



Mr. *Backus's*

DISCOURSE

On Faith and its Influence, &c.



True Faith will produce good Works,

A

DISCOURSE,

Whercin are opened

The Nature of Faith, and its powerful Influence on the Heart and Life ; together with the contrary Nature and Effects of Unbelief : And Answers to various Objections.

To which are Perfix'd

A brief View of the present State of the Protestant World, with some Remarks on the Writings of Mr. Sandeman.

By ISAAC BACKUS.

Minister of the Gospel in Middleborough.

Purifying their Hearts by *Faith*, Act. 15. 9.
It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should *earnestly contend for the Faith* which was once delivered unto the Saints, Jude 3.

B O S T O N :

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THE INTRODUCTION, CONTAINING A BRIEF
VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE PRO-
TESTANT WORLD ; WITH SOME PARTICULAR
Remarks ON THE WRITINGS OF MR. SAN-
DEMAN.

WHEN men see a new book, 'tis natural
for them to enquire the occasion of its
appearance, especially now when the
world is so full of them. The request
of friends is a common excuse, and may
truly be alledged here ; yet that is not the chief
motive. And what encouragement can the present
face of things give to such a work as this ? For the
language of booksellers in our country for some years
has born a near resemblance to that of one described
in the *London Magazine* for *April 1763*. Who re-
fused to print a poem, because the subject was too
moral and religious ; and said,
“Had your poem been garnish'd with modish chit chat,
How Fanny said this, and how Cloe did that ;
Lac'd with baudry and smut, had you publish'd a play,
I could sell off two thousand at least the first day.
For whate'er you may fancy, you live in an age,
When the church do not pay half so well as the stage ;
Dear Doctor, tho' skill'd both in Hebrew and Greek,
You had much better preach for five Shillings a week
Than publish such verse—for whatever is in't,
It *serious*, it ne'er pays for paper and print”.

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Yet (strange as it may seem) a heart affecting view of this deep sleep which we are fallen into, is the principle motive to this attempt, towards stirring souls up to a living and practical regard to divine truth : The neglect whereof has brought this lethergy upon us. And while it was coming on, various things have diverted our minds from a sense of our danger. Sometimes our thoughts were prying into *futurities*, to the neglect of *present* living unto God ; and then every thing that could be met with of a *prophetical* nature was published and spread : Not only such as were serious calculations or conjectures from scripture, but also romantic visions and dreams. At other times, witty or angry *controversy* employed our minds in various shapes : yea, instead of living by faith as we ought, many have contended (as hard as *Job* and his friends did) about what *faith* is.

And I believe *counsel* has been *darkned with words without knowledge*, as much in *this* controversy as in *that*. As long as *Job* view'd God in all that befel him, he did not *sin with his lips* ; but when he turned to dispute with his friends, each party misapplied excellent truths, and retorted their mistaken conclusions till their spirits were wearied out : yet when the Lord appeared he made them all ashamed of their conduct ; and doubtless his appearance now would have the same effect upon some of our late disputants. The neglect of right conduct in many who have made great professions of faith, has given occasion for the builders on works to exert themselves afresh ; and the writings of a religious nature which have had the most current spread in this land for some years past, were such as, under a pretence of promoting morality and good order, have been levelled against many of the
peculiar

peculiar doctrines of christianity ; yea some of them even against the true deity of its great author.

In the mean time we have one * who makes a shew of appearing for those great doctrines, and to stir people up to look into them, that yet has artfully mixed such a *poison*, as tends to settle men in a dead sleep. And since his writings have been a means of hardning many in iniquity, and of entangling or perplexing some serious minds, I shall attempt to point out some pernicious principles, which he has interspersed among many choice truths.

He has set down a charming description, of the Apostle's manner of preaching in these terms, viz.
“ As they exhibit no allurements to the passions of
“ men ; so neither do they enter into any parly of capi-
“ tulation with his presumptuous reasonings ; but
“ storming and demolishing these, they press forward
“ to his conscience, charge him before God, and con-
“ verse with him there. They clear up, and present
“ in a striking view before him, the half-defaced rea-
“ sons of duty, naturally imprinted in his heart, and
“ shew at once, how unsutable to them his thoughts
“ and actions have been. They unshackle his con-
“ science, and make it speak out, and, with the high-
“ est demonstration, enforce every thing it speaks.
“ And while they shut up all his imagined sources of
“ light and hope, they furnish him with a supernatural
“ reason of hope stamped with the divine character”. †
Such

* Mr. Robert Sandeman, who came from Scotland in autumn 1764. and after travelling into various parts of the country he gathered a church at *Portsmouth* ; but that was scattered last fall, and he has a small society now in *Boston*.

† Letters on Theron and Aspacio 3 Editon Vol I. page 226.

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Such fine passages as this, will induce some to take down all that such a writer says, almost without examination. But if we observe the divine caution, *Take heed what you hear*, we may soon find things of another nature; for the Apostles are dead, and this writer has raised a stately monument for them, and inscribed thereon, PAUL'S GOSPEL. And now he will not allow any man to call himself Christ's *ambassador*, and to *beseech* souls in *Christ's stead to be reconciled to God*: * and for no better reason that I can find than this, viz. that many have abused that character since the Apostle's days † Therefore now when one minister says to his hearers, "Let me tell you, the Lord hath sent me at this time to *proclaim liberty* to the captives that are in this sad, bitter, and (to their thinking) desperate condition; liberty God hath given thee, if thou wilt come freely; nothing in the world shall hinder thee". This author says that in this passage, "His lofty self conceit may be seen". And when another minister expostulates with his hearers thus, "Can none of my exhortations, none of my friendly intreaties prevail with you to *rouse up*, and look into your own hearts, and examine your state and condition" &c. This man cries observe with what dignity this gentleman *struts* in his pulpit". § And he concludes his book with this advice to his readers, viz. "After you have heard the orthodox so plainly affirming, that justification is an act of God's free grace,—suffer them not to put the change upon you. Whenever they begin to talk to you of any act you are to exert in order

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* 2. Cor. 5. 20.

† See Letters Vol. I. page 45. &c.

§ Letters Vol. 2. page 203, 204, 208.

“ to acceptance, and call it a justifying act, which
“ you are to exert by the help of God’s grace, be
“ you ready to reply, Avaunt ; none of your tricks !
“ If you would preach gospel to us, you must tell
“ us something fit to give us joy as we presently
“ stand unconscious of any distinguishing qualifica-
“ tion”.

Here reader, only look back to his description of the
Apostle’s way of preaching the gospel, and judge for
thyself, if he does not teach sinners to *gainsay* just such
preaching now as they delivered, when they “ pref-
“ sed forward to the sinners conscience, charged him
“ before God, and conversed with him there ; and
“ shut up all his imagined sources of light and hope”
while they called him to *believe in the Lord Jesus and*
ye shall be saved : yea he teacheth them to resist such
preachers now as they would the devil, by crying
“ Avaunt ! none of your tricks ” !

It is readily granted that this writer has pointed
out many dark strokes in the writings of our most
noted divines ; and if he could clear off all their mis-
takes, he should be as welcome thereto, as any *crow*
could be to take all the *carrion* out of our pleasant
fields ; but who would abandon their fruitful fields,
because some crow’s meat was found there ? Yet he
bends all his wit this way ; for after naming Mr.
Flavel, the *Erskine’s* and many others, under the name
of *popular preachers*, he says, “ I would be far from
“ refusing even to the popular preachers themselves,
“ what they so much grudge to others, the benefit
“ of the one instance of an hardened sinner finding
“ mercy at last : For I know of no sinners more
“ hardened, none greater destroyers of mankind than
“ they”.

“ they”. * And afterwards, speaking of the writings
 “ of Messrs. *Guthrie, Marshal, Boston and Doddridge*,
 “ he says, If any profane Person, who desires to be
 “ converted, shall take pains to enter into the spirit
 “ of these books, it will be easy to shew, from the
 “ new-testament, that he thereby becomes two-fold
 “ more the child of hell than he was before” †
 And he tells Mr. P. that he was “ particularly fond”
 of these two passages; “ Not (says he) that these
 “ passages contain *any thing* but what is *aimed at* in
 “ every page”. Thus we happen to have his own
 account of what he *aimed at* thro’ all his writings,
 even against such as he allows do plainly enough set
 before “ us *many* articles of the apostolic doctrine”.
 Yea who “ assert almost *all* the articles belonging to
 “ the sacred truth”. ‡ Now compare this with what
 he says of others: “ Many, says he, trusting in
 “ themselves, that they are more eminently godly
 “ than others, look down with a solemn pride on
 “ the rest of mankind.—Many have their pride not
 “ a little gratified, by *complaining* of the *defections*
 “ of the church whereof they are members”. Yet
 there is scarce one *protestant* author that he names
 without *complaining* of his *defections*; and where he
 could find nothing to *complain* of, he conceals their
 names; for he says, “ I have as I found occasion,
 “ freely adopted the observations, and even the words
 “ of the friends of the doctrine contained in these
 “ sheets, without seeing any necessity of quoting them
 or

* Letters on Theron &c. Vol. 2 page 138.

† Ibid page 191. Epistolary Correspondence between S. P.
and R. S. page 20.

‡ Letters Vol. I. page 271 & Vol. 2. page 246. Vol. 2
page 194.

“ or mentioning their names”. But why not their names on one side as well as the other? Why he says “ There was no attacking the popular doctrine “ to any purpose, without making an *honest* essay towards profaning the divinity of those demi-gods”*

Now my dear friends, behold ! this man is so *humble* that he exclaims aloud against every bodies *pride* but *his own* ! and he is so *honest* that he exerts all his wit to expose the *nakedness* of *protestant fathers* ; but adopts their *good observations*, while he conceals their names that they may pass for his own !

Yet he would not have us think that he is moved to this conduct by the *prejudices* of *education* ; because he tells us he was trained up from his infancy under such teaching, and long sought to form his heart thereby : “ But, says he I am far from thinking I say “ any thing extravagant, or in the least injurious to “ my conscience, when I affirm, that I might have “ been as profitably employed, and even with as “ much christian piety, in attending the levee of the “ lady of Loretto”. Vol. 1 page 121.

Here observe, *Loretto* is a city in *Italy*, where *Roman Catholics* say they have the *holy house* that the virgin *Mary* was born in, which they pretend was carried through the air from *Gallilee* by angels :— therefore many thousands yearly resort there, to pay their devotions to the *Ladies* image, with the infant on her arm. † So that he had as good have said, “ There is are profitable means to promote christian “ piety in attending the worship of the virgin *Mary*, “ in the depths of *popery*, as there are under such teachers as Mr. *Boston*, the *Erskins's* &c”.

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Let

* Letters Vol. 2 page 245, 246.

† Universal Gazetteer at the word Loretto.

Let this be kept in mind, and we will turn and enquire what more profitable means are to be had under his teaching. If we ask how a soul comes to believe in Christ, his reply is that “Faith comes not by human endeavours, or the use of *any means*, even under the *greatest* advantages that men *can* enjoy”. But says he, “The conveyance of the salutary truth to them for their relief, as much prevents every *motion* of their will,—as did the divine gracious purpose before the world was”. * Now what can have a more natural tendency to guard against a sense of the guilt of unbelief, than this has? to illustrate his meaning he says, “Let us learn from the words of Jesus, how infants at the beginning of Life, and how condemned fellows at the end of it, enter into the kingdom of God. Thence we will see how little account the deity makes of all the mighty bustle of our thoughts thro’ all the busy scene of life”. †

In order to establish his notion of these two cases, he puts a false construction upon others sentiments concerning them. As to the first, he speaks of some *dissenters*, and afterwards of Dr. Gill by name, whom he represents as holding that adult persons are intitled to baptism, and so to the kingdom of Heaven on account of something which they *can do* more than infants towards *obtaining* a part therein. § Whereas that controversy is not concerning what any can do towards *obtaining*, but ’tis about *manifesting* their interest in the kingdom. We have no account who the parents of them children were which were brought to Jesus, *Mat.* 19. 13, 14. Neither does he

* Letters Vol. 2 page 67. 136. † Ibid page 40.

§ Letters Vol. 2 page 41 205.

he say *all such*, but *of such* is the kingdom of Heaven. Mr. S. holds that * “justification comes to a parent, and his house at the same time; and says, “The parent then believing, according to what is spoken, is justified together with his house”. If this were true, it would prove that parents *can do* a great deal for others, if not for themselves. The text he refers to for the support of this notion, asserts fully that the *word* was *spoken to all that were in the jailor’s house*, and that *all rejoiced believing in God*, as it does that *all were baptized*, Act. 16. 31—34. None speaks more plainly against *national churches* than this author pretends to do; yet how vain are all such pretences, while he holds things thus? For all know that families are the foundation of nations: the old *national church* all sprang from one eminent believer.

Upon the other case viz. the *thief on the cross*, he takes some passages from Messrs. *Flavel*, *Boston*, and *Willison*; wherein they warn souls against *neglecting the great salvation* because of that instance of one who found mercy at the last: and because they say, that was an *extraordinary* time, such as will not happen again, and that the thief never had an offer of grace before. This author, catching at such expressions, *metamorphoseth* their discourse, till he would make their meaning to be “That the pardoned sinner had extraordinary merit, namely, of the negative kind, yea, that he had within him a very lively spark of goodness”; and strains it even to this, that, “extraordinary mercy was, upon an extraordinary occasion, shewn to extraordinary worth”. † And having changed their meaning in such a wretched manner, he then compares them to *Proteus*, who, the

* Epistolary Correspond. page 30. † Vol. 2 p 46, 47.

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the poets said would *change his shape at his pleasure*. And then brings in some of the most false sentiments he could find on that subject ; and so spends *eighteen* pages, and all to try to make out his position, “ That the deity makes little account of our thoughts “ thro’ all the busy scene of life”.

Yet Jehovah calls the *heavens* and *earth* to give ear to what he *hath spoken*, because his people *doth* not consider Isai. 1. 2, 3. The reason this man gives why these divines cannot mean right, is that it can never do to say, a person delays believing a testimony now, in hopes of finding it to be true hereafter : and so ridicules the notion of men’s delaying their faith. But God’s word informs us that when *Felix* heard *Paul* concerning the faith in Christ ; so that truth made him *tremble*, and his immediate answer was, *go thy way for this time*. And as we are expressly told that *faith comes by hearing* ; so the danger of *neglecting* it, is often warned against in these terms, *To day if ye will hear his voice hardned not your hearts*. And though he treats them with contempt for holding forth that the thief had not outstood such calls as presumptuous sinners now do ! yet *Paul* says, *I obtained mercy because I sinned IGNORANTLY, in unbelief*. 1 Tim. 1. 13.

At the same time this writer would be so far, from being accounted an enemy to good works, that he gives it as *Paul’s* mind, intimated to true Christians,” that “ they could not warrantably be assured of their happy state by any exercise of mind, without the self “ denied *works* of obedience.” And he takes pains to distinguish between the assurance of faith, and the assurance of hope, and refers the first to the *truth* believed, the other to our *interest* therein. And he says, “ No man can be charged with the sin of disbelieving “ the gospel for *doubting* if he be a good Christian : “ his

“ his chief hazard lies on the other side.” Of the assurance of faith he says, “ They obtain it without their using any endeavours in search of it:— whereas the assurance of hope is enjoyed *only* by those who give all diligence to obtain it.” * Now compare this with his essay to detect others *artifice*, in confounding grace and works together, where he says, “ Must we not say, that all the good works which shall be recompenced at the resurrection of the just, are produced by the influence of the divine Spirit dwelling in the hearts of those who believe? yet such is the connection betwixt every good work and its reward, that according to scripture, the *justice* of God, not to say his *grace*, is concerned to make it good.” †

Were this true then, he that gives all diligence to perform the *self denied works of obedience*, and so obtains the *assurance of hope*; God's *justice*, not to say his *grace*, would be concerned to *reward* him for those *good works* at the *resurrection of the just*. Whereas according to the gospel, *justice* is as much concerned to *forgive* the penitent, and to *cleanse* him from all *unrighteousness*, as to reward his good works: 'Tis all thro' grace in Christ Jesus, *Rom. 5. 17.*
 † *John 1. 9. Rev. 8. 3, 4.*

Tho' this author abounds with *criticism*, yet this, and other scriptural *distinctions* he labours to explode. As, 1. The distinction between *doctrinal* and *experimental* knowledge; between right *notions* of truth in the *head*, and *knowing* them in the *heart*. When Mr. P. had professed a full concurrence with his sentiments concerning faith, and then made an attempt to explain his definition of it, as “ a *bare* belief of “ the *bare* report of the gospel”, so as to make it mean

* Letters Vol. 2 page 140, 141. † Ibid page 96.

mean more “ than what is commonly called a *speculative, notional, or dead faith*” : Mr. S. replies, that “ any attempt to render my language on this head less offensive, is enough to alarm me and awaken “ suspicion”. Epist. Correspond. page 62. And tho’ Mr. P. expressed his thankfulness for the help he had received from our author’s writings to *clear his views, and relieve his mind* ; yet because he adds his persuasion that he had, “ truly known and preached, trusted and loved the Lord Jesus Christ for many “ years”, and therefore could not join in his *severity* against other *preachers and writers* ; Mr. S. tries hard to detect Mr. P. of *hypocrisy*, and concludes that there *must be some defect or mistake* in his faith, tho’ he could not *pretend to point out* wherein it lay, p. 61. But if this distinction was excluded, how would it strengthen the *deists* when they hear Jesus declare to his disciples that they *knew*, what they asserted that they did *not know* ; Job. 14 4—9. The glory of God in the face of Christ had shined into their *heart*, tho’ they had not as yet, distinct notions thereof in their *heads*. And tho’ they truly believed in him as the *way to the Father*, yet they *knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead*, John 20. 9. But after he arose, he *opened their understandings*, so that they could distinctly and boldly preach the *forgiveness of sins*, to *Jews* who are gathered from *among all nations* Luk. 24. 45. —47. Act. 2. Yet still it was a long time before they had so much head knowledge as to preach this gospel freely to the *gentiles*. All which shews that distinct notions in the head, and a knowing the truth in the heart are quite different things.

2 Mr. S. makes no just distinction between a *slavish* and a *child-like fear*, but labours to confound them together. He declares that no fixed judgment

can be formed of any man's state, but a patient continuance in *well doing to the end*. "No mortal," says he, can attain any such assurance of hope but that he still finds himself occasionally in hazard of losing it". page 85. And he asserts that, one can scarce do a greater hurt to professors, than by indulging them in the thought that they are at bottom possessed of some inherent *good principle*". A teacher, says he, runs no risk of exceeding in urging the motives to *fear*". page 92. But Paul says, ye have not received the spirit of *bondage* again to fear: And Zacharias blessed God that Christ would deliver us from our enemies, so that we might *serve him WITHOUT FEAR, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life*, Rom. 8. 15. Luk 1. 74. 75.

Now I defy him or any other man to reconcile these matters, without carefully distinguishing between that *bondage thro' fear of death* which souls are subject to before Christ *delivers* them; and the *reverence and godly fear*, whereby gracious persons *serve God*. Heb. 2. 15 & 12. 28 I come to his dislike of a third distinction, which he delivers thus. "Hence we may see how unfit the common addresses at the end of Sermons to believers, as *distinguished* from careless and unconcerned, are to promote the business of true edification". page 84. Who can refrain from comparing these things with what God says to false prophets? viz. *With lies have ye made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way*, Ezek. 13. 22. Yea he says, they do it *by their lies, and by their* LIGHTNESS. Jer. 23. 14, 32. This may turn us

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to look at the line of *practice* which this man is labouring to promote; as it is pointed to in various parts of his *Letters*; but is more clearly described in a pamphlet printed last year, called, "A plain and full account of the christian *practices* observed by the church in St. Martin's-le-grand, London, and other churches in fellowship with them". In the edition of it at *Boston*, the churches from him are called "SANDEMANIAN". The professed design of it, is chiefly to give a full account of those *practices* wherein they differ from others. page 4. * And the first article of such difference which they name is their having the *Lord's Supper every Sabbath*, for which they cite *Act. 20 7*. And because the disciples met with that design on that day, when *Paul* was there; they would have it, that these churches *brake bread* every first day, p. 6. Another practice they express thus. "In the interval between the morning and afternoon service, we have our *love feasts*; of which every one partakes; by dining at the houses of such of the brethren who live sufficiently near,—that the poor may have a comfortable meal at the expence of the more wealthy.—We cannot allow any member to be absent from the feast, either thro' indifference or mere inconvenience", page 4. 8. To prove this they quote three texts, viz. 1 *Cor. 11. 20, 21. 2 Pet. 2 13. Jude 12*. Wherein we may observe, that *Paul* calls the *Corinthians* feasts, their *own supper*, in distinction from the *Lord's Supper*; and *Jude* calls them *your feasts*. Thus three Apostles reprov'd the disorders which attended those feasts; and we have no account that one apostle ever practiced them. Tis most likely that they

* Note, the quotations are from the London edition.

they were taken up in imitation of the old *Jewish feasts*, without any divine warrant at all.

The next particular of their practice is ; at their feast, and at the admission of members. and at other opportunities they salute *each other* with a *kiss of charity* page 9 10. And they say, “ we account all objections against it, and all attempts to set it aside, by substituting any other form of salutation in its room, to proceed from a disregard to the authority of the new-testament”. However I would ask is there no difference between *customs* of expressing our respects to each other, and *ordinances* of worship towards God ? And is it as criminal to *alter* the *mode* of expressing our love to one another, as to *change* his *ordinances* ? The *deists* make a handle of what *Paul* speaks of another custom, against all *revelation* : one of them once said to me, *Paul* was mistaken in some things, for he says, “ Doth not *nature it self* teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him ; he mistook *nature* for *custom*”. But I think Mr. *Edward*’s remark is a good reply to this ; which is “ that ’tis *custom* which establishes any outward sign, as a token of inward sentiment ; therefore when it had established the wearing of long hair, as the sign of a female, *nature it self* taught that it was a shame for a man to appear in the known garb of a woman”. So here, those precepts which they refer to, undoubtedly require to salute the saints with *sincere tokens of love* : But I am not convinced that they require us to salute with a kiss, as a token of *spiritual* love, among people who scarce ever knew it used, to manifest any other than *natural* or *carnal* love

Washing of feet, was a needful kindness in old times, to travellers, because their manner of *dress*

left their feet exposed to the dust; but it seems this people are conscious that *custom* has made some alteration in these things now ! for they hold that John 13. 14. makes it our duty to *wash a brothers feet*, only when it can be an *act of kindness to do so*, p 13. And doubtless that *example* of our Lord, ought to make us all ready to do the lowest act of kindness to each other: but to *wash feet* only as a religious ceremony ; this we are told has long been annually practised by the *Pope*, and by several Kings of *Europe*.

This people often profess their strict regard to scripture ; yet they declare that they find neither express *precept* nor *precedent* therein, for *family prayer*, while they say, “ it seems necessary for maintaining “ the fear of God in a family”. page 14. But what *fear of God* would they maintain, without precept or precedent from him ? * However their design immediately appears, by their proceeding to judge those who insist upon the practice of *family prayer*, and the *first day sabbath*, but disregard the *feasts of charity*, the *holy kifs*, &c as persons, “ influenced to their “ religious practises, not by the fear of God, the authority of Christ, or the spirit of truth” page 15. Thus they judge others : and as to their own members, they say, “ In every church transaction, whether “ it be receiving, censuring, or expelling members, “ choosing officers, or the like ; we esteem *unanimity* “ *ty* to be absolutely necessary : Nothing is decided “ by the vote of the majority—In some cases indeed “ there are dissenting voices : The reasons of the dissent are thereupon proposed and considered ; if they

* I believe there is precept, and precedent too in the word for *family prayer* ; but as my views on that subject were published last year, I shall not repeat them here.

“ they are scriptural, the whole church has cause to
“ change its opinion ; if not, and the person persists
“ in his opposition to the *word of God*, the church is
“ bound to reject him”. page 24. 25. What mon-
strous things are here !

1 Here is a *self contradiction* ; for the first part of the paragraph asserts. that *nothing* is decided by the *vote of a majority*, while the last part declares that the *church rejects* a person that *dissents* ; i. e. the *major rejects the minor*.

2 Here is *cruel tyranny*, to oblige every member, to *believe as the church believes* in every act, on pain of being *rejected*.

3 Here is an awful *assuming of the prerogative of the most high* ; for the *churches opinion* which the dissenting person persisting in opposition to, is, without reserve, called “ the word of God”. This is the *church* which does not pretend to “ have any express
“ direction for the *precise day*, in which *their feasts*
“ should be observed”. page 8. who yet have *chosen* the *Lord's Day* for it, and *cannot allow indifference* or mere *inconvenience* to keep one member therefrom. And they have gone so far towards *forbidding to marry*, as positively to deprive a minister of his *office* if he should *marry a second wife*. page 18. yea, this is the church that *makes void* the divine rule concerning *forgiveness*, so far as absolutely to refuse to *receive* a person again, if he should incur their *censure* after they had restored him twice. And yet they call this a *solemn check* put upon *all disobedience* to the *gospel of Christ* : yea, and to *strike the rejected man's conscience* to bring him to *repentance* ! page 23 O strange ! bring him to *repentance*, but never receive him again !

Yet after all their *solemn checks*, they tacitly brand all with the odious name of *Pharisees*, who are against encouraging

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encouraging all *diversions publick or private* which are not “connected with circumstances *really sinful*”. page 15, 16. compare this with *Ecclef. 7. 2—4. Phil. 4. 5. 1 Thes. 5. 8.* and many other Scriptures.

Methinks I hear some say, “We are tired of hearing such things, and why do you spend so much labour against so mean a person, who is pleased with being taken notice of, tho’ it be in a way of opposition”? I grant these remarks to be true; and the *meanest* thing I can see in him, is the *deceitful* methods which he has taken to promote his designs; yet as I was convinced that hereby he has imposed upon many, I thought it duty to point out some of those *deceptions*, and so to warn my fellow men of their danger; otherwise I should think this labour very unbecoming.

He and his followers make great professions of appearing for *despised truth*. The *doctrine of the cross*, and *Paul’s Gospel*; and have accordingly raised their standards in the capitals, both of *old and new-England*: And instead of *Paul’s motto, in fastings often*, they have set up the baits of *feastings often*, and a free encouragement of both publick and private *diversions*; as if *inclination* did not lead people fast enough that way, without the sanction of *religion* to put them forward therein. And instead of *keeping under the body*, their scheme would keep many from divine worship, *every Lord’s day*, to provide for *feasting the body*. And tho’ they say, “We are utterly against aiming to promote the cause we contend for, either by creeping into private houses, or by causing our voice to be heard in the streets”, page 29. yet they do it by that art,

“Whose softest notes out-strip loud thunders sound,
And spread their accents thro’ the world’s vast round”*

And

* Stennet’s Ænigma on writing.

And as *creeping*, is the opposite of *going upright* ; therefore all *who walk not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel* ! let it be to get into private or publick houses, are justly said to *creep in*.

Paul's weapons were used for calling down *imaginations* and every *high thing* that exalteth it self against the *knowledge of God*, and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 5. But this pretender to Paul's gospel, encourageth sinners to hope that either they were justified in infancy, or else may be at the close of life ; and teacheth them that the deity makes *little account* of our *thoughts* thro' all the *busy scenes* of life : and instead of *pulling down satan's strong holds*, he has used his art to *fortify* them, so that now, if a preacher makes a close address to their *thought* and *conscience*, and calls them in Christ's name to *surrender* into his hands ; to believe on him &c. the *imagination* of a *dead body* is brought up, and the preacher is ridiculed as if he was absurdly talking to a *senseless corpse* ; tho' probably the *same image*, was in the sinners thoughts in the other part of the discourse, to guard against any conviction that he was *spiritually* dead, because he is *naturally* alive. Yet after this man has exerted all his wits to cast contempt upon such address, as if the preacher certainly meant that there was some good principle in the sinner's will ; he is so inconsistent, that he labours much to move professors to, what he calls, the self denied works of obedience, without allowing them to think that they are *possessed* of *any inherent good principle* at all. He says, " A person by being brought to the knowledge of the truth, is not thereby led to think himself possess'd of some *good principle*, by which he stands more *nearly related* to God than he was, or than other men. His comfort does

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“ does not lie in thinking on any *change* he has undergone, but he is comforted in thinking on what is *without* him, on what is *absent* from him, even on what is in *Heaven*.” So Balaam said, *I shall see him but not now : I shall behold him, but not nigh* ; whereas Paul says, *Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates*. Again, this writer says, “ We must not consider the person advancing to the assurance of hope as engaged in certain round of duties, so as his comfort should arise from a *consciousness* of his performing or desiring to perform them from *right motives*.”

“ Thus the christian profession would become a pharisaical scheme. We must rather consider him, as, at the risk of all other evils, seeking of *shelter* from the greatest in the society of Christ, and his disciples”.* What contradiction is here to *Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 6. 2 Cor. 1. 12.* and great numbers of other places ? And what does all Mr. S’s religion come to at last, more than speculative *notions* about the *truth*, and some outward *doings*, without *thinking* he is possess’d of any good principle by which he stands *more nearly related to God than other men* ; and without being *conscious* of having experienced any inward *change*, so as to act from *right motives*, or *desiring so to do* ! Yet when he goes on in *feasting, laughter, and diversions*, he still hopes to have *shelter* from the *greatest of evils, in the society of Christ and his disciples*. Now if we remember *Loretto*, and how he has treated *protestant* writers in general, and observe that he declares our writers, upon the steps of the spirits work in conviction and conversion, to be “ much more hurtful to mankind, than writers of *romances*” ; and plainly signifies that the *pulpit* at present

* Epistolary correspond. p 82, 83., & 86.

present does *more hurt* than the *stage* : And he says,
 “ When we hear one describing to us how he first
 “ obtained peace with God, if we find him taking
 “ pains to inform us of the influences of grace he
 “ felt in his heart, and the *operations of the Spirit* lea-
 “ ding him on to conversion, we may safely say,
 “ This is a spirit that speaks of it felt ; this is not
 “ the true grace of God”. * And if we reflect again
 that his plan of church government, disallows
 the distinction between *circumstantial*, and *essential*
 points, which is so general with protestants, and re-
 jects every member that dare be so bold as to judge
 otherwise in *any case*, than the church does ; and yet
 that this very church reserves liberty to her self to
correct mistakes, and alter her ways as other matters
 may *occasionally* be presented. page 24. ; † These
 and other things would be apt to make us think of
 an old story which they used to tell, of persons taking
lanquary in the bosom of the church, whose head is
 called *Christ’s vicar on earth*.

And tho’ this man and his followers appears con-
 temptible to many, and he glories in it, and would
 not have any think there is any danger of their “ ma-
 “ king head as a faction or party of this world”.
 D yet

* Letters on Theron &c. Vol. 2 page 61. 103.
 243. I am far from thinking that our writers on
 these subjects are free from errors : The following dis-
 course will shew the contrary ; yet to treat Mr. *Her-*
vey, and many other excellent authors as he has done,
 is monstrous ; tho’ his treatment of the work of God’s
 Spirit is much more abominable.

† “ Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her
 “ ways are *moveable*, that thou canst not know them”.
Prov. 5. 6.
 Epist. Correspond. page 15.

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yet a due consideration in the light of truth might give us another view of our state. For tho' few have received his model of church affairs; yet many are pleased with his crafty cants upon our most awakening preachers and writers; and instead of *mortifying the deeds of the body*, they are strongly attached to the *pleasures of sense*. And if we realize how much professors of religion value themselves, upon their nice distinctions and refined *speculations*, with some polite *forms*; while they give sad proofs of unacquaintance with *heart exercise*, and a *living conformity to God*; and observe how many *inventions* they are seeking out to ease their minds, in neglect, if not contempt, of this *good old way*; these, and many other things might justly alarm us all. For let men please themselves never so much with their refined sentiments, and a *bare belief* of the *truth*; yet he who cannot lie, says, "Because they received not the *love of the truth*, that they might be saved, God shall send them *strong delusions*, that they may believe a lie; that they all might *be damned*, who believed not the truth, but had *pleasure in unrighteousness*". 2 *Thes.* 2. 10—12. What did the *counsel of Balaam* do, after he had spoken many bright truths? *Feasting* under the name of religion, and carnal embrace, involved *Israel* in such iniquity, as *Phinebas* and other princes said, they were not *cleansed from*, even when settled in *Canaan*, altho' there was a plague which swept off twenty four thousand of them, *Num.* 25. 9. and 31. 16. *Joshua.* 22. 17. See also *Rev.* 2. 14.

The apostle *Paul* not only says, It is *high time to awake out of sleep*, but he also warns us against *this*, and other snares which tend to lull us to sleep again; for we are told that the word *Comus*, which is translated *rioting*, in *Rom.* 13. 13. is with the heathen the God

of

of feasts : * And surely that God who must have *feasting* and *kissing*, upon every day that is set a part for his worship, is more properly called *Comus* than *Christ* ; or † *Lord Peor* than *Lord Jesus*. I doubt not but many are now drawn into these ways in their *simplicity*, as those were who followed *Abjalom*, when he pretended he was going to *pay his vow unto the Lord*. 2 Sam. 15. 7, 11. Who then can hold his peace under such apprehensions ? No man's station is so low but if he discovered a lurking *enemy*, or kindling *fire* ready to spread slaughter and desolation all around, ought to alarm others of their danger : He, who would excuse him from guilt, if he neglected so to do ? And tho' false alarms ought not to be made, yet a *mistake* in that would be more easily excused, than a neglect to give notice of real danger. Therefore none may justly blame so weak an attempt as this is, if I have truly pointed out any snares and dangers which at present attend us, that my brethren and fellow mortals were not sufficiently a ware of before ; for when the apostle *Jude* found it needful to write unto us, and *exhort* us to *contend earnestly for the faith* ; the reason he gives therefor is, that there are *certain men crept in unawares*, who under a pretence of *grace*, with *great swelling words*, use all their art to cover and gratify the *fire of lusts*, which exposeth to the *just vengeance of eternal fire* : And he plainly directs to one method of help, that is now craftily guarded against, namely close and moving addresses to men's souls, for their deliverance from ruin. After exhorting saints to a close walk with God, he says, “ And “ of some have *compassion*, making a difference : and

D 2

others

* Vide Dr. Gill on the place, and Mr. Edwards's life and remains published 1765.

† *Baal* signifies *Lord*.


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“others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire,
“having even the garment spotted by the flesh”. He
had already spoken of *dreamers*, and here he has a
plain allusion to persons in a *deep sleep*, when, tho’
they may have fine *dreams* and *notions* in their *heads*,
yet the *flames* are just ready to consume them. Who
can observe this emblem and not renounce and detest
that cold, and general way of speaking upon the great
concerns of eternity, that is so much in vogue at this
day! John was a *burning* as well as a *shining light*.


Some sense of the importance of these things has
carried me beyond my first design; but now I leave
the foregoing and following remarks both upon our
misery and the gospel remedy, to the readers judg-
ment, desiring each one to be as *noble* as the *Bereans*
were, and *search the scriptures daily, whether these
things are so*. If any thing is found to disagree there-
with, let it be rejected in welcome: but if any *scorn*
to regard the truth, *he alone must bear it*. On the
other hand, if any shall receive the least benefit here-
by, ’tis hoped they will neither neglect to give all the
glory to God, nor to pray for their unworthy servant
in the gospel.

ISAAC BACKUS.

*Middleborough,
May 4th 1767.*

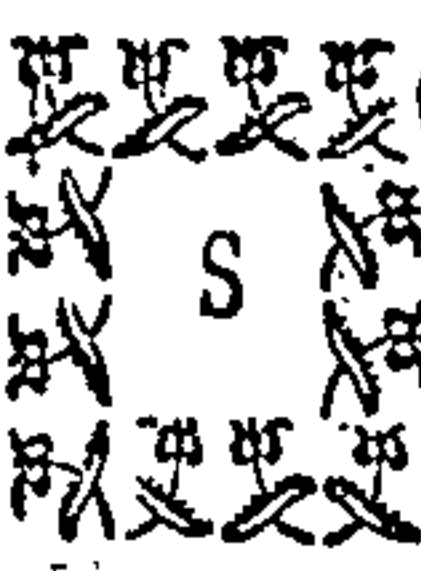


Faith wrought with his Works.



JAMES II. 22.

*Seest thou how Faith wrought with his Works,
and by works was Faith made perfect.*

OME have thought that there was a difference in sentiment between *Paul* and *James*, because one insists so much upon justification by faith without works ; and the other asserts that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. But if the scope and occasion of their writings be duly attended to, this seeming contradiction will vanish. *Paul* laboured chiefly upon laying the foundation of christianity, where Christ had not been named ; and scarce any thing is more natural than for souls when awakned to think, that as by breaking the law they exposed themselves to divine wrath ; so that the way to appease that wrath, and obtain God's favour is to keep the law : therefore he engageth with all his might against all such notions, and fully proves that nothing but Christ's righteousness can justify us before God : while *James* wrote principally to professors, to stir them up, and exhort them to live agreeable to their profession,

feſſion, in the ſeveral places where they were ſcattered abroad ; and to expole the abſurdity of pretending to have faith when it did not produce obedience. He puts the queſtion, *What doth it profit my brethren, tho' a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works ? can faith ſave him ?* That is, can that be ſaving faith which does not bring forth good fruit ; - and what profit is there in a man's ſaying he has it, when we have only his bare word to prove it ? And he proceeds to make this demand, — *Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works :* From whence it appears that the juſtification which he is there upon, is what is *evidential*, a ſhewing and evidencing to others that we have juſtifying faith. And to illuſtrate the matter he brings in the example of the father of the faithful, ſaying, ‘was not *Abraham* our father juſtified by works, when he had offered *Iſaac* his ſon upon the altar ? *Abraham* believed God and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs”, long before that time ; but now the evidence thereof, and of his true regard to God's authority, ſhined forth with peculiar luſtre, which I take to be the import of theſe expreſſions, *Now I know that thou feareſt God. Gen. 22. 12.* With great propriety therefore, is this example introduced to detect a *dead faith*, and to ſhew the difference between that and a *living one*.

The apoſtle would have us obſerve it well : *Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works ?* how powerfully it governed his heart and conduct, in ſuch a trying affair. Yet let us remember, he does not ſay, “ ſee how his works produced his faith ” : No, he ſets faith as the leading grace, and tells us in the next verſe, that *the ſcripture was fulfilled which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs.* James held to juſtification

cation by *imputed righteousness*, as much as *Paul* : and on the other hand, *Paul* held to faith which worketh by love, and makes souls careful to maintain good works * as much as *James* ; they were sweetly agreed.

What I shall further attempt from this text, as divine assistance may be granted, is,

- I. To open the nature of Faith.
- II. Shew its powerful influence on the heart and life.
- III. How by works it is made perfect.

I. I shall endeavour to open the nature of this faith upon which there have been great controversies in our day. And I shall endeavour to keep close to the scripture account of it, which shews plainly,

1. That Christ is the *author* as well as *finisher* of our faith : and that it is wrought in the soul by the *exceeding greatness* of God's power. *Heb.* 12. 2. *Eph.* 1. 19.

2. That the *word* is the means of it ; *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* *Rom.* 10. 17

3. That the heart of man is the subject of this grace : *With the heart man believeth,* *Rom.* 10. 10. yea with *all the heart,* *Acts* 8. 37. Thus the author, means and seat of this principle, are plainly pointed out: but still it is inquired what is the nature of faith ? To this the answer is ready,

4. *It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* *Heb.* 11. 1. *The things hoped for,* are all the blessings which are promised in the gospel ; grace and glory, and every good thing that God's people need. Faith takes his word for all, and by it they appear *substantial realities* to the soul. *The things not seen,* comprehend all the affairs of the invisible and eternal world, which are revealed in the word ; such as the being and perfection of God ; his creating all things out of nothing, and upholding all

* *Gal.* 5. 6. *Tit* 3. 8.

things by the word of his power ; his creating man in his own image , and giving to him a law as the rule, and condition of his life ; man's breaking that law, whereby death and misery are brought upon the world ! the doctrine of the trinity ; the son of God's undertaking for us, and his taking upon him our nature, wherein he obeyed and suffered in our stead, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ; the holy Ghost's coming to apply these great blessings ; the resurrection, general judgment, and the future state of happiness to the righteous, and misery to the wicked. These and all other matters of divine revelation, faith is the *evidence* of.

Evidence is to discover what is otherwise unknown, and to decide controversies. Now the *world by wisdom knew not God* ; and they are full of controversies about divine things. But faith takes the divine evidence as that which is sufficient to end all disputes. The believer settles the matter there, if God has said it, that is enough ; *for if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* Human testimony about distant things, tho' it should come from persons of good credit, yet the things are distant and invisible to us, and we know men may be mistaken : but the Lord presents the great things which concern our peace in *present* view, to the believing soul. His word is compared to *glass*, which opens as it were a window into the eternal world, so that when the spirit takes the *veil from our hearts*, *we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image*, 2 Cor. 3. 16—18.

These plain scriptures may teach us the evil of that opinion 'that in the first act of faith we believe, that which was not true before'. The objects were the same before, tho' we did not see them 'till then. And
there

there is as little truth in asserting on the other hand, that we have no knowledge of our interest in those blessings, *in faith*, but only by its *effects* afterwards". Indeed the glory of divine objects engages our first attention ; yet as the first *entrance of the word giveth light*, * it gives the soul at the same instant, some knowledge and enjoyment of the benefits of the glorious *Sun* ! † and which is greatly consumed by after effects. " The conveyance of the truth to them, for their relief, as much prevents every motion of their will, as did the divine gracious purpose before the world was". For the guilt of unbelief lies in this, that *light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light : And their eyes have they closed, lest they should see and be converted, and healed.* They are *willingly ignorant* of the evidence of the truth of God's word, which shines in all his works. § Now how can any soul possibly be turned herefrom, to behold *the lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world*, || without any motion of his will ? Another mistake may likewise be detected here. Some hold that the faith which unbelievers are condemn'd for the neglect of, is a lower kind of faith, than that which is saving. But what is saving faith beside this, viz a *receiving with all the heart. the witness and testimony that God hath given us, of eternal life in his Son* ? 1 Joh. 5. 9—12. And he that *believeth not God, hath made him a liar*. The evidence of this truth shines so clearly as to leave all without excuse, who do not believe with *all their hearts* ; while every soul that is made willing, by divine power, to *receive his testimony, and set to his seal that God is true*, knows that this *faith is not of himself* ; it is the

E gift

* *Psal.* 119. 130. † *Psa.* 84. 11. *Mal.* 4. 2.

§ *Joh.* 3. 19. *Acts* 28. 27. 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. || *John* 1. 29.

gift of God ; * who is worthy to be obeyed as well as trusted for ever. Which leads us,

II. To consider the powerful influence of faith on the heart and life. *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works ?* how it moved him to ready obedience. When the command came, “ Take now thy son, thine only son *Isaac*, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of *Moriah* ; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I shall tell thee of” ! † *Abraham* knew it to be God’s call, and that was enough for him ; he never stands to confer with flesh and blood, nor to say, “ I am in a justified state, and therefore I shall be saved if I do not comply with so surprizing and trying a command”. No, tho’ there never was a command which nature might form more plausible pleas against than this ; yet he makes no delay, but riseth early in the morning, prepares for the journey and goes three days travel to the appointed place, for the heart rending work ; and there, with unshaken resolution he proceeds in his obedience, until a voice from heaven gave him a release from sacrificing his son, and said, *Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me*, Gen. 22. 1—12.

Come precious souls, attend here and learn what that *fear of God* is, which is so often enjoined and recommended in scripture : it is not that *dread* that moves many to work like *slaves* for fear of punishment ; but it is a *noble regard* to God which flows from acquaintance with him, and faith in him, whereby the saint views him as worthy to be obeyed with all our powers, and that nothing is too dear to be given up at his command. Such is the nature and influence

* *John* 3. 33. *Eph.* 2. 8. † *Gen.* 22.

of true faith. There are three things in faith which powerfully excite to obedience, and guard against all the snares of sin : The believing soul views the *precept* to be true and excellent, therefore to be obeyed ; the *promise* to be sure and sufficient, therefore he shall be *supported* ; and faith presents eternal things as *near* and *real*, therefore to be *regarded* without delay. And if we carefully observe, we shall find that in these are the main springs of obedience, and that the contrary, is the root of all mischief.

1. The soul by faith views and esteems all God's precepts concerning all things to be *sure, right, and excellent*, therefore ever to be *obeyed*. *Psal.* 93 5. and 119. 128. The contrary of this was the main snare that drew our first parents into disobedience. God had given them a law, and declared that in the day they broke it, they should *surely die* : but the serpent represented that command unreasonable, and said, *ye shall not surely die* if ye brake it ; and to him they hearkned, and rebelled against God. And tho' many of their children deny their being sinners by nature ; yet they might be justly challenged to produce one of them all, who does not naturally conceit, that the plain letter of God's law is hard and severe, and that if they break it, yet the full penalty will not take place upon them. Nay what less than this, is implied in all their objections against the doctrines of absolute and certain salvation in Jesus alone ? Representing as tho' these doctrines would hinder obedience. All such objections carry such language as this in them, namely, that men do not view the divine law to be true and excellent, nor the lawgiver to be worthy of all honor and regard ; no ; but since he has got the power in his hands, we must make the best terms with him we can, lest he fall upon us and destroy us ;

tho' if we were once certain that we were secure therefrom, we would take our ease, and live as we list. O astonishing ! Is this the dignity of human nature, that we hear so much of ! We all know that what we love, and have a great esteem of, we pursue after and delight in, without being drove to it by terrors, or punishments : yea, we will pursue after it tho' terrors and dangers should appear against us, and still hope to escape the danger, and to enjoy the object of our desires : Thus the covetous person pursues after, his beloved gains, the ambitious man after his honors, and the luxurious man after his pleasure ; and notwithstanding the curses of the law are levelled directly against him, he secretly hopes to escape the lash of them, which hope is supported by unbelief. So *Moses* describes the *root that beareth gall and worm-wood*, as being one who heareth the words of the curse, yet blesteth himself in his heart saying, *I shall have peace, tho' I walk in the imagination of mine heart.* Deut. 29. 19.

Every soul which runs on in sin, is some way or other blinded about the truth and verity of God's law ; but the believer views his testimonies to be *very sure*, and that *holiness becomes his house for ever*, which engageth him to walk in all the commandments, and ordinances of the Lord blameless ; and he is abundantly strengthened therein.

2 By viewing the *promise* to be *sure* and *sufficient*, and therefore he shall be supported in all the work that God calls him to. This is one peculiar glory of the gospel plan, that a full supply of help is provided and promised to enable the saint to go thro' every duty, that the precept enjoins upon him. Is he called to go thro' rough ways, then his *shoes shall be iron and brass*, and as his *day is* his *strength shall be*. Is

he assaulted with temptation? The Lord says, *my grace is sufficient for thee*; yea, he says to all his children, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*: so that they boldly say, *the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* Heb 13. 5, 6. A believing view of these and other *exceeding great and precious promises*, gives the saint a participation of such divine supplies as enables him to be *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knows that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.* 2 Pet. 1. 4. 1 Cor. 15. 58. While thousands and ten thousands, who have had some sight of the danger of a sinful course, so as to bring them to resolve to lead a new life; yet have fainted in the way, and by reason of difficulties without, and struggles within, have given up the cause and turned again to their old ways, if not into worse conduct than before. Alas! what multitudes of old, *despised the pleasant land*, which God had promised to *Israel*, because *they believed not his word*: * and tho' they could not deny but it was a good land; yet they imagined that strength of the enemies, and the height of their walls, were a sufficient bar against their proceeding any further, and a good reason for their turning back into the wilderness; where, by God's awful judgment their carcases fell. And we have abundant evidence that the record of their fall, stands as a loud and constant warning to us all, to give the more *earnest heed* to the things which we have heard in the gospel, least *any man fall after the same example of unbelief* †

Natural men pursue a separate interest of their own in all they do; therefore they must support themselves and their cause: but all that are reconciled to God, become

* *Psal*, 106. 24.

Psal. 95. & *Heb*. 2, 3. & 4 chapt.

become one with him, in interest and end ; hence they do not go a warfare, against the world, flesh and devil, at their own charges ; but have truth it self engaged to *supply all their needs*, which strengthens them to *come boldly to the throne of grace*, that they may obtain help in time of need. * This distinction is very conspicuous in the spies which *Moses* sent to view the promised land ; altho' the true, and the false spies both had a sight of the same walls and enemies, yet how different is their language ? The one says, *We are well able to overcome them* ; but the other said, *We be not able* : And the cause of this difference in judgment is quite plain ; The false spies formed their conclusion by computing what proportion there was between their own strength, and that of the enemy ; while the true ones viewed the infinite disproportion there was between *Jehovah*, by whose direction they acted, and on whose promise they trusted, and all those tall worms which others were so much frightened at ; and this view made them plead with *Israel* not to rebel against the Lord, neither fear the people of the land, for, say they, *they are bread for us ; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us : fear them not.* Num. 13. 30, 31. & 14. 9. But the congregation refused to hear, and believe this noble testimony, and O, how dreadful were the consequences !

“ Look back, my soul, with holy dread,

“ And view those antient rebels dead ;

“ Attend the offer'd grace to day,

“ Nor loose the blessings by delay.

“ Seize the kind promise while it waits,

“ And march to *Zion's* heavenly gates ;

“ Believe, and take the promis'd rest ;

“ Obey, and be for ever blest”. †

The

* *Phil.* 4. 19. *Heb.* 4. 16.

† *Watts* in the 95th *Psal.*

The truth we are upon shines with peculiar lustre in the example of another antient patriarch. *Jacob* upon his return from *Padan Aram* with his family, heard that his angry brother was coming to meet him, with four hundred men, which filled him with great concern ; and what can he do with his feeble company ? why, he makes his address to his heavenly friend, (as well as improves the best means within his power for relief) and says, *O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, return unto thy country, and I will deal well with thee : I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant.—Deliver me, I pray thee,—thou said'st, I will surely do thee good.* Gen. 32. 9—12. O my friends, here is an example for us all ! and may we duly regard it. Here precept and promise are sweetly united, which satan is ever trying to separate as he did in his temptation to our Saviour, when he brought the promise of being borne up by angels : but left out the clause, *in all thy ways*, which respects the ways that God has directed us to walk in. Thus he often tempts souls to presume upon being upheld by divine promise, tho' in a way of disregard of divine rule. But *Jacob* could appeal to what God had said, for the warrant of his conduct, as well as for the support of his cause ; yet he is far from pleading any deserving of his own ; he sees that he is not worthy of the least mercy ; at the same time he believes that God is true, and there he fixeth his claim. *Thou said'st I will surely do thee good ;* and with humble boldness, he would hold him to his word, and say, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* And the blessing he had with a witness ; and a new name, which signifies that, as a prince he prevail'd with God.

Come

Come all you who say, that the belief of mercies being sure to us, will make us careless in our conduct: dare you still confront heaven? For so long as this and other such like sacred records remain true, all such objectors will be found liars, and their speech nothing worth. At the same time, this instance shews what a dead, vain thing, that pretended faith is, which does not influence men's hearts, and govern their behavior. Seest thou how *Jacob's* faith moved his soul to plead and *wrestle all night* for promised blessings; and likewise diligently to use the best means he could, in order to obtain the deliverance he wanted? These are the *footsteps of the flock*, which we must *go forth by*, if we would find rest to our souls. A further confirmation of our doctrine is,

3. That faith views eternal things as *near* and *real*; therefore to be *regarded without delay*. What multitudes are there, where the gospel shines, who do not pretend to deny the importance of religion, that still *neglect the great salvation*? The chief cause of which, is that the objects of sense, and things of time, appear to them as *present realities*; while that salvation is to them a *distant uncertainty*: And therefore to part with present honors, riches or pleasures, for things which they know not, they will not do, as long as they can help it. Thus they are willingly blinded by the *God of this world*, lest the *light of the gospel should shine unto them*: but when God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart, * then all things appear just the reverse; the glories of this world are seen to be *uncertain, vexatious vanities*, and spiritual things to be *present, and glorious realities*. By faith *Moses refused* all the glittering charms of *Pharaoh's court*, and chose

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* 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6.

to take his lot with God's *afflicted* people ; for he saw the *pleasures of sin* were but for a short season ; yea he *esteemed reproach* for Christ to be *greater riches than the treasures in Egypt* ; for he had *respect unto the recompense of the reward*. * Faith presents the great white throne in view, and gives the soul (as it were,) to hear the awful and glorious sentence from the judges' mouth, which shall *reward* every man according to his works : and this moves the saint to act now, as every one will wish they had acted when these heavens shall be no more : yea, and he finds that *in* keeping God's commands there is *great reward*.

And as faith guards against the *allurements*, so it does also against the *terrors* of the world and the devil. *By faith Moses forsook Egypt* ; led forth *Israel* from their cruel master, *not fearing his wrath*, tho' one of the greatest of earthly *Kings*, *for he endured as seeing him who is invisible*. God reproves his people smartly by the prophet, that they should be *afraid of a man that shall die*, and forget the *Lord their maker*, *Isai. 52. 12, 13*. A believing view of him, was such a shield to *Daniel's* three friends, against the rage of another monarch, who had spread terror thro' the world, that they could boldly tell him to his face, that they were *not careful to answer him* in a matter in which he commanded, what their God forbid : and that they *would not obey him* therein ; no, notwithstanding a *fiery furnace* was set before them, as the penalty of such disobedience, *Dan. 3. 16. 18*. These truths are so weighty, and so delightful, that I scarce know how to leave them ; tho' it may be time that I come,

III. To consider how *by works, faith is made perfect* : and I understand two things by it,

I

1. That

* *Heb. 11. 24-27,*

42 True Faith will produce good Works.

1. That hereby the perfect, or excellent nature of faith is *made manifest* : So the word *made* is sometimes used ; as by *Peter* on the day of pentecost : *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made, that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ*, Acts 2: 36. That is he hath *made* it manifest, or (as another text has it) *declared him to be the son of God with power*. So here, by works faith is made perfect, as its excellent nature is manifested thereby.

2. By exercise it *grows* ; it is compared to a grain of mustard seed which grows to a great tree : So the just who live by faith, walk in the path which is *as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. Both of these, were eminently true in *Abraham* : the perfect nature of his faith was made manifest, so that heaven bore testimony thereto ; and also this trying exercise, greatly encreas'd it. Many weighty lessons might be drawn from these observations : I would touch upon a few.

1. Hence see how unreasonable and false, all the objections are, against the doctrines of free grace, and being saved by faith, which would represent them as injurious to the interest of morality ; when it is clearly proved, that faith in Christ for righteousness and strength, is the very principle from whence all good works flow ; yea, and truth it self shews, that without it we can no more bear good fruit, than the branch can be fruitful without union, and communion with the vine, *John. 15. 1—5*.

Yet (amazing to think of !) the scripture is not fuller of proofs for these doctrines, than the world is of opposition against them ; but if we examine carefully, we shall find, that what is said against the doctrines of grace, proceeds chiefly from the same quarter, that

that the false prophets *dreams* did of old, namely, the *deceit of their own hearts*. We may often hear men, telling how they would gratify their lusts, if they believed them doctrines were true; and also that if their good works, did nothing towards intitling them to divine favour, they would never do any more. Such language, has often reminded me of Solomon's remarks, that *when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool*; for what greater folly can a man express, than this? Such language holds forth plainly, that all their delight is in sin, and therefore if they were once delivered from fear of the consequence, they would indulge their lusts without controul, with all their might: and that as to their pretended good works, *self* is the spring and end of them all; so that if *self* was but secure they would not care what became of God's honor, or others welfare; and on the other hand, if *self* might not lay in some claim for the services they do for God, they would quit the tedious business.

This folly is drest up in our day, with all the fine language, that many of the wise men of this world are masters of; who, with great pretences of *reason*,
“ make as bold with the bible, (as to the gospel part
“ thereof) as one of the senate houses sometimes do,
“ with a bill sent them from the other, i. e. spy
“ faults, and make amendments, only to clog the same,
“ and render it obscure and intricate, that so it may
“ sink at last” * But before men venture so far to
speak evil of those things, which they know not, they had better come down to things that they do know: and if they would give such a description of their sentiment, about what is good œconomy in their own families,

* Mr. S. Keeps divine energy. dedication page 5.

as they do about Christ's family, there would be no great danger of their *subverting whole houses*, as they often do. Let one of these doctors come out, and tell the world, that "He has got a very affectionate and faithful wife, and the way she is kept so, is by a constant fear of being divorced and punished, if she should embrace a false lover; and that he has no other way to keep her in good order, but only by holding her in *suspence* about his unshaken love to her": Or that "he has got an excellent and obedient son, and the way he is kept so, is by frequently threatening to disinherit him, if he does not behave well; and that he is forced to hold his son always in *doubt*, about ever enjoying his father's estate; in order to keep him in good subjection to his commands". Now when they can convince us, that this is the best sort of œconomy in a human family, then possibly we may believe, that assurance has a hurtful tendency; and that it is not best, for Christ to grant the request of his spouse, when she cries, *Set me as a seal upon thine heart:—for love is strong as death, jealousy is as cruel as the grave.* * Tho' as long as we believe that God knew best what has a good tendency, who says, of our spiritual David, *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.* And that he is willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, that they might have strong consolation: † so long we must detest and abhor all such teachings as would represent, that the knowledge of God's unchanging love in Christ Jesus, is of a dangerous tendency.

Lc

* Cant. 8. 6. Psal. 89. 30—33.

† Heb. 6. 17, 18

Let us attend to the testimony of one, who was with our Lord on the mount, concerning this matter. “Beloved, (says he) now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath *this hope* in him, purifieth himself; even as he is pure”. * This testimony is diametrically opposite to the modern notions of many, in two points : *one* is, that many will say, “If you are *assured*, you are got beyond *hope*” : but *John* calls a *knowing* that we shall have the beatific vision, *this hope* : and tho⁹ he does not assert that all saints have this Knowledge ; yet near the close of this experimental epistle, he does say, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God ; that ye *may know* that ye have eternal life”. † Which is as plain as words can express, that all true believers *may know*, that they have eternal life. The *other* point is, the effect of this knowledge. How often have we heard it declared, that if a person “knows he shall go to heaven, this will make him careless about his conduct”. And yet *John* asserts, that *every man* that hath *this hope* in him, *purifieth himself* : and aims at nothing less than, to be pure *even as Christ is pure*. And now who shall we credit ? him that wrote by inspiration of God, or they that speak and write according to the wisdom of this world ? Surely we must give in to the apostles conclusion, *Let God be true, and every man a liar*.

Therefore, 2. Hence learn the reason why all sin is summed up in unbelief, both by Christ and his apostles, *John* 16. 9. *Rom.* 3. 9 & 11. 32. *Gal.* 3. 22. The more we look into things truly, the more clearly

* 1. *John* 3. 2, 3.

† *Joh.* 5. 13.

clearly we shall find it to be so. Truth abundantly declares that God is the fountain of all good and happiness. Now, was this believed, by precious souls, could they pursue a course contrary to him, in order to obtain happiness? Our Savior shews, that one soul is worth more than this world, and that if a man should gain the *whole world*, and loose his *own soul*, he would have a dreadful bargain of it. — If this was credited as a *reality*, could men possibly neglect their souls for earthly trifles, as most of them do? Solomon says, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.* * Were this viewed as truth, by any that take false and deceitful ways to get wealth, it would be like the drawn sword † to one of old, who *loved the wages of unrighteousness*, he fell before it. I have some where seen this remark, that of all transgressors, the drunkard may seem to have the most reason to say, he cannot help gratifying his lust: yet present him with the finest bowle of liquor, and then let him know, that there is a dose of poison in the bottom of it, he will not take it. Now truth it self warns him not to look § upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup; because, *at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*

So as to uncleanness, where is the mariner, let him be ever so weary, that would lie down upon the yielding wave, or think to take his rest upon the *top of a mast*? yet the oracles of God give this as a just emblem of him that yields to the harlots embrace. ||

Yea and also likens him to the *ox* that goes to the slaughter, and a *bird* that *hasteth to the snare*, and knoweth not it is for his life. And if we (like Ezekiel) turn

* Prov. 21. 6. † Num. 22. 31. § Prov. 23. 31. 32.

|| Prov. 23. 34. & 7. 22. 23.

turn yet again, we shall see greater abominations than these, in the *false swearer*. He is afraid of losing something of earth ; or, of meeting with shame and punishment from men, and what will he do ? why, he will deny the truth and appeal to heaven to confirm that, which God and his own conscience know is false ; which reminds me of a passage in sir *Francis Bacon*, to this effect ; that “ The liar acts the part of “ a *bravado* towards God, but of a *coward* towards “ men ; for he *faces* God, but *shrinks* from men”. Be ye astonished O ye heavens at this !

This again brings to mind a maxim, which people often use viz. “ Of too evils chuse the least”. Now there is the evil of *sin*, and the evil of *affliction* : one is against God, the other affects our selves ; and *self* generally carries the day, so that *Elibu's* words are more justly applicable, even to most professors in our day, than they were to *Job* and his friends :—*Take heed, regard not iniquity : for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction*, Job. 36. 21. Whereas those that live by faith, now as well as formerly, chuse to endure the trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments ; yea to be stoned, sawn asunder, or slain with the sword : or to wander about in sheep skins, and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, rather than accept deliverance upon any sinful terms. Heb. 11. 35. 37. And did the ambitious man believe, that all men's hearts are in the hand of the Lord, and that he speaks the truth when he says, *Them that honor me, I will honor ; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed* ; * would he take the contrary way to obtain honor ?

And what shall we say of hypocrites ? They draw near to God with their mouth, and honor him with
their

* 1 Sam. 2. 30.

*their lips ; but have removed their heart far from him. * They are very strict in some outward forms of worship, and generally add some precepts of men to divine institution. They come and sit, sometimes before a good minister, and if he is eloquent, his preaching is to them as a very lovely song, and they will praise the speaker and his words, but they do them not : for with their mouth they shew much love, - but their heart goeth after their covetousness : † so that they will turn aside the just for a thing of naught ; devour widow's houses, and are full of extortion and excess ; § yet will make long prayers, and have many religious pretences, and cry, Is not the Lord among us ? none evil can come upon us. || They do not know that Christ is in them, the hope of glory ¶ but might know the contrary ; yet upon a negative proposition, they form a positive conclusion.*

Observe it well, they do not by faith trust in Christ ; yet will they lean upon him, and say, *Is not the Lord among us ?* The world's religion is built upon negatives ; but when the Lord's servants openly point out to them their abominations, and warn them of the dreadful consequences thereof, they will watch for iniquity ; make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate ! † and tho' the heads of Zion judge for reward, the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money ; § yet because the Lord's name and worship is among them, they will not hear to any such thing, but for all they are so much against certainty in religion ; they now positively contradict the warning, and say, *none evil can come upon us.* Ah ! were they once convinced,

* *Isai.* 29. 13. *Mat.* 15. 8, 9. † *Ezek.* 30. 31, 32.
 § *Isai.* 29. 21. || *Mat.* 23. 14, 25. ¶ *Mich.* 3. 11.
 § *Col.* 1. 27. † *Isai.* 29. 20, 21. || *Micah* 3. 11.

of the *truth* ; *sinners in Zion* would be soon *afraid*
fearfulness shall surprize the hypocrite. *

Time would fail, to speak of the evidence that ap-
 pears from every quarter, of unbelief's being the root
 of all evil. The *wages* of all *sin is death*, † which
 comprehends the ruin both of soul and body, for time
 and eternity. *This* is what every sinner is at *work*
for, as much as one that is hired is at work for his
 wages : it is what he *earns*, and justice will give him
 his *due*. Come up then, you that say, " If our *good*
 " *works* do nothing towards procuring God's favour, we
 " will do no more ; " Did you believe that the *wages*
 of your *bad* works is death, and that you earn hell,
 by every sin you commit ; could you run on to abuse
 the *goodness of God*, and *treasure up wrath* unto
 your selves as you do ? *Rom. 2. 4, 5.*

Methinks I hear some say, " We are far from de-
 " nying these plain *truths*, and *rules* ; but there are
 " certain *doctrines* taught by some, which do a world
 " of mischief. Ay, what are they ? why one is,
 " That all mankind are fallen undone sinners, and
 " cannot help themselves in the least : hence 'tis in
 " many mouth's *I cant help my self*, and so they go
 " on in sin".

Answer, I know I have heard it from many mouths,
 who yet, when death and eternity have been made to
 appear *realities* before them, have talked quite other
 language : for then they would cry, " O if God will
 " spare my life, I will never live as I have done" :
 Which demonstrates that they do not *really see*, that
 they can do nothing, but only would ward off con-
 viction by that pretence. Do you think the woman
 with an issue of blood, who had *suffered many things*
 of many physicians, and had spent all that she had,
 G and

* Isai. 33. 14.

Rom. 6. 23.

*and was nothing better. but rather grew worse ; was hindered by a sense of her helpless case, from coming to Jesus for a free cure ? * Our Lord gives the reason of his being disregarded, yea rejected by the Jews thus, They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. † Had they believed the prophets testimony, ‖ That their whole head was sick, and their whole heart faint ; that there was no soundness in them, they would not have rejected our glorious physician as they did. Indeed the contrary opinion, was the very cause thereof ; they thought that the Messiah would teach them some further good things, that they might do to inherit eternal life : ¶ but when he proclaimed liberty to them from captivity and bondage, this gave great offence, and they said we be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage ; how sayest thou, we shall be made free ? §*

This doctrine is so far from being injurious to good doings, that the contrary conceit is the main support of sinners and hypocrites, in all their bad doings in this world. For so long as men think, that to gratify their carnal inclinations in pleasure, and liberty, they will be upon their guard against any attempts that are made to turn them therefrom ; and will look upon all that make such attempts as enemies to their liberty, and happiness ; and if they cannot deny but the consequences will be dreadful hereafter ; yet so long as they think they can turn when they please, they will put it off till a more convenient season. Whereas if they were once convinced that they are captives in the worst of slavery, and that nothing but almighty grace can deliver them, they would be in haste for deliverance

* Mark 5. 26 29. † Luk. 5. 31. ‖ Isa. 1 5. 6. ¶ Mat. 19. 16. Luk. 10 25. & 18. 18. * Luk. 4. 18. 28. John 8. 33. ‖ Act 24. 25. Psal. 40. 2. Isai. 51. 14.

rance from the horrible pit. Solomon saw the *impudent harlot*, encourage herself, and entice others to take their *fill* of lustful loves, with this plea, that she had just *paid her vows*, and had more *peace offerings with her*. So God says to those who had *debased* themselves *even unto hell*, *Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way*; yet *saidst thou not, There is no hope*. Tho' they were got so near to hell in their conduct, they still hoped to escape ruin there; and what was this *hope* built upon? why, the *life of their hands*; this guarded them against being *grieved* for all their abominations. The Lord proceeds to say, *I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works, for they shall not profit thee*. For says he, *I dwell,—with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit*, Isa. 57. 9, 10. 12. 15. In the next chapter the prophet is commanded to *lift up his voice like a trumpet to shew the house of Jacob their sins*; even sins which were covered under an enquiry after *justice*, and a pleasing pretence of much devotion; and he shews them, that the *pleasure* which they found therein, was a pleasing conceit that God was indebted to them for these doings. Behold! *ye exact all your labours*! And because he did not own their accounts, nor make them such returns as they expected, they complained and said, *Wherefore have we fasted and thou seest not? have afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?* Tho' he did know at the same time that they did not *loose the bands of wickedness*, nor *undo heavy burdens*, and *let the oppressed go free*; did not deal their bread to the hungry, nor *cloaths* to the naked Isa. 58. 1—6.

These are God's declarations concerning *his people's righteousness*, which is done by the *life of their hands*

G 2

† Prov. 7 14 18.

hands ; and it all comes to much the same with the doings of our first parents, after they had got the *knowledge* that was forbidden ; it is to *cover their nakedness*, and to *hide* even from God. Yea he says, *they seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord*, *Isai. 29. 15.* That it may not be known what the true nature and springs of their actions are. This should put us all upon close consideration. Great professions of *love in word and in tongue*, are the polite mode of our days ; but as to *love indeed and in truth*, by *giving to the destitute those things which are needful for the body* ; or to *lay down our lives for the brethren*, how little of that is to be found ? Here men have many plausible coverings, * tho' John says, *How dwelleth the love of God in him ?* † *Paul* was once *hid* under as good a covering as any of these ; yet when divine light shined into his heart, he counted all his doings and possessions *but loss, and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus* ; that he might *be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith*. And he warns Christ's flock to *beware* of those who taught in the contrary way, as being *dogs and evil workers*. Yet this was so far from making him careless about his behaviour, that he directly renounced the notion of resting in what he had *already obtained*, and asserts that he was *reaching and pressing after perfect holiness*, *Phil. 3. 2 8,—16.* This shews the genuine effects of faith in Christ alone for righteousness and strength.

Another

* “ And some who have no need, complain of want,
 “ To those whose bread they know to be but scant ;
 “ Least they should something from their hands expect,
 “ And so by *lying*, cover their neglect.” Wright

† *Jam. 2 15. 16. 1 Joh. 3. 16.—18.*

Another doctrine which many think has a bad tendency, is that of *personal election*; because they often hear sinners say, "If I am elected I shall be saved", and on they run in all abominations.

But this is doing exactly as the devil would have them, even not to *believe* nor regard, *those things which are revealed* that belong to us; but to *presume* upon the *secret things* that belong to God. * Thus he would have had our Savior presume upon the *secret* support of *angels*, by *casting himself down* from the *pinnacle* of the *temple*, without any regard to the *ways* that divine *revelation* has directed us to walk in. † Christ's answer proves, that to use the scripture so, is to tempt God, and not to *trust in him*.

Election is as expressly taught as any doctrine in the bible; yet it has been dressed in such a form, in our times, that many start at the mention of it, as soon as they would at one covered with a bear-skin, and so determine against the doctrine by their imagination and passions, instead of being governed by scripture and reason. Indeed attempts are made to bring both these against it. One thing advanced for this end is, that to hold that a particular number are elected, would make God a *respector of persons*, contrary to his word. But if the matter be examined, we shall find that the *respect of persons*, so often condemned, is a *perverting judgment*, thro' a wrong bias, so as to shew that regard to some, and disregard to others, which is unjust. † Now every pious soul detests any such thought concerning God; yet we have early notice of his respecting persons in another sense. He had *respect* unto *Abel*, and to his offering; but unto *Cain* and to his offering he had not respect; which made *Cain very wroth*: whereupon

* Deut. 29. 29. † Mat. 4. 6. 7.

† Deut. 10. 17. 2 Chron. 19. 7.

whereupon Jehovah demands the reason of it, and says, *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door.* * As if he had said, “Do you think I am so unjust as not to accept all that is done well?”. This demand Cain could not answer; but turns to talk with his brother, and to end the controversy shed his brother’s blood; and we are expressly told, that the reason why he slew him was, *Because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous.* Gen 4. 4.—8. 1 Joh. 3. 12.

Here is sovereign electing love display’d, in the first family of the human race; two brothers come to worship God, and he respects the person and offering of the younger, while the elder is not respected. This began a bloody controversy which is not ended to this day; and it all centers against God’s doing what he *will* with his *own* grace; || and his not being under any obligation to bestow it upon any, for all their doings. The state of this controversy is set in a very clear light by the evangelist *Luke*, who informs us, that Jesus, after doing wonders in other places, came to *Nazareth*

* How strange is it, that some will bring this demand, as a proof that we are to be accepted for our *well doing* which was made to convict *Cain* of the falshood of such notions! It was *by faith* that *Abel* offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than *Cain*. by which he obtained witness, that he was *righteous*. Both *Abel*’s person, and his offering were accepted in the beloved Redeemer, so that his works were done from a right principle, to a right end; both of which were wanting in *Cain*’s offering; therefore his works were not well done, and the *Sin* lay at his *own door*. Every good act flows from love, out of a pure heart and good conscience, and from faith unfeigned: and the divine oracles assure us, that all who *swerve* from this, *understand neither what they say, nor wherof they affirm.* Heb. 11. 4. Eph. 1. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5 7.

|| Mat. 20. 15.

Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the sabbath-day, he in their synagogue read in the prophecy of *Esaias*, where it was written, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, &c.* After which he began to say unto them, *This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears: and all bare him witness, and wondered, at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* But Jesus soon discovered what notions they had of grace, for he said, *ye will surely say unto me this proverb, physician heal thy self: whatsoever we have heard in Capernaum, do also in thy country.* Which shews that they supposed this glorious physician was under some obligation to them, so that if he did not do as great things there, as in other places he would be *partial* and need healing himself: But Jesus assures them that there were *many widows in Israel* in the days of *Elias*; and *many lepers* in the days of *Elisba*, and yet *none* of them had such favours granted, as were shewn to a *widow* among *Sidonians*, and a *leper* among the *Syrians*: Which was as much as to say, “I am under no obligation to bestow my grace upon you, because of your outward friendship, but have good right to grant it to *heathens*, while you are left to perish in your sins”. And observe the effect; those who had just before wondered at his *gracious words*, now were *filled with wrath*, and rose up and THRUST him out. Luk. 4. 15—29. And why should his servants expect better treatment than their master had?

As long as any person thinks he has any thing in him, or done by him, which can give him the least claim to salvation more than others, he will not give in to this doctrine; but all that are brought to see their undone estate, as it is, have no other gleam of hope, than

than by sovereign grace : For they see, that if any good thing were to be done by them, as a necessary condition of their deliverance, it would be a gone case with them for ever. But to hear that God is *gracious to whom he will be gracious*, and that he *justifies the ungodly* ; this is good news to their poor souls : and when they receive it, they can heartily join with *Paul* in blessing the father, for all the spiritual blessings which are laid up in Christ, *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.* Eph. 1. 3—7.

Observe *Paul* says, *he hath chosen us, that we should be holy* : But the modern notions are, that he chuseth us because we *are holy*, making that to be the cause, which *Paul* viewed to be the effect. All the controversy turns upon this point, whether the good pleasure of God's will, or our free will be the cause of our holiness and happiness. * *Jesus* is so far from giving foreseen faith and good works, as the cause of babes, receiving gospel grace, instead of the wise and prudent, that he resolves it all into father's pleasure alone ; *for so it seemed good in his sight.* Mat.

II.

- * One justly observes, that conditional election, “ sets up an
 “ inferior cause above a superior ; making election and
 “ salvation no more than a *may be*, instead of a *shall be*.
 “ It represents the Almighty as ever fluctuating in his
 “ councils, taking up with new consultations dependent on the fickle will of man, and the uncertain
 “ acts that flow therefrom : by which method he is
 “ brought in saying. O ! I will if they will ; and O !
 “ that they may will to believe, become holy, diligently and perseveringly by improving their stock of
 “ free-will abilities, that they may be saved : nevertheless not my will but their will be done !

Chandler's doctrine of grace, printed at Boston 1744
 page 208.

11. 26. And if any man teach otherwise, than these wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrines according to godliness, we are assured that he is both *proud* and *ignorant*, 1 Tim. 6. 3—5. And tho' such generally deny their partaking of *Adam's* sin, yet they at the same time *bear witness* that they *allow the deeds of their father*, by questioning the truth of what God has *plainly said*: and aspiring to be *as Gods to know*, instead of keeping their place as creatures, to *receive and obey*.

These great pretenders to reason, would despise a statesman or general, that should lay such a plan of proceedings as would need perpetual alterations, and was liable to final disappointment: yet such is their scheme of *conditional decrees*.

But methinks I hear some say, "We have one objection that is invincible against all this reasoning, and that is, there are many who profess a full belief of these doctrines, that are in fact some of the worst of men". I own 'tis a lamentable fact, that there are such men, and so there were in *James's* day; and he compares them to *dead bodies*, and says, *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*, Jam. 2. 26. The Jews had the *form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law*: * so men may have the *form of doctrines of faith and a body of divinity*, under the gospel, and yet both of them conduct so as to cause the *name of God to be blasphemed thro' them*. Yet who would reject all *bodies*, because there are some *dead stinking ones*? We read of the *spirit of faith*; and of *living by faith* &c. † and so all ought to live. Again *Jude* calls such persons *filthy dreamers*; now who will say that their waking thoughts and views, have not good influence on their conduct, because they may have many thoughts and views in

H *dreams*

* Rom. 2. 20, 24. 2 Cor. 4. 13. Gal. 3. 12. Heb. 10. 38.

dreams, while they remain asleep on their beds.

However, since you are for appealing to *facts*, we will try a few of them. None that believe the scriptures can reasonably deny that the *Jews* had high notions of their power to do good works: *Paul* speaketh expressly, that they *followed after the law of righteousness*, and had a *zeal for God*; and he is as express concerning the reason why they did not attain to it, *because they sought it not by faith*, Rom. 9. 31, 32. 10 2 They had no such faith as he taught in sovereign decrees, and sovereign mercy to helpless sinners. No, they held to works which they could do, to entitle them to divine blessings. Now let us see what fruits these principles produced; they *both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and persecuted the apostles*: they *pleased not God and were contrary to all men*, &c. 1 Thes. 2. 15. 16. But the apostles on the other hand, preached that both *Jew and Gentile* were all under sin, and that by grace we are saved thro' faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. And these doctrines spread their victorious and happy influence as far as the *Roman* conquests had ever extended.

Afterwards there came on a terrible *falling away*, and the *man of sin* was revealed, who opposed these doctrines, and carried his notions of man's power to do good works so far as to hold, that he could do more than were required. But instead of these principles producing *good works*; their *bad works* got to such a length, that the Pope's *indulgencies* to commit sin with hopes of another pardon, were openly sold by their ministers, to get money. This shocked *Luther*; and he and *Calvin*, and others were moved to *protest* against those abominations, and boldly to preach those doctrines, which have born *Calvin's* name ever since. And none will deny that they produced great and
good

good effects then, but such as are either secret or open friends to *popery*. Great was the spread, and happy the influence of these doctrines in our nation at those times; yet the contrary principles have since extensively prevailed. And a noted divine observed eleven years ago, to an assembly of the national clergy, that “ ’Tis a general complaint, that our churches are less frequented than they used formerly to be, and that degeneracy of manners universally prevails. Now says he I may venture to affirm, that the *moral preaching* so much in vogue, is the cause of all this. In short we have preached morality so long, that we have hardly any morality left; and this *moral preaching* has made our people so very immoral, that there are no lengths of wickedness which they are afraid of running into”. *

I am not insensible that many are ready to reject this testimony, because it comes from a friend to the doctrines which they dislike; therefore out of the abundant evidence which might be produced from the other side, I will touch upon what appears in one, that the nation has owned to be a *rational* writer. I mean Dr. *John Brown*, whose *estimate of the manners and principle of the times*, published ten years ago, met with such a reception that we are told it had six editions in seven months. Therein he gives a very rational account of the present state of our nation, deduced from plain facts. He says, “ We may with truth and candour conclude, that the ruling character of the present times is that of a vain, *luxurious*, and selfish effeminacy”. And which has prevailed to such a degree among them, who are called *polite*, that he says, “ To suppose a man of fashion
H 2 “ I way’d

* Mr. *Jone*’s Sermon at the visitation of the Archdeacon of *Surry*, Sept. 1755 page 16, 17.

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“ sway’d in his conduct by a regard to *futurity*, is an
“ affront to the delicacy and refinement of his *taste*.
“ Hence the day set apart by the laws of his country,
“ for religious service, he derides and affronts as a
“ *vulgar* and *obsolete* institution”. And they have
so lost a sense of *honour*, that he says, “ They laugh
“ at the picture of their own follies ; they go home,
“ and *without a blush repeat them*”. And he shews,
“ that the principle of regard to the publick good
“ is so far lost, and a system of political self-interest
“ introduced in its room, that “ a foundation is laid
“ for *endless dissention* in the state”. Thus (says he)
“ by gradual and unperceived decline, we seem glid-
“ ing down to ruin. We laugh, we sing, we feast,
“ we play : we *adopt every vanity*, and *catch at eve-*
“ *ry lure*, thrown out to us by the *nation* that is *plann-*
“ *ing our destruction*”.

Thus he points out our *danger* ; and dreadful ex-
periments since have confirm’d the truth of these ob-
servations. But what shall give relief in this doleful
case ? why Dr. *Brown* says, he had it in his thoughts,
to have proceeded to the consideration of their *most*
practicable remedies : but (says he) as the closet-pro-
“ *jects* of retired and speculative men, often are re-
“ garded, as *chimerical* ; he was therefore unwilling,
“ at present, to hazard the discredit of such an at-
“ tempt”. And goes on to tell us of two kinds of
remedies ; the one *lasting*, the other *temporary* : and
says he, “ The first seems totally impracticable at
“ *present* : for as they suppose a *change* of manners
“ and principles, this may justly be regarded as an
“ impossible event, during the present age ; and is
“ rather to be wished than hoped for, in the next”.

See fifth edition of his *estimate*, page 54. 61, 64, 121
144, 212, 218, 219.

Here

Here reader is a fair opportunity given us to discern the difference between antient and modern christianity. Ancient christianity declares both *Jews* and *Gentiles* to be *all under sin* ; and that we must be *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*. *

But the modern scheme tells of a great deal that we *can do and must do*, in order to obtain salvation. The ancient plan, while it shews our *malady*, discovers at the same time a *present* and complete *remedy* : † but the late scheme flatters us along 'till we get to the brink of ruin, and then alas ! there is no *lasting remedy* to be *hoped for in this age* ; and why ? because it supposeth “ a CHANGE”, which according to that plan is “ an IMPOSSIBLE event”. Again the ancient plan gave courage boldly to preach the *gospel* at *Rome*, which was then the seat of the greatest *warriors* and *Philosophers* in the world ; and emboldened the preacher to assert the use he made of *closet-projects* in his work ; and also to beseech the *brethren* there to *strive together with him* therein. § While the late *rational scheme* has taken heart and courage so much from a *minister* and *doctor* of *modern divinity*, as to make him “ unwilling at present, to *bazard* the *discredit* of such “ an attempt” ; even in his own nation, whose manners and *weapons* he viewed to be “ degenerated into “ those of *women*”. ¶ Yea, and at time too when he saw them “ laughing, singing, playing, and adopting “ every *vanity*, and perceived not that they were “ *gliding down to ruin* ?

This soul-destroying scheme had got great footing in *New-England*, before the Lord appeared for us
years

* Rom. 3. 9. Eph. 2. 10. † Rom. 5. 20, 21.

§ Rom. 19. 15. 30. These *projects* have often saved nations from ruin, see *Exod.* 32. 30. 2 *Kings* 19. *Dan.* 9.

¶ Estimate page 125.

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years ago, and brought forth a number of men to preach up the doctrines of man's undone condition in himself, and of help alone by sovereign grace, in a bold and moving manner; and our *enemies themselves* cannot deny, that multitudes then really thought those doctrines to be true. Well, what were the effects?

Why, *taverns* were forsaken, and had scarce any company but travellers; *courts* had little to do when they met; frolicks were dropt; and an *anxious* pursuits of the *world* was in a great measure forsaken. But places of religious worship, both publick and private were crowded; multitudes flocked to hear the word, *in season and out of season*; *conversation* was chiefly on religious subjects and soul concern; old *quarrels* were made up &c. Yea, when a little army from *New-England* was called away to attack the enemies strong hold at *Cape Briton*, their language when they went off was, "Pray for us while we fight" "for you" and they were crowned with such success as proved a principal means of putting an end to that bloody war.

"Ay, say some, but how have things turned out since?" Answer, they have turned out exactly according to the scriptural account. In many the word had no more root, than seed sown by the highway; others heard *with joy*, and yet in time of *temptation* fell away: Some who seemed to pay a more lasting regard to truth, yet are *choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life*, so as to bring no fruit to perfection. While a few chosen ones keep the word, and bring forth fruit with patience. Jesus had the same end in view in giving this account, as he had in telling the twelve, that one of them would lift up his heel against him, namely, that when it came to pass they might believe, Joh. 13. 19. But behold and be amazed!

amazed! Many now strengthening themselves *against believing*, because these things *are come to pass*! And men have again straitned their wits to persuade people, that they are able with ordinary assistance to perform the conditions of the gospel, so as finally to obtain eternal life. And these notions have been the most openly espoused in this country of late, that ever they have been since christianity was known here; and the effects are too open to need any proof. *Pride and extravagance* involved people to such a degree, that in several counties they often had more than a thousand writs at a court. And if we review the late commotions about the *stamp-act*, what cause have we all to be abased in the dust, when we think how many more assemblies were gathered, of all ranks, to consult what creature power or policy could do in the case, than there were to *fast and cry* to the creator for help? How different is this from the conduct of God's ancient people? *Eph. 4. 3.* And tho' truth says, *The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whither soever he will*; yet the *rejoicings* immediately after the news of our deliverance, which were managed so as to destroy a number of *lives*; and the *thanks* if not *worship* that were addressed to several *instruments* of our relief; while there was such a visible backwarkness for *giving thanks* to the great *author* thereof, put me in mind of the note of a worthy expositor upon the *Philistians* conduct, who assembled to *offer a great sacrifice to Dagon and to rejoice*; for they said, *our God hath delivered Sampson our enemy into our hand.* The note is this "Tho' " *Sampson's harlot* had done it, and they had paid " her for it, yet they attribute it to their God, such " was their blindness and stupidity; and yet this may " shame us believers in the true God, who are so " backward

“ backward to ascribe to him the great things he
 “ does for us, when such heathens were so forward
 “ to give glory to their false deities, without any
 “ foundation for it”.

Upon the whole, as the *Jews* earnestly denied Je-
 sus his being a *King*; while their trembling fear of him,
 and raising such force as they did against him, plain-
 ly *said* that he *was a King*; so now all these, and
 many other *facts*, which are brought against these
 doctrines plainly *say they are true*. * Many who op-
 pose these doctrines make great pretences to dignity
 of sentiments; and one of their high notions is, that
 “ Because the deity can receive no profit from us,
 “ therefore his great end in all his works and dis-
 “ pensations, is his creatures happiness”. But if ’tis
 asked, why then are not all his creatures made hap-
 py? The reply is, “ Their own folly prevents it”.
 So that they have got a deity too high to be *served*
by them; yet he is so low that he must *serve them* with
 all his might; and when he has done his best, many
 of his creatures are too hard for him, and frustrate
 his great design of making of them all happy! This is
 turning things *upside down* with a witness! *Isa.* 29. 16.

Another of their high notions is, “ That they will
 “ receive nothing for truth, but what they can com-
 “ prehend with their reason”. Tho’ by the way,
 they expect to be credited in the accounts they give
 of many of their deep discoveries, which at the same
 time they do not suppose common people can fathom.
 But forsooth! they are too big to credit what Jeho-
 vah declares, any further than they can comprehend
 it;

* Many *facts* from the remarkable effects of these doctrines,
 in sundry particular towns and villages in various parts
 of our land lately, might greatly strengthen our argu-
 ment; but that would swell this discourse so far that I
 must omit them for the present.

it! Nothing is more certain than this is, that a *God* which a *creature* can comprehend is an *idol*. The deity which *Paul* worshiped was quite another kind of Being. Rom. 11. 33 — 36. And Heathenish principles will alway lead to heathenish practice. Now one of the most unnatural barbarities, that I ever heard of in the old *natives* of this country, was, their getting their *powows* when they had a friend taken sick, to try their magic art to find out whether the sick would die or not: And if the answer was that he *would die*: then no farther pains were used, but they let him die as soon as he would. Compare this with our modern reasoners against *certain decrees*, and see how much better hearts we have than them old *heathens*. If *they* thought their friends death was determined, that made them neglect the use of means for natural life: *these* say if they believed the event was appointed, they would neglect all means for spiritual life. *They* neglected means to keep off death; *these* use means to hasten it on. *They* neglected *others* bodies; *these* neglect their *own* souls. These *heathens* might be chargeable with *negative* murder of others bodies; but these *christians*, positively murder their own souls! The son of God knew, and often foretold what sufferings he should go thro'; yet, in the days of his *flesh*, he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save from death, and was heard in that he feared: tho' he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, Heb 5. 7, 8. And he gave express warning to his disciples, that they would all be offended because of him:—upon which *Peter* declared, that tho' all men should be offended he never would. To which Jesus reply'd, *Verily I say unto thee, that this Night before the cock crow, thou shalt*

I deny

deny me thrice: Yet this certain declaration was so far from excusing his neglect of his masters caution, to *watch and pray*; and his sloth, rashness and cowardice, that when *Peter* remembered those words of *Jesus*, *he went out and wept bitterly*, Mat. 26. 31—75. In *Paul's* voyage to *Rome*. after a long tempest had lain upon them, he stood forth in the midst of their company and said, *I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the Ship*. And shewed how this was revealed to him by an angel; and then adds, *I believe God; that it shall be even as it was told me*. Yet soon upon it, as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, by letting down their boat into the sea, *Paul* said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, *Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved*, Acts 27 21—31. He believ'd that the means and end were connected together. When *Daniel* understood by books, that the years were near or quite expired, which the Lord spake of by *Jeremiah* the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of *Jerusalem*, he set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fastings, and sackcloth and ashes, for the fulfilment of what God had absolutely promised.

Now all these (and many others) thought there was a consistancy between foreordination of events in our great *Ruler*; and earnest prayers and endeavours in his subjects, for the avoiding of all evil, and the obtaining of all the good we want. They thought that the certainty of the event no ways took away the creatures liberty, or made him less worthy of praise or blame for what he did. but some are lifted up in our days so high, as not to be content with the place of men, but have set their heart as the heart of God:
and

and *Behold! they are wiser than Daniel*, Christ, or his *apostles*, and explode the sentiments which they held, and practised upon! * However, as their *heart is lifted up*, and they *have corrupted their wisdom*, therefore (without repentance) God will *bring them down to the pit*, in such a manner as shall cause *astonishment and terror to all that know them* Ezek. 28. 2—6, 8, 17—19.

III. These things may teach us the evil nature, and pernicious tendency of a prevailing custom in our day, encouraging persons to profess religion, and come into the church *without this faith*. James calls those professors *vain men*, who have not such a *living faith* as Abraham had: and Paul says *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*. When the eunuch asked what hindered his being admitted to the initiating ordinance of the gospel church, Philip said, *If thou believest with ALL THINE HEART, thou mayest*. Yet Mr. Solomon Stoddard of Northampton about half a century ago, openly espoused the contrary sentiments

I 2

* Mr Edwards's remark is worthy of notice here, which is, "That most of the arguments from scripture, which *Arminians* make use of to support their scheme, are no other than *begging the question*": for they first conclude that these principles which have been just mentioned, are inconsistent with the use of commands, threatnings, promises, exhortations and the like, and then heap up scriptures that are full of such things; upon which they boast they have demonstrated their point: whereas the point in dispute, is whether the certainty of the event takes away the use of these means or not? and 'till they can prove that it does, all such proofs from scripture to support their scheme is near *beggery*. See his enquiry into the modern notion of free-will, Part 4. Sect. 11.

timents, and held that the Lord's Supper was a converting ordinance, and that persons that were not scandalous in their lives, might come to it, tho' they did not think themselves converted. This scheme, was by one of our fathers, in that day, compared to *Solomon of old's setting up the high places* : and after generations were not more fond of those *high places*, than many in our times are of *this scheme*.

Tho' we have had a notable experiment of the evil of it in Mr. *Stoddard's* church ; for his grandson and successor Mr. *Edwards* practised thereon 'till he had got a very large church, and then upon his attempting to have some of them called to an account for their *lascivious and obscene discourse*, the town was " suddenly all on a blaze", and little could be done in the affair. And upon their finding that he had changed his sentiments about that point, they laid hold of that as a handle against him, and never would rest until they had got him away. Thus when the world had got into the church, they would not be governed by divine rule : they would sooner *thrust* away one of the best divines that this age has seen. See Mr. *Edwards's* life printed in Boston 1765, page 53, &c. *

A
* The council which concurred with the church in dismissing of him, say, " We have had no other objection against him, but what relates to his sentiments upon that point". And what those sentiments were, they give us in these words; viz. his " Insisting upon it as
" necessary to the admission of members to full com-
" munion, that they should make a profession of *sancti-
" fying grace* ; whereas the brethren are of opinion,
" that the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance, and
" consequently, that persons if they have a competen-
" cy of knowledge, and are of a blameless life, may be
" admitted to the Lord's table, altho' they make *no such
" profession*". printed result of said counsel page 3, 4
Jun 22 1750.

A profession of christianity necessarily implies faith in Christ, and a devotedness to him ; and if there is not a measure of that, truly in the heart, the profession is *false* ; and to encourage men to lie before God and man, in order to be converted, looks very shocking. But to avoid this absurdity, Mr. *Williams* (who wrote against Mr. *Edwards* on this point) says page 47. that “ Nothing should be expressed in the words “ of the profession, but what some unsanctified men “ may say, and speak true”. upon which Mr. E. replies, that “ There are two competitors for the kingdom of this world, *Christ* and *Satan* ; the design “ of a publick profession of religion is, to declare which “ side men are” ; and asks, “ Is it the constitution of “ King *George*, and the *British* parliament, that men “ should take oaths of allegiance, contrived in words “ of indeterminate signification, to the end that men “ who are in their hearts enemies to King *George*, “ and friends to the *pretender*, may use them and “ speak true” ? Reply to Mr. *Williams* page 39, 45.

The principal arguments that are brought to support these notions are taken from *Abraham's* covenant, and the national church which sprang from him ; notwithstanding the *messenger* who came to prepare the way of the gospel dispensation, warned souls against such notions, and shew'd that God was able *of stones to raise up children to Abraham*. And when many of the *Jews* believed on our Lord, he said to them, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*. This they immediately resented, and said *we be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage*. But Jesus assured them, that *whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin*. And adds, *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the work of Abraham*

Abraham.—ye are of your father the devil. *Joh. 8. 30—44.* Observe this well ; here was a great number of believers who were ready to profess Christ's name, if that would have done, but he was for having *disciples indeed, who should know the truth*, so as to make them *free* from the service of sin and satan, without which he would not own them to be *children of Abraham*. No, instead of that, for all their faith he declares them to be *children of the devil*.

Paul was very careful to distinguish to the *Romans*, the difference between *Abraham's* natural and spiritual children ; and shews that only the latter were by the gospel *counted for thee seed*, *Rom. 9. 7, 8.* And when some teachers who *desired to make a fair show in the flesh*, and avoid the *cross*, were zealous to introduce the national, *doing plan*, under the christian name, into the churches of *Galatia*, how smartly does he warn them churches against that scheme ? yea tho' it had come from apostles or *an angel from heaven*, and says, *who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth ?* And bids them *know that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham ;* and adds, *If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* *Gal. 1. 8.* and *3. 1, 7. 29. & 6. 12.*

This apostle knew well how pleasing this scheme was to mankind, and that he could have avoided *persecution* by embracing it : but then he knew as well what the consequence would be on the other hand ; and therefore says, *If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* *Gal. 1, 10. & 6. 12.* And how can any that proceed in that way, be servants of Christ now, any more than in *Paul's* day.

Mr. Edwards's smart remark may deserve our notice here. *Mr. W.* and many others having made much
use

use of the parable of the *tares of the field*, to support their cause ; tho' Jesus says, *the field is the world*, yet they must needs have it to be the *church* : Mr. E. observes, that if we should allow it to be so, it would not help their cause ; for the *tares* are plainly represented as having no just right there, but an *enemy* bro't them in ; and too, while the servants *slept*, who ought to have been upon their watch to keep the enemy out. He therefore says' " Perhaps some would be ready
" to make the reflection, that those churches whose
" practice is agreeable to the loose principles Mr. W.
" espouses, do that at noon-day ; in the presence of
" God, angels and men, which the devil did in the
night, *while men slept*" ! Reply page 103.

Hence IV. If *this faith* be so necessary in *professors*, how much more in *teachers* of christianity ? Let any man have what else he may, yet if he has not *this faith* to see HIM who is invisible, and to look at *unseen and eternal things* ; he will be governed even in his religion by the *things which are temporal*. It was this alone that enabled *Paul* and his companions to *preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord* ; and themselves the churches *servants for Jesus sake* : even because *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, had *shined into their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*. 2 Cor. 4. 5. 6, 1. Some would turn these off as *extraordinary things* ; and they profess to be lead in an *ordinary way* ; but the *ordinary way* of every man is to seek *self* in one shape or another, if he is not delivered therefrom by such supernatural influence.

Our Savior says, *Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also*. And goes on plainly to hold forth that if our *eye be not single but evil*, the light
that

that is in us is darkness. Who then will dare to say, that a man of great knowledge without a *single eye*, may be a safe guide? or that they can now *serve too masters*? Mat. 6. 21—24.

Many who cannot deny these truths, yet evade their practical influence, by the plea that we cannot know who are sincere, and who not. Our great *law-giver* saw all this, and therefore, after cautioning against wrong *judging*; proceeds very early to give plain rules for right judgment in these affairs; and says, *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps cloathing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits*; Mat. 7. 6, 15, 16. Nothing is more common in scripture than for things which are devoted to God's worship to be called *holy*. In *Ezekiel's* vision of the temple he was ordered to shew to such as were *ashamed of their iniquities*, the *forms and laws of the house*, even of the *comings in and goings out thereof*, and all the *ordinances thereof*; and he says, *The whole limit thereof round about, shall be most holy: behold THIS is the law of the house.* And again, *Thus saith the Lord God, No stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh shall enter into my sanctuary*, Ezek. 43. 11, 12. and 44. 9. *Pearls* are to be kept as choice treasure, in distinction from things for common use. Each gate of the *holy city* was *one Pearl*, Rev. 21. 21. *

* Tho' this is so plain, yet great numbers would have it, that *pearls* mean *inward experiences*, which they say are not to be told before carnal men. But if *Paul* greatly transgressed this rule, for he declared the peculiar circumstances of his conversion before his persecutors, both at *Jerusalem* and *Cesaria*. And we are all required to be *ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear*, 1 Pet. 3. 15.

Peter compares false teachers and professors to *dogs* and *swine*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. Now compare these things together, and how plain is the command not to give *holy ordinances* to such men, nor open the gates of the church to any but the *righteous nation which keepeth the truth*? *Isai.* 26. 2. And who can fully describe the *rending and filthy* work, which churches have often met with for not attending duly to this rule.

What many seem to understand by *fruits* is *Sheeps-cloathing*; their making a shew & appearance like sheep; But *Jesus* has told us plainly what he means by *fruits*. *Every tree*, says he, *is known by his own fruit*:—a good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. *Luk* 6. 44. 45. And we may observe that when *Peter* declared the faith which was given him by a super-natural revelation, *Christ* answered, *Blessed art thou*; and immediately says, *thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church* *Mat.* 16. 16—18. *Peter* signifies a *stone*; he was but one stone which was to be laid in the building upon this glorious rock; and he says to other saints, *ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. Our Lord's speaking of *building* his church, directly after that noble declaration of faith, evidently points out the *manner* as well as *matter* of this building. As if he had said, “The way in which I will build my church is by persons declaring thus with their mouths, what they believe in their hearts concerning me?” Hence, on the day of pentecost, when many were pricked in their hearts, and cried, *What shall we do?* *Peter* pointed out to them the way of relief;

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and

and as many as gladly received his word were baptized, and added to the church, and they continued stedfastly in the *apostles doctrine and fellowship*—They declared both their conviction and conversion, and thus the first gospel church was built up, and walk'd in fellowship : and the apostle *John's* account of the way wherein christian fellowship is begotten and promoted perfectly agrees herewith. He says, *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us : and truly our fellowship is with the father, and with his son Jesus Christ* 1 *Job.* 1. 3

When *Peter* was directed by a vision from heaven to go to *Cornelius*, and went *without gainsaying* ; yet when he came there, he asked and received a distinct account of the steps of experience which had led *Cornelius* thus far. Then he opened his mouth and preached Christ to all present ; and while he spake, the *holy Ghost* fell on all them which heard the word, whereupon they were commanded to be baptized. Thus the primitive churches were built up.

On the other hand, when one who had been baptized as a believer, spoke that out of the abundance of his heart, which discovered that his heart was not right with God, *Peter* said, *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter*, *Act.* 8. 20, 21. So the church of *Ephesus* is commended because she could not bare them which were evil ; and had tried them which said they were apostles, and were not ; and had found them liars, *Rev.* 2. 2. This discipline was neglected in the church of *Corinth* ; therefore *Paul* says to them, *Know ye not, that a little leaven, leavens the whole lump ? what have I to do, to judge them that are without ? do not ye judge them that are within ? therefore put away from among your selves that wicked person*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 6. 12, 13. And to the churches of *Galatia*, he

he says concerning those who had perverted the gospel, *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* I would they were even cut off that trouble you, Gal. 5. 9. 12. John speaking concerning the doctrine of Christ, says, *Look to your selves:—if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house,* 2 John 8—10.

Query, do not *actions* speak louder than *words*? Answer, in many cases they do: yet how do we know what actions mean but by words? for instance, *Simon offered the apostle's money*; now had he done it for their support in the Lord's work, or for them to distribute to poor saints, the *action* would have been good; tho' by what he *said* when he offered the money, he discover'd that his *heart* was not right in the sight of God. This hint may shew the harmony there is between those two different descriptions of the last judgment, namely, by thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned: And, then shall he reward every man according to his *works*, Mat. 12. 37. & 16. 27. Indeed, *fruits* comprehend all that men *bring forth out of their hearts*, in their principles, experience, conversation and conduct; and hereby we are to *know them*, and to act towards them according to the clearest light we can gain. * If these divine rules were duly regarded they

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would

* Some talk'd much of a distinction between *private* and *publick* charity, and assert that *private* charity will not do to *act upon in publick* affairs. If by private charity they mean an *inward persuasion*, which is not governed by *intelligible evidence*, I readily concur with them: though I fear what is often intended by that distinction, is that we should receive all who are willing to make a public profession of religion, if nothing is openly objected against them, whether we have any proper evidence to

would soon settle the controversy we have had concerning who has a right to preach, and who not : for according to these rules, if *Peter, Paul*, or an *angel from heaven* should come to us, and not bring the *doctrines of Christ*, but a *perverted gospel*, we ought to reject them. While all those who have *renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but who by manifestation of the truth, commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*, ought to be received 2 Cor. 4. 2. † These rules are *rational* as well as *scriptural*. Saints are often called *witnesses* Isa. 43. 10. 1 Tim. 6. 12. Heb. 12. 1. A witness is to testify what he knows concerning a matter in dispute ; and God's witnesses are to testify what they know of him, and his truth, which the world is so full of disputes about. Now

our consciences that they experimentally know the truth or no. Great noise also has been made about *infallible knowledge*, and of assuming God's prerogative to *search the heart*, and the like ; but this is all beside the proper question which is, whether we must act towards men, according to what they *pretend* to be, or upon the clearest *evidence* we can gain of what they *really* are ?

† Here many are ready to cry, alas ! what times are we fallen into ? a party spirit encouraged, and one minister condemning another : how much better were former days than these are ? But they forget that *Solomon* tells them, that they *enquire not wisely concerning this*. Eccl. 7. 2. there always have been contentions ever since *two seeds* have been in the world ; and he must be very ignorant of his bible who does not know that true and false ministers have spoken against each other in all ages, tho' with very different tempers ; yea, when the teacher of teachers came into the world, what divisions were there among God's people about him ? Some said *he is a good man* : others say *nay* ; but *he deceiveth the people*. And he was so far from denying the peoples right to judge of such

Now every rational mind, in order to be satisfied in important affairs, wants to hear witnesses tell, not only that a thing is *so* ; but also how they *came to know it to be so*. Hence *civil courts* will not take up with *written evidences*, if the persons can be had, for they suppose there is danger of being imposed upon by false testimony ; therefore they would examine evidences critically, in order to come at the truth. Neither will men be content to have this done by one or more in private, and so have what they discover reported to the court : No, all who are concerned must hear what is said ; yea, and have liberty to ask what questions

such matters, that he gave them plain instructions to direct them therein. He first shews the necessity of being engaged to *do*, as well as *know* the *Fathers will*, if we would expect to be guided by him ; and then lays down a general rule to judge teachers by : viz. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness in him*. And having given them the rule, he says, *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*, Joh. 7. 12. 17, 18, 24. Others judged according to the appearance : and those who appeared in *Moses seat*, and according to the established religion, they judged to be right ; but *this man* who had never learned in their schools, or been *approved* by their rulers and standing teachers, and was admired only by people who knew not the law ; they accounted a *deceiver*, ver. 15, 47—49. Notwithstanding he *spoke as never man spoke*, and constantly went about doing good. But he calls us to judge *righteously* according to what is *really said* and done, and not according to the *appearance* and show that men make. Those who *seek their own glory*, will be more concerned to have the esteem and approbation of men, than to *approve themselves unto God*, by *rightly dividing the word of truth*, 2 Tim. 2. 15. or to *approve themselves as the ministers of God*, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, &c. 2 Cor. 6. 4—10. as *these ministers* did, which *these* claim a succession from.

questions they think proper : and the fear of witnesses, bashfulness, or blundering in their story, will not be admitted as a sufficient reason against this way of proceeding ; and why ? because their honour, interest, or life is at stake.

Yet where the divine honor, and the life of souls is at stake, the contrary method is taken. For many have given out that they had rather receive two hypocrites (nay some say ten) than shut out one saint. * And for fear persons should blunder in their account, *written testimonies* have been received, which have often been *framed* as well as *penned* by other hands ; persons by signs have own'd it as their testimony, when God and their own consciences knew it was not so. Thus churches have gone on ; till of late many have dropt, having particular accounts of experience in any way ; and receive members only upon a *general* assent to christianity. And some have been so stupid as to try to justify such conduct by the *eunuch's* confession *Acts* 8. 37. as if their openly assenting to that which they were always taught was true, was parallel to his declaring his hearty belief of that, which Jews and Gentiles all said was false. * *Philip* likewise had been particularly acquainted with his *soul exercise* about these things before, so that he had good evidence of the *eunuch's* conversion before he baptized him.

The generality of those who are going on in the ways above described, are very ready often to caution us against *judging* :—yet if we will not run with them to the same excess of abomination, they can soon speak evil of us, and *judge our hearts* at a great rate. But the things I have now related are not secret surmises,

* i. e. Had rather receive 2 or 10 enemies than hold one friend in suspense, 'till they could obtain evidence that he was a friend ?

mises, they are most open and notorious facts ; and if any would give me a better reason for this difference in conduct, than this, I should be glad to hear it ; viz. That most men are wiser for time, than for eternity, and have more concern about their own interest, than the interest of Christ's kingdom in the world. And in vain do men wish for better times, while divine rule is thus disregarded ; they might as well look for peace while enemies are not guarded against ; or for health while contagion is freely spread.

Therefore, V. These things should rouse us all, and engage our souls to regard without delay the only method of relief in our deplorable circumstances, before iniquity prove the ruin of our nation and land.

But here I am come to the most difficult point in the whole christian plan, I mean applying the call and command to impotent creatures. None but God can keep us from straying to the right or left hand here. Multitudes hold it to be unreasonable for God to require that which the creature cannot do ; tho' the absurdity of such a notion appears !

1. Because the divine command ever remains *holy just and good*, altho' we are *carnal seld under sin*, Rom. 7. 12, 14. What a strange conceit would it be, to conclude the creditors claims to be unjust, because of the bankruptcy of the *debtor* !

2. All sin is a voluntary contrariety to the divine will ; how reasonable then is it that we should be called and commanded to that which must be our hearty choice, or we never can be saved ? and that is a *turning from sin to God*, Ezek. 33. 10. 11.

3. Nothing but the light and power of the command, brought home upon the conscience, can ever make a soul truly to know its misery, and so to prize the remedy which is provided : for without a soul
knows

knows he is sick, he will not improve a physician ; 'till he knows he is a prisoner he will not welcome a proclamation of liberty ; and 'till he is convinced of his great and just debts, and that he has *nothing to pay*, he will not *love much* when they are all *frankly forgiven*, Luk. 4. 18. & 5. 31. & 7. 42.

4 God's call conveys light and life to the soul, when and where he pleaseth. When *Ezekiel* viewed the bones that were very dry, he prophesied, as he was commanded, and said, *O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord* : and how glorious was the effect ? The divine call is, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*, Eph. 5. 14. So our apostle after mentioning, that every good gift cometh from the father of lights, who of *his own will begets* souls with the *word of truth*, says *wherefore, let every man be swift to hear*, Jam. 1. 17 &c.

Here therefore let us observe that true teaching ever shews our constant obligation to conform to every divine rule ; and at the same time, that all our help, so to do, must be freely received from Christ Jesus, by the influence of the holy spirit. From thence we receive the *gift of righteousness*, whereby all our crimes are forgiven ; and *abundance of grace*, whereby our natures are charged, and our souls are enabled to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. But false teaching will either *abate* part of the price, in order to accomodate our duty to our ability ; or else excuse the creature from his *obligation*, because he is not able to fulfil it.

This difference appears plain in all ages. When *Joshua* in a moving manner had pressed home upon *Israel* the importance of chusing that day whom they would serve, and which had such effect, that the people answered, *we will serve the Lord* :—he immediately

diately adds, *ye cannot serve the Lord ; for he is an holy God* Joshua 24. 15—19. He would have them know their impotency, and their need of divine help.

The prophets orders were, *Tell ye ; there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Savior. Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth — Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* Strength as well as righteousness is in him, and not in ourselves. So our Redeemer when he came, insisted much on the strictness and authority of the divine command, and our constant obligation to obedience; and at the same time, he as fully asserted, that *without him we can do nothing*, Mat. 5 Joh. 15. While the leaders of most note in that day, *abated* the terms in various shapes. They would confine the law, only to outward actions ; but Jesus extends it to our inward disposition, and designs : they would have an observance of small things answer, while they neglected the *weightier matters of the law* : yea, they would fain have their *forms of devotion*, suffice, while they exercised *injustice and cruelty* towards the poor. Yet they could not bear the thoughts of perishing any more than others : no, they often enquired what *good things they should do* for eternal life ? And can the words *gospel, faith or repentance* help these in the least who deal with souls in this *partial* line ; and can their case be a whit better than those who of old had been *partial in the law* ? Mal. 2. 9. Yea, and is not *justice, mercy and faithfulness* as much neglected now under a profession of christianity, as ever they were among the *Jews* ? Paul saw these things creeping in, and therefore says, *Be not deceived : evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not ; for some have not the knowledge of God : I speak this to your shame.* 1 Cor. 15. 33. 34.

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But here many of our late reasoners, will tell us that we make men mere machines, who are not worthy of praise or blame : for what we *cannot* do, we are not to blame for neglecting ; and if we are actuated by divine power in all that is done right, then we are not praise-worthy therefor.

Answer 1. God is the author and supporter of all nature, who *giveth to all life breath and all things* ; and *heathens* as well as *christians*, derive a natural power from him to do *natural* actions ; and by that power they may do many things which are *materially* good ; but in order for any action to be *spiritually* good, it must be done from a right principle, and to a right end, without which the *end of the commandment* is not answered, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5.

2 This controversy proceeds upon the same footing of that between *Job* and his friends, namely, *darkning counsel with words without knowledge* : using words without knowing what they mean ; for the words *cannot*, are *not able* and such like, are as different in their meaning when used about the soul, from what they are about the body, as the nature of the soul differs from the body * We may be heartily willing to do many outward actions, which yet we cannot do, and so are excused from blame in our not doing them : but the cause why souls cannot believe the record which God has given of his son, and love and obey him with all their hearts, is because, *they love darkness rather than light* ; yea, *they hate the light*, Joh. 3. 19, 20. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God*, &c. Rom. 8. 7. This is the account which *Jehovah* has given of the case, and those who dare to set up their reason

* See Mr. *Edwards* on the will, page 307. A book which has afforded more light to my mind in these points, than any other human composition that I ever read.

reason against this account, will sooner or later hear that tremendous demand, *shall he that contendeth with the almighty, instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

What souls will dare to stand the trial, and come up and tell the most High that they cannot believe him, and therefore he must excuse them from blame in making HIM A LIAR! * Or tell HIM that they cannot see beauties enough in HIM to attract *all their hearts*, and therefore he must *abate his law*, and take up with *bodily exercise*, take up with a shewing much love with their mouths, while their heart goeth after their covetousness? † Many are ready to call this rough or harsh preaching; but this is no new thing, they called it so in *Isaiah's* day and said, *speak unto us smooth things; cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us.* The near views of a *holy God*, tore off their covering which was *not of his spirit*, and that they would not bare; therefore the prophet was ordered to note it in a book that it might be for time to come, for ever and ever, that these were a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord. Isa. 30 1. 8,—11. And the day is hastning when an awful tempest shall sweep away the refuge of lies: now therefore be ye not mockers lest your hands be made strong, *Isai.* 28. 17, 22.

O therefore precious souls, make no more attempts to hide from God, but submit to him and embrace his free salvation without delay. Dost thou say, I can't believe? let that teach thee what a heart thou hast, which has often regarded *lying vanities*, and yet now can't believe the *God of truth*. Do you say, I can believe there is mercy for others, but not for me? Why not for thee? oh, because I am a great sinner!

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* Joh. 5. 10

† Ezek. 131. 3.

84 True Faith will produce good Works.

That is thou canst not believe, because thou art just such a creature as Jesus came to save ! 1 Tim. i. 15. The bottom of the matter is we can believe that Christ came to save *good* sinners, but not *bad* ones : such as have nothing else but badness. Hence the profligate person thinks he believes the gospel, and hopes for mercy at last, because in the midst of all his extravagance he conceits he has an *honest* heart, & God regards *honesty*, & hates *hypocrites*. So in every case men's conceits they have some good either of an inward or outward nature, which will when it is well improved move Christ to save them. Yet when the divine spirit shews them truly what they are, this takes away all that sort of faith.

We naturally imagine that God is *altogether* like *ourselves*, who cannot love those whom we see no loveliness in : tho' the truth is that his thoughts and ways are as high above ours, as the heavens are above the earth. The contention in our day, concerning a *general*, and a *particular* faith centers here : for they don't contend concerning who is the Savior ; but the dispute is concerning what faith gives an interest in him. Multitudes hold that if we believe the gospel to be true, and walk according to the rules of it, we may hope for mercy at last ; tho' they will scarce allow any to know they are safe till they leave this world ; and for this plain reason, because their hope depends upon their *doing well* to the end. Others hold saving faith to be a persuasion that *Christ died for me in particular*, and that this persuasion must be *worked up*, by the spirit's assistance in our hearts.

Now each party can see *self* and man's *doings* in the others faith ; therefore they have carried their contentions to a great length. Yet after all, when any poor soul has his eyes opened, and is turned *from darkness*

ness to light, all their criticisms will never persuade him to wait till next year, and see what effects light and heat have upon him, before he may *appropriate* the benefits of the glorious *Sun* to himself. * If a number of *rebels* should lift up their arms against their king till many of them were slain, and the rest scattered in the wilderness, ready to perish, and they should hear that he had granted out a proclamation of free pardon to rebels, and a general call to come in and accept it : yet if they still kept off, how vain would all their disputes or attempts prove, to find out who of them should be saved by the King's mercy ? tho' in the mean time if he should *appear* to any of them in his royal robes, and with his charming voice proclaim *pardon to them* ; how would it melt their hearts, and engage each of them to strive who should shew the lowest submission, and the highest gratitude for his undeserved mercy ? See *Jer.* 31. 2, 3.

In these debates the ideas of a *dead* or *absent* friend unawares slips into our minds, who has left choice legacies to a select number of persons, where there is room for lawyers, disputes and men's judgments in order to determine who are interested therein. Whereas, did we observe that they which *find grace in the wilderness*, are such as the Lord hath *appeared unto*, and declares his *everlasting love to their souls* : and that we never can see the sun only by its own light, which always brings its evidence with it, both of its own excellency, and of our right to enjoy its benefits ; this would settle the point. Here some are ready to cry out, “ If all our help is in God, and if he has determined to give it only to such persons as he hath chosen ; then 'tis in vain for us to strive, or use means

* *Psal.* 84. 11. *Act.* 26. 18.

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“ means, we will e’en take our ease and live as we
 “ list”. This many call *reasoning*; and as one told
 Dr. Taylor (who has written much in this line,) all the
 cry is *reason* and *candour*, *reason* and *candour*! and
 said he, thou meanest no less by it than they did who
 cried, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*! Yet if this
 noise was stilled, we may find a *self-contradiction* in
 the very nature of the objection: * for it is in effect
 to say, “The measure of my future happiness is fixed;
 “ therefore I will take methods to increase it” or
 plainer still: “God has determined what happiness I
 “ shall have, therefore I will take my own ways. and
 “ not his to promote it”! Every man is using some
 sort of means or other for happiness every day he
 lives; so that the query is not properly whether we
 shall use any means, or no; but whether ’tis best to
 use the means which God has appointed, or those which
 man has invented? †

This sort of *reasoning* began near the *forbidden
 tree*; and generally they who most *positively* deny
 their concern in what was *acted there*, shew most *plain-
 ly* that they *allow of the deed of their father*, by gi-
 ving in to *reasonings* against what God *hath* plainly
said, as he did. How is the world ransacked, and the
 faults of professors on all hands brought up, and ma-
 ny false charges added thereto, and all to guard against
 taking and regarding God’s truth as he has delivered
 it? yea rather than yield; the *pit below* is searched,
 and Judas is brought up to carry on the argument a-
 gainst a close adherence to divine rule in our practice
 in church affairs. As if Judas’s example was for *imi-
 tation* instead of *warning*. Tho’ truly he had never
 had any place in the *christian* church, as distinct from
 the *Jewish* church; for his commission was limited to
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* vid. Mr. Edwards on the will p 316. † Eccl. 7. 49

the *house of Israel*, before their *national church* was dissolved : and the great commission to *teach and baptize all nations*, was given to the *eleven* ; there was no *Judas* among them. *Mat* 10. 5 6 & 28. 16. 19.

It is therefore our highest wisdom to acknowledge our own guilt and folly, and freely receive the divine testimony as 'tis delivered to us, and present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, which is our *reasonable service*. Even *self interest*, if rightly view'd would move us hereto. For if we disregard the *golden rule*, the Lord will ; not who says *with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*. Had *David* viewed this when he was tempted to defile his neighbours wife, and then *deceitfully* to shed his blood ; and had he seen that this would be *measured* to him *double* : that one son would defile his daughter, and another murder him ; and then that the murderer would *deceitfully* dethrone *David*, and openly defile his wives ; with what indignation would he have rejected that *traveller* which came to entice him thereto ?

Yet because this *sentence is not immediately executed*, sinners will not quit their evil ways : yea when they see the execution of it *begin at the house of God*, upon *the righteous*, they *reason* directly against *revelation*, and conclude that the awful *sentence* will not reach to *ungodly sinners* who *obey not the gospel of God*. They are *willingly ignorant* of the true nature and design of all God's dispensations, 1 *Pet.* 4. 17, 18. 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. Let me therefore address you in the language of wisdom it self, " Hear instruction " and be wise, and refuse it not : for whoso findeth " me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. " But he that *sinneth* against me wrongeth his own " soul : all they that *hate me*, *love death*, *Prov.* 8. " 33—36,

I thought to have stopt here ; but a review of our present state constrains me to go farther. For as we are loudly called to *awake out of sleep*, so we are called to stir up one another, and to *provoke one another to love and good works*. Many are stirring up one another to evil, and it might make us all ashamed to think that sinners are more active in the way to destruction ; than saints are in the way to salvation. We can scarce go into any company without hearing talk of others faults ; yet how rare is faithful reproof ? and why ? we are afraid of giving offence : tho' when the report comes round to the persons ears, the offence is double.

How little regard is paid to the divine rule, for dealing with a faulty brother in *Mat. 18* ? One way by which many evade it is, that the *fault is secret*, and therefore they will not take these steps ; yet they can whisper it all round the church or neighbourhood. *Another* is that *many know it*, and so they would be excused from that method ; whereas if the case be not openly *in the church*, as that was of the incestuous man at *Corinth*, I know no other way to bring it in aright, but by these steps. and if any case be so *secret* that we may not open it in *that way*, it ought to remain *secret* : for the command is, *Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself ; and discover not a secret to another ; lest he that heareth it, put thee to shame*, Prov. 25. 9, 10.

Nothing is more common than to hear men's faults aggravated in their absence, beyond what they are in their presence : and as Mr. *Morgan* observes “ An
“ evil report, be it true or false, spreads much farther than a good one ; an evident token that most
“ men do not love their neighbour as they do themselves”. But whence comes this aversion, to giving
and

and receiving reproof? surely not from a good cause; for, *rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee: and open rebuke is better than secret love.* ⁹ *Is the scooner that loveth not one that reproveth him,* Prov. 15, 12. Sin is our worst enemy, and if it has insnared us under any disguise whatsoever, 'tis a great kindness to have the enemy discovered and cast out. And if others are mistaken in their reproof; yet it can be no injury to have our deeds tried and made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

We have lately been upon the borders of a civil war, for LIBERTY: hanging and burning were not too bad for the enemies of LIBERTY! Ah! little do many see what they are doing; for after all this noise? *Whoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,* Joh. 8. 34. Such harbour the worst enemies to liberty in their own bosoms. *Turkish or Spanish slaves* are not to be compared with those who are under the *bondage of corruption.* *Covetousness* will make men rise early, set up late and eat the bread of carefulness; and if they have grasped much together, their abundance will not suffer them to sleep: it will drive them to cheat, lye, steal, and kill, and has brought many to a halter, and ten thousands more to hell. *Pride* moves men to manifold works of deceit, to advance self, and crush others; and when its views are crossed, it breaks out into wars and fightings with tongue, pen, club, or sword, and fills societies, countries, or kingdoms, with confusion, blood, or desolation. *Luxury* draws persons in many ways to waste their estate, health and time, under a notion of pleasure, and often brings on a speedy, if not timely death, and an aggravated damnation.

Yet those who thus *weary themselves to commit iniquity*, often treat such as enemies who would labour to convince them and turn them from this dreadful *slavery*. Every company sounds with complaints of *hard times*; — *debts*, and *want of means to pay them*: whereas had we the means that have been *consumed upon these lusts*, among us in ten years past, and could we *use them*, and not *abuse them*, we should be as happy as any people on earth: but in vain do we look for *peace* while we harbour such *enemies*; or for *liberty*, while we *yield our selves to serve sin*, and are not in earnest to improve all gospel means to search out these *exceeding foes*. I speak not thus because I am free of blame therein. No, rather, (as Col. Gardiner said) because I have been so *scandalously* *fooled* by them.

We glory much in our *liberty of conscience*; yet how little is that understood among us? * The true nature of it is, when we have delivered our sentiments and the grounds of them; then to say with *Paul*, *Judge ye what I say*. But what is more common than for us to go a step further, and judge for others as well as our selves, and if they do not concur with our judgment, to treat them with contempt or abuse? Yea, and civil privileges, or just dues are often withheld, only because others sentiments differ from ours. All the difference between this and ancient *persecution* is, that *then* the *tyrant* was upon the *throne*, but *now* he is come down to the footstool; *then* he took away life; but

* Good conscience men allow (they say)
but must be understood,
To say as they themselves do say;
or else it can't be good.

Goddard.

but now he is restrain'd from going so far. Paul says, *Whatsoever is reprov'd is made manifest by light.* Other methods therefore than holding forth *light*, or *speaking the truth in love*, have not a good, but evil tendency. Since I have ventured thus far, I will proceed a little farther, and observe that as to christian union, *John* loved the saints in *the truth*; and we are commanded *to love the truth and peace.* Therefore to pursue *peace with all men*, as far as we can consistent with *truth*, is an incumbent duty: but to wrong *the truth for peace*; to wrong our own consciences to please others, is an awful sort of liberty!

The prince of peace calls to arms against sin, and there is *no discharge in this war*, any more than in that which will come by and by. No, the Prince declares, *He that is not with me, is against me.* * Surely then my brethren, it is *high time to awake out of sleep*, and *cast off the works of darkness*, and *put on the armor of light*:† and no longer follow our blind inclinations, or others' inticements, because we *don't know* this or that to be wrong; but pursue what we *do know* is right: and make this our daily cry, § *That which I see not touch thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* Does the multitude of inward and outward foes cause thee to cry, *Alas, what shall we do?* the answer is ready, *Fear not*; for *they that be with us, are more than they that be with them* || The Lord tells us what the controversy is, and that all shall know the issue of it; says he, *they shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs.* ¶ He calls us to trust and obey his word, tho' rulers, fathers, mothers, wife or children say the contrary; and tho' we loose house, lands, or life in

* Mat. 12. 30.

† 2 Kin. 6. 15, 16.

‡ Rom. 13 11, 12. § Job 24. 32.

¶ Jer. 44. 28.

the cause : And he that will turn from truth for any or all of these, CANNOT be Christ's disciple. *

Worldly wisdom says, *This is too much*, and when it comes to the trial, many go away sorrowful, not being able to endure *so great a fight of affliction*. But faith computes things quite in another line. I remember a story of a great commander, that when an account of his army was brought to him, in order to shew that their number was not so great as their enemies, he says, "And how many thousands did you reckon ME for". Unbelief leaves the *captain of our salvation* out of the account : but faith views him as *all in all*, so that if it sees, violence, iniquity, and grievance, so that the law is slackèd, and judgment doth not go forth, because the wicked doth compass about the righteous : yet it sees HIS glory cover the heavens, and the earth was full of HIS praise. HE stood and measured the earth, HE beheld and drove asunder the nation, and scattereth the mountains and hills. HIS ways are everlasting. Then let nature's supplies all fail, yet the believer will, *joy in the God of his salvation*. Hab. 1 2—4 & 3, 3, 6, 17, 18.

Faith puts self out of the question, and cries, *Lord it is nothing with thee to help. whether with many, or with them that have no power : help us O Lord our God ; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude : O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against THEE. In this may God's people out of weakness wax valiant in fight,*
and

* Luk. 14 26, 27.

and turn to flight a thousand thousand enemies, 2 Chron. 14. 9, 11. Every believer has the sacred three, the armies of heaven, and all the good men upon earth on his side; and divine power and faithfulness have engaged to make all the attempts both of his carnal and spiritual foes to work for his good. * While the unbelievers party consists of the *prisoners of darkness*, and a multitude of *worms* who are *crushed before the moth*, Jude 6. Job. 4. 19. It is high time therefore for us all to have done both with lukewarmness and cowardice in this cause; and while many are extolling the courage of carnal men, let us be *valiant for the truth upon the earth*, †

Every

* Rom 8. 28. 2 Cor. 4. 17.

† Jer. 9. 3

Hark yet again you carnal men,
and hear what I shall say,
In your own dialect, and then
i'll you no longer stay.

2 You talk sometimes of valour much
and count those bravely man'd,
Who will not stick to have a touch
with any in the land.

Tho' you dare crack a cowards crown,
or quarrel for a Pin,
You dare not on the wicked frown,
nor *speak against their sin*.

Know then true courage there doth dwell,
where men engage for God,
Against the devil, death, and hell,
and bear the wickeds rod.

Bunyan.

94 *True Faith will produce good Works.*

Every one wants to be happy. Well we have the testimony of truth itself, that "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. AMEN.

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