, to annul the universality of our
 Saviour’s gracious invitation, “ whosoever will,
 “ let him take the water of life freely^c,” by
 the ingenious comment of a late Predestinarian,
 that “ none can will a part in these privileges,
 “ but those whom God previously makes wil-
 “ ling and desirous; and that he gives this
 “ will to, and excites this desire in, none but
 “ his own elect^d.”

The argument might be farther pursued,
 under a multiplicity of forms, and in a variety
 of particulars. But the leading remarks now
 thrown out may be sufficient for my purpose;
 and will probably convince those, whose minds
 are open to their reception, that the doctrine
 of absolute election and reprobation is irrecon-

^b See Barrow’s Works, vol. iii. p. 335. or vol. i. p. 88.
 of Sermons selected; Oxford edition.

^c Rev. xxii. 17.

^d Toplady on Predestination, p. 72.

cible with the general declarations of Scripture concerning the nature and government of God; and necessarily involves consequences, "which, if there are some things so evil that they can never be good, cannot be ascribed to God without blasphemy^e." I shall therefore decline any farther exemplification of the present argument; for I shrink from the discussion of a subject, which can hardly be examined without some degree of apparent irreverence; and without seeming to derogate from the majesty, by even bringing into question the attributes and the moral government, of "the High and Lofty One, which inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy;" towards whom the hosts of heaven bend in lowly adoration, and "cast their crowns before his throne."

II. I proceed therefore to consider the subject, with reference to *the general covenant of the Gospel, and the promises of God, as they are generally set forth in holy Scripture.*

Now the very notion of a covenant is incompatible with the doctrine in dispute. By a covenant, in a religious sense, we understand a compact or agreement, whereby God stipulates to bestow certain blessings upon those, who engage to perform certain conditions;

^e See Stebbing on the Spirit, chap. vi. sect. 2.

And, as “ he is faithful who promises,” provided those, with whom he enters into covenant, perform the conditions they engage for, “ God for his part will most surely keep and “ perform his promise,” and confer the blessings, for which he was graciously pleased to stipulate. The terms of the Gospel covenant are, salvation with all its auxiliary blessings on the part of God; faith and obedience on the part of man. I take the representation of the case from our Church’s office of Baptism, whereby we are admitted into covenant with God.

Here then is our alternative. That God elects certain individuals to unconditional salvation, is the doctrine of Calvin; the Gospel teaches, that the salvation of every man is conditional: both positions cannot be true: if we believe one, we cannot believe the other: we must therefore relinquish either the Institutes, or the Bible; either absolute predestination, or the Gospel covenant; either the imaginations of man, or the sure word of God.

The argument however is of such immense importance, and it is so firm and conclusive on the matter in debate, that it requires to be more fully enforced and illustrated. I do not scruple then to assert, and I assert it with a steadfast

reliance on its truth, without fear of confutation, and with a trust in God that it is capable of demonstration, that the Gospel dispensation, in the whole and in its several parts, is strictly a covenant between God and man:—that all those spiritual blessings, which Christ died to purchase, and which the Holy Spirit was sent to confer, are annexed to the discharge of certain duties, to the performance of specific services:—that every man has the power, (with the assistance of that grace which God is pleased to bestow,) of discharging those duties, of performing those services:—that every man also has the power of falling from that grace, which he may once have enjoyed, so as to perish eternally:—and that in consequence, if God be true, (I shudder at the proviso, which I am compelled to introduce!) those spiritual blessings, and especially that salvation, which is the conclusion, sum, and substance of the whole, are not the effect of an arbitrary election on the part of God; are not absolute; are not irrespective; but are conditional, and depend upon the will and exertions of man.

Our adversaries tell us, that “the Gospel in offering salvation, offers it *wholly unconditional*;^s”—that “the Gospel is not to be clogged with terms, qualifications, and con-

^s Hawker’s Prop against all Despair, p. 18.

“ditions^h,”—that “a conditional redemption
 “is a contradiction in termsⁱ,”—that “the
 “promises of the Gospel are not conditional,
 “made to the believer upon certain terms, as
 “if upon doing his part, God would do his
 “also^k,”—that “believers are justified before
 “God, without any respect to their works,
 “past, present, or to come^l,”—in a word, that
 “to preach terms and conditions is to pervert
 “the Gospel of Christ, and to substitute a mere
 “system of man’s devising^m.”

To these assertions others of the same im-
 port might easily be added. What now is the
 protestant doctrine on this head? “Although
 “God’s promises made in Christ,” say our Re-
 formers, “be immutable, yet he maketh them
 “not to us *but with condition*, so that his pro-
 “mise standing, we may yet fail of the pro-
 “mise, because we keep not our promiseⁿ.”
 Or, to take the question more at large, I answer
 in the words of a zealous opposer of Antino-
 mianism, “If all the protestant divines, who

^h Goliath Slain, p. 160. and Mason’s Spiritual Treasury,
 p. 75.

ⁱ Toplady’s Church of England vindicated from Armi-
 nianism, p. 92.

^k Romaine’s Walk of Faith. Works, vol. ii. p. 168.

^l Whitefield’s Works, vol. v. p. 137.

^m Mason’s Spiritual Treasury, p. 178.

ⁿ Necessary Doctrine, &c. Declaration of Faith.

“ have directly or indirectly represented re-
 “ pentance and faith as *conditions of present*
 “ *salvation*, and holiness of heart and life as
 “ *conditions of eternal glory*, as things *sine*
 “ *quibus non*, without which salvation and
 “ glory neither can nor will follow;—if all
 “ those divines are guilty of heresy, ninety-
 “ nine out of an hundred are heretics^o.” And
 I question, whether some of the declaimers
 against conditions be not sometimes answer-
 able for the heresy.

What again is the doctrine of Scripture?
 “ If thou wilt enter into life, keep the com-
 “ mandments^p.”—“ This do and thou shalt
 “ live^q.”—“ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,
 “ and thou shalt be saved^r.”—“ Whosoever
 “ shall call on the name of the Lord shall be
 “ saved^s.”—“ He that believeth and is bap-
 “ tized shall be saved^t.”—“ Whoso eateth my
 “ flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal
 “ life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”
 Shall I adduce more texts from the Holy
 Scriptures? or will these already cited from
 the several parts of the New Testament, in the
 language of our Saviour and of his Apostles,
 be sufficient to prove, that eternal life is suf-

^o Fletcher's First Check, p. 66.

^p Matt. xix. 17.

^r Acts xvi. 31.

^t Mark xvi. 16.

^q Luke x. 28.

^s Rom. x. 13.

^u John vi. 54.

pended upon the performance of certain conditions? or, that we may not be engaged in a strife of words, on the fulfilment of certain duties and obligations, the non-fulfilment of which will (generally speaking) exclude us from eternal life: on our having "certain indispensable prerequisites," according to the phrase of a Calvinistic writer; or, as it is justly defined by a distinguished Presbyter and Dignitary of our Church, "not the cause, by which an effect is produced, but the circumstance, without which that effect will not take place." What are those conditions, and what is the precise import of the expressions, just cited from Scripture, are questions, which do not affect our present argument. If eternal life and salvation be suspended on the fulfilment of certain conditions, the doctrine of God's absolute election of men to salvation falls to the ground.

It is however not only that salvation and eternal life are suspended on certain conditions; but the several spiritual gifts, ordained by God for the attainment of salvation, are also conditional, and depend upon the performance of certain specified duties. Is it necessary, that we "be born again of water and of the Spirit?"

x Christian Observer, June 1807. p. 379.

y Daubeny's Vindiciæ, p. 286.

The laver of baptism is provided for our regeneration. Is it necessary, that we “eat the flesh, and drink the blood;” of Christ? They are provided for us at the holy communion. Must we believe in order to be saved? “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” If we would enter into life, must we “keep the commandments?” For this purpose the help of the Holy Spirit is necessary: but in order to procure his help, the duty of prayer is appointed; and we are assured, that “God will give his Holy Spirit, and with him all good things, to them who ask him.”

And let it not be objected to this statement, that the duties, for which we contend, are held forth in Scripture, not as conditions, but as consequences and evidences, of our election to eternal happiness: that, as Austin expresses it, “the elect are not chosen because they believe, but they are chosen that they may believe:”—that, as the Contra-Remonstrants at Dort contended, “God ordained who should believe, and so predestinated both to grace and glory:”—or that, in the quaint phraseology of the modern Predestinarian, “we must

² *Intelligamus ergo vocationem, qua sunt electi, non qui eliguntur, quia crediderunt, sed qui eliguntur ut credant. August. de Prædest. Sanctor. cap. xvii.*

^a Hales's Letters from Dort, p. 452.

“ not mistake working *for* life, for working
 “ *from* life^b.” According to the plain tenor
 of Scripture, we are exhorted to “ fight the
 “ good fight of faith,” not because we have laid
 hold, but that we *may* “ lay hold of eternal
 “ life^c :” —we are admonished to “ run with
 “ temperance the Christian course,” not be-
 cause we have obtained, but “ that we *may*
 “ obtain an incorruptible crown^d :” —we are
 perpetually reminded to believe in Christ, and
 to keep his commandments, not because we
 are, but that we *may be* admitted into life
 everlasting. So teaches our great Reformer^e :
 “ It is to be considered, that although our Sa-
 “ viour Christ hath offered himself upon the
 “ cross a sufficient redemption and satisfaction
 “ for the sins of the world, and hath made
 “ himself an open way and entry unto God
 “ the Father for all mankind, only by his
 “ worthy merit and deserving; and willing all
 “ men to be saved, calleth upon all the world
 “ without respect of persons to come and be
 “ partakers of the righteousness, peace, and
 “ glory which is in him; yet for all this be-
 “ nignity and grace, shewed universally to the

^b Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 181. Romaine's Works, vol. i. p. 361. Walk of Faith.

^c 1 Tim. vi. 12.

^d 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.

^e Abp. Cranmer.

“whole world, none shall have the effect of
“this benefit of our Saviour Christ, and enjoy
“everlasting salvation by him; but they *that*
“*take such ways to attain the same*, as he hath
“taught and appointed by his holy word ‘.”

And let it not be supposed, that this statement militates against the undoubted doctrine of the Gospel, that our salvation is wrought by the free grace of God; according to the insinuation of Whitefield, that “one reason why
“he thinks Calvinism right is, because proud
“nature will not stoop to be saved by grace^g.”
—nor let it expose us to the repetition of an uncharitable and injurious aspersions from the advocate of moderate Calvinism, that “it is
“not either the name or nature of Calvinism,
“as such, to which we confine our attacks;
“but that it is the doctrine of salvation by
“grace through faith in the Redeemer, under
“whatever form or name it is professed, to
“which in reality we at the bottom object^h.”
That our notions of the divine decrees are in any way incompatible with the doctrine of salvation by grace, we leave to be proved by our accusers. “The ancient Synods holden in

^g f Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man. Article of Justification.

^g Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 113.

^h Overton, p. 97.

“ the time of St. Austin,” (I am citing the words of Grotius,) “ inform us, that the doctrine of grace may well be maintained, without determining any thing about that of absolute decrees and its dependenciesⁱ. “ For,” as the same learned man likewise remarks, “ both opinions,” that is, of conditional and unconditional predestination, “ agree in this, “ that all the decrees and operations of God, “ relating to the salvation of men, are founded “ in Christ Jesus; and accordingly we hold “ HIM to be the only foundation^k.”

Blessed be God, and we glory in avowing it, it is of his free grace, sinners as we all are by nature, and spiritually “ dead in trespasses and sins^l,” that we are “ saved and called with an “ holy calling, not according to our works, “ but according to the divine purpose and “ grace given us in Christ Jesus before the “ world began^m.” It is of his free grace, corrupt as we are by nature, that “ we are cleansed and justified by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghostⁿ.” It is of his free grace, that he promises to enable us, weak and imperfect creatures as we always

ⁱ Speech to the Burgomasters of Amsterdam. Brandt's History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 216.

^k Ibid. p. 212.

^m 2-Tim. i. 9.

^l Eph. ii. 1.

ⁿ Tit. iii. 5, 7.

continue, to perform, however incompletely, the conditions of our salvation. It is of his free grace, that he promises his Holy Spirit, both to "put into our minds good desires," and to assist us in "bringing them to good effect." It is of his free grace, that "he teaches us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ^o." But free as is the grace of God, it operates by the instrumentality of certain appointed means. Life and breath, health and strength, all the enjoyments, and comforts, and necessaries of this life are the gifts of God, and are bestowed upon us of his free grace. So it is with our spiritual gifts; with faith, with obedience, and whatever other blessings are conducive to our spiritual welfare. The case is the same, however, with respect to the attainment, the maintenance, and the increase of our blessings, both temporal and spiritual; if we would possess them, and have them thrive in our possession, we must be diligent in practising the appointed means; and it is at the same time the most rational, and let me add the most grateful, conduct, to prac-

^o Tit. ii. 12, 13.

tise with diligence the means which God hath appointed.

I am aware it will here be objected, that the argument is not conclusive: for that if God has absolutely elected certain individuals to salvation, he will take care to ratify his election:—"if he has predestinated to the end, he has also predestinated to the means:"—if he has chosen to bestow certain gifts and graces on his elect, he will also lead them to the means, by which those gifts and graces are to be conferred. It was into this error that some men fell at the time of the Reformation; when, in opposition to the Anabaptists, who ran into one extreme, and maintained their own sufficiency to attain salvation, some of the Gospellers, as they were called, not able to reconcile free-will with grace, ran into the other extreme, totally denied the free-will of man, and resolved the whole process of his salvation or reprobation into the absolute decrees of God: and it was against this error that our temperate Reformers directed their efforts, when with their wonted moderation they observed, "All men be to be monished, "and chiefly preachers, that in this high "matter they, looking on both sides, so at- "temper and moderate themselves, that neither "they so preach the grace of God, that they "take away thereby free-will; nor on the

“ other side so extol free-will, that injury be
“ done to the grace of God ^p.” “ It is not a
“ Christian man’s part,” said one of that noble
army of Martyrs, “ to attribute his salvation
“ to his own free-will, with the Pelagian, and
“ extenuate original sin. Nor to make God
“ the author of ill and our damnation with
“ the Manichee. Nor yet to say, God hath
“ written fatal laws, as the Stoic; and with
“ necessity of destiny, violently pulleth one by
“ the hair into heaven, and thrusteth the other
“ headlong into hell ^q.”

In correspondence with this judicious decision it remains to be shown, that, as it is of the free grace of God, that salvation is proffered and the means of salvation applied to man; so it is of the free-will of man to accept or reject them:—that, as the wise man affirms, “ Before man is life or death, and whether
“ him liketh shall be given him ^r :—or to express the proposition in words before employed, that every man has the power of falling from that grace, which he may have enjoyed; so as to perish eternally; and that every man has the power of performing the services re-

^p Necessary Doctrine, &c. Article of Free-will.

^q Hooper’s Preface to Declaration of the Ten Commandments.

^r Ecclus. xv. 17.

quisite for eternal salvation : a power, it may be observed by the way, not in any degree precluded by the foreknowledge of God, nor by the decree which God in his prescience has determined ; for (as it hath been well remarked by one of our earlier divines) “ God’s decree “ being consequent on his foreknowledge, “ man’s salvation or damnation is only infalli- “ ble to God’s knowledge, but free and con- “ tingent to man ; God’s knowledge, as know- “ ledge, causing nothing ; and his decree not “ altering or crossing, but ratifying that, which “ he knew would be the work of man, working “ out his own salvation by co-working with “ the grace of God ; or working his own dam- “ nation, by forsaking God’s mercy’.”

1. With respect to the former case, which may be thus expressed in the language of the venerable Latimer, “ that we may one time be “ in the book of life, and another time come “ out again, as it appears by David, who was “ written in the book of life ; but when he “ sinned, he was at the same time out of the “ book of God’s favour, until he had repented “ and was sorry for his faults’ :” wherefore do the writings of the Apostles, addressed to “ the “ elect,” “ the called of God,” “ the saints,”

* Plaifere’s Appello Evangelium, part i. chap. vi. p. 34.
Churchman’s Remembrancer, No. V. p. 57.

† Latimer’s Sermons, vol. ii. p. 847.

“ the sanctified and preserved by Christ Jesus,”
“ the beloved of God,” abound in the most fervent exhortations to steadfastness in the belief and practice of the Gospel, if they were incapable of falling from grace given, and losing their title to eternal life ?

Surely if ever there were a body of men, of whom it could be with truth pronounced, that God had absolutely elected them to eternal life, and to whom the apostolical language, which is made a foundation of this doctrine, could in this sense be reasonably applied ; they must be the primitive Christians ; they must be the very persons, to whom those epistles were addressed ; of whom those things were predicated ; who were saluted by the very appellations, on the use of which the doctrine is partly built. [Wherefore then does St. Paul admonish “ all that be at Rome, beloved
“ of God, the called of Jesus Christ, called to
“ be saints,” “ the election according to grace,”
“ not to be high-minded but to fear,” because
“ if they continued not in God’s goodness,
“ they also should be cut off^s ?” Wherefore, in writing to the Corinthians, whom he salutes as “ sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be
“ saints,” and commends for “ coming behind
“ in no gift,” does he remind them, that “ they

^s Rom. i. 6, 7. xi. 5, 20, 22.

“are still carnal;” and warn them that “he who thinketh he standeth should take heed lest he fall;” and “beseech them, that they receive not the grace of God in vain^h?” Wherefore, in writing to the churches of Galatia, to whom he bears witness that “they did run well,” does he accuse them of “not obeying the truth;” and demand, “who had bewitched them before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified before them;” and express himself “afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vainⁱ?” Wherefore to “the saints at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus,” whom he describes as “blessed by God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with all spiritual blessings in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved;” does he “beseech them to walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith they are called;” and exhort them, to

^h I Cor. i. 2, 7. iii. 4.

ⁱ Gal. v. 7. iii. 1. iv. 11.

“ walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity
“ of their mind ;” and caution them to “ let
“ no man deceive them with vain words ; for
“ because of these things the wrath of God
“ cometh on the children of disobedience ;”
and bid them “ put on the whole armour of
“ God, that they may be able to stand against
“ the wiles of the devil, to withstand in the
“ evil day, and having done all to stand ^k?”
Wherefore does he exhort “ the saints in
“ Christ Jesus at Philippi,” whom he com-
mends for their Christian character, and de-
scribes as “ partakers of his grace,” to “ be-
“ ware of the dangers which beset them ;” to
“ stand fast in the Lord ;” and to “ work out
“ their own salvation with fear and trembling ;”
that he may “ rejoice in the day of Christ, that
“ he has not run in vain, neither laboured in
“ vain ^l?” Wherefore, in writing to “ the saints
“ and faithful brethren at Colosse,” whom he
styles “ the elect of God, holy and beloved,”
does he promise the blessings of Christ’s sacri-
fice, “ if they continued in the faith rooted and
“ settled, and were not moved away from the
“ hope of the Gospel ^m?” Wherefore to the
church of the Theſſalonians, of whom he de-

^k Eph. i. 3, 4, 5, 6. iv. 1, 17. v. 6. vi. 11, 13.

^l Phil. i. 1, 7. iii. 2. iv. 1. ii. 12, 26.

^m Col. i. 2. iii. 12. i. 23.

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clares; that he “ knows their election of God,” and that “ God had from the beginning chosen “ them to salvation through sanctification of “ the Spirit and belief of the truth,” does he signify his apprehension “ left by some means “ the tempter should have tempted them, and “ his labour should be in vain ?” Wherefore does St. John, addressing himself to “ the elect “ lady and her children,” admonish them to “ look to themselves : that we lose not,” he adds, “ those things which we have wrought, “ but that we receive a full reward ?” And wherefore does St. Peter, writing to those, whom he represents as “ having obtained like “ precious faith with himself,” and whom he styles “ elect according to the foreknowledge “ of God the Father,” at the same time most fervently charge them, to “ be sober and vigi- “ lant” in withstanding the artifices of the devil; to “ beware, lest they being led away “ with the error of the wicked, should fall “ from their own steadfastness;” and to “ give “ diligence to make their calling and election “ sure ?”

Surely if there ever was an individual of a character inferior to the apostolical, who might be regarded as absolutely predestined to sal-

^a 1 Theff. i. 4. iii. 5. 2 Theff. ii. 13.

^o 2 John ver. 8.

^p 2 Pet. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 2. v. 8. iii. 17. i. 10.

vation, it was Timothy, St. Paul's "own son in the faith." Wherefore then does St. Paul charge him with paternal authority, to "take heed unto himself" that so he might be saved; to "flee foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction;" to "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness;" to "fight the good fight of faith," and so to "lay hold on eternal life?"

Surely if ever an Apostle may be considered as absolutely elected to everlasting life, it was St. Paul himself, converted by the miraculous interposition of Christ to a profession of his religion; "a vessel chosen by the Lord to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel;" filled with the Holy Ghost; and "separated" by his especial appointment "to the work whereunto he had called him." Wherefore then does St. Paul affirm of himself: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?" And what meaning, short of

⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 16. vi. 9, 11, 12.

¹ Acts ix. 15, xiii. 2

⁵ Phil. iii. 13.

a possibility, of his ultimate rejection, can be understood by that declaration, where, urging the necessity of temperance in the Christian race, he immediately subjoins, “ I therefore so
 “ run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as
 “ one that beateth the air ; but I keep under
 “ my body, and bring it into subjection, lest
 “ that by any means, when I have preached
 “ to others, I myself should be a castaway’.”

Peter undoubtedly did fall from grace: although by the intercession of Christ, which implies that he was in danger of an irrecoverable fall, he was enabled to repent and rise again. And the example of Judas affords a still more awful warning to those, who have been elected like him to the Gospel, but who have certainly been endowed with less noble spiritual gifts than he, to take good heed, lest they also prove traitors to their Master, and fall into final perdition. Judas indeed, we may be told, “ as truly lived, moved, and had his
 “ being from God, as Peter :” that whilst the other Apostles “ were chosen to partake of
 “ Christ’s kingdom, he was chosen and pitched
 “ upon to betray him, and to be the means of
 “ shedding his blood :” that both the final perseverance of the one, and the rejection of the other, were solely effected by God’s free and

† 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.

absolute will, for that "he gave repentance to Peter, and left Judas to perish in his sin^u." Rather let us adhere to the founder doctrine of Latimer, ("that veteran and true apostle of our nation and of Christ^x," as his brother martyr styled him,) unsophisticated by the comment of the author to whom I have just referred; "Christ shed as much blood for Judas as he did for Peter; Peter believed it, and therefore he was saved; Judas would not believe, and therefore he was condemned; the fault being in him only, and in nobody else^y."

2. With respect to the latter point that was to be proved, namely, as the same venerable Reformer expresses it, that "there are none of us all, but we may be saved by Christ;" and that "men are the cause of their own damnation, for that God would have them saved, but they refuse it, like as did Judas the traitor, whom Christ would have had to be saved, but he refused his salvation^z:" if every man is not capable of performing the services

^u Toplady on Predest. p. 64, 110, 68.

^x Ridley's Life of Bishop Ridley, p. 593.

^y Sermons, vol. ii. p. 556. See Winchester on the seventeenth Article in the Churchman's Remembrancer, No. ii. p. 66. and Mr. Churton's Biographical Pref. p. xvi.

^z Latimer's Sermons, vol. ii, p. 891, 888.

requisite for salvation, what is the meaning of those gracious offers of mercy and spiritual assistance; of those pathetic exhortations to repentance and amendment of life; of those unqualified promises of pardon to the penitent sinner; with which the Scriptures every where abound? What are we to understand by the assurance of God that he “will make his sinful people a new heart and a new spirit^a?” What are we to understand by his earnest intreaties, that the wicked “will repent, and “turn themselves from all their iniquities, and “make themselves a new heart and a new “spirit, that so iniquity may not be their “ruin^b?” What by his consequent most solemn protestations, that “though their sins be “as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; “though they be red like crimson, they shall “be as wool^c?” that “if the wicked will forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his “paths, and turn unto the Lord, he will have “mercy upon him; and unto his God, that he “will abundantly pardon^d?” What are we to understand by his most plain declarations, “I “will send unto them all my messengers and “prophets, rising up early and sending them, “because I have compassion on them^e?” and

^a Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

^b Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.

^c If. i. 18.

^d If. lv. 7.

^e 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Jer. xxv. 4. xxxv. 15.

by his most equitable appeal to their own judgment, “ See, I have set before thee life and death, good and evil, in that I command thee to love the Lord thy God, and to walk in his ways^f?” and by his most solemn attestation, “ I call heaven and earth to record against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing?” and by his consequent inference and exhortation, “ therefore choose life?” and by his most tender expostulations, “ why will ye die^g?” and by his earnest inquiries, “ What more could I have done” to prevent your death, “ which I have not done^h?” and by his affectionate complaint, “ I would have purged them, but they would not be purged; I would have gathered them, but they would not be gatheredⁱ?” and by his most passionate exclamations, “ O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end^k!” “ O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my way^l!” “ O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace^m?” And by his subsequent sentence of condemnation, “ but now they are hid from thine eyes?” *now*, there-

^f Deut. xxx. 15, 16, 19.

^g Ezek. xviii. 31.

^h If. v. 4.

ⁱ Ezek. xxiv. 13. Matt. xxiii. 37.

^k Deut. xxxii. 29.

^l Ps. lxxxi. 13.

^m Luke xix. 42.

fore they were not always so. What is to become of the most solemn assurance of the Almighty by his Prophet, “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but that the sinner turn from his evil way and liveⁿ?” What is to become of the warning of the Apostle, that “the goodness and long-suffering of God” are designed to “lead men to repentance; and that they who despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, do after their hardness and impenitent hearts treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render unto every man according to his deeds; for there is no respect of persons with God^o?” Prejudice may pervert, and sophistry perplex, the plainest declarations of Scripture. But surely in the face of these, and of an innumerable multitude of similar passages, which give a direction and a tone to the whole of the sacred volume, to suppose that any man is incapacitated by a divine decree for performing the qualifications necessary for salvation; that “our Lord Jesus Christ is no otherwise the Saviour of the wicked, than as they are beholden to him for every worldly comfort that they en-

ⁿ Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

^o Rom. ii. 4, 5, 6, 11.

“ joy^p ;” and that the only use, to which these passages can be applied by sinners, is that of “ making them careful to adjust their moral “ external conduct according to the rules of “ decency, justice, and regularity, and thereby “ prevent much inconvenience to themselves “ and injury to society^q :” is to suppose, (let me not be deemed irreverent in affirming it,) that the Bible is a compound of inconsistency and error ; is to make a liar of the God of truth ; and to convert his gracious tenders of mercy into the most bitter, the most cruel, and most sarcastic irony towards his deluded and abandoned creatures.

I have thus stated the arguments, by which I would vindicate my claim to the title of an evangelical Minister, a Preacher of the Gospel of Christ, although I decline to preach the doctrines of Calvinistic predestination. In order to this statement, I have been induced to enter at considerable length on a mysterious and much controverted question ; a question, to which, I solemnly repeat, that I have not been voluntarily led, and which it were better to leave precisely where the Gospel leaves it ; were it not that the diligence, with which it is obtruded by our accusers both from the pulpit

^p Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 160.

^q Toplady on Predestination, p. 126.

and from the press, and the misery and mischief, which it occasions to the Church of Christ, and the calumny withal, which it is made the instrument of discharging against the national clergy; call loudly on us for a vindication of ourselves, and therein (as we believe) of the true evangelical faith. I dare not hope indeed, that the present arguments are likely to convince a person, prepossessed by the contrary persuasion: yet, whilst they might not unreasonably serve to abate the confidence, and mitigate the asperity of our accusers, they lead me to judge, with no faint persuasion, of the sentence, which from a review of the general scope of the Scriptures an unprejudiced inquirer would pronounce upon the question, whether the Gospel is preached by us or by the Calvinists:—by us, who teach, that Christ Jesus made atonement for all the sins of the whole world; that all men may therefore be saved, who will strive by the grace of God to work out their salvation; but that no man will be saved, who is not diligent in fulfilling the conditions which God hath appointed:—or by the Calvinist, who teaches, that God elected a few individuals to salvation, and that Christ died to make atonement for their sins alone, to the exclusion of the great mass of mankind; that the salvation of these elect depends solely upon

certain absolute and irrelative decrees of God, and is effected solely by the grace of God, so that no conditions are required to be fulfilled, no cooperation to be given on their parts, but that, however great and numerous may be their sins, they are eternally sure of salvation: and that the great bulk of mankind are eternally doomed to perdition, no reference whatever being made to any faults of theirs; no possibility whatever being allowed them of escaping their doom; the sole cause of which is the pleasure, and the sole object of it the glory, of God.

Not such, we humbly presume, was the tenor of those Hallelujahs, which the beloved disciple heard in the Spirit before the eternal throne: when “every creature in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth,” even “a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” joined in uttering praises to “the Lamb, who had redeemed them to God by his blood:” whilst “they who had the harps of God, sang the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb; Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints”!

^r Rev. v. 13. vii. 9. v. 9. xv. 2, 3, 4.

Now therefore “ Amen : Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.”

DISCOURSE V.

JOHN vii. 37, 38, 39.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

IN this metaphor there are an appropriate force and beauty, which no doubt were immediately felt by the persons, to whom the words were addressed. Liable from their natural situation to feel the misery of occasional drought, and acquainted perhaps by their own experience, or at least by the narratives of others, with the horrors of the neighbouring deserts, the people of Judea would consequently perceive in the comparison all that expression, which our Saviour intended it to convey. The alteration to be wrought in the soul by the

Holy Spirit, thus presented to their view under the emblem of a perennial fountain, would be suggested by the refreshment, which water communicates to a traveller in a dry and sultry wilderness: the reviving vigour of the traveller would be considered, as representing the renovation to be imparted to the believer by the enlivening influence of the Spirit: and they would be impressed with a sense of the necessity of that influence, by reflecting on the distress and dismay, to which one of their earliest writers pathetically alludes; when faint from the passage over the burning waste, and anxiously expecting to relieve their thirst at the customary springs, which the heat had parched and exhausted, “the troops of Tema
“ looked, the companies of Sheba waited for
“ them; they were confounded because they
“ had hoped; they came thither, and were
“ ashamed^a.”

It was in this light, that our Lord's declaration would probably exhibit itself to the minds of the Jews. And thus unfolded and illustrated, it presents an appropriate and lively picture of that inward comfort, which the Christian derives from the agency of the Holy Spirit; of that invigorating principle, which he bestows; and of the general importance,

^a Job vi. 19, 20.

benefit, and necessity of his aid, to support us in our earthly progress, and finally to conduct us to "the paradise of God^b," more lovely than the garden of Eden, from which Adam by transgression fell: where we "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us unto living fountains of waters," and shall "satisfy us with the plenteousness of his house, and give us drink of the river of his pleasures."

There is not a doctrine in the sacred volume, which is more clearly revealed, nor one which more abounds in motives to holiness of life, or in topics of rational exultation, than this, which attributes our ability to "work out our salvation" to the preventing and assisting grace of the Holy Spirit of God. At the same time unhappily there is not one, which has been perverted into a more overflowing source of corruption and error. There is not one, which has been wrested in former times into a motive or a sanction for more daring impiety and profligacy. There is not one, which has been more tortured in the present day, so

^b Rev. ii. 7.

^c Rev. vii. 16, 17. Pf. xxxvi. 8.

as to administer fuel to the flame of enthusiasm, or to afford a convenient cloke to disorder and licentiousness. The schismatic sanctifies his breach of constituted order, his disobedience of established laws, his licentiousness of principle in religious concerns, and his correspondent licentiousness of practice, whereby he converts the Church of Christ into a scene of discord, tumult, and confusion, by pleading that he acts under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: and because we deny the sufficiency of an appeal to the inward motions of the Spirit, and refer to the revelation of his will contained in his written word; and because the more sober notions of his influence, which that word appears to us to supply, do not carry us the same length as the unbridled conceptions of the enthusiast; we are calumniated, as sacrificing the truth of God at the idolatrous shrine of human learning or human presumption; as being ourselves destitute of the Spirit, and as renouncing the Gospel, of Christ.

Convinced of the perpetual operation of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of believers; contemplating him, with lowly devout and grateful adoration, as the Regenerator, the Renewer, the Guide, the Enlightener, the Strengthenener, the Comforter, and the Sanctifier of all the elect people of God; firmly persuaded of these important truths, as most evidently re-

vealed in Scripture, and as forming an essential part of the scheme of our redemption; I can unite with the most ardent advocate for divine grace in loudly proclaiming that “the Holy Ghost, like his almighty Purchaser, is the same to-day as he was yesterday; that he is now, as well as formerly, in the use of all instituted means, appointed to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment; to lead them into all truth by spiritually opening their understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures; and to renew a clean heart and right spirit within them here, in order that they may be thereby prepared for the full enjoyment of a triune and ever blessed God hereafter^d.” But convinced at the same time, with our pure and evangelical Church, that we may “abuse the goodness of God, when he calleth us to repentance^e,” and that we may “depart from grace given, and fall into sin^f,” and further convinced with her, that “the inward motions of the Holy Ghost” in our hearts are an object less of sense than of faith, less of certainty than of “trust^g,” I see not on what authority

^d Whitefield's Works, vol. iv. p. 287.

^e Communion Service.

^f Article 16.

^g See the Ordering of Deacons.

we are required, either to believe ourselves, or to teach others, that his ordinary operations on the minds of men have that *irresistible*, or that *sensible*, influence, which are wont to be ascribed to them by those, who accuse us of not preaching the Gospel.

There is much sound sense in the observation of an acute Remarker on Ecclesiastical History, and the times, wherein we live, fully prove the importance and the value of the observation, that “ whilst we acknowledge the
 “ gracious influences of Providence in every
 “ thing, that tends to make us better and
 “ wiser and happier, we must be very careful
 “ to keep the sober mean between the ex-
 “ tremes, the one of excluding the divine in-
 “ terposition in the natural and moral world;
 “ the other of destroying human agency, or of
 “ ascribing the wild fancies of our own heads
 “ to the suggestions of the Holy Spirit^h.”

Whether this sober mean is observed by those, who with the Calvinist attribute every thing in the work of man’s salvation to the exclusive and irresistible energy of the divine grace; or by those, who with the Enthusiast are for resolving his influence into sensible manifestations and experiences, to the neglect, if not to the exclusion, of all other rules of judging; is a

^h Jortin on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 26.

question which the present inquiry will probably tend to answer.

I. On the *irresistibility* of the divine grace our accusers speak in the strongest terms. The fact, I apprehend, is notorious; but it may be well to establish it by the adduction of particular proofs. They tell us then, that “divine grace proceeds efficaciously and certainly to the attainment of its endⁱ”—that “its impulses are strong and can by no means be resisted^k”—that “God himself had need to draw with omnipotent efficacy, to draw us off from the world and sin and self, that we may come sincerely and eagerly to Christ^l”—that “converting grace is irresistible, that is, efficacious, invincible, and certainly victorious^m”—that “the sinner in vain strives to resist the resistless grace of Godⁿ”—that “there proceeds from God an efficacious power, which sweetly overrules the sinner’s natural will^o”: that “neither evidences the most conspicuous and multiplied, nor arguments the most powerful and convincing, nor demonstration itself,

ⁱ Christian Observer, Jan. 1806. p. 34.

^k Whitefield’s Works, vol. vi. p. 380.

^l Evangelical Magazine, April 1808. p. 153.

^m Toplady; Church of England vindicated, p. 78.

ⁿ Rowland Hill’s Sermon on Sunday Schools, p. 26.

^o Whitefield’s Works, vol. vi. p. 54.

“ can produce faith, which is a divine work,
 “ a creation in the heart by the Spirit of
 “ Christ:”—that “ the elect *shall* come to God,
 “ and if they themselves will not, the Lord
 “ will make them willing in the day of his
 “ power:”—that “ believers are constrained
 “ by a powerful and irresistible influence:”—
 and that “ it is only sovereign, distinguish-
 “ ing, irresistible grace, which brings men to
 “ heaven.”

To meet these and similar positions, which are frequent in the mouths of our accusers, we may, in the first place, proceed upon the ground of those general arguments, which prove the election of men to be conditional. In proof of that doctrine we maintain, that “ *Christ died for all men,*” in the plain, and obvious, and large signification of the phrase;—that salvation is proffered to all men;—that “ the grace of God, that bringeth salvation,” the saving grace of God, ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτηριος, “ hath appeared to all men.” But, if the saving grace of God hath appeared to all men, and if all men notwithstanding are not saved, (a supposition, which is too well supported by

p Evangelical Magazine for 1807. p. 81.

q Hawker's Prop against all Despair.

r Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 182.

s Tit. ii. 11.

the warrant of holy Scripture,) it follows, that the grace of God is *not irresistible*: that it is *not* certainly victorious: that it does *not* proceed efficaciously and certainly to the attainment of its end: that in short it may be, and is, resisted. But as a confutation of these erroneous positions is of great importance to the cause of truth, the more especially by reason, not only of their own preposterous character, but of the mischievous consequences to which they lead, I propose to give some consideration to the subject, independent of the general question with which it is connected; and endeavour to show, by express testimonies and direct arguments from Scripture, the extent of the influence to be ascribed to the divine grace.

I apprehend it then to be plainly set forth in Scripture, that the operation of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men is *not irresistible*: but that, whilst he “prevents us with his most “gracious favour and furthers us with his “continual help,” and whilst from him we derive all our “sufficiency” to do what is pleasing to God; instead of “overruling us in “our words and actions”^x,” a doctrine which

^t Communion Service.

^u 2 Cor. iii. 5.

^x Overton, p. 125.

we see perversely ascribed to the Scriptures and to the Church of England, he leaves us at the same time the will, either to act in obedience to his heavenly motions, or not. “ Al-
 “beit God is the principal cause and chief
 “worker of this justification in us, without
 “whose grace no man can do no good thing,
 “but following his free-will in the state of a
 “sinner, increaseth his own injustice, and
 “multiplieth his sin; yet so it pleaseth the
 “high wisdom of God, that man prevented
 “by his grace (which being offered, man
 “may, if he will, refuse or receive) shall be
 “also a worker by his free consent, and obe-
 “dience to the same, in the attaining of his
 “own justification.” “ It is surely of the
 “grace of God only, that first we be inspired
 “and moved to any good thing; but to resist
 “temptations, and to persist in goodness and go
 “forward, it is both of the grace of God, and
 “of our free will and endeavour.” Such is
 the doctrine, which Cranmer and our Re-
 formers deduced from “ the oracles of God.”
 Such was the doctrine, believed in the ancient
 Jewish Church, when the wise Son of Sirach
 commented on the words of Moses, “ God

γ Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man. Article of Justification.

z Ibid. Article of Free-will.

“ himself made man from the beginning, and
 “ left him in the hand of his counsel ; if thou
 “ wilt, to keep the commandments, and to
 “ perform acceptable faithfulness. He hath
 “ set fire and water before thee, stretch forth
 “ thy hand unto whether thou wilt. Before
 “ man is life and death ; and whether him
 “ liketh shall be given him ^a.” And such was
 the doctrine of the primitive Church of Christ,
 whose opinion, with the reason of it, is briefly
 expressed by Irenæus, where he says, “ God
 “ always preserved the liberty of the will in
 “ man, that they might be justly condemned
 “ for their disobedience, who did not obey
 “ him, and that they who believed and obeyed
 “ him, might be honoured with incorrupti-
 “ bility ^b.”

Shall we be told, that by this doctrine,
 which ascribes “ the acceptance or refusal of
 “ the divine grace to the pleasure of man, we
 “ take from God his omnipotence ^c?” God
 forbid, we answer, that such a blasphemous

^a Ecclus. xiv. 14—17.

^b —id quod erat semper liberum et suæ potestatis in
 homine semper servasse Deum et suam exhortationem : ut
 juste damnentur qui non obediunt ei, quoniam non obedi-
 erunt ; et qui obedierunt et crediderunt ei, honorentur
 incorruptibilitate. . *Iren.* lib. iv. cap. 29.

^c Hawker's Zion's Pilgrim.

imagination should ever have had place in our minds, or should derive any colour from our opinions ! It was finely remarked by one, who was well acquainted with the fallacies of those restrictive doctrines, in the profession of which he had been educated, but from which he gloried in being delivered, that “ though
“ speaking of his absolute power, God *can*
“ compel and necessitate the will of man, and
“ so we do not make him stronger than God,
“ as is very weakly concluded by some ; yet
“ he *will* not, because he will not violate that
“ order, which he hath set in our creation.
“ He made man after his own image, invested
“ him with a reasonable soul, having the use
“ of understanding, and the freedom of will :
“ he endowed him with a power to consider
“ and deliberate, to consult and choose ; and
“ so by consequence he gave him dominion
“ over himself and his own actions ; that hav-
“ ing made him lord of the whole world, he
“ might not be a slave to himself, but might
“ first exercise his sovereignty in the free pos-
“ session of his own mind. To force his will,
“ were to destroy the nature of his creature,
“ which grace is not designed to do, but only
“ to heal and assist it ; and therefore God deals
“ with man, as a free agent, by instructions
“ and commands, by promises and threaten-

“ings, by allurements and reproofs, by re-
wards and punishments. So true is the
saying of Tertullian, *Nemo invitus fit bo-
nus*.”

What though we are instructed by the in-
fallible word of truth, that “no man can
come unto Christ, except the Father draw
him;” and that if we would be sons of
God, we must be “led by the Spirit?” Are
we also told, that we must be chained, and
dragged, and irresistibly forced to the altar,
like brute beasts, which have no understanding?
Is this the “reasonable service,” wherewith
the Apostle “beseeches us, by the mercies of
God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice,
holy, acceptable unto God?” Are these the
“free-will offerings,” with which the Psalmist
teaches us the Lord will “be pleased?” Nay,
does not the very language of such declarations
itself contradict the notion of irresistible force?
And does not our blessed Lord resolve his own
expression into the same, as the “being taught
of God,” the “having heard and having
learned of the Father?” “Many men un-
derstand these words,” says Bishop Hooper,
“in a wrong sense, as though God required in

^d Examination of Tilenus, p. 278.

^e John vi. 44.

^f Rom. viii. 14.

^g Rom. xii. 1.

^h Pf. cxix. 108.

ⁱ John vi. 45.

“ a reasonable man no more than in a dead
 “ post; and marketh not the words that
 “ follow, Every man, that heareth and learn-
 “ eth of my Father, cometh to me. God
 “ draweth with his word and the Holy Ghost;
 “ but man’s duty is to hear and learn, that is
 “ to say, receive the grace offered, consent to
 “ the promise, and not repugn the God that
 “ calleth. God doth promise the Holy Ghost
 “ unto them that ask him, and not to them
 “ that contemn him^k.” And such was the
 interpretation of the wise Melancthon, whom
 his less gentle brother in the reformation ac-
 cused of “ prevaricating with Chrysofom^l,”
 because he asserted the necessity of a willing
 mind. “ It is objected” (said that pious and
 learned Reformer) “ by the timid soul, I can-
 “ not believe, unless God kindle my faith. I
 “ answer, it is true that men are drawn by
 “ God; but they are drawn by the word of
 “ the Gospel, to which God wills thee to
 “ assent, and at the same time to ask assistance,
 “ as it is written, How much more shall he
 “ give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.
 “ Do not then resist the Gospel; do not en-

^k Bp. Hooper. Preface to Declaration of the Ten Com-
mandments.

^l Multoquē fatius est quam tergiversari cum Chryf-
ostomo. *Calv. Inst.* lib. iii. cap. xxiv. sect. 13.

“ courage mistrust ; do not think, as Enthu-
 “ siasts dream, that thou must wait for a vio-
 “ lent motion, whereby God may drag thee
 “ on, although thou resist, and rush backward
 “ into wickedness : but assent to the divine
 “ voice, and at the same time pray for assist-
 “ ance, as the suppliant in Mark, Lord, I be-
 “ lieve, help thou my unbelief. When thou
 “ doest this, it is certain, that thou art drawn
 “ and assisted by God ; according to his oath,
 “ As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the
 “ death of a sinner, but that he be converted
 “ and live. To this effect are those sayings,
 “ God draws, but he draws the willing mind ;
 “ and again, Only be thou willing, and God
 “ hastens to meet thee, as Basil says in his dis-
 “ course on the prodigal son, to whom, as he
 “ returns, his Father goes forth to meet him,
 “ and flies into his embrace. These things we
 “ say,” he adds, “ to comfort those who are in
 “ the Church, and understand that they are
 “ called by the voice of the Gospel, and are
 “ willing to be converted. But if any without
 “ repentance agitate curious questions, with
 “ such it were vain to dispute ^m.”

^m Sed objicit trepida mens, Non possum credere, nisi Deo fidem accedente. Respondeo, Verum est homines a Deo trahi ; sed trahuntur per vocem Evangelii, cui vult te Deus assentiri, et simul petere auxilium, sicut scriptum est, Quanto magis dabit Spiritum sanctum petentibus.

Have we the power then to resist the Spirit, when he would lead and draw us unto God? And is that true, which our Reformers have affirmed, that “although the goodness of God offereth his special grace to all men, yet they only enjoy it, which by their free-will do accept and embrace the same, and that others by free-will abuse the grace and benefits of God^m?” The Scriptures teach us that we may. We may “hate” and “rebel against the lightⁿ :” we may “do despite unto the Spirit of grace^o :” we may “neglect

Non igitur repugnes Evangelio; non indulgeas diffidentiae; non cogites, ut somniant Enthusiastæ, expectandum esse violentum motum, quo te rapiat Deus etiam repugnantem, et iterum ruentem in scelera: sed assentiaris voci divinæ, et simul petito auxilium, sicut ille apud Marcum, Credo, Domine, sed opem fer imbecillitati meæ. Hoc cum fit, certum est te a Deo trahi et adjuvari, sicut jurat, Vivo ego, dicit Dominus, nolo mortem peccatoris, sed ut convertatur et vivat. In hanc sententiam et hæc dicta sunt, Deus trahit, sed volentem trahit. Item, Tantum velis; et Deus præoccurrit, ut Basilius dicit in concione de filio prodigo, cui redeunti Pater obviam procedit; et involat in amplexum. Hæc dicimus ad consolandos eos, qui sunt in Ecclesia, et se intelligunt vocari voce Evangelii, et volunt converti. Si qui autem sine pænitentia movent curiosas quæstiones, cum talibus frustra disputatur. *Epist. ad Rom. cap. ix. Op. vol. iv. p. 160.*

^m Necessary Doctrine and Erudition, &c. Article of Free-will.

ⁿ John iii. 20. Job xxiv. 14.

^o Heb. x. 29.

“to stir up the gift of God that is in us,” and so “quench” his gracious influence in our hearts^p: we may “resist him,” till he will no longer “strive with us^q”: we may “rebel against him,” and “grieve” him, and “vex” him; “rejecting” the proffered means of salvation, and “thrusting from us the word of life,” till he will be “turned” from us^r: we may provoke him by obstinate impenitence and disobedience, until he will remove his light from before us^s: we may “refuse to turn at his counsel, and may despise his reproof,” until he will close his ear to our entreaties, and will refuse to be found of us^t: “if we forsake him, he will forsake us^u”: and “if we do not like to retain him in our knowledge, he will give us over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient^x.” “God doth by his goodness approach to all,” saith St. Basil, “but we set ourselves at distance by sin^y”: and, as another Father of the Church remarks, “they who are actuated by the Holy

^p 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Theff. v. 19.

^q Acts vii. 51. Gen. vi. 3.

^r If. lxiii. 10. Eph. iv. 30. Matt. xxi. 42, 43. Acts xiii. 46.

^s Rev. ii. 5.

^t Prov. i. 23—30.

^u 2 Chron. xv. 2.

^x Rom. i. 28.

^y Τη ἑαυτου αγαθοτητι πασιν ο Κυριος εγγιζει, μακρυνομεν δε ἑαυτους ἡμεις δια της ἀμαρτίας. *Bas. in Pf. xxxiii. Op. tom. i. p. 155. ed. Paris. 1721.*

“ Spirit, are not held under any necessity, but
 “ have a liberty to turn themselves, and do
 “ what they will in this life ^z.”

With respect indeed to those gifts, which were miraculously conferred by the Holy Spirit on some of the primitive converts for “ the work of the ministry, and the edifying of “ the Church,” they seem to have been the effect of an irresistible and overruling power, and to have required no cooperation in the will of the recipient. And with a view to such gifts as these St. Paul appears to demand, “ Who maketh thee to differ from another ^a ?” But with respect to his ordinary grace, though that grace and ability is from Christ, it is our indispensable office to actuate that ability, and to cooperate with that grace, which is sent to “ strengthen ^b,” but not to force us, in the discharge of our duty.

“ It is an error,” says Calvin, “ to make
 “ man cooperate with God, so that he may

^z Ουτε γαρ ὁ τελείος εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἢ βαδὺς εἰς τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, καὶ ποίων ἑαυτὸν σκευὸς τοῦ διαβόλου, ὅφ' οὐ τὸ ὄλον κάτεκριθῆ^ε εἰς τὸ κακόν, ἀναγκὴ τινὶ δεδεται^ι· ἀλλ' ἔχει τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τοῦ γενεῖσθαι σκευὸς ἐκλογῆς καὶ ζωῆς^ε ὁμοίως παλιν οἱ μεμυθεσμένοι^ο εἰς τὴν θεοσῆτα, καίτοι πεπληρωμένοι καὶ δεδεμένοι πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, οὐκ ἀναγκὴ τινὶ κεκρατηῖται, ἀλλ' ἔχουσι τὸ αὐτέξουσιον τοῦ τραπῆναι αὐτοῦς, καὶ ποιοῖν ὃ θέλουσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τούτου. *Macarii Hopt.* xv. p. 96. ed. Paris. 1621.

^a 1 Cor. iv. 7.

^b Phil. iv. 13.

“ratify his election by his own voice^c.” The assertion runs counter to the whole tenor of the Bible; annulling its commands and exhortations; its promises and threats; all its commendations of the good, and all its judgments on the wicked. Why when God, by the mouth of Moses, set before the Israelites life and death, blessing and cursing, did he command and invite and encourage them to “choose life^d,” if the choice was not in their power? This is the inference of Justin Martyr^e. When by the mouth of Isaiah he promises rewards to his faithful servants, and denounces punishment on the sinner, “If ye be willing “and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the “land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be “devoured with the sword, for the mouth of “the Lord hath spoken it^f :” what was the

^c Duo autem errores hic cavendi sunt: quia nonnulli cooperarium Deo faciunt hominemi, ut suffragio suo ratam electionem faciat: ita secundum eos voluntas hominis superior est Dei consilio. *Calv. Inst. lib. iii. cap. xxiv. sect. 3.*

^d Deut. xxx. 19.

^e Ου γαρ ὡσπερ τα αλλα, οἶον δένδρα και τετραποδα, μηδεν δυναμενα προαιρῶσει πραττειν, ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεος τον ανθρωπον· ουδε γαρ ην αξιος αμοιβης η επαινου, ουκ ἀφ' ἑαυτου ἐλομενος το αγαθον, αλλα τῆτο γενομενος· εἰ κακος ὑπηρχε, δικαιος κολασεως ἐτυγχαεν, ουκ ἀφ' ἑαυτου τοιουτος ων, ἀλλ' ουδεν δυναμενος ειναι ἕτερον παρ' ὁ εγεγονει. Εδιδάξε δε ἡμας ταυτα το ἅγιον προφητικον πνευμα δια Μωσεως, κ. τ. λ. Και παλιν δια Ησαίου του ἕτερου προφητου, κ. τ. λ. *Just. Mart. Apol. ii. p. 81.*

^f If. i. 19, 20.

meaning of the declaration, if it was not in their own choice either to obey or to refuse? This is inferred by Justin again, and Clement of Alexandria^ε, and others of the early Fathers. Why did our Saviour pronounce, that “this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil^h ;” if they did not exert their wills in resisting a light, which would otherwise have been effectual for their salvation? Why was our Saviour so transported with admiration at the faith of some, as well as at the unbelief of others, if that faith were wrought so irresistibly, that the believer contributed nothing towards it; and if the unbeliever, so far from resisting, had not even the means of being converted? When our Saviour tells Martha, “One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good partⁱ ;” why does he commend Mary for her discrimination, and reprove Mar-

ε Παντων τοιουν ανθρωπων κεκλημενων, οι υπακουσαι βεληθεντες κλητοι ωνομασθησαν. ου γαρ εστιν αδικια παρα τω Θεω. αυτικα εξ εκατερου γενος οι πιστευσαντες, ουτοι λαος περιουσιος. και ταις ωραξισι των Αποστολων ευροις αν καταλεξιν, Οι μεν ουν αποδεξαμενοι τον λογον αυτου εβαπτισθησαν. οι δε μη θελησαντες παιδεσθαι, εαυτους απεστησαν δηλαδη. Προς τουτους η προφητεια λεγει· Και θελητε, και εισακουσητε μου, τα αγαθα της γης φαγεσθε· εφ’ ημιν κειμενα διελεγχουσα, και την αιρεσιν, και την εκτροπην. *Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. cap. xviii. tom. i. p. 371. ed. Oxon.*

^h John iii. 19.

ⁱ Luke x. 42.

tha for her neglect? If the discrimination of Mary had been exclusively effected by the irresistible operation of divine grace, Martha might have pleaded the want of ability in her excuse; she might have charged the fault of her neglect, in not making the like choice, on his deficiency in a matter so needful; and have replied, in the language of a modern Calvinist, that “her sister could not so properly be said to have chosen, as to have been chosen by the Lord^k.” Wherefore is it said with approbation of some, that they “received the word gladly,” and “with readiness of mind^l;” unless that gladness and readiness were, in some sort, the result of their own freedom of will, which constituted them moral and accountable agents? And wherefore are others condemned, for that they “*would not* come unto Christ, that they might have life and might be saved^m,” (ΟΥ ΘΕΛΕΤΕ ελθειν προς με, *ye are not willing to come to me*;)—that “they were willingly ignorant,” as St. Peter says, “that by the word of God the heavens were of oldⁿ;”—that “they received not the love of the truth,” as St. Paul speaks, “but had pleasure in unrighteousness^o;

^k Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 125.

^l Acts ii. 41. xvii. 11.

ⁿ 2 Pet. iii. 5.

^m John v. 40, 34.

^o 2 Thess. ii. 10, 12.

—unless they had the liberty of being different from what they actually were? For there appears nothing inconsistent either with reason, or revelation, in the opinions of the early writers of the Church; that “man would not be a fit object of praise or recompence, did he not choose good of himself, nor worthy of punishment for doing evil, if he did not this of himself^o,”—that “neither praises nor reprehensions, rewards nor punishments are just, if the soul hath not the power of choosing or abstaining, but evil is involuntary^p,”—and that even as to Judas himself, as Origen affirms, “blame would not have attached to him, had he been a traitor of necessity, and could not have been like the rest of the Apostles^q.” “Take away the grace of God; how does he save the world?

^o Ουδε γαρ ην αξιος αμοιβης, &c. *Vid. Just. Mart. ut supra.*

^p Ουτε δε οι επαινοι, ετε οι ψογοι, εδ' αι τιμαι, εδ' αι κολασεις δικαιαι, μη της ψυχης εχουσης την εξουσιαν της ορμης και αφορμης, αλλ' ακουσιου της κακιας ουσης. *Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. cap. xvii. tom. i. p. 368.*

^q Ου γαρ ερουμεν, επει προεγνωσται Ιουδαν προδοτην γενεσθαι, οτι πασα αναγκη ην Ιουδαν προδοτην γενεσθαι. Εν γουν ταις περι του Ιουδα προφητειαις, μεμφεις και κατηγοριαι του Ιουδα αναγεγραμμεναι εισι, παντι τω παριστάσασαι το ψεκτον αυτου. Ουκ αν δε ψογος αυτω προσηπτετο, ει επαναγκες προδοτης ην, και μη ανεδεχето (ενεδεχετο) αυτον ομοιον τοις λοιποις αποστολοις γενεσθαι. *Origen. ap. Euseb. Præpar. Evang. lib. vi. cap. xi. p. 288. ed. Paris. 1628.*

“Take away man’s freedom of will; how does he judge the world?” The question is proposed by Austin: and we leave it to be solved by his disciples.

But that the Spirit of God does not act with that irresistible power, which deprives man of his freedom of will, is matter, not only of probable inference, but of certain and unquestionable fact. Did not the Jews resist him to their destruction under the old dispensation; did they not “provoke him to anger continually to his face,” when “all day long he stretched forth his hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people?” “When he had done all that could have been done for his vineyard, and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it not forth wild grapes?” “When he purged them, did they not refuse to be purged?” “When he called them,” did they not refuse to answer?” “When he spake,” did they not refuse to hear? and “do evil before his eyes? and choose that in which he delighted not?” “When he sent to them by his messengers

† Si non est gratia Dei, quomodo salvat mundum? Si non est liberum arbitrium, quomodo judicat mundum? See Heylyn’s Quinq. Hist. part i. chap. 6. where it is quoted as “that divine saying of St. Augustine.”

‡ If. lxv. 3. Rom. x. 21.

† If. v. 4.

‡ Ezek. xxiv. 13.

‡ If. lxv. 12. lxvi. 4.

“ the prophets, rising up betimes and sending,
 “ because he had compassion on his people and
 “ on his dwelling-place;” did they not “ mock
 “ his messengers, and despise his words, and
 “ misuse his prophets, and provoke him to
 “ anger with the works of their hands to their
 “ own hurt, until the wrath of the Lord arose
 “ against his people, till there was no re-
 “ medy?” Did they not resist him, even to
 their political annihilation, under the new dis-
 pensation; and have we not the authority of
 St. Stephen for saying that they did so? Al-
 though “ God sent his Son to bless them, in
 “ turning every one of them from his iniqui-
 “ ties,” did they not refuse to “ repent and be
 “ converted, that their sins might be blotted
 “ out?” And did not their impenetrable hard-
 ness and perverseness of heart draw from our
 Saviour that most tender exhortation, “ that
 “ plaintive effusion” (as Jerome says) “ of pa-
 “ ternal love^b,” “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou
 “ that killest the prophets, and stonest them
 “ which are sent unto thee, how often would
 “ I have gathered thy children together, even

^y Jer. xxv. 4, 5, 6, 7. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.

^z Acts vii. 51.

^a Acts iii. 26, 19.

^b Hierusalem, non faxa et ædificia civitatis, sed habitatores, quam plangit patris affectu, sicut in alio loco legimus, quod videns eam fleverit. *Hieron. Comm. in Matt.* xxiii.

“ as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not^c!” I know we may be told, and it may be pressed on us by the authority of Austin, that “ this address of the Redeemer means no more, than that Jerusalem would not that her children should be gathered together by him; but that, even against her will, he gathered together as many as he would; and that it was not his pleasure to gather any more^d:” —but however the comment may be applauded for its ingenuity, it is surely altogether inconsistent with the obvious purport of the address, and with the benevolence, the simplicity, and the sincerity of the Speaker’s character: and it only serves to show the extreme danger of a system, which can reduce its advocates to such a sophification of Scripture; and can convert an exhortation of the most passionate and affecting tenderness, into a deliberate invective of the most practised dissimulation, and of cruelty the most refined.

^c Matt. xxiii. 37.

^d Ubi est illa omnipotentia, qua in cælo et in terra quæcunque voluit Dominus fecit, si colligere filios Jerusalem voluit, et non fecit? An potius illa quidem filios suos ab ipso colligi noluit; sed, ea quoque nolente, filios ejus collegit ipse quos voluit? Quia in cælo et in terra non quædam voluit et fecit, quædam vero voluit et non fecit; sed omnia quæcunque voluit, fecit. *Augustin. Enchir. cap. xxvii.*

Not such were the sentiments of Austin himself, when he taught, that “no man is worthy of dispraise or punishment, for not doing that which he hath no power to do;” and that, “if sin be worthy of dispraise or punishment, there is sin, where is a freedom of will to abstain.” “These things,” he says, “the shepherds sing upon the mountains, and the poets in the theatres, and the unlearned in their assemblies, and the learned in the libraries, and the doctors in the schools, and the bishops in the churches, and mankind throughout the whole earth. Yea, this is so manifest, that it hath the universal consent of the learned and unlearned.” And

^c Peccatum est voluntas retinendi vel consequendi quod Justitia vetat, et unde liberum est abstinere: quanquam si liberum non sit, non est voluntas.—Nonne ista cantant et in montibus pastores, et in theatris poetæ, et indocti in circulis, et docti in bibliothecis, et magistri in scholis, et antistites in sacratis locis, et in orbe terrarum genus humanum? Quod si nemo vituperatione vel damnatione dignus est, aut non contra vetitum justitiæ faciens, aut quod non potest non faciens, omne autem peccatum vel vituperandum est vel damnandum, quis dubitet tunc esse peccatum, cum et velle injustum est, et liberum nolle? *August. Lib. de Duabus Anim. cap. xi.*

Nunc vero usque adeo peccatum voluntarium est malum, ut nullo modo sit peccatum, si non sit voluntarium. Et hoc quidem ita manifestum est, ut nulla hinc doctorum paucitas, nulla indoctorum turba dissentiat. *Lib. de vera Relig. cap. xiv.*

although Austin may have renounced, in his discourses against the Pelagians, most of those things, which he had said in confutation of the Manichees, the alteration of his sentiments affects not the stability of a truth, which, while it is asserted by the universal concurrence of mankind, is supported withal by manifest declarations of the oracles of God.

But can they, who have had faith, “unfeigned faith and a good conscience, put away their good conscience, and make shipwreck of the faith?” Can they “who were clean escaped from them, that live in error, be allured through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness?” Can they, after they “have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be again entangled therein and overcome?” Can they who have once “known the way of righteousness, after they have known it, turn from the holy commandment delivered to them; so that it may happen to them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire?” Can they, whose

f Compare 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. and 2 Tim. i. 5.

g 2 Pet. ii. 18.

h Ibid. ver. 20.

i Ib. ver. 21, 22.

hearts have once been opened to receive the grace of God, and who have submitted to his dictates, and conformed to his will, can they also “sin wilfully after they have received the “knowledge of the truth;” can they “do “despite unto the Spirit of grace, and draw “back unto perdition?” Can they, who were once “enlightened, and who have tasted of “the heavenly gift,” and have been “made “partakers of the Holy Ghost,” can they nevertheless fall away, and be finally rejected^k?

Of such the Scriptures indisputably speak.— Of such, in concurrence with the Scriptures, speak Cranmer and our Reformers: “It is no “doubt,” say they, “but although we be once “justified, yet we may fall therefrom by our “own free-will and consenting unto sin, and “following the desires thereof. For albeit the “house of our conscience be once made clean, “and the foul spirit be expelled from us in “baptism or penance; yet if we wax idle, and “take not heed, he will return with seven “worse spirits, and possess us again. And “although we be illuminate, and have tasted “the heavenly gift, and be made partakers of “the Holy Ghost, yet may we fall and displease God. Wherefore, as St. Paul saith, “He that standeth, let him take heed that he

^k Heb. x. 26. and following verses.

“fall not¹.” And to the same effect, and with authority, in the Homily: “What a shame were it for us, being thus so clearly and freely washed from our sin, to return to the filthiness thereof again! What a folly were it, thus endowed with righteousness, to lose it again! What madness were it to lose the inheritance, that we be now set in, for the vile and transitory pleasure of sin! And what an unkindness should it be, where our Saviour Christ of his mercy is come to us, to dwell with us as our guest, to drive him from us, and to banish him violently out of our souls, and instead of him, in whom is all grace and virtue, to receive the ungracious spirit of the devil, the founder of all naughtiness and mischief^m!”—Such too the Calvinist, if I mistake not, will sometimes allow to existⁿ. And it is a mere begging of the question in dispute, and an arbitrary at least, not to say a presumptuous, interpretation of the language of the Apostle; to endeavour to explain it away by affirming, with a modern Minister of our Church, that “none of those so spoken of were ever children of God, were ever truly regenerate; that they were

¹ Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man. Article of Justification.

^m Sermon of the Resurrection, p. 370. Oxf. edit.

ⁿ See Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 52.

“ once enlightened with head-knowledge, not
 “ renewed in heart affections ; that they were
 “ made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his
 “ common operations upon the understanding,
 “ not in his quickening and regenerating
 “ grace on the soul:” in a word, that “ the
 “ whole account is confined to the common
 “ operations of nature as distinguished from
 “ grace, in which natural men frequently ex-
 “ cel ; and sometimes indeed to such a degree,
 “ as to surpass in head-knowledge children of
 “ grace ;” and that “ although such persons
 “ may be said by the world to have fallen
 “ from grace, the fact is, they never were *in*
 “ grace °.” Such interpretations of Scripture
 it is much easier boldly to advance, than it is
 to substantiate them on solid grounds. And
 if such interpretations be admitted ; or if, as
 farther asserted, it be admitted with respect
 to those, who were, in apostolical language,
 “ once enlightened and partakers of the Holy
 “ Ghost,” that “ every thing in such persons
 “ was derived from natural causes, was sup-
 “ ported by natural means, and adopted for
 “ natural purposes, and thus beginning in na-
 “ ture they end in the same ;” I am persuaded
 there is not a doctrine in the sacred volume,
 which we must not equally admit, in whatever

° Hawker's *Zion's Pilgrim*, p. 82, 83, 84.

sense the torturing imagination of a visionary commentator may choose to exhibit it.

The fact is, that the Epistle to the Hebrews abounds in stubborn passages, which the advocate for the indefectibility of grace may endeavour to wrestle with in vain. It were impossible to enumerate them at present: but he who duly estimates the language of the Apostle to the Jewish believers, whom he addresses in this epistle; his manifold exhortations to them to be steadfast unto the end; his frequent cautions to them to beware of falling from the grace of God; his declarations, as to their present state, and his promises and threatenings, as to the future; bearing in mind withal, that they were then, if there be any sense in language, true converts, and sound believers, and avowedly in a state of salvation; and that no less certainly they were, in the Apostle's judgment, liable to fall away both totally and finally; will probably see reason, not only to think with Whitby, that the epistle contains many cogent arguments against the doctrine of perseverance, but to adopt the opinion of Barrow, that it was written expressly against that doctrine^p."

It is not however in the epistle to the Hebrews alone, that this doctrine is evidently

^p See Whitby's Discourses on the Five Points, p. 403.

controverted : there is not a book in the New Testament, which does not controvert the same. For what mean the commands and exhortations, which every where abound, to persevere and stand fast in the faith, if the persons, to whom they are directed, must inevitably do so? Whither tend the exhortations to churches and individuals, to fear lest they should fall away and finally miscarry, if there were no grounds for apprehension? Whither tend the actual fears of the Apostles, assisted as they were by the Spirit of God, lest the faithful should fall away, if by an unalterable decree the faithful were preserved from falling? Whither their cautions to the elect not to fall from grace so as to lose their reward, if their perseverance in grace and their reward were alike certain? Whither their conditional promises, if the promised blessings were secured by an absolute decree? Whither their alarming threatenings, if the evil that was threatened could not possibly befall them? Whither, finally and more especially, their direct intimations, that faints, or true believers, or men once truly good, might cease and had ceased to be so; might fall, and had fallen, from the grace that they had enjoyed; might be, and had been, deserted by the Spirit of God?

Full as St. Paul undoubtedly was of the Holy Spirit, and abounding in every grace

that he bestows, that great Apostle suffers us not to imagine, that he regarded himself as being in a state of infallible security; but intimates the possibility of his ultimate rejection, and insists upon the necessity of his own active, strenuous, and indefatigable exertions, cooperating with the grace from above. “ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I; not as beating the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.” And when he tells the Philippians, who were “ all partakers of his grace,” that “ it is God which worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” he uses it as an argument to encourage them, to “ work out their own salvation with fear and trembling,” that he may rejoice in the day of Christ, that he had not run in vain, neither laboured “ in vain.” To this effect he intimates the possibility of a fall, of a total and final fall, to every church in every epistle which he wrote:—specially to the Corinthians, who had received “ the seal of God and the earnest of the Holy Spirit in their hearts,” who were “ the temple of God, and in whom the Spirit of God dwelt;” but whom he nevertheless

° 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.

P Phil. i. 7. ii. 12, 13, 16.

“ beseeches, not to receive the grace of God
 “ in vain⁹ :” — to the Ephesians, who were
 “ sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, the
 “ earnest of their inheritance,” and who were
 made “ an habitation of God through the
 “ Spirit ;” whom nevertheless he admonishes
 to “ let no man deceive them with vain
 “ words,” to “ faint not at his tribulation,”
 and to “ put on the whole armour of God ;
 “ that they may be able to withstand the
 “ wiles of the devil, and having done all to
 “ stand :” — and to the Thessalonians, “ unto
 “ whom the Gospel had come not in word
 “ only, but also in power, and in the Holy
 “ Ghost, and in much assurance ;” who had
 “ become followers of the Lord, having re-
 “ ceived the word in much affliction, and with
 “ joy of the Holy Ghost,” and who were
 “ the elect of God,” “ in whom the word
 “ wrought effectually ;” of whom nevertheless
 he expresses his fears, “ lest by some means
 “ the tempter should have tempted them, and
 “ his labour should be in vain.” — Whilst of
 the Galatians, more particularly, he declares
 on the one hand, that they “ had received the
 “ Spirit by the hearing of faith ;” that “ they

⁹ 2 Cor. i. 22. vi. 16, 1.

^r Eph. i. 13, 14. ii. 22. v. 6. iii. 13. vi. 11.

^s 1 Theff. i. 5, 6, 4. ii. 13. iii. 5.

“ were all made the children of God by faith
 “ in Christ Jesus,” and by baptism “ had put
 “ on Christ;” that “ because they were sons,
 “ God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son
 “ into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father;”
 and that they once “ did run well;” and mar-
 vels on the other hand, that “ they were so
 “ soon removed from him that called them
 “ into the grace of Christ unto another gospel,
 “ whereby the Gospel of Christ was pervert-
 “ ed;” and inquires, “ who had bewitched
 “ them, that they should not obey the truth;”
 and declares, that he was “ afraid of them,
 “ lest he had bestowed upon them labour in
 “ vain;” and that “ he travailed in birth
 “ again until Christ be formed in them;” and
 unequivocally warns them, “ that if they were
 “ circumcised, Christ should profit them no-
 “ thing;” that “ he was become of no effect
 “ to as many of them as sought to be justified
 “ by the law;” that as to such persons, they
 were “ *fallen from grace*!”

Let it then be allowed that St. Paul and his
 converts were in grace, (and I cannot conceive
 how in the face of his own declarations any
 one can be bold enough to question it,) it will
 be an arduous attempt to reconcile either the

‘ Gal. iii. 2, 26, 27. iv. 6. v. 7. i. 6, 7. iii. 1. iv. 11, 19.
 v. 2, 4

profession of the Apostle on his own state, or his cautions to his converts as to theirs, with the bold affirmation of an ancient Puritan, that “ it is no more possible for believers to mis-
 “ carry finally, than for Christ himself to be
 “ held under the power of the grave :” and with the equally bold and kindred assertion of one of more modern times, that it were “ as
 “ easy to get into heaven, and cut off Christ’s
 “ right hand, which is impossible, as to cut off
 “ one of the members of Christ’s mystical
 “ body .” Impossible indeed it is, that they, who believe in Christ, and “ hold the begin-
 “ ning of their confidence firm unto the end,” should perish : not so, that the believer may fall from his faith and holiness, and thereby fail of everlasting life : thus the ancient Fathers taught, (whose opinion Vossius testifies to have been “ notoriously against the indefecti-
 “ bility of the saints ’,) that God, dwelling in us by his Spirit, may be provoked to quit his habitation ; and that he, whose body is the

u Coles on God’s Sovereignty, p. 284. edited by Romaine.

x Romaine’s Life of Faith. Works, vol. i. p. 155.

y Quid? quod antiquitas tota indefectibilitati adversatur? Nec quenquam, quantum meminisse valemus, veterum invenire est, qui fideles omnes omnimodam de perseverantia sua certitudinem habere arbitraretur.—Communem fuisse antiquitatis sententiam, quam diximus, soli hodie negare possunt, qui cætera fortasse viri sunt non ineruditi; sed in

temple of the Lord by virtue of his Spirit dwelling in him, may defile that temple to his own ruin, and cause the Holy Spirit to depart. Nor can stronger evidence be brought of the possibility of such a fall, than the admonitions of the Apostle with respect to others, and his profession concerning himself.

The Advocate for indefectibility may affirm indeed, that St. Paul practised “this subjection of the flesh to the spirit, not through dread of being reprobated and cast away for ever² ;” and it is necessary that he should maintain it, if he would be consistent with himself in teaching, that “it is as impossible for one of God’s children, that ever had a single spark of the grace of Jesus, to be a prey to the devil, as it was for Lazarus to quit Abraham’s bosom for the flames of hell³ .” But it would be rather for the interest of evangelical truth, were he to adopt such an interpretation, as is consistent with the Apostle’s language, who did these things, “lest that by any means he himself should be a cast-away ;” disapproved, and judged unmeet for the crown of victory, ΜΗΠΩΣ αὐτὸς ἀδοκιμῶς γένηται, an ex-

antiquitate tamen plane sunt hospites, *Voss, Histor. Pelag.* lib. vi. thes. xii. p. 587. See Whitby on the Five Points, p. 440.

² Mason’s Spiritual Treasury, p. 119.

³ Ibid, p. 146.

pression, constantly intending some degree of apprehension and uncertainty: and it would at the same time be more conducive to holiness, if instead of employing the text as a foundation for infallible security, he would adopt the inference of the ancient Commentators; “If Paul, so great a man, one who had preached and laboured so much, dreaded this termination of his labours; what cause have we to fear, lest it should befall us also^b!”

Admirable to this effect are the sentence and the admonition of the venerable Latimer; and they are well worth the attention of those professed admirers of the doctrines of the Reformation, who condemn such as say, “that a person may be in Christ to-day, and go to the devil to-morrow;” and bless God that they have not so learned Christ^c. “I will you to pray,” said that faithful Pastor and true Apostle of the Gospel of Christ, “I will you to pray, that God will continue his Spirit in you. I do not put you in comfort, that if ye once have the Spirit, ye cannot lose it. There be new spirits start up now of late, which say, after we have received the Spirit, we cannot sin. I will make but

^b See Whitby in loc.

^c Whitefield's Works, vol. v. p. 245.

“one argument. St. Paul had brought the
 “Galatians to the profession of the faith, and
 “left them in that state: they had received
 “the Spirit once, but they sinned again, as he
 “testified of them himself. He saith, Ye did
 “run well: ye were once in a right way:
 “and again, Ye did receive the Spirit, not by
 “the works of the law, but by the righteous-
 “ness of faith. Once they had the Spirit by
 “faith: but false prophets came, when he was
 “gone from them; and they fell from all,
 “that Paul had planted them in; and then
 “said Paul, O foolish Galatians, who hath be-
 “witched you? *If this be true, we may lose*
 “*the Spirit, that we have once possessed.* IT
 “IS A FOND THING. I WILL NOT TARRY IN
 “IT^d.”

Upon the whole, whilst the Scripture is clear and express in asserting the operation of the Holy Spirit on our minds, it asserts in language equally plain and unequivocal the freedom of our wills; whether regenerate, or unregenerate; whether before, or after, our incorporation with Christ; and our power to yield to, or to withstand, his influence. We conclude therefore, that his influence is *not irresistible*; that he “works *in us*;” but, in order for his working to be effectual, that he

^d Latimer's Sermons, vol. i. p. 218.

must also work *with* us, and we must “work
 “with him.” Founded upon this are the exhortations, which we address to our people; whilst carefully reminding them on the one hand that “we are not sufficient of ourselves
 “to think” or do “any thing as of ourselves,
 “but that our sufficiency is of God^e,” “who
 “worketh in us both to will and to do of his
 “good pleasure;” we are equally assiduous on the other, in exhorting them to “fight the
 “good fight of faith,” to “strive for the mastery,” to “give diligence to make their calling and election sure,” and to “work out
 “their own salvation with fear and trembling^f.” Bearing in mind the prudent caution of our Reformers, that “all men be to be
 “monished, and especially preachers, that in
 “this high matter, they, looking on both
 “sides, so attemper and moderate themselves,
 “that they neither so preach the grace of God,
 “that they take away thereby free-will; nor
 “on the other side, so extol free-will, that
 “injury be done to the grace of God^g.” whilst we promote the humility of our hearers by admonishing them, that faith and repentance are “the gifts of God^h,” we stimulate their

^e 2 Cor. iii. 5.

^f 1 Tim. vi. 12. 1 Cor. ix. 25. 2 Pet. i. 10. Phil. ii. 12.

^g Necessary Doctrine, &c. Chapter on Free-will.

^h Rom. xii. 3. Acts xi. 18.

exertions, by reminding them that “ God commandeth all men to repent and believeⁱ.” Whilst we encourage them by the promise of God to his people, that he will “ circumcise their hearts” and “ cleanse them from all iniquity^k ;” we stir up their activity by his precept, that they “ circumcise their own hearts,” and “ wash themselves and make themselves clean^l.” Whilst we call on them, to pray to God with the Psalmist, that he will “ create in them a new heart, and renew a right spirit within them^m ;” we warn them that God calls upon his people by a Prophet, to “ cast away from them all their transgressions, and make themselves a new heart and a new spiritⁿ.” Whilst we animate the hopes of the desponding by God’s gracious promise, that “ he will put his fear in the hearts of his people, that they shall not depart from him^o ;” we endeavour to awaken the careless, and to humble the proud, by setting before them the end of those, who “ did not choose the fear of the Lord^p.” “ Thus,” said Theodoret^q, having established

ⁱ Acts xvii. 30. 1 John iii. 23.

^k Deut. xxx. 6. Jer. xxxiii. 8.

^l Jer. iv. 4. If. i. 16.

^m Pf. li. 10.

ⁿ Ezek. xviii. 31.

^o Jer. xxxii. 40.

^p Prov. i. 29.

^q Οὐκ ἀν γὰρ οὐτε ὁ Θεός, ἀγαθός γε ὢν καὶ δίκαιος, ποιεῖν

that the grace of God lays no necessity on the will of man, and concluding with an assertion which Voffius largely proves, and which Calvin admits; “thus,” said he, “have we “Christians,” thus, I add, have we Ministers of the Church of England, “been taught by “our ancestors, and thus we teach.”

II. Secondly; (and let the observation be cherished for the encouragement of those, who although they truly honour and serve God, yet are but little sensible to themselves of the operation of the Holy Spirit;) his influence is not of that *sensible* kind, which the Enthusiast represents it: affirming, that “the “manifestation of God’s Spirit may be perceiv- “ed by the soul as really as is any sensible im-

τοῖς παρανομῶν βίον ἀσπαζομένοις εἰσπραξέν, ἐπεὶ ἀρὰ κατ’ ἀναγκὴν ἡμαρτανόν κ. τ. λ.—Ταῦτα περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως φρονεῖν, καὶ ἐδιδάχθημεν καὶ διδασκομεν. *Theodoret. Serm. v. de Nat. Hominis.* Op. ed. Paris. 1642. tom. iv. p. 559.

^r Sed tandem allegandi veteres finis esto; quando, non dico si omnia omnium indicare velimus, (quod non possemus quidem,) sed vel sola quæ possumus, nullus fit futurus finis: et eo minus labore istoc opus, quando maximus Calvinus hanc fuisse antiquitatis sententiam non obscure agnoscit, &c. *Voff. Hist. Pelag. lib. vii. par. ii. p. 751.*

^s Ac voluntatem movet, non qualiter multis seculis traditum est et creditum, ut nostræ postea sit electionis, motioni aut obtemperare aut refragari; sed illam efficaciter afficiendo. *Calv. Inst. lib. ii. cap. iii. sect. 10.*

“pression upon the body”:—that “he fills
“the whole heart with a divine power, and
“draws all the faculties of the soul after
“Christ, as a mighty rushing wind”:—that
he “gives a believer such a testimony of his
“adoption, that, while it is present to the
“soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his
“sonship, than he can doubt of the shining of
“the sun, while he stands in the full blaze of
“his beams:”—that he “feels the Spirit in
“his soul in the same way as he feels the
“wind strike upon his bodily organs”:—and
that “it is a truth which remains not now to
“be questioned but by sceptics, that the Lord
“comes nigh to his people in sensible mani-
“festations of his gracious presence in their
“seasons of worship, in their daily employ-
“ments, and in short in all the various provi-
“dences by which they are exercised.” I
cite the words of some of the most celebrated
Methodists, thinking it unnecessary to multiply
quotations from others of inferior note. Suffice
it to observe, that as, on the one hand,
Wesley represented this doctrine of sensible

† Whitefield's Works, vol. iv. p. 18.

“ Wesley's Works, vol. xxvii. p. 31, 32. Outram's Ex-
tracts, p. 63.

× Wesley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 155.

γ Hawker's Paraclesis, p. 66. See Outram's Extracts,
p. 74.

impressions, to be “ one grand part of the testimony, which God had given the Methodists to bear to all mankind ; and that it was by his peculiar blessing upon them in searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth was recovered, which had been for many years well nigh lost and forgotten :” so, on the other hand, there is no point on which Methodists of every denomination have been more prone to insist, than on their inward impulses and feelings ; their *experiences*, in the phraseology of the sect ; as the direct witness of the Holy Spirit in their hearts ; as distinctive marks, and infallible evidences, of the approbation of Heaven.

Far from me be the arrogance and the folly of denying, that “ God hath given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts^a ;” or that “ the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God^b.” However arduous may be the task of defining the limits of his agency, and drawing a line of separation between his motions and the natural suggestions of the human mind, (a task, which the great Searcher of hearts alone may be deemed capable of performing,) still the belief

^a Wesley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 164.

^a 2 Cor. i. 22.

^b Rom. viii. 16.

that we are blessed with this “inward witness^c,” is a source of consolation, peace, and encouragement to the humble believer: he embraces it with gladness, and he acknowledges it with gratitude.

Do I then deny the *sensible* influence of the Spirit? I answer; we may “feel in ourselves “the working of the Spirit of Christ^d.”—our Church employs the language; and I scruple not to repeat it, nor when scripturally understood to maintain it for the doctrine of Scripture: but we feel it no otherwise than we do our thoughts and meditations; we cannot distinguish them, by their manner of affecting us, from our natural reasonings and the operation of truth upon our souls; so that, if God had only designed to give the Holy Spirit to us, without making any mention of it in his word, we could never have known, unless it had been communicated to us by some private revelation, that our souls are moved by a divine power, when we love God and keep his commandments^e. Agreeable to this interpretation is the language of our Church, when she demands of her candidates for holy orders, not “Are you inwardly moved, but “Do you trust, “that you are inwardly moved by the Holy

^c 1 John v. 10.

^d Art. 17.

^e See Stebbing on the Holy Spirit, chap. vii. sect. 6.

“ Ghost, to take upon you this office and mi-
 “ nistration, to serve God for the promoting
 “ of his glory; and the edifying of his peo-
 “ ple^f.” For, as Calvin well and temperately
 remarks, “ an inward call is the honest testi-
 “ mony of our heart, that we undertake the
 “ office of the ministry, not from ambition, or
 “ covetousness, or any other sinful desire; but
 “ from a true fear of God and wish to edify
 “ the Church^g.” Agreeable to this also is the
 language of the Homily; which speaks of the
 operation of God’s Holy Spirit within us, as
 a mighty indeed, but also as a “ secret” work-
 ing^h; and refers us to the fruits of the Holy
 Spirit in our hearts and conduct as the only
 proof “ whereby we can know that he is
 “ in usⁱ.” And such, to come more closely to

^f Ordering of Deacons.

^g Est autem (arcano vocatio) bonum cordis nostri testi-
 monium, quod neque ambitione, neque avaritia, neque
 ulla alia cupiditate, sed sincero Dei timore, et ædificandæ
 ecclesiæ studio, oblatum munus recipiamus. *Calv. Inst.*
 lib. iv. cap. iii. sect. 11.

^h Homilies, p. 389. Oxf. Ed.

ⁱ “ O but how shall I know that the Holy Ghost is
 “ within me? some man perchance will say. Forsooth
 “ as the tree is known by his fruit, so also is the Holy
 “ Ghost. . . . Here now is that glass, wherein thou must
 “ behold thyself, and discern whether thou have the
 “ Holy Ghost within thee, or the spirit of the flesh, &c.”
 p. 390.

the point, is the exprefs testimony of a work, which ſpeaks the ſentiments of our Reformers, and affords an admirable comment on the language of the Article ; “ We feel Chriſt dwell-
“ ing within ourſelves in ſuch fort, as we do
“ our own proper ſouls^k.” Thus much we believe on the authority of Scripture, and guided in our interpretation by our own evangelical Church. But if more than this be intended by one of the original Methodiſts^l, when, in a diſcourſe from this place, he accuſed thoſe, who diſſented from his opinions, of ſetting up “ a devilish diſtinction, of which
“ our Church knows nothing ; of renouncing
“ the Church of England, as well as the whole
“ Chriſtian revelation, of denying the whole
“ Scriptures, the whole truth, and promiſe, and
“ testimony of God^m :”—if by that “ experi-
“ mental knowledge,” which he deſcribed as being “ alone true Chriſtianity,” by that
“ ſpiritual ſenſation, that divine conſciouſneſs,
“ that witneſs of God, which is more and
“ greater than ten thouſand human witneſſesⁿ,” he meant, what his brother defined himſelf to mean, by the testimony of the Spirit ; namely,

^k King Edward’s Catechiſm. Enchir. Theolog. vol. i. p. 30.

^l The Rev. Charles Weſley.

^m See J. Weſley’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 43, 44.

ⁿ Ibid. p. 36.

“ an inward impressi^on on the soul, whereby
 “ the Spirit of God immediately and directly
 “ witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of
 “ God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and
 “ given himself for me : that all my sins are
 “ blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to
 “ God^o :” —we must be allowed to demand for
 the doctrine much stronger proofs both from
 Scripture and from our Church, than any
 which have hitherto been offered ; and mean-
 while to protest against the accusation as un-
 founded, uncharitable, and unjust.

At the same time I have no scruple in as-
 serting, that those strong and vivid impulses,
 which are sometimes described as the effect of
 the Spirit ; the communications which he is
 said to make to the eyes and ears of the in-
 spired ; the “ inexpressible light with which
 “ he suddenly surrounds them ;” and the rap-
 turous and ecstatic visions, with which he is
 said to illuminate their minds ; “ giving,” says
 Wesley, “ now, as aforesaid, remission of sins
 “ and the gift of the Holy Ghost, even to us
 “ and to our children ; yea, and that always
 “ suddenly, as far as I have known, and often
 “ in dreams or in the visions of God^p ;” resem-

o See J. Wesley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 152, 165.

p See Wesley's Journals, No. V. p. 28. VII. p. 100. III.
 p. 60, 61.

ble less the sober promises of Scripture, than the wild and fanciful dreams of Pagan superstition. The testimony of the Spirit, which those promises instruct the humble Christian to expect, is of a composed and tranquil character. It is to fill him with comfort and calm joy in believing; it is to give him "the peace of God which passeth all understanding;" it is to make him "rejoice in hope of the glory of God:" it is in a word to infuse into his soul that principle of harmony, which was communicated to the contending elements of the world; when the earth, which had been "without form and void," was clothed with beauty and fertility by the overshadowing influence of the Spirit; and darkness fled from the deep, as he "moved upon the face of the waters."

"They that pretend to these heights," observed the pious and eloquent Bishop Taylor, in language, which in the following century might have seemed directed against the pretensions of Methodism; "They that pretend to these heights call them the secrets of the kingdom; but they are such which no man can describe; such which God hath not revealed in the publication of the Gospel; such for the acquiring of which there are no

“ means prescribed, and to which no man is
“ obliged, and which are not in any man’s
“ power to obtain: such which it is not lawful
“ to pray for or desire, and concerning which
“ we shall never be called to an account.”
“ This we are sure of, that many illusions have
“ come in the likeness of visions; and absurd
“ fancies under the pretence of raptures; and
“ what some have called the spirit of prophecy
“ hath been the spirit of lying; and contem-
“ plation hath been nothing but melancholy;
“ and unnatural lengths and stillness of prayer
“ hath been a mere dream and hypochondriacal
“ devotion, and hath ended in pride or de-
“ spair, or some sottish and dangerous tempta-
“ tion.” “ I will not say,” he adds, “ that all
“ violences and extravagances of a religious
“ fancy are illusions; but I say, that they are
“ all unnatural, not hallowed by the warrant
“ of a revelation, nothing reasonable, nothing
“ secure. I am not sure that they ever consist
“ with humility; but it is confessed, that they
“ are often produced by self-love, arrogance,
“ and the great opinion others have of us. I
“ will not judge the condition of those persons,
“ who are said to have suffered these extraor-
“ dinary; for I know not the circumstances,
“ or causes, or attendants, or the effects, or
“ whether the stories be true, that make re-
“ port of them; but I shall only advise, that

“ we follow the intimation of our blessed Sa-
“ viour, that we sit down in the lowest place,
“ till the Master of the feast comes, and bids
“ us sit up higher. If we entertain the inward
“ man in the purgative and illuminative way,
“ that is, in actions of repentance, virtue, and
“ precise duty, that is the surest way of uniting
“ us to God, whilst it is done by faith and
“ obedience; and that also is love; and in
“ these peace and safety dwell. And after we
“ have done our work, it is not discretion in a
“ servant to hasten to his meal, and snatch at
“ the refreshment of visions, unions, and ab-
“ stractions; but first we must gird ourselves,
“ and wait upon the Master, and not sit down
“ ourselves, till we all be called at the great
“ supper of the Lamb. It was therefore an
“ excellent desire of St. Bernard, who was as
“ likely as any to have such altitudes of spe-
“ culation, if God had really dispensed them
“ to persons holy, phantastick, and religious:
“ I pray God grant to me peace of spirit, joy
“ in the Holy Ghost, to compassionate others
“ in the midst of my mirth, to be charitable in
“ simplicity, to rejoice with them that rejoice,
“ and to mourn with them that mourn: and
“ with these I shall be content. Other exalta-
“ tions of devotion I leave to Apostles and
“ apostolick men: the high hills are for the
“ harts and the climbing goats, the stony

“rocks and the recesses of the earth for the
“conies.”

Y In short, that the operation of the Holy Spirit is of that perceptible kind, which the Enthusiast imagines, is an opinion, which the Scriptures do not appear to warrant: whilst the man, who, from the evidence of his feelings alone, believes that he is under the influence of the Spirit, is in extreme danger of deceiving himself, and has no ground for expecting that he shall be believed by others.

1. He is likely to deceive himself: for notwithstanding the assertion of the Enthusiast, that “he wants no other evidence than that
“divine consciousness, that witness of God;
“which is more and greater than ten thousand
“human witnesses:” that which he conceives to be the working of the Holy Spirit, may be nothing else than the effect of strong constitutional feelings; or of an overheated and disordered imagination; or of a weak and disordered body; or of high animal spirits; or of youthful giddiness and inexperience; or of popular applause; or of pride, vanity, indolence, or self-love; or it may be even nothing else than the suggestion of the evil spirit himself.

^r Bishop Taylor's *Life of Christ*, part i. sect. 5.

^s Wesley's *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 36.

For such, on the one hand, is the weakness of human nature, that we are too prone to flatter and “commend ourselves,” when we have no reason to expect the divine approbation. “The heart of man,” says Calvin, “has so many retreats of vanity, abounds in so many secret abodes of falsehood, is overspread with such guileful hypocrisy, that it often deceives itself; and experience shows, that the reprobate are sometimes moved with the same feelings as the elect are, so that in their own judgment they differ nothing from the elect.” Thus we are warned by a Prophet, that “man’s heart is deceitful above all things:” and the parable of the proud Pharisee may teach us, that a man may “trust in himself that he is righteous,” and may find in his heart to thank God that he is better than other men, and yet not be “justified” in the sight of God*.

Whilst, on the other hand, such are the artifices of the evil spirit, that in order to accomplish his malicious purposes against our happi-

* Tot vanitatis recessus habet, tot mendacii latebris scatet cor humanum, tam fraudulenta hypocrisis oblectum est, ut seipsum sæpe fallat. . . . Experientia ostendit reprobos interdum simili fere sensu atque electos affici, ut ne suo quidem judicio quicquam ab electis differant, *Calv, Inst.* lib. iii. cap. ii. sect. 10, 11,

u Jer. xvii. 9,

x Luke xviii. 9,

ness, he can be “transformed into an angel of light”;¹ in other words, he can assume a holy appearance to deceive us, as he did when he tempted our Saviour, and endeavoured to dazzle and delude his understanding by citing passages from Scripture. That we have to “wrestle against” this malicious and crafty enemy, and that he employs all his ability to ruin us, are truths, concerning which the Scriptures give us ample reason to be assured. And there is perhaps no artifice, by which he may be thought more likely to work on the generality of minds, especially on the more feeble and unguarded, than by seducing them into a belief, that his motions and suggestions are those of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul warns us of some, against whom, “because they received not the love of truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness,” God permitted Satan to exercise such power, as to make them “trust in strong delusion; and believe a lie.”²

To the prevalence of such delusion in earlier times, whether it be ascribed to the weakness of human nature, unable to withstand the assault of its domineering passions, or to the more mysterious interposition of diabolical agency, the history of the Church bears melancholy

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 14.

² 1 Pet. v. 8.

^a 2 Theff. ii. 11.

and convincing testimony. That it hath not ceased in the present day, (the observation may be invidious, but it is not rashly alleged,) the history of Methodism testifies; and the acknowledgments of its professors authorise and establish the allegation.

I employ the language of the Founders of the sect, when I affirm, that many of their *experiences*, wherein they represent themselves as sensibly wrought upon by the Spirit, and which they sometimes describe as “the most infallible of all proofs^b,” judging it “an easy thing for a spiritual man to know when the Holy Spirit makes an impression upon his soul^c,” and that “it is as easy to distinguish the witness of the Spirit from presumption, as day from night, or light from darkness, or the light of a star or glimmering taper from the light of the noonday sun^d,” “often proceeded from the state and disposition of the body, the temperament of the blood and animal spirits^e,” that they were “mere empty dreams of an heated imagination;”—were “genuine instances of enthusiasm;”—were “groundless speculations;—were vain and blasphemous conceits;”—were “plain

^b Lavington on Enthusiasm, part ii. p. 24.

^c Whitefield's Works, vol. iv. p. 12.

^d Wesley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 160.

^e Lavington on Enthusiasm, part ii. p. 106.

“ proofs that the pretenders to inspiration
 “ were under the full dominion of the spirit of
 “ pride and of lies;”—were “ wiles of the
 “ devil,” who, for the purpose of deluding
 them, “ was mimicking God’s work, and had
 “ transformed himself into an angel of light.”
 “ I find,” said Whitefield of the Moravian
 brethren, (and wherefore is it not as applicable
 to his own followers?) “ that they are as
 “ weak and fallible as those, whom they judge
 “ not to have drunk so freely of the Spirit of
 “ Christ.” Whilst Wesley, after enumerating
 the singular blessings conferred upon his par-
 tizans, and representing Almighty God as
 “ having wrought a new thing in the earth in
 “ their favour,” thus unreservedly declares the
 fruits of Methodism: “ It brought forth error
 “ in ten thousand shapes, turning many of the
 “ simple out of the way. *It brought forth*
 “ *enthusiasm, imaginary inspiration, ascribing*
 “ *to the all-wise God all the wild, absurd, self-*
 “ *inconsistent dreams of an heated imagination.*
 “ It brought forth pride, robbing the Giver of
 “ every good gift of the honour due to his
 “ name. It brought forth prejudice, evil-sur-

† See Wesley’s Journals, vol. v. p. 81. vol. iv. p. 54,
 p. 55, 66. vol. v. p. 71. and Whitefield’s Works, vol. i.
 p. 50.

‡ Whitefield’s Works, vol. i. p. 444.

“ mising, cenforiousness, judging and con-
 “ demning one another: all totally subversive
 “ of that brotherly love, which is the very
 “ badge of the Christian profession; without
 “ which whosoever liveth, is counted dead be-
 “ fore God. It brought forth anger, hatred,
 “ malice, revenge, and every evil word and
 “ work: *all direful fruits, not of the Holy*
 “ *Spirit, but of the bottomless pit^h.*”

And let it not be supposed, that such delu-
 sion has been confined to those inferior mem-
 bers, who from some uncommon weakness of
 constitution, from some peculiar feebleness of
 intellect, from some defect in mental cultiva-
 tion, or from that propensity, which inclines
 inferior minds to follow the guidance of their
 superiors, may have been more signally expos-
 ed to this infatuation. It was the confession
 of one, endowed with powers both constitu-
 tional and intellectual, greater than those,
 which fall to the ordinary lot of mortality;
 whose mind had been stored with the acquire-
 ments of education; to whose lips, as to those
 of “ an angel of Godⁱ,” thousands listened
 with enthusiasm while he was living, and to
 whose spirit, as to that of a man of apostolical
 and saintlike virtues^k, thousands and ten thou-

^h Wesley's Sermons, vol. vi. p. 66.

ⁱ See Lavington, part ii. p. 15.

^k Evangelical Magazine, Nov. 1808. p. 473, 474.

sands are obedient, now that he is dead ; it was the confession of him, with whom (if his own assertions are to be credited¹) “ the Lord’s “ dealing was somewhat out of the common “ way ;” whose “ sermons were attended with “ great manifestations of the divine presence ;” to whose “ ministerial office God set his seal “ in every place ;” who “ experienced daily “ teachings of the blessed Spirit, and carried “ on constant communion with the most high “ God and the ever-blessed Jesus :” who had “ assuredly felt, who knew that it was Jesus “ Christ that revealed himself to his soul ;” who “ knew and was assured that God sent “ forth to him his light and his truth ;” to whom “ it was revealed that Satan was grieved “ at his success ;” who “ felt every day more “ and more of the divine presence and assist- “ ance ;” who was “ directed in his designs “ by the special interposition of Providence,” and was “ endowed in the execution of them “ with power from above :” who “ leaned on “ the bosom of his Saviour, and was carried “ in the arms of his love from morning to “ night ;” “ talked with God as a man talketh “ with his friend,” and “ spoke with the de- “ monstration of the Spirit, and as the Spirit

¹ Whitefield’s Works, vol. iv. p. 45. vol. i. p. 259, 44, 120, 228.

“gave him utterance ;” who “felt the blessed Spirit daily filling his soul and body, as plainly as he felt the air which he breathed; or the food which he ate;” who “daily experienced the outgoing and incoming of the blessed Spirit in the sanctuary of his heart;” who “felt the great God in a glorious manner filling and overshadowing his soul,” and was “often filled with the whole Godhead, with the fulness of God^m:—it was his frank and voluntary confession, that “imagination had mixed itself with his work;” that “by several of his assertions on these topics he had given too much occasion for reflection;” that “his mistakes had been too many, and his blunders too frequent, to make him set up for infallibilityⁿ.” “I came soon into the world,” he says; “I have carried high sail, whilst running through a whole torrent of popularity and contempt; and by this means have sometimes been in danger of oversetting.” “I know too much of the devices of Satan, and the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of my own heart not to be sensi-

^m See Account of God's Dealings with the Rev. G. Whitefield, sect. 3. Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 315, 458, 195, 205, 166, 195, 228, 237, 466. Lavington on Enthusiasm, part i. p. 50, 61, 66, 67, 54, 51.

ⁿ Whitefield's Remarks on a Pamphlet, entitled, The Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. p. 43, 33, 40.

“ ble, that I am a man of like passions with
 “ others; and consequently may have mistaken
 “ nature for grace, imagination for revelation;
 “ and the fire of my own temper for the pure
 “ and sacred flame of holy zeal which cometh
 “ from God’s altar.” “ Alas! Alas! in how
 “ many things have I judged and acted wrong!
 “ I have been too rash and hasty in giving
 “ characters both of places and persons! I
 “ have too much made impressions, without
 “ the written word, my rule of acting. Being
 “ fond of Scripture language, I have often
 “ used a style too apostolical, and at the same
 “ time I have been too bitter in my zeal.
 “ Wild-fire has been mixed with it; and I find I
 “ have frequently written and spoken too much
 “ in my own spirit, when I thought I was writ-
 “ ing and speaking intirely by the assistance of
 “ the Spirit of God^p.”

That one, who had made such an open and unequivocal avowal of his delusions, should have nevertheless persevered in setting up his own inward feelings as the criterion of spiritual communications, must excite our astonishment, if it be true: that he *did* persevere in asserting his claim to such communications upon the same ground and in similar language, is a fact,

^o Works, vol. iv. p. 127.

^p Remarks, &c. p. 35.

the evidence of which we have not far to seek : and it may warn us of the danger of encouraging that enthusiastic temper, which, at the very instant that it may flatter itself with the belief, that it is correcting its former extravagancies, is administering fresh materials to its rapacious appetite, and feeding itself with new delusions.

Liable then as we all are to be deluded, the man who feels in himself those inward motions, which he is willing to be persuaded are the workings of the Holy Spirit, would do well to be cautious how he inconsiderately gives way to the evidence of his feelings ; instead of trying by a surer test, whether they may not be ascribed to the passions or infirmities of his nature, or to the suggestions of his crafty enemy the devil, and not to the gracious influence of the Spirit of God.

2. Nor, again, has such a man reasonable cause for expecting to be believed by others, even if he admit his own inward feelings for sufficient evidence to himself. “ *Monstrare nequeo, sentio tantum,*” is an appeal, which as every man, as well as Whitefield^a, may arbitrarily advance, so no man can reasonably require to be admitted.

1 For if the appeal be once admitted, when is

^a Works, vol. iv. p. 166.

it to be rejected? if the claim be once allowed; when is it to be denied? if we once concede our assent to the unsupported testimony of him, who arrogates to himself the sanction of the Spirit; when are we consistently to withhold it? The pretensions of one man, abstractedly considered, have as fair a demand upon our credit as those of another: and we must not only believe, that the Founders of Methodism were acting under this divine influence, because they affirm it, when they were belieing their vows of ordination, by “bringing their own dreams and phantasies into the Church,” and sowing in it dissensions, instead of promoting quietness and peace; by violating the ecclesiastical order of the realm, and by renouncing the authority of those, to whom were committed the charge and government over them, each claiming to himself an apostolical commission, and each accusing the other of preaching a new gospel; and that their followers were acting under the impulse of the same heavenly monitor, because they also affirm it, when their very superiors pronounced them to be under the full dominion of an heated imagination, or of the spirit of pride and of lies: but we must for the same reason admit, as divine inspirations, those manifold

extravagances, which at various times have thrown disgrace on the profession of the Gospel, and brought the very operations of the Holy Spirit into question; and must refer to the same sacred, pure, and unpolluted source the fanciful pretensions, which sanctify the ritual of the Papists, and have canonised the saints of the Romish calendar[†]; the pretensions of the Herefiarch Manichæus to illuminations from the Paraclete[‡]; the vain and arrogant presumption of Montanus[§]; the rapturous visions of the Messalians[¶]; the mystic conceits of Molinos, the ecstasies of Loyola, the illuminations of Bourignon, the delirious dreams of Swedenborg, the ignorant fanaticism of Fox[‡], and the ravings of Southcott and of Brothers; the profligacy and seditious enormities of Hacket the English[‡], and Boccold the German[‡], impostor; the gloomy yet ardent bigotry, which instigated Ravailac and Felton to acts of assassination; the cool hypocrisy, which veiled the judicial murder committed by Crom-

† See Homily for Whit-Sunday, part 2.

‡ Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 114.

§ Lavington on Enthusiasm, part i. Introd.

¶ Mosheim, Cent. iv. part ii. c. 24. See Ridley's Sermons on the Holy Ghost, Serm. iv.

‡ Mosheim, Cent. xvii. sect. ii. part 1, 2.

‡ Collier's Ecclesiastical History, part ii. b. 7.

‡ Mosheim, Cent. xvi. sect. iii. part ii. c. 3.

well and his Puritans; the blasphemous impieties of many of the Bishops of Rome; and even the audacious imposture, the cruelty, and the sensuality, of the pretended Prophet of Arabia. Mahomet arrogated to himself a more abundant portion of the Spirit, than he allowed to Him, to whom alone it had been "given without measure;" while "in the cave of Hera," as the sarcastic historian has remarked with more than his customary justice, "he consulted the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm, whose abode was not in the heavens, but in the mind of the prophet^b."

If now in these and in numberless parallel cases, (for falsehood ever delights to veil her deformity under the garb of truth,) unfounded pretensions have been advanced to celestial inspiration; if the artful have asserted that plea for the purpose of deceiving others, and if the weak have admitted it as the instrument of their own delusion: surely we have ample reason to withhold our assent from every unsupported claim; nay, we have cause to summon suspicion to the aid of wisdom, whenever such a claim is alleged; lest our unguarded simplicity be deceived by enthusiasm or hypocrisy; enthusiasm, whose very sincerity will inspire her with zeal, at the same time that it

^b Gibbon, chap. l. vol. ix. p. 260. 8vo. ed.

will act as an instrument, to increase the number of her converts; and hypocrisy, that specious fiend,

Which neither man nor angel can discern,
 ———— the only evil, that walks
 Invisible, except to God alone^c.

In cases indeed of infinitely inferior importance, and much more than in matters of this high import, the testimony borne by any one to his own character has a reasonable tendency to excite suspicion in the minds of others. That self-love, which is a prime ingredient in our composition, and which prompts us to the exercise of the first law of nature, self-preservation, sometimes discloses itself in a less creditable form; and testifies its dominion by stimulating us to approve and commend ourselves, too often without the warrant of reason. This infirmity, which we feel in ourselves, both Scripture and experience justify us in attributing to others: in suspecting the possibility at least of self-deception, even where sincerity may be allowed, and in admitting self-commendation with caution.

To the propriety of caution in such a case our Saviour expressed his assent: "If I bear witness to myself," said he; "my witness is not true^d." At the same time he laid down

^c Paradise Lost,

^d John v. 31.

the principle, on which his own claim to the character he asserted, was to be tried and determined; when he added, “The works that the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.” And the same criterion he proposed for judging of the operations of the Spirit, by referring to his fruits and his effects.

When the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles at the day of Pentecost, his coming was with the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled all the house, where they were sitting: and he sat upon each of them in the shape of cloven fiery tongues. The effect was in proportion to the greatness of the inspiration: for from that time the Apostles were indued with a power of speaking languages, with which they had been till then unacquainted, and of performing the most wonderful miracles, which before that time they might have, which indeed they had, attempted in vain.

But even in those early seasons of more abundant inspiration, “such a coming” (as one of our old Prelates hath observed) “was rare and nothing usual with the Holy Ghost; which is an invisible Spirit, and cometh for the most part invisibly. So saith Job, He cometh to me, and I see him not; he pas-

“ feth hard by me, and I perceive him not. It
 “ was thus here for this once: but after, he came
 “ upon Cornelius and his company, and after
 “ that upon the twelve at Ephesus; but on
 “ neither that aught could be seen or heard,
 “ only discerned by some effect he wrought
 “ in them. He that best knew the Spirit, sets
 “ us down the manner of his coming: *Spiritus*
 “ *spirat, sed nescis unde aut quo*: He doth
 “ come and inspire; but how or which way,
 “ that know you not.”

The influence of the Spirit in these latter days is less powerful: it is less sensibly felt by those who enjoy it, and it is less strikingly obvious to others. For after the previous remarks, I presume to question the correctness of our modern Enthusiasts in their narrations both of those violent and extraordinary inspirations, which have been vouchsafed to individuals, and of those public testimonies, by which God has been said to confirm the ministry of the preachers: when, as they have described it, “ most remarkable outpourings of
 “ the Spirit have been seen in their assemblies;” when “ the power of the Lord has come
 “ mightily upon the congregation, and the
 “ Holy Ghost has overshadowed them;” when

* Bishop Andrews; First Sermon of the Holy Ghost, Works, p. 600.

“ the Spirit has come down like a mighty
 “ rushing wind, and carried all before it;”
 when “ the stately steps of their glorious Em-
 “ manuel have been seen in his sanctuary, and
 “ his glory has shone with exceeding bright-
 “ nefs;” when “ God has, as it were, bowed
 “ the heavens, and come down;” when “ the
 “ flame of love has gone before him, the rocks
 “ have been broken in pieces, and the moun-
 “ tains have flowed down at his presence;”
 when “ their prayers have been accompanied
 “ by an abiding universal shock; and a violent
 “ impetuous power has suddenly come on the
 “ great congregation, overrunning all opposi-
 “ tion; and the place has been almost rent by
 “ the power and presence of God †.”

I trust, that we may reasonably withhold our assent from narratives, which lay claim to such distinguished visitations of the Deity; and doubt whether the operations of the Spirit have ever produced so violent and sensible an effect, or have been attended by such overpowering symptoms, since the apostolical age; even if descriptions so highly wrought can be properly applied to the visitations, vouchsafed to the Apostles themselves. But whilst we he-

† See Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 184, 201, 224, 202, 222, 337, 409, 312, &c. &c. Wesley's Journals, N^o. III. p. 29. N^o. IX. p. 18. Sermons, vol. iv. p. 155.

fitate in giving credit to such perceptible and visible effects in the present day, we may believe that he is not the less certain in his influence, nor the less manifested by his effects.

What are these effects of the Spirit, it were impossible to inquire at any considerable length. But considering the extreme danger, even by the avowal of the advocates of experiences themselves, “of mistaking emotions of the affections, for experimental and practical godliness^g,” it may be desirable to notice with as much brevity as possible some things which are not, and some things which are, to be ascribed to his influence.

No impurity of any kind can proceed from him; for he is “the Spirit of holiness^h :”—no hypocrisy, nor fraud, nor falsehood of any kind can proceed from him; for he is “the Spirit of truthⁱ :”—no pride, no vanity, no boasting, no ostentation, no presumptuous confidence in our own security, can be the effect of the Spirit; for he “resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble^k :”—no disobedience, no contempt of lawful order and authority, can be the work of the Spirit; for “he is not the author of confusion, but of peace;

^g Minutes of Conference, 1800. p. 25. Outram's Extracts.

^h Rom. i. 4.

ⁱ John xv. 26.

^k 1 Pet. v. 5. •

“as in all churches of the faints^l”—no hatred, or malice; no slander, or evil-speaking; no murder, nor any act or thought of revenge; can be suggested by him; for he is the Spirit of peace, of mercy, of patience, of consolation, and of love^m:—in a word, he cannot be supposed to influence us to do any thing unrighteous, any thing at all inconsistent with the will and word of God; for he is the Spirit of righteousnessⁿ.

And thus by considering what things are not the effects of the Holy Spirit, we are led to understand on the other hand those that are. Purity of heart, shown by purity of words and actions; true devotion and piety to God, and the walking honestly, and the speaking of truth every man with his neighbour; lowliness and meekness; “not to think of himself more highly than a man ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith^o :” obedience and submission to “them that have the rule over^p” us, to lawful and constituted authorities both in church and state: mildness, gentleness, and forbearance; and charity, which is approved by our thinking and speaking fa-

^l 1 Cor. xiv. 13.

^m 1 Theff. v. 23. Jam. iii. 17. Rom. xv. 5. John xvi. 7.
2 Cor. xiii. 11.

ⁿ Eph. v. 9.

^o Rom. xii. 3.

^p Heb. xiii. 17.

vourably of our neighbour, by a willingness to “do good unto all men, and especially unto them who are of the household of faith,” by forgiving those, who have injured or offended us, as we would hope for forgiveness of our offences at God’s hand, and by endeavouring as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men: to speak in one word, Faith; not an unfruitful assent to the truths of the Gospel, but a lively and an active faith in Christ; such a faith, as in the language of St. Paul, “worketh by love,” or, as St. James expresses it, “shows itself” by the works of a religious and charitable life; these are the most undoubted effects of the Holy Spirit. My brethren, “let no man deceive you. HE THAT DOETH RIGHTEOUSNESS, IS RIGHTEOUS⁹.” And he who thus labours to do, what is commanded by the Spirit of God in the written word of God, may then, and then only, be assured, that he drinks of the living water of the Spirit; and may look forward with humble and joyful hope to the inheritance, purchased by the blood of Christ for his faithful followers, in the eternal kingdom of his Father.

Thither may Almighty God vouchsafe to bring us all by the sanctification of his Spirit, and for the sake and through the mediation of

⁹ 1 John iii. 7.

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his Son! To whom, with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, three persons in one Godhead, be all honour and glory, in all churches of the saints, now, henceforth, and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE VI.

JOHN iii. 5.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

AT the time that Almighty God first selected the Jews for his peculiar people, he instituted the rite of circumcision, whereby they were to be admitted into covenant with him. This institution was designed not only for an outward and visible mark to distinguish those, who professed their belief in the true God; but at the same time for a memorial to remind them of his covenant; and for a monument to incite them to perform their part of the covenant; and for a token that God would perform his part.

This institution, which was designed for the Jews as the chosen people of God, was extended to those strangers also, who became profelytes to the true faith. But in addition

to this, another ceremony was appointed by the Jews themselves, derived, as they imagined, from the law of Moses, and certainly stamped with the sanction of high antiquity. Proud of their own peculiar sanctity, as the elect people of God, and regarding all the rest of mankind as in a state of uncleanness, they would not admit converts into their church without washing, to denote their being cleansed from their natural impurity. Profelytes, thus purified and admitted into the Jewish church by baptism, were said to be regenerated, or born again: nor was this a mere empty appellation; but being considered dead to their former relations, they became intitled to rights and privileges, from which by nature they were excluded.

The duration of God's covenant with the Jews being limited, the rite of circumcision was of course limited, and was to cease upon the completion of God's promise in the sending of Christ. God had now accomplished his covenant with Abraham by sending that seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. And as there was no longer to be any distinction in favour of the Jews, the children of Abraham, above the other nations of the world, the outward mark of distinction was no longer useful. God was now to show no respect unto persons, to the

circumcised or to the uncircumcised; but in every nation, among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews, he that feared God and worked righteousness was equally to be accepted with him.

But upon the introduction of the new covenant in Christ, God was pleased to institute a new ceremony; whereby mankind at large were to be admitted into covenant with him, as the Jews had been by the rite of circumcision. For this purpose Christ adopted baptism, which had been consecrated by his brethren after the flesh to a similar use; and ordained it as the rite, by which those, who believed in him, should be admitted to the privileges of his religion. “He kept the ceremony,” says Bishop Taylor, “that they, who were led
“ only by outward things, might be the better
“ called in, and easier enticed into the religion,
“ when they entered by a ceremony, which
“ their nation always used in the like cases:
“ and therefore without change of the out-
“ ward act, he put into it a new spirit, and
“ gave it a new grace and a proper efficacy:
“ he sublimed it to higher ends, and adorned
“ it with stars of heaven: he made it to sig-
“ nify greater mysteries, to convey greater blef-
“ sings, to consign the bigger promises, to
“ cleanse deeper than the skin, and to carry
“ profelytes farther than the gates of the in-

“stitution. For so he was pleased to do in
 “the other sacrament: he took the ceremony
 “which he found ready in the custom of the
 “Jews, where the Major-domo after the Pas-
 “chal supper gave bread and wine to every
 “person of his family; he changed nothing of
 “it without, but transferred the rite to greater
 “mysteries, and put his own Spirit to their sign,
 “and it became a sacrament evangelical^a.”

It was to this sacrament of baptism, the institution of which he was anticipating, that our Saviour alluded, when he declared to the Jewish Rabbi, who was inquiring into the nature of his doctrine, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:” and when, in reply to a farther inquiry, he repeated his former declaration, and stated it in more limited and specific terms, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” It should appear, I say, that he was here alluding by anticipation to the sacrament of baptism, which he intended to ordain; and to that supernatural grace, which was thereby to be conferred through the instrumentality of water, and by the agency of the Holy Ghost: adopting, not only

^a Life of Christ, part i. sect. 9.

the ceremony itself, which he meant to exalt to more noble and spiritual purposes; but also the very term, by which the Jews had described the change wrought in the baptized, although he undoubtedly employed it, in a similar indeed, but in an infinitely more dignified sense. To the proselyte from heathenism to the Jewish faith, baptism had been a death to his natural incapacities, and a new birth to the civil privileges of a Jew: to him, who should be admitted to a profession of the Christian faith, and who should be “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God^b,” it was to be a death unto sin, and a new birth unto those spiritual privileges, which should accompany his deliverance “from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God^c.” The Jewish proselyte had been baptized with water: the Christian was to be baptized, not with water only, but with the Holy Ghost. “Baptism,” says the same pious and learned Prelate, to whom I just referred, asserting at the same time the doctrine, and explaining the ground of it; “Baptism is a new birth, by which we enter into the new world, the new creation, the blessings and spiritualities of the kingdom. And this is

^b John i. 13.

^c Rom. viii. 21.

“ the expreffion, which our Saviour himfelf
 “ ufed to Nicodemus, Unless a man be born
 “ of water and the Spirit. And it is by St.
 “ Paul called λουτρον παλιγγενειας, the laver of
 “ regeneration. For now we begin to be
 “ reckoned in a new cenfus or account, God
 “ is become our father, Chrift our elder bro-
 “ ther, the Spirit the earneft of our inheritance,
 “ the Church our mother; our food is the
 “ body and blood of our Lord; faith is our
 “ learning; religion our employment; and
 “ our whole life is fpiritual, and heaven the
 “ object of our hopes, and the mighty price of
 “ our high calling. And from this time for-
 “ ward we have a new principle put into us,
 “ the Spirit of grace, which, befides our foul
 “ and body, is a principle of action, of one na-
 “ ture, and fhall with them enter into the por-
 “ tion of our inheritance. And becaufe from
 “ henceforward we are a new creation, the
 “ Church ufes to affign new relations to the
 “ catechumens, fpiritual fathers and fufcep-
 “ tors^d.”

I make no fcruple of confidering the words
 of our Saviour in the text, as indicating the
 facrament of baptifm; becaufe I believe it
 to be the doctrine of the Bible, and I am fure
 it is the doctrine of the Church of England,

^d Life of Chrift, part i. feét. ix.

agreeably to which I conceive it to be the opinion of the generality of the national clergy, that by that sacrament we are made Christians, and are born anew of water and of the Holy Spirit: or that I may express myself in the words of the late apostolical Bishop Wilson, that "Regeneration or New-Birth is that spiritual change, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon any person in the use of baptism; whereby he is translated out of his natural state, as a descendant of Adam, to a spiritual state in Christ; that is, to a state of salvation; in which, if it is not his own fault, he will be saved." This doctrine however is virtually at least, if not actually, denied by some ministers of our Church: and it is denied in terms, which charge the maintainers of it with blindness and ignorance; with innovating on evangelical truth; with being opposers of the doctrines of the Gospel, and patrons of a heathenish superstition.

As it may be important to prove, beyond the possibility of a suspicion to the contrary, that the accusation, which is to be made the subject of our present inquiry, implicates the Church of England as well as the generality of her ministers, I shall venture to show by the adduction of several passages in her Liturgy,

which it might be otherwise superfluous to specify before such an assembly as the present, that the doctrine of regeneration by baptism is most clearly asserted by her: or, in other words, that “she supposes in strict conformity “with the Scriptures,” not merely “that “all real Christians are regenerate by God’s “Holy Spirit,” by which I understand all those, who live a Christian life; but that those also are so regenerated, to whom baptism is rightly administered, notwithstanding by their future conduct they may forfeit the privileges of their new birth.

The office with which I begin is the ministration of public baptism to infants, which the priest, having ascertained that the child has not been baptized, is directed to commence in this form: “Dearly beloved; forasmuch as “all men are conceived and born in sin, and “that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter “into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the “Holy Ghost; I beseech you to call upon “God the Father through our Lord Jesus “Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will “grant unto this child that thing which by “nature he cannot have, that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and

† See Overton’s True Churchmen, &c. p. 109.

“ be received into Christ’s holy Church, and
“ be made a lively member of the same.” I
give the address at length, because it is placed
at the very opening of the ministration of bap-
tism, and is designed to draw the attention of
the hearers to the purpose, for which baptism
is administered. It consists of two parts; an
admonition to the people to pray, and a reason
for the admonition: what they are to pray
for, partly is, that “ the child may be baptized
“ with water and the Holy Ghost:” the reason
for their being called on so to pray, is, “ foras-
“ much as Christ saith, none can enter into
“ the kingdom of God, except he be regene-
“ rate and born anew of water and of the
“ Holy Ghost.” Putting these passages to-
gether, what else is the prayer that the child
may be baptized with water and the Holy
Ghost, than a prayer that by baptism he may
be born anew ?

Proceeding to the prayers, I do not rest on
that general expression in the first, where we
pray God “ to wash and sanctify the child with
“ the Holy Ghost:” but going forward to the
second, I beg your attention to that passage,
wherein the priest is directed to say, “ Al-
“ mighty God, we call upon thee for this in-
“ fant; that he, coming to thy holy baptism,
“ may receive remission of his sins by spiritual
“ regeneration.” The passage needs no com-

ment: it will only be recollected that the question is, what does the Church of England understand by our Saviour's expression of being born of water and of the Spirit? Nor is it necessary to make any other comment on the following extracts, while I point to that prayer, where we intreat Almighty God to "give his Holy Spirit to the infant about to be baptized, that he may be born again:" to the prayer of consecration, where we intreat him, to "sanctify the water to the mystical washing away of sin, and to grant that the child, now to be baptized therein, may receive the fulness of his grace, and ever remain in the number of his faithful and elect children:" to the address immediately following the baptismal rite, wherein the priest calls on the congregation to give thanks to Almighty God, expressly for this cause, "seeing that the child is regenerate;" and to the thanksgiving that follows, wherein we are instructed to "yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate the infant with thy Holy Spirit, and to receive him for thine own child by adoption." These words must be left to speak for themselves. They admit of no illustration or explanation. Language cannot be plainer.

Let us proceed to the ministration of private baptism of children, where, it may be first re-

marked, that the prayers being the same as in the public baptism, the same expressions of course occur, as those already noticed. But when the child, that has been privately baptized, is admitted into the public congregation, the doctrine is repeated under several new forms of expression. The child, being born in original sin, is said to “be now by the laver
“of regeneration in baptism received into the
“number of the children of God:” a prayer is offered to Almighty God to “give his Holy
“Spirit to the infant,” not, as in the former office, that he may be born again, but that he
“being born again may continue God’s ser-
“vant:” the congregation is required to give thanks to Almighty God, for that the child
“is by baptism regenerate:” and in the same form of prayer as before, thanks are yielded to our most merciful Father, for “having pleased
“to regenerate the infant with his Holy Spi-
“rit, and to receive him for his own child by
“adoption.” This great variety of expressions, wherein the same doctrine is so repeatedly conveyed, proves to my mind most satisfactorily, how tenacious the Church of England is of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and how anxious she is to impress it upon her members.

This variety we trace still farther exemplified in the ministration of baptism to such as

are of riper years; where, although the service is for the most part the same as that for the baptism of infants, certain particulars are added, not immaterial to be specified in this inquiry. Thus instead of the gospel from the 10th chapter of St. Mark, which is adapted to the condition of infants, but would be out of place in the baptism of adults, the passage selected is the conversation, wherein Christ asserts to Nicodemus the necessity of the new-birth; and which is made the foundation of the following exhortation: "Beloved, ye hear in this gospel
 " the express words of our Saviour Christ, that
 " except a man be born of water and of the
 " Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of
 " God. Whereby ye may perceive the great
 " necessity of this sacrament, where it may be
 " had." It must be enough barely to quote this passage: it would be an insult upon any man's understanding, to attempt to make it clearer; and it would be superfluous to add more from the same office. If a bare statement of this fact does not convince a man, nothing, I am persuaded, can convince him, that it is by baptism, in the judgment of the Church of England, that a man is born of water and of the Spirit.

I am afraid of fatiguing and wearing out your patience by multiplying evidences of what must already be so clear. Knowing

however as I do, and as every one at all acquainted with the state of religion in this country must know, that there are persons, who, not content with denying the doctrine of baptismal regeneration themselves, would fain fasten their heresy upon our Church, and sedulously labour to propagate it as hers; I must solicit your attention whilst I proceed to show by a still greater accumulation of proof what her doctrine is; and that she does not confine her assertion of it to her baptismal offices, but disseminates it over other parts of her Liturgy.

After being baptized, the first religious duty in which the Church requires a child to be engaged is the learning of his Catechism; and here reminding him of the privileges to which he was then admitted, the very first thing that she teaches him is, that “in his baptism he “was made a member of Christ, a child of “God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of “heaven.” In his baptism he was made a child of God! Made a child of God; not formed so at his natural birth, but made so by a second, a new, a spiritual birth; made so at his baptism. As he proceeds, however, the doctrine is more fully and explicitly revealed to him. He is then instructed, that a sacrament is “an outward visible sign of an inward “spiritual grace given unto us:” and that it

“ is ordained by Christ himself, as a means
 “ whereby we receive the same” grace, “ and
 “ as a pledge to assure us thereof.” He is in-
 structed, that baptism is a sacrament ; and as
 such, of course consisting of an outward and
 visible sign, and of an inward and spiritual
 grace :—he is instructed, that the outward sign
 is “ water, wherein the person is baptized in
 “ the name of the Father, and of the Son, and
 “ of the Holy Ghost;” and being interrogated,
 what is its inward and spiritual grace, he is in-
 structed to answer, “ a death unto sin, and a
 “ new birth unto righteousness ; for being by
 “ nature born in sin, and the children of
 “ wrath, we are hereby made the children of
 “ grace;” hereby, that is, by baptism ; neither
 the argument nor the structure of the sentence
 can admit of any other interpretation. What
 can be plainer ? Had it been the intention of
 the Composers of the Catechism, as indeed I
 doubt not it was, to assert most unequivocally
 the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, how
 could it have been more directly asserted ?
 Plainer language cannot be found. “ The
 “ outward sign of baptism is water : the spi-
 “ ritual grace is a death unto sin, and a new
 “ birth unto righteousness ; for we are hereby
 “ made the children of grace.”

The next religious office, in which the child
 is engaged, is the order of Confirmation ; where-

in he ratifies and confirms the vows made for him by his sureties at baptism. We have here then of course an allusion to that holy institution; and as if it were cautiously provided, that the sacramental character of the institution should be kept steadily in view, we are reminded of the regeneration conveyed by it to the baptized. The Bishop who presides at the office is thus directed to pray: "Almighty
" and ever-living God, who hast vouchsafed to
" regenerate these thy servants by water and
" the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them
" forgiveness of all their sins; strengthen them,
" we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy
" Ghost the Comforter." The assertion is plain and direct: the Church affirms by the mouth of one of her Governors, and she affirms it in the most solemn form of a prayer to the almighty and ever-living God, that he has vouchsafed to regenerate his servants, who come now to be confirmed, by water and the Holy Ghost: not, as hath been confidently alleged, "with a view to blessings contingent
" upon their future endeavours^z," but with a view to those, which at baptism they actually receive.

Hitherto we have seen frequent notice taken

^z See Overton, p. 104.

by the Church of the doctrine of regeneration; and it is remarkable, that the parts of the Common-Prayer-Book, which we have been hitherto examining, have either an immediate connection with, or an obvious relation to, baptism. And I think it no less remarkable, that there is (if I am not strangely mistaken) only one place more in the whole Book of Common-Prayer, wherein the doctrine of regeneration or the new-birth is noticed; and there it is noticed in perfect conformity with her expressions, that have been already cited, as an event already passed, and one in which her members in general have partaken. In her collect for Christmas-day, the Church is led, from a mention of the birth of Christ, to mention the spiritual birth of those who are regenerated in him; who are made partakers of his nature, as he had condescended to become partaker of theirs. The collect runs in this form: "Almighty God, who hast given
" us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature
" upon him, and as at this time to be born of
" a pure virgin; grant that we, being re-
" generate, and made thy children by adoption
" and grace, may daily be renewed by thy
" Holy Spirit." The petition is exclusively for daily renovation: the notice of our regeneration, and of our adoption as the children of

God, is retrospective; and is the grateful acknowledgment of a blessing, once conferred, and not to be repeated.

From the Liturgy if we direct our attention to the Articles of our Church, we shall find a perfect harmony maintained about the doctrine in question. In three of the Articles it is incidentally alluded to in such a manner, as to show that the Church takes for granted the connection between baptism and the new birth. In the 9th it is laid down, that “the original infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated;” and by the context it appears that by the regenerated are intended “they that believe and are baptized:” in the 15th Christians universally are designated by the appellation of those, “who are baptized and born again in Christ:” and the 16th Article speaks of the condition of “those, who fall into sin after baptism;” that is, according to an equivalent expression, after they have “received the Holy Ghost.” But that, which is more pointedly and more fully to our purpose, is the 27th Article, which expressly sets forth the doctrine of the Church concerning baptism: “Baptism is not only a sign of profession and a mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that are not christened; but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby as by

“ an instrument, they that receive baptism
 “ rightly are grafted into the Church; the
 “ promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our
 “ adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy
 “ Ghost are visibly signed and sealed; faith is
 “ confirmed and grace increased by virtue of
 “ prayer unto God.” I give the whole of the
 description: the part of it, essential to our pre-
 sent inquiry, exactly corresponding with the
 description in the Catechism, which speaks of
 the outward visible sign and the inward spi-
 ritual grace, is, that baptism, or the washing
 with water, is a sign of regeneration or new-
 birth; and that by it, as by an instrument,
 the promise of our adoption to be the sons of
 God by the Holy Ghost is visibly signed and
 sealed.

Such is the doctrine of our Church with re-
 gard to regeneration: nor does she consider it
 as a matter of mere abstract speculation; for
 in conformity with this she requires her mi-
 nisters to instruct the people, that “ the bap-
 “ tism of their children ought not to be de-
 “ ferred longer than till the first or second
 “ Sunday after their birth^b ;” “ lest” (as one
 of her most highly esteemed Bishops hath ob-
 served) “ importune and unnecessary delay
 “ occasion that the child die before it is dedi-

^b Rubrick before the office of private Baptism.

“ cated to the service of God and the religion
“ of the Lord Jesus; before it be born again,
“ admitted to the promise of the Gospel, and
“ reckoned in the account of the second
“ Adamⁱ.” And she accordingly pronounces,
what gives to the doctrine, that I am main-
taining, its great practical importance, that
“ it is certain by God’s word, that children,
“ which are baptized, dying before they com-
“ mit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.” As
to those, who do not die in infancy, she
teaches, that the privilege of salvation, thus
bestowed by God through the regeneration of
baptism, is continued to them, if they grow
up in faith and obedience: if not, it is taken
from them, until they repent; for, as it is
affirmed in the 16th Article, “ the grant of
“ repentance is not to be denied to such as
“ fall into sin after baptism. After we have
“ received the Holy Ghost, we may depart
“ from grace given, and fall into sin; and by
“ the grace of God we may arise again, and
“ amend our lives.”

I have thus stated the several passages in the
Liturgy and Articles, wherein our Church
notices regeneration, or the being born again.
I have not knowingly omitted one. And I

ⁱ Bishop Taylor’s Advice to his Clergy. Enchir. Theol.,
vol. ii. p. 280.

will now venture to say, that I do not think it possible that a doubt can exist upon the mind of any fair inquirer, with respect to the opinion entertained by our Church on the question of baptismal regeneration. Indeed so unequivocal was her opinion upon this point understood to be, that when, after the restoration of the royal family and the regal government in Charles the Second, it was enacted, that those ministers, who had gained possession of any benefices during the rebellion, should relinquish their preferment, unless they conformed to the principles and doctrines of the Church of England, the Nonconformist Ministers, who quitted their stations, assigned this reason, in common with others, for their non-conformity; that "the Church clearly teaches "the doctrine of real baptismal regeneration".^k" It is therefore with some degree of pain and surprise, that I see any doubt of the inward and spiritual grace of baptism expressed by a living Minister of our Establishment, whose moderation and Christian charity appear not to be surpassed by his piety and zeal^l: and I esteem it no gratuitous concession, which is made by the less gentle advocate of a party in

^k Nonconformist's Memorial, Introd. p. 39. See Baxter's Life, p. 313, 327, 342.

^l See Zeal without Innovation, p. 109.

the Church, that “ she speaks of every child
“ that she has baptized, as regenerate, as a
“ partaker of the privileges of the Gospel, and
“ as in some sense called to a state of salva-
“ tion.” But it is an uncharitable and a cruel
insinuation, if he means to charge those whom
he calls his opponents, with concluding hence,
“ that our Church knows of no distinction but
“ that between professed Christians and pro-
“ fessed Heathens, Jews, &c. and that she
“ really considers *all*, who are her nominal
“ members, in such a sense in a state of salva-
“ tion, as that they will escape future punish-
“ ment and obtain everlasting happiness, *what-*
“ *ever be their characters.*” God forbid that
we should be justly exposed to so formidable
an accusation! Let us rather trust, that whilst
with the Church, we maintain the regenerat-
ing efficacy of baptism to those, who die before
they commit actual sin, with her also we con-
sider, in the language of the same Author,
that “ none who have arrived at maturity and
“ are capable subjects, are in such a sense
“ Christians, as that they will obtain happiness
“ and heaven, except those who are influenced
“ by Christian principles and exhibit a Chris-
“ tian conduct; who are penitents, believers,
“ and habitual observers of God’s laws^m.”

^m See Overton’s True Churchmen, p. 102, 106.

I have dwelt longer upon this point, extraneous as it is to the subject I have more immediately in hand, and have multiplied proofs to a greater extent than may appear necessary to those, who are contented to take the plain declarations of our Church in their plain and obvious meaning. To such persons it may be matter of no small astonishment, that one of the Founders of Methodismⁿ, who uniformly gloried in his fidelity to the doctrines of the Church of England, declared that “baptismal regeneration might with all our best endeavours be ineffectual;” affirming of himself, that “though he had used all the means for twenty years, yet he was not a Christian;” and adopting the authoritative language of our Saviour, “Verily, verily, I must be born again.” To such persons it must be matter of astonishment, that the other great leader of the schism, himself also a Minister of the national Church, declared with inconceivable effrontery, that “he would as soon believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, as that all people, who are baptized, are born again^o;” and pronounced with a spirit of uncharitableness equal to his effrontery, that “baptismal regeneration was the Diana of the present

ⁿ J. Wesley.

^o Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 351.

“clergy and of the present age^p :” a groundless (I suppose) and a wicked superstition, for which, like the idolaters of Ephesus, or the advocates of unassisted, unenlightened reason, (for their conceits he also denominates, “that great and boasted Diana,”) we renounce the articles of the Christian faith, which at our baptism we promised to believe. Nor will it be heard without surprise, mingled perhaps with some degree of indignation, that not only among the deluded partizans of schismatical enthusiasm, but in the very bosom of the Church there are men, who have pledged themselves most solemnly to the support of her doctrines, and who arrogate to themselves the distinction of being her only faithful sons; whose preaching nevertheless is in irreconcilable opposition to her unequivocal and numerous declarations on this important article of her creed. Regeneration is, as it were, inscribed on their banners, and is one of the watchwords of their sect: regeneration, not the fruit of Christ’s holy ordinance of baptism; but the effect of their declamation; not the blessing of a soul, peacefully devoted to Christ’s service, but the mark of one zealous in the cause of their party. They, who can be persuaded to embrace the tenets of that party, are

^p Whitefield’s Works, vol. iv. p. 162, 241. vol. v. p. 205.

described as labouring in the pangs and travails of the new birth, until Christ be formed in them; whilst all who tread in the sound paths of the Church, of Scripture, and of antiquity, unseduced by their invitations and unterrified by their threats, are represented, together with their ministers, those blind leaders of the blind, as unregenerate unconverted sinners.

I will not retort upon our accusers the charges, which they lavish upon us. I will not even insist more strongly upon the discrepancy, which prevails between their tenets and those which the foregoing quotations will have satisfactorily shown to be the tenets of our Church. I will in this place do no more than express my hope and belief, that the remarks, which are now about to be offered, and which shall be derived principally from holy Scripture, will at least acquit us of the temerity of blindly subscribing to a doctrine without an appearance of sufficient evidence; even should they fail of proving, that the doctrine itself, unlike the image of the Ephesian Diana, did really "come down from heaven."

Now it is certain, that by being born again, of which our Saviour speaks in such lofty language, something is designed absolutely necessary to be attained by those, who would enter into the kingdom of God. It is matter

therefore, not of mere idle speculation, but of the nearest and dearest interest, that we examine what is meant by being born again: in order that we may “be filled with all joy and “peace in believing” that we partake of it, if, as we apprehend, it is conferred by the sacrament of baptism; or, if not, that we may be enabled to discover, what it is that is thus necessary for our salvation; and where, and when, and how, it is to be obtained.

In the first place then, we derive a strong probability in behalf of our supposition from this consideration; that, if the work of regeneration is not effected by baptism, it is almost impossible for any sober man to say when and by what means it is: and that we are thus left without any other guide, than the very questionable criterion of our own imaginations or our own feelings, to determine, whether we are in possession of that, which our Saviour has pronounced to be an indispensable requisite of salvation. A situation this of doubt, suspense, and anxiety, with regard to our eternal welfare, to which, it is reasonable to believe, that, with such a revelation of his will as Christianity professes to be, “the Father of “mercies and God of all comfort” would not expose his humble creatures.

For, that I may prosecute a former observation, if spiritual regeneration be not conferred

by baptism, when (we may reasonably demand) and by what means is it conferred? In what other ceremony, and at what other season, shall we find that joint operation of water and of the Holy Spirit, of which Christ affirms we must be born? I say that joint operation; for surely those, which Christ himself hath joined together, it is not for man to put afunder. . . .

I am the more disposed to press this argument, and to bring it forward in the most prominent point of view, not only because it appears to me decisive on the question; but also, because the importance of the argument seems to be recognized by the silence of our opponents, who in their zeal to enforce regeneration, the being born again, the being born of God, the being born of the Spirit, studiously keep out of sight the instrument, whereby Christ says we must be born again. But “that we may be thus born of the Spirit,” (I use the words of Bishop Beveridge,) “we must be born also of water, which our Saviour here puts in the first place. Not as if there was any such virtue in water, whereby it could regenerate us; but because this is the rite or ordinance appointed by Christ, wherein he regenerates us by his Holy Spirit: our regeneration is wholly the act of the Spirit of Christ. But there must be something done

“ on our parts in order to it ; and something
“ that is instituted and ordained by Christ him-
“ self, which in the Old Testament was cir-
“ cumcision, in the New, baptism or washing
“ with water ; the easiest that could be in-
“ vented, and the most proper to signify his
“ cleansing and regenerating us by his Holy
“ Spirit. And seeing this is instituted by
“ Christ himself, as we cannot be born of wa-
“ ter without the Spirit, so neither can we in
“ an ordinary way be born of the Spirit with-
“ out water, used or applied in obedience and
“ conformity to his institution. Christ hath
“ joined them together, and it is not in our
“ power to part them ; he that would be born
“ of the Spirit, must be born of water also ⁹.”

Upon this point the observation of one of our first and most celebrated Reformers is not unworthy of attention. “ Like as Christ was
“ born in rags,” says the venerable Latimer,
“ so the conversion of the whole world is by
“ rags, by things which are most vile in this
“ world. For what is so common as water ?
“ every foul ditch is full of it : yet we wash
“ out remission of our sins by baptism ; for
“ like as he was found in rags, so we must
“ find him by baptism. There we begin : we
“ are washed with water, and then the words

⁹ Beveridge's Sermons, vol. i. p. 304.

“ are added ; for we are baptized in the name
 “ of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost,
 “ whereby the baptism receiveth its strength.
 “ Now this sacrament of baptism is a thing of
 “ great weight ; for it ascertaineth and assureth
 “ us, that like as the water washeth the body
 “ and cleanseth it, so the blood of Christ our
 “ Saviour cleanseth and washeth it from all
 “ filth and uncleanness of sins.” And so it is
 taught in King Edward’s Catechism, that
 “ baptism doth represent and set before our
 “ eyes that we are by the Spirit of Christ new
 “ born, and cleansed from sin ; that we be
 “ members and parts of his Church, received
 “ into the communion of saints. For water
 “ signifieth the Spirit.”

For the purpose therefore of regeneration, we conceive this union of water, as the instrument, and of the Spirit, as the efficient principle, to be absolutely necessary : and although we acknowledge with humble and grateful hearts, that the continued and unceasing influence of the Spirit is requisite for the welfare of our souls, and that we are daily renewed by his sanctifying power, sometimes perhaps without the instrumentality of outward means ; still we are justified in contending, that for the

† Bp. Latimer’s Sermons, vol. ii. p. 779.

* Enchir. Theolog. vol. i. p. 52.

express purpose of regeneration, not only is his operation necessary, but that it must also (humanly speaking) be administered through the mediation of water. It is not for man to dispense with the ordinances of God.

Nay, for man to take upon him to dispense with God's ordinances, is not only generally an act of presumption, but it is also in a particular manner to derogate from the honour due to that Holy Spirit, by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption. "For a special prerogative" (saith Bishop Andrews) "hath the Holy Ghost in our baptism above the other two persons of the Trinity. That laver is his laver properly, where we are not only to be baptized into him, as into the other two; but also even to be baptized with him, which is proper to him alone. For besides the water, we are there to be born anew of the Holy Ghost also; else there is no entering for us into the kingdom of God." So that to deny the regenerating effect of baptism is in some sense to do despite unto the Spirit of grace, and to rob him of his peculiar honour.

And farther; not only is it presumptuous to attempt to separate water from the Spirit, but it is at the same time altogether unnecessary.

† Serm. V. on the Holy Ghost, p. 64L.

If indeed it could be made appear, that they never acted together, we must be content, (how much soever it might seem at variance with the express affirmation of our Saviour,) still we must be content to admit the notion of their distinct and independent operation. But when baptism presents itself to our minds, as a rite instituted by Christ for the admission of disciples into his Church, and when it may be satisfactorily argued from the highest authority, that baptism is the vehicle of regeneration; why should we look for any other? Why should we resort to a forced, an unnatural, and a presumptuous construction, to supply us from a distance with the uncertain shadow of a blessing, when the plainest and most easy interpretation of our Saviour's words places the substance immediately in our hands?

That this blessing is conferred upon us by baptism I assert on the authority of Scripture. It is the doctrine of the holy Scriptures, that we are by baptism made heirs of salvation through Christ; and it is the declaration of our Saviour, that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, which is equivalent to the expression that we cannot become heirs of salvation, except we be born anew of water and of the Spirit. If then we cannot become heirs of salvation, except we be born of water and

of the Spirit, and if we be made heirs of salvation by baptism, I see not how we are to evade the consequence, that the outward washing of baptism is attended by the sanctification of the Spirit, and that we are born of water and of the Spirit, when we are baptized. Thus when our Saviour, on giving his commission to the Apostles to go, teach all nations, baptizing them, accompanied it with the promise, that he that believed and was baptized should be saved, it must clearly be understood, that the communication of the Holy Spirit and spiritual regeneration were to attend on baptism, which is here expressly represented as the means of salvation.

A single text of Scripture, properly understood, may serve for the foundation of a doctrine. "Where there are a multitude of affirmations in Scripture," said the learned reformer Bishop Ridley, "and where there is but one affirmation, all is one concerning the truth of the matter: for that which any one of the Evangelists spake, inspired by the Holy Ghost, was as true as that which was spoken of all." But as the evidence will undoubtedly strike with accumulated force, if a doctrine shall appear, not to rest on an insulated passage, but to be expressed or implied

^u Ridley's Life of Bishop Ridley, p. 437.

under a variety of forms, and to diffuse its leaven, as it were, through a large mass of the sacred volume, I shall proceed to state several scriptural authorities, on which the notion of our being regenerated by baptism may be incontrovertibly maintained.

St. Paul, in his epistle to Titus, having remarked upon the depraved state of men before their conversion to Christianity, thus proceeds: “ But after that the kindness and love of God
 “ our Saviour towards man appeared, not by
 “ works of righteousness which we have done,
 “ but according to his mercy he saved us, by
 “ the washing of regeneration and renewing
 “ of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us
 “ abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour:
 “ that being justified by his grace we should
 “ be made heirs according to the hope of
 “ eternal life^x:” by the washing of regeneration, *δια λουτρου παλιγγενεσιαις*, “ by the laver of
 “ regeneration,” as it is rendered in our baptismal office; by “ the fountain of the new-
 “ birth^y,” as one of our Homilies expresses it. By comparing together the several parts of this passage it is evident, that baptism is here represented as the mean through which, or the instrument by which, the Holy Spirit of God

^x Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

^y Homily on the Nativity, p. 345.

regenerates us; and thereby makes us heirs of that eternal life, which the mercy of God our Saviour hath provided for those, whom he justifies and saves.

The same Apostle, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, again representing as before the wretchedness of unbelievers, immediately adds, with reference to the Christian converts, whom he was addressing, “ And such were some of
“ you; but ye are washed, but ye are sancti-
“ fied, but ye are justified, in the name of the
“ Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God².”
Where, as the Lord Jesus is mentioned as the meritorious cause of sanctification and justification, and the Spirit of our God as the efficient and operating cause; so also is the washing of baptism mentioned as the instrument by which those blessings are conveyed: for “ then it is,” saith Bishop Taylor, “ that God
“ pours forth, together with the sacramental
“ waters, a salutary and holy fountain of
“ grace, to wash the soul from all its stains
“ and impure adherences³.” It is true, that in this passage there occurs no such expression as regeneration, or the being born again; but, as it was before argued, if a person must be born again, in order to be saved or justified,

² 1 Cor. vi. 11.

³ Taylor's Life of Christ, p. 199.

and if by baptism he is saved or justified, it then necessarily follows that by baptism he is born again.

The argument is more direct from what the same Apostle says to the Colossians: "Buried
 " with Christ in baptism, wherein also ye are
 " risen with him, through the faith of the
 " operation of God, who hath raised him from
 " the dead. And you, being dead in your
 " sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,
 " hath he quickened together with him ^b." What can be plainer or stronger to the point? Dead in their sins, and buried in baptism, by baptism also they were raised and quickened by God.

To the Romans he employs the same figure, describing baptism as a burial, wherein they were dead unto sin and alive unto God: adding withal a particular, which confirms an opinion presently to be insisted on, that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world. For having observed, that "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no
 " more; death hath no more dominion over
 " him: for in that he died, he died unto sin
 " once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto
 " God ^c;" the Apostle immediately subjoins, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves," like-

^b Col. ii. 12, 13.

^c Rom. v. 4, 11.

wife, in a like or in the same manner, *ὅτω καὶ ὑμεῖς λογιζέσθε ἑαυτοὺς*, “to be dead indeed unto
“ sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ
“ our Lord.” Does not the language of the
Apostle warrant the argument, that we are
born anew in baptism; and in baptism exclu-
sively?

In the epistle to the Ephesians, again, he
takes for the ground of an exhortation to con-
jugal affection, that “Christ loved the Church,
“ and gave himself for it, that he might sanc-
“ tify and cleanse it with the washing of wa-
“ ter by the word; that he might present it
“ to himself a glorious Church, not having
“ spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that
“ it should be holy and without blemish^d.”
Sanctification and purity, unspotted and un-
blemished holiness, are here attributed to the
Church of Christ, as the effect of the washing
of water. But what water could produce
such an effect without the operation of the
Spirit? And what rite is performed by their
joint operation, but the sacrament of baptism?
And by what appropriate scriptural term is
the effect of their united influence to be de-
nominated, but by that of regeneration?

Similar questions arise from the affirmation
of the same Apostle to the Corinthians: “By

^d Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.

“one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Allow the baptism here spoken of to be used in a literal sense, and its spiritual, and in course its regenerating influence follows. Maintain that the use of the term is figurative, as the Quaker does in this and other passages of the New Testament, and with him you may renounce the sacrament of baptism; which perhaps it were more consistent to do altogether, than to retain the ceremony, and to divest it, as far as can depend upon the denial, of that which gives it its value.

The same inference is to be drawn from St. Peter's first exhortation to the Jews after our Saviour's ascension; “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The same inference follows from his language on his first preaching to the Gentiles: when, although the Holy Ghost immediately fell on them, so that they spake with tongues, and some might probably have thought it unnecessary to baptize such as had already received the Holy Ghost, yet (says Bishop Beveridge) “the Apostle, considering that this gift of the Holy Ghost was only to enable them to speak with tongues, not to regenerate them,

e 1 Cor. xii. 13.

f Acts ii. 38.

“inferred from thence that they ought the
“rather to be baptized: Can any man, said
“he, forbid water, that these should not be
“baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost
“as well as we? And he therefore command-
“ed them to be baptized in the name of the
“Lord; which he would never have done, if
“it had not been necessary for them to be
“born of water and of the Spirit^s.” And
such is the inference from Ananias’s admoni-
tion to Paul, after his miraculous conversion;
“And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be
“baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on
“the name of the Lord^h.”

It may be here not unimportant to remark,
that as we argue for baptism being the vehicle
of regeneration, because it is the vehicle of
salvation to which regeneration is necessary;
so also we may come to the same conclusion
from this consideration; that all Christians, all
persons who have been baptized, are indiscrimi-
nately said to have been regenerated. In
the passages already cited from several epistles
of St. Paul, it will have appeared, that he ap-
plies the term to large societies of believers;
especially to the churches at Rome and at Co-
losse. The language, which he addresses to

^s Bp. Beveridge’s Works, vol. i. p. 305.

^h Acts ii. 38.

Titus upon that subject, appears to be at least equally comprehensive; whilst St. Peter and St. John, each in a catholic epistle, addressed to immense societies of Christians scattered throughout the east, describe the persons whom they address as “sons of Godⁱ,” “begotten and born again^k.” But wherefore, unless their regeneration was the effect of an ordinance, of which all Christians in general partake? And if so, of what ordinance but of baptism?

From these several authorities I apprehend it to be established, as the general doctrine of the Gospel, that the new birth or regeneration, which is pronounced by our Saviour to be necessary to salvation, or (as he expresses it) to seeing or entering into the kingdom of God, is effected by the operation of the Holy Ghost at baptism. To this purpose beautiful and satisfactory is the illustration of the learned Joseph Mede, where, speaking of St. Paul's text to Titus, as making baptism and regeneration type and countertype, he adds, “The same
“ was represented by that vision at our Sa-
“ viour's baptism of the Holy Ghost descend-
“ ing upon him, as he came out of the water,
“ in the similitude of a dove: for I suppose,” he continues, “ that in that baptism of his the

ⁱ 1 John iii. 2.

^k 1 Pet. i. 3, 23.

“ mystery of all our baptisms was visibly acted; and that God says to every one truly baptized, as he said to him, in a proportionable sense, Thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased¹.” Indeed to deny the regenerating efficacy of baptism is to deny its sacramental character; to strip it of that which makes it most valuable; and to reduce it to a mere “ beggarly element,” a form without substance, a body without spirit, a sign without signification; it is as one found Divine describes it, “ to make it no better than a piece of solemn pageantry^m;” or (to adopt the comparison of the same learned writer to whom I lately referred) it is “ to make of it an empty shell, whose kernel is taken out, or a carcass whose soul is goneⁿ.” Of the folly of this conduct, and of the source from which it proceeds, one of our excellent Reformers strongly expressed his opinion, when he said, that “ in all ages the devil hath stirred up some light heads to esteem the sacraments but lightly, as to be empty and bare signs^o :” and of the tendency of this conduct we have a memorable proof in the Calvinistic Founder of Methodism, who deprecated

¹ Mede's Works, Disc. xvii.

^m Examination of Tilenus, p. 267.

ⁿ Mede's Works, Book i. Disc. xliii.

^o Latimer. See Ridley's Life of Bp. Ridley, p. 453.

“disputing about baptism, and other non-essentials, as the effect of a narrow spirit, a party sectarian zeal.” Strip the sacrament of its spiritual character, and we see to what it is avowedly reduced.

I am well aware, that no authority is admissible for the foundation of a doctrine, except that of the inspired writings. It is however sometimes of advantage to know, and it affords a strong collateral support to a doctrine if we can learn, how controverted expressions have been understood by those, who were most likely to be acquainted with their proper signification. The testimony of the ancient Fathers was esteemed one of the best criterions of the sense of the holy Scriptures concerning the sacraments, by “a worthy martyr of God, the glory of the English Reformation,” who endured the flames in support of the true evangelical doctrine of the Lord’s supper, and whose opinion of the other sacrament, coinciding with that of his brother in faith and martyrdom, already laid before you, is contained in his own declaration, that “as the body is nourished by the bread and wine at the communion, and the soul by grace and spirit with the body of Christ; even so in baptism the body is washed with

“ the visible water, and the soul is cleansed
“ from all filth by the invisible Holy Ghost⁴.”

It may therefore be useful to remark, and it will be a curious remark to those who bear in mind the assertion of one of our accusers about “ baptismal regeneration being the Diana of the present age;” that the opinions of the early Christians uniformly support the doctrine, which I have been deducing from the authority of Scripture. “ What Christ means “ by being born of water and of the Spirit,” observed Bishop Beveridge about 150 years ago, “ is now made a question; I say now; “ for it was never made so till of late years. “ For many ages together none ever doubted “ it, but the whole Christian world took it for “ granted, that our Saviour by these words “ meant only, that except a man be baptized “ according to his institution, he cannot enter “ into the kingdom of God: this being the “ most plain and obvious sense of the words, “ forasmuch as there is no other way of being “ born again of water as well as of the Spirit, “ but only in the sacrament of baptism.”

Baptism indeed and regeneration, the terms which specifically denote the outward sign and the spiritual grace, appear to have been

⁴ Ridley's Life of Bp. Ridley, p. 684, 669, 620.

⁵ Beveridge's Works, vol. i. p. 304.

employed by the early Christians, as expressions of the same import. "Whoever," says Justin Martyr, "are persuaded and believe, that the things taught and said by us are true, and undertake to live agreeably to them, are led by us to a place where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner, in which we were regenerated; for they are washed in the name of God the Father and Lord of all, of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, If ye be not regenerated, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And it is the doctrine of Austin, whose opinion will doubtless weigh with those, who represent his doctrines as the model of their own, that they, who partake of the sacrament of baptism, die unto sin, as Christ also died unto sin, that is, unto the flesh, the image of sin; and live, by being born again of the laver, as he by rising from the grave." And this doctrine he maintains without any limitation,

^s Ὅσοι ἀν πεισθῶσι, καὶ πιστευῶσιν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα τὰ ὑφ' ἡμῶν διδασκομένα καὶ λεγόμενα εἶναι, καὶ βιοῦν ἕως δυναδῶν ὑπὸ χωνῶνται, — ἀγόνται ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐνθα ὕδωρ ἐστὶ, καὶ τρόπον ἀναγεννησῶσιν, ὃν καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ἀναγεννηθῆμεν, ἀναγεννῶνται ἐπ' ὀνοματὸς γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὄλων καὶ δεσποτοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τοῦ σωτηρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ πνευματὸς ἁγίου, τὸ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τότε λουτρον ποιοῦνται. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς εἶπεν, ἀν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, οὐ μὴ εἰσελθῆτε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. *Just. Mart. Apol. ii.*

or rather excepting against every limitation, in point of age. "For" (he subjoins) "from the infant newly born, even to the decrepit old man, as no one is to be prohibited from baptism, so there is no one who does not die unto sin in baptism: but infants die only to original sin, adults to all their sins, whatsoever they have added by their evil lives to that which they contracted at their births." But, not to multiply quotations to this effect from the writers of antiquity, I adopt the words of a learned and sound Divine of the last century, after whose masterly discussion of the subject it would appear presumptuous in me to attempt it, did it not fall in with the general course of inquiry to which I have been led by the current of opinion in certain popular sects; and I observe in his language that "it has been well proved at

† *Ipsum est, quod in nobis celebratur, magnum baptismatis sacramentum, ut quicumque ad istam pertinent gratiam, moriantur peccato, sicut ipse peccato mortuus dicitur, quia mortuus est carni, hoc est, peccati similitudini; et vivat a lavacro renascendo, sicut ipse a sepulchro resurgendo, quamlibet corporis ætatem gerant. A parvulo enim recens nato usque ad decrepitum senem, sicut nullus est prohibendus a baptismo, ita nullus est qui non peccato moriatur in baptismo. Sed parvuli tantum originali; majores autem etiam iis omnibus moriuntur peccatis, quæcunque male vivendo addiderunt ad illud quod nascendo traxerunt.* *Augustin. Enchirid. xvi.*

“ large, beyond all reasonable contradiction,
 “ that both the Greek and Latin Fathers not
 “ only used the word regeneration for baptism,
 “ but so appropriated it also to baptism, as to
 “ exclude any other conversion or repentance,
 “ not considered with baptism, from being
 “ signified by that name; so that according to
 “ the ancients, regeneration or new birth was
 “ either baptism itself, (including both sign
 “ and thing;) or a change of man’s spiritual
 “ state, considered as wrought by the Spirit in
 “ or through baptism.”

The doctrine being thus generally establish-
 ed, it rests with those, who contend for any
 other regeneration, to show either the excep-
 tions to its taking place at baptism; or that,
 having then taken place, it may afterwards be
 repeated. We have, as I believe, and as I
 trust hath been sufficiently demonstrated, scrip-
 tural authority for asserting, that baptism is
 the vehicle of the new birth; so that although
 I dare not make, I could not controvert the
 assertion, if made in the language of Bishop
 Hopkins, without the limitation with which
 he qualifies the proposition, that “ baptismal
 “ regeneration must be acknowledged by all,
 “ that will not wilfully shut their eyes against

u Waterland on Regeneration. See Churchman’s Re-
 membrancer, N^o. I. p. 9.

“the clear evidence of Scripture*.” And if ever the new birth be not conveyed by baptism, rightly administered; or if, when once regenerated, it be (I will not say necessary, but) possible for any one to be born again, doubtless there is scriptural authority to that purpose. Let the authority then be adduced. Let it be shown from holy writ, that any person, to whom baptism was rightly administered, was not regenerated; let it be shown, that any person, having been once baptized, is described under any circumstances whatever of repentance, reformation, renovation, or conversion, to have been again regenerated; let it be shown, that the Apostles, who are perpetually exhorting their Christian converts to changes such as these, do once exhort them to become regenerate; do once enforce the necessity of it; or even affirm, or at least insinuate, its possibility; and we may then perceive some reason for wavering in our belief. It will then be ample time to condemn us for error, when we can be convicted from the oracles of truth: meanwhile, standing, as we trust we do, on the unshaken rock of the Gospel, let us not be accused of a heathenish superstition, until the Gospel can be brought to confute us.

* Works, vol. ii. p. 423. 8vo. ed.

The error of our accusers appears to have arisen from disregarding the outward form of regeneration; from an inattention to the union intended by our Saviour when he said, that we must be born of water and of the Spirit; an inattention, of which Calvin set the example by contending, that the expressions "water and the Spirit mean only the Spirit, "who cleanses after the manner of water":" and from a consequent confusion between regeneration and renovation or conversion, with which it has often been identified, but from which it ought clearly to be distinguished. Let me not be esteemed presumptuous, or insensible to the authority of a venerable name, if I observe, that a celebrated Prelate, who ranks especially high in the estimation of certain members of our Church, appears to have been under the influence of this confusion; for he unequivocally avers, that in many places of Scripture regeneration is ascribed to the holy ordinance of baptism, as one of the effects of it, and explains the *λουτρον παλιγγενειας*, the bath of regeneration, mentioned by St. Paul, to signify that baptismal

Modum hic indicat, quo regenerat nos Deus, nempe per aquam et Spiritum; quasi diceret, per Spiritum, qui, purgando et irrigando fideles animas, vice aquæ fungitur. Aquam ergo et Spiritum simpliciter accipio pro Spiritu, quia aqua est. *Calv. Instit. lib. iv. cap. xvi. sect. 25.*

water, wherein we are buried with Christ; and nevertheless considers this baptismal regeneration, as merely admitting us members of the visible Church, and not as intitling us to eternal life; and contends for another regeneration, independent of the washing by water, and identified by him with conversion, renovation, and the like^z. Such a change of heart may be wrought either before, or after, baptism; in persons either regenerate, or unregenerate; it qualifies them for regeneration, if unbaptized; it restores them to the privileges of baptism, which they may have forfeited by being hardened in sin; it accompanies those who are, humanly speaking, good, through the whole course of the Christian life. St. Paul was converted three days before he was baptized: the incestuous Corinthian, who had been excommunicated from the society of his brethren, was restored to them on his repentance; and Simon Magus, “who” (as Bishop Wilson says) “had received the washing of regeneration, and so was intitled to partake upon his repentance^a,” was exhorted by the Apostle to repent of his wickedness, and to “pray God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven:” and all of us

^z See Bp. Hopkins's Works, vol. ii. p. 492, 468, 476.

^a See Wilson's Works, vol. iv. p. 412.

are instructed to pray, agreeably to apostolical language, that "being regenerated and adopted for the children of God, we may be daily renewed by his Holy Spirit." But where are we instructed to pray after baptism for regeneration? Where is it intimated that the Corinthian was born again, subsequently to his fall? Where was Simon Magus admonished of the necessity of undergoing another new birth? Or where is St. Paul described as regenerated, until Ananias baptized him and washed away his sins? That he was converted, and that his heart was renewed, is evident from the language, which he uttered when he had fallen to the earth, and from the obedience which he paid to the voice from heaven. That he was not regenerated until a later period is equally evident; for when Ananias called on him to be baptized, he was still under the pollution of his sins. I am aware indeed that we shall be told, that during the intermediate time he was experiencing the pangs and agonies of the new birth. The assertion may be permitted to pass; for a gratuitous assumption needs not to be seriously confuted. More deserving of our attention, and better calculated to give us correct notions, because more agreeable to the representations of Scripture, is the following statement of the learned and judicious Hooker: "As we are not naturally men without

“ birth, so neither are we Christian men in the
“ eye of the Church of God, but by new birth ;
“ nor, according to the manifest ordinary
“ course of divine dispensation new born, but
“ by that baptism, which both declareth and
“ maketh us Christians. In which respect we
“ justly hold it to be the door of our actual
“ entrance into God’s house, the first apparent
“ beginning of life ; a seal perhaps to the
“ grace of election before received, but to our
“ sanctification here, a step that hath not any
“ before it^b.”

It has been judged, that the error, which I am combating, derives support from the words of St. John, that “ whosoever is born of God
“ doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth
“ in him, and he cannot commit sin, because
“ he is born of God^c.” Whence it is contended, that as baptismal regeneration does not secure a man from sin, another greater and better new birth must be added to supply the defect.

I shall not detain you at present by insisting on the impossibility of any man attaining to a state of sinless perfection, which these words, if strictly interpreted, assert ; because a more

^b Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. chap. lx. vol. ii. p. 248. Oxf. edition.

^c 1 John iii. 9.

convenient opportunity will be afforded me of entering upon a full discussion of that conceit. But I shall be satisfied with contending at present, that the conclusion is absurd, from a consideration of the words themselves and of their context.

It will, I presume, be admitted, that the appellations of "born of God" and "the sons of God" are controvertible terms: that if they occur in the same composition, and especially within a few sentences of each other, they must be understood of the same description of persons; at least, that what may be affirmed generally of the one, cannot be denied of the other. Now in the passage before us, the Apostle affirms, that "whosoever is born of God cannot sin;" and a few verses before he affirms, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God:" so that connecting the two assertions together, he will be made to affirm, that all the persons, to whom his epistle was addressed, were incapable of sinning; a hazardous affirmation this, if it be considered, that the epistle was certainly addressed to large societies of Christians; probably to those, who were dispersed throughout the provinces of the Greater and the Lesser Asia^d.

The truth appears to be, that St. John in-

^d See Preface to Pyle's Paraphrase.

tended to give a description of those persons, who, having been regularly adopted for the sons of God by the appointed means, continued to act in a manner worthy of their adoption, by striving to profit by the grace of God, which would then effectually preserve them from the commission of the grosser sins. "Every regenerate person," says Bishop Taylor, in a passage which well explains the meaning of the Apostle, "is in a condition, whose very being is a contradiction and an opposite design to sin. When he was regenerate and born anew of water and of the Spirit, the seed of God, the original of piety was put into him, and bidden to increase and multiply. The seed of God in St. John is the same with the word of God in St. James, by which he begat us; and as long as this remains, a regenerate person cannot be given up to sin; for when he is, he quits his baptism, he renounces the covenant, he alters his relation to God in the same degree as he enters into a state of sin." The words of the Apostle therefore are to be considered as a caution to the regenerate, not to rely on their admission into filiation with God, as sufficient to secure their eternal happiness; but to live up to their

^c Bp. Taylor's *Life of Christ*, part ii. sect. 12.

high vocation, lest they should ultimately lose the privileges of their adoption by disobedience or unbelief, and become as though they had not been born again.

Such was partly the design of the epistle, which was directed against the errors of the Nicolaitans and other heretics, who taught, that the mere external profession of the Christian faith, and the privilege of being begotten into the true Church, would bring men to happiness, whatever were their lives and practices^f. And such appears to be the proper import of the particular passage that I have quoted. But neither it, nor any other passage in St. John, nor any other text of Scripture, appears to me to authorise the doctrine of a second, or of any other distinct from baptismal regeneration.

Under the limitation here contended for, we may admit the position of an acute writer, that “the views, dispositions, and conduct of “real Christians invariably characterise the “regenerate children of God in Scripture^g.” Under the same limitation too may be admitted that other position, by which discredit is sometimes attempted to be brought on the

^f Preface to Pyle's Paraphrase.

^g Overton, p. 109.

doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that “there
“ is an infallible connection between regene-
“ ration and salvation, so that all, that were
“ baptized in their infancy, must necessarily be
“ saved^h.” Positions, which are true, pre-
cisely to the same extent as the assertion of
the Apostle, that “by baptism we are dead
“ unto sin and are freed from sin,” and as the
promise of our Saviour, that “he that believeth
“ and is baptized shall be saved;” in other
words, they are true of those persons, who are
preserved by faith and obedience in the posses-
sion of those privileges, to which by baptism
they were admitted: but in a more extended
signification they are by no means correct;
and in the unqualified terms, wherein they are
often conveyed, are calculated to perplex and
mislead.

If now what has been advanced be true, it
must be an error for persons baptized in their
infancy to describe any subsequent period of
their lives as “a season of unregeneracyⁱ,” and
to call upon men once baptized to become
regenerate; for no other new birth can take
place in this world. In fact we know of only
three lives, and three correspondent births.

^h See Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, 1805. p. 39.
Simpson's *Plea for Religion*, p. 56. Whitefield's *Eigh-
teen Sermons*, p. 350.

ⁱ Hawker's *Zion's Pilgrim*, p. 3.

Once we are born into the natural life, being born of Adam; once we are born into the spiritual life, being born of water and of the Spirit; and once also, if we take care to profit by our baptismal privilege, we may be born into a life of glory, being born of the resurrection at the last day. Into our spiritual life, with which we are at present concerned, as into the others also, we are born once: to say that we are born into it more than once, has no foundation in reason, no analogy in nature, nor (what is much stronger to the purpose) has it any warrant in Scripture. The condition of the Christian life is well described by one of our Reformers, in a work bearing the sanction of authority, where he distinguishes the uses of the sacraments; that “as in baptism we have been once born again, so by the Lord’s supper we are perpetually nourished and supported to a spiritual and eternal life^k.” It is indeed in our spiritual, as in our natural, life: as we may be ill in health, and may grow better and recover, but born again we cannot be; so we may be spiritually ill, and again be renewed or reformed; but in that case we still hope for everlasting salvation

^k Sicuti in baptismo semel renati sumus, ita Cœna Domini ad vitam spiritualem atque sempiternam jugiter alimur atque sustentamur. *Noelli Catechismus*. Enchirid. Theol. vol. ii. p. 222.

upon the ground of the covenant, into which we were originally baptized: for inasmuch as there is but "one baptism," so there is but one regeneration in this world; and as we cannot be baptized again, so cannot we be a second time regenerated, or a second time be born again.

Let it not be supposed that the present argument is a mere question of words: far indeed, very far from it. The abuse of words in this, as in many other cases, leads to material errors in opinion, and to serious evils in practice.

Let us figure to ourselves a man, educated according to the principles of the Church of England, but seduced from "the words of truth and soberness" which she delivers on the subject of regeneration; and inticed or terrified into the popular belief that he is no Christian, and is not in a state of salvation, until he feel the pangs of the modern new birth. No violence will be done to nature and probability, if we suppose him reasoning with himself in some such manner as the following:

' When an infant, I was baptized according
' to the order of the national Church; and the
' Minister pronounced by her directions, that I
' was regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and re-
' ceived by our most merciful Father as his own

‘ child by adoption. As soon as I was able to
‘ learn, I was taught what a great blessing was
‘ then conferred upon me; and that, by having
‘ been admitted to baptism, I had been made
‘ the child of God, and had undergone a death
‘ unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.
‘ When I had been sufficiently instructed to
‘ be confirmed by the Bishop, I heard from
‘ him a repetition of the comfortable assurance,
‘ that God had vouchsafed to regenerate me
‘ by water and the Holy Ghost, and to give
‘ me forgiveness of all my sins. And I have
‘ since periodically joined with my brother
‘ Christians in making our grateful acknow-
‘ ledgments to Almighty God, for being re-
‘ generate and made his children by adoption
‘ and grace.

‘ The Church has thus uniformly instructed
‘ me to look back upon regeneration, as a
‘ thing which is passed: she has never taught
‘ me to look forward to it, as a thing which is
‘ to come; she has never bid me desire and
‘ pray for it, as a thing necessary; she has
‘ never warned me to expect it, as a thing ex-
‘ pedient; she has never led me to regard it,
‘ as a thing possible. I am now however con-
‘ vinced, notwithstanding her assurances, com-
‘ fortable as they were, and her instructions,
‘ found and scriptural as they appeared to be,
‘ that Verily, verily, I must be born again.

‘ What can I think of such a Church ? Can
‘ I regard her as a pillar and ground of the
‘ truth ? Can I reverence her, who so grossly
‘ deluded me by a visionary regeneration, and
‘ threw an impenetrable veil over that, which
‘ alone is effectual ? Who taught me to think
‘ that I was in the way of salvation, when I
‘ had not yet passed the threshold ? Who made
‘ me believe I was a child of God, when I
‘ was still a child of the Devil ? Who treated
‘ me as a Christian, when I was nothing but a
‘ “ baptized heathen ? ” Away with such an un-
‘ scriptural Church ! With such a mother of
‘ deceit and falsehood ! Away with such a
‘ monster from the earth !

‘ What too shall I think of the Minister,
‘ who instructed me, according to the Liturgy
‘ and Articles of that Church, of which he is
‘ too faithful a son ? He recited to me her opi-
‘ nions in words of her own providing ; and
‘ he pretended to support them from the pulpit
‘ on the authority of the Bible. But he is
‘ blind ; he is ignorant ; he saw for me visions
‘ of peace, when there was no peace ; he
‘ spoke of my having been quickened by the
‘ Holy Spirit, who had infused into me a new
‘ principle of life, when I was still dead in
‘ trespasses and sins. Can such an one be
‘ a preacher of the Gospel ?

‘ What again shall I think of baptism ; of

‘ that which I have been wont to consider as
 ‘ the laver of regeneration ; of that, which I
 ‘ have been taught is a sacrament, consisting of
 ‘ an outward visible sign, and an inward spi-
 ‘ ritual grace ? Truly it doth not regenerate ;
 ‘ it conveys no effectual regeneration ; it is
 ‘ destitute of an inward spiritual grace ; it is
 ‘ no sacrament ; it is a non-essential.’

It will not have appeared perhaps that a syl-
 lable has been here suggested, more than would
 probably be uttered, or than probably has been
 in effect uttered, by persons in the situation
 that I have supposed. And if a man can
 bring his mind to think thus meanly of bap-
 tism, ordained as it was by Christ himself, with
 a promise of salvation annexed to its legitimate
 administration ; what will he think of Christ’s
 other ordinances ? What of the other sacra-
 ment, the holy communion of Christ’s body
 and blood ? If the spiritual part of baptism be
 denied, why should the spiritual part of the
 communion be allowed ? If water be not really
 the laver of regeneration, why should bread
 and wine be spiritually the body and blood of
 Christ, and convey strength and refreshment to
 the soul ? Surely it is not too much to affirm,
 that the stripping of one of God’s ordinances
 of that, which constitutes its essential value,
 has a natural tendency to bring the efficacy of
 the others into question, and to diminish at

least, if not to annihilate, a man's respect for them as means of spiritual grace.

In this condition perhaps he will continue, sometimes exulting in hope, and sometimes sunk in despondency; waiting for an extraordinary impulse of the Holy Spirit, and neglecting the means of procuring his ordinary sanctifying graces; until the moment approach, in which, under the influence of some powerful preacher, whose word is sharper than a two-edged sword, he is to undergo his mysterious regeneration; a regeneration, wherein, instead of being born himself of water and of the Spirit, Christ is to be "born in his heart as he was born in the Virgin's womb;" a regeneration, without undergoing the pangs of which he is taught that "he may flatter himself that he may go to heaven, but will certainly find himself miserably mistaken in the end:" when, having experienced a state of horror, agony, and despair, which mocks the language of description, and which it were too painful, if it were possible, to describe; a state of pangs and travails, which is necessary to be sustained by every one ere Christ be formed in him; a state, which has been compared by those who have felt its horrors, to the agonies of death,

¹ -Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 307.

^m Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 18.

the pains of hell, and tortures inflicted by infuriate devilsⁿ; he fancies that he is begotten again! that he is born of the Holy Spirit of God!

What will be the future life of a man thus regenerated, I do not venture to pronounce. But in noticing some evil consequences of a doctrine, which, for the spiritual grace attendant upon the holy ordinance of Christ, substitutes a wild and fanciful regeneration of man's invention, we may be allowed to speculate on the effects likely to be produced in one thus initiated to the new birth. To speculate, did I say, on probable effects? Rather to call to mind effects which have notoriously ensued, and to consider whether they are not such as sober reason might have foreseen.

The history of some popular modern sects does strictly tally with the expectations of reason: and if among the regenerated of later days, who have been thus tormented into the new birth, many have subsequently been driven through every species of extravagance to the very extreme of irrecoverable madnessⁿ; if many, after a temporary exultation in the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, have re-

ⁿ Wesley's Journals, and Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. vol. iii. p. 23. and following pages.

* See an instance in Wesley's Journals, No. V. p. 81. Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. vol. iii. p. 11—14.

lapsed into intolerable perplexities, distraction, and despair^p; if many, after fancying themselves purified even as Christ is pure, have turned back, and become twofold more the children of hell than before^q; if many, who pretended to be conformed to the image of Christ, have at that very instant continued under the dominion of grievous sins; if many, who imagine themselves thoroughly renewed in the image of the meek and lowly Jesus, swell with pharisaical pride, thanking God that they are not as other men are; and if almost all regard their less favoured brethren with scorn, and “say, Stand by thyself; come not near to me, for I am holier than thou;” and condemn those, who admit not their pretensions and discountenance their conceits, as unconverted unregenerate sinners; it is no more than might have been expected from men, who depreciate God’s holy ordinance, deny its sanctifying efficacy, and convert the workings of a feverish brain, or the impulse of visionary feelings, into the operation of the Spirit of truth.

Such a doctrine the Enthusiast may teach, and the deluded multitude may follow. But it was a very different regeneration, for which

^p *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* vol. ii. p. 3, 140.

^q *Wesley’s Farther Appeal*, p. 130.

Paul prepared the Gentiles, when he was sent to “open their eyes, and to turn them from “darkness to light, and from the power of “Satan unto God:” and it was a very different vision to which he was obedient, when he repelled the charge of insanity by speaking forth the words of truth and soberness; and forced from the royal Jew that memorable and disinterested confession, “Almost thou “persuadest me to be a Christian.”

Now unto God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three persons in the unity of one Godhead, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

† Acts xxvi. 18.

DISCOURSE VII.

MATT. xviii. 2, 3.

*And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,
And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

ALL the dispensations of Providence are tempered by an harmonious principle; and in the moral, as well as in the natural, world, every effect has an evident relation to its cause. In operations, whether intellectual or material, it is irrational to expect similar results in cases, between which an important difference prevails, as to the powers of the agent, the disposition of the patient, and the numerous contingent circumstances, by which they are respectively modified.

Eye-witnesses of the life, miracles, and resurrection of Christ; capable from their personal observation of demonstrating the fulfil-

ment of ancient prophecies; armed themselves also with miraculous power, and endued by the Holy Ghost with the faculty of speaking the language of every nation under heaven; the Apostles preached the doctrines of Christianity to men, whose senses bore testimony to the supernatural endowments of the preachers: and thus "in the demonstration of the " Spirit and of power," they converted multitudes to a steadfast belief in Christ, and to consequent holiness of living. But therefore to suppose that the eloquence of a mere human preacher, assisted only by the ordinary visitations of divine grace, is to be followed by the immediate conversion of multitudes of sinners, to whom the truths of the Gospel have been long familiar, to uniform habits of Christian purity, were as gross an absurdity as to suppose, that a peasant could verify the boast of Archimedes, and move the earth; or that an astronomer could realize the fiction of romance, and divert the sun from his orbit.

The doctrine of conversion, as it is delivered by some of our modern sectaries, is so much at variance with the more sober, more rational, and (I trust) more evangelical doctrine of the national clergy; and it is so vehemently enforced as absolutely necessary to salvation, and the preaching of it is represented as so indispensable a criterion of the preaching of the

Gospel^a, that it of course claims a place in the present inquiry; and it is so closely connected, and by some persons so thoroughly identified with regeneration, which was examined in my last discourse, that it naturally presents itself for the subject of our present reflections.

Conversion, according to our notions, may not improperly be said to consist of a rational conviction of sin, and sense of its wretchedness and danger; of a sincere penitence and sorrow of heart, at having incurred the displeasure of a holy God; of steadfast purposes of amendment with the blessing of the divine grace; of a regular and diligent employment of all the appointed means of grace; and of a real change of heart and life, of affections and conduct, and a resolute perseverance in well-doing.

The triumph of such conversion as this is not attended by alternations of extreme joy and despondency; of the most ecstatic rapture, and the most gloomy despair; sometimes by heavenly exultation, and sometimes by the agonies of hell. It has little of what is brilliant and dazzling to decorate; little of what is magnificent and imposing to dignify and exalt it. It cannot be described as intended by the Lord to set the world in a flame^b: the

^a See Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 130.

^b Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 200.

minister, who is God's instrument to effect it, cannot be pompously represented to be carried as on eagle's wings^c; or be elevated into a comparison with Joshua, going from city to city, and subduing the devoted nations: its direction cannot be said to be marked out by a sign from heaven, as the cloud employed by Providence to conduct the people of Israel on their march through the wilderness^d: its progress cannot be described to be terrible as an army with banners^e: its effects cannot be extolled into a rivalry with the success of the victorious and imperial Constantine^f. But if its operations are slow, they are certain; if its effects are milder, they are more secure; if its conquests are less extensive, and it draws a less numerous crowd of suppliants at its chariot-wheels, it exerts a more permanent dominion over those, whom it has subdued. Unambitious of earthly distinction, and contented with doing good, its throne is the humble and contrite spirit, and its sceptre is righteousness and peace.

But I am anticipating remarks, which might appear more pertinent after the comparison, which I propose to institute in the present

^c Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 367.

^d Ibid. vol. i. p. 370, 407, 451, 477.

^e Ibid. vol. i. p. 398.

^f Wesley's Farther Appeal, p. 92.

discourse, between the scriptural and methodistical notions of conversion. The result will probably authorise us to conclude, that by declining to adopt the latter, and by representing conversion with a very different complexion from those artificial colours, with which it has been disguised by the enthusiast, we are ascribing to it its legitimate character, and maintaining the simplicity of the Gospel and “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven:” such was our Saviour’s warning to the unbelieving Jews; and it was a warning highly necessary to be impressed, not upon them alone, but upon men of every description to whom the Gospel was originally preached. The Gospel militated against the prejudices, the pride, and the corrupt passions of all men: nor, unless they were subdued and superseded by humility, docility, modesty, simplicity, and that comparative innocence, which are the most distinguishing qualities of childhood, could it be effectually received. Among the Jews, he who obstinately resisted, and he who more actively persecuted, the faith of Christ; the Pharisee, who commended his own righteousness, and trusted to an exact performance of the ritual ordinances of the law; the Sadducee, who denied a resurrection;

the Scribe, who was zealous for the Mosaic institutions; even the disciple, who was ambitious of sitting on the right hand or on the left of his Master, in what he expected would be a temporal kingdom; and generally every child of Abraham, who was habitually and fondly attached to the national belief of the perpetuity of their exclusive privileges: among the Gentiles, those who were spoiled and seduced by philosophy and vain deceit; the sceptic, who doubted, and the infidel, who denied, the existence or the providence of a supreme Being; and the idolater, who worshipped the creature more than the Creator, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man: and universally, both among Jews and among Gentiles, those who were living under the dominion of sin, or were not duly convinced of the necessity of a Redeemer: every man, who was subject to prepossessions such as these, (and they comprise almost every soul of man that breathed,) must have been converted from his errors whether in principle or in practice: his heart must have been opened, and softened, and rendered capable of receiving fresh and totally different impressions, before he could become a believer in the truth, or a performer of the duties, of the Gospel.

Every man, who now also is under the in-

fluence of similar prepossessions, must now also undergo a similar change. Every unbeliever and every sinner, although made by baptism a member of Christ and a child of God, must be, in a certain sense, converted, if he would ultimately succeed to his inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. But to fancy, that every Christian whatever must experience a conversion in order to be in a state of salvation:—to assert, with the Arminian Founder of Methodism, that “ he who knows no time, when he “ had need of such a vast and mighty change “ as a change from darkness to light, from the “ power of Satan unto God, from death unto “ life, may by this also know, if he give him- “ self leave to think, that he is not born of the “ Spirit, that he has never yet known God, “ but has mistaken the voice of nature for the “ voice of God ^g :” —to suppose, with his Calvinistic competitor, “ that in every Christian “ congregation there are two sorts of people, “ some that know Christ, and some that do “ not know him, some that are converted, and “ some that are strangers to conversion ^h ;” and to assert that “ every person must be converted “ or be damned, and that they who die in an

^g Wesley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 157.

^h Whitefield's Works, vol. v. p. 338.

“ unconverted state must be damned for everⁱ: ”
 —to contend, as is stated to be the opinion of our self-denominated evangelical brethren by their Apologist, that “ in order to a state of “ salvation a change of mind, of views, and “ dispositions must be effected in *every person*; “ wherever born, however educated, or of “ whatever external conduct^k: ”—this is a conceit, which revelation warrants not, and which reason and experience disclaim.

That no man, however near he may approach to the perfection of the Christian character, and however lovely an example he may exhibit of the beauty of holiness, is absolutely perfect and free from the dominion of sin, I readily admit, and shall hereafter have occasion to contend. Every man has been undoubtedly guilty of “ sins, negligences, and “ ignorances,” for which he will be brought to account, and will need the atoning blood of the Redeemer. But some humble Christians also undoubtedly there are, who, having been once regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, have so followed his heavenly motions, and improved his sanctifying graces; have so pursued the calm and blameless tenour of their

ⁱ Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 124, 292.

^k Overton's True Churchmen, &c. p. 160.

way; have preserved that childlike simplicity of character, and that childlike innocence of conduct, that their angels may not blush to behold the face of their heavenly Father.

Such was the conversation even under the Jewish law of Zacharias and Elizabeth, “ who “ were both righteous before God, walking in “ all the commandments and ordinances of “ the Lord blameless¹.” And if the ministration of Moses, which was in comparison a ministration of death, was thus glorious, how shall not the ministration of Christ, which is the ministration of the Spirit, be rather glorious? How shall not the covenant of God be established, wherein he hath bound himself by an oath to Abraham, that he would “ grant us “ a power to serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life^m?”

And are we to be told that Christians, such as these, must experience an intire change of heart, a thorough conversion of their ways? It is not to ascribe any merit to their righteousness; it is no prejudice to the precious efficacy of the Redeemer's blood, or to the all-sufficiency of the Holy Spirit, (God forbid!) to say that they need no conversion. By that blood they have been purified from the original corruption of their nature; by that blood

¹ Luke i. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8.

^m Luke i. 76.

they have been cleansed of their actual sins; by the Holy Spirit of God they have been regenerated; his preventing grace hath conducted them; his assisting grace hath cooperated with, and given effect to their zealous endeavours to persevere in the course of piety and virtue; his sanctifying influence renews and invigorates them day by day. Let God have all the glory of their continuance in their Christian career: but let it not be judged necessary that they should undergo “ a change of mind, of views, and dispositions,” when that change must be from holiness unto sin; let them not be subject to a conversion, which must be the very reverse of turning them from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God.

It is the remark of a learned Prelate, to whose labours in the discharge of a weighty and important office many of us have been indebted for instruction in sound theology, that “ we are not told in Scripture, as we are now imperiously called upon, to divide our hearers, being believers in Christianity in common, into the classes of converted and unconverted. There is indeed a conversion from infidelity; or a conversion from sin, or from any particular sin, or course of sinning. He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way (so saith St. James most divinely

“in a far other strain, and in the true spirit of
“Christianity) shall save a soul from death,
“and shall hide a multitude of sins. But that
“among men, baptized as Christians, taught
“from their infancy to believe the doctrines
“and practise the duties of Christianity, a spe-
“cial conversion also at some period of their
“life is necessary to stamp them true Chris-
“tians, is an unheard-of thing in the Gospel;
“and is plainly a novel institution of man.
“Thus taken it is a spurious substitute for the
“true hinge of Christianity, repentance; with
“which in Scripture we find it conjoined as
“one and the same: Repent, and be con-
“verted, that your sins may be blotted out.”

To represent conversion, then, as universally necessary to all Christians, because it was universally necessary to all men, before they became Christians, or because it is necessary to all, who, whether through unbelief or impiety, have become apostates, as it were, from the religion which they professed, is a distinguished and fundamental error in the methodistical creed. And it is likely to redound very little either to the advancement, or to the honour, of genuine Christianity, thus to confound those who are estranged from that faith or obedience, which are the duty of its professors,

* Bp. Randolph's Charge at Bangor, 1808. p. 16.

with those, who having remembered their Creator and devoutly submitted to be taught of him from their youth up, have conscientiously endeavoured both to believe and to live, as it becometh the followers of Christ.

In describing conversion as necessary to every professor of the Gospel, some of our self-denominated evangelical brethren appear to err in common with our more extravagant accusers: for, notwithstanding the more sober and qualified language of one, who seems to step forward as the advocate of their cause, and whom I always wish to mention with honour for his Christian moderation^o, their professed, and (if I mistake not) their more accredited advocate affirms, that “in order to a state of salvation such a change must be effected in every person, wherever born, however educated, or of whatever external conduct.” In the nature of the thing, however, and in the method of its being effected, where previous habits of irreligion and worldly-mindedness render it necessary, I trust we do not materially differ; for my own part, considering it in the light, in which it is represented by the former of these writers, or understanding with the latter, that it consists in “the actual reformation of the heart and character; that the author of

^o See Zeal without Innovation, pages 96. and following.

“ this happy change is the Holy Spirit, but
“ that it is generally effected, and is always to
“ be sought after, in the diligent use of the ap-
“ pointed means of grace; that it is no in-
“ stantaneous operation, which finishes the
“ whole business of religion at once, but that
“ it is the serious commencement of a work,
“ which it requires the vigorous exertions of
“ the whole life to complete^p :” considering
conversion, I say, in this light, I can cheer-
fully concur with our brethren in maintaining
the necessity of such a change to every one;
who is satisfied with mere nominal Christiani-
ty, or with any thing short of true Christian
holiness both of heart and life; although I
cannot but be of opinion that we are adhering
more closely to the simplicity of evangelical
truth, whilst, with our venerable Church, we
impress the necessity of such a change upon
our hearers by the appellation of a true re-
pentance; and that we are at the same time
more free from causing perplexity in the minds
of those, who are of themselves little capable
of discrimination; and that we more unequi-
vocally discountenance the unwarranted con-
ceits, by declining the phraseology, of enthu-
siasm.

To proceed: As the Methodists err in re-

^p Overton, p. 162, 163.

spect of the extent, by multiplying the subjects, of conversion; they err no less in respect of the rapidity, with which it is to be effected. It is represented as an operation, which is completed always suddenly; very frequently in a moment; instantaneously, and with the rapidity of lightning. "The Gospel," said one of their leaders, "like its Author, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and if preached as it ought to be, will prick numbers to the heart, and extort the cry of the trembling gaoler, What must I do to be saved? as surely now, as it did seventeen hundred years ago. These are the sudden and surprising effects I always desire to have; and I heartily pray God," he adds, addressing himself to a contemporary Prelate, "your Lordship and all your clergy may always see such effects in consequence of their preaching." And more fully, in order that the notion of an instantaneous change may not appear deficient in parallels and unsupported by the authority of Scripture, we are informed by the other great leader of the schism, who once entertained doubts concerning the doctrine, of which he afterwards became a determined advocate, "I could not comprehend what was meant by an instantaneous work;

“ I could not understand, how this faith could
“ be given in a moment; how a man could at
“ once be thus turned from darkness to light;
“ from sin and misery to righteousness and joy
“ in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures
“ again, touching this very thing, particularly
“ the Acts of the Apostles; but to my utter
“ astonishment found scarce any other in-
“ stances there of other than instantaneous
“ conversions; scarce any other so slow as that
“ of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs
“ of the new birth.” *

Now that we may not lose by such a summary reference to Scripture the benefit of that light, which a more ample examination of the instances there recorded is admirably calculated to supply; we will take a view of some of the most striking examples, which it contains, of sudden and instantaneous conversion: carrying with us at the same time this, not unimportant, remark, that the conversions there recorded are for the most part, if not entirely, conversions of Jews and Heathens, that is of unbelievers, to a belief in the Christian revelation; and not of hardened sinners to habits of piety and virtue. Their conversion indeed was followed by the fruits of a Christian

* Wesley's Journals, No. II. p. 92. Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 143.

faith ; but the conversion itself was a turning from darkness unto light ; from the obscurity of heathen superstition, or the comparative twilight of the Jewish revelation, to the Christian Day-spring, which visited them from on high : which first enlightened their understandings, and then guided their feet into the way of peace.

In the first place then, I observe, that, where the conversion was sudden or instantaneous, it was the consequence of miraculous evidence to the truth. When the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost added to the Church three thousand souls, they were men, who had been “amazed and confounded” by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the supernatural gift of tongues’. When five thousand men believed the word preached by Peter and John, it was whilst they were “filled with wonder and amazement” at the restoration of him, who had been lame from his mother’s womb’. It was the sight of the paralytic, who had been restored to health by the word of Peter, which occasioned all the people of Lydda and Saron to “turn unto the Lord.” It was the blindness inflicted by Paul on Elymas the sorcerer, which made the Proconsul of Asia “believe, in astonishment at the doctrine of the

^s Acts ii.

^t Ibid. iii. iv.

^u Ibid. ix.

“Lord.” It was the supernatural earthquake, and the composure, little less supernatural, of Paul and Silas, which forced from the jailor at Thyateira his earnest inquiry, “Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?” It was “the light from heaven above the brightness of the sun,” and the voice of “the heavenly vision,” which converted Paul himself from an active persecutor, into a most zealous propagator, of the truth. Such are the most striking examples, which the evangelical history affords, of sudden or instantaneous conversions. And need I insist more fully on the causes, to which they are to be immediately referred? Need I repeat a former observation, that, where such causes do not exist; such effects are not to be expected? And am I not warranted in affirming, notwithstanding the pretensions which some of the abettors of modern enthusiasm have advanced, that such causes do not at present exist?

In cases such as these, the chain of interrogatories employed heretofore by the Puritan, and now adopted by the Methodist, might easily have been answered; and the convert might have distinctly specified the place, the year, the month, the day, nay the very hour of the day, wherein he was wrought upon by the

* Acts xiii.

y Ibid. xvi.

z Ibid. ix. xxii. xxvi.

divine grace. But even in the primitive ages of the Church, we perceive the justice of our blessed Lord's remark, that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation^a;" and that more frequently it is "as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how^b."

Agreeably to this, it is to be noticed, secondly, that some of the conversions, specified in the Acts of the Apostles, were more gradually effected, than those which have now been cited. And it is equally worthy of notice, and it is precisely what a sober inquirer would expect, that those are the very conversions, which were not wrought by the immediate interposition of miraculous power, but were the consequence of a cool and deliberate attention to less overbearing evidence. If the conversion were wrought by a miracle, it must, one would suppose, be instantaneous: if resulting from the deductions of reason, it must in course be slower and more gradual.

Impressed with the "word of exhortation" delivered by St. Paul, but perhaps not thoroughly persuaded by his doctrine, the Gentiles of Antioch "besought that the same words might be preached unto them the

^a Luke xvii. 20.

^b Mark iv. 26, 27.

“ next sabbath-day^c.” The interval was probably employed in meditations and inquiries on the subject of his discourse : and when, on the appointed day, the Apostle resumed his argument, and tendered to the Gentiles the same salvation in Christ, which he had offered to the Jews, we read that “ they were glad, and “ glorified the word of the Lord ; and as many “ as were ordained, believed ;” as many as were disposed by previous preparation for eternal life ; as were fit or well-disposed for the kingdom of heaven^d. When Paul preached in the synagogue of Thessalonica, some Jews believed ; not instantly, upon his first addressing them ; but when “ on three sabbath-days he “ had reasoned with them out of the Scriptures ; opening and alledging, that Christ “ must needs have suffered, and risen again “ from the dead ; and that this Jesus, whom I “ preach unto you, is Christ^e.” And at Berea “ they received the word with readiness of “ mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, “ whether those things were so. Therefore “ many of them believed :” not suddenly, for that their conviction was gradual, the passage unquestionably indicates ; not being “ brought “ to God by force,” as Whitefield affirms of

^c Acts xiii.^d Luke ix. 62.^e Acts xvii.

his modern converts^f; not “finding God irresistibly acting upon their soul;” as Wesley pronounces of believers, that “the grace which “brings faith and thereby salvation into the “soul is irresistible at that moment^g;” not wrought upon by the Spirit of God, operating independently of, and in a manner distinguished from evidence, and argument, and moral suasion; but subsequently to, and in consequence of, their daily investigation of the Scriptures, and ingenuous comparison between them and the doctrine of the Apostle.

These examples may, I trust, be regarded as just specimens of the conversions, which prevailed in the primitive ages of Christianity, and which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: nor are they mutilated, or distorted, to give colour to a favourite system. To me they appear to mark out a very evident line of distinction between two different kinds of conversion; the one being rapidly effected by the overbearing evidence of the finger of God; the other being the slow and progressive result of a deliberate attention to the ordinary methods of conviction, and a willing and rational acquiescence in that result. This kind of con-

^f Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 94.

^g Wesley's Journals, No. V. p. 107.

version best agrees with the testimony of Irenæus, that, “ God redeems men from the apostate spirit not by force, but by persuasion^h ;” and with the notion, which others of the ancient Christians give of faith, consisting of a deliberate assent of the understanding, and a free consent of the will. “ Faith,” saith Clement of Alexandria, “ is a spontaneous acceptance and compliance with divine religionⁱ.” And, “ To be made at first,” saith Justin Martyr, “ was not in our power : but God persuadeth us to follow those things which he liketh, choosing by the rational faculties, which he hath given us ; and so leadeth us to faith^k.”

Examples of the latter kind it is surely most reasonable to expect, in times subsequent to the age of miracles. Where the miraculous testimony has ceased, it is to be expected, that the instantaneous effect should cease also : and as to the particular example of St. Paul, which

^h —ea quæ sunt sua redimens ab ea (scil. apostasia) non cum vi,—sed secundum suadellam ; quemadmodum decebat Deum, suadentem et non vim inferentem, accipere, quæ vellet. *Iren. lib. v. cap. i.*

ⁱ Πισις προληψις εκθεσιος εστι, θεοσεβειας συγκαταδεσις &c. *Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. p. 265.* See Barrow's Works.

^k Το μεν αρχην γενεσθαι εκ ημετερον ην το δε εξακολουθησαι οις φιλον αυτω, αιρουμενες δι' ων αυτος εδωρησατο λογικων δυναμεων, πειθει τε, και εις πισιν αγει ημας. *Just. Mart. Apol. ii. p. 58.*

410. *A special and instantaneous Conversion*

we have already seen cited, and on which the supporters of this novel doctrine of conversion are much disposed to dwell, I adopt the remark of an invaluable writer on this and its kindred topics, that “the conversion of St. Paul was not according to the common way and rule, but extraordinary; in regard whereof he may very well style himself an *abortive*. For the ordinary course is not for the kingdom of heaven to offer violence to us, and take us by force; but for us to do so by it¹.” “The dispensation of the Gospel,” says the same judicious writer, “which is the ministration of the Spirit, goes forth doubtless with a mighty power of conviction; but how far it works upon particular persons affected under the influences of it, is not so easily to be resolved. There are in the conversion of sinners cases extraordinary, which must not be drawn into example, nor prejudice the general rule, as in St. Paul, Austin, &c. But ordinarily, that there is some disposition and temper of mind, more apt than others to receive the effectual impressions of it, is most certain. Such is the honest and good heart in the parable; such are the honest and meek, and the poor in spirit: such as do the truth and the will of God, so

¹ Examination of Tilenus, p. 273.

“ far as their information serves them ; such
“ are the weary, and heavy-laden, and the
“ like ; they are resembled to sheep, and to
“ babes ; and are said to be of God, to have
“ learned the Father, and to know him. These
“ are said to be ordained, that is, disposed, and
“ in a fit posture for eternal life ; and of this
“ ingenuous and noble temper were the people
“ of Berea. They were, as it were, in the
“ suburbs ~~or~~ confines, not far from the king-
“ dom of God ; and upon the first call by the
“ word of grace, they obeyed and stepped into
“ it ^m.”

Not that I would be understood to assert, that Providence may not perhaps, even in the present day, be sometimes pleased to interpose in a manner more awful and impressivè, than is agreeable to the ordinary course of his proceedings ; and to arrest the sinner in his career of infidelity or wickedness ; and to turn him from darkness unto light.

But it is the error of enthusiasm to invert the order of God's proceedings ; and to mistake that for the rule, which in reality constitutes the exception. Under the influence of Methodism, which has been again and again represented by its founders and its disciples, as an extraordinary dispensation of Providence, “ in

^m Womack on False Principles, p. 227.

“favour of which God wrought a new thing upon the earth;” supported by the evidence of even “greater things than the raising of dead bodies to lifeⁿ,” and such, that “if men will not believe the evidence God has given that he sent it, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead^o,” men are taught to expect these instantaneous and irresistible conversions, as matters of course and of necessity. “Are not all these things,” demands its Calvinistic Founder, after giving his own colouring to the examples of miraculous conversion recorded in the Acts, “Are not all these things written for our learning? Is not God the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? And may he not now, as well as formerly, reveal his arm and display his power, in bringing sinners home to himself, as suddenly and instantaneously as in the first planting of the Gospel Church^p?” The consequence must naturally be, a carelessness about growing in grace, and a neglect of the outward regular means: and this carelessness and neglect are augmented by their being ostentatiously reminded of those, who are said to have been recovered from the most settled despair and the most excruciating horror by a kind of

ⁿ Wesley’s Sermons, vol. vi. p. 66.

^o Whitefield’s Works, vol. iv. p. 18. vol. i. p. 50.

^p Ibid. vol. iv. p. 161.

supernatural interposition, after having in vain habitually practised all the means of grace^a; and of others, who are said to have been impelled to wean themselves from inveterate wickedness, and to embrace a religious life, by a strong preternatural agency, without having practised those means at all^b.

It is true, we hear them telling their deluded followers, that they ought to be converted; expostulating with them for not choosing to be converted, and for putting off their conversion, for not turning to God directly; intreating them to repent and be converted: Yet wherefore? when in almost the same breath they tell them, that the Author of this conversion is the Holy Ghost; that it is not their own free will; it is not moral suasion; that nothing short of the influence of the Spirit of the living God can effect this change in their hearts^c.

Yet it was by outward and ordinary means, by evidence and arguments and moral suasion, that conversions of the ordinary kind were effected by the Apostles themselves. Such we have seen to be the case with respect to the

^a Wesley's Journals, No. III. p. 15, 32, 54.

^b See *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* vol. ii. p. 146. Wesley's Journals, No. III. p. 109.

^c Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, pages 118. and following.

Gentiles of Antioch, and the Jews of Thessalonica and Berea. And such was the mode adopted by Paul, when “the Lord opened the “heart” of Lydia of Thyateira, not to believe, but “to attend to the things spoken by” the Apostle^t; and by Philip, when he unfolded to the Ethiopian eunuch the memorable prophecy of Isaiah, and “began at the same scripture, “and preached unto him Jesus.”

Even when miraculous attestations were conferred in immediate aid of their ministry, the Apostles employed sound and sober arguments to convince the reason; and directed their efforts to enlighten the understandings, rather than to excite the passions and feelings, of their hearers. The sermon of Peter, which was occasioned by the astonishment consequent upon the miraculous gift of tongues, was occupied in convincing the inquiring multitude, that there was no illusion in their claim to inspiration; that it was a completion of one of their ancient prophecies, several others of which had also been fulfilled in the person of Christ; and in pressing on their minds the miraculous acts of his life, and his resurrection, and ascension into heaven. It was with similar arguments, that he wrought upon the minds of the five thousand, who flocked together on the cure of

^t Acts xvi.

^u Acts viii.

the lame man. And the conversion of Cornelius, the first fruits of the Gentile world, which had been begun by a supernatural vision, vouchsafed him in consideration of his acts of devotion and charity, correspondent to the proportion of knowledge which he possessed; was promoted by Peter bearing witness to the miracles and resurrection of Christ^x.

Very unlike these words of truth and soberness is the character of that preaching, which the missionary of Methodism, protesting as he does against the operation of moral persuasion upon the soul^y, employs for the instrument of his instantaneous conversions. Reason is left to slumber on her post; and her authority is superseded at least, if not annihilated, while, with language the most portentous, enforced by the most vehement articulation and the wildest extravagance of gesture, he gives the rein to the imagination, alarms the feelings, and stimulates the passions; now exciting an ecstatic love for Christ in terms of rapture, of which it hath been truly observed that “enthusiasts and pious mystics have been remarkably fond^z,” but which more become a preacher of the Koran, than of the Gospel;

^x Acts x.

^y Whitefield's Works, vol. i. p. 113.

^z Jortin's Remarks on Ecc. Hist. vol. ii. p. 81.

now dwelling with horrible delight on the terrors of God's wrath, and figuring to the shrinking mind, with a minute and frightful particularity, the agonies of hell and the torments of the damned.

The effect corresponds with its cause. But I dare not lay before your eyes specific and detailed examples of those formidable symptoms, which accompany the conversion of the disciple, and testify the efficacious power of the teacher. Alternate extremes of weeping and of laughter; sobs and shrieks and groans and wailing and gnashing of teeth; the voice now stifled by agony, and now bursting forth in tones of execration, blasphemy, and despair; tremors and faintings and droppings to the ground, as if struck by lightning and thunder; paleness and torpor; convulsions and contortions, as in the pangs of death, as out of the belly of hell; things terrible to behold, too horrible to be borne, and which words cannot describe: such are the symptoms of conversion, which the very preachers, who have excited them, have gloried to survey, have exulted and triumphed in enumerating^a.

^a See Wesley's Journals, N^o. III. p. 32, 36, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 61, 62, 71, 74, 75, 79, 82, 95, 98, &c. &c. *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* vol. iii. p. 23. and following pages. *Ibid.* p. 135, 136.

A scene more melancholy hardly presented itself to the powerful imagination of Milton^b, when he described, as the most loathsome consequence and most compendious testimony of human corruption, his visionary lazar-house,

—wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseas'd; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heartfick agony,——
Convulsions, epilepsies,——
Demoniack phrenzy, moaping melancholy,
And moonstruck madness——
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch.

But they are very different sensations from those of triumph and exultation, which he attributes to the conscious author of such misery, when he represents him exclaiming,

O miserable mankind, to what fall
Degraded, to what wretched state reserv'd!
—————Can thus
The image of God in man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debas'd,
Under inhuman pains? Why should not man,
Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And for his Maker's image sake exempt?

Such sentiments have undoubtedly passed

^b This paragraph was not delivered from the pulpit.

through the minds of many confiderate men, on perufing the annals of modern enthufiafm ; and contemplating their nature, fallen indeed and corrupted, but renewed, and repaired, and rendered capable of being conformed again to the image of Chrift, thus cruelly debafed to the extreme point of degradation.

And are we to be referred to Scripture for parallels to fuch extravagances as thefe? Are we to be fent to Scripture for examples of men in a ftate of intellectual defolation, reduced to a level with the very beafts that perish, in order that they may be clothed with finlefs perfection, and revel in the affurance of happinefs? Is not this more like making them pafs through fire to Moloch, than leading them with willing fteps to reft upon God's holy hill?

The Bible however is before us: let us turn to the cafes of conversion which it commemorates; and let us take them for the criterion of our opinions. And what refemblance to thefe enormities, which are described as the frequent proofs and fymptoms of conversion;—or even to thofe pangs and travails of foul, which, we are taught, that *all* experience before a thorough conversion is effected in the heart^c;—

^c Whitefield's Short Account of God's Dealings with the Rev. George Whitefield, p. 73.

to those "dreadful conflicts," that "plowing
 "up of the heart," which the enthusiast tells
 us "*must* take place in us, or we shall never be
 "prepared for the kingdom of heaven;"—
 what resemblance to these extravagances shall
 we discover in the compunction of the con-
 verts on the day of Pentecost, which led to
 the rational inquiry, "Men and brethren,
 "what shall we do?" and was followed by
 their "gladly receiving the word, and being
 "immediately baptized?" What resemblance
 to these extravagances do we perceive in the
 alarm of the keeper of the prison, which filled
 him indeed with a trembling anxiety for his
 salvation, but which did not disable him from
 listening to the word of the Lord, and attend-
 ing carefully on its preachers, and embracing
 the Gospel on a conviction of its truth? What
 symptom of an alienated mind do we discern
 in the considerate behaviour of Sergius Paulus?
 or in the collected language and calm joy of
 the Ethiopian eunuch? or in the reasonings
 and investigations of the Jews at Thessalonica
 and Berea? or in the exultation and praises of
 the lame man, or in the wonder and amaze-
 ment of those who beheld his cure, at Jerusa-
 lem? or in the gladness and thanksgivings of
 the Gentiles at Antioch? or in the attention

^d Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 94.

and humility of Lydia at Thyateira? or in the temperate conduct of the centurion and his household at Cæsarea, or of the multitude at Lydda and Saron? Or, that we may meet the enthusiast on his favourite and strongest ground; what features of resemblance can we trace between the conversions of the disciples of Methodism; and that of the Apostle St. Paul? We have authority for affirming, that, after Paul had recovered from the instantaneous effect of "the heavenly vision," which met him on the way, and he was led by the hand and brought into Damascus, "he was three days "without sight, and neither did eat nor drink;" that he prayed; and that he was visited with a supernatural notice of the approaching restoration of his sight. But on what authority is it affirmed, that during these three days he continued, not only sick in body, but "under "great agonies of soul," labouring (according to the phraseology of enthusiasm) in the pangs and travails of the new birth? That the repentance of St. Paul for his persecution of the Gospel was sincere and perfect, and that the distress of mind which he experienced on a discovery of his error, however "verily he had "thought with himself" that he had been in the line of his duty, was intense, no man per-

^e Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. vol. iii. p. 135.

haps in his senses will doubt. That his repentance was of that character, which is intended by great agonies of soul, and by the pangs and travails of the new birth; much less that it was accompanied with those frightful symptoms, to which we are seeking a scriptural parallel, hardly any one in his senses, with the plain narrative of Scripture before his eyes, would venture to affirm. Nor does it redound to the credit of that man's soundness of understanding, or piety and humility of heart, who could deliberately compare a young female enthusiast struck down by the power of God's word^f, by which the relater meant to denote the efficacy of his own preaching, to Paul arrested in the career of his persecutions by a supernatural light, and falling to the earth under the piercing expostulations of the Almighty.

On the presumption of this comparison, consistent as it is with the general style of its employer, I forbear to enlarge. The comparison itself however naturally induces a reflection as to the characters of those persons, of whom the converts recorded in the evangelical history consisted, and of those, who have swelled the catalogue of the victims of modern delusion.

^f Whitefield. See *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* vol. iii. p. 135.

It was the observation of Origen^s, that “ if
 “ any one would candidly consider the Chris-
 “ tians, they could produce him more who
 “ had been converted from a life not the
 “ worst, than from a very wicked course: for
 “ they,” he adds, “ whose conscience speaks
 “ favourably in their behalf, are disposed to
 “ wish that our doctrine concerning the future
 “ rewards of goodness may be true; and so are
 “ more ready to assent to the Gospel than pro-
 “ fligate men.” And Jortin, who quotes the
 observation, judiciously remarks upon it; “ I
 “ know it may be said, that among the first
 “ Christians there were several, who had led
 “ bad lives before: but there are many de-
 “ grees of wickedness; and there is no reason
 “ to suppose that these sinners were for the
 “ most part of the worst sort; and though
 “ some persons, who have been very wicked,
 “ may become very good, and such were found
 “ amongst the first Christians, yet where the
 “ exceptions are few, the general observation
 “ is not affected by them; for thus much is

ὁ Ἡμεῖς δὲ, εἰ τις κατανοήσῃ ἡμῶν εὐγνωμονῶς τὸ ἀδρόσιμα,
 πλείονας ἐχομένω παραστήσῃ τοὺς οὐκ ἀποχάλεπε πᾶν βίου, ὑπερ-
 τοὺς ἀποεξώλεστων ἀμαρτημάτων, ἐπιστρέψαντας. καὶ γὰρ πρῶ-
 κασιν οἱ τὰ κρείττονα ἑαυτοῖς συνεγνωκότες, εὐχομένοι ἀληθῆ εἶναι
 τὰ κηρυσσομένα περὶ τῆς ὑπο τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῖς κρείττοσιν ἀμοιβῆς,
 ἰτοιμότερον συγκατατίθεσθαι τοῖς λεγομένοις, παρὰ τοὺς πᾶν
 μοχθήως βεβιωκότας. *Orig. contra Cels. lib. iii. sect. 65.*
Op. tom. i. p. 490. Paris. 1733.

“ certain, that an honest mind is a great help
“ to understand the truth; that the practice of
“ morality leads to the practice of Christianity;
“ and that, since conversion is brought about
“ by steps, and revealed religion is founded on
“ natural religion, he who is moved to em-
“ brace the Gospel, must be first sensible of
“ the difference between good and evil, truth
“ and falsehood, virtue and vice; must love
“ the one and abhor the other; must repent
“ of his former transgressions, and receive the
“ sacred knowledge which is offered to him
“ with gratitude, and a firm resolution of per-
“ forming his duty. He therefore who can
“ call evil good, and good evil, who is totally
“ corrupted in heart and understanding, is re-
“ moved to an infinite distance from God and
“ righteousness, has no ears to hear, and no
“ eyes to see, not even to see miracles, so as
“ to be instructed and amended by them^h.”

Agreeably to this sound remark, which is well worthy the attention of those who are for depreciating moral goodness and entertaining favourable hopes of the hardened sinner, St. Luke has incidentally mentioned certain traits in the characters of the primitive converts, which will materially assist the proposed comparison. We find them respectively de-

^h Jortin's Discourses and Remarks, vol. i. p. 7.

scribed as “devout men;” “worshipping God;” diligent in “searching the Scriptures;” willing to be guided in the search by the well-informed; listening to reason; and “receiving “the word with all humility and readiness of “mind.” The Proconsul of Asia was a prudent man, as well as desirous of hearing the word of God. The Ethiopian eunuch, whose probity and wisdom are attested by the great authority delegated to him, and the unlimited confidence reposed in him, by his sovereign, “had come to Jerusalem for to worship, and “was returning, and sitting in his chariot read “Esaïas the prophet;” an employment, undoubtedly indicating a religious and a reflecting mind. Cornelius was “a devout man, “and one that feared God with all his house; “which gave much alms to the people, and “prayed to God alway.” The life of Paul, whom it is the practice with certain religionists to represent as on a level with “drunkards, “sabbath-breakers, whoremongers, adulter- “ers, unclean wretches as ever trod on the “groundⁱ;” and who has been somewhat coarsely and irreverently stigmatised as “that “notorious persecutor Saul^k,” as “a flagrant “rebel,” and as “a devil incarnate^l;” had

ⁱ Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 177.

^k Whitefield's Works, vol. v. p. 367.

^l Evangelical Magazine, July 1806. p. 299, 298.

been "strict according to the strictest sect of his religion;" "touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless;" "continually living in all good conscience before God," and even in the persecution of the Church of Christ acting under a false, but still a sincere, persuasion, that he was engaged in the execution of his duty, his heart was fervent and zealous, his mind capacious, vigorous, and well-stored.

Now in all these traits of character (and they apply in different degrees to most, if not to all of the cases which have been passing before us) there is no tendency to irregular and enthusiastic feelings; no predominance of the imagination over the judgment; no deficiency in natural understanding; no want, or contempt, of intellectual improvement; no weakness in short to encourage a suspicion, that persons, endowed with such qualities, would be seduced by insufficient argumentation to embrace a new religion; or be impelled by a terrified conscience to a precipitate adoption of the faith in a moment of desperation, and to take refuge from the wages of sin in a groundless or imperfect conversion.

Had the characters of the primitive converts indeed been such as we are supposing, and as they are sometimes fondly represented; had they consisted of "savage jailors and of felons

“in prison^m,” (whereas in truth it does not appear from the sacred narrative, that there was any savageness in the disposition of the jailor at Thyateira, or that any felons at all were converted,) there might have been occasion for that stricture upon the body at large, which Zosimus passed upon Constantine, that he chose Christianity as the only religion, which promised impunity and pardon for his enormous practicesⁿ. What was really the case with respect to their characters, we have seen upon the testimony of Origen, corresponding with the representations of Scripture. The instruction, delivered by our Saviour to his Apostles, “into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy^o,” is well illustrated by the circumstances of the primitive converts: for it was not without reason that Pothinus, the immediate successor of Irenæus, when the Præfect demanded of him, Who was the Christians’ God? replied, If thou be worthy, thou shalt know: intimating that the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were made known to those, who were by previous habits of piety, proportioned to their opportunities, and by the ingenuoufness

^m Evang. Magazine, May 1808. p. 201.

ⁿ Barrow’s Works, vol. ii. p. 63.

^o Matt. x. 11.

and docility of their tempers, well disposed to receive it ^P.

The persons, who have been most affected by the impulses of modern enthusiasm, and who constitute a large proportion of its converts, are probably of a different description, in point either of intellect, or of previous habits, or of both. They have been arranged in several divisions by an author, who made an ample inquiry, and possessed a clear insight, into the nature of the case: I shall therefore adopt his classification in supposing them to consist in a great measure of “ young persons, “ who are arrived neither to ripeness of reason, “ nor solid constitution of body; women, “ who (notwithstanding some exceptions) may “ without offence be called the weaker vessels; “ persons of a fickle and inconsistent humour; “ persons, though piously inclined, yet of weak “ judgment or weak nerves; persons disorder- “ ed with hypochondriac fumes, and melan- “ choly vapours, and divers other peculiar dis- “ tempers; persons of lively parts and brisk “ fancy, though in a perfect state of health, “ yet deficient in a solid and settled judgment; “ persons of an amorous complexion; persons “ of bad principles, as hypocrites, those of a “ vain and ambitious mind, or of an imperti-

^P See Barrow's Works, vol. iii. p. 337.

“ nent and unwarrantable curiosity; and lastly, “ persons of profligate lives and libertine sentiments.” Such persons appear most adapted both by constitution and by habits, for being wrought on by the modern methods, and for experiencing the modern symptoms, of conversion; and such persons the annals of enthusiasm enumerate amongst the most prominent of its converts.

If among this description of persons, and especially if among those in the last division, some have been effectually, sincerely, and permanently converted to pious sentiments and virtuous lives, God forbid I should endeavour to detract from the credit of those, to whose exertions it may be due. Enthusiasm indeed; and schism, spiritual delusion and religious factions, are laden with too monstrous an accumulation of evil, to suffer me to entertain a wish, that they should be robbed of whatever commendation they may incidentally merit. Yet I cannot withhold an opinion, that little is gained to the cause of pure Christianity, if men are rescued from sins of one character; only to fall into those of another; if conversion from sensual wickedness is followed by spiritual pride, calumny, detraction, presump-

9 Bp. Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, part iii. p. 190—204.

tion; by mutual jealousies, disputes, and divisions within their own societies, and an overweening scorn and intolerance towards those that are without.

It is however to be feared that methodistical conversion does not always terminate in consequences no more mischievous than these; but that, whilst it ingrafts the spiritual, it fails of lopping away the sensual, sins. Impulses suddenly and violently impressed upon the feelings, where the reason is not engaged in their support, are naturally evanescent; and will probably yield to the reviving opposition of early, favourite, and inveterate habits.

It is painful, and it may appear uncharitable, to dwell upon such a topic as this; but the cause of pure religion is promoted by an exposure of the mischief and erroneous pretensions of superstition. It might be fruitless also to attempt exposing them, and to deny the efficacy of methodistical conversion, if I trusted the cause to less exceptionable evidence than that of the Founders of Methodism themselves. But surely no objection can be made to the acknowledgment of Whitefield¹, that there were among his followers "many mushroom converts, many persons that are always happy, happy, happy, and never were

¹ Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons, p. 87, 131, 246.

“miserable; who hear the word with joy,
“and in a time of temptation fall away;
“that made him cautious now, which,” says
he, “I was not thirty years ago, of dubbing
“people converts so soon;” that “there were
“others, who, although they may have been
“converted twenty or thirty years ago, were
“perverted then, and stood in need of a fur-
“ther conversion to close Christianity with
“God;” and others, “who although they
“were really converted, were still conformed
“to the world, were still lukewarm, had ten
“thousand things that their own hearts must
“tell them they wanted to be converted from;
“who could go to a public-house, and play at
“cards, and the like, and yet bless God they
“were converted; who had been arrested by
“God’s grace, even after conversion, when
“they were damning their own souls:”—nor
can any reasonable exception be taken against
the equally plain confession of Wesley, that
there were among his disciples “sinners of
“every kind, and the great stumbling-block
“by them that say and do not. Such I
“take for granted,” he says, “will be among
“us, although we purge them out as fast as
“we can: persons, that talk much of religion;
“that commend the preachers, perhaps are
“diligent in hearing them; it may be, read
“all their books, and sing their hymns; and

“ yet no change is wrought in their hearts.
“ Were they of old time as lions in their
“ houses? They are the same still. Were
“ they (in low life) slothful, intemperate?
“ Were they tricking or dishonest, overreach-
“ ing or oppressive? or did they borrow and
“ not pay? *The Ethiopian hath not changed*
“ *his skin.* Were they (in high life) delicate,
“ tender, self-indulgent? Were they nice in
“ furniture or apparel? Were they fond of
“ trifles, or their own dear persons? *The leo-*
“ *pard hath not changed her spots.* Others
“ there are, in whom there was a real change.
“ But it was only for a season. They are now
“ turned back, and are twofold more the chil-
“ dren of hell than before*.”

Nor is the effect upon the mind more beneficial, than that upon the heart. The understanding, not having been enlightened previously to conversion, still continues under a cloud of darkness, which the opinion of enjoying exclusive spiritual privileges, and the contracted notions, to which that opinion gives birth, with respect to the merciful dispensations of Providence, are not calculated to remove. The Spirit converted their hearts; and the Spirit will guide their understandings into all truth. The means of instruction are

* Wesley's Farther Appeal, p. 130.

as little prized as the means of grace. They are wiser than their unconverted teachers; and as for human learning, they detest and abhor it as a diabolical invention, at enmity with the wisdom that is from above. Prejudice supplies an answer to every argument; and pride is an insurmountable barrier against conviction. In love with error, and closing their eyes against the truth, an insulated text of Scripture, torn perhaps from its context, imperfectly understood, and violently distorted into a correspondence with their confined prepossessions, is sufficient to intrench a favourite doctrine, and to serve as an impregnable bulwark against the whole accumulated force of the Gospel.

For the mind to be thus perverted is a case of ordinary occurrence; experience confirms the position by daily examples of its truth. Sometimes however the shock is more disastrous; and instead of partially obstructing, or contracting, the current of the understanding, has forcibly wrested it from its channel. Irrational and unchristian, not to say unnatural, doubts and perplexities; a disbelief of God and of Christ; madness, sometimes expatiating in unbridled licentiousness, and sometimes convulsed with laughter amid severest woe; visions of despair, wherein the patient believes himself rejected by God, plunged into

utter darkness, and actually tormented in hell; or visions of exultation, in which he fancies that he is plunged into the Deity, and identified with God^t: such is the intellectual desolation, the darkness, and the bondage, into which the converted have been betrayed; a darkness, which hath been felt by every faculty of the inward man, and a bondage, wherein the iron hath entered deep into the soul.

But let us throw a veil over these gloomy images of the corruption, the perverseness, and the infatuation of human nature. Necessary as they are to be exhibited, as fatal examples of the pernicious tendency of error, they are too melancholy to be contemplated with composure. The mind recoils from contemplating them; and seeks repose and consolation in that scene of harmony, and gladness; of gratitude, and devotion; of sober delight, and rational exultation; of “love, peace, and joy “in the Holy Ghost,” which is represented in the page of the Evangelist; when “they that “gladly received the word were baptized, and “continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of

^t See Wesley’s Journals, No. I, II. p. 133. No. III. p. 109. No. V. p. 81. Account of Samuel and Thomas Hitchens, p. 4, 12, 18, 19. Enthusiasm of Methodists, part ii. p. 112. part iii. p. 7, 8, 9, 45, 46, 88, 93, 4, 5, 6.

“bread, and in prayer;” when “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;” and “continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God, and having favour with all the people.”

The foregoing comparison will, I trust, have made it appear, that there are few points of resemblance between that instantaneous and violent conversion, which the Methodists consider as necessary to salvation; and that sort of conversion recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, to which the Methodists themselves refer, as affording authorities and parallels to their conceit.

In the first place then, we are furnished by this comparison with a strong negative argument against such conversions. For if they were not wrought in the early ages of the Gospel, it is surely reasonable to infer, and the inference I apprehend would be conceded by their advocates, that in the present age they are neither necessary nor profitable.

The argument however, which the foregoing comparison supplies, is not merely negative; for, secondly, the reflections, to which it gives rise, authorise us positively to contend, that neither the rapidity of such conversions;

nor the means employed to effect them ; nor the symptoms, by which they are accompanied ; nor the dispositions, to which they are peculiarly adapted ; nor the consequences, by which they are followed ; are agreeable to the general economy of Providence in his dealings with mankind.

We may therefore hold ourselves acquitted of any dereliction of evangelical truth, if we decline enforcing instantaneous conversion, as necessary to the salvation of Christians. And if, on the contrary, we warn our hearers against being deluded by such fanciful, irrational, and unscriptural conceits ; if we address them as beings, formed in the image, after the likeness of God, and although lamentably fallen indeed, and partakers of a nature essentially corrupt, yet still endowed with reason, the glorious inheritance derived from their gracious Creator ; if we endeavour to convince their understandings, and thereby to alarm their fears, and animate their hopes ; if we labour to persuade their minds of the necessity of a Redeemer to reconcile them to their offended God, and fill their hearts with a devout affection and veneration for Him, who paid the price of their redemption ; if we impress on them the awful truth, that the wages of sin, notwithstanding the sacrifice of

Christ, and notwithstanding their admission into his Church, will eventually be death, unless it be heartily repented of through faith in the blood of the Redeemer, and followed by reformation and amendment of heart and life; if we persuade them not to rely on strong internal impulses, but to make diligent use of the appointed means of grace; and if we thus encourage and assist them, not to expect a sudden change of heart, but, under the guidance of the revealed will of God, and with the preventing and assisting grace of the Holy Spirit, gradually to build themselves up in faith and holiness, and so to grow unto an holy temple of the Lord: we may then indulge the pleasing reflection of a good conscience, that we are preaching the doctrine of Peter, who called upon the Jews to “repent
“and be converted, that their sins might be
“blotted out;” that we are imitating the example of Paul, who was sent unto the Gentiles “to open their eyes, and to turn them
“from darkness unto light, and from the
“power of Satan unto God;” and that we are fulfilling the intention of our blessed Saviour, when he required, that sinners should
“be converted, and become like little children,
“if they would enter into the kingdom of
“heaven.”

Now unto “ the blessed and only Potentate,
“ the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who
“ only hath immortality, dwelling in the
“ light which no man can approach unto ;
“ whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to
“ him be honour and power everlasting. A-
“ men.”

DISCOURSE VIII.

MATT. v. 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

THE revelation, which God hath been pleased to manifest of his will, is intitled to our unqualified obedience, universally and in all its parts: nor can we willingly, without guilt and danger; commit a breach of one of his "least commandments." Whatever doctrine he may disclose, it is our duty to receive it: whatever precept he may enact, it is our duty to observe it: whatever quality he may recommend, as calculated to render us less unworthy of his favour, and whatever blessing he may promise, as a testimony of his favour, it is our duty, and will be for our interest, to cultivate the one, and to aspire after the other. Still there is no irreverence in affirming, that the several gifts and graces of Providence, proceeding as they all do, from the same divine

mind, and favouring of their heavenly original, are marked by several degrees of excellence: as in the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the glory of the sun is greater than the glory of the moon; or as "one star differeth from another star in glory."

It will be no disparagement then to the other Christian graces, if I remark, that the quality on which a blessing is pronounced in my text, and the recommendation of which is peculiar to revealed religion, is exhibited in the holy Scriptures under a form of singular loveliness, and encompassed with an appropriate degree of lustre. It is not only placed by our Saviour, in whose person it was embodied, at the head of the beatitudes; but its spirit is diffused through all the rest. It is that quality, to the possessors of which the Gospel is especially preached: to which the visitations of divine grace are especially promised^a: and the heart, which is tempered by its influence, is described as the favourite abode of that "high and lofty One, which inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy"^b.

The heart, in which this heavenly quality resides, bears evidence to its power by a life of habitual devotion and submission to God: it acknowledges, that it is absolutely unworthy

^a Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.

^b Is. lvii. 15.

of God's favour, but through the merits of Christ: and that it is altogether incapable of performing the services, to which the promise of that favour is annexed, but by the help of the Holy Spirit: even with the help of that Holy Spirit, it confesses the original corruption of its nature to be so inveterate, that it is unable to perform the will of God without numerous lapses and testimonies of imperfection; and, fearful of falling ultimately from grace, and anxious to make its calling and election sure, it is diligent in working out its salvation with fear and trembling.

Such will be the sentiments, and such the conduct of one, who is sincerely "poor in spirit." Feeling his own infirmity, he will feel the possibility, and will dread the consequences, of "a righteous man turning away from his righteousness, and committing iniquity, and dying in it:" nor will his humility permit him to exult in a full assurance of everlasting salvation, or in an unspotted and sinless perfection, until hope shall be swallowed up in fruition; until faith shall be annihilated in the completion of the promises; and charity shall be released from the image of the earthy, and be inshrined in the image of the heavenly, Adam; be purified from the alloy of mortality, and see the Creator face to face.

These remarks are suggested to me by re-

flecting, how incompatible this favourite quality of our Saviour is with those extravagant notions, which are interwoven with the modern doctrine of conversion; and which represent the true Christian as exalted to a state of infallible assurance of his everlasting happiness, and of dominion over every outward and inward sin. The true Christian is indeed elevated by faith in his Redeemer to an eminence, from which he may look down upon the struggles, the errors, and the failures of his brethren with comparative serenity: but to represent him as a disinterested spectator of the scene, inasmuch at least as being personally exempt from its difficulties and dangers; as released from the corruption and infirmities, which flesh is heir to; and as trampling under foot all the fears, the doubts, and apprehensions incident to mortality: to represent him, in the language of Whitefield, as “emboldened
“under the sense of his interest in distinguish-
“ing love to give the challenge to all his ad-
“versaries, whether men or devils, and that
“with regard to all future as well as present
“attempts to destroy:”—to represent him with Wesley, as “saved from his sins, the root
“as well as the branches;” as “made free
“from outward sin,” “from evil thoughts and

“evil tempers;” as enjoying “a distinct explicit assurance that his sins are forgiven,” an assurance often “excluding all kinds of doubt and fear concerning his future perseverance^d :”—to characterise him, in the words of some celebrated ministers of our Church, as “certain that God will love him and keep him unto the end;” as “standing secure on the edge of the whirlpool, no longer within the reach of the tide, and beholding the solemn prospect of thousands still engulfed;” as “removed from the regions of doubts and fears, storms and clouds, and resting safe in a condition of absolute serenity and quiet^e :”—is to indulge in the visions of fancy, and to borrow the poet’s delineation of a scholar of Epicurus, rather than to trace a resemblance from the oracles of truth, of a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Whatever cause of delight and self-gratulation such an one may feel, in his own state of comparative security, still he has reason to apply to himself the solemn warning of his Redeemer, and to “watch and pray that he enter not into temptation;” and to acknowledge in his own case, as well as in that of the Apostles, to

^d Wesley’s Sermons, vol. iv. p. 340. vol. iii. p. 11, 23, 231.

^e Hawker’s Zion’s Pilgrim, p. 2. Mason’s Spiritual Treasury, edited by Romaine, p. 113.

whom the warning was originally addressed; that however "willing may be the spirit, the flesh indeed is weak."

The origin of the doctrines, to which I am calling your attention, as professed by some Methodists, is of a modern, and by others, of a very recent date. Assurance, as taught by Whitefield, for he expressly condemned the doctrine of perfection as a "monstrous doctrine," appears to be a part of the predestinarian scheme, according to the opinions of Calvin; who, in this particular entering upon ground, which had not been occupied by Austin, contended, that "true and saving faith was a constant principle, and could not be lost; and therefore that they who were conscious to themselves of having such a faith, were even now already assured of everlasting salvation; notwithstanding" (as he confessed) "they might fall into very grievous sins."

With Wesley the combined doctrines of assurance and perfection were derived from a different quarter: and it is now about seventy years, a long period indeed in the life of man, but a mere point in the existence of those sacred truths, which, like their divine Author, are "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for

† Whitefield's Works, vol. iii. p. 337.

‡ Brandt's Hist. of the Reformation, vol. ii. book xviii.

“ever^b,” that they were first introduced amongst us. It was then that the Founder of Methodismⁱ, hearing it affirmed by one of the sect of Moravians, which had been established in Germany not twenty years before, that “true faith in Christ has these two fruits in-
“separately attending it, dominion over sin,
“and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness, was quite amazed, and looked upon it
“as a new gospel.” Consulting the Scriptures however upon this point, which (he tells us)
“he had before been taught to construe away,
“and conversing with some living witnesses,
“who testified of their own personal experience, that a true living faith in Christ is in-
“separable from a sense of pardon for all past,
“and freedom from all present sins, he was
“now thoroughly convinced.” On a subsequent visit to the Moravian settlement, he was much strengthened by the religious experience of several holy men, with whom he conversed during his stay in this truly Christian place. One of these gave him at his request a definition in writing of the *πληροφορια πιστεως*, “the full assurance of faith, in the following words, *Requies in sanguine Christi; firma fiducia in Deum, et persuasio de gratia di-*

^b Heb. xiii. 8.

ⁱ See Wesley's Journals, No. I. and II. p. 103, 144. Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 156—167.

“vina ; tranquillitas mentis summa, atque serenitas et pax ; cum absentia omnis desiderii carnalis, et cessatione peccatorum, etiam intertornorum. He added, testifying at the same time it was his own experience, Verbo, cor quod antea instar maris turbulenti agitabatur, in summa fuit requie, instar maris sereni et tranquilli. *Repose in the blood of Christ ; a firm confidence in God, and persuasion of his favour ; serene peace and steadfast tranquillity of mind, with a deliverance from fleshly (unholy) desire, and from every outward and inward sin. In a word, the heart, which before was tost like a troubled sea, was still and quiet and in a sweet calm.* This,” continues his biographer, “was the first account Mr. Wesley had heard from any man living as his own experience, of what he had before learned from the Oracles of God. And as by the former testimonies he was encouraged to hold fast the beginning of his confidence, so by this he was stimulated to press forwards after all the privileges of his high calling, that his joy might be full.”

Now with respect to the experiences of other men, which appear to have had a weighty effect on his mind in the present instance, and which he had previously acknowledged as a conclusive evidence for instantaneous conversion, I shall say no more on the

present occasion, than to protest against its being admitted, as the criterion of a religious doctrine. It is neither a pillar of a cloud to lead us the way, nor a pillar of fire to give us light. Instead of being a beacon to guide, it is a meteor to dazzle and perplex us. But as by referring to the Oracles of God, by honouring his doctrines with the appellation of the "old faith of the Gospel^k," he proposes for his opinions a sure criterion, the only infallible rule of the truth, I shall endeavour to show what support the Scriptures afford to each of the doctrines in question. The intimate connection of these doctrines with the subjects of some former discourses, will prevent the examination from being regarded as an irrelevant digression, even if the remarks, which will incidentally occur, should not bring it so strictly within the line, marked out for our more immediate inquiry.

I. In the first place, then, I state it to be a tenet of Methodism, in both of its great divisions, that *true faith in Christ produces a full and infallible ASSURANCE of everlasting pardon and salvation*, often conveyed in a sensible manner, and in many, very many persons, excluding all doubt and fear concerning their future perseverance. And so strongly has this

^k Wesley's Journals, No. V. p. 43.

tenet been inculcated, that one of the Founders of the sect pronounced, that “it is a dreadful “mistake to deny the doctrine of assurances;” that “assurance of eternal salvation is one of “the privileges of Christ’s followers;” and that “to hear of a Christ dying for sinners, “will only increase our damnation, will only “sink us deeper into hell, unless we have “ground to say, by a work of grace wrought “in our hearts, that the Lord Jesus hath “brought this home to us¹:”—that another “wished all persons mad, who were not assured of forgiveness^m:”—and that a third considered “a distinct explicit assurance that “his sins were forgiven the common privilege of real Christians,” and affirmed of one, who “hoped only for salvation, without “being absolutely assured of it, that that person was already in a state of damnationⁿ.”

It is surely unnecessary to remark, that a doctrine ought to be revealed in the most clear and positive terms, and to be recognised in the holy Scriptures, as an essential article of faith,

¹ Whitefield’s Fifth Journal, p. 17. Works, vol. v. p. 247. Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. vol. i. p. 43. vol. iii. p. 4, 5.

^m See Enthusiasm, &c. vol. iii. p. 4. The name of the person here alluded to was Seward.

ⁿ Wesley. See Outram’s Extracts, p. 77. Enthusiasm, &c. vol. iii. p. 5. See also Hampson’s Life of Wesley, vol. iii. p. 51.

instead of depending on the controverted interpretation of a few difficult texts, before an individual can be warranted in thus authoritatively pronouncing on its merits, and uttering anathemas against those, whose opinions may not correspond with his own. I would however at present insist on this point the rather, because it evidently appears to be the general tendency of the sacred writings, to repress and correct all presumptuous imaginations; and to encourage that poorness of spirit and those congenial qualities, which would divert us from confidently relying on our own security, and stimulate us to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." Besides it is a principle, which like the former cannot be too often repeated, or too forcibly impressed, or too carefully guarded, as one of the securest bulwarks of the truth, that extreme caution should be observed in the interpretation of the more difficult passages of Scripture, lest we be seduced into the adoption of tenets, irreconcilable with its general tenor, and subversive of its fundamental truths.

Some of these passages will presently be offered for your observation. Meanwhile I wish to suggest a few considerations, which appear to exhibit the doctrine in a very questionable shape.

It affords then, on the first general view, a

strong presumption against the truth, of the doctrine, that this assurance of salvation is supposed to be effected as an accompaniment of the instantaneous conversion, which was examined in my last discourse; and that, consequently, it is an operation of such a sudden, rapid, and violent nature, as is not agreeable to the general order of God's proceedings with mankind^o.

A farther presumption to its discredit is afforded by this reflection, that it frequently bears the mark of enthusiasm, stamped on its very forehead. For what more appropriate denomination can be given to the belief of that mysterious and inexplicable instrument, by which it is frequently said to be conveyed; whether it be "a voice," (inward or outward its hearers seem not to have ascertained,) "pronouncing forgiveness to the sinner:" or an apparition of Christ, "now lying in the manger, and now crowned with thorns, and clothed with the purple robe; now hanging on the cross, and now standing on the right hand of God; exhibited in a bodily form to the mental, as plainly as it could be seen by the material, eye^p."

^o *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* vol. i. p. 43.

^p *Wesley's Sermons*, vol. i. p. 161, 165, 333. *Journals*, No. I. and II. p. 138. No. III. p. 24. No. VII. p. 100.

It is moreover far from a recommendation of this assurance as a scriptural doctrine, that it is merely an affair of feeling: (“*I felt* faith in “*Christ,*” says one of the leaders of the sect; “and an assurance was given me that he had “*taken away my sins, even mine:*” “*I know “numbers,*” reports the other, “whose salva- “*tion is written upon their hearts, as it were “with a sun-beam:*”)—of feeling, which “may be as truly felt and discerned as any “impression from without can be felt by the “body; which may as surely be felt by the “believer, as Naaman felt, that he was cured “of his leprosy, or the woman in the Gospel, “that she was cured of her bloody issue:”— of feeling too, let it be observed, not the result of, but distinguished from, a rational conviction, that they are in the way of salvation, such as would be warranted by a conscientious comparison of their hearts and lives with the precepts of the Gospel.

It is a consequence, which might naturally be expected, that such a feeling should often prove delusive. One of its great advocates has

N^o. XIV. p. 86, 91. N^o. XV. p. 35. Whitehead's Life, p. 113. Whitefield's Further Dealing, p. 22.

^q Wesley's Journals, N^o. I. p. 105.

^r Whitefield's Fifth Journal, p. 17. *Enthusiasm, &c.* vol. i. p. 43.

¹ Whitefield's Works, vol. v. p. 369.

readily allowed, that “some of his followers, “who had not assurance of salvation, presumptuously imagined they had it’.” He would probably throw the blame upon the presumption of the individual: let it however be candidly considered, whether it is not rather attributable to the nature of the doctrine itself. And let it be farther considered, whether the mere feeling of assurance has not an obvious and natural tendency to foster arrogance, spiritual pride, and a general neglect or contempt of the prescribed duties of a religious and virtuous life.

Further, it is a convincing proof of the presumptuous character of the doctrine, that it nourishes lofty and vain conceits of special visitations; of “a holy familiarity” with God; prompting men to think and affirm, that he hath signally revealed himself unto them, and directs them supernaturally how to act; that they “meet and talk with God, as a man talketh with his friend;” that they are “admitted to a degree of that holy and familiar converse and communion with God, with which the Prophets and Apostles were favoured.” “When familiarity with God,”

† Letter to the Author of the *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. by G. Whitefield, p. 31.

‡ Whitefield's Works, vol. v. p. 40, 237. vol. i. p. 195. vol. iv. p. 211.

faith the pious and eloquent Bishop Taylor,
“ shall be esteemed a privilege of singular and
“ eminent persons, not communicated to all
“ the faithful, and is thought to be an admis-
“ sion to a nearer intercourse of secrecy with
“ God; it is an effect of pride. Familiarity
“ with God is nothing else but an admission to
“ be of God’s family, the admission of a ser-
“ vant or son in minority; and implies obe-
“ dience, duty, and fear on our parts; care,
“ and providence, and love on God’s part.
“ And it is not the familiarity of sons, but the
“ impudence of proud equals, to express this
“ pretended privilege in even, unmannerly,
“ and irreverent addressees and discourses. And
“ it is a sure rule, that whatever heights of
“ piety, union, or familiarity, any man pre-
“ tends to, it is of the devil, unless the greater
“ the pretence be, the greater also be the hu-
“ mility of the man. The highest flames are
“ the most tremulous: and so are the most
“ holy and eminent religious persons more full
“ of awfulness, and fear, and modesty, and hu-
“ mility.”

Nor do the objections to the doctrine of as-
surance stop here: for, like Calvinistic election,
whilst on the one head it leads to unreason-
able presumption, on the other it exposes less

* Life of Christ, part i. sect. 5.

ardent minds to a despondency equally unreasonable. “When such a confident assurance
 “is made a certain mark of grace, and the
 “want of it as certain a mark of damnation,
 “what” (it has been well demanded) “can
 “be done by the weak, the modest, the hum-
 “ble, and the melancholy, who cannot wind
 “themselves up to the highest pitch of self-
 “conceit and presumption? They will of
 “course fall into fears and doubts and despera-
 “tion, as persons in a reprobate condition;
 “because they have not the same experiences
 “with others, not only of knowing and feel-
 “ing, but actually seeing Christ taking away
 “their sins’.”

Nor should it be omitted in this cursory review of its demerits, that it is not productive of full and uninterrupted satisfaction to those, who are allowed to be really possessed of it. “It is true,” said an earlier and more temperate advocate of the doctrine, who is not to be confounded with the abettors of modern enthusiasm, “It is true among Christians, some
 “may not have this assurance at all, and none
 “have it at all times. As in a walk, that is
 “shaded with trees and checkered with light
 “and shadow, some tracks and paths in it are
 “dark, and others are sunshine, such is usually

“ the life of the most assured Christian. Some-
“ times he walks in the light of God’s coun-
“ tenance, and rejoices in the smiles of his fa-
“ vour ; and at other times he walks in dark-
“ nefs, and can see no light ; he steps out of
“ the bright manifestations of God’s love into
“ the umbrages of sad and cloudy apprehen-
“ sions concerning his present state of grace,
“ and his future state of glory. So that some
“ Christians never have any full assurance at
“ all, and no Christian hath this full assurance
“ at all times^z.” Agreeable to this, with respect
to the occasional failure of the assurance which
they pretend to, is the language of our modern
enthusiasts. We have it on the confession of
those, who “ have felt an infallible assurance of
“ everlasting salvation,” that they have, at pe-
riods subsequent to their admission into this
state, been “ subject to manifold evil sugges-
“ tions, and dangerous temptations; have been
“ exceedingly troubled and perplexed; have
“ alternately fainted and exulted, desponded
“ and presumed; have feared that they had
“ deceived themselves, and greatly doubted
“ whether God would not lay them aside^a.”

This is a natural effect of those visionary,

^z Bp. Hopkins’s Works, vol. ii. p. 524. 8vo.

^a See various extracts from the works of Whitefield and Wesley in the Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. vol. ii. p. 76, 82. vol. iii. p. 8.

I venture to call them those magical, raptures,

Which in a pleasing slumber lull the sense,
And in sweet madness rob it of itself :

but it is very unlike indeed to that "abundant hope," that "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost^b," which, the Gospel teaches us, accompany and reward the righteousness of the humble and contrite spirit; to that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," which, the Gospel promises, shall "keep the hearts and minds" of the faithful "through Christ Jesus^c." Such however was the avowed condition of the founders of Methodism, the strenuous advocates of the doctrine. What then must we think of an assurance, which in some instances is readily allowed to be liable to be mistaken; and which, in others, where it is real, is nevertheless admitted, on the confession of its fondest patrons, to be inconsistent with, and contradictory to itself?

But waving these considerations, let us come nearer to the point, and examine the particular scriptural authorities, by which the doctrine is supposed to be established^d. In the first place then we are referred to the assertions of St. Paul, that "the Spirit itself beareth witness

^b Rom. xv. 13. xiv. 17.

^c Phil. iv. 7.

^d See Wesley's Journals, N^o. I, p. 92. Whitefield's Letter, p. 32.

“ with our spirit, that we are the children of
“ God^e :” and that we must “ know our own
“ selves how that Jesus Christ is in us, except
“ we be reprobates^f :” and to the similar asser-
tions of St. John, that “ he that believeth on the
“ Son of God hath the witness in himself^g ;”
that “ we know that we are of God, and the
“ whole world lieth in wickedness^h ;” and that
“ hereby know we that we dwell in him, and
“ he in us, because he hath given us of his
“ Spiritⁱ .”

God forbid we should deny the comfortable doctrine, which is really conveyed by these and similar declarations of Scripture! But what is that doctrine? Evidently it is, that “ as many as are led by the Spirit of God^k ;” acting in obedience to his heavenly motions, in conformity to his revealed will, “ they are “ the sons of God :” they continue in full possession of those privileges of adoption, to which they were admitted when they were “ born “ again ;” and they enjoy an inward testimony of their continuance in that state, a testimony conveyed to their hearts by the influence of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth ; and they are filled by Him with “ all joy and peace in “ believing.”

^e Rom. viii. 16.

^f 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

^g 1 John v. 10.

^h 1 John v. 19.

ⁱ Ibid. iv. 13.

^k Rom. viii. 14.

What now are the privileges, to their possession of which, testimony is thus borne by the Spirit? A promise of forgiveness of sins, and of everlasting happiness: a promise, which will eventually be realized, provided they continue to be led by the Spirit, and to act in a manner worthy of their adoption, as the sons of God. If indeed their continuance in that state were certain, their assurance of future salvation also might be full and infallible. But if it be possible for them to fall from their present righteousness, the testimony to their future happiness also must be limited and provisional.

Still do not the Scriptures speak of true Christians possessing “a full assurance of faith^l” Undoubtedly they do; and of their possessing “a full assurance of hope^m.” But this is not to speak of their possessing a full assurance of eternal salvation. God hath given to mankind certain promises; and “as he is faithful that “promisedⁿ,” we have a full assurance of faith, we do intirely and infallibly believe, that he will perform his promises. The promises are made to his faithful servants; and we may have a full assurance of hope, we may hope with intire and unerring confidence, that if we be faithful on our parts, we shall “through

^l Heb. x. 22.

^m Heb. vi. 11.

ⁿ Heb. x. 23.

‘faith and patience inherit the promises.’
‘Truth it is,’ as our Reformers discreetly express the doctrine of Scripture, “that in the
‘sacraments instituted by Christ, we may
‘constantly believe the works of God in them
‘to our present comfort and application of
‘his grace and favour, with assurance also
‘that he will not fail us, if we fall not from
‘him. Wherefore so continuing in the state
‘of grace with him, we may believe undoubt-
‘edly to be saved.” Comparing our lives
with the law of God, having “the testimony
“of our conscience^p,” that they are in general
correspondence with that law, and trusting
in the atonement made by the blood of Christ
for our sins; with respect to our present state
we may have the witness of the Spirit in our-
selves, creating a full assurance of faith and
hope; or, as the Homily expresses it, we may
“have a sure trust and confidence in God,
“that by the merits of Christ our sins are for-
“given, and we reconciled to the favour of
“God.” But with respect to our future state
we cannot, at least on scriptural grounds we
cannot, entertain such an assurance. “Foras-
“much as our own frailty and naughtiness
“ought ever to be feared in us,” (I quote the

^p Necessary Doctrine, &c. Declaration of Faith.

^p 2 Cor. i. 12.

words with which our Reformers follow up the passage lately laid before you,) “ it is
 “ therefore expedient for us to live in con-
 “ tinual watch and continual fight with our
 “ enemies, the devil, the flesh, and the world;
 “ and not to presume too much of our per-
 “ severance and continuance in the state of
 “ grace, which in our behalf is uncertain and
 “ unstable. For although God’s promises made
 “ in Christ be immutable, yet he maketh them
 “ not to us but with condition, so that his
 “ promise standing, we may yet fail of the
 “ promise, because we keep not our promise^q.”
 Our receiving a crown of glory depends on
 our enduring temptation^r.” Our being ad-
 mitted into everlasting happiness depends on
 our persevering in obedience. “ He who
 “ shall have persevered even unto the end,”
 saith Cyprian, “ that man shall be saved:
 “ whatever shall have been before the end is
 “ a step, whereby we are ascending to the
 “ height of salvation, not the goal, whereby
 “ the summit of the pinnacle is already attain-
 “ ed^s.” Unless we be assured, that we shall

^q Necessary Doctrine, &c. as above.

^r James i. 12.

^s Cumque scriptum sit, qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit; quicquid ante finem fuerit, gradus est, quo ad fastigium salutis ascenditur, non terminus, quo jam culminis summa teneatur. *Cyprian. de Unit. Eccles.* p. 201. ed. Paris. 1726.

ndure temptation unto the end, we cannot be assured of receiving a crown of glory : unless we be assured, that we cannot fall from our state of obedience, we cannot be assured that we shall continue in a state of salvation. But, as St. Austin affirms, “ divers have had given them that faith, that charity, that justification, wherein if they had died, they should have been saved, who yet were not saved :” and, “ whether any one has received the gift of perseverance is uncertain, as long as he continues in this life ; no one is so known to himself, that he can be secure of his conversation to-morrow. In this world and in this life no soul can be secure.” And the learned Barrow affirms “ the unanimous con-

† Erant itaque in bono, sed quia in eo non permanerunt, id est, non usque in finem perseveraverunt, non erant, inquit, ex nobis. *Augustin. de Corr. et Grät. cap. ix.*

Neque ait, et ne veniatis ad viam justam ; sed ne peccatis, inquit, de via justa ; quid ostendens, nisi eos esse admonitos qui jam ambulant in via justa, ut in timore Deo serviant, id est, non altum sapiant, sed timeant? *Ibid.*

Quis enim ex multitudine fidelium, quamdiu in hac mortalitate vivitur, in numero prædestinatorum se esse præsumat? *Ibid. cap. xiii.*

Propter hujus utilitatem secreti, ne forte quis extollatur, sed omnes etiam, qui bene currunt, timeant, dum occultum est qui perveniant ; propter hujus ergo utilitatem secreti credendum est, quosdam de filiis perditionis, non accepto dono perseverandi usque in finem, in fide, quæ per dilectionem operatur, incipere vivere, et aliquandiu

“sent of all Christendom for fifteen hundred
 “years to have been against the doctrine, that
 “no man being once in God’s favour can ever
 “quite lose it^u:” a consent perfectly at har-
 mony with Scripture, which is too explicit to
 suffer us consistently to doubt the possibility of
 a “righteous man turning away from his
 “righteousness, and committing iniquity, and
 “dying in it to the final ruin of his soul;”
 and which conveys that possibility under no
 trivial form, in the exhortation, which it in-
 joins on all men, to “work out their own
 “salvation with fear and trembling^x,” and,
 “seeing we serve that God, who without re-
 “spect of persons judgeth every man accord-
 “ing to his works, to pass the time of our so-
 “journing here in fear^y,” in the blessing,
 which it pronounces upon “the man that
 “feareth always^z,” and in the solemn warn-
 ing, which it impresses on presumptuous con-

fideliter et juste vivere, et postea cadere, neque de hac
 vita, priusquam hoc eis contingat, auferri. *Ibid.*

Utrum quisque hoc (perseverantiæ) munus acceperit,
 quamdiu hanc vitam ducit, incertum est. *Ejusd. de Dono
 Persev.*

Nec sibi quisquam ita notus est, ut sit de sua castina
 conversatione securus.—In hoc mundo et in hac vita
 nulla anima possit esse secura. *Ejusd. Ep. 121. ad Pro-
 bam.*

^u Barrow’s Works, vol. ii. p. 51.

^x Phil. ii. 12.

^y 1 Pet. i. 17.

^z Prov. xxviii. 14.

idence, "let him, that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall^a."

Still however are we not exhorted by another Apostle to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure^b?" Undoubtedly we are. But whatever foundation the exhortation may lay for our present assurance, provided we "give all diligence to add unto our faith the Christian virtues^c" which are enjoined, it is in truth so far from warranting a certain assurance of our future salvation, that its obvious import is, to represent that salvation as conditional; as an effect to be wrought by our diligence; as dependent upon it; and as consequently not secure, until our season of probation shall be terminated, and "an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ^d." Such is the doctrine of St. Peter in the passage before us:—such is the doctrine of St. James in a passage which has been lately adduced:—such is St. John's doctrine, when he admonishes his converts, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward^e:"—and such is St. Paul's, in passages too numerous to escape

^a 1 Cor. x. 12.

^b 2 Pet. i. 10.

^c Ibid. ver. 5, 6, 7.

^d 2 Pet. i. 11.

^e 2 John 8.

attention, and too pointed to be misunderstood; passages, which largely exemplify the saying of Jerome, that “as long as we live, we are engaged in a warfare; and as long as we are in a warfare, our victory cannot be certain.” Agreeable also to the precepts and warnings, which that great Apostle impresses upon his converts, is the exhibition which he gives of his own feelings and expectations. Though he had “once entered within the veil, and seen unutterable glories,” he describes himself, in common with less favoured Christians, as engaged in “a race” and in “a warfare;” as striving with the most earnest and unremitted assiduity against his natural appetites, lest he should be judged unmeet for the prize; and as “following after, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Is this the language of a

† *Quamdiu vivimus, in certamine sumus, et quamdiu in certamine, nulla certa est victoria, quæ etiam Apostolo fortissime prælianti, in futuro sæculo reservatur. Hieron. adv. Pelag. lib. ii. Op. Basil. tom. ii. p. 282.*

‡ *Phil. iii. 11, 13.*

man, who *felt an infallible assurance* of everlasting salvation? Is this the language of one, *on whose heart salvation was written as with a sun-beam?* This was the language of St. Paul, when he “knew that he should abide “longer in the flesh^b :” when indeed it was revealed to him, that he was about to put off his earthly tabernacle, he breaks forth into a strain of more unqualified confidence, conscious that he had striven lawfully, temperately, and zealously for the mastery, and that he had persevered in “enduring hardships, as “a good soldier of Jesus Christⁱ.” This conduct of the Apostle, to whom we may refer for the most satisfactory explanation of his own expressions of “the assurance of faith” and “of hope,” is strongly and memorably to our purpose. It shows the presumption of an ordinary Christian, cherishing an infallible assurance of eternal happiness, during his mortal career; and it is a glorious example of devout exultation at its close. It admonishes us, that to pronounce our final salvation certain, is, as the great Fathers of our Church affirm, “to triumph before the victory^k ;” is to lay hands upon the prize before the race is run; to “take up the crown, which lies at the foot

^b Phil. i. 24, 25.

ⁱ 2 Tim. ii. 3.

^k Necessary Doctrine, &c. Declaration of Faith.

“ of the throne of grace, and irreverently to “ place it upon our own heads’.” And at the same time it teaches us, that he, who has trodden in the Apostle’s footsteps, and like him “ endured unto the end,” may then, and not till then, adopt his triumphant exclamation, “ I am now ready to be offered, and the “ time of my departure is at hand: I have “ fought a good fight; I have finished my “ course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth “ there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, “ shall give me in that day^m.”

Inconsistent as an infallible assurance of future happiness is with the notion of a state of trial, under which the whole Christian life is represented up to its very close; there are nevertheless two particular views of Christianity, with which this doctrine is in unison; I mean those of the Predestinarian, and the Perfectionist:—the Predestinarian, who, believing in the absolute decrees of God, if he be once persuaded that he is in the number of the elect, will of course be persuaded, that he cannot fall from grace, but must ultimately be saved;—and the Perfectionist, who, believing that a true Christian is delivered from every fleshly

^l See Bp. Taylor’s *Life of Christ*, p. 365.

^m 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

and unholy desire, and from every outward and inward sin, if he be once convinced, that he is received into favour with God, will be assured that he shall not forfeit it, but is in a state of absolute security.

As ministers of the Church of England, “receiving the promises of God in such wise “as they be generally set forth in holy Scripture”,” and believing that “after we have “received the grace of God, we may depart “from grace given, and fall into sin:” and farther assenting to her doctrine, that “all “men, although baptized and born again in “Christ, yet offend in many things, and if we “say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, “and the truth is not in us:”—concurring, I say, in these several positions laid down by the Articles of our Church, it is not probable that we should be influenced in our judgment by the opinions, either of the Predestinarian, or of the Perfectionist.

The incorrectness of the view of Christianity entertained by the former of these, has been already exposed in the course of the foregoing inquiry. It therefore needs not to be examined at present, as whatever support it may lend to the doctrine of assurance, is overthrown together with the basis, on which it

rests. An exposure of the fallacy of the other opinions, by which a true Christian is represented to have attained *a dominion over sin, an unspotted and unfinning perfection*, was proposed at the outset of the present discourse, as a subject of our inquiries on this occasion: and to that I shall accordingly proceed.

II. Now for general purposes, and with a common inquirer after truth, it might be sufficient to state broadly, as one of the plainest and most vital principles of the Bible, in the words of the Article just cited; that “Christ
 “ was made like unto us in all things, sin only
 “ excepted, from which he was clearly void
 “ both in his flesh and in his spirit; but that
 “ *all we the rest*, although baptized and born
 “ *again in Christ, yet offend in many things:*” for surely it is a palpable misrepresentation of the obvious sense of the Article, to interpret it as meaning no more than that ‘If we say,’ as the Pelagians and Pharisees, ‘that we have no’ original or actual ‘sin,’ i. e. that we are like Christ in either of these respects, our conception, infancy, childhood, youth, and age, being all taken into the account; ‘we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us⁹.’ As the

⁹ Wesley’s Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 16. Fletcher’s Last Check to Antinomianism. Works, vol. vi. p. 42.

doctrine however of the indwelling of sin in believers has been denied, even where it might have challenged support, by men engaged in the ministry, and professing attachment to the doctrines, of our Church, it becomes necessary to trace the opposite tenets through their several steps: and it will probably be the simplest and the most satisfactory method, to follow the direction of that authorised declaration, wherein the doctrine of PERFECTION was laid down, methodised, and supported, at the first annual Conferences of the preachers in Wesley's connection; and according to which we are told by his accredited biographer, that it has "continued unshaken even to the present day".

It is contended then, that "the immediate fruits of justifying faith are peace, joy, love, power over all outward sin, and power to keep down inward sin;"—that "in being a perfect Christian is implied, the loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and soul, and strength;"—that "without doubt this implies, that all inward sin is taken away;"—and that "we should expect to be saved from all sin before the article of death." This was the form, in

^r Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 267, 270, 278, 279. Wesley's Account of Christian Perfection, p. 30. and following.

which the doctrine was exhibited, when first publicly acknowledged: to the same effect, but in language somewhat more forcible, especially as to the indispensable necessity of such perfection, it has been asserted in a more recent publication, that “Christ by the power of his
 “ grace and Holy Spirit shall destroy sin, root
 “ and branch, in every believing soul. From
 “ all your filthiness, and from all your idols
 “ will I cleanse you, &c. Such is present sal-
 “ vation, salvation in this life from the guilt,
 “ power, and being of sin; and *whosoever is*
 “ *not thus saved from sin here, will not be saved*
 “ *from hell hereafter*.” A strange and a bold assertion! But let us proceed to the proof of a doctrine, thus solemnly and resolutely maintained.

By way of evidence we are first assured, that there is clear scripture promise of this dominion over sin. To the question, Is there any clear scripture promise of this, that God will save us from *all* sin? the answer is returned in these words: “There is: in the
 “ 130th Psalm, *He shall redeem Israel from*
 “ *ALL his iniquities*. This is more largely expressed in the prophecy of Ezekiel; *Then*

§ Methodist Magazine, Jan. 1803. p. 13.

‡ Wesley on Christian Perfection, p. 32, Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 279, 280,

“ will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye
“ shall be clean; from ALL your filthiness, and
“ from all your idols I will cleanse you—I will
“ also save you from ALL your uncleannesses.
“ No promise,” it is said, “ can be more clear.
“ Equally clear and express,” it is added, “ is
“ that ancient promise, *The Lord thy God will*
“ *circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy*
“ *seed, to love the Lord thy God with ALL thy*
“ *heart, and with ALL thy soul.*”

With respect now to the first of these passages, “ He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities;” in what manner, I would ask, was the Lord to redeem him? Read the foregoing portion of the Psalm, and especially reflect upon that verse, in which the Psalmist addresses the mercy of the Almighty; “ If thou, Lord, “ shouldest mark iniquities, Lord, who shall “ stand? But there is forgiveness with thee.” —And let the doctrine be decided by a consistent reply to this question, whether the Lord was to redeem Israel from all his iniquities, by giving him dominion over sin, or by extending to him mercy and forgiveness?

As to the promise contained in the prophecy of Ezekiel, clear beyond comparison as it is represented to be, a doubt may reasonably be entertained, as to its object; and a sentiment much stronger than a doubt, as to its application to the doctrine in question. At least,

before it can be admitted as evidence to that doctrine, let us be certified, whether the prophecy has yet been fulfilled, or still waits for its accomplishment:—whether it points to the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, or to their general conversion to the Christian faith:—if to the former deliverance, whether it does not relate to them collectively, purified from idolatry and other national impieties, and sanctified by a general steadfast profession of the true faith;—otherwise, whether it can be said to have been ever literally fulfilled at all;—whether they can be said to have been ever cleansed from all their filthiness, to have been saved from all their uncleanness:—if to the latter deliverance, whether it does not denote the sacrament of baptism, by which through the atonement of Christ they, in common with other true believers, are to be cleansed and saved from their former sins. It is remarkable, and it will serve to elucidate this question, that the same, or nearly the same expression is employed by St. John, when he is speaking of forgiveness of past sin, not of intire freedom from sin in time to come: “ If
 “ we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
 “ to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from
 “ all unrighteousness.”

Similar questions arise, with regard to the

^u 1 John i. 9.

more ancient prophecy of Moses, which is described as “equally clear and express” with the other. Has it hitherto been fulfilled or not? —If it has, we may affirm on the authority of later Prophets, that it was not a promise of personal, at least not of literal, perfection.—If it has not been fulfilled, which appears the more probable case, it may be contended, that a prophecy, delivered exclusively to the Jews, which has not hitherto been completed, and of which, until it shall be completed, the precise import cannot be decisively ascertained, cannot reasonably be admitted as a rule of belief in matters, which relate to Christians in general. Or if it be contended, that these promises relate to the spiritual Israel, “the children,” not of the blood, but “of the faith, of Abraham,” on what authority is their completion assigned to this mortal state, instead of being referred to that state of full and final justification, of intire and unmixed sanctification, which the blood of Christ has purchased in another world for all those, who study with humility and diligence to submit to his Gospel in this?

The doctrine however being thus established (as is supposed) on the authority of the Old Testament, it is next affirmed*, that “affer-

* Wesley on Christian Perfection, p. 32, 33. Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 280.

“ tions answerable to this occur in the New
 “ Testament, and that they are laid down in
 “ the plainest terms. So in the first epistle of
 “ St. John, *For this purpose was the Son of*
 “ *God manifested, that he might destroy the*
 “ *works of the devil*: the works of the devil,
 “ without any limitation or restriction ; but all
 “ sin is the work of the devil. Parallel to
 “ which is that assertion of St. Paul, *Christ*
 “ *loved the Church and gave himself for it,*
 “ *that he might present it to himself a glorious*
 “ *Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any*
 “ *such thing, but that it should be holy and*
 “ *without blemish.*”

If now the former of these texts speaks of the destruction of sin to be effected in this world ; and if we adopt the comment, which follows it, and understand all sin without restriction or limitation, the purpose of Christ's manifestation is plainly not accomplished. All sin has not been destroyed by it in this world.

But it is intended perhaps by the commentator, all sin in the true Christian. Where then is it affirmed, that the destruction of sin, even in him, is to take place in this world ? Death, as well as sin, is among the works of the devil: and it was to destroy death, as well as sin, that the Son of God was manifested. Now if the conquest over sin must be complete in this world, why not the conquest over death ? The

conquest indeed over each will finally be complete: the destruction of each (blessed be God through our Lord Jesus Christ!) is inevitable: but the declaration of the Apostle affords not the slightest authority for affirming, either that sin will be totally extirpated from any child of Adam, or that “death will be swallowed up
“in victory, until this corruptible shall have
“put on incorruption; until this mortal shall
“have put on immortality.”

Then also, and not till then, shall “he who
“loved the Church, and gave himself for it,
“present it unto himself a glorious Church,
“not having spot or wrinkle or any such
“thing; but holy and without blemish.” For consider an instant, what is the consequence of the Perfectionist applying this passage in a literal sense to Christ’s earthly Church. If the Church be strictly holy and unblemished, all the parts of it must be strictly holy and unblemished also. He must therefore exclude all those, who fall short of a spotless and unfinishing purity, from being members of Christ’s Church in this world. An egregious departure from Scripture, which expressly asserts, that that Church should contain members of every kind^z; and an arrogant and uncharitable presumption, surpassing that of the Romish Church,

^y 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.

^z Matt. xiii. 47, 48.

in proportion as the pale of the Perfectionist is more contracted than hers.

The true intent of such passages as these is well expressed by one of our excellent Reformers, in the true spirit of that Gospel, whose purity he died to maintain. "Christ saved us not from sin," saith the venerable Latimer, "so that we should be without sin, that no sin should be left in our hearts: he saved us not from sin, in taking it clean away from us, so that we should no more be inclined to it. But rather the power and strength of sin he hath so vanquished, that it shall not be able to condemn those, which believe in him; for sin is remitted and not imputed to believers. So he saved us from other calamities; not taking them clean away, but rather the power of them, so that no calamity nor misery should be able to hurt us that are in Christ Jesus. And likewise he saved us from death; not that we should not die; but that death should have no victory over us, nor condemn us; but rather to be a way and entrance into salvation and everlasting life^a."

But to proceed: "the New Testament" (it is added) "affords a farther ground for expecting to be saved from all sin, both in those

^a Latimer's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 804.

“ prayers and commands which are equivalent
“ to the strongest assertions^b.”

“ Such are, first, the prayers which it con-
“ tains for intire sanctification ; which, were
“ there no such thing, would be mere mockery
“ of God.” What? is it mere mockery of God,
to pray that we may be “ delivered from evil,”
from which we are finally to be delivered, and
towards our deliverance from which we are
required to make a daily progress? Is it mere
mockery of God, to pray that we may be
“ sanctified wholly,” when we are finally to
attain to that state, and ought to be daily ad-
vancing towards it? What would it be, if we
were to pray for a partial deliverance from
evil, for the attainment of partial holiness?
What would it be, if we were to supplicate
the Author and Giver of all good, partly to re-
lease us from the power, and partly to devote
us to the dominion, of our spiritual adversary?
if we were to implore the God of holiness,
partly to cleanse us with his Spirit, and partly
to leave us subject to impurity? Surely there
is no insult to the Almighty in praying that
we may be “ filled with all the fulness of
“ God,” although we may at present be in-
capable of receiving all, that he is able and
willing to give. Rather it is our duty to pray

^b Wesley and Coke, as above.

for the highest grace ; to submit our wills to his in the accomplishment of our petitions ; and to be contented with that measure, which he in his wisdom shall bestow.

Our Saviour, the great exemplar of our conduct, as well as “ the head corner-stone ” of our hopes, in his extreme agony prayed to his heavenly Father, “ Father, if thou be willing, “ remove this cup from me ; nevertheless not “ my will, but thine be done.” Consistently with the purpose of his incarnation, the object of the prayer was impossible to be attained. But the prayer was not regarded as *a mockery of God*. Although it failed of procuring intire deliverance, which could not be granted, it insured an inferior blessing which could. The cup still remained for him to drink : but “ there “ appeared an angel unto him from heaven, “ strengthening him ” to drink it. Such, we humbly trust, is the light, wherein the Almighty regards our prayers for intire sanctification. Although he declines conferring on us that, which in our mortal state we cannot receive ; he accepts our prayers to the extent, to which they can be efficacious, and bestows on us that “ measure of grace,” which we are capable of receiving.

But further, we are told “ there are com- “ mands in Scripture to the same effect. *Be “ ye perfect, as your Father, which is in hea-*

ven, is perfect. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” And it is added, that “if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.” A position as true, as it is irrelevant.

With respect to the former proof here alleged, it is plainly a misapplication of a text, which in its original use is designed to injoin, not universal perfection, but the cultivation of that particular quality of mercy, on which the context is employed. Yet as the word does certainly occur in a more general sense, it may be useful here to remark, that it never appears to mean a state of absolute perfection in this world: but either such a progress in the Christian life, as in the natural life distinguishes a full grown man from an infant or a child:— (“in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men,” *τελειοι γινεσθε*, be perfect^c;— “every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe: but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age,” to them that are perfect, *τελειων δε εστιν η σερρα τροφη*, “even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil^d”;—till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge

^c 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

^d Heb. v. 14.

“ of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto
 “ the measure of the stature of the fulness of
 “ Christ, that we be no more children^c ;” *εις*
ανδρα τελειον, a phrase employed by the classical
 writers of Greece, to denote a man of full age,
 as distinguished from a youth^f :)—or it means
 such a farther improvement, such an absolute
 perfection in holiness and happiness, as will
 attend the true Christian in that “ general as-
 “ sembly and church of the firstborn^g,” where
 “ the spirits of just men shall be made per-
 “ fect :” a perfection, which, St. Paul instructs
 us, he had not already attained ; and did not
 expect to attain, until he should receive “ the
 “ prize of the high calling of God in Christ
 “ Jesus at the resurrection of the dead^h.” The
 Scriptures unquestionably speak of Christian
 perfection : but from the bare use of the word,
 without attending to its proper signification,
 to argue for a state of freedom from sin in this
 world, is to take a shadow for a substance ; is
 to be delighted with contemplating a bubble,
 which breaks and vanishes at the touch.

With respect to the other example, to what
 does the argument amount ? “ We are com-
 “ manded to love the Lord our God with all
 “ our heart, and with all our soul, and with

^c Eph. iv. 13.

^f See Parkhurst's Lex. in voc. *τελειος*.

^g Heb. xii. 23.

^h Phil. iii. 11, 12.

“all our mind:” and it is assumed that “the commandment,” which requires us to love God in this manner, “is equivalent to the strongest assertion,” that we are capable of doing it.

If this interpretation of the commandment proves any thing, it certainly proves too much. The commandment is given to Christians; therefore Christians are capable of fulfilling it: the commandment was given to the Jews; therefore the Jews were capable of fulfilling it. How then does this comport with the declarations of the Jewish Scriptures, that “there is no man that sinneth notⁱ:” “that a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean^k:” and that “no man living shall be justified in the sight of God^l?”

Why however is it necessary to suppose, and where is the force of the argument which supposes, that a perfect command on the part of God must imply the possibility of perfect obedience on the part of man? If indeed a failure in obedience were to be followed by punishment from the divine displeasure, it might be argued perhaps from the justice and goodness of God, that man is able perfectly to obey. But if punishment be awarded to those alone, who fail of exerting their talents, and if a

ⁱ 1 Kings viii. 46.

^k Job xiv. 4.

^l Pf. cxlii. 2.

mean of reconciling them to God for their natural and unavoidable deficiencies be provided by the atonement of Christ, there is no inconsistency in the lawgiver's enacting a law, which enjoins perfection, even though the persons, for whom it is designed, be incapable of thoroughly observing it. At the same time it is a proof of the divine wisdom and goodness, that our exertions are stimulated by being directed to such a mark, as renders necessary the full employment of all our powers: and it is a testimony also of the divine holiness, which might have suffered degradation, had there been proposed for the model of our conduct any thing less than a perfect law. "The Law," as the foregoing sentiments are expressed in a work, which speaks the opinions of our Reformers, "The Law, requiring such absolute perfection, sets forth to the pious a mark, at which they may aim, and a goal, for which they may strive; that by daily advances they may struggle to draw near to complete uprightness: for this mind and will the pious undertake under the conduct of the eternal God^m."

^m Principio Lex tam exactam vitæ perfectionem flagitans, quasi scopum piis, ad quem collimare, et metam, ad quam eniti conveniat, demonstrat, ut ad summam rectitudinẽ in dies proficiendo magno conatu contendant; hanc enim mentem voluntatemque Deo immortalĩ duce piĩ suscipiunt. *Noelli Catechismus. Enchir. Theol. vol. ii. p. 69.*

And again, “ In enacting the Law, God had regard, not so much to what we might be able to perform, who of our own fault are burdened with infirmity, as to what might be worthy of his own righteousness. For whereas none but the most perfect righteousness could be pleasing to God, it was meet that that rule of life, which he proposed, should be altogether perfect.”

But further : The holy Scriptures abound in examples to encourage us, as well as in precepts to instruct us : and undoubtedly, if a state of perfection be attainable in this world, there are in Scripture examples of persons, who have attained it. “ There are,” reply the advocates of the doctrine°. “ St. John, and all those, of whom he says in his first epistle, *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.*”

That the passage may appear to authorise the assertion, if understood in a literal and unqualified sense, it were fruitless to deny : and

° In *Lege ferenda Deus non tam quid nos præstare possemus, qui nostra culpa imbecillitate laboramus, quam quid ipsius justitia dignum esset, spectavit. Quum vero Deo non nisi summa justitia placere possit, eam vivendi normam, quam ipse descripsit, omnino perfectam esse oportuit.* *Noelli Catechismus. Enchir. Theol.* vol. ii. p. 68.

° Wesley on Perfection, p. 34. Coke's *Life of Wesley*, p. 282.

it may at the same time be admitted, that this probably is not the only passage in the epistle, which may be thought to sanction the same opinion. Without recurring however to the general tenor, or to any other portion, of Scripture, St. John himself supplies us with an answer to the remark. Apparently aware that his sentiments might be misapprehended, and desiring to guard them against misapprehension, he has in the commencement of his epistle borne strong, clear, and decided testimony to the universal weakness of human nature: and in behalf of himself, and of all those to whom he writes, and generally of all the sons of Adam, or (which will be equally strong to our purpose) of all the followers of Christ, he protests against any claim to that perfection and freedom from sin, which, notwithstanding his unequivocal renunciation of it, is most unwarrantably fastened upon him. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." I am aware it has been affirmed, that in this passage "the tenth verse fixes the sense of the eighth: 'If we say that we have no sin' in the former, being explained by 'If we say

“ we have not sinned’ in the latter verse^p.” I am content however to leave the interpretation to the unsophisticated judgment of any ingenuous mind: and forbear to detain you with a comment.

In this inquiry concerning *the Christian’s freedom from sin*, I have followed the line marked out by the advocates of the doctrine. The arguments, which have been advanced, have consequently been limited to those particular views, in which they have thought proper to exhibit it; doubtless considering those views to be most favourable to their cause. I have accordingly declined insisting upon its glaring absurdities and incongruities, whether in a rational, a moral, or a religious view. I have not referred to some Christians, who have been guilty of gross enormities, the same in kind, though not so great perhaps in degree, as that of the fanatic, who “ throwing away “ the Bible exclaimed, I am good enough; I “ will never read or pray more: I don’t desire “ to be any better than I am^q.” I have not animadverted on that spiritual pride, and that contempt of their fellow Christians, which are likely to be wrought in those, who consider

^p Wesley’s Account of Christian Perfection, p. 16. Sermon on the same, vol. iii. p. 21.

^q Wesley’s Journals, No. IV. p. 66. Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. vol. iii. p. 62.

themselves as advanced to perfection, and others in an imperfect, abject, or reprobate state'. I have not noticed the effects, very different from the fruits of Christian charity, which this persuasion is said to have produced; inciting those, who are under its influence, to introduce discord and confusion into their societies, and to fill the minds of others with prejudices against those infidels, as they call them, who will not allow them to be so perfect as they pretend'. I have not cited the confession made by the great Patron of this doctrine concerning the "pride and enthusiasm," to which it appeared likely to give birth; and the tumult and confusion, which actually ensued; when the spirit of enthusiasm broke forth; while some "began to take their own imaginations for impressions from God, and thence to suppose that they should never die;" and some "ran into other extravagances, fancying they could not be tempted, that they should feel no more pain, and that they had the gift of prophecy and of discerning of spirits;" and others took upon them to fix the precise day on which the world should come to an end; and others again, "who thought themselves possessed of perfection,

† See *Enthusiasm, &c.* vol. ii. p. 24, 25.

‡ *Hampson's Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 60.

“ were manifestly wanting in resignation, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance.” I have not adverted to the irrational expedients, to which the maintainers of the doctrine have been driven in its support :—the contradictory supposition, that a man can be subject to sins of infirmity and still can be deemed perfect :—the belief, that a man can be delivered from every fleshly desire and from every outward and inward sin ; and the “ denial, that he can be absolutely perfect ^x :” —the strange inconsistency of supposing “ mistakes” and “ infirmities” and “ defects,” “ a thousand nameless defects,” “ a thousand infirmities necessarily connected with flesh and blood, wherewith the corruptible body more or less presses down the soul,” in one “ sanctified throughout in body,” who “ has all the mind that was in Christ, and always walketh as he walked ;” who has “ a heart renewed in the whole image of God, the full likeness of him that created it ;” and who “ doth the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven ^y :” —and the presumptuous dilemma which they have been compelled to form in their defence,

^t Wesley on Perfection, p. 54, 56, 79.

^u Hampson's Life of Wesley, vol. iii. p. 60.

^x Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 335.

^y Wesley's Account of Christian Perfection, p. 14, 26, 27, 28, 39, 41, 102.

either that there was inward corruption in our Lord, or that the servant can be as his Master, and consequently incorrupt^z. I have not enumerated the various contradictory positions, into which they have been betrayed by their zeal for this doctrine, at one time attributing to it properties, which at another they have been compelled to qualify or to deny^a. I have not mentioned the seeming inconsistency of the Founder of Methodism, who had long patronised the doctrine, who had shown on every occasion the most decided partiality to those who professed it, and who for many years seldom preached a sermon without largely insisting on it, and yet never could be persuaded to profess it himself^b. I have not commented on the unscriptural distinction, which it introduces, between common and accepted believers; between those of a lower, and those of a more favoured, class^c. I have not brought forward to view the language of presumption, held by the Perfectionist, affirming himself to have “no temper contrary to love, no desire “contrary to the will of God^d ;” to be “quite “free from evil propensities, pride, and irre-

^z *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* vol. i. p. 45, 47.

^a See Wesley's Account, &c. p. 21, and the notes.

^b *Hampson's Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 56.

^c *Ibid.* p. 55.

^d *Wesley's Journals*, No. XV. p. 35.

“gular. passions, and never during a long series of years to have lost that sanctification for a moment^c ;” to be saved not only from the guilt, but also from the desert, of punishment^f. I have not contrasted with this the language of humility, wherein the most pious and virtuous men have been accustomed to acknowledge their own imperfection. I have not dwelt upon the language, wherein St. John, and the other Apostles, and all the sacred writers describe the Christian course as a continual growing in grace, and uniformly speak of men, even of the most perfect, as guilty of occasional sins. I have not adverted to the concession of the advocates of the doctrine, that the perfection for which they contend was not enjoyed by the generality of believers before them, nor by those to whom St. Paul wrote his epistles, nor by St. Paul himself, when his former epistles were written^g. I have not laid before you instances of those frailties, not to mention those more grievous sins, which have stained the purity of such as the Scriptures hold up to our imitation, as the most just and the most perfect men. Nor have I enlarged on the concurrent testimony of Prophets and Apostles,

^c Methodist Magazine, Jan. 1803. See Outram's Extracts, p. 18.

^f Wesley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 220, 221.

^g Wesley's Account of Christian Perfection, p. 31.

and on the general tenor of the Old and New Testaments, which represent the sacrifice of Christ as necessary to every man, not only to purify him from original corruption, but also to make continual atonement for actual sins. Each of these topics would supply an ample field for discussion: I shall be satisfied however with having thus cursorily suggested them to your minds, trusting that the previous remarks will have been sufficient to show the fallacy of an opinion peculiar to a comparatively small body of Christians, and novel as it is peculiar. I call it a novel doctrine; for such I apprehend it to be amongst us, although in former ages it has not been without its advocates. "The Montanists," as Bishop Lavington has remarked in the words of the Historian of that sect, "took themselves to be perfect^h:" and the learned Barrow observes, that "there have indeed been sects of men, such as the Novatians, and the Pelagians, who have pretended to perfection and purity: but these men," (continues that powerful and copious divine in terms of animadversion, well deserving the attention of the modern Perfectionist,) "But these men, one would think, did never read the Scripture; did never consult experience;

^h *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, vol. i. p. 6. See also *Outram's Extracts*, p. 9.

“ did never reflect on their minds ; did never
“ compare their practice with their duty ; had
“ no conscience at all, or a very blind and stu-
“ pid one. *Who can say, I have made my*
“ *heart clean, I am pure from sin,* was a ques-
“ tion of Solomon, to which he thought no
“ man could answer affirmatively of himself.
“ *If I justify myself, my own mouth shall con-*
“ *demn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall*
“ *prove me perverse,* was the asseveration of
“ that person, whose virtue had undergone the
“ severest trials. *In many things we offend all;*
“ was the confession of an Apostle, in the
“ name of the wisest and best men¹.”

It will be elucidating by a beautiful example the scriptural notions of assurance and perfection ; of perfection, to which the Christian is daily drawing more near, and of assurance not vouchsafed unto him until the close of his mortal life ; if I call to your recollection the last moments of a “ most learned, most humble
“ and holy man,” a man of saintlike and apostolical simplicity. “ I have lived,” said he, “ to
“ see this world is made up of perturbations,
“ and I have been long preparing to leave
“ it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful
“ hour of making my account with God, which
“ I now apprehend to be near. And though

¹ Barrow s Works, vol. iii. p. 239.

“ I have by his grace loved him in my youth,
 “ and feared him in mine age, and laboured to
 “ have a conscience void of offence to him and
 “ to all men; yet, if thou, O Lord, be extreme
 “ to mark what I have done amiss, who can
 “ abide it? And therefore where I have failed,
 “ Lord, show mercy to me: for I plead not
 “ my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my
 “ unrighteousness, for his merits who died to
 “ purchase a pardon for penitent sinners. And
 “ since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be
 “ terrible, and then take thine own time: I
 “ submit to it! Let not mine, O Lord, but let
 “ thy will be done! With which expression,”
 adds his biographer, “ he fell into a dangerous
 “ slumber, dangerous as to his recovery; yet
 “ recover he did, but it was only to speak
 “ these few words: God hath heard my daily
 “ petitions; for I am at peace with all men,
 “ and he is at peace with me: from which
 “ blessed assurance I feel that inward joy,
 “ which this world can neither give nor take
 “ from me. More he would have spoken; but
 “ his spirits failed him; and after a short con-
 “ flict between nature and death, a quiet sigh
 “ put a period to his last breath, and so he fell
 “ asleep.”

Such were the dying sentiments of a man,
 whom his biographer characterises by great
 learning, remarkable meekness, godly simpli-

city, and Christian moderation: whom his contemporaries esteemed as most capable of “teaching learning by instruction, and virtue by example;” whom not this University alone, but our Church and Nation, have uniformly esteemed, as one of their brightest luminaries; and to whose merits the testimony of two successive monarchs has been sanctioned by the approbation of the good, the wise, and the great; who have concurred in adopting the appellation, that his sovereigns had bestowed, and in transmitting his honour to posterity as “the learned, or judicious, or reverend, or venerable Hooker^k.”

Virtually disclaiming the modern doctrine of assurance, by declaring that “the strongest in faith that liveth on the earth, has always need to labour, strive, and pray, that his assurance concerning heavenly and spiritual things may grow, increase, and be augmented:” and disclaiming the modern doctrine of perfection by an humble acknowledgment of his own unrighteousness, he bore his testimony to the truths, which I have been endeavouring to establish, even before the opposite heresies had taken root amongst us. With singular gratification I close the present discourse by

^k Isaac Walton's Life of Hooker. Works, Oxford ed. p. 90, 25, 79, 60.

such an attestation to the foundness of the tenets, which I have been deducing from the Oracles of God: for I cannot consider it as a matter of trifling moment, that they are thus incidentally supported by one, whose heart was the living picture of that poorness of spirit, to which is promised the blessing of the kingdom of heaven; and whose mind was of a capacity to trace the operations of law, emanating from the bosom of the Creator, and diffusing harmony throughout his works¹.

Now unto "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; who dwelleth in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit:" unto Him be glory and dominion for ever!

¹ See Eccl. Polity. Conclusion of the first book.

DISCOURSE IX.

I COR. IX. 16.

Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me: yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.

AT the commencement of these Lectures, to the conclusion of which we are now rapidly advancing, the words, that have been just recited, were selected for your attention; because I was desirous that our minds might be impressed, at the outset of the proposed inquiry, with a due-sense of the solemnity of the charge, into the grounds of which it was my design, with God's blessing, to examine: a charge, as was then remarked, which, if it were substantiated, must involve us in the guilt of corrupting, or renouncing, "the truth as it is in Jesus;" and which must in consequence expose us to the "wo," (as it is expressed in the text,) to the "curse," (as St. Paul elsewhere expresses it,) denounced on

those, who "preach not the Gospel" of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Alive to the responsibility, which attaches to us as ministers of the Gospel, and to the tremendous punishment which awaits us, if we wilfully pervert or abandon the true evangelical faith; I have endeavoured to give a just scriptural exposition of those more prominent subjects, on which the charge in question is principally founded; to detail the particulars of the charge, as alleged by our accusers; to state, what I apprehend to be, the substance of our teaching on the controverted points; and to defend and vindicate our teaching by that, which alone can be pleaded in its defence, namely, the pure and unadulterated word of God. The several subjects of the conditions of man's justification; of his predestination to life or death; of the efficacy, and perceptibility, of the operations of the Holy Spirit; of regeneration; of conversion; of assurance; and of perfection; have been thus successively proposed to your thoughts: not, (for I would here repeat what was said in my introductory discourse,) not for the purpose of superseding, but of encouraging, more full and more minute investigation in those, for whose benefit these Lectures appear to have been principally designed. Whilst, therefore, I attempt to draw the attention of the younger part of my hear-

ers to the foregoing topics; in order that they may be the better enabled to perform their ministerial duties with success; let me intreat them to prosecute the examination by the light of the sacred Scriptures; assisted by those human aids, which have been so largely vouchsafed by a bountiful Providence to this country, and the study of which it is a prominent object of our academical institutions to promote.

A late excellent Prelate, who contributed much to the ornament and spiritual edification of our University, in which he occupied a distinguished post, in a discourse from this place remarked, that “as heresies make their periodical revolutions in the Church, like comets in the heavens, to shed a baleful influence on all about them, the time seemed to be coming, when Antinomianism was to be again rampant amongst us. And what wonder” (he adds) “that this or any other heresy should be introduced and propagated, if men, instead of having recourse to the catholic doctors of the ancient Church, and to such of our divines as have trodden in their steps, will extract their theology from the latest and lowest of the modern sectaries, thus beginning where they should end: if, instead of drawing living water for the use of the sanctuary from the fresh springs of

“ primitive antiquity, they take up with such
 “ as comes to them at second or third hand
 “ from the lake of Geneva: if the spirit of a
 “ Cyprian, exerted in the maintenance of the
 “ *vigor Episcopatus* and the constitution of the
 “ Church, be accounted for bigotry and nar-
 “ rowness; and Clement and Ignatius pass for
 “ but very moderate divines, when compared
 “ with the new lights of the Tabernacle and
 “ Foundery. Should this method of studying
 “ divinity prevail, to the exclusion of the
 “ other, there will soon be neither order left
 “ in the Church, nor certainty in the faith*.”

The season of anarchy and instability, which
 this excellent Prelate so pathetically anticipat-
 ed, appears to be gaining ground upon us with
 rapid strides: whilst men, despising all ecclesi-
 astical subordination and discipline, all unity of
 “ mind and judgment,” and esteeming them-
 selves wiser than their teachers, tenaciously
 adhere to such practices and opinions as are
 right in their own eyes; or rather such, as are
 agreeable to their own inclination and conceit.
 Thus sectarism, in all its manifold variety of
 forms, is perpetually inlisting fresh proselytes,
 who are distinguished, rather by hostility to
 the national faith, than by attachment to any
 settled system of doctrines; and of whom it

* Bp. Horne's Sermons, vol. v. p. 66.

may more easily be affirmed, what they are not, than what they are. Meanwhile the accusation against the clergy, that the Gospel is not preached in the Church, is circulated with unremitting assiduity:—by some, whose superior knowledge might reasonably have led us to expect from them a more enlarged charity:—and by others, who are alike unacquainted, both with the true scope of the Gospel, and with the doctrines of the national clergy; and in whose excuse it might be pleaded, that “they know neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm,” were not their ignorance accompanied with a high degree of spiritual pride; with a supercilious contempt of others; and an overweening esteem for themselves. The coarse and crude attacks of this latter class of our assailants has not provoked me to a reply. My remarks have been almost intirely confined to those, whom a more liberal education, or a legitimate appointment to the ministry, or the respectability of their personal characters, has rendered fitter objects of notice; although some of them have not unfrequently disgraced themselves by language, totally unworthy of an enlightened, or a religious mind. The principal specific forms, under which the accusation is conveyed against us, have been examined in the foregoing lectures. It will be my object, in this conclud-

ing discourse, to offer some remarks on the general character of the charge.

I. First, then, I observe, that the charge alleged against the national clergy, that they are not preachers of the Gospel, is *arrogant and presumptuous*. It is so with respect to those, who make it:—men, oftentimes “of the lowest of the people;” oftentimes deficient in the ordinary means of procuring information; and proportionally rude and ignorant:—men, at the best, “of like passions” and like infirmities with those, whom they condemn; possessed of no superior natural endowments, of no superior opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, and (notwithstanding the pretensions, which some of them have made to apostolical authority) of no superior spiritual gifts. It is presumptuous, again, with respect to the doctrines, on which it rests. Take, for instance, the doctrine of absolute predestination, that which is the most commonly and the most vehemently urged. “The five disputed points,” says a learned writer, much conversant in these controversies, “The five disputed points, which in these last times are reproached by the name of Arminianism, had more or less exercised the Church in all times and ages, especially after the breaking out of the Pelagian heresies, when all the niceties thereof were more

“ thoroughly canvassed, Neither the piety and
 “ sobriety of the primitive times, nor the au-
 “ thority of the popes, nor the commanding
 “ spirit of Luther, nor the more powerful name
 “ of Calvin, have prevailed so far, but that the
 “ Church, and every broken fragment of it,
 “ hath found some subdivision about these de-
 “ bates^b.” Whence then this fancied infalli-
 bility, wherewith our accusers assume the cha-
 racter and office of the judge, and confidently
 pronounce sentence in their own behalf? Wherefore, upon questions notoriously much
 controverted, and therefore, it is to be pre-
 sumed, of some difficulty and perplexity, do
 they assume the prerogative of deciding, as in
 a case of no difficulty or intricacy at all? Is it
 consistent with modesty, with humility, with
 decency, thus to condemn without appeal, not
 only the great body of the English clergy,
 against whom they more immediately direct
 their attacks; but some also of the most glo-
 rious names, which shed a lustre on the annals
 of the Christian Church? I speak not of the
 earliest Fathers of the Church, whose opinions
 have been proved to run with a full current
 against those of Calvin and his followers: yet,
 setting their authority aside, numerous and
 noble is the catalogue of those, who have un-

^b Heylyn's *Historia Quinquarticularis*. Preface.

equivocally dissented from the doctrines of absolute predestination, partial redemption, and irresistible grace; and who must unquestionably share in the sentence of condemnation, which is confidently pronounced upon us. We rest our defence indeed upon the declarations of Scripture: but in the interpretation of Scripture, the judgment of learned men deserves, and demands, attention. And surely the names of Chrysofom and Jerome; of Melancthon, and Arminius, and Grotius; of Latimer and Cranmer; of Jackson, and Taylor, and Leslie, and Beveridge, and Barrow; might abate the confidence of the absolute Predestinarian; and moderate his asperity in the condemnation of opinions, for which such advocates have stood forward in their support.

But even allowing the Calvinistic doctrines to be probably true, still is it not presumptuous, we may ask, to represent the preaching of them as the criterion of ministerial fidelity; and to condemn those, who forbear to preach them, as guilty of apostasy from their profession? "I hold," said the learned Mede, "that communion is not to be broken but for fundamentals; of which kind I take none of the differences between the Calvinists and Lutherans to be." A belief in these mysterious articles

will hardly be judged necessary to salvation. If true, they are involved in such obscurity, that a man (it is presumed) may safely doubt concerning them, or even be ignorant of them altogether. Now the edification of the hearers should be the measure of the preacher's doctrine: assuredly therefore those doctrines, which it is not necessary for the people to believe, it cannot be necessary for the preacher to enforce. Nay, of the necessity, or even of the expediency of enforcing them, let Calvin be the judge, when he pronounces, "Should any one thus address the people, If ye believe not, it is because God hath already predestinated you to destruction,"—yet what is this but to preach pure and consistent Calvinism?—that man not only cherishes slothfulness, but also gives encouragement to sin^d." At the same time of this we may be certain, that, whatever the Apostles thought on these points, they manifested less anxiety to amuse their converts with mere speculative doctrines, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying^e, than to build them up in the practice of a holy life, established on faith in the Re-

^d Si quis ita plebem compellet, si non creditis, ideo fit, quia jam divinitus exitio prædestinati estis, is non modo ignaviam fovet, sed etiam indulget malitiæ. *Calv, Inst. lib. iii. cap. xxiii. sect. 14.*

^e 1 Tim. i. 4.

deemer; and that instead of employing language, which might afford occasion for self-conceit or despondency, for carelessness or uncleanness of living, they uniformly addressed themselves to the sinner, as to one capable of repenting and being forgiven; and to the faint, as to one, capable of "falling from his own steadfastness," and finally "coming short of salvation."

"For my own part," said the wise and pious Bishop Andrews, when his sentiments were demanded on the doctrines of the Lambeth Articles, "I honestly confess, I have followed the advice of Austin; These mysteries, which I am not able to open, being shut up, I have gazed upon with awe: and therefore for these sixteen years, since I was made a Priest, I have, neither in public nor in private, either disputed or preached about them; and even now also I had rather hear concerning them, than speak. And indeed since it is a slippery subject, and has on each side dangerous precipices; and since the passages of Paul, from which it is for the most part derived, have always been reckoned amongst those *things hard to be understood*, of which Peter speaks; and since there are not many among the Clergy, who can skilfully unfold them, and very few among the people, who can profitably hear them; I would

“advise, if it were possible, that silence be in-
 “joined on both sides; and that they be not
 “so loosely and crudely propounded by every
 “one, as the custom is. Certainly I account
 “it much more profitable, that our people be
 “instructed to seek their salvation in the ma-
 “nifest precepts of a holy and faithful life, as
 “is the advice of Peter also, than in the se-
 “crets of the divine counsel: of which an
 “over-curious examination is apt to produce
 “dimness and dizziness of sight, but seldom
 “produces edification, at least in narrow
 “minds.” Such was the language of a very

† Ego certe (ingenue fateor) secutus sum Augustini
 consilium, Mysteria hæc, quæ aperire non possum, clausa
 miratus sum; et proinde per hos 16 annos, ex quo Pres-
 byter sum factus, me neque publice neque privatim vel
 disputasse de eis, vel pro concione tractasse: etiam nunc
 quoque malle, de eis audire, quam dicere. Et quidem
 cum lubricus locus sit, et habeat utrinque periculosa præ-
 cipitia, cumque loci Paulini (unde fere eruitur) inter *dog-
 vora* illa (de quibus Petrus) semper sint habiti; cumque
 nec multi in Clero sint, qui ea dextre expedire, et per-
 pauci in populo, qui idonei illius auditores esse possint;
 suaderem, si fieri possit, ut indiceretur utrinque silentium;
 nec ita passim et crude proponerentur a quibusque ut
 affolet. Certo multo magis expedire arbitror, ut doceatur
 populus noster salutem suam quærere in manifestis vitæ
 sanctæ et fideliter institutæ, (quod et Petrus suadet,) quam
 in occultis consilii divini; cujus curiosa nimis inspectio
 vertigines et scotomata generare potest et solet; ædifica-
 tiones certe in angustiis ingeniis vix solet. *Judicium L.
 Andrews Ep. Winton. de Art. Lamb. p. 28.*

excellent Prelate, a distinguished ornament and pillar of the Church, which, as the noble Historian of the Rebellion truly testifies, he “understood and loved^s.” Wherein the practice, which he describes himself to have followed, and which he recommends for the adoption of others, is inconsistent with the sound principles of the Gospel, and with the example of its inspired teachers; is an inquiry, not unworthy the attention of our accusers: and until it shall be satisfactorily answered, we may venture to question their modesty in condemning us by reason of our forbearance as to the mysterious doctrines in debate.

And if the presumption of our opponents be great, in thus authoritatively deciding upon subjects, which have long divided the opinions of the greatest men, and in taking the preaching of their own sentiments upon these subjects for the criterion of ministerial fidelity; they are not less reprehensible in pronouncing sentence upon points, whereon the sentiments, which they espouse, derive little or no countenance from antiquity; or even were not at all encouraged until since the period of the Reformation. “The doctrine that no man, “being once in God’s favour, can ever quite “lose it,” is affirmed by the learned Doctor

^s Clarendon’s History of the Rebellion, vol. i. book i.

Barrow, to have “the unanimous consent of
 “all Christendom for fifteen hundred years
 “against it^h.” “What Christ meant by be-
 “ing born of water and of the Spirit,” saith
 Bishop Beveridge, “is now made a question:
 “I say, now; for it was never made so, till
 “of late years. For many ages together none
 “ever doubted of it, but the whole Christian
 “world took it for granted, that our Saviour
 “by these words meant only, that except a
 “man be baptized according to his institution,
 “he cannot enter into the kingdom of Godⁱ.”
 Perfection, if it has been occasionally support-
 ed by some particular sects, as by the Nova-
 tians of old time, and certain enthusiasts about
 the age of the Reformation, has never had
 any pretensions to be considered as a doctrine
 of the catholic Church. Whilst assurance was
 so far from being admitted and taught in the
 primitive times, that it was not asserted even
 by that Father, “whose supposed patronage
 “stands our accusers in so much stead upon
 “other occasions^k,” and whose opinions some
 of them represent as the model of their own.
 Yet these are among the leading points, which
 are made the subject of the charge against us:

^h Barrow's Works, vol. ii. p. 51.

ⁱ Beveridge's Works, vol. i. p. 304.

^k Barrow, ut supra.

a charge, the operation of which thus appears not to be confined to those, against whom it is directly levelled, but comprehends a very great majority of the whole Christian world.

II. Whilst the charge is thus shown to be presumptuous, it is also (as is the nature of all general charges against large bodies of men) accompanied with much *misrepresentation*, and in consequence *uncharitable and unjust*. The clergy of the Church of England consists of several thousands of individuals; with whose sentiments and style of preaching, otherwise than as they are to be inferred from our assent to the authorised declarations of the Church, it is impossible, that they, who advance the charge, can be acquainted, but upon some very disputable authority. Yet often on such authority as this; and often (it is not to be questioned) on no authority at all, is the sentence of condemnation pronounced upon us; and we have reason to complain in the words of the primitive Christians, which an historian of the reformed churches has applied to a persecuted body in his own days, “ Our denomination carries a condemnation with it, without any conviction of our guilt †.”

† *Condemnati sumus quia nominamur, non quia vincimur.* See Heylyn's *Hist. Quinquart.* part i. chap. v. sect. 12.

But this unjust and uncharitable spirit is evinced still more clearly, where the charge is confidently propagated in spite of positive testimony to its falsehood. Let me instance in one favourite form, under which it has been frequently repeated; namely, that in our national Church “mere heathenish morality has generally superseded the preaching of the “Gospel.” Now whatever may be the issue of the question, as to the terms of our justification; and whether we err, or not, in ascribing the importance, which we do, to holiness of life; is it to be broadly asserted, that the holiness, which we enforce, is a *mere heathenish morality*? Ought it to be admitted by others? Is it, can it be, believed by the assertors themselves?—Let us suppose, for the argument’s sake, that there may have been, that there may be, some amongst us, who, in their zeal to promote the moral virtues, have not been sufficiently cautious in discriminating between Christian, and heathen, morality; in distinguishing between “works done before the “grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his “Spirit^h,” and those “good works, which “spring out necessarily of a true and lively “faithⁱ.” in excluding our works, however

^g Apology for Sunday Schools, by the Rev. Rowland Hill, p. 27.

^h Art. 13.

ⁱ Art. 12.

and whenever wrought, from all pretensions to contribute a tittle towards the purchase of our justification; and in ascribing our being “accounted righteous before God only to the “merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ^k.” —Let this case, I say, be supposed; and let us concur in the justice of whatever severity of animadversion the accuser may inflict upon it, as a dereliction of the Gospel of Christ for the morality of heathens; is the same sentence therefore to be pronounced on those, who, maintaining unequivocally with the Church the doctrine of “justification only for the “merits of Christ by faith, and not for our “own works or deservings,” and pronouncing with her, that no works of ours can “put “away our sins, and endure the severity of “God’s judgment;” with her also assert, that “good works, which are the fruits of faith, “are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ,” and “are the right trade and pathway unto “heaven^l?” From the metropolitan chair of this kingdom, amid the studious retreats of this University, and in one of the most obscure and retired corners of our land, the judicious Secker, the excellent and amiable Horne, the venerable Wilfon were proclaiming the glory of

^k Article 11.

^l Homily on Good Works.

the Redeemer, and labouring to lead their flocks “beside the waters of comfort, and in the paths of righteousness, for his name’s sake,” whilst Methodism was planted and propagated under the sanction of the specious plea, that “the people were utterly ignorant of the Gospel,” and that “for the moralizing iniquity of the priest the land mourned^m.” Being dead, they still speak in their surviving works; and plainly enough, to expose the uncharitableness and injustice of our accusers. Many, we doubt not, of their contemporaries deserve to participate in their praise; and many, many, we trust, still remain; inheritors of the purity of their faith, if not of their talents for enforcing it; and fearless of the assaults of the enemy, as long as they shall have grace to hold fast the sound apostolical method of instruction, practised by these faithful Ministers of Christ.

III. The *temper*, with which the charge is urged, is agreeable to the preceding particular in the charge itself: a temper, which appears to partake little of that charity, which is the distinguishing badge of a disciple of Christ; of that “meekness in instructing those who oppose themselves,” which is the indispensable duty of a servant of the Lord. “A whole

^m Whitefield’s Works, vol. v. p. 155.

“ body of lukewarm, prejudiced, envious, malignant clergy; opposers of true vital religion; blind leaders of the blind; heretics; traitors; perjured apostates; hateful hypocrites; murderers of souls; our Saviour’s most bitter enemiesⁿ;” —such are the terms, which the patrons of Methodism have scrupled not to employ in their descriptions of the regular clergy, under the pretence of “ doing God service.” “ Reproachful language,” said an heathen prince to one who had accosted him with insolence, “ is wont to irritate the mind of him, against whom it is uttered: but although thy address hath been injurious, thou hast not provoked me to be unseemly in my reply^o.” The resolution is worthy of a Christian. Let us adopt it; and “ being reviled, let us revile not again.” Yet there is one observation, which I cannot withhold, with respect to the temper of our accusers; that the language of bitterness, which it prompts, betrays that persecuting sort of spirit, which would hardly be contented with invective, if other weapons were in its power.

ⁿ Whitefield’s Works, vol. i. p. 389, 390. vol. v. p. 271. vol. vi. p. 95. Pietas Oxon. &c. See also Outram’s Extracts, p. 124—139.

^o Ω ξεινε Σπαρτιητα, ονειδεα κατιοντα ανθρωπω φιλεει επαναγειν τον θυμον· συ μεντοι αποδεξαμενος υβρισματα εν τω λογω ου με επεισας αχημονα εν τη αμοιβη γενεσθαι. Herod. lib. vii.

“ You have the word, and we have the sword,” said the Popish Prolocutor Weston^p, when he felt his inability to cope with the scriptural authorities, by which his Protestant opponents, the Fathers of the English Church, supported their opinions. They had the sword; and they used it. The language of our accusers may warrant a wish, that the sword may never fall into their hands; lest a repetition of the scenes, which desolated the Church in a somewhat later most melancholy and eventful period of our history, should convince us by sad experience, as the originals convinced our forefathers; that bigotry and intolerance are not confined to the adherents of Popery; and that higher degrees of charity are not always found to accompany pretensions to superior purity of faith.

IV. It deserves to be remarked, that the charge is *vague and undefined*. Often indeed it is alleged by men, who have as indistinct a notion of the Gospel, as they have an imperfect acquaintance with the preaching of the clergy. But taking it in the most favourable light, as alleged by the more informed of our accusers, it is still of so fluctuating an import, as to defy all attempts to satisfy it. That we do not preach the Gospel, is the charge ad-

^p Ridley's Life of Bp. Ridley, book vii. p. 488.

vanced by our various enemies: a charge, to appearance the same with all of them, but in substance irreconcilably different.

For let us reflect an instant on the persons, by whom it is advanced; men, like Ephraim and Manasseh combined together against Judah^a, as widely at variance with each other, as either of them can be hostile to us:—men, who have no other principle of harmony, than that which united Herod and Pontius Pilate in the persecution of Christ:—men, who have expressly “accused each other, of preaching
“damnable and essentially erroneous doctrines, horrid blasphemies, another gospel, and the like.” What then is it possible that we can do, to silence the clamour of our accusers? Shall we espouse the sentiments of the Wesleyan Methodists? The charge will still be levelled against us by the Calvinist; and we may be rebuked in the language of Whitefield, when he told his rival in their schism, that
“they preached two different gospels; and
“therefore he not only would not join with,
“or give him the right hand of fellowship,
“but was resolved to preach against him and
“his brother, wheresoever he preached at all.”

^a .Is. ix. 21.

^r See Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. part ii. Preface, p. xxi.

^e Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 214.

Shall we range ourselves under the banners of the Calvinist? This will hardly content the followers of Wesley, who declared, that “he had an immediate call from God to publish to the world, that Mr. Whitefield’s doctrine was highly injurious to Christ.”

Or suppose that we could decide in favour of some great division of our accusers; the same difficulty would occur, as to the subdivision, which we should adopt. Let us determine on the party of Wesley. Shall we then attach ourselves to those, who still take the lead in the regular connection; or to those, who have separated from it, by reason of a diversity of opinion on some important doctrinal points, whereon they claim the sanction of the authority of the original Founder of the sect? Let us declare ourselves of the Calvinistic party. Shall we then maintain “the rigours of the system,” in conformity with its fundamental principles; and agreeably to the doctrines of Calvin, and of consistent Calvinists, and to the declarations of the Lambeth Articles: or shall we profess ourselves the advocates of “a milder and more moderate Calvinism,” and “absolutely disavow the doctrine of absolute decrees and absolute reprobation?”

* Nott’s Bampton Lectures, p. 248. note.

u Nightingale’s Portraiture of Methodism, p. 409, 481.

“bation,” as an extravagant and frightful system?

Or suppose again, that this difficulty was surmounted; and that our election was made, not only of the sect but of the sectary, not only of the party but of the man, that shall have dominion over our faith. Inconsistent as our accusers are with themselves, as well as at variance with each other, by what rule shall we be guided in distinguishing, between those opinions of the individual, which we shall espouse, as of evangelical purity; and those, which we shall reject, as a departure from it? Taking, for instance, the Apologist of moderate Calvinism for our guide, shall we with him assert, that “the fundamental principles, on which “the Calvinistic system rests, are incontrovertible;” or shall we unite with him in renouncing some of those principles, until we have stripped Calvinism of its characteristic features, as a system of faith; and made of it a mutilated structure, which its founder would have derided, as the edifice of childishness and folly? Attaching ourselves to another celebrated champion of our self-denominated evangelical brethren, shall we teach our people that the salvation offered by the Gospel is “wholly unconditional,” and irreversibly determined by

* Overton's True Churchmen, &c.

the absolute will of God; or shall we represent it, as depending upon men's improvement of the opportunity of grace offered? With Whitefield, shall we preach universal, or partial, redemption? the defectibility, or the indefectibility, of grace? Shall we expostulate with our hearers for not choosing to be converted, or shall we tell them that their conversion is not of their own free will? With Wesley shall we contend, that a man can "have all the mind that was in Christ, and always walk as he walked;" or shall we deny that any man can be "absolutely perfect?" Shall we assert, that a man cannot have living faith, without knowing that he hath it? or that he may be justified, that is, may have this living faith, yet not know it, till a long time after? Shall we affirm "the condition of our acceptance with God to be not our holiness either of heart or life, but faith alone, faith as contradistinguished from holiness, as well as from good works;" or shall we contend for a "faith, which is necessarily inclusive of all good works and all holiness;" or shall we maintain it as a po-

^y See Hawker's Prop against all Despair, p. 18. *Misericordia*, p. 43, 65.

^z See Tucker's History of the Principles of Methodism, p. 20, 32.

^a See Nott's Bampton Lectures, p. 246.

fiction, which cannot be “denied without fighting about words, that holiness is a condition “of our final acceptance with God^b?”

These inconsistencies and disagreements of our accusers, not only with each other, but with themselves, will justify us in regarding their opinions with jealousy; confident, as they all are, in support, each of his favourite doctrines; and professing, as some of them have done, to have been directed to a knowledge of the truth, even in the minutest circumstances, by a special revelation from God. Amid such contending claims, great deliberation not only is allowable, but becomes a duty, before we embrace any system of opinions, thus proposed to us, as articles of the Gospel faith: lest we should at length discover, that, like the moderate Calvinist, we are “haling between two opinions,” consistently attached to neither; or lest, with Whitefield, conceiving ourselves to be favoured at some future period with a more clear knowledge of divine truth, we should be compelled to retract and recant: or lest, having laboured in vain for years, like Wesley, “to convert “others,” and teach them the truths of Christianity, we should after all discover, that we

^b Wesley's Farther Appeal. See Outram's Extracts, p. 104.

had “never been converted ourselves.” Thus stands the case, with respect to our own satisfaction: in the mean time, as to our accusers, before we can cherish a well-grounded hope of satisfying them, they may reasonably be required to display a greater degree of harmony, one with another, and of consistency, each with himself. Till then, we may be permitted to adopt for our pattern the conduct of the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, on occasion of the complaint of the Disciplinarians, in Queen Elizabeth’s time, against the Liturgy then in use. “He demanded,” as Fuller reports it, “whether they desired the taking away thereof. They answered, No; but only the amendment of what was offensive therein. He required them to make a better, such as they would have settled in the stead thereof. Whereupon, the first classis formed a new one, somewhat according to the form of Geneva. The second classis, disliking it, altered it in six hundred particulars. The third quarrelled at these alterations, and resolved on a new model. The fourth classis dissented from the former. Thus, because they could not agree amongst themselves,” continues the historian, “that wise statesman

^c Wesley’s First Journal, p. 78. Coke’s Life of Wesley, p. 133.

“ put ‘them off for the present, until they
 “ should present him a pattern with a perfect
 “ consent^d.”

V. I proceed to remark, that we are accused of *abandoning the doctrines of the Reformation; the doctrines of the Church of England.*

Now that some of the opinions of our accusers were maintained by certain persons at the earliest periods of the Reformation, and in this country, may readily be allowed. The doctrine of perfection, for instance, was so maintained, as we learn from our Articles, by which, as well as by the Augsburg Confession, it is condemned^e. The doctrine of not falling from grace had also its advocates; for so we are informed by Bishop Latimer, who pointedly deprecates it, as a novel upstart opinion^f. Thus again, with regard to the Calvinistic tenets in general; of which an historian speaks in language, well calculated to excite attention, from the correspondence, which it exhibits, between those times and the present. “ There were
 “ some men,” he says, “ who, in the beginning of the reign of King Edward the Sixth,
 “ busily stickled in the maintenance of Calvin’s

^d Fuller’s Church History, book ix. p. 178.

^e Art. 15. and Confessio August. Art. 11.

^f See above, Serm. v.

“doctrines. And *thinking themselves to be*
 “*MORE EVANGELICAL, than the rest of their*
 “*brethren, they either took unto themselves, or*
 “*had given by others, the name of GOSPELLERS.*
 “Of this they were informed by the reve-
 “rend prelate and right godly martyr Bishop
 “Hooper, in the preface to his Exposition of
 “the Ten Commandments: Our *Gospellers,*
 “*saith he, be better learned than the Holy*
 “*Ghost; for they wickedly attribute the cause*
 “*of punishments and adversity to God’s provi-*
 “*dence, which is the cause of no ill, as he*
 “*himself can do no ill; and over every mis-*
 “*chief that is done, they say, it is God’s will.*
 “In which,” adds Heylyn, “we have the men
 “and their doctrine; the name of *Gospellers,*
 “and the reason why that name was ascribed
 “unto them^z.”

Thus far, then, it may be conceded, that
 the doctrines for which our accusers contend,
 the doctrines of Calvin especially, were not
 without their advocates, in the age of the Re-
 formation, either at home or abroad. But is
 it to be understood, that these doctrines formed
 part of that system of faith, which was gene-
 rally adopted by those, who separated from
 the Church of Rome? Unquestionably they
 did not. Earnestly as they were maintained

z Hist. Quinquart. part iii. chap. xvi. p. 589.

by their great patron, whose name they bear, and by those divines, with whom he was more closely connected, and who (as judicious Hooker says) “deemed his books almost the “very canon, by which both doctrine and discipline were to be judged^h ;” let it not be supposed, that the establishment of these doctrines in a general view formed any part of the Reformation from the corruptions of Popery : let it not be supposed, that these doctrines did in fact constitute a part of the creed of those, whether individuals or churches, whom we are bound to regard with the most grateful and fond attachment.—Abroad ;—whatever may have been the opinions of Calvin, and his adherents, and those churches, in France, in Switzerland, and in the Netherlands, which were “cast according to the mold which he “madeⁱ ;” let it never be believed, that those were esteemed the doctrines of the Reformation, which Melancthon condemned as “the “dotage of Stoicism and the ravings of Manichæan madness ;” which the Confessions of Augsberg and of Saxony unequivocally discourage ; and which the Lutherans deprecate, under the name of “the Predestinarian pestilence ;” from which they shrink with even

^h Pref. to Eccles. Polity, p. 139. Oxford edit.

ⁱ Hooker.

greater abhorrence, than from Popery itself; and which they accuse of dethroning God, and making the devil the object of worship in his stead^k.—At home;—whatever opinions may have been espoused by our northern neighbours, who “in erecting the fabric of their own reformation, took the self-same pattern^l” as those, who had moulded themselves after Calvin’s example; let it not be believed, that these doctrines were ever intended to be set forth for the doctrines of the English Church; reformed as it was by men, who, steadfastly adhering to the sentiments of the primitive fathers, in the construction of the formularies composed for regulating the faith of the country, chose for their coadjutor, not Calvin, but Melancthon; and for the model of their articles of faith, the language of the Auguffan Confession: and who have most plainly, and unquestionably, and repeatedly asserted the doctrines of God’s willing all men to be saved; of universal redemption purchased by the sacrifice of Christ; of the cooperating and assisting grace of the Holy Spirit; and of the possibility of falling from God, so as to be utterly and finally destroyed: doctrines, by the establishment of which, as the learned Bishop Bull has un-

^k See *The Rehearſal*, vol. iv. p. 27, 48. Heylyn’s *Quinq. Hiſt.* p. 521.

^l Hooker.

answerably remarked, “the whole frame and fabric of Calvinism is shattered and overthrown^m.”

We know indeed that there was a period, not long subsequent to the Reformation of our Church, and immediately succeeding the Marian persecution, when “Calvinism overspread a great part of it, as Arianism did the eastern churches in the older timesⁿ ;” and an attempt was made, and repeated in the following reign, to establish the predestinarian tenets, as part of the faith of the country, by, what are termed, the Lambeth Articles: an attempt, we may observe in passing, which had evidently been superfluous, had the creed already established spoken the sentiments of the projectors. But as well might it be contended from the subsequent growth of Arianism, that

^m A Calvini tum disciplina, tum doctrina, (qua parte ipse a Melanchthone aliisque instaurati purioris Christianismi magistris antiquioribus abierit) prorsus alienos fuisse primos Reformationis nostræ Authores, satis constat. Nimirum positis his duabus hypothesibus, 1. Christum etiam eos, qui pereunt, vere redemisse; 2. Possè vere in Christum credentes, et per Christum justificatos, a Fide et Justificatione, sua culpa penitus deficere atque æternum perire; (quæ manifesta sunt atque indubitata Ecclesiæ nostræ dogmata) corrui tota Calvinismi, qui dicitur, moles et machina: quod cuius rem vel mediocriter attendenti mox liquebit. *Apolog. pro Harm.* p. 57.

ⁿ Heylyn's preface.

the same had been the doctrine of the primitive church; as it might be contended that Calvinism was "the native and original doctrine of the Church of England," because peculiar circumstances afterwards conduced to its encouragement. The attempt, when made, to establish absolute predestination as an article of the national creed, first in the reign of Elizabeth, and then of James the First, was rendered abortive (under Providence) by the wisdom of our rulers, whose sanction was necessary to its success. And God be praised that it was so! Still, had it succeeded to the full extent of its projectors' wishes, the question, with which we are now concerned, would have remained unaffected by that result. *Our doctrines would still be the PRIMITIVE doctrines of the reformed English Church.* The Canons of the Synod of Dort affect not the opinions of Melancthon, and the declarations of the Augsburg Confession; nor identify the principles of Calvin with those of the Reformation abroad: no more would the establishment of the Lambeth Articles have made those to be the primitive doctrines of our English Reformation, which are irreconcilable with our Church's authorized formularies and declarations of faith, as promulgated by Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley.

VI. Connected with the charge, that we do not preach the doctrines of the Reforma-

tion, is another form, under which the accusation is conveyed; namely, that the doctrines, which we do preach, are those of *Pelagianism* and *Popery*. On the intemperance of our accusers I have already had occasion to remark: at present I will add no more on that head; than the pious and benevolent caution of Bishop Sanderfon in a season of much and bitter controversy; “that, if we cannot grow to be
 “of the same belief in every thing, we might
 “at least be brought to show more charity
 “either to other, than to damn one another
 “for every difference; and more ingenuity,
 “than to seek to render the one the other
 “more odious to the world than we ought,
 “by representing each other’s opinions worse
 “than they are.”

It has however been always the unfortunate portion of those, who have maintained the doctrines, which we espouse, on the subject of predestination, to be assailed with the most unmerited charges, and to be laid under the imputation of opinions which their souls abhorred. Of the maintainers of those doctrines, during the progress of the Reformation, it was affirmed, “whether with greater ignorance or
 “malice,” says Heylyn, “it is hard to say,
 “that there was a synod called at Dort to

° Bp. Sanderfon’s Works, Pref. sect. xix.

“ suppress the Arminians ; and that the said
“ Arminians held among other heresies, first,
“ that God was the author of sin ; and, se-
“ condly, that he created the far greater part of
“ mankind, only of purpose for to damn them,
“ with several others of that kind : which
“ every man of reason knows, not only to be
“ the consequence and result of Calvin’s doc-
“ trine ; but to be positively maintained and
“ taught by some of his followers^p.” By this
and similar artifices did some of the early pa-
trons of Calvinism endeavour to render their
adversaries hateful : whilst the cry of Pelagi-
anism and Popery has been transmitted from
Calvinist to Calvinist, of whatever age, country,
or degree : a cry (I am bold to say) as utterly
unfounded, as that, which would condemn us
for making God the author of sin.

For what, let it be demanded, is Pelagianism ?
Pelagius, says a celebrated ecclesiastical histo-
rian, “ looked upon the doctrines, which were
“ commonly received concerning the original
“ corruption of human nature, and the neces-
“ sity of divine grace to enlighten the under-
“ standing and to purify the heart, as prejudi-
“ cial to the progress of holiness and virtue,
“ and tending to lull mankind into a presump-
“ tuous and fatal security. He maintained,

^p Hist. Quinquart. part i. chap. v. p. 533.

“ that these doctrines were as false as they
 “ were pernicious; that the sins of our first pa-
 “ rents were imputed to them alone, and not
 “ to their posterity; that we derive no corrup-
 “ tion from their fall, but are born as pure and
 “ unspotted, as Adam came out of the forming
 “ hand of his Creator; that mankind therefore
 “ are capable of repentance and amendment;
 “ and of arriving to the highest degrees of
 “ piety and virtue by the use of their natural
 “ faculties and powers; that indeed external
 “ grace is necessary to excite their endeavours;
 “ but that they have no need of the internal
 “ succours of the divine Spirit¹.” How these
 opinions can be ascribed to men, who not
 only expressly condemn the vanity of the Pe-
 lagians in denying “ the fault and corruption
 “ of human nature;” but who also believe,
 that “ the condition of man after the fall of
 “ Adam is such, that he cannot turn and pre-
 “ pare himself, by his own natural strength
 “ and good works, to faith and calling upon
 “ God; and that therefore we have no power
 “ to do good works pleasing and acceptable to
 “ God, without the grace of God by Christ
 “ preventing us, that we may have a good
 “ will, and working with us when we have
 “ that good will:”—(for undoubtedly I am at

¹ Mosheim, vol. ii. p. 87.

liberty to assume, that the doctrines, to which we solemnly assent, we do honestly believe:—how the opinions of Pelagianism, I say, can be fairly ascribed to men, who notoriously profess the very opposite belief, it is for our accusers, if possible, satisfactorily to explain: and until they can succeed in the attempt, we must be allowed to think and to say, that no credit is reflected on the cause by the employment of such measures in support of it; nor on its advocates, who can have recourse to such measures for its support.

Then again, as to the charge of Popery; it is a sword which cuts either way. The Papists have been divided on these points, not less than the Protestants. The disputes of the Arminians and Calvinists in the reformed churches have been the counterpart of those of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the church of Rome. Nay, according to an observation in the useful and elaborate work of one of the most eminent of my predecessors, “*Though,*” as Bishop Bull very justly says, “the doctrine of predestination ‘was never thought of for the four first ages,’ nor even after that time by the Greek church; yet it appears to have been part of the creed of the leading men in the Romish communion from the time of its great advocate Augustine to that of the Re-

“formation’.” So that, if we would reply to a railing accusation in correspondent language, we might retort the charge of Popery on our opponents.

But passing from this view of the subject, and admitting, (if it be desired,) that the Anti-Calvinistic tenets are the authorised creed of the Papists, as established by the Council of Trent; still, without any attachment to the church of Rome, and on the sound principles of Protestantism, it may be contended, that a doctrine is not therefore to be rejected, merely because it is an article of the creed of the Romish church. If the contrary principle be once admitted, what shall we think of the doctrines of the Trinity; and of the incarnation, and the twofold nature, of the Son of God; doctrines, which we believe, unquestionably in common with the church of Rome? —What shall we think of the whole of the Apostle’s Creed? What of the Lord’s Prayer itself? With respect to both of which, we know the time, when they were condemned and thrown aside by our Calvinistic brethren; as rags and remnants of Popery? “I believe,” said an excellent Bishop of our Church, who could speak experimentally of the mischievous effects of this practice in the disastrous times,

† Eveleigh’s Bampton Lectures, p. 167. note.

to which I am alluding; " I believe all those
" men will be found much mistaken, who
" either measure the Protestant religion by an
" opposition to Popery, or account all Popery,
" that is taught or practised in the church of
" Rome. Our godly forefathers, to whom,
" under God, we owe the purity of our reli-
" gion, and some of whom laid down their
" lives for the defence of the same, were sure
" of another mind; if we may, from what
" they did, judge what they thought. They
" had no purpose, nor had they any warrant,
" to set up a new religion, but to reform the
" old; by purging it from those innovations,
" which in tract of time, some sooner, some
" later, had mingled with it, and corrupted it,
" both in the doctrine and worship. Accord-
" ing to this purpose they proceeded, without
" constraint or precipitancy, freely and ad-
" visedly as in peaceable times, and brought
" their intentions to a happy end; as by the
" result thereof, contained in the Articles and
" Liturgy of our Church, and the prefaces
" thereunto, doth fully appear. From hence
" chiefly, as I conceive, we are to take our
" best scantling, whereby to judge what is,
" and what is not, to be esteemed Popery.
" All those doctrines then, held by the mo-
" dern church of Rome, which are either con-
" trary to the written word of God, or but

“superadded thereunto, as necessary points of
 “faith, to be of all Christians believed un-
 “der pain of damnation; and all those su-
 “perstitions, used in the worship of God,
 “which either are unlawful, as being con-
 “trary to the word; or being not contrary,
 “and therefore arbitrary and indifferent, are
 “made essentials, and imposed as necessary
 “parts of worship: these are, as I take it,
 “the things, whereunto the name of Popery
 “doth properly and peculiarly belong.” Upon
 the principles, thus clearly and satisfactorily
 laid down, we may be contented to rest our
 defence, as to the present point; little soli-
 citous, whether our opinions be, or be not, the
 same with those of the Papist, provided they be
 agreeable to the Scriptures of truth. In the
 mean time, presuming upon the correctness
 of the description of Popery, thus delineated
 by Bishop Sanderfon, we may suggest it to
 the consideration of our Calvinistic brethren,
 whether the importance, which they attach
 to their peculiar tenets, as necessary points of
 the true evangelical faith, does not breathe
 somewhat of a Popish spirit: and farther we
 may request them to consider, whether the
 temper, with which Calvin and his Protestant
 followers, both at home and abroad, in former

* Bp. Sanderfon's Works, Pref. sect. 15.

and in the present times, have maintained their tenets, is not congenial to the temper of their brethren in the church of Rome; who have been distinguished, as for their attachment to the predestinarian doctrines, so also for their zealous patronage, and active promotion, of the Inquisition^t.

VII. After all; meeting our accusers upon the ground of their own characteristic and avowed principles, as advocates of absolute predestination and irresistible grace; we may demand of them, What conduct they would wish us to adopt? The end of every man, you affirm, is predestinated by a divine decree, which has irreversibly determined, not the end only, but the means. It is determined then, what individuals among our hearers shall be saved; and what part shall be performed by us in order to their salvation. In the first place, indeed, our own conversion is necessary; for, according to your apprehensions, we are ourselves in an unconverted state. Then, secondly, if converted ourselves by the resistless grace of God, which we are utterly unable either to forward or to retard, still we can do nothing towards the conversion of others, but that which is absolutely decreed. Upon your principles, every argument, exhortation, and

^t See Heylyn's *Quinq. Hist.* part i. chap. vi. p. 536.

remonſtrance, which you can employ, for the conviction either of us, or of your hearers, is nugatory and fooliſh. It is altogether of the will of God, the ſinner may plead, whether I ſhall be ſaved or not: you may call upon me to believe and repent; but I cannot have either faith or repentance, unleſs it be the will of God for me to have them; and if that be his will, I ſhall have them, whether I will or not. And to the ſame effect may we argue, and the moſt acute Calviniſt may be challenged to reply to the argument, If it be the will of God, that my mind ſhould be enlightened, and I become a preacher of the Goſpel, I ſhall be ſo; if not, I ſhall not. Here then the matter may be left, with the obſervation of a great Stateſman in the days of Queen Elizabeth, when the attempt was firſt made to eſtabliſh amongſt us the doctrines of Calvin, embodied in the Lambeth Articles. Having ſeverely condemned the preſumption of thoſe divines, who ventured on “ dangerous definitions,” and “ dared to make decrees, without legal authority, concerning the moſt weighty queſtions, on which, for many ages, the moſt learned men had never been able to agree; it was not difficult,” he ſaid, “ to diſcover, what was the aim of thoſe, who had been moſt earneſt in this affair. For thus they think and teach; that every

“ human action, whether it be good or evil, is
 “ bound by the law of an unchangeable de-
 “ cree: nay, that this necessity is imposed on
 “ the very wills of men, so that men cannot
 “ will, otherwise than they do. If which
 “ things be true,” he continued, “ most august
 “ Sovereign, in vain do I and the other faith-
 “ ful servants of your Majesty, long and cau-
 “ tiously consult on what is needful to be
 “ done for your and the kingdom’s benefit:
 “ since upon those things, which necessarily
 “ come to pass, all consultation is manifestly
 “ absurd.”

“ At magnus ille vir (qua erat prudentia) facile intelli-
 gens, periculosas esse definitiones in controversiis adeo de-
 certatis, vehementer factum hoc omne improbavit; dixit-
 que effecturum se ut ejus autores consilii sui pœniteret.
 Nec sefellit promissi fidem. Reginam quippe convenit,
 ac gravi oratione demonstrat, in his quæ ad statum reli-
 gionis pertinent, per Angliæ leges neminem posse nisi ex
 auctoritate Reginæ, et quidem accedente parlamenti con-
 sensu, quicquam decernere. Neque id frustra institutum.
 Magnum enim esse in animos humanos regnum religionis,
 et facillime eo obtentu in partes iri et factiones. At nunc
 paucos Theologos ausos decreta facere de gravissimis
 quæstionibus, super quibus multis jam a sæculis inter
 eruditissima ingenia convenire nunquam potuerit. Neque
 obscurum, quo tenderent, qui hoc impetrassent: nam eos
 ita existimare atque docere, *Quicquid gereretur rerum hu-
 manarum, bonum id malumve esset, id omne constringi lege
 immutabilis decreti; ipsis quoque hominum voluntatibus
 hanc impostam necessitatem, ut aliter quam vellent, homines
 velle non possent.* Quæ si vera (inquit) sunt, Domina Au-

I have thus brought to a conclusion the inquiry, which was proposed at the commencement of these Lectures. The motive, with which they were undertaken, was a sincere desire, with the blessing of Almighty God, to maintain against gainfayers the sound orthodox doctrines of that Gospel, which we are accused of corrupting or forsaking; and at the same time to contribute my aid, however feeble, that (as Episcopus pleaded for himself and his brethren at Dort) “the Church might not be traduced, by reason of the private conceits of some of her Ministers*.” Whether my object will in any degree have been attained; whether it will have appeared, that the great body of the national clergy are assailed with unmerited censure; whether any individual, either among our enemies or among our friends, will have been recalled or preserved from error, or confirmed or reestablished in the truth; at least I trust, that nothing, in the prosecution of the inquiry, will have escaped me, unworthy of the assembly, which I address; or of the station, which I occupy; or

gustissima, frustra ego alique fideles Majestatis tuæ ministri, quid in re quaque opus sit factò, quid ex usu futurum sit et Regni et tuo, suspenfa diu consilia versamus, cum de his quæ eveniunt necessario, stulta sit plane omnia consultatio. *Artic. Lambeth. Hist.* p. 6.

* Hales's Letters.

of the cause, which I espouse; and that the attempt itself will not be deemed deserving of reprehension, when it is considered, according to the beautiful language of a late learned Divine, that “it was designed, flight and im-
“ perfect as it is, for the service of Truth, by
“ one who would be glad to attend and grace
“ her triumphs; as her soldier, if he has had
“ the honour to serve successfully under her
“ banners; or as a captive, tied to her chariot
“ wheels, if he has, though undesignedly, com-
“ mitted any offence against her.”

In the mean time, however this may be, there are two important practical remarks, suggested by the foregoing inquiry, which deserve to be impressed upon our minds, as containing matter, not only of general moment to us in our professional characters, but also, in the existing temper of men’s minds, of great special obligation.

And, first, considering the activity of our enemies, and the propensity, which they diligently foster, to disparage the clerical character, we should be stimulated more than ever, to “take heed to ourselves” by a diligent discharge of the duties of our profession, and by a strict attention to our personal conduct. Of our parishioners, and of mankind in ge-

neral, the great bulk are not capable of deciding on controverted topics, but they are all able to judge of external conduct. By careful attention to their interests, both temporal and spiritual, we may attach them to our persons; and thus, by natural consequence, to our ministry: and it will be no difficult conclusion for them to draw, that inasmuch as we labour to “do the will of God, we know of the doctrine, whether it is of God.”

Secondly, The same consideration should operate on us as an additional caution, to “take heed to the doctrine;” to preach the Gospel of Christ in its original purity and simplicity. Truth lies between the several extremes of Antinomian licentiousness, and mere morality; of irresistible grace, and unassisted free-will. This is the path, in which we should endeavour to walk; ever remembering, that the right method of confuting erroneous opinions is not by maintaining the opposite errors, but by setting forth, and contending for, the true evangelical faith. Conduct, such as this, is best adapted, under the favour of a bountiful Providence, to establish our friends, and to defeat our enemies. They, who accuse us with an honest conscience and a meek and Christian spirit, may thereby be induced to withdraw their opposition, at least to be temperate in urging it; to forbear from being active adver-

faries, if they cannot be prevailed on to become cordial friends. Whilst, as to others, provided we afford them no just occasion of offence, the responsibility of the divisions and heart-burnings, which they promote, will fall upon their own heads. "Wo unto him," saith our Lord, "by whom the offence cometh!" God forbid, my brethren, that it should come by us! Within these hallowed walls, on the very spot, where we are now assembled, the Fathers of our Reformed Church resisted the power and malice of their persecutors, and bore resolute testimony to "the truth, as it is "in Jesus." Within the precincts of our University, they sealed that testimony by their blood. Men indeed they were, not exempt from the weakness and imperfections of their nature: but they were men, second to none, whom Almighty God ever sent in his mercy to bless a favoured land, either in natural ability; or in acquired learning; or in the Christian graces of humility and meekness; or in the patience, wherewith they investigated the truth; or in the fortitude, with which they defended it, through disgrace and tribulation; during temptation and persecution; amid imprisonment, in the flames, and unto death. May God Almighty give us grace to serve him faithfully, as they did; to tread steadfastly in their footsteps; and to "bear up the pillars"

of that Church, of which they laid the foundation. And never, never may we supply just occasion for the charge, that we have forsaken their example; nor incur the heavy "wo" denounced by the Spirit of truth, on those who "preach not the Gospel" of Christ!

Now unto him, "God manifest in the flesh;" unto him, who is "over all, God blessed for evermore;" unto him, in the unity of the Father and the Holy Spirit, three persons and one God, be all blessing and honour and glory and power, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

THE END.

ERRATUM.

P. 376. l. 9. for *controvertible* read *convertible*.

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