



THE CAUSE OF GOD
AND TRUTH PART 1

Dr John Gill DD

The Cause of God and Truth



By John Gill, D.D.

In **Four Parts**

Part 1

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11 Hayling Close Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3AE

PREFACE.

It should be known by the reader, that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines ; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation ; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the 'Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians have very little reason to triumph on that account.

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it ; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the

increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed ; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery.

This is **Part 1** of 4 parts, and a new edition, with some alterations and improvements, is now published by request.

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Part 1 Scriptures Examined

Section 1— Genesis 4:7

If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted

I. It will be proper to inquire, whether a wicked, an unregenerate man, as was Cain, can perform good works. To which may be answered,

1. Adam had a power to do every good work the law required; which men, since the fall, have not. Men indeed, in an unregenerate state, might do many things which they do not; such as reading the Scriptures, attending on public worship, etc. No doubt but the persons in the parable, who were invited to the dinner, could have gone to it, had they had a will, as well as the one did to his farm, and the other to his merchandise. Men have an equal power, had they an heart, a will, an inclination, to go to a place of divine worship, as to a tavern, or alehouse; but it is easy to observe, that persons oftentimes have it in the power of their hands, when they have it not in the power of their hearts, to do a good work; as a rich man to give alms to the poor. Unregenerate men are capable of performing works, which are in a natural and civil, though not in a spiritual sense, good. They may do those things, which externally, in appearance, and as to the matter and substance of them, may be good; such as hearing, reading, praying, giving alms to the poor, etc., when the circumstances requisite to good works are wanting; for whatsoever is done as a good work, must be done in obedience to the will of God; from a principle of love to

him; must be performed in faith; in the name of Christ, and to the glory of God by him. Therefore,

2. It must be denied, that wicked, unregenerate men, have a power to perform good works in a spiritual manner; which is evident from their natural estate and condition, according to the scriptural representation of it, which is this: that the bias of their minds is to that which is evil, and to that only; that they are wholly carnal, and mind nothing else but the things of the flesh; that they are weak and strengthless, yea, dead in trespasses and sins; nay, that they are under an impossibility to do that which is spiritually good; There is none that doeth good, no, not one of them, nor are they able; they are not subject to the law of God, nor can they be. When the Ethiopian changes his skin, and the leopard his spots, then may they also do good, who are accustomed to do evil. Men may expect as soon to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, as good fruit to grow upon, or good works to be performed by, unregenerate men; no, they must be created in Christ Jesus, have the Spirit of Christ put into them, and his grace implanted in them; they must be believers in him, before they are capable of doing that which is spiritually good. And even believers themselves are not able to think a good thought or perform a good work of themselves; it is God who works in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Sometimes when they have a will to that which is good, yet how to perform they know not; they can do nothing without Christ, though all things through him, who strengthens them; much less then have unregenerate persons either a power or a will to that which is spiritually good. Nor,

3. Is there any foundation for such a proposition in these words, which are hypothetically expressed, and therefore nothing absolutely to be concluded from them; that is to say, we are not to argue from God's saying to Cain, If thou dost well, therefore Cain had a power to do well, or to do that which is spiritually good, well; much less should we infer from hence, as one does, that "God could not have proposed the doing of good as a condition, if he had not given Cain sufficient strength whereby he was capable to do good." Since God could not only have proposed the doing of good, but have required it according to his law, without being under obligation to give sufficient strength to obey; for though man by his sin has lost his power to obey the will of God in a right manner, yet God has not lost his authority to command; which he may use without obliging himself to find man sufficient strength to act in obedience to it. Besides,

4. These words regard doing well, not in a moral, but in a ceremonial sense. Cain and Abel were very early taught the necessity, manner, and use of sacrifices; and in process of time they brought their offerings to the Lord, each according to his different calling and employment; the one brought of the fruit of the ground, the other of the firstlings of his flock. Now to Abel and his offering the Lord had respect, that is, he accepted him and his offering; but to Cain and his offering he had not respect; which made Cain very wroth, and his countenance fell; upon which the Lord expostulates with him after this manner, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou dost well, ean orqWV prosenegkhV , If thou hadst offered

rightly, as the Septuagint renders the words which though it is not a proper literal translation of them, yet agreeable enough to their sense, shouldst thou not be accepted? Cain failed either in the matter or manner of his sacrifice; probably in the latter; since the author of the Epistle to

the Hebrews observes, that by faith, Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. (Heb. 11:4) Cain offered his sacrifice without faith, without any view to the sacrifice of Christ: he performed this his sacrifice hypocritically, in show and appearance only; he acted from no right principle, nor to any right end; and therefore his works, whatever show of righteousness they might have, are, by the apostle John, (1 John 3:12) rightly called evil; as are also all the works of wicked and unregenerate men. I proceed,

II. To consider whether man's acceptance with God is on the account of his good works.

1. There is a difference between the acceptance of men's works, and of their persons for them: there are many actions done by men, which are acceptable and well-pleasing to God, when they themselves are not accepted by him, on account of them. Besides, no man's works are accepted by him whose person is not previously accepted: God first had respect to the person of Abel, and then to his offering; which shows that his was not accepted for the sake of his offering. The best works of the saints are imperfect and attended with sin, and are only acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, in whom, and in whom

only, who is the beloved, their persons are accepted and well-pleasing to God. No man can be justified or saved by his works, and therefore no man can be accepted with God on that account; which is the current doctrine of the sacred writings: this will help us to understand the true sense of such passages, as Acts 10:35, Romans 19:18, 2 Corinthians 5:9, compared with Ephesians 1:6, and 1 Peter 2:5.

2. Nor do these words suppose that man's acceptance with God stands upon the foot of works. The Hebrew word *tas*, for there is but one word in the original text, which our translators render, shalt thou not be accepted? signifies either excellency, as in Psalm 62:4, and may design the dignity of primogeniture, or honor of birth-right, as it does in Genesis 49:3, and so be rendered, shalt thou not have the excellency? that is, shall not the right of primogeniture continue with thee? shall not the honor and privilege of being the first-born abide with thee? thou needest not be afraid that this shall be taken from thee, and given to thy younger brother, who is willing to be subject to thee, and ready to serve thee; which well agrees with the latter part of the text, and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shall rule over him; or the word signifies an elevation, or lifting up; and is to be understood as Aben Ezra observes of Mygp *tas*, a lifting up of the countenance, which was fallen, verses 5, 6, and then the sense is, if thou hadst done well, when thou broughtest thine offering, thou mightest have lift up thy face without spot, and doubtless thou wouldst have done so; but inasmuch as thou hast sinned and done evil, and which is to be seen in thy fallen countenance, sin lies at the door of thy

conscience; which, when once opened, it will enter in, and make dreadful work; as it did a little after; which made him say, My punishment is greater than I can bear. But admitting that the word signifies acceptance, and be rendered, shall there not be an acceptance? it is to be understood, not of an acceptance of his person, but of his sacrifices and services.

III. It remains to be considered, whether Cain had a day of grace, in which it was possible for him to be accepted with God.

1. There is no acceptance of any man's person, but as he is considered in Christ the Mediator. Now as there is no reason to believe that ever Cain, who was of the wicked one, the devil, was ever in Christ, or ever considered in him; so there is no reason to conclude, that he either was, or that it was possible for him to be, accepted with God.

2. The text does not speak of his doing well in a moral or spiritual, but in a ceremonial way; and not at all of the acceptance of his person, on the foot of so doing; but at most, only of the acceptance of his sacrifice and ceremonious services, supposing them rightly performed.

3. These words are not expressive of a day of visitation in a way of grace and mercy to him; but are to be considered as an expostulation with him for his wrath, fury, and fallen countenance, and an upbraiding of him with his evil doing, in order to awaken his conscience, and bring him to a full sense of his sin; which was so far from proving a day of grace to him,

that it quickly issued in the utmost distress of mind, torture of conscience, and black despair.

Section 2—Genesis 6:3.

And the Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. It will be necessary, in order to understand the sense of this text, to inquire,

I. Who is meant by the Spirit of God; and whether the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the Trinity, is designed or not.

1. Some of the Jewish writers think, that the soul of man is intended; which is called not only the spirit of man, but also the Spirit of God; as in those words of Job, All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils. (Job 27:3). Some of them derive the word *dg* translated strive, from *zry*, which signifies the scabbard of a sword, and say, what the scabbard is to the sword, that the body is to the soul; and give this as the sense of the words; "My Spirit, or the soul which I have put into man, shall not always abide in him as a sword in its scabbard; I will unsheath it, I will draw it out; he shall not live always, seeing he is flesh, corrupt, given up to carnal lusts; yet his days, or term of life, which I will now shorten, shall be one hundred and twenty years." Another of them delivers the sense of the words to this purpose; "My Spirit, which I have breathed into man, shall not be any more in contention with the body; for it does not delight in nor receive profit from the

desires of the body; for the body is drawn after beastly desires, and that because it is flesh, and its desires are plunged and fixed in the propagation of the flesh; however, I will prolong their days one hundred and twenty years; and if they return by repentance, very well; but if not, I will destroy them from the world. The Targum paraphrases the words thus, "This wicked generation shall not be established before me for ever."

2. Others, as Sol Jarchi, understand it of God himself, thus saying, within himself, "My Spirit, which is within me, shall not always be, as it were, in a tumult, or contention about man, whether I shall spare him, or destroy him, as it has been a long time, but it shall be no longer so; I will let man know that I am not fluctuating between mercy and judgment, but am at a point, being determined to punish him, since he is wholly given up to carnal pleasures, when I have spared him an hundred and twenty years more." This sense of the words much obtains among learned men. And if either of these senses be received, the reasonings of the Arminians from these words, in favor of any branch of their scheme, fall to the ground; but I am willing to allow,

3. That by the Spirit of God, we are to understand the Holy Ghost; so Jonathan Ben Uzziel, in his Targum, expressly calls him; and I am the rather induced to believe this to be the meaning of the phrase; since the apostle Peter, when he speaks of Christ being put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the Spirit, which is to be understood of the Holy Spirit, adds, by which, that is, by which Spirit, also he went and preached unto

the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, (1 Pet. 3:18-20.) which words refer to those in Genesis, and are the best key unto them, and comment on them. I proceed to consider,

II. Whether the Holy Spirit was in the men of the old world, since, as it is observed, the words may be rendered, My Spirit shall not always strive in man; and whether it may be concluded from

hence, that the Spirit of God is in every man, from whom he may wholly remove through man's misconduct.

1. The Spirit of God is every where, in every creature, and so in every man, as he is the omnipresent God; hence says the Psalmist, Whither shall I fly from thy Spirit? (Ps. 139:7.) He may also be in some persons by his gifts natural or divine, and that either in an ordinary or in an extraordinary way, or by some operations of his on the mind; which are not of a saving nature, nor designed to a saving purpose; and in one or other of these senses, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal; (1 Cor. 12:7); and the Spirit may be said to be both in the men of the old world, and of this. But,

2. That he is in every man in a way of special grace, and to saving purposes, provided they behave well, must be denied; for every unconverted man is destitute of the Spirit; were the Spirit, in this sense, in every man, the indwelling of the Spirit would be no evidence of regeneration; the difference between a

regenerate and an unregenerate man lying in this, the one has, the other has not the Spirit of God. Hence,

3. It is easy to judge in what sense the Spirit of God does, and does not depart where he once is. Where he is only by his gifts or external operations, he may wholly remove, he may take away those gifts, or cease from those works; and men, notwithstanding these, may be everlastingly lost; but where he is by his special grace, he never totally departs, though he may withdraw his gracious presence for a time; his people may not be indulged with his joys and comforts, and in their apprehension he may seem to be taken away from them, yet he always abides in them; otherwise Christ's prayers for his perpetual continuance with his people would not be answered; nor would the Spirit's indwelling

be a security of the saints' perseverance nor any certain pledge of their future glory. To add no more, the words of the text speak not of the Spirit's being in the men of the old world, but of his striving with them. Wherefore the next inquiry

III. Is, what is meant by the strivings of the Spirit? and whether through man's neglect of him, or opposition to him, he may strive to no purpose.

1. The Hebrew word *zwd*, here used, signifies to judge, to execute judgment, or punish in a righteous way; and so some read the words, My Spirit shall not judge these men for ever; I will not reserve them to everlasting torments; I will punish them here in this world; for they are flesh, frail sinful creatures;

I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made; (Isa. 57:16) or rather the sense is according to this version, My Spirit shall not exercise judgment on them for ever, that is, immediately, directly, at this very instant; though they are so corrupt, I will give them the space of one hundred and twenty years to repent in; and after that, if they repent not, I will deliver them up to destruction; which accordingly was the event of things.

2. The word here translated strive, signifies also to litigate a point, or reason in a cause; before it is ripe for judgment, or the execution of it. Now the Spirit of God had been litigating and reasoning with these men in the court and at the bar of their own consciences, about their sins, by one providence or another, and by one minister or another; particularly by Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and that to no purpose; hence he determines to go on no longer in this way, but to proceed to pass and execute the sentence of condemnation on them, since they were so very corrupt, being nothing else but flesh. However, to show his clemency and forbearance, he grants them a reprieve for one hundred and twenty years; which is that long suffering of God the apostle speaks of, that waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. (1 Pet. 3:20). Hence it appears, that the strivings of the Spirit of God with these men, were only by the external ministry of the word, and in a way of moral suasion, which came to nothing. This may lead us to observe the insufficiency of moral suasion and the external

ministry of the word, without the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit.

3. It is now easy to discern in what sense the Spirit of God may be opposed and resisted, and strive to no purpose, and in what sense not. The things of the Spirit of God are disagreeable to a natural man: it is no wonder that the external ministry of the word and ordinances are despised, opposed, and resisted. The external call maybe rejected; yea, some inward motions and convictions may be overruled, stifled, and come to nothing: nay, it will be granted, that there may be and is an opposition and resistance to the work of the Spirit of God in conversion; but then the Spirit cannot be so resisted, in the operations of his grace, as to be obliged to cease from his work, or to be overcome or hindered in it; for he acts with a design which cannot be frustrated, and with a power which is uncontrollable; were it otherwise, the regeneration and conversion of every one must be precarious, and where the grace of the Spirit is effectual, according to the doctrine of free-will, it would be more owing to the will of man than to the Spirit of God.

IV. It may be asked whether the old world had a day of grace, and so all mankind, in which they might be saved if they would; during which time the Spirit strives with man; and when that is expired he strives no longer.

1. The space of one hundred and twenty years allowed the old world for repentance was indeed a favor, and indulgence of divine Providence, a time of God's long-suffering and

forbearance; but it does not follow, that because they had such a space allotted to them, in which, had they repented, they would have been saved from temporal ruin; that therefore all mankind have a day of grace, which if they improve, they may be saved with an everlasting salvation. For,

2. If by a day of grace are meant the means of grace, the external ministry of the word and ordinances, these are insufficient to salvation, without the efficacious grace of God; and besides, these are not enjoyed by all mankind. Every man has not a day of grace in this sense. Sometimes the means of grace, have been confined to one particular nation, and all the rest of the world have been without them for a considerable number of years. This was the case of all the nations of the world whom God suffered to walk in their own ways; overlooked them, took no notice of them, gave them no day of grace; while his worship was only kept up in the land of Judea. And since the coming of Christ; the administration of the word and ordinances has sometimes been in one place, and sometimes in another, when the rest of mankind have been without them: so that every man in this sense has not had a day of grace.

3. The whole Gospel dispensation in general may be called a day of grace; but this day does not expire while men live, or at their death; it reaches from the coming of Christ, unto the end of the world; it will continue until all the elect of God are gathered in: nor can it be said of any man, that, he has outlived

or out-sinned this day of grace; for still it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice; Now

is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. (Heb. 3:7; 2 Cor. 6:2)

4. The open special day of grace to God's elect, begins at their conversion, which will never end, never be over with them; though may have their clouds and darkness, until it is changed into the everlasting day of glory.

Section 3—Deuteronomy 5:29.

O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.

I. These vehement desires of God for the good of these people, are said to be irreconcilable with his decrees of election and reprobation; and supposing those decrees, they are represented to be hypocritical: to which may be replied;

1. For God passionately to wish good things, even salvation itself, for some, and not for all, is no ways contrary, but perfectly agreeable to the doctrine of election. If any thing is said to the purpose, as militating against that doctrine, it ought to be said and proved, that God has vehemently desired the salvation of all mankind; of which these words can be no proof, since they only regard the people of Israel, who were the fewest of all people. As for those scriptures which represent God as

willing all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9), and not willing that any should perish, they will be considered in their proper places.

2. It might seem repugnant to these decrees, and to imply hypocrisy and guile, could any instance be produced of God's passionately wishing the salvation of such whom the Scriptures represent as rejected of him, given up to a reprobate mind, and as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, or who are not eventually saved; but none will say, such were the people whose good and welfare are vehemently desired in this passage of Scripture. For,

3. These are the most improper instances that could have been pitched upon: since they were a peculiar people to the Lord, whom he had chosen to be a special people to himself, above all people upon the face of the earth (Deut. 7:6).

II. These passionate wishes also, supposing the doctrine of particular redemption, are said to represent as full of guile, deceit, insincerity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy; to which I answer,

1. The doctrine of particular redemption is the doctrine of the Scriptures. Christ died not for all men, but for some only; who are called his people, his sheep, his church, unless all men can be thought to be the people, sheep, and church of Christ.

2. The blasphemous charge of guile, deceit, insincerity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy, ought to be removed from God,

who cannot lie, deceive, dissemble, or deny himself; who is a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he. Nor,

3. Does such a passionate wish for the good of these people, whom God had so great a regard for as to redeem from Egyptian bondage, imply any thing of this nature, supposing the doctrine of particular redemption for, as has been observed in answer to former question, it ought to be proved, that God has ever used such expressions of desire for the salvation of all mankind, and particularly of such who are not saved; in which number none will choose to put the people of Israel, especially since it is said (Rom. 11:26), that all Israel shall be saved. And,

4. After all, these words do not express God's desire of their eternal salvation, but only of their temporal good and welfare, and that of their posterity; for their eternal salvation was not to be obtained by works of righteousness done by them, by their fear or worship of God, or by their constant universal obedience to his commands. They were saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as we. Their fear of God, and obedience to his will, issued indeed in their temporal prosperity, and on this account were strictly enjoined them; that so they might live, and it be well with them, and they prolong their days in the land they were going to possess, as appears from verse 33; and with a view to this, God so ardently desired these things in them, and to be done by them.

III. Such pathetic expressions are thought to imply, that God gives to all men sufficient grace for conversion, and to militate

against the necessity of the unfrustrable operation of his grace in that work.

1. Admitting that the saving work of conversion is here wished for; such a wish does not necessarily suppose that sufficient grace for that work either was or would be given; and if the thing wished for was effected, it does not follow from hence, that this was not performed by the unfrustrable operation of God's grace.

2. Allowing that this grace, an heart to fear the Lord, and all that is requisite to it, were given to the Israelites; it ought not to be concluded from hence, that all men have the same, or that God wishes the same to all men.

3. We are not to imagine that such velleities and wishes are strictly and properly in God; who here speaks, as R. Aben Ezra observes, *Mda ygb zwvlk*, by an anthropopathy, after the manner of men; such desires are ascribed to him in the same way as human passions and affections are; as anger, grief, repentance, and the like: nor do such wishes and desires declare either what God does or will do; but what he approves of, and is grateful to him; as are an heart to fear him, and a constant and universal obedience to his commandments.

4. The words are so rendered by some, as that they express no wish or desire in God, but rather what was to be desired by the Israelites themselves; so the Arabic version, it should be wished for by them, that such an heart would continue in them; that is, such an heart as they professed to have in verse 27, when they

said to Moses, Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. The Lord takes notice of this declaration, in verse 28: I have heard, says he, the voice of the words of this people, they have well said all that they have spoken; and then adds, according to this version, that a continuance of such an heart to hear and do, should be very desirable by them. Moreover, the words *zty ym*, may be rendered as they are by the Septuagint, *tisdwsei*, who will give? and so be considered as an inquiry, as Dr. Whitby himself says who will give them this heart? they could not give it themselves: no creature could give it them; only God could give them such an heart as this. And perhaps this mode of expression may be used on purpose to convince them of their want of such an one, and that God only could give it to them; and therefore they should apply to him for it, and not presume, as they seemed to do, to hearken to his commandments, and obey them in their own strength, and without the assistance of his grace. Or,

5. These words may be considered as an upbraiding of these people with the want of an heart to fear the Lord, and with want of ability, to keep all his commandments, and that always, notwithstanding the vain boasts and empty resolutions they had just now made. In the same manner are we to consider other pathetic expressions of the like nature; such as Deuteronomy 32:28, 29 and Psalm 81:11-13.

Section 4—Deuteronomy 8:2.

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.

It is said, that it is evident from this and other passages of Scripture, that the state of man in this world, is a state of trial or probation. It will be proper therefore to make the following inquiries:

I. What this state of probation is, or what is meant by it.

1. This state of trial is not of men's graces, as faith, patience, etc., by afflictive dispensations of Providence; for men in general are not in such a state, since all men have not grace to be tried; nor is the state of every man an afflicted one in this life: this is a state peculiar to the people of God, and to them only when converted: for before conversion they have no graces to be tried; and with some of them, this state is very short, and so far from being the state of man whilst in this world; and yet, as will be seen hereafter, the proof of the state of probation pretty much depends on passages of Scripture which relate to the exercise of the graces of the saints by afflictions, temptations, etc.

2. This state of trial, if I understand it right, is of man's obedience and conduct towards God during his life; according

to which conduct and behavior God acts towards him, both in this and the other world; his state, as to happiness or misery, being yet unfixed: so that whilst this state lasts, it is uncertain whether he will be saved or lost.

II. What proof is given of the state of man in this world, being such a one.

1. All those scriptures are urged, which speak of God's proving the children of Israel when in the wilderness, and in their own land, whether they would walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments, or no; such as Exodus 16:4, Exodus 20:20; Deuteronomy 8:2, and 13:3; Judges 2:21, 22, and 3:1, 4. It ought to be observed, that these people were under a theocracy, or the immediate government of God as their King, who gave them laws, according to which they should act; to which they readily promised a cheerful and universal obedience; on condition of which obedience, they were to enjoy, and continue in their enjoyment of the land of Canaan. Therefore, before they entered into the land, and when in it, God was pleased to try them, sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another, whether they would yield that obedience to his commands which he required, and abide by the promises which they themselves had made, or no; all which he did not for his own sake, who knows all things, but that their obedience or disobedience might be made manifest, and he be justified in all his dealings with them. This trial of their obedience was not in order to their salvation in another world, but to their temporal good in this; for such of them as were saved with an everlasting

salvation, were saved not by their obedience to the commands of God, but by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides, the scriptures produced, speak only of the people of Israel, and of what was their state and case as a politic body, under the immediate government of God, in a certain period of time; and not of all mankind; and so fall abundantly short of proving that the state of man in this world, is such a state of probation as before described.

2. This is attempted to be proved from all those places in which God is said to try men, their works and graces, by afflictions, persecutions, temptations, and the like; as 1 Corinthians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 3:2; 1 Peter 1:7, and 4:12; James 1:3; Revelation 2:10, and 3:10; Psalm 66:10; Daniel 11:35, and 12:10; Zechariah 13:9. What I have said in answer to the first query, is a sufficient reply to what is alleged from these passages; since these only speak of the saints, and of the trial of their grace, who only have grace to be tried, and that not in order to fix and settle the affair of their salvation; nor are these trials mere experiments of the truth and constancy of their graces: but are also designed for the further exercise and increase of them; the issue of which is their own spiritual good, and God's glory. Hence it must follow that these scriptures are insufficient proofs of every man's being in a state of probation, and in order to everlasting happiness or misery.

3. This is said to be evident from all the promises and threats recorded in the Scripture, to engage all men to repent, and turn to God; for it is added, no such thing is or can reasonably be

offered to them who are already in a fixed state either of happiness or misery. To which I reply, that the promises and threats recorded in the Scripture, which relate to men's spiritual and eternal good, may be reduced to and comprehended in these words, He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned; which was the substance of the gospel ministry the apostles had in commission from Christ to fulfill, and which might be exercised fully and thoroughly, supposing a fixed state of happiness or misery; since such a ministry might be, and is used, through the grace of God, to bring those who are designed for happiness, into a state of grace meet for the same; and to leave others inexcusable, to discover the more the corruption and vitiosity of their nature, and so to justify the righteous proceedings of God against them.

4. This is argued for from all the exhortations of the holy Scripture to men to watch and pray, that they enter not and are not led into temptation, and from such scriptures which suppose men to be in danger by temptation; the passages referred to are, Matthew 6:13, and Matthew 26:41; Luke 8:13; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; which only regard the saints, or such who profess to be so, and not all mankind. Besides, if God has put all men into a state of probation, and this designed by temptation, how should any watch and pray not to enter or be led into it? Moreover, this state of probation, is either a good one, or a bad one; if a good one, why should men watch and pray against it? if a bad one, can it be reasonably supposed, that

God has put men into it, in order to their everlasting good? and why then should it be contended for?

5. This is said to be evident from the temptations of Satan, who goes about continually seeking whom he may devour; and it is added, to what end should he tempt, or endeavor to destroy the elect, or strive to hinder the progress of the gospel, or the conversion of any man; when supposing a fixed state by the decrees of God, and a divine unfrustrable operation on the hearts of men, he must know that his labor will certainly be in vain? To which I answer, that Satan has not the book of life in his keeping; nor does he know who are and who are not the elect of God, until this appears by the unfrustrable operation of God's grace on their hearts, and it may be, not even then: so that it is no wonder that he tempts, strives, and endeavors to hinder the success of the

gospel in their conversion, and to destroy them; and when he does know who they are, endeavors to distress them by his temptations, though he cannot destroy; and in ten thousand instances will show his malice, when he cannot show his power. Besides, the text referred to in 1 Peter 5:8, carries in the sense of it the doctrine of a fixed state; when it supposes that there are some whom Satan may devour, and leaves a plain intimation that there are others whom he may not and cannot devour; who are the sheep of Christ, and being in his hands, neither man nor devil will ever be able to pluck from thence. This is the sum of the proof offered in favor of this notion, by a

celebrated writer, which how pertinent it is, must be left to the consideration of others.

III. What reason there is to conclude that the state of man in this world is not such a state.

1. Angels and man both, have been in a state of probation already, in which their free-will, and power to obey the commands of God, have been sufficiently tried; which trial has issued in the fall and ruin of a large number of angels, and of the whole race of mankind: and therefore it is not reasonable to suppose that God would put man into such a state again; but rather provide in another way for the good of those he designed to bring to everlasting happiness.

2. If men were in a state of probation, they ought to be on equal ground, enjoying equal privileges and advantages; whereas this is not the case; some have only the dim light and weak law of nature, whilst others enjoy the gospel revelation; and of these some have larger, and others lesser, means of grace, light, and knowledge; some have the grace of God itself bestowed upon them, others have it not. Now were all men in such a state of probation as is pleaded for, is it reasonable to suppose that there would be such an inequality among them?

3. This state of probation, which renders salvation precarious and uncertain, is contrary to God's foreknowledge and decree of election; for God, according to his foreknowledge, has chosen and predestinated a certain number of men to eternal life and salvation, by which their state is fixed, and their

salvation sure, for the purpose of God according to election shall stand. Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate; whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 9:11; 8:29, 30).

4. This notion puts man's salvation on the foot of his obedience and works, contrary to the Scriptures, to the merits of Christ, and to the grace of God; it ascribes more to the free-will of man than to the free grace of God, and lays a foundation for boasting in the creature.

5. Such a state of probation is contrary to all those scriptures which represent the saints to be now in a saved state, and as having everlasting life; such as Ephesians 2:8, John 5:24, and John 6:47. In a word, it destroys the doctrine of assurance, and leaves the saints themselves in a most uncomfortable condition, because it leaves them in a most precarious, unsettled, yea, dangerous one.

Section 5—Deuteronomy 30:19.

I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.

These words are frequently made use of by the patrons of free-will, in favor of it, and its power, to do that which is spiritually good. I shall briefly consider this so-much-controverted subject, by considering the following things:

I. What free-will is, or what is the nature of the liberty of the human will.

1. The will of man, though it is free, yet not independently and absolutely so; it is dependent on God, both in its being and acting; it is subject to his authority and command, and controllable by his power. The King's heart (Prov. 21:1), and so every other man's, is in the hand of the Lord: as the rivers of waters, he turneth it whithersoever he will. The will of God is only free in this sense; he is not subject to a superior being, and therefore acts without control, according to his will, in the armies of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth: hence those great swelling words of vanity, *autjexousion*, *liberum arbitrium*, which carry in them the sense of self-sufficiency, despotic, arbitrary liberty, are improperly given to the human will, though agreeable enough to the language of some free-willers; such as Pharaoh, who said, Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go (Ex. 5:2). Others have said, Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us? (Ps.12:4).

2. The liberty of the will does not consist in an indifference to good and evil, or in an indetermination to either; otherwise the will of no being would be free; for God, as he is essentially and naturally good, his will is determined only to that which is so; nor does he nor can he do anything evil; and yet in all he does, acts with the utmost freedom and liberty of his will. The will of the good angels, though in their state of probation, was left mutable and liable to change; yet in their confirmed state, is

impeccable, wholly turned unto and bent upon that which is good, and yet all the services they perform to God and man, are done with the greatest readiness, cheerfulness, and willingness, without any force or compulsion. The will of the devil is biased only to that which is evil, without the least inclination to that which is good; and yet moves freely in the highest acts of sin and malice. The will of man, considered in every state he has been, is, or shall be in, is determined to good or evil, and does not stand in equilibrio, in an indifference to either. The will of man, in a state of innocence, was indeed mutable, and capable of being wrought upon and inclined to evil, as the event shows; yet during that state, was entirely bent on that which is good, and acted freely, and without any co-action, in obedience to the commands of God. The will of man, in his fallen state, is wholly addicted to sinful lusts, and in the fulfilling of them takes the utmost delight and pleasure. Man, in his regenerate state, though he is inclined both to good and evil which arises from the two different principles of corruption and grace in him; yet both move freely, though determined to their several objects. The flesh, or corrupt part, is solely determined to that which is evil; grace, or the new creature, to that which is spiritually good; so that with the flesh, the regenerate man serves the law of sin, and with his mind the law of God. The will of the glorified saints in heaven is wholly given up to spiritual and divine things, nor can it be moved to that which is sinful; and yet as they serve the Lord constantly, so with all freedom and liberty. Consider, therefore, the will in very rank

of beings, its liberty does not consist in an indifference or indetermination to good and evil.

3. The liberty of the will is consistent with some kind of necessity. God necessarily, and yet freely, hates that which is evil, and loves that which is good. Christ, as man, was under some kind of necessity of fulfilling all righteousness, and yet performed it voluntarily. The will of man is free from a physical or natural necessity; it does not act and move by a necessity of nature, as many creatures do. So the sun, moon, and stars, move in their course; fire, by a physical necessity, burns; light things ascend upwards, and heavy bodies move downwards. Moreover, it is free from a necessity of co-action or force; the will cannot be forced; nor is it even by the powerful, efficacious, and unfrustrable operation of God's grace in conversion; for though before, it; is unwilling to submit to Christ, and his way of salvation, yet it is made willing in the day of his power, without offering the least violence to it; God working upon it, as Austin says, *cum suavi omnipotentia et omnipotentis suavitate*, with a sweet omnipotence, and an omnipotent sweetness: but then the will of man is not free from a necessity of obligation; it is bound to act in obedience to the divine will; though it is free, it is not free to act at pleasure, without control; though the sinful, corrupt will of man, breaks out in despite of the laws of God, and chooses its own ways, and delights in its abominations; yet this is not properly liberty, but licentiousness. And though a good man looks upon himself under a necessary obligation to act agreeable to the will of God, yet this necessity is act contrary to

the liberty of his will; for he delights in the law of God after the inner man. Moreover, there is a kind of necessity which the school-men call a necessity of immutability; which respects the divine decrees, and their necessary, unchangeable, and certain events, that is consistent with the liberty of man's will: for though the decrees of God are necessarily fulfilled, yet these do not infringe nor hinder the liberty of the creature in acting; for instance, the selling of Joseph to the Ishmaelites, by whom he was brought to Egypt, was according to the decree and purpose of God, who sent him thither, and designed it for the good of others, and yet his brethren in the whole of that affair, acted with the utmost deliberation, choice, and freedom of their wills imaginable. Nothing was more peremptorily decreed and determined by God than the crucifixion of Christ, and yet men never acted more freely, as well as more wickedly, than the Jews did in all the parts and circumstances of that tragical scene. So that the liberty of the will is consistent with some kind of necessity, yea, even with some kind of servitude. A servant may serve his master freely and voluntarily, as the Hebrew servant who was unwilling to part from his master when his time of servitude was expired. A wicked man, who commits sin, gives up himself wholly to it, is a servant of it, yet acts freely in all his shameful and sinful services; even at the same time he is a slave to those lusts and pleasures he chooses and delights in; which made Luther call free-will *servum arbitrium*.

4. The consideration of the will of man in the several states of innocence, the fall, regeneration, and glorification, serves much

to lead us into the true nature and notion of the liberty and power of it. Man, in his state of innocence, had both a power and will to do that which was naturally and morally good; though his will was left mutable, and so through temptation might be inclined to evil, at which door came in the sin and fall of man. Man, in his fallen state, is wholly under the power and dominion of sin, is a captive under it, and a slave unto it, and has neither a power nor will to that which is spiritually good. Man, in a state of regeneration, is freed from the dominion of sin, though not from the being of it; his will is sweetly and powerfully wrought upon, and inclined to what is spiritually good, though he finds a body of sin and death about him, which much distresses and hinders him in the performance of it. The saints in heaven are freed both from the being and dominion of sin; and as they have a will solely inclined, so they have full power, to serve the Lord without ceasing.

5. The distinction between the natural and moral liberty of the will is of great service in this controversy; though these two are artfully confounded together; and because the one is denied by us, it is concluded that the other is also; whereas we affirm, that the natural liberty of the will is essential to it, and always abides with it in every action and in every state of life. A wicked man, in the highest degree of servitude to sin, his will acts as freely in this state of bondage as Adam's will did in obedience to God, in a state of innocence; but the moral liberty of the will is not essential to it, though it adds to the glory and excellency of it; and therefore may and may not be with it, without any violation to, or destruction of, the natural liberty of

the will. The moral liberty of the will to that; which is good was with Adam in a state of innocence; this was lost by the fall; hence man in a state of corruption and unregency is destitute of it; in the regenerate state it is implanted in the will by the Spirit and grace of God, and in the state of glorification will be in its full perfection; so that the controversy ought to be not about the natural, but moral liberty of the will, and not so much about free-will itself, as the strength and power of it; which leads me to the consideration of the next inquiry, which is,

II. What is the strength and power of man's free-will; or what it is that the will of man itself can will or nill, choose or refuse, effect and perform.

1. It will be allowed that the human will has a power and liberty of acting, in things natural or in things respecting the natural and animal life; such as eating, drinking, sitting, standing, rising, walking, etc. The external parts, actions, and motions of the body, generally speaking, are subject to, and controllable by the will; though the internal parts, motions, and actions of it, are not so, such as digestion of food, secretion of it to various purposes and uses, nutrition and accretion of the several parts of the body, circulation of the blood, etc., all which are performed without the consent of the will.

2. The will of man has a liberty and power of acting in things civil, such as relate to the good of societies, in kingdoms, cities, towns, and families; as obedience to magistrates, lawful marriage, education of children, cultivation of arts and

sciences, exercise and improvement of trades and manufactures, and every thing else that contributes to the good, pleasure, and advantage of civil life.

3. Man has also a power of performing the external, parts of religion, such as praying, singing praise of God, reading the scriptures, hearing the word of God, and attending on all public ordinances. So Herod heard John gladly, and did many things in a religious way, externally. Men. may also give to every one their own, do justice between man and man, love such as love them, live inoffensively in the world, appear outwardly righteous before men, and do many things which have the show of moral good, as did the heathen and publicans, and the apostle Paul before conversion.

4. Man has neither will nor power to act of himself in things spiritually good, or in such as relate to his spiritual and eternal welfare; as conversion, regeneration, faith, repentance, and the like. Conversion is not the work of a creature, but of God, even a work of his almighty power; by which men are turned from sin and Satan to him, are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son. Regeneration, or a being born again, is expressly denied to be of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, and is ascribed to God himself. All men have not faith in Christ; and such who have it, have it not of themselves; it is the gift of God, the operation of his Spirit, the fruit and effect of electing and efficacious grace. Evangelical repentance, which is unto life, is not in the power of man; man, in a state of nature, has no true sense of his sins;

nor will any means of themselves bring him to repentance for them, without the efficacious grace of God. True evangelical repentance is God's free-grace gift.

5. That there is no power naturally in the will of man, to will, choose, and effect things spiritually good, does not only appear from all experience of human nature, but also from all those scriptures which represent men as polluted, wholly carnal, given up to sin, slaves unto it, and dead in it; and not only impotent unto, but under an impossibility to do that which is good; and from all those scriptures which declare the understanding, judgment, and affections, to be corrupt, by which the will is greatly influenced and directed; and from all such scriptures which intimate that every good gift and spiritual blessing come from God, and that the saints themselves only will and act through the power, and under the influence of the grace of God; who works in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. I proceed,

III. To inquire whether the words of the text under consideration assert the power and liberty of the will of man in choosing that which is spiritually good. To which I answer,

1. Supposing what is here proposed to be chosen is spiritually good, and what to be refused is spiritually evil; it does not follow from hence that man has a power to choose the one and refuse the other; for, as Luther says, "The words are imperative, they assert nothing but what ought to be done; for Moses does not say, thou hast a power of choosing, but choose, keep, do.

He delivers precepts, of doing, but does not describe the power of man."

2. Life and death, blessing and cursing, are to be taken in a civil sense, and design the external dispensations of God's providence, with respect to temporal good or evil, which should befall the people of Israel, according to their civil behavior. That people were under the immediate government of God; he was their political king and head. Moses, from him, gave a system of laws to them as a body politic; according to their obedience to which laws, they and their seed were to live and dwell in and enjoy all the temporal blessings of the land of Canaan, as appears from verses 16, 20; but if they disobeyed, they were to expect cursing and death, captivity and the sword, and not prolong their days in the land they were going to possess, as is evident from verses 17, 18. Therefore Moses advises them to choose life, that is, to behave according to those laws given them as a commonwealth; that so they, under the happy government they were, might comfortably live, and they and their posterity enjoy all the blessings of a civil life in the land of promise. What comes nearer to such a case, and may serve to illustrate it, is as if a person should represent the wholesome constitution laws of

Great Britain, preserved under the government of his majesty king George, with all the consequent blessing and happiness thereof, and also, the sad and miserable condition it would be in under a popish Pretender; and then observe that it would be most desirable, advisable, and eligible peaceably to continue

under the government of the one, than to receive the yoke of the other. To choose the one is to choose liberty and property, blessing and life, and everything, that is valuable, in a civil sense; to choose the other, is to choose slavery and arbitrary power, cursing and death, and everything that is miserable and destructive. Now it is allowed that man has a power of willing and nilling, choosing and refusing, acting and not acting, in things of a civil nature; therefore these words can be of no service, nor ought they to have a place or concern in the controversy about the power and liberty of the will in things spiritual.

Section 6—Deuteronomy 32:29.

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.

These words were made use of to contradict the doctrines of absolute election, particular redemption, and unfrustrable grace in conversion; it is intimated, that, on supposition of these doctrines, they would represent the God of sincerity and truth as full of guile and hypocrisy, when he earnestly wishes and desires the welfare of men, and that they have spiritual wisdom; and yet he himself has decreed to leave them without a Savior, and without means of being spiritually wise; which is all one as though he had passionately wished they had been of the number of his elect, when he himself, by an absolute decree from all eternity, had excluded them out of that number. In answer to which, let it be observed,

I. That it ought to be proved that God does passionately wish the spiritual and eternal welfare of all mankind; or desires that every individual of human nature might have spiritual wisdom to know his spiritual estate, and consider his latter end; since it is evident that he does not afford to every son of Adam the means of being spiritually wise, and it is certain that these words do not express such an universal wish; for they only regard a part of mankind, either the people of Israel, or the adversaries of Israel, as will be seen hereafter; and therefore, being spoken only of some, and not of every individual of men, cannot militate against the election and redemption of some only.

II. It ought to be proved that God wishes or desires the spiritual welfare of, or spiritual wisdom for any, but those whom he has chosen to eternal life, whom Christ has redeemed by his blood, and to whom the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of themselves and Christ is given; or in other words, that God wishes and desires the spiritual welfare of such, and spiritual wisdom for such, who, in the event, are not eternally saved.

III. It ought to be considered whether these words regard the spiritual welfare of any, or contain in them a wish for wisdom and understanding in spiritual things; or rather, whether they do not only regard things temporal, and the knowledge of them, as will quickly be made to appear.

IV. Supposing the words to contain a wish for wisdom and understanding in spiritual things, such a wish must be ascribed to God, not properly, but by an anthropopathy (the attributing of human emotions, passions, sufferings to God; ed.), or after the manner of men; wishes and velleities (a very low degree of desire or volition; ed.) are improperly, or in a figurative way, attributed to God; nor do they suppose any imperfection in him, nor sufficiency in his creatures; nor do such necessarily imply that it is his will to give that wisdom he wishes for; nor do they lay him under obligation even to afford the means of spiritual wisdom; but as a man wishes for that which is grateful and agreeable to him, so when God wishes for spiritual wisdom in men, it only implies that such wisdom in them would be well-pleasing to him. Besides, such a mode of speaking may be used either by way of complaint of ignorance, or as expressing pity for it, or as upbraiding with it; and that in order either to bring to a sense of it, and encourage to apply to him for wisdom, who gives it liberally, or to leave inexcusable. But,

V. The words are not delivered in the form of a wish, but are an hypothetical proposition. The Hebrew word *wl* signifies if, and the whole verse should be rendered thus:—If they were wise, they would understand this, they would consider their latter end; and supposing them to be understood in a spiritual sense, the meaning is, had they been wise to do good, as they are to do evil, they would have understood the things that belong to their spiritual peace and welfare, and would have seriously considered the last issue and end of all things, and themselves; but they are not wise in things divine and spiritual, and

therefore have no understanding of them; nor do they consider the end of their sinful actions; nor the end of their days, how short it is, how nigh at hand; nor that awful judgment that will follow after death; nor their final doom, nor whither they shall go, to heaven or hell. Though,

VI. After all, the words are to be understood of things temporal, and not of what concerns the spiritual and eternal welfare of any. Instances of God's goodness to the people of Israel are at large recited in verse 14. After that, their many sins against God and great ingratitude to him are mentioned in verses 15-18, which drew God's resentment and indignation against them, expressed in threatenings of many severe judgments, verses 19-25, which he would have executed on them, but that he feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this (v. 27), for he knew that they were a nation void of counsel: neither was there any understanding in them (v. 28), for if they had been wise, they would have understood this, that the destruction of the people of Israel was of God, and not of them; for otherwise, how should one chase a thousand, that is, one Gentile a thousand Israelites; and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? (v. 30). They would also have considered their own end, or what must befall them in length of time; that as God had cut off and destroyed his people Israel for their sins, so they might expect the same destruction for iniquities of a like kind. Now since this is the plain and obvious sense of the words, they cannot be

used with any propriety in the controversy about the doctrines of distinguishing grace.

Section 7—Psalm 81:13, 14.

O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways; I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.

This passage is produced by the Remonstrants, to prove the resistibility of the grace of God in Conversion; in favor of the delectability of the saints; and by a late writer, as irreconcilable with God's decrees of election and reprobation, and the doctrine of particular redemption; and as proving that men have a sufficiency of ability to do what God wishes they would do. But let it be considered,

I. That, admitting the words contain a wish and desire of God for the spiritual welfare and conversion of men, such a wish can only be ascribed to him in a figurative sense, as has been observed under the preceding section. Wishing cannot be attributed to God in such sense as it is to man, who often wishes for that which is not in his power to perform, and therefore desires it to be done by another, which cannot be said of God without impeaching his omnipotence. When God is said to wish for and desire, as we will suppose here, the conversion and obedience of men, it only implies that these would be grateful and well-pleasing to him; and not that either is in the power of men to convert themselves, and obey the commands

of God, or that it is the determining will of God that every individual of mankind should be converted and obey his commands in a way acceptable to him; for then every man would be converted and obey: therefore, such a wish, suppose it as universal and extensive as you please, does not militate against the distinguishing grace of God, in choosing, redeeming, and calling some only; since such a wish only declares what God approves of, and not what he determines shall be.

II. The wish for the spiritual welfare of the persons here mentioned, supposing it to be one, is only for the people of Israel, God's professing people, and whom he calls my people, and not all mankind, or every individual son of Adam, as it ought to have been, could it be thought to militate against the election, redemption, and effectual vocation of some particular persons only; and besides, it would be difficult to prove that these persons spoken of, notwithstanding all their perverseness, rebellion, and misconduct, were not chosen of God, redeemed by Christ, and savingly wrought upon by the power of divine grace, and finally saved.

III. The words, if duly examined, will appear not to contain any wish at all, but an hypothesis, or supposition; being to be read thus, If my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways, I should, etc. R. Sol. Jarchi interprets *wl* by *sa*, and R. Aben Ezra by *wlya*, and the Septuagint by *eij*; all which signify if: so the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Vulgate Latin, Junius, and Tremellius, read the words; therefore, as the

Contra- Remonstrants have rightly observed, it does not follow from hence, that these people could obey the commands of God; or that the performance of obedience depended on their will; no more than it would follow from such a proposition, if a man keeps the law of God perfectly, he shall be justified by it: therefore it is in the power of man to keep the law of God perfectly; or from this, if a man believes he shall be saved; therefore, faith depends on man's will, or is in man's power. Besides,

IV. The words are not to be understood of the internal work of grace and conversion, and of spiritual and evangelical obedience springing from it, which would have been attended with spiritual and eternal blessings; but of an external obedience to God's commands, which would have been followed with temporal favors; such as subduing their enemies under them, feeding them with the finest of the wheat, and satisfying them with honey out of the rock; in the same sense are we to understand the words in Isaiah 48:18, which usually go in company with these under examination, and are also to be read conditionally; If thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river; as they are by the Targum, the Septuagint, and Arabic versions, by R. David Kimchi, Junius, and Tremellius; and neither the one nor the other regard the spiritual, but temporal welfare of God's people Israel; nor do they contain a wish for that, but a declaration or an asseveration of it, on condition of their obedience to God's commands. The passage in Hosea 11:8, which is sometimes joined with this, is a human way of

speaking, as R. Aben Ezra on the place observes; and expresses God's compassionate concern for the temporal welfare of Ephraim and Israel, and not transports of affection, and desire after the spiritual welfare of any, much less of all mankind.

Section 8—Psalm 125:3.

For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

These words are made use of to prove, that "saints, or true believers, or men once truly good, may cease to be so: for it is said, that they seem plainly to insinuate, that great and long impressions might have this effect upon them; trod surely that which God is thus careful to prevent, might possibly befall the righteous: there being no need of care to prevent that which he hath absolutely engaged to preserve them from." Strange! seeing,

I. The doctrine of the saints final perseverance is so plainly intimated in the two preceding verses of this psalm: They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever. If they that trust in the Lord, who are saints, true believers, men truly good, are as mount Zion; then they cannot be removed neither from the heart of God, nor out of the hands of Christ; but will abide there for ever, and consequently cannot cease to be what they are. If, as the

mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about the same persons before described, who are his people, and that even for ever; how is it possible that they should ever perish?

II. These words are strictly connected with the former, and express a certain effect that should surely follow from the safe state and happy situation of such who trust in the Lord, yk for, or because it is so and so with them; therefore the rod of the wicked, the tyrannical government, oppressions, and persecutions of wicked men, to which the saints are often subject, shall not rest, always continue and abide, upon the lot, not the back, as Dr. Whitby cites the words, of the righteous; meaning either their persons or their goods; lest the righteous, who are made so by the righteousness of Christ, put forth their hands unto iniquity; that is, lest through the oppressions of wicked men, the instigation of Satan, and their own hearts, they should be moved to that which would dishonor God, bring a reproach on his ways, and wound their own souls; all which they may do, and yet not cease to be saints, true believers, truly good men; as the instances of David, Peter, and others, fully make appear. The righteous may put forth their hands unto iniquity, and fall into great sins, and yet not totally fall away, or so fall as to be lost and perish: total apostasy is not intended by putting forth their hands unto iniquity.

III. It is stranger still, that the care of God to prevent the righteous putting forth their hands unto iniquity, should be improved into an argument against their perseverance, and in

favor of their apostasy. It will be readily allowed, that what God is thus careful to prevent, even suppose a total apostasy was meant, might possibly befall the righteous, should they be left to themselves, destitute of the powerful protection of God; nor would there be a possibility of its being otherwise; but since the care and power of God are so greatly employed about their preservation, it is impossible that it should befall them.

IV. It is an egregious mistake to say, that "there is no need of care to prevent that which he (God) absolutely hath engaged to preserve them from;" since God's engagement to preserve his people, is the true reason of the employment of his care about

them; which is necessary to prevent their doing the iniquity, which otherwise would be done by them: God having absolutely resolved, determined, and engaged, that those that trust in him should not be removed, but abide for ever; therefore he will be round about them for ever, and take care of them, that nothing hurt or destroy them; he will keep them by his power through faith unto salvation.

Section 9—Psalm 145:9.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works

The doctrines of election and reprobation, and of particular redemption, are represented as contrary to the general mercy and goodness of God expressed in this passage: with a view to these doctrines, it is asked by one writer, "Why is it said, that

his tender mercies are over all his works, if they are so restrained from his most noble creatures?" And it is observed by another, "That it should not be said, his tender mercies are over all his works: but his cruelties are over all his works." To which I reply,

I. That the said doctrines do not restrain the tender mercies of God in a providential way, of which this text only speaks, as will be shown hereafter, from any of his creatures; no, not even from the non-elect, or those who have no share in the special grace and favor of God, and who are not eventually saved; though these should not be reckoned God's most noble creatures: for surely they are not more noble than the elect of God, or those who are saved with an everlasting salvation; or more noble than the angels, who stand, and never left their first estate in which they were created. Admitting also that these doctrines carried in them ideas of cruelty, and want of compassion in God to those who are rejected by him, and excluded from redemption by Christ; yet it should not be concluded from hence, that the cruelties of God are over all his works; since, according to the known tenor of these doctrines, some of God's creatures are chosen by him to eternal life, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and shall be certainly and eternally saved.

II. The said doctrines are not expressive of cruelty in God to mankind, nor inconsistent with his goodness and mercy; nor do they represent God less good, or less merciful, than the doctrines of conditional election and universal redemption do;

nay, they represent him more merciful than these do, since they ascertain the salvation of some, whereas these leave the salvation of every man. precarious and uncertain, if not impossible, depending upon the mutable will of the creature.

III. These words are to be understood not of special mercies, or saving benefits, bestowed by God upon any of his creatures; but of his providential goodness, which extends to them all, even to the brutal world, to all irrational as well as rational creatures, as appears from verses 15, 16, compared with Psalm 147:8, 9, who have no concern in election and redemption; so that if these words should be so understood, as to relate to the blessings of spiritual and eternal salvation, they would prove too much, more than our opponents desire; namely, that these blessing are provided for, and extend unto irrational creatures, yea, even to all the works of God, of every kind and sort. Therefore,

IV. The said doctrines are not at all repugnant to these universal expressions of God's goodness and mercy; since the non-elect, or such who have no saving benefit by the death of Christ, have a share in the providential goodness and tender mercies of God; who makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, and is kind to the unthankful and to the evil: nay, oftentimes the worst of men have the greatest share of the good things of this World; their eyes stand out with fatness, and they have more than heart could wish:

their temporal mercies are oftentimes larger than those, that the dear children of God enjoy; and therefore are not what they have in common with the brutes that perish; God takes more care of them than of oxen, or the fowls of the air, in a providential way; though they despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth them to repentance; but after their hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Section 10—Proverbs 1:22-30.

How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? Turn ye at my reproof, etc.

These are the words of Christ, who, hinder the name of Wisdom, is represented crying without, and uttering his voice in the city in the streets, in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates; which is to be understood of the public preaching of the word, either by Christ himself, or by his ministers. What is advanced from these passages in favor of any part of the Arminian scheme, will be considered in the following order:

I. It, is said, that from hence "it is very evident, that it was primarily the counsel and will of God, that even they who would not turn, would not repent and accept of salvation,

should believe and come to repentance, and be made partakers of it:" in which I observe,

1. That this writer, with the Remonstrants, supposes an antecedent and consequent will in God, when he says, that it was primarily the counsel and will of God, etc., as if what was once the will of God is not now his will; which is contrary to the immutability of his nature and will; who is in one mind; and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doth. What is once his will, is always so; nor can it be made null and void by the will of man.

2. That he mistakes the counsel of God here, as also in Luke 7:30, for the intentional will of God, respecting the faith, repentance, and salvation of persons; when it designs in both places, God's will of command and approbation; and is expressive, not of what God intended and designed concerning these persons; but of what was their duty, and which would be grateful to him, and approved of by him: for had it been his intentional determining will that these persons, who rejected and despised his counsel, should believe, repent, and be saved, they would have believed, repented, and been made partakers of salvation; for who hath resisted his will?

II. It; is intimated from hence, that man does not lie under a disability to believe, repent, and turn to God; and it is asked, "To what purpose did wisdom say to them, who were thus disabled, Turn you at my reproof? Or could she, without

insulting over the misery of fallen man, thus laugh at the calamity they could never prevent?" To which I reply,

1. That the exhortation, Turn ye at my reproof, is not to repentance and conversion, but to an attendance to the external ministry of the word. Reproof is the same with counsel, in verses 25, 30, where they are joined together, and put for each other, and design the word preached, which reproves of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and it is not turning at, but to this reproof, which is exhorted to; for the ythkytl wbmt, should not be rendered, turn ye at, but to my reproof; so Arias Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Junius, and Tremellius, read them; and the meaning is either as the Targum interprets them zwnptt ytwgskml, turn your face to my reproof, and not your backs; or as Aben Ezra, turn ye, that is, your ears, to hear my reproof; and do not pull away the shoulder, or stop your ears. Now it is certain, that man does not lie under a disability to turn his face and ears to the external ministry of the word; though so depraved are the inclinations and will of man, and such a lover is he of simplicity

and scorning, and such a hater of true, useful, and spiritual knowledge, that he had rather hear an idle story told, or the Scriptures burlesqued, than an honest, serious sermon, which is reproving, searching, and informing.

2. The calamity of these persons did not arise from a disability to do what they were exhorted to, but was owing to a neglect of what they might have done: for they could have attended the

ministry of the word, observed ordinances, and turned their faces and ears to the reproof of Wisdom; but they hated knowledge, and the means of it; they despised sermons, laughed at ordinances, and treated with the utmost contempt every admonition, counsel, and reproof; therefore they did eat of the fruit of their own ways, and were filled with their own devices, verse 31; there was a just retaliation made to them; they were paid in their own way; it was a righteous thing with Wisdom, and no insult on their misery, to laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear came upon them.

III. This passage is produced in favor of sufficient grace given to men, to repent, believe, and convert themselves; and to prove that God's calls, invitations, and messages, by his prophets, are sufficient inducements to procure reformation and repentance. To which I answer,

1. It is plain that the persons here spoken of, called unto, exhorted, and threatened, had not sufficient grace; since they are represented as fools, scorers, lovers of folly, haters of knowledge; who despised the counsel of Wisdom, and rejected her reproof.

2. Nor should this be concluded from the encouragement that Wisdom gives, to turn to her reproof; saying, Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you; since this is not to be understood of the Holy Ghost, and of the dispensation of his extraordinary gifts, or

of saving grace; for when he is promised in either of these senses, it is expressed by a different phrase than what is here used; he is promised to be poured out upon, and not as here, unto the sons of men: (see Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 39:29; Joel 2:28). I observe that Dr. Whitby, whenever he cites the passage before us, inadvertently transcribes it as though it was read, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, when it is unto you. By the Spirit, we are to understand the mind of Wisdom; so the word hwr is used in Proverbs 29:11; and by pouring it out, a large and full revelation of it to the sons of men, as it is explained in the next clause, I will make known my words unto you.

3. This external revelation of the mind of Christ, ought not to be called sufficient grace; it is indeed the means of conveying and implanting grace, when it comes not in word only, but the Holy Ghost and with power: it is not sufficient means of grace to all men; for all men have it not, nor is it so to all that have it; for to some it is the savor of death unto death, whilst it is to others the savor of life unto life; nor is it of itself sufficient means to any, without the efficacious grace of God. Hence,

4. Though the calls, invitations, and messages of God to men, by his ministers, may be sometimes (for they are not always) sufficient inducements to procure an external reformation, an outward repentance, as in the people of Nineveh; yet these are not sufficient of themselves, without powerful grace, to produce true faith in Christ, evangelical repentance towards God, and new spiritual obedience, in life and conversation.

IV. These words, I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, are used to prove the resistibility of the grace of God, and that an irresistible power is not necessary to the conversion of a sinner. But,

1. It ought to be observed, that there is a twofold call; the one is internal, which is by the powerful operations of the Spirit of God on the soul, either with or without the word; which cannot be so resisted, as to be made to cease, to become void, and of no effect; the other is external, by the ministry of the word; and may be resisted, rejected, and despised, and become useless: now it is of the latter call, and not of the former, that the text speaks, and therefore no way militates against the irresistible, unfrustrable grace of God in conversion: and in this sense are we to understand some other places of Scripture, as Proverbs 2:3, 4, and Proverbs 11:3, 4; Isaiah 65:2; Matthew 20:16.

2. It is said, that "were such an irresistible power necessary to the conversion of a sinner, no man could be converted sooner than he is; because before this irresistible action came upon him, he could not be converted; and when it came upon him, he could not choose but be converted." To which I reply, I see no absurdity in the consequence: for, as all our times are in the hands of God, a time to be born, and a time to die; so likewise the time of conversion, which is called a time of love (Ezek. 16:8). Now as a man cannot be born sooner or later than he is, nor die sooner or later than he does; so neither can he be converted sooner or later than he is. But then,

3. It is objected, that if this be the case, "no man could reasonably be blamed that he lived so long in his impenitent and unconverted state." To which I answer, that living in an impenitent and unconverted state, is living in sin, and therefore blameworthy. And though man, by sinning, has involved himself in a state, out of which he cannot extricate himself; yet is he not the less culpable on that score for living in it.

4. It is further objected, that if man cannot be converted sooner than he is, God must unreasonably make these inquiries, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? With others, in the following places, Exodus 16:28; Numbers 14:11; Jeremiah 4:14, and 13:27. In answer to which, it will be enough to say, that these passages speak not of conversion, but of external obedience and reformation; which might be sooner done, though conversion cannot.

5. It is said, that if it is so, "it would not be praiseworthy in persons that they were then converted, it being not in their power then to be otherwise; since an unfrustrable operation is that which no man can frustrate." It is very true; for all the praise of conversion is due to the powerful and efficacious grace of God, and none to the power and will of man.

6. It is asked, "If there be some physical and unfrustrable operation on God's part, necessary to the new birth, why is the want of this new birth and spiritual renovation imputed to men's voluntary want of consideration, to their rejecting the counsel of God, and not choosing the fear of the Lord?" (Prov.

1:24, 25, 29, 30). I reply, that the want of the new birth and spiritual renovation, is not the thing spoken of in the place referred to; but a non-attention to, and a contempt of, the ministry of the word, though these indeed are a sign of it; much less is this imputed to men's rejecting the counsel of God, and not choosing the fear of the Lord.; for the tables must be turned; and if we speak truth, we must say, that man's rejecting the counsel of God, and not choosing the fear of the Lord, are owing, and to be imputed, to a want of the new birth and spiritual renovation. Besides, as the new birth and spiritual renovation are the effects of, and owing to the Spirit and grace of God, and therefore called a being born of

water and of the Spirit, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; so a want thereof is owing to a man's not having that grace which is in the power of God only to bestow upon him.

Section 11 — Isaiah 1:16, 17.

Wash ye, make you clean, etc.

These words are supposed to express the power of man, and contradict the necessity of unfrustrable grace in conversion: the argument from them is formed in this manner; "If conversion be wrought only by the unfrustrable operation of God, and man is purely passive in it, vain are all these commands and exhortations directed to wicked men." The weakness of which conclusion will appear by considering particularly each command or exhortation.

1. Wash ye, make you clean; these two are to be regarded as one, since they intend one and the same thing; and suppose, that men, in a state of nature, are polluted and unclean; and indeed their pollution is of such sort, and to such a degree, that they cannot cleanse themselves, either by ceremonial ablutions, or moral services, or evangelical ordinances; for, who can say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin? (Prov. 20:9). This is God's work only, as appears from his promises to cleanse his people from their sins; from the end of Christ's shedding his blood, and the efficacy of it; from the sanctifying influences of the Spirit; and from the prayers of the saints (Ps. 51:2, 7, 10), to God, that he would create in them clean hearts, wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin. But if this be the case, that it is God's work alone, and that man is incapable to cleanse himself from sin, it will be said, to what purpose are such exhortations? I answer, to convince men of their pollution, and that they stand in need of being washed and cleansed, of which they are naturally ignorant: there are two many who are pure in their own eyes, and yet not washed from their filthiness (Prov. 30:12); as also, to bring them to a sense of their own inability to cleanse themselves; which seems to be the particular design of them here; since these Jews thought to have washed themselves from their immoralities by their ceremonial services, and which are therefore rejected by God, verses 11-15; and they, notwithstanding all their legal purifications, are called upon to wash and make clean: besides, such exhortations may be useful to lead persons to inquire after the proper means of cleansing,

and so to the fountain of Christ's blood, in which only souls being washed are made clean. These exhortations then are not in vain; though conversion is wrought only by the unfrustrable operation of God, and man is purely passive in it. This view of them will help us to understand aright some parallel places; such as Jeremiah 4:14, 13:27; 2 Corinthians 7:1; James 1:21, and James 4:8, which commonly go in company with these.

2. Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Evil is said to be put away from a nation, when it is punished in the doer of it; see Deuteronomy 13:5, and Deuteronomy 17:7, 12; and from a family and particular persons, when discouraged and abstained from, Job 11:14, and 22:23. But it ought to be observed, that the exhortation here is not barely to put away their doings, but the evil of them; and that not from themselves, but from before the eyes of God. Now to put away sin in this sense, is to take it away, to remove it, as that it is pardoned, and men acquitted and discharged from it; but this is impracticable to men, and is the act of God only; as is evident from his promises to remove the sins of his people; from the end of Christ's sacrifice which was to put away sin for ever; and from the prayers of the saints, who desire that God would take away all iniquity, and receive graciously. But why then is such an exhortation given? First to convince men, that the putting away of sin from the eyes of God's vindictive justice, is absolutely necessary to salvation; and then that men cannot by all their ceremonial and moral services do this; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin (Heb. 10:4); as also to lead and direct their views to the sacrifice of Christ,

which effectually does it; and without which, to what purpose is the multitude of sacrifices? and vain are all oblations, verses 11, 12.

3. Cease to do evil; which regards either a cessation from ceremonial works, which being done with a wicked mind, were an abomination to the Lord, verses 13, 14, or an abstinence from outward immoralities; such as shedding innocent blood, oppressing the fatherless and widow, verses 15, 17. Now a natural man may be able to abstain from such external enormities of life, without supposing a power in him to do that which is spiritually good; or that the unfrustrable grace of God is unnecessary in conversion.

4. Learn to do well; that is, to do acts of justice, beneficence, liberality, and charity, such as are here mentioned; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; all which are very commendable, and may be performed by men in an unconverted state; and no way militate either against man's passiveness, or the necessity of God's efficacious grace in the work of conversion.

Section 12—Isaiah 1:18, 19.

Come now and let us reason together; If ye be willing and obedient, etc.

I. The eighteenth verse is considered in strict connection with the words preceding and following; from whence it is concluded, that to cease to do evil, and learn to do well, to be

willing and obedient, are qualifications for the pardoning mercy of God, and conditions of obtaining it; the promises of pardon, life, and salvation, being made to persons of such characters. But,

1. Let it be observed, that the eighteenth verse may be read in a parenthesis, without any connection with or dependence on either the preceding or subsequent verses; being thrown in on purpose to comfort the people of God, oppressed with a sense of their sins, whilst he is expressing his just resentment and indignation against the sins of others.

2. Admitting it to be in strict connection with the context, it contains a free declaration of pardoning grace and mercy, without any conditions annexed to it; it is not expressed in a conditional form; it is not said, if ye cease to do evil, and learn to do well, then though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; nor is it said, if ye be willing and obedient, then though your sins be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, but ye shall eat the good of the land.

3. God's promise of pardon is free, absolute, and unconditional; it is expressed in this manner; I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more (Heb. 8:12.); and made to persons guilty both of sins of omission and commission; who had bought him no sweet cane with money; neither had filled him with the fat of sacrifices; but had made him to serve with their sins, and had wearied him with their iniquities (Acts 5:31).

4. Pardon of sin is never ascribed to any condition performed by men, but to the free grace of God, streaming through the blood of Christ; which was shed to obtain it, and in whose gift it is, being exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Isa. 43:24, 25); and which is often given to persons without any conditions previously qualifying them for it.

5. Obedience is not the condition of pardon, though a declaration of pardon is an excellent motive to induce to obedience; evangelical obedience springs from, and is influenced by, discoveries of pardon, but is neither the cause nor condition of it.

II. It is here promised to such who are willing and obedient, that they shall eat the good of the land; and threatened to the disobedient, that they shall be devoured with the sword; from whence it does not follow, that it is in the power of man to do what is spiritually good, much less that eternal happiness depends upon, or is to be obtained by man's obedience. For,

1. The voluntary obedience here encouraged, is to things civil; such as to relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow, verse 17, which it is allowed are in the power of a natural man to perform; and might be reasonably expected from a professing people, as these were to whom those exhortations were given.

2. What is here promised, is not of a spiritual or eternal, but of a temporal nature; ye shall eat the good of the land; that is, of

the land of Canaan; the possession of which they held by their obedience to those laws of a moral, civil, and ceremonial kind, which God gave them as a body politic; and which, so long as they observed, they were continued in the quiet and full enjoyment of all the blessings of the good land, flowing with milk and honey, as were promised to them; see Deuteronomy 5:32, 33, 6:24, 25, 28:1-14, and Leviticus 26:3-10. But when they refused and rebelled it was otherwise with them. And therefore,

3. The punishment threatened to their disobedience and rebellion is temporal; ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; as he had in Leviticus 26:25, 33, and so it was frequently with this people, when they broke the laws of God, transgressed his commands, and rebelled against him, the enemy was let in upon them, the sword was drawn against them, and they destroyed by it, or carried captive.

Section 13—Isaiah 5:4.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked, etc.

No one place of Scripture is more frequent in the mouths and writings of the patrons of free-will, and adversaries of the grace of God, than this; which is used by them, to prove that God gives sufficient grace for the conversion of such who are not converted; and that he does not effect that work by an

irresistible power, by an unfrustrable operation; which operation, it is said, "if necessary to produce the expected fruits, and not vouchsafed, it must follow, that this vineyard had not grace sufficient to answer her Lord's expectations; and if so, he must unreasonably complain, that she brought forth wild grapes, and more unreasonably expect good grapes, and most unreasonably punish, her for not doing what he would not give her grace sufficient to perform. To which I reply,

1. These, words are part of a parable, representing the state and condition of the people of the Jews. Now, parabolical divinity is not argumentative; nor ought parables to be stretched beyond. their scope and design; the intent of this is to show the ingratitude of the Jews, in the midst of many favors bestowed on them, and the patience and long-suffering of God towards them, and to vindicate his justice in their ruin as a nation.

2. Seeing there is a particular application of this parable to the people of Israel and Judah, verse 4; The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plants; who were favored with peculiar blessings above all people on the face of the earth; it can be no proof of any blessing or grace common to all mankind; or in other words, it can be no proof that God gives to all men sufficient grace for conversion, though not effectual, through their perverseness.

3. It does not appear from hence that God gave to all the men of Israel and Judah, grace sufficient for conversion; which is not a national, but a personal blessing; and it is evident, that

some among them had not restraining grace, no sense of sin in them, nor fear of God before their eyes; they drew iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope; they said, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it; they called evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness (vv. 18, 20). Nor was every man in Israel and Judah capable of judging whether God had given sufficient grace or no, to any, or all among them.

4. These words, What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done, in it; cannot be understood of God's having done all that was sufficient and necessary to the saving conversion of those who are designed by the vineyard; for a reply to the question, taken in this sense, might easily be made after this manner: that God could have made of this bad vine a good one, which was absolutely necessary to its bringing forth good grapes; he could by internal grace have effected the saving work of conversion; to which, external means, without it, were insufficient; he could have removed the veil from their understandings, and have taken away the stony heart, and given an heart of flesh; all which are requisite to the real work of conversion.

5. The similitudes in the parable only regard the external culture of the vineyard, and can only, at most, design the outward means of reformation, which these people enjoyed; such as the mission of the Lord's prophets to them, the ministry

of the word, admonitions, exhortations, reproofs, etc., when it might be expected that a people enjoying such privileges, would behave well in their moral conversation; and instead of being guilty of rapine, oppression, luxury, drunkenness, pride, and contempt of God himself, sins which they are in this chapter charged with; they would have done common justice between man and man, would have sought judgment, relieved the oppressed, judged the fatherless, and pleaded for the widow; all which they might have done, without supposing them to have grace sufficient to saving conversion, and though this might be withheld from them, and therefore it was not unreasonable in the Lord to expect good grapes of this kind from them, nor to complain of their wild grapes, nor to punish them for them.

6. If the parable is narrowly examined, it will be found, that the good things which God had done for his vineyard, the men of Israel and Judah, were of a civil nature, and which regarded their civil constitution and settlement as a body politic; such as the planting of it in a very fruitful hill, in the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; fencing it with good and wholesome laws, which distinguished and kept them separate from other nations, as well as with his almighty power and providence; especially at the three yearly festivals, when all their males appeared at Jerusalem; gathering out the stones, casting the heathen out, and driving Canaanites before them; planting it with the choicest vine, such having fallen in the wilderness who murmured and rebelled against God; building a tower in it, expressive of divine protection, and placing a

winepress, which may either mean plenty of temporal blessings, or the prophets, who were placed among them to stir up and exhort the people to a regard to the laws of God.

7. God's looking or expecting that this vineyard should bring forth grapes, is not to be taken properly but figuratively, after the manner of men; for, from such a well-formed government, from such an excellent constitution, from a people enjoying such advantages, might it not be reasonably expected that the fruits of common justice and equity would have appeared? might not judgment have been looked for instead of oppression, and righteousness instead of a cry? but alas! it proved just the reverse.

8. The interrogation ought not to be rendered as it is by our translators, What could have been done more to my vineyard? nor as Dr. Whitby reads it, What was there more to do for my vineyard? etc., but *ymrkl rws twselAhm* should be translated, What is to be done here, after to my vineyard? etc., and so designs not any thing past, but something to come; and is to be understood not of good things bestowed before, but of punishment hereafter to be inflicted, as evidently appears from the answer to it, (vv. 5, 6): —And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be eaten up, and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down, and I will lay it waste, etc., which was fulfilled in the destruction of the land by the Chaldeans, a punishment God never inflicted to that degree before on that people; and so the words have much the same

meaning with those in Matthew 21:40, 41: —When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen? they say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons; for the question must be of the same nature with the answer; and if it be so, the words are far enough from proving that grace sufficient for conversion is given to some who are not converted, or from contradicting the doctrine of unfrustrable grace in conversion.

Section 14—Isaiah 30:15.

For thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence we shalt be your strength; and ye would not.

These words are cited in favor of free-will, as proving that men's impotency to that which is good, is not owing to any disability by the fall of Adam, but to other causes acquired by, and not born with them; such as evil dispositions, customs, prejudices, hardness of heart, or blindness willfully contracted; and therefore irresistible and unfrustrable grace is not necessary to the conversion of a sinner; but of what service they are in this cause will be better understood when the following things are observed.

1. Admitting that the words regard the spiritual and eternal salvation of men, then they are expressive of the way and

manner in which God saves such who are saved. In returning and rest shall ye be saved, that is, by faith and repentance; repentance may be meant by returning, and faith by rest; or by returning and rest, may be designed returning to rest, that is, to Christ, who is the only rest to weary souls; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. Quietness may intend peace of conscience, and confidence assurance of faith, which make men strong Christians, though their strength does not barely lie in these graces, but in the object of them. Now faith and repentance are blessings of the covenant, gifts of God; the graces of the Spirit go together in the doctrine of salvation, and have a great concern in it; though they are not meritorious, procuring causes, nor conditions of it, yet in this way God brings his people to salvation; they enter into and are descriptive of the character of such that are saved; there is so close a connection between these and salvation, that none are saved without them.

2. If we take this to be the sense of the words, then the last clause, and ye would not, shows, that God's way of saving men through repentance and faith, by going to Christ alone for rest, by placing all confidence in, and deriving all peace and comfort from him, is disagreeable to unregenerate men; which is a proof of the wretched depravity, corruption, and perverseness of the will. Hence this scripture, viewed in this light, with Jeremiah 6:16, 17, and 13:11, 27, and 18:12, and 29:19, Ezekiel 20:8, Hosea 5:4, stand on record, as so many lasting reproaches to the will of man.

3. Let this depravity, corruption, perverseness, and obstinacy of the will, proceed from what cause soever, whether from any thing born with men, or acquired by them; such as evil dispositions, customs, prejudices hardness and blindness of heart; what else can conquer these evil dispositions, break such customs, destroy such prejudices, and remove this blindness and hardness of heart but the almighty power and efficacious grace of God? How necessary, therefore are irresistible and unfrustrable operations of the Spirit of God to the conversion of such sinners; when can it be reasonably expected they should be willing to be saved by Jehovah in his own way, but in the day of his power on their souls? who must work in them both to will and do of his good pleasure, if ever the perverseness of their wills is cured. But,

4. Though, no doubt, the depravity and stubbornness of the will is increased by prejudices, customs, etc., yet to what can its first taint be ascribed, or from whence had it its first blow, and received its original disability, at from the fall of Adam? Does not the Scripture, according to this doctrine, furnish us with the best account of the origin of moral evil? Does not the apostle (Eph. 2:8), attribute men's conversation in the lusts of the flesh, their fulfilling, taqelhmata thV sarkoV the wills of the flesh, and of the mind, to their being by nature children of wrath? Why is it the wicked will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely; but because they are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born speaking lies (Ps. 58:8). And what else can be the source and spring of such early practices in iniquity, but the corruption

of nature, owing to the fall of man, they bring into the world with them? Do we not read (Isa. 48:4, 8) of some whose neck was an iron sinew, and their brow brass; whose obstinacy, disobedience, and treacherous, dealing, are accounted for by their being called transgressors from the womb?

5. After all, the words are not to be understood of the spiritual and eternal salvation of men, but of the temporal safety and happiness of the people of Israel, had they acted according to the advice given them; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; that is, if ye return from the evil counsel which ye have taken, which is not of me, saith the Lord, verse 1, and rest quietly in your own land, and do not walk to go down into Egypt, nor seek to Pharaoh for help, verses 2, 3, ye shall be saved; you shall be in safety, no enemy shall break in upon you, or disturb you: in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; your strength is to sit still, verse 7, quietly to abide in Jerusalem, in your own cities, and trust in my power and protection, then ye need not fear any enemy; and ye would not; but ye said, for we will flee sws lꝝ, unto horses, to Egypt for horses, or upon horses, which we have had from thence; therefore shall flee; we will ride upon the swift; therefore they that pursue you shall be swift: meaning the Chaldeans; one thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one, at the rebuke of five shall ye flee, till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill. Now as this appears from the context to be the plain and genuine sense of the words, they can be of no use to prove what they are cited for, and ought to have no place in the controversy about free-will, and efficacious grace.

Section 15—Isaiah 55:1.

He, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

1. These words are no call, invitation, or offer of grace to dead sinners, since they are spoken to such who were thirsty, that is, who, in a spiritual sense, were thirsting after pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, and salvation by Christ; after a greater knowledge of him, communion with him, conformity to him, and enjoyment of him in his ordinances, which supposes them to be spiritually alive; for such who are dead in sin, thirst not after the grace of God, but the lusts of the flesh; they mind and savor the things of the flesh, and not the things of the Spirit; only new-born babes, or such who are born again, are quickened and made alive, desire Christ, his grace, and the sincere milk of the word, that their souls may grow thereby; besides, the persons called unto, are represented as having no money; which, though true of unconverted persons, who have nothing to pay off their debts, or purchase any thing for themselves; yet they fancy themselves to be rich, and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing; whereas the persons here encouraged are such, who not only have no money, but know they have none; who are poor in spirit, and sensible of their spiritual poverty; which sense arises from the quickening influences of the Spirit of God upon their souls; nor are Isaiah

1:18, 19, Luke 13:3, John 3:16, and 7:24, any offers, grace, as they are with this represented to be.

2. They do not express any power or ability in unconverted persons to come to Christ, seeing they are not directed to such, as is before observed; besides, neither Christ, nor the grace of Christ, are designed by the waters, but the ordinances; the allusion being, as is thought by some, to maritime places, or sea-ports, where ships of merchandise unload their traffic, and people resort to buy things necessary for them. Now where should hungry and thirsty souls, and such that have no money, attend, but on the ordinances, the means of grace? where they may expect to meet with Christ, and of his fullness receive, even grace for grace. Nor,

3. Do they declare any self-sufficiency in creatures to procure any thing for themselves by their works; for the things to be bought, wine and milk suitable to thirsty persons, signify either the doctrines of the gospel, or the blessings of grace, both which are freely given. Buying here is to be taken not in a proper sense, for no valuable consideration can be given to God for his grace; but in an improper one, the manner in which these things were to be bought, being without price; and besides, the persons who are called upon to buy, are said to have no money. This explanation of the words in the several parts of them, will help us to understand the advice and invitation given in other places; such as Revelation 3:18, and 22:17.

Section 16—Isaiah 55:6.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.

This passage of Scripture is no proof of a day of grace, which, if men improve, they may enjoy the favor of God; but if they let it slip, if it is once elapsed, there is no more opportunity of meeting with him.

1. They are an exhortation to public worship, signified by seeking the Lord and calling upon him; the time for which, with the Jews, was on the seventh day of the week, and with us Christians, on the first; these being times in which he might be found, it became the Jews of old, and us now, to attend public ordinances, in expectation of meeting with God; since he has promised his people to be in the midst of them, when they are met together.

2. The words may be so rendered, as that they may be understood of place as well as time; Seek ye the Lord, waxmhb, in his being found, call ye upon him, wtwyhb brq, in his being near; that is, in the place where he is to be found, and in the place where he is near. Now, though God is everywhere, and in all places, yet, in the Old Testament dispensation, there was a particular place for public worship appointed, where God vouchsafed his presence, and where it was both the duty and interest of his people to attend; and though under the gospel dispensation, all places are alike, yet where the saints agree to

meet together, there God has promised to be in the midst of them; and, therefore, there should he be sought and called upon.

3. The words may have a particular regard to Christ's being on earth in the land of Judea, seeing he is spoken of under the name of David (v. 3), and is promised to be given for a witness to the people, a leader, and commander of the people (v. 4), and it is prophesied of him, that there should be a large concourse of the Gentiles to him (v. 5), who are here encouraged, or rather the Jews, to seek unto him, and call upon him, while he was in their land, near unto them; when they had the advantage of his personal presence, ministry, and miracles.

Section 17—Isaiah 55:7.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

I. These words are represented as a promise of pardon, on condition of forsaking sinful ways and thoughts and turning to the Lord; which, if not in man's power to perform, is to promise on an impossible condition, and that is, indeed, to promise nothing. To which may be replied,

1. That forsaking sin, and turning to the Lord at first conversion, or returning to him after backslidings, which perhaps may be here meant, are not owing to the power of man,

but to the efficacious grace of God. None can truly forsake sin, or heartily turn to the Lord, but such who are influenced by the Spirit of God; hence says Ephraim, Turn thou me, and I shall be turned (Jer. 31:18).

2. That the promise of pardon is free, absolute, and unconditional, not depending on any condition whatever to be performed by men; forsaking sinful ways and thoughts, and returning to the Lord, are not here proposed as conditions of obtaining mercy, and receiving pardon; but the declarations of pardoning grace and mercy here made, are made on purpose to encourage souls sensible of the wickedness of their ways, and unrighteousness of their thoughts, to return to the Lord, who is a God of grace and mercy,

3. Though faith and repentance are not conditions of pardon, nor in the power of man, of himself, to perform; yet as pardon is promised to such who repent, believe, and turn to the Lord, so all such, to whom God makes the promise of pardon, he gives the graces of faith and repentance; hence his promise is not vain, empty, and delusory.

II. It is said, that "if conversion is wrought only by the unfrustrable operation of God, and man is purely passive in it, vain are the promises of pardon, such as this; for no promises can be means proper to make a dead man live, or to prevail upon a man to act, who must be purely passive." To which I answer,

1. That these words contain no promise to dead men, but a declaration of pardoning grace to sensible sinners; who were wicked and unrighteous in their own apprehensions, being represented as thirsty (v. 1), seeking after the way of life and salvation; though they took the wrong way, and had their thoughts wrongly turned to spend money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not, (v. 2), and therefore remained oppressed with a sense of sin; hence they are here encouraged to quit their own way of salvation, and all thoughts of their own righteousness, and alone to seek the Lord for mercy and pardon; since his thoughts were not as their thoughts, nor his ways as their ways.

2. Admitting them to be a promise of pardon made to dead men; it may be thought to be a proper and sufficient means in the hand of God, under the mighty influences of his Spirit and grace, to make dead men live; since the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, the ministration of life, yea, the savor of life unto life (Rom. 1:16; 2 Cor.2:16; 3:6); and especially when it is observed what is said in verses 10, 11. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud. that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, now at this present time delivered, in verses 7-9; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

3. Though man is passive in regeneration, yet he is active in forsaking sin and turning to the Lord. Promises of pardon may, through the grace of God, prevail on such to act in these instances, who have been passive in the work of regeneration; for regeneration antecedes these; forsaking sin, and turning to the Lord, follow upon, and rise from regenerating grace. No man can truly do these, until he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. It follows, then, that men may be prevailed upon, by the promises of pardon, to act, who have been passive in regeneration.

III. It is intimated, that such who are in the Calvinistical way of thinking, say, that God promises pardon and life to the non-elect, on condition of their faith and repentance: and it is asked, "How can a God of truth and sincerity be said to promise to them pardon and salvation, seriously and in good earnest, who are, by his own act of preterition, infallibly and unfrustrably excluded from it?" I answer,

1. Who the men are that say so, I do not know, and must leave them to defend their own positions, who only are accountable for the consequences of them; for my own part, I utterly deny that there is any promise of pardon made to the non-elect at all, not on any condition whatever. The promise of pardon is a promise of the covenant of grace, and which is made to none but to such who are in that covenant, in which the non-elect have no share; to

whom the blessing of pardon belongs, to them only is the promise of it made: the blessing of it only belongs to such for whom Christ died, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin; and these are the elect of God only: and though the gospel declaration of pardon is made in indefinite terms, to every one that believes; the reason is, because all those who are interested in the covenant of grace, and for whom Christ died, God does in his own time, give faith and repentance, and along with them forgiveness of sins.

2. This passage of Scripture now under consideration, is no promise of pardon to the non-elect; for the words wicked and unrighteous, are not peculiar to them; God's elect are so in their state of nature, and in their own sense and apprehension, when the Spirit of God convinces them. Besides, the persons spoken to, appear from the context, to be such towards whom God's thoughts had been from everlasting (vv. 8, 9); and who were to partake of the blessings of joy and peace for ever (vv. 12,13).

Section 18—Jeremiah 4:4.

Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; let my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it; because of the evil of your doings.

These words, with Deuteronomy 10:16, which express much the same thing, in almost the same words, are thought to disprove man's passiveness and the unfrustrable operation of

God in conversion; or that that is God's work alone; which, if true, it is said, vain are all such commands and exhortations as these: on which, let the following things be observed:

1. That it is questionable whether these figurative expressions are to be understood of internal conversion, or the first work of it on the soul; since they are directed to backsliding Israel and Judah; and may not rather design a national repentance and reformation of them, as God's professing people, that they might be saved with a temporal deliverance from temporal judgments; with which they are threatened throughout this chapter.

2. Admitting that they are to be understood of the internal, spiritual, and saving work of conversion; since he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God (Rom. 2:29): this sense of the word carries the things expressed by them still farther out of the power of man, and into the hands of God alone; seeing this is the circumcision made without hands (Col. 2:11), that is, without the power, help, and assistance of men. Circumcision of the flesh was typical of that of the spirit, and fitly expresses the passiveness of men in it; for as the infant was entirely passive and not active in circumcision, so is man in regeneration and first conversion; not to take any notice of, or insist upon the word *circumcidimini*, being of a passive form, and rendered by the Septuagint, *πεποιμησθητε* and by the Vulgate Latin, *circumcidimini*, be ye circumcised.

3. What God here requires, commands, and exhorts unto, he elsewhere promises to do himself, saying; The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live (Deut. 30:6); which at once discovers the inability of man, and the necessity of the grace of God; for if man could do this of himself, there would be no need of God's doing it for him: since this is the case, we may say, as Austin did, *Domine, da quod jubes, et jube quod vis*; Lord, give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt.

4. Such commands and exhortations are not in vain, supposing man's passiveness in this work of conversion, and the unfrustrable operation of God in it; seeing such exhortations may be useful to convince men of the corruption of their nature; the necessity of a spiritual circumcision, without which there can be no salvation; their own disability, and the need of the power and grace of God to effect it.

Section 19—Ezekiel 18:24.

But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

This scripture is placed at the front of those which are said "expressly to assert the possibility, that true believers, true penitents, men truly just and righteous, may fall from their righteousness, and die in their iniquity." But,

1. The man here spoken of, is not one truly just and righteous; seeing he is denominated righteous from his own righteousness in which he trusted, and from which he is supposed to turn. Now none are truly, and in an evangelic sense, righteous by their own righteousness; only such are, who are made so by the obedience of Christ; and these never can, nor shall they turn from this righteousness, which is the righteousness of God, an everlasting one, and is revealed from faith to faith; nor do they commit sin, that is, make a trade of sinning, live in a course of it; much less do they according to all the abominations of the wicked; nor can it be said of them, that their righteousness shall not be mentioned, since it endures for ever; and they, on the account of it, shall be in everlasting remembrance. Nor can they ever die, in the Arminian sense of the phrase here used; for they are justified by Christ's righteousness from all their sins, and therefore shall not die in them; they live by faith on it, and shall never die the second death; there is more virtue in the righteousness of Christ to justify them, than there is in all their sins to condemn them; their justification and glorification are inseparably connected together. Besides, such are the love, care, and power of God, which are engaged on their side, and exercised towards them, that it is impossible they should everlastingly perish. The man here designed, is one that is outwardly righteous before men; who imagines himself to be

so; trusteth to his own righteousness (Ezek. 33:13); concludes, that what he suffered was owing to his father's sin, and not any iniquity of his own; and therefore complains of injustice in God; whose folly, vain opinion of himself, and unrighteous notions of God's providence, are fully and justly exposed in this chapter. The righteousness from which he is denominated righteous, is his own, and not another's, and what he himself hath done, and not what Christ hath done for him: a mere moral, righteousness, consisting of some negative holiness, and a few external, moral performances, as appears from verses 5-9; from such a righteousness a man may turn, commit iniquity, sin and die; but then this is no proof or instance of the apostasy of the saints, of true believers, true penitents, men truly just and righteous. It is indeed said, "that the righteous man here spoken of, is one truly righteous; for he is one who sinneth not, committeth not iniquity, and turneth not away from his righteousness; one who walketh in God's statutes, and keeps his judgments, yea, who walketh in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; and therefore assuredly is one, who is truly and inwardly righteous, and not in outward profession only." To which I answer; the texts referred to in Ezekiel 33:12, 13, and 8:9, 17, 19, say not any one of these things concerning the righteous man; but on the contrary, suppose he may sin, commit iniquity, and turn from his righteousness; and indeed, there is not a just man, one that is truly so, that lives and sins not; nor is any man righteous in the sight of God by virtue of his inward holiness, or outward walk; besides, the same author contradicts himself in the next page,

when he says," the righteous man who turneth away from his righteousness, is one who committeth iniquity and doth according to all the abominations which the wicked man doth; and therefore must be one to whom belongs the portion of the wicked, which is death eternal." It is further objected from Dr. Prideaux, that "should he (the righteous man) only turn from his counterfeit and hypocritical righteousness, should he not rather live than die; inasmuch as he would put off the wolf, to put on the lamb?" which will be fully answered by observing the horrid blunder, and wretched mistake, that one doctor has made, and another by him is led into; for the turn is not from a counterfeit and hypocritical righteousness to a real one; but from a mere external moral righteousness, which had some appearance and degree of obedience in it, to an open, shameful, and abominable course of sinning; which is so far from putting off the wolf to put on the lamb, that it is just the very reverse; it is to put off the lamb or sheep's clothing, in which he appeared, to put on the wolf he really was; and consequently such an one should rather die than live.

2. The death threatened to the righteous man that turns from his righteousness, is not an eternal death, or the death of the soul and body in hell; since this death was then upon them, what they were complaining of, imagining it came upon them for the sins of their parents; and besides, they might have been recovered from it by repentance and reformation. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; wherefore turn

yourselves, and live ye (Ezek. 18:13); all which cannot be said of an eternal death; dying in his iniquity, is the same with dying for his iniquity, as it is rendered in verse 26, and designs some severe temporal calamity or affliction; which is often in Scripture called a death (Ex. 10:17, 2 Cor. 1:10; 11:23); such as captivity, in which the Jews then were, of which they were complaining, what was owing to their sins, and from which they were capable of being recovered. "This answer, it is said, contradicts the express words of the prophet about twenty times;" though not one single instance of it is given. Wherefore,

3. Admitting that the truly just and righteous man is here intended; it is no proof of a possibility of his turning away from his righteousness and sinning, so as to be finally lost and perish; only so as to be afflicted, or suffer in a general calamity; besides, the words are delivered in a conditional form, being to be read thus: If the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness. Now *suppositio nil ponet in esse*, a supposition puts nothing in being, is no proof or instance of matter of fact. But this is said to be "flying for refuge to a mere mistake; the words in the original being not *if*, but *beshub*, *en h an hmera epistreyh*, in the day that he turns away from his righteousness." To which I reply, that the word *bwvb beshub* may be rendered, *if he turns*; as it is by the Vulgate Latin and Pagnine here and by our translators in Ezekiel 33:19, agreeable to the like forms of expression in other places; as Psalm 46:2, *Therefore will not we fear xra rymtb*, though, or if the earth be removed, *syrh jwmbw*. and though, or if the mountains be

carried into the midst of the sea. Nor does the Greek version of the Septuagint read the words, *en h an hmera epistreyh*, in the day that he turns away; but *en de tw apostreyai*, in his turning, or when he turns. Add to this, that a conditional form is not only signified by *if*, but by *when*. And whereas it may be said, as it is, that such a form of words suppose something in possibility, though not in being, as it does in a wicked man's turning from his wickedness, opposed unto; it will be allowed that, there is a possibility of a truly righteous man's falling away, was he left to himself, and not kept by the power and grace of God; and therefore such a supposition as this may be designed for, and made use of, as a means to show him his weakness, make him cautious of his walk, and lead him wholly to rely and depend on superior help and assistance, and so consequently be the means of his final perseverance.

Section 20—Ezekiel 18:30.

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God: repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

These exhortations are represented as contrary to the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation, and of unfrustrable grace in conversion. The argument from them stands thus; "He who would have all men, to whom the gospel is vouchsafed, to come to repentance, hath not prepared this saving grace only

for some few Christians, leaving the rest under a necessity of perishing for the want of it; for to all such persons he hath promised, that they shall not perish." And elsewhere, it is said, that "such delude men with vain words, who teach, that a God of truth, and of sincerity, and of great goodness, should say to persons with such symptoms of passionate concern, Repent, and be converted from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin; when he himself had from eternity appointed them to ruin, and purposed to withhold from them that grace, without which it was impossible they should repent, or be converted;" and that, "if conversion be wrought only by the unfrustrable operation of God, and man is purely passive in it, vain are all such exhortations." To all which I reply,

1. That these exhortations are not made to all men, but only to the house of Israel; and therefore do not contradict the preparation of saving grace for some few only, as the Israelites were; nor do we say, that God has prepared saving grace only for some few Christians, but for all Christians; that is, all that are Christ's; nor are any of them left under a necessity of perishing for the want of it, since it is given to them, and they have it, as their character supposes: and whereas it is said, that to all such persons God has promised, that they shall not perish; it is readily granted, and by the way, is an acknowledgement, of the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance; which is elsewhere greatly objected to. Moreover, inasmuch as they were the house of Israel, and every one of them, that are here spoken to, they are the wrong persons pitched upon to contradict the decrees of election and

reprobation; for who will say of every one of them, that they were doomed to eternal death or appointed to everlasting ruin, who were chosen to be a peculiar people? It ought to be shown, if anything is done to purpose, that God has somewhere or other expressed himself in such language to all men, and particularly to such as shall not eventually be saved, as is here used to his professing people.

2. The repentance here exhorted to, is not to be understood of an evangelical one, which is a repentance unto life, and unto salvation; but of a national one, for national iniquities, and to prevent national judgments, with which they are here threatened; seeing it is the whole house of Israel, the whole nation, and every one of them, who are exhorted unto it. Now, though there can be no true evangelical repentance without the unfrustrable grace of God, yet there may be a national external repentance without it; as in the case of the Ninevites. Besides, was an evangelical repentance designed here, an exhortation to it being made to the people of God, as the house of Israel were, could only be to the exercise of it, the grace itself having been wrought in them by the power of God: or admitting that the words are spoken to such who had not the grace itself; such an exhortation might not be in vain, supposing the necessity of an unfrustrable operation; seeing it might be made use of to convince such of the necessity of repentance, and of their want of it; and so God may in this way bring his elect to it, according to his eternal purposes and designs. Moreover, turning from transgression, does not intend the first work of internal, saving conversion, which is wrought by the powerful and efficacious

grace of God and in which men are purely passive; but an external reformation, or a bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, in which persons may be, and are active; since it is not reasonable to suppose that the house of Israel, and every one of them, should be in an unconverted state. Besides, some give the sense of these words thus: not turn yourselves, but turn others, every man his neighbor, or his brother; so R. Sol. Jarchi, R. David Kimchi, R. Sol. Ben Melec, and some Christian interpreters.

3. The ruin the house of Israel was in danger of through iniquity, and which they might escape by repentance and reformation, was not eternal but temporal; so iniquity shall not be your ruin, *lwvkm* a stumbling-block to you; an hindrance, an obstruction, lying in the way of your enjoyment of temporal blessings; therefore, cast away from you all your transgressions. This sense of the words may be confirmed from the advantages proposed to such who turned from their sins and transgressions (vv. 27, 28), as that such an one should save his soul alive; not with an everlasting salvation, for no man can save his soul alive in that sense; but with a temporal one, as did the Ninevites, by their repentance and reformation: it is also said, that he shall surely live, not a spiritual and eternal life; for he is said (Ezek. 33:19.) to live by his doing that which is lawful and right; whereas, no man can live spiritually and eternally by so doing; but it intends a civil life, in the comfortable enjoyment of outward mercies. It is moreover added, he shall not die, which is to be understood not of an

eternal death, but of a temporal one, or of a death of afflictions, as has been observed under the preceding section.

Section 21 — Ezekiel 18:31&32.

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.

This passage of Scripture is frequently used by the patrons of free-will, and opposers of God's grace; in which they imagine the power of man in conversion is strongly asserted, and the doctrine of reprobation sufficiently disproved; but whether they are, or are not, we shall be better able to judge when, the following things are considered.

1. That the exhortation to cast away their transgressions from them, regards either their sins themselves, which they had committed, and shows, that they were not only unprofitable, but pernicious, and so to be disliked and abhorred, as such things are that are proper to be cast away; or else the punishment due to their sins, which they might have removed and cast off from them by their repentance and reformation, and is the sense Kimchi gives of the words; or rather those things, particularly their idols, by which then transgressed. Now let it be observed, that this phrase of casting away transgressions, is no where else used, is peculiar to Ezekiel, and

so may be best interpreted by Ezekiel 20:7, 8. Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, etc. Now these idols were the abominations of their eyes, were the cause of their transgressions, or that by which they transgressed, which their own hands had made unto them, for a sin (Isa. 31:7), and what they had power or were able to cast away from them; and no ways militates against the necessity of an unfrustrable operation in conversion.

2. The other exhortation, to make them a new heart and a new spirit, admitting that it designs a renewed, regenerated heart and spirit, in which are new principles of light, life, and love, grace, and holiness, it will not prove that it is in the power of an unregenerate man, to make himself such a heart and spirit; since from God's commands, to man's power, non valet consequentia, is no argument: God commands men to keep the whole law perfectly; it does not follow from hence that they can do it; his precepts show what man ought to do, not what he can do. Such an exhortation as this, to make a new heart, may be designed to convince men of their want of one, and of the importance of it, that without it is no salvation; and so be the means, through the efficacious grace of God, of his elect enjoying this blessing; for what he here exhorts to, he has absolutely promised in the new covenant (Ezek. 34:26); A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. Though it ought to be observed, that these words are not spoken to unconverted persons, but to the house of Israel, every one of them; who cannot be thought, especially all of them, to have been at that time in an unregenerate state; and therefore

must not be understood of the first work of renovation, but of some after renewings, which were to appear in their external conversation; and so the words have the same sense as those of the apostle Paul to the believing Ephesians (Eph. 4:23, 24). Be ye renewed in the spirit of your minds; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Moreover, by a new heart, and a new spirit, may be meant, as the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel renders them, *aljd hwrw lytd bl*, a fearing heart, and a spirit of fear, that is, a heart and spirit, to fear, serve, and worship the Lord, and not idols. And it is observable, that wherever a new heart and spirit are spoken of, they stand opposed to idols, and the service of them; so that the exhortation amounts to no more than this, that they yield a hearty reverential obedience to the living God, and not to dumb idols. Besides, what is here called a new heart, is, in Ezekiel 11:9, called one heart, that is, a single heart, in opposition to a double or hypocritical, one; and so may design sincerity and uprightness in their national repentance and external reformation, which they are here pressed unto.

3. The expostulation, *Why will ye die?* is not made with all men; nor can it be proved that it was made with any who were not eventually saved, but with the house of Israel, who were called the children and people of God; and therefore cannot disprove any act of preterition passing on others, nor be an impeachment of the truth and sincerity of God. Besides, the death expostulated about, is not an eternal, but a temporal one, or what concerned their temporal affairs, and civil condition, and circumstances of life; see Ezekiel 33:24 to 29. Hence,

4. The affirmation, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, which is sometimes introduced, with an oath, (Ezek. 33:11) as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, does not in the least militate against an act of preterition; whereby any are left by God justly to perish in and for their iniquities; or the decree of reprobation, whereby any, on the score of their transgressions, are appointed, or foreordained to condemnation and death; and therefore all the reasonings made use of to disprove these things, founded on this passage of Scripture, are vain and impertinent; for a death of afflictions is here intended, as has been already observed, which the house of Israel was groaning under, and complaining of; though it was wholly owing to themselves, and which was not grateful to God, and in which he took no pleasure: which is to be understood, not simply and absolutely, and with respect to all persons afflicted by him; for he delights in the exercise of judgment and righteousness, as well as in showing mercy, and laughs at the calamity of wicked men, and mocks when their fear cometh; (Jer. 9:24; Prov. 1:26) but it is to be taken comparatively; as when he says (Hosea 5:6.) I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; that is, I take delight in mercy rather than in sacrifice; so here, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth: in his afflictions, distresses, calamities, captivity, and the like; but rather, that he would return from his ways, repent and reform, and live in his own land; which shows the mercy and compassion of God (Lam. 3:33) who does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Wherefore he renews his exhortation, Turn yourselves, and live ye. The sum of all this is,

you have no reason to say, as in verse 2, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge; or as in verse 25, that the way of the Lord is not equal; seeing it is not for the sins of your parents, but your own, that the present calamities you are complaining of lie upon you; for my part, I take no delight in your death, in your captivity; it would be more agreeable to me, would you turn from your evil ways, to the Lord your God, and behave according to the laws I have given you to walk by, and so live in your own land, in the quiet possession of all your goods and estates. But what has this to do with the affairs of eternal life, or eternal death?

Section 22—Ezekiel 24:13.

Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shall not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.

These words are represented as irreconcilable with God's decrees of election and reprobation as inconsistent with the doctrine of particular redemption, and in favor of sufficient grace given to all men. But,

1. The words are not spoken to all men, nor do they declare what God hath done for, or what he would have done by all men; but are directed only to Jerusalem, or the house of Israel, whose destruction is here represented under the parable of a boiling pot; and do not discover any design of God, or steps that he has taken towards the purgation of all mankind, and

therefore no ways militate against the decrees of election and reprobation.

2. This purgation of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants thereof, is to be understood either of ceremonial purifications, or of an external reformation of life and manners, and not of an internal cleansing of them, much less of all men, from sin, by the blood of Jesus; and so is no ways inconsistent with the doctrine of particular redemption.

3. These words do not express what God had done, and was not done; which is a contradiction in terms; nor what he had done sufficient for their purgation, but was obstructed by their obstinacy; or that he would have purged them, and they would not be purged; for our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased (Ps. 115:3), but what he commanded to be done, and was not done; for so the words should be rendered; as they are by Pagnine, *Jussi ut mundares to, et non mundasti to*, I commanded that thou shouldst purge thyself, and thou hast not purged thyself; to which, agrees the note of Junius on the text. *Verbo praecepi to mundari et toties et tamdiu per prophetas imperavi*, I have in my word, and by my prophets, so often and so long commanded thee to be purged. The sense of them is, that God had commanded either ceremonial ablutions and purifications, or a moral, external reformation, and they had not obeyed; and therefore threatens to leave them in their filthiness, and pour out all his fury on them; and so are no proof of God's giving sufficient grace, or sufficient means of grace to all men. The text in Jeremiah 2:9,

We told have healed Babylon, but she is not healed, is very improperly joined with this, since they are not the words of God, expressing any kind intentions, or sufficient means of healing, which were obstructed, as through mistake, they are represented by a learned writer; but of the Israelites, or others, who were concerned for the temporal welfare of Babylon, though in vain, and to no purpose.

Section 23—Matthew 5:13.

Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shalt it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

This is one of the places which, it is said, "do plainly suppose that saints, or true believers, or men once truly good, may cease to be so; for sure, good salt must signify good men; nor can this salt lose its savor, and become good for nothing, but by ceasing to be good salt." To which I reply,

1. That the text speaks not of men as saints or true believers, comparable to salt, for the truth and savor of the grace of God in them: but as ministers and preachers of the Gospel, who, by their savory doctrines and conversations are the salt of the earth, the means of purifying and preserving the world from corruption. Now some men may be good preachers, and so good salt, and yet not be good men, or true believers; and therefore, when any of these drop the savory truths of the word,

and fall off from the seeming conversation they have maintained, they are no proofs nor instances of the final and total apostasy of real saints. If it should be said, that those who are here called the salt of the earth, were the disciples of Christ, and therefore good men, as well as good preachers; it may be replied, that there were many who were called the disciples of Christ, besides the apostles; and some there were who, in process of time, drew back from him (John 6:66), and walked no more with him. But allowing the twelve apostles are particularly designed, there was a Judas among them, whom Christ might have a special eye to; for he knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him (John 6:64, 70); that one of those whom he had chosen was a devil; that he would lose his usefulness and his place; that he would be an unprofitable wretch; and, at last, be rejected and despised of men. Admitting further, that the true and sincere apostle of Christ are here intended; yet this of losing their savor is only a supposition, which nil ponit in esse, puts nothing in being, proves no matter of fact, and may be only designed as a caution to them, to take heed to themselves, their doctrines, and ministry, to which they are advised in many other places; see Matthew 16:6, 12, and 24:4, 5; Luke 21:34-36; though there was no possibility of their final and total falling away

2. The savor here supposed, that it may be lost, cannot mean the savor of true grace, or true grace itself, which cannot be lost, being, an incorruptible seed; but either gifts, qualifying men to be good and useful preachers, which gifts may cease; or

the savory doctrines of the gospel men may depart from; or their seeming savory conversations they may put away; or that seeming savor, zeal, and affection, with which they have preached, and which may be dropped; or their whole usefulness, which they may lose; for all these things men may have and lose, who never really and truly tasted that the Lord is gracious: and, generally speaking, when such men lose their usefulness, it is never more retrieved; they become and remain unprofitable, are despised and trodden under foot of men: but these instances are no proofs that saints, or true believers, or men once truly good, may cease to do so. The similitude in which our Lord saith, that a piece of new cloth is not to be put to an old garment:, lest the rent be made worse; nor new wine into old bottles, lest the bottles burst (Matthew 9:16, 17); no more plainly supposes this, than the former metaphor of salt: for be it that the design of this to show, that Christ's "young disciples must not presently be put upon severe duties, lest they should be discouraged and fall off from him." It shows indeed their weakness and danger of falling, and yet, at the same time, the care and concern of Christ in the preservation of them; and therefore ought not to be improved into an argument against their final perseverance: though the plain design of the similitude seems, from the context, to be this, that it would be equally as absurd for the disciples to fast and be sad, while Christ, the bridegroom, was with them, as it would be to put new cloth into an old garment, or new wine into old bottles.

Nor does the commination against them, who shall offend one of Christ's little ones believing in him, viz. that it were better

for him that a mill-stone was hanged about his neck, and he cast into the midst of the sea (Matthew 18:6), plainly suppose that saints, or true believers, may cease to be so; for the word skandalizein, here used, does not signify an offending of them, so as to be the occasion of their falling off from the faith to their eternal ruin, but stands opposed, to receiving of them, in verse 5 and is explained by despising them, in verse 10, and at most, can only mean the laying of an offense, scandal, or stumbling-block in their way; which might be of bad consequence, considering their weakness and the wickedness of men, were it not for the care, power, and grace of God, which are concerned for them: and since the angels, who are their guardians on earth, always behold the face of Christ's Father in heaven, verse 10; and seeing the Son of man, who also is the Son of God, is come to save such lost ones, verse 11, and especially since it is not the will of our Father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish, verse 14. It is not false but true, that they who do truly believe in Christ, are of the number of those whom God would not have to perish, cannot be so offended as to fall off from the faith to their ruin: nor do the pathetic discourses, and dreadful woes and punishments denounced, imply the contrary; seeing they are used to show the care of God over his people, and the natural tendency to ruin such offenses might have, was it not prevented by his power; and consequently their attempts that way are not less sinful and criminal. As for Romans 14:20; 1 Corinthians 8:9, 11; Psalms 125:3; which are urged to the same purpose; see in sections 8, 36, and 37.

Section 24—Matthew 11:21, 23.

Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

These words are frequently insisted on as proving man's ability to repent, believe, and convert himself; and that unfrustrable and irresistible grace is not necessary to these things; and that faith, repentance, and conversion, are not produced by it. But,

1. Here is no mention made of faith and conversion, only of repentance; and that not spiritual and evangelical, but external and legal; such as was performed in sackcloth and ashes, and by virtue of which Sodom might have remained unto this day; for though a repentance is not unto eternal salvation, yet it is often attended with temporal blessings, and is the means of averting temporal judgments, as in the case of the Ninevites, and may be where the true grace of God is not; with the want of this Christ might, as he justly does, upbraid the cities where his mighty works had been done, and the Jews, in Matthew 12:41, and 21:31, 42, which might have been performed by them, though they had no power to repent in a spiritual and

evangelical sense, to which more is required than the bare performance of miracles. See Luke 16:31.

2. These words are to be understood, as Grotius observes, in a popular sense, and express what was probable, according to a human judgment of things; and the meaning is, that if the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, had had the advantages of Christ's ministry, and of seeing his miracles, as the inhabitants of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum had, it looks very likely, or one would be ready to conclude, they would have repented of their flagitious crimes, which brought down the judgments of God upon them in such a remarkable manner; as these ought to have done, particularly of their sin of rejecting the Messiah, notwithstanding all the evidence of miracles, and convictions of their own consciences, and so probably sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost. And therefore,

3. The words are an hyperbolical exaggeration of their wickedness, such as those in Ezekiel 3:5-7, showing that they were worse than the Tyrians and Sidonians, who lived most profligate and dissolute lives; than the inhabitants of Sodom, so infamous for their unnatural lusts; yea, than any others, if there were any worse than these under the heavens; and therefore would be punished with the worst of punishments, verses 22, 24. In much the same way are we to understand, Matthew 12:14, and 21:31, 32, where Christ upbraids the Jews with the want even of an external repentance for their sin of rejecting him, though they had such a full proof and demonstration of his being the Messiah; and therefore were

worse than the men of Nineveh, who repented externally at the preaching of Jonah; yea, worse, notwithstanding all their pretended sanctity and righteousness, than the publicans and harlots, who went into the kingdom of God, attended on the outward ministry of the word, believed John the Baptist, and gave at least an assent to what he said concerning the Messiah as true.

4. These words can be no proof of God's giving sufficient grace equally to all men, which is in some effectual to conversion, and in others not; seeing the men of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, had not the same advantages and means, or the same grace, as the inhabitants of these cities had, if the mighty works done among them are to be called so. Besides, where persons have the same external means of grace, and the same outward advantages, and one truly repents, believes, and is converted, and another not; this is owing not to the will of man, but the sovereign grace of God, as appears from verses 25, 26: —At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Section 25—Matthew 23:37.

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 as a hen gathereth her chicken under her wings, and ye would not!

Nothing is more common in the mouths and writings of the Arminians than this Scripture, which they are ready to produce on every occasion against the doctrines of election and reprobation, particular redemption, and the irresistible power of God in conversion, and in favor of sufficient grace, and of the free-will and power of man, though to very little purpose, as will appear when the following things are observed.

1. That by Jerusalem we are not to understand the city, nor all the inhabitants; but the rulers and governors of it, both civil and ecclesiastical, especially the great Sanhedrim, which was held in it, to whom best belong descriptive characters of killing the prophets and stoning such as were sent to them by God, and who are manifestly distinguished from their children; it being usual to call such who were the heads of the people, either in a civil or ecclesiastical sense, fathers, Acts 7:2, and 22:1, and such who were subjects and disciples, children, 19:44, Matthew 12:27, Isaiah 8:16, 18. Besides, our Lord's discourse, throughout the whole context, is directed to the scribes and Pharisees, the ecclesiastical guides of the people, and to whom the civil governors paid a special regard. Hence it is manifest, that they are not the same persons whom Christ would have gathered, who would not. It is not said, how often would I have gathered you, and you would not, as Dr. Whitby more than once inadvertently cites the text; nor, he would have gathered Jerusalem, and she would not, as the same author transcribes it in another place; nor, he would have gathered them, thy children, and they would not, in which form it is also sometimes expressed by him; but I would have gathered thy

children, and ye would not, which observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage in favor of free-will.

2. That the gathering here spoken of does not design a gathering of the Jews to Christ internally, by the Spirit and grace of God; but a gathering of them to him internally, by and under the ministry of the word, to hear him preach; so as that they might be brought to a conviction of and an assent unto him, as the Messiah; which, though it might have fallen short of saving faith in him, would have been sufficient to have preserved them from temporal ruin, threatened to their city and temple in the following verse—Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: which preservation is signified by the hen gathering her chickens under her wings, and shows that the text has no concern with the controversy about the manner of the operation of God's is grace in conversion; for all those whom Christ would gather in this sense were gathered, notwithstanding all the opposition made by the rulers of the people.

3. That the will of Christ to gather these persons is not to be understood of his divine will, or of his will as God; for who hath resisted his will? This cannot be hindered nor made void; he hath done whatsoever he pleased, but of his human will, or of his will as man; which though not contrary to the divine will but subordinate to it, yet not always the same with it, nor always fulfilled. He speaks here as a man and minister of the circumcision, and expresses a human affection for the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, and a human wish or will for their temporal good, instances of which human affection and will may be observed in Mark 10:21, Luke 19:41, and 22:42. Besides, this will of gathering the Jews to him was in him, and expressed by him at certain several times, by intervals, and therefore he says, How often would I have gathered, etc. Whereas the divine will is one continued invariable and unchangeable will, is always the same, and never begins or ceases to be and to which such an expression as this is inapplicable; and therefore this passage of Scripture does not contradict the absolute and sovereign will of God in the distinguishing acts of it, respecting election and reprobation.

4. That the persons whom Christ would have gathered are not represented as being unwilling to be gathered; but their rulers were not willing that they should. The opposition and resistance to the will of Christ. were not made by the people, but by their governors. The common people seemed inclined to attend the ministry of Christ, as appears from the vast crowds which, at different times and places, followed him; but the chief priests and rulers did all they could to hinder the collection of them to him; and their belief in him as the Messiah, by traducing his character, miracles, and doctrines, and by passing an act that whosoever confessed him should be put out of the synagogue; so that the obvious meaning of the text is the same with that of verse 13, where our Lord says, Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in;

and consequently is no proof of men's resisting the operations of the Spirit and grace of God, but of obstructions and discouragements thrown in the way of attendance on the external ministry of the word.

5. That in order to set aside and overthrow the doctrines of election, reprobation, and particular redemption, it should be proved that Christ, as God, would have gathered, not Jerusalem and the inhabitants thereof only, but all mankind, even such as are not eventually saved, and that in a spiritual saving way and manner to himself, of which there is not the least intimation in this text; and order to establish the resistibility of God's grace, by the perverse will of man, so as to become of no effect, it should be proved that Christ would have savingly converted these persons, and they would not be converted; and that he bestowed the same grace upon them he does bestow on others who are converted; whereas the sum of this passage lies in these few words, that Christ, as man, out of a compassionate regard for the people of the Jews, to whom he was sent, would have gathered them together under his ministry, and have instructed them in the knowledge of himself as the Messiah; which, if they had only notionally received, would have secured them as chickens under the hen from impending judgments which afterwards fell upon them; but their governors, and not they, would not, that is, would not suffer them to be collected together in such a manner, and hindered all they could, their giving any credit to him as the Messiah; though had it been said and they would not, it would only have

been a most sad instance of the perverseness of the will of man, which often opposes his temporal as well as his spiritual good.

Section 26—Matthew 25:14-30.

The parable of the talents.

I. It is not to be concluded from this parable that sufficient grace is given to all men, by which they may be saved if they will. For,

1. All men are not designed by the servants to whom the talents were committed; these are not all Christ's servants, nor so called; much less with an emphasis his own servants. No more can be included under this character here than belong to the kingdom of heaven, the visible gospel church-state, the subject of this parable, which does not consist of all mankind; yea, even all the elect of God are not intended; for though they are the servants of Christ, and his own servants, whom the Father has given him, and he has purchased, by his blood, and subjects to himself by his grace, yet all that come under this character here, were not such; for one of them is represented as a wicked and slothful servant, and to be justly cast into outer darkness; but the servants of the man travelling into a far country, meaning Christ, are the ministers of the gospel, who are, in a peculiar sense, the servants of Christ; and who, whether faithful or slothful, are in a lively manner described in this parable, which is a distinct parable from that which is delivered in the preceding part of this chapter; for as that gives an account of

the several and different members of the visible church, so this of the several and different ministers in it; and being spoken to the disciples, was an instruction, direction, and caution to them, and not only to them, but is so to all the ministers of the word in succeeding ages.

2. Sufficient grace is not intended by the talents, but gifts; and these not merely the gifts of natural and acquired knowledge, of wealth, riches, and honor, of the external ministry of the word, gospel ordinances, and opportunities of enjoying them; but spiritual gifts, or such as fit and qualify men to be preachers of the gospel, as appears from the name, talents, these being the greatest gifts for usefulness and service in the church, as they were the greatest of weights and coins among the Jews; from the nature of them being such as may be improved or lost, and for which men are accountable; from the persons to whom they were delivered, the servants of Christ; from the time of the delivery of them, when Christ went into a far country, into heaven, when he ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gave them to men; and from the unequal distribution of them, being given to some more, and to others less; all which perfectly agree with ministerial gifts. Now these may be where grace is not; and if they are to be called grace because freely given, yet they are not given to all men, and much less unto salvation, for men may have these and be damned. See Matthew 7:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 13:1, 2. And therefore,

II. It is not to be established from hence that a man has a power to improve the stock of sufficient grace given him, and by his

improvement, procure eternal happiness to himself; since such a stock of grace is not designed by the talents, nor is it either implanted or improved by man; nor does the parable suggest that men, by their improvement of the talents committed to them, do or can procure eternal happiness. Good and faithful servants are indeed commended by Christ, and he graciously promises great things to them, which are not proportioned to their deserts; for whereas they have been faithful over a few things, he promises to make them rulers over many things, and bids them enter into the joy of their Lord; into the joy which he of his grace and goodness had provided for them, and not which they had merited and procured for themselves.

III. It is not to be inferred from hence that true grace once given or implanted may be taken away or lost; for the parable speaks not of what is wrought and implanted in men, but of goods and talents, meaning gifts, bestowed on them, committed to their trust, and received by them; which may be lost, or taken, away, or be wrapped up in a napkin, and lie useless by them; when true grace is the incorruptible seed which never dies, but always remains that good part which will never be taken away nor lost, but is inseparably connected with eternal glory.

Section 27—Luke 19:41, 42.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy

day, the things which belong unto thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes

These words are often made use of to disprove any decree of reprobation in God, Christ's dying intentionally, for some only, the disability of man, and in favor of a day of grace. But,

1. It should be observed that they are not spoken of all mankind, only to Jerusalem and its inhabitants, and regard not their spiritual and eternal salvation, but their temporal peace and prosperity; and therefore ought not to have a place in our controversies about these things. That the words relate only to Jerusalem and the inhabitants thereof, will not be disputed; and that they design their temporal prosperity, which Christ was concerned for, and was almost at an end, appears from the following verses, 43, 44, For the days shall come upon thee, etc. Add to this, this one observation more, that Christ here speaks as a man, expressing his human affection for the present temporal good of this city, as is evident from his weeping over it on his near approach to it. Hence,

2. There is no foundation in this text for such an argument as this: "Christ here taketh it for granted that the people of Jerusalem, in the day of their visitation by the Messiah, might savingly have known the things belonging to their peace. Now, either this assertion, that they might savingly have known these things, was according to truth; or his wish, that they had thus known the things belonging to their peace, was contrary to his Father's will and decree; which is palpably absurd. And seeing

the will of Christ was always the same with that of his Father, it follows also that God the Father had the same charitable affection to them; and so had laid no bar against their happiness by his decrees, nor withheld from them any thing on his part necessary to their everlasting welfare." But it was not their everlasting welfare, or that they might savingly know the things which belong to eternal peace, but their outward prosperity, which he as a man, and one of their own nation, was concerned for; and such a human compassionate regard for them he might have and show, notwithstanding any decree of his Father's, respecting the, eternal state of some or all of these people, or any other part of mankind. It does not follow that, because Christ as a man had a charitable affection for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, God the Father bore an everlasting love to them; or, because he showed a goodwill to their temporal welfare, that the Father had at heart their eternal salvation. Christ's human affections and will were not always the same with his Father's: he beheld the young man mentioned by the evangelist (Mark 10:21), and he loved him, as man; but it does not follow from hence that God the Father loved him, and gave him or did every thing necessary to his everlasting welfare. The sufferings and death of Christ were absolutely and peremptorily decreed by God, and yet Christ as man desired that, if it was possible, the cup might pass from him; and so he might wish as man for the temporal happiness of this city, though he knew that the desolations determined would be poured upon the, desolate (Dan. 9:26, 27), both in a temporal spiritual sense; and yet his tears over them are tears of charity and true compassion, and

not crocodile's tears, as they are impiously called, on a supposition of God's decree of reprobation, or act of preterition. Hence,

3. We shall not meet with so much difficulty to reconcile these words to the doctrine of particular redemption, as is suggested, when it is said, "You may as well hope to reconcile light and darkness, as these words of Christ with his intention to die only for them who should actually be saved;" unless it can be thought irreconcilable, and what implies a contradiction, that Christ as man should wish temporal good to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and yet not intentionally die for all mankind: should he intentionally die for them who are not actually saved, his intentions would be so far frustrated, and his death be in vain.

4. It does follow from hence that, because these people might have known the things which belonged to their temporal peace, though they were now in a judicial way hid from their eyes, therefore men may of themselves, and without the powerful and unfrustrable grace of God working upon their hearts, and enlightening their understandings, know the things that belong to their spiritual and eternal peace, seeing it is slid of natural men, the way of peace they have not known (Rom. 3:17); and could these words be understood of the things belonging to spiritual and eternal peace, they would only prove that these Jews had the means of the knowledge of them, which they despising, God had given them up to blindness of heart; and so Christ's words are to be considered not so much as pitying them, but as upbraiding them with their ignorance, unbelief,

neglect, and contempt of him, his miracles, and doctrines; therefore God was just:, and they inexcusable.

5. The time in which Christ was on earth was a day the light, of great mercies and favors, to the Jews; but it does not follow that, because they had such a time, therefore all men have a day of grace, in which they may be saved if they will. Besides, the phrase this thy day may respect the time of her (Jerusalem's) visitation (v. 44), which was a day of vengeance, and not of grace, that was hastening on, and near at hand, though hid from her, and was the occasion of Christ's compassionate tears and wishes.

Section 28—John 1:7.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.

A considerable argument in favor of the extent of Christ's death to all men is thought to arise from the obligation which is, and always was, upon all persons to whom the Gospel is or was revealed, to believe in Christ, that he came to save them, and died for them; for if he died not for them, they are bound to believe a lie; and if condemned for not believing, they are condemned for not believing an untruth. I observe,

1. That the argument is most miserably lame and deficient. The thing to be proved is, that Christ died for every individual man

and woman that have been, are, or shall be in the world. The medium by which this is attempted to be proved is, the obligation that lies on such to whom the Gospel is revealed, to believe that Christ died for them; and the conclusion is, that therefore Christ died for all men. Now the Gospel has not been nor is it revealed to all men, only to some; wherefore was there any truth in the medium, the conclusion would not follow. The argument stands thus: all men to whom the Gospel is revealed are bound to believe that Christ died for them; some men have the Gospel revealed to them, therefore Christ died for all men. The weakness and fallacy of such an argument must be seen by every one; a most miserable argument this, which proceeds upon a partial revelation of the Gospel to an universal redemption. I observe,

2. That the obligation to believe in Christ, and so the faith to which men are obliged are in proportion, and according to the nature of the revelation of the Gospel, which obliges them Now the Gospel revelation is either external or internal: the external revelation is by the word, and the ministry of it; which respecting Christ, lies in these things, that he is really and properly God, and truly man; that he is the Son of God, and the Mediator between God and men; that he is the Messiah, who is actually come in the flesh; that he died and rose again the third day; is ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, and will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness; and that by his obedience, sufferings, and death, he is become the Savior of sinners, and that none can be saved but by him. Now let it be observed, that this revelation is

general and not particular, and does not necessarily oblige persons to whom it comes to believe that Christ is their Redeemer and Savior, and that he died for them particularly, though the Spirit of God may and does bless it to many for the begetting special faith; and it may and does lay a general foundation for special and appropriating acts of that grace, yet it only requires an historical faith, or bare assent to the truth of the said propositions. Now such a faith is not saving; men may have this, and yet be damned; yea, the devils themselves have it. It follows that men may be obliged to believe, and yet not to the saving of their souls, or that Christ died for them. Besides, this revelation is not made to all men; and therefore all men, such as Indians, and others, are not obliged to believe in Christ, nor even to give a bare assent to the truth of the above said things, much less to believe that Christ died for them; and indeed, How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14). And perhaps all are not obliged to believe who live in a land where this revelation does come; as those who have not their natural reason and hearing, or the due and proper use and exercise of the same, such as infants, idiots, madmen, and those who are entirely deaf; only such to whom this revelation is made, and are capable of hearing and understanding it, are obliged to have faith in Christ by it, as were the Jews of old, who were condemned for their unbelief, not because they did not believe that Christ died for them, to which they were not obliged, but because they did not believe him to be God, the Son of God, the true Messiah, and Savior of sinners. The

internal revelation of the Gospel, and of Christ through it, is by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; whereby a soul is made sensible of its lost state and condition, and of its need of a Savior; is made acquainted with Christ as the alone Savior, both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; whence it is encouraged to venture on him, rely upon him, and believe in him to the saving of it: now such an one ought to believe, and none but such, that Christ died for them. This faith all men have not; it is the faith of God's elect, the gift of God, the operation of his Spirit, and the produce of almighty power.

Now, according to the revelation is the faith men are obliged to, and what is produced by it: if the revelation is external, or the Gospel comes in word only, the faith men are obliged to is only an historical one, nor can any other follow upon it; and that Christ died for every individual man is no part of the revelation. If the revelation is internal, a special spiritual appropriating faith is the result of it; but then this revelation is not made to all men, nor are God's elect themselves, before conversion, bound to believe that Christ died for them; and when they are converted, to believe that Christ died for them is not the first act of special faith; it is the plerophory, the full assurance of faith, to say, He hath loved me, and hath given himself for me (Gal. 2:20). Hence,

3. Since there is not a revelation of the Gospel made to all men, and all men are not bound to believe in Christ, much less to believe that Christ died for them; it follows that no such

absurdity can attend the denial of universal redemption, that some more are bound to believe a lie; nor will it be the condemnation of the heathens that they believe not in Christ, but that they have sinned against the light, and broken the law of nature; nor will any persons enjoying a revelation be condemned for not believing that Christ died for them, but for the breach of God's laws, and neglect and contempt of his Gospel; nor is there any danger of any one believing a lie, since all those who believe in Christ, and that he died shall certainly be saved, which is the fullest proof that can be of his dying for them. Christ dying for an unbelieving Christian, and a Christian being under a condemnatory decree, are unintelligible phrases, mere paradoxes, and contradictions in terms.

4. John the Baptist's bearing witness of Christ, the light, and true Messiah, that all men through him might believe, respects not all the individuals of human nature, since millions were dead before he began his testimony, and multitudes since, whom it never reached; nor can it design more than the Jews, to whom alone he bore witness of Christ; the faith which he taught, and required by his testimony, was not to believe that Christ died for them, who as yet was not dead, but an assent unto him as the Messiah. This was the work, will, and command of God, that they should believe on him, in this sense, whom he had sent. This is what Christ often called for from them, declaring, that if they believed not that he was the Messiah, they should die in their sins; and this was what the Spirit of God reprov'd the world of the Jews for, by bringing down the wrath of God in temporal ruin and destruction, upon

their persons, nation, city, and temple. Since then this text, with multitudes of others, which speak of believing in Christ, only regards the people of the Jews, and designs only a bare assent to him as the Messiah, which would have preserved that people and nation from temporal ruin; it does not follow that all men are bound to believe in Christ, that he died for them, and consequently can be of no service to the doctrine of universal redemption.

Section 29—John 5:34.

But these things I say, that ye might be saved.

This passage of Scripture is often produced as proof of Christ's serious intention to save some who are not saved, to whom he gave sufficient means of salvation, which they refused; and consequently that his Father had made no decree, whereby they stood excluded from salvation; that he did not die intentionally only for such who are actually saved, and that the work of conversion is not wrought by an irresistible and insuperable power. To which I reply,

1. It is certain that the Jews, to whom Christ here speaks, had not, means sufficient to salvation; for though the testimonies of his Father, of John the Baptist, and of his own works and miracles, which he produced, were proper means to induce them to believe that he was the Messiah, yet not means sufficient to salvation; for to salvation, an internal work of grace, the regeneration of the Spirit, are absolutely requisite

and necessary; without which no man can be saved. Now it is evident, that they wanted these, since they had not the love of God in them (v. 42); nor his word abiding in them (v. 38); nor so much as the knowledge of Christ's divinity, or of his being the true Messiah (v. 18).

2. It is taken for granted, that these words regard a spiritual and eternal salvation; whereas they may very well be understood of a temporal one; and the sense of them be this; these things I say, that is, these testimonies of my Father, and of John, I produce, not so much for my own honor and glory, as for your good; that ye, through these testimonies of me, may believe that I am the true Messiah, and so be saved from the temporal run and destruction, which will otherwise come upon you and your nation, for your disbelief, neglect, and contempt of me. But,

3. Admitting that Christ spoke these words with a view to the spiritual and eternal salvation of his audience; it should be observed, that he is here to be considered as a preacher, a minister of the circumcision, sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for whose welfare he had a compassionate regard and concern; and therefore published the things concerning his person, office, and grace, indefinitely to them all, that he might gain some, not knowing as man, though he did as God, who were chosen, and who were not; which consideration of him is neither injurious to God nor to him.

4. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to prove, that the persons to whom Christ spoke these words, were not eternally saved; though at the present time they were unbelievers, and destitute of the grace of God, yet might hereafter be converted and enabled to go to Christ, for life and salvation; or at least, there might be some among them who were the elect of God, and sheep of Christ; for whose sake Christ might express himself in this manner, in order to bring them to the knowledge of him, and salvation by him; and therefore do not militate either against; any decree or act of preterition passed by God, respecting any part of mankind, or the doctrines of particular redemption and unfrustrable grace in conversion.

Section 30—John 5:40.

And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

These words are usually cited together with the former, and are urged for the same purposes; particularly to show that Christ seriously intended the salvation of such who would not come to him for it; and that man does not lie under any disability of coming to Christ for life; did he, his not coming to Christ would not be criminal in him; nor would he be blame-worthy for what he could not help. To which I answer,

1. That what Christ intends, he intends seriously; but it does not appear from these words, that he did intend the salvation of these persons who would not come to him, but rather the contrary; since they look more like a charge exhibited against

them, for their neglect of him, as the way of life and salvation, and trusting to the law of Moses, and their obedience to it, and therefore did not receive him, or believe in him; and though Christ declined bringing in an accusation directly and in form against them, yet he acquaints them that there was one that accused them, even Moses, in whom they trusted; and therefore their future condemnation would be justifiable upon their own principles, and by the very writings they had such an opinion of; since these testified of him, and of eternal life by him, which they rejected.

2. These words are so far from being expressive of the power and liberty of the will of man to come to Christ, that they rather declare the perverseness and stubbornness of it; that man has no desire, inclination, or will, to go Christ for life; but had rather go any where else, or trust to any thing else, than to him. Man is stout-hearted, and far from the righteousness of Christ, and submission to it; is not subject to the law of God, nor the Gospel of Christ; nor can he be, till God works in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure; or until he is made willing in the day of his power. No one can come to Christ, except the Father draw him; nor has he a will to it, unless it be wrought in him.

3. Though man lies under such a disability, and has neither power nor will of himself to come to Christ for life; yet his not coming to Christ, when revealed in the external ministry of the Gospel, as God's way of salvation, is criminal and blameworthy; since the disability and perverseness of his will are not

owing to any decree of God, but to the corruption and vitiosity of his nature, through sin; and therefore, since this vitiosity of nature is blame-worthy; for God made man upright, though they have sought out many inventions, which have corrupted their nature; that which follows upon it, and is the effect of it, must be so too.

Section 31 — John 12:32.

And I, if I be lifted from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Though this text is not produced by the principal writers in the Arminian controversy, nor by the Remonstrants formerly, nor by Curcellaeus, nor by Limborch, nor by Whitby of late; yet inasmuch as it is urged by others, in favor of universal redemption, that he who draws all men to him by his death, must needs die for all men; it will be proper to consider the import of it, and the argument upon it. And,

1. It is certain, that the death of Christ, and the very kind of death he should die, is intimated by his being lifted up from the earth; since the evangelist observes in the next verse, that this he said signifying what death he should die; and it must be owned, that the drawing of all men to Christ, is here represented as a fruit of his death, or as what should attend it, or would follow upon it; and I can say, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me. And therefore

2. The sense of these words pretty much depends on the meaning of the word draw: which either designs a collection of

a large number of people to him, and about him, when he should be lifted on the cross, some against, others for him; some to reproach, and others to bewail him; or rather of the gathering of the people to him, through the ministry of the apostles; and so of their being enabled, through the power of divine grace, to come unto him, and believe on him for eternal life and salvation; for all those whom God has loved with an everlasting love, and Christ has died for, are, sooner or later, with loving-kindness drawn unto him; in this sense Christ uses the word in this Gospel; no man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him (John 6:44). Now,

3. It is most evident, that all men, that is, every individual of human nature, every son and daughter of Adam, have not faith, are not drawn, or enabled to come to Christ, and believe in him. There were many of the Jews who would not, and did not come to Christ, that, they might have life; who, instead of being drawn to him in this sense, when lifted up on the cross, vilified and reproached him; nay, at this time, here was a world spoken of in the preceding verse, whose judgment, or condemnation, was now come; and besides, there was then a multitude of souls in hell, who could not nor never will be drawn to Christ; and a greater number still there will be at the last day, to whom, instead of drawing to him in this gracious way and manner, he will say, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity (Matthew 7:23, and 25:41). Christ died, indeed, for all men who are drawn unto him; but this is not true of all men that are, were, or shall be in the world. Add to this that the men is not in the Greek text; it is only panta, all; and some copies read panta, all

things; so Austen read it formerly, and so it was in an ancient copy of Beza's. But not to insist on this;

4. By all men, is meant some of all sorts, all the elect of God, the children of God, that were scattered abroad; and particularly the Gentiles as well as the Jews, as Chrysostom and Theophylact interpret the words; which interpretation is perfectly agreeable with ancient prophecy; that when Shiloh was come (Gen. 49:10; Isa.11:10), to him should the gathering of the people, or Gentiles, be; and with the context, an occasion of these words, which was this; certain Greeks that were come up to worshiper the feast, desired to see Jesus; of which when he was apprised by his disciples, he answered, that the hour was come in which he should be glorified, and that as a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, so should he: and though he tacitly intimates, that it was not proper to admit these Greeks into his presence now, yet when he was lifted up from the earth, or after his death, his Gospel should be preached to them as well as to the Jews; and that large numbers of them should be drawn unto him, and brought to believe in him; agreeable to which sense of the words is Dr. Hammond's paraphrase of them: "And I being crucified, will by that means, bring a great part of the whole world to believe on me, Gentiles as well as Jews." And to the same purpose is the note of Dr. Whitby on the text.

Section 32—Acts 3:19.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

It is concluded from hence, that repentance and conversion are in the power of men, and not wrought by the unfrustrable grace of God; that there is no such thing as an absolute election, nor special redemption of particular persons; since all men are exhorted to repent and be converted, and that in order to procure the remission of their sins. But,

1. It should be observed, that repentance is either evangelical or legal, and this either personal or national. Evangelical repentance is not in the power of a natural man, but is the gift of God's free grace. Legal repentance may be performed by particular persons, who are destitute of the grace of God, and by all the inhabitants of a place, as the Ninevites, who repented externally at the preaching of Jonah, though it does not appear that they had received the grace of God, since destruction afterwards came upon that city for its iniquities; and such a repentance these Jews are here exhorted to, on the account of a national sin, the crucifixion of Christ, with which they are charged (vv. 14-18), and in the guilt and punishment, of which they had involved themselves and all their posterity, when they said, His blood be upon us, and upon our children (Matthew 27:25). Likewise the conversion here pressed unto us, is not an internal conversion of the soul to God, which is the work of almighty power, but an outward reformation of life, or a

bringing forth fruit in conversation meet for the repentance insisted on. Besides, exhortations to any thing, be it what it will, do not necessarily imply that man has a power to comply with them. Men are required to believe in Christ, to love the Lord with all their heart, to make themselves a new heart and a new spirit, yea, to keep the whole law of God; but it does not follow that they are able of themselves to do all these things. If, therefore, evangelical repentance and internal conversion were here intended, it would only prove that the persons spoken to were without them, stood in need of them, could not be saved unless they were partakers of them, and, therefore, ought to apply to God for them.

2. These exhortations do not militate against the absolute election nor particular redemption of some only, since they are not made to all men, but to these Jews, the crucifiers of Christ; and were they made to all men, they should be considered only as declarations of what God approves of, commands, and requires, and not what he wills and determines shall be; for then all men would repent and be converted; for who hath resisted his will? Besides, in this way God may and does bring his elect to see their need of repentance, and to an enjoyment of that grace, and leaves others inexcusable. It is said, that if Christ died not for all men, God could not equitably require all men to repent: and it is asked, What good could this repentance do them? what remission of sins could it procure? and therefore must be in vain; yea, that it would follow from hence, that no impenitent person can be justly condemned for dying in his impenitent estate. To which I reply; it does not become us to fix

what is, and what is not equitable for God to require of his creatures, on supposition of Christ's dying or not dying for them; this is limiting the Holy One of Israel. Supposing Christ had not died for any of the sons of men; have they not all sinned and transgressed the commands of God? and should they not be sorry for these sins, and repent of the same, being committed against the God of their mercies? and might not God equitably require this at their hands, though he had not given his Son to die for them? and though such a repentance would not procure remission of sins, which is not to be procured by any repentance whatever; nor is it by the repentance of those for whom Christ has died, but by his precious blood, without which there is no remission; yet it might be the means of enjoying a present temporal good, and lessening the aggravation of future punishment; as in the case of the Ninevites. Nor does it follow from Christ's not dying for all men, that no impenitent person can be justly condemned for dying in his impenitent estate; since the providential goodness of God leads to repentance; (Rom. 2:4, 5) and therefore such who despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, do, after their hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and righteous judgment of God; and since, as many as have sinned without law, (Rom. 2:12) and consequently without the Gospel and the knowledge of Christ, his sufferings, and death, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. Besides, as has been observed, the exhortation to repent here made, is not made unto all men, but

to the Jews, on a very remarkable occasion, and was blessed to many of them, to the turning them away from their iniquities; for many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand (Acts 4:4). If it should be replied, that though the exhortation to repentance is not here made to all men; yet it is elsewhere expressly said, that God commandeth all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Let it be observed, that as this command to repentance does not suppose it to be in the power of man; nor contradicts its being a free-grace gift of God; nor its being a blessing in the covenant of grace, and in the hands of Christ to bestow; so neither does it extend, as here expressed, to every individual of mankind; but only regards the men of the then present age, in distinction from those who lived in the former times of ignorance: for so the words are expressed: and the times of this ignorance God winked at; overlooked, took no notice of, sent them no messages, enjoined them no commands of faith in Christ, or repentance towards God; but now, since the coming and death of Christ, commandeth all men, Gentiles as well as Jews, everywhere to repent; it being his will, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations (Luke 24:47): but admitting that it has been God's command in all ages, and to all men that they repent; as all men are indeed bound, by the law of nature, to a natural repentance, though all men are not called by the gospel to an evangelical one; yet I see not what conclusions can be formed from hence against either absolute election or particular redemption.

3. Though there is a close connection between evangelical repentance, true conversion, and pardon of sin; that is to say, that such who are really converted and truly repent, have their sins pardoned; yet not repentance and conversion, but the free grace of God and blood of Christ are the causes of pardon. Forgiveness of sin is indeed only manifested to converted penitent sinners, who are encouraged and influenced to repent of sin, and turn to the Lord from the promise of pardoning grace; hence the most that can be made of such an exhortation is only this; that it is both the duty and interest of men to repent and turn to God, that they may have a discovery of the remission of their sins through the blood of Christ, and not that they shall hereby procure and obtain the thing itself: though, after all, neither evangelical repentance and internal conversion, nor the grace of pardon are here intended; not evangelical repentance and internal conversion, as has been before observed, nor the spiritual blessing and grace of pardon; for, though pardon of sin is signified by blotting it out, Psalm 51:1,9; Isaiah 43:25, and Isaiah 44:22; yet forgiveness of sin sometimes means no more than the removing a present calamity, or the averting of a threatened judgment, Exodus 32:32; 1 Kings 8:33 to 39; and is the sense of the phrase here. These Jews had crucified the Lord of glory, and for this sin were threatened with miserable destruction; the apostle therefore exhorts them to repent of it, and acknowledge Jesus to be the true Messiah; that so when wrath should come upon their nation to the uttermost, they might be delivered and saved from the general calamity; which, though these would be

terrible times to the unbelieving Jews, yet would be times of refreshing to the people of God from troubles and persecutions. Though the last clause may be considered, not as expressing the time when their iniquities should be blotted out, but as a distinct additional promise made to penitents, and be read with the other thus: that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come; as they are by the Syriac and Arabic versions, and to which the Ethiopic agrees, and is the reading preferred by Lightfoot; and the sense is this, "Repent of your sin of crucifying Christ, acknowledge Jesus as the true Messiah, and you shall not only be saved from the general destruction of your nation, but shall have the gospel and the consolation of Israel with you. Jesus Christ, who was first preached unto, you, shall be sent down unto you in the refreshing consolatory ministry of the word, though he in person must refrain in heaven, until the times of restitution of all things."

Section 33—Acts 7:51.

Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Though these words are not once cited or referred to by Dr. Whitby, as I remember, yet, inasmuch as the Remonstrants have never failed to urge them in favor of the irresistibility of God's grace in conversion, and to prove that that work is not wrought by an irresistible power; and that men may have sufficient grace for conversion who are not converted, it will be

proper not to omit them; their argument from them stands thus. If the Holy Spirit may be resisted when, he acts in man with a purpose and will to convert him, then he does not work conversion by an irresistible power; but the Holy Spirit may be resisted when he acts in man with a purpose and will to convert him: therefore, etc. But,

1. That the Spirit of God in the operations of his grace upon the heart in conversion, may be resisted, that is, opposed, is allowed; but that he may be so resisted as to be overcome, or be hindered in, or obliged to cease from the work of conversion, so as that it comes to nothing, where he acts with purpose and will to convert, must be denied, for who hath resisted his will? who, in this sense, can resist it? No one instance of this kind can ever be produced.

2. It should be proved that the Spirit of God was in these persons, and was acting in them with a design to convert them, and that they had sufficient grace for conversion given them, and that that grace was the same with that which is given to persons who are only converted; whereas it does not appear that they had any grace at all, since they are said to be stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears.

3. Supposing the Spirit of God was acting in them with a purpose and will to convert them, it will be difficult to prove that they so resisted, and continued to resist him, as that they were not hereafter converted by him; we are sure that one of

these persons, namely Saul, was afterwards really and truly converted; and how many more were so, we know not.

4. The resistance made by these persons was not to the Spirit of God in them, of which they were destitute, but to the Spirit of God in his ministers, in his apostles, and particularly Stephen; not to any internal operation of his grace, which does not appear to have been in them, but to the external ministry of the word, and to all that objective light, knowledge, evidence, and conviction, that it gave of Jesus being the Messiah; in which sense they are said to reject the counsel of God against themselves (Luke 7:30); and to put from them the word of God (Acts 13:46). Such who resist Christ's ministers resist him; and such who resist him may be said to resist his Holy Spirit. Once more, The word *aniptete*, signifies a rushing against, and falling upon, in a rude and hostile manner; and fitly expresses their ill-treatment of Christ and his ministers, by falling upon them and putting them to death, which is the resistance here particularly designed, as is manifest from the following words (v. 52).

Section 34—Romans 5:18.

Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.

These words stand as a proof of general redemption; and the sense given of them is, that Christ died for the justification of

all men; and that justification of life was procured by him for, and is offered unto, all men; it being apparent that the apostle is comparing the condemnation which is procured by the sin of Adam, with the free gift of justification procured by the second Adam, as to the extent of persons concerned in both; all men, in the first clause, being to be taken in the utmost latitude, the same word in the latter clause must be taken in the same manner, or the grace of the comparison is wholly lost. To all which I reply;

1. These words say nothing at all about the death of Christ, or of his dying for any persons or any thing, but speak of his righteousness and the virtue of it, to justification of life; by which righteousness is meant his active obedience, as appears from the following verse: nor do the Scriptures anywhere say, that Christ died for our justification, but that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. It is true indeed that justification is procured by the death, as well as the obedience of Christ; as that we are justified by his blood as well as by his righteousness; but it cannot be said, with any propriety, that justification of life is offered to any; since justification is a forensic, a law term, and signifies a sentence pronounced, or declared, and not offered. A judge, when he either acquits or condemns, he does not offer the sentence of justification or condemnation, but pronounces either: so God, when he justifies, he does not offer justification to men, but pronounces them righteous, through the righteousness of his Son; and when Christ procured justification, it was not an offer of it, but the blessing itself. These words then are not to be understood either

of Christ's dying for justification for any, especially for every individual man; since all men, in this large sense, are not justified; many will be righteously condemned, and eternally punished; and consequently his death, respecting them, must be in vain, were this the case; nor of the procuring of justification, still less of the offer of it, but of the application of it to the persons here mentioned.

2. It is apparent, that the apostle is here comparing the first and the second Adam together, as heads and representatives of their respective offspring, and the effects of sin, to the condemnation of those that sprang from the one, with the grace of God to the justification of such that belong to the other, and not the number of persons concerned in these things. His plain meaning is, that, as the first Adam conveyed sin, condemnation, and death, to all his posterity; so the second Adam communicates grace, righteousness, and life, to all his posterity; and herein the latter has the preference to the former, and in which lies the abundance of grace here spoken of; that the things communicated by the one are, in their own nature, to be preferred to the other; and particularly, that the righteousness, which Christ gives to his, not only justifies from the sin of the first Adam, and secures from all condemnation by it, but also from all other offenses whatever, and gives a right to eternal life, wherefore it is called the justification of life, which the first Adam never had. Were the comparison between the numbers of such who are condemned by the sin of the one, and of those who are justified by the righteousness of the other, the numbers being the same, the grace of the comparison would be

wholly lost; for where would be the exuberance when there is perfect equality?

3. Admitting that the apostle is comparing the condemnation which, was procured by the sin of Adam with the free gift of justification procured by the second Adam, as to the extent of persons concerned in both; this extent cannot be thought to reach to more than such who respectively spring from them, and belong to them. No more could be condemned by the sin of Adam than those who naturally descended from him by ordinary generation. The angels that fell are not condemned for Adam's sin, from whom they did not spring, but for their own personal iniquities. This sin reached not to the man Christ Jesus, nor was he condemned by it for himself, because he descended not from Adam by ordinary generation; so no more can be justified by the righteousness of Christ, nor does that reach to the justification of more than those who are Christ's, that belong to him, and who are in time regenerated by his Spirit and grace, and appear to be his spiritual seed and offspring.

4. All men, in the latter clause of this text, can never design every individual of mankind; for if the free gift came upon all men, in this large sense, to justification of life, every man would have a righteousness to be justified, be secure from wrath to come, have a right to eternal life; and at last be glorified and everlastingly saved; for such who are justified by the blood of Christ, shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5:9; 8:30); and whom God justifies, them he also

glorifies. Now it is certain, that all men, in the utmost latitude of this phrase, have not a justifying righteousness; there is a set of unrighteous men who shall not inherit the kingdom of God, are not, nor will they ever be justified; but the wrath of God abides on them, and will be their everlasting portion: could it be proved that the righteousness of Christ is imputed by the Father, and applied by the Spirit, to the justification of every man, and that every man will be saved, we shall readily come in to the doctrine of universal redemption by the death of Christ. But,

5. The apostle is the best interpreter of his own words, and we may easily learn, from this epistle, who the all men are, to whom the free gift by Christ's righteousness comes, to justification of life; they are the elect whom God justifies, through the righteousness of his Son, and secures from condemnation by his death (Rom.8:33, 34); they are all the seed to whom the promise of righteousness and life belongs, and is sure (Rom. 4:16); they are the all that believe, upon whom and unto whom the righteousness of Christ is manifested, revealed, and applied by the Spirit of God (Rom. 3:22); and they are such who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17); and, in a word, the gift comes upon all those that are Christ's, and belong to him to justification, even as judgment came upon all to condemnation, through the offense of Adam, that belong to him or descend from him. The text in 1 Corinthians 15:22, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, in which the same comparison is made between the two heads, Adam and Christ,

and their different effects, and which is sometimes used, in favor of general redemption, is foreign to the purpose, since it speaks not of redemption by Christ, nor of spiritual and eternal life through him, but of the resurrection of the dead, as is evident from the whole context; and that not of every individual man, only of such as are Christ's, and who sleep in him, of whom he is the first-fruits, verse 20, 23; who will be raised by virtue of union to him, and come forth unto the resurrection of life; which all will not, for some will awake to shame and everlasting contempt, yea, to the resurrection of damnation, which, by the way, is a proof that the word all does not always design every individual of mankind.

Section 35—Romans 11:32.

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

This passage of Scripture is produced as a proof of God's will, that all men should be saved, and to show that he has rejected none from salvation by an absolute and antecedent decree, and consequently that Christ died for all men; seeing as God hath concluded all men in unbelief, none excepted, so, by the rule of opposition, he hath mercy on all, none excepted. To which I answer:

1. That God shows mercy to all men in a providential way, is granted, for his tender mercies are over all his works; (Psalm 114:9.) but that all men are partakers of his special mercy

through Christ, must be denied, since the vessels mercy are manifestly distinguished from the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction (Rom. 9:22, 23); and certain it is, that there are some whom he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favor (Isa. 27:11); and where God does extend his special mercy, it is wholly owing to his sovereign will and pleasure, for he hath mercy on whom, he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18).

2. By the rule of opposition, no more can be thought to be the objects of God's mercy than those whom he has shut up in unbelief; which is not true of all men that ever were in the world; for, though all men are, by nature, unbelievers, yet they are not all shut up by God in unbelief. To be shut up in unbelief, is the same as to be concluded under sin, the meaning of which phrases is, not that God makes men sinners and unbelievers, or puts them into the prison of sin and unbelief, but that he proves, demonstrates, and convinces them, that they are in such a state and condition, as Chrysostom on the other place observes, and which is the sense that Grotius and Vorstius, who were both on the other side of the question, give of these words; for such who are savingly convinced of sin, are held and bound down by a sense of it in their consciences, that they can find no by-way to creep out, or make any excuse for it. Now, all men are not in this sense concluded under sin, or shut up in unbelief, none but those whom the Spirit of God reprove and convinces of these things; which convictions are wrought in them, on purpose that they may flee, not to their own merits,

but to the mercy of God, which they may hope to share in, since with the Lord is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption (Ps. 130:7).

3. It is not said absolutely, God hath concluded, *pantaV* , all in unbelief, that he might have mercy, *pantaV* , on all; but God hath concluded, *touV pantaV* , them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy, *touV pantaV* , on them all, which limits and restrains the all to the persons the apostle is speaking of in the context; were the elect of God among the Jews and Gentiles, and so designs the fullness of the Gentiles, whom God determined to bring in, (v. 25), and especially that all Israel, (v. 26), that shall be saved, not by their own righteousness, but by the pure mercy and free grace of God. In short, by the all whom he has mercy on, and in order to bring them to a sense of their need thereof, concludes in, and convinces of, unbelief, are to be understood all believers, that is, who are eventually so, be they Jews or Gentiles, as Vorstius observes, and which is manifest from a parallel text, The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe (Gal.3:22). Hence this passage neither militates against an absolute election, nor special redemption of particular persons.

Section 36—Romans 14:15.

Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

These words are frequently used in favor of universal redemption, and to prove that Christ died not only for the elect, for his sheep, and true believers, but also for them that perish; and the argument from them is formed thus: "If Christ died for them that perish, and for them that do not perish, he died for all. But Christ died for them that perish, and for them that do not perish; ergo, he died for all men. That he died for them that do not perish, is confessed by all; and that he died for such as may, or shall perish, is intimated in this injunction; destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." But whether so much is intimated hereby, will be seen when the following things are considered;

1. That the injunction, destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died, does not intend eternal destruction; since that can never be thought to be either in the will or the power of those on whom this is enjoined. Such a degree of malice and wickedness surely can never arise in the heart of any to wish for, desire, and take any steps towards the eternal damnation of others; what comes nearest to such an instance, is the Jews' prohibition of the apostles, to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved (1 Thess. 2:16); which discovered implacable and inveterate malice indeed; but surely nothing of this kind could ever be among brethren of the same faith, and in the same church state; and were any so wicked as to desire the eternal destruction of another, yet it is not in his power to compass it; none can eternally destroy but God; fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell

(Matthew 10:28). Besides, is it reasonable to suppose, or conclude, that eternal damnation should follow upon eating and drinking things indifferent, as herbs, meat and wine, or be caused by an offense given and taken through these things? Therefore, unless it can be proved, that eternal destruction did or might ensue upon the use of things indifferent; or that weak brethren might or were so ensnared, offended, and stumbled hereby, as to perish eternally, there is no force in the argument.

2. It will appear from the context, that the destruction of the weak brother dehorted from, is not the eternal destruction of his person; but the present destruction, interruption, or hindrance of his peace, and comfort. To destroy the brother with meat, is, by eating it, to put a stumbling, or an occasion to fall in his way (v. 13); not to fall from the grace and favor of God; but so as that the peace of his mind may be broken, his affections to the brethren wax cold, and he be staggered in the doctrines of the gospel: hence says the apostle, It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak (v. 21); to do which, is contrary to Christian charity; if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably; yea, it is destroying the work of God (v. 20); not the Christian convert, who is God's workmanship; nor the good work of grace, which will be performed until the day of Christ; nor the work of faith, which will never fail; but the work of peace in churches, and particular persons, which God is the author of, and which the things that make for it, saints should follow after (v. 19). Now a weaker brother, for whom Christ has died, may be thus grieved,

distressed, wounded, his peace destroyed, and yet not eternally perish;. and so can be no instance of Christ's dying for such as may be or are eternally lost. The apostle's design in this dehortation, is manifestly this; partly from the interest Christ has in, and the love he has showed to such brethren in dying for them; and partly from the hurt that may be done to their weak minds and consciences, to deter stronger believers from giving them any offense by their free use of things indifferent; though he knew their eternal salvation could not be in any danger thereby.

Section 37—1 Corinthians 8:11.

And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

These words are commonly joined with the former, and produced for the same purposes, both to prove that Christ died for such as perish, and that true believers may totally and finally fall away. What has been said under the preceding section, might be sufficient to lead us into the true sense of this text, which is parallel with the other, and so remove any argument or objection taken from hence. But not to let it pass without particular examination, let it be observed;

1. That as the text in Romans 14:15, is a dehortation, or an injunction not to destroy him with meat, for whom Christ died; this is delivered out in the form of all interrogation; and neither the one nor the other prove matter of fact, supposing they could

be understood of eternal destruction and ruin; as that any one brother, who was a true believer, was destroyed, or perished eternally this way; and at most, only imply the danger and possibility thereof, through their own corruptions, Satan's temptations, and the offenses given by stronger brethren; were they not preserved by the grace and power of God, through Christ, who died for them, and so will not suffer them to perish.

2. The perishing of this weak brother, is to be understood of, and is explained by, a defiling of his conscience (v. 7); a wounding of it (v. 12); and making him to offend, (v. 13), by the imprudent abuse of Christian liberty in those who had stronger faith, and greater knowledge, and by a participation in things offered to idols, in an idol's temple (vv. 7, 10); and not of his eternal damnation in hell, which could never enter into the apostle's thoughts; since he says (v. 8), Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. Hence we have no need to return for answer, to arguments formed on these texts; that these weak brethren, of whom it is supposed that they might perish, being under a profession of religion, men were obliged, from a judgment of charity, to believe that Christ died for them, though he might not, or that others may be said to destroy, or cause them to perish, though their destruction followed not; because they did all that in them lay towards it, and what in its own nature tended to it; and therefore we are not concerned with the replies made unto such answers, which we shall not undertake to defend.

3. This text proves, that Christ died for weak brethren, whose consciences may be defiled, wounded, and offended, through the liberty others might take, and in this sense, perish; but does not prove that Christ died for any besides his sheep, his church; or those who are eventually true believers; for which the Remonstrants cite it; for surely a brother who is truly one, though weak, is a sheep of Christ, a member of his church, and a believer; and therefore can be no instance of Christ's dying for any reprobates, and still less for all mankind.

4. Such for whom Christ died, can never finally, totally, and eternally perish; since he has, by his death, procured such blessings for them, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace with God, reconciliation to him, and eternal salvation; which will for ever secure them from perishing. Besides, should any of them perish in this sense, his death would be so far in vain; nor could the death of Christ be thought to be a sufficient security from condemnation; whereas the apostle says, Who shall condemn? it is Christ that died: nor a full satisfaction to the justice of God; or God must be unjust to punish twice for the same faults.

Section 38—1 Corinthians 10:12.

Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

It is observed, that "the apostle here speaks to the whole church at Corinth, and to such who truly thought they stood; and

plainly supposes, that he who truly stood, might fall, and would do so, if he used not great diligence to keep his standing; for had not this taking heed been the condition of their standing; had they been of the number of those who, by God's decree, or promise, infallibly were assured of standing, this exhortation to take heed, must have been superfluous; since men can need no admonitions to do that which God's decree and promise secure them they cannot omit; much less to do it to prevent what cannot possibly befall them." To which I reply;

1. That the apostle does not speak these words to the whole church at Corinth; for though the epistle is in general directed to the church, yet there are several things which only respect some particular persons; as the incestuous person; such who went to law with their brethren before unbelievers; some that behaved disorderly at the Lord's table, and others that denied the resurrection of the dead, of and to whom some particular things are spoken, which did not belong to the whole church; and here the apostle exhorts, not such who truly thought they stood; for such do stand in the grace of God, in Christ, and by faith, and shall never finally and totally fall away; but such who seem to stand, who seemeth to himself and others, to stand; and manifestly designs such who were swelled with a vain opinion of themselves, of their knowledge and strength, tempted God, and trusted to themselves, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and despised weak believers: now such as these may fall, as they often do, from that which they seemed to have, from the truths of the Gospel, and a profession of it, and into scandalous sins, and at last, into condemnation. If it should be asked, why

should the apostle concern himself about these persons, or exhort them to take heed to their standing? would it not have been as well, if they had thrown off the mask at once, and have appeared to be what they really were? I answer that the apostasy of formal professors, is injurious both to the honor and interest of true religion; for the ways of God are evil spoken of, the name of Christ blasphemed, profane sinners hardened, and weak believers stumbled by the falls of formal professors, as of real Christians: besides, it must be worse for themselves, their defection being the means of a more severe punishment: for it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (2 Pet. 2:21).

2. Supposing that such who truly taught spoken to; it will be allowed that these may fall into temptation, into snares, into sin, from a degree of steadfastness in the Gospel, and from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace, but not finally, totally, and irrecoverably; since they are enclosed in the arms of everlasting love, secured in the hands of Christ, built on a foundation that will never give way, and kept by an almighty power, which can never be overcome: and though taking heed is not the condition of their standing, but that is secured unto them by the purpose and promise of God, which can never fail; yet such an exhortation is not superfluous; since though they cannot finally and totally fall, they may fall to the dishonor of God, the reproach of the Gospel of Christ, the grieving of the Spirit, the wounding of their own souls, the stumbling of weak

believers, and the strengthening of the hands of the wicked; all which are so many strong reasons and arguments why they should take heed lest they fall; though they can never so fall as to perish eternally: nor are the admonitions needless to that which God's decree and promise secure; since these are often the means in and by which God executes his decree, and makes good his promise; see Acts 27:22, 24, 31. To add no more, these words should never be made use of against the saints' final perseverance, since they are so closely connected with the following verse, which so fully expresses that doctrine: there hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. By this, way we may judge of the nature, design, and use of cautions given to the saints not to fall away; which are represented as evidences and suppositions that they may do, so; such as the caution Christ gave all his disciples, in these words; Take heed unto yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting etc. (Luke 21:34, 36.). Which only implies, that the apostles, like other men, were subject to infirmities, sins, snares, and temptations: and therefore caution, watch-fullness, and prayer, were incumbent on them, that they might not be found in a supine, negligent, sleepy frame, when not the day of judgment, but of the destruction of Jerusalem, came on; and so they might escape the general calamity, and stand before the Son of man, and carry his Gospel into the Gentile world: and is no proof of the possibility or danger of their final falling away;

who were chosen of Christ, given him by his Father, and so kept by him, as that none were lost, but the son of perdition.

When the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews cautions the believers he writes unto, to take heed, lest there be in any of them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, and fall from the promised rest; and to look diligently lest any man fail, of the grace of God (Heb.3:12; 4:1; 12:15); his design is to expose the sin of unbelief, as what bereaved the saints of much comfort, and God of much glory; every degree of it in that, being a partial, though not a total departure from God, and therefore should be watched against: and it should be observed, that he does not caution them to take heed lest they fell from the rest promised them, but lest they should seem to come short of it; which they might do, and yet enjoy it: and when he exhorts them, to take diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; this is not to be understood of the grace and favor of God towards them, nor of the grace of God in them, but of the doctrines of grace which they had received; the duty enjoined them being a mutual one, in which they were episkopein, to act the part of a bishop or overseer over each other.

When the apostle Paul cautions the Colossians, to beware, lest any man should beguile them with enticing words, spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, and beguile them of their reward (Col. 2:4, 8, 18); he does not design a final and total seduction of them from Christ their head, in whom they were complete, verse 10; not a destruction of grace in them but a

corruption of the doctrine of grace received by them; which might be unawares introduced by false teachers, under the specious pretenses of humility and holiness.

When the apostle Peter exhorts those he wrote to, to beware, lest being led away with the error of the wicked, they fall from their own steadfastness (2 Pet. 3:17): his meaning is, not as though there was danger or a possibility of falling from the like precious faith they had obtained: but that they might be in danger of falling from some degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of faith, through the ensnaring errors of wicked men; and therefore should guard against it.

Lastly. When the apostle John saith to the children of the elect lady, Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward (2 John 1:8), it does not follow, that such who have the true grace of God, may lose those things which they have wrought; for it is not what ye, but what we, have wrought; much less lose what the Spirit of God has wrought; but the caution regards the doctrines and ministry of the apostles, lest that should be in any respect in vain; or a veil be drawn over the glory of it, through those persons any way giving heed to the doctrines of deceivers (vv. 7, 9, 10).

Section 39—2 Corinthians 5:14,15.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for

all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

This scripture never fails to have a place in the controversy about the extent of the death of Christ. Universal redemption is concluded from hence, by the following arguments, now to be examined.

I. The first is taken from the word all here used, if, or since one died for all. But it ought to be observed,

1. That the text does not say that Christ died for all men, but for all; and therefore, agreeable to other scriptures (Matthew 1:21; John 10:15; Eph. 5:25; Heb. 2:9, 10), may be understood of all the people whom Jesus saves from their sins; of all the sheep for whom he laid down his life; of all the members of his church, whom he loved, and for whom he gave himself; or of all the sons for whom he tasted death, and, as the Captain of their salvation, brings to glory.

2. That it is said in the latter part of the text, that those for whom Christ died, for them also he rose again; who therefore ought to live *tw uper autwn apoqanonti kai egerqenti*, to him that died and rose again for them. Christ died for no more nor for others than those for whom he rose again; such for whom he rose again, he rose for their justification; if Christ rose for the justification of all men, all men would be justified, or the end of Christ's resurrection would not be answered; but all men are not, nor will be justified; some will be condemned: it

follows, that Christ did not rise from the dead for all men, and consequently did not die for all men.

3. That the all for whom Christ died, died with him, and through his death are dead both to the law and sin; then were all dead. Besides, the end of his dying for them was, that they might live, not to themselves, but to him that died for them; neither of which is true of all mankind; not to take any notice of the nature and manner of Christ's dying for these all; which was for, in the room and stead of them; and denotes a substitution made, a satisfaction given, which issues in the full discharge, acquittance, and justification of them, and is not the case of every individual of human nature.

4. That the context (2 Cor. 5:17, 18, 21), explains the all of such who are in Christ, are new creatures, reconciled to God, whose trespasses are not imputed to them, for whom Christ was made sin, and who are made the righteousness of God in him; which cannot be, said of all men.

II. It is observed, "the words, all were dead, must certainly be taken in their greatest latitude; wherefore, the words preceding, if or since Christ died for all, from which they are an inference, ought also to be taken in the same extent." To which I reply,

1. The latitude in which the words all were dead, are to be taken, must be according to that in which the preceding words, if one died for all, are to be taken; by these the extent of the other is fixed, and not the extent of these by them. The apostle does not say, nor is it his meaning, that Christ died for all that

were dead; but that all were dead for whom he died; if one died for all, then oi panteV apeqaion, those all were dead; for the article oi is anaphorical or relative, as Beza and Piscator rightly observe: supposing, therefore, that the words all were dead, are capable of being taken in such a latitude as to comprehend every individual of mankind, there is no necessity that they should be so taken here, unless it be first proved, that the preceding words, if one died for all, by which the extent of these is fixed, are to be understood in so large a sense; which is the thing in question, and cannot receive any proof from hence; till this is done, it is enough to say, that all for whom Christ died were dead: from whence it does not follow, by any just consequence, that Christ died for all that were dead.

2. It is proper to consider the sense of these words, then were all dead. The Remonstrants understand them of a death in sin, which is common to all mankind; and because all men are dead in sin, they conclude that Christ died for all men. Admitting this sense of the words, they prove no more, than that all for whom Christ died were dead in sin; which is very true; for the elect of God are dead in trespasses and sins, whilst in a state of nature, as well as others; but not that Christ died for all that were dead in sin: and therefore, even according to this interpretation, they conclude nothing in favor of universal, or against particular redemption. Though it does not appear that this is the sense of the words, since to be dead in sin is no consequence of the death of Christ, that is, such an one as is depending on it; for it would have been a truth, that all men descending from Adam, were dead in sin, if Christ had never

died; or if he had died for some or for none; much less is a death in sin the fruit of Christ's death, or what puts persons in a capacity of living to Christ, which the death here spoken of is intimated to be and do; but, on the contrary, this death is the fruit of sin, and what renders persons incapable, whilst under the power of it, to live to Christ. And therefore,

3. When those for whom Christ died, are said to be dead through his dying for them, the meaning is, either that they were dead with him, or in him, as the Ethiopic version reads it, their head and representative; when he was crucified they were crucified with him, and so was their old man, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth they should not serve sin; or that they were dead to the law by the body of Christ, as to the curse of it, and condemnation by it; and dead to sin, as to its damning power, so that they were acquitted, discharged, and justified from it; the consequence of which is, a deliverance from the reigning power and dominion of it. Hence, being thus dead to the law and sin, they are capable, through the assistance of divine grace, of living unto righteousness, and to the glory of Christ; all which is the saints' privilege, and the fruit and effect of Christ's death. Now as the former sense of the words concludes nothing in favor of Christ's dying in for every individual of mankind; this latter sense, which is most genuine, strongly concludes against it; since all men are not, nor will be, dead to the law and to sin.

III. Universal redemption is pleaded for from the end of Christ's death; which is, that they which live, should not live

unto themselves, but unto him that died for them. Upon which it is observed, "This sure must be the duty of all Christians in particular (unless there be any Christians not obliged to live to Christ, but rather at liberty to live unto themselves), and so that death, which is the motive to it, must be intended for them all." To this I add, instead of answering, that this is a way of reasoning which cannot be contradicted, certainly it is the duty of all Christians to live to Christ, nor are any at liberty to live to themselves: and it will not be denied, that the death of Christ was intended for them all, since all Christians, who are really such, are the believers, and these are the elect of God. But then there is a wide difference between these two propositions, Christ died for all Christians, and Christ died for all men; unless it can be thought, that all men, Turks, Jews, and Indians, are Christians. The argument from the end of Christ's death, here mentioned, is formed in a much better manner, and to better purpose, by the Remonstrants, thus "Those who ought to live to Christ, for them Christ died; but not the elect only ought to live to Christ, therefore Christ did not die for the elect only." To which I answer, that however plausible this argument may seem to be, yet it has no foundation in the text, which does not say, that Christ died for all them who ought to live to him; but only, at most, proves, that those for whom he died, ought to live to him: all men ought to live to Christ as God, as their Creator, they are obliged to it by the laws of Creation, and ties of nature, whether he died for them or no, and indeed, supposing he had never died for any; bat besides the obligation from creation, there is a fresh one upon such for whom he died to live to him:

hence it follows not that "to say that Christ died for some only of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, is to exempt all others of those nations from living to Christ;" for though they are not bound to live to Christ on the account of redemption by him; yet, because they are his creatures, and are supplied with temporal mercies from him: and as to what is further observed, that "to say he died for all the elect, that they of them who live, might not live to themselves, is to suppose that some of the elect might live, not to Christ, but to themselves; which cannot truly be imagined of the elect of God." I reply, that there is a proneness in all the elect of God, even after they are made spiritually alive, to live to themselves, and not to Christ; and therefore, such an argument, taken from Christ's dying for them in particular, is a very proper one to quicken them to their duty, and engage them with all readiness and cheerfulness to seek the glory and honor of their Redeemer.

IV. That Christ died for all men, is argued for from the love of Christ constraining the apostles to preach the Gospel to all; and it is said, the apostle "declares, that the sense of this love of Christ prevailed upon them to persuade men to believe in him. Now this persuasion they used to every man to whom they preached; and therefore they persuaded all men to believe that Christ died for them (Col. 1:28)." To which I answer; that it was not the love of Christ, but the terror of the Lord, that prevailed upon them to persuade men (v. 11), and that it is not said, that they persuaded all men, but men; for it was not all men they preached unto. Moreover, this persuasion was not to believe in Christ, but a general judgment, to which all will be

summoned (v. 10), much less to believe that Christ died for all to whom they preached; of which kind of persuasion we have no instance, neither here nor in Colossians 1:28, nor in any other passage of scripture.

Section 40—2 Corinthians 5:19.

To wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

This text is produced to confirm the truth of. general redemption; and it is said. to do it beyond exception; which, whether it does or no, will better appear, when,

I. It is considered, that the word world cannot be understood of every man or woman that have been, are, or shall be in the world. For,

1. All and every one of these, are not reconciled to God. The text says, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; which must be understood of his doing it either intentionally, or actually; if intentionally only, that is, if he intended to reconcile the world to himself by Christ, and drew the scheme of reconciliation in him, can intentions be frustrated? Shall not his counsel stand? will he not do all his pleasure? shall a scheme so wisely laid by him in his Son, come to nothing; or at least, only in part be executed? which must be the case, if it was his design to reconcile every individual of mankind to himself, since a large number of them are not reconciled: but if the words are to be understood of an

actual reconciliation by Christ, which is certainly the sense of the preceding verse, all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ; then it is beyond dispute, that the word world cannot be taken in so large a sense as to include every man and woman in the world; since there are multitudes who die in their sins, in a state of enmity to God and Christ, whose peace is not made with God, nor they reconciled to his way of salvation by his Son. It is indeed said, that; "the import of these words is plainly this; he was offering through Christ a reconciliation to the world, and promising them who would believe in him, absolution from their past offenses." To which I answer; Admitting the ministry of the word is here designed, that is not an offer of reconciliation to the world; but a proclamation or declaration of peace, made by the blood of Jesus, of reconciliation by the death of the Son of God: nor is this ministry of reconciliation sent to all men; millions of people were dead and gone before and since the word of reconciliation was committed to the apostles, who never so much as heard of this ministry; nor did it reach to all that were alive at that present time. Besides, the text does not speak of what God did by the ministry of his apostles, but of what he himself had been doing in his Son, and which was antecedent, and gave rise unto, and was the foundation of their ministry. There was a scheme of reconciliation drawn in God's counsels before the world began, and an actual reconciliation by the death of Christ, which is published in the gospel by the ministers of it, and which is not published to all mankind; nor did the apostles entreat all men to whom they preached, to be

reconciled to God; the exhortation in the following verse, be ye reconciled to God, is given not to all men, but to the believing Corinthians, for whom Christ was made sin, and they made the righteousness of God in him.

2. It cannot be said of every man and woman in the world, that God does not impute their trespasses to them; whereas this is said of the world here: Blessed indeed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin; but does this blessedness come upon all men? Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment and some they follow after (1 Tim. 5:24). To say that God is here "promising to them who would believe in him, an absolution from past offenses," is putting a wrong construction on the words; which are not a promise of what God would do, did men believe, but a declaration of what he had been doing: besides, if only an absolution from past offenses is promised, what must be done with after ones? And after all, they who would or do believe, are not every man and woman in the world.

II. There is good reason to conclude, that the whole world, is to be restrained to the elect of God; since these are the persons whose peace Christ is, who are reconciled to God by his death, whose sins are not imputed to them, and against whom no charge of any avail can be laid; and perhaps the people of God among the Gentiles, may be more especially designed; since,

1. They are called by the world, who are said to be reconciled (Rom. 11:12, 15), yea, the whole world, for whose sins Christ

is the propitiation (1 John 2:2). Nor was any thing more common among the Jews than to call the Gentiles $\mu\lambda\omega[j]$ twmwa, the nations of the world. Dr. Hammond, by the world, in this place, understands the greater and worse part of it, the Gentiles.

2. This sense well agrees with the context. In verses 14, 15, the apostle asserts that Christ died for all, Gentiles as well as Jews, and adds, in verse 16, Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more; that is, we make no difference in our ministry, nor in our esteem, value, and affections for men, with respect to their carnal descent, whether they be born of Jewish or Gentile parents: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh; had a value for him, as a Jew, as one of our own country, entertained gross notions about him, and about a temporal deliverance from the Romans, and a temporal kingdom to be erected amongst us by him; yet now henceforth know we him no more; we have quitted our former carnal apprehensions of him, and only look upon him as a spiritual Savior of Jews and Gentiles; therefore, verse 17, if any man, Jew or Gentile, be in Christ, he is a new creature, or let him be a new creature; which is the main thing we regard; old things are passed away; the Old Testament economy is abolished; behold all things are become new, under the Gospel dispensation; hence now in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; for this is the subject of our ministry, God was in Christ reconciling the world, Gentiles as well as Jews, unto himself.

3. That reconciliation was made for Gentiles as well as Jews, was not only a reason why the apostles, to whom the word of reconciliation was committed, carried it among the Gentiles, but was also a noble argument to engage the believing Gentiles at Corinth to regard the exhortation made unto them, verse 20, be ye reconciled to God, that is, to his providential dispensations towards them, to the order and ordinances of his house, to the form of discipline he had fixed in the church, and to all the laws of Christ, as King of saints, since he had been reconciling them to himself by his Son, the blessed effects of which they then enjoyed. This exhortation, was not made to unconverted sinners, much less to the non-elect; but to the church of Christ, professing faith in him, and who were reconciled to God's way of salvation by him.

Section 41—2 Corinthians 6:1.

We therefore, as workers together with him; beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

This scripture usually stands among the proofs of the saints' defectibility or apostasy, from whence it is concluded, that a man may receive the true grace of God in regeneration in vain, which may become useless and of no avail, may be lost, and he himself everlastingly perish. But,

1. We are not to understand by the grace of God, that grace which is implanted in the souls of men at the time of their regeneration, for that cannot be received in vain; it always

produces its proper fruit and designed effect; it begins, carries on, and finishes the work of sanctification; it is an immortal, incorruptible, never-dying seed; it cannot be lost in any part or branch of it; it is a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life; it is closely and inseparably connected with eternal glory; to all those to whom God gives grace he gives glory; whom he calls and justifies, them he also glorifies.

2. The grace of God is sometimes to be understood of gifts of grace, and particularly such as qualify men for the work of the ministry, in which sense it is used by the apostle Paul, in Romans 1:5, and Romans 12:6; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Corinthians 15:10; of which he had a large measure; nor was the grace which was bestowed on him in vain, seeing he labored more abundantly than all the rest of the apostles. And it will appear reasonable to take the phrase in the same sense here, if we consider the words as they stand in connection with the latter part of the preceding chapter, and some following verses in this, after this manner; seeing the word and ministry of reconciliation is committed to us, and we are ambassadors for Christ; we not only pray you, the members of the church at Corinth, to be reconciled to the order of the Gospel, and the laws of Christ in his house, but as workers together, (not, with him, that is, God or Christ, which is not in the text,) as fellow-laborers in the Lord's vineyard, as jointly concerned in the same embassy of peace; we beseech you also, the ministers of the word in this church, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; that is, that you be careful that the gifts bestowed on you do not lie neglected and useless, but that you use and improve

them to the advantage, of the church and glory of Christ, by giving up yourselves to study, meditation, and prayer, and by laboring constantly in the word and doctrine; and also, that you have a strict regard to your lives and conversations, giving no offense in any thing, laying no stumbling-block in the way of such you are concerned with, that the ministry be not blamed, verse 3 (for verse 2 is included in a parenthesis), and then adds the apostles, but in all things approving, eautouV , yourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, etc.

3. The grace of God often designs the doctrine of grace, or the Gospel of the, grace of God, as in Titus 2:11, Hebrews 12:15; Jude 1:4; which may be truly so called, since it is a declaration of the love and grace of God to sinful men; it ascribes the whole of salvation to it, and is the means of implanting the grace of God in the hearts of his people in regeneration. Now the grace of God, in this sense, that is, the doctrine of grace, may be received in vain, so as that it may become useless, take no real effect, produce no real fruit; as was the case of such who received seed by the way- side, into stony places, and among thorns; and is the case whenever it comes in word only; is received, not into the heart, but into the head only; when the life and conversation is not becoming it; and especially when it is abused to vile purposes, that is, when men turn this doctrine of the grace of God into lasciviousness; and when besides, they drop, deny, and fall off from those truths of the Gospel they have before professed; and since this too often is the case, an entreaty, an exhortation of this kind made to a visible church, consisting of real and nominal professors, cannot be improper,

without supposing that true believers may fall from or lose the true grace of God in regeneration.

Section 42—2 Corinthians 11:2, 3.

For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy! For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The fears of the apostle, expressed in these words, and in Galatians 4:11, 1 Thessalonians 3:5, lest pious persons should miscarry, are thought to add farther strength to the argument against the saints' final perseverance; "for, it is said, if the apostles, by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, had declared, that God had absolutely promised, that men once truly pious, should persevere to the end, how could they reasonably express their fears, lest it, should be otherwise?" To which I reply,

1. That the fears of the apostle about the persons referred to in these several passages, were not lest they should fall from the love and favor of God, nor from the grace which was implanted in them, and so miscarry of heaven and eternal happiness; but lest, through the subtlety of Satan, and his instruments, false teachers, their minds and judgments should be in any degree corrupted from the purity and simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, and they should any way give into erroneous doctrines, or comply with Judaizing practices, and so the labor of him and

his fellow- ministers, in instructing and establishing them in Gospel truths, be so far in vain.

2. The fears of the apostle, lest these persons should fall in this sense, yea, even if they could be extended further, are no proofs of fact that these persons did fall away; but only, at most, declare his apprehensions of their danger. And it is certain, that the most eminent saints are in danger through the wiles of Satan, the cunning of false teachers, the persecutions of the world, and the corruption of their own hearts, of falling from their steadfastness in the faith; and it is owing to the mighty power and grace of God, that they are in any measure preserved. The apostle might express his fears on account of these things without any contradiction to or hesitation about God's absolute promise of the saints' final perseverance, and his faithfulness in the performance of it.

3. The jealousies and fears of the apostle about these persons, expressed with such a tender and affectionate concern for them, might be purposely directed and powerfully blessed to them by the Spirit, by whom he was assisted, as a means of their preservation from false principles and practices they were in danger of falling into, and thereby God's absolute promise of their final perseverance be accomplished. Nor does the apostle's fear, jealousy, caution, and watchfulness of himself, expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:27, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away imply, any possibility or danger, or supposed danger, of his eternal damnation; since the word *ajdo*>*kimov*, does not design a

reprobate, as that is opposed to an elect person; for the apostle knew in whom he had believed, and was persuaded that nothing could separate him from the love of God; but his concern was, lest he should do any thing that might bring a reproach on the Gospel, and his ministry be justly blamed, and brought under contempt, and so be rejected and disapproved of by men, and become useless.

Section 43—Philippians 2:12.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

These words are represented as militating against God's decree of reprobation, man's passiveness, and the unfrustrableness of grace in conversion, and the final perseverance of the saints.

1. It is asserted, that "to say God seriously invites, exhorts, and requires all men to work out their salvation, and yet, by his decree of reprobation, hath rendered the event, to most of them, impossible, is to make the gospel of Christ a mockery." Bat it should be observed, that this exhortation is not given to all men, and particularly not to reprobates, but to men already believing and converted, as is elsewhere owned, even to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which were at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, in whom a good work of grace was begun; to whom it was given both to believe on Christ, and suffer for his sake; who were beloved by the apostle, had always obeyed the

Lord, and in whose hearts he was then working both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Now to exhort these, and such as are in the like state and condition, to work out their salvation, who have a principle of spiritual life in them, and have measures of grace and strength given them, answerable to what they are exhorted to, is not to make the gospel of Christ a mockery, since these can never be thought to be reprobates; nor does this contradict the decree of the reprobation of others, which springs from the sovereign and righteous will of God, and which is not, but sin, the cause of man's damnation.

2. It is asked, "If some physical and irresistible operation were required on God's part, which makes it necessary for us to will and to do, why are we then commanded to work out our own salvation? for can we act where we are purely passive?" To which I reply, that these words are spoken to men already converted, in whom the work of regeneration was wrought, in which work they were purely passive; though now, having a principle of spiritual life, and under the influences of the grace of God, were capable of being active in working out their own salvation, which is something distinct from conversion and regeneration, and is to be understood, not in such a sense, as though men could procure and obtain spiritual and eternal salvation by their own performances, which is contrary to the Scriptures, which ascribe salvation in whole, and in part, to the free grace of God; contrary to the glory of the divine perfections of wisdom, grace, and righteousness, and inconsistent with the weakness and impotence of believers themselves; besides, the best works of men are imperfect, and,

were they perfect, could not be meritorious, since the requisites of merit are wanting in them. Add to this, that salvation is obtained alone by Christ, and is already finished, and not to be wrought out now, either by Christ or believers; and, were it procured by the works of men, the death of Christ would be in vain; boasting in the creature would not be excluded, and men's obligations to God and Christ would be greatly weakened; and, since this sense of the words is attended with such insuperable difficulties, it can never be the true meaning of them. Let it be observed, that the words may be rendered, work about your salvation, that is, employ yourselves in things which, though not essential to, yet do accompany salvation, and are to be performed by all those who expect it, though not do be expected for the performance of them; such as hearing of the word, submission to gospel ordinances, a discharge of every branch of spiritual and evangelical obedience, for which-the apostle commends them in the beginning of this verse, since they had always obeyed, not only in his presence, but much more in his absence, he exhorts them to go on in a course of cheerful obedience to the close of their days, when they should receive the end of their faith, that which they were aiming at, and looking for, even the salvation of their souls. The Syriac version, if not a strict translation, yet gives the just sense of the words, by rendering them [^]wkyjyd anhlwp wjwlp do the work or business of your lives, that is, your generation work, what God has cut out and appointed for you in this life; do all that with fear and trembling, with all humility, not trusting to your

own strength, but depending on the grace of God, who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

3. This exhortation to work out salvation with fear and trembling, being directed to such who were, at present, in a state of favor with God, and in whom God had begun the good work, with others, directed to churches and persons, to fear, lest they should fall away, and finally miscarry, such as Proverbs 23:17, and 28:14, Romans 11:20, Hebrews 4:1, and 12:28, 1 Peter 1:17; are improved into an argument against any absolute decree or promise of God, in favor of the saints' final perseverance: for it, is said, "What ground of fear can there be, where God hath absolutely decreed to confer this salvation, and stands obliged by promise to afford those means, which will infallibly produce it?" To which I answer:

1. The exhortation to the Philippians to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, is not to be understood of a slavish fear of hell and damnation, or lest they should fall away and finally miscarry; since this would have been a distrust of the power and faithfulness of God, and so criminal in them. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the apostle would exhort to such a fear when he himself was confident of this very thing, that he which had begun a good work in them would perform it until the day, of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). Besides, the exhortation would be very oddly formed, if this were the sense of it, work out your salvation with fear of damnation, but as the phrase with fear and trembling always designs, wherever used, so here, modesty and humility, and stands opposed to pride and

vain confidence; as in Romans 11:20, Be not high-minded, but fear, which sense perfectly agrees with the apostle's general design in this chapter, which is to engage the saints to a modest and humble deportment in the whole of their conversation with each other, and in every branch of duty; and which he enforces by the example of Christ, in his incarnation, humiliation, and death; and in imitation of him, urges to a constant and cheerful obedience, with all humility of soul, without dependence on it, or vain-glory in it; but ascribing it wholly to the grace of God, who works in us both to will add to do of his good pleasure.

2. Several of the passages referred to, such as Proverbs 23:17, and Proverbs 28:14, Hebrews 12:28, 1 Peter 1:17, are to be understood not of a fear of apostasy, but of a filial, spiritual and evangelical fear of God; which is a grace of the Spirit of God, a branch of the new covenant, and of considerable moment to secure the saints from a total and final departure from God; I will put my fear into their hearts, says God, that they shall not depart from me (Jer. 32:40).

3. The apostle, in Hebrews 4:1, speaks indeed of a cautionary fear of falling; but yet in that does not exhort the believing Hebrews to fear lest any of them should fall short of entering into rest, as Dr. Whitby cites the words, but lest any of them should seem to come short of it. Now, between coming short and seeming to come short is a great difference; and though there was no danger of their coming short of heaven, yet, inasmuch as through the disagreeableness of conversation, they might seem to others to come short; therefore, for the glory, of

God, the honor of the gospel, the credit of religion, and the good of others, it became them to be cautious, wary, and jealous of themselves, and watchful over their conversations, that they gave no occasion to any one to entertain such an opinion of them. Hence it appears that all the reasoning against the doctrine of the saints' perseverance to the end, founded on these scriptural exhortations, to fear, are vain and impertinent.

Section 44—1 Timothy 1:19, 20.

Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander.

Among the instances of the saints' apostasy, stand,

I. Hymeneus, Alexander, and their associates, who are here said to put away a good conscience and make shipwreck of faith. "Now," it is said, "to put away a good conscience belongs to them alone who once had, and ought to have retained it; and to make shipwreck of the faith, so as to blaspheme the doctrine which they once professed, is surely to fall off from the in profession of it." And these instances are represented as a sufficient confutation of all the arguments produced from Scripture for the doctrine of perseverance. But,

1. It should be proved that these men were once good men, and had the truth of grace in them; otherwise they are no instances of the apostasy of saints. Hymeneus and Alexander, who are

mentioned by name, were vile, wicked men; the one was a profane and vain babbling, who went not from the truth of grace to a course of sin, but from a lesser degree of impiety (1 Tim. 2:16, 17) to more ungodliness; the other, who seems to be the same with Alexander the coppersmith (1 Tim. 4:14, 15) did the apostle Paul much evil, and not only withstood his words and doctrines, but also those of others.

2. Their putting away a good conscience, does not necessarily imply that they formerly had one, since that may be rejected and put away which was never had. Thus of the Jews, who contradicted and blasphemed the word of God, never received it, nor gave their assent to it, the apostle says, ye put it from you, *pwqei~aqe* (Acts 13:45, 46), ye rejected it; the same word which is here used, and signifies to refuse, reject anything with detestation and contempt. These men always had an abhorrence to a good conscience among men, and to a good life and conversation, the evidence of it, and at last threw off the mask, and dropped the faith they professed, as being contrary to their evil conscience and practices. But admitting that this phrase does suppose that they once had a good conscience, this is not to be understood of a conscience really purged and cleansed by the blood of Christ; but of a good conscience in external show only, or in comparison of what they afterwards appeared to have. Besides, some men, destitute of the grace of God, may be said to have a good conscience in some sense, or with respect to some particular facts, or to their general conduct and behavior among men; so the apostle Paul, whilst unregenerate, lived in all good conscience (Acts 23:1) and it is said of the

unenlightened heathens, that their conscience also was bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another (Rom. 2:15). Now, these persons had put away, rejected, and acted contrary to the very dictates of natural conscience; theirs was become seared with a hot iron, and so spoke lies in hypocrisy, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4:1, 2).

3. It will be granted, that to make shipwreck of faith, so as to blaspheme the doctrine which they once professed, is to fall off from the profession of it; but then to fall from the doctrine of the Gospel, and a profession of it, and to fall from the grace and favor of God, or from the grace of faith, are different things. Man may

fall totally and finally from the one, but not from the other; and it is not the grace, but the doctrine of faith, that is here designed, and is the sense in which it is often used in this epistle; (See 1 Tim. 3:9; 4:1; 5:8; 6:21.) though supposing faith as a grace was intended, the phrase, to make shipwreck of it, is not strong enough to prove the total and final falling away of true believers, could such be thought to be here meant, since persons may be shipwrecked and not drowned or lost. The apostle Paul thrice suffered shipwreck (2 Cor. 11:25), and yet was each time saved. Besides, as there is a true and unfeigned, so there is a feigned and counterfeit faith, which may be in persons who have no true grace, and may be shipwrecked so as to be lost.

II. The next instances of the saints falling away are Hymeneus and Philetus, of whom the apostle says, that they erred concerning the truth, and overthrow the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:18, 19). Now,

1. As was before observed, it should be proved that these men were once good men, true believers in Christ; whereas, on the contrary, it appears that they had only a form our godliness, but denied the power thereof, were evil men and seducers, who waxed worse and worse.

2. When it, is said of them, who, concerning the truth, have erred; or, as Dr. Whitby renders the words, have fallen off from the truth, for about such a rendering we will not contend; the meaning is not that they fell from the truth of grace in their hearts, which it doth not appear they ever had, but from the truth of the gospel in the profession of it, and particularly from that branch of it which respects the resurrection, saying, that the resurrection is past already.

3. When they are said to overthrow the faith of some, this is not to be understood of the true grace of faith, the end of which is the salvation of the soul, and is not to be overthrown by men or devils, but of a doctrinal faith, or an historical one, which is a bare assent of the mind to some doctrinal proposition, as here, to the resurrection of the dead, and which had a place in some nominal professors, who were ever learning and never able to come to the saving knowledge of the truth; and after all these instances of falling from the truth, and of the subversion of

faith, the apostle says, Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his: so that these are no instances of the apostasy of real saints.

III. Many Judaizers in the church of Galatia, appear next much suspected to be in the black list of apostates, of whom it is said (Gal. 5:4), that they were fallen from grace; from whence it is argued, that they therefore must have been formerly in a state of grace, and consequently, that such who were once known of God might fall from his grace and favor. But it should be observed,

1. That as on the one hand, all that is said in this epistle, to that church in general, is not to be applied to every member in particular; as that they had received the Spirit through the hearing of faith, were all the children of God, and the like; so, on the other hand, it is not to be thought that all of them were fallen from grace, but only whosoever of them were justified by the law, that is, who sought for justification by the, works of it; so that they were not the same individual persons who fell, to whom the best characters in the epistle belong.

2. The grace from whence they fell was not the grace and favor of God in his own heart towards them, nor any grace of God wrought in their hearts; but the doctrine of grace, particularly that of

justification by the grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, which they had formerly professed, but were now going

off from it, and embracing the doctrine of justification by works.

IV. To this head of instances of apostasy are referred the predictions of the Scripture concerning persons who should fall away; such as,

1. The words of our Lord, in Matthew 24:12, 13, are thought to be, because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Now these many are either hypocrites and formal professors, liable to be deceived by false teachers, verse 11, and so not the elect of God, who cannot be seduced (v. 24), and their love is no other than a flashy zeal for religion, which in time, through the subtlety of false teachers, the corruptions of men, and persecutions of the world, abates, waxes cold, and at last disappears, and so no instance of the falling away of the saints; or else these many are true believers whose love to Christ, though it may wax cold in bad times, yet shall not be lost even as the church at Ephesus left, abated in the fervency of her first love, though she did not lose it; which, though a proof of declension, yet not of final and total apostasy.

2. The words of the apostle Paul, in 1 Timothy 4:1, are produced for the same purpose; Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith; but this is to be understood, not of a falling away from the true grace of God, but of a departure from the doctrine of faith; since it follows, giving heed to seducing spirits, and

doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats; which manifestly point at the general falling away (2 Thess. 2:3) from the truths of the gospel, when the man of sin, and son of perdition, the Pope of Rome, was revealed.

V. This would be a proper place to consider the instances of David, Solomon, Peter, Demas, and others, who are usually alleged as proofs of the saints' apostasy; but these are not mentioned by the celebrated writer I chiefly attend to. However, I shall just observe, that as to David, though, by his fall, his bones were broken, and the joy of salvation was gone, yet his salvation was safe and secure; and though the graces of the Spirit might lie unexercised by him, yet the Spirit itself, was not taken from him, as appears from his own words, when most sensible of his case: Take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit (Ps, 51:11, 12). As for Solomon, though his backsliding was great, and attended with aggravating circumstances, yet it does not appear to be total, from some qualifying expressions in the account of it; as, that his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father; and that he went not fully after the Lord as did David his father (1 Kings 11:4, 6); nor was it final; which is not reasonable to suppose of one who was so eminent a type of Christ: and besides would be contrary to the promise God made concerning him, saying, I will be his father, and he shall be my son: If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of

men, and with the stripes of the children of men but my mercy shall not depart away from him (2 Sam. 7:14, 15); Besides, he had repentance for his sins, and the book of Ecclesiastes was penned by him in his old age, as an acknowledgment and retraction of his former follies: and after his death, some persons are spoken of with a commendation for walking in the way of David and Solomon (2 Chron. 11:17). As for Peter, his fall was not total; Christ prayed for him, that his faith failed not; nor final, for he was quickly restored by repentance. And as for Demas, who, very probably, was a good man, since he is mentioned with such who were so, Colossians 4:14, Philemon 4:24; what the apostle says of him (2 Tim. 4:10), as that he had forsaken him, having loved this present world, is not sufficient to prove him an apostate, any more than Mark's departure from Paul, as others at Pamphylia; or that too much love of the world, which is to be observed in many otherwise valuable good men, would prove them to be so; however, these instances are recorded in Scripture for our admonition; that he that thinks he stands, should take heed lest he fall.

Section 45—1 Timothy 2:4.

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

These words are often used to oppose God's decree of reprobation, and in favor of universal redemption; but with what success will be seen when it is observed,

1. That the salvation which God here wills that all men should enjoy, is not a mere possibility of salvation for all, nor putting all men into a salvable state, nor an offer of salvation to all, nor a proposal of sufficient means of it to all in his word; but a real, certain, and actual salvation, which he has determined they shall have, has provided and occurred in the covenant of his grace, sent his Son into this world to effect, which is fully effected by him.

2. That the will of God, that all men should be saved, is not a conditional will, or will that depends upon the will of man, or anything to be performed by him: for if this was the case, none might be saved; and if any should, salvation would be of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, and not of God that sheweth mercy, contrary to the express words of scripture (Rom. 9:16) but this will of God, respecting the salvation of men, is absolute and unconditional, and what infallibly secures and produces it: nor is it such a will as is distinguishable into antecedent and ill consequent: with the former of which it is said, God wills the salvation of all men, as they are his creatures, and the work of his hands; with the latter he wills or not wills it, according to their future conduct and behavior: but the will of God, concerning man's salvation, is one entire, invariable, unalterable, and unchangeable will; He is in one mind; and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth even that he doth (Job 23:13). Nor is it merely his will of approbation or complacency, being only expressive of what is grateful and well pleasing to him; but it is his ordaining, purposing, and determining will, which is never frustrated, but

is always fulfilled. I know it is observed by some, that it is not said that God will *sw~sai salvos facere*, save all men, as implying what he would do; but that he would have all men *swqh~nai salvos fieri*, to be saved, as signifying their duty to seek after salvation, and use all means for the obtaining of it, which, when effected, is well pleasing to him. But the other sense is to be abundantly preferred.

3. That the all men whom God would have to be saved, are such whom he would also have to come to the knowledge of the truth; that is, not a mere nominal, but experimental knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life, or of the true way of life and salvation by him; and all those whom God saves, they are brought by his Spirit and grace to an acquaintance with these things, which is an act of his sovereign will, and an instance of his distinguishing favor; for whilst he hides these things from the wise and prudent, he reveals them to babes: even so, Father, says Christ, for so it seemed good in thy sight (Matthew 11:25, 26). Hence,

4. By all men whom God would have to be saved, we are not to understand every individual, of mankind, since it is not the will of God that all men, in this large sense, should be saved; for it is his will that some men should be damned, and that very justly, for their sins and transgressions; ungodly men, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation (Jude 1:4); and to whom it will be said, go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. Moreover, if it was the will of God that every individual of mankind should be saved, then every one would be saved; for

who hath resisted his will? or can do it? Does he not do according to His will in the armies of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth? (Rom. 9:19; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11). Nay, does he not work all things after the counsel of his own will? and it is certain that all men, in this large sense, are not saved, for some will go away into everlasting punishment, when the righteous shall go into eternal life (Matthew 25:46). Besides, the same persons God would have saved he would have come to the knowledge of the truth; but this is not his will with respect to every individual of mankind; were it his will, he would, no doubt, give to every man the means of it, which he has not done, nor does he; for many hundred years he suffered all nations to walk in their ways, and overlooked the times of their ignorance. He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them (Acts 14:16; 17:30; Ps.147:19, 20). From many to whom the Gospel does come, it is hid; some are given up to strong delusions to believe a lie, and few are savingly and experimentally acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus.

5. There are indeed many things urged in favor of this large sense of the phrase all men. As,

1. The exhortation of the apostle, in verse 1, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. But surely by all men, is not meant every in, individual man, that has been, is, or shall be, in the world; millions of men are dead and gone, for whom prayer is not to be made; many in

hell, to whom it would be of no service; and many in heaven, who stand in no need of it; nor should we pray for such who have sinned the sin unto death (1 John 5:16) .Besides giving of thanks, as well as prayers, were to be made for all men; but surely the apostle's meaning is not that the saints should give thanks for wicked men, and persecutors, and particularly for a persecuting Nero; nor for heretics or false teachers, such as Hymeneus and Alexander, whom he had delivered to Satan; the phrase is therefore to be taken in a limited and restrained sense, for some only, as appears from verse 2, for kings and for all in authority; that is, for men of the highest, as well as of the lowest rank and quality.

2. This sense is contended for, from the reason given in verse 5, for there is one God, "who is the God of all, the common Father and Creator of all men." Now, "it is said, thus he is the God of all men in particular; and so this argument must show, he would have all men in particular to be saved." To which may be replied, that God is the God of all men, as the God of nature and providence, but not as the God of grace, or in a covenant way, for then it would be no distinguishing favor or happiness to any people, that the Lord is their God; he is indeed the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all, meaning believers, to whom the apostle writes (Eph. 4:6; Rom. 10:12); the same Lord is rich unto all, but then it is to them that call upon him.

3. This is argued for from the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; but it should be observed, that he is

not said to be the Mediator between God and all men, and much less every individual man; and since he is expressly called, the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 12:24), he only can be a Mediator for those who are in that covenant; and it is plain, that he has not performed the several branches of his mediatorial office, the oblation of himself on the cross, and his intercession in heaven, for every man; and though the nature he assumed common to all men, was endued with the best of human affections, and subject to the common law of humanity; yet, since it was assumed with a peculiar view to the elect of God, the seed of Abraham, they share all the peculiar blessings and favors arising from the assumption of such a nature.

4. It is observed that Christ is said, in verse 6, to give himself a ransom for all, which is understood of all men in particular; but it should be observed also, that this ransom is *ajnti>lutron uJper pa>ntwn*, a vicarious ransom substituted in the room and stead of all, whereby a full price was paid for all, and a plenary satisfaction made for the sins of all, which cannot be true of every individual man, for then no man could be justly condemned and punished. The sense of these words is best understood by what Christ himself has said, The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). So the Hebrew word *lk*, all, to which this answers, signifies sometimes many, a multitude; and sometimes only a part of a multitude, as Kimchi has observed. Wherefore,

5. It is better by all men to understand some of all sorts, as Austin did long ago, and is the sense in which the word all is to be taken in many places; as in Genesis 7:14; Matthew 4:23, 24; Joel 2:28; and is the meaning of it in verse 1, and well agrees with the matter of fact; since Christ has redeemed some of all nations, some out of every kindred, tongue, and people; and God saves and calls some of every rank and quality, as kings and peasants: of every state and condition, as rich and poor, bond and free; of every sex, male and female; of every age, young and old; and all sorts of sinners, greater and less. It is indeed said, that, according to this limitation and sense of the words, God is willing some of all kindred and people should be saved; it may more truly and properly be said, that God would have all men to be damned, and that Christ died for none; since they for whom he died are none, according to this doctrine, comparatively to the greater number for whom he died not. To which I answer, it does not become us to say what might be more truly and properly said by God, or an inspired writer. However, this is certain, that as there is a whole world that lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19), so there is a world that shall be damned; which agrees with what the apostle Paul says in so many words, that the world shall be condemned, We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned or damned with the world (1 Cor. 11:32). Moreover, though they for whom Christ died are but few comparatively, yet they cannot be said, in a comparative sense, or in any sense at all, to be none; and indeed, when considered by themselves, are a number which no man can number. But,

6. I rather think that by all men are meant the Gentiles, who are sometimes called the world, the whole world, and every creature (Rom. 11:12, 15; 1 John 2:2; Mark 16:15); which is the sense, I apprehend, in which it is used in verse 1, where the apostle exhorts, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all in authority; which was contrary to a notion that obtained among the Jews, of whom there were many in the primitive churches, that they should not pray for heathens and heathen magistrates. The apostle enforces this exhortation from the advantage which would accrue to themselves; that we may lead a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty; besides, says he, This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men, Gentiles, as well as Jews, to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and therefore has sent his ministers to preach the gospel among them; and the doctrine of the grace of God has appeared to these, all men, in order to bring them to it; for there is one God of Jews and Gentiles, who, by his gospel, has taken out of the latter a people for his name and glory; and there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who, not like Moses, who was the Mediator for the Jews only, but is for the Gentiles also; and is become our peace, that hath made both one, reconciled both in one body on the cross; preached peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh; through whom, as the mediator, both have an access by one Spirit to the Father; who also gave himself a ransom for all (Eph. 2:14-18), to redeem the Gentiles as well as Jews; which was to be testified in due time to them,

as it was by the apostle, who adds, Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity; and then concludes, I will therefore that men pray everywhere, and not be confined to the temple for public prayer, another Jewish notion and practice, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Seeing then there are some Jewish notions pointed at in the context, and the whole is adapted to the state and case of the Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation, there is a good deal of reason to conclude that they are designed here; whereby another principle of the Jews is confuted, which is, that the Gentiles should receive no benefit by the Messiah when he came; and is the true reason of most, if not of all, those universal expressions, relating to the death of Christ, we meet with in Scripture. From the whole, since these words cannot be understood of every individual man, they cannot be thought to militate against God's righteous decree of reprobation, nor to maintain and support universal redemption.

Section 46—1 Timothy 4:19.

For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe.

These words stand among others, which are said to contain, in express terms, the doctrine of general redemption. But,

1. If these words represent God, as the Savior of all men, in the sense of a spiritual and eternal salvation, they prove more than any, unless Origen and his followers contend for, namely, an universal salvation. To say that Christ is the Savior of all men, with respect to the impetration of salvation for them, though not with respect to the application of it to them all, is a distinction which must, in part, make the death of Christ in vain; nor can a mere possibility of salvation, nor a conditional one, nor a putting of men into a salvable state, be intended; for then they that believe, would be only in such a precarious and uncertain state; whereas it is certain that he that believeth shall be saved. Besides, if God is the Savior of all men, in the sense of eternal salvation, then he must be the Savior of unbelievers, contrary to many express passages of Scripture; such as John 3:18, 36, Mark 16:16, Revelation 21:8.

2. The words are to be understood of providential goodness and temporal salvation; which all men have a share in, more or less, God the Father and not Christ, is here called the living God, who is the Savior of all men, that is, the preserver of all men; who supports them in their being, and supplies them with all the necessaries of life, and especially them that believe, who are the particular care of his providence; for though he is good, and does good to all men, yet more especially to the household of faith; which was the foundation. Of the apostles' trust in him, under all their labors and reproaches, which attended the

preaching of the Gospel. Which sense of the words is perfectly agreeable both to the analogy of faith, and to the context, and is owned by some who are on the other side of the question.

Section 47—Titus 2:11, 12.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

This scripture also appears among the very many clear and express ones, in which the doctrine of universal redemption is thought to be contained. It is observed, "That the grace here mentioned, is the grace of God, even of that God who spared not his Son, but freely gave him up for us; that it is styled *hJ ca>riv hJ soth>riov*, saving grace: and that this grace hath appeared to all men;" all which is readily granted. The argument formed on these observations stands thus; "If the apostles did in their preaching tender it (salvation) to all without exception, they either tendered it to them, to whom, by God's intention it did not belong, and so exceeded their commission, or else it belongs to all men; and since it could only belong to them by virtue of Christ's passion, it follows that the benefit of his passion must belong to all," What foundation there is in the text for such kind of reasonings, will be seen when it is considered,

1. That, by the grace of God, we are not to understand the grace which lies in his own heart, or his free love, favor, and goodwill to any of the sons of men through Christ; which, though it is productive of salvation, and instructive in real piety, yet does not appear, nor has it been, nor is it made manifest to all men; neither is that grace designed by it, which lies in the hearts of believers, being implanted there by the Spirit of God; for though this also brings salvation, or has it strictly connected with it, and powerfully influences the lives and conversations of such as are partakers of it; yet it neither has appeared to, nor in all men; for all men have not faith, nor hope, nor love, nor any other graces of the Spirit! but, by the grace of God, is meant the grace which lies in the Gospel, or which is the Gospel of the grace of God, in which sense it is often used; as in Acts 20:24, 2 Corinthians 6:1, and Hebrews 12:15; and is indeed owned to be the sense of it here by the learned author I am concerned with. Now,

2. This doctrine of the grace of God bringeth salvation: it brings the news of it to the ears of men, in the external ministration of it, and brings that itself to the hearts of men, under the powerful influences and application of the Spirit of God; and so may be rightly called saving grace, as being the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe; though it is not, nor was it designed to be so, to all to whom it is externally preached; nor does the text say that it brings salvation to all men; and if it did, or if it should be rendered, as it is by some, the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men; to which agrees the: Syriac version, *lk tyjm*, that

quickeneth or saveth all; so the Arabic; this cannot be understood of every individual person, every man and woman; for the Gospel has not brought salvation to every one, in any sense; not in the external ministry of it, for there have been multitudes who have never so much as heard the outward sound of salvation by Jesus Christ, and fewer still who have had an application of it to their souls by the Spirit of God: to many to whom it has come, it has been a hidden gospel, and the savior of death unto death.

3. It is indeed said, that this doctrine of the grace of God hath appeared to all men; but by all men cannot be meant every man and woman that has been in the world, for it would not be true that the grace of God has appeared to all in this sense. The whole Gentile world, for many hundred years, was in darkness, without the light of the Gospel; it neither shined upon them, nor in them: in the times of the apostles, when the doctrine of the Gospel appeared the most illustrious, and shone out most extensively, as well as most clearly, it reached not every individual person, nor has it in ages since, nor does it in ours, no, not in our own nation; nor in this great city, where the Gospel is most fully preached; for of preachers, they are the fewest who preach the doctrine of the grace of God; and so of hearers, they are the fewest who attend unto and embrace this doctrine; multitudes know nothing of it, are under neither the form nor power of it. Since then, matter of fact stands incontestably against this sense of the words, we must look out for another. By all men, therefore, may be meant all sorts of men, men of every rank and condition of life, high and low,

rich and poor, bond and free, masters and servants; which sense of the phrase well agrees with the context, in which the apostle charges Titus to exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again, nor purloining, but showing all fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things (Titus 2:9, 10); and gives this as the reason of all, for the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, servants as well as masters; teaching us who have believed, whether we be masters or servants, of whatsoever state or condition, to live a godly and religious life, whilst we are in this world: or by all men, we may, with Dr. Hammond, understand the Gentiles, before the times of the apostles. The Gospel was like a candle lighted up in one part of the world, in Judea only; but now it shone out like the sun in its meridian glory, and appeared to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews; it was no longer confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but preached to every creature under heaven; but though it appeared to all, it was not applied to all, though it shined out upon them all, yet not into the hearts of them all; nor is this universal appearance of the Gospel, in the external ministration of it, any proof of universal redemption, nor was it so designed by the apostle; and it is easy to observe, that when he comes to speak of redemption, and the persons redeemed in verse 14, he makes use of a different form of expression; where he says, who gave himself for us, not for them, or for all; that he might redeem us, not them, or all men, from all iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar, distinct people, zealous of good works. The argument above cited, is

founded on a manifest falsehood, that the apostles tendered the saving grace of God to all men, without exception whereas they tendered it to none, but preached the Gospel to all, without any distinction of persons who came to hear it. The Armenians frequently argue from an universal offer of the Gospel to an universal redemption; such whose ministrations run in the strain of offers and tenders, would do well to consider this, and deliver themselves from this argument, who only are pinched by it.

4. The doctrine of the grace of God is represented as teaching us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Observe, the apostle does not say, teaching them, all men, to whom it appeared, which is the sad mistake of a learned writer; but teaching us, to whom it has come, not in word only, but in power; and so taught them not only doctrinally, but influentially, both negative and positive holiness; which lesson, all who learn will be undoubtedly saved, though not by learning this lesson, or doing these things, but by our Lord's salutary passion; to which things they are obliged by the grace of God and sufferings of Christ; though all men are not obliged by them, of which many are ignorant, but by the law of nature; from whence this absurdity therefore does not follow, "that there are some yet, yea, the greatest part of Christians, who are not, on the account of this grace appearing to them, or of these sufferings, obliged to the performance of these duties." Since all men are not Christians, and all that are true and real Christians Christ suffered for, and the grace of God appeals to

with powerful influences, engaging them to the discharge of these things.

Section 48—The Epistle to the Hebrews.

It is said, "That the Epistle to the Hebrews was manifestly written to prevent the apostasy of the believing Jews: and that as the excellent Dr. Barrow used to say, it was written against the doctrine of perseverance, and that it certainly contains many cogent arguments, against that doctrine, as is evident from the exhortations, cautions, promises, declarations, and threats, to true believers, of whom the apostle there speaks; which suppose that they unquestionably might fall away, both finally and totally."

1. It is very awkwardly expressed, and sounds a little oddly, that this epistle should be written to prevent the apostasy of believing Jews, and yet written against the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, since all means to prevent apostasy tend to establish and secure perseverance, and can never be contrary to the doctrine of it; and among the means of perseverance may be reckoned the exhortations, cautions, promises, declarations, and threats mentioned, and, therefore, ought not to be considered as so many cogent arguments against the doctrine of it. Besides, this church of the Hebrews, like other churches, no doubt, consisted of real and nominal professors, true believers, and hypocrites; and, perhaps, with a particular view to the latter, many of these exhortations, cautions, promises, and threats are given out; and, supposing them to be all true

believers, these directions were not unseasonable and improper, but very useful to stir them up to duty, diligence, care, and watchfulness, since there might be danger of a partial, though not of a total and final falling away; and, at most, these can only imply a possibility or danger of such a falling, considered in themselves, and if left to themselves, through sin, Satan, and false teachers, but prove no matter of fact, or furnish out any instance of any one true believer that ever did finally and totally fall away.

2. It seems strange that this epistle should be written against the doctrine of perseverance, when there are so many strong proofs of this doctrine in it; the author of represents the unchangeableness of God's counsel, purpose, and promise, respecting the salvation of his people, in the strongest light, when he says, Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us (Heb. 6:17, 18); but where would be the immutability of God's counsel, or the strong consolation of the saints, if the heirs of promise could possibly perish? In it, also, Christ is set forth as having, by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14; 7:25; 2:10, 13); as able, and as one that will save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him; as one that ever lives to make intercession for the saints; and, as the Captain of their salvation, who has brought, and will bring, many sons safe to glory, even all the sons of

God; for, at the great day, he will say, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me, which he would not be able to do should any of them be lost and perish. The graces of the Spirit are spoken of as sure and certain things, faith is said to be the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and hope, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast (Heb. 11:1; 6:19); yea, the apostle says of these believing Hebrews (Heb. 12:28; 10:34, 38, 39; 6:9), as well as of himself, that they had received a kingdom which cannot be moved, and knew in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance; that they were not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul: and that the just shall live by faith. He was persuaded better things of them, and things that accompany salvation, when such who were not true believers, finally and totally fell away, to whom alone the threats in this epistle are directed. From all which it is plain, that this epistle was not written against the doctrine of perseverance; nor are the exhortations, cautions, promises, and declarations, made to true believers, cogent arguments against it, since these were designed as means to promote and secure it, and do not in the least imply that any of the true believers in this church might, or should, finally and totally fall away.

Section 49—Hebrews 2:9.

That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

The doctrine of universal redemption is said to be contained in express terms in these words, and it is observed upon them, that "here is no restraint at all, nor any seeming limitation of the comprehensive phrase, he tasted death for every man, distributively taken;" and that there is something "which doth seem to strengthen the general intendment of the phrase, for this is said to magnify the grace of God in sending his Son to die for men; now sure the grace of God will be more magnified by this general extent of our Savior's death, than by contracting the intentment of it to a few; for, if the grace of God be great in sending his Son to die for a few chosen persons, it must be a greater in sending him to die for many, and greater still in giving him up to die for us all." To which I reply;

1. That the word man is not in the original text; which says not that Christ should taste death, *uJper panto<v ajnqrw>pou*, for every man, but *uJper panto<v*, which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered for the whole, that is, for the whole body, the church (Eph. 4:16), for which Christ died, and of which he is the Savior; or distributively, and be translated for every one, that is, for every one of the sons, Christ, the Captain of salvation, brings to glory, (v. 10); for every one of the brethren, whom he sanctifies, is not ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God (vv. 11, 12); for every one of the members of the church, even the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, in the midst of which he sang praise (v. 12), for every one of the children God has given to him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood (vv. 13, 14); and for every one of the seed of

Abraham, taken in a spiritual sense, which are Christ's, whose nature he assumed (v. 16). Moreover, supposing there is a change of number, and that $\text{uJper panto} < \text{v}$, is instead of $\text{uJper pantw} \sim \text{n}$, for all, that is, for all men, there is, in the context, a plain restraint and limitation of the phrase, to all the sons, the brethren, the members of the church, the children, the seed of Abraham, for all whom Christ tasted death, that is, he really died, and became the author of eternal salvation to them, which does not in the least help the cause of general redemption.

2. It deserves consideration, whether the words $\text{uJper panto} < \text{v}$ $\text{geu} > \text{shtai qana} > \text{tou}$, may not be rightly rendered, that he should taste of every death, or of the whole of death. This hint I have received from an author referred to in the margin. If this reading of the words can be established, as I think it may, agreeably to their grammatical construction, the context, and the analogy of faith, the argument, and any color of or pretense for one from hence, in favor of the universal scheme, are entirely removed: should it be objected, that if this were the sense of the words, they would have been placed thus, $\text{geu} > \text{shtai uJper panto} < \text{v}$ $\text{qana} > \text{tou}$, and not the verb between the adjective and substantive; it may be observed, that there is in the very text itself a like position of words, as $\text{hjlattwme} > \text{non ble} > \text{pomen Ihsou} \sim \text{n}$; therefore, such an objection would have no weight in it; uJper is sometimes put for $\text{peri} <$, and signifies de, of, instances of which the lexicons themselves will furnish us with; and, though the verb $\text{geu} > \text{omai}$ governs a genitive case without a preposition, yet it is well known that the Greek language abounds in pleonasm of this

kind. The context also favors this sense of the words; for if they be considered in connection with the phrase, made a little lower than the angels, or that other, crowned with glory and honor, they contain a reason for either; for if it should be asked, Why was Christ so greatly depressed and humbled in the human nature? the answer is ready, that he might be capable of tasting of every death, or of the whole of death; and should it be inquired, wherefore he is exalted in such a glorious manner, it may be replied, Because he has tasted it; for, as in verse 10, the Captain of salvation is made perfect through sufferings. And it is certain, that Christ has tasted of every death, or of the whole of death, the law required he should, in the room and stead of his people: hence we read of his deaths in the plural number (Isa. 53:9). He made his grace with the wicked, and with the rich, wylmb in his deaths; he tasted of the death of afflictions, being all his days a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; of a corporal death, being put to death in the flesh, in the body or human nature; and of eternal death, or what was equivalent to it, when his Father hid his face from him, poured out his wrath upon him, as the surety of his people, whereby his soul became exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; he tasted of the whole of death, of the agonies, miseries, bitterness, and curse of it, and so has delivered his people from the sting of it, and from all the wrath which follows upon it.

3. Whereas it is observed, that the scheme of general redemption more magnifies the grace of God than that of particular redemption does; the contrary is most true; for surely that scheme of redemption which provides for the certain

salvation of some, which some are a number that no man can number, more magnifies the grace of God, than that scheme which provides a precarious, uncertain salvation for all, giving only a mere possibility of it, with a probability that all of them may perish; leaving multitudes of them without so much as the means of salvation, and entirely without the Spirit of God to apply it to them; putting them only in a salvable state, so that they may be saved if they will; which, if it is effected, must depreciate the grace of God and sufferings of Christ, and exalt the power and freewill of man. The instance of a prince affording an act of grace and indemnity to some rebels, leaving others under condemnation, who would assuredly conceive his grace and favor would be greater were it extended to them also, and not think it, the more magnified for being so discriminating, is not to the purpose; for the prince's grace is not to be judged of by the conceptions of such rebels, who are justly left under condemnation; and whatever they think of it, it is certain, that those who are comprehended in the act of grace, look upon their prince's favor to be the greater for being so discriminating, seeing they were equally guilty with such who are left out. The grace of God is magnified, not so much by the number of persons on whom it is conferred, as by the sovereignty of it, the circumstances of the persons interested in it, and the manner in which it is bestowed.

Section 50—Hebrews 6:4-6.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the

Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

This scripture is often used to contradict the final perseverance of the saints: and it is said, that "The doctrine of the possibility of the final departure of true believers and penitents from the faith, is fully contained in these words; that it is evident they are spoken of such from the word *fwtiaqe>ntev*, enlightened, used by the same apostle, speaking to the same persons, in Hebrews 10:32, who were so enlightened as to know they had an inheritance in heaven; and from the words, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, which imply, that they had once truly repented, and were once truly in that state to which they were to be renewed, and their loss of it; and that these must fall totally and finally, because the apostle does pronounce it a thing impossible to renew them to repentance, and, on this account, that they crucified to themselves afresh the Son of God, and put him to an open shame. But,

1. Admitting that these words are spoken of true believers, they will bear such a version and sense as will be so far from furnishing out an argument against the saints' perseverance that they will conclude one for it; for they may be rendered thus: it is impossible that there should be any who have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, *parape>sontav*, and yet all away, that is, it is impossible that

such should fall away; agreeable to which is the Syriac version of the words, it is impossible, etc., [^]fjn bwtd, that they should sin again, so as to die spiritually, or lose the grace of God, and stand in need of a new work of grace upon them, which would require the crucifying of Christ again, and a re-exposing him to public shame which latter things are impossible; and, therefore, the former, namely, that they should sin in such a manner; for, according to this version, the several other things mentioned, are connected with the word impossible, as it is impossible that they should be renewed again to repentance, that they should again crucify the Son of God, and put him to shame. This sense of the words is also confirmed by the Arabic version. Moreover, should we read the words, if they fall away, they do but at most contain a supposition of the saints falling; et suppositionil ponit in esse, a supposition puts nothing in being, proves no matter of fact; nor can it be concluded from hence that any such have fallen away, and are, at most, only expressive of the danger they are in, and of the difficulty of restoring them when fallen even partially; a total and final falling away being prevented by the grace and power of God.

2. It is not evident, from the characters of those persons, that they were true believers; they are said to be once enlightened, which some understand of their being once baptized; and it is certain, that fw>tismov and fw>tisma, illumination, were used by the ancients for baptism, and fwtizo>menoi, enlightened once, for baptized persons; accordingly, the Syriac version reads the words thus, who once atydwm[ml wtjn have descended into baptism, the Ethiopic, after they are baptized;

and it will not be denied that some such, as Simon Magus, may totally and finally fall away; but not to insist on this sense of the words. There are two sorts of enlightened persons, some who are savingly enlightened by the Spirit of God, to see their lost state and condition, their need of salvation by Christ, and their interest in it, who shall never perish; others are enlightened only into the doctrines of the Gospel, and some to such a degree as to be able to preach them unto others, and yet entirely destitute of the grace of God; and when such fall away, they are no proofs nor instances of the apostasy of real saints. The enlightened persons in Hebrews 10:32, are not the same with these here mentioned; for the believing Hebrews are manifestly distinguished from these (v. 9); But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak; and therefore, though the Hebrews were so enlightened as to know that they had an inheritance in heaven, it does not follow that these were enlightened in the same manner, and so sincere Christians and true believers. They are also said to have tasted of the heavenly gift, by which, whether we understand eternal life, or any of the blessings of grace, as a justifying righteousness, or, with the Greek fathers, a [fesi n tw < n a J martiw ~ n, the remission of sins; the meaning is, that they had some speculative notions about these things, and some desires after them, arising from a natural principle of self love; or should Christ himself be intended by it, tasting of it, stands opposed to eating his flesh and drinking his blood, which is proper to true believers, who feed upon him, internally receive him, and are nourished by him; while

hypocrites, and formal professors, only taste of him, have a superficial knowledge of him, and gust for him. In the same sense are they said to have tasted the good word of God, the Gospel, in the bare form and notion of it, and the powers of the world to come, meaning either the state of the church, and the glorious things relating to it, after the first resurrection, which they might have some notional apprehensions of, or the joys and glories of heaven, on which they might be able to make some natural and pleasing reflections; or rather, the *duna>meiv*, miracles and mighty works in the former part of the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, the Jews, *akh slw* world to come, which many, as Judas and others, were able to perform, who were not sincere Christians, nor true believers, and yet might be said to be partakers of the Holy Ghost; not of his person, nor his grace, but of his extraordinary gifts, in which sense not only Dr. Hammond but Dr. Whitby himself, understand the phrase. Now it may be observed, that here is nothing said of these persons but what may be applied to hypocrites, nor any thing that is peculiar to true believers; these are not said to be regenerated, nor sanctified, nor justified, nor adopted, nor sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, all which are true of real saints. Besides, true believers are in the context, manifestly distinguished from them, and are compared to the fruitful earth, when others are only likened to the barren land, verse 8, 9; their case is mentioned with a view to stir up the saints to industry and diligence (vv. 11, 12); and so be the means of their final perseverance, which they had reason to expect and believe, from the immutability of God's counsel, the

safe refuge in Christ, the nature of hope, the anchor sure and steadfast, and the entrance of Christ, their forerunner for them, into heaven (vv. 17- 20).

3. The phrase, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, does not imply that they had once truly repented, and their loss of true repentance; that cannot be lost, it is inseparably connected with life and salvation, and therefore is called repentance unto life, and unto salvation. The repentance of these persons, like that of Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas, was only a show of one, a counterfeit one; and consequently, the renewing them again to repentance designs a renovation of them to that which they only seemed to have, and to make pretensions to.

4. It will be granted, that these persons might, and such as these may, fall finally and totally; but inasmuch as it does not appear that they were true penitents and believers, they are not to be mentioned as, nor allowed to be, instances of the final departure of such from the faith.

Section 51—Hebrews 10:26-29.

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he

be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

This passage is used on a double account, both to prove that Christ died for some that perish — otherwise, it is asked, "in what tolerable sense can it be said, that no farther sacrifice for sin remains to them, for whom no sacrifice was ever offered or intended; and who were, by God's own decree, excluded from any interest in Christ's death before they came into the world? how were they sanctified by the blood of the covenant, from which they were inevitably excluded from the beginning of the world?" —and also to prove that true believers, such as these are said to be, from their being sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may finally and totally fall away, since they so sinned, and there remained no more sacrifice for their sin, and did despite to the Spirit of grace. But,

1. It is not evident from what is said of these persons, that they were true believers; not from the apostles speaking in the first person plural, we, which may seem to include himself, who was a true believer, and a chosen vessel of salvation; since the apostle frequently makes use of this way of speaking, not so much with regard to himself as others; that so what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and be more readily received by them, when they observed he entertained no hard thoughts or jealousies of them; which

would greatly distress the minds of those who were truly gracious; (see Hebrews 2:1; 4:1). Besides, it may be observed, that sometimes, when the apostles express themselves in this manner, they do not design themselves at all, but others, who were under the same visible profession of religion, and belonged to the same community of believers as they did; (see 1 Pet. 4:3; Titus 3:3; Eph. 2:3; compared with Acts 22:3; Acts 26:5; Phil. 3:6). But admitting that the apostle and other true believers are included in these words, they are not a categorical but hypothetical proposition; which may be true when one or both parts of it are impossible; the truth of such a proposition consisting in the connection of the antecedent and consequent; as when our Lord said to the Jews, If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you (John 8:55); the proposition is true, when both the parts of it were impossible; it was impossible that Christ should say, he knew not the Father; and it was equally impossible that he should be a liar like unto them. So the proposition in the text is true, though it is impossible that true believers should so sin as to perish eternally; when I say impossible, I do not mean that it is impossible considering their own weakness, and the power of Satan, and should they be left to their own corruptions, and the temptations of the evil one; but impossible, considering the grace of God, the power of Christ, their security in an everlasting covenant, &c. Hence it follows, that such a proposition neither proves that they could or should, or did sin in this manner. It may be said, that then such a proposition is delivered in vain, and answers no purpose. I reply; It may be of

service, though the condition is impossible, as to illustrate and certify the just punishment of apostates; for if true believers themselves would be so severely punished, should they, or were it possible they should sin after this manner; such hypocritical wicked persons, and vile apostates, could not expect to escape divine vengeance; yea, such declarations may be made use of by the Spirit of God, to stir up true believers to diligence in duty, and watchfulness, against every degree of apostasy, and so be the means of their final perseverance; and after all, it is plain that the apostle distinguishes true believers (vv. 38, 39); from these apostates, whose custom it had been to forsake the assembling of themselves together (v. 25). Nor does it appear that these were real saints, from their having received the knowledge of the truth; whether by the truth we understand Jesus Christ, or the Scriptures, or the Gospel, or some particular doctrine of it, especially the principal one, salvation by Christ; which I am inclined to think is intended; since, besides a saving knowledge of these things, which is peculiar to true believers, there is a notional one common to them with others; who may not only give their assent to them as true, but have much light into them, be able to explain them, and preach them to others, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; and therefore if such persons sin, and finally and totally fall away, they are no instances nor proofs of the final and total apostasy of real saints; nor is it manifest that such were the persons here spoken of, from their being sanctified by the blood of the covenant, supposing the words are to be understood of them; seeing they have no relation to the inward sanctification of our

nature by the Spirit of Christ, as Dr. Whitby himself owns; who contends that they should be understood of remission of sins, and justification by the blood of Christ, which these persons had received. It is true indeed, that the blessings of pardon and justification, are by and through the blood of the covenant; and are sometimes expressed by sanctifying, purging, and cleansing (see Heb. 9:13, 14; 10:10; 13:12; 1 John 1:7); yet cannot be designed here; for either these persons received a partial remission of sins, and a partial justification from them, or a full remission of all their sins, and a plenary discharge from them, not a partial one; for when God forgives for Christ's sake, he forgives all trespasses, and justifies from all sin: if then these persons had received the forgiveness of all their sins, and were justified from all their iniquities, they would have stood in no need of any more sacrifice for sin; (see Heb. 10:18), nor would there be any foundation for punishment of any kind, much less for one so severe as is here represented; (see Rom. 8:1, 30, 33). If then these words are to be considered as spoken of these apostates, the meaning of them is, either that they were sanctified, or separated from others, by a visible profession of religion, had given themselves up to a church to walk with them in the ordinances of the Gospel, had submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord's Supper, and drank of the cup, the blood of the New Testament, or covenant; though they did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in that ordinance but counted the bread and wine, the symbols thereof, as common things; or that they professed themselves, and were looked upon by others, to be truly sanctified by the Spirit, and

justified by the blood of Christ. Persons are often described, not by what they really are, but by what they are thought to be. Thus the apostle writing to the Corinthians says of them all, that they were sanctified in Christ Jesus, and by his Spirit, because they professed themselves to be so, and in the opinion of others, were so; though it cannot be thought that they were all of them really so. But after all, it seems most probable, that not he that trod the Son of God under foot, but the Son of God himself, is said here to be sanctified by the blood of the covenant; which is mentioned as an aggravation of the wickedness of such that count that blood unholy, by which the Son of God himself was sanctified, that is, set apart, hallowed, and consecrated; as Aaron and his sons were by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priest's office: Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, whereby the covenant of grace was ratified and confirmed, was, through the blood of that covenant, brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; and being set down at God's right hand, ever lives to make intercession for us; which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish.

2. The crimes which are supposed of these persons, or they are charged with, such as sinning willfully; which is not understood of the common infirmities of life, even grosser acts of sin, which may be voluntarily committed by the saints after regeneration, as were by David, Peter, and others; but of a denial of the truth of the Gospel, that salvation is by Christ, against all the evidence of it, and convictions of their own

minds: treading under foot the Son of God, as much as in them lay, pulling him from his throne, and trampling on him, stripping him of the glory of his person and sacrifice, denying him to be the eternal Son of God; counting the blood of the covenant an unholy or common thing, putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at most, counting it, *çglkd dya*, according to the Syriac version, as the blood of any other man, yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable; and doing despite to the Spirit of grace rejecting him as a lying spirit, and his gifts, and miracles, as illusions, as Dr. Whitby observes; I say such crimes as these, are what can never be thought to have been committed, or capable of being committed, by such who have truly tasted that the Lord is gracious.

3. The declaration made to these persons, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; no more typical sacrifices at Jerusalem, nor any more real sacrifice of the same kind, that has been offered up by Christ, who will not come and die again, and repeat his sacrifice; and therefore, they having denied salvation by him, and the virtue of his former sacrifice, can never expect another; but that when he appears a second time, he will bring on an awful judgment, which will issue in the devouring flames of his wrath and indignation, and be a sorer punishment than the transgressors of Moses' law endured; which was but a temporal, this an eternal death; such a declaration of wrath and vengeance, I say, proves indeed that these persons fell finally and totally; but inasmuch as they cannot be proved to be true believers, it will not be evident from hence, either that Christ

died for such as perish; or that those who have truly believed may totally and finally fall away.

Section 52—Hebrews 10:38.

Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

The doctrine of the possibility of the final departure of true believers from the faith, is said to be still farther evident from these words: Wherefore,

1. For the right understanding of this passage it will be proper to consult the original text in Habakkuk 2:4, from whence it is taken. The word *hlp*[, which the Septuagint have rendered by *uJpostei>lhtai*, here used by the apostle, and in our version translated draw back, is, according to R. David Kimchi, *nyn[^wdzw blh twhbg*, expressive of pride and haughtiness of heart: and according to Jarchi is *twz[nwçl*, a word that has the signification of impudence in it; R. Moses Kimchi takes it to be the same with *lp*[, which signifies a tower or fortified place; and thinks it designs one that betakes himself to such a place for shelter from the enemy, and seeks not to God for deliverance; from all which senses or the word we may conclude that such an one is intended who is proud, haughty, vain, and conceited, lifted up with his own righteousness, in which he trusts, and in which he imagines himself to be safe from all evil; and so stands opposed to the just man who lives by faith, walks humbly with God, in a dependence, not on his own, but

Christ's righteousness, in which he is safe from all wrath and condemnation, and secure of the divine favor; while the other will be so far from being the object of God's delight and pleasure, that he will lie under his sad displeasure, and feel his keen and just resentment. The Greek word $\epsilon\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\eta\tau\alpha\iota$, used by the Septuagint and the apostle, signifies a withdrawing through fear, as Peter withdrew because of the circumcision (Gal. 2:12), and may here intend a forsaking the assemblies of the saints (v. 25, which was the manner of some), and all the ordinances of public worship, through fear of reproach, scandal, and persecution, withholding truth, shunning to declare it, or to maintain a profession of it, contrary to what the apostle Paul says of himself (Acts 20:20, 27), where this word is twice used, and may design one who $\epsilon\pi\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon\tau\iota\mu\alpha\iota$ plays the hypocrite, and deals deceitfully, as a late writer observes, the word is rendered by Hesychius and Suidas; than which, to do in religious affairs especially, nothing is more abominable to God; and, in short, may be expressive of an entire departure and total apostasy from the faith, not from true saving faith, but from a mere profession of the grace and doctrine of faith. But then,

2. It must be observed, that $\epsilon\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\eta\tau\alpha\iota$, if he or any one draws back, does not refer plainly, as it is said, to the just man who lives by his faith; for as the drawer back, in verse 39, stands opposed to him that believes to the saving of his soul; so the drawer back, in verse 38, stands opposed to the just that lives by faith, which is owned by the author I refer to, and consequently cannot be the same person; this will still more

fully appear from the order of the words in Habakkuk 2:4, he that is lifted up, or withdraws himself or fails, his soul, that is, God's, shall have no pleasure in him; but the just shall live by his faith; therefore the words do not plainly suppose, as is asserted, that the just man who lives by that faith, in which, if he persisted, he would save his soul, may draw back to perdition; nor is this evident from the ensuing words, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, for they do not plainly intimate, as is affirmed, that God took pleasure in him before his drawing back; since it is not said, my soul shall have no more, or no further pleasure in him, but shall have no pleasure in him; which does not necessarily suppose that he had any pleasure in him before, but that he should have none in him hereafter. Besides, such who are the objects of God's delight and pleasure are always so; nothing can separate from the love of God, which is always joined with delight in his people.

3. Admitting that the words do plainly refer to the just man that lives by faith, such a one cannot draw back to perdition; for that is denied in the following verse; is contrary to an express declaration, a just man falleth seven times a day, and riseth up again (Prov. 24:16); and consistent with a divine promise, the righteous shall hold on his way (Job 17:9); and even with this in the text, the just shall live by faith; and therefore shall not die the second death, or so draw back as to be eternally lost; though his zeal may abate, his love grow cold, and he fall from some degree of steadfastness in faith; but allowing that drawing back to perdition is here supposed of the just man, it is no more than an hypothetical proposition, which proves not that ever

any just man did, could, or should so draw back. The nature and use of such conditional propositions, in which the condition, or thing supposed is impossible, has been shown under the foregoing section. But it is observed, that *kai* < *eja* < *n*, may be rendered not hypothetically, and if, but and when he draweth back: be it so, it is well known that a condition is as well and as frequently expressed by when, the adverb of time, as by the conjunction if, of which numerous instances might be given. The objection from the impossibility of the condition, and the uselessness of threats founded thereon, is answered in the preceding section.

4. I see not why the supplement any man, should not stand, made by our translators, which the grammatical construction of the words seems to require. Grotius owns the justness of it. Now this carries off the sense from the just man that lives by faith, to any of those who had made an external profession of religion, but were withdrawing themselves from the communion of the saints, through fear of persecution, who are threatened with the just resentment and displeasure of the Almighty; but lest this should be startling and surprising to true believers, the apostle adds, but we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. So far is this from proving the final and total apostasy of real saints, that it establishes the doctrine of their final perseverance; for he that is just or righteous by the everlasting righteousness of Christ, will ever remain so; who will live spiritually, and that by that faith which will never fail, and is inseparably connected with salvation, and so he shall never die.

Section 53—2 Peter 1:10.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

It is said, "That the election mentioned in the Holy Scriptures is not that of particular persons, but only of churches and nations; that it is to the enjoyment of the means of grace, which puts them in a capacity of having all the privileges and blessings which God hath promised to his church and people, and is only a conditional one, upon our perseverance in a life of holiness, and is to be made sure unto us by good works, according to this exhortation." But,

1. Though it will be granted that there was a national election of the Jews, who enjoyed the means of grace, the word and ordinances of God, and had peculiar blessings and privileges in consequence of this special choice of them as a nation; yet this was not an election to salvation elsewhere spoken of, and about which our controversy is, and therefore in vain are so many passages produced by Dr. Whitby, out of the Old Testament, to prove what nobody denies. And though sometimes whole communities or churches are by the apostles styled the elect of God, as the churches of Colosse, Thessalonica, Babylon (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess.1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 5:13), and others, yet they were not chosen as such; nor is it to be thought that all of them were ordained to eternal life, though the apostles speak of them in the bulk as the elect of God, being under a visible

profession of religion; just as they call them all saints, the sanctified, and faithful in Christ Jesus; though it is not to be supposed that an the individual members of these churches were real saints. However, it does not appear that the persons the apostle Peter wrote his epistles to were either a nation or a church, being the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet. 1:1); they are indeed called a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people (2 Pet. 2:9); but that is only in allusion to typical Israel, and the shadowy election of that people as a nation. It is certain that these persons were chosen not merely to external means and outward blessings and privileges, but to grace here, and glory hereafter; for they were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and in consequence of this were begotten again to a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, and were kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:2-5). They were a set of particular persons, who had obtained like precious faith with the apostles (2 Pet. 1:1), and were, every one to use diligence to make sure their own, and not another's calling and election; and so not a national or church election, but a personal one.

2. This election it not a conditional one, depending on perseverance in a life of holiness. The text does not say, if ye do these things ye shall be elected, or your election shall remain firm and sure, but ye shall never fall; meaning, not into lesser sins and infirmities of life, for in many things we offend

all, ptaio>men a{pantev, we all fall; but into the great evil of a final and total apostasy; or ye shall never fall (Jam. 3:2) so as to be lost and perish. The final perseverance of the saints is secured by electing grace; that is not the cause, but the fruit of election; election does not depend upon that, but that upon election.

3. Election and calling here mentioned with it, are to be made sure; not that they can be made surer in themselves, nor with respect to God, than they are, being both not according to our works, but according to the purpose, and grace of God, which cannot be frustrated; and so stand upon a sure foundation, which can never fail, and are inseparably connected with glorification (Rom. 8:30). Nor are these to be made sure by the saints to themselves, for, though they may have some doubts and scruples in their minds about their interest in these things, and an assurance of which may be attained; yet it is not their work, but the work of the Spirit of God, to certify or assure them of their vocation and election of God. But diligence is to be used by the saints, to make sure their calling and election to others; either to their fellow Christians, which they may do by conversing with them about the work of grace upon their souls, or rather to the world, and that dia< twn kalwn ejrgwn, by good works; as these words are read in two manuscript copies of Beza's, and by the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin; and then the meaning is, be careful to maintain good works, be diligent in doing these things, which, through the grace of God, will not only be the means of your final perseverance, but also of making your calling and election sure to others; you will

hereby certify and assure others, give the best evidence to the world you are capable of giving, or they of receiving, that you are the called and chosen of God you profess yourselves to be.

Section 54—2 Peter 2:1.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

This passage of scripture is often produced as a proof both of the saints' final and total apostasy, and of universal redemption; or that, besides those that are saved, Christ died also for them that perish. Dr. Whitby mentions the several answers which different men give to these words: one says, Christ bought these persons only to be slaves; another, that he died to rescue them from temporal, but not eternal punishments; a third, that he died for them because he gave a sufficient price for them; a fourth, that they denied that Lord whom they professed to have bought them; and a fifth, that they denied him, who, in the judgment of other men, had bought them. Upon which he observes, that they are so extravagant, that it is as easy to confute as to recite them.

1. I do not think myself concerned to defend any of these senses of the text mentioned, judging neither of them to be the meaning of the words, and so have nothing to do with the reasonings made use of in the confutation of them; though,

perhaps, the two latter are not so extravagant as represented. However, in order to give the genuine sense of this text, let it be observed,

2. That Christ is not here at all spoken of; nor is there one syllable of his dying for any persons, in any sense whatever. The word *despoteuthv*, Lord, does not design Christ but God the Father of Christ. The only places besides this where this word is used, when applied to a divine person, are Luke 2:29, Acts 4:24, 2 Timothy 2:21, Jude 1:4, Revelation 6:10, in all which places God the Father is plainly intended, and in most of them manifestly distinguished from Christ; nor is there anything in this text or context which obliges us to understand it of the Son of God; nor should this be thought any diminution of the glory of Christ, since the word *despoteuthv* is properly expressive only of that power which masters have over their servants; whereas the word *kyriov*, which is used whenever Christ is called Lord, signifies that dominion and authority which princes have over their subjects. Besides, Christ is called King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the only Potentate; yea, God over all, blessed for ever. Moreover,

3. When these persons are said to be bought, the meaning is, not that they were redeemed by the blood of Christ, for, as is before observed, Christ is not intended. Besides, whenever redemption by Christ is spoken of, the price is usually mentioned, or some circumstance or another which fully determines the sense of it; (see Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 14:3-4), whereas here is not

the least hint of anything of this kind. Add to this, that such who are redeemed by Christ, are never left to deny him, so as to perish eternally; for could such be lost, or bring on themselves swift destruction, Christ's purchase would be in vain, and the ransom price be paid for naught. But,

4. The word buying regards temporal deliverance, and particularly the redemption of the people of Israel out of Egypt; who are therefore called the people the Lord had purchased. The phrase is borrowed from Deuteronomy 32:6; Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee? Nor is this the only place the apostle Peter refers to in this chapter; (see vv. 12, 13, compared with Deuteronomy 32:5). Now the persons the apostle writes to, were Jews, the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithyna, a people who, in all ages, valued, themselves upon, and boasted mightily of their being the bought, purchased people of the Lord; wherefore Peter makes use of this phrase much in the same manner as Moses had done before him, to aggravate the ingratitude and impiety of these false teachers among the Jews; that they should deny, if not in words, at least in works, that mighty Jehovah, who had of old redeemed their fathers out of Egypt, with a stretched out arm, and, in successive ages, had distinguished them with peculiar favors; being ungodly men, turning the grace, the doctrine of the grace of God, into lasciviousness Hence,

5. Nothing can be concluded from this passage in favor of Christ's dying for them that perish; since neither Christ, nor the death of Christ, nor redemption by his blood, are here once mentioned, nor in the least intended. Nor can these words be thought to be a proof and instance of the final and total apostasy of real saints, since there is not anything said of these false teachers, which gives any reason to believe that they were true believers in Christ, or ever had the grace of the Spirit wrought in their souls.

Section 55—2 Peter 2:20-22.

For if after that they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

This Scripture generally stands among the proofs of the apostasy of real saints; and it is said, that the possibility of the final and total falling away of true believers, may be strongly argued from these words.

1. It will be allowed that the persons here spoken of, finally and totally fell away; since they are not only said to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, but to be again entangled in the pollutions of the world, and overcome; yea, to turn like the dog to his vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire: so that the latter end with them is worse than the beginning. Yet,

2. Nothing is said of them which discovers them to have been true believers. They might have externally escaped the pollutions of the world, reformed in their outward lives and conversations, through the national knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; professed the way of righteousness, and for a while, visibly walked in it, and submitted to the holy commandments and ordinances of Christ, and yet not have been partakers of the grace of God; nor is it evident that the apostle here speaks of such who had obtained like precious faith with them; but of some third persons distinct from them. Perhaps the highest character given them is in verse 18, which is, that they were such who were clean, *ontwv*, truly and really, as Dr. Whitby renders the word, escaped from them who live *ejn tla>nh* in error; which, he observes, is to be understood not of judgment, but of deceitful lusts. But let it be considered that there are different readings of this text; some copies, instead of *o]ntwv* read *ojli>gwv* within a little, or almost, so the Alexandrian MS. in the Polyglott Bible, and two books of Beza's; others *ojli>gon*; so the Complutensian edition, and the King of Spain's Bible; agreeably the Vulgate Latin renders it *paululum*, a very little, or a very little time. The Syriac version

reads it *lylq almb*, in a few words, or almost; and, according to the Ethiopic version, a few persons are designed. From all which, this sense of the words may be collected, that there were some few persons, who, in some few instances, had almost, or within a very little, or for a little time, escaped from such who lived in error, being carried away with divers and strange doctrines. But admitting that *o]ntwv* is the true reading, and that *pla>nh* signifies not error of judgment, but deceitful lusts; it is possible that men may truly and really escape, not only from idolaters and false teachers, and so have the form of sound doctrine, whilst they deny the power of it, but also reform and withdraw from openly profane and scandalous sinners, and yet not be true believers, as it appears these were not; since they openly turned to, and appeared to be what they really were; as the dog turns to his own vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire.

Section 56—2 Peter 3:9.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise (as some men count slackness), but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

This scripture appears among those which are said to be very many clear and express ones for the doctrine of universal redemption; and it is observed, "that *ti>nev*, opposed to *pa>ntev*, is a distributive of all, and, therefore, signifies, God is not willing that any one of the whole rank of men should perish" But,

1. It is not true that God is not willing any one individual of the human race should perish, since he has made and appointed the wicked for the day of evil, even ungodly men, who are foreordained to this condemnation, such as are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; yea, there are some to whom God sends strong delusions, that they may believe a lie, that they all might be damned, and others whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not and their damnation slumbereth not (Prov. 16:4; Jude 1:4; Rom. 9:22; 2 Thess. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:3). Nor is it his will that all men, in this large sense, should come to repentance, since he withholds from many both the means and grace of repentance; and though it is his will of precept, that all to whom the preaching of the Gospel is vouchsafed should repent, yet it is not his purposing, determining will, to bring them all to repentance, for who hath resisted his will? (Rom. 9:19.)

2. It is very true that *ti>nev*, any, being opposed to *pa>ntev*, all, is a distributive of it; but then both the any and the all are to be limited and restrained by the *us*, to whom God is longsuffering; God is not willing that any more should not perish, and is willing that no more should come to repentance than the *us* to whom his longsuffering is salvation. The key, therefore, to open this text lies in these words, *eijv hJma~v*, to us ward, or for our sake; for, these are the persons God would not have any of them perish, but would have them all come to repentance. It will be proper, therefore,

3. To inquire who these are. It is evident that they are distinguished from the scoffers mocking at the promise of Christ's coming, (vv. 3, 4), are called beloved, (vv. 1, 8, 14, 17), which is to be understood either of their being beloved by God, with an everlasting and unchangeable love, or of their being beloved as brethren by the apostle and other saints; neither of which is true of all mankind. Besides, the design of the words is to establish the saints in, and comfort them with the coming of Christ, until which, God was longsuffering towards them, and which they were to account salvation (v. 15). Add to this, that the apostle manifestly designs a company or society to which he belonged, and of which he was a part, and so can mean no other than such who were chosen of God, redeemed from among men; and called out of darkness into marvelous light; and such were the persons the apostle writes to. Some copies read the words δι' υμῶν, for your sakes; so the Alexandrian MS. the Syriac version, ὑμῶν, for you, or your sakes; the same way the Ethiopic. Now these persons were such who were elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:2); and such, as these, or who belong to the same election of grace they did, God is unwilling that any of them should perish, but wills that all of them should have repentance unto life; and, therefore, he waits to be gracious to them, and defers the second coming of Christ. The case stands thus: there was a promise of Christ's second coming, to judge the world, delivered out; it was expected that this would have been very

quickly, whereas it has been a long time deferred. Hence scoffers shall arise in the last days, charging the Lord with slackness and dilatoriness concerning his promise, though he is not slack with respect to it, but is long-suffering towards his elect, waiting till their number is completed in effectual vocation, and for their sakes bears with all the idolatry, superstition, and profaneness that are in the world; but when the last man that belongs to that number is called, he will stay no longer, but descend in flames of fire, take his own elect to himself, and burn up the world and the wicked in it.

4. It is indeed said, "that the apostle, by the elect, to whom he writes, does not mean men absolutely designed for eternal happiness, but only men professing Christianity, or such as were visible members of the church of Christ: since he calls upon them to make their calling and election sure, exhorts them to watchfulness, seeing their adversary the devil goes about seeking whom he may devour, and to beware lest they fall from their own steadfastness; yea, he speaks of some of them as having forsaken the right way; and also propheties that false teachers should make merchandise of them, neither of which, it is observed, can be supposed of men absolutely elected to salvation; and, also, that the church at Babylon was elected, together with these persons, which could not be known and said of all its members." To all which I reply, that calling upon them to make their election sure, does not suppose it to be a precarious and conditional one, as I have shown in a preceding section that exhortations to sobriety, and vigilance against Satan, and cautions about falling, are pertinent to such who are

absolutely elected to salvation; for, though Satan cannot devour them, he may greatly distress them; and, though they shall not finally and totally fall from the grace of God, yet they may fall from some degree of steadfastness, both as to the doctrine and grace of faith, which may be to their detriment as well as to the dishonor of God: that it is not true, that the apostle speaks of any of these elect he writes to, that they had forsaken the right way, but of some other persons; and though he prophesies that false teachers should make merchandise of them, the meaning is, that, by their fine words and fair speeches, they should be able to draw money out of their pockets, not that they should destroy the grace of God wrought in their hearts. As to the church at Babylon being said to be elected with them, the apostle might say this of the church in general, as he does, in a judgment of charity, of the church at Thessalonica, and others, though every member of it in particular was not elected to salvation, without any prejudice to the doctrine of absolute election. Besides, the persons he writes to were not visible members of any one particular church or community, professing Christianity, but were strangers scattered abroad in several parts of the world, and, were such who had obtained like precious faith with the apostles, and is a strong evidence of their being men absolutely designed for eternal happiness. And whereas it is suggested, that these persons were come to repentance, and therefore cannot be the same to whom God is longsuffering, that they might come to repentance; I answer, that though they are not the same individual persons, yet are such who belong to the same body and number of the elect, on

whom the Lord waits, and to whom he is longsuffering, until they are all brought to partake of this grace, having determined that not one of them should ever perish.

5. Hence it follows, that these words do not furnish, out any argument in favor of universal redemption, nor do they militate against absolute election and reprobation, or unfrustrable grace in conversion; but, on the contrary, maintain and establish them, since it appears to be the will of God, that not one of those he has chosen in Christ, given to him, and for whom he died, shall ever perish; and, inasmuch as evangelical repentance is necessary for them, and they cannot come at it of themselves, he freely bestows it on them, and, by his unfrustrable grace, works it in them; and, until this is done unto and upon every one of them, he keeps the world in being, which is reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

Section 57—1 John 2:2.

And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

A very considerable argument for the universal extent of Christ's death is thought to arise from this passage of scripture, as well as from all those which represent Christ as the Savior of the world; and it is observed, that whereas these scriptures are all, save one, in the writing of St. John, the sense which the world beareth in St. John's gospel and epistles, must be

esteemed., in reason, the proper import of the word, where it never signifies the elect only, in opposition to the wicked of the world, but the wicked of the world in opposition to the faithful Christian. To which I answer,

I. That there would be some weight in this observation if the word world was always used in one uniform and constant sense in the writings of the apostle John, whereas it admits of a variety of senses; and, therefore, the sense of it in one place cannot be the rule for the interpretation of it in another, which can only be prefixed as the text or context determine: sometimes it signifies the whole universe of created beings, (John 1:10); sometimes the habitable earth (John 16:28); sometimes the inhabitants of it, (John 1:10); sometimes unconverted persons, both elect and reprobate, (John 15:19); sometimes the worse part of the world, the wicked, (John 17:9); sometimes the better part of it, the elect, (John 1:29; 6:33, 51); sometimes a number of persons, and that a small one in comparison of the rest of mankind, (John 12:19); in one place it is used three times, and in so many senses, (John 1:10); he, that; is, Christ, was in the world, the habitable earth, and the world, the whole universe, was made by him, End the world, the inhabitants of the earth, knew him not; and which is not to be understood of them all, for there were some, though few who did know him: and I will venture to affirm, that the word world is always used in the apostle John's writings, in a restricted and limited sense, for some only, unless when it designs the whole universe, or habitable earth, senses which are out of the question, for none will say Christ died for the sun,

moon, and stars, for fishes, fowls, brutes, sticks, and stones; and that it is never used to signify every individual of mankind that has been, is, or shall be in the world; in which sense it ought to be proved it is used, if any argument can be concluded from it in favor of general redemption.

II. It is most manifest that the word world, used by the apostle John when speaking of redemption and salvation by Christ, is always used in a limited and restrained sense, and signifies some persons only, and not all the individuals of human nature, as will appear from the consideration of the several passages following, as when the Baptist says (John 1:29), Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world! By the world cannot be meant every individual of mankind; for it is not true, it is not fact, that; Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, takes away the sin or sins of every individual man, since there are some who die in their sins, whose: sins go beforehand to judgment, and others they follow after, for which they will be righteously and everlastingly condemned; which can never be, if Christ taken away their sin Should it be said, as it is, "That the Baptist speaks this in allusion to the lambs daily offered up for the sin of the whole Jewish nation; and, therefore, intimates, that as they were offered up to expiate the sins of the whole nation, so was this Lamb of God offered to expiate the sins of the whole world in general;" I reply, that as the lambs daily offered were typical of Christ, the Lamb of God, so the people, for whom they were offered, were typical, not of the whole world in general, but of the true Israel and church of God, for

whom Christ gave himself an expiatory sacrifice, and whose sins he so takes away as they shall not be seen any more.

When our Lord says, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16),—by the world he cannot mean every son and daughter of Adam; for this world is represented as the object of God's love, even of his special love, which all men are not: as such to and for whom God has given his only-begotten Son, which is not true of all mankind; who are brought to believe in Christ, in consequence of God's love, and the gift of his Son, but all men have not faith; as such who shall never perish, though it is certain that some men will; and as such who shall have everlasting life, whereas some will go into everlasting punishment, and die the second death. The similitude of the brazen serpent lifted up for the preservation of the Jews, is insufficient to prove the redemption of all mankind: nor is it supposed, of this world, so beloved of God, that some would not believe, and therefore perish; and that others would, and be saved; for the phrase whosoever believeth, does not design a division of different persons, but a distinction of the same persons; who, in their unconverted state, believe not, but, through the power of divine grace, are brought to believe in Christ for life and salvation; and so it points out the way in which they are secured from perishing, and have everlasting life. Nor win it be the condemnation of infidels among the Heathens that they believed not in Christ, but their transgressions of the law of nature; nor of the unbelieving Jews, that they believed not Christ dies for them, but because

they did not believe him to be the Messiah: nor do these words, taken in the universal sense, more magnify the love of God than when taken in a more restrained one; since according to this general scheme, men may be the objects of God's love, and have all interest in the gift of his Son, and yet finally perish, and come short of everlasting life. The words in the following verse (John 3:17; John 12:47), and which are elsewhere in the same manner expressed, that Christ came into the world not to condemn it, but to save it, are designed to point out the different ends of Christ's first and second coming. Again,

When the Samaritans declared their belief in Christ, that he was the Savior of the world (John 4:43; 1 John 4:14); and the apostle John says, that we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world; by the world, cannot be intended every man and woman that has been, is, or shall be in the world, since every one is not saved; and Christ cannot be the Savior of more than are saved. Besides, was he the Savior of the world in this universal sense, he must be the Savior both of believers and unbelievers, contrary to his own words; He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16). Moreover,

When Christ says, The bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world (John 6:33); no more can be designed by the world than those to whom this bread of God gives life. Now it is certain, that spiritual life here, and everlasting life hereafter are not given to all men, and therefore all men cannot be intended here; only such who are quickened

by the Spirit of God, and shall enjoy eternal life; and these are the world, for the life of which Christ promised to give his flesh, in this same chapter (John 6:51). Now from this consideration of all these passages, it will appear how weak, trilling, and inconclusive is the argument taken from hence in favor of universal redemption. But,

III. It may be said, if the world does not include every individual person in it, yet surely the phrase, the whole world, must: and when the beloved disciple says, And he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2); these, his words, will not admit of a restrained sense, but must extend to all men. To which I reply:

1. The phrase, the whole world, is frequently used by the Jews in a limited and restrained sense; as when they report, "That it happened to a certain high priest, that when he went out of the sanctuary, aml[ylwk, the whole world went after him;" which could only design the multitude in the temple; and where it is said, " aml[ylwk, the whole world has left the Misnah and gone after the Gemara;" which at most can only intend the Jews, and perhaps only a majority of their doctors; and in another place, aml[ylwk, the whole world fell upon their faces; but Raf did not fall on his face;" where it means no more than the congregation. Once more, It is said, "When R. Sirecon Ben Gamaliel entered, that is, into the synagogue, aml[ylwp, the whole world, that is, all the synagogue, stood up before him." Such phrases as these ygylp al aml[ylwk, the whole world does

not dissent; ydwm aml[ylwk, the whole world confesseth; and yrbs aml[ylwk, the whole world are of opinion, are frequently met with in the Talmud; by which is designed an agreement among the Rabbins in certain points; nay, sometimes two doctors only are meant by amy[ylwk, the whole world.

2. This phrase in scripture, unless where it signifies the whole universe, or habitable earth, is always used in a limited and restrained sense; a decree went out theft all the world should be taxed; which was no other than the Roman empire, and such countries as were subject to it. The faith of the church at Rome, was spoken of throughout the whole world, that is, throughout all the churches, and among all the saints in the world. All the world is said to become guilty before God by the law; which can be said of no more than were under that law, and so not true of all mankind; who, though all guilty by the law of nature, yet not by the law of Moses. The apostle tells the Colossians, that the gospel was come into all the world, and bringeth forth fruit; which, can design only real saints and true believers, in whom alone it brings forth fruit. An hour of temptation is spoken of, which shall come upon all the world, to trig them which dwell upon the earth; who can be no other than such who will then be in being, and cannot be thought to include all the individuals that have been in the world. All the world wondered after the beast; and yet there were some who did not receive his mark, nor worship him. Satan deceiveth the whole world; and yet it is certain, that the elect cannot be deceived by him. The whole world will be gathered together to the: battle of the great day of God Almighty; who are distinct from the saints, whom

they will oppose (Luke 2:1; Romans 1:8; 3:19; Col. 1:6; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 12:9, 13:3).

3. This phrase in the writings of the apostle John, is used in a restrained sense, and does not extend to every individual of human nature, that has been, is, or shall be in the world, as it should be proved it does, to conclude an argument from it in favor of universal redemption. Now it is used but in one place besides the text under consideration, when it designs men, in all his writings, and that is in 1 John 5:19. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness; where the whole world lying in wickedness, is manifestly distinguished from the saints, who are of God, and belong not to the world; and consequently the whole world is not to be understood of all the individuals in it. And it is easy to observe the like distinction in the text before us; for the sins of the whole world are opposed to our sins, the sins of the apostle, and others to whom he joins himself; who therefore belonged not to, nor were a part of the whole world, for whose sins Christ was a propitiation, as for theirs. That the whole world, for whom Christ is a propitiation, cannot intend every man and woman that, has been, is, or shall be in the world, appears from his being their propitiation; for whose sins he is a propitiation, their, sins are atoned for and pardoned, and their person: justified from all sin, and so shall certainly be glorified; which is not true of the whole world, taken in the large sense contended for. Besides, Christ is set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood (Rom. 3:25). The benefit of his propitiatory sacrifice, is only received and enjoyed through

faith; so that in the event, it appears that Christ is a propitiation only for believers, a character which does not agree with all mankind. Add to this, that for whom Christ is a propitiation, he is also an advocate (v. 1), but he is not an advocate for every individual in the world; yea, there is a world he will not pray for, and consequently is no propitiation for. Once more, the design of the apostle in these words, is to comfort his little children, who might fall into sin through weakness and inadvertency, with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ; but what comfort would it yield to a distressed mind, to be told that Christ was a propitiation, not only for the sins of the apostles, and other saints, but for the sins of every individual in the world, even of those that are in hell? Would it not be natural for persons in such circumstances, to argue rather against than for themselves; and conclude, that inasmuch as persons might be damned, notwithstanding Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, that this might and would be their case? But,

4. For the better understanding the sense of this text, it should be observed, that the apostle John was a Jew, and writes to Jews, as Dr. Whitby himself observes, and them chiefly, if not altogether, who were distinguished from the Gentiles, commonly called the world: now, says the apostle, He is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, the sins of us Jews, but also for the sins of the whole world, the Gentiles. Nothing is more common in the Jewish writings, than to call the Gentiles *aml*[, the world; and *ulw*[lk, the whole world; and *ulw*[j twmwa, the nations of the world; hence the apostle Paul

calls them *kosmos*, the world, in Romans 11:12,15. It was a controversy agitated among the Jewish doctors, whether when the Messiah came, the Gentiles, the world, should have any benefit by him; the majority was exceeding large on the negative of the question, and determined they should not; only some few, as old Simeon and others, knew that he should be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of the people of Israel. The rest concluded, that the most severe judgments and dreadful calamities would befall them; yea, that they should be cast into hell in the room of the Israelites. This notion John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, purposely oppose, and is the true reason of the use of this phrase in the Scriptures which speak of Christ's redemption. Thus John the Baptist, when he pointed out the Messiah to the Jews, represents him as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, the Gentiles as well as the Jews; for by the blood of this Lamb, men are redeemed to God, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. When our Lord was discoursing with Nicodemus, one of their Rabbins, he lets him know that God so loved the world, the Gentiles, contrary to their rabbinical notions, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever of them that believeth on him, should not perish, as they had concluded every one of them should; but have everlasting life: and that God sent not his Son into the world, to conform the world, the Gentiles, as they imagined, but that the world through him might be saved. When the Samaritans believed in Christ, they declared him to be the Savior of the world, the Gentiles, and so of themselves, who were accounted by the

Jews as Heathens; Christ sets forth himself as the bread of life, preferable to the manna, among other things, from its extensive virtue to the world, the Gentiles: and here the apostle John says, that Christ was not only the propitiation for the sins of the Jews, but for the sins of the whole world, the Gentiles (John 1:29; 3:16,17; 4:42; 6:33; 1 John 2:2). This puts me in mind of a passage I have met with in the Talmud, a saying of Rabbi Jochanan, " We, says he, twmwal lsw[h, to the nations of the world, who are lost, and they know not that they are lost; whilst the sanctuary stood, the altar atoned, or was a propitiation for them; but now who shall be a propitiation for them?" Blessed be God, we know who is the propitiation for us, the nations of the world, one that was typified by the altar, and is greater than that, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 58—Jude 1:21.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the money of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

These words are thought to represent the saints' continuance in the love and favor of God, as conditional, depending on their obedience, care, and keeping of themselves; and that there is a possibility of their falling from it, and consequently that they are not absolutely elected to everlasting life. To which I reply;

1. That the saints' continuance in the love and favor of God, does not depend on their obedience, or on any thing done by them; since his love to them is an everlasting one, which

commenced from everlasting, and will continue to everlasting; is prior to all their obedience; was in his own heart towards them, and expressed by several acts before they had done either good or evil; and continued, notwithstanding all their disobedience, in an unregenerate state, and is the source and spring of all their love and obedience to him; nor is there anything in their best works that can entitle them to his favor, or secure the continuance of it; since, when they had done all they can, they are but "unprofitable servants." Nor is there any possibility or danger of real saints falling from the love and favor of God. They may, and sometimes are, left to do those things which are displeasing to him, and, was he a man or should he act men usually do such cries, would at once, and effectually turn them out of his favor; but the case is, he is the Lord, and not man, and changes not in his affections as men do; "and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Mal. 3:6.) In his severest providences towards his people, his love always remains the same, as when he hides his face from them, or chides and chastises them in a fatherly way; should it be otherwise, his love would not be everlasting, unchangeable, and from which there is no separation, as the; Scriptures represent it; and besides, would be contrary to the assurances he has given of the continuance of his love, both by word and oath (Isa. 54:9,10).

2. By the love of God, in this text, we are not to understand the love which God bears in his own heart to his people, or with which they are loved by him, but rather that love with which they love him, and of which he is the object; see Luke 11:42,

which is a sense some interpreters on the other side of the question readily allow of; and then the meaning of the.214 exhortation, keep yourselves, eJautouv, one another, as it may be rendered, in the love of God, is, that though this grace of love cannot be lost, yet, inasmuch as the fervor of it may be shared, and the saints grow cold and indifferent in their expressions of it, it becomes them to make use of all proper means to maintain, increase, and inflame it, both in themselves and others, such as are mentioned in the context, as conversing together in an edifying way, about either the grace or doctrine of their most holy faith; praying either separately or together, under the influences of the Holy Ghost, and looking forward for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life. All which, with many other things, by the blessing of God, may serve to maintain and revive the grace of love, and flow it up into a flame. Though, perhaps, this phrase may chiefly design that love, peace, and concord, which ought to subsist among saints as brethren, and which they should be careful to preserve. This may be called the love of God, just as the same thing is styled the peace of God (Col. 3:15), because he calls them to it, it is of him, what they are taught by him, and in which he causes them to abound; and then the sense of the exhortation, keep yourselves, or one another in the love of God, is, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the hold of peace; provoke one another to love and good works (Eph. 4:3; Heb. 10:24; Eph. 5:2); walk in love, both to God and among yourselves, as ye have Christ for an example; which sense is strengthened by the following words, of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save

with fear. And hence it will appear that this text neither militates against the doctrine of absolute election, nor countenances the doctrine of the possibility of real saints falling from a state of grace and favor with God. But,

3. Admitting that by the love of God, is meant the grace and favor of God: the exhortation to the saints, to keep themselves in it, is, to set it always before them, to keep it constantly in view, to exercise faith on it, firmly believing their interest in it, and hence keep looking and waiting for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life; or to keep themselves in it, is to meditate on it, give themselves up wholly to the contemplation of it, and employ their thoughts constantly about this delightful subject, the love of God; which is the foundation of all grace here, and glory hereafter. Once more the words $\epsilon\lambda\upsilon\tau\eta\sigma\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\kappa\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\varsigma\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ may be rendered, preserve yourselves by the love of God, that is, against Satan's temptations, the snares of the world, and the lusts of the flesh. Whenever Satan solicits to sin, any snare is laid to draw into it, and the flesh attempts to be predominate, betake yourselves to the love of God, as a strong hold, or preservative against sin; and reason thus, as Joseph did, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Gen. 39:9) who, when I look backward, has loved me with an everlasting love: and when I look forward there is the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Consider the words in either light, they neither prove a conditional election, nor a possibility of the saints falling from grace; against which, provision is made in Christ, who, in verse 24, is represented as

"able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

Section 59—Revelation 2 and Revelation 3.

Several passages are produced from the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, in favor of the delectability and total apostasy of real saints. It should be observed, that the churches in all ages, have more or less consisted of true believers and hypocrites, wise and foolish virgins, sheep and goats, wheat and tares, and sometimes are denominated from the better, and sometimes from the weaker part; some things in the epistles to them particularly regard true believers and others formal professors among them. This Observation will help us to understand the reason and meaning of many commands, cautions, exhortations, and threatenings, not only used in these epistles, but in the rest of the epistles sent to the several churches, Besides, it may be observed, that the whole in churches may be unchurched, their church state be dissolved, and yet not one true believer among them be lost or perish, as has been the case of these seven churches, and many others; which is brought about by removing true believers by death, withholding a blessing from the means of grace to the conversion of others; and at length, taking the Gospel wholly from them, and so at last the candlestick is removed out of its place, It is, therefore, to no purpose to urge passages and instances of this kind against the saints final perseverance; however, we shall consider the several scriptures urged and referred unto. And,

1. The first of this kind to be examined, is in the epistle to the church at Ephesus. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But neither the complaint lodged against this church, that she had left her first love, proves that she had totally and finally fallen away from grace; since she might leave, that is, abate in the fervency of her love to Christ, though not lose it; which sometimes waxes cold through the prevalence of corruption and the snares of the world, when it is not lost, as it was not in this church; nor can it be lost in any true believer, notwithstanding their desertions, temptations, falls, and backslidings: nor does the exhortation, to remember from whence she was fallen, prove it, seeing she might be fallen partially, though not totally; and the design of this exhortation be to put her upon comparing her former and present condition together; that her desires, after a restoration to her former lively and comfortable frame, might be quickened, and she be humbled under a sense of her backslidings, and brought to an acknowledgment of the same, which would appear by her doing her first works: nor does the threatening to come unto her, and remove her candlestick out of his place, in case of non- repentance, prove it, seeing this may be understood of his coming to her in a providential way, and either shaking her church state, by suffering persecution or heresy to come in upon her, or by wholly removing it, through withholding a blessing from the means of grace, and entirely

taking them away; which might be done without the loss of one true believer, as has been observed. Besides, this church is greatly commended in verses 2,3, for her labor, and patience, and zeal against false apostles; a plain case, that she was not finally and totally fallen from grace.

2. The next passage to be considered is the promise made to the church at Smyrna, be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 3:4, 5:4). It is represented as incongruous with an absolute promise of God, that believers should persevere to the end, or suspend their happiness on condition of their perseverance, which is said to be done in these words. But it should be observed, that the crown of life, or eternal happiness, is not a blessing suspended, since it never was promised nor ever expected to be enjoyed before death, much less suspended on any condition whatever to be performed by us; since it is a gift, a gift wholly of free grace. In faithfulness unto death is not here made the condition of enjoying the crown of life; but the gift of the crown of life is made the encouragement to faithfulness unto death. In the same light are we to consider James 1:19, and the words of our Lord in Matthew 24:12, 13. Because iniquity shall abound (not because tribulations abound, as Dr. Whitby cites the words,) the love of many shall wax cold: but he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved; where enduring to the end, is not the condition of salvation, but the promise of salvation is the encouragement to endure to the end.

3. A third passage referred to is the exhortation to the church at Pergamos, not Ephesus, as Dr. Whitby, through mistake, calls it: Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth (Rev. 2:16). This church is so far from being an instance of the apostasy of real saints, that she is commended for holding fast the name of Christ, and not denying his faith in the worst of places, and in the worst of times, even where Satan's seat was, and wherein Antipas, a faithful martyr, was slain: and though there were some among them who held the doctrines and followed the practices of Balsam and the Nicolaitans, which should have been matter of humiliation, and on the account of which Christ exhorts to repentance; and though he says that he will come to her quickly, that is in a providential way, yet not to fight against her, but them; for he says I not, I will fight against thee, the church, as Doctor Whitby inadvertently reads the words, but against them, the Balaamites and Nicolaitans; and that not with the temporal sword, but with the sword of his mouth, the word of God. The passage out of the epistle to the church at Thyatira, being much the same with what is alleged from the epistle to the church at Philadelphia, will be considered with it. I proceed,

4. To examining the instance of the Church at Sardis. There were but few true believers in this church; she had a name to live, but was dead; she had but a few names which had not defiled their garments, and therefore the defection of her is no proof of the apostasy of real saints. The things which remain, she is lied upon to strengthen, are not to be understood of the

graces of the Spirit in her embers; since these are never really wanting and declining, they are always, all they were, and never less, but continually on the growing, thriving, and increasing hand; for us good work of grace is daily carrying on, whether the saints are sensible of it or no, and will be performed until the day of Christ nor can the graces of the Spirit die, being immortal and incorruptible seeds; nor are they ever ready to die, unless in the apprehensions of saints under fits of unbelief. Besides, it is God's work, and not man's, to strengthen these; and should these be intended in this passage, it would be no proof of the real loss of true grace, since these are said not to be dead, but ready to die, and recoverable. The *ta loipa* were the remaining members of this church, which sense is confirmed by the versions of the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Vulgate Latin, and others. The majority of the members were already dead, and many others of them were sickly, and ready to die; the angel or pastor of this church is called upon to do his duty, to confirm such as were wavering, and do all that in him lay, by a diligent preaching of the word, and constant administration of ordinances, to preserve them from a more general defection. The threatening, in verse 3, regards the formal and lifeless part of this church; and as for the rest, the few undefiled names in Sardis, a promise of perseverance and happiness is made unto them:— They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will

confess his name before my Father, and before his angels (Rev. 2:25).

5. When Christ says to the church at Thyatira, That which ye have already, not what thou hast attained to, as Dr. Whitby cites the words, hold fast till I come; (Rev. 3:11) and to that at Philadelphia, Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown; by what they had, and should hold fast, he does not mean the grace, but the doctrine of faith, the faithful word, the form of sound words, which both ministers and members should hold fast, in opposition to wavering about it, cowardice in it, and a departure from it; and such exhortations, though they may imply that saints may have their temptations to and there is a possibility that they may, fall from some degree or steadfastness in the doctrines of the Gospel, and therefore should be on their guard, yet not that they may or shall finally and totally let them go. And whereas the saints are stirred up to regard the more such exhortations from this consideration that no man take their crown: by which may be meant, either the Gospel, which was their own and glory, or the honor they had attained by their faithfulness, and integrity in biding by it; or if eternal life is intended by it follows not that this is liable to be taken way from or be lost to true believers, though some professors who expect it will be disparated of it; but the design of the expression, in allusion to the Olympic games, in which many ran, but one received the prize, to excite the saints to industry, diligence, and watchfulness.

6. When Christ says to the church of the Laodiceans, Because thou art lukewarm, and either cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth, let it be observed that the state of this church, and the members of it, was such that she was not cold, without a principle of spiritual life and love, and a profession of religion; nor hot, lively, warm, and zealous in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; but lukewarm, indifferent, unconcerned about her own condition, and the honor and interest of Jesus Christ, a frame of soul very disagreeable to Christ, and therefore, to show his resentment of it, he threatens to spue her out of his month, as men do that which is ungrateful to them: which designs some chastisement or affliction, and that in order to bring her to a sense of her present condition, and out of it; for certain it is he had a love, an unchangeable and everlasting one, to many in this church; wherefore he says, As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent (v. 19).

Section 60—Revelation 3:20.

Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me,

From hence it is concluded, that Christ stands and knocks at the hearts of unregenerate sinners by the ministry of the word, and that they have sufficient grace and strength to open their hearts unto him, or else he knocks in vain; for what wise man would stand at another's door and knock, if he knew there were not

any within that could open to him? And since it is required of men in conversion, to open their hearts to Christ, it follows, that the work is not performed by an irresistible power, or without the consent and cooperation of the will of man. But,

1. It should be proved that the ministry of the word is ever signified by knocking at the hearts of unregenerate sinners, or that God, or Christ, are ever said to knock at men's hearts by the ministry of the word. Men can strike the ear, God only can reach and strike the heart, which is done when the Gospel comes not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost; and when God does this, he does not knock and rap, and then wait till entrance is made from within; but he strikes home, and at once opens the door of the heart, as he did Lydia's, by his powerful and efficacious grace. It should also be proved, that God, in conversion, does command and require men to open their hearts unto him, neither of which can be proved either from this text or from any other in the whole Bible; nor is it in the power of unregenerate men, being dead in trespasses and sins, nor in their will, inclinations, desires, and affections, their carnal mind being enmity against God and Christ, to open their hearts and let them in. And supposing that these words do represent Christ standing and knocking at the door of men's hearts, by the external ministry of the word, has he not the key of the house of David, with which he opens and no man shuts, and lets himself in by the power of his grace, without offering any violence to the wills of men, since his people are made a willing people in the day of his power. Hence his knocking is not in vain, since to his elect not only sufficient but efficacious

grace is given, by which the door of their hearts is opened to him, and others are left inexcusable, who are ready to make such shifts as these; had he knocked, I would have opened; had I heard, I would have believed; had I known, I would have done this and the other thing. But,

2. These words are not spoken to nor of unregenerate sinners, nor have they any reference to the opening of men's hearts in conversion, but are directed to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, and to the members of that church, persons that professed the name of Christ; Who, though they were not hot, yet were not cold, and for whom Christ had a regard, though they were in this lukewarm state; and, therefore, takes every proper method to bring them out of it; which was much the same with the church in Song of Solomon 5:2, I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled — a place parallel to this text, and which is the only one besides in which Christ is said to knock, and require any to open to him. Now his standing at the door may either mean his near approach to judgment, see James 5:8,9; (this church of Laodicea, being the last of the churches, represents the state of the church in the last times, which will bring on and conclude with the general judgment;) or else his attendance on this church is meant, which shows his continued love, care, condescension, and patience towards it. His knocking at the seer is not by the ministry of the word, but by some afflictive dispensation of providence, perhaps persecution. This church was in a sleepy, lukewarm, indifferent, secure frame of spirit,

as appears from (vv. 15-18). Christ will not suffer her to continue so, and, therefore, takes his rod in his hand, stands at her door, and gives some severe knocks and raps to bring her to herself, and out of this indolent, supine, and self-confident state and condition she was in; which sense is confirmed by the preceding verse, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten be zealous, therefore, and repent. The promise he makes to such who hear his voice, that is, the men of wisdom, who hear the rod, and who hath appointed it, when the Lord's voice crieth, to a city, or a church, and open to him, that is, by the lively exercise of faith and love, and which is owing to his putting in his hand by the hole of the door, is, that he will come in, to them, and sup with them, and they with him, which may, in general, design communion and fellowship in his house and ordinances, or in particular, the marriage-supper of the Lamb, to which they who are called are pronounced blessed.

Now read Part II containing;

Chapter 1 Of Reprobation- a vindication of

Chapter II Of Election

Chapter III Of Redemption

Chapter IV Of Efficacious grace

Chapter V Of the corruption of human nature, and the importance of the human will of man to that which is spiritually good

Chapter VI Of Perseverance

Other Publications

Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists



Authored by Mr David Clarke
Cert..Ed.

My Testimony and Confession

This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs. They were both sent to prison for carrying a re arm without a license and malicious wounding. They were however both converted from crime to Christ after which they turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. This story tells of David's Conversion in 1970 and that of Michael, 1999 some 30 years later. It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and then Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970. It tells how he became a Christian over night, how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. He tells of the event that led to him making a

confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and findings in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984 written to help others. David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion and how he continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died in 2005. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. It tells how David felt compelled to write this story under the title, "Converted On LSD Trip". once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence. David tells how Michael too was converted through him reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God, after this it tells of David's mission to the Philippines to bring help and assistance

to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines. This story is told in there book, “Trojan Warriors”, that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row. David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus

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